

# Coweta County

## 2026 Comprehensive Plan

**Draft Community Assessment**

November 2005



**Coweta County 2006-2026 Comprehensive Plan:  
Community Assessment**

**June 30, 2005**

*Draft*



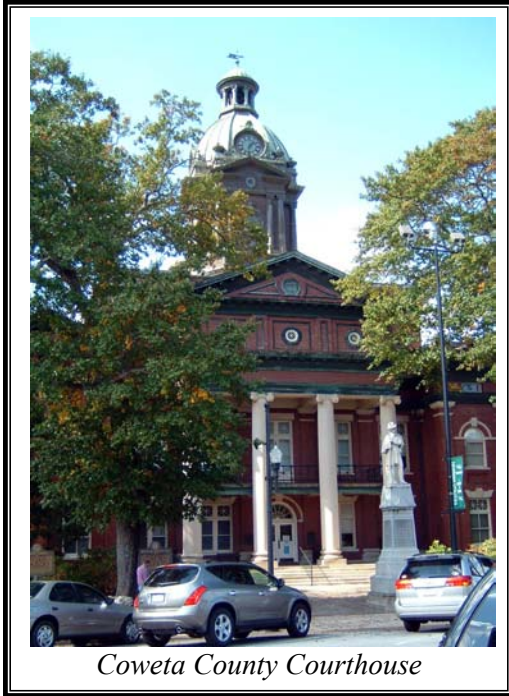
## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Purpose .....	1
1.2	Scope.....	1
1.3	Methodology .....	2
1.4	Summary of the Public Involvement Effort .....	2
2	Issues and Opportunities .....	6
3	Analysis of Existing Development Patterns .....	11
3.1	Existing Land Use .....	11
3.2	Areas Requiring Special Attention .....	13
3.3	Character Areas.....	15
4	Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives .....	23
4.1	Land Use and Transportation Goal .....	23
4.2	Economic Development Goal.....	25
4.3	Housing Goal .....	26
4.4	Natural and Cultural Resources Goal .....	27
4.5	Community Facilities and Services Goal.....	28
4.6	Intergovernmental Coordination Goal .....	28
5	Supportive Analysis of Data and Information .....	30
5.1	Population .....	30
5.2	Economic Development .....	31
5.3	Housing.....	31
5.4	Natural and Cultural Resources .....	31
5.5	Community Facilities and Services .....	31
5.6	Intergovernmental Coordination.....	31
5.7	Transportation.....	31

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of this report is to lay the foundation for the update of the Coweta County Comprehensive Plan. In particular, it provides a comprehensive review of the issues and opportunities that will affect the future growth of the community. This analysis is based on an



*Coweta County Courthouse*

analysis and inventory of existing conditions, land use patterns, public policies, and planned improvements. Over the next 20 years, Coweta County is projected to double in population. Community leaders recognize that this planning effort can play a critical role in directing that growth in a manner that is consistent with the community's vision for the future.

Another purpose of this report is to meet the intent of the "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" (Standards) as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). These Standards were adopted recently by the DCA Board and became effective on May 1, 2005. Planning for and work on this update of the Comprehensive Plan began in 2004 under a previous version of the DCA Standards, so strict adherence to the requirements of the new Standards is not possible. For example, under the new Minimum Standards, work on the Community Assessment and the Community

Participation Plan is supposed to be completed before any public involvement takes place. However, following the guidelines of the previous standards, a very ambitious public involvement effort was launched in January 2005. This public involvement effort included a wide range of activities, which are described in the companion *Citizen Participation Program*.

## 1.2 Scope

As required in the DCA Standards, this report includes four basic components:

1. List of issues and opportunities that the community wants to address
2. Analysis of existing development patterns
3. Evaluation of current community policies, actions, and development patterns for consistency with the Quality Community Objectives
4. Analysis of supportive data and information.

In its coverage of these four components, this report is written in an executive summary-like fashion so that citizens and decision makers can quickly review the essential elements and major findings of this planning effort.

Most of the detailed findings of this assessment are included in a "Technical Addendum". A digital copy of this "Technical Addendum" is provided on compact disc attached to the back of

## ***DRAFT***

this report in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). Also included on this “Technical Addendum” CD are 30” x 40” versions of the three maps presented in this report: the Existing Land Use Map, Areas Requiring Special Attention Map, and the Character Area Map.

### **1.3 Methodology**

As required by the DCA Standards, this Community Assessment is primarily the product of a review of county policies, plans, regulations, and development patterns. Though this Assessment does provide some countywide and municipal information, it is not intended to fulfill the planning requirements for any of Coweta County’s eight municipalities: Newnan, Palmetto Sharpsburg, Turin, Senoia, Moreland, Haralson, and Grantville. The study area for this Assessment is the unincorporated area of Coweta County, an area of approximately 414 square miles. The entire County, if one includes the area inside Coweta’s eight municipalities, covers approximately 447 square miles.

As described earlier, this report also is based on the findings of an ambitious public involvement effort. Consultants and County officials have had the benefit of talking directly with the public about the community’s vision for the future and the issues and opportunities that they feel will influence the achievement of that vision. Following is a brief summary of that public involvement effort to date. A more detailed description can be found in the *Citizen Participation Program*, along with plans to continue these public involvement efforts.

### **1.4 Summary of the Public Involvement Effort**

The public involvement process began on January 18, 2005, with a public hearing before the County Board of Commissioners. A brief overview of the project was presented to inform the public of how they can be involved in the planning effort. The public hearing also was used to officially launch the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and to inform the public of that planning effort as well.

A series of 12 visioning workshops then was undertaken, with the first workshop held on February 17, 2005. The last workshop was conducted on May 5, 2005. The meetings were held at schools and community centers around the County. Altogether approximately 535 participants attended the workshops, it should be noted that this 535 total does include Citizen Advisory Committee members (CAC) and a few repeat attendees.



**DRAFT**

<b>Workshop Date</b>	<b># Citizens</b>	<b># CAC</b>	<b>Total</b>
2/17/2005	55	7	62
2/22/2005	38	8	46
3/3/2005	54	5	59
3/8/2005	41	4	45
3/17/2005	54	5	59
3/22/2005	23	3	26
3/31/2005	15	3	18
4/12/2005	46	3	49
4/21/2005	48	3	51
4/25/2005	7	2	9
4/28/2005	33	2	35
5/5/2005	73	3	76
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>535</b>

To promote attendance at these workshops, an aggressive public outreach effort was made through newspaper ads, newspaper articles, posters, emails, and a project website. Two local public access TV shows also featured interviews with the project consultants and County staff. Project consultants and County staff also gave presentations about the planning effort at local meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Realtors.

At the first 11 meetings, the citizens were asked four basic questions:

1. What do you want to preserve?
2. What do you want to change?
3. What do you want to create?
4. What do you want to connect?



These questions were asked in smaller groups with facilitators leading the discussion groups. For each of the questions, the top few items that were brought up by the citizens are listed below.

**What do you want to Preserve?**

- Open Space/Greenspace
- Trees
- Historic homes, buildings, communities
- Small town character
- Air/Water Quality
- Streams & Creeks

## *DRAFT*

### **What do you want to Change?**

- Rate of growth
- Planning practices
- City/County coordination
- Enforcement of existing codes and ordinances

### **What do you want to Create?**

- Impact fees
- Bike/Pedestrian/Equestrian Paths
- More parks
- Industries – clean, high tech
- Tourism
- Higher paying jobs
- Educational opportunities
- Incentives for redevelopment
- Larger lot sizes
- Sense of identity

### **What do you want to Connect?**

- Bike/Pedestrian/Golf Cart/Multi-purpose pathways
- Development of a true bypass
- Subdivisions to schools, recreation areas, etc.
- East-West movement
- New interchanges on I-85

Through these discussions, one overarching goal emerged: “To develop a plan that best manages the anticipated growth in the community.” Under this goal, five other major goals for the community emerged. The final meeting, held on May 5, 2005, was structured to discuss with the participating citizens, the five major goals and to develop opportunities and strategies to achieve them.

**Goals** – one of the five issue groups identified as part of the workshop process

1. **Natural Resources** – Preserve/conservate greenspace, open space, and natural resources
2. **Transportation** – Improve the existing transportation system and prepare for anticipated growth
3. **Economic Development** – Effectively promote appropriate economic development
4. **Sense of place** – Preserve valued elements of community character and create a better sense of place
5. **Planning and Development Process** – Improve the planning and development process

The findings of these workshops are presented in the next section, “Issues and Opportunities.”

While the visioning workshops were being held, the County and the Chamber of Commerce were circulating a community survey that yielded over 5,000 responses, representing approximately 7% of the adult population. A Summary of the findings of that survey can be found in the “Appendix” of the *Community Participation Program*.

## ***DRAFT***

In many respects, the findings of the survey reflected the viewpoints expressed at the visioning workshops and helped to reinforce what was learned. This information was presented to and used by the CAC to craft a draft countywide vision statement. The CAC was comprised of 12 members (10 citizens from around the county and 2 commissioners). The commissioners appointed two citizens from each district. The CAC met on June 22, 2005, to craft a countywide vision statement, which will be included in the *Community Agenda* after review and adoption by the Board of Commissioners.



## 2 Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were identified through the public involvement process. Additional issues and opportunities are identified later in this report in the review of “Quality Community Objectives” and the “Analysis of Supportive Data and Information.”

### **Overarching Goal: To develop a plan that best manages the anticipated growth in the community**

#### **Identified Population Issues**

1. Population is projected to double in 20 years
2. Aging population will create need for better healthcare and senior services

**Supportive Goals** – one of the five issue groups identified as part of the workshop process

1. **Natural Resources** – Preserve/conservate greenspace, open space, and natural resources
2. **Transportation** – Improve the existing transportation system and prepare for anticipated growth
3. **Economic Development** – Effectively promote appropriate economic development
4. **Sense of place** – Preserve valued elements of community character and create a better sense of place
5. **Planning and Development Process** – Improve the planning and development process

#### **Frequently Expressed and Identified Natural Resource Issues**

1. Loss of Trees
2. Declining Water Quality
3. Poor Air Quality
4. Trash Along the Roads
5. Lack of Resource Protection (buffers)
6. Preservation of Open Space
7. Protecting the Chattahoochee River
8. Loss of Prime Agricultural Land



*Natural Resource*

#### **Natural Resources Opportunities**

1. Preserve greenspace
  - o Purchase available land (preferably larger tracts) and create parks and open space
  - o Prevent large developments in rural areas
  - o Use larger buffer zones with strict regulations
  - o Identify areas to locate regional parks and recreational facilities

## ***DRAFT***

2. Clear and concise zoning, codes, and ordinances to support and preserve natural and cultural resources and enforce with effective fines and penalties.
3. Educate farmers – incentives, best practices, biodynamic farming (non-toxic runoff)
4. Identify and plan where growth should take place
5. Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights
6. Maintain inventory of resources – need for better County geographic information system

### **Frequently Expressed or Identified Transportation Issues**

1. Traffic Congestion
2. Safety
3. Need for Public Transportation
4. More Sidewalks
5. Network of Multi-use Trails
6. Accessibility/Connectivity
7. Signal Timing
8. Other: Maintenance of Roads, Signage, and Trucks

### **Transportation Opportunities**

1. Improve congestion by traffic coordination – synchronization of lights, alternative routes, safer road construction plans, intermodal transportation options (bicycles, horses, golf carts, buses, walking)
2. Promote transit alternatives – carpooling, GRTA express, bike paths, etc.
3. Need transit connection to the airport
4. Pedestrian connection needed around commercial developments, schools, and neighborhoods
5. Impact fees for developers to fund infrastructure improvements
6. Mixed-use development – live-work-play environment to alleviate traffic
7. Community should be more self-supportive and have a better range of jobs in Coweta County.
8. Improve the Bypass and Lower Fayetteville Road
9. Add new interchanges on I-85
10. Replace old wooden bridges



## *DRAFT*

### **Frequently Expressed or Identified Economic Development Issues**

1. Target Industries
2. High Paying Jobs
3. Tax Base
4. Educational/Job Training Opportunities
5. Cost of Investment
6. Promotional Opportunities
7. Perception of Poor Healthcare



### **Economic Development Opportunities**

1. Infrastructure to attract industrial/business growth (high-tech options, more fire and safety protection, and facilities, etc.)
2. Need to attract a broad range of development/job diversity
3. Educational opportunities - Need institutions for higher learning, including technology schools and a four-year college.
4. Tax incentives to attract target industries including healthcare facilities, high tech options, etc.
5. Need larger sewer service area
6. Promote historic or equestrian-based tourism
7. Improve overall quality of life – healthcare, education, safety, recreation

## *DRAFT*

### **Frequently Expressed and Identified Sense of Place Issues**

1. Need for better historic preservation (downtowns, mill villages, homes)
2. Franchise-driven character of new commercial development
3. Lack of local and regional identity
4. Loss of small town and rural character
5. Community gathering places - parks and recreation
6. Declining jobs-housing balance – fewer residents work in the community and spend less time in the community

### **Sense of Place Opportunities**

1. Nodes for community should be unique and dispersed throughout the County – schools, good teachers, parks, live-work-play.
  - o Promote policies and incentives for conservation subdivisions and villages
  - o Request developers to donate land for schools and parks
2. Impact fees for transportation, libraries, water, and sewer through new developments to enhance existing character
3. Architectural guidelines for new housing and commercial development; with emphasis on square footage, use historic character as a guideline, and plan communities with established rules and standards.
4. Cluster public facilities in nodes
5. Adopt Historic Preservation Ordinance
6. Increase minimum lot sizes in more rural and agricultural areas
7. Allow greater density in planned communities with mixture of uses
8. Do not allow or promote strip commercial development
9. Improve look and image of the community at interstate interchanges – interstate gateways



## ***DRAFT***

### **Frequently Expressed and Identified Planning and Development Issues**

1. Poor City/County Coordination – Annexation is used as a tool by developers to get around County regulations
2. Better and consistent code enforcement is needed
3. Following the comprehensive plan in making rezoning decisions
4. More citizen involvement
5. Effective regulations
6. Need for more County staff

### **Planning and Development Process Opportunities**

1. Adopt Unified Development Code - Improve code language, forms, review, and enforcement
2. Citizen involvement – develop an email newsletter to keep citizens informed, better signs for public meetings/hearings, better means of notification needed
3. Eliminate spot zoning
4. Re-establishment of the Planning Commission
5. Better conservation subdivision regulations
6. Establish procedure for regular updates of the Land Use Plan
7. Concurrency – only allow development if needed public infrastructure is in place or will be provided
8. Better City-County coordination
  - a. Possible consolidation of city/county services and government (would eliminate motivation for annexation)
  - b. Develop intergovernmental council to develop a coordinated growth plan
  - c. Formalized municipal spheres of influence
  - d. Update the Service Delivery Strategy



*Development under construction*

### 3 Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

The purpose of this analysis is to gain a clear understanding of the geographic setting within which Coweta is growing and to explore further those issues and opportunities that relate directly to the physical environment. The following analysis looks at three aspects of the existing development patterns in Coweta County: Existing Land Use, Areas Requiring Special Attention, and Character Areas. Separate maps, which can be found at the end of this section, have been prepared to illustrate each of these aspects.

#### 3.1 Existing Land Use

An existing land use map is a representation of what is on the ground at a given point in time. For purposes of this analysis, the Coweta County Existing Land Use Map shows what is on the ground as of July 1, 2005. The map is based on a number of field surveys undertaken in the spring of 2005, an analysis of 2004 aerial photography, and a review of building permit activity. The map illustrates only those uses found within the unincorporated County. These uses were categorized using a variation of the standard category system prescribed by the Georgia DCA. **Figure 3-1** shows the amount of land categorized under each use.

**Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use, Coweta County, July 2005**

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of County Total
Standard Category	Sub-Category	
<b>Residential</b>	<b>130,107</b>	<b>45.47%</b>
	Estate Residential	73,870
	Rural Residential	38,790
	Low-density Residential	8,848
	Under Construction Residential	6,364
	Medium-density Residential	1,917
	High-density Residential	108
	Mobile Home Park	210
<b>Agriculture/Forestry</b>	<b>102,461</b>	<b>35.81%</b>
<b>Transportation/Communication/Utilities</b>	<b>13,673</b>	<b>4.77%</b>
	Road Right-of-Way	9,228
	Other Transportation/Communication/Utilities	4,445
<b>Parks/Recreation/Conservation</b>	<b>6,347</b>	<b>2.22%</b>
<b>Undeveloped/Vacant</b>	<b>5,862</b>	<b>2.05%</b>
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	<b>2,817</b>	<b>0.99%</b>
	Other Public/Institutional	2,772
	Cemetery	45
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>1,872</b>	<b>0.65%</b>
	Light Industrial	1,398
	Heavy Industrial	474
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>0.54%</b>
	Built Commercial	1,507
	Under Construction Commercial	42
<b>Unincorporated Total</b>	<b>264,688</b>	<b>92.50%</b>
<b>Cities</b>	<b>21,469</b>	<b>7.50%</b>
<b>County Total</b>	<b>286,157</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: JJG, from field surveys, permit data, aerial photography.

## ***DRAFT***

The following table presents the definitions of each of these categories. **Figure 3-2**, at the end of this section, is a reduced copy of the Existing Land Use Map. A larger 30”x 40” version of the map is available in PDF format on the “Technical Addendum” CD.

Existing Land Use Category	Definition
Estate Residential (ER)	Single-family residential uses up to 0.1 units per acre (10-acre or larger residential lots)
Rural Low-density Residential (RR)	Single-family residential uses 0.1 up to less than 1 unit per acre (1-acre up to less than 10-acre residential lots). Typically associated with the rural reserve zoning district.
Low-density Residential (LDR)	Single-family residential uses 1 to 1.2 units per acre (1-acre down to 0.8-acre residential lots). Typically associated with the old R-1 zoning district.
Medium-density Residential (MDR)	Single and multi-family residential uses of more than 1.2 up to 8 units per acre
High-density Residential (HDR)	Multi-family residential uses at a density of 8 to 12 units per acres
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	Land used for mobile home communities.
Under Construction Residential (UCR)	Single-family or multi-family developments that are under construction at the time of the survey. Some lots may be occupied.
Agricultural/Forestry (AF)	Land used for agricultural purposes such as cropland or livestock production and all land used or potentially used for commercial timber production.
Commercial (COM)	Commercial and office uses; including strip malls, big-box retail, auto-related businesses, restaurants, convenience stores, and office buildings.
Under Construction Commercial (UCC)	Property on which construction activity for future commercial uses was evident at the time of the survey.
Light Industrial (LI)	Industrial uses that do not generally conflict with other uses, including small warehouses and light assembly operations.
Heavy Industrial (HI)	Intensive industrial uses, usually separated and buffered from residential and commercial uses. Includes manufacturing plants and quarries.
Under Construction Industrial (UCI)	Property on which construction activity for future industrial uses was evident at the time of the survey.
Parks/Recreation/Conservation (PRC)	Active and passive recreation areas, parks, and protected lands. Includes land owned by a land trust or public agency and preserved from future development as maintained as open space.
Floodplain (FLD)	100-year floodplain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Cemeteries (CEM)	Areas dedicated for the burial of human remains.
Public/Institutional (PI)	Community facilities (except utilities), general government, and institutional uses. Examples include schools, public safety stations, city halls, courthouses, jails, health facilities, churches, and libraries.

## *DRAFT*

Existing Land Use Category	Definition
Transportation/Communication/Utilities (TCU)	Land used by transportation, communication or utility facilities; such as airports, cell towers, power stations, sewer plants, water towers, and water treatment facilities.
Road Right-Of-Way (ROW)	Land dedicated to road right-of-way.
Undeveloped/Vacant (VAC)	No active use on the property, includes property improved for real estate sale (cleared and graded but on structure) and property with vacant or abandoned structures with which no employment or residence can be associated. Property with recently constructed structures will fall under one of the under construction categories or the use for which it is intended.

From the visioning workshops, we know that a sense of rural character and open space is a characteristic of the community that citizens most value and are interested in preserving in the future. This existing land use survey shows that over two-thirds of the County currently contributes to that rural character. Approximately 26% of the County can be classified as estate residential, which is made up of residential lots greater than 10 acres in size. Another 36% is used for agriculture/forestry, and 4% of land is classified as either parks/recreation/conservation or undeveloped/vacant. All combined, this totals approximately 66% of the County's total land area.

Surprisingly, less than 2% of the total land area is currently used for commercial or industrial. Though this contributes to the sense of rural character, it also helps to explain the increasing share of laborers leaving the County to work. This relatively small amount of commercial and industrial land also has negative implications for the property tax base.

### **3.2 Areas Requiring Special Attention**



As Coweta County grows and develops, it will have significant impacts on the existing residents, natural and cultural resources, community services and facilities, and infrastructure. This section summarizes the locations of some of the likely impacts of growth, including areas where growth should be avoided. Also included are areas in need of additional investment because of aesthetics, pollution, or disinvestment. These are areas where future growth should be directed. **Figure 3-3, Areas Requiring Special Attention**, illustrates the locations of these various areas.

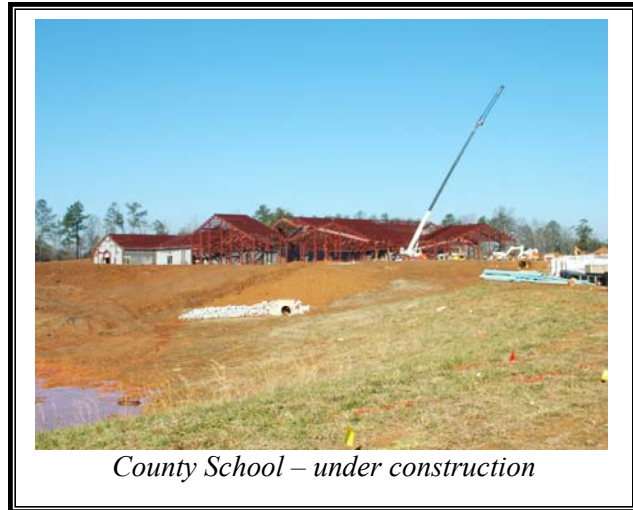


### **Areas Where Development is Likely to Occur**

Because of the rapid pace and low density of projected growth over the next 20 years, a substantial swath of Coweta County is anticipated to feel its effect (area bounded by dark green dashed line in **Figure 3-3**). The Areas Requiring Special Attention Map classifies 184,245 acres as “development-prone” out of the County’s 286,157 acres (64%).

Within this area, development will continue to outpace infrastructure, community facilities, and services. All of the public services will be strained, including:

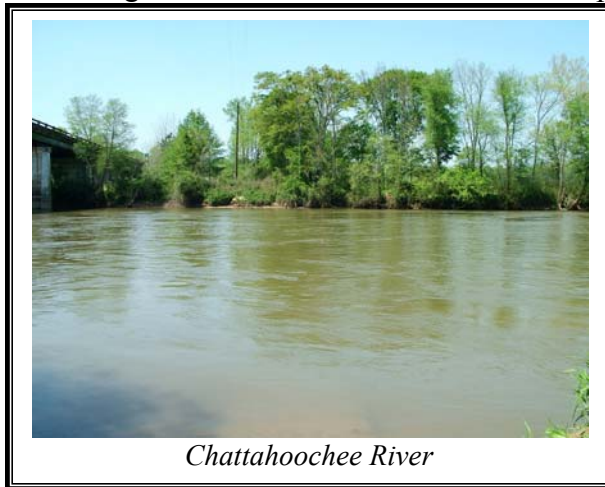
- Highways and roads
- Schools
- Libraries
- Fire stations and police precincts
- Water and sewer



### **Significant Natural Resources**

Critical natural resources such as wetlands, streams, groundwater recharge areas, and floodplains are located throughout Coweta County. Included in **Figure 3-3** are several types of resources that will have an impact on future development.

The first, water supply watersheds, covers most of the northeastern quadrant of the County. Protecting the water in these basins is vital to protecting drinking water supplies for most of the



County’s residents. Unfortunately, the water supply watersheds are located almost entirely within the area where development is likely to occur.

Just south of Turin and Sharpsburg are two regionally significant concentrations of prime agricultural land. On the western side of the County lies a significant concentration of steep slopes, Chattahoochee riverfront, and riparian areas. These three areas, indicated in dark green on the special areas map, are key areas for open space preservation efforts.

## **Significant Cultural Resources**

Cultural resources are among Coweta County's most prized resources. Nine historic districts and numerous sites are located throughout the County and should be preserved. Many of these areas are being enveloped or threatened by new development. The County needs to create a policy-regulatory framework for ensuring the long-term integrity of its cultural and historic resources.

## **Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities**

Coweta County has substantial opportunity for infill development. Each of the cities has infill opportunities, as does the Newnan/I-85 corridor suburbs. This large area (outlined with brown dashed lines) developed in a scattered, leap-frog fashion, leaving behind approximately 19,900 acres of unincorporated undeveloped land (of 50,400 total acres). Emphasizing infill on these acres will help keep the County's urbanized area compact and contiguous, minimizing the impact on rural lands and natural resources and improving the efficiency of service delivery.

## **Brownfields**

Most of Coweta County's industrial legacy is located within its cities. Potential brownfields within the unincorporated County are included in **Figure 3-3**. The County should work with its cities, Newnan in particular, Chamber of Commerce, and Development Authority to formulate a brownfield redevelopment strategy.

## **Areas of Disinvestment, Needing Redevelopment, or Improvements to Aesthetics or Attractiveness**

As unincorporated Coweta County has relatively new development and most of its strip commercial development is located within cities, the unincorporated County does not contain many areas of disinvestment or needing redevelopment. Several corridors have existing or will likely develop, aesthetic or disinvestment issues over the coming years. These are indicated in yellow on **Figure 3-3**.

A handful of developments present opportunity for reinvestment. Many of these areas have particularly high levels of poverty and could be appropriate for rehabilitation or aesthetic improvements. These include the mill villages, several large manufactured home parks, and several older single-family subdivisions.



### **3.3 Character Areas**

The use of character areas in planning acknowledges the visual and functional differences that exist today among the districts of Coweta County and helps guide future development through policies and implementation strategies that are tailored to each situation. These recommended character areas can be used to define areas that (1) presently have unique or special

**DRAFT**

characteristics that need to be preserved; (2) have potential to evolve into unique areas; or (3) require special attention because of unique development issues. In some cases, different character areas are defined for existing land use and future land use in order to highlight appropriate transitions as the community evolves.

Character Area	Description/Location	Development Strategy
Conservation Areas	Areas of protected open space that follow natural features for recreation and conservation purposes, including greenways that link ecological, cultural and recreational amenities	Preservation of more greenspace should be encouraged. Link greenspaces into a pleasant network of greenways, set aside for pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle connections between schools, churches, recreation areas, city centers, residential neighborhoods, and commercial areas. These greenways can provide safe, efficient pedestrian linkages, and at the same time, give users an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. Properly designed greenways can serve as an alternative transportation network, accommodating commuting to work or shopping as well as recreational biking, walking, and jogging.
Agricultural Areas	Consisting primarily of pastures, woodlands, and farmlands in open or cultivated state.	Maintain rural character by protecting viewsheds to natural areas from clear cutting, and prohibiting junk yards or outdoor storage of heavy equipment.
Lakeside Residential	Residential developments surrounding local reservoirs and large lakes, such as Lake Redwine and the Brown Reservoir.	Appropriate land use regulations should be in place to serve the intended use of the lake or reservoir and protect water quality.
Rural Residential	Consisting primarily of unique rural neighborhoods and undeveloped land that help establish the rural character of the County. These areas will have low pedestrian orientation and access, no transit, large lots, open space, pastoral views, and high degree of building separation.	Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential development as rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporate significant amounts of open space. Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional rural character. Foster establishment of a regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.

## DRAFT

Character Area	Description/Location	Development Strategy
Suburban Residential	Consisting primarily of areas adjacent to Newnan and I-85 where pressures for the typical types of suburban residential subdivision development are greatest. These areas are characterized by automobile orientation, high degree of building separation, predominately residential, with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear.	Promote moderate density, traditional development (TND) style residential subdivisions. New development should be master planned with mixed uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips. There should be connectivity and continuity between master planned developments. There should be 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. Foster the establishment of a regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.
Mill Villages	Historic villages that once centered around the activities of a local textile mill. These planned communities contain historic housing, a grid of interconnected streets, and strong local identity. There are three in the unincorporated County: Arcco Mills, Sargent and East Newnan	In each of the mill villages, the old mill that served as the employment center of the community is closed. Strategies should be put in place to encourage the adaptive reuse of the old mills and the development of a new community focus, such as a local school or other public use. Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the historic character and should not include "franchise" or "corporate" architecture.
Crossroads Community (Hamlet)	A community typically centered around a rural crossroads. Crossroads communities include a nucleus of small-scale commercial uses, civic facilities, religious institutions, and schools surrounded by single-family and estate residential.	The Crossroads Community serves as a convenient center for public activities. Its land use consists of a mix of retail, public/institutional, services, and residential. The village character of the Crossroads Community is set by a combination of rehabilitated historic houses and compatible new infill development targeted to a broad range of income levels. Design standards for the Crossroads Community encourage pedestrian-oriented, walkable connections between different uses. There are direct connections with the greenspace and trail networks linking the center of the community to neighborhoods and major community facilities such as parks, schools, libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, and commercial clusters.
New Village	A neighborhood focal point providing a collection of activities such as restaurants, neighborhood-oriented shops and services, housing, and appropriate public and open space uses easily accessible by pedestrians.	Each New Village should include a mix of retail, office, services, and housing to serve a neighborhood market area. Residential development should surround and reinforce the traditional nature of each New Village. Design for each New Village should be pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses. Commercial parking should be located to the rear. New Villages should be connected to surrounding residential areas by sidewalks, greenspace, and trail networks.

**DRAFT**

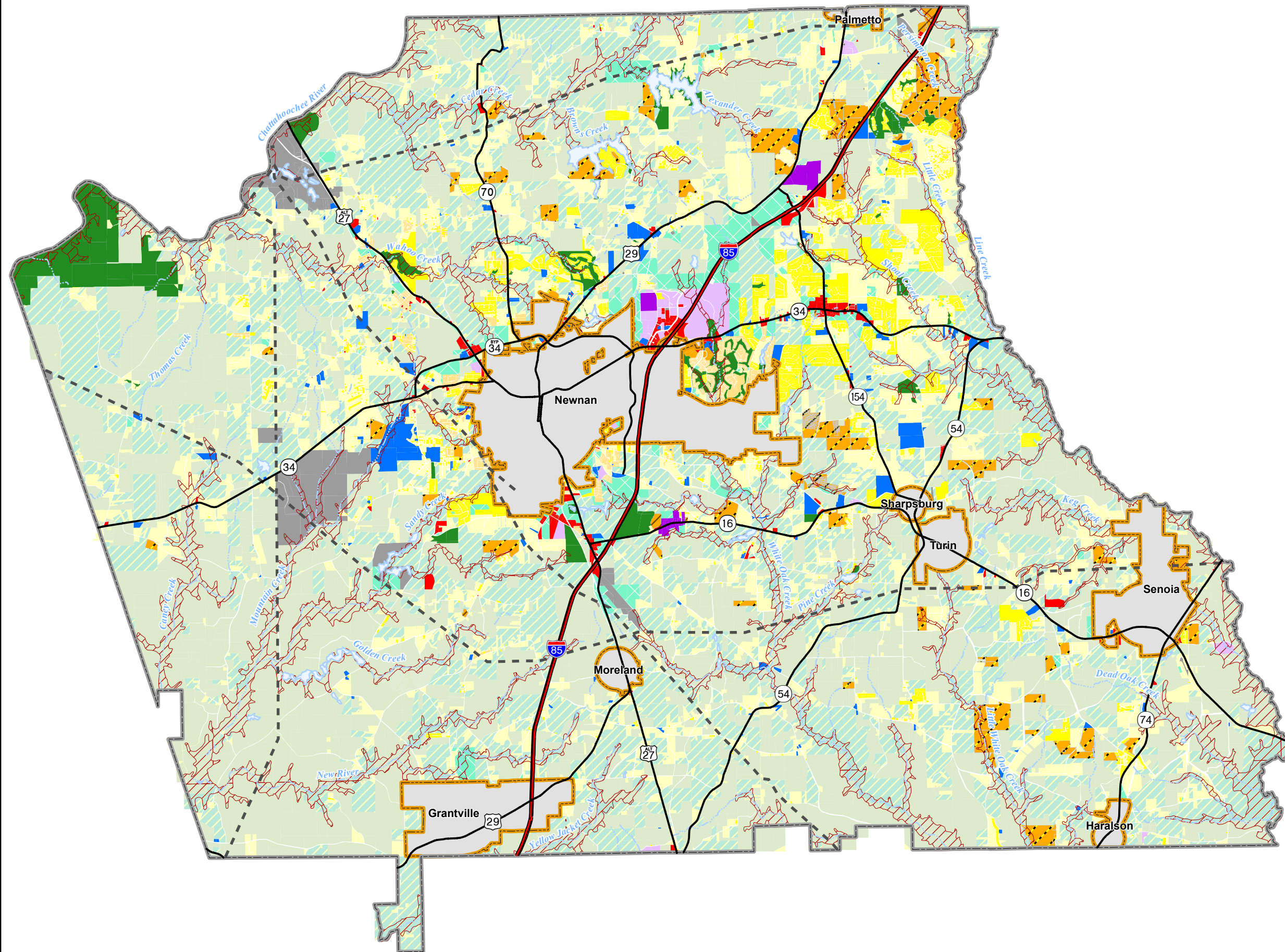
Character Area	Description/Location	Development Strategy
Employment Center	Consisting of industries, warehouses, and distribution facilities on level sites having close access to I-85, railroads, and utilities, and with space for expansion.	Provide adequate infrastructure capacity and maintain designated truck routes to I-85 that are safe and maneuverable for heavy vehicles and minimize noise, vibration, and intrusion of trucks in residential areas. Provide adequate room for expansion and the development of ancillary business and employee services. Encourage attractive, landscaped entrances and grounds. Protect environmentally sensitive areas and buffer surrounding neighborhoods. Screen truck docks and waste handling areas from public view. Avoid intrusion of obnoxious uses into industrial parks.
Scenic Corridor	The community has identified numerous existing scenic corridors. These are located primarily in the rural portions of the County.	Maintain scenic and rural character while accommodating new development within the corridor. Residential development should be clustered and screened in such a way as to preserve rural views from the corridor. Minor commercial uses, consistent with the scenic or rural character of the corridor; including architectural style, location, and orientation of parking, sign design, and massing. Scenic corridors should be designed to accommodate all users; including pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians. Billboards should be banned.
Residential Corridor	A highway corridor designated for residential uses. Located throughout the County, Residential Corridors often connect non-residential areas together.	Encourage moderate-speed vehicular travel. Accommodate pedestrians, school children, and bicyclists. The predominant land use along Residential Corridors should be residential subdivisions. These should be designed so that homes front the corridor, with alley access that leads to common subdivision entrances. Subdivision entrances should be spaced every 1,000 feet to provide adequate connectivity. Opposing entrances should be aligned and served by a common traffic signal. Where appropriate, incidental, or accessory commercial uses may be incorporated into a Residential Corridor. These should be designed as part of, and integrated into, a residential subdivision. Signage, parking, architecture, and massing should be designed consistent with the pastoral character and historic context of the corridor.
Commercial Corridor	An uninterrupted channel of developed or developing land on both sides of designated high-volume transportation facilities.	Older commercial strip centers should be retro-fitted to be more aesthetically appealing and, therefore, perhaps also more marketable to prospective tenants. Complete and integrated pedestrian improvements and crosswalks throughout the corridor should be required to promote pedestrian comfort, safety and convenience; promote high standards of landscape and sign controls to improve corridor appearance and maintain traffic speeds and capacity through access management and inter-parcel access.

**DRAFT**

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Description/Location</b>	<b>Development Strategy</b>
Interstate Gateway	A visitor's impression of the County is often set by what they see and experience when they get off of the interstate. These character areas are defined by a mix of uses that surround each of the I-85 interchanges.	Streetscaping enhancements and strong design standards should be in place to help ensure that the aesthetic qualities of the built environment around each of the interchanges is reflective of the community's vision for the future and the image they want to portray to visitors. In particular, there should be strong signage controls to direct visitors to local activity centers, reflect a sense of community pride and local architectural styles, and still promote local businesses.
Municipal Gateway	Surrounding each of the local municipalities are areas within the unincorporated County that are more reflective of the character of the municipality than the surrounding unincorporated County. These transition areas include those properties likely to be considered for future annexation.	Development within these areas should be consistent with the character of the adjacent municipality. There should also be in place a formal procedure for the notification of development and annexation plans between the County and the municipality to mitigate the potentially negative impact of land use decisions.

**Figure 3-4** shows the proposed location of each of these character areas.

*Existing Landuse  
July 2005*



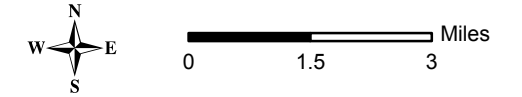
- Transmission Line
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Existing Land Use**
- ER - Estate Residential
- RR - Rural Low Density Residential
- LDR - Low Density Residential
- MDR - Medium Density Residential
- HDR - High Density Residential
- MHP - Mobile Home Park
- UCR - Under Construction Residential
- AF - Agricultural/Forestry
- COM - Commercial
- UCC - Under Construction Commercial
- LI - Light Industrial
- HI - Heavy Industrial
- UCI - Under Construction Industrial
- PRC - Park/Recreation/Conservation
- CEM - Cemetery
- PI - Public Institutional
- TCU - Transportation/Communications/Utilities
- ROW - Right-of-Way
- VAC - Undeveloped/Vacant
  
- Interstate
- State Highway
- River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- City Boundary
- County Boundary



**Figure 3-2**

# Coweta County 2006-2026 Comprehensive Plan

## Areas Requiring Special Attention



- Reinvestment Opportunity
- Possible Brownfield
- Corridor Requiring Special Attention
- Water Supply Watershed
- Groundwater Recharge Area
- Historic District/Site
- Area Where Rapid Land Use Change is Likely to Occur / Area Where Natural Resources are Likely to be Impacted by Development
- Conservation Focus Area
- Area with Significant Infill Development Opportunities
- Interstate
- State Highway
- County Road
- Proposed Road
- River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- City Boundary
- County Boundary

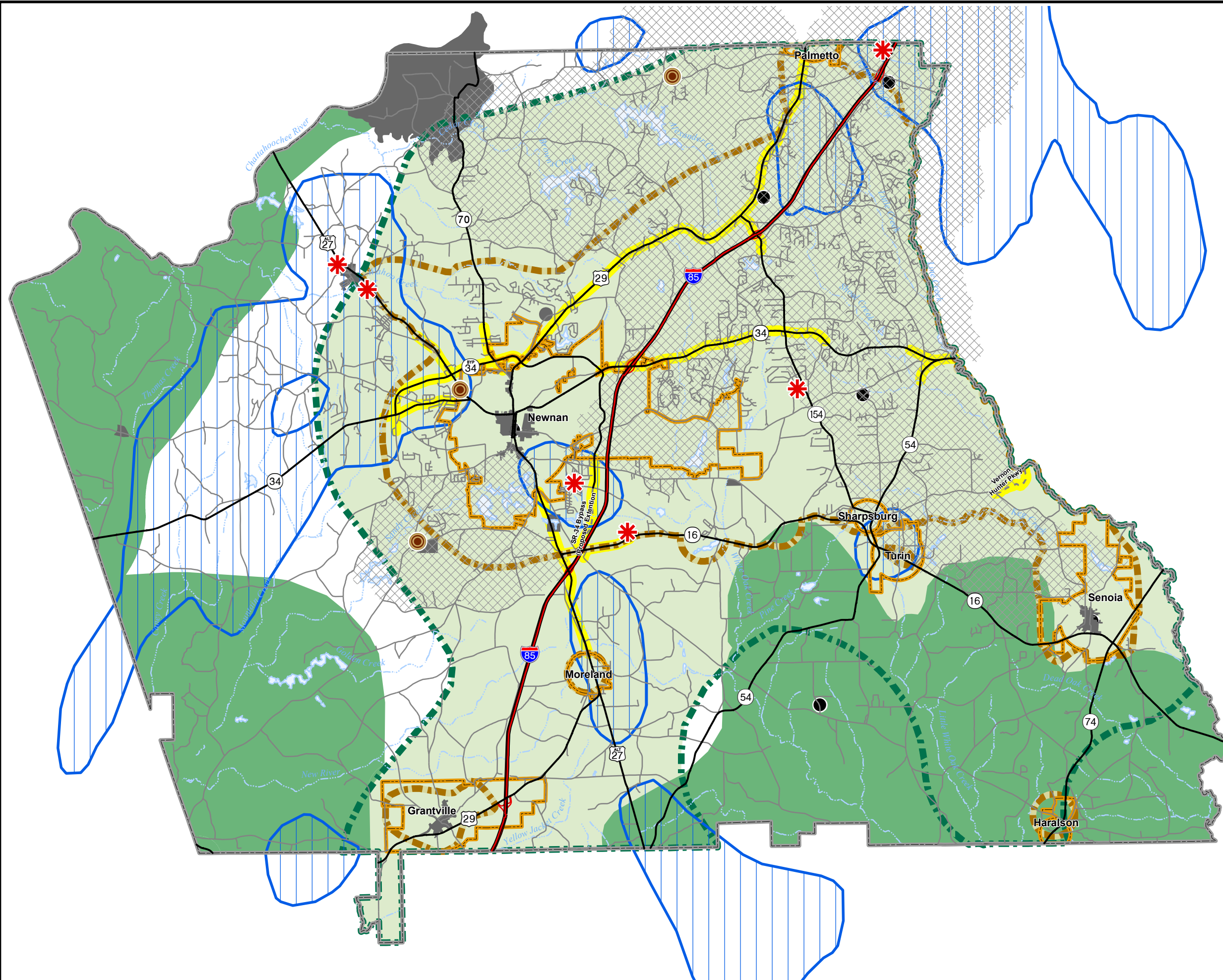
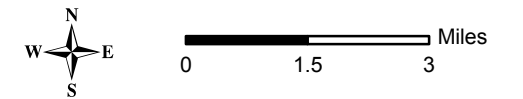


Figure 3-3



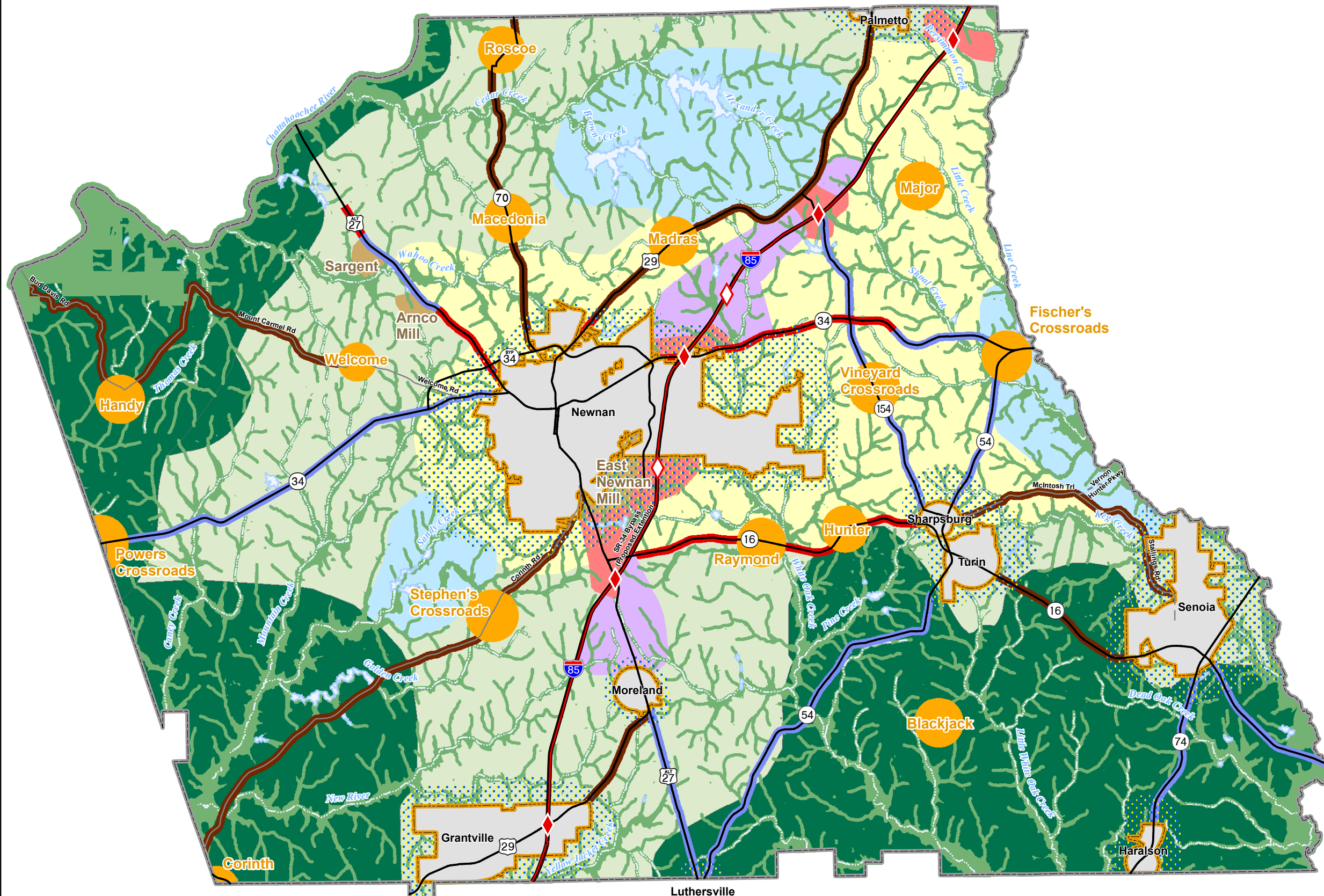
*Character Area*



- Existing Interstate Interchange
- Proposed Interstate Interchange

- Residential Corridor
- Scenic Corridor
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Crossroads Community
- Employment Center
- Highway Corridor
- Interstate Gateway
- Lakeside Residential
- Mill Village
- Municipal Gateway
- Rural Residential
- Conservation
- Suburban

- Interstate
- State Highway
- Corridor Roadway
- Proposed Roadway
- River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- City Boundary
- County Boundary



**Figure 3-4**

## 4 Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

This section is intended to meet the Minimum Standards for Local Comprehensive Planning requirement that the Community Assessment include an evaluation of the community's current policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with the Quality Community Objectives contained in the State Planning Goals and Objectives. Each of the 15 Quality Community Objectives is listed below with a brief summary of Coweta County's strengths, issues, and opportunities with respect to the objective. The objectives are organized around the five statewide planning goals.

### 4.1 Land Use and Transportation Goal

**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.

Strength: We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage and have taken steps to protect those areas.

Strength: Within the Quality Development Corridor District, we have ordinances to regulate building materials and landscaping.

Strength: We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.

Issue: The unincorporated County lacks attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly community focal points.

Issue: Much of the new development in our County fails to draw upon our unique architectural or design characteristics.

Issue: We do not have a plan to protect farmland.

Issue: Outside the Quality Development Corridor District, in other high visibility areas, building materials are not regulated.



**DRAFT**

**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.

Issue: Our community does not have ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by-right.”

Issue: Our zoning ordinance lacks design guidelines for traditional neighborhoods.

Issue: Our zoning code requires the separation of commercial, residential, and retail uses.



children from walking or bicycling to school.

Issue: Our community does not have a street tree ordinance that requires new developments to plant shade-bearing street trees (although street trees are required in the Quality Development Corridor District).

Issue: Segregation of land uses throughout the unincorporated County makes errands on foot undesirable, dangerous, or impossible for most residents.

Issue: Locations of new schools and their orientation to surrounding subdivisions deter

**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.

Strength: Our Future Land Use Plan limits commercial development along major highways.

Issue: We have not designated areas of our community that are planned for compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, nodal development.

Issue: Our community only allows large-lot development of 1.6 acres per unit or greater.

Issue: Our community has not identified specific areas that are appropriate for infill development.

Issue: Our community does not have specific incentives for encouraging infill development.

## ***DRAFT***

Issue: Our community does not have an overlay district with compatibility guidelines for infill development.

Issue: Our community has not prepared an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.

Issue: Our community is not actively working to promote brownfield or greyfield redevelopment.

**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.

Strength: We have a commuter bus route.

Strength: We have a greenway and trails plan for the Chattahoochee Hill Country area of the County.

Issue: We do not have intra-County public transportation in our community.

Issue: Our ordinances do not require a connected network of streets, with connections between subdivisions and multiple entrances into subdivisions.

Issue: We lack a good network of sidewalks.

Issue: We do not have a sidewalk ordinance in our community.

Issue: Coweta County does not allow shared parking by right. (However, share parking arrangements have been reached through the variance process.)

### **4.2 Economic Development Goal**

**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.

Strength: Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets, and weaknesses and has created a business development strategy based on them.

Strength: Our Economic Development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community and has a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible.

Strength: We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple us.

## ***DRAFT***

Issue: There is a tendency to think of warehousing as the only industry that values I-85. Recruitment should continue to strive for balance and diversity across industry types within the I-85 corridor.

**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.

Strength: Our community provides work-force training options for our citizens.

Strength: Our community has higher education opportunities within or near the County. Expanded offerings are needed to fully address the needs of the community.

Strength: Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose. The County, however, does not have adequate jobs-housing balance, serving as a bedroom community to Metro Atlanta.

Issue: Additional technical/vocational training offerings are needed.

**Employment Options Objective:** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

Strength: Our community has a diversified economy, offering jobs for both unskilled and skilled labor.

Issue: Our community does not have enough local jobs relative to the amount of local housing.

### **4.3 Housing Goal**

**Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing sizes, 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.

Strength: Countywide, people who work in our community can afford to live here, too.

Strength: Our community has ample housing for each income level.

Issue: We do not encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original towns, mill villages, and crossroad communities, continuing the traditional street design and lot sizes.



#### **4.4 Natural and Cultural Resources Goal**

**Environmental Protection Objective:** Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve



*Lake Redwine*

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.

Strength: Our community has passed the necessary Part V Environmental Ordinances, and we enforce them.

Strength: We have a natural resources inventory.

Strength: We have land use measures

that will protect some of the natural resources in our community, but we have an opportunity to fully protect floodplains, steep slopes, and prime agricultural lands.

Strength: We have maximum parking space requirements, allowing overflow parking on pervious surfaces.

Opportunity: We can begin to use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.

Issue: Our land use plan and development regulations ensure most developments will be auto centric and not support improved air quality.

**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.

Strength: Our community has a greenspace plan.

Strength: New developments have a conservation subdivision option to help preserve greenspace.

Opportunity: Our community is considering an open space acquisition or preservation program.

## *DRAFT*

Opportunity: We have the opportunity to create a local land conservation program and work with state and the non-profit community to preserve environmentally and culturally important areas in our community.

**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.

Strength: We have designated historic districts in our community.

Issue: We do not have a historic preservation ordinance or an active historic preservation commission.

Issue: We want new development to complement our historic development, but we do not have ordinances and design standards in place to ensure that happens.

### **4.5 Community Facilities and Services Goal**

**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.

Strength: We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.



*Coweta County Recreation Department*

Strength: We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth.

### **4.6 Intergovernmental Coordination Goal**

**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.

Strength: Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.

## ***DRAFT***



*Coweta County Administration Building*

Strength: Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.

Strength: Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage.

Strength: Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.

Strength: Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.

Strength: Our community contributes to the region and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment, and education.

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

Strength: We participate in the Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Council and the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Strength: We cooperate with at least one local government to provide or share services (parks and recreation, E911, Emergency Services, Police or Sheriff's Office, schools, water, sewer, other).

Issue: We need to update Service Delivery Strategies to reflect recent changes in sewer service and funding mechanisms.

**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.

Strength: We plan jointly with our cities for transportation planning purposes.

Issue: We do not have a regular meeting process with the County and neighboring cities to discuss solutions to regional issues.

Issue: We are not discussing adopting a joint program of impact fees or transferable development rights with our cities. A coordinated strategy is needed for how to distribute growth and allocate scarce resources over the next 20 years.

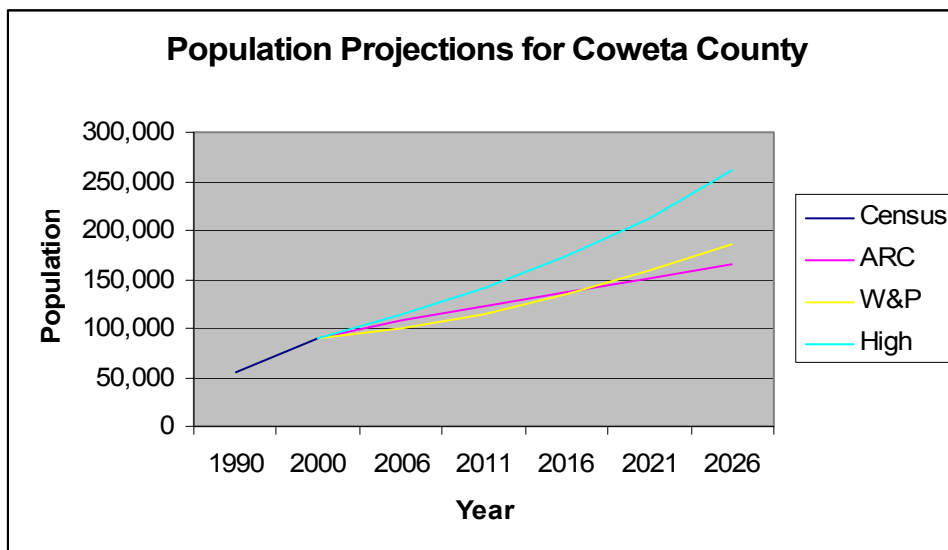


## 5 Supportive Analysis of Data and Information

Following is a brief summary of the major findings of the data analysis undertaken as part of this Assessment. It highlights those points that support the issues and opportunities already identified and raises some new issues and opportunities that will be addressed later in development of the Community Agenda. Most of the supportive analysis undertaken as part of this effort, including the numerous maps required under DCA Standards, is included in the “Technical Addendum”.

### 5.1 Population

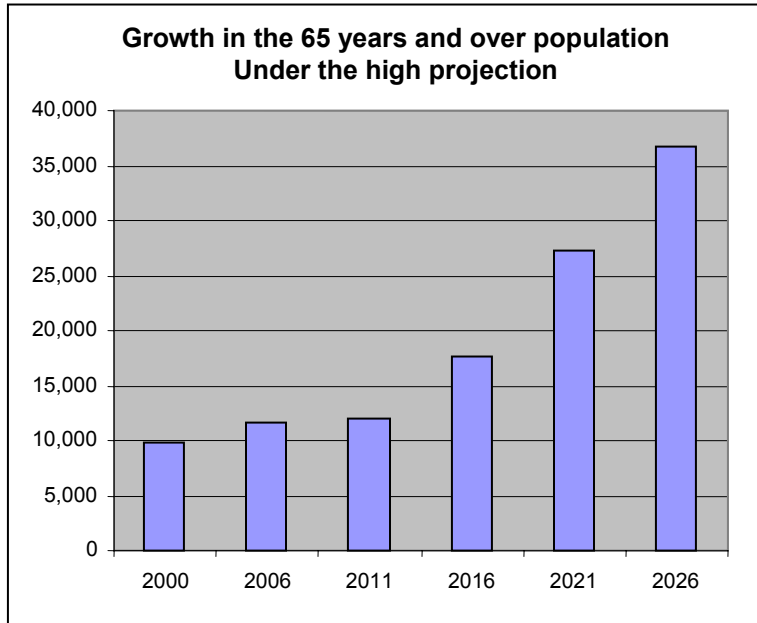
**Rapid Population Growth.** Since 1990, Coweta County’s population has grown by over 50,000 persons – almost doubling the County’s population. The primary reason for Coweta County’s growth since 1990 has been in-migration – the number of new families moving here from other places. For instance, in 2004 migration accounted for over 70% of Coweta County’s growth. This trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. However, in-migration is very hard to predict, because it is driven by cyclical changes in the job and housing market as well as the County’s own policies. Therefore, a range of population projections are included to guide the Comprehensive Plan. For 2026 these range from 166,054 to 261,617. In other words, total population increase over the 20-year period is predicted to be between 52% and 139% of the estimated 2006 population.



The high projection translates into an average of 245 households per month over the 20 years. One of the central purposes of this plan is to identify how to accommodate these new residents while maintaining or even improving the quality of life for all of the County’s residents. Where are they going to live, work, shop, and play? How are they going to get around? How is the County going to provide them with the services they need?

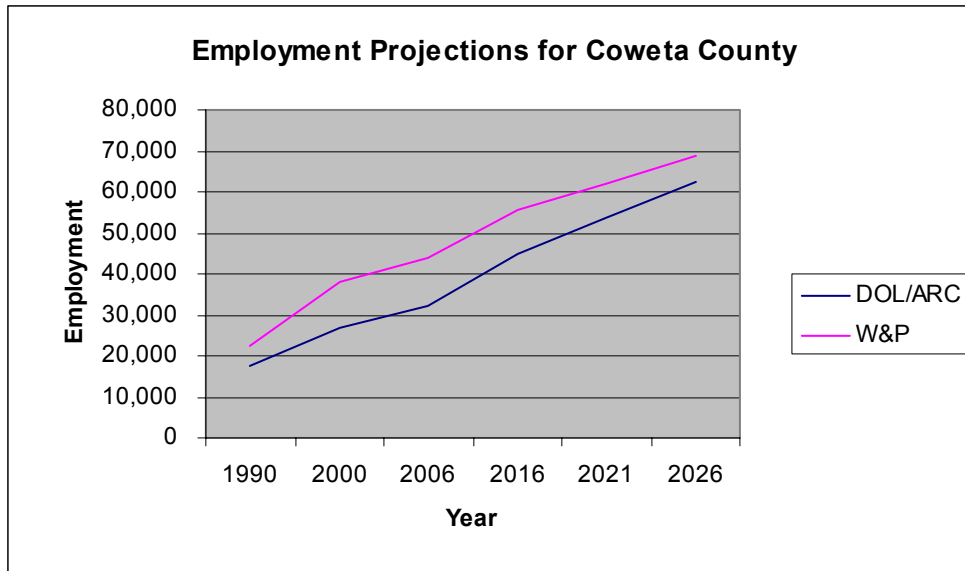
**Rapidly Growing Population of Seniors.** Between 2000 and 2026, the share of residents over 65 is expected to increase faster than the growth of the population as a whole. Based on the high

population projection, this translates into nearly 29,000 additional seniors living in Coweta County in 2026. Seniors have different preferences than other groups such as families with children or singles. Many seniors desire smaller, single-story homes with little or no yard to care for. Quality healthcare, walkability, and transit are higher priorities. Recreationally, seniors prefer amenities like golf courses rather than soccer fields. This presents a clear housing, service, and transportation challenge for the community.



## **5.2 Economic Development**

**Growing Economic Base.** Similar to population, future economic growth in Coweta County is partially based on policy decisions made today, particularly related to roads, water, and sewer improvements. Maintaining the County’s high quality of life and attracting a high-quality workforce are other important factors. A relatively narrow range of employment projections are indicated below, extending from 62,331 on the low end to 68,624 on the high end, based on Atlanta Regional Commission and Woods and Poole Economics data, respectively. The rate of growth is projected to slow relative to recent trends, but Coweta County is expected to outperform metro-Atlanta, Georgia, and the nation; because the County is relatively young in its population growth cycle.

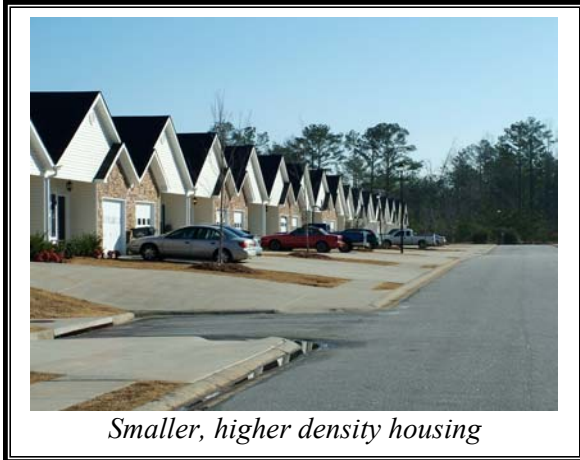


**Diversified Economy.** One of Coweta County’s advantages is its diversified economy. Coweta County had a 2003 employment base of 28,264 jobs, according to the Georgia Department of Labor, but it is not dominated by a single sector. Major basic industries, or export-oriented industries, are manufacturing and retail trade. Manufacturing is an industry in decline, but the retail trade sector is growing. Other basic, high-growth employment sectors are transportation and warehousing, utilities, accommodation and food service, education and healthcare services, and local government. All of these sectors offer excellent future growth potential. Maintaining a diversified economic base, while expanding the local economy, is critical to the future of the County for several reasons. A broad-based economy mitigates downward turns in the national and local economies. Also, a variety of employment opportunities and wages becomes available to County residents.

**Strength and Challenges for Economic Development.** Coweta County offers several strengths for economic growth and development, including its strong geographic location – I-85 corridor, proximity to downtown Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Airport. Another major strength is its small-town lifestyle, offering a high quality of life. The Central Educational Center, quality and cost of the local workforce, and availability of land and buildings are other strengths. The County also has a few challenges for economic development. The primary challenge is providing the infrastructure – roads, water, and sewer – to support business development. Sewer service and capacity is at a critical juncture. Although traffic congestion remains a concern, proposed interchanges with I-85 should open up some new avenues for business growth. Providing better workforce training opportunities is another challenge, particularly at the post-secondary level. The Newnan campus of the University of West Georgia does not fully address the needs of the community, but it could potentially be expanded. There is a real need for a local 4-year college or university. Such an institution could help support businesses in the County with a steady supply of qualified labor. Maintaining the standards and reputation of the school system is another significant factor in attracting new business to the County. A more proactive approach to business marketing, recruitment, and retention also is needed to support future economic growth.

### **5.3 Housing**

**Demographic Changes Affect Housing Demand.** There are four primary demographic factors shaping the local housing market. First, the County has a significant number of families (78.1%) with children (half of family households) that will likely require a more traditional single-family neighborhood. Second, the population is aging, with empty-nesters and seniors growing at a faster rate than other age cohort groups. This older demographic group will create demand for



*Smaller, higher density housing*



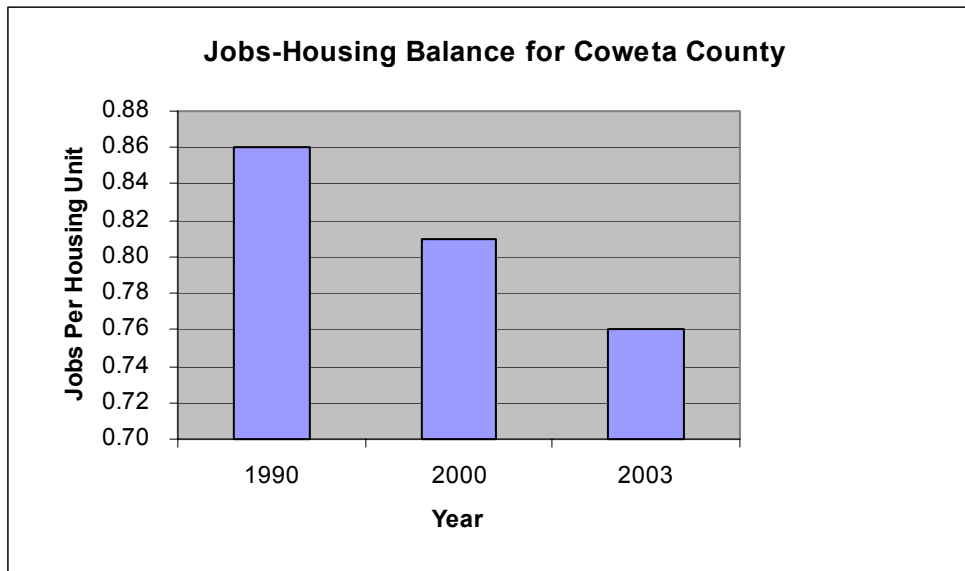
*Traditional single-family housing*

smaller, higher-density housing units. Third, the racial composition of the county is changing, as minority residents, particularly Hispanics, increase at a faster rate than non-minority residents. Lastly, householders are gaining affluence. Approximately 36.5% of households have incomes exceeding \$75,000; and these higher-income groups are growing at a significantly higher rate, which creates a need for executive-level housing in the County (e.g., \$300,000+). These demographic characteristics and trends will create demand for a variety of housing choices in terms of location, density, product, style, services, and price-point.

**Demand for Workforce Housing.** Housing prices in Coweta County are considered relatively affordable compared to more urban counties of metro Atlanta, but prices are rising more rapidly than wages. Average median house sales prices were approximately \$114,400 in 2000 compared to \$139,400 in 2004, representing an average annual growth rate of more than 5.1%. Nonetheless, there is a disparity among housing prices (or values) and average wages for the County. In 2003, the County's estimated median household income was \$66,700, and the estimated median home value of \$143,800 is 2.16 times the income, based on Claritas information. During this same year, average annual wages for all industries in the County were just under \$29,000, which would support a house price of approximately \$114,000; this means that two incomes are required to purchase a home in the County by local workers. In addition, the County's average wages are 46% less than metro Atlanta and 27% less than the state. As a result, many County residents are working outside the County in higher wage areas of metro Atlanta; and many Coweta County workers are living in lower-cost areas outside the County.

**Jobs-Housing Imbalance.** Coweta County has a low jobs-housing ratio of 0.76, as of 2003. This ratio has actually fallen from 0.86 in 1990, which indicates that the County serves as a bedroom community more than a balanced community. A balanced community generally has a jobs-housing ratio of 1.25 to 1.75, with 1.4 considered ideal. This is further indicated by the fact

that nearly 52% of residents worked outside the County in 2000, compared to nearly 20% in 1970.



**Effects of Local Housing Policy.** The County has a minimum lot size of 1.6 acres as an effort to slow growth and to protect rural areas of the County. This policy has resulted in slower growth, as evidenced by recent housing permit activity. Between 1993 and 1999 an annual average of 1,340 units were permitted in Coweta County, compared to 890 units per year from 2000 through 2003. The County also has taken a general policy of not providing sewer for residential development, except in areas near the I-85 corridor and other commercial corridors and areas. Many developers and private property owners are requesting annexation into local municipalities as a way to avoid this policy on limited sewer, as well as minimum lot size.

#### **5.4 Natural and Cultural Resources**

**Declining Water Quality.** Eleven of Coweta County’s significant streams and rivers are in violation of the Clean Water Act. With the exception of the Chattahoochee River, most of these streams originate in Coweta County, and the source and solution to the problem lies in Coweta County. With the exception of one industrial source, the pollution is coming from urban and rural non-point source runoff. To address this problem, better enforcement of existing erosion and sedimentation control regulations is required. Additionally, revisions to development standards could include limits on impervious surfaces, conservation subdivision options, requirements for pervious parking areas, or incentives for green roofs.

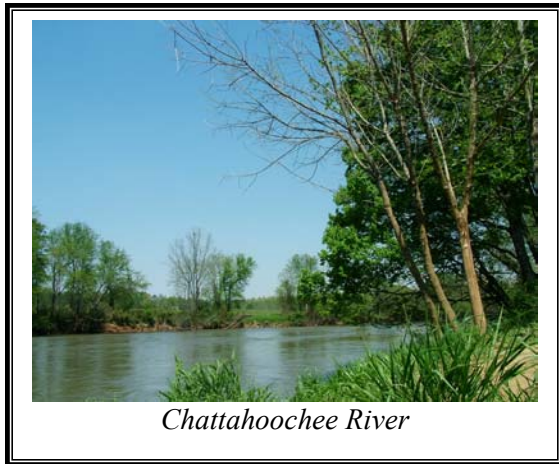
**Poor Air Quality.** Coweta County is one of 20 metropolitan Atlanta counties with poor air quality. The County does not meet Clean Air Act standards for particulate matter or ground-level ozone. Regionally, the bulk of the problem originates with cars and trucks. Several ongoing trends will likely exacerbate Coweta County’s air quality problem including:

- Increased development
- The auto-centricity of new developments including the strict segregation of uses
- Poor street connectivity

## *DRAFT*

- Lack of pedestrian or bicycle facilities
- Loss of tree cover and canopy
- Increase in commuting outside of the county for employment

Stemming these trends will require a multi-faceted campaign of zoning and land development regulation reform, public education, and intergovernmental coordination between the County, its cities, and the school board.



*Chattahoochee River*

**Protecting the Chattahoochee River.** Among the most exciting developments within Coweta County in recent years was the acquisition of the 3,000 acres along the Chattahoochee for the Chattahoochee Bend State Park. The park is part of a coordinated strategy to protect a continuous 200-mile greenway along the Chattahoochee River from Helen to Columbus. Significant acreage within Coweta County is still vulnerable to development.

**Loss of Prime Agricultural Land.** Coweta County retains some of the largest remaining, contiguous concentrations of prime agricultural land in metropolitan Atlanta. It also retains thousands of acres of active, productive farms. But development pressure on these valuable resources is mounting, and the County lacks a strategy for preservation and retention.

**Preservation of Historic Resources.** The County's cherished historic resources, districts, and sites lack local protection from demolition, inappropriate modification, or encroachment of incompatible development. To protect its historic resources, the County should adopt both historic preservation districts and architectural and design guidelines, and create a historic preservation commission.



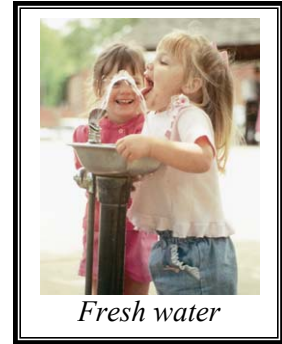
*Historic Resource*

### **5.5 Community Facilities and Services**

**Adequate Water System Treatment Capacity, but Limited Distribution System.** The Coweta County Water System provides water service to approximately 62,000 people through 21,620 metered connections. These customers are located primarily in the unincorporated portions of Coweta County, as well as the Cities of Grantville, Haralson, Moreland, and Senoia. The Cities of Newnan, Palmetto, Sharpsburg and Turin have their own water supply sources and distribution systems. There are large areas of the County that are dependent on well water. One of the biggest concerns related to this is its affect on fire protection and a limitation on the availability of fire hydrants.

## ***DRAFT***

Water is currently purchased from Newnan Utilities and the City of Atlanta. In 2003, Coweta County's annual average daily demand (AADD) was 5.0 million gallons per day (MGD) with a peak day demand of 5.9 MGD. By 2006, water supplies also will be available from the B.T. Brown water treatment plant (WTP), currently under construction by Coweta County, as well as the City of Griffin. Water supply is expected to be adequate to meet the water demands over the planning period and beyond.



*Fresh water*

**Limited Wastewater System.** Coweta County owns and operates three Water Pollution Control Plants (WPCPs) – Arnco, Sargent, and Shenandoah WPCPs. Each of these facilities has a distinct collection system and service area. A fourth service area, East Newnan, has its



*Arnco Wastewater Plant*

wastewater collected and pumped to the Wahoo Creek WPCP, which is owned and operated by Newnan Utilities. The cities of Newnan, Grantville, Palmetto, and Senoia provide wastewater service within their corporate boundaries.

Public wastewater collection and treatment services are very limited in Coweta County. The County's approach to residential wastewater management has been through the use of on-site septic systems. Overall, the septic tanks are performing well for residential developments; however, there have been problems reported with commercial developments using septic tanks in Coweta County. A Sewer Master Plan for Coweta County, which is already underway, will address the development of sewer service districts and treatment strategies for industrial and commercial centers.

According to the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce Quality Growth Task Force:

*"Under Georgia's previous draft Tri-State agreements with Alabama and Florida, septic tanks, land application systems and outdoor irrigation were considered '100% consumptive' of water supply, as they did not return measurable amounts of water to the rivers (unlike sewers, that treat and return wastewater). Under this premise, a house on a septic tank can 'consume' 6.6 times the water of a house served by sewer."*

(Source: "Metro Atlanta Quality Growth Task Force, Consolidated Recommendations", dated May 7, 2004)

## DRAFT

It should also be noted that land application systems would be treated the same as individual septic tanks under the assumptions of these Tri-State agreements. With the region's available water supply diminishing, this suggests that there may be future political pressure to develop sewer systems in favor of septic.



*Fire Department – Station #12*

**Growing demands for better Fire Protection.** The current ISO rating is 6/9 for the County. This rating denotes a 6 for areas that are located within 5 vehicle miles of a station and within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant; the County rates a 9 outside those ranges. To improve the County's current ISO rating to 1, it would have to build 17 new stations and provide water service throughout the County. The 5-vehicle mile coverage of each station is now also impeded by the poor condition of local bridges. Many were not designed to handle

the 44,000-pound fire engines. Other transportation needs include improvements to Smokey Road, to complete the Bypass, and improvements to Lower Fayetteville Road.

**Growing demands for more Public Safety Personnel.** Based on the statewide average of 26.8 public safety personnel per 10,000 residents, Coweta County's current level of service of 23.7 public safety personnel per 10,000 residents is slightly below the statewide average. With the construction of the new courthouse in late 2005 or early 2006, the Sheriff's Office will be hiring more personnel to staff the facility.

**Need for more Passive Recreation.** The Recreation Department serves the entire County and maintains a wide range of facilities; including 56 baseball fields, 4 football fields, 15 soccer fields, 2 gyms, and 3 senior service centers. Compared to national recreation standards, the County has an adequate number of baseball, football, and soccer fields to serve the current population. The number of County tennis courts, however, is less than half of the national average, though these facilities are strongly supplemented with those found in the recreation areas of local subdivisions.

One common recreational desire, however, heard as part of the public outreach effort was for more passive recreation facilities and multi-purpose trails. Many participants even stated that they traveled to Peachtree City to go jogging.



*Hunter Recreation Complex*

**Expansion of the County's New Stormwater Management Program.** The County's stormwater management program is still in its infancy. The County's first stormwater



## ***DRAFT***

management ordinance was passed only this year. The County is meeting NPDES requirements, but, as the County continues to grow, there are a number of issues related to this program that will need to be addressed, including:

- Administration and staffing of the new procedures for plan review, engineering, permitting and enforcement of stormwater management ordinances
- Public education and developer training regarding the new development procedures related to stormwater management
- Enforcement of new stormwater management and erosion/sedimentation control ordinances
- Updating FIRM maps of floodplain
- Identifying and financing the retrofit of failing or inadequate stormwater management facilities, such as existing culverts and ponds that pose a risk to public health and property
- Consideration of cost-effective stormwater management methods, such as area-wide stormwater storage and treatment
- Coordination of stormwater management implementation strategies and funding with municipalities
- Implementing Best Management Practices in support of total maximum daily loads (TMDL's) in sub-basins of streams that do not fully support designated uses.

**Need to Update the Solid Waste Management Plan.** The County's Solid Waste Management Master Plan is over 10 years old, and according to state law will have to be updated concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan Update process. The update of this Master Plan will likely identify several issues that will need to be coordinated with this planning effort.

**Expansion and improvement in the County Education System.** Throughout the public involvement process, participants stressed the importance of a good education system to the overall quality of life and in attracting both residential and employment growth. The general perception is that the County's education system is good, but citizens want a system that is superior to all others in the region. The community would strongly benefit from the development of a local four year college.

**Perceived Lack of Quality Health Care.** Throughout the public involvement process for this plan, a great deal of concern was expressed about the Health Care facilities in the county. Coweta County had 3.2 licensed nursing home beds per 100 persons in 1999, compared with the state average of 5.5 per 100 persons. In 1999, the number of physicians in the county per 10,000 persons was 10, compared to the state average of 19.3. It is generally known that many Coweta residents seek medical attention in Atlanta and nearby Fayette County. The perceived lack of quality health care has direct impact on perceived quality of life and is a detriment to attracting new businesses.

**Consistency with Service Delivery Strategy.** Recent and proposed changes in service delivery, funding sources and annexation policies will have to be reflected in another update of the SDS as part of this planning effort. Open communication and dialogue with the cities will have to be maintained throughout this planning process.

**Need for more government staff and the cost of providing needed improvements.** Coweta County government was comprised of 658 employees in March 2005. This represents 92

## ***DRAFT***

employees per 10,000 residents of the unincorporated county, which is roughly half the statewide average for local government employment of 194 per 10,000 residents. In addition as indicated in the table below, Coweta County also has one of the lowest total millage rates in the region. Future funding of any of the comprehensive plans recommendation, including additional staffing needs of the County, needs to be given strong consideration. The County needs to find additional sources of revenue if they want to maintain or improve their current level of service.

### **2004 Tax Indicators**

<b>County</b>	<b>Total Millage</b>	<b>Unincorporated Millage Rate</b>	<b>School Millage Rate</b>	<b>School Bonds</b>	<b>Fire District</b>	<b>Sales Tax Type*</b>
<b>Coweta</b>	<b>25.04</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>18.59</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>LSE</b>
Cherokee	27.03	4.94	18.45	1.12	2.22	SE
Carroll	24.28	6.17	18.10	NA	NA	LSE
Paulding	23.63	6.50	16.41	1.21	NA	LSE
Cobb	26.97	6.80	19.00	2.65	2.65	E
Douglas	28.53	7.69	19.48	1.02	NA	LSE
Clayton	25.80	7.78	18.91	NA	3.90	LSE
Gwinnett	31.80	8.27	18.87	NA	NA	SE
DeKalb	38.56	8.31	22.98	NA	2.30	MHE
Fayette	31.96	8.65	18.99	3.69	NA	LS
Troup	30.11	10.56	18.50	NA	NA	LSE
Henry	36.20	11.24	18.90	3.06	NA	LSE
Fulton	34.69	11.58	17.32	0.29	NA	MLE
Spalding	35.57	13.40	18.90	NA	3.07	LE
Rockdale	35.44	14.40	21.48	NA	NA	SHE

Source: Georgia Department of Labor/ 2004 Government Management Indicators Survey,. GDCA

\* L – Local Option Sales Tax; S- Special Local Option Sales Tax, E – Educational Local Option Sales Tax; H – Homestead Option Sales Tax; M - Marta

### **5.6 Intergovernmental Coordination**

**Annexation is threat to growth management efforts.** Several of the county municipalities have in past been very active in annexing property. In particular, after the County adopted the 1.6 acre minimum lot size many landowners with development interests applied for and were granted annexation requests, primarily as a means to developing higher density. If this plan recommends and the county adopts similar growth management strategies, many feel that similar rush on annexation applications will occur eroding the integrity of the effort. Mechanisms need to be in place to facilitate proper coordination of land use and growth management issues. Some citizens have even suggested a consolidation of government.

### **5.7 Transportation**

**Transportation Challenges.** One of Coweta’s greatest assets is its role in the regional transportation network, including its strong geographic location – Interstate 85 corridor, proximity to downtown Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Airport. With the anticipated growth of the county, however, there are several transportation issues that will need to be addressed in this planning effort, such as growing traffic congestion, poor connectivity, lack of public transit, automobile dependence, lack of an effective pedestrian and bicycle network, poor condition of

***DRAFT***

the rural bridges and roads. A comprehensive look at each of these issues is included in the inventory of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, a major portion of which is included in the “Technical Addendum.”



2397\_001 comp plan.tn 1

**JORDAN  
JONES &  
GOULDING**

**6801 Governors Lake Parkway • Building 200 • Norcross • Georgia 30071  
t 770.455.8555 • f 770.455.7391 • [www.jjg.com](http://www.jjg.com)**