

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025

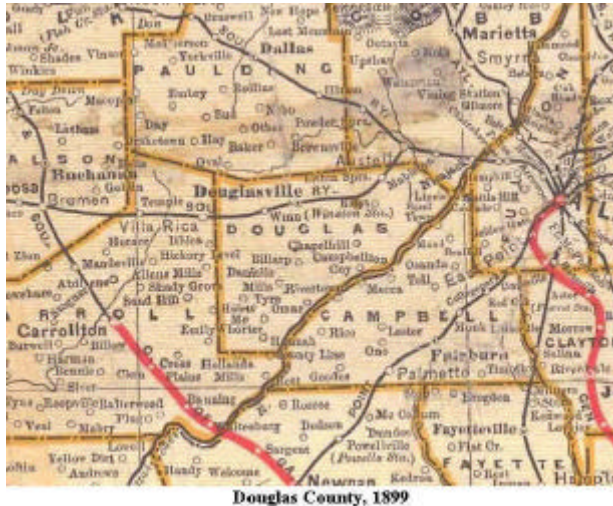
## Comprehensive Plan Elements:

Introduction  
 Population  
 Economic Development  
 Housing  
 Natural Resources  
 Historic and Cultural Resources  
 Community Facilities and Services  
 Transportation  
 Intergovernmental Coordination  
 Land Use  
 Implementation



# **Douglas County Comprehensive Plan 2004 to 2025**

## **Table of Contents**



Douglas County, 1899



- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Population**
- 3. Economic Development**
- 4. Housing**
- 5. Natural Resources**
- 6. Historic and Cultural Resources**
- 7. Community Facilities and Services Element**
- 8. Transportation**
- 9. Intergovernmental Coordination**
- 10. Land Use**
- 11. Implementation**

# 1. Introduction

■	Overview of the Plan	1-1
■	Public Participation	1-1
	District Meetings	1-2
	Stakeholder Committee	1-2
■	Growth Management Desires	1-2
	Quality Growth	1-2
	Efficient Growth	1-3
	Fiscally Sound Growth	1-3
	Coordinated Growth	1-3
■	The Vision	1-4
	Results of this vision will be:	1-4
■	Principles Guiding the Land Use Plan	1-4
■	Interjurisdictional Cooperation	1-7
	Consistency	1-8
	Regional Development Policies	1-8
	Quality Community Objectives	1-10
■	The Planning Process	1-10
	Step 1: Inventory and Assessment	1-10
	Step 2: Statement of Needs and Goals	1-10
	Step 3: Implementation Strategy	1-10
■	Plan Elements	1-11
	Population	1-11
	Economic Development	1-11
	Housing	1-11
	Natural Resources	1-11
	Historic and Cultural Resources	1-11
	Community Facilities and Services	1-12
	Transportation	1-12
	Intergovernmental Cooperation	1-12
	Land Use	1-12
	Implementation	1-12
■	Overview of the Plan	1-1
■	Public Participation	1-1
	District Meetings	1-2

	Stakeholder Committee _____	1-2
■	Growth Management Desires _____	1-2
	Quality Growth _____	1-2
	Efficient Growth _____	1-3
	Fiscally Sound Growth _____	1-3
	Coordinated Growth _____	1-3
■	The Vision _____	1-4
	Results of this vision will be: _____	1-4
■	Principles Guiding the Land Use Plan _____	1-4
■	Interjurisdictional Cooperation _____	1-7
	Consistency _____	1-8
	Regional Development Policies _____	1-8
	Quality Community Objectives _____	1-10
■	The Planning Process _____	1-10
	Step 1: Inventory and Assessment _____	1-10
	Step 2: Statement of Needs and Goals _____	1-10
	Step 3: Implementation Strategy _____	1-10
■	Plan Elements _____	1-11
	Population _____	1-11
	Economic Development _____	1-11
	Housing _____	1-11
	Natural Resources _____	1-11
	Historic and Cultural Resources _____	1-11
	Community Facilities and Services _____	1-12
	Transportation _____	1-12
	Intergovernmental Cooperation _____	1-12
	Land Use _____	1-12
	Implementation _____	1-12



# 1. Introduction

## ■ Overview of the Plan

The Douglas Comprehensive Plan is a long-range plan for guiding growth and development in the County for the next twenty years. The overall goal of the plan is to accommodate growth in a timely, orderly, and efficient arrangement of land uses, public facilities, infrastructure and services that meet the needs of the present and future residents and businesses of Douglas.



The County has been on the forefront of planning for over two decades. The original Comprehensive Plan for the County was developed in 1994. Since that time the County has experienced an extraordinary amount of growth and development activity. Since the last update, numerous small area-planning studies have been completed to address specific area issues. These studies, along with input from other agencies and the public have been incorporated into this 10<sup>th</sup> year Update.

This update has been undertaken for several reasons. During the last 6 years the County has once again experienced explosive growth, and therefore population and employment projections are greater than projected in the 1994 plan. Only eleven years remain in the last plan's planning horizon—2014. Thus, this 10<sup>th</sup> year update brings the database up to the 2000 benchmark, and extends the planning horizon to 2025.

## ■ Public Participation

Utilization of typical and non-typical public participation tools were used extensively during this 18-month update process to gain feedback from the public regarding the 10<sup>th</sup> year update. The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) used innovative mixed media, such as stakeholder meetings, facilitated public meetings, brochures, citizens surveys, email blast lists, county wide mailings and web access to enhance the public's involvement in the process, and to reach as many citizens and businesses as possible. Full documentation of the process can be reviewed in the "Comprehensive Plan 2025 Public Involvement Plan (PIP)".

Public meetings were held as follows:

Kick-off Public Hearing, January 2003

District Meetings (5), October 2003;

Board of Commissioners/Planning Commission all day Workshop-October 2003;

Stakeholder Meetings—twice monthly September 2003 through May 2004;  
Board of Commissioners/Planning Commission all day Workshop—May 2004;  
District Meetings (6), June 2004; and  
Transmittal Public Hearing, July 2004

### **District Meetings**

The County held two sets of district meetings. The first set of 5 meetings was held in the beginning of the process throughout the county in October of 2003. These meetings focused on the initial vision statement, goals and objectives, assessment of each plan element and initial issues, concerns and general citizen comments. Survey sheets were distributed and written comments were recorded from these meetings. These original meetings formed the basis for a revised vision statement, current issues and general goals for the County.

The second set of 6 District meetings were held in June 2004 throughout the County. These meetings focused on the actual plan document, including the community vision, goals & objectives, guiding principles and the actual Future Land Use Plan map. Again a written comment form was distributed and written comments were recorded.

### **Stakeholder Committee**

In order ensure that all aspects of the citizens and business of the County were represented in the creation of this plan, a 45 member Stakeholder Committee was appointed by the Board of Commissioners representing the diverse interests of the county, such as long time residents, new residents, builders, developers, environmentalists, an historian, business owners, and agencies heads.

This committee met twice monthly from September through May to review and make comments to both the Unified Development Code (UDC) and the Comprehensive Plan. They also received educational briefings from the City of Douglasville, the School Board, The Water and Sewer Authority and the County Commission. Their participation formed the background of this Plan Update.

## **■ Growth Management Desires**

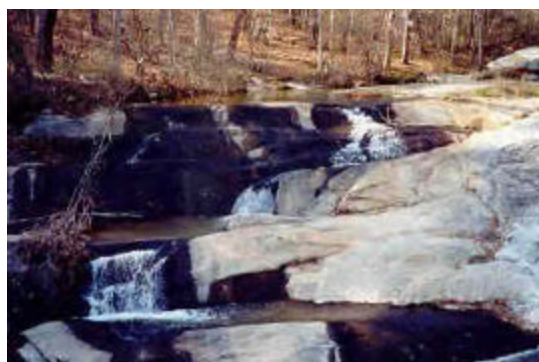
During the public review process and planning process several major theses emerged that were incorporated into this plan. These themes were consolidated into for areas as follows:

### **Quality Growth**

Douglas County's "small town" feel should not be sacrificed as the County grows.

Economic and fiscal benefits should be maximized, and the negative aspects of growth should be minimized (traffic, environmental).

The quality of new development should be significantly improved. High standards for residential and commercial development quality should be implemented and enforced



– i.e. land use compatibility, landscaping, signage, lighting, access management, traffic impact, and environmental impact.

The protection of natural resources and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas should be a priority. Bear Creek and Dog River Basins need to be protected and enhanced.

Lower “gross” densities should be preserved in the environmentally sensitive areas of the Dog River and Bear Creek Basins. Innovative development techniques that support “smart growth” such as master planned and open space developments should be encouraged.

### **Efficient Growth**

Growth should be managed on the basis of available or planned public services and infrastructure. Infrastructure should be planned according to desired land use patterns on the future land use plan map and not simply in reaction to market forces.

Public investment should be made in areas of more compact development, which therefore would help reduce development pressures in environmentally sensitive areas.

Sewer services should be targeted to areas with commercial and higher density potential as outlined on the future land use plan map.

New development should occur in or around existing and proposed activity areas at densities that promote an efficient utilization of land while being compatible with existing neighborhoods.

### **Fiscally Sound Growth**

There should be an appropriate balance between the growth of housing and business in order to assure long-term fiscal health. Land that is suitable for commercial or industrial uses is a valuable resource that should be discouraged from developing as residential.

The provision of sewer service in areas with potential for commercial, industrial development and higher density residential is a high priority relative to new low-density residential sewer service.

There should be a full and balanced range of housing opportunities provided to avoid an over-concentration of any one housing type such as “starter” housing. A true balance of housing will require more distinction between residential densities and unit types as well as a balance of price points.

### **Coordinated Growth**

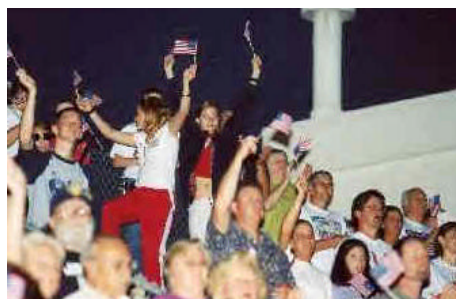
Douglas County and its cities should continue to work towards mutually agree upon land uses and provision of services around city boundaries.

Douglas County and its cities should continue to work towards a resolution of annexation issues.

The County and its cities should continue to plan for a coordinated system of Greenspace.

## ■ The Vision

This plan update has been prepared within the context of an overall vision and a series of guiding principles for the County that emerged during plan development. This vision guides the goals and strategies created under each of the plan elements, as well as overall implementation of the plan's recommendations. The vision is simply stated as:



*Douglas County will greet the future, while at the same time preserving its small town feel, its safe and rural environment, its valued historic and natural resources, and the continued creation of a quality built environment, while maintaining and developing a reasonable, balanced tax base.*

### Results of this vision will be:

Maintenance of the *small town feel* and sense of community, while providing exceptional and responsive public services and schools

Managed growth at a *human scale* in balance with the *rural environment*, available Greenspace and existing development.

Development occurring in a *fair and balanced* manner guided by *quality development standards*, resulting in a built environment with pedestrian amenities, a connected street network, and a mix of commercial and residential land uses.

A *diversity of people and life opportunities*, including a diverse selection of housing and employment opportunities so that residents can stay in the community as their lifestyles change.

A *cooperative, positive and progressive* government and community that work to preserve and strengthen those qualities that makes Douglas County unique.



## ■ Principles Guiding the Land Use Plan

The following is a number of basic planning principles that guide designation of specific uses on specific properties on the Future Land Use map. These are discussed below in preparation for presentation of the Plan itself.



### **Guiding Principle: Respect and maintain prevailing land use patterns**

Because of the availability of water and sewer within the municipalities, land use surrounding the cities is more notably urban in character in contrast to the rural portions of the county. Prevailing land use and zoning patterns are well established by existing development throughout the county and clearly indicate appropriate use of nearby vacant lands. In-fill development is therefore encouraged that would be compatible with surrounding existing development. This guiding principle interacts with the County's policies on corridor and village center development to protect stable residential neighborhoods while encouraging economic development in appropriate locations.



### **Guiding Principle: Place medium density housing near village centers or integrated into mixed-use developments.**



Higher density, such as townhouses, duplexes, lofts, quadplexes and small lot single family housing, fills an economic need for affordable and less-permanent accommodations, and offers an opportunity for transitions in land use intensities between commercial centers and surrounding single-family neighborhoods. Extensive areas that contain over 100 units at high densities can have negative effects, however. To avoid potential negative impacts, this plan disperses high-density developments to small-scattered sites and to mixed-use developments

where appropriate infrastructure can be provided. As a policy, Douglas County intends to encourage medium density housing to be incorporated into mixed-use developments instead of stand-alone projects or within small stand-alone in-fill sites that have access to sewer and water. Attention to site design that will create more livable communities in the future has been included within the Unified Development Code.

### **Guiding Principle: Coordinate infrastructure and land use**

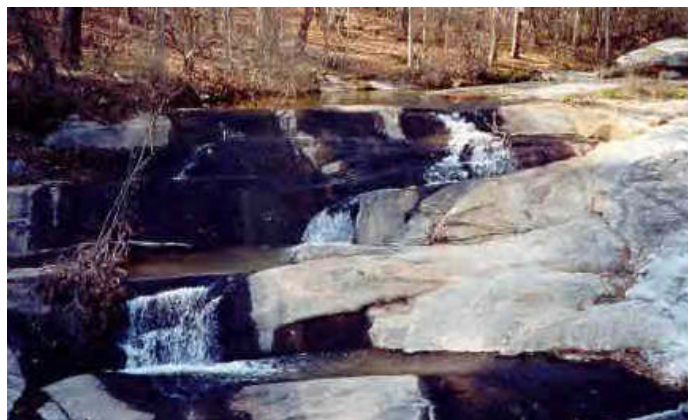
Because of unplanned growth over the last few decades and the limited capacity of current water, sewer and transportation infrastructure, it is extremely important that future land use decisions are coordinated with current and proposed infrastructure to provide the most efficient and cost effective use of the County budget. Character areas are based on existing and proposed availability of major Infrastructure and levels of service.



Infrastructure planning is a two-step process. First, the Future Land Use Plan has taken current and future infrastructure availability into consideration, and therefore has designated higher residential densities, commercial and industrial uses in areas where current services exist or are planned. Secondly, the Future Land Use Map will be used as a guide for planning and programming future infrastructure.

### **Guiding Principle: Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

Douglas County's water supply, tree cover, natural habitats, open space and other environmentally sensitive areas are important to our future. As the region grows and develops it will become increasingly important to accelerate efforts to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as small water supply watersheds, waterway corridors, wetlands, and aquifer recharge areas and other natural areas. The recently proposed Unified Development Code and Greenspace Plan provide strong regulations for the protection of sensitive areas.



### **Guiding Principle: Encourage industrial, office and commercial employment opportunities in appropriate locations**

Douglas County's industrial and employment areas have excellent access to the State highway system (limiting traffic impacts on county residents) and other infrastructure. Within the non-residential character areas include business parks, office campuses, high tech and research facilities, wholesale companies and showrooms, assembly or fabrication operations, business equipment supply or repair, and distribution facilities for local or regional deliveries. The County should continue to develop and program the appropriate infrastructure to support these uses.

### **Guiding Principle: Protect the capacity of major thoroughfares through nodal development techniques**

New commercial areas should be focused in nodes around major intersections, rather than spread out lineally along roadways. Intervening areas along major thoroughfares between nodes should be developed or planned with residential subdivisions having reverse frontage lots that back up to the thoroughfare. The demand for "big box" development (uses similar to Home Depot, Sam's Warehouse and Target that have a regional draw) should be integrated into character areas, which have been identified along major thoroughfares where traffic accessibility is optimized.



### **Guiding principle: Connectivity and Linkages**

Require linkages between and internal to communities in order to promote the use of alternative modes of transportation and commu-

nity interaction. All new communities built within Douglas County will be built with sidewalks and potentially trail systems that connect residents to amenities within the community and to the larger world outside their community. Non-residential character areas are designed to promote “village” and integrated “centers” that will act as mini “town centers” for the residents of Douglas County.

### **Guiding Principle: Encourage innovative development techniques**

Master Planned Developments, conservation style open space subdivisions, “village commercial centers,” mixed use development and other innovative development techniques are encouraged throughout the County within the recently proposed Unified Development Code, and through the use of Character Areas within this Plan.

Where appropriate to a property's surroundings and infrastructure availability, a mixing of use or housing types may be appropriate, as outlined in the Unified Development Code. Mixed-use development allows compatible land uses, such as shops, offices, and housing, to locate closer together and thus decreases travel distances between them. Mixed-use developments should be at an appropriate scale for the location.



### **Guiding Principle: Encourage redevelopment of obsolete, transitional or economically deteriorating areas**

Obsolete or heavily impacted areas can devolve into slums unless viable alternatives are available that can generate economically sound reuse of the area. Transitional residential areas (such as those impacted by major transportation improvements) have been designated as a transitional corridor in



order to encourage their transition or redevelopment to appropriate uses that will not disrupt the fabric of the neighborhood or the county. To prevent further deterioration in the future, all new subdivisions are required to have reverse frontage and adequate buffers along all arterials, or roads planned for expansion.

This principle also has specific and unique application to suburban-style commercial developments that are being passed over by retailers seeking more modern facilities or better competitive locations, discussed below. Older commercial areas should also be upgraded coordinated and protected and redeveloped along the “Main Street” village design concept. An important strategy to encourage redevelopment over excessive expansion is to discourage any new commercial rezoning that is not consistent with the Land Use Plan Map, particularly for non-neighborhood type commercial nodes and corridors.

## **■ Interjurisdictional Cooperation**

One of the keys to the success of the comprehensive planning process in Douglas County stems from the cooperative effort between the County, the region, the State, the Cities of Douglasville and Villa Rica, and other active agencies within the county. An outline of this process is more fully described within the “Intergovernmental Coordination Element” of this plan.

## **Consistency**

In taking on the major task of rewriting both its Comprehensive Plan and creating a UDC, the county wished to achieve consistency between various ordinances, and between ordinances and comprehensive plan goals and objectives. This joint effort looked at current development patterns and rates of growth, and investigated methods to achieve a balance between the natural and built environment of the county. Overall goals of the Regional Development Policies (RDP) and Community Quality Objectives (CQO) were incorporated into the plan and implementation tools created within the UDO. In addition, the timing, location and planning of capital facilities was reviewed in terms of expected land use patterns.

## **Regional Development Policies**

Within a regional context, the County realized that its current plan utilized traditional comprehensive and land use methods and was inconsistent with ARC's Regional Development Plan Policies. During the RDP Update in 2002 it became apparent that a major rewrite of both its comprehensive plan and development ordinances was necessary. ARC RDP Policies formed the foundation for many of the guiding principles and goals and objectives used to develop policy within the county.

In proceeding with the rewrite of both the Comprehensive Plan and its development ordinances, the county seeks to achieve several major goals that relate to the intent of ARC's Regional Development Policies:

### **Provide development strategies and infrastructure investments to efficiently accommodate forecasted population and employment growth.**

A land demand analysis was performed to verify required land uses to meet the needs of forecasted population and employment growth for the County over the next 20 years. The Future Land Use Plan Map was created using existing and planned infrastructure and the land demand analysis to ensure that residential, commercial and industrial land was available to meet these needs.

### **Guide an increased share of new development to the Central Business District, transportation corridors, activity centers and town centers.**

Douglas County does not have a central business district so this would not apply to the County, although land use character areas have been designed to require non-residential development to be concentrated within "villages" and "centers." New requirements within the newly adopted UDC and quality standards within this Plan also encourage more "community" type development.

A main objective of this plan was to review the existing development within the county, and to determine appropriate and best uses of land for the future. A feature that the county would like to explore is mixed use development and revitalization within aging corridors. There are several areas within the county, such as Thornton Road and Bankhead Highway that present potential redevelopment opportunities. The plan and related ordinances looks at the use of innovative techniques that encourage self-supporting mixed-use communities that are less dependent on the automobile for minor trips.

### **Increase opportunities for mixed-use development, infill and redevelopment.**

The previous comprehensive plan and development ordinances were based upon historic land use planning techniques. Unfortunately most of these techniques encourage separation of uses



and the promotion of the automobile. One of the primary objectives during this update was to examine various innovative land use practices, such as mixed-use centers, traditional neighborhood development and village centers. The comprehensive plan sets the tone for innovation, while the UDC provides regulations in order to implement this goal.

This Plan includes several categories that specifically allow mixed uses, such as the transitional corridor and mixed-use corridor. In addition, all villages and centers allow and encourage the mixing of uses and the formation of mini “town centers.” Master Planned Developments were created within the new UDC that allows a non-residential and residential mix within all new zoning districts.

### **Increase transportation choices and transit-oriented development (TOD).**

Douglas County is very committed to promoting alternative modes of transportation. The Douglas County Ride Share Department has been very active in organizing vanpool routes, implementing and staffing a multi-modal facility, and converting municipal vehicles to natural gas. This organization will continue to market and promote ridesharing to residents through its involvement in the regional organizations such as with GRTA and ARC, and participation in the Clean Air Campaign & Commute Connections.

The transportation element included transit and non-motorized transportation. The new UDC requires that all newly created public streets have sidewalks to provide pedestrian connections. Linkages, both internal and external are required within all villages and centers. Through this plan and related ordinances the County is encouraging land use patterns that coordinate transportation accessibility and provide linkages.

Additional transportation choices will be more fully addressed in the proposed Comprehensive Transportation Plan in 2005-2006.

### **Provide a variety of housing choices throughout the region.**

An intense analysis of housing needs was completed as part of the Housing Element of this Plan. Based on these findings, the County provided for varied housing types as outlined within that Element. In addition, the City of Douglasville provides a wide variety of housing types for Douglas County residents.

### **Preserve and enhance the stability of existing residential neighborhoods.**

Appropriate land use transitions, buffers, landscaping and tree preservation and site design were all included within this Plan. Character areas and land use locations were specifically designed to protect existing neighborhoods.

### **Advance sustainable Greenfield development.**

Master Planned and Open Space subdivisions were introduced within the new UDC. These development options were streamlined and will be highly encouraged within the County.

### **Protect environmentally sensitive areas.**

The County goes beyond the State’s recommended minimums in terms of stream buffers and local permitting of non-jurisdictional wetlands. A Watershed Protection Overlay within the Dog River Basin and portions of the Bear Creek Basins was created within the new UDC to address this environmentally sensitive area that the County gets their drinking water.



**Create a regional network of Greenspace that connects across jurisdictional boundaries.**

The County is actively working with the Chattahoochee Hill County alliance to develop a multi-county greenway and trail system, and has set up several subcommittees to define property acquisition and locational needs.

**Preserve existing rural character.**

Preserving the exiting rural character and small town feel of Douglas County is the overriding theme of the County's Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals and Objectives. The "Rural Places" character area was designed to achieve this objective, in addition to encouraging master planned developments throughout the county.

**Quality Community Objectives**

The primarily goal within the New Minimum Standards is to promote coordinated and comprehensive planning between a community and its municipalities, a community and its regional and a community and the overall state goals and priorities. To further this goal, DCA developed and adopted "Quality Community Objectives" within each plan element as a refinement of the interim statewide goals. The Quality Community Objectives must be considered in the planning process undertaken by each local government. Goals developed in local government plans shall be consistent with these initial statewide goals. The Douglas County Comprehensive Plan has incorporated these Quality Community Objectives throughout this plan.

■ **The Planning Process**

Georgia's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures require that all local government Comprehensive Plans follow a specific planning process in their development. This process consists of the following three steps, as described by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The results of these steps are interwoven into the plan elements that follow.

**Step 1: Inventory and Assessment**

In order to plan for the future, a community must know about its existing conditions. This step answers the questions "what do we have as a community?" and "What is good or bad about our community?" Once completed, this step provides a picture of the existing conditions within a community.

**Step 2: Statement of Needs and Goals**

Based upon the inventory and assessment, existing community needs are identified and goals for future growth and development are prepared. These goals provide guidance for the community and the framework from which detailed policies and recommendations are developed. This step of the planning process answers the question "where do we want to go?"

**Step 3: Implementation Strategy**

This step combines all of the plan's recommendations and describes how they will be implemented. This step answers the question "How are we going to get there?" The Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures also require that a Short-Term Work Program be prepared as part of the Implementation Strategy. The Short-Term Work Program is a listing of specific actions that a local government

anticipates taking over the next five years to implement its plan. The Implementation Strategy and its Short-Term Work Program is to ensure that the plan will become a working tool which will be used to guide decision-making rather than being just another unused report on the shelf.

Two major fundamentals of the new DCA minimum standards are the incorporation of active public participation throughout the process and increased interjurisdictional cooperation. How the County achieved these state goals was outlined earlier.

## ■ Plan Elements

The basic planning process is applied to each of the planning elements required in the State's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. The following briefly describes the elements of Douglas's Comprehensive Plan—2025.

### **Population**

This element provides the foundation for the plan. In order to plan for the future, the County must have a general idea of approximately how many people to plan for. The Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures require that all local plans contain an analysis of historical population, estimated population and projected population. Only Step 1, Inventory and Assessment, of the planning process is applied to the Population element.

### **Economic Development**

This element provides an inventory and assessment of the County's economic base and its labor force. An analysis of the past trends of the County's economic base and its labor force, as well as an analysis of regional comparisons in these areas, will provide insight into the County's economic health. An understanding of the County's economy is necessary in order to develop goals and strategies for the County's future economic development.

### **Housing**

This element provides an inventory and assessment of the County's housing. The inventory includes the age, type, condition, and location of housing units within the County. Based upon population projections, a rough estimate of the number of additional housing units needed to house the County's future population can be made. Goals and strategies are developed to address existing needs and the future provision of housing in the community.

### **Natural Resources**

This element provides an inventory and assessment of the County's natural features (topography, wetlands, prime agricultural and forest land, plant and animal habitats, etc.) and water features. Goals, objectives, and policies are developed to address the impact that future population growth and its related development could have on these resources, as well as what role they could play in economic development.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

This element provides an inventory of historic resources and cultural resources, such as historic homes, landmark buildings, and archeological resources. Goals, objectives, and policies are developed to address the impact that future population growth and its related development could have on these resources, as well as what role they could play in economic development.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

This element provides an inventory and assessment of the various services that are provided by the County, Fulton County or others. Existing needs are identified. The impact of future population growth on public services such as police protection, water and sewer service, schools, and garbage disposal is addressed. Goals and strategies are developed to address the future provision of community facilities. This element formed a major foundation for the Future Land Use Plan Map to determine land use and infrastructure concurrency.

## **Transportation**

Although roads, transit, sidewalks and bikeways are technically “community facilities,” their importance is recognized as a separate element of the plan. Extensive inventories, capacity analyses and Level of Service assessment were performed to assess the quality of the existing network. Existing needs and the improvements needed to serve future growth are identified, leading to goals and strategies for future system expansion. The County considers the work done to complete this element as Phase I of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan that will begin in 2005.

## **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

This element provides an inventory and assessment of intergovernmental coordination mechanisms, and identifies binding document and process that the county follows.

## **Land Use**

This element provides an inventory and assessment of how land is used in the County. The estimated acreage of each land use type is calculated and projections are made of the amount of land required for each land use type. Goals and strategies are developed to address existing land use problems and to address how the County’s land should be used in future years.

## **Implementation**

This element provides a wrap up to the entire comprehensive plan, and the ways in which the plan will be implemented. A listing of implementation tools, goals and strategies and how to manage the plan are included in this element, in addition to an updated 5 Year Short Term Work Program and Accomplishments Report.

## **2. \_\_\_\_\_ Population**

■	Introduction _____	2-1
■	Population and Household Trends and Forecasts _____	2-1
■	Comparison in Rates of Growth _____	2-3
■	Age Distribution _____	2-5
■	Racial Composition _____	2-6
■	Educational Attainment _____	2-8
■	Income _____	2-10
■	Assessment — Population _____	2-12





## 2. Population

### ■ Introduction

This chapter provides basic information about Douglas County's residents, including trends over the past several decades, the population's characteristics as of 2000, and forecasts of the future. When combined with development opportunities and constraints contained in the Historic and Natural Resources Chapter, this Chapter provides a basis for the Community Facilities, Housing and Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Future population and household data, along with future employment forecasts contained in the Economic Development Chapter, help determine demand for housing and employment opportunities, infrastructure improvements, and land development patterns that are consistent with the goals and policies established in the other Chapter of the Plan.

Located 28 miles west of downtown Atlanta, for the past decade Douglas County has been increasing in population and housing growth. Growth in the southwestern portion of the Region will continue and Douglas County will share in this continued pace of development, particularly as growth appears to be shifting from the central portions of the region to the more rural counties to the southwest and north. The demography of this growth in terms of population and household characteristics is discussed below.

### ■ Population and Household Trends and Forecasts

Between 1980 and 2000, the population of Douglas County almost doubled from 54,570 persons to 92,174 persons. Historically, the population growth during each decade between 1980 and 2000 was fairly consistent at approximately 30 percent per decade. Although numerically population growth was higher in the unincorporated County areas between 1990 and 2000, overall population increase was the highest in the incorporated cities, with the population in the cities increasing by 72 percent, as compared to a 21 percent increase in the population of the unincorporated area.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Population</b>			
<b>Historic, Current and Future Forecasted</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total County</b>	<b>Unincorporated County</b>	<b>Incorporated Areas</b>
1980	54,886	45,730	9,156
1985	62,270	51,882	10,388
1990	71,120	59,256	11,864
1995	78,642	63,436	15,206
2000	92,174	71,717	20,457
2008	124,698	93,032	31,666
2009	129,766	96,367	33,399
2010	135,089	99,855	35,234
2015	164,832	119,572	45,260
2020	200,054	143,087	56,967
2025	240,758	170,398	70,360
Total population for 1980 and 1985 from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.; unincorporated population for 1980 and 1985 based on observed percentage for 1990.			

**Table 2**

**Households**

**Historic, Current and Future Forecasted**

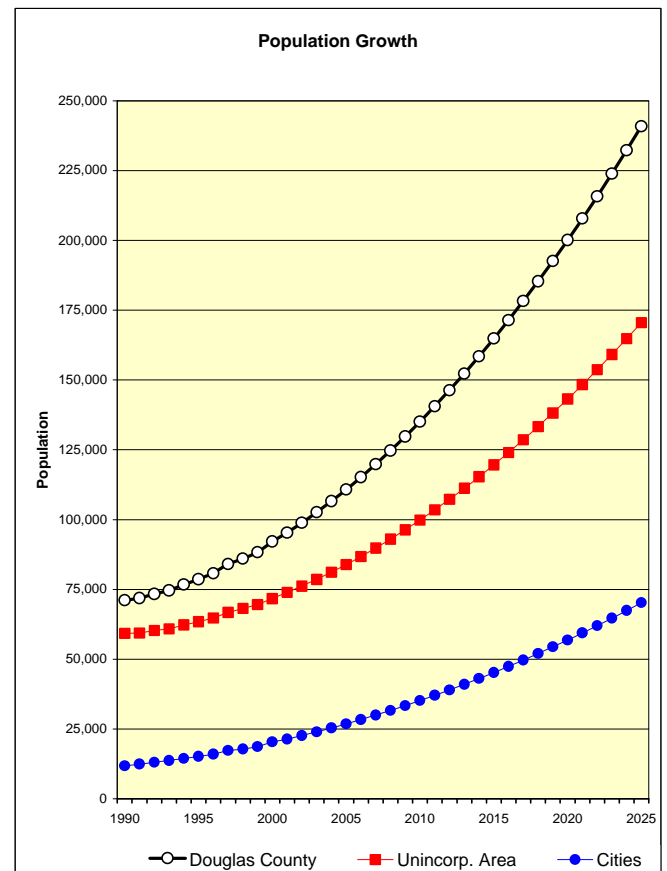
Year	Total County	Unincorporated County	Incorporated Areas
1980	21,742		
1985			
1990	29,633		
1995			
2000	32,822	25,383	7,439
2005	40,160	30,228	9,932
Figures for the years 1980, 1990 and 2000 taken from the U.S. Census.			

Based on commuting patterns, it is estimated that daytime population in the County is lower than the base population. Of the 46,176 employed persons in the County, only 16,924 remain in the County during the day. The remaining 29,252 persons residing in Douglas County commute to jobs in surrounding counties or out of state. An additional 15,491 persons who live in another county are estimated to commute into the County for employment, resulting in a daytime population which is 13,761 persons lower than the residential population.

The number of households doubled between 1980 and 2000 reflecting

the population increase combined with increasing household sizes. The past trends in household growth for the unincorporated County and incorporated areas from 1980 to 2000, and forecasts to 2025 beyond. As seen in Table 2-1, population and housing growth between 1995 and 2000 continues the consistent rate of increase established during the past 2 decades, but at a slightly higher pace. This same period of the 1990s has seen an increase in average household size, particularly in the unincorporated County areas.

Population forecasts were made for the County based on historic trends and second and third order regressions. Regressions were carried out on a ten-year and thirty-year base. From the resulting projections, the forecasts that had the highest likelihood, based on a comparison of regressions as well as the thirty-year base, were selected. Annual future growth was allocated to areas of the county based on census tract data, including land suitability and availability.



<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Average Household Size</b>			
<b>Historic, Current and Future Forecasted</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total County</b>	<b>Unincorporated County</b>	<b>Incorporated Areas</b>
1980	2.51		
1985			
1990	2.40		
1995			
2000	2.78	2.81	2.67
2005	2.73	2.76	2.63
Figures for the years 1980, 1990 and 2000 taken from the U.S. Census.			

Population on a countywide basis is forecast to almost triple by 2025, from 92,174 in 2000 to 240,758. Population is expected to increase to 170,398 in the unincorporated area and 70,360 in the cities by the year 2025. Although population within the unincorporated areas of the county will continue to grow and more than double, and numerically continues to hold the majority of the population, the incorporated cities are expected to proportionally capture an even greater percentage of the total county population, more than tripling their current population. Household size within the County is projected to slightly decrease between 2000 and 2025, from 2.78 to 2.72. Similarly, the

household size in the incorporated areas (including Douglasville and portions of Villa Rica and Austell), which are smaller than in the unincorporated County, are projected to decrease slightly in the future. The trend of larger households in the unincorporated County is forecast to continue through 2025, with the overall household size reducing slightly to 2.77 persons per household.

## ■ Comparison in Rates of Growth

The unincorporated portions of Douglas County have outpaced the State of Georgia in its rate of growth in every five-year increment since 1980, except for the period between 1990 and 1995. Unincorporated Douglas County experienced a fairly constant rate of growth between 1980 and 1990, which was approximately 150% of the State growth rate. Growth is anticipated to increase between 2004 and 2010 on an average of 3.36% to 3.59% per year, which is over 250% of the growth rate projected for the State. Between 2010 and 2025, the

<b>Table 4</b>					
<b>Population Growth Rate Comparison</b>					
<b>County and State</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Unincorporated County</b>	<b>Growth Rate*</b>	<b>State Population**</b>	<b>Growth Rate*</b>	<b>County Rate as % of State Rate</b>
1980	45,730		5,484,436		
1985	51,882	13.45%	5,962,716	8.72%	154.27%
1990	59,256	14.21%	6,512,602	9.22%	154.11%
1995	63,436	7.05%	7,328,413	12.53%	56.31%
2000	71,717	13.05%	8,234,373	12.36%	105.60%
2008	93,032	3.54%	9,202,394	1.27%	279.55%
2009	96,367	3.59%	9,316,015	1.23%	290.41%
2010	99,855	18.97%	9,430,937	6.44%	294.32%
2015	119,572	19.75%	10,024,612	6.29%	313.67%
2020	143,087	19.67%	10,636,675	6.11%	322.09%
2025	170,398	19.09%	11,273,522	5.99%	318.80%
*Growth rate is for five-year intervals except for the years 2005 through 2009.					
**State population is from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.					

growth rate is anticipated to exceed that of the previous years, at around 19%, which is approximately 300% that of the State.

The development and growth outlook are positive for Douglas, growth is expected to increase at a faster rate than was experienced during the 1980-2000 years, as land prices in the surrounding, more urban counties continues to climb as developable land becomes more scarce. Reflecting this growth trend, Douglas's population will continue to grow during the 25-year period at a higher rate than the State.

In order to compare the future rate of growth in Douglas to its neighboring jurisdictions, forecasts for the other jurisdictions were obtained from the Department of Community Affairs Plan Builder (DCA). The methodology used by DCA for execution of the forecasts for the counties may take into account different variables than the methodology used in the above tables to forecast the population and household information for Douglas County. However, although the forecast is significantly lower than that presented in Table 1-1, for purposes of consistency within the above comparison table, the population forecast information for Douglas County reflects the methodology used by DCA, not the forecast methodology presented in Table 1-1. As a result, general comparisons in terms of rates of growth will be discussed, as opposed to actual population numbers.

Douglas County is located in the middle of the area that comprises the western and southern portion of the Atlanta Region - Henry, Fayette, Rockdale and Clayton counties, and Paulding County (outside of the ARC region). Table 5 shows the forecast population growth in the ARC region's southern, central and northern counties. Compared to the region as a whole, Douglas County is

<b>Table 5</b>						
<b>Population Growth</b>						
<b>Douglas County and the Atlanta Region</b>						
						<b>% Increase</b>
<b>County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2000-2025</b>
Cherokee	91,393	143,232	191,579	240,922	266,340	86.0%
Cobb	450,812	612,150	771,011	935,128	1,019,940	66.6%
Gwinnett	356,609	594,742	756,999	924,138	1,010,520	69.9%
Fulton	649,309	820,788	867,960	924,918	956,717	16.6%
DeKalb	548,227	669,306	714,858	768,326	797,766	19.2%
Henry	59,892	120,863	159,268	198,561	218,813	81.0%
Rockdale	56,648	70,533	91,455	112,928	124,000	75.8%
Paulding	42,028	82,716	110,331	138,531	153,014	85.0%
Source: Woods and Poole						
*Region is 10-county ARC region, plus Paulding County.						

expected to grow at a rate slightly higher that of the region as a whole, and over the next ten years is expected to be a moderate growth area within the region. DeKalb, Fulton and Clayton counties are forecast to have significantly lower rates of increase; Cobb and Gwinnett counties are forecast to

have comparable rates of increase; and Cherokee, Paulding, Fayette, Rockdale and Henry counties are forecast with higher rates of increase.

## ■ Age Distribution

Age distribution trends for the years 1980 to 2000 show that the age cohorts of 0-24 and 25 to 44 have contained the majority of residents of Douglas County. In 1980 the population under 45 was 77.9%; in 2000 it had decreased slightly to 69.9%. From 1980 to 2000 a proportional decrease has been seen in the 0 to 24 cohort from 45.0% of the population to 36.5%. Over the same time period, very minor increases are seen in the 25 to 44 age cohort from 33.0% in 1980 to 33.3% in 2000. While the elderly increased in number between 1980 and 2000, the proportion of the population above 65 has increased only from 6.3% to 7.5%. The age cohort with the greatest proportional increase between 1980 and 2000 is the 45 to 64 age cohort, reflecting either an aging of families already residing in the County, or an in-migration of families during the 1980s and 1990s.

Age distribution projections, shown on Table 6, indicate the natural aging of the population over the coming 20 years with slight decreases in the lower age cohorts and slight increases in the older cohorts. Although Douglas County's population under the age of 45 will continue to dominate, the projections show that in 2025 this age group will comprise 59.2% of the population, as opposed to 69.9% of the population currently. By 2025, the "middle age" cohort is anticipated to have increased from 22.6% to 24.6% of the population, while the over 65 age cohort is forecast to comprise 16.2%

<b>Table 6</b>										
<b>Age Distribution</b>										
<b>Historic, Current and Future Forecasted</b>										
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<5 years	8.68%	8.45%	8.05%	7.88%	7.32%	7.03%	7.08%	7.10%	7.01%	6.98%
5 to 9	9.62%	8.27%	7.83%	7.76%	7.80%	7.12%	6.87%	6.97%	7.02%	6.95%
10 to 14	9.97%	8.44%	7.90%	7.87%	7.91%	7.59%	7.00%	6.81%	6.93%	7.00%
15 to 19	9.13%	8.10%	7.67%	7.18%	7.22%	7.27%	7.02%	6.57%	6.45%	6.61%
20 to 24	7.60%	7.98%	7.50%	6.80%	6.31%	6.68%	6.82%	6.64%	6.28%	6.23%
25 to 29	8.98%	9.57%	9.01%	7.77%	7.20%	6.45%	6.50%	6.61%	6.48%	6.18%
30 to 34	4.30%	4.29%	4.73%	5.77%	6.82%	6.91%	7.28%	7.50%	6.65%	6.06%
35 to 39	3.52%	3.71%	3.70%	3.94%	4.88%	6.23%	6.42%	6.81%	7.07%	6.30%
40 to 44	2.84%	3.13%	3.04%	2.99%	3.35%	4.38%	5.49%	5.68%	6.03%	6.30%
45 to 49	2.30%	2.38%	2.45%	2.40%	2.46%	2.89%	3.83%	4.83%	5.04%	5.38%
50 to 54	1.74%	1.81%	1.81%	1.85%	2.00%	2.04%	2.41%	3.22%	4.11%	4.32%
55 to 59	1.20%	1.30%	1.36%	1.39%	1.42%	1.66%	1.70%	2.04%	2.76%	3.54%
60 to 64	0.61%	0.70%	0.79%	0.87%	0.92%	0.98%	1.16%	1.21%	1.47%	2.01%
65 to 69	0.48%	0.54%	0.58%	0.66%	0.74%	0.83%	0.97%	1.00%	0.92%	0.95%
70 to 74										
75 to 79										
80 to 84										
> 84 years										
Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.										

of the population. When combined, the increase indicates an aging of the population.

Within individual categories, the projections suggest a continuing proportional decrease in school-aged children (5 to 14) a decrease in young adults (15 to 29), and a decrease in family age adults (30



to 45) while Douglas’s population continues to move into advanced middle age (45 to 65). Some of the County’s families will stay and grow older, their children themselves moving into adulthood and moving away from home, while other families will defer having children until later in life..

The actual number of elementary/middle school aged children is expected to increase by almost 50% over the coming twenty years. At the other end of the spectrum, Douglas County is not viewed as a “retirement community,” although a greater number of older residents are expected to call Douglas County home in the future. This is due in part to the lower cost of housing in the County as compared to other areas of the ARC region. In addition, many older people are attracted and will continue to be attracted to the County in order to relocate close to their grandchildren and other family members.

A comparison to the age distribution for the State of Georgia and the ARC region in 2000 helps illustrate the population characteristics of Douglas County. The chart shows the percentage of the population in Douglas County, the ARC region and the State by age category (from Table 2). Douglas County clearly has a higher proportion of school age children than the State overall, and a slightly lower proportion of adults in the “traditional family” ages—25 to 44. On the other hand, the “middle age” groups (45 to 64) are overrepresented in Douglas County compared to the State and ARC region. The County has a slightly higher proportional representation of the elderly than the ARC region, but is well below that of the State.

<b>Table 7</b>					
<b>Comparison of Age Distribution</b>					
<b>Distribution by County, Region &amp; State</b>					
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Region*</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>County as % of</b>	
				<b>Region*</b>	<b>State</b>
0-4	7.31%	7.37%	7.27%	99.12%	100.51%
5-14	15.75%	14.88%	14.94%	105.81%	105.37%
15-19	7.23%	6.81%	7.28%	106.09%	99.26%
30-34	8.34%	9.08%	8.03%	91.85%	103.78%
35-44	17.86%	17.96%	16.53%	99.45%	108.00%
45-54	14.24%	13.61%	13.19%	104.69%	107.97%
55-64	8.20%	7.16%	8.08%	114.48%	101.50%
65+	7.55%	7.27%	9.59%	103.77%	78.70%
Source: Year 2000 U.S. Census. County figures are for all of Douglas County.					
*Region is 10-county ARC region.					

## ■ Racial Composition

Racial composition trends in Douglas County suggest a clear proportional decrease in the White population between the years 1990 and 2000 from 91.3% to 78.9%, and clear increases in the Black racial categories. During the 1990s, while total population increased by almost 30%, the Black or African American population more than doubled its proportion of the population from 7.9% to 19.4%. Simultaneously, people of the Asian and Pacific Islander races grew proportionally from less than 1% in 1990 to 1.4% of the population in 2000. The racial categories were modified somewhat for the 2000 Census, allowing people to select either a single racial category (such as “White” or “Black,” etc.) or a combination of two or more racial categories to more accurately reflect their heritage. Persons of Hispanic descent are counted in one of the primary race classifications, such as white or black. The proportion of persons in the County classifying themselves as of Hispanic origin

is increasing slowly, yet almost tripled over the past decade, from only 1.05% in 1990 to 2.92% in 2000.

**Table 8**  
**Race Distribution**  
Historic, Current and Future Forecasted

Race	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
White	91.29%	85.13%	78.89%	76.71%	74.36%	72.03%	69.64%	67.09%
Black	7.93%	13.70%	19.40%	21.43%	23.54%	25.63%	27.73%	29.91%
Native American	0.25%	0.27%	0.36%	0.34%	0.31%	0.29%	0.27%	0.25%
Asian & Pacific Islander	0.53%	0.91%	1.35%	1.52%	1.78%	2.05%	2.37%	2.75%
Hispanic	1.05%	1.79%	2.92%	3.07%	3.17%	3.32%	3.60%	3.94%

The population is expected to continue the current trends in the next 25 years. The White population is forecast to further reduce in proportional representation from 78.9% in 2000 to 67.1% in 2025, with a subsequent increase in proportional representation in the Black category from 19.4% in 2000 to almost 30% in 2025. The Asian & Pacific Islander population is expected to double, yet remain only a small proportion of the total at less than 2.8%. Those persons classifying themselves as of Hispanic origin will slowly continue to increase proportionally, increasing to almost 4% of the population.

**Table 9**  
**Comparison of Race Distribution**  
Distribution by County, Region & State

Category	County	Region*	State	County as % of	
				Region*	State
White	77.30%	67.76%	65.07%	114.08%	118.79%
Black	18.50%	24.79%	28.70%	74.63%	64.46%
American Indian	0.40%	0.28%	0.27%	142.86%	150.65%
Persons of Hispanic Origin	2.90%	5.93%	5.32%	48.90%	54.55%

Source: Year 2000 U.S. Census. County figures are for all of Douglas County.

\*Region is 10-county ARC region.

\*\*\*Other" includes multiple-race categories.

There appear to be two major racial concentrations in Douglas County – White and Black, which, although they are coming closer together proportionally in the County, the White population will remain predominant. However, people of all races and ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated into the Douglas community. As shown in Table 9, the County is less ethnically or racially integrated than the ARC region as a whole, or the State, with the proportional representation of the White classification over 114% of the ARC region and 188% of the State, while the Black composition is less than 75% of the region and under 64% of the State. Representation of all other ethnic groups, with the exception of American Indian, are also well under the region and state representation.

<b>Table 10</b>					
<b>Educational Attainment</b>					
<b>Historic and Current</b>					
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>
TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	29,909	36,658	43,407	51,047	58,687
Less than 9th Grade	6,194	5,180	4,165	3,704	3,242
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	6,560	7,201	7,842	7,833	7,824
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	10,953	13,718	16,483	18,400	20,316
Some College (No Degree)	3,490	5,546	7,601	10,270	12,939
Associate Degree	n/a	n/a	2,092	2,587	3,081
Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 figures from U.S. Bureau of the Census.					
Note: Figures for 1985 and 1995 are interpolated from decennial data.					

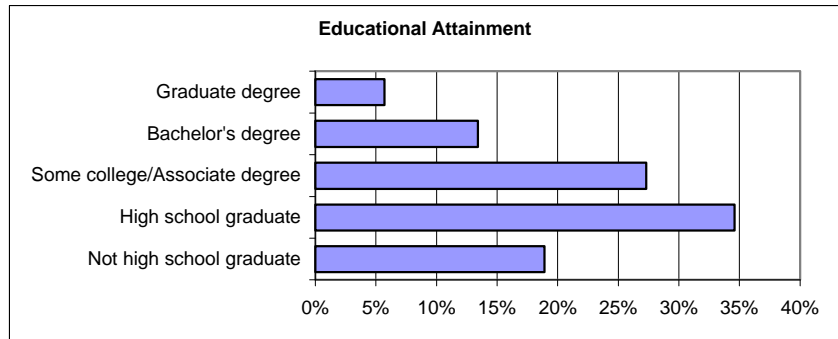
## ■ Educational Attainment

Douglas County has a moderately educated work force that made significant increases between 1980 and 2000. In 1990, 34.4% of the adult population had some college education and above and 16.9% of the population were college graduates, as compared to 1980 when 20.7% of the adult population

<b>Table 11</b>						
<b>Comparison of Educational Attainment</b>						
<b>Year 2000 Percentage of Population</b>						
		<b>Surrounding Counties</b>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Douglas County</b>	<b>Carroll County</b>	<b>Cobb County</b>	<b>Fulton County</b>	<b>Paulding County</b>	<b>State of Georgia</b>
Less than 9th Grade	5.52%	10.08%	3.87%	5.14%	5.11%	7.58%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	13.33%	18.87%	7.34%	10.85%	14.10%	13.85%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	34.62%	34.21%	20.75%	19.37%	39.07%	28.65%
Some College (No Degree)	22.05%	16.78%	22.43%	18.55%	21.90%	20.41%
Associate Degree	5.25%	3.55%	5.85%	4.70%	4.62%	5.20%
Bachelor's Degree	13.45%	9.79%	28.02%	26.65%	11.60%	16.00%

had some college education and 9.1% were college graduates. By 2000, almost 50% of the population had completed some college and above, and 24.5% had a college degree. In numerical terms, the number of adults with less than a high school education actually went down, while the number of college graduates increased five-fold during the two decades.

Douglas's working age population is less educated than in many of the surrounding counties, and the State. In terms of the



proportion of college graduates in 2000, Douglas County ranked number four out of six when compared with four surrounding counties and the State. Considering the proportion of adults with at least some college education, Douglas also ranked number four at 46.6% compared to Fulton overall

**Table 12**  
**Educational Statistics**  
1995-2001

Category	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)	88.00%	86.00%	71.00%	72.00%	72.00%	73.00%	66.00%
H.S. Dropout Rate	9.00%	3.30%	5.70%	5.70%	4.00%	4.70%	4.80%
Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges	29.60%	28.40%	36.30%	35.80%	35.40%	n/a	32.60%
Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools	13.30%	11.40%	4.40%	4.40%	8.30%	7.90%	8.30%

(64.6%), Cobb (68%), Paulding (41.7%), and Carroll (36.9%), as well as the State of Georgia (49.6%).

Educational attainment indicators such as drop out rate and standard achievement test scores are

**Table 13**  
**Educational Attainment Indicators**  
Comparison with Selected ARC Counties and State 2001

Category	Douglas	State	Cobb	Fulton	DeKalb	Clayton	Fayette	Henry	Rockdale	Paulding
H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)	66.0%	65.0%	76.0%	77.0%	62.0%	59.0%	84.0%	71.0%	69.0%	65.0%
H.S. Dropout Rate	4.8%	6.4%	3.5%	4.2%	6.4%	8.1%	2.0%	4.2%	3.5%	6.9%
Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges	32.6%	36.1%	45.4%	40.8%	33.6%	35.3%	45.7%	43.9%	38.9%	29.0%
Grads Attending GA Public Technical Schools	8.3%	8.8%	6.3%	2.4%	3.5%	5.5%	4.6%	6.7%	5.9%	11.6%

Note: Paulding County is not included in the 10 county ARC region  
Source: Ga. Department of Education.

available for Douglas County. Over the past five years, it appears as though SAT scores in Douglas County have dropped significantly, although the high school drop out rate has decreased by 50% since 1995. As well, the number of graduates attending Georgia public colleges appears to be holding fairly steady at slightly over 35%, while the number of students attending Georgia technical colleges is decreasing since 1995, yet higher than the low in the 1997-1998 time period.

Comparable data is available for all of the counties within the ARC region, and adjacent jurisdictions not within the 10 county region as well. For the latest full school year reported (2000-2001), the Douglas County system was generally fairly comparable to the State as a whole. Although the Douglas County system had a much lower dropout rate, and average SAT scores were marginally above the State average, the percentage of grads attending state public colleges and public technical schools was lower. Statistics are not available to determine what proportion of graduates were attending private or out-of-state colleges in order to ascertain if less grads were attending college, or if a higher proportion of grads from Douglas County were attending non-public Georgia schools.

Compared to selected other counties within the ARC region, Douglas County is at the lower middle end of ranking for SAT scores, exceeding only Clayton, DeKalb and Paulding counties. In terms of high school drop out rate, again Douglas County is at the lower middle end of ranking, exceeding Clayton, DeKalb and Paulding counties. With the exception of Paulding County, Douglas County ranks lowest for the proportion of graduates attending Georgia public colleges, but is one of the highest for grads attending public technical schools. Overall, for a combined proportion of grads attending Georgia public colleges or technical schools, Douglas County ranked fourth from the lowest. Statistics were not collected to determine what proportion of graduates were attending private or out-of-state colleges in order to ascertain if a lower proportion of Douglas County grads were attending college, or if a higher proportion of grads from Douglas County were attending non-public Georgia schools.

One of the most important factors in employment development is the ability to provide an adequate labor force. The data collected indicates that although there are adequate numbers of potential employees available, skills and education levels lag below surrounding counties. Continued economic growth and stability in attracting long-term industry investment within the County will depend on increased educational levels for all age groups and degree levels.

## ■ Income

The economic well being of families and households rose slowly for the residents of Douglas County between 1980 and 2000. With a primarily service and retail oriented work force and the continued attraction of lower and middle income households due to affordable housing prices compared to

**Table 14**  
**Per Capita Income**  
Historic and Current

Year	Average Per Capita Income	Median Per Capita Income**
1980	\$15,565	\$6,520
1985	\$17,822	N/A
1990	\$18,753	\$14,096
1995	\$20,502	N/A
2000	\$23,485	\$21,172

Source: \* Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2003

\*\* Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census

**Table 15**  
**Household Income**  
Historic and Current

Year	Average Household Income*	Median Household Income**
1980	\$49,744	\$16,802
1985	\$52,243	N/A
1990	\$54,505	\$37,138
1995	\$58,418	N/A
2000	\$65,440	\$50,108

Source: \* Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2003

\*\* Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census



other counties in the ARC region, in 2000 the residents of Douglas County were generally less prosperous than the State and region as a whole. Tables 14 and 15 show both per capita income and average household income, for those years where data is available. Recent income

estimates for Douglas County by Woods and Poole Economics indicate that per capita income has risen each year over the past decade. From \$18,753 in 1990, it increased by 9.3% to \$20,502 in 1995,

and another 14.5% from between 1995 and 2000 up to \$23,485. Data provided by the 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census indicates a slightly different picture, reflecting a slightly lower per capita income and household income than the Woods and Poole Economics data. According to the Census, per capita income of \$14,096 in 1990 increased by 50% to \$21,172 in 2000. The median household income in Douglas County, according to the 2000 Census, increased from \$37,414 in 1990 to \$50,108 in 2000. The County income was higher than the median income in

**Table 16**  
**2000 Household Income Estimates**  
**Douglas County and State**

Income Category	Douglas County		State	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-\$14,999	3,160	9.6%	480,875	16.2%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	3,042	9.3%	369,279	12.3%
\$25,000 - \$39,999	6,235	19.0%	555,305	18.4%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	7,706	23.4%	604,362	20.0%
\$60,000 +	12,736	38.7%	997,857	33.1%
Total Units	32,879	100.0%	3,007,678	100.0%

Source: 2000 Census

the city of Douglasville, which increased from \$30,275 in 1990 to \$45,289 in 2000. Household income estimates from Woods and Poole cite an increase in annual household income (assuming a household size of 4 persons) from \$54,505 in 1990 to \$65,440 in 2000. The Census numbers appear to more accurately reflect the income characteristics of the population in Douglas County, whereas the numbers from the other data source appear to closely approximate the median family income of \$65,000 assigned to the Atlanta ARC region as a whole by HUD for purposes of program administration. (Refer to Housing chapter).

In comparing income distribution for households, in 2000 almost 70% of Douglas County's households earned between \$25,000 and \$100,000 as compared to about 60%

**Table 17**  
**Median and Per Capita Income**  
**Comparison of Selected ARC Counties**

County	Median Per Capita Income	Median Household Income
Carroll	\$17,656	\$38,799
Clayton	\$18,079	\$42,697
Cobb	\$27,863	\$58,289
DeKalb	\$23,968	\$49,117
Douglas	\$21,172	\$50,108
Fayette	\$29,464	\$71,227
Fulton	\$30,003	\$47,321
Gwinnett	\$25,006	\$60,537
Henry	\$22,945	\$57,309
Paulding*	\$19,974	\$52,161
Rockdale	\$22,300	\$53,599

\* Paulding is not included in the 10 county ARC region

Source: 2000 Census

of the households in the State of Georgia. Approximately 50% of Douglas County households had incomes over \$50,000, compared to 42% in the State of Georgia. At the lower end of the scale, only 9.6% of the households in Douglas County had incomes less than \$15,000 in 2000, as compared to 16.2% in the State.

Douglas County median household and per capita income per the 2000 Census can be compared with surrounding counties in the ARC region, including Paulding County. Data indicates that Douglas County falls within the middle of the income range, with four counties (Carroll, Clayton, DeKalb and Fulton) having lower incomes, and the remaining six counties having higher median incomes. However, Douglas County median household income is closely comparable to the median household income of Paulding and Rockdale counties. In terms of median per capita income, Douglas County is within the mid to lower end of the range, with three counties (Carroll, Clayton and Paulding) with lower median per capita incomes. The remainder of the counties have per capita incomes which exceed that of Douglas County, although the median per capita income in Henry and Rockdale counties is fairly comparable. When compared to the State, the median per capita income in the State is almost identical to Douglas County, at \$21,154, although the median household income in the State is lower, at \$42,433.

## ■ **Assessment — Population**

Overall, Douglas's citizens are somewhat more affluent than the State overall, yet lower than most of the counties in the ARC region, reflecting a slow movement of middle and upper income families to the County in recent years. Over these past 20 years, some 17,079 housing units have been built in the County, including almost 8,330 units in the past decade alone. The following summarizes the findings regarding the County's present and future population.

Douglas's population doubled between 1980 and 2000, and is forecast to add another 57,872 units by the year 2025, almost tripling the current stock to accommodate an additional 148,600 persons.

The development and growth outlook are positive for Douglas, therefore growth is expected to increase at a comparable, if not somewhat increased rate, to that experienced during the 1980-2000 years.

The number of households will grow at a slightly higher rate than the population, based partly on a slight decrease in the projected household size, and a higher proportion of single or two person households as the population ages. By the year 2025, the ratio of occupied dwellings to population will be greater than in 2000.

Age distribution trends for the years 1980 to 2000 show that the age cohorts of 0-24 and 25 to 44 have contained the majority of residents of Douglas County, from 77.9% in 1980 to 69.9% in 2000. The age group 35 to 54 years old comprises the largest percentage of the population (32%). This group statistically is usually single family homeowners with school age children.

While the elderly increased in number between 1980 and 2000, the proportion of the population above 65 has increased only from 6.3% to 7.5%. The age cohort with the greatest proportional increase between 1980 and 2000 is the 45 to 64 age cohort, reflecting either a trend toward maturing families that moved to Douglas County and have stayed as their children grow up and move away from home, or an in-migration of families during the 1980s and 1990s.

While forecasts reflect a maturing population overall, with a proportional shift toward the 45 to 60 age group, Douglas County's population under the age of 45 will continue to dominate. However, the projections show that in 2025 this age group will comprise 59.2% of the population, as opposed to 69.9% of the population currently. By 2025, the "middle age" cohort

is anticipated to have increased from 22.6% to 24.6% of the population, while the over 65 age cohort is forecast to comprise 16.2% of the population. When combined, the increase indicates an aging of the population.

As the County's age characteristics continue to diversify, community facility improvements and housing should also diversify to meet the wide range of ages and lifestyles.

Non-white families are also being attracted to Douglas. During the 1990s, while total population increased by almost 30%, the Black or African American population more than doubled its proportion of the population from 7.9% to 19.4%. Non-white families are fully integrated into the community, and are expected to continue to be drawn to the County's many neighborhoods.

Overall income levels and educational attainment levels are below regional levels. Douglas's working age population is less educated than in many of the surrounding counties, and the State. The lower education level may be associated with a slightly lower median income. The predominance of entry level housing at lower prices than surrounding metro counties may contribute to the attraction of households with these characteristics to the County.

The County will continue to grow and experience demand pressures due to its location within metro Atlanta. Over the next twenty years, Douglas County will continue to experience a high rate of growth as a part of the fastest growing area in the Atlanta Region. According to the ARC 2025 Regional Transportation Plan, Cherokee, Douglas, Henry and Rockdale Counties are projected to experience growth rates of over 70%. Douglas County's objective to expand the move-up and executive housing opportunities will begin to attract upper-middle and upper income families. Its continuing economic growth, combined with an objective to expand the employment base to high tech and professional level occupations, will begin to attract upper and middle management families that want to be close to work. Pressure will continue on the school system to accommodate more children, while citizen demands on parks, roads, water, fire, police and other community facilities will more than double.

### 3. **Economic Development**

■	Introduction	3-1
	Setting—The Region	3-1
	Setting—The Douglas County Area	3-2
■	Economic Base Inventory	3-4
■	Employment by Sector	3-4
■	Sector Earnings	3-7
■	Sources of Personal Income	3-9
■	Major Development Trends	3-10
	Retail Trade and Services	3-11
	Construction	3-12
	Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade	3-12
■	Unique Economic Activities	3-12
	Downtown Enhancement	3-13
	Master Planned Developments	3-13
■	Labor Force Analysis	3-13
	Education	3-15
	Labor Force Participation	3-15
	Unemployment	3-18
	Commuting Patterns	3-19
■	Local Economic Development Resources	3-20
	Development Agencies	3-20
	Development Authority of Douglas County	3-20
	Douglas County Chamber of Commerce	3-21
	Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce	3-21
	Resources—Programs and Tools	3-21
	Special Tax Programs	3-24
■	Assessment—Economic Development	3-24



### **3. Economic Development Element**

#### **■ Introduction**

This chapter provides an inventory and assessment of Douglas's economic base, labor force characteristics, and local opportunities and resources for economic development. This data provides a basis for economic needs and goals for the County that, in combination with information from other chapters of this Comprehensive Plan, lead to strategies for the economic well-being of Douglas and the designation of appropriate future land use plan categories.

Several factors will contribute to Douglas's positive growth outlook. The Douglas County population is becoming more highly educated, providing skilled workers for high tech companies. Major infrastructure improvements have been made or are planned to the water and sewer system and transportation system. Douglas County has a favorable image with a small town atmosphere conveniently located near a major city and international airport. The lower cost of land in comparison to surrounding counties in the ARC region makes it an attractive location for new businesses and has kept the housing market reasonably priced. The County has begun to attract a range of technological and research facilities, business parks, office campuses and other professional and/or higher wage employment resources, in addition to the wholesale companies and showrooms, assembly or fabrication operations, business equipment supply or repair, distribution facilities for local and regional deliveries, and retail, service and commercial uses which serve as the foundation of the County's economic base. Douglas County's industrial and employment areas have excellent access to the State highway system. Combined with an increasingly diverse housing stock providing a wealth of well priced market rate housing, an expanding move-up market and new executive housing opportunities, preserved natural resources, and an abundance of land to accommodate employment growth, the County is well poised to undertake a transformation from a commuter community to a well balanced and fiscally sound community.

A strong and diverse economy is important because it creates jobs, increases income and provides a more stable tax base, and thereby provides a better quality of life. Although the County continues to grow economically, it continues to remain primarily a bedroom community for the Atlanta Metro area. For Douglas County to provide for the necessary services to meet the needs of its population, the County will have to continue to diversify its economic base.

#### **Setting—The Region**

During the early 1990s, the Atlanta Region experienced a period of slow growth mirroring the national recession as compared to the tremendous boom period from 1983 to 1988 when employment grew by over 400,000 jobs and 500,000 new residents. By the mid 1990s the Atlanta Region was once again experiencing strong growth in both population and employment, particularly in the northern sector. During the past 20 years population and employment growth has extended outward from the center of the region, particularly to the north. By 2025 however, the northern counties will continue to experience large absolute numeric increases, although their percent change is anticipated to be modest compared to western and southern counties. Much of the forecast growth is predicted to be in Henry, Rockdale and Douglas County, as well as Cherokee County to the north, indicative of a continuing trend of rapid suburbanization in formerly rural areas far from the urban core.

Several factors contribute to the Atlanta Region's continued growth. The region has an excellent transportation system of roads, public transportation and Hartsfield International Airport allowing convenient travel within the region, providing a central distribution location, and access to a diversity of housing choices. The extension of GA 400 directly to the Central Atlanta area has opened faster channels to the Buckhead and Midtown business district. The region has a very positive housing market, leading the nation in permits and starts over the last ten years. The Atlanta Region remains a top choice in corporate relocations and in-migration. In fact, ARC projects that in-migration will account for almost half of the region's increase between 1990 and 2025.

The Atlanta Regional Commission forecasts that growth will continue to be strong in the region, although at a slower rate than the past decade. The Services and Retail Trade sectors will account for more than one-half of the region's job growth. The Services industry will claim one of every three new jobs created between 2000 and 2025 and Retail Trade employment will nearly double to be the region's second fastest growing industry between 2000 and 2025. Strong growth is also forecast in the Wholesale Trade and the Transportation, Communications and Utilities (TCU) sectors, both major users of office space and business centers.

Because of its status as a “bedroom community” in the western quadrant of the Atlanta metro area, and its proximity to major employment centers such as Vinings, Smyrna and Marietta in Cobb County, and the Downtown, Midtown and Buckhead areas of Atlanta, residents of Douglas County have unlimited access to employment within the region. Douglas County is located approximately 20 miles west of Atlanta’s central business district and 20 minutes from Hartsfield International Airport directly via Camp Creek Parkway. Douglas County’s business future is closely allied with that of the Metro area, although the County is striving to become a balanced community that offers a range of residential lifestyles, employment options, and recreational opportunities.

## **Setting—The Douglas County Area**

The beginning of European settlement, in what is now known as Douglas County, began in the 1820’s, primarily from Virginia, the Carolina’s, and the eastern portions of Georgia. Land grants increased the rate of settlement. Rural farming was the major source of income until the development of mills in the 1840’s and the incurrence of railroads in the 1880’s.

In 1828, Campbell County was created, with the seat of government being Campbellton or the Chattahoochee River. To reduce the size of the County, the Legislature created Douglas County out of parts of Cobb, Campbell, and Carroll Counties in 1870. An election was held to choose officials and select the new County seat. Although the largest group of voters chose a location at the center of the County, the newly elected leaders chose Skink Chestnut near the railroad right-of-way. After a four-year stalemate, the State Supreme Court ordered that another election be held and the Skink Chestnut location was upheld. The town of Douglasville was established at this location by the Georgia General Assembly in 1875.

Douglas County is strategically located in the region's western growth path, linked to the metro Atlanta area and Hartsfield International Airport by the Westside I-20. Because of its proximity to Atlanta, and abundance of availability of affordable housing stock, Douglas County has undergone a transformation over the last decade from a totally rural county to a bedroom community within the Atlanta metropolitan area. A full two-thirds of those who reside in Douglas County are employed elsewhere in the region. Over the last 30 years the County has been urbanizing rapidly, with a large portion of growth over the last 10 years. Thirty-two percent of all dwelling units were constructed over this 10-year period. Downtown Douglasville has served as a central economic core of the Douglas County community for many years. While the downtown continues to host a diversity of professional, retail and government functions, the construction of I-20 through the City of Douglasville several miles south of the downtown drew much of the retail shopping activity to corridors per-



pendicular to the interstate highway at the location of exits for state highways 92 and 5. Arbor Place, a million square foot regional mall at the intersection of I-20 and Chapel Hill Road, has further diminished the central downtown's role in meeting residents primary shopping needs, but has served as an impetus for continued ancillary commercial and services, as well as support for move-up and executive housing opportunities. Development activity in the County has concentrated around the incorporated area of Douglasville, and more recently outward along major transportation corridors in the form of golf/tennis/swim master planned residential subdivisions and commercial centers.

There are many reasons attributable to Douglas County's recent growth:

**Residential Growth:** Between 1980 and 2000, the population of Douglas County almost doubled from 54,570 persons to 92,174 persons. Although numerically population growth was higher in the unincorporated County areas between 1990 and 2000, overall population increase was the highest in the incorporated cities, with the population in the cities increasing by 72 percent, as compared to a 21 percent increase in the population of the unincorporated area.

From 1990 to 2000, the total number of households increased almost 85% from 21,742 to 32,822. The median house value in Douglas County in 2000 was \$99,600, approximately 68.9% of the Atlanta Region's median of \$144,600, with over 50% of Douglas's housing valued at \$100,000 or less. In addition, approximately 79% of the County's households consist of married couples, with over 50% of that number having children living at home.

**Buying Power:** During the last two decades, Douglas County has served as a commuter community to the Atlanta metro area and a resource for households seeking reasonably priced "starter" homes. In recent years, the economic composition of the community has begun to change. The County's median household income increased from \$37,414 in 1990 to \$50,108 in 2000. The County's median income of \$50,108 is below the median family income of \$69,000 (as utilized by HUD in the determination of housing assistance) for the Atlanta metro area. This may partially be attributed to the fact that the large supply of affordable starter homes has attracted households with comparable incomes, thereby reducing the median. As the stock of move-up and executive level housing expands, it is anticipated that the proportion of households with above moderate incomes will increase as they move into the new stock, and subsequently raise the median income. In Douglas County, 52.5% of all households have an income over \$50,000, and almost 39% of the households have incomes over \$60,000. Only 3.6% of the population in the unincorporated County area was below the poverty line in 2000.

**Work Force:** Education levels in Douglas County lag below surrounding counties. The percentage of persons 25 years of age and older without a high school diploma was 18.9% in 2000. The percentage of persons 25 years of age and older with some college (inclusive of persons with college degrees and above) was 46.5% in 2000. The County's labor force increased from 37,431 in 1990 to 46,176 in 2000 and up to 48,208 in the year 2004. The unemployment rate in 2002 was 4.9%, which was lower than both the State and Atlanta metro area. Continued economic growth and stability will depend on increased educational levels for all age groups and degree levels.

**Quality of Life:** Douglas County is still primarily a bedroom county to the Metro area, with 63% of residents commuting outside the county in 2000. In addition, commuter patterns suggest that there are limited employment opportunities for upper management, professional and skilled employees living within the county.

However, quality of life in Douglas County has been steadily improving over the past decade, due to implementation of more stringent development controls, the use of the master planned development, careful monitoring and expansion of infrastructure support systems, and focused efforts to attract viable business into the area. Previous economic development efforts have been aimed at attracting industrial employment to the area; greater efforts are being made to accommodate projected office and

retail commercial to support residential growth. Based on growth, economic and employment forecasts, upwards of 600 acres of additional office and commercially zoned land is needed to accommodate future retail and service uses, both of which will be attracted to the county by its population growth and resulting increase in disposable income.

There are currently 27,300 jobs among all economic sectors outside of the City of Douglasville. By the year 2025 the number of jobs could more than double to 67,500, a 148% increase.

The western extension of the I-20 has provided Douglas County with rapid, convenient access to Atlanta employment centers. Douglas County is well positioned for accessibility to employees, clients and shoppers alike. Convenient access, planned development areas and a central location in the area of the Atlanta Region forecast to experience rapid growth through 2025 will continue to fuel Douglas County's growth to the year 2025.

## ■ **Economic Base Inventory**

Much of the following analysis uses the term “economic sector.” The federal government classifies local industries and businesses into the following nine major “sectors”:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing & mining;
- Construction;
- Manufacturing;
- Transportation, Communications, Utilities (TCU);
- Wholesale Trade;
- Retail Trade;
- Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE);
- Services; and
- Public Administration (government).

## ■ **Employment by Sector**

Douglas County's economy is generally based on a service and retail sector to support the residential population, followed by government and manufacturing/construction. According to the Census, there were 2,036 non-farm businesses in 1999. The Georgia Department of Labor reports 2,241 businesses located in Douglas County in 2002. Of these businesses, the largest sectors of the County economy are services, retail, government and goods production, inclusive of construction and manufacturing. Major employers include: Inner Harbour Hospital, Kroger Co., Silver



Line Building, Wal-Mart Associates, and Wellstar Health Systems.

Employment refers to the number of people employed by local businesses and industries, sole proprietors and those that are self-employed. This includes people living in surrounding areas coming into the County to work, but does not include residents of the County who commute to jobs outside of the County limits. The data does not determine if a worker is also a resident of the County. Table 3-1 “Employment Trends by Sector” examines employment opportunities and trends within only the Unincorporated County areas from 1980 to 2000 and projections to 2025.

**Table 1**  
**Employment by Sector - Unincorporated Douglas County**  
Historic, Current and Future Forecasted

Sector	Employment									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Construction	1,252	2,159	1,951	2,080	2,725	3,277	3,963	4,733	5,559	6,394
Manufacturing	853	1,174	1,055	1,241	1,955	2,346	2,876	3,481	4,123	4,759
T.C.U.*	646	855	723	801	936	1,183	1,502	1,877	2,294	2,734
Wholesale Trade	374	884	983	1,231	1,487	1,880	2,400	3,033	3,783	4,651
Retail Trade	2,335	4,015	2,670	3,338	4,899	5,806	7,358	9,292	11,530	13,939
F.I.R.E.**	910	1,180	637	697	1,075	1,218	1,464	1,761	2,094	2,445
Services	3,008	4,784	4,069	5,731	7,565	9,762	12,653	16,225	20,580	25,817
Government	2,534	2,852	1,817	1,738	2,287	2,891	3,667	4,590	5,644	6,789
Total	11,912	17,903	13,905	16,857	22,930	28,362	35,885	44,993	55,607	67,528

Employment figures for 1980 and 1985 are from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

\*Transportation, Communications and Utilities

\*\*Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

The unincorporated portion of Douglas County has seen a slow but steady rate of growth in employment over the last decade. In 1990 it is estimated that the County had a little over 13,905 employees. Predominate sectors were retail trade, construction and services. Within a 10-year period, employment has almost doubled to just fewer than 23,000 persons. The distribution of employment opportunities remain predominantly unchanged; construction, government and wholesale trade decreased slightly as an overall percentage of employment opportunities, as service and retail trade continued as the two predominant sectors within the economy. The majority of office employment is included within the service sector. Employment projections to 2025 show employment growth continuing in the future, with the number of jobs more than tripling to over 67,500. It is expected that the unincorporated County will see an increase of almost 44,600 employees over this 25-year period for a total of 67,528 employees in the year 2025. The dominance of retail trade and services sectors will continue into the future, although as the service sector continues to grow from 33% in 2000 to 38% by 2025, the retail sector will decrease slightly from 21.4% in 2000 to 20.6% in 2025. Due to the overwhelming service sector capture of the market, construction and manufacturing will capture a smaller percentage of the market, although they will increase numerically.

As noted above, employment growth is expected to continue in the unincorporated County, at a somewhat faster pace than the past decades. It is expected that between 2000 and 2025 the County will attract 44,600 new jobs, or an increase of 194%. Although it is expected that overall (national) economy has seen boom development over the last 10 years, and is expected to slow down, although the unincorporated areas of Douglas County are not anticipated to follow these national trends. First, there is abundant land available in the unincorporated portions of the County, and master planned developments are just beginning to be implemented as a major planning tool.

**Table 2**  
**Comparison of Employment by Sector**  
**Unincorporated Douglas County and State Percentages**

Sector	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Construction										
County	10.51%	12.06%	14.03%	12.34%	11.89%	11.55%	11.04%	10.52%	10.00%	9.47%
State	5.30%	6.34%	5.94%	5.75%	6.41%	6.40%	6.38%	6.33%	6.25%	6.12%
Manufacturing										
County	7.16%	6.56%	7.59%	7.36%	8.53%	8.27%	8.02%	7.74%	7.41%	7.05%
State	20.14%	18.19%	16.02%	14.69%	12.58%	11.99%	11.41%	10.86%	10.32%	9.80%
T.C.U.*										
County	5.42%	4.78%	5.20%	4.75%	4.08%	4.17%	4.19%	4.17%	4.12%	4.05%
State	5.81%	5.72%	6.05%	5.89%	6.34%	6.46%	6.54%	6.56%	6.50%	6.37%
Wholesale Trade										
County	3.14%	4.94%	7.07%	7.30%	6.48%	6.63%	6.69%	6.74%	6.80%	6.89%
State	6.63%	6.90%	6.38%	5.91%	5.77%	5.85%	5.86%	5.86%	5.85%	5.83%
Retail Trade										
County	19.60%	22.43%	19.20%	19.80%	21.37%	20.47%	20.51%	20.65%	20.73%	20.64%
State	15.53%	16.74%	16.97%	17.65%	17.18%	16.96%	16.88%	16.78%	16.66%	16.53%
Services										
County	25.25%	26.72%	29.26%	34.00%	32.99%	34.42%	35.26%	36.06%	37.01%	38.23%
State	19.15%	21.39%	24.53%	27.40%	29.89%	30.79%	31.69%	32.74%	33.92%	35.22%
Government										
County	21.27%	15.93%	13.07%	10.31%	9.97%	10.19%	10.22%	10.20%	10.15%	10.05%
State	19.82%	17.48%	17.25%	16.15%	14.53%	14.32%	14.04%	13.76%	13.47%	13.19%

\*Transportation, Communications and Utilities

\*\*Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

Although historically the industry mix in Douglas County has not been based on high technology and specifically the telecomm sector, which has been seriously impacted by the national economy, it is anticipating attracting growth in the technology sectors. As indicated by the forecasts, as residents adjust their disposable income spending habits, retail trade growth is expected proportionally reduce, although numerically the sector will experience growth to support the expanding population.

**Table 3**  
**Earnings by Sector - Total County**  
**Historic, Current and Future Forecasted**

Sector	Earnings (in millions)									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Farm Employment	0.10	0.49	0.81	0.02	(0.05)	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	0.46
Agricultural Services	0.90	1.31	1.01	2.06	3.47	3.43	3.91	4.45	5.02	5.60
Mining	2.05	2.93	3.93	3.42	4.84	5.60	5.82	6.06	6.31	6.57
Construction	31.11	53.87	80.70	86.40	115.71	136.65	152.22	165.23	175.78	183.59
Manufacturing	20.31	26.50	35.64	55.52	103.55	102.86	120.84	137.98	153.31	165.88
T.C.U.*	19.30	25.86	36.13	48.75	56.46	71.38	85.11	98.11	109.99	120.34
Wholesale Trade	9.38	22.21	41.14	54.31	75.85	93.35	110.44	127.56	144.85	162.51
Retail Trade	39.20	70.13	88.46	122.70	176.72	199.60	228.52	257.17	283.51	305.67
F.I.R.E.**	7.65	9.14	20.15	25.63	38.39	43.60	49.58	55.42	60.89	65.78
Services	55.42	85.87	134.08	189.57	264.34	343.71	423.46	507.46	598.26	698.24
Government	50.24	71.37	100.33	102.10	151.58	186.89	218.50	248.20	275.73	300.29
Total	232.59	364.96	536.62	684.96	982.59	1,178.03	1,388.67	1,597.11	1,802.30	2,002.28

\*\*Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

In comparing employment in Douglas County to statewide percentages, in 2000, the unincorporated County followed state trends for higher employment distribution among the services and retail trade sectors. The County had notably above average concentrations in the construction, services and wholesale trade sectors. Both the County and State showed services as the top sector, followed by retail, although the proportional representation of both within the sector mix was higher than in the State in the unincorporated County. Within the County, employment within offices is primarily categorized as part of the service sector. The third largest sector in the unincorporated County in 2000 was construction, which was the smallest sector on a statewide basis.

Both the State and County see these trends continuing into 2025 with services and retail becoming the top two sectors, again exceeding the forecast State mix. Within the County, by 2025, government will be the third largest sector, comparable to that of the State although in a lower proportion, followed by construction, which well exceeds the State representation.

## ■ Sector Earnings

Earnings represent the total of wages, salaries, and other earned income paid to persons working for the businesses or industries in a given geographic area. In 1990, the highest earning sector was ser-

**Table 4**  
**Comparison of Earnings by Sector**  
Douglas County and State Percentages

Sector	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Farm Employment										
County	0.04%	0.13%	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%	0.02%
State	0.16%	1.29%	1.39%	1.44%	1.11%	1.04%	1.01%	0.98%	0.96%	0.95%
Agricultural Services										
County	0.39%	0.36%	0.19%	0.30%	0.35%	0.29%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%	0.28%
State	0.37%	0.42%	0.47%	0.55%	0.60%	0.61%	0.62%	0.63%	0.63%	0.63%
Mining										
County	0.88%	0.80%	0.73%	0.50%	0.49%	0.48%	0.42%	0.38%	0.35%	0.33%
State	0.65%	0.49%	0.37%	0.30%	0.25%	0.24%	0.22%	0.20%	0.19%	0.17%
Construction										
County	13.37%	14.76%	15.04%	12.61%	11.78%	11.60%	10.96%	10.35%	9.75%	9.17%
State	5.73%	6.72%	5.95%	5.52%	6.08%	5.98%	5.87%	5.74%	5.57%	5.38%
Manufacturing										
County	8.73%	7.26%	6.64%	8.10%	10.54%	8.73%	8.70%	8.64%	8.51%	8.28%
State	22.81%	20.47%	17.90%	17.23%	14.64%	14.19%	13.71%	13.20%	12.68%	12.13%
Wholesale Trade										
County	4.03%	6.09%	7.67%	7.93%	7.72%	7.92%	7.95%	7.99%	8.04%	8.12%
State	8.97%	9.24%	9.05%	8.35%	8.72%	8.66%	8.50%	8.33%	8.16%	7.99%
Retail Trade										
County	16.85%	19.22%	16.48%	17.91%	17.99%	16.94%	16.46%	16.10%	15.73%	15.27%
State	10.45%	10.87%	9.38%	9.29%	9.01%	8.68%	8.46%	8.24%	8.03%	7.81%
F.I.R.E.**										
County	3.29%	2.50%	3.76%	3.74%	3.91%	3.70%	3.57%	3.47%	3.38%	3.29%
State	5.50%	5.71%	6.57%	7.02%	7.76%	7.81%	7.88%	7.93%	7.95%	7.95%
Services										
County	23.83%	23.53%	24.99%	27.68%	26.90%	29.18%	30.49%	31.77%	33.19%	34.87%
State	15.82%	17.74%	22.44%	24.88%	27.60%	28.85%	30.16%	31.64%	33.30%	35.12%
Government										
County	21.60%	19.56%	18.70%	14.91%	15.43%	15.86%	15.73%	15.54%	15.30%	15.00%
State	21.28%	20.19%	19.75%	18.08%	15.76%	15.22%	14.70%	14.20%	13.72%	13.27%

Figures are from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

\*Transportation, Communications and Utilities

\*\*Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

vices, followed by retail trade, government and construction. By 2000, services and retail trade remained the highest earning sectors, with earnings in both sectors doubling. Government and construction remained third and fourth, respectively. The earnings gap between construction and manufacturing diminished significantly, with earnings in the manufacturing sector almost tripling.

The earnings in the service and retail sectors are forecast to remain predominant in the County through 2025, with earnings in the Service sector more than doubling. Growth in the Retail sector between 2000 and 2025 is forecast to be 75%, which, although increasing significantly in numeric terms, slows in comparison to some other sectors. By 2025 the earnings position of the Retail sector will almost be met by the Government sector, which will double from \$151.58 million in 2000 to \$300.29 million by 2025. Earnings in the Manufacturing sector are forecast to triple over the forecast period, and the Transportation, Communications and Utilities sector is anticipated to double in the next 25 years.

Douglas County as a whole compares favorably with the state in every economic sector except: Farming and Agricultural Services (which have little role to Douglas County); Finance, Insurance and Real Estate; and Manufacturing. Earnings in Retail Trade and Construction far exceeded that of the state. The county and state were fairly comparable in the sectors of Wholesale Trade, Government and Services.

Overall, wages in Douglas County in 2000 were lower than in Georgia as a whole. Since 1990, the County has fallen behind the State in weekly wages for the Agricultural and Construction sectors. By 2000, the County exceeded State wages on a very slight basis only in Retail Trade and Government (State and Local). As was shown in Table 4, many of the weekly wages in the County are significantly lower than the State average, particularly within: the Finance, Insurance and Real Estate sector, at \$536 as compared to \$900 per week; Transportation, Communication and Utilities sector at \$652 as compared to \$895 per week; Wholesale Trade at \$932 per week as compared to \$650; and Services, at \$399 as compared to \$611 per week. The

**Table 5**  
**Comparison of Average Weekly Wages by Sector**  
**Douglas County and State Figures**

Sector	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000*
Agricultural Services					
County	\$0	\$0	\$295	\$300	\$330
State	\$0	\$0	\$276	\$322	\$390
Mining					
County	\$0	\$0	n/a	n/a	n/a
State	\$0	\$0	\$589	\$734	\$866
Construction					
County	\$0	\$0	\$436	\$506	\$585
State	\$0	\$0	\$434	\$508	\$623
Manufacturing					
County	\$0	\$0	\$357	\$482	\$522
State	\$0	\$0	\$450	\$555	\$684
T.C.U.					
County	\$0	\$0	\$441	\$622	\$652
State	\$0	\$0	\$603	\$737	\$895
Retail Trade					
County	\$0	\$0	\$232	\$291	\$343
State	\$0	\$0	\$236	\$275	\$335
F.I.R.E.					
County	\$0	\$0	\$405	\$475	\$536
State	\$0	\$0	\$544	\$693	\$900
Services					
County	\$0	\$0	\$355	\$378	\$399
State	\$0	\$0	\$414	\$501	\$611
Government					
County	\$0	\$0	\$402	\$453	\$562
State	\$0	\$0	\$460	\$533	\$551
Wholesale Trade					
County	\$0	\$0	\$468	\$529	\$650
State	\$0	\$0	\$603	\$729	\$932

\* 2000 figures actually represent 1999 wages.  
In construction, manufacturing and services, data is available only for 1998 and 1997 for Douglas County

two sectors with the highest weekly earning potential are Transportation, Communication and Utilities and Wholesale Trade.

## ■ Sources of Personal Income

The sources of personal income are indicators of how a community receives its income. The State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, with

the assistance of Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., has developed categories and numbers for the analysis of sources of personal income. These five categories of personal income include the following:

Table 6 and 7 present personal income estimates for Douglas County and the State. In 2000, total personal income for Douglas County was \$1,455,440,000, up from \$1,061,380,000 in 1990. This increase was due to substantial gains between 1995 and 2000, with a 37% increase over the five-year period. Whereas personal income increased four-fold over the 20 year period between 1980 and 2000, forecasts indicate that it will double by 2025, up to \$3,086,760,000. During the same time periods, personal income in the State tripled between 1980 and 2000, with a 30% increase in the five-year period of 1995 to 2000. Growth in personal income between 2000 and 2025 is not anticipated to be as great for the State, increasing by 79% as compared to 112% for Douglas County.

As in the State, Douglas County receives the majority of its personal income through wage and salary collection, although the County receives a slightly lower proportion in wages and salaries than the state, at 54.99% as compared to 58.82%. This proportion is forecast to fall slightly over the next twenty years to 53.28% while the proportion statewide increases slightly up to 59.29%. As the second largest source of personal income for both the County and State, the County receives a larger proportion of personal income from Interest, Dividends and Rents, at 17.13% compared to 15.90%. While the proportion of personal interest from this source for the County is forecast to rise slightly by 2025, the proportion for the State is anticipated to drop slightly. The third largest source of personal income, transfer payments, is also higher at the County level than the State, at 14.79% as compared to 10.55%. Transfer payments are forecast to increase pro-

**Table 6**  
**Sources of Personal Income - Total County**  
Historic, Current and Future Forecasted

Source	Personal Income (in millions)									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Wages and Salaries	175.58	277.43	425.45	545.60	800.37	960.59	1,134.03	1,306.54	1,477.26	1,644.61
Other Labor Income	20.30	34.56	55.20	68.27	80.53	95.87	111.68	126.95	141.62	155.52
Proprietors Income	39.76	57.69	61.73	76.58	109.95	131.10	153.17	174.61	195.22	214.79
Dividend, Interest, Rent	72.38	118.13	156.39	190.06	249.35	299.14	349.92	406.22	468.97	539.25
Transfer Payments	72.66	91.40	118.65	180.86	215.24	265.62	319.82	381.55	452.02	532.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>380.68</b>	<b>579.20</b>	<b>817.41</b>	<b>1,061.38</b>	<b>1,455.44</b>	<b>1,752.30</b>	<b>2,068.62</b>	<b>2,395.87</b>	<b>2,735.09</b>	<b>3,086.76</b>

Figures are from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. and are shown in 1996 dollars.

**Table 7**  
**Sources of Personal Income - State of Georgia**  
Historic, Current and Future Forecasted

Source	Personal Income (in millions)									
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Wages and Salaries	53,972.93	68,598.80	81,355.57	96,422.82	131,084.77	148,691.83	167,887.56	188,855.14	211,572.07	236,032.81
Other Labor Income	7,079.35	9,626.20	11,702.32	14,092.00	15,009.73	16,123.74	17,914.23	19,832.98	21,871.49	24,023.48
Proprietors Income	5,484.85	7,694.69	9,584.28	12,998.89	17,814.86	20,001.86	22,369.19	24,930.98	27,673.70	30,591.02
Dividend, Interest, Rent	10,986.97	17,428.33	23,366.94	26,625.05	35,435.80	39,703.36	44,270.10	49,381.37	55,118.92	61,576.58
Transfer Payments	9,867.38	11,841.27	14,749.82	20,606.71	23,504.54	26,996.14	30,845.43	35,221.15	40,201.65	45,877.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>87,391.48</b>	<b>115,189.29</b>	<b>140,758.91</b>	<b>170,745.46</b>	<b>222,849.69</b>	<b>251,516.92</b>	<b>283,286.51</b>	<b>318,221.61</b>	<b>356,437.84</b>	<b>398,100.97</b>

Figures are from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. and are shown in 1996 dollars.



portionally in the County by 2025, as well as the State, but at a higher rate, from 14.79% to 17.25% as compared to 10.55% to 11.52%. This may correspond to the forecast aging of the population as discussed in the Population chapter.

Median household income distribution for the County, as well as per capita income, with comparison to the State, is discussed in the Population chapter.

**Table 8**  
**Comparison of Sources of Personal Income**  
Douglas County and State Percentages

Sector	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Wages and Salaries										
County	46.12%	47.90%	52.05%	51.41%	54.99%	54.82%	54.82%	54.53%	54.01%	53.28%
State	61.76%	59.55%	57.80%	56.47%	58.82%	59.12%	59.26%	59.35%	59.36%	59.29%
Other Labor Income										
County	5.33%	5.97%	6.75%	6.43%	5.53%	5.47%	5.40%	5.30%	5.18%	5.04%
State	8.10%	8.36%	8.31%	8.25%	6.74%	6.41%	6.32%	6.23%	6.14%	6.03%
Proprietors Income										
County	10.45%	9.96%	7.55%	7.22%	7.55%	7.48%	7.40%	7.29%	7.14%	6.96%
State	6.28%	6.68%	6.81%	7.61%	7.99%	7.95%	7.90%	7.83%	7.76%	7.68%
Dividend, Interest, Rent										
County	19.01%	20.40%	19.13%	17.91%	17.13%	17.07%	16.92%	16.96%	17.15%	17.47%
State	12.57%	15.13%	16.60%	15.59%	15.90%	15.79%	15.63%	15.52%	15.46%	15.47%
Transfer Payments										
County	19.09%	15.78%	14.51%	17.04%	14.79%	15.16%	15.46%	15.93%	16.53%	17.25%
State	11.29%	10.28%	10.48%	12.07%	10.55%	10.73%	10.89%	11.07%	11.28%	11.52%

## ■ Major Development Trends

Over the past decade Douglas County began a growth and development trend that is carrying through the end of the millennium. Between January 2003 and the end of the April 2004, 202 new commercial building permits (including 59 commercial structures and 143 structures other than buildings) and 224 new business licenses have been issued. The number of business licenses issued for at-home businesses was 721 in the same period. There were 22 notifications of a commercial business operation, which were exempt from license fees. An additional 52 permits for alterations, additions and conversion of non-residential buildings were issued at a valuation of almost 3.5 million. Based on the valuation of the building permits alone, business interests have invested in excess of \$19.2 million in the community since January 1, 2003. This figure encompasses new construction, additions, alterations and conversions, and demolitions (primarily of residential structures).

Between January 1, 2003 and May 1, 2004, over \$181 million in new private investment was initiated including 2,139 new single-family homes, 32 attached single family homes, and 59 non-residential projects including primarily offices, banks and professional offices, retail and customer services, schools, amusement/recreational structures, and churches over the course of the 16 months. The non-residential projects added an estimated 3 million square feet of commercial space to the County. The most notable recent trends in Douglas County include its emergence as the retail/commercial hub of western Georgia, including the new Arbor Place Mall, the Landing at Arbor Place, and ancillary retail centers, new restaurants and hotels, and the emergence of a number of business parks housing manufacturing and technology companies.

There is nearly @@ million square feet of business park, office and retail space being built or planned in the County. Demand is high for this space, in part because of Douglas's favorable location, the reasonable lease rates, and the quality of developments. Several thousand acres of land are available for commercial development.

## Retail Trade and Services

The most notable recent trends in Douglas County include the addition of major new retailers and shopping centers, with associated hotels and restaurants, and business park expansion.

**Hotels.** The I-20 corridor, particularly the commercial areas along the corridors perpendicular to the interstate highway at the locations of exits for state highways 92 and 5, support a sizeable hotel market, focused primarily in the vicinity of Arbor Place Mall, which accommodates a number of visitors, and provides supplemental accommodations for Six Flags in neighboring Cobb County as well. There are currently 21 hotels containing over 1,600 rooms in the City of Douglasville, and @@ in the unincorporated areas of Douglas County.

**Retail Expansion.** Douglas County supports a number of neighborhood level shopping centers, most of which are anchored by a supermarket. The majority of regional serving and large "big box" shopping opportunities are located within the city limits of Douglasville, along the corridors perpendicular to the interstate highway at the locations of exits for state highways 92 and 5, and Chapel Hill Rd., including: the 1 million square foot Arbor Place Mall; the Landing at Arbor Place; Market Square; the Super-Walmart and Sam's Club Center; and the Douglasville Pavilion, including the anchors of Target, Ross, Marshalls and Goody's; as well as ancillary strip centers.

In addition the strength of the economy in Douglas County relies in its large diversified small business community. Making up the majority of the Douglas County Chamber of Commerce's membership base, most new jobs are created from this sector. The retail/commercial market in unincorporated Douglas County continues to grow, and growth is anticipated to be at a faster rate than during the last decade.

**Business Park/Office.** Douglas County is beginning to develop a portion of its economy in the manufacturing, office and technology sectors. The County, inclusive of the City, is fortunate to offer some of the finest business parks in the region. Such companies as AT&T, Nioxin, Silver Line Building Products, Circuit City, Steelcase, Maytag, and Stairhouse, among others, are realizing the competitive advantage of location in this area, and have chosen to locate in the Douglas County and City of Douglasville area.

Business parks in the County include the following:

Industrial Developments International (IDI) has two business parks – Westfork and the Camp creek Distribution center. These parks comprise 600 acres and offer a variety of amenities. Both have direct access to I-20 and the Jackson-Hartfield International Airport via Camp creek Parkway. Douglas County's largest employer, Silver Line Building products, is located in Westfork along with industries such as Nioxin, Formica, Circuit City and Revest/Steelcase. Westfork has approximately 4.5 million square feet of space.

Riverside Business Park straddles the Douglas and Cobb border. The park is owned by Crescent Resources and covers 800 acres. The park is home to industries such as AT&T and Amoco Fibers. The Douglas County portion has approximately 500,000 square feet of space with plans to construct 1 million more.

First Industrial Real Estate opened the Terminus West Business Park in 2002. The park encompasses 200 acres and is already home to industries such as Maytag, Stairhouse and Standard

Register. Terminus West has 750,000 square feet and plans for an additional 750,000 square feet.

Carter and Associates is developing the New Manchester Business Park. The first building was completed in 2003 and leased to JVC of America. The second building is under construction and upon completion will encompass 200 acres. In addition, the American Red Cross has recently announced plans to relocate the Southern Regional headquarters and blood processing center to New Manchester. Plans call for 180,000 square feet on 19 acres.

Thornton Road Business Park, developed by Catellus Development Corporation, currently has three buildings under construction for APL Logistics. Plans call for the park to build out at approximately 170 acres.

Douglas County and the City of Douglasville have other small business parks and commercial/industrial sites available through out the community.

## **Construction**

Residential growth over the past decade, and particularly since 2000, has been strong in the County and areas surrounding the incorporated cities, ending with 2,171 residential permits issued on projects valued at just over \$137 million from January 2003 to May 2004. Over the next 25 years the construction industry will take a slightly smaller percentage of overall employment due to the slowing in population growth, and the buildout of available land near the end of the horizon period in the County, as well as shifts in the economic make-up of the County to primarily service and retail oriented.

## **Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade**

Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade play a small but significant role in the economy of Douglas County. The location of industrial development is primarily located off the Thornton Road Corridor. In the last 10 years, the number of manufacturing firms in the county has increased, particularly in the type of light manufacturing with up-front office space well suited to business parks. Although the manufacturing sector is anticipated to continue to grow in the future, it is anticipated that it will decline as a proportion of the economy, and most likely will include only extremely limited heavy manufacturing endeavors.



## ■ **Unique Economic Activities**

With the completion of Arbor Place Mall and the Landing at Arbor Place, as well as surrounding retail centers, Douglas County has become a shopping and employment hub for its sector of the region. Arbor Place Mall and its nearby supporting commercial facilities, serves an east-west sector focused on 1-20 on the state routes 92 and 5, and the Chapel Hill area. At the same time, the County is beginning to experience growth in corporate and executive offices, sometimes associated with manufacturing or distribution functions. The business center market (front office activities coupled with storage, transfer or distribution space) is also strong in the County, and expected to remain so.

## Downtown Enhancement

The City of Douglasville is fortunate to have a traditional historic downtown shopping district. The Office of Commerce “Shop Douglas” program, has been aggressively marketing and enhancing the traditional shopping street. Programs to enhance the downtown



nate to have a traditional historic City, in coordination with the Chamber First” program, has been aggressively overall appearance and make-up of this Programs to enhance the downtown

- Encouraging the development of the traditional downtown shopping district, restaurant, entertainment and cultural destination point;
- Developing special events and ongoing activities in the downtown area;
- Providing the necessary infrastructure such as utilities, parking, streetscape, and pedestrian amenities;
- Enhancing the appearance and identifying the boundaries of downtown through the use of distinctive elements such as light poles, flags, flower baskets, planters, signage and landscaping;
- Providing financial incentives and design services to encourage private property enhancement;
- Consideration of construction of a downtown commuter rail station as a cornerstone of the revitalization effort.

## Master Planned Developments

Some of the recent development in the County has been PUDs, specifically, Chapel Hill and Annawakkee. This area has been aided by proper infrastructure of fiber optic cable, sewer, water, fire protection, etc. Recent attention to detail and amenities has aided Douglas County in beginning to attract both quality residential and commercial developments. The County has begun to implement regulations intending to attract high quality companies, while at the same time protecting the quality of life that is sought after in Douglas County.

## ■ Labor Force Analysis

Residents Jobs as shown in Table 9 shows the percentages of total employment by occupation classifications for 2000 in Douglas County, the State of Georgia and the Nation. The analysis looks at the occupations of the residents of the County, regardless of where they worked in the region.

As shown on the “Occupation of Residents,” 13.8% of the County's working residents in 2000 were employed in executive, administrative and managerial professions and 15.7% were employed in professional and technical specialty occupations, with an additional 18.7% of the workforce in clerical and administrative support, for a total of 48.2% of the workforce. Another 23.4% held jobs in the service and retail sectors, and 28.2% held jobs in production or other labor-intensive occupations. These figures reflect a very slight change from 1990, when approximately 46.5% of the labor force fell into the executive, professional and technical categories, 23.4% were employed in sales and services, and over 31% were “blue collar” workers. However, a significant change occurred within the individual occupation group of machine operators, assemblers and inspectors, which changed from 6.1% in 1990 to 13.4% in 2000. This may be partially attributed to the fact that in 2000 the Census removed the handlers, equipment cleaners and laborer category, and combined it with other non-skilled labor categories, most probably the machine operators employment category. This overall limited change underscores the predominance of affordable “starter” homes which have been constructed over the past decade, and a shortfall of move up and executive level homes which would

draw more persons with executive and managerial, professional, technical and related support to the community.

The number of white-collar employees living in Douglas County is lower in comparison to the state and the nation, as shown on Tables 9 and 10. In 1990, executive, professional, and technical support made up 28.2% and 30.1% of the state and national population, respectively, compared to Douglas County's 25.7%. Clerical support represented a higher proportion in the County than at the state and national levels, at 20.8% compared to 16% and 16.3% respectively. Service and sales were also lower in proportional representation than the state and nation. At the other end of the scale, Douglas's proportion of skilled laborers (Precision Production, Craft and Repair) was around 15% com-

**Table 9**  
**Comparison of Employment by Occupation - 1990**  
Douglas County, State, and Nation

Occupation	Employment (1990)			Percentage of Total Employment		
	County	State	Nation	County	State	Nation
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	5,113	378,984	14,227,916	13.66%	12.26%	12.32%
Professional and Technical Specialty	3,325	383,012	16,287,187	8.88%	12.39%	14.11%
Technicians & Related Support	1,196	110,766	4,251,007	3.20%	3.58%	3.68%
Sales	4,157	379,746	13,606,870	11.11%	12.28%	11.79%
Clerical and Administrative Support	7,783	494,823	18,769,526	20.79%	16.00%	16.26%
Private Household Services	57	15,882	520,183	0.15%	0.51%	0.45%
Protective Services	715	52,596	1,981,723	1.91%	1.70%	1.72%
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	3,131	302,084	12,746,927	8.36%	9.77%	11.04%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	371	68,111	2,835,950	0.99%	2.20%	2.46%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	5,607	366,819	13,077,829	14.98%	11.86%	11.33%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	2,270	262,930	7,886,595	6.06%	8.50%	6.83%
Transportation & Material Moving	2,158	142,189	4,715,847	5.77%	4.60%	4.08%
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers & Laborers	1,548	134,115	4,545,345	4.14%	4.34%	3.94%

Employment figures from Georgia Department of Labor.

pared to 11.9% for the state and 11.3% for the nation, while the County's proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled working residents (Operators, Fabricators, Transportation and Laborers) was 15.5% compared to 17.5% of the state and 24.8% of the U.S.

By 2000, the proportion of white collar employees living in the County remained below that of the state and nation. Executive, professional, and technical support made up 33.3% and 34.6% of the state and national population, respectively, compared to Douglas County's 29.6%. The gap between the proportions of clerical and administrative support had nearly disappeared, at 12.1% in the County, compared to 11.9% for the state and 11.6% for the nation. The County remained below the state and nation in proportional representation of skilled labor, at 6.9% compared to 9.2% and 8.7% respectively, and again exceed the state and nation in semi- and unskilled labor categories.

If Douglas County's businesses have to rely solely on the County's labor pool to operate, there would be an excess of employees and an insufficient match of employment options to labor skills. While many people who work in the County live outside of the County itself, many residents of the County should not have to commute outside of the County. As traffic congestion and commuting time increases access to employment opportunities may become a problem for business in the future. It is important to address continued availability of quality, move-up and executive housing within the area, and increased transportation options for production workers and laborers, including public transportation.

**Table 10**  
**Comparison of Employment by Occupation - 2000**  
 Douglas County, State, and Nation

Occupation	Employment (2000)			Percentage of Total Employment		
	County	State	Nation	County	State	Nation
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	6,489	538,647	17,448,038	13.84%	14.29%	13.85%
Professional and Technical Specialty	7,367	717,312	26,198,693	15.72%	19.03%	20.79%
Technicians & Related Support	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Sales	5,672	446,876	14,592,699	12.10%	11.85%	11.58%
Clerical and Administrative Support	8,769	581,364	20,028,691	18.71%	15.42%	15.89%
Private Household Services	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Protective Services	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	5,285	444,077	15,575,101	11.28%	11.78%	12.36%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	82	24,489	951,810	0.17%	0.65%	0.76%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	3,235	346,326	11,008,625	6.90%	9.19%	8.74%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	6,290	415,849	12,256,138	13.42%	11.03%	9.73%
Transportation & Material Moving	3,680	254,652	7,959,871	7.85%	6.76%	6.32%
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	n/a	n/a	n/a			

Employment figures from Georgia Department of Labor.

## Education

There are 19 elementary schools, 6 middle schools and 4 high schools in the public school system within the County, as well as seven private facilities (in the cities of Douglasville, Lithia Springs and Villa Rica) and a special education school. As analyzed in the Population chapter, Douglas County has a moderately educated work force that made significant increases between 1980 and 2000. In 1990, 34.4% of the adult population had some college education and above and 16.9% of the population were college graduates, as compared to 1980 when 20.7% of the adult population had some college education and 9.1% were college graduates. By 2000, almost 50% of the population had completed some college and above, and 24.5% had a college degree. In numerical terms, the number of adults with less than a high school education actually went down, while the number of college graduates increased five-fold during the two decades.

Douglas's working age population is less educated than in many of the surrounding counties, and the State. In terms of the proportion of college graduates in 2000, Douglas County ranked number four out of six when compared with four surrounding counties and the State. Considering the proportion of adults with at least some college education, Douglas also ranked number four at 46.6% compared to Fulton overall (64.6%), Cobb (68%), Paulding (41.7%), and Carroll (36.9%), as well as the State of Georgia (49.6%).

Residents also have access to higher education and training opportunities close to home at the Douglas County campus of the West Central Technical College. In addition, there are 3 higher education facilities in the vicinity: Mercer University in Lithia Springs; and State University of West Georgia and West Central Technical College in Carrollton. There are also numerous colleges and universities in the Metro Atlanta area, including the world famous Georgia Institute of Technology.

## Labor Force Participation

"Labor Force participation 1990 and 2000" presents data on the employment status of the labor force in Douglas County and compares it to the state and the nation. The tables also reflect the major changes that occurred in the County during the growth of the last decade.

**Table 11**  
**Comparison of Employment Status - 1990**  
 Douglas County, State, and Nation

Status	Employment (1990)			Percentage of Total Employment		
	County	State	Nation	County	State	Nation
<b>Males</b>						
Civilian Employed	20,346	1,652,016	62,639,048	38.21%	33.44%	32.75%
Civilian Unemployed	862	89,593	4,257,993	1.62%	1.81%	2.23%
In Armed Forces	88	65,444	1,520,812	0.17%	1.32%	0.80%
Not in Labor Force	4,666	550,527	23,448,976	8.76%	11.14%	12.26%
<b>Females</b>						
Civilian Employed	17,085	1,440,358	52,792,388	32.09%	29.16%	27.60%
Civilian Unemployed	1,108	98,347	3,487,207	2.08%	1.99%	1.82%
In Armed Forces	12	7,614	184,961	0.02%	0.15%	0.10%
Not in Labor Force	9,080	1,035,875	42,961,952	17.05%	20.97%	22.46%
Total	53,247	4,939,774	191,293,337			

In 1990, 74% of the County's population over 16 was working or seeking employment. By 2000, this figure had dropped to 70.6% of the population working or seeking employment. To some extent, the difference is attributable to the larger proportion of children in 2000 over 16 but not working, and the increase in women of workforce age choosing not to enter the workforce to raise families. The percentage of males in the civilian labor force in 1990 was 78.4%, which dropped to 74.9% in 2000.



Table 12

**Comparison of Employment Status - 2000**

Douglas County, State, and Nation

Status	Employment (2000)			Percentage of Total Employment		
	County	State	Nation	County	State	Nation
<b>Males</b>						
Civilian Employed	25,216	2,051,523	69,091,443	36.37%	32.82%	31.81%
Civilian Unemployed	916	107,652	4,193,862	1.32%	1.72%	1.93%
In Armed Forces	67	57,840	987,898	0.10%	0.93%	0.45%
Not in Labor Force	7,449	815,427	30,709,079	10.74%	13.05%	14.14%
<b>Females</b>						
Civilian Employed	21,728	1,788,233	60,630,069	31.34%	28.61%	27.92%
Civilian Unemployed	962	115,400	3,753,424	1.39%	1.85%	1.73%
In Armed Forces	32	9,018	164,239	0.05%	0.14%	0.08%
Not in Labor Force	12,964	1,305,594	47,638,063	18.70%	20.89%	21.94%
Total	69,334	6,250,687	217,168,077			

The change in the percentage of females 16 or older who were working or seeking employment in 1990 and 2000 is slight—decreasing from 62.6% to 60.9%, respectively.

Comparisons to the state and the U.S. are equally enlightening. Trends between 1990 and 2000 for the County, state and nation indicate a drop in active labor force participants and increase in the number and proportion of persons not in the labor force. However, in 1990, the participation of males and females 16 and older in Douglas's labor force far exceeded state and national averages. This trend continued to 2000, when state and national labor force participation rates were less than two-thirds for Georgia and the U.S., Douglas County's was almost three-quarters. Although the County's participation in the labor force is proportionately greater than the state or nation, the increase of persons not in the labor force between 1990 and 2000 is greater than that experienced by the state and nation. In 2000, 10.7% of the males were not in the labor force, representing a 1.9% increase, and the proportion of females not in the labor force was 18.7%, a 1.7% increase, for a total of a 3.6% increase. During the same period, state and U.S. non-participation increased only 1.9 and 1.4 percentage points, respectively, although the total non-participation still exceeded that of the County. In both the state and the nation, the proportion of women not participating in the workforce actually decreased, as compared to an increase in the County. Conversely, the proportion of men not in the workforce increased on a state and national basis, comparable to the increase experienced in the County.

It is possible that the percentage of the total labor force will continue to decrease, as young persons continue their education and remain out of the labor force, the population ages, or young families move into the area with one parent remaining out of the labor force to raise children. However, as income and education levels increase, business opportunities in the professional and high tech occupations are attracted to the area, and types of housing production expand to include more move-up and executive options, more employees may be attracted to reside in the County. Second, in 2000 there was a high proportion of the age cohort of "traditional family age," 25 to 44 who would be entering the labor force. This trend is expected to continue to 2025 as the population continues to grow and age. These figures suggest several different concurrent trends—a movement toward the one

wage-earner family as young families with small children locate in the County, an increasing proportion of middle age families with fewer children in the County, an increase in the educational status of persons over the age of 16, and an aging of the population.

## Unemployment

Employment data for the Douglas County for 1993 through 2002 indicates that unemployment rates fell between 1993 from a high of 4.5% to a low of 2.8%, rising again in 2002 higher (4.9%) than they had been previously 10 years before. This trend occurred in surrounding jurisdictions as well. In 2002, the County ranked in the middle out of 5 counties, with Paulding County having the lowest unemployment rate, and Fulton County having the highest.

Statistics comparing Douglas County to the state and nation indicate that Douglas County has had a lower unemployment rate than both the state and the nation every year over the past decade, ranging around an average of 72% of the state's

**Table 13**  
**Comparison of Unemployment Rate**  
Douglas and Surrounding Counties, 1993-2002

Year	Unemployment Rate				
	Douglas*	Carroll	Cobb	Fulton	Paulding
1993	4.5	5.7	4.6	6.2	4.8
1994	4.0	4.7	4.2	5.8	3.6
1995	3.6	5.2	3.6	5.4	3.5
1996	3.2	5.1	3.0	5.0	2.6
1997	3.1	5.0	3.0	4.6	2.7
1998	3.0	4.5	2.7	4.1	2.3
1999	2.9	4.5	2.6	3.9	2.1
2000	2.8	4.2	2.5	3.6	2.2
2001	2.9	5.1	3.0	4.3	2.4
2002	4.9	5.7	4.7	6.4	4.1

Source: *The Georgia County Guide, 2003*, University of Georgia.

\*Douglas County figures are for the entire county.

**Table 14**  
**Comparison of Unemployment Rate**  
County, State and Nation

Year	Unemployment Rate			County as % of	
	Douglas	State	Nation	State	Nation
1993	4.5	5.8	6.9	77.59%	65.22%
1994	4.0	5.2	6.1	76.71%	65.27%
1995	3.6	4.9	5.6	73.80%	64.27%
1996	3.2	4.6	5.4	68.94%	58.81%
1997	3.1	4.5	4.9	68.88%	63.21%
1998	3.0	4.2	4.5	72.41%	67.51%
1999	2.9	4.0	4.2	72.98%	68.78%
2000	2.8	3.7	4.0	75.68%	70.00%
2001	2.9	4.0	4.7	72.50%	61.70%
2002	4.9	5.1	5.8	96.08%	84.48%

Source: *The Georgia County Guide, 2003*, University of Georgia.  
County figures are for all of Douglas County.

rate for all years except 2002, and comprising around an average of 64% of the nation's rate for every year except 2002. The same trend of a decrease in unemployment between 1993 and 2000 applies to the state and nation, where unemployment decreased from 5.8% and 6.9% respectively in 1990 to 3.7% and 4.0% respectively in 2000, as compared to 4.5% in 1993 to 2.8% in 2000 for the County. In the most recent year available, the difference in unemployment rate has decreased significantly, particularly between the state and County, where the unemployment rates are fairly comparable. Douglas County's unemployment rate remains below the nation in 2002, although the gap has reduced from 70% in 2000 to 84.8% in 2002.

## Commuting Patterns

In 1990, Douglas County had a resident labor force of almost 36,493 and an employment base of over 15,215. However, in that year, only 12,081 workers who lived in the County, comprising 33.1% of the employed workforce, actually worked there. By 2000, the County had a

**Table 15**  
**Commuting Patterns**  
Historic and Current

Category	Count		Percentage	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Worked in County of Residence	12,081	16,924	33.10%	36.92%
Worked outside County of Residence	24,412	28,916	66.90%	63.08%

Figures from U.S. Bureau of the Census.

resident workforce of 45,840, of which 36.9% commuted elsewhere for employment, indicating a slight expansion of employment opportunities appropriate for residents of the County. Data on commuting patterns for 2000, presented on Table 15, indicate that 98% of the County's employed residents commuted outside of the County to work. Conversely, almost 8,000 of the County's employees, or 84%, commuted into the County every day to work.

Over 62 percent still commute to employment outside of the county as of 2000, down slightly from over 66 percent in 1990. In addition to over 36 percent of the commuters working within Douglas County, almost 31 percent of persons residing in Douglas County commute to Fulton County, 16.1 percent commute to Cobb County, 4.8 percent commute to DeKalb County, and 2.6 and 2.3 percent

**Table 16**  
**Commuting Patterns**

Employed Residents of Douglas			Persons Working in Douglas		
County Where Employed	Employees	Percent of Total	County of Residence	Employees	Percent of Total
Carroll	1,057	2.29%	Carroll	3,438	10.61%
Clayton	1,196	2.59%	Clayton	567	1.75%
Cobb	7,450	16.13%	Cobb	4,011	12.37%
DeKalb	2,211	4.79%	DeKalb	674	2.08%
<b>Douglas</b>	<b>16,924</b>	<b>36.65%</b>	<b>Douglas</b>	<b>16,924</b>	<b>52.21%</b>
Fulton	14,253	30.87%	Fulton	1,192	3.68%
Gwinnett	747	1.62%	Haralson	562	1.73%
Paulding	596	1.29%	Paulding	2,865	8.84%
Other	1,742	3.77%	Other	2,182	6.73%
Total			Total		
46,176			32,415		

Source: Georgia Department of Labor/2000 U.S. Census.

commute to Clayton and Carroll Counties respectively. The remaining 6.7 percent commute to Paulding and Gwinnett counties, other locations in the state, or outside of the state. Out of state employment remains below 1 percent.

In 1980 there were 12,259 persons employed in Douglas County. By 2000 employment had doubled to 32,415. Over 52 percent of the persons employed in Douglas County reside in the county, with: 12.4 percent residing in Cobb County; 10.6 percent residing in Carroll County; 8.8 percent residing in Paulding County; 3.7 percent residing in Fulton County; 2.1 percent residing in DeKalb County; 1.7 percent residing in both Clayton and Haralson Counties; and 6.7 percent living in other counties or states. Almost 45% of the employment opportunities in 2000 are located within the incorporated city portions of the county.

If the labor force participation rate remains the same, in 2025 the potential 43,000 residents in the labor force residing in the unincorporated portions of Douglas County will be matched to an employment base of 63,538 or just less than 1.5 jobs for every working resident in the unincorporated County. As traffic congestion increases in the region and internal circulation is improved, it is anticipated that a much higher percentage of residents will work in the County than now. A major goal of the County is to increase live, work and play opportunities by providing the necessary housing opportunities and infrastructure, and expanding the base of employment opportunities. Adequate land is available to achieve this objective. As Douglas County moves closer to this goal, it is anticipated that a much higher percentage of the residential population will actually work within the County.

## ■ **Local Economic Development Resources**

### **Development Agencies**

Effective economic development programs are a group effort, involving not only local government staff but also the cooperation of and resources available from other potential partners that have programs underway at various levels.

### **Development Authority of Douglas County**

In February 1981 the Douglas County Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution creating the Development Authority of Douglas County. The body was activated in 1997 and has since held the primary role of financing targeted development projects through the issuance of revenue bonds. The Development Authority is the central point of contact for businesses looking to expand or locate operations in Douglasville and Douglas County. The office maintains a database of available buildings and sites, tracks business financing programs and assists entrepreneurs in starting businesses in the County. Additionally, it is the center of economic development planning and marketing and is responsible for assisting and building relationships with existing businesses and industries. The Development Authority provides services designed to assist these businesses with every facet of the location process. Services provided include:

- Confidential site selection services for commercial and industrial;
- Program Financing and Incentives;
- Demographic and Consumer Information

## **Douglas County Chamber of Commerce**

The Chamber has an economic development program and offers an excellent resource to the County for coordinating activities. The Chamber works closely with the Development Authority of Douglas County in coordinating with other agencies and resources, as well as with State Industry, Tourism and Trade, and can act as a go-between to these agencies on behalf of the County. The Chamber develops a Local Policy Agenda, based on a semi-annual survey of the Chamber membership, to inform members of the local governing bodies of the business community's position on pertinent issues. The Chamber staff attends meetings at the City of Douglasville and its working committees and well as meetings of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners. The Chamber also meets frequently with officials on matters of interest to the business community. During 2003-2004, the Chamber has acted on issues of stormwater management, sales tax, property taxes, land use, zoning and tourism.

## **Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce**

The Metro Atlanta Chamber is involved in a wide range of economic development and regional improvement programs, some of which have particular significance for Douglas County. The Metro Atlanta Chamber's overall goal is regional in scope and addresses the attraction, creation and retention of business in metro Atlanta, which includes particular attention to the maintenance and provision of the physical infrastructure needed to support and expand the business base. The Metro Atlanta Chamber provides a coordinated program of business promotion at the national and international level, promoting the entire metro area, including Douglas County. The Chamber's promotional activities emphasize the biomedical fields, telecommunications and software, all of which are important parts of Douglas County's desired future employment base.

## **Resources—Programs and Tools**

### **Douglas County Chamber of Commerce Entrepreneurial Initiatives**

The Douglas County Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to making businesses achieve success with a variety of services geared toward small and growing businesses. A few of the services offered include:

Small Business Development Center – Access to technical and financial assistance specifically for small business. Business strategy, finance and accounting assistance and market analysis and planning are a few of the topics available for assistance.

Entrepreneur's Tool Kit – The "Who's Who" of starting a business in Douglas County. The kit provides contacts, what forms to fill out, permits required, where to go, the phone numbers and addresses needed to get the business started.

Entrepreneur Roundtables – Business owners are brought together to discuss best practices, business issues, success stories and offer networking opportunities.

Small Business Needs Survey – Business needs are assessed and match with resources.

Networking/Advertising Opportunities – Links business owners to business owners, and to potential customers through word of mouth advertising.

Other promotional activities sponsored by the Chamber include a Business to Business Trade Expo, Ribbon Cutting/Open House service, networking events, a member to member directory and a community web portal.

### **Douglas County Chamber of Commerce Community Development Initiatives**

Strengthening and expanding partnerships throughout the community is a cornerstone of the Douglas County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber works in a collaborative fashion, channeling the business community's support to social and community focused organization.

Board of Education – Mentoring students, partnering business and schools and matching internship/apprenticeship opportunities are a few of the ways that the Douglas Chamber works to enhance the public education system with private sector.

Literacy Council – Provides every citizen of the County the opportunity to enjoy the rewards of education. The Chamber is a participant of the certified Literate Community program, dedicated to stamping out illiteracy in the community.

Workforce Development Council – Made up of area educators and employers, the Council assesses employment challenges and seeks innovative solutions.

Community Visioning (Douglas Blueprint) – This 10 year vision for the future of the County serves as a roadmap for strategic growth, land use, planning and zoning, greenspace, workforce and leadership and civic infrastructure issues. A Steering Committee of community leaders meets regularly to keep this plan dynamic.

Social Services – The Chamber and its volunteers are involved in virtually every community service, including United Way, Women's Shelter, Children's Advocacy, and many others.

### **Quick Start**

The Quick Start Training Program provides high quality, tailored training at no cost to area business. Both manufacturing training and service training are available to manufacturing operations, warehouse and distribution centers, national and international corporate headquarters, information technologies and customer service operations. The program includes a training needs analysis, a detailed training program, high quality training and expert training staff.

### **Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology (GCATT)**

GCATT is an initiative of real virtual clusters of excellence in advanced telecommunications. GCATT supports development of the latest technologies and applications in communications, computing and content processing. Formed in 1991, GCATT is a program of the Georgia Research Alliance, a public/private partnership fostering technology-based economic development across the state. Although GCATT is based at Georgia Tech, it supports research programs in advanced telecommunications at the Georgia Research Alliance's six research universities.

The GCATT partnership of industry, government and universities works together in a three-pronged strategy of Technology, Policy and Commercialization for high-tech economic development in Georgia. There are approximately 20 different research centers that fall under the GCATT umbrella. The research programs of the centers are funded by the industry and government through grants, industry consortia and directed research projects. GCATT staff provides support by promoting collaboration across the various research centers, leveraging the knowledge and resources that already exists.

### **Yamacraw**

Yamacraw is an economic development initiative to make Georgia a world leader in the design of broadband communications systems, devices and chips—thus creating in Georgia both high-paying design jobs and support and supply-chain jobs. Yamacraw research is grouped in three targeted areas of broadband technology: Embedded Software, Broadband Access Devices and System Prototyping. At its core, Yamacraw is made up of 200-300 world-class researchers who take the best of

technologies one step further by integrating them to patent a new generation of compatible infrastructure products.

### **Georgia Power Company, Economic Development Division**

Georgia Power is the oldest economic developer in Georgia, and has an Economic Development Division whose primary role is to attract businesses to the state. The Economic Development Division of Georgia Power has two sections, a domestic section and an international section. Each section is responsible for marketing Georgia as a positive place to do business. There are 130 local offices statewide with a primary concern of job development. Although Georgia Power has offices throughout the state, it does not provide any specialized programs for any particular city or county. Georgia Power's primary local contact for economic development issues are generally with the Chamber's of Commerce. Alternative points of contact are with the various levels of government in Georgia Power's service area. Georgia Power has in the past formed different alliances with other organizations and agencies for the purpose of attracting businesses to an area.

### **Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism**

The Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism (GDITT) is a state funded agency mandated to serve as agent for all the cities and counties in the state of Georgia. GDITT's primary purpose is to assist potential businesses considering locating in the state of Georgia in identifying an optimal location for their operational needs. The Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism also assist the movie industry in locating appropriate movie sets throughout the state of Georgia. The identification of international markets for the export of Georgia goods and services is another duty of GDITT.

Because GDITT is a statewide agency, there are no specific programs or projects tailored to the needs of Douglas. In the event that a potential business client is interested in the Douglas area, GDITT policy is to work with both the Chamber of Commerce and the local governmental entity. GDITT has a working relationship with the utility companies, rail systems, banks, universities, and other agencies with resources to facilitate economic development. GDITT maintains a substantial computer based inventory of commercial and industrial sites throughout Georgia.

### **Oglethorpe Power**

Oglethorpe Power maintains a robust economic development program that works in concert with the local communities, the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade & Tourism and other statewide economic development programs to bring industry into Georgia. Over the past 20 years, these efforts have resulted in numerous commercial and industrial firms locating or expanding in the state. Oglethorpe Power is a founding member of the Georgia Allies, a public-private economic development partnership of ten private companies with statewide economic development interests and the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism. The Georgia Center for Site Selection was established to help businesses, both large and small, establish or expand operations in Georgia. Information on how to find the most appropriate community in Georgia, and information regarding available industrial buildings and sites to statistical information on communities across Georgia is provide free of charge.

### **Georgia Business Expansion Support Act**

In 1994, the State passed legislation for tax credits against state income taxes to encourage economic development in Georgia. Some of the programs are targeted to specific industry groups manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, or research and development, but does not include retail business).

Job tax credits and investment tax credits are available to the targeted industry groups at different levels, depending on the relative need of the area for economic development. Some credits are



available to specific industry groups, while others apply to all employers. Overall, Douglas County and its cities are categorized, as “Tier 4” communities within the plan and qualifying companies are eligible for associated credits. The following is a summary of the various provisions of the Act as they relate to Douglas County:

### **Special Tax Programs**

There are several special tax programs in place in other jurisdictions that are not currently utilized in Douglas County:

**Urban Enterprise Zone.** Under an Urban Enterprise Zone, specific areas are delineated where deteriorating physical or market conditions have resulted in little or no investment in property improvements or development. Within an Urban Enterprise Zone, if a property owner renovates or develops a site, the County's property taxes can be frozen at the pre-improvement level for a specified time period, then rising in annual steps to full value taxation at the end of the period. This approach is useful in encouraging investment that would otherwise not occur, and in eventually increasing the tax base where taxes would otherwise continue to fall through depreciation.

Urban Enterprise Zones can be set up for commercial, industrial or housing investment, but should be used only where development would not otherwise occur.

**Tax Increment Financing.** This approach allows property taxes to rise as sites are developed or improved, but directs all or some of the increase over and above the pre-improvement tax level into public facilities that have been built to support the area's revitalization. In effect, the government takes the risk through provision of public improvements up front, and then pays itself back through the higher tax collection increment while assuring that the pre-improvement tax collections continue to go into the general fund. Once the improvements are paid for, all of the taxes will go into the general fund. This approach can be very useful in a carefully controlled revitalization effort for a deteriorating area, where future renovations and development can be reasonably anticipated but are dependent on a general improvement to the area.

**Community Improvement Districts:** The Georgia Constitution provides for a special kind of tax district called a Community Improvement District (CID). This type of district can be created only upon the petition of the property owners themselves, and is managed by a board that includes representatives of the property owners and the County. Under a CID, only nonresidential property is subject to the special tax, and the funds must be used only for certain public facilities, such as roads and water and sewer utilities. The funds can be used for both capital and operating expenditures, and the special nature of the Act allows the basis of taxation to be the development density or impact of a property as well as its assessed value. The Act also allows debt financing without referendum since a majority of the property owners (who must own at least 75% of the properties by value) must request the CID designation. A plus for the County is that debts of a CID are not debts of the government and do not affect the County's debt limit, while the CID can enjoy a lower interest rate due to its quasi-governmental structure.

## ■ **Assessment—Economic Development**

Over the last two decades Douglas County has seen changes and growth both in its residential population and its employment opportunities. Currently it is estimated that nearly 32,415 people work in the County, primarily in the services and retail sectors. These sectors have grown as a response to Douglas County's location, growing amenities, reasonably priced housing market, available land, slowly increasing potential buying power of the residential population and an improving quality of life. Employment growth is expected to continue over the next 25 years, but at a much faster rate de-

spite the potential trend of the national economy slowing down, particularly as the availability of land for new non-residential development is absorbed. Several issues have emerged during this economic development analysis:

Services and retail sales are the primary sectors in the Douglas County market, encompassing over 54.4% of the total employment market. The services sector includes the majority of employment activity that is done within an office building or business park.

Manufacturing, Technology and Warehousing will continue to increase numerically over the next 25 years, but will encompass less than 8% of the entire employment market by 2025 due to the overwhelming growth of the service and retail sectors.

It is expected that between 2000 and 2025 the County will attract 44,600 new jobs, or an increase of 194%.

Infrastructure and available land will play a critical role in attracting the appropriate mix of employment opportunities. The County must assure that there is adequately zoned land with appropriate infrastructure to service the expected growth in employment within the County. Over the 2004 to 2025 planning period, over 18 million square feet of occupied non-residential space will be needed to accommodate employment growth for the unincorporated area of the County. Based on a standard floor area per acre ratio, this equates to almost 2,000 acres of land needed for development of the increased need for non-residential space. Overall, approximately 24.6 million square feet of new floor area could be accommodated by current zoning, the clear majority of which is zoned in the industrial districts (79%). However, the distribution of vacant land by zoning category does not match the future demand by land use type appropriately. The current zoning provides far more land than needed for industrial uses, while only about one-half of the retail commercial demand can be accommodated on commercially zoned land. Land specifically zoned for office uses will be in particularly short supply; and although offices can be allowed in commercial zoning districts, there is insufficient land zoned commercial to accommodate the retail development alone.

Previous economic development efforts have been aimed at attracting industrial employment to the area. Greater efforts should be made to accommodate projected office and retail commercial to support residential growth.

Industrially zoned land can be used for certain professional and administrative office uses, and limited commercial use, which could absorb some of the excess industrial zoning. While mid-rise office parks are often found in and around the kind and quality of industrial development light industrial uses require, industrial zoning is often unattractive to commercial and office development oriented to retail sales and personal services. While the County contains many more acres of industrial land than 2025 forecasts would absorb, retaining an excess of land for development beyond 2025 is not inappropriate. While some vacant industrially zoned land may not be well located for non-industrial uses, some should be considered for re-zoning to commercial and office uses.

Upwards of 600 acres of additional office and commercially zoned land is needed to accommodate future retail and service uses, both of which will be attracted to the County by its population growth and resulting increase in disposable income. The potential for rezoning some of the available industrial acreage, where it can best accommodate commercial and office uses, should be considered.

Commuter patterns suggest that there are limited employment opportunities for upper management, professional and skilled employees living in the County.

The local economy is heavily dependent on the service and retail sectors operations, with a deficit in high tech and management/professional sectors. The County should look at ways to further diversify the local economy to reduce its heavy reliance on these sectors.

Education levels lag behind a number of surrounding communities. Continued economic growth and stability will depend on increased educational levels for all age groups and degree levels.

Retail sales will continue to grow in response to the population growth and increasing incomes in the Douglas County area. Appropriate land and infrastructure should be provided to meet this need.

The City of Douglasville has invested substantially in the initial redevelopment of historic downtown Douglasville. Due to these efforts the downtown area is planned to become a destination for area residents for shopping, recreating and eating. The historic character of this area has been emphasized through several events. The City in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce will continue to promote this area.

Legitimate start up businesses cannot afford even the low commercial lease rates that Douglas County has to offer. The County needs to develop mechanisms for fledgling companies to effectively do business and get off the ground.

## 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Housing

■	Introduction _____	4-1
■	Residential Growth in Douglas County _____	4-2
■	Types of Housing Units _____	4-2
	Current Housing Stock _____	4-2
	Projected housing unit trends _____	4-5
■	Age and condition of housing _____	4-6
	Age _____	4-6
	Condition _____	4-7
■	Tenure and Vacancy in Douglas County's Housing Supply _____	4-8
	Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing _____	4-8
	Vacancy Rates _____	4-9
■	Cost of Housing _____	4-11
	Existing Housing _____	4-11
	New Housing _____	4-13
	Rental Costs _____	4-14
■	Housing and Community Characteristics _____	4-15
	Households Reporting Problems _____	4-15
	Income Characteristics _____	4-17
	Housing Cost Burden _____	4-19
	Affordability of Home Ownership _____	4-22
	Affordability of Rental Units _____	4-22
	Overcrowding _____	4-23
	Special Needs Populations _____	4-26
	Age and Housing Needs _____	4-28
	Employment and Commuting Patterns _____	4-29
	Affordable Housing Options and Housing Programs _____	4-30
■	Housing Forecasts _____	4-32
	Development Capacity _____	4-33
■	Governmental Influence on Housing _____	4-34
	Comprehensive Plan _____	4-35
	The Unified Development Code _____	4-37
	Infrastructure Availability _____	4-37
■	Housing Assessment _____	4-38
	Key Findings _____	4-38
	Summary and Needs Assessment _____	4-39



## 4. Housing

### ■ Introduction

The characteristics and trends within a community are important indicators of future housing needs and policies..

The purpose of assessing Douglas County's housing stock is to:

1. Assess the current housing stock in terms of overall population demographics, special needs populations, economic development and affordability characteristics.
2. Determine the County's future housing needs in conjunction with population projections, economic development and community goals and policies.
3. Discover and investigate any local housing problems such as substandard housing, over building, infrastructure and land use suitability.
4. Assess whether an adequate, appropriate, affordable and varied supply of housing is being offered in Douglas County to meet the future needs of its citizens.
5. Develop an implementation plan to promote the County's vision and to provide the adequate provision of housing for all sectors of the population in the future.

Due to the desirability of the region, Douglas County faces increasing development pressures as both a bedroom community to the metropolitan area and as a potential employment center. The Housing Element promotes a mix and balance of residential development options available to existing and future residents of the County, in the spirit of maintaining the small town low-density character as desired by county residents.



## ■ Residential Growth in Douglas County

The beginning of European settlement, in what is now known as Douglas County, began in the 1820 s, primarily from Virginia, the Carolina s, and the eastern portions of Georgia. Land grants increased the rate of settlement. Rural farming was the major source of income until the development of mills in the 1840 s and the incurrence of railroads in the 1880 s.

Because of its proximity to Atlanta, abundance of vacant land, and the availability of affordable housing stock, Douglas County has undergone a transformation over the last decade from a totally rural county to a bedroom community within the Atlanta metropolitan area.



Over the last 30 years the County has been urbanizing rapidly, with a large portion of growth over the last 10 years. Thirty-two percent of all dwelling units were constructed over this 10-year period.



A full two-thirds of those who reside in Douglas County are employed elsewhere in the region. In 1990 the County had an estimated 26,495 housing units, up from 17,746 in 1980. By the year 2000 the United States Census identified 34,825 housing units in Douglas County, a 31.4% increase during the 10-year period. Following current trends the County is expected to contain 92,697 housing units by the year 2025. A predominate theme within the Douglas County Vision statement is the preservation of the County's rural and small town character. Therefore, large acreage estates, and single family residential currently is the predominant housing type within Douglas County; and it is expected that this trend will continue.

## ■ Types of Housing Units

### Current Housing Stock

The predominate housing type within Douglas County, both in the 1990 census and the 2000 census was overwhelmingly single-family houses. The single-family house category includes stick built attached and detached single-family units in addition to manufactured housing. Stick built single-family housing predominated the housing market in both 1990 and 2000, capturing 74.8% of the market in 1990 and 76.7% in the 2000 census. In the year 2000 single-family housing comprised 84.6% of the total housing market, inclusive of mobile homes, detached and attached single-family units. This is a decrease from 1980, where single-family units, inclusive of mobile homes, constituted over 95% of the housing stock. Numerically, there are 26,717 single family detached and attached units as of the 2000 census versus 19,819 in the 1990 census, an increase of 6,898 units or 34.8 percent. Proportionally, however, the representation of stick built single-family attached and detached units within the total housing stock has remained fairly constant between 1990 and 2000. The primary difference occurs in the proportion and numerical representation of manufactured homes.

Data indicates that within the third component of single-family housing, manufactured

housing, both the actual numbers and percentage of manufactured housing in Douglas County is decreasing. Numerically, there were 2,756 mobile home units as of the 2000 census versus 2,933 in the 1990 census, a decrease of 177 units or 6%.

**Table 1**  
**Dwelling Units - Percentage by Type**  
Historic and Current

	1980	1990	2000
Single-Family Detached	83.32%	73.27%	74.71%
Single-Family Attached		1.53%	2.01%
Multi-Family	4.42%	14.13%	15.37%
Mobile Home	12.26%	11.07%	7.91%

Multi-family housing units totaled

3,743 in 1990, or 14.1% of the market, and 5,352 in 2000 or 15.4% of the market. This clearly has been one of the fastest growing housing sectors in Douglas County during the 1990s in numerical terms, reflecting a 43% increase in total number of multi-family units over the decade.

Data pertaining to type of unit can be tracked for both incorporated and unincorporated portions of the County, although slight discrepancies in the numerical counts for 1990 from STF 1 and STF 3 are noted. In 1990, there were 4,796 total units in the incorporated areas of the county, inclusive of Douglasville and small portions of Austell and Villa Rica, constituting 18.1% of the total County housing stock. Of this, almost 98% of the units were located within the city of Douglasville. In 2000, the number of housing units within the incorporated areas totaled 8,174, comprising 23.5 % of the total housing stock in the county.

The percentage of single-family units to the total units in the incorporated area was also significantly lower than in the remaining unincorporated county, at 67.7% of the total (inclusive of single family detached and attached units, and mobile homes) in comparison to 90% of the total units for the unincorporated county. By 2000, the proportion of single-family units to the total in the incorporated area had slightly reduced to 66.4%, partly due to the numerical drop in the number of mobile home units and a large increase in the number of multi-family units. In comparison, the proportion of single-family units to total units in the unincorporated county in 1990 was 90.2%, remaining constant in 2000.





**Table 2**  
**Trends in Housing Type**  
**1990 - 2000**

	1990		2000		Percent Change
	Units	%	Units	%	
<b>Douglas County - Total</b>					
<b>Single-Family</b>					
<i>SF Detached</i>	19,414	73.3%	26,017	74.7%	1.43%
<i>SF Attached</i>	405	1.5%	700	2.0%	0.48%
<i>Manufactured Home</i>	2,933	11.1%	2,756	7.9%	-3.16%
<b>Total Single Family</b>	22,752	85.9%	29,473	84.6%	-1.24%
Multi-Family (over 9 units)	1,368	5.2%	2,205	6.3%	1.17%
Duplex	588	2.2%	833	2.4%	0.17%
3 to 9 units/building	1,678	6.3%	2,310	6.6%	0.30%
Other*	109	0.4%	4	0.0%	-0.40%
<b>Total--All Units</b>	26,495	100.0%	34,825	100.0%	
<b>Douglas County - Unincorporated</b>					
<b>Single-Family</b>					
<i>SF Detached</i>	16,841	77.6%	21,379	80.2%	2.60%
<i>SF Attached</i>	241	1.1%	342	1.3%	0.20%
<i>Manufactured Home</i>	2,484	11.4%	2,322	8.7%	-2.70%
<b>Total Single Family</b>	19,566	90.1%	24,043	90.2%	0.10%
Multi-Family (over 9 units)	1,145	5.3%	1,340	5.0%	-0.30%
Duplex	354	1.6%	381	1.4%	-0.20%
3 to 9 units/building	505	2.3%	883	3.3%	1.00%
<b>Total Multi-Family</b>	2,004	9.3%	2,604	9.8%	0.50%
Other*	129	0.6%	4	0.0%	-0.58%
<b>Total--All Units</b>	21,699	100.0%	26,651	100.0%	

Source: 2000 Census, STF1 Database

Conversely, 33.5% of the housing stock in the incorporated area was multi-family in 2000, increasing slightly from 31.0% in 1990. Within the unincorporated county, 9.2% of the housing stock was comprised of multi-family units in 1990, increasing to 9.8% by 2000.

Numerically a significant change has occurred between the incorporated and unincorporated areas in terms of multi-family units. In 1990, there were 1,486 multi-family units in the incorporated areas and 2,004 in the unincorporated area. By 2000, there were more multi-family units in the in-



incorporated area than the unincorporated area at 2,733 and 2,604 respectively. This represents a numerical increase in the incorporated area of 84%, as compared to a 29.9% increase numerically in the unincorporated area. By 2000, multifamily units in the incorporated area comprised 7.8% of the total county stock as compared to 7.5% in the unincorporated area, although over 76% of all housing units in the county are located in the unincorporated area. This data suggests that the majority of new multi-family housing has been occurring within the city of Douglasville. As one might suspect, as the urban area of Douglas County, the City of Douglasville provides a much greater density and variety of housing types for the county as a whole.

The most noticeable change occurred in the distribution of manufactured housing units within the incorporated and unincorporated areas. In 1990, mobile homes constituted 10% of the housing stock within incorporated areas and 11% of the housing stock within unincorporated areas respectively. By 2000, these proportions had decreased to 4.7% of the housing stock within incorporated areas and 8.7% of the housing stock within unincorporated areas respectively. Statistics indicate that the majority of mobile home units are located within the unincorporated county.



### Projected housing unit trends

Future housing-type demand will depend on a number of variables from availability and economics, to the changes in demographics in Douglas County and Douglasville. The demand analysis for the county (including Douglasville) shows the demand for 92,697 units by 2025, based on a progression of the same breakdown in units by type as existed in 2000. The forecast indicates that by 2025 the number of multi-family units in the incorporated areas will be almost double that of the unincorporated area - at approximately 10,581 multi-family units (inclusive of duplex units) within the incorporated areas, as compared to 5,517 multi-family units in the unincorporated county.

A recent trend in residential development in the County has been the master planned development, where residential uses are combined with amenities and open space. Although an overall general per acre density applies, natural resources can be protected through clustering of units or subdivision into smaller lots to allow for preservation of natural resources, Greenspace, open space and provision of amenities such as swimming pools, nature trails, parkland or passive open space areas, playfields, ponds or lakes, golf courses and putting greens, and other such activity sites. The county has streamlined this process and will strongly encourage all future development to utilize this process.



Review of building permit activity during the period from 1995 to 2000 indicates that slightly over one-third of the development has been for multi-family housing products. The remainder of the development, over 61%, has been single-family units, with almost 55% being single family detached. Approximately 6.4% of the permitted development has been for single-family attached projects, which were processed as two development projects. There have been no new mobile homes approved. Actually, the number of mobile homes in the

County is decreasing, both numerically and proportionally, from over 12 percent of the total stock in 1980, to 11.1 percent of the total in 1990, decreasing to 7.9 percent in 2000. Based on past development trends and objectives of the County, it is anticipated that single-family detached units will continue to be the prevalent form of residential development in the next decade in the unincorporated county area. Based on the new master planned development parameters, higher density single-family products may be targeted to mixed-use developments.

## ■ Age and condition of housing

While the County's housing stock is relatively new and contains most modern conveniences, some older subdivisions exhibit early signs of deterioration and lack of maintenance. Age and condition of housing are primary indicators of neighborhood decline and potential housing intervention programs. It would be to the County's advantage to implement a proactive inspection program coupled with some form of maintenance incentives and perhaps targeted financial assistance. A number of housing programs at the State and Federal level could be utilized to assist in funding. The elderly would be a positive target group to begin with and programs could be later expanded to include low and moderate-income households.

### Age

Housing age is a potential factor for determining the need for rehabilitation. Without proper maintenance, housing units deteriorate over time. In construction terms, 30 years generally serves as a standard for the initial life of a house. After 30 years, most housing units require some form of rehabilitation, such as roof repair or replacement, new plumbing, concrete repair, paint, wood trim repair or replacement, heating and cooling system upgrades, and in some cases interior renovation (appliances primarily in kitchen and bath). Also, older housing units may not be built to current housing standards for fire or other safety factors.

Douglas County's residential growth has been relatively recent in nature, which is reflected in the age of its housing stock. A total of 20,069 housing units, or 58 percent of the total stock, were built in Douglas County between 1980 and March 2000. Within the City of Douglasville, 70 percent of the units were constructed between 1980 and March 2000. This compares to only 50 percent for the State of Georgia. Although numerically the amount of growth experienced in the unincorporated county was greater than in the city of Douglasville, the statistics reflect a higher rate of growth in the vicinity of Douglasville over the past two decades.



Only 800 housing units currently exist in Douglas County (or 2.3 percent) which were built before 1939, and 609 (1.7 percent) built between 1940 and 1949, bringing the total for homes over 50 years of age to 4.0 percent of the housing stock. Proportionately, a greater number of older homes (pre-1950) are found within the incorporated area of Douglasville, with 6.8% of the units over 50 years in age as compared to 3.3% for the unincorporated county area. As of 2000, the State of Georgia had 192,972 housing units, or 5.9 percent, which were built before 1939, a reduction from 213,712 units reported in 1990. Even con-

sidering the demolition of units between 1950 and today, it is apparent that the bulk of residential development has occurred only recently (Table 3).

## Condition

Housing is considered substandard when conditions are found to be below the minimum standards defined by Section 1001 of the Uniform Housing Code. Households living in substandard conditions are considered in being in need of housing assistance even if they are not seeking alternative housing arrangements.

In addition to visible structural deficiency, the lack of certain infrastructure and utilities often serves as an indicator of substandard conditions. The lack of plumbing, the type of heat source used, and the presence (or absence) of complete kitchen facilities are often used as indicators of housing condition. As of 2000, less than one-half of one percent (0.3%) of housing units in Douglas County lack complete plumbing and less than one-half of one percent (0.4%) of housing units lack complete kitchen facilities (Table 4). Similar statistics apply to those units within the city of Douglasville. The State of Georgia had 0.9 percent of units lacking complete plumbing facilities and 1.0 percent of units lacking complete kitchen facilities as of 2000.

The incidence of persons living in structures with no plumbing facilities may be partially attributed to the fact that persons are residing in structures that are not intended as dwelling units, for example the conversion of garages, basements or sheds to a residence although they do not contain plumbing or kitchen facilities. As well, such units may not incorporate heating mechanisms and may depend on space heaters, or have no source of heating. There appears to be a correlation between the number of units with no plumbing facilities (112) and the number, which do not utilize fuel (117). It is interesting to note that 14 percent of those units lacking complete plumbing facilities were built prior to 1960. The majority of units lacking plumbing facilities appear to have been built in the periods between 1995 and 1998, and 1970 to 1979, perhaps reflecting the conversion of garages or basements to apartments with no plumbing or cooking facilities.

Douglas County's housing stock is relatively well maintained, yet there is a core of lower cost houses and manufactured homes that exhibit signs of moderate to significant deterioration. While this has no official documentation and no data on these structures currently exists, a visual survey of the County is sufficient to form this conclusion. Housing and property conditions may affect property values, internal and external perceptions, health and safety concerns. Problem areas include deteriorated siding roofing, and paved areas, lack of or insufficient landscaping, and litter and debris-filled yards. Additional data should be collected through housing surveys, inspections, and market studies in targeted areas resulting in an adequate County-wide housing, data base tied in with the eventual development of a Geographic Information System.

Presently, there is no data at the parcel level and no data on structural integrity. The problem of deteriorated housing should be met by programs, which offer incentives for compliance with developed standards and penalties for non-compliance. These programs should make use of grant funds, as available, from the Federal Government, State Government, ARC RDC if available, and private foundations.

**Table 3**  
**Housing Type, Age and Condition**  
**Douglas County, Douglasville, Region and State Comparisons**

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single-Family	14,786	83.32%	19,819	74.80%	26,717	76.72%
SF Detached			19,414	73.27%	26,017	74.71%
SF Attached			405	1.53%	700	2.01%
Multi-Family	785	4.42%	3,743	14.13%	5,352	15.37%
Mobile Home	2,175	12.26%	2,933	11.07%	2,756	7.91%
Total Units	17,746		26,495		34,825	
Total Units						
ARC RDC			1,052,430		1,331,264	
Unincorporated Co			21,813		26,651	
Built Before 1939:						
Douglas County	1,223	6.89%	742	2.80%	800	2.30%
Douglasville			315	6.70%	239	3.02%
Unincorporated Co			427	1.96%	561	2.10%
Georgia	29,662		212,294	8.05%	192,972	5.88%
ARC RDC			56,329	5.35%	52,960	3.98%
Lacking Complete Plumbing:						
Douglas County	295	1.66%	112	0.42%	112	0.32%
Douglasville			11	0.23%	28	0.35%
Unincorporated Co			101	0.46%	84	0.32%
ARC RDC			4,367	0.41%	6,465	0.49%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

## ■ Tenure and Vacancy in Douglas County's Housing Supply

### Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing

Owner-occupied units made up 74.8 percent of all occupied housing units in 2000, whereas renter-occupied units made up 25.2 percent of occupied units. Owner-occupancy has slightly decreased since 1990 when figures were 77.8 percent owner-occupied and 22.2

percent renter-occupied respectively. Conversely, renter-occupancy has slightly increased since 1990.

Following the above trend, the owner to renter ratio in the county in 2000 is 2.97, down from 3.50 in 1990 and 4.95 percent on 1980. In comparison, the owner to renter ratio in the State has been steadily increasing over the past 2 decades, yet still is well below the ratio in the county at 2.08. (Table 5). In comparison, 92.0 percent of the units in the city of Douglasville are occupied, with a vacancy rate of 8.0 percent. This differential may be attributed to a number of new units, which were completed but not yet occupied, or a higher turn-over in occupancy due to a higher proportion of rental units. As well, owner occupied units constituted 56.9 percent of the occupied housing stock, and 43.1 percent of the occupied units were renter occupied. This trend corresponds to the higher incidence of multi-family type units in the city.

### **Vacancy Rates**

Of the total of 34,825 housing units in Douglas County, 32,822 units or 94.2 percent are occupied units with only 2,003 units, or 5.8 percent unoccupied. This figure is down from the 1990 figure of 9.2 percent. (Table 4).

The 2000 Census reports that approximately 2.3 percent of the ownership units in the county are vacant, with 8.7 percent of the rental units vacant. This closely compares to vacancy rates in the state, at 2.2 and 8.5 percent respectively. Mirroring the occupancy factors within the County, 39.1 percent of the vacant units are for rent, compared to over 50 percent in the city of Douglasville. An additional 29.0 percent of the units are for sale only, with approximately 10.0 percent of the units rented or sold, but not yet occupied. Of the vacant units in the county, 5.8 percent are held for vacation or seasonal use, comprising a very small percentage of the total housing stock.

Analysis of characteristics of vacant units on a countywide basis indicates that 47.6 percent of the vacant units are detached single family units, 16.3 percent are mobile homes, 25.8 percent are multi-family with 3 or more units, and 10.3 percent are either single family at-

**Table 4**  
**Housing Occupancy Characteristics**  
**Douglas County, Region and State Comparisons**

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner Occupied Units	14,067	83.19%	18,880	77.77%	24,555	74.81%
Renter Occupied Units	2843	16.81%	5,397	22.23%	8,267	25.19%
Total Occupied Units	16,910	100.00%	24,277	100.00%	32,822	100.00%
Total Occupied Units						
Georgia	1,215,206		1,536,759		2,029,293	
ARC RDC	408,918		577,226		810,955	
Douglasville	n/a		4,162		7,275	
Unincorporated County	n/a		20,029		25,416	
Vacancy Rate						
Douglasville			520	11.10%	635	8.00%
Unincorporated County			1,670	7.70%	1,236	4.60%
Douglas County Total			2,218	8.40%	2,003	5.60%
Owner Vacancy Rate*						
Douglas County	n/a		n/a		2.31%	
Georgia	n/a		2.36%		2.24%	
ARC RDC	n/a		n/a		1.96%	
Renter Vacancy Rate*						
Douglas County	n/a		n/a		8.66%	
Georgia	n/a		12.36%		8.46%	
ARC RDC	n/a		n/a		7.14%	
Owner to Renter Ratio						
Douglas County	4.95		3.50		2.97	
Georgia	1.86		1.85		2.08	
ARC RDC	1.53		1.57		1.80	

\* Vacancy rate data for 1980 is not consistent with 1990 due to changes in Census methodology.

NOTE: Figures for 1980 show Year-Round units only, while 1990 and 2000 show All Units.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

tached or duplex units. When broken down into city of Douglasville and remainder of unincorporated county area, (small portions of Austell and Villa Rica are included in this data), the characteristics change. Of the vacant units in the unincorporated area, 54.8 percent are single-family detached units, 3.2 percent are attached or duplex units, 22 percent are multi-family, and 20 percent are mobile homes. In comparison, 32.1 percent of the vacant units are single family detached, 25.7 percent are single family attached or duplex, 44.9 percent are multi-family, and only 8.3 percent are mobile homes. The characteristic of vacant properties again reflects trends in types of units being built in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

## ■ Cost of Housing

### Existing Housing

**Table 6**  
**Comparison of Property Values and Rent**  
Region and State Comparisons

Category	1980		1990		2000	
	County as % of		County as % of		County as % of	
	ARC	RDC State	ARC	RDC State	ARC	RDC State
Median Property Value						
New Units	80.50%	166.23%	79.52%	102.95%	68.90%	99.00%
Existing Units					68.90%	99.00%
Median Monthly Rent	97.25%	162.09%	105.45%	129.36%	93.80%	122.77%

Within the Atlanta region, surrounding counties and the state, Douglas County is a comparably affordable place to live. Average home values and average rents are below that of the region in general. Median home values are comparable to those on a state-wide basis, but rents are higher than the statewide median, although costs in 2000 are becoming more

**Table 5**  
**Property Values and Rent**  
Douglas County, Region and State

Category	1980			1990			2000		
	Douglas	Region	State	Douglas	Region	State	Douglas	ARC RDC	State
Median Property Value	\$38,400	\$47,700	\$23,100	\$73,400	\$92,300	\$71,300	\$99,600	\$144,504	\$100,600
Median Monthly Rent	\$248	\$255	\$153	\$445	\$422	\$344	\$620	\$661	\$505

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.



consistent than those of 10 years ago.

The median purchase cost of a home in Douglas County rose from \$73,400 in 1990 to \$99,600 in 2000 (the 2000 Census reports \$99,600 for all owner occupied housing, and a slightly higher figure of \$102,700 for specified owner occupied housing units, which may not include mobile homes), representing an increase of over 35%. Housing values in Douglas County were lower than housing values in the city of Douglasville, where the median housing price was \$114,400, as well as the surrounding Paulding and Cobb counties at \$103,600 and \$142,790 respectively.

**Table 7**  
**Comparison of Housing Costs 2000**  
**Douglas County and Surrounding Counties**

	<u>Douglas</u>	<u>Cobb</u>	<u>Paulding</u>
Owner Housing Value			
25th Percentile	\$84,600	\$109,900	\$88,800
Median	\$102,700	\$147,600	\$106,100
75th Percentile	\$141,500	\$206,200	\$136,000
Rental Housing Rents			
25th Percentile	\$499	\$593	\$371
Median	\$620	\$698	\$519
75th Percentile	\$726	\$831	\$641
Median Mobile Home	\$27,400	\$15,500	\$49,300

NOTE: In actual dollars for year reported. All figures are as reported by resident households.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

In comparison to the regional 10 county ARC ADC median figure of \$144,000, Douglas County housing costs are significantly lower representing an affordable place to live in the metropolitan Atlanta Area (Table 6). This disparity can be explained by examining specified housing units by value classification.

Over 16 percent of the Douglas County (inclusive of the city of Douglasville) housing stock is valued below \$79,999 and a little over half (50.6 percent) of its housing cost below \$100,000. The city of Douglasville had the highest number of units valued under \$79,999, equivalent to 22.3 percent of its housing stock. The high representation of homes valued at \$79,999 or less possibly reflects the 2,756 mobile homes in the county, to which the Census assigns a median value of \$27,400, and the high per-

centage of such housing within the City of Douglasville.

Comparatively, Cobb County had only 8.1 percent of its housing stock valued below \$79,999, and only 21.4 percent below \$100,000, whereas Paulding County had over 19 percent of its housing stock valued under \$79,999 and 46.9 percent below \$100,000.

The city of Douglasville had the highest number of units valued under \$79,999, equivalent to 22.3 percent of its housing stock. At the high range, only 32.4 percent of Douglas County's housing stock was valued over \$125,000 and only 10 percent over \$200,000. Douglas County is comparable to Paulding County where 31.1 percent of the housing stock was valued over



\$125,000. In contrast, Cobb County had over 63.6 percent of its housing stock valued over \$125,000 and 25.7 percent over \$200,000. As well, the city of Douglasville had 44.3 percent of its housing stock valued over \$125,000 and 19.2 percent valued over \$200,000, reflecting the new residential subdivisions targeted toward move-up and executive level housing within the city.

## New Housing

Analysis of new home prices in the county and Douglasville reflect a number of new home communities at various price ranges. Data reported through the Multiple Listing Service tracking price listings of new homes, and listing price compared to sales price for existing homes for 2003 and the first quarter of 2004 provides a picture of the current housing market. General findings are as follows:

- As of 1/1/04, the average listing price of a sample of 2,920 new homes was \$184,108.
- Out of 1,308 resales, the average list price was \$166,014, with the average sales price slightly lower at \$164,765.
- A snapshot of homes sold in March 2004 yields the following information: 21 homes out of a sample of 113 properties (18.6%) sold for less than \$100,000; 50 (44.2%) homes sold for \$100,100 to \$149,999; 21 homes sold for \$150,000 to \$224,999 (18.6%); and the remaining 18.6% sold for over \$225,000. The majority of the homes listing over \$250,000 were located in one of three master planned developments and/or golf course subdivisions. Only one home sold for over \$400,000.

**Table 8**

### Value for Owner-Occupied Housing Units

Douglas County, Douglasville and Unincorporated Area

Housing Value	Douglas County		Douglasville		Unincorporated	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Less than \$50,000	1,924	7.8%	376	9.1%	1,548	7.6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	10,490	42.7%	1,373	33.2%	9,117	44.7%
\$100,000 to \$174,999	8,541	34.8%	1,288	31.1%	7,253	35.5%
\$175,000 - \$249,999	2,139	8.7%	625	15.1%	1,514	7.4%
\$250,000 +	1,461	6.0%	475	11.5%	986	4.8%
Total	24,555	100.0%	4,137	100.0%	20,418	100.0%

Source: 2000 Census

- Price per acre of raw land and farmland ranged from \$11,000 per acre to \$35,000 per acre.

Out of a sample of 141 new homes available as of 4/2004 from an internet listing service: 36.2 percent were selling for between \$117,900 and \$199,999; 46.8 percent were selling for between \$200,000 and \$299,999; 7.1 percent were selling for between \$300,000 and \$400,000; and 9.9 percent were selling for over \$400,000. A survey of 7 new residential subdivisions indicated that five of the subdivisions offered start up homes for \$200,000 and below, one



offered mid-priced move-up homes from \$200,000 to \$400,000 and one offered executive homes between \$300,000 to \$500,000. The data indicates that although the market is changing in the Douglas County area to include move-up and executive housing, it remains comprised of predominantly entry level and moderate priced single-family subdivisions.

## Rental Costs

A summary of rent structures in the County, derived from Census information and internet real estate listings reflects the following information. The median contract rent in the County, including the city of Douglasville is \$620 per month, as compared to \$549 in 1990 and \$189 in 1980. Within the unincorporated area, only 3.3 percent of the total rental units were available for rents below \$350 per month, as compared to 11.5 percent in the city of Douglasville. A larger proportion, 21.2 percent, were available for rents between \$350 and \$600 per month. Proportionately, the city of Douglasville offered more rental units in the lower rental range than the unincorporated County. The largest proportion of units (64.0%) fell within the \$600 to \$999 per month range, with only 11.5 percent renting for over \$1,000 per month.

**Table 9**

### **Rental Structure for All Rental Units**

**Douglas County, Douglasville and Unincorporated Area**

	<u>Douglas County</u>		<u>Douglasville</u>		<u>Unincorporated</u>	
<b>Monthly Cash Rent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than \$349	501	6.5%	346	11.5%	155	3.3%
\$350 to \$599	1,518	19.6%	512	16.9%	1,006	21.2%
\$600 to \$999	4,860	62.6%	1,827	60.5%	3,033	64.0%
\$1,000 - \$1,499	832	10.7%	336	11.1%	496	10.5%
Above \$1,500	47	0.6%	0	0.0%	47	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,758</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,021</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,737</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2000 Census

Among specified vacant units, the median rent asked was slightly higher, at \$668 in the County and \$675 in the city of Douglasville.

- Approximately 14.4 percent of the total vacant rental units asked rents below \$400 per month. Of these units, over 42 percent were located in the city of Douglasville.
- Almost 45 percent of the vacant units were asking rents below \$600 per month, of which 39 percent were located in the city.
- Over half of the available vacant rental units (51.6 percent) rented for between \$600 and \$1,000 per month, of which 39 percent were located in Douglasville.
- Only 3.5 percent of the vacant units rented for more than \$1,000 per month.

Of the rental units available in the unincorporated county: 3 percent were studios; 20.9 percent 1 bedroom; 36.7 percent two-bedroom; and 39.4 percent 3 bedroom. Over one-half of

the studios rented for less than \$750 per month, with 49 percent at rents over \$750 per month; 79 percent of the one-bedrooms rented for between \$500 to \$1,000 per month; 76.4 percent of the two-bedrooms rented for between \$500 to \$1,000 per month; and 58.3 percent of the three bedrooms rented for \$500 to \$1,000 per month.

The majority of units renting at the lower end of the price range for all size units (less than \$300 per month) were located in the city of Douglasville. Single-family units comprised 43 percent of the rental units, which may relate to the high proportion of 3 bedroom rental units in the unincorporated county.

In early 2004, there were approximately 1,500 lease opportunities available on a monthly basis. A sample of 10 rental units available through real estate agency internet listings were all single family units, primarily detached with one duplex unit, with generally higher asking rents than reflected by the Census, ranging from \$600 to \$1,295 per month. The average rent asked was \$993 per month. There were no units asking rents below \$600 per month. Out of a sample of 10 units listed, six were asking rents between \$600 and 1,000 per month. The remaining units, all three-bedroom and built within the past 5 years, were listed at over \$1,000 per month.

With 100% financing available, and the low interest rates of the early 2000 s, home ownership is becoming a more attainable goal, particularly in the first time homebuyers housing market. Although statistics for 2004 are not available, it is possible that the rental vacancy rate may be increasing as it becomes more feasible for households that traditionally would be limited to rental housing are able to purchase entry level units. As well, the favorable interest rates and 0% financing options are allowing a greater number of households to enter the move-up and executive housing market, particularly in Douglas County where home prices are still reasonable in comparison to other counties in the region.

## ■ Housing and Community Characteristics

This section of the housing chapter addresses the relationship between characteristics of the population and the existing housing stock, and the county s expectations and future goals. The following analysis of current county household and housing conditions presents housing needs and concerns relative to various segments of the population. Several factors will influence the degree of demand, or need for new housing in the county in coming years:

- housing needs resulting from population growth;
- housing needs resulting from the overcrowding of units;
- housing needs that result from the overpayment of housing costs; and
- housing needs of special needs groups such as elderly, large families, female headed households, the homeless and the disabled.

These aspects of the community, when compared with existing housing stock, are good measures of how well current housing stock is meeting the residents needs.

### Households Reporting Problems

The State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has compiled information on households reporting some kind of housing problem. These include persons with AIDS, persons having sustained family violence, the elderly, persons with a disability, and persons encountering substance abuse.

The characteristics of persons with housing problems are further evaluated by size of household, tenure, income, household type, age and race. 7,284 persons, or 7.9% of the total County population reported a housing problem.

- **Ownership Information**

- 66 per cent were owners and 44 percent were renters.
- There were 594 owner households (1.8% of total households) and 368 renter households (1.1% of total households) reporting multiple problems.

- **Household Size and Composition**

- The majority of owners with problems (73 percent) lived in 2, 3 and 4 person households;
- The majority of renters with problems (57.7 percent) lived in 1 and 2 person households, potentially reflecting a relationship to age;
- The average household size for owners with problems was 2.8 persons per household; the average household size for renters with problems was slightly smaller at 2.5 persons per household;
- Married couple households comprised 63.2 percent of owner households;
- Female headed households constituting 17.1 percent of owner households;
- Householders living alone comprising 13.2 percent of owners of households;
- householders living alone constituting the largest group at 32.3 percent of renters;
- Married couple households comprised only 28.8 percent of renter households; and
- Female headed households constituting 24.5 percent of renter households.

- **Income**

- Almost 62 percent of the owners with problems reported an income between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year, which is equivalent to an income between 50% and 100% of the county median income;
- 28.5 percent of the renters with problems reported an income between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year;
- The majority of renters with housing problems (71.5%) earned less than \$25,000 per year, which corresponds to the very low-income group per HUD income limits classifications.
- 9.5 percent of the persons reporting a housing problem relied on social security as their primary source of income, again indicating a relationship of housing problems to age.

- The relationship between income and overpayment (cost burden) is further discussed in a subsequent section.

Overall, persons with housing problems were overwhelmingly white, and non-hispanic in origin, at 75 percent of persons with problems, correlating closely with the racial distribution within the county, indicating that housing problems in Douglas County are not particularly attributed to a changing ethnic population. Among persons over the age of 16 reporting housing problems, over 80 percent in each tenure category was employed.

<b>Table 11</b>						
<b>Households Reporting Problems</b>						
<b>Douglas County</b>						
<b>AIDS Cases 1981-2000*</b>	<b>Family Violence, # of Police Actions Taken, 2000**</b>	<b>Total, # Age 62+, 2000***</b>	<b>Total, % Age 62+, 2000****</b>	<b>Disability (Any) % Age 16+, 1990*****</b>	<b>Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Need, 2001*****</b>	<b>Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Need, % of Total Population, 2001</b>
89	757	8,688	9.43%	21.39%	5,722	6.21%
*Aids Cases Reported by Year of Diagnosis (3 = <5), 1981-2000. Retrieved June 14, 2002, from the University of Georgia, Georgia Statistics System web site: <a href="http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu">http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu</a>						
Investigation Family Violence Statistics Search Page web site: <a href="http://www.state.ga.us/gbi/famv.cgi">http://www.state.ga.us/gbi/famv.cgi</a>						
***Total, # Age 62+, 2000. Retrieved June 14, 2002, from the University of Georgia, Georgia Statistics System web site: <a href="http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu">http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu</a>						
****Total, % Age 62+, 2000. Retrieved August 19, 2002, from the University of Georgia, Georgia Statistics System web site: <a href="http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu">http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu</a>						
*****Disability, % Age 16+ with any disability, 1990. Retrieved June 14, 2002, from the University of Georgia, Georgia Statistics System web site: <a href="http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu">http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu</a>						
*****Marsteller, F.A. (2001, November 3). 2001 Estimates of the Georgia Adult and Juvenile Populations Needing Substance Abuse Treatment.						
Census Estimate, July 1994. Retrieved August 19, 2002, from the University of Georgia, Georgia Statistics System web site: <a href="http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu">http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu</a>						

Over 91 percent of owners reporting a housing problem lived in single-family detached units, with 7 percent in mobile homes. In comparison, less than 32 percent of renters experiencing housing problems resided in a single family detached unit, with over 56 percent living in multi-family housing and 7.8 percent in mobile homes. This is further expanded in subsequent analyses of overpayment by tenure and income by incorporated city of Douglasville and unincorporated county.

### Income Characteristics

The median household income in Douglas County, according to the 2000 Census, increased from \$37,414 in 1990 to \$50,108. The County income was higher than the median income in the city of Douglasville, which increased from \$30,275 in 1990 to \$45,289 in 2000.

The HUD median family income for the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2004 was \$69,000. HUD utilizes four income categories for housing affordability analysis: Very Low income (50% of the median income); Low income (51% to 80% of the median income); Moderate income (81% to 120% of the median income); and Above Moderate income (above 120% of the median). The higher \$69,000 median figure is consistent with definitions of low and moderate income households used in various Federal and State housing programs, e.g. Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly Section 8), and use of HOME or other Federal funding programs based on income. However, for purposes of analyzing affordability of the housing market within Douglas County itself, the lower median income is used, and the definitions of affordability applied, which would reflect more realistic economic conditions than utilizing the higher median. Under the scenario that the higher median is used, as for application for Federal funding, the income limits would subsequently increase as follows: Very Low income (50% of the median income) to \$34,500; Low income (51% to 80% of the median income) to \$55,200; Moderate income (81% to 120% of the median income) to \$82,800; and Above Moderate income (above 120% of the median) to incomes above \$82,800. Although use of these income limits based on the Atlanta MSA as established by HUD as threshold in-

come limits would theoretically allow households to afford a rental unit with a higher rent, or purchase a home with a higher cost as compared to the use of income limits based on the County's median income, it does not accurately reflect the conditions in the County.

Although the Census classifications for income are not the same as the household income categories used by HUD and DCA in housing affordability analyses and award of grants and other forms of assistance, general comparisons can be made. Subsequently, application of the HUD definitions to the 2000

**Table 12**  
**2000 Household Income Estimates**  
**Douglasville and Unincorporated County**

Income Category	Douglasville		Unincorporated		Douglas County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-\$14,999	1,040	14.20%	2,120	8.30%	3,160	9.60%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	771	10.50%	2,271	8.90%	3,042	9.30%
\$25,000 - \$39,999	1,403	19.20%	4,832	18.90%	6,235	19.00%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	1,509	20.60%	6,197	24.20%	7,706	23.40%
\$60,000 +	2,599	35.50%	10,137	39.70%	12,736	38.70%
Total Units	7,322	100.00%	25,537	100.00%	32,879	100.00%

Source: 2000 Census

Census data estimates for the County result in the following income classifications: Very Low income households range from less than \$25,055; Low income households range from \$25,056 to \$40,086; Moderate income households range from \$40,089 to \$60,130; and Above Moderate income households exceed \$60,131. As shown in Table 12, approximately 38 percent of the households in the County are lower income, with 18.9 percent classified as very low income and 19 percent as Low-income households. Above Moderate income households constitute almost 39 percent of the County total, with the remaining 23.4 percent as Moderate-income households. These data indicate that there is a need for housing affordable to the Very Low and Low income households, as well as a strong market for housing that serves the needs of Moderate and Above Moderate income households.

The national average poverty threshold for a family of four persons was \$17,960 in 2001 (census). The 2000 census reports that 5.7 percent of households in the County were living below the poverty level, with 2.1 percent of the households residing in the city of Douglasville, and the remaining 3.6 percent on the unincorporated county. Proportionally, the incidence of poverty in the city of Douglasville is greater than in the unincorporated areas, at 10.1 percent of the city population in poverty as compared to 4.5 percent of the unincorporated county in poverty. Almost 45 percent of households in poverty were female-headed households with children, followed by married couples at 36.8 percent of households in poverty, of which almost one-half had children. The remaining 18.2 percent were male-headed households, of which 73 percent had children. Even though the cost of housing in Douglas County is generally lower than in surrounding counties in the Atlanta region, lower income households may require housing with rents or payments lower than payments associated with market rate housing. Often, payment assistance is needed from local, state or federal government agencies to assist these households in getting adequate housing. Available programs should be used by the County to increase opportunities for affordable housing for special needs groups. This indicates a particular need for affordable housing for female-headed households with children, and family units for households with incomes below the poverty level.

## Housing Cost Burden

Overpayment refers to renters and owners who must pay more than 30 percent of their gross income for shelter. A high cost of housing eventually causes fixed income, elderly, and lower income families to use a disproportionate share of their income for housing. This may cause a series of related financial problems which may result in deterioration of housing stock, because costs associated with maintenance must be sacrificed for more immediate expenses (e.g. food, medical care, clothing, and utilities), or inappropriate housing types or sizes to suit the needs of the households.

**Table 13**  
**Percentage of Homeowners Paying More than 30% of Income by Income Bracket**  
**Douglas County, Douglasville and Unincorporated Area**

	City of Douglasville		Unincorporated County		Total Douglas County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total with a Mortgage	3,677		17,436		21,113	
Less than \$10,000	79		527		606	
30% or more	57	1.55%	346	2.00%	400	4.00%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	281		829		1,110	
30% or more	152	4.10%	428	2.50%	580	2.70%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	427		2,433		2,860	
30% or more	232	6.30%	1,086	6.20%	1,318	6.20%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	615		3,317		3,932	
30% or more	168	4.60%	882	5.10%	1,050	5.00%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	874		4,900		5,774	
30% or more	97	2.60%	341	2.00%	438	2.10%
\$75,000 to \$99,000	689		3,030		3,719	
30% or more	31	0.80%	66	0.40%	97	0.50%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	496		1,933		2,429	
30% or more	6	0.20%	31	0.20%	37	0.20%
\$150,000 and above	216		467		683	
30% or more	0	0%	0	0%	8	0.00%
Total Paying Over 30%		20.15%		18.40%		20.70%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000



Table 13 compiles the number of households within the county whose housing costs are considered a burden. Using income guidelines as provided by the Department of Community Affairs, households paying between 30% and 49% of their income are considered cost-burdened and households paying over 50% are severely cost-burdened. Approximately 23 percent of the households are considered cost burdened within the total county and 8.4 percent of the county is considered severely cost burdened. While this includes approximately 6,903 households, of which 56.9 percent are homeowners and 43 percent are renters, it is still relatively low. By comparison, in the Atlanta MSA \_\_\_% of households were spending over 30% of their income on housing compared with 23.0% in Douglas County.

**Table 14**

**Percentage of Renters Paying More than 30% of Income by Income Bracket  
Douglas County, Douglasville and Unincorporated Area**

	City of Douglasville		Unincorporated County		Total Douglas County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Paying Rent	3,132		5,013		8,145	
Less than \$10,000	458		415		873	
30% or more	345	11.00%	235	4.70%	580	7.10%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	550		710		1,260	
30% or more	452	14.40%	623	12.40%	1,077	13.20%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	769		1,292		2,061	
30% or more	440	14.00%	699	13.90%	1,139	14.00%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	586		1,136		1,722	
30% or more	37	1.20%	142	2.80%	179	2.20%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	511		898		1,409	
30% or more	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
\$75,000 to \$99,000	136		436		572	
30% or more	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	122		126		248	
30% or more	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
\$150,000 and above	216		0		0	
30% or more	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total Paying Over 30%		40.60%		33.80%		36.50%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2000

From the 2000 Census, cost burden can be broken down further into the incorporated city of Douglasville and the remaining unincorporated county (inclusive of small portions of the cities of Villa Rica and Austell). Of the 6,903 total households reporting a cost burden,

2,197 (7.5 percent of the total county households) are located within the city of Douglasville, with 4,706 (16.1 percent of the total county households) residing in the remainder of the county. Within the city of Douglasville, 32.3 percent of the households reported a cost burden of 30% or more, with 46.3 percent of the renters reporting a cost burden, as compared to 20.3 percent of the owners. In the remainder of the County, 18.2 percent of the owners experienced a cost burden, as compared to 30.4 percent of the renters. In numerical terms, however, the number of owners experiencing a cost burden exceeds the number of renters in both jurisdictions. Approximately 44.9 percent of the cost burdened renters had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 50% of the median county income), and 45.9 percent of the renters had incomes of less than \$35,000 (between 50% and 80% of the county median). Comparatively, 24.3 percent of the cost burdened owners had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 50% of the median county income), 34.0 percent of the owners had incomes of less than \$35,000 (between 50% and 80% of the county median), and 27.7 percent had incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (between 80% and 100% of county median).

In the unincorporated county, 18.2 percent of the owners experienced a cost burden, as compared to 30.4 percent of the renters. In numerical terms, however, the number of owners experiencing a cost burden exceeds the number of renters in both jurisdictions. Approximately 44.9 percent of the cost burdened renters had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 50% of the median county income), and 45.9 percent of the renters had incomes of less than \$35,000 (between 50% and 80% of the county median). Comparatively, 24.3 percent of the cost burdened owners had incomes under \$20,000 (less than 50% of the median county income), 34.0 percent of the owners had incomes of less than \$35,000 (between 50% and 80% of the county median), and 27.7 percent had incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (between 80% and 100% of county median).

A distinction between owner and renter housing overpayment is important because, while homeowners may overextend themselves financially to afford a home purchase, the owner maintains the option of selling the home and may realize tax benefits or appreciation in value. In addition, some owner households choose to allocate a higher percentage of their disposable monthly income on housing costs because this allocation is justified in light of the financial benefits of ownership. Renters on the other hand, are limited to the rental market, and are generally required to pay the rent established by the market. The discrepancy between owner and renter households is largely reflective of the tendency for year round renter households to have lower incomes than owner households. While efforts to reduce the cost burden of housing should be considered, particularly lower income rental households, this is not among the county's most pressing problems, as this segment of the population represents only 3 percent of the total households in the unincorporated county area.

**Table 15**  
**Affordable Rent/Purchase by Annual Income**  
**Douglas County**

Classification	Annual Income	Maximum Affordable Rent Payment	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price
Very Low	\$0 - \$25,055	\$626	\$105,000
Low	\$25,056 - \$40,086	\$1,002	\$172,000
Moderate	\$40,087 - \$60,130	\$1,503	\$250,000
Above Moderate	Above \$60,131	\$1,503+	\$250,100
Median	\$50,108	\$1,253	\$207,000

Rent Based on 30% of income

Classifications based on HUD income limits

Purchase Price based on 10% down, 5% interest and 1.2% taxes and insurance

Table 15 identifies the affordable rents and purchase price by income category for a family of four based on 30 percent of income expended. In the case of rent, the 30 percent does not include allowance for utilities which may impose additional costs to the renter between \$50 and \$100 per month, depending on what utilities the renter is responsible for paying, and make rental of a unit which otherwise might be affordable to become a condition of overpayment.

### **Affordability of Home Ownership**

A summary of home prices in the County, derived from the Census, a sample of real estate sales during the period of January 2003 through March 2004, and internet marketing web-sites reflects the following information, as previously presented in detail:

- According to the Census, a variety of housing types at a range of prices are offered in the unincorporated county, from homes with values less than \$10,000 to over \$1,000,000 or more.
- According to the Census, slightly over 50 percent of the units were valued at \$100,000 or less, with 23.3 percent valued at less than \$80,000. This indicates that there appears to be adequate stock of homes to accommodate the 18.9 percent of the county households with incomes less than 50% of the County median, which can afford a monthly payment not exceeding \$626.
- An additional 29 percent of the existing units in the County were valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000. It appears as if adequate stock is available to house the 19 percent of the total County households which are considered lower income (at 50% to 80% of County median income), and can theoretically afford a payment which does not exceed \$1,002 per month.
- The census reports only 6.0 percent of the housing units with values over \$250,000, although over 38 percent of the households could theoretically afford to purchase a home at that price point. Although in the past four years a large number of new move-up and executive level housing has been constructed which is not reflected in the Census counts, it is clear that there is a need for more expensive housing catering to households with incomes over 120% of the County median.
- Only 8.9 percent of the units had a mortgage and/or monthly cost that was less than \$600 per month, which is comparable to the \$626 monthly amount a household with an income of 50% of the County median can afford based on expenditure of 30% of monthly income. Of those units without a mortgage (units which may have their mortgages already paid off or other circumstances), 97 percent of the units had a monthly cost of less than \$600.
- However, over 53 percent of the housing stock with a mortgage was reported to have a monthly payment of less than \$1,000, which is the amount affordable to lower income households with incomes between 50% and 80% of the County median.

### **Affordability of Rental Units**

A summary of rent structures in the County, derived from Census information and April 2004 real estate company internet listing surveys, as previously discussed, reflects the following information for renters:

- Within the unincorporated area, only 3.3 percent of the total rental units were available for rents below \$350 per month, which is affordable to households with extremely very low incomes (earning 25% of the county median), which comprise over 8 percent of the

rental households, indicating a shortfall in the number of units with rents affordable to the lowest income households in the unincorporated county.

- A larger proportion, 21.2 percent, rented between \$350 and \$600 per month, which is affordable to households at the upper ranges of the very low income category (50% of the County median income), which constitutes over 14 percent of the households in the unincorporated county.
- The largest proportion of units (64.0%) fell within the \$600 to \$999 per month range, which is affordable to households within the low-income range (50-80% of County median income) which constitute almost 26 percent of the households.
- Only 11.5 percent rented for over \$1,000 per month, which is generally affordable to households earning over 80% of the median income.
- A sample of 10 rental units available through real estate agency internet listings were all single family units, primarily detached with one duplex unit, with generally higher asking rents than reflected by the Census, ranging from \$600 to \$1,295 per month. The average rent asked was \$993 per month. There were no units asking rents below \$600 per month. Out of a sample of 10 units listed, six were asking rents between \$600 and 1,000 per month. The remaining units, all three-bedroom and built within the past 5 years, were listed at over \$1,000 per month. This indicates that there are generally two bedroom single family rental units available to households earning between 50 and 80% of the County median income, and three-bedroom units available at rents affordable to households with incomes over 80% of the County median.
- The above analysis of current market conditions suggests that while there may be an adequate number of rental units available for lower income households, there may not be an adequate number providing the size needed by the lower income households.

## Overcrowding

In response to higher housing prices, lower income households must often be satisfied with smaller, less adequate housing for available money. This may result in overcrowding. Overcrowding places a strain on physical facilities, does not provide a satisfying environment, and eventually may cause conditions which contribute both to deterioration of the housing stock and neighborhoods in general.

The Bureau of Census defines overcrowded housing units as those in excess of one person per room average. Overcrowding is often reflective of one of three conditions: 1) either a family or household is living in too small a dwelling; 2) a family is required to house extended family members (i.e. grandparents or grown children and their families living with parents, termed doubling); 3) a family is renting inadequate living space to non-family members, also representing doubling.

The number of rooms available in a residence, and the proportion of larger or smaller units in a jurisdiction influences the incidence of overcrowding. Since 1990, housing units have been getting larger on a countywide basis. The proportion of large units (7, 8, and 9 rooms) has increased from 25 percent to almost 33 percent of the total housing stock. Conversely, the proportion of smaller units has decreased since 1990 from 22.4 percent to 20.4 percent, as well as the proportion of average sized homes with 5 and 6 rooms, from 52 percent in 1990 to 47 percent in 2000. This same trend applies to both the city of Douglasville and the unincorporated county.

Table 16 shows the number of rooms per unit, by tenure. Generally, owner-occupied hous-

**Table 16**  
**Rooms In Housing Unit 2000**  
**Douglas County, Douglasville and Unincorporated Area**

Size	Douglas County		Unincorporated County		Incorporated Areas	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Owner Occupied						
1-Room	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2-Rooms	102	0.3%	78	0.3%	24	0.3%
3-Rooms	719	2.2%	581	2.3%	138	1.9%
4-Rooms	1,107	3.4%	877	3.4%	230	3.2%
5-Rooms	4,976	15.2%	4226	16.5%	750	10.3%
6-Rooms	7,390	22.5%	6476	25.3%	914	12.6%
7-Rooms	4,639	14.1%	3958	15.5%	681	9.4%
8-Rooms	2,905	8.9%	2351	9.2%	554	7.6%
9+ Rooms	2,717	8.3%	1871	7.3%	846	11.6%
Total Own	24,555	74.9%	20418	79.9%	4137	56.9%
Renter Occupied						
1-Room	212	0.6%	119	0.5%	93	1.3%
2-Rooms	640	1.9%	461	1.8%	179	2.5%
3-Rooms	1,345	4.1%	691	2.7%	654	8.9%
4-Rooms	2,275	6.9%	1251	4.9%	1024	14.1%
5-Rooms	1,802	5.5%	1144	4.5%	658	9.0%
6-Rooms	1,294	3.9%	888	3.5%	406	5.6%
7-Rooms	357	1.1%	306	1.2%	51	0.7%
8-Rooms	222	0.7%	165	0.6%	57	0.8%
9+ Rooms	120	0.4%	104	0.4%	16	0.2%
Total Rent	8,267	25.1%	5129	20.1%	3138	43.1%
Total	32,822	100.0%	25548	100.0%	7275	100.0%

Source: 2000 Census

ing tends to be larger. Over 50 percent of the units in the unincorporated county are owner-occupied with 5, 6 and 7 rooms, which would generally correspond to 2, 3 and some 4 bedroom units. These size units constitute over 70 percent of the owner-occupied housing stock, with 6 room units comprising the largest proportion. Among renter-occupied housing, the majority of units, 68.9 percent of the rental stock, are comprised of 4, 5 and 6 room units, with 5 room units as the largest proportion. The number of small rental units

(1, 2, 3 and 4 rooms) exceeds the number of small owner-occupied units of the same size,

**Table 17**  
**Occupants Per Room by Tenure**  
**Douglas County, Douglasville and Unincorporated Area**

Occupants/Room	Douglas County		Unincorporated County		Incorporated Areas	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Owner Occupied</b>						
0.50 or less	17,030	69.3%	14,062	68.9%	2,968	71.7%
0.51 to 1.00	6,917	28.2%	5,861	28.7%	1,056	25.5%
1.01 to 1.50	483	2.0%	390	1.9%	93	2.3%
1.51 to 2.00	97	0.4%	81	0.4%	16	0.4%
2.01 or more	28	0.1%	24	0.1%	4	0.1%
Total	24,555	100.0%	20,418	100.0%	4,137	100.0%
<b>Renter Occupied</b>						
0.50 or less	4,630	56.0%	2,899	56.5%	1,731	55.2%
0.51 to 1.00	3,037	36.8%	1,817	35.4%	1,220	38.9%
1.01 to 1.50	426	5.2%	309	6.0%	117	3.7%
1.51 to 2.00	116	1.4%	86	1.7%	30	1.0%
2.01 or more	58	0.7%	18	0.4%	40	1.3%
Total	8,267	100.1%	5,129	100.0%	3,138	100.1%
Total Households	32,822	100.0%	25,547	100.0%	7,275	100.0%

Source: 2000 Census

at 9.9 percent of the total stock for renters as compared to 6 percent for owner-occupied units.

Information provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs relating to persons or households reporting housing problems indicates that 319 owner households and 397 renter households experienced overcrowding conditions. Data from the Census differs slightly. According to the Census, approximately 3.5 percent of all households (903) in the unincorporated county area reported overcrowded housing conditions, of which 54.8 percent were owner occupied units and 45.2 percent were renter occupied units. Proportionately, renters experienced overcrowding at a higher rate than owners with 8.0 percent of renters living in overcrowded units as compared to 2.4 percent of owners. This is reflected in the fact that within the total unincorporated county area, owners experiencing overcrowding comprised 1.9 percent of the total households, while renters experiencing overcrowding comprised 1.6 percent of the total households, although proportionately renters represented only 20 percent of the total households. Within the city of Douglasville, 4.1 percent of the households experienced overcrowded conditions, whereby overcrowding among owners represented 1.6 percent of the total households, and overcrowding among renters represented 2.6 percent of the total households.

The 2000 Census reports the average household size of owner-occupied units at 2.87 persons, and the average size of renter-occupied units at 2.52 persons per unit. Within the unincorporated county areas, 3 and 4 person households comprised 38.3 percent of the total, with 2 person households comprising 33 percent of the total. Larger households with 5 or more persons constituted 11.5 percent of the total households, and single person house-

holds comprised 17.1 percent of the households. Distribution in the city of Douglasville was comparable with one difference the proportion of single person households constituted 23 percent of total households with a slightly lower representation of 3 and 4 person households at 34.7 percent of the total.

### Special Needs Populations

A variety of populations within Douglas County have special housing needs. Within the county as a whole, 15,562 persons, or 18.4 percent of the population over age 5 were reported as having a disability. By jurisdiction, 3,287 (18.3 percent of the city population over 5) reside in the city of Douglasville, and 12,275 (18.4 percent of remaining county population over age 5) persons resided in the remaining unincorporated county (inclusive of portions of Austell and Villa Rica). Within the unincorporated county, persons between the ages of 21 and 65 represented 66.1 percent of the total population over age 5. Proportionally, 64.5 percent of all disabled persons are between age 21 and 65. Persons over 65 constituted over 21 percent of all persons reporting a disability in the unincorporated area, although persons over 65 represent 8.2 percent of the population over age 5. In other terms, 49 percent of seniors reported a disability.

Table 19 includes an inventory of some disabilities accounted for by the Census Bureau. According to the Census, there were 28,558 disabilities reported in the county, of which 21 percent (5,997) disabilities were reported within the city of Douglasville. It should be noted that the reporting of a disability does not equate to the actual number of persons reporting disabilities. A single person may have reported more than one kind of disability. For example, a person may report a physical disability that in turn results in a self care disability and an inability to work, resulting in being counted in three categories. Within the unincorporated county area, seniors accounted for 25.3 percent of the disabilities, persons between 16 and 65 accounted for 69.9 percent of the disabilities, and persons under 15 represented the remaining 4.8 percent. Almost 25 percent of all disabilities reported were an employment disability.

Many of these disabilities simply require design modification to existing residences. Other populations, such as individuals with extreme mental disabilities, or self care limitations, require long-term residential care. Within the county, specialty housing, such as residential group homes and shelters exist to meet the needs of this group. There are shelters for victims of domestic violence and their families, rehabilitation centers for individuals recovering from drug addiction or mental illness, and transitional housing for homeless families.

**Table 18**  
**Average Household Size**  
**Douglas County, Douglasville and Unincorporated Area**

Size	Douglas County	Unincorporate County	Incorporated Area
Owner Occupied			
1-Person	3,566	2,867	699
2-Person	8,369	7,027	1,342
3-Person	5,128	4,282	846
4-person	4,584	3,858	727
5-Person	1,947	1,607	340
6-Person	621	515	106
7+ Person	340	263	77
TOTAL	24,555	20,419	4,137
Renter Occupied			
1-Person	2,474	1,497	977
2-Person	2,309	1,395	914
3-Person	1,512	880	632
4-person	1,109	788	321
5-Person	531	339	192
6-Person	222	157	65
7+ Person	110	73	37
	8,267	5,129	3,138
Total	32,822	25,548	7,275

Source: 2000 Census

A less visible component of special needs populations are the homeless. Based on a 2001 study conducted by the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, 25 calls were received

**Table 19**  
**Special Needs Populations**  
**Douglas County**

Age Group	Tallied	Sensory	Physical	Mental	Self-Care	Go-Outside	Employment
Douglas County							
5 to 15	1,403	211	184	869	139	0	0
16 to 64	20,141	1,671	4,256	2,262	1,093	3,864	6,995
65 and older	7,104	1,127	2,573	875	751	1,688	0
Total	28,648	3,009	7,013	4,006	1,983	5,552	6,995
Douglasville							
5 to 15	318	56	49	177	36	0	0
16 to 64	4,464	373	954	535	286	859	1,457
65 and older	1,345	237	570	151	128	259	0
Total	6,127	666	1,573	863	450	1,118	1,457
Unincorporated County							
5 to 15	1,085	155	135	692	103	0	0
16 to 64	15,677	1,298	3,302	1,727	807	3,005	5,538
65 and older	5,759	890	2,003	724	623	1,429	0
Total	22,521	2,343	5,440	3,143	1,533	4,434	5,538

Source: 2000 Census

for placement of 39 individuals from Douglas County in shelters. There are two homeless shelters in Douglas County: SHARE House, a 50 bed facility for female victims of domestic abuse; and the Douglas County Homeless Shelter. The Homeless Shelter is a single structure with an 18-bed capacity for intact families and single women with children, funded through a non-profit organization and supplemented by grants through DCA. Residents may stay for a period up to 6 months, or longer if necessary. The nonprofit organization operating the Homeless Shelter indicates that additional shelter facilities, for a total of 40 beds, are needed in the County. Single men are referred to the Metro Atlanta Task Force for placement in Jefferson's Place in Atlanta, or other shelter facilities in the Atlanta metropolitan region. The County should consider assisting the non-profit organization in working with DCA to apply for additional potential funding for expansion of available facilities with up to 22 additional beds.

In addition, Travelers Aid operates a transitional housing program providing four 2-bedroom units (each providing up to 6 beds) in Douglas County (currently within the unincorporated area but slated for a relocation to Douglasville in 2004) for households which are: currently residing in a shelter; have been evicted from their current residence; are living in extremely overcrowded conditions; or facing homelessness. Occupants are recruited from the Homeless Shelter or SHARE house, or are referred by organizations, churches, or social services. Other resources serving the homeless, or nearly homeless in the County are the Douglas County Continuum of Care, and the Douglas County Food Bank.



## Age and Housing Needs

Residents require different accommodations throughout their lifecycle. The needs of a single person are very different to that of a family and again to someone we would consider an empty nester. According to Census data, median age in Douglas County has increased from 30.9 in 1990, to 32.5 in the year 2000. Between the years 1990 and 2000, the age

Table ?

### Comparison of Age Distribution

Distribution by County, Region & State

Age Group	County	Region*	State	County as % of	
				Region*	State
0-4	7.31%	7.37%	7.27%	99.12%	100.51%
5-14	15.75%	14.88%	14.94%	105.81%	105.37%
15-19	7.23%	6.81%	7.28%	106.09%	99.26%
20-24	6.25%	7.03%	7.23%	89.01%	86.46%
25-29	7.28%	8.83%	7.84%	82.41%	92.84%
30-34	8.34%	9.08%	8.03%	91.85%	103.78%
35-44	17.86%	17.96%	16.53%	99.45%	108.00%
45-54	14.24%	13.61%	13.19%	104.69%	107.97%
55-64	8.20%	7.16%	8.08%	114.48%	101.50%
65+	7.55%	7.27%	9.59%	103.77%	78.70%

Source: Year 2000 U.S. Census. County figures are for all of Douglas County.

There are a total of 14,517 persons over the age of 65, comprising 16% of the total population. The 35 to 54 year old age group comprises the largest percentage of the population, at 32%. While almost half of the population may be comprised of young families with children, it appears as if the mature population with older children is steadily increasing. By the year 2025 an even greater number of residents will move into the 65 over age range, with a projected 15% of the population at age 65 and above. As the County's age characteristics continue to diversify, special planning attention should be aimed towards community facility improvements, live, work, play environments, linkages and housing to meet the needs of a wide range of ages and lifestyles.

Various housing types will be required to meet the lifestyle characteristics of the area. Master planned developments that incorporate a non-residential component and special considerations to linkages, and mixed uses within village centers will enable people of all ages to remain within the County. Not only will diversified housing stock (such as duplex, multi-family, townhouse, etc.) be important to younger families, single persons and empty nesters as affordable housing alternatives, they will provide construction jobs and available housing for an increasing labor market.

To meet the needs of this diversified population, the above population statistics reflect the need for an increased attention to public facilities such as schools, recreation, health facilities and a continued emphasis on youth oriented and elderly programs countywide.

## Employment and Commuting Patterns

A strong and diverse economy is important because it creates jobs, increases income and provides a more stable tax base, and thereby provides a better quality of life. Although the county continues to grow economically, it continues to remain primarily a bedroom community for the Atlanta Metro area, based on analyses of commuting patterns. For Douglas County to provide for the necessary services to meet the needs of its population, the County will have to continue to diversify its economic base. Table 21 summarizes the changes in commuting patterns between 1990 and 2000. The number of persons living and working within Douglas County is increasing slightly from 32.8 percent in 1990, to 36.7 percent in 2000. Over 62 percent still commute to employment outside of the county as of 2000, down slightly from over 66 percent in 1990. In addition to over 36 percent of the commuters working within Douglas County, almost 31 percent of persons residing in Douglas County commute to Fulton County, 16.1 percent commute to Cobb County, 4.8 percent commute to DeKalb County, and 2.6 and 2.3 percent commute to Clayton and Carroll Counties respectively. The remaining 6.7 percent commute to Paulding and Gwinnett counties, other locations in the state, or outside of the state. Out of state employment remains below 1 percent. As seen in the Economic Development Chapter job growth within the county increased from 26,048 in 1990 to 31,818 in 2002.

**Table ?**  
**Commuting Patterns**  
Historic and Current

Category	Count		Percentage	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Worked in County of Residence	12,081	16,924	33.10%	36.92%
Worked outside County of Residence	24,412	28,916	66.90%	63.08%

Figures from U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Table ?

**Commuting Patterns**

<b>Employed Residents of Douglas</b>			<b>Persons Working in Douglas</b>		
<b>County Where Employed</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>County of Residence</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Carroll	1,057	2.29%	Carroll	3,438	10.61%
Clayton	1,196	2.59%	Clayton	567	1.75%
Cobb	7,450	16.13%	Cobb	4,011	12.37%
DeKalb	2,211	4.79%	DeKalb	674	2.08%
<b>Douglas</b>	<b>16,924</b>	<b>36.65%</b>	<b>Douglas</b>	<b>16,924</b>	<b>52.21%</b>
Fulton	14,253	30.87%	Fulton	1,192	3.68%
Gwinnett	747	1.62%	Haralson	562	1.73%
Paulding	596	1.29%	Paulding	2,865	8.84%
Other	1,742	3.77%	Other	2,182	6.73%
Total <u>46,176</u>			Total <u>32,415</u>		

Source: Georgia Department of Labor/2000 U.S. Census.

In 1980 there were 12,259 persons employed in Douglas County. By 2000 employment had doubled to 32,415. Over 52 percent of the persons employed in Douglas County reside in the county, with: 12.4 percent residing in Cobb County; 10.6 percent residing in Carroll County; 8.8 percent residing in Paulding County; 3.7 percent residing in Fulton County; 2.1 percent residing in DeKalb County; 1.7 percent residing in both Clayton and Haralson Counties; and 6.7 percent living in other counties or states. Almost 45% of the employment opportunities in 2000 are located within the incorporated city portions of the county. According to the available data for the industry mix in Douglas County, the top sector within the county was services, capturing 30.5% of the workforce; followed by retail trade at 24%. Construction and government/public administration constitute approximately 11% each. Agriculture, forestry and mining is the smallest sector at less than 2% of the total employment market.

**Affordable Housing Options and Housing Programs**

It appears from statistics that housing affordability in Douglas County is on par with surrounding counties and lower than some adjacent counties and the 10 county ARC region in general. Approximately 50 percent of the existing housing is valued at less than \$100,000, which theoretically provides ownership opportunities for persons with income of 50% or less than the county median, although homes valued at the lower end of the range are scarce. The median price of a new home is significantly higher, at around \$180,000 to \$188,000, which indicates that the move-up and executive level housing market is expanding, although still limited. The median rent is \$620, which also theoretically accommodates housing affordable to persons with incomes less than 50% of the median income. However, a housing affordability problem does exist in the County, within both the City of Douglasville and unincorporated areas, particularly among very low income renters. A majority of households are currently paying less than 30% of their monthly income for housing related expenses. The correlation between income deficiencies and housing problems (affordability and maintenance) indicates the need to develop the means to assist a small contingent of lower income renters (6.9% of the total households in the unincorporated County), homeowners and potential homeowners with both attaining and/or improving their current hous-

ing. Government subsidized programs will continue to be instrumental in improving the living conditions of these households. In general, it is reasonable to expect that housing needs of low income households will, in many cases, continue to be unsatisfied through market rate inventory, even though the County is extremely well stocked in lower cost housing stock, making government assisted housing programs essential.

The Douglas County Housing Authority provides 229 units of public housing with rents affordable to low income households, based on the HUD Median Family Income of \$69,000 for the Atlanta MSA. (as discussed previously). All of the public housing units are located within the City of Douglasville. There are 110 family units, 100 units for the elderly and handicapped, and 19 new handicapped wheelchair accessible units funded through a HUD Grant. In 1998, the Douglas County Housing Authority was authorized to issue a bond for \$8,360,000 for one of their public housing projects.

Douglas County works with the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for award of grants or funding for housing assistance through a number of DCA's housing assistance programs. In addition, grants for assistance to the two homeless facilities in the County, S.H.A.R.E. House and the Douglas County Shelter, has also been awarded utilizing funds from the Federal Emergency Shelter Grant and State Housing Trust Fund. The principle programs utilized over the past decade include:

- **Housing Choice Vouchers:** Formerly the Section 8 Rental Assistance program, Housing Choice Vouchers is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program helps low and very low income households pay rent in the private rental housing market. DCA determines if a person is eligible to participate in the program. People who participate in the program normally pay 30 percent of their income as their portion of monthly rent and utilities. DCA pays the remainder of the rent to the landlord. There are program requirements regarding the maximum rent allowable and the quality of the rental unit. In some special cases, rental assistance vouchers may be tied to a particular apartment complex (project based section 8) although this is not the case in Douglas County. In 2003, the Housing Choice Voucher Program assisted 345 renter households throughout Douglas County.
- **OwnHOME Down Payment Loan Program:** This program provides 0% interest loans to help first time home-buyers with down payment, closing costs and pre-paid items associated with owning a home. Generally Own HOME loans are available in only conjunction with the Home Buyer Mortgage Program. Own HOME loans are made as delayed repayment second mortgage loans of \$5,000. Delayed repayment means that the loan is repaid when the home is sold, transferred or refinanced or if the home is no longer the borrower's primary residence. Own HOME borrowers must provide a portion of their own funds, with a contribution of one percent of the sale price of the home, for the down payment, closing costs or prepaid items. Own HOME loans are available from local lenders participating in the Home Buyer Program. Since 1996, 203 loans have been completed to Douglas County residents.
- **Home Buyer Mortgage Program:** The Home Buyer Mortgage Program provides low interest rate mortgage loans for borrowers with moderate incomes and modest assets. Borrowers generally must be first time homebuyers. The loans are 30 year fixed rate mortgages with interest rates that are below the market rate. Loans are originated under FHA, VA, conventional or USDA/Rural Development Guidelines. Homes purchased under the program cannot exceed maximum sales price limits. Application for these loans is made through a network of participating local lenders in the community. The required down payment is a minimum of 1 percent of the sales price, and the home must be the borrower's primary residence.
- **Emergency Shelter Grant Program:** This program provides funds to non-profit organizations and local governments from the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless

Commission and Emergency Shelter Grants Program funds allocated to the State by HUD. Grant funds must be used to provide shelter and essential services to homeless persons. Eligible activities include emergency shelter and essential services to the homeless, transitional housing, homeless prevention programs, acquisition, construction and/or renovation of facilities that serve the homeless, and technical assistance. General funding limits are set for each of these activities. A 25 percent matching share is expected for participation in the facility development program. Since 1996, \$264,546 has been awarded to S.H.A.R.E. House, the Douglas County Shelter, or the Douglas County Food Bank for assistance to the homeless.

- **Bond Allocation Program:** Federal law allows for tax-exempt government bonds to be issued for certain types of private activities. In Georgia, DCA is responsible for the administration of the Georgia Allocation System, through which eligible authorities receive authorization to issue bonds. Bonds used for multi-family rental housing must set aside a portion of the funds for low to moderate-income households. Rental developments financed with these bonds are also eligible for state and federal housing credits without having to compete in the annual tax application cycle.

DCA offers a number of programs which the County has not participated in which serve as potential resources for housing redevelopment activities through the Home Again Program, CBDG and Community HOME Investment Program. As well, DCA offers the HOME Rental Housing Loan Program and Housing Tax Credit Program to help develop affordable rental housing. The County should consider application for such funding resources in the future, particularly for implementation of a targeted housing rehabilitation and maintenance program.

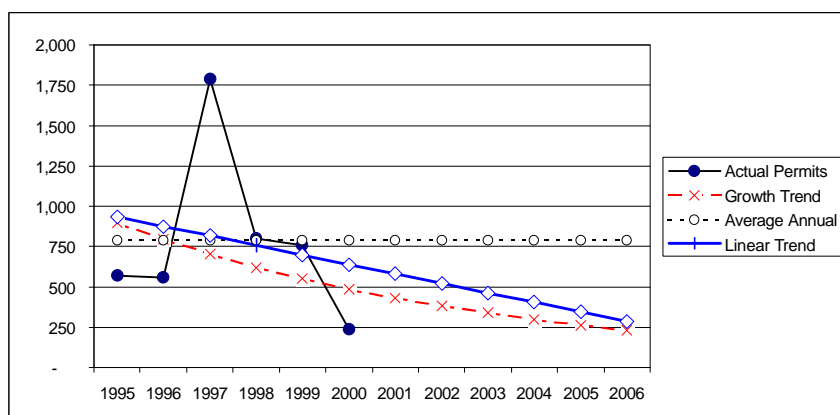
In addition to the government funded programs described above, the County will need to plan for meeting additional needs of the lower income households utilizing the remaining vacant land zoned to accommodate higher density housing types. The integration of carefully planned and design monitored residential components into commercial mixed-use centers, which may cater, for example: to the elderly; small or large households; or quality rental complexes with a proportion of units reserved at rents affordable to lower income households, will reinforce the concepts reflected by the Future Land Use Map for focusing growth into nodes and along existing transportation corridors. While the Future Land Use Plan provides for a full range of housing types and densities, future decisions of the County regarding public improvements, zoning and development standards will determine the extent to which limited multi-family and creative housing products, as well as fostering increased numbers of move-up and executive level housing, will successfully be utilized in meeting anticipated housing needs.



## ■ Housing Forecasts

Since 1980, dwelling unit construction in the County has steadily grown from 14,752 units in 1980 to 34,825 units in 2000. The growth in the County in the 1990s coincides with the growth and suburbanization of the Atlanta area. It is anticipated this trend will continue into the future. Recent trends in dwelling unit construction are anticipated to continue, at least in the short term. Maintaining adequate transportation access, continued growth of employment opportunities and a diversified housing stock will be key factors in the continuation of residential growth.

In general, the average number of persons per household for Douglas County (2.6) is used to forecast future dwelling units, with refinements and adjustments for changing population characteristics, vacancy characteristics, and the aging of the baby boomer population. By 2025, the number of dwelling units is expected to almost triple to 92,697 units, in



close correlation to the increase in population. This forecast can be broken down further into the city of Douglasville

with a forecast unit count of 27,880, and by unincorporated county, with a forecast of 64,817 units by 2025. This indicates a potential growth in the housing stock of 33,888 new units. The distribution of units among housing types in the unincorporated county area is provided in Table 23.

**Table 23**  
**Forecasted Units by Type**  
**Unincorporated Douglas County**

	Distribution	2004	2025	Increase
Single Family	88.93%	27,596	59,289	31,693
Two Family (Duplex)	1.43%	428	675	247
Multi-family	9.62%	2,901	4,842	1,941
Other	0.02%	5	11	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>30,930</b>	<b>64,817</b>	<b>33,887</b>

Source: Distribution based on housing units by type, 2000 Census

## Development Capacity

The County currently has capacity to accommodate additional residential growth in the years ahead, embodied by its supply of vacant, developable land. Actual development capacity, based on: the current zoning; net acres of vacant land available for development; realistic minimum land required per lot within each zone, and applicable development densities, appears to be adequate, for the most part, to serve the projected housing needs. Overall, current zoning in the unincorporated area could support, at most, about 32,400 new housing units (assuming no redevelopment of currently existing land uses), the vast majority of which



**Table 24**  
**Demand/Capacity Comparison**  
**Unincorporated Douglas County**

	<b>Demand 2025</b>	<b>Development Capacity</b>	<b>Unmet Demand</b>	<b>Excess Capacity</b>	<b>% Unmet</b>	<b>% Excess</b>
<b>Residential Growth</b> (in Housing Units)	33888	32419	1489	0	4%	0
Single Family	31,693	30,130	1,563	0	5%	0%
Two-Family	247	28	219	0	89%	0%
Multi-Family	1,941	2,261	0	320	0%	14%

Source: Demographic Trends and Development Demand Analysis for Douglas County (92.9%) would be single family homes on individual lots. The remaining 7 percent of the total future capacity falls under the multi-family zoning districts.

Overall, projected residential growth is very close to the capacity available, exceeding it by only 4 percent. This would represent a complete build out of the residential areas by, or before, 2025 as currently zoned. The same can be said for the single-family detached category, with demand at 5 percent over current capacity. There is a clear but very small lack of land designated for duplexes, while the multi-family zoning districts can accommodate 14 percent more units than demanded in 2025. This indicates that the demand for multi-family housing, although low in the County, should be focused on providing units which accommodate particular households types with housing problems, such as large person households (3 bedroom rental units); the elderly and/or disabled; single person households; and units with rents or purchase prices affordable to lower income households.

## ■ Governmental Influence on Housing

Historically, the provision of housing affordable to very low-income individuals has been almost exclusively a function of the public sector. However, market rate housing in the county has been available to meet the housing needs of the majority of the population, particularly with its abundance of starter units and resales at prices affordable to households with incomes from 80% of the median income and above, particularly with the recent low interest rates and 100% financing options. Approximately one-half of the housing stock is available on the market for less than \$100,000. Although the median house value is expected to rise, but to remain low in the context of the metropolitan area, a segment of the population may be eliminated from the housing market, as a home purchase still typically requires a sizeable down payment and cash closing costs, even with favorable interest rates. The implementation of governmental policies may add to the cost of housing that in turn is passed on to the buyer.

Governmental constraints include policies, development regulations and standards, requirements or other actions imposed by the various levels of government on development. Although Federal and State agencies play a role on the imposition of governmental constraints, the actions of these agencies, are, for the most part, beyond the influence of local government and are therefore not addressed in this analysis. Apart from federally determined interest rates, most governmental constraints are local. The following factors may influence the maintenance, improvement and/or development in Douglas County: land use controls; building codes; processing procedures; and development fees.

## Comprehensive Plan

In implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the County utilizes a number of planning tools including the Unified Development Code (UDC). Zoning, which must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as established by the UDC, provides specific development, allowable uses, and limitations.

It is an objective of the County to foster a community character of high design standards and low densities for new development, including housing catering to more income constrained residents. In theory, density is considered a factor in the development of housing to persons with limited income resources, and maintaining low densities typically increases the cost of construction per unit, which subsequently is passed on to the buyer or renter. Higher density improves housing affordability because it lowers the per unit land cost (although the overall cost for infill land or land served by existing infrastructure may be higher than for lower density uses) and facilitates effective construction. More intense residential development that is consistent with the County's character can be achieved through a number of mechanisms, including: clustering of residential units; mixed-use development; and zero lot line/small lot development within its urbanized cities.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes Guiding Principles that foster managed planned development and will help ensure that residents have access to adequate and affordable housing. These basic planning principles will guide designation of specific uses on specific properties on the Future Land Use Map. Under the overarching objective for maintaining a low density character within the County while simultaneously addressing the need to provide the opportunity for accommodations for residents of all incomes and housing type needs, two of the County's Guiding Principles, which will be used as policy guidelines during zoning and development decisions, relate directly to the County's housing goal.

### **Guiding Principle: Place medium density housing near village centers or integrate into mixed-use developments to assure transitional land use compatibility.**

*Higher density, such as townhouses, duplexes, lofts, quadplexes and small lot single family housing, fills an economic need for affordable and less-permanent accommodations, and offers an opportunity for transitions in land use intensities between higher densities within the incorporated areas of the county, major commercial centers and surrounding single-family neighborhoods. Extensive higher density areas can have negative effects; therefore, this plan disperses high-density developments to small-scattered sites and to mixed-use developments where appropriate infrastructure can be provided. Medium density housing in Douglas County should continue to be primarily clustered within major transportation corridors where access can be maximized, and should be located near commercial areas where pedestrian access can be encouraged. Mixed use and integrated centers fill a important need for families with young children and the growing senior population of the county.*

*As a policy, Douglas County intends to encourage medium density housing to be incorporated into mixed-use developments instead of stand-alone projects or within small stand-alone in-fill sites that have access to sewer and water. Attention to site design that will create more livable communities in the future has been included within the Unified Development Code.*

### **Guiding Principle: Encourage innovative development techniques**

*Master Planned Developments, conservation style open space subdivisions, village commercial centers, mixed use development and other innovative development techniques are encouraged throughout the County within the recently proposed Unified Development Code.*



*Land use categories shown on the Future Land Use Map should be interpreted as reflecting the predominant use of a property. Where appropriate to a property's surroundings and infrastructure availability, a mixing of use or housing types may be appropriate, as outlined in the Unified Development Code. Mixed-use development allows compatible land uses, such as shops, offices, and affordable housing, to locate closer together and thus decreases travel distances between them. Mixed-use developments should be at an appropriate scale for the location. Alternately, uses other than the one shown on the Future Land Use Map may be appropriate if the impact of the alternate use will be the same or less than the designated use, considering the property's surroundings and prevailing land use patterns.*

The mechanisms established in the above Guiding Principle are subject to design parameters in the Unified Development Code and are reflected in the Community Character Areas concept integrated into the Future Land Use Plan. Clustering of housing can produce higher densities on a portion of land, while retaining the overall density assignment of the entire property. This method is effective when portions of the property not utilized for residential development can be developed with compatible uses, such as open space/recreation, parks, schools, and public facilities. In the case of mixed-use, residential uses may be clustered with office, commercial, retail, hotel, Business Park or public facilities for residential uses in proximity to employment and transportation nodes.

The Community Character Areas of the recommended Future Land Use Map define the overall land use characteristics in generalized areas of the County, including the land use and character of a permitted development. Each character area identifies associated zoning districts for implementation, which define the minimum lot sizes and subsequent densities. The Comprehensive Plan establishes 3 classifications of land use that are primarily residential in nature:

- Rural Places
- Suburban Living
- Urban Residential

Character areas and subsequent design standards and policy guides have been developed to move towards the achievement of another county need: move up and executive housing. As stated earlier within this chapter, there is a growing need for housing on the other end of the cost spectrum housing costing over \$200,000. If Douglas County is to achieve their economic goals of creating a balanced tax base by increasing higher end employment options to its residents, amenities and a higher level housing product should be encouraged to encourage executives, professionals and managers to live where they work.

Based upon the Future Land Use Element and current zoning categories, it is estimated that 32,419 new homes will be

<b>Table 25</b>			
<b>Residential Zoning Categories</b>			
<b>Douglas County</b>			
	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Density</b>	<b>Lot Size</b>
<b>Outside Watershed Protection Areas</b>			
	AG Rural Residential	0.9830	435,600
	R-1 Residential Agricultural		
	Not Sewered	0.4604	87,120
	Sewered	0.8531	43,560
	Not Sewered	1.6266	21,780
	Sewered	2.2926	15,000
	R-3 Two Family Residential	3.4848	10,000
	R-4 Single Family Townhouse	8.0000	2,400
	R-5 Condominium Residential	8.0000	5,445
	R-6 Multi-Family Residential	8.0000	5,445
	R-7 Mobile Home Residential	2.2926	15,000
	R-8 Mobile Home Park	6.2229	4,500
	R-9 Medium Density Single Family	3.2267	10,000
	R-10 High Density Single Family	4.8400	6,000
	PUD Planned Unit Development	2.2960	15,000
<b>Inside Watershed Protection Areas</b>			
	AG Rural Residential	0.0983	435,600
	All Other Zones	0.3152	130,680

needed in the remainder of the unincorporated county. When combined with the existing housing stock, it is estimated that the county at build-out will reach approximately 60,000 dwelling units. The Land Use designations provide for new development at a range of densities and product types and are not considered to be a constraint to the provision of housing for all income levels. Keeping the County's objective to increase the volume of move-up and executive level housing, the best source of housing affordable to lower income households includes the existing stock of homes found in older subdivisions, mobile homes, and newer starter home stock which has been the prevalent type of housing constructed over the past decade, and potential medium density housing within village and mixed use centers.

## The Unified Development Code

The County's zoning, subdivision, development and environmental codes have been rewritten during the planning process and combined into a Unified Development Code (UDC). As a concurrent process during the plan update the UDC was modified as part of the Comprehensive Plan update for consistency and ease in implementation of the Community Character area land use categories. Two new types of subdivisions, Open Space and Master Planned Developments, have been added to the existing conventional subdivision, private estate subdivision and PUD. A summary of applicable subdivision requirements is provided in Table 25. The two new types of subdivisions are summarized as follows:

- **Open Space Subdivision:** Maximum density allowed for the zoning district determines the total number of lots in the subdivision, but the minimum lot size is reduced to a certain extent to create open space and recreation amenities for the residents.
- **Master Planned Development:** Zoning district density limitation controls, but the minimum lot size is reduced in order to create open space and recreational amenities for the residents. Depending on the zoning district in which a master planned development is located, flexibility in lot sizes, mixed-use projects and certain commercial uses are allowed.

There are 11 residential zoning districts under the current Development Code. Net densities range from .09 units per acre (du/ac) in the AG district to 8.0 du/ac in the R-10 district. Maximum densities for the multi-family districts (R-4, R-5 and R-6) are set by the zoning districts themselves at 8.0 units per acre. The R-4 Single Family Townhouse district itself requires open space to be provided on a per-unit basis. Residential zoning districts, minimum lot sizes and practical residential densities are summarized in Table 25.

## Infrastructure Availability

The primary concern with the location of housing is the availability of utilities and the efficiency with which they can be provided. It is likely that development will be market driven due to the cost of providing new infrastructure service lines and transportation networks. The Douglas County Water and Sewerage Authority (WSA) exclusively provides water and sewer services to Douglas County, with the exception of the portions of Villa Rica and Austell within the county's jurisdiction. WSA's water and sewer system served approximately 90-95% of the residential population of the County for fiscal year 2003. The WSA is implementing capacity improvements that are projected to meet the Authority's needs through 2025. Sewer limitations and the availability of raw water will influence residential patterns significantly within the county over the future. Character area designations were developed in part according to future infrastructure availability.

Although expansion of existing infrastructure systems is not feasible to all areas of the county where development is anticipated to occur, the policies of the Comprehensive Plan

to direct growth toward existing and planned service areas and away from rural areas dependent on septic systems, especially sensitive watershed areas; and to target some higher density development in areas currently designated for lower densities within the unincorporated areas will contribute toward removal of constraints to the development of housing as a result of unavailability of infrastructure. The UDC has been modified to include regulations and restrictions as to where higher density residential products may be built within a conventional subdivision, limiting locations to areas where both public water and sewer systems are available.

## ■ Housing Assessment

### Key Findings

Areas of concern relate to a perceived overabundance and the continued development of starter homes and low cost housing, lack of housing maintenance and upkeep, adequate neighborhood preservation, shortage of available rental options for extremely low income households within the incorporated area, and the shortage of executive housing options.. Recent trends in dwelling unit construction are anticipated to continue, at least in the short term. Maintaining adequate transportation access, continued growth of employment opportunities and a diversified housing stock will be key factors in the continuation of residential growth. In general, the average number of persons per household for Douglas County (2.6) is used to forecast future dwelling units, with refinements and adjustments for changing population characteristics, vacancy characteristics, and the aging of the baby boomer population. By 2025, the number of dwelling units county-wide is expected to almost triple to 92,697 units, with 64,817 units in the unincorporated county area, in close correlation to the increase in population. Analysis of demand in relation to development capacity yield the following implications for planning:

- By 2025, the residential areas of unincorporated Douglas County will be completely built out.
- The amount of available vacant or underutilized low-density residential land appears to generally be sufficient to accommodate the projected housing need through 2025.
- The projected need for housing units by type, available land, current zoning and identification of such needs on the future land use plan map will provide for anticipated housing needs as identified in the Land Demand Analysis.
- Outside of the 3-acre lot watershed protection areas, pressures to bring sanitary sewer to all portions of the unincorporated area will mount. Given the market pressures generating demand, rezoning requests to R-2 for subdivisions on sewer will increase accordingly.
- There is a small but unmet need for two family residential development (duplexes) which comprise less than 1% of future residential demand. Rather than focus on new R-3 rezonings, the inclusion of duplexes as one type of housing within a mixed-use villages.
- There is currently more than adequate land already zoned and available for multi-family development. Unless a particular location would be notably advantageous to the County for multi-family zoning, no additional land zoned for multi-family use is needed.
- Medium densities and more urban urban types of development have been identified on the future land use plan map within areas that currently (or are proposed in the near fu-

- ture) provide adequate infrastructure and adjacently to the County's more urbanized areas (around the cities of Douglasville and Villa Rica for instance).
- Douglas County is not an island unto itself. Analysis of surrounding counties and the cities within Douglas County have shown that affordable starter ownership housing and rental housing are abundant within the incorporated areas of Douglas County and in surrounding counties. Much of the higher residential areas and rental property, including housing that fits the affordable housing definition, within the County are located within the City of Douglasville. Due to Douglasville's urban nature, higher density zoning patterns and existence and planned multi-family housing growth, it is expected that much of the affordable housing needs of Douglas County will be met within its urbanized municipalities.

## Summary and Needs Assessment

Low-density single-family housing represents over 84.6 percent of the total housing stock in Douglas County. Of dwelling units classified as single family, 74.7 percent were traditional single-family homes, 2.0 percent were single-family attached units, and 7.9 percent were manufactured homes. Most homes built more than 10 years ago are situated on large lots in the rural areas and traditional homes within subdivisions. Since 1990, new detached single family subdivisions and master planned developments have emerged as public sewer was extended. The predominant type of single-family unit has been in the starter and first move-up level categories. As reflected in analysis of 2004 real estate market conditions, the number of executive level and move-up housing subdivisions is increasing, typically offering large homes on ½ to 1 acre lots within golf course and swim /tennis communities.

Multi-family housing has had numerical increases over the last 10 years, but has remained stable at about 15.4 percent of the housing stock in 2000, while townhouses have increased from less than 1.5 to 2.0 percent of the total even though a surplus of multi-family zoned land remains undeveloped and vacant. Multi-family and other non-traditional types of housing are expected in the future to accommodate a more diverse population within the County and be used to meet some of the needs of the special populations or households experiencing problems (such as overcrowding, overpayment, inaccessibility, etc), or life style needs, such as senior residents of the county.

The cost of buying a new home in Douglas County remains relatively low in comparison to the Atlanta MSA and some of the surrounding counties. This cost can be attributed to the lower median incomes in Douglas County (at \$50,108 as compared to \$69,000 for the Atlanta MSA) and the relatively low cost of raw (or largely undeveloped farm) land which supports the potential for development of high quality housing and amenity packages in newly developing subdivisions to meet the desires and needs of the many professionals and executives that are moving to the County.

Overall, housing conditions in the County are good, but a handful of substandard homes or homes requiring rehabilitation may exist, particularly among individual homes, mobile homes, and subdivisions over 30 years in age. Douglas County currently does not have a program in place to provide financial assistance with the maintenance of housing in the unincorporated areas of the County. These homes should be identified as part of a housing conditions survey and must be targeted for modernization assistance.

Based on a series of public involvement sessions, county residents feel that attracting higher wage employment, particularly high tech industries, would be a better strategy for reducing the cost burden of housing, rather than increasing the stock of affordable housing. By all conventional measures, Douglas County is already an affordable place to live. Also during the public involvement process, residents stated they would like to see greater diversity in housing types within the county. Most feel that the starter home market is well rep-

resented within the county presently and that the executive and move up markets are not adequately represented.

As part of this Comprehensive Plan, the County created a vision of future growth focused on identified development nodes in strategic locations throughout the County to accommodate anticipated growth. Individual nodes are intended to act as community centers where inevitable growth is managed at a human scale and where new development integrates living, working, shopping and playing in close proximity to one another. It is anticipated that various levels of nodes, including neighborhood and town centers, will provide a variety of housing types to accommodate an increasingly diverse population within Douglas County.