

9. **Intergovernmental Coordination**

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9. Intergovernmental Coordination

■ Introduction

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

Although Douglas County does not have the ability to require coordination efforts, through attempts to further open channels through communication it mutually mechanisms can only does seek to develop a planning process mutual sharing of information is a the process. County's efforts it consistent forecasts are used throughout the area in the development of services, land use policies and infrastructure planning. Whatever the outcome of this effort, this is the first step for truly coordinated planning.



coordination improved is hoped that beneficial be developed. Not Douglas County coordinated and policy, the available valuable part of Through the is hoped that

The inventory portion of this chapter describes the relationships that exist between Douglas County and other local governments, agencies and programs. The inventory also reviews the County's relationship to independent organizations that have an impact on land use policy within the county, such as the local school board. The purpose of this section is to provide an inventory of both agencies and current coordination mechanisms, or lack thereof, within the county.

The assessment of current and future needs articulates the outcome of the inventory review. This section identifies whether current mechanisms will achieve the county's goals or potential solutions to better achieve these goals over the next 20 years.

The last section of the chapter includes an articulation of intergovernmental coordination goals. An associated implementation program to address those identified coordination needs can be found in the Implementation Plan.

■ Inventory of Existing Coordinating Mechanisms

This section identifies existing relationships and coordination mechanisms between Douglas County and other government entities. This section will identify the nature of the entity's relationship to aspects within Douglas County's comprehensive plan and any existing coordination mechanisms. Formal coordination mechanisms may include intergovernmental agreements, joint planning, and

service agreements, special legislation, or joint meetings, committees or work groups for the purpose of coordination.

Service Delivery Coordination

During the 1997 legislative session, the Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 489 (The Service Delivery Strategy Act); this required each county and its municipalities to adopt a Service Delivery Strategy by July 1, 1999. This legislation, developed following several months of negotiation between the Association County Commissioners of Georgia and the Georgia Municipal Association, was the major recommendation of the Georgia Future Communities Commission.



The intent of the legislation is that local governments take a careful look at the services they provide in order to identify overlap or gaps in service provision and develop a more rational and coordinated approach to allocating delivery and funding of services among local governments and authorities in each county. The legislation also asks local governments to look at their land use plans in order to minimize conflicts between the city and county plans.

The Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) addresses the following:

Coordination

- Identification of all services presently provided in the county by cities, counties and authorities;
- Assignment of which local government will be responsible for providing which service in what area of the county;
- Strategy should provide for the elimination of duplication of services, or an explanation for its existence;
- Conflicts in land use plans within a county, between the county and its cities, must be eliminated.

Funding and Implementation Strategy

- Description of how all services will be funded and by whom;
- Identification of intergovernmental contracts, ordinances, resolutions, etc. to be used in implementing the Strategy, including existing contracts;
- Jurisdictions charging water and sewer rate differentials to customers outside their boundaries must be able to justify such differentials;
- Services provided primarily for unincorporated areas must be funded by

- revenues derived exclusively from the unincorporated areas;
- A process must be agreed upon for resolving land use classification disputes between a county and city over property to be annexed.

The SDS for Cities of Austell, Douglasville, and Villa Rica were adopted in 1999 and have provided Douglas County and the Cities of Austell, Douglasville, and Villa Rica with opportunities to reach agreements to deliver services in an effective and cost efficient manner.

The SDS serves an important role in the local land use coordination among Douglas County and its cities. This document is one of the many issues that has been discussed during this comprehensive plan update. The SDS has been the starting point for Douglas County and its cities to discuss and coordinate adjacent land uses. Specific policies relating to annexation are included in the document.

After considerable review during this comprehensive plan update, Douglas County feels that the current SDS is consistent with current and future policies, goals, and objectives of this comprehensive plan; and, therefore, there are no changes or new intergovernmental agreements that are needed for the coordination of the current SDS.

Individual programs, intergovernmental agreements and coordination efforts are specifically listed by each city in the next section of this chapter.

■ **Adjacent Local Governments**

Douglas County is adjacent to a number of local governments including Carroll County to the south and west, the City of Villa Rica to the west, Paulding County to the north, Cobb County to the north and east and including the City of Austell to the east, and Fulton County to the south and east. The City of Douglasville is contained entirely within Douglas County.

City of Douglasville

One of the most critical relationships among these various governments is the county's relationship with the City of Douglasville. Not only is Douglasville the largest municipality within the county borders, it is also the county seat. Douglas County and the City of Douglasville are preparing individual comprehensive plans concurrently. During the comprehensive planning process, the City and County have met on a weekly basis to review and coordinate their respective plans in terms of service delivery strategy, capital facilities, land use patterns, and potential annexation areas. Proactive planning for the next twenty years has been the hallmark of this process. Land use categories, transitional uses, and compatibility standards have been discussed to ease coordination of services, develop overall preferred land use patterns and to prepare for future annexations. Both jurisdictions had extensive public participation during this process and utilized diverse stakeholder groups to represent the varied interests within Douglas County. Many public meetings were overlapping between the jurisdictions and several community members were on both Stakeholder Committees. This overlap enabled ideas among the citizens to be shared with both jurisdictions making the comprehensive planning process, although separate, seamless between county and city. Through enhanced coordination during this long term planning process, it is believed that a better quality of life will be provided for all citizens within Douglas County regardless of whether they reside within the City of Douglasville, or within the unincorporated area. As a part of this coordination effort, the elements of the SDS relating to coordination between Douglas County and the City of Douglasville were extensively reviewed as part of an overall coordination strategy between the County and the City. As stated earlier in this chapter, the County does not see any changes to this agreement in order to provide continued coordinated services and to provide for

comprehensive plan consistency. Specific areas covered in the Service Delivery Strategy for Douglas County and the City of Douglasville include:

Agriculture Extension	Jail
Animal Control	Law Enforcement
Building Inspection	Library
Cemetery	Planning and Zoning
Coroner	Parks and Recreation
Courts (Superior, etc.)	Property Tax Assessing/Collection
Court (Municipal)	Public Housing
Downtown Development	Public Works (Roads)
Economic Development	Social Services
Elections	Solid Waste Collection
Emergency Management	Solid Waste Disposal
Engineering	Tourism
E-911	Transportation
Fire and Emergency Medical Svc	Wastewater Collection
Health	Water Supply
Hospital	

Many of the elements of the Service Delivery Strategy are addressed by Douglas County wholly. However, Douglas County and Douglasville address the elements articulated below individually. In some cases an overlap does exist, but it provides a much higher level of service to residents.

Economic Development

Douglas County provides Economic Development Services and the City of Douglasville operates its own Community Development Department. Services are coordinated to an extent and sometimes overlap, but there is a higher level of service in this area.

Engineering

Douglas County and Douglasville each provide their own engineering services however, Douglasville does utilize some services for issues arising from development related problems that take place in the City, but also affect the adjoining unincorporated areas of the County. Otherwise no overlap of service exists.

Jail Services

A formal agreement exists whereby Douglasville utilizes the Douglas County Jail for cases tried in Municipal Records Court.

Law Enforcement

Douglas County is the primary service provider in the unincorporated areas. In Douglasville, the County patrol services are less intensive as the City of Douglasville has its own police force. The service is overlapping, but there is a higher level of service.

Parks and Recreation

Douglas County and Douglasville each provide full time organized Parks and Recreation services and deliver programs to residents of the unincorporated areas, municipalities and other jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction is committed to providing this service and efforts are coordinated to an extent. The service is overlapping, but a higher level of service exists.

Public Works (Roads)

Douglas County and Douglasville each provide for their own public works (roads). The service is overlapping, but there is a higher level of service.

Solid Waste Collection/Disposal

Douglasville provides its own solid waste collection for residential and business properties. This service is not provided by Douglas County; therefore no overlap in service exists. Douglas County does have a solid waste disposal operation and through the collection of user fees this disposal operation serves the unincorporated areas of Douglas County as well as the municipalities located within Douglas County.

The County also participates through ARC on any development project that qualifies as a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) and the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The DRI is designed to improve communication between affected governments and to provide a means of revealing and assessing potential impacts of large-scale developments before conflicts relating to them arise. At the same time, local government autonomy is preserved since the host government maintains the authority to make the final decision on whether a proposed development will or will not go forward. As discussed later in this chapter, the City of Douglasville and Douglas County will be joint venturing on a comprehensive transportation plan in early 2005 to identify a multi-modal solution to the unique transportation issues within the County.

City of Villa Rica and City of Austell

Although the majority of both the City of Villa Rica and the City of Austell are located in other counties, it is essential to continue coordination efforts with these jurisdictions during the planning process. Through the Atlanta Regional Commission, these two cities actively participate in the review process for any development project that qualifies as a Development of Regional Impact (DRI). The DRI is designed to improve communication between affected governments and to provide a means of revealing and assessing potential impacts of large-scale developments before conflicts relating to them arise. At the same time, local government autonomy is preserved since the host government maintains the authority to make the final decision on whether a proposed development will or will not go forward. Coordination within the DRI process is typically focused on the planning staff. Specific areas also covered in the Service Delivery Strategy for Douglas County and the Cities of Villa Rica and Austell include:

Agriculture Extension	Jail
Animal Control	Law Enforcement
Building Inspection	Library
Cemetery	Planning and Zoning
Coroner	Parks and Recreation
Courts (Superior, etc.)	Property Tax Assessing/Collection
Court (Municipal)	Public Housing
Downtown Development	Public Works (Roads)
Economic Development	Social Services
Elections	Solid Waste Collection
Emergency Management	Solid Waste Disposal
Engineering	Tourism
E-911	Transportation
Fire and Emergency Medical Svc	Wastewater Collection

Health
Hospital

Water Supply

Many of the elements of the Service Delivery Strategy are addressed by Douglas County wholly. However, Douglas County, Villa Rica, and/or Austell address the elements articulated below individually. In some cases an overlap does exist, but it provides a much higher level of service to residents.

Economic Development

Douglas County provides Economic Development Services and the City of Villa Rica operates its own Economic Development Department. Services are overlapping and some efforts coordinated, but there is a higher level of service.

Engineering

Douglas County, the City of Villa Rica and the City of Austell each provide their own engineering services however, each municipality does utilize some services for issues arising from development related problems that take place in the City, but also affect the adjoining unincorporated areas of the County. Otherwise no overlap of service exists.

Fire and EMS Services

Villa Rica and Austell utilize the Fire and EMS services of Douglas County though they provide or utilize other fire protection services. Automatic Aid agreements exist with Austell, Villa Rica and Douglas County. An overlap exists, but a higher level of service is provided.

Jail Services

The City of Villa Rica and the City of Austell each utilize the Douglas County Jail for some charges bound over to State or Superior Court.

Law Enforcement

Douglas County is the primary service provider in the unincorporated areas. In Douglasville, the County patrol services are less intensive as the City of Austell and the City of Villa Rica have their own police force. The service is overlapping, but there is a higher level of service.

Parks and Recreation

Douglas County, the City of Villa Rica and the City of Austell each provide full time organized Parks and Recreation services and deliver programs to residents of the unincorporated areas, municipalities and other jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction is committed to providing this service to its residents and efforts are coordinated. The service is overlapping, but there is a higher level of service.

Public Works (Roads)

Douglas County, the City of Villa Rica and the City of Austell each provide for their own public works (roads). The service is overlapping, but there is a higher level of service.

Carroll County, Cobb County, Fulton County and Paulding County

Coordination with Carroll County, Cobb County, Fulton County, and Paulding County is essential to the planning process. Through the Atlanta Regional Commission, Coosa Valley RDC, and Chattahoochee Flint RDC, all three local governments actively participate in the review process for any development project that qualifies as a Development of Regional Impact (DRI). The DRI is

designed to improve communication between affected governments and to provide a means of revealing and assessing potential impacts of large-scale developments before conflicts relating to them arise. At the same time, local government autonomy is preserved since the host government maintains the authority to make the final decision on whether a proposed development will or will not go forward. Coordination within the DRI process is typically focused on the planning staff. Automatic Aid agreements exist between Douglas, Paulding, Carroll and Cobb Counties with respect to Fire and EMS services.

■ Local Agencies

Douglas County Board Of Education

The Douglas County Board of Education is the governing body of the Douglas County School System. The primary role of the Board is the legislation of the school system politics, which are executed under the direction of the school Superintendent. The provision of quality educational opportunities is an essential service provided in Douglas County. Joint planning efforts include Board of Education involvement in the review of all rezoning requests and involvement with the County's Technical Review Committee process. These processes are carried out through the Planning and Zoning Department and the Board of Education. Through active participation on the Douglas 2025 Steering Committee, the County has also shared current population and employment data and forecast data. A representative from the Douglas County Board of Education also actively participated in the formation of future land use policy. Continued cooperation and coordination with the School Board is expected throughout the planning horizon.

■ Independent Special Districts

Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority (WSA)

The Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority is an independent entity that was created by the state legislature. WSA is the identified provider of public water and sewer services within incorporated and unincorporated Douglas County. Therefore, no formal agreement exists for the delivery of water and sewer services to Douglas County. A representative from WSA was active in the Douglas 2025 Steering Committee and provided valuable land use coordination data for both the City and County, and was an active participant in the development of future land use pattern policy and the drafting of the future land use plan map. WSA also provides coordination with the Villa Rica Water and Sewer Authority and the Cobb County/Marietta Water Sewer Authority for water and sewer provisions within limited portions of the county. WSA also represents the County during the North Georgia Water District activities. The exchange of data on land use and other planning related issues provide adequate coordination regarding the WSA service area.

As part of the County's water quality initiative, WSA took over storm water management activities, including the administration of the soil and sediment control ordinance within Douglas County in the beginning of 2004 through a formal agreement between Douglas County and WSA. As WSA takes on this responsibility, rules and regulations are being evaluated to improve water quality and reduce the adverse environmental impact of development, in close coordination with both the City and County.

Joint planning efforts include WSA involvement in the review of all rezoning requests and involvement with the County's Technical Review Committee process. These processes are carried out through the Planning and Zoning Department and the WSA. Through active participation on the Douglas 2025 Steering Committee, the County has also shared current population and employment

and forecast data. A representative from the WSA also actively participated in the formation of future land use policy. Continued cooperation and coordination with the WSA is expected throughout the planning horizon.

Villa Rica Water and Sewer

As identified by the Service Delivery Strategy for Douglas County and the City of Villa Rica, the water and sewer district for the City of Villa Rica extends into the City of Villa Rica inside of Douglas County. WSA coordinates with this authority on the provision of water and sewer service in this portion of the county and is currently under agreement by the North Georgia Water District to take over these independent systems within the main WSA system at two treatment plants. This exchange of data on land use and other planning related issues provides adequate coordination regarding the City of Villa Rica service area.

Cobb County/Marietta Water and Sewer Authority

As identified by the Service Delivery Strategy for Douglas County and the City of Austell, the water and sewer district for the Cobb County/Marietta Water and Sewer Authority inside of Douglas County. WSA coordinates with this authority on the provision of water and sewer service in this portion of the county. The exchange of data on land use and other planning related issues provides adequate coordination regarding the City of Austell service area.

■ **Independent Development Authorities**

Development Authority of Douglas County

The Development Authority of Douglas County is the central point of contact for businesses looking to expand or locate operations in Douglasville and Douglas County. The Development Authority provides services designed to assist these businesses with every facet of the location process. Services provided include: confidential site selection services (commercial & industrial), program financing and incentives, and demographic and consumer information. A representative of the Development Authority of Douglas County was also an active participant on Douglas 2025, and provided valuable insight on future land use patterns and policy.

Douglas County Chamber of Commerce

A Local Policy Agenda is developed, based on a semi-annual survey of the Chamber's membership, to inform members of the local governing bodies of the business community's position on pertinent issues. The Chamber staff attends the working and voting session of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners. The Chamber also meets frequently with officials on matters of interest to the business community. During the past year, the Chamber has acted on issues of stormwater management, sales tax, property taxes, land use and zoning and tourism. A representative of the Douglas County Chamber of Commerce was also an active participant on Douglas 2025, and provided valuable insight on future land use patterns and policy. Continued cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce is expected throughout the planning horizon.

■ Other Units of Local Government and Utility Companies

Douglas County Sheriff's Office

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office is charged with the responsibility of serving and protecting citizens and visitors. In relation to the planning process, continued coordination of information and resources will be required to achieve the long-term vision of the community. Joint planning efforts include a detailed assessment of current and future facility needs and level of service statistics during the writing of the capital facilities element of this plan. The Sheriff's Office is involved in the review of all rezoning requests and involvement with the County's Technical Review Committee process. These processes are carried out through the Planning and Zoning Department and the Sheriff's Office. Continued cooperation and coordination with the Sheriff's Office is expected throughout the planning horizon.

Greystone Power Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) and Georgia Power Company

Greystone Power EMC and Georgia Power provide service within Douglas County, and was involved with the creation of utility line placement during the development of the County's Unified Development Code. Continued coordination with the county's permitting staff will be required.

■ Other Organizations

Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) performs regional planning and coordination for the metropolitan Atlanta area. There are currently ten counties included in the ARC. The commission is dedicated to unifying the region's collective resources to prepare the metropolitan Atlanta area for a prosperous future. It does so through professional planning initiatives, the provision of objective information, and the involvement of the community in collaborative partnerships that encourage healthy economic growth compatible with the environment, improve the regions quality of life, and foster leadership development.

The ARC fulfills the particular need of the metropolitan Atlanta area by advocating wise resource management and planning, analyzing both current and potential growth problems, and providing professional technical assistance in developing local and regional objectives, plans, and programs. Work items include both regional and local planning projects. These projects range from transportation, recreation, historic preservation, environmental resource assessment, population, economic analysis and water resources, to comprehensive local and regional plans, reviews of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), and large-scale development reviews as authorized by the Georgia Land Sales Act and the Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA).

ARC works with its planning partners to develop the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a process which can take anywhere from one to three years based on numerous factors such as the complexity of issues being addressed and the amount of effort required to reach regional consensus. The RTP development process consists of the following major steps:

- Developing a clear and measurable set of RTP goals.
- Understanding and quantifying short and long-range transportation system needs.
- Organizing transportation policies, programs and projects into logical scenarios that address system needs.

- Testing those scenarios.
- Evaluating these scenarios against the RTP goals.
- Cycling through this preferred scenario and evaluation process until a set of transportation policies, programs and projects are developed that would best serve the identified needs.
- Developing and using financial forecasts based on the latest available data and information.
- In air quality non-attainment regions, demonstrating conformity to the applicable motor vehicle emissions budget developed to show attainment to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Each step of the process outlined above involves a significant amount of coordination and outreach to planning partners and the general public.

As the Area Agency on Aging, ARC plans and provides comprehensive services to address the key needs of the region's older population. The Atlanta Region's Area Plan on Aging is carried out through contracts with 10 county-based aging programs, to provide a continuum of home and community-based services. Older citizens and their families are offered many options, including information and referral services, case management, transportation, home-delivered meals, senior centers, legal services and more through this network of care.

Douglas County is a member of the Atlanta Regional Commission and membership in the ARC is comprised of 10 member counties and 63 municipalities. Georgia law stipulates a local funding formula and local membership funds are used to match federal and state funding to support the ARC in its mission. An agreement exists between Douglas County and ARC regarding local funding and membership.

Georgia Regional Transportation Authority

The role of the Georgia Transportation Authority (GRTA) is to approve the region's short-range programs, implement transportation strategies and review Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). More specifically, GRTA works with those counties in Georgia that have been designated non-attainment under the Federal Clean Air Act standards. Currently, there are thirteen counties in the metropolitan Atlanta area that are non-attainment. Those counties are Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale. GRTA can assist local governments in financing mass transit or other projects to alleviate air pollution. GRTA board approval is also required for land transportation plans in the region, and for use of federal or state funds for transportation projects associated with major developments such as large subdivisions or commercial buildings, that affect the transportation system in the metro Atlanta region. As with the DOT, formal agreements are made on a project-by-project basis.

Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) are large-scale developments likely to have effects outside of the local government jurisdiction in which they are located. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorizes the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish procedures for intergovernmental review of these large-scale projects. These procedures are designed to improve communication between affected governments and to provide a means of revealing and assessing potential impacts of large-scale developments before conflicts relating to them arise.

GRTAs legislation also requires that it review DRIs within its jurisdiction. The purpose of GRTAs review is to approve or disapprove the use of state and federal funds to create transportation services and access that may be required as a result of the DRI. The goals of the review are: protecting and efficiently allocating limited state and federal resources, promoting compliance with regional transportation plans and air quality standards, and furthering GRTAs mission and goals. In the last ten years, Douglas County has commented on or initiated the review of the following DRIs (note: items in bold are DRI reviews initiated or co-initiated by Douglas County):

Terminus West

Austin Ridge

Chapel Ridge

Phoenix Townhouse Development

Arbor Place Mall

Riverwalk PUD

Touchet Industrial Development

Camp Creek Business Park

Conners Road Development

Douglas Hill Campus

Liberty Park/Lake Val-Do-Mar

Douglas Waste Service Center

New Manchester

Anneewakee Trails

Woodside

In instances where Douglas County has approved the rezoning or development of a DRI, GRTA conditions are conditions of zoning or approval of the project. GRTA's vision statement includes the following items:

Work to plan and implement a transportation system that is multi-modal, seamless, and accessible to all citizens;

Encourage land use policies that promote efficient use of infrastructure investments;

Operate within a decision-making framework that values public participation and connects transportation choices, land use and the overall Quality of Life;

Serve the best interests of the region by working in cooperation with other agencies and governments that are involved in planning and transportation; and

Measure its effectiveness in improving air quality, traffic, accessibility and land use.

One of the guiding principles of GRTA is that it will advocate and implement a transportation system that is multi-modal, seamless, and accessible to all. Given the fact that the County's current transportation plan is outdated and needs to be updated to reflect changes in growth trends, land use, population and travel demand, the County will address preliminary transportation issues and develop guiding principles for the full Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The Transportation element will provide initial policy direction to the CTP. The CTP will be multi-modal, multi-level and comprehensive. The initial inventory will include pedestrian, bicycle facilities and trail systems as well as transit and other public transportation. The first of these options will be express bus service to downtown Atlanta beginning in the summer of 2004. This is the result of an agreement between Douglas County and GRTA. The CTO is scheduled to begin in the first quarter 2005 and is expected to be a 15 to 18 month joint effort with the City of Douglasville. It will establish technical and policy guidelines for plan implementation. The result will be a 25-year plan in five year planning horizons. Therefore, close coordination with GRTA is required. Douglas County plans to work cooperatively with GRTA and the City of Douglasville throughout the planning horizon via its newly created County Department of Transportation.

Georgia Department of Transportation

The Georgia Department of Transportation plans, constructs, maintains, and improves the state's roads and bridges. Duties also include the provision of planning and financial support for other modes of transportation such as mass transit and airports. Legislative mandates exist that require the DOT to provide funding to counties based on population and vehicle miles traveled. Formal agreements are arranged on a project-by-project basis though no standing formal agreements exist. Close coordination with the Department of Transportation is required. Douglas County plans to

work cooperatively with the Department of Transportation throughout the planning horizon via its newly created County Department of Transportation.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

The mission of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic, and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices. Douglas County plans to work cooperatively with the Department of Natural Resources throughout the planning horizon to protect all natural, cultural, and historical resources located within the County.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Department of Community Affairs operates a host of state and federal grant programs; serves as the State's lead agency in housing finance and development; promulgates building codes to be adopted by local governments; provides comprehensive planning, technical and research assistance to local governments; and serves as the lead agency for the state's solid waste reduction efforts. In addition, the Department of Community Affairs also manages the State's coordinated planning program. Douglas County plans to work cooperatively with the Department of Community Affairs throughout the planning horizon.

■ **Other Programs and Activities**

Annexation

City of Douglasville

The Comprehensive Plan pertaining to Service Delivery Strategy for Land Use Compatibility and Provisions for Dispute Resolution between Douglasville and Douglas County provides for a method of communication regarding zoning and annexation and a procedural guide to resolve land use classification conflicts that may arise between the two governmental entities resulting from proposed rezoning or annexation of those lands which serve as boundaries between the two. The process is comprised of notification via certified mail and a corresponding response of objection. Absence of said objection notification by the County within the said time frame shall be construed to mean the City of Douglasville can proceed with the annexation. Receipt of a formal objection will result in the call for either formal or informal mediation. If mediators reach an agreement in favor of the City's proposed new land use classification, the County shall not object further to said annexation. If no agreement is reached, the City, if it proceeds with annexation, shall do so at the County land use classification and accept no rezoning applications for all or a portion of the annexed property for at least 90 days from the effective date of annexation.

City of Villa Rica

The Comprehensive Plan pertaining to Service Delivery Strategy for Land Use Compatibility and Provisions for Dispute Resolution between Villa Rica and Douglas County provides for a method of communication regarding zoning and annexation and a procedural guide to resolve land use classification conflicts that may arise between the two governmental entities resulting from proposed rezoning or annexation of those lands which serve as boundaries between the two. The process is comprised of notification via certified mail and a corresponding response of consent or objection. If Villa Rica receives no response, the County shall be deemed to have no objection. Receipt of a formal objection will result in the call for either formal or informal mediation. The mediation panel shall issue a written report, which shall make recommendations as to the land use classification of

the subject property, or state that no agreement could be reached. If the City and County cannot reach an agreement and the property proposed for annexation is north of Highway 78, the City may do so at the County land use classification and accept no rezoning applications for all or a portion of the annexed property for at least 90 days from the effective date of annexation. If no agreement is reached and the property proposed for annexation is south of Highway 78, the City agrees not to annex the proposed property. The City of Villa Rica also has adopted and follows the Douglas County Watershed Protection Ordinance south of Highway 78.

City of Austell

The Comprehensive Plan pertaining to Service Delivery Strategy for Land Use Compatibility and Provisions for Dispute Resolution between Austell and Douglas County provides for a method of communication regarding zoning and annexation and a procedural guide to resolve land use classification conflicts that may arise between the two governmental entities resulting from proposed rezoning or annexation of those lands which serve as boundaries between the two. The process is comprised of notification via certified mail and a corresponding response of objection. Absence of said objection notification by the County within the said time frame shall be construed to mean the City of Austell can proceed with the annexation. Receipt of a formal objection will result in the call for either formal or informal mediation. If mediators reach an agreement in favor of the City's proposed new land use classification, the County shall not object further to said annexation. If no agreement is reached the City, if it proceeds with annexation, shall do so at the County land use classification and accept no rezoning applications for all or a portion of the annexed property for at least 60 days from the effective date of annexation.

■ **Land Use Compatibility**

The planning staffs as well as consultants in the comprehensive plan update process for both the City of Douglasville and Douglas County have held several meetings to discuss future land use plans and are working toward making the plans more compatible in areas where local boundaries meet.

The services to be provided by Douglas County, as identified in the Douglas County Comprehensive Plan, do not exceed those identified in the Service Delivery Strategy. Additionally, the service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by Douglas County and the City of Douglasville are consistent between the Douglas County Comprehensive Plan and the Service Delivery Strategy.

■ **The Georgia Community Greenspace Program**

The Georgia General Assembly created the Georgia Greenspace Program during the 2000 legislative session. The statute assigns responsibility for program administration to the Department of Natural Resources and creates a five-member Georgia Greenspace Commission, which reviews and approves community greenspace programs submitted by eligible counties. The statute defines "greenspace" as permanently protected land and water, including agricultural and forestry land, that is in its undeveloped, natural state or that has been developed only to the extent consistent with, or is restored to be consistent with, one or more listed goals for natural resource protection or informal recreation.

The statute also creates a Georgia Greenspace Trust Fund, which is funded annually by the Georgia General Assembly. Such funds are granted to each participating local government with an approved community greenspace program and which has established a Community Greenspace Trust Fund as specified by the statute. Greenspace grant funds are provided to assist local governments in carrying out their strategies for acquiring and permanently protecting land.

While Douglas County is rapidly growing, it still contains substantially less urban, industrial and/or concentrated suburban development than neighboring Cobb and Fulton Counties. The County will continue to prioritize the acquisition of lands that primarily serve to protect and preserve water quality and natural resources. Lands that contain cultural resources and provide opportunities for connection through greenways will be considered as well. The County will continue to prioritize land acquisitions in areas where protection will achieve multiple goals and/or that occur in the most rapidly developing areas. The County will continue to implement the short-term goals of the Douglas County Greenspace Program through fee simple acquisition, conservation easement, and partnering with the local development community. Douglas County has several funding agreements with the DNR that facilitate the purchase and protection of greenspace throughout the County. Douglas County will also continue to participate in Regional Greenspace Coordinating meetings facilitated by the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Act was signed into law in 2001. This Act created a planning entity dedicated to developing comprehensive regional and watershed-specific plans to be implemented by local governments in the District. These plans will protect water quality and public water supplies in and downstream of the region, protect recreational values of the waters in and downstream of the region, and minimize potential adverse impacts of development on waters in and downstream of the region.

The general purposes of the District are to establish policy, create plans, and promote intergovernmental coordination for all water issues in the district; to facilitate multijurisdictional water related projects; and to enhance access to funding for water related projects among local governments in the district area. It is the primary purpose of the District to develop regional and watershed-specific plans for storm-water management, wastewater treatment, water supply, water conservation, and the general protection of water quality, which plans will be implemented by local governments in the District.

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is required to prepare three long-term plans: watershed management, wastewater, and water supply/water conservation. The statute includes specific requirements for each plan. The statute also provides for EPD to develop standards for each plan, receiving input from basin advisory councils.

The District's Draft Long-Term Wastewater Management Plan already calls for WSA to consolidate all of its wastewater treatment facilities into two major plants by 2010. Douglas County is a member of the North Georgia Water Planning District and will continue to work with the North Georgia Water Planning District and the Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority on issues that affect water quality throughout the planning horizon.

■ **Assessment of Current and Future Needs**

This section provides information to assess whether current coordination mechanisms are adequate to serve the community's current and future needs. Better coordination on a number of issues would benefit the county as a whole and help to further the implementation of mutual long-range goals.

From time to time, issues arise from growth and development proposed in the comprehensive plans of nearby local governments and land use conflicts arise at jurisdictional borders due to a lack of information about the plans and policies of adjacent communities. During this comprehensive planning process, the door to communication has been opened, specifically with the City of Douglasville, to further coordinate future land use plans and policies to reduce the number of land

use conflicts at jurisdictional borders. Maintaining this newfound communication is a key to resolving future land use disputes.

A concerted effort should also be made to work with Douglasville, Villa Rica, the Douglas County Board of Education, WSA, and other local entities to examine the feasibility of establishing a joint process for collaborative planning and decision-making on population projections, the location and extension of public facilities, and the location of facilities with countywide significance, such as water supply reservoirs, water and wastewater treatment facilities, solid waste disposal facilities, and schools.

Intergovernmental Coordination Goals

- Serve the best interests of the County and the region by working in cooperation with other agencies and governments and developing a shared vision for the community's future and to implement that vision through mutually beneficial agreements.
- Follow the county land use plan in making capital investment decisions.
- Improve the efficiency of local service delivery through close coordination with other entities and identify further opportunities for joint service delivery.
- Work with Douglasville, Villa Rica, the Douglas County Board of Education, WSA, and other local entities to examine the feasibility of establishing a joint process for collaborative planning and decision-making on population projections, the location and extension of public facilities, and the location of facilities with countywide significance, such as water supply reservoirs, water and wastewater treatment facilities, solid waste disposal facilities, and schools.
- Work with local jurisdictions to coordinate future land use policy to reduce the number of jurisdictional border land-use disputes.
- Work toward more informal means of resolving outstanding jurisdictional border landuse disputes.
- Work to plan and implement a transportation system that is multi-modal, seamless, and accessible to all citizens.
- Encourage land use policies that promote efficient use of infrastructure investment.
- The Implementation Program provides the overall strategy for the comprehensive plan implementation. The policy recommendations articulated above are merged and coordinated with the policies articulated in other elements to form the implementation program.

11. _____ **Plan Implementation**

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11. Plan Implementation

■ Introduction

The previous chapters provided a basic inventory and an assessment of needs related to the eight elements of the Douglas County's Comprehensive Plan: population; economic development; housing, natural resources, historic and cultural resources; community facilities and services; transportation; intergovernmental coordination, land use and implementation. However, without an overall strategy for implementation, the Plan's goals and strategies will not be realized. This element merges and coordinates the goals and strategies arising from the separate plan elements into an overall implementation strategy to direct the Plan over the next 20-years. Complementing this long-term implementation strategy is the Five-Year Short Term Work Program. The Short Term Work Program sets out specific actions and time frames for the next five years to implement the Plan—who is suppose to do what, when and where the money is coming from.

Lastly, this chapter sets out provisions for annual review, amendment and updating the Plan as time goes by and changes occur, whether or not anticipated in the forecasts of future development or in the County's vision for the future.

■ Implementation Process

Communication: The first step in the implementation process is communication. However, to fully communicate the values of the planning process, the Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission have been fully apprised of the Plan's overall goals, facility needs and the strategies necessary to address these needs. This communication step is not limited to the policy makers but has been extended to the citizens and businesspersons in the community as well. The public is aware of the processes involved to create the Comprehensive Plan, how they can contribute to the process, and how the plan will be implemented.

Formal Adoption: The second step was formal adoption by the Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission after two public hearings were held. The Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners will then use the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for making decisions that will affect future growth in Douglas County. Unless the goals and strategies are accepted and embraced by the Board of Commissioners, the planning commission, residents, and business interests, the Comprehensive Plan will have little value.

Continuous Monitoring: To ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains a useful tool for guiding growth, it will be monitored for its impact and modified periodically to reflect changing community conditions. As part of plan implementation, the Plan's Five-Year Short Term Work Program is to be updated annually and extended into another year to maintain the five-year horizon.

■ **Implementation Tools**

Management and Regulatory

Unified Development Code

Douglas County recently transformed the County's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and other land use regulatory controls into a Unified Development Code (UDC). The UDC combines and consolidates all phases of the land development process from the zoning of a piece of property to the actual development of this property. Like its predecessor (the zoning ordinance), the UDC will continue to regulate the use of the lot, lot size, building bulk and height, and setbacks. In addition, it will regulate the manner in which land may be subdivided to ensure that each subdivision meets standards as to minimum block and lot sizes, streets, relationship to existing streets, and provisions for open space, schools, and other public facilities and the protection of natural resources. The UDC is a valuable and necessary tool for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and for the creation of quality developments within Douglas County.

Water Quality

The Douglasville/Douglas County Water & Sewer Authority (WSA) has recently taken over the responsibility of monitoring both soil & erosion control and stormwater facilities within Douglas County, including the City of Douglasville. WSA will continue to work on protecting water quality by implementing its Stormwater Management Plan. WSA will also continue to act as Douglas County's representative in the ongoing North Georgia Water Planning District Plan.

Detailed Planning Studies

Detailed plans, such as a Solid Waste Management Plan, Park and Recreation Plan, Greenspace Plan, Capital Facilities Plan or a Comprehensive Transportation Plan, are adopted as implementing measures of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition the County will advance on several small area studies within the county as outlined in the STWP, such as the Lithia Springs Town Center Study, The Bankhead Highway Redevelopment Corridor, and the Post Road Interchange Study. These are more detailed planning studies for specific elements within the Plan. However, all facility improvements recommended by these plans will conform to the overall Comprehensive Plan.

Incentives

The County can implement incentives to encourage certain types of private development that will contribute significantly to the public good. Several development options that promote good design and protection of natural resources and an overall streamlining of the regulatory process has been one of the focuses of the new UDC.

Fiscal

Capital Improvements Program

The Douglas County Capital Improvements Program (CIP) provides the link between the planning effort and the operational budget of the County. Capital improvement programming is the scheduling of selected physical plans and facilities over a five-year period. These improvements are based on level of service needs, stated priorities, and the present and expected financial capabilities of the County.

Fiscal Programs

The County will continue to investigate a range of tools to deal with the fiscal impacts of development, including impact fees, adequate public facility standards, and fiscal impact assessment requirements. The Capital Improvements Plan and Level of Service standards could provide the basis for substantiating impact fees in the community when and if the County chooses to develop a program. Other financial tools may include continued SPLOST funding and available state and federal grants.

These tools will help to ensure that new development is of a type and quality that does not undermine the fiscal health of the city and county.

Capital Investment

The county is committed to providing infrastructure and services in areas targeted for development in the comprehensive plan. Major transportation improvements, public water and sewer investment will be aimed at providing services to areas of medium density and commercial and industrial development.

■ Public Awareness and Cooperation

Interagency/intergovernmental Cooperation

The County's 10th Year Comprehensive Plan Update paved the way for an increase in cooperation among internal departments, outside agencies and the municipalities within the county limits. During this process the County met with other governing bodies to develop a cooperative working relationship and the sharing of mutual information. Agency heads from the Board of Education, The Development Authority, and the Water and Sewer Authority were members of the Citizen Stakeholder Committee that participated extensively on both the County's UDC and Comprehensive Plan Development. Monthly meetings were held throughout the planning process with the City of Douglasville to discuss coordination of land use, annexation policy, infrastructure investment and service delivery. Continued coordination efforts between the City of Douglasville and Douglas County will result in a Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the Expansion of public Water and Sewer through WSA.

Citizen Involvement

Citizen involvement was critical in the development of this comprehensive plan Update. A comprehensive plan that is written in a vacuum will not accurately identify the goals and needs of the citizens of the community. The Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission and Development Services Staff all recognize that citizen involvement would be important in the planning process. This Plan and its related UDC were developed utilizing open public forums, a diverse stakeholders committee and media outlets to gather input, comments and an understanding of the issues. The development of a countywide Vision has been integrated throughout individual elements, and provides the foundation for the land use element and future land use plan map and this implementation strategy. Douglas County's long history of involving its citizens within the planning process is expected to continue with the creation of a development review committee, DERK and the initiation of the Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

■ **Goals and Strategies**

The following goals reflect the assessment of existing conditions and desired future results discussed in the various chapters of this Plan, coupled with the advice and guidance generated through the intensive public participation program. The underlying principle of the goals is to reach the vision of Douglas County as addressed in the Introduction Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

Economic Development Goal ... strengthen and sustain the economic base of Douglas County.

Strategies that will address these needs include...

Continue to coordinate with, provide vital economic information to, and support the Douglas County Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority, its existing Industries Committee and local businesses and industries towards the retention of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses.

Enhance overall quality and attractiveness of Douglas County by increasing cultural amenities, striving to strengthen services, improving the education system, maintaining the physical integrity of structures and the physical environment and to provide districts for executive housing options.

Maintain and periodically update a commercial area database linked to a GIS system that would utilize primary data and secondary data collected from business licenses, appraisal data and local real estate data.

Coordinate transportation planning efforts with land use planning so that efficient and ordered linkages are developed and access to such facilities is available to those with and without private transportation.

Review proposals for industrial development based on potential tax revenues, service expenditures, and quality of worker, infrastructure availability and environmental effects.

Require developers to perform a fiscal and environmental impact analysis on each large development.

Establish an education roundtable to discuss ways to maintain and improve the quality of the public education system.

Encourage the development of a local apprenticeship program that provides technical, mechanical, and crafts experience to local children.

Establish a tourism committee of the County, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Development Authority, which, as part of its mandate, will establish and maintain contacts with key members of the tourism industry, the Georgia Department of Tourism and Trade, and others, and make recommendations for incentives to attract tourism-related industries to the County.

Natural and Scenic Resources Goal ... Preserve, protect and nurture the qualities of the natural and historic environment of the County.

Strategies that will address these needs include...

Encourage development patterns and land use, which enables the County to protect, enhance and preserve sensitive areas, through identification of sensitive areas on the Future Land Use Plan Map, and the appropriate development regulations to ensure such protection.

Promote best management practices that limit soil erosion from agricultural operations, commercial and residential development sites, and the promotion of tree protection.

Protect water quality including those sources used for drinking water, recreational activities, and other water bodies such as Non-watershed Rivers; streams and creeks by meeting or exceeding minimum state standards for water supply watersheds and groundwater recharge areas.

Protect and preserve viable agricultural lands, wetlands, steep slopes and ridgelines, and other environmentally sensitive areas from incompatible activities and development, and mature trees during the development process and other land disturbance activities.

Develop an overall countywide environmental improvement and maintenance effort coordinated with efforts at the regional level, state and federal levels.

Actively reduce the solid waste stream within the county.

Ensure the integrity of those historic and archaeological resources found in Douglas County to ensure that they are not removed from the County without permission.

Enhance the County's Greenspace plan so that sensitive natural areas are identified and acquire land with the intent of developing public parks or preserves. Encourage the protection of sensitive areas through innovative land use techniques and conservation easements.

Continue the actions of the Open Space Committee/Task Force to advance the open space goals of the County, including increasing the awareness of County residents of the codes and ordinances in place to maintain and protect open space, mature trees and natural areas.

Review and evaluate local government codes and ordinances, and enforcement procedures targeted to the prevention and enforcement of illegal waste disposal activities.

Survey locations of point source pollution outfalls emptying into local water resources in order to target these locations for control or elimination

Historic Resources Strategies...Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources within the county.

As part of the development process provide for the protection for historic and archaeological sites and structures considered important to the community.

Establish guidelines for the excavation of historically and archaeologically important sites within the County.

Encourage and promote educational efforts designed to enlighten the public concerning the value and importance of local historic and archaeological resources.

Public Facilities and Services Goal ... provide for efficient, effective and high quality public facilities and services for the citizens and businesses of Douglas County.

Develop a capital facilities plan according to existing capacity, preferred level of service and projection of need calculated within the Capital Facilities Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

Implement the 20-year Capital Improvement Plan through the annual STWP and budget process.

New development will be served with public facilities that meet or exceed established level of service standards.

Fair and predictable standards will be developed for allocating infrastructure costs between areas of the county.

Sanitary sewer services will be target as a priority to areas with business and industry potential, such as areas along major transportation routes.

Sanitary sewer services will generally be provided to new residential development other than low-density rural residential uses, in support of land use goals related to efficient growth and in furtherance of water conservation goals.

The County will complete a master parks plan and identify future park sites and facilities will meet or exceed acceptable levels of service standards for parks and recreation facilities.

The county will that promote a linked system of parks and open spaces.

The County will ensure that all residents have access to cultural opportunities, facilities and programs.

Optimize efficiency and effectiveness of services through the coordination of land use planning and infrastructure financing.

To ensure a variety of passive and active park, open space and recreational facilities and opportunities are available and accessible to all residents of the County.

Continue to utilize and update as necessary design and construction criteria for all new public and private facilities, additions and modifications to existing facilities, and require compliance with or exceed all local, state, and federal standards including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Implement and update the maintenance action plan for all County facilities to ensure maximum utilization of existing facilities.

Evaluate the delivery of public services in relation to current and projected demand as part of a 20-Year Public Service Action Plan.

Work with WSA to coordinate future land use, population and employment projections and the location and capacity of line extensions.

Use water conservation techniques to conserve and wisely utilize water resources through the establishment of educational and public relations mechanisms focusing on the conservation and efficient utilization of local water resources.

The County will explore standards for ensuring that public facilities and services are available concurrently with development that require such facilities.

The county will explore adding fiscal impact analysis requirements to their development codes to establish a solid foundation for fairly allocating infrastructure costs.

The county will continue to maintain and upgrade existing infrastructure to accommodate and encourage infill and redevelopment within its boundaries.

The county will explore a maintenance and enforcement program for septic systems to ensure that such systems adequately function in a fashion that protects public health and water quality.

Solid Waste

Promote recycling activities concurrent with the Douglasville/Douglas County Solid Waste Plan and regional, State and Federal guidelines, continue to identify additional markets for recycled products, and target recycled products as a percentage of total purchases.

Maintain and enhance current efforts by private citizens and governmental agencies to clean up litter.

Continue to utilize inmate and community service labor to clean up trash and litter

Continue to emphasize education and public relations activities to increase awareness of current programs to reduce the solid waste stream even further, including source reduction, composting, recycling and personal waste reduction programs, as well as the implications of non-compliance.

The County shall continue to promote solid waste reduction through the purchase of recycled materials where feasible.

Public Safety Strategies...

Develop a comprehensive public safety plan for the County based on existing capacity, preferred level of service and future demand.

Require inclusion of public safety infrastructure (such as fire hydrants, adequate fire flow pressure, and emergency access routes) in development plans.

Update, and revise where necessary the Board of Health Strategic Plan to meet projected needs as identified in the Community Facilities Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan. Continue to implement the Board of Health Strategic Plan.

Update as necessary the Parks and Recreation Master Plan based on the current assessment and statement of needs as identified within this plan, for active parks, recreational facilities and passive open space.

Utilize the Greenspace program to target lands within small water supply watersheds such as the Dog River, Bear Creek, and Anneewakee Creek watersheds, and other environmentally sensitive areas as potential locations for passive recreation.

Continue to integrate pedestrian and bicycle trail linkages from residential and commercial areas to parks, open space and other recreational facilities through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan component of the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation and Thoroughfare Plan.

Cultural and Library Strategies...

Increase the offering of, and participation in cultural events, programs, and organizations. Consider the development of cultural institutions in Douglas County such as a performing arts center, art museum, concert hall, history museum, and other institutions.

Complete a master parks plan to identify the amount and type of parkland that will meet or exceed the acceptable level of service standards as established in the Community Facilities Chapter of this plan.

Promote a linked and accessible system of parks, recreational areas and open spaces that will provide connectivity throughout the county.

Educational Strategies...

Communicate and coordinate with Board of Education concerning future growth areas and the County's plans for provision of public schools to meet future capacities. Identify future school districts on the Future Land Use Plan.

Coordinate development and forecast information to promote coordinated timing of infrastructure, growth and educational needs.

Continue to promote local opportunities for human resource development and employee training.

Transportation Goal ... provide a comprehensive and coordinated multi-modal transportation system which will provide multiple options for safe, convenient, environmentally friendly, and efficient inter-County and intra-County mobility to all residents and employees within the county.

Actively plan for improvements to the local transportation system through a regional, collaborative context involving other cities and counties, the GA DOT and the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Develop and implement alternative modes of transportation in addition to the auto that will better serve the public and achieve regional, state and federally established transportation goals and air quality standards.

Proactively increase transportation infrastructure capacity, safety, accessibility, efficiency and mobility in the context of the Future Land Use Plan Map.

Minimize negative social and environmental impacts due to transportation facilities on residential neighborhoods, adjacent land uses, the County as a whole, and the region in general.

Address the need for aviation facilities.

Budget annually for transportation projects and develop new and innovative sources of funds for both locally programmed projects and use as leverage to obtain state and federal funding.

Implement a street beautification program to improve and enhance the aesthetic environment of the roadway network in residential, commercial and industrial areas.

Continue to encourage transit, high occupancy vehicle lane development, and ridesharing programs with express bus service to key employment destinations on a local and regional level.

Housing Goal ... Achieve an appropriate mix of housing opportunities for current and future residents.

Based on the inventory and assessment presented above, the County needs to...

Foster a variety of housing options including a variety of housing type, size, price, density and site conditions to meet every market niche through the use of innovative development techniques, such as mixed-use villages, loft development and master planned developments.

Maintain, protect and enhance the viability, character and identity of established neighborhoods, communities and rural settlements.

Carefully consider appropriate types of redevelopment and infill land uses to ensure compatibility.

Perform a comprehensive housing market analysis to determine housing need and types of homes in demand.

Develop a residential district that would include a minimum unit size, and quality design standards appropriate for move-up and executive housing options.

Utilize innovative, state-of-the art residential construction techniques that will achieve economies of scale maintain or lower costs, yet not compromise quality.

Include additional requirements such as sidewalks, parks and open space, common area improvements, and other features that add to the quality of the residential development. Establish minimum requirements for sidewalks, parks and community amenities within large-scale subdivisions and master planned developments.

Develop loan, grant, incentive and educational programs for home maintenance and repair targeted toward the elderly and blighted areas of the county.

Maintain code enforcement efforts in areas of low and moderate-income housing. Establish target areas for implementation of maintenance and rehabilitation strategies.

Land Use Goal ... coordinate land use patterns and infrastructure planning in order to provide an efficient, equitable, and compatible distribution of land uses in Douglas County.

Based on the inventory and assessment presented above, the County needs to...

Ensure that future land use and development decisions are consistent with long range planning goals and policies and that such decisions promote social and economic well-being.

Growth will generally be directed toward existing or planned service areas and away from rural areas with planned lower levels of services and a dependence on public wells and/or septic systems. Allowable densities will be reduced in rural areas that cannot be efficiently serviced.

Infrastructure will be target as priorities to areas suitable for commercial, industry and business uses, but new residential uses (other than low density rural residential) will also be directed to areas that can be efficiently served with sanitary sewers.

Require comprehensive plan consistency and infrastructure concurrency during the rezoning and development review process.

Encourage innovative development techniques to provide for a mix of uses in appropriate locations.

Ensure compatibility between differing land uses and protect existing development from incompatible uses when making land use decisions.

Develop an effective strategy for the gradual elimination of non-conforming land uses.

Encourage the reuse and revitalization of obsolete or underutilized commercial or industrial facilities that is in conformance with local land use regulations.

Accommodate the year 2025 population and employment projections.

Ensure consistency of the Zoning Map with the Future Land Use Map designations through rezoning.

Establish an urban growth boundary beyond which no additional dense or urban scale development can occur, with the exception of neighborhood serving commercial.

Seek and maintain urban growth boundaries agreements with adjacent governments.

Use infrastructure as a tool to guide development into locations where the land is most cost effectively serviced (i.e., accessible to police, fire, water, sewer and the urban road network).

Adopt public service and facility standards that ensure new development will only be approved when the facilities to serve it will be concurrently available.

Monitor development's (including undeveloped areas zoned and / or platted) impact on existing or future infrastructure and public facilities capacities.

Encourage creative urban design solutions for development within the County, such as mixed-use projects, village oriented centers and other innovative site planning techniques, such as TNDs, conservation subdivisions and TODs.

Target higher density residential development in areas where adequate transportation facilities and commercial or public facilities exist or are planned.

Limit development in environmentally sensitive or unsuitable areas.

Provide transitions in intensity, scale, density and land use between high and low-density land uses as a key tool in decision-making.

Develop subdivisions that foster a sense of community and promote pedestrian mobility, community recreation and an abundance of public open space.

Support a cohesive approach to providing retail sales and service nodes within the County thereby avoiding strip commercial patterns along arterial routes; these nodes would be developed near existing and planned transportation routes and connections on a scale that is compatible with residential development and pedestrian access.

Encourage the establishment of community oriented activity or village centers as focal points for the various communities within Douglas County.

■ **Short Term Work Program**

The Short Term Work Program (or STWP) is attached at the end of this chapter. The STWP presents a schedule of specific actions that the County intends to take during each of the coming five years to address its needs and to implement its strategies for Douglas County. The STWP includes the following:

A description of initiatives and programs to be put in place over each of the next five years, including cost estimates and alternative funding sources where applicable.

A description of major capital improvements or infrastructure expansions proposed by the County over each of the next five years, including cost estimates and alternative funding sources where applicable.

A description of administrative systems, regulatory measures or land development regulations to be adopted or amended over each of the next five years.

■ **Managing the Plan**

To be a useful and influential tool in guiding growth and development in the future, and in ultimately realizing Douglas County's vision for the future, the Plan must be kept current. Over time, changes will occur in the county that may not have been anticipated and over which the County may have no

control—changing lifestyles, national or regional economic shifts, the impact of telecommuting or internet access on working and shopping patterns, etc. Annually monitoring these shifts against progress in Plan implementation may lead to the need for amendments to the Plan. In addition, the State has certain requirements for amendments and updates that must be followed. All of these issues are addressed below.

Annual Plan Review

The annual review is to be accomplished in coordination with the annual budgeting process. At a minimum, the annual review will consider:

Apparent changes in the pace of growth, in terms of housing units built and land absorbed by nonresidential development.

Land development approvals over the past year in light of realization of the Comprehensive Plan Design Guidelines (as applicable).

Zoning approvals over the past year in relation to the Future Land Use Map.

Planned Short Term Work Program activities compared to actual accomplishments.

The plan outlines recommendations to cope with anticipated changes in Douglas County. The adopted plan serves as a policy guide for local growth and development. To be carried out, the following steps need to be taken:

Review current development regulations

Annually review the Unified Development Code and other county regulations to ensure that the plan is being properly implemented.

Administer and Enforce Regulations

Continue to enforce the Unified Development Code, the Capital Facilities Plan and the Future Land Use Plan Map as the roadmap to the county's desired land use patterns.

Update the Capital Improvements Plan and Budget

A part of the Capital Improvements Plan and Budget process, it is very important to identify future sites or at least general locations for community facilities such as parks, libraries, etc. as early as possible using the guidelines in the Plan. Early acquisition of sites minimizes ultimate land costs and permits the best sites for community facilities to be obtained before other development occurs. Capital facilities programming should be in conjunction with outlined land use patterns on the Future Land Use Plan Map and policies within this plan. The Capital Improvement Planning and budgeting process should include:

- Preparation of a detailed capital improvements plan and budget including the following elements:
 - Detailed Project descriptions.
 - Location of desirable sites.
 - Schematic Layouts of buildings and sites
 - Construction cost estimates
- Prepare a schedule, program and budget including the following elements:
 - Design and construction schedule
 - Possible grant funding

- Staff operation and maintenance costs
- Five-year capital budget

Obtain Funds for needed improvements.

In addition to local funds, state and federal grants can be used to help pay for local projects. On the average, all grant programs require some local participation for capital expenses as well as a commitment for local staffing, maintenance and operational expenses. Alternative funding sources should be identified during the update to the five-year capital budget program. Alternative sources that can be utilized include such programs as impact fees, SLOST, bonding and special improvement districts a complete funding plan should be included in the capital facilities plan.

■ **Updates to the Comprehensive Plan**

Short Term Work Program

The STWP will be updated annually, reflecting the results of the Annual Plan Review. The STWP will be extended one year into the future in order to maintain a full five years of future activity, and any changes appropriate to the other years will be included. No later than 30 days after the end of the year just completed, the updated STWP will be forwarded to the ARC for their files.

Minor Plan Amendments

As a result of the Annual Plan Review, amendments to the Plan may be appropriate. If the needed changes are strictly local and not considered to have an effect on another local government, the changes may be adopted as a minor amendment to the Plan at any time during the year by Board action. At the end of each year, along with the annual update to the STWP, a summary of all minor amendments is to be sent to the ARC with a statement that the individual and cumulative effects of the minor amendments do not significantly alter the basic tenets of the approved Plan.

Major Plan Amendments

If, as a result of the Annual Plan Review, conditions or policies on which the Plan is based have changed significantly so as to alter the basic tenets of the Plan, the County will initiate a major Plan amendment. The public will be involved in preparation of the Plan amendment to the extent warranted by the degree of change that has occurred. Following State procedural guidelines, a public hearing will be held to inform the public of the County's intent to amend the Plan, and to seek public participation. The major Plan amendment will be submitted to Fulton County and near-by cities for review in accordance with our agreement under HB 489, and to the ARC for review under the State's requirements, prior to adoption.

Fifth-Year Review and Tenth-Year Plan Update

In accordance with State requirements, the Comprehensive Plan will be given a full update, at a minimum, in ten years (2011). After five years, however, in 2007, the County will determine if the Comprehensive Plan needs a major update based on the degree of change in the county that has occurred by that time. If major changes have taken place that have not been incorporated into the Plan through past amendments, a complete update will be initiated following State procedural guidelines (which are the same as for adoption of a new Plan).