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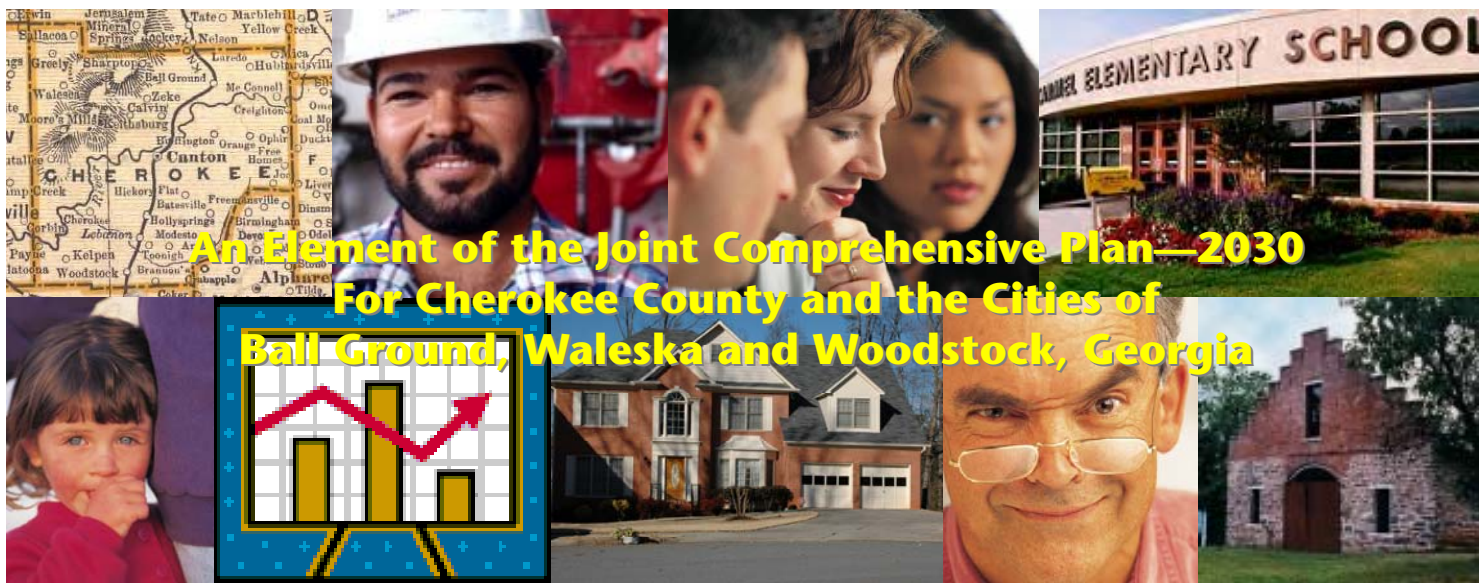
DRAFT

Cherokee County

Community Assessment

Vol. 1: Issues and Opportunities

January, 2007



**An Element of the Joint Comprehensive Plan—2030
For Cherokee County and the Cities of
Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock, Georgia**

**Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update
Cherokee County, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock**

**Community Assessment
Vol. 1: Issues and Opportunities**

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**Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update
Cherokee County, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock**

**Community Assessment
Vol. 1: Issues and Opportunities**

Introduction

■ Comprehensive Planning Requirements

Three of the four jurisdictions participating in this Plan—Cherokee County and the Cities of Ball Ground and Waleska—participated jointly in the adoption of their current Comprehensive Plans, while Woodstock adopted their current Plan independently. In order to maintain their Qualified Local Government status (that is, to remain eligible for a wide range of State grants, assistance and permitting programs), the plans must be updated regularly—in the case of Cherokee County and its cities, by the end of October 2007. This current update is characterized by the State as the ‘tenth-year update,’ which, because of the significant changes that have occurred in Cherokee County over the past decade, coupled with the adoption of new planning standards by the State, requires a complete reevaluation, reorganization and rewrite of the Plan elements.

Planning requirements for the preparation and adoption of Comprehensive Plans are adopted by the State’s Board of Community Affairs pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act, and administered and supplemented by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The most recently applicable planning standards took effect May 1, 2005, and establish the minimum standards that must be met for DCA approval.

■ Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this Community Assessment report is to present a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the comprehensive plan is built. In the view of the Department of Community Affairs, preparation of the Community Assessment is largely a staff or professional function of collecting and analyzing data and information about the community and presenting the results in a concise, easily understood format for consideration by the public and decision-makers involved in subsequent development of the Community Agenda (i.e., the “Plan”). The preparation of this Community Assessment, however, has greatly benefited from input and active participation by the Citizens’ Roundtable and from the general public through Plan Forum exercises and surveys.

This Community Assessment is comprised of two volumes:

- This Volume 1 is focused on issues and opportunities facing the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants now and anticipated in the future that result from growth and development.
- Volume 2 is an ‘addendum’ to the Community Assessment, containing detailed data and analyses that relate to the issues and opportunities discussed in Volume 1.

■ Components of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan meeting the planning requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs must include the following three components:

Community Participation

The first part of the comprehensive plan is the Public Participation Plan that was adopted by all parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update in order to take advantage of ongoing citizen participation activities through the Citizens Roundtable. The Public Participation Program describes the strategy for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

Community Assessment

This part of the comprehensive plan is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about Cherokee County and its cities (with an emphasis on those cities participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan). This following are included in the Community Assessment's two volumes:

- a list of potential issues and opportunities the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants may wish to take action to address;
- analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development;
- evaluation of current community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with DCA's Quality Community Objectives; and
- analysis of data and information to check the validity of the above evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities.

Community Agenda

The third part of the comprehensive plan is the most important, for it includes the community's vision for the future as well as its strategy for achieving this vision. The Community Agenda will include three major components:

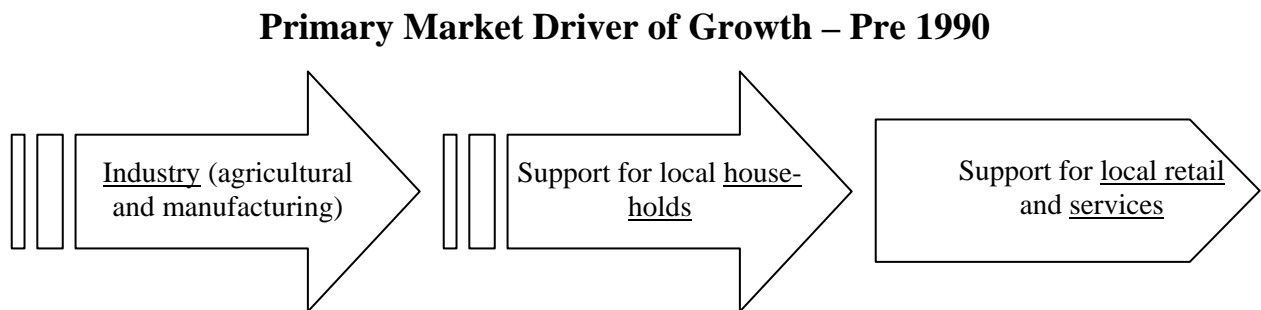
- a vision for the future physical development of the jurisdictions participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan, expressed in map form indicating unique character areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns;
- a list of issues and opportunities identified by the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants for further action; and
- an implementation program for each of the Joint Comprehensive Plan participants to achieve the vision for the future and to address the identified issues and opportunities.

In addition to the three components above, and in concert with preparation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, the County and its cities must review and possibly amend and recertify their previously adopted **Services Delivery Strategy**, and update the State-mandated **Solid Waste Management Plan**.

■ County Overview

Prior to the 1980's, the County was largely rural and agriculturally based. As the County's roadway networks began to improve and expand, bedroom communities began to appear to serve commuters into metro Atlanta. Population growth has been most significant along the southern boundaries near the Cities of Holly Springs and Woodstock. The eastern portions of the County and Canton are beginning to experience notable growth as transportation networks and infrastructure systems are improved and expanded. The northern portions of the County are anticipated to retain their rural character, although Waleska and particularly Ball Ground are poised for growth in the near future.

Historically (pre-1990), growth in Cherokee County was very moderate and was driven by growth within the county. Fueled by agricultural and manufacturing industries, jobs were available for local households who, in turn, supported local retail and services:



Due to the desirability of the region, Cherokee County faces increasing development pressures as both a bedroom community to the metropolitan area and as a potential employment center. Over the last two decades, Cherokee County has, and continues to experience a remarkable growth rate. By 2030, the population is anticipated to more than double from 183,449 to 417,654; for every 5 people in the county today, there will be 11 by 2030.

This assessment 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, while at the same time encouraging economic opportunities to promote a well balanced tax base. Clearly, however, density is building in the cities where services exist and a more “urban” character is developing.

- The nature of growth has changed over the past fifteen years and will continue to mature and evolve.
- The demographic characteristics of those who already live in the county are changing as they have children, age in place, etc.;
- The number and types of households that are attracted to the county will likely continue to change based on the types of development and potentially types of jobs; and
- The living environments these households will need (whether it be lower maintenance housing for aging baby boomers or more affordable housing to support industry) and seek (perhaps more walkable and mixed-use environments) will help drive the nature of future development.

A well thought-out comprehensive plan is responsive to current market trends and anticipatory of likely future market trends. The following represents a snapshot of the history and past economies of the county and its cities.

■ A Brief History of Cherokee County

The county, established by the Georgia Legislature on December 26, 1831, theoretically still belonged to the Cherokee Indians, but they would soon relinquish their ownership as a result of their removal to the West. Although preceded in the first millennium by a culture often referred to as “Moundbuilders,” the Cherokee and Creek Indians in the early 1700s were the first people in recorded history to call the area “home.” Many remnants of their culture remain throughout the county whose very name honors these proud people. Although migration of whites into the area began in the early 1800s, by 1825 there were still only 220 whites, including men, women and children, living amidst 13,000 Indians and 1,277 slaves belonging to the Indians. The discovery of gold in Dahlonega and the election of Andrew Jackson in 1829 spelled the end of the fledgling Cherokee Nation in northwest Georgia. Pressure from the Georgia state government and the Jackson administration led to the official end of the Cherokee Nation and the integration of its territory into Georgia in December of 1831. The newly formed Cherokee County consisted of some 6,900 square miles, covering most of northwest Georgia. A year later, the Georgia legislature voted to subdivide this giant county and create what is now modern Cherokee County. What follows is a brief introduction to the history of that region.

Created primarily as an emergency measure, the original county served the temporary purpose of holding the territory together under Georgia's laws while the survey was being made and while a more permanent arrangement could be worked out for its disposition into Counties of normal size. In an act of the Georgia state legislature approved December 3, 1832, the original Cherokee County was divided into ten counties: Cherokee, Cass (now Bartow), Cobb, Floyd, Forsyth, Gilmer, Lumpkin, Murray, Paulding and Union. Later divisions of these eleven counties have increased the total number of counties made from the original Cherokee to twenty-two.

“Captain’s Districts” or militia districts in Cherokee County were not totally legalized until after 1833. Each county was divided, by statute, into “Georgia militia districts,” and the able-bodied men resident in each district were organized into a military company by a captain, who was duly elected by the district. The militia system lasted until the Civil War period, although militia districts retain the civil functions allowed to them by the original statute.

The modern county of Cherokee, now 429 square miles, was first surveyed in 1832. Surveyors marked out a few large agricultural lots in the northwest corner of the county. The rest was subdivided into forty acre “gold lots.” Few of these lots actually contained gold, and as a result were sparsely settled by farmers. In the 1830s, newly arrived settlers introduced Cherokee’s first industry, silk production. The largest city, Etowah, was renamed Canton to honor China's silk capital. This venture quickly proved a failure, as the regions climate was ill suited for silk production.

Tobacco cultivation arrived in the northwest corner of the county in the 1850s. Several families emigrated from Virginia to the area known as the hill region around Salacoa. These families established a considerable tobacco industry that dominated that corner of the county until relatively recently.

Perhaps the greatest economic boon to the people of Cherokee was the extension of the railroad to Canton in 1879. This allowed cotton, the dominant crop in the county by the 1880s, and the small but thriving marble industry to ship their goods south to Atlanta and Marietta.

In 1899, R. T. Jones, a local merchant, transformed Canton and much of the county when he established the Canton Cotton Mill. The mill quickly dominated the economic and social life of Canton. As the largest employer in the county, Jones took an almost paternalistic responsibility for the region. Among other things, the

mill built two villages to house its employees, established schools, sponsored festivals, operated stores and built a church. In 1924, Jones expanded this operation with the construction of Mill No. 2. This made Canton a major center for the manufacture of denim cloth. However, although cotton was king, the marble finishing business in the north end of the county would prove to be the county's largest revenue producer for a number of years.

As time progressed into a new century, Cherokee's five municipalities would emerge as centers of commerce and trade. Each town had its own identity. Canton, as the county seat, evolved to become the center of government. The cotton mill and other ventures gave newcomers and natives the livelihood needed. Ball Ground, named for an actual ball game between two Indian tribes, became known for its gems and minerals. Reinhardt College gave prominence to Waleska. Woodstock remained a quiet farming community for many years, as did Holly Springs, but that too would change. The county survived a world war and a depression, and it should be noted that during the 1930s when 2/3 of the banks in Georgia failed, none of the four Cherokee County banks did so.

In the 1930s, a new industry joined the textile mills of Canton. Cherokee County's long tradition of temperance led to a thriving moonshine trade. According to Frances Owen in "Glimpses of Cherokee County," (p. 53) Cherokee was the number one producer of corn whisky during the 1930s. The 1930s also brought a transition in agriculture; soil exhaustion, the boll weevil and decline in demand transformed Cherokee from one of the state's largest producers of cotton to one of the country's number one producers of chickens. During and after World War II, the county would experience explosions in growth and all the accompanying changes. Cotton farming gave way to poultry production, and the county became known as the Broiler Capital of the World. Poultry production continues to dominate the agricultural economy of the county today. Bell Bomber, the forerunner of Lockheed in Marietta, gave many residents unexpected opportunities for gainful employment. Hundreds of workers would now call Cherokee County "home," and in the decades to follow, the allure of the suburbs would draw newcomers to the area in record numbers.

In 1963, the Canton Cotton Mill began a slow and rather painful decline. In that year, mill workers voted in a labor union for the first time. This started many years of conflict between the mill owners (still the Jones family) and the employees. This conflict quickly destroyed the familial tradition of the mill community. In 1981, the Canton Cotton Mill closed, marking the end of an era in Cherokee County.

Five areas were incorporated within the county:

Ball Ground

Ball Ground became known for its gems and minerals. Located in northern Cherokee County, the original ball field used by rival Indian tribes, is not the exact site of the town, however, Indian ball grounds were usually located on a level area of 100 yards long and often along a running stream. Ball Ground did not come into existence as a town until the railroad passed through it in 1882. Until that point, the community was almost entirely agricultural. When the railroad line was surveyed to run through Ball Ground, officials decided to put up a depot and develop a town to go along with it. Within two years, Ball Ground had a population of 250 and a large number of new buildings, including three churches and a high school. Ball Ground was considered one of the best business points on the railroad. In addition to providing a market for nearby farms, it had several industries such as saw milling and woodworking. However, its best-known industry for many years was marble working.

Canton

The county seat of Cherokee County was established in 1833 and re-named Canton in 1834. Once famous for its "Canton Denim," known worldwide for the high-quality denim produced by Canton Cotton Mills, the City of Canton is now enjoying the greatest economic boom in its history.

Holly Springs

The City of Holly Springs is a seven square mile oasis of friendly neighborhoods, thriving businesses, and wonderful early-twentieth century homes and commercial buildings. The City was incorporated in 1906, and quickly began building up around a busy train depot established by the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad. That depot, now the Holly Springs Community Center, was painstakingly restored by the City in the late 1990's and is a source of immense civic pride for its 5,000 residents.

Waleska

Waleska takes its name from Warluskee, daughter of an Indian chieftain who lived approximately 150 years ago. When this maiden was removed to the west with her people, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis W. Reinhardt named their settlement in her honor. Waleska was chartered by the legislature in 1889. Agriculture and lumbering were two of the industries carried on in Waleska; however, the chief industry since the mid-1880s has been the education of students at Reinhardt College. Waleska has grown along with Reinhardt College in the past decades. Recently, Reinhardt College began offering a Bachelor's Degree program in the McCamish School of Business. Waleska is also home to nearby Lake Arrowhead. A private community, Lake Arrowhead not only offers golf and tennis facilities but also boasts the largest private man-made lake in the south—over 500 acres—and provides boating and fishing fun. The small town of Waleska is only 1.5 square miles in area.

Woodstock

Woodstock is located in the southernmost part of Cherokee County, approximately 30 miles north of Atlanta and 12 miles south of Canton, the county seat. The southern part of Cherokee was settled first due to its flatter topography and easier access. Woodstock is over one hundred years old and one of the county's oldest towns. There are many different stories of how Woodstock got its name. The most logical is that it derived from a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott. Other less plausible explanations included the theory that the train stopped here to “stock wood,” but the railroad came to the area some fifty years after the town had a post office and a name. There is also one tale that a man named Mr. Woodstock settled in the area and started a school, thus giving the community its name. The railroad came to Woodstock in November 1879. Presumably, this is when the first train depot was built, although the first written account was recorded when the City of Woodstock limits were measured from the Depot in 1897. The City had a population of 300 and comprised a total of 960 acres.

Woodstock had industries of various kinds. The first gristmills in the county were located nearby. Woodcarving, yarn spinning and other related activities were also done. The abundance of waterpower around Woodstock, such as Little River, Noonday Creek, and other streams, facilitated these industries. Woodstock had a considerable activity in mineral development. The old Kellogg Gold Mine and several others are within a few miles of Woodstock. Mica and kaolin were also found in nearby areas.

In addition to industry, Woodstock had a strong agricultural base. By the 1890s, Woodstock was said to be shipping 2,000 bales of cotton annually. A number of Woodstock developers were influential in introducing innovative farming methods to the county. In the present, the City boasts a historic downtown with brick paved sidewalks and buildings dating back to 1879.

Executive Summary: Community Assessment

The following summary focuses on those jurisdictions participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update—Ball Ground, Waleska, Woodstock and Cherokee County (for the unincorporated area) Where appropriate, countywide data and data or estimates for the nonparticipating jurisdictions is also included for comparison and a complete, countywide perspective. More detail can be found in Vol. 2 of this Assessment Report, the Technical Data and Analyses addendum.

■ Land Use Summary

- The majority of multi-family units will be targeted for location in the vicinity of major transportation corridors and at high activity nodes within the County, such as the Bells Ferry Corridor, Highway 92, Highway 5, and I-575; within the downtown redevelopment areas of the cities; and within mixed-use planned communities.
- With the dramatic household growth has come support for a significant amount of new retail and local-serving office.
- Newer, local serving retail is moderate to high quality.
- Regional-serving centers are rare in the county but are proposed along I-575; most centers are clustered in Woodstock and Canton on I-575.
- Several new, local-serving office projects have been developed near the large residential bases.
- Like many other suburban counties, but perhaps ahead of the curve, we are seeing some of the new retail and office projects come in “village center” formats either as a part of Cherokee’s many master-planned communities (MPCs) or as a complement to one of the existing downtowns, such as Woodstock.

■ Demographic and Socioeconomic Summary

Trend analysis and baseline population data provide a measure of current and projected population and employment growth within the County. Several factors can be attributed to this:

- The County has, and continues to experience a remarkable growth rate. By 2030, the population is anticipated to experience a growth rate which more than doubles the present population, which has already grown by more than 41,500 people since the 2000 census (a 30% increase). Prior to the 1980’s, the community was largely rural and agriculturally based. As the County’s roadway networks began to improve and expand, bedroom communities began to appear to serve commuters, principally into Cobb and Fulton Counties. Population growth has been most significant in the southern part of the county, directed toward the communities of Holly Springs and Woodstock. The eastern portions of the County and Canton are beginning to experience notable growth as transportation networks and infrastructure systems are improved and expanded. The northern portions of the County are generally anticipated to retain their rural character while accommodating significant growth.
- The majority of residential development in the County has been, and is anticipated to be single-family residential units at a variety of prices and sizes. Since 2000, 90.1 percent of new residential development in the County was comprised of single-family detached units. This is attracting a mix of younger family households with children, first time homebuyers, and opportunities for move-up and, to a much lesser extent, executive housing in a suburban setting. Higher-density housing has been increasing in the

cities, particularly Woodstock. Additional economic development support in terms of employment opportunities, commercial, retail and support services, and public services will need to keep pace with the residential development if the County is to become more self-supporting and less of a commuter community.

The County and its cities will need to address a number of specific concerns that are critical in meeting future housing needs. In addition to fulfilling a market niche for move-up and executive housing, future housing needs may be increasingly translated into greater demand for more reasonably priced workforce and point-in-life (such as adult communities or senior housing) housing types like multiple-family and creative mixed-use products. While the need is clear to provide for a full range of housing types and densities, future decisions of the County and its cities regarding public improvements, zoning and development standards will determine the extent to which multiple-family housing and other higher density and creative housing products will be utilized in meeting anticipated population growth and associated housing needs without disturbing the ultimate goal of maintaining a rural/suburban quality of life, punctuated with more “urban” city centers.

- The majority of growth in the County is anticipated to come from in-migration as opposed to natural increase, with in-migrants generally moving from elsewhere in the Atlanta metropolitan region, and an almost equal number moving in from outside the region. With a trend toward smaller families indicated, the availability of new residential opportunities at relatively affordable prices as compared to the overall metro Atlanta area will remain the primary draw for increases in the population and households in the County. However, as a variety of market pressures increase the price of starter single-family housing, a small but growing share of new housing product is expected to be townhomes.
- The increase in both the proportion and absolute number of older persons in the County (55+) indicates a growing need for housing products that will accommodate active adults and seniors on fixed incomes. New residential development, which has been primarily comprised of single-family detached housing throughout the county’s history, will need to adapt to these growing market segments. These products could include varied single-family and multi-family units within planned communities, active adult communities featuring small lot single-family and attached products with amenities at attractive costs.
- The persons-per-household sizes have been decreasing slowly over the past years, and are anticipated to continue to decrease moderately. This trend is consistent with national trends as the overall birth rate in the United States is expected to decrease over this planning period, but will be less felt in Cherokee County. Many suburban counties in Atlanta have seen rapid growth in Hispanic households over the past five years, which has contributed to areas of larger household sizes as many Hispanic households maintain multi-generational families in one home. Several metro counties were qualified as experiencing “hypergrowth” (a small base but dramatic growth) in Hispanic households. In Cherokee there is a steadily growing, yet still small Hispanic population, with over 95 percent of the population reported as White in 2000. Although the Hispanic population remains low at 5.6 percent of the population, it has increased twenty-two fold since 1980 and we would expect continued growth over the next 25 years. Currently, the larger household sizes often associated with Hispanic households is not a factor in household size projections. The decreasing household size may be attributed to the attraction of first time homebuyers with no children (either as families or single), empty nesters, and single persons entering the local job market, and is relative to the national trend of smaller household sizes/fewer children often associated with higher income and/or two-income families in areas with burgeoning economies.

Critical to understanding development opportunities in Cherokee County, and its cities, is a clear understanding of the market audience for new and revitalized land uses in the area. The following are details on the key demographic findings and conclusions relative to the demographics that shape development and revitalization opportunities.

A summary of Year 2000 demographic characteristics for the county is shown in Table 1. The 10-County ARC region and Georgia are included for comparison purposes. In 2000, Cherokee County comprised 4.1 percent of the ARC region’s population. Overall, the county had proportionally fewer persons in traditional

transit demographic groups (young persons, elderly, non-white persons, low-income persons, and households without vehicles) than either the region or the state. However, the concentration of population groups within Cherokee County varies by city.

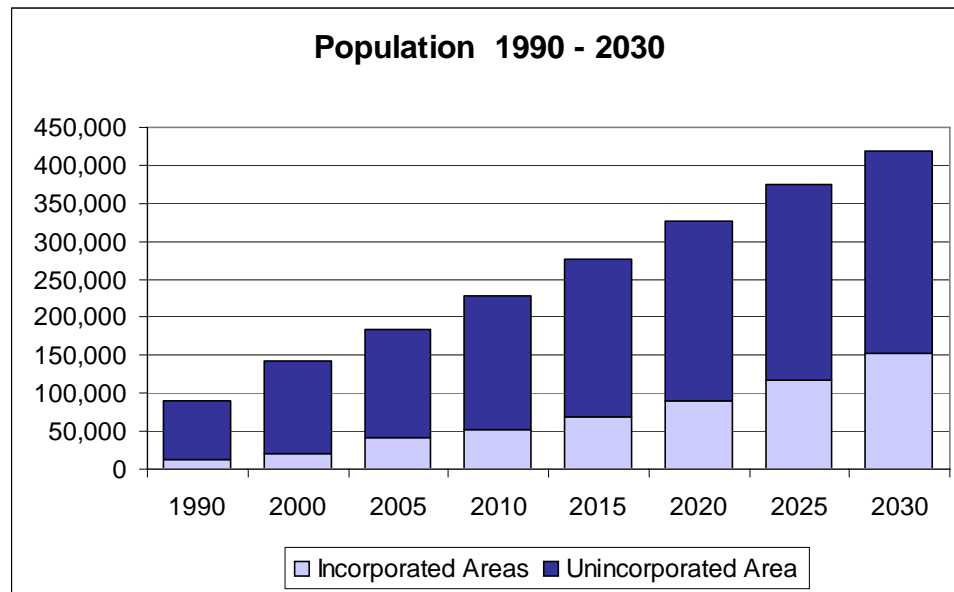
For young persons age 15 to 19, Waleska had a greater proportion of persons in this age category (29.9 percent) than countywide (6.4 percent), region-wide (6.8 percent) or statewide (7.3 percent) due primarily to the student population at Reinhardt College. Canton had the largest proportion of persons age 65 and older (12.7 percent) followed by Ball Ground (11.5 percent) and Woodstock (8 percent). The proportion of non-white persons countywide (10.1 percent) was lower than either statewide (37.4 percent) or region-wide (44.6 percent). Canton had the county's largest proportion of non-white persons (31.2 percent), followed by Woodstock (13.3 percent) and Waleska (12.2 percent). There were proportionally fewer low-income persons living below the poverty level in Cherokee County (5.3 percent) than statewide (13.0 percent) or region-wide (9.5 percent). Ball Ground had the greatest proportion of persons below poverty (12.2 percent) followed by Canton (11.2 percent). Cherokee County residents had a higher proportion of households owning vehicles (97.1 percent) than region-wide (92.3 percent) or statewide (91.7 percent). Ball Ground was the only area with an auto ownership level below the statewide average (90.7 percent).

Table 1: Cherokee County Demographic Characteristics—2000

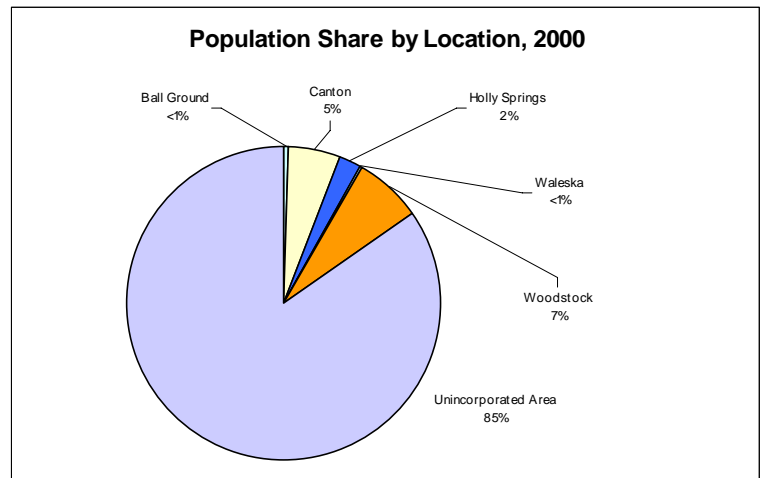
Geography	Total Population	Total Households	Percent of Population or Households				
			Persons Age 15 to 19 years	Persons Age 65 years and over	Non-White Persons	Persons Below Poverty Level	Households with No Vehicles
Georgia	8,186,453	3,006,369	7.3%	9.6%	37.4%	13.0%	8.3%
ARC 10-County Region	3,429,379	1,261,894	6.8%	7.3%	44.6%	9.5%	7.7%
Cherokee County	141,903	49,495	6.4%	6.6%	10.1%	5.3%	2.9%
Ball Ground	730	247	7.1%	11.5%	1.0%	12.2%	9.3%
Canton	7,709	2,713	6.4%	12.7%	31.2%	11.2%	5.3%
Holly Springs	3,195	1,109	6.2%	5.0%	8.1%	1.3%	1.7%
Waleska	616	112	29.9%	5.0%	12.2%	5.1%	0.9%
Woodstock	10,050	3,845	5.7%	8.0%	13.3%	4.2%	2.5%
Source: 2000 U.S. Census							

Population

- Cherokee represents a small but growing portion of the Atlanta metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), at 3.7 percent of metropolitan population in 2005, compared to 2.9 percent in 1990.
- Even with rapid growth projected for the metro area, Cherokee is expected to grow even faster and account for over 4 percent of all the metro population through 2030.
- Population growth in Cherokee County has quadrupled in the past 20 years, increasing 75 percent between 1980 and 1990, and again by 57 percent between 1990 and 2000, for an annual average growth over the decade of 5.7 percent.
- In 1990, there were approximately 90,204 people in the County compared to 141,903 in 2000 and an estimated 169,300 persons in 2004.

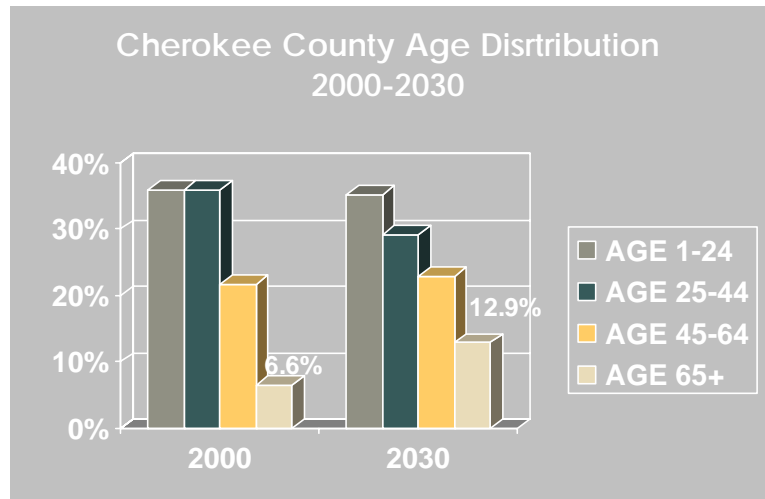


- The cities comprise a relatively small but growing proportion of the county population. Since 2000, the proportion has grown from approximately 15.3 percent to 22.3 percent of the county's population that resides in the incorporated cities of Canton, Ball Ground, Holly Springs, Woodstock and Waleska. By 2030, as a result of continued annexations, redevelopment and attraction of new development, the proportion will have grown to 36.5 percent.
- The City of Woodstock is the largest incorporated area in the county, constituting 9.9 percent of the total county population today, followed by Canton and Holly Springs at 6.8 and 2.1 percent of the County respectively. By 2030, these cities will have increased to: Canton and Woodstock 14.8 percent of the county each, followed by Holly Springs at 4.4 percent.
- The majority of growth in the County is anticipated to come from in-migration as opposed to natural increase (births minus deaths). For 1995 to 2000, a slight majority of in-migration appears to have been driven from within the metropolitan region, with 52% of new residents having moved from elsewhere in the metro area, and the remaining 48% moving to the county from outside the Atlanta MSA.
- Population forecasts for the year 2030 are 417,600.
- Currently, about one-half of the population in Cherokee County (47.2 percent) ranges from age 25 to 54, which is the primary workforce cohort.



Age

- In 2005, slightly over 41 percent of the households in the County indicate the presence of children under the age of 18, an increase since 2000.
- Much has been said about the “aging of America,” and while the county will not increase its share of retiree-age persons in nearly the degree of the nation as a whole (where 19 percent of the population will be aged 65+ by 2030), there will be a shift in persons in the older age cohorts within the county. People aged 65 and above will account for nearly 13% of the population (only 7 percent of county residents are in this age group currently), and there will be a correlating drop in younger adults (ages 18 through 44), from 42% of the population to 36%. Children under 18 and adults 44-54 are projected to be present at proportions similar to those seen today.
- Whereas the highest concentrations of projected growth of the age of householders in the MSA and in Cobb County are in the 55+ range, Cherokee’s growth is much more spread out. The highest concentration is in 45-54 range.
- Driven by the aging of the baby boomers, 55 percent of household growth in Cherokee is expected to be in households aged 55+. This is very significant but perhaps less so when compared to neighboring Cobb (69 percent of household growth is 55+) or the MSA overall (64 percent).



Household Composition

- Currently, approximately 80 percent of the households in the County are family households, with the remaining 20 percent being non-family households (an individual living alone or 2 or more unrelated persons living together). Approximately 52 percent of family households in 2005 have one or more children.
- Household characteristics vary between the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county. Within the unincorporated county, 81.8 percent of the households are family households.
- Within the incorporated areas, 67.6 percent are families, and 24.5 percent of the households are non-family.

Income

- The percentage of households with income \$50,000+ is higher in Cherokee than in Cobb or the MSA—61.5% for Cherokee County, compared to 58.9% for Cobb and 52.5% for the MSA.
- Presently Cherokee County maintains a relatively high level of household income with 68% of households earning more than \$50,000 per year, and a county household median income of \$69,597—higher than Cobb County (57.7% of households making more than \$50,000/year, and a household median income of \$65,649), and the MSA (57.7% making \$50,000/year or more, and a household median income of \$59,127).

- This level of high income is expected to grow, with a vast majority of county households (73%) making more than \$50,000 per year by 2010 (adjusted for inflation).
- However, the level of executive/very high income (over \$150,000/year), as well as those below the poverty line, is lower than in other counties such as Cobb and Forsyth, suggesting a narrower band of incomes in Cherokee County, which are generally within the moderate to moderate-upper ranges.

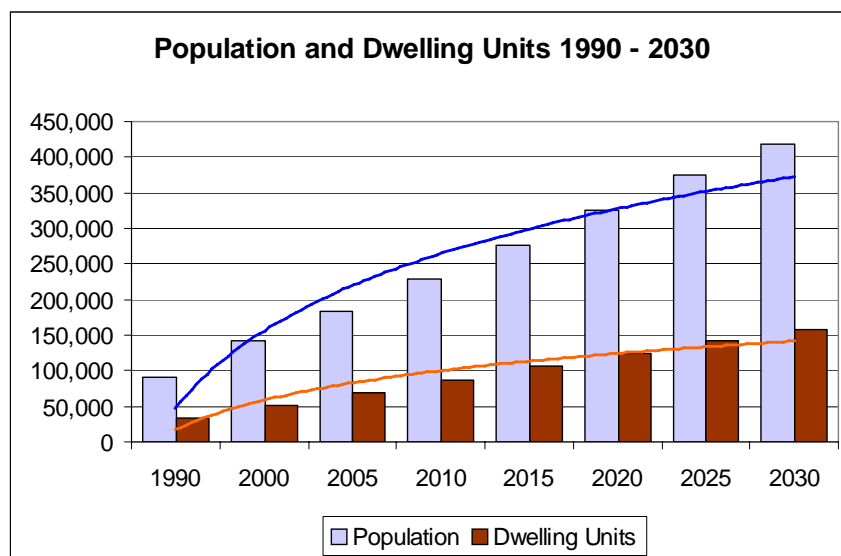
■ Housing Summary

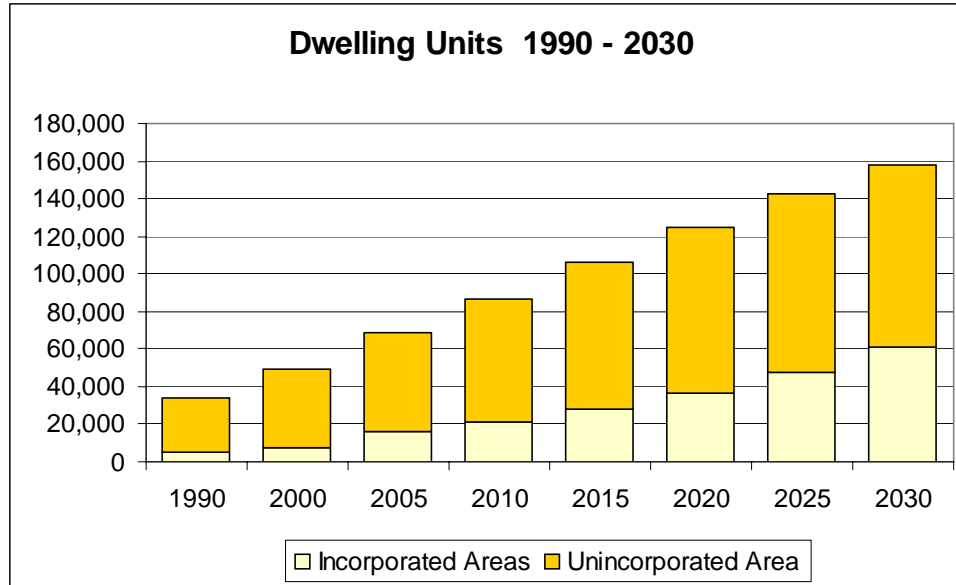
The characteristics and trends within a community are important indicators of future housing needs and policies.

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

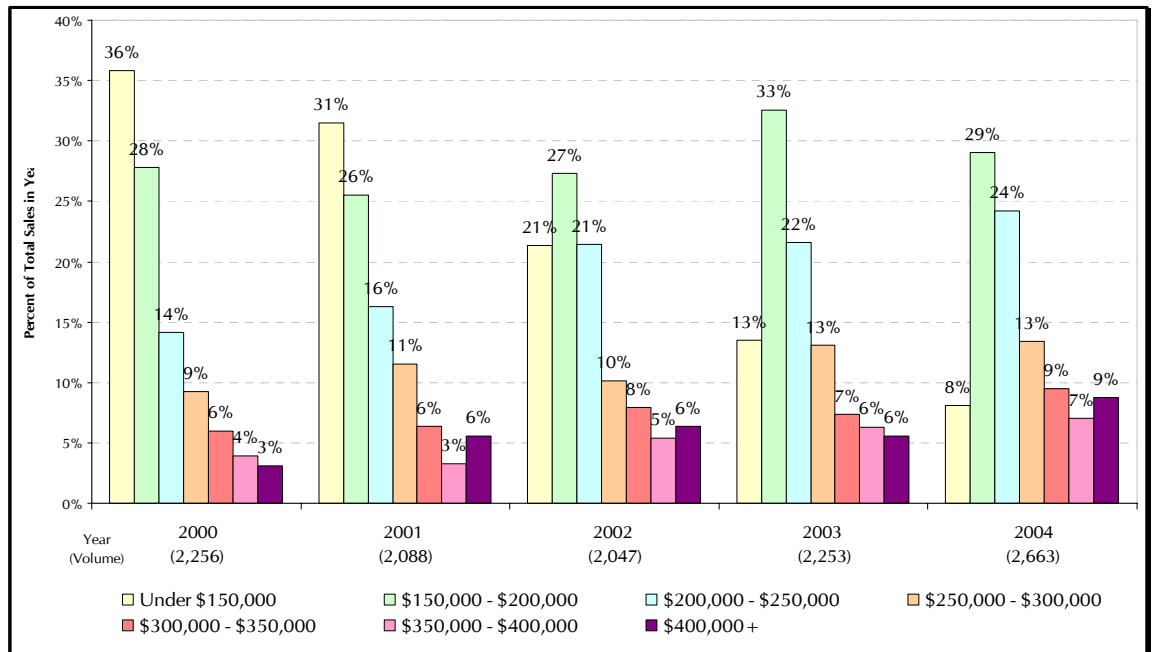
- Assess the current housing stock in terms of overall population demographics, special needs populations, economic development and affordability characteristics.
- Determine the County's future housing needs in conjunction with population projections, economic development and community goals and policies.
- Discover and investigate any local housing problems such as substandard housing, over-building, infrastructure and land use suitability.
- Assess whether an adequate, appropriate, affordable and varied supply of housing is being offered in Cherokee County to meet the future needs of its citizens.
- 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, Cherokee County faces increasing development pressures as both a bedroom community to the metropolitan area and as a potential employment center. The Housing assessment promotes a mix and balance of residential development options available to existing and future residents of the County.





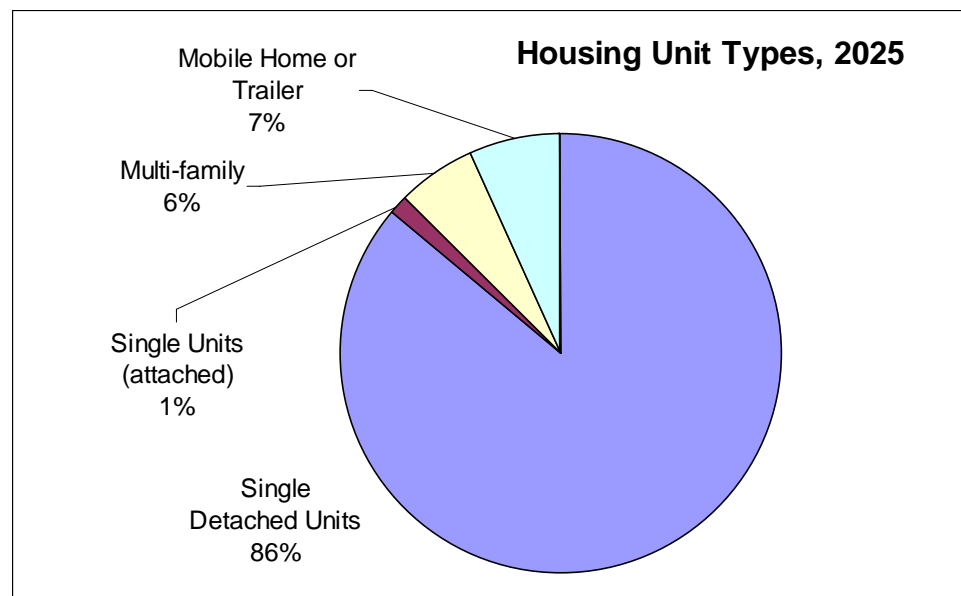
- In 2000, there were 51,937 housing units in Cherokee County, a 53.5 percent increase during the preceding 10-year period, which had grown to an estimated 68,426 by 2005. The County is forecasted to contain 157,634 housing units by the year 2030 (an increase of almost 90,000 units).
- The predominant housing type within Cherokee County, both in the 1990 census and the 2000 census was overwhelmingly single-family houses, comprising 86.9 percent of all units in 2000. Of all owner-occupied housing, single-family homes represented 94.3 percent of the total. However, between 2000 and 2004 the number of new single-family homes sold in the county as a percentage of all home sales decreased by about 10 percent. In 2000, 97 percent of all new homes were single-family homes. By 2003, this percentage dropped to 85, and then rose to 88 percent in 2004. The numbers reflect demo-



graphic shifts, including smaller household sizes and aging of the population, as well as market shifts, such as increases in land costs. Much of the new attached housing is either townhomes located proximate to North Fulton employment cores or homes targeting households 55 plus in age.

- In the single-family market, Cherokee County has recently experienced a decrease in the availability of new, lower priced detached homes. Home prices appear to be geared toward buyers looking at moderately priced homes, with most buyers (consistently about half) buying within the \$150,000 and \$250,000 range.
- There has been a significant increase in executive and move-up housing opportunities, particularly conservation subdivision developments, and subdivision communities with golf courses or other amenities.

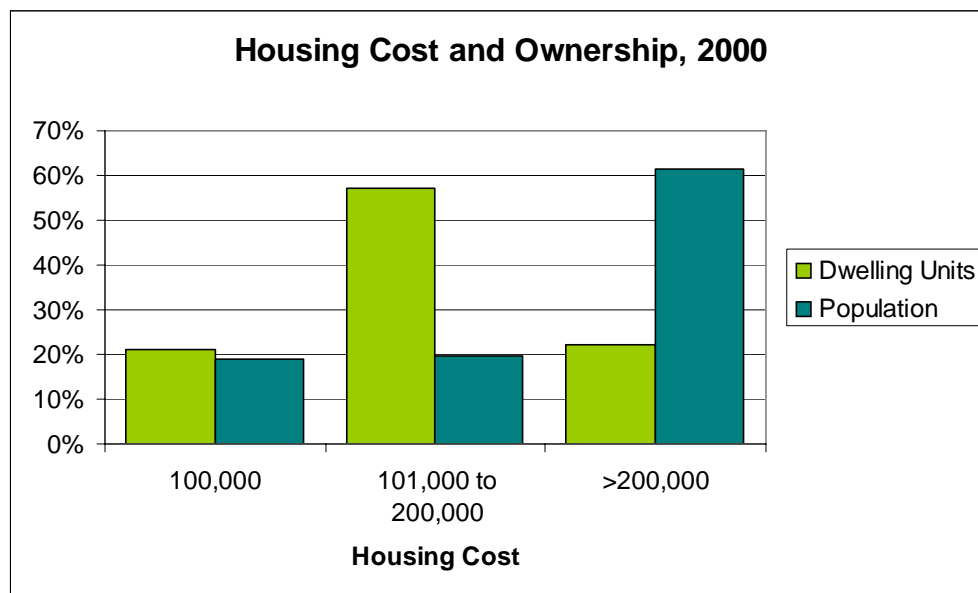
In 1990, multi-family housing units totaled 8 percent of all the county's dwellings and 5.3 percent in 2000. Although the percentage remains small in the overall housing market context, this has been one of the fastest growing housing sectors since 2000, as the percentage of multifamily new home sales has risen by about 2 percent annually during the current decade.



- The percentage of manufactured or other housing types dropped between 1990 and 2000, from 12.7 percent to 7.8 percent, signifying a decrease in this housing choice for county residents.
- Stick-built single-family housing dominated the housing market in both 1990 and 2000, capturing 81.9 percent of the market in 1990 and 85.4 percent in 2000.
- Proportionately, the representation of stick built single-family attached units (duplexes and townhomes) remains fairly constant between 1980 and 1990, but increased significantly between 1990 and 2000.
- Owner-occupied units made up 83.9 percent of all occupied housing in the County in 2000, whereas renter-occupied units made up 16.1 percent of occupied units. Year 2005 estimates show that numbers have not changed significantly in the past five years. During this time, homeownership rates have increased nationally but new, rental apartment communities have also been developed to result in little change in the ratio of owner to renter housing units.
- In comparison to the regional 10-county ARC median figure of \$143,000 (2000), Cherokee County housing costs are slightly lower at \$138,000. However, Cherokee's median housing value rose 60 per-

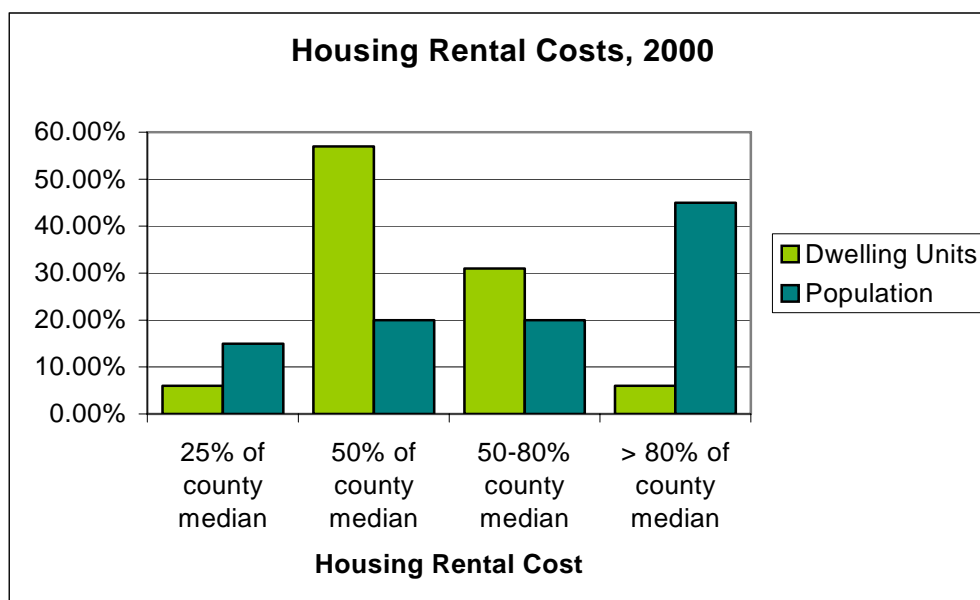
cent from 1990-2000, compared to the region's 54 percent growth. Current estimates put Cherokee's median owner-occupied housing value at \$176,000.

- Cherokee County has seen its median home value appreciate at a greater rate (almost 160 percent) than the MSA (149 percent) and nation (142 percent).
- The larger population centers of Cherokee County, which are closer to Atlanta metropolitan activity centers and transportation corridors, have seen an even greater rise in median home value, with Woodstock appreciating at 161 percent and Canton at 181 percent from 1990 to 2000.
- 18.7 percent of the total county population reported a housing problem of some kind (71 percent of whom were homeowners and 29 percent renters). Housing problems include substandard housing, overcrowding, and lack of affordability. Of those reporting a housing problem, 17.7 percent reported a cost burden (overpayment for housing): homeowners—15.2 percent and renters—30.6 percent. 6.9 percent of the population reported as severely cost burdened (paying over 50 percent of their income for housing).
- The majority of person reporting problems (87.1 percent) resided in the unincorporated portions of the county.
- The table below shows that many more people in 2000 could afford higher priced housing than the units available, while a close match existed between lower cost housing and those with lower incomes.



- Among owners reporting housing needs, a greater proportion are seniors, at 15.3 percent of owners reporting problems, as compared to renters at 7.6 percent
- In 2000, 21 percent of the County housing stock was valued below \$100,000 and 40.4 percent valued at less than \$125,000. Current year estimates, however, show that the values of homes have risen dramatically in the past five years. Homes valued below \$100,000 now comprise only about nine percent of all owner-occupied homes. There appears to be an adequate stock of existing homes to accommodate the 18.8 percent of the county households with incomes less than 50 percent of the County median. Over time, as home prices continue to escalate, the ability to serve households requiring homes less than \$100,000 will be diminished.

- Fifty-seven percent were valued between \$101,000 and \$200,000 in 2000. This percentage dropped to 54 percent by 2005, according to Claritas, Inc. estimates. This indicates that there is adequate stock available to house the 19.8 percent of the total county households that are considered lower income (50 percent to 80 percent of the County median).
- At the high range, homes valued over \$200,000 were equivalent to 22 percent of the county housing stock in 2000. This number has jumped to 37 percent in the past five years.
- Within the unincorporated area, only 5.6 percent of the total rental units were affordable to very low-income households; 15 percent of the 2000 rental households earn 25 percent of the county median income.
- The largest portion of rental units (56.3 percent) are affordable to the upper ranges of the very low-income category (50 percent of the County median income), which constitutes 20 percent of the rental households in the unincorporated county.
- 30.3 percent of units were affordable to the lower income category (50-80 percent of the County median income) which constitutes 20 percent of the renter households.
- Only 4 percent of all rental units rented for over \$1,500 per month, which is generally affordable to households earning over 80 percent of the median income, which constitutes almost 14 percent of rental households in 2000.
- Like ownership housing, in 2000 many more people could afford higher cost rental housing than the units available. At the lower end, however, units are clearly in short supply.



■ Economic Summary

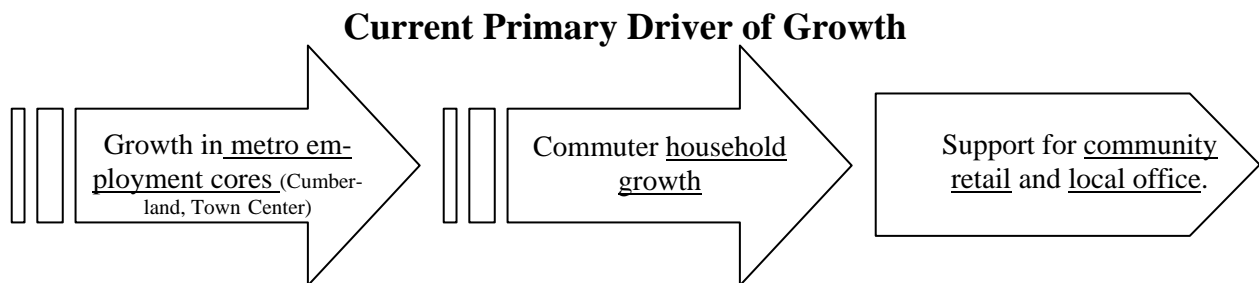
As the nation's economy pulls itself out of the recent downturn, communities are trying to identify and capitalize on their strongest economic attributes to assure quick recovery and sustainable economic success in the future. Even prior to the weakening of the economy, local communities have been trying to align their economies appropriately around the national shift from manufacturing to a more service-oriented economy,

as well as well as an increased dependence on technology sectors. Cherokee County has historically been dependent on manufacturing, which accounted for more than 25 percent of the employed population in the County in 1980, in addition to Retail Trade, Construction, Transportation and Utilities, and Education. Shifts in the employment base of the County's labor force toward Professional and Administrative Services, Technology and Education, Health and Social Services have been occurring over the past two decades, and are anticipated to continue. Analysis of the County's statistics, economic trends and business environment surveys indicates that there are three main issues surrounding the County's future of economic development:

- Workforce – training needs and concern about quality;
- Infrastructure – transportation and ability to support growth; and
- Business environment – desire for better support for small businesses.

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 analysis of commuting patterns.

As employment has decentralized away from Atlanta's urban core and metropolitan Atlanta has continued to move out the interstates, the primary drivers of growth in Cherokee have changed from that which is generated within Cherokee County to that which is going on to the south:



- From 1990 to 2000, the total employment in the County has risen by 121 percent from 21,607 to 47,655.
- Forecasts of employment growth were prepared by job sector in a ratio with the forecasted population growth: 63,160 jobs in 2005 and 144,970 jobs in 2030, which translates into an Increase of 81,800 jobs over 25 years.
- Cherokee County has a high labor participation rate of 84.3 percent.
- An overwhelming 64.6 percent of Cherokee County's employed residents worked outside of the County in 2000. The number of persons living and working within Cherokee County has increased from 31.5 percent in 1990 to 35.4 percent in 2000. However, nearly 2/3 of Cherokee residents still commute to employment outside of the County. This level of jobs/housing balance stands out even more when compared to the percentage of individuals working in their county of residence in the Atlanta MSA (50.8 percent), Georgia (58.5 percent) and the United States (73.3 percent).
- The unemployment rate, while relatively low, has increased steadily since 1999, and has begun to descend. The May 2003 rate for the County was 3.6 percent (much lower than the region or the state).
- The 2001 real per capita income in Cherokee County was \$29,150, lower than that of the Atlanta MSA's at \$33,769 and the United State's at \$30,413, but higher than the State's at \$28,523. This reflects the county's higher proportion of families with children and two wage-earner households.

- Almost 80 percent of the population relies primarily on net earnings for income, and the percentage of the population accepting Social Security and public assistance transfer payments decreased from 1990 to 2000.
- The Education and Health Services, Retail Trade and Manufacturing sectors employ the most people in Cherokee County. These sectors represent nearly half (48.5 percent) of the County's total employment.
- The Construction sector has the highest employment and earnings location quotient in the County representing 18.7 percent of the County's total employment.
- The three sectors with the highest average annual payroll are Wholesale Trade at \$42,539, Financial Activities at \$40,534 and Construction at \$34,314.
- At 20 percent, the Professional and Business Services sector has the largest portion of the total number of establishments in the County (897 firms).
- Only 3.3 percent of all business establishments employ more than 50 people.
- Non-farm sole proprietors represent 25 percent of the total employment, with annual average earnings of \$24,887.
- The county currently lacks any large-scale job providers. Those employers that do exist are generally small and provide lower-paying jobs.
 - Three of the five largest employers (excluding government and public schools) are retailers, which typically pay lower wages;
 - The County included only 21 industries with 50+ employees; and
 - There are only three industries with 200+ employees.
- The ability to attract major employers may be negatively influenced by the lack of rental housing for employees. Firms, regardless of their field, generally employ a workforce that occupy all levels of the income spectrum, and those workers at the lower or entry-levels of the spectrum often seek housing commensurate with their pay. Market-rate rental housing commonly addresses these income bands.

Earnings statistics indicate that Cherokee County has an untraditional income distribution, but is, overall, a middle-income community. The poverty and crime rates are also relatively low, indicating that poverty is not a serious problem for the County. In addition, the number of individuals receiving government financial assistance, (Social Security and non-retirement related transfers) has declined from 1990 to 2000, indicating an increase in the community's overall wealth. In particular, the wealth of retired individuals has apparently increased as more are relying on their personal retirement income.

Evidence of the relatively low paying employment opportunities is clear in the employment sector analysis of Cherokee County: the average annual earnings in each of the employment sectors are less than that of the State. Statistics indicate that the county overall is a middle-income place, with the higher income individuals generally being those that work outside the County.

Employment and earnings data suggest that Cherokee County's economy is overly dependent on services for current residents, and not those sectors that can bring in revenue from outside the County. Manufacturing is a revenue generator and is currently one of the largest sectors in the County, but is declining nationally and is projected to continue to do so. This trend is expected to be mirrored in Cherokee County. In addition, the low annual payrolls for the Manufacturing subsectors do not suggest it is a promising sector for the community. Wholesale Trade and Financial Activities are some of the highest paying sectors in the County, but represent less than 10 percent of the total employment combined. While other sectors which predominantly serve the needs of the residents are growing, and are anticipated to continue to grow (Retail Trade; Education and Health Services; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Construction), indicating that the County is growing at a rapid pace and suggestive of a healthy economy. The lack of large sector employment generators that

can attract substantial revenue from outside the County is a problem that may affect the outlook for strong, sustainable economic success in the future.

■ **Natural Resource Summary**

An important element of land use planning is the assessment of how natural resources are responsibly utilized, managed, developed and preserved within a community. This chapter in Volume 2 provides an inventory and assessment of locally significant and unique natural and cultural resources and presents a determination of vulnerability to the impact of growth and development. The assessment also identifies opportunities and constraints on the way land is developed.

Cherokee County has taken a proactive stance on the protection of its natural and sensitive resources. As Cherokee County continues to develop, more and more effort is being put into finding a balance between environmental needs of clean air and water, the availability of drinking water, retaining areas of natural significance for animal and plant habitats, and those of development and growing population. As part of the implementation of this plan, the County may need to revise further its Codes and Regulations to guide development away from sensitive areas. Increased education of the general public and developers with regard to environmental issues will bring about increased awareness of the importance of maintaining a proper balance between people and their environment.

In order to balance development pressures with the need to preserve both the rural character and sensitive environmental resources, the County has taken pro-active measures within this plan and on the current Future Land Use Plan. The use of the Watershed Protection Ordinance, Floodplain Regulation Ordinance, the Greenspace Conservation program, the Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance, the County's Tree Preservation and Replanting Ordinance, the Soil Sedimentation and Control Ordinance, and adoption of the minimum DNR standards where specific ordinances have not been adopted will ensure the protection of these important features within the County. The Future Land Use Map utilizes a designation for Parks and Recreation/Open Space/Conservation. This designation includes active and passive parkland, dedicated greenspace, forests, WMAs, lakes, the Little River and the Etowah River. An Agricultural designation represents all pastures, cropland and areas incidental to farming operations and livestock production and aquaculture, as well as all land used for timber production or pulpwood harvesting.

On an independent course, Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock have adopted regulations that mirror the County's ordinances for environmental protection.

■ **Historic and Cultural Resources Summary**

Historic resources include landmark buildings, historic structures and sites, commercial and residential districts, historic rural resources, archaeological and cultural sites and the historic environment in which they exist. Historic Resources serve as visual reminders of a community's past, providing a link to its cultural heritage and a better understanding of the people and events that shaped the patterns of its development. Preservation of these important resources makes it possible for them to continue to play an integral, vital role in the community. Currently the County has seven properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the Woodstock Train Depot; the Alfred W. Roberts House in Ball Ground; the Canton Commercial Historical District; the Crescent Farm/Edgewater Hall and the Rock Barn in Canton; the Canton Wholesale Company; and the Canton Cotton Mill #2.

As in many Georgia counties, distinct periods of building activity are apparent. An important building period in the County was between 1880 and 1919, better known as the period of the New South. For Cherokee County, this was a period of growth and expansion brought on by the construction of the railroad. Other major historical periods represented include antebellum, Reconstruction, Roaring Twenties, Great Depression and World War II/pre-Cold War. Varying styles of architecture include examples of Victorian, Queen Anne,

Craftsman, Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival, Romanesque, Italianate, Beaux Arts Classicism, and Tudor Revival. Craftsman and Minimal Traditional are the most common architectural styles found in the County.

The Cherokee County Historical Society is very active throughout the county, having recently completed additional studies identifying 44 more properties eligible for nomination to the National Register.

■ **Transportation**

Roadways were the focus of the transportation needs assessment. In 2000, congestion occurred primarily in the southern edge of the county. By 2030, it is anticipated that congestion will be a daily occurrence through to the core of the county. In 2000, the roadways experiencing the greatest congestion included I-75, the southern portion of I-575 from Woodstock to the Cobb County line, and portions of SR 92, west of I-575. By 2010, congestion is anticipated to increase on I-575, with congested conditions experienced from SR 20 in Canton to the Cobb County line. SR 20, heading east and west out of Canton and Victory Road from the Cobb County line to north of Towne Lake Parkway are forecasted to experience above average congestion.

By 2020, major roads connecting Cherokee to Cobb and Fulton Counties are expected to be congested near the county lines. By 2030, much of the major roadway network on the southern edge of the county is anticipated to experience capacity deficiencies. Roadways in the northwest corner of the county, including Wale-ska, are not expected to be deficient. The northeast corner, including Ball Ground, is also unlikely to face severe congestion; however, the Canton Highway and SR 372 near Ball Ground are expected to experienced low to moderate congestion levels.

In order to meet future transportation needs, Cherokee County must respond to the following issues through the 2030 horizon year.

- Accessibility and connectivity to Cobb, Fulton, DeKalb and, increasingly, Forsyth Counties.
- Corridor preservation (Cobb County) – I-575, I-75, Bells Ferry Road, Wade Green Road, and Trickum Road.
- Corridor preservation (Fulton County) – SR 92, SR 140/Arnold Mill Road, and SR 372/Birmingham Highway.
- Slightly decreasing percentage of commuters living and working in Cherokee.
- Preservation of employment centers – Woodstock, Towne Lake, and Canton.
- Congestion on roadways in the southern portion of the county – I-75, I-575 between SR 20 and Cobb County line, SR 92, SR 20, and SR 140.
- Alternative transportation – Ongoing transit study, airport expansion, sidewalk needs, and bicycle suitability and connectivity.

Potential Issues and Opportunities

The following issues have been identified from previously adopted plans, from data analysis (contained in Volume 2 of this Assessment Report) and through discussions with the Cherokee County Roundtable stakeholders group. These issues are preliminary in nature, and will be refined and addressed in the Community Agenda of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Tenth-Year Update.

■ Overview

Issues facing Cherokee County and its cities can be summarized generally under the following four topics:

- **Community Diversity**
 - Economic self sufficiency vs. bedroom community
 - Implications in terms of balance of residential, employment, retail
 - How do we accommodate the unmet economic development demands for higher paying jobs and loss of retail sales dollars?
 - Is the community ready to embrace what it would take to accomplish this?
 - Work force / affordable housing
 - Diversity of housing choices – young, old, worker, middle class, executive
 - Implications of the diversity of products and densities
 - Rental housing demands
 - Jobs follow executive housing, and there is currently a shortage of this housing type.
 - The image of the County needs to be upgraded so business moves here.
 - **Woodstock**—Many structures in downtown are ill maintained and in disrepair. Devise ways of approaching absentee landlords, and the development of assistance programs and tools.
 - **Woodstock**—there is not an active group to guide and promote downtown revitalization.
 - The county currently lacks any large-scale job providers. Those employers that do exist are generally small and provide lower-paying jobs.
 - Regional serving retail center needs are currently unmet.
 - Currently housing is relatively affordable, but the county is a relatively expensive place for renters. Only 5.6% of the rental units were affordable to very low-income households (15%).
 - Only 4% of all rental units rented for over \$1,500 per month, which is generally affordable to households earning over 80% of the median income, which constitutes almost 14% of the rental households in 2000.
 - 18.7% of the total county population reported a housing problem of some sort: substandard housing, overcrowding and affordability.
 - The majority of person reporting problems resided in the unincorporated portions of the county.
 - Among owners reporting housing needs, a greater proportion are seniors.

- **Pattern and Form of Development**

- Sprawl vs. density issue
- Current land use patterns and policies promote sprawl.
- Rural character preservation – recognizing that it is more than just density
- How do we protect “horse country”?
- The county cannot pave enough to solve congestion issues.
- Town and country distinction – is it important? Is it too late?
- Annexation implications – can’t say both that growth should be concentrated in and around cities and not recognize that will mean more annexation
- Density is required to maintain affordability
- In order to support economic development there needs to be a greater diversity of housing densities
- Expectations associated with property ownership
- **Waleska**—how do we best emphasize our biggest asset, Reinhart College?
- **Waleska**—Water and Sewer infrastructure are necessary to achieve our vision as an intimate college town that will embrace families, seniors and students.
- **Woodstock**-- there is a lack of connectivity within the downtown area.
- **Woodstock**--Pedestrian safety needs to be increased. All new development should plan for pedestrian connectivity and activity.
- What will Cherokee County be like in 20 years?
 - Will Cherokee County become a more mature bedroom community with additional quantities and wider varieties of housing, retail and local office?
Or
 - Will Cherokee develop a more dynamic economy by attracting a major employer or employment sector?

- **Quality and Character of Development**

- How far are the communities willing to raise the bar?
- Design quality and natural resource protection
- Quality will not happen by accident. Are the communities willing to invest the resources and take the heat for higher regulatory standards?
- Open space – is the county ready to take on open space preservation beyond what it can get out of the development review process, such as creating a dedicating funding source to acquire open space
- Recognize other aspects of community character – vibrant older neighborhoods, downtowns
- The county has no local historic resource protective ordinances
- Historic resources should be mapped for added protection.
- Develop more historic districts.

- **Traffic and Transportation**

- Related to the economic diversity issue – i.e. commuting patterns
- Is the community ready to recognize:
 - It can not pave its way out of the problem
 - It must look at a range of solutions:
 - Alternative land use patterns such as mixed uses
 - Multi modal options
 - More walkable neighborhoods
 - Transportation management tools, such as managed access, better connectivity, intelligent transportation technology

■ **Recurring Themes**

Growth Management

Generally, there is an agreement that managing growth is important for the county. The county and each city should have a vision for where and how growth would occur and that roadways and other public infrastructure, schools and public services should be adequate to accommodate the additional growth in conjunction with the development. A common theme was that the county should control growth and not allow growth to control the county.

Slow Growth/No Growth vs. Quality Growth

On the topic of how and where future growth should occur, there were two schools of thought. On the one hand, there were participants who voiced the opinion that the county should try to slow down growth and not allow development at a greater intensity than 3-5 acres per home in the county and the cities should no longer annex additional land to accommodate higher density development. These participants also voiced the opinion that taxation and other efforts should be implemented by the county to perpetuate the use of land for agriculture rather than residential development. They stated that the county was rural and should remain as such.

On the other hand, many participants indicated that because they believe growth is inevitable, and many desire a self-sustaining community, the county should focus efforts on ensuring that it happens at the highest quality possible and in a responsible manner, that coordinates the provision of adequate public facilities and services with high quality development.

There was general agreement that infrastructure is a key factor, but from a service delivery standpoint—whether the cost of providing infrastructure to support new growth would be too great a tax burden to bear, whether expansions would be timely to growth demands, or whether improvements could maintain the current quality of life at all.

Single-family development, particularly larger lot development, tends to consume farmland and natural environment areas at much greater pace than conservation-designed development and higher density residential products. Therefore, as conservation of the natural areas and rural character is one of the county's underlying concepts, growth management techniques and careful planning of land uses at appropriate densities must be considered.

Rural Character Preservation

The rural character of the county is one of the key strengths of Cherokee County. This rural character should be preserved through some means. There has been mention of rural estates (large lots of 2+ acres) and an area dedicated to horse farms and that way of life as desirable land uses, especially in the eastern portions of the County. In other areas, as agriculture diminishes, pressures to realize the development value of family farms must be recognized. How do we accommodate growth while saving the overall rural feel of the community?

Community Character

“Rural communities,” “small town” and “horse country” are defining characteristics within the county. While this character is difficult to define, this discussion was often accompanied by frequent mentions of encouraging high quality development and the use of architectural standards for non-residential developments. Existing neighborhood character should be identified, protected, and enhanced.

In general, the cities are preserving and enhancing the heritage nature of their cores, while building “in-town” densities. A recurring theme encircling and outside the cities is a desire to retain all of the quality of life benefits of “suburban living,” while fostering significant nonresidential development in appropriate locations.

Balanced Land Use Mix

On the topic of the mix of land uses in the county/community there were again differing opinions. There were some participants that expressed the desire to see more development that is nonresidential which would generate local jobs and increase the nonresidential tax base to provide funds for services, schools and infrastructure improvements, while other participants felt that the county should remain a rural residential community and that nonresidential uses would not be appropriate in the county. The market study outlined in Volume 2 had identified both an employment and retail shortage within the county. The concerns of the Citizens’ Roundtable was to achieve the “best of both worlds” by retaining the benefits of a suburban lifestyle while strongly encouraging economic growth (both as a source for local employment and tax base advantages).

Economic Development Opportunities

There are major shifts in the economy and real estate market towards “knowledge-based”/service economy. Employment growth is lower in places where the housing supply is more constrained. If Cherokee County is to become an employment center, a much greater percentage of rental housing will be necessary to support these economic opportunities. The ability to attract major employers may be negatively influenced by the lack of rental housing for employees, and the provision for “executive” housing for management.

The historic downtowns and town centers within the County add to the county’s diverse and small town feel. The historic core downtowns need to be supported and secure in their focus and purpose in order to create lively centers. There is also a concern that competition from other non-residential areas will siphon the life out of these centers. Downtown and town centers should be active both during the day and in the evening to provide a cultural focal point and a greater diversity of commercial establishments that support a mix of retail, entertainment and dining options.

Workforce Availability

The issue of providing workforce housing and other types of affordable housing options will require significant attention and potential revisions to the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Code to accommodate mixed-

use developments with residential components and areas of higher density residential. This may also involve the added application of density bonus and incentives in exchange for inclusion of residential units within the cost limitations of the workforce community.

Fiscal Responsibility

As a corollary to infrastructure financing and preferred land use patterns, there was a consensus that the Comprehensive Plan should be sustainable in its fiscal responsibility, assuring that the benefits and costs of future development must be balanced to maintain the quality of life now enjoyed throughout the county. Limited non-residential development has impacts both on quality of life issues (commuting time, environmental) and financial (a large proportion of the county's potential retail dollars are spent outside of the county). Identifying large areas of the county as rural, very low density also has financial implications on the fiscal health of the county.

Choice

It is an aim of the County to foster an environment that allows people to remain within the community from birth to death. As the county's demographics continue to diversify, special planning attention should be aimed towards policies to integrate appropriate community facility improvements, encourage "live, work, play" environments, create linkages and support housing to meet the needs of a wide range of ages and lifestyles.

Environmental and Historic Protection/Conservation

Growth needs to be balanced with the need to retain and protect significant natural resources, i.e., streams, wooded areas, wildlife habitats and open spaces throughout the county. It is also important to identify and protect historic sites, areas of steep slope and watersheds. The county's water supply is recognized as a critical resource.

Development should be steered away from these valuable resources including additional measures to further assess and protect the natural and historic resources of the County, particularly in the pre-development assessment phase. The county should identify targeted areas for conservation proactively, and not just react to their disposition when faced with a development request.

Annexation

A number of people shared their concern that annexation of land by municipalities is an issue. While there was some consensus that higher intensity development should occur only within the limits of the cities, there also was some concerns expressed that the cities should not continue to grow outwards through annexation. It is noted that few seemed aware that the County and the cities have established growth boundaries in the past in order to deal with this issue in a positive and cooperative way. At the very least, this cooperative arrangement between the cities and county should continue.

Rural Preservation vs. Property Rights

Another topic where there was a split between participants was on the topic of rural preservation vs. property rights. While some people expressed the desire to preserve large tracts of land for agricultural uses to preserve the rural appearance of portions of the county, others believed that regulations preventing the subdivision of larger tracts of land could deprive landowners of their property rights. "We don't want to be your scenic easement" summarizes the concerns that family farms would continue to dwindle, particularly as agriculture becomes increasingly unprofitable and the families move toward retirement. A balance between "ru-

ral” character and development was sought by some, possibly through a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and wider use of conservation subdivisions.

Community Facilities and Services

A high growth rate and scarcity of public funds has led to many infrastructure improvements to be “reactive” to development rather than being used to “guide” development. Sewer is extended on a development-by-development basis rather than being coordinated under a master plan for growth and comprehensive plan population and employment projections. New schools can be a strong catalyst for attracting growth to areas where growth is planned, desired and supported by other necessary infrastructure. Transportation issues associated with school location can also be coordinated with land use to encourage greater use of school buses, bicycles and walking.

Facilities catering to special needs populations such as shelters for victims of domestic violence, rehabilitation centers and transitional housing for homeless families are limited or non-existent in the County and the needs of this population must take advantage of the services offered through organizations outside of Cherokee County.

Schools

Construction of new schools and the capacity of existing schools will have difficulty-keeping pace with the forecasted growth. The attractiveness of the Cherokee County as a great “family” environment will continue, bringing proportionately more school-aged children into the school system than in many other counties.

Traffic/Road Network

The road network and its ability to handle existing traffic volumes is a major issue in the county. Traffic congestion on I-575 and the increasing traffic counts on SR 20 and other major roads are really a problem. There is a concern that the rural road network is having difficulty keeping up with growth, and that the currently planned roadway improvements will not even fix existing problems. Traffic congestion not only lowers the quality of life of a community, but it also impedes economic development opportunities. The County needs to change its mindset of how we view mobility, investigate connectivity, rail, transit and greater land use/transportation connections.

Other solutions will have to be sought to solve these problems, including:

- Create more walkable communities and increase the perception of safety increasing buffers and sidewalk widths along high-speed roads.
- Increase the land use and transportation coordination to improve future mobility, including the use of alternative modes and mixed uses to reduce trips.
- Get commuter rail in the community to cut down single person occupancy vehicles.

Political “Planning” Will over Time

There needs to be a mechanism or organization in place to assure that adopted plans remain on track without regard to changes at the political level. Some felt that the Planning Commissions play that role, while others thought a separate broad-based citizen’s group should be created to assure that we “stick to” the Comprehensive Plan after it is adopted. Land use plan consistency is one option that will be studied further.

Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

■ Land Use Summary

Since Cherokee County's existing land use patterns have a direct influence on the community's future growth and infrastructure, the analysis of existing development patterns are important as the basis for the preparation of the Future Development Map.

Because of its proximity to jobs in the Atlanta area, and particularly Cobb and Fulton Counties, its abundance of vacant land, and the availability of affordable housing stock, Cherokee County has undergone a transformation over the last several decades from a primarily 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 15 years. Almost 51 percent of today's total dwelling units were constructed since 1990 (that is, the total has more than doubled); 24 percent of today's units have been constructed since 2000 alone.

With this dramatic household growth has come support for a significant amount of new local-serving retail and local-serving office development of moderate to high quality. Most commercial centers are clustered in Woodstock and Canton and along I-575, while several new, local-serving office projects have been developed near the large residential bases. Like many other suburban counties, some of the new retail/office growth has occurred either in "village center" formats, as a part of Cherokee County's many master-planned communities, or as a complement to one of the existing downtowns, such as Woodstock.

Estimates for 2005 indicate that Cherokee County as a whole contains 68,426 housing units, predominantly in single-family homes (85.7 percent), and 4.7 million square feet of nonresidential floor area supporting retail, office and industrial uses.

■ Current Land Use

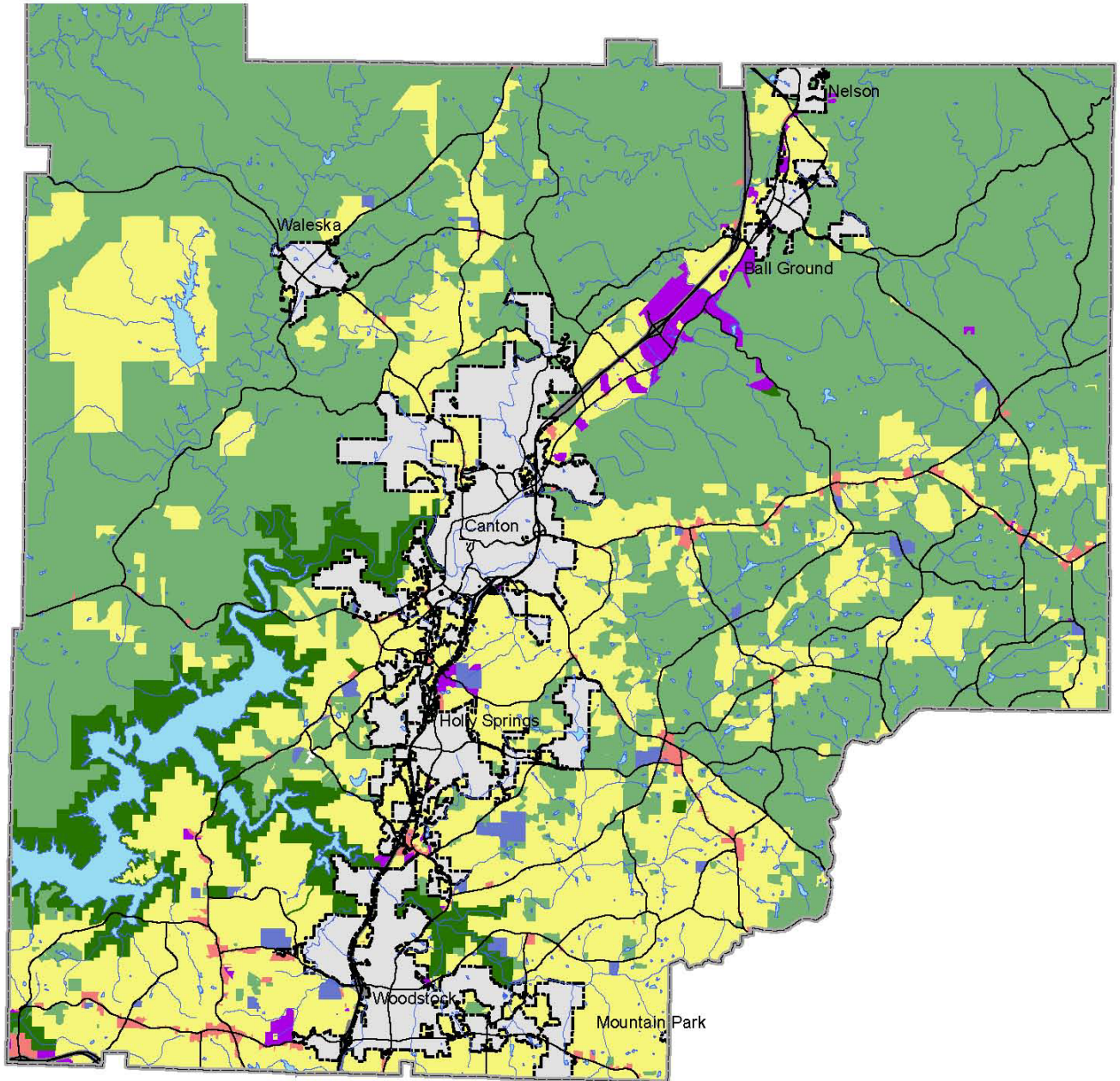
The Existing Land Use Maps show the distribution of land uses by basic category within the jurisdictions participating in this joint Comprehensive plan: Ball ground, Waleska, Woodstock and the unincorporated areas of the county.

The land categories displayed on the map are:

- **Residential.** The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units.
- **Commercial.** This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.
- **Industrial.** This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.
- **Public/Institutional.** This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. This category does not include facilities that are publicly owned, but would be classified more accurately in another land use category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities are included in the Park/Recreation/Conservation

category, and general office buildings containing government offices are included in the Commercial category.

- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities.** This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports and other similar uses.
- **Park/Recreation/Conservation.** This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.
- **Agriculture/Forestry.** This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.
- **Undeveloped/Vacant.** This category includes land that has not been developed for a specific use, or was developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.
- **Mixed Use.** This category covers mixed use projects that are predominantly residential in character, but which contain a range of housing types and densities and/or nonresidential elements for shopping or work, and usually a dedicated open space or recreational amenity (such as a club or golf course).



Legend

- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

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Drawing Prepared By:
CHEROKEE COUNTY
PLANNING & ZONING DEPT.
CANTON, GA.
DATE: 08/24/06

0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles

■ Areas Requiring Special Attention

Areas of Significant Natural or Cultural Resources

Cherokee County is fortunate to have many conservation, recreation and natural areas. Prominent natural features in the county with steep slopes include Pine Log Mountain and Bear Mountain. The Cherokee County Parks and Recreation Authority holds 1,245 acres in passive open space, which may contain undisturbed land, land adjacent to the Etowah or Little Rivers, walking trails, off-road bike paths, open fields (not playing fields or play areas), and an additional 400 acres of improved open space/parkland.

Natural open space also includes three Wildlife Management Areas that are managed by the Georgia DNR on lease agreements. These large tracts of land principally serve public hunting interests during the regulated State hunting seasons but also serve as access points for fishing on the lake. The Allatoona Wildlife Management Area, owned by the Corps of Engineers, encompasses 4,433 acres at the Lake. The McGraw-Ford (2,400 acres) and Pine Log Mountain (14,900 acres) WMAs are privately owned and leased to DNR. Among the undeveloped and unused land within the WMAs, almost 97 percent is forested.

Under the previously funded Governor's Greenspace Program, the County acquired 675 acres, including 575 acres of greenspace with State funds and 100 acres with county funding. The greenspace is located in five tracts of land: the Wyngate Tract (20 ac) which protects water quality, riparian buffers and natural habitat; the Emerald Development tract (131.4 ac) which protects scenic quality, natural resources, passive recreation and connectivity; and the two Hudgens tracts—Tract 1 (423.4 ac) which promotes scenic attributes, passive recreation opportunities and connectivity, and Tract 2 (100 ac) which was purchased with County funds subsequent to termination of State funding. An additional 2 acres has been acquired by the City of Woodstock for the Rubes Creek Park, which protects water quality, riparian habitat, wetlands, natural habitat, connectivity and passive recreation opportunities.

Cherokee County contains three significant water resources—the Etowah River Corridor, the Little River Corridor, and Lake Allatoona. Georgia uses a river basin planning approach to watershed protection. River Basin Management Plans are prepared in accordance with legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly that calls for the Environmental Protection Division to prepare plans for each major river basin in Georgia. The Coosa River Basin Management Plan, which includes the Etowah River and its tributaries, was completed in 1998. The entire Etowah River Corridor qualifies as a protected river under State law (O.C.G.A. 2-12-8). The Etowah River is of regional importance because it is a source of water and electrical power for communities in the northwestern part of Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Because there are few roads accessing the river outside of Canton, much of it is in pristine condition, bordered by low-density residential and agricultural land uses. Although DNR Criteria only requires large watersheds with reservoirs and small watersheds (with or without reservoirs) to institute buffer and impervious surface restrictions, Cherokee County requires a measure of protection to all watersheds in the county. In July 2005, a Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance was adopted, which establishes a 150-foot wide natural buffer along the Etowah and Little Rivers, and a 50-foot wide buffer along primary and secondary rivers. The County has begun to develop the Etowah River Greenway in accordance with the Department of Natural Resources regulations for river developments.

The U.S. Corps of Engineers is a principle land and water owner in the county. Lake Allatoona, approximately 12,010 acres at normal pool level with 270 miles of shoreline, is primarily operated for flood control, power production and water supply with recreation as a secondary, yet important benefit. The Etowah River is the source of Lake Allatoona's water. Allatoona Dam impounds run-off water from 1,110 square miles into the Lake. Within Cherokee County, the Corps owns a buffer around the lake comprising about 17,753 acres. Buffer widths vary around the lake. Corps owned reservoirs are specifically exempted from buffer re-

quirements placed on other public water supply reservoirs and watersheds by state law: however, under the Corps' lake management plan, Lake Allatoona is protected to a higher degree, for the most part, than specified by state law.

The Corps has developed and operates many public recreation sites around the lake and leases acreage to county and municipal governments and to private and non-profit organizations as park and recreation areas, including Woodstock's extension of Rope Mill Park. The Corps developed and manages several of its own recreation facilities, including boat ramps, hiking trails, campsites, picnic areas and a museum/nature interpretive center, located on the land owned by the Corps. Lake Allatoona also provides a specialized habitat for fish and wildlife.

The Yellow River Reservoir consists of 420 acres located primarily in Dawson County with arms of the reservoir coming into Cherokee County. The reservoir is owned and operated by the Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority as a public water supply and for low-water conditions. The facility falls under the DNR Part V Environmental Standards and requires a local government management plan. Portions of the reservoir within Cherokee County are also subject to the buffering, use restrictions and impervious surface requirements applicable to other watersheds in the county.

Cherokee County is participating with other jurisdictions in creating a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to protect the Etowah River and its threatened and endangered fish species. The HCP creates standards for stormwater runoff such that, in the highest priority areas (Priority 1) post-development runoff will not be allowed to exceed the pre-development, forested condition. In the Priority 2 areas, stormwater runoff measures must be taken so that the increase in post-development runoff from the site would be the equivalent to that generated by 5 percent of the site being impervious surface. Within the Priority 1 and 2 areas, "development nodes" can be identified where higher volumes of runoff are allowed, in order to accommodate commercial, industrial and high-density residential development where otherwise allowed by zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. Most of the northeast quadrant of the county, particularly north of SR 20 and east of I-575, as well as a significant area due west of Canton, falls into the Priority 1 category. Everything else in the county within the Etowah drainage basin—basically all of the county north of Lake Allatoona and Canton, and north of Canton Creek (which runs east-west south of SR 20)—falls into Priority 2.

The county's rich history is made evident by the numerous historic buildings dispersed throughout the area. A survey of historic and cultural resources was completed in 1989, and was updated in 2005. The current Cherokee survey covers the categories of landmark buildings and structures, commercial districts, and residential districts. Canton had 311 total properties surveyed, Ball Ground 49, Waleska 17, Woodstock 36, and Holly Springs 6. Per the 2005 Update, the county has 44 identified properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Areas Where Rapid Development or Change is Likely to Occur

Transitional land use pressures tend to be composed of older single-family homes that have come face-to-face with incompatible development or other changes to their residential environment. Higher traffic volumes and ensuing road improvements along several major corridors have made the properties undesirable for residential purposes, but excellent opportunities for adaptive reuse. Such areas include the homes located along Highway 5 and Highway 92, Bells Ferry Road, Highway 20 and Highway 140. Some of the homes already have been redeveloped as office and small retail type uses. Generally, these transitional corridors are expansions of existing or planned commercial areas as outlined on the current Future Land Use Plan rather than spot commercial zoning. As private development takes place, commercial uses are anticipated to expand and may affect additional single-family residences and nearby subdivisions. By keeping the uses low intensity in use, density and traffic impact, nearby residential areas can be protected while offering a reasonable reuse of the properties. Further adaptive reuse of the remaining residences is expected, and eventual assembly and redevelopment for new office or commercial construction that is compatible with the surrounding areas would be encouraged.

There are potential compatibility issues between the unincorporated sections of the county and the larger southern and central cities. These areas, primarily involving established single-family communities adjacent to the city boundaries and/or areas of influence, may become unstable areas. As the cities grow through annexation and densification, these areas may be exposed to development pressure to be rezoned commercial, or may require additional protection through buffering or design features to maintain their integrity. All of the participants in this Joint Plan should consider establishment of special buffer requirements in transitioning areas, particularly along the five major thoroughfares cited previously, or where established neighborhoods which are not likely to transition to another use may be impacted by non-residential development.

A new interchange with I-575 is planned with Ridgewalk Parkway (Old Rope Mill Road) in Woodstock, which will eventually connect (via Neese Road) to SR 92. This road improvement will spur intense development already planned along Ridgewalk Parkway but may create negative impacts in the Neese Road residential area. Extension of Woodstock Parkway south from Towne Lake Parkway to SR 92 will prove an important catalyst in opening the southwest quadrant of the LCI-Downtown area to new development as well as redevelopment of obsolete and abandoned commercial sites along its path.

Areas where Development Outpaces Infrastructure

As discussed earlier, 86 percent of all housing units countywide are single-family, 7 percent are mobile homes, and 7 percent of all units within the county are attached or multi-family units. In past years, the lack of sewer availability over many portions of the county has resulted in a low proportion of multi-family products and a preponderance of single-family units on large lots that are reliant on septic systems. As the county becomes more urbanized, and the infrastructure systems are extended along major transportation routes and capacity expanded, a more varied inventory of dwelling unit types is resulting. The county retains a great deal of vacant land for housing development and infill, although the county has begun to adopt planning practices that are designed to reduce sprawl and retain natural resources.

The recent development of higher density residential development and regional commercial developments has not resulted in the provision of pedestrian or alternative transportation connections. Both Bells Ferry and SR 92 are scheduled for roadway improvements. The roadway improvements in conjunction with development of new residential areas and the redevelopment of the older commercial areas present an opportunity to increase the efficiency of the public infrastructure in this corridor. Data from several sources indicates the need for improvements along several corridors. Increasing connectivity and accessibility will require improvements to better utilize the roadway as a safe, suitable bicycle route. The ARC Bicycle, Transportation & Pedestrian Pathways Plan recommends multi-use trails and sidewalks for several roadways. The Regional Transportation Plan indicates several corridors planned to have alternative bus transit available by the year 2025.

A number of major roads in the county have reached unacceptable levels of congestion, reflecting the extent to which growth has outpaced the needed road improvements. These are detailed in the Transportation Section of Volume 2 of this Assessment Report.

Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Significant improvements to Aesthetics

Elsewhere in this Report, areas that are deteriorating, in land use transition or potential redevelopment areas are identified and discussed. Because of these issues, a number of Character Areas have been tailored to the different strategies that would be useful in each type of area. These Character Areas, listed below and discussed in more detail in Volume 2, include Transitional Corridors, Development Corridors and Highway Business Corridors along impacted and deteriorating major thoroughfares. These areas are shown on the Character Areas maps, and particularly include the Bells Ferry Corridor, the SR 92 Parkway Village Corridor and SR 20 east of Canton.

Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

The Wal-Mart structure in Woodstock, located on the north side of SR 92 between I-575 and Main Street, has not been reoccupied since the company opened the nearby Super Wal-Mart. Adaptive reuse or redevelopment of the building has been explored by potential investors, but no plan has surfaced. The building lies in an area that would be greatly benefited by extension of Woodstock Parkway south to SR 92.

Areas with Significant Growth and Infill Development Opportunities

In 1990, the County as a whole had an estimated 33,840 housing units, up from 17,638 in 1980. By the year 2000, the United States Census identified 51,937 housing units in Cherokee County, a 53.5 percent increase during the 10-year period. The housing market continues to be strong for Cherokee County. Cherokee is predominantly comprised (over 60 percent) of moderately priced single-family subdivisions and opportunities for entry-level housing. There is also a greater range of housing opportunities at the lower end of the price spectrum than in other metro Atlanta communities, particularly comprised of the older housing stock located in or near the incorporated areas, manufactured homes and older condominiums. The majority of new town-home and patio home/zero lot line projects built since 2000 sell from between \$100,000 and \$250,000, but are not reflected in the Census data.

Unincorporated Area

Most of the land in Cherokee County that is developed for residential use is located in the unincorporated area. In 2000, the Census reported that 84.1 percent of all housing units in the county were located outside of any city. Over the 10-year period 1990-2000, the number of units in the unincorporated area increased from 29,795 to 43,701, a 46.7 percent increase. Much of this growth occurred in the southern portions of the unincorporated county, south of Canton. The development patterns in the south, however, “leapt over” many properties that had less development potential or were not otherwise available, leaving a great deal of land behind where infill development (compatible with surrounding neighborhoods) is expected to occur. Much of the county, however, remains rural and undeveloped, or has been devoted in large-lot and estate lot developments where sewer was not available, particularly north of Canton and in eastern Cherokee County. Many major road corridors present both challenges and opportunities where growing traffic and road improvements have changed the “rural residential” character and created pressures for reuse, redevelopment and potentially incompatible infill.

Bells Ferry Corridor

Cherokee County has recently completed a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study for the Bells Ferry/Highway 92 area, which will be the focal area for the majority of the proposed higher density residential and mixed-use projects in the unincorporated area. The existing residential land use in the corridor includes a variety of housing types with a particular concentration of mobile home parks. The existing housing stock has a variety of price ranges, and the quality and age of the housing ranges greatly within and along the corridor. While many Cherokee County residents tend to be skeptical of multiple-family products and mixed-use or other more creative configurations of housing products yielding higher densities, residential subdivisions employing smaller lot sizes than the underlying zoning while preserving open space (conservation subdivisions) appear to be highly supported.

Several residential projects have been completed in the past few years or are under construction. The area has experienced a noticeable transition as manufactured housing parks are being replaced with patio homes, townhomes and apartments. In the period from January 2000 to January 2004, 1,026 housing units have been rezoned for higher density residential development ranging from 6 to 16 units per acre. Recently, commercial development has begun to follow the residential development into the study area. Although both ends of Bells Ferry Road have had recent new residential and commercial development, the middle portion of the corridor (from south of the Highway 92 & Bells Ferry Road intersection, west to Wade Green Road, and north to just south of Red Barn Road) has experienced the characteristics of an area in economic decline.

However, both the residential and commercial development remains independent and do not compliment one another as would a mixed-use development. Retail commercial projects are developing in the northernmost portion of the corridor near Eagle Drive and Bells Ferry Road. These commercial projects are designed and located to serve the needs of a regional market incorporating the developed areas of Towne Lake and south-west Cherokee.

The Bells Ferry Corridor has suffered from the lack of a distinct vision. Currently, development that is taking place is doing so in a haphazard manner, converting various properties to single-focused disconnected uses with little regard to the character of the areas. The Livable Center Initiative Study established the vision for the Bells Ferry Corridor. The resulting effect of redevelopment in these areas will be the transformation from an area struggling to attract quality development to a community of choices.

Recent developments that have been completed or are nearly complete include:

- Gregory Lane & Walden Pond apartments: 220 units on 22 acres;
- Britley Park Patio Homes: 184 units on 36.6 acres;
- Mirramount single-family homes: 93 units on 20.74 acres;
- Cherokee Summit apartments: 283 units on 20.28 acres;
- Peaks of Bells Ferry Town Homes and Apartments: 248 units on 15.48 acres;
- Grantham Park Apartments: 137 units on 17.11 acres;
- Robert Harris Town Homes: 76 units on 15.24 acres;
- Ralph Davis Apartments: 192 units on 12.5 acres; and
- Pridemark Town Homes: 75 units on 11.62 acres.

Ball Ground

The City of Ball Ground, located in the northeastern quadrant of the county, was incorporated in 1883. The Cherokee Indians met here during an earlier century to play a game resembling lacrosse, hence the name 'Ball Ground.' This small community is a family-oriented town with a total area of 1.24 square miles, and boasts a compact and historical downtown district.

While the City of Ball Ground strongly encourages infill, particularly in the Old Canton Road area north of Georgia 372, the majority of new growth, similar to the other cities in the county, will be from development of larger tracts of vacant land and annexations. The majority of annexed land is residential. Out of the 399 acres annexed since 2000, 210 acres are single-family residential. Recent developments include Mountain Brook with 237 units, Olde Mill with 44 units, and Preston Manor with 10 homes.

The City of Ball Ground will continue to grow through limited infill and through development of projects in recent and future annexation areas. Ball Ground is undertaking a 165-acre major mixed-use project under TND zoning to the south and west of the City toward the I-575 Intersection with Howell Bridge with the following uses: Commercial—21.59 acres; Office Warehouse—7.3 acres; Mixed Use—5.98 acres; and Residential—130.13 acres. The residential component is a combination of single-family detached and 100 town homes. The mixed-use area allows residential over the commercial uses. It should be noted that these are three separate parcels and owners and not a "single development." The most recent piece of this project was zoned in May 2005.

Waleska

Waleska was incorporated in 1889, but the area was settled years earlier, primarily by the Reinhardt, Sharp, Rhyne and Heard families. A store, cotton gin and tobacco factory were in operation at the crossroads by 1856, and a post office was added to the store soon after. In the past, industry in Waleska included gristmills, lumbering, tobacco manufacturing and some mineral development. The lumber industry is still active in the

area, as is agriculture. The chief “industry” of the town, however, has always been the Reinhardt College, and Waleska has come to be regarded, almost exclusively, as a college town. The current City covers 1.46 square miles. The lack of sewer service historically has deterred significant development in the area, while nearby Lake Arrowhead (with its self-contained sewer system) has blossomed. The extension of public sewer to the area (or construction of more private systems) in and around Waleska would potentially release a great deal of pent-up demand for Greenfield development and downtown redevelopment.

Woodstock

The City of Woodstock was incorporated in 1897 with a population of 300. Woodstock had industries of various kinds, including the first gristmills in the county, woodcarving and yarn spinning, facilitated by the abundance of waterpower around the city. As in many of the Cherokee County cities, the railroad was influential in the development of Woodstock, so much so that the original city charter set its boundaries as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile north and south of the railroad depot and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east and west of the depot. In 1897 at the time of incorporation, the City consisted of 960 acres. By 2005, the City had grown to 10,050 acres, or 8.8 square miles, to become the largest city in the county.

Since 2000, 980.4 acres of land have been annexed into the City of Woodstock. Of this, over one-half is comprised of the Woodlands subdivision, consisting of 543 acres; 144 acres for the Mountain Brook mixed-use development with the Highlands at Mountain Brook residential component; and 101.7 acres is devoted to commercial uses. The remainder is comprised of scattered residential enclaves and individual units, including the Riverpark subdivision, a townhome complex on Highway 92, The Willows at Hames Road ranch-style townhome community for active seniors, a KB Homes single-family residential subdivision, Cornerstone Park single-family detached and townhome community, a Jim Cowart single-family enclave at Neese Road, and the Madison Retail mixed-use project with townhomes in the Towne Lake subdivision.

Woodstock’s proximity for commuters to Cobb and Fulton Counties enhances its draw for new families to the area, while its proximity to several I-575 interchanges (with one new interchange planned) and several east-west highway corridors enhances its attraction to nonresidential developments.

The City of Woodstock has been processing a number of higher-density and mixed-use projects, targeted primarily in the downtown district, that integrate additional workforce housing, protect existing stable neighborhoods and assist in the revitalization of their downtown and commercial core areas.

Approximately 200 acres of land within the city is considered vacant or underutilized, of which 132 acres are located within the LCI area (downtown). Most of this vacant/underutilized land within the LCI is designated AG (an existing horse farm). The other large concentration of “vacant land” (now under development) in the LCI is near the railroad depot. The Downtown Master Plan fosters mixed-use and higher density development at a maximum up to 16 housing units per acre. Townhome and apartment developments completed in the past 5 years include: Alta Woods Apartments (498 units); Creekwood Commons townhomes, Magnolias at Ridgewalk townhomes; the Regency at The Village at Weatherstone townhomes; the Ridge at River Park townhomes; Weatherstone Park townhomes; The Village at Weatherstone townhomes; and The Willows townhomes. The Hedgewood mixed-use project is currently developing on the east side of Main along Arnold Mill within the LCI that will include single-family, townhome and apartment units. In the northwest quadrant off I-575 on Dupry Road, 300+ townhome or patio homes are proposed. As well, the 340-unit Alta Ridgewalk Apartments are under construction in the City of Woodstock, and a proposed annexation on Highway 92 will include a townhome complex planned to the rear of a retail development.

Areas of Significant Disinvestment, Levels of Poverty or Unemployment

The majority of the county and its cities’ residential neighborhoods have been developed since 1980, with over 73 percent of the county’s total housing stock completed between 1980 and January 2000, resulting in a community with few areas of instability or deterioration. Based on housing counts as of 2000, within the un-

incorporated area, almost 75 percent of the housing stock is less than 30 years old. In comparison, almost 65 percent of the housing stock in the incorporated areas is less than 30 years old.

Since the vast majority of Cherokee County is relatively new, and the County was able to apply modern land use planning concepts to so much of the development before it occurred, areas of blight and transitional land use are very limited. Where they occur is in the older parts of the county and cities along major thoroughfares.

Unincorporated Area

While there are no large districts of blight or substandard housing found within the unincorporated county, small pockets of housing found in need of maintenance or minor to moderate rehabilitation are located primarily in the southwest portion of the county where older homes and existing higher density residential products are concentrated in the vicinity of Bells Ferry and SR 92, as well as some individual sites along Arnold Mill Road and Highway 20. Over the past 5 to 7 years, the portions of the unincorporated area have undergone a notable transition as older mobile homes are replaced with patio homes, apartments and townhouses. However, 14 trailer parks remain in the area, ranging from good condition to those exhibiting signs of deterioration and disrepair. In Emerald Forest, located in the southwest corner of the county and constructed in the late 1960's to early 1970's, a sizeable number of units appear to require attention for deferred maintenance and rehabilitation in general, although there are several well maintained units in the subdivision. It is possible that a number of lower priced detached single-family rental units are located in this subdivision and subsequently may receive minimal repair and maintenance. There are also a number of scattered, older single-family homes near Lake Allatoona that are exhibiting significant signs of deterioration and deferred maintenance. The mobile home parks, particularly the parks with older coaches that may not meet current safety and health standards, exhibit the greatest signs of deferred maintenance and deterioration in the county. The County Marshall Department, which handles code enforcement issues, annually inspects the mobile home parks to ensure compliance with current license and permit requirements. The mobile home parks along Arnold Mill Road, in particular the Fountain and Lake mobile home park, and those in the southwest quadrant of the county near Lake Allatoona, appear to exhibit the most significant conditions.

The Bells Ferry LCI Corridor is located in the southwest portion of the Cherokee County. Of primary concern to area residents and business owners is the "greyfield" redevelopment of declining shopping and service centers within the Corridor. The Bells Ferry Corridor has a number of existing older commercial, office and service uses in need of redevelopment. This is of particular importance in the core of the corridor where SR 92 and Bells Ferry Road intersect. Several of the shopping centers as well as many stand alone commercial buildings have experienced significant tenant turnover, which has led to declining rents and/or revenues and an increase in vacancies.

Ball Ground

In the City of Ball Ground there is a small pocket of older homes which exhibit problems associated with disrepair, located on the west side of Old Canton Road, between Stripling Street and Terrell Street. Land is slowly being acquired by the private sector for redevelopment, and possibly with town homes. Three structures in the area have already been removed, with three critical pieces remaining to be obtained.

Waleska

There are no concentrations of housing in need of rehabilitation. Some deteriorating properties are scattered throughout the community, with a few sited on Reinhardt College Parkway just north of Canton.

Woodstock

The Woodstock LCI Study identified the existence of a number of residential and commercial structures that are in need of rehabilitation within the LCI study area. Older homes that might be considered for rehabilitation are located on or near Highway 92/Trickum Rd. As well, there are units exhibiting signs of deterioration located primarily on secondary streets around the older downtown core area, although overall the residential

stock is in good condition and well maintained with only a few structures in disrepair. Subdivisions north of the Downtown LCI study area appear to have been built between the early 1960's and the 1980's, and therefore contain some structures over 40 years old which may be exhibiting signs of disrepair, in addition to scattered units throughout the city. Strategies for revitalization, rehabilitation or replacement of units in these neighborhoods are addressed in the Woodstock Livable Centers Initiative Plan.

Potential Character Areas

The following Character Areas are offered as examples of the types of Character Areas that may be appropriate for unincorporated Cherokee County, and participating jurisdictions: Ball Ground, Waleska, and Woodstock. *These Character Areas will be refined and revised, and new Character Areas may be created, as the Community Agenda is developed and public input is received through the Community Participation Program.* Currently there are two sets of character areas listed on the map, those for Cherokee County and those for Woodstock. During agenda development is assumed that many character areas will be used in common throughout the county, with specific character areas applying to specialized areas of the cities.

■ Natural Preserve

Undeveloped, natural lands with significant natural features, including views, steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas, conservation areas and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development of any kind are included in this character area. This character area also includes greenways and passive open space.

Development strategies:

- Maintain natural, rural character by not allowing any new development and promoting use of conservation easements;
- Widen roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary and carefully design the roadway alterations to minimize visual impact; and
- Promote these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation designations.

■ Scenic Corridor

Scenic Corridors are developed or undeveloped land paralleling a transportation corridor that has significant natural, historic or cultural features, and scenic or pastoral views.

Development strategies:

- Establish guidelines on development to protect the characteristics deemed to have scenic value;
- Enact guidelines for new development that enhances the scenic value of the corridor and addresses landscaping and architectural design;
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing, using directory signage to clustered developments;
- Steer development into nodes and clusters in order to keep the scenic viewshed in tact; and
- Provide pedestrian linkages to adjacent and nearby residential or commercial districts.

Allowable Nonresidential Development

- Country Crossroads
- Neighborhood Village Centers
- Transitional Corridor

■ Equestrian Lifestyle

Loss of open land has been identified as the greatest threat to the future of the equestrian lifestyle. This character area is developed to the cherished areas horse country character, provide social and economic stability of equestrian activities within the area, to preserve and enhance the natural environment, conserve natural resources and open space resources for passive recreation. Semi-rural equestrian related activities are the principal character of this area. Use of very low density residential and rural residential expressly supports equestrian focus and rural character. To support the character of this area, policies should be developed to acquire rights-of-way, construct and maintain trails and establish traffic control along trail system, provide equestrian crossing signals and to discourage incompatible land uses.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area;
- Encourage horse farms and appropriate accessory uses such as barns, corrals, grazing areas stables and similar structures;
- Intensive equestrian and animal keeping uses are expected and encouraged.
- Restrict new development to large-lot “estate” development of 5 acres or more or conservation subdivisions; and
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area.

Allowable Non-residential Development

- Country Crossroads;
- Agricultural related commercial usage, such as equestrian centers, boarding stables, riding academies and tack shops;

Note: this character area is under evaluation as to its positive and negative affects, and may be deleted or merged into another appropriate Character Area.

■ Country Estates

Areas within this character area are lands that are undeveloped or have been developed as “estate farms” or large-lot subdivisions. The intent of the Country Estates Character Area is to provide a low-intensity residential community, augmented with limited non-production agricultural activities, while accommodating low-intensity residential growth.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the low-intensity character in the area;
- Prohibit production-oriented agricultural activities such as major cash-crop cultivation and animal production (including cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry broilers or eggs);
- Restrict new development to large-lot “estate” development of 2 acres or greater or conservation subdivisions and an overall density of .5 units per acre; and
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area.

■ Rural Places

Much of Cherokee County's identity is tied to its rural and small town heritage. Although large-scale farms are not a major use within the county, many smaller homestead and "estate farms" still exist. Areas within this character area are lands in a cultivated or pasturage state or sparsely settled, including woodlands and areas under forestry management. In addition, areas of sensitive natural resources that require protection but are not Natural Preserves are found in this character area. The intent of the Rural Places Character Area is to provide a residential-agricultural community, which benefits from its scenic rural landscape with much of its identity based on its agrarian past while accommodating residential growth. This character area encompasses various areas of the county where public water may or may not be available; but sewer is not available or planned.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the rural character in the area;
- Achieve a net density of .5 units per acre
- Developments under 5 units must be on 2 acre lots; residential development over 5 units is restricted to conservation subdivisions;
- Livestock is allowable in this character area with appropriate buffering.
- Encourage and accommodate the further development of existing estates and mini-farms that blend into the overall fabric of the area; and
- Provide a lower level of service to these areas, in terms of transportation and sewer improvements, in order to maintain and protect the rural character and low intensity development.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Country Crossroads;
- Neighborhood Village Centers; and
- Community Village Centers.

■ Suburban Growth Area

As Cherokee County continues to experience growth in both residential and commercial development, more and more areas will experience growth pressure for typical types of new suburban residential subdivision development. This character area covers areas with limited existing development but where this pressure is the greatest due to adjacency and current or proposed community infrastructure (such as sewer and water). The intent of this character area is to channel growth pressures to areas that are suitable in terms of land use patterns and infrastructure investment, and to areas that have a more "suburban" feel. Without intervention, these areas are likely to evolve with low pedestrian orientation, little or no alternative transportation options, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential development with scattered civic buildings and varied non-connecting street patterns, often curvilinear.

Development strategies:

- Promote TND style residential subdivisions with a strong level of connectivity;
- Promote Master Planned Developments blending residential development with schools, parks, and recreation, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision;

- Provide a strong base of coordination with existing and proposed infrastructure;
- Provide good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points;
- Whenever possible connect to regional network of green space and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes; and
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking and the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Centers
- Community Village Centers

■ Suburban Living

This character area includes older established suburban neighborhoods and areas adjacent to established neighborhoods. This character area could include appropriate senior housing. Characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, large lots, high to moderate degree of building separation, predominately residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. Public services and facilities are offered at a higher level of service to accommodate a denser population. Water and sewer are either existing or planned within this character area. Vacant tracts are often scattered throughout the area between existing neighborhoods.

Development strategies:

- Retain and conserve the existing sound housing stock;
- Promote residential development that fosters a sense of community and provides essential mobility, recreation and open space;
- Assure compatibility of infill development with surrounding neighborhoods;
- Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform with traditional neighborhood development principles;
- Create neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences;
- Accommodate upscale executive housing to meet the market demand;
- Add traffic calming improvements, sidewalks, and increased street interconnections to improve walkability within and between existing neighborhoods; and
- Provide for areas of innovative development, such as golf, master planned and traditional communities in appropriate locations.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Center

■ Neighborhood Living

These neighborhoods have relatively well-maintained housing, possess a distinct community identity through architectural style; lot and street design and have higher rates of homeownership. The intent of this character area is to protect existing moderate density single-family neighborhoods through focusing on reinforcing stability by encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. The interior of these neighborhoods will remain single-family residential on sewered lots, relying on nearby neighborhood commercial for services. Infill or redevelopment of parcels within this character area will provide greater lifestyle housing choices, but should be compatible with the existing neighborhoods. Sensitivity to surrounding residences in terms of light, bulk, setbacks, landscaping and mass should be reviewed. This character area is also appropriate for newly developing neighborhoods at moderate densities.

Development strategies:

- Allow for the conversion of sites to more intensive residential use, such as townhouses and patio homes, where appropriate;
- Allow smaller lot development with higher densities;
- Encourage locating residential development where full urban services, public facilities, and potential routes of public transportation are available;
- Permit in certain sections of the county or cities, multi-family housing developments that blend into the overall fabric of the area; and
- Develop residential areas that utilize innovative urban design principles to encourage community, pedestrian linkages and mixed-use environments.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Centers

■ Historic Neighborhood

Residential areas in older parts of the community typically developed prior to WWII, make up the Historic Neighborhood Character Area. Characteristics include high pedestrian orientation, sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture; on-street parking, small regular lots, limited open space, buildings close to or at the front property line, low degree of building separation, neighborhood-scale businesses scattered throughout the area. These older neighborhoods should be encouraged to maintain their original character, with only compatible infill development permitted. There are two types of historic neighborhoods that call for their own development strategies: stable and declining.

Stable: An historic neighborhood having relatively well maintained housing, possessing a distinct identity through architectural style, lot and street design, and having generally higher rates of homeownership. Location near declining areas of town may cause this neighborhood to decline over time.

Development strategies for stable historic neighborhoods:

- Encourage more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties to reinforce stability;
- Require infill development of new housing and other appropriate uses to be architecturally compatible with the historic neighborhood;

- Allow well-designed new neighborhood activity centers at appropriate locations to provide a focal point for the neighborhood and to provide a suitable location for local-serving retail uses, such as a grocery store, hardware store and drug store; and
- Provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shopping or other destinations in the area.

Declining: An historic neighborhood that has most of its original housing stock in place, although housing conditions are worsening due to low rates of homeownership and neglect of property maintenance. There may be a lack of neighborhood identity and gradual invasion of different types and intensities of use that may not be compatible with the neighborhood's residential use.

Development strategies for declining historic neighborhoods:

- Public assistance and investment should be focused where needed to ensure that the neighborhood becomes more stable, mixed-income community with a larger percentage of owner-occupied housing;
- Encourage and promote infill development of vacant properties for new housing, but assure that it is architecturally compatible with the historic neighborhood;
- Allow well-designed new neighborhood activity centers at appropriate locations to provide a focal point for the neighborhood and to provide a suitable location for local-serving retail uses, such as a grocery store, hardware store and drug store; and
- Provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shopping or other destinations in the area.

■ Urban Living

Urban Living Character Areas consist of a higher density mix of uses, mixed-use building types that accommodate local-serving retail and professional offices, small lot single-family neighborhoods, townhouses and apartment complexes. Urban Living Character Areas present an “in-town city neighborhood” environment, and commonly surround Urban Cores, providing a transition between the core and lower intensity residential character areas. These urban neighborhoods are walkable communities with easy access to restaurants, retail shopping and personal service establishments, professional office centers and recreational facilities.

Development strategies:

- Buffering is very important between lower intensity uses, such as higher density residential and traditional subdivisions;
- Internal and external connections and walkability are key to character area in order to reduce automobile trips and to encourage a close knit community; and
- The provision of community services and commercial uses create a “complete community” and allow a variety of life styles and life cycles within the community.

Allowable Non-residential Development:

- Neighborhood Village Centers
- Community Village Centers

■ Country Crossroads

Country Crossroads are very small commercial areas that currently exist at historic crossroads in the county that have developed over the years to serve local needs. These areas are located in the rural area of the county. Due to the rural nature and low-intensity single-family orientation of the surrounding area, Country Crossroads are envisioned to be localized service providers that provide limited local convenience goods and services to the adjacent single-family rural environment. Country Crossroads are intended to be limited to existing locations, and to provide for limited expansion to prevent these small commercial uses from growing into neighborhood village centers. If the location merits larger expansion, a future land use map change should be applied for as a neighborhood village center.

Development strategies:

- Limit to existing retail/service providers within the rural places character area;
- Limited expansion within existing crossroads areas at existing intersections within the character area on a case-by-case basis;
- Limit individual convenience retailers and service providers to 5,000 square feet of floor area; and
- Any further commercial development should be compatible with surrounding residential properties and developed to serve a very limited immediate service area and pass-by traffic.

■ Transitional Corridor

Areas suitable for designation as Transitional Corridors are those major roadways originally developed for single-family homes that have or will become impacted by adjacent multi-laned thoroughfare improvements and commercial encroachment, and that may no longer be suitable primarily for residential use. In the past, individual properties have been rezoned and converted in a way that has often been disruptive from an urban design sense: parking lots have replaced front lawns; houses have been remodeled unprofessionally, resulting in structures with incoherent design elements; signage has often been out of proportion to the structure and use advertised.

In order to propose an orderly, safe and aesthetic transition, properties within designated transitional corridors can be considered for nonresidential use at intensity compatible with surrounding residential areas and that maintain the essential residential “look and feel” of the area. Designation of this corridor is meant to encourage public and private investment that will promote vitality, activity and safety in the area, by controlling aesthetics, careful site planning and limiting nonresidential uses to those that will not overly affect existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to the site.

Development strategies:

- Adopt design and use requirements to guide new construction and adaptive reuse and conversion of existing structures that will assure compatibility with remaining residences on the road and with surrounding neighborhoods. These could include:
 - The new use should be compatible with the adjoining neighborhood and not attract a high volume of traffic or visitors, have late night or early morning hours of operation, produce outdoor sound or other distractions, or serve a market area that extends beyond the adjacent neighborhoods and passers-by. Generally, professional and business office uses, personal services and local-serving retail sales establishments, small-scale religious and other non-profit institutions, and other low-intensity neighborhood services are compatible with houses.
 - The conversion’s remodeling should be architecturally compatible with the neighborhood and must upgrade or at least be consistent with the basic architecture of the structure. Architectural integrity

and compatibility considerations include siting of the building, massing, proportion, scale, materials, colors, details, façade treatment, lighting and signage.

- New building design should take into consideration the unique qualities and the dominant character of the surrounding area.
- New occupancies in converted houses should be limited to one business enterprise (with one business entrance) for structures under 2,000 square feet of gross leasable area.
- Signs should be consistent with the form and materials of the building. Illuminated signs would not be permitted when adjacent to existing residential uses.
- Mechanical equipment must be screened from public view and sited so as not to cause noise impacts on adjacent properties, and trash and garbage enclosures must be restricted to rear yard areas.
- Landscaping must be installed in areas not designated for parking and circulation. Parking areas must have landscaping and be screened from public view.

■ Neighborhood Village Center

Neighborhood Village Centers are places where small-scaled commercial uses, such as a bank, grocery store, drug store, cleaner and gas station, are arranged in a village-like setting that might include a neighborhood park, pedestrian circulation and public spaces. Thus, a Neighborhood Village Center is envisioned as a compact assortment of convenience-oriented retail stores and services to address the demands of nearby residents. From an urban design perspective, sidewalks are important circulation features in Neighborhood Village Centers. Given a Neighborhood Village Center's small scale and emphasis on local-serving stores, the scale and size of individual businesses and the village center as a whole are most important. Adaptive re-use of existing structures and buildings is encouraged as a focal point.

Development strategies:

- Each Neighborhood Village Center should include a mix of retail, services and offices that are primarily oriented to serve neighborhood residents' day-to-day needs. A shopping center anchored by a national chain drug store would be an example of an appropriate use;
- Residential development should reinforce the neighborhood center through locating moderate-density housing options adjacent to the center in appropriate locations, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including smaller-lot single-family residential developments, patio homes and townhouses;
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses;
- Individual uses should be no larger than 20,000 square feet for an anchor, the majority of individual businesses under 10,000 square feet, and the entire center under 50,000 square feet.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear; and
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.

■ Community Village Center

Typically located at the convergence of major transportation corridors, Commercial Village Centers are envisioned, as places where a compatible mixture of higher intensity uses are located, such as larger scaled shop-

ping centers, professional offices and services. Mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, service and recreational uses integrated and linked together by a comprehensive circulation system are encouraged in these areas. Community Village Centers include shopping and service facilities that offer a wide variety of goods and services, including both convenience goods for neighborhood residents and shopping goods for a market area consisting of many neighborhoods. Whereas someone might live near a neighborhood village center but work outside the county, the commercial village concept includes a variety of housing options, employment opportunities, businesses, office, retail shops, services, well-placed parks, plazas and open spaces that create a community where it is possible to live, work and play. Land use components coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. Natural and historic resources within Community Village Centers should be enhanced and preserved as a means of defining a distinct identity or sense of place. Improved connections to natural assets, both pedestrian and vehicular, particularly from existing and developing higher density residential communities will tie the village together. A Community Village Center should create a focal point for its surrounding neighborhoods.

Development strategies:

- Each Community Village Center should include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services and employment to serve a wider market area than a neighborhood village, but not regional in nature. A shopping center anchored by a major grocery store would be an example of an appropriate use;
- Residential development should reinforce the community village center by locating higher-density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including smaller-lot single-family residential developments, patio homes, townhouses, apartments and condominiums;
- Design for each center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Individual uses should be no larger than 50,000 square feet for an anchor, the majority of individual businesses under 25,000 square feet, and the entire center under 125,000 square feet.
- Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear; and
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by providing sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to other neighborhood amenities, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, parks, schools, etc.

■ Regional Activity Center

Regional Activity Centers include concentration of regionally marketed business and retail centers, “big box” commercial uses, office and employment areas, higher-education facilities, sports and recreational complexes, and higher density condominium and rental residential complexes. These areas are often characterized by a high degree of access by vehicular traffic, extensive on-site parking, a low degree of internal open space, a high floor-area-ratio (building coverage) on large tracts of land, and campus-like or unified development.

Development strategies:

- Regional Activity Centers include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services and employment oriented to serve a regional market area. Major religious, educational and other institutions and recreational facilities having a regional draw are appropriate in this character area. A stand-alone nationally-recognized big-box retailer or a shopping center anchored by a department store would be an example of an appropriate use (generally greater than 250,000 square feet of floor area);

- A Regional Activity Center should include a diverse mix of higher-density housing types within it or on adjacent properties, including townhouses, apartments, lofts and condominiums, and including affordable and workforce housing;
- Design should be very pedestrian oriented, with strong, walkable connections to other uses and to nearby networks of greenspace or trails.
- Provide bike lanes or wide curb lanes to encourage bicycling and provide additional safety, provide conveniently located, preferably sheltered, bicycle parking at retail and office destinations and in multi-family dwellings.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.

■ Urban Core

An Urban Core Character Area generally consists of the highest density development and provides for the widest range of mixed uses in its general area, combined with central civic areas such as City Halls. Though differing in scale and intensity.

Downtown Woodstock

The historic “Olde Towne” in the heart of the City of Woodstock is an example of an “urban core,” and includes the city’s municipal facilities, streetscaping with brick paved sidewalks and decorative lighting, the City Park, historic buildings dating back to 1879 and a strong residential community. Vacant land and underutilized parcels within Olde Towne provide opportunities for new pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development or redevelopment. Nearby creeks and recreational facilities, provide alternative transportation and recreation options. In addition, the Georgia Northeastern Railroad parallels Main Street, defining the downtown area, and provides future entertainment and community opportunities. Main goals within the Olde Towne urban core character area include:

- Increase transportation accessibility and mobility options and improve traffic flow in and around the downtown area;
- Expand and strengthen the downtown by building on its current successes and small-town atmosphere; and
- Increase the viability of live, work, and entertainment choices within the downtown area.

■ Development Corridor

Development Corridor Character Areas extend along major thoroughfares that have or are experiencing major development of retail, office or industrial land uses and multi-family housing, including mixed-use developments, and include redevelopment of aging mixed-use areas. The overall goal of this character area is to provide, through transportation, land use and streetscape projects and other physical enhancements to make this corridor environment a distinctive “place” not merely a roadway.

Development strategies:

- Focus development in villages, urban centers or compact activity centers;
- Provide for mixed uses and higher densities than surrounding areas;
- Redesign existing strip development into pedestrian scale, interconnected nodes;

- Plan for a community street network that is as friendly to alternative modes of transportation to the automobile;
- Require master planning to address access management; and
- Plan and design transportation improvements that fit with community character.

Examples of Development Corridors are:

Bells Ferry Corridor

Cherokee County is seeking to balance growth and development within the Bells Ferry Corridor by encouraging redevelopment of greyfield commercial developments into vibrant mixed-use centers; creating a variety of housing choices at appropriate destinies to enable residents to remain in their community; creating an environment of mobility and opportunity within the corridor for all ages and income levels; and investing in the area's neighborhoods by weaving civic uses and buildings into the local fabric. The Bells Ferry Corridor is a gateway into Cherokee County from Cobb County. It connects the southwestern portions of the county with Towne Lake and Woodstock, areas of significant private investment and attractive physical development.

The Bells Ferry Corridor is envisioned to be a corridor that empowers community. A true community is inclusive and diverse. It is a place where one can live, work, shop and play. Cherokee County will provide the framework necessary to allow for a mix of land uses within the Bells Ferry Corridor. A longer vision may include the location of TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) within the Bells Ferry Corridor to serve a variety of populations (e.g.—seniors, lower income groups) which prefer or by necessity do not utilize automobiles. The integration of land uses and emphasis on patterns of more compact development can facilitate the feasibility of transit.

Parkway Village Corridor (SR 92)

This Development Corridor Character Area is envisioned to provide destinations for expanded interstate trade opportunities and small business opportunities, and would accommodate higher density single- and multi-family residential in order to create a synergy between retail, office, industry, other commercial uses and surrounding residential development. Development of a wide range of housing choices can be important to ensuring the viability of this corridor.

These land use components will coexist as part of a collective approach to creating communities that are safe, attractive and convenient for pedestrians and motorists alike. The purpose of this character area is the creation of an inviting commercial and mixed-use area. "How does my particular building work on the street, and what elements can I add to create an inviting and pleasant environment." From an urban design standpoint, the most critical element in creating a visually appealing mixed-use corridor is the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping. Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial uses.

Buildings will be designed to conform to architectural standards and oriented in close proximity to each other to facilitate walking instead of driving. For a retrofit to be successful, the public right-of-way, the adjacent land uses and the interface between the two should be addressed comprehensively. Urban design features such as lighting, coordinated signage, street furniture and landscaping are used as visual cues that create a recognizable character for the area. Design factors fostering community commercial, including limitation of size of commercial development in terms of square footage; design parameters for parking and internal circulation/access, recommended façade treatments, building setbacks, siting and orientation; buffer requirements to ensure compatibility with adjacent single-family residential; and other factors which promote pedestrian-friendly movements, are important considerations. Anticipated land uses will provide commercial and services support to the community as a whole on a larger scale than a neighborhood village center, yet the

square footage size restriction and required design parameters will retain a neighborhood feel as opposed to creating a regional draw.

Parkway Village Corridor regulations promote specialized planned commercial development standards and requirements limiting the types of uses permitted by regulating the square footage allowed; establishing pedestrian oriented setbacks and parking lot layouts; specifying site layout and building orientation; recommending design features such as façade treatments, landscaping and streetscape elements; and instituting buffer requirements to protect the residential uses behind the corridor.

■ Highway Business Corridor

The Highway Business Corridor Character Area is a specially designated corridor to encompass an existing working commercial and light industrial “auto-oriented” area along a major thoroughfare. These areas may be going through transition to uses attractive to the traveling public, or continued development as transportation improvements are made. Mixed-use developments incorporating commercial and office uses fronting major commercial corridors and light industrial uses along major thoroughfares are encouraged; the introduction of design and landscaping standards may be needed.

This Character Area relies on major transportation access, particularly from interstates or major arterials. Similarly, the provision of adequate public services in the form of water, sewer and power are critical to the functionality of these areas. This corridor is intended to create a pleasant, hazard-and-nuisance-free environment and does not create either appreciable nuisance or hazard to other property, individuals or the public in general. The purpose of this corridor is the creation of an inviting commercial and mixed-use area.

The intent of the Highway Business Corridor designation is to provide a variety of tracts for heavy commercial uses, light industrial and employment uses such as business parks, distribution/services, light industrial, auto repair and service, high technology and research, wholesaling companies and similar businesses that have no significant impacts on the environment.

Development strategies:

- Create a visually appealing highway business corridor through the enforcement of appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping;
- Buffers are critical between incompatible uses;
- Apply guidelines that address outdoor signage, sound and lighting to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of heavy commercial and light industrial uses.

■ Workplace Center

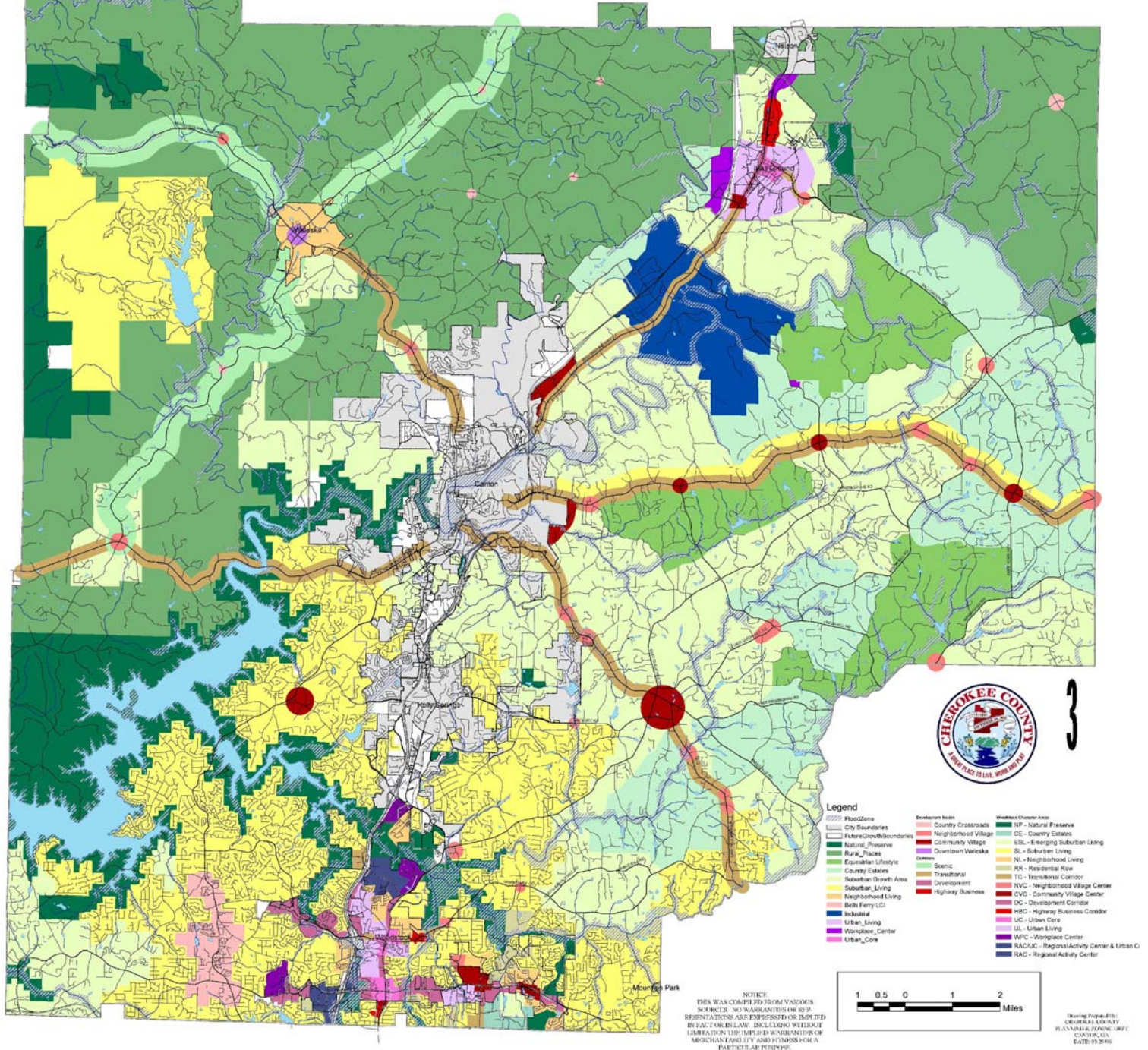
Considered major employment centers utilizing a mixture of manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, commercial, office and some high-intensity residential uses, these character areas are located relative to major transportation connections. Internal housing would provide a customer base for offices, cafés, restaurants, and retail uses located in the corridor, and also enhance the safety of the area by maintaining a continuous population base in a location that is typically unpopulated in the evening hours.

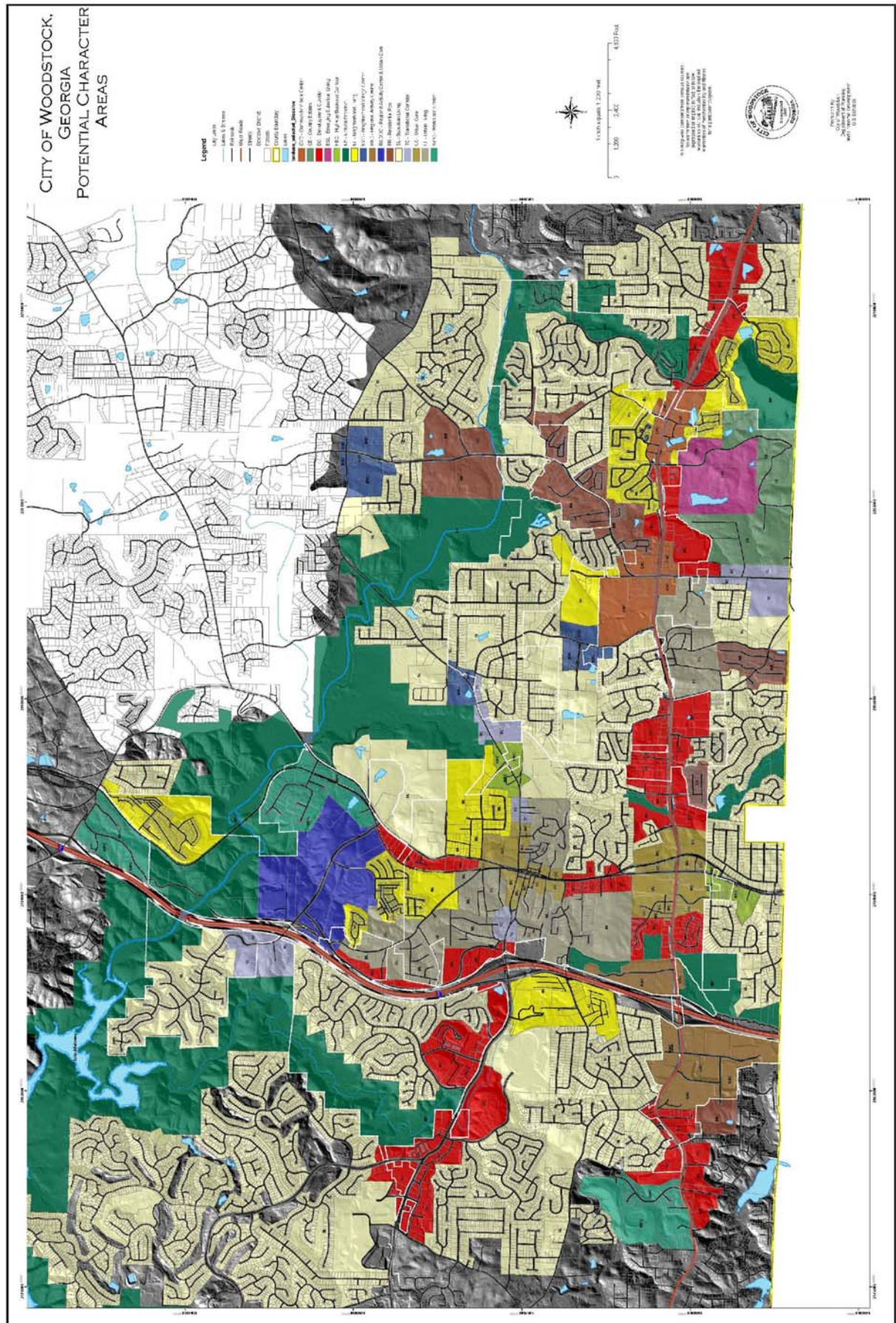
Development strategies:

- Enforce appropriate development standards to ensure adequate site plans and landscaping;
- Buffers are critical between incompatible uses and guidelines that address signage and lighting will help to mitigate the negative impacts of a high concentration of commercial and industrial uses;

- Vast amounts of parking and truck loading/unloading areas should be screened from view;
- Where possible, the parking areas should be distributed to two or more sides of the business to “visually scale down” the size of the parking lot;
- Inter-parcel access between sites should be used whenever possible; and
- Grouping or “clustering” of shops with co-mingled parking, landscaping and pedestrian areas are encouraged.

Cherokee County Preliminary Character Areas





Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to its fullest potential. The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities.

This assessment is meant to give a community an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching these objectives set by the Department, but no community will be judged on progress. The assessment is a tool for use at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community that “you are here.” Each of the fifteen Quality Community Objectives has a set of yes/no statements, with additional space available for comments. The statements focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles.

A majority of “yes” answers for an objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. “No” answers may provide guidance in how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives.

This initial assessment is meant to provide an overall view of the community’s policies, not an in-depth analysis. There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. Its merit lies in completion of the document, and the ensuing discussions regarding future development patterns, as governments undergo the comprehensive planning process.

Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective, it may consider a “yes” to each statement a benchmark toward achievement. Please be aware, however, that this assessment is only an initial step. Local governments striving for excellence in quality growth may consider additional measures to meet local goals.

■ **Regional Identity Objective:**

Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

■ **Growth Preparedness Objective:**

Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

■ **Appropriate Businesses Objective:**

The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

■ **Educational Opportunities Objective:**

Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

■ **Employment Options Objective:**

A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

■ **Heritage Preservation Objective:**

The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

■ **Open Space Preservation Objective:**

New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.

■ **Environmental Protection Objective:**

Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

■ **Regional Cooperation Objective:**

Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.

■ **Transportation Alternatives Objective:**

Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

■ **Regional Solutions Objective:**

Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.

■ **Housing Opportunities Objective:**

Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

■ **Traditional Neighborhood Objective:**

Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

■ **Infill Development Objective:**

Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.

■ **Sense of Place Objective:**

Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

Quality Community Objectives

Local Assessment

The following summary covers all jurisdictions in this Joint Comprehensive Plan—Ball Ground, Waleska, Woodstock and the unincorporated portions of Cherokee County—except where indicated otherwise in the “Comment” column.

<i>Development Patterns</i>			
Traditional Neighborhoods			
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	X		
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	X		
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	X		
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.	X		
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X		Cherokee Clean and Beautiful
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X		
7. In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X		Improvement of walkability is a major goal of this plan update.
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	X		Increased connections between the schools and neighborhoods are a major goal of this plan.
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	X		An increased connection between the schools and neighborhoods is a major goal of this plan.

10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	X		In some areas. Coordination between plan land use and school placement will be addressed further.
Infill Development Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	X		
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.	X		
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	X		
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).		X	The development of character areas that include villages and centers is part of this plan update.
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.	X		Primarily in the cities.
Sense of Place Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.		X	Other than a few distinct places, such as downtown areas of most of the cities, Cherokee County shares the same characteristics of suburban living, strip and big box commercial shopping, and rural hinterland found in other counties circling the Atlanta Metro core.
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.	X		There has recently been an emphasis placed on both rural preservation and historic preservation within the county. Cherokee County possesses valuable resources in both its authentically rural landscape and the local vernacular building tradition of the 19th century. These resources not only enhance Cherokee County visually and aesthetically, but also positively affect the lives of its citizens and increase the property values and desirability of the area. Each City within the county has taken steps to emphasize, enhance and protect their historic downtowns.

3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	X		The Zoning Ordinances of the County and its cities establishes development standards and regulations that regulate the impact of development on the environment both physically and aesthetically, including but not limited to: building height, lot coverage, setbacks, tree preservation, landscaping requirements, signage and lighting. In addition, the County and Woodstock have adopted development and architectural standard regulations along the SR 92 Corridor in the form of the SR 92 Overlay District. As well, similar guidelines and regulations within the Downtown Development Ordinances and/or Livable Communities study reports for the cities of Woodstock, Holly Springs and Canton, and the Bells Ferry Corridor in the unincorporated county.
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X		
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X	
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X	The rural places and Equestrian Lifestyle character areas are designated to protect the community's rural character.
Transportation Alternatives Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. We have public transportation in our community.	X		There is limited public transportation in Cherokee County, including the City of Canton Transit, Mountain Area Transportation Service, Cherokee Area Transportation System and GDOT Park and Ride Lots.
2. We require that new development connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.		X	Development in Cherokee County requires compliance with established access management standards.
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X		One of the primary elements of a successful community transportation network system is a system of interconnecting bicycle/pedestrian pathways. It allows free movement among spatial area (i.e. greenway corridors, residential neighborhoods, and commercial sectors), thus contributing to the over all well being of the community. It is recommended that Cherokee County incorporate a network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways into its roadway improvement program that would be coupled with commuter rail corridors. The recommendations specifies pedestrian and bicycle pathways on both sides of an arterial classified roadway, where as pathways would be located on only one side of a major and minor collector streets.
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	X		New development is required to include four-foot sidewalks on at least one side of each new subdivision street. In addition, any widening or new location of state routes will include sidewalks.
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.	X		

6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.		X	The Bicycle Suitability map shows the roadways in Cherokee County that offer "best conditions" through "very difficult conditions" for bicycling. The suitability of a roadway for bicycling depends on several factors including traffic volumes, travel speeds, and functional classification. Most of Cherokee County's arterial roadways are too highly traveled to offer a comfortable bicycling environment, but much of the system provides the cyclist sufficient connectivity to not only enjoy effective transport but also access to Cherokee County's natural beauty and many attractions.
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X		Especially encouraged in the Traditional Neighborhood Development Ordinance in the County and the Woodstock Downtown Master plan.
Regional Identity			
Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X		Officially created in 1831, Cherokee County is a mix of historic properties, including residential, farming, industrial and commercial, institutional and transportation facilities, downtowns within the incorporated areas with turn of the century traditional design, new commercial and industrial facilities, although the majority of the housing stock has been built after 1980. These characteristics are similar to a number of urbanizing counties in the metro Atlanta area.
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.		X	
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).		X	
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	X		
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.		X	Tourism is not one of the County's economic development target industries.
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	X		The County has developed its own identity and slogan "Choose Cherokee...Where Metro Meets the Mountains." The Development Authority believes that this motto reflects the atmosphere of the county, and intends to maximize on the belief that businesses and residents want to be close to a major city but have a true feel of a quality community.

Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation

The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	X		Within Woodstock.
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.	X		Within Woodstock.
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	X		Within Woodstock.

Open Space Preservation

New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.	X		An extensive greenspace plan was developed in conjunction with the Governor's Greenspace Initiative. Since the ending of this program, alternative funding sources are being investigated.
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	X		Limited funding has reduced greenspace acquisition. A question to be investigated in this plan is whether there is citizen agreement to use other funding sources to acquire additional greenspace.
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	X		The County encourages conservation subdivisions.
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	X		

Environmental Protection

Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.		X	
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		N/A	

3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.	X		
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	X		
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance that is actively enforced.	X		The County has a Tree Preservation Ordinance, which is being updated and is still under review. The County enforces its ordinance and employs a trained County Arborist in the Engineering Department.
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X		The purpose of the County's Tree Preservation Ordinance is to protect and replace trees as part of the development process. The County's Technology Ridge Tree Buffer requires vegetative screening (existing or planted) along I-575.
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	X		Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinances adopted by all jurisdictions.
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	X		Flood Damage Prevention ordinances.

Social and Economic Development

Growth Preparedness

Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X		
2. Our local governments, the local school board and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X	This is a major goal of this plan update.
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X		
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X		Current ordinances achieve these goals partially. The County and the City of Woodstock plan on revisiting their ordinances at the end of the comprehensive plan process in order to further enhance the County and Cities guiding principals.
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X		Funding is still an issue.
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.	X		The County and the Cities already have designated growth areas such as the Bells Ferry Corridor, Hwy 92, the TND development in Ball Ground and downtown Woodstock. Additional areas are being identified as part of this process.

7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X		
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	X		
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	X		
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X		
Appropriate Businesses The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X		
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	X		
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.		X	
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.		X	The County and the Cities are developing programs to increase management and higher skilled employment.
Employment Options A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X		
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X		Not enough.
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X		Not enough.
Housing Choices A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.			
	Yes	No	Comments

1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	X		Within Woodstock.
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X		
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).	X		Although there is a shortage of higher cost and move up housing.
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.	X		Within Woodstock.
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or "neo-traditional" development.	X		Especially within the cities.
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X		Primarily within the cities.
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X		Primarily within the cities
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	X		We support Habitat for Humanity.
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		X	
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	X		
Educational Opportunities			
Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce-training options for its citizens.	X		
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X		
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X		
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.		X	A few, but higher skilled and managerial jobs is part of the focus of the economic development plan.
<i>Governmental Relations</i>			
Regional Solutions			
Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.			

	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X		
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X		
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X		
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X		
Regional Cooperation Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	X		
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	X		
3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	X		The Cherokee Recreation & Parks Authority (CRPA), City of Woodstock and Cobb County are looking at linking Noonday Trail in Cobb with CRPA & Woodstock trails on Little River.
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections and discuss issues of regional concern.	X		