

# *2017 Comprehensive Plan*

## Hart County, Georgia



Adopted March, 2018

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# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The purpose of planning and community development is to provide guidance for everyday decision-making by local government officials and other community leaders. This document, the *Hart County 2017 Comprehensive Plan*, represents the culmination of the efforts to plan for the future well-being for the County, the residents and various stakeholders by identifying the critical, consensus issues and goals for the community. Implementing the plan will help the community address those critical issues and opportunities while moving towards realization of the unique vision for its future. As outlined by Georgia’s planning standards (see below):

*Statewide benefits of comprehensive planning*

*(Local) comprehensive planning should be conducted in the context of Georgia’s strong and vibrant intergovernmental system that clearly recognizes the important role cities and counties play in fostering the state’s image as an attractive place to invest, conduct businesses and raise a family. City and county comprehensive planning enhances coordination at many levels.*

*Local benefits of comprehensive planning*

*The highest and best use of comprehensive planning for local governments is to show important relationships between community issues. A local comprehensive plan is a fact-based resource for local constituents that tracks implementation of community-based policies. Furthermore, local comprehensive planning creates an environment of predictability for business and industry, investors, property owners, tax payers and the general public. In addition, the plan helps local governments to recognize and then implement important economic development and revitalization initiatives. For these reasons, the state finds that well-planned communities are better prepared to attract new growth in a highly competitive global market.*

*In short, local planning should recognize that:*

*Assets can be **accentuated** and **improved**;*

*Liabilities can be **mitigated** and **changed** over time; and*

*Potential can be **sought after** and **developed**.*

## Scope

This document addresses the local planning requirements and community development of Hart County, Georgia. Some consideration has been given to those areas and political entities inside city limits that influence conditions within the community, but all the cited issues, objectives and opportunities discussed herein are solely focused on unincorporated Hart County.

This document will be offered as supplemental material for the respective comprehensive plans for incorporated municipalities within Hart County.

## Plan Elements

This comprehensive plan serves to meet the requirements and intent of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs's "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," as amended in 2013, and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is essential that the plan be prepared in compliance with these rules and guidelines in order for Hart County to maintain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. Further, State law requires that Hart County update its comprehensive plan every 5 years.

*"The purpose of Minimum Standards is to provide a framework for the development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans at the local, regional and state government level. They reflect an important state interest: healthy and economically vibrant cities and counties are vital to the state's economic prosperity."*

**(1) Community Goals.** *The purpose of the Community Goals element is to lay out a road map for the community's future, developed through a very public process of involving community leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of the community. The Community Goals are the most important part of the plan, for they identify the community's direction for the future, and are intended to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community, thereby leading citizens and leadership to act to ensure that the plan is implemented.*

*The Community Goals must include at least one or a combination of any of the four components listed below:*

**(a) General Vision Statement.** *Include a general statement that paints a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.*

**(b) List of Community Goals.** *Include a listing of the goals the community seeks to achieve. Review the suggested community goals in the Supplemental Planning Recommendations for suggestions.*

**(c) Community Policies.** *Include any policies the local government selects to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Goals.*

**(d) Character Areas and Defining Narrative.** *This option lays out more specific goals for the future of the community by community sub-areas, districts, or neighborhoods, and may be prepared using the guidance provided for the Land Use Element.*

**(2) Needs and Opportunities.** *This is the locally agreed upon list of Needs and Opportunities the community intends to address. Each of the needs or opportunities that the community identifies as high priority must be followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Community Work Program. The list must be developed by involving community stakeholders in carrying out a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) or similar analysis of the community.*

**(3) Community Work Program.** *This element of the comprehensive plan lays out the specific activities the community plans to undertake during the next five years to address the priority Needs and Opportunities, identified Target Areas (if applicable), or to achieve portions of the Community*

*Goals. This includes any activities, initiatives, programs, ordinances, administrative systems (such as site plan review, design review, etc.) to be put in place to implement the plan. The Community Work Program must include the following information for each listed activity:*

- *Brief description of the activity;*
- *Legal authorization for the activity, if applicable;*
- *Timeframe for initiating and completing the activity;*
- *Responsible party for implementing the activity;*
- *Estimated cost (if any) of implementing the activity; and*
- *Funding source(s), if applicable.*

Lastly, local comprehensive plans in Georgia are required to include an assessment of compliance and consideration for the appropriate regional water plans for each community.

*Consideration of the Regional Water Plan and the Environmental Planning Criteria. During the process of preparing its comprehensive plan, each community must review the Regional Water Plan(s) covering its area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria... to determine if there is need to adapt local implementation practices or development regulations to address protection of these important natural resources. The community must certify that it has considered both the Regional Water Plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria when it transmits the plan to the Regional Commission for review.*

This is to certify that as part of this planning process appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed the *Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Plan*, the *Georgie Mountains Regional Plan*, and the *Georgia State Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating this local plan. No conflicts were identified between this document and the other documents

In addition to the core required elements the Hart County is required to include a both an Economic Development element and a full land use element in support of their development regulations and policies. The analysis provided by the land use section will ensure the County manages development related issues and objectives.

**(6) Land Use Element.** *The Land Use Element, where required, must include at least one of the two components listed below:*

*(a) Character Areas Map and Defining Narrative. Identify and map the boundaries of existing or potential character areas (see definition in Chapter 110-12-1-.05) covering the entire community, including existing community sub-areas, districts, or neighborhoods.*

*For each identified character area, carefully define a specific vision or plan that includes the following information:*

- *Written description and pictures or illustrations that make it clear what types, forms, styles, and patterns of development are to be encouraged in the area.*
- *Listing of specific land uses and/or (if appropriate for the jurisdiction) zoning categories to be allowed in the area.*
- *Identification of implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns for the area, including more detailed sub-area planning, new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments, and infrastructure improvements.*

*(b) Future Land Use Map and Narrative. Prepare a Future Land Use Map that uses conventional categories or classifications to depict the location (typically parcel by parcel) of specific future land uses. If this option is chosen, prepare the Future Land Use Map using either of the land use classification schemes described below and include a narrative that explains how to interpret the map and each land use category.*

The Economic Development element is required for local governments included in Georgia Job Tax Credit Tier 2, which is the primary indicator of local economic stress. These analyses are used to help the community identify ways to address issues concerning job retention and development, employee training and business recruitment.

***Economic Development Element.*** *Identify needs and opportunities related to economic development and vitality of the community, and Community Work Program activities for addressing these needs and opportunities, considering such factors as diversity of the economic base, quality of the local labor force, effectiveness of local economic development agencies, programs and tools. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) for the region may be substituted for this element.*

## **Public Participation**

As a part of the planning process each local government must provide and implement opportunities to encourage public participation. The purpose of this is to insure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process, are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan elements, and have adequate access to the process of defining the community's vision, priorities, goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

At a minimum, the public participation program must provide for: adequate notice to keep the general public informed of the emerging plan; opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the plan; hold the required public hearings; and, provide notice to property owners through advertisements in the newspaper (legal organ) of the planning effort soliciting participation and comments. In addition, the local government must provide opportunities for public participation through other means and methods to help articulate a community vision and develop associated goals and implementation program.

Public involvement for Hart County featured 4 public hearings stretching from December, 2016, through May, 2017. Additional meetings among staff and select stakeholders were also held, as well as a public presentation specifically for the Hart County Homeowners Association, a local citizens group. Attendance ranged from 20-45 persons per event and enthusiasm was quite high. Additionally, the County saw very strong participation through a local survey made available online and in paper forms. Combined more than 400 responses were generated and strong themes were identified through both the surveys and forum discussions.

The County also tapped an advisory committee of over 20 persons, to ensure a wide variety of representation among the different demographic groups within Hart County. Included in this Committee were members from the agricultural community, the cities, the schools (including students), long-time and short-time residents, homeowners from near the lake and from the rural county, as well as a variety of business leaders. The advisory committee participated through both public meetings and direct email discussion and review of materials. The County also made sure to involve representatives from the Archway partnership with UGA.



**HART COUNTY PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

<b>Government and Civic Leaders</b>	<b>Public Representatives</b>
Joey Dorsey, County Chairman Ricky Carter, County Commission Terrel Partain, County Manager Nicki Meyer, Hart Co. Chamber Anna Strickland, Archway Partnership Michelle Weatherbee; DDA Jay Floyd; Hart County School Board James Owens, Hart County Recreation Bill Leard, Hart County IBA	Kevin McCraney; Ga Power Matt Honiotes Robert Kesler, RJK Assoc. Steven Mouchet , Gateway Financial Terry Vickery, Quality Home Inspections Tony Haynie, retired Rev. Lonnie Robinson Mandy Floyd Jerry Cannady, All Hart Realty Alicia Burch Pam Quinn Terry Shugart, Shugart Enterprises Alexandra Amberg, SD Automotive Bobby Fleming, farmer
<b>Other Partners</b>	
Brandon Johnson, Mayor of Hartwell David Aldrich, Hartwell City Manager Tray Hicks, Hartwell City Council George Nolan, City of Bowersville	

# COMMUNITY VISION

## 2

The Minimum Standards and Requirements for Local Comprehensive Planning defines a community vision as something “... *intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.*” It is required as an element of the comprehensive plan so that communities can truly establish a pure and simple ideal for themselves in a format that is easily expressed and understood.

Visioning provides communities with an opportunity to pause and consider the “big picture” as well as to attempt to clearly define their ideal future. Developing a vision means that community has at least tried to identify current values, describe how they’re to be realized in the future and use that image as a foundation for short and long-term planning. As a process this also requires the community to develop a consensus on what conditions to change or to preserve.

### Vision Statement

A vision for the future of the community must be included in the comprehensive plan. The community vision is intended to provide a complete picture of what the community desires to become. The community vision must be based on public input, the assessment of current and future needs and be supported by the goals, policies and objectives in the comprehensive plan. In addition, there must be consistency between the community vision and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Quality Community Objectives as well as consistency with the community visions of other communities within the region.

In talking about their future, the residents of Hart County showed a fierce devotion to their community. They felt there was as much untapped potential as there was a need for improving their economic opportunity. They respected their role as a lakeside community and what that means for tourism and the nature of living near a popular natural amenity, but they also agreed it could be managed better for the benefit of those who lived and worked locally. In lieu of past economic downturns there was also an expressed interest in diversifying their economic base, again focusing on most effecting the well-being of those who called Hart County home. They wanted to use this visioning exercise, then, to reaffirm their commitment to one another, to continuing the practices they favored about their hometown and to improve upon the elements that mattered most to them.

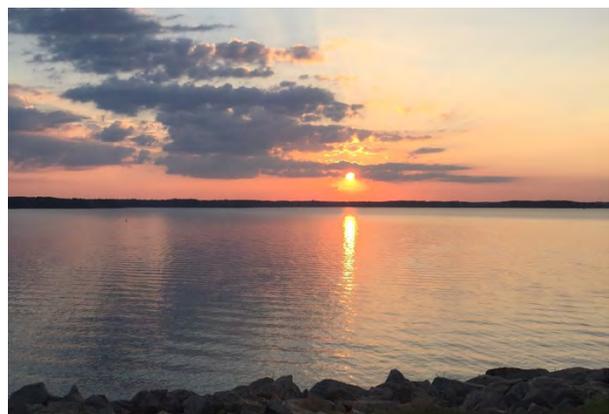
Values most frequently cited in discussing the vision for Hart County		
Affordable	Peaceful	Sound government
Agricultural	Proud	Southern
Historic	Rural	Stewardship
Hometown	Safe	Thinking about tomorrow
Neighborly/Friendly		

## HART COUNTY - COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

*Hart County, Georgia, is a proud lakeside community dedicated to its rural agricultural heritage and providing a safe and affordable hometown for all. Celebrating our history and rooted in the outdoor spirit, Hart County aspires to preserve the peaceful way of life and southern hospitality that has defined our community for generations. We will strive to be good neighbors and leaders through clear and efficient governance that prioritizes service to the community, the wise stewardship of Lake Hartwell and all our resources, investing in our future, and a commitment to our rural character.*

It was imperative to the public and the Advisory Committee members that Hart County identify itself as a lake community to recall the scope of affect of, and the potential within, having Lake Hartwell on the eastern boundary. This reservoir has not only shaped housing and tourism patterns but drives much of the economy, provides water, and at times provide power generation. Planning program participants wanted to see the County and its partners work to deepen the relationship between the lake and the community so that stakeholders can better protect the reservoir's water levels and prevailing water quality, and to find new ways to utilize the lake as an asset for tourism and economic growth.

Beyond the lake affect the participants echoed support for strengthening the rural residential nature of the county, both in fostering the area as a quality destination for households to raise families and as a place that will work to preserve its agricultural heritage and economy. People very much want Hart County to be viewed as a hometown that is neighborly, peaceful, and affordable, with economic growth building from, and upon, those elements as defining traits of why people want to be here. Finding additional ways to preserve this characteristic, through programs that promote farming and buying local, and by encouraging rural development forms outside of the cities, work support this effort to keep alive these elements so valued in Hart County



## Economic Development

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

Reference material used for this planning process came from the Georgia Department of Labor's *Area Labor Profiles* for Hart County, and from the 2016 GMRC *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*, both of which can be found in the appendix. The CEDS is a regional document that is required by the federal Economic Development Administration and is the overarching document used to coordinate federal and State investment in capital projects that support job growth or retention. Further discussion was held among stakeholders to determine the relative health of the local economy and in identifying the economic needs and opportunities for Hart County.

### Unemployment Rates (January for each year)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Hart Co.</b>	12.7	12.3	10.8	11.2	7.7	6.8	5.6

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Since the recession Hart County has seen some strong recovery with regards to unemployment levels. Much of this lies within the lower paying jobs supporting commercial and service industries, however, particularly those related to tourism as visits to the Lake increase. The County is still seeking additional prospects within the goods production industries where and when possible, and has been actively working with Lavonia, Royston and Hartwell in seeking to attract businesses to the area.

Agriculture remains a strong component of the local economy, both with respect to livestock and poultry as well as with some row crops. Commercial agriculture, especially in the poultry field, is prominent in Hart County, and most everyone in the community wishes to find ways to sustain this element of the local economy and way of life. As with many rural areas around the country, Hart County has struggled to retain young adults and foster the next generation of farmers, so efforts to increase outreach with education partners and reaching school children has been a focus for the community for several years. The growing trend in agritourism and supporting local growers has of late aided this cause, though the County is still exploring ways to provide additional boosts to local farmers.

Arguably the biggest challenge for Hart County is dealing with the skills-gap between employers and employees. Hart County has several businesses that indicate a regular need for skilled labor, often in trade positions. However, many younger adults are either looking for other career options, such as recent college grads looking for more white collar professions or those seeking more glamorous options. This is a growing national trend as the nature of simplistic manufacturing jobs has changed to require either greater specialization or reduced to something more menial in support of technologically advance production lines. The labor force in rural areas are often the hardest hit during these transitions until employers and local schools and colleges can reorient training programs to provide more adept workers. These changes are underway in the Hart County system and with North Georgia Technical College but will need some time to better match the demands of regional industries.

## Needs & Opportunities

To achieve its stated vision a community must understand those obstacles and issues that must be addressed in order to reach the goals implied. The comprehensive planning process asks communities to assess the information outlined in an effort to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered when trying to plan for the future. In doing so the communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions to as to better achieve the desired vision.

The following represents a refined listing of Issues and Opportunities for Hart County. Some were carried over from the previous plan, but the list has been confirmed and/or refined based on the discussions and analyses throughout the current planning process.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
<p><u>Maximize benefit of Lake Hartwell</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to improve access for residents</li> <li>• Need to enforce protection of water level</li> <li>• Need to enforce protection of water quality</li> <li>• Potential for bringing the Lake identity inland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support efforts to upgrade Hart State Park (<i>Policy</i>)</li> <li>• Monitor Army Corps of Engineers management of high water levels (<i>Policy</i>)</li> <li>• Maintain protective standards for State Vital Areas (<i>Policy</i>)</li> <li>• Develop report concerning EPD listed waters in the county (2018)</li> <li>• Solicit ideas to bring lake theme into county (2019)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Support local agricultural industry/culture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must support education programs</li> <li>• Should direct industry support through NRCS, RC&amp;D</li> <li>• Must maintain conservation easement options</li> <li>• Need to direct intense development toward cities/urban areas</li> <li>• Must support more Ag-centric events; Promotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review development policies and ordinances for ways to direct growth toward cities/urban areas; Amend as needed (2018)</li> <li>• Solicit report assessing performance of conservation easements (2018)</li> <li>• Establish policies for, and encourage, conservation design subdivisions (2018)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Support the rural, small town feel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead industry and growth to cities &amp; urban areas</li> <li>• Support Agriculture</li> <li>• Adopt conservation design standards for subdivisions</li> <li>• Promote rural/ Appalachian architectural design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review development policies and ordinances for ways to direct growth toward cities/urban areas; Amend as needed (2018)</li> <li>• Establish policies for, and encourage, conservation design subdivisions (2018)</li> </ul>

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
<p><u>Need a true economic development strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to match jobs with talent, and vice versa</li> <li>• Coordinate with education partners, Cities</li> <li>• Need tourism and manufacturing strategies</li> <li>• Performance monitoring for marketing material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the Cities, develop an industrial build-out scenario for the County (2020)</li> <li>• Develop/maintain a report on economic development efforts; Annually present to Commission (Policy)</li> <li>• Host annual forum bringing business leaders with local school officials (Policy)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Need to maintain low cost of living</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep government cost efficient</li> <li>• Foster affordable housing through policy</li> <li>• Emphasize adaptive reuse of existing properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop financial performance monitoring for each department (2018)</li> <li>• Solicit report profiling sub-market housing conditions in the county (2019)</li> <li>• Solicit report identifying targeted standards for new housing (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Need more commercial options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire/opportunity for more retail and dining for locals</li> <li>• Coordinate growth with Cities</li> <li>• Opportunity for new tourism attractions/ Entertainment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit study assessing options for new recreation or tourist attractions for the area (2019)</li> <li>• Encourage staff from each local government to hold a joint annual development forum (2018)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Demand for governmental harmony</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with the public</li> <li>• Interaction with the Cities</li> <li>• Interaction with the neighboring communities</li> <li>• Utilize GMRC Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite ACCG (or other entity) to review and offer guidance on best practices for public relations (2018)</li> <li>• County manager to meet with cities quarterly and GMRC and adjoining counties annually (Policy)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Need for jail improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for expanded capacity</li> <li>• Needed facility modernization and upgrades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct assessment to confirm costs of expansion vs. new construction (2018)</li> <li>• Report identifying options for funding jail improvements (2018)</li> <li>• Expand or build new jail (2020)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Need for water system improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to expand water lines outside of Hartwell</li> <li>• Need to maintain system compliance with State for future permits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phases 1-5 line extensions (2018)</li> <li>• Report identifying future system expansions (2019)</li> <li>• Continue to support Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Council and maintain compliance with State water plan (Policy)</li> </ul>

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# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3

## Land Use Assessment

Land use management policies and programs represent guidelines for shaping development patterns that provide for efficient growth while also protecting sensitive social and environmental areas. As such communities should take into account their current and immediately projected conditions and assess the identified needs and issues regarding the built landscape and community services for the area. This section presents an inventory of existing land use patterns and development trends for the community, allowing the local government to produce the most effective policies needed to manage the demands from projected development.

### *Defining Narrative*

The overall development desired for Hart County will compliment existing patterns and scale, allowing the county to retain much of its rural character. Higher density land uses will be directed toward the cities and areas with existing utility capacity, reserving the bulk of the county for agricultural functions, large-lot residential estates and occasional commercial or professional operations the compliment the community.

One important factor to be considered in developing the Future Development Scenario for Hart County is the absence of major land use management policies. The County does have environmental protection measures in place, but does not have any type of formal zoning. To help manage the impacts of growth, the County can direct and influence development through the placement and scale of utilities, management of any improvements to local roads, criteria for subdivisions and minimum lot sizes. Areas where the County wishes to remain sparsely developed will see little public investment, whereas areas targeted for receiving growth and higher densities will see major investment in utilities and services.

## Areas Requiring Special Attention

Analysis of prevailing trends assists in the identification of preferred growth patterns for the future. These analyses can identify those areas requiring special attention with regard to management policies, such as natural or cultural resources likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development.

### Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur

- **Lavonia and the I-85 Corridor.** This area features the growing city and its adjoining industrial district which has become the foremost employment and economic center within the tri-county area. The development projected around the new hospital has not yet arrived but the recent completion of improvements to SR17 north of the interchange signals the continued growth of this area is still to come.
- **Lakefront.** Lake Hartwell remains the premier area attraction and though largely built out it's assumed the pressure for more development around the lake will remain strong for some time.

### Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation

Newer development is occurring within projected service delivery areas and is occurring slow enough to remain within suitable demand levels for public services. Provided efforts are made to retain the quality and capacity of parks and water lines (for fire suppression), existing services and/or planned expansions should suffice for managing near-to-mid term growth in Hart County.

### Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)

Most of the large-scale developed areas, industrial sites and commercial malls are within city limits, and what few properties lie in the unincorporated county are not considered dilapidated. Some effort could be pursued to improve over time the arterial corridors leading into Hartwell and to the prominent lakeside residential districts, with the City coordinating redevelopment efforts and the County supporting development policies for new work along the corridor.

### Large abandoned structures or sites, including possible environmental contamination.

Most of the large-scale developed areas and industrial sites are within city limits. The few such properties that lie in the unincorporated county are not considered environmentally contaminated.

### Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites).

There are no concentrations of sites available for infill development in Hart County. There are select properties scattered within certain districts (lakeside, industrial...) that should be developed in a fashion suitable for their context, while areas surrounding the cities of Hartwell, Bowersville and Lavonia should be developed in a fashion that complements the existing urban/suburban fabric of those communities.

### Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole

There are no concentrations of impoverished properties within the unincorporated county, however, parts of the rural area includes dozens of residential and agricultural properties that feature aging and/or dilapidated structures. This speaks to the general level of household income in the community and the struggle many residents have had to maintain their homes or invest in better properties. As the county grows the encouragement will be to support renovation of existing structures while ensuring new construction meets modern code.

## **Character Area Assessment**

Character area planning is designed to focus on the physical appearance (aesthetics) and function of a particular area. Development strategies are tailored and applied to each individual area. The goal is to enhance the existing character/function or promote a new, more desirable character for the future. Character areas identify portions of the community that have a unique or special character that needs to be preserved or require special attention because of unique development issues

A key component of the comprehensive planning process is the development of a Character Area Map that reflects the county's vision for future growth and development during the course of the planning period. This vision was developed through an extensive public visioning process and expresses the unique character of various portions of the county. The various character areas, then, are intended to support the overall future development strategy by organizing common themes of development patterns throughout the community. They promote the desired development patterns and provide a framework for coordination of capital improvement projects that may impact development. The following pages present the map and narratives of each Character area associated with Hart County.

Each identified character area outlines a specific vision or plan that includes the following:

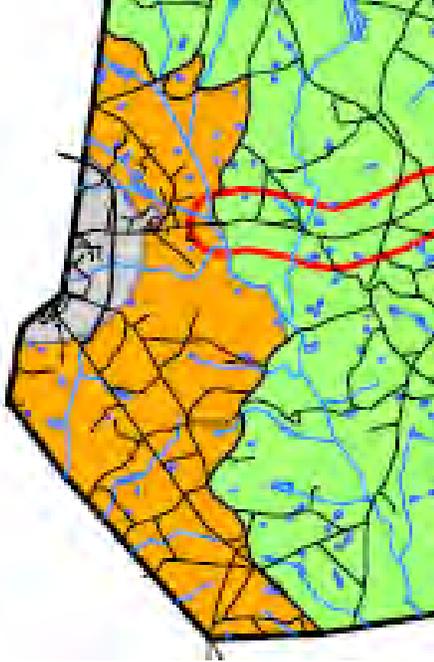
- Written description and pictures or illustrations that identify the patterns and scales of development encouraged in that area.
- Identification of implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns for the area, including more detailed sub-area planning, new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments, and infrastructure improvements.

<b>CHARACTER AREAS</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Development Types Allowed</b>
<b>Reed Creek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passive recreational or low-impact eco-tourism</li> <li>• State Parks and wildlife management areas</li> <li>• Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Low impact agricultural</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Hart County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Agricultural uses</li> <li>• Churches &amp; small-scale institutional</li> <li>• Minimize surface parking</li> <li>• Should blend with architectural character of community</li> <li>• Conservation design subdivisions</li> </ul>
<b>Greater Hartwell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential &amp; subdivisions with amenity areas</li> <li>• Churches &amp; small-scale institutional</li> <li>• Minimize surface parking</li> <li>• Should blend with architectural character of community</li> <li>• Conservation design preferred</li> <li>• Commercial, office, and low-impact warehousing or industrial</li> </ul>
<b>Arterial Corridors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural residential, subdivisions</li> <li>• Agricultural, agritourism</li> <li>• Recreational, institutional</li> <li>• Neighborhood commercial &amp; office</li> <li>• Conservation design preferred</li> </ul>
<b>I-85 Corridor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial</li> <li>• Transportation, Utility</li> <li>• Institutional</li> </ul>
<b>Greater Bowersville</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential, single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Churches &amp; small-scale institutional</li> <li>• Parks and recreation</li> <li>• Should blend with architectural character of community</li> <li>• Conservation design subdivisions</li> <li>• Neighborhood commercial</li> <li>• Low-impact industrial</li> </ul>

<b>CHARACTER AREAS</b>	
Area	Development Types Allowed
<b>Greater Lavonia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential, single family or small-scale multi-family</li> <li>• Sidewalks encouraged near City, small parking lots preferred</li> <li>• Architecturally encouraged to match design styles in the city</li> <li>• Neighborhood commercial, intuitional, and office uses</li> <li>• Parks and recreation</li> <li>• Light industrial (with proper buffering)</li> </ul>
<b>Greater Royston</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential, single family or small-scale multi-family</li> <li>• Sidewalks encouraged near City, small parking lots preferred</li> <li>• Architecturally encouraged to match design styles in the city</li> <li>• Neighborhood commercial, intuitional, and office uses</li> <li>• Parks and recreation</li> <li>• Light industrial (with proper buffering)</li> </ul>
<b>Lake Hartwell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlay limiting impervious surfaces</li> <li>• Passive recreational or eco-tourism</li> <li>• State Parks and wildlife management areas</li> <li>• Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred</li> <li>• Low-impact, outdoor-themed retreat and conference facilities</li> </ul>

*Note on Implementation Measures for Character Areas:*

Hart County has to date employed minimalist development regulations in a deference to market forces and landowner preferences. The County does employ building codes and subdivision regulations as well as utility and infrastructure requirements for intensive industrial uses. Until such time as the county embraces more detail land use management regulations their ability to shape development within the character areas will be pursued through recommendations and guidance regarding land use types and design as well as the management of utilities and infrastructure. Hart County will use this planning time frame (2018-2022) to explore development trends and monitor the viable options for more/new and use policies. During this time the implementation measures offered here will serve as the general policies the County will undertake in working to manage development.

Character Area	Greater Royston
<p><b><u>Location:</u></b> Southwestern corner of Hart County, surrounding the City of Royston.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Measures:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Attempt to concentrate growth</li> <li>✓ Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers</li> <li>✓ Monitor development for application of environmental standards</li> <li>✓ Encourage open-space preservation</li> </ul> 	

**Description:**

The goal of this area is to support the role of Royston as a minor regional center. It will foster a collection of neighborhood scale residential use with a variety of commercial, office and other public uses. Of the cities along the Ga 17 corridor Royston is the southern destination for commercial and employment activity centers.



Land use in this area should complement this distinction. Residential uses can include single family and multi-family residential units, as well as specialty units such as those for the aged or infirmed. Preferences should be given to traditional neighborhood forms, with sidewalks and smaller blocks, that allow newer development to feel compatible with established residences and, where possible, enable pedestrian accessibility.

Given the presence of water and sewer service it is expected that Royston will continue to serve as a destination for many services and activities unavailable in the smaller cities of Canon and Bowersville, as well as for rural portions of Hart, Elbert and Franklin Counties. Commercial and office activity can be either neighborhood scale or larger. Royston does feature a couple conventional strip shopping centers, though updated design features that decrease the impact of the automobile are preferable. Building

heights of 3 and possibly 4 stories are possible close to the urban core of the city. As these uses are located further away from the urbanized areas, they should adopt smaller scales (under 3 stories) and seek to blend in with the rural landscape. It is expected the transition to purely rural environments will progress more quickly than with surrounding Hartwell.

Some industrial activity could also be sustained within this area, pending the availability of utilities. Such uses would be prohibited from nuisance activities that might impact surrounding residential and public uses, but there are opportunities for such larger scale developments in this area.



**Character Area**

**Greater Bowersville**

**Location:**

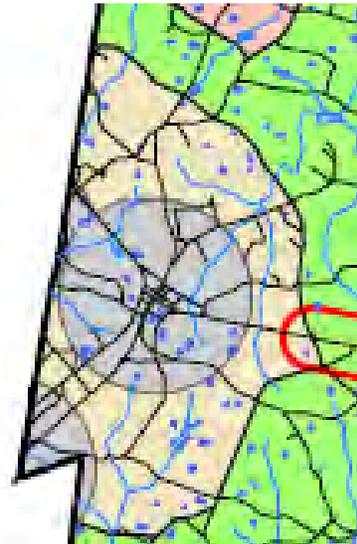
Western edge of Hart County surrounding the cities of Bowersville and Canon.

**Implementation Measures:**

Attempt to concentrate growth

Monitor development for application of environmental standards

Encourage open-space preservation



**Description:**

While part of the Ga 17 corridor that is experiencing growth pressures, these cities represent modest civic centers amidst rural settings. Neither functions as a commercial or employment center save for several smaller businesses mostly catering to immediate residents, nor is there the volume of water or sewer available to support higher densities. The goal of this area is to compliment these roles of smaller town centers, offering a minor shift from purely rural, agricultural surroundings with small communities based almost exclusively on housing.

Neither Bowersville nor Canon has large, established neighborhoods. Most housing associated with these communities remains rural in character (larger lots, often on active farms), with modest clustering of units coming together around the town centers. Housing introduced into the area, even in subdivisions, should be of larger lot sizes than traditional neighborhoods like those in Royston and Hartwell. Additional

design considerations with landscaping, buffering and the inclusion of open space should be incorporated so as to distinguish this area from formal urbanizing areas.

Commercial uses should be restricted to neighborhood scale activities designed primarily to support area residents. Particularly as Ga 17 is improved and likely moved out of this part of Hart County, most through traffic should be regional in nature and oriented to the immediately neighboring communities. As such larger, regional commercial activities should be reserved for areas in and around Hartwell, Lavonia and Royston.



There are some industrial operations around Bowersville and it is recognized that available water capacity and arterial access makes the area suitable for such uses. Additional industrial activity is encouraged providing such uses are prohibited from nuisance activities that might impact surrounding residential and public uses.

<i>Character Area</i>	<i>Greater Lavonia</i>
<p><b><u>Location:</u></b> The northwest portion of the county that includes I-85 and borders the City of Lavonia. Bordered to the south and east by Pooles Creek.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Measures:</u></b> Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development</p> <p>Attempt to concentrate growth</p> <p>Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers</p> <p>Encouraging infill where possible</p> <p>Monitor development for application of environmental standards</p> <p>Encourage open-space preservation</p>	

**Description:**

The northern tip of the Ga. 17 corridor attracting development but also geared for heavier commercial growth due to utilities, presence of industrial parks and the Interstate access. This area is considered the gateway to Hart County and a current economic engine for industries requiring access to the neighboring metropolitan areas. While Lavonia retains some small-town elements and character, the overall scale of development and variety of public uses suggests the community is taking on more of a suburban feel. The goal of this area is to efficiently accommodate new growth, attracting industrial growth/expansion, and maintaining the essence of connectivity to rural Hart County and the neighboring cities.

Interstate access and sewer capacity has enabled Lavonia to take on conventional metropolitan characteristics like chain retail and dining establishments and volumes of auto-oriented strip shopping developments. Most of this is restricted to select arterial corridors, but it has also fostered expansive growth of suburban style residential and office uses on the city's periphery.

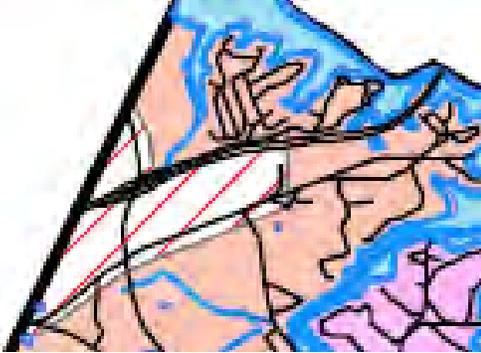


New residential in this area is encouraged to adhere to traditional neighborhood forms where adjacent to established residential areas. Beyond that, residential development should aspire to early generation suburban neighborhood forms, featuring curvilinear roads and larger ½ -1 acre lots but maintaining road connectivity, short front yards and pedestrian trails or sidewalks if possible. Cul-de-sacs should be discouraged to protect against the need for major road improvements, the development of traffic problems at key intersections and provide a sense of urbanity amid rural landscapes. Higher densities would be encouraged if/as sewer becomes available to more of this area.

Commercial, office and institutional uses are encouraged in areas with established utilities and infrastructure, preferably within Lavonia or corridors of established activity centers. Infill development is encouraged when existing structures become vacant (a common trait with modern commercial structures). Larger, regional scale operations are permitted as the Interstate interchanges make the area a regional destination for tourists and passing motorists.

Industrial uses are acceptable but restricted to smaller operations unless located within the I-85 Corridor overlay (See below). Some industrial uses may be feasible in this area as utilities and conditions permit, such as businesses that are low-traffic and not considered nuisance activities.



<i>Character Area</i>	<i>I-85 Corridor</i>
<p><b><u>Location:</u></b> The northern tip of the county that includes I-85.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Measures:</u></b> Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to attract/ control development</p> <p>Attempt to concentrate some growth so as to deflect pressure from elsewhere in County</p> <p>Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers</p> <p>Encouraging infill where possible</p> <p>Monitor development for application of environmental standards</p>	

**Description:**

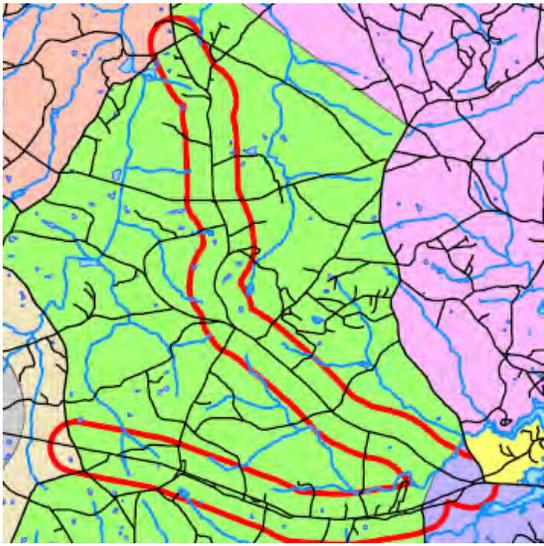
As the only portion of the county with direct access to the Interstate this area has been significant to Hart County’s industrial growth over the past 15 years. In conjunction with the Ga 17 corridor and the City of Lavonia, the I-85 corridor has attracted heavier commercial and industrial growth than elsewhere in the County. This area is considered the gateway to Hart County and a current economic engine for industries requiring access to the neighboring metropolitan areas. The goal of this area is to maximize the available resources necessary for continuing this growth and preserve this corridor for economic development.

Some residential and agricultural activity remains in this area, but the prevailing infrastructure and utilities enable more intensive uses. Together with neighboring communities and the Joint Development Authority, Hart County has encouraged the use of the general I-85 corridor for economic development and industrial development.



Recognizing the other uses and conditions prescribed for the Greater Lavonia area (see above), the I-85 Corridor overlay provides for industrial development at those areas closest to the Interstate. Even with this designation there is the need for proper utilities and infrastructure for each subsequent development, though in most cases these should be readily available depending on the scale of operation proposed. Where such industrial uses are near or adjacent to predominantly residential areas extra care should be paid to prohibit nuisance activities.



<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Arterial Corridors</b>
<p><b><u>Location:</u></b> An overlay area for the main roads connecting Hartwell with surrounding cities: US 29 (Royston), Ga 51 (Bowersville), and Ga 77/Providence Church Road (Lavonia).</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Measures:</u></b> Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development</p> <p>Monitor development for application of environmental standards</p> 	

**Description:**

Plans for these arterial roads include the eventual provision of main lines for expanded public water service. As such, time and growth pressures will see these corridors forced to accommodate volumes of both through traffic and persons accessing destinations along the route. In an effort to preserve the main functions of the roads and to minimize the impacts of development on the overall rural character of the county, these overlays have been identified to discourage inappropriate development types.

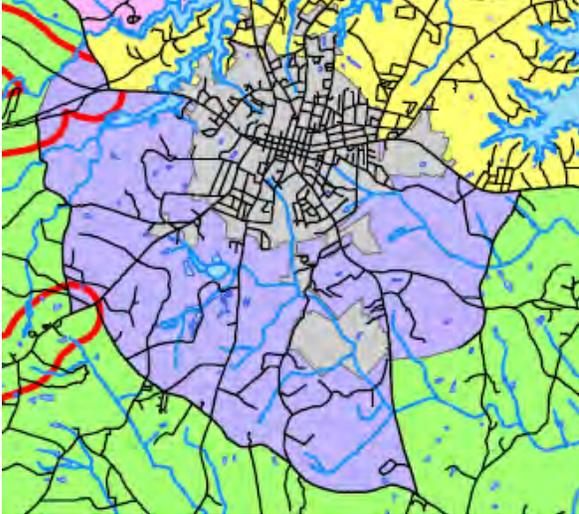


Small-scale commercial activities are permissible, preferably at major intersections. Development should be relatively small (under 2 stories) and feature small parking areas. Larger operations such as strip centers should be avoided and redirected closer to Lavonia, Hartwell or Royston. Signage should be reserved to minimal sizes and feature minimal lighting.



Subdivisions and residential development are also permitted, but should be designed for compatibility with predominantly rural surroundings. Larger buffer areas along the roadway, preserved open spaces and subdued entrances are encouraged. Ideally volumes of development should be hidden from view.

Overall development patterns should be sparse enough to forgo the need for lighted intersections and feature as few curb cuts as possible so as to maintain flow of traffic.

<i>Character Area</i>	<b>Greater Hartwell</b>
<p><b><u>Location:</u></b> The area immediately surrounding Hartwell and reaching south and west in accordance with utility service areas.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Measures:</u></b> Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development</p> <p>Attempt to concentrate some growth</p> <p>Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers</p> <p>Monitor development for application of environmental standards</p> <p>Encourage open-space preservation</p>	

**Description:**

Hartwell is recognized as the civic and commercial center for most of Hart County and the seasonal visitors to Lake Hartwell. The area is shaped by the small-town urban core featuring local and regional commercial uses, civic destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. The eventual extent of this higher density of land use will be shaped by controlled outward expansion of water and sewer service. The goal of this area is to enhance the form and character of Hartwell so as to alleviate development pressure throughout rural Hart County, and to create a transitional space between the two areas (rural and urban).



Development should be fostered that compliments what exists in Hartwell, maintaining the town scale and design. Commercial centers, offices and civic functions can be developed that connect with comparable uses within the city fabric. Industrial uses may also be possible where utilities and infrastructure permit. Residential uses should mimic the traditional neighborhood form and scale of existing housing in and around Hartwell. This would include features such as block and lot size, capacity for sidewalks and pedestrian accessibility, and a predominant house size below 3 stories.

Further away from the city the form can begin to accept more rural/suburban traits. A transition from urban to rural is encouraged through a decrease in the scale of commercial activity (keeping that as close to the city as possible), taking on larger lots indicative of the absence of sewer, and seeing signs of agriculture. Development should be restricted to mostly residential and rural activities by the time one progresses from the city limits to the edge of this character area.



<i>Character Area</i>	<b>Reed Creek</b>
<p><b><u>Location:</u></b> Most of the large peninsula to the north of Hartwell.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Measures:</u></b> Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development</p> <p>Monitor development for application of environmental standards</p> <p>Quality, controlled public access to ensure all residents feel benefits from, and responsibility for, the lake</p> <p>Encourage open-space preservation</p>	

**Description:**

A mix of seasonal and year-round residential, with some lake-related commercial, conservation and recreation use. This area should be maintained in accordance with management plans for the reservoir and environmentally sensitive areas. The volume of permanent structures and houses should be such that they do not potentially lead to overcrowding of the lake. The goal of this area is to strengthen the community’s relationship with Lake Hartwell, both as an amenity for recreation and scenic beauty and as a resource to be protected.

The variety of uses along the lake-front will range from residential, public access and parks, communal access for private subdivisions and appropriate types of commercial activity. Heavy industrial uses, activities that include on-site storage of potential contaminants and large-scale commercial activities that are not oriented to the lake should be restricted.



Of more concern to lake-front properties will be the overall scale of activity. Many roads around the lake remain unpaved and sewer service remains at a premium. So as to minimize the impact of development, human activity, flood hazards and deterioration of the shoreline and stream banks, the overall scale of development should maintain a minimum of 1-unit-per-acre where possible. Structures should be relatively small – under three full stories – and the landscape should retain as much of the natural foliage and tree canopy as possible.



As development moves immediately inland from the shoreline, structural types and land uses should be compatible with the lake-shore activities. Residential development may take on more neighborhood and subdivision forms given the proximity to Hartwell. Commercial uses and public activity centers should locate along major, paved roads and preferably at/close to major intersections. Properties adjacent to residential uses should be of comparable scale and restricted from nuisance activities.

Further inland portions of this area also include more agricultural activity. This combined with the distance removed from Hartwell and more populated areas lets this part of the lake corridor take on a more rural feel. Even where the scale and types of lake-frontage property may appear the same as lots on the Hartwell side, the rest of the area features fewer commercial and public uses and takes on a more isolated feel. Apart from public parks and select commercial uses there should be no other uses designed to attract visitors to this area.

Subdivision development is encroaching into this area as water does become available and more jobs can be found along the Interstate corridor. This is acceptable provided this housing involves quality units likely to attract long-term reinvestment and that environmental standards are observed. Subdivisions are encouraged to incorporate open space into their design and to screen housing from public viewpoints so as to preserve image of rural countryside.



**Character Area**

**Lake Hartwell**

**Location:**

The area to the immediate north and east of Hartwell, adjacent to the lake and coming inland to the nearest major intersections.

**Implementation Measures:**

- ✓ Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development
- ✓ Monitor development for application of environmental standards
- ✓ Quality, controlled public access to ensure all residents feel benefits from, and responsibility for, the lake



**Description:**

A mix of seasonal and year-round residential, with some lake-related commercial, conservation and recreation use. This area should be maintained in accordance with management plans for the reservoir and environmentally sensitive areas. The volume of permanent structures and houses should be such that they do not potentially lead to overcrowding of the lake. Like with Reed Creek the goal of this area is to strengthen the community’s relationship with Lake Hartwell, both as an amenity for recreation and scenic beauty and as a resource to be protected. Unlike Reed Creek, however, this area will feature more of the commercial and service amenities for residents and visitors so as to pull tourists deeper into Hart County and to maximize utility service areas.



The variety of uses along the lake-front will range from residential, public access and parks, communal access for private subdivisions and appropriate types of commercial activity. Heavy industrial uses, activities that include on-site storage of potential contaminants and large-scale commercial activities that are not oriented to the lake should be restricted, and development should feature minimal impervious surfaces and adequate stormwater management designs.

Of more concern to lake-front properties will be the overall scale of activity. Many roads around the lake remain unpaved and sewer service remains at a premium. So as to minimize the impact of development, human activity, flood hazards and deterioration of the shoreline and stream banks, the overall scale of development should maintain a minimum of 1-unit-per-acre where possible. Structures should be relatively small – under three full stories – and the landscape should retain as much of the natural foliage and tree canopy as possible.

As development moves immediately inland from the shoreline, structural types and land uses should be compatible with the lake-shore activities. Residential development may take on more neighborhood and subdivision forms given the proximity to Hartwell. Commercial uses and public activity centers should locate along major, paved roads and preferably at/close to major intersections. Properties adjacent to residential uses should be of comparable scale and restricted from nuisance activities.



Though some agricultural activities remain in this area very little (none?) of it is of commercial scale. Given the proximity to the lake and the desire to foster more higher end residential use in the area, new agricultural activity should be redirected to rural Hart County.



<i>Character Area</i>	<b>Rural Hart County</b>
<p><b><u>Location:</u></b> Summation of unincorporated County between the other character areas.</p> <p><b><u>Implementation Measures:</u></b> Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development</p> <p>Monitor development for application of environmental standards</p> <p>Quality, controlled public access to ensure all residents feel benefits from, and responsibility for, the lake</p>	

**Description:**

The remaining land, and most of Hart County, remains largely rural, with a mix of agricultural activity, large lot residential, conservation lands, churches and some small stores. The overall density of development is very sparse and visibly there is almost an even ratio of active farms and large residential lots. Lots of the prevailing landscape remains in natural settings or cultivated for agricultural uses. As such, the goal of this area is to preserve these characteristics and promote the land uses that evoke truly rural lifestyles.

Agricultural activity is the predominant use found within this area, and should be preserved as such. Though economically agriculture has not retained its levels of prosperity, it is still vital to the local economy and remains the dominant lifestyle of existing residents. This includes larger commercial

farming operations and smaller, recreational farmers mostly aspiring for open spaces and country living. Additional measures may be needed by the County to help sustain select agricultural sectors, if desired, but as a development form the most efficient and effective way of retaining the county’s rural character and efficient distribution of utilities is to maintain the level of agricultural activity. Redirecting development pressures away from these areas will assist in the goal.



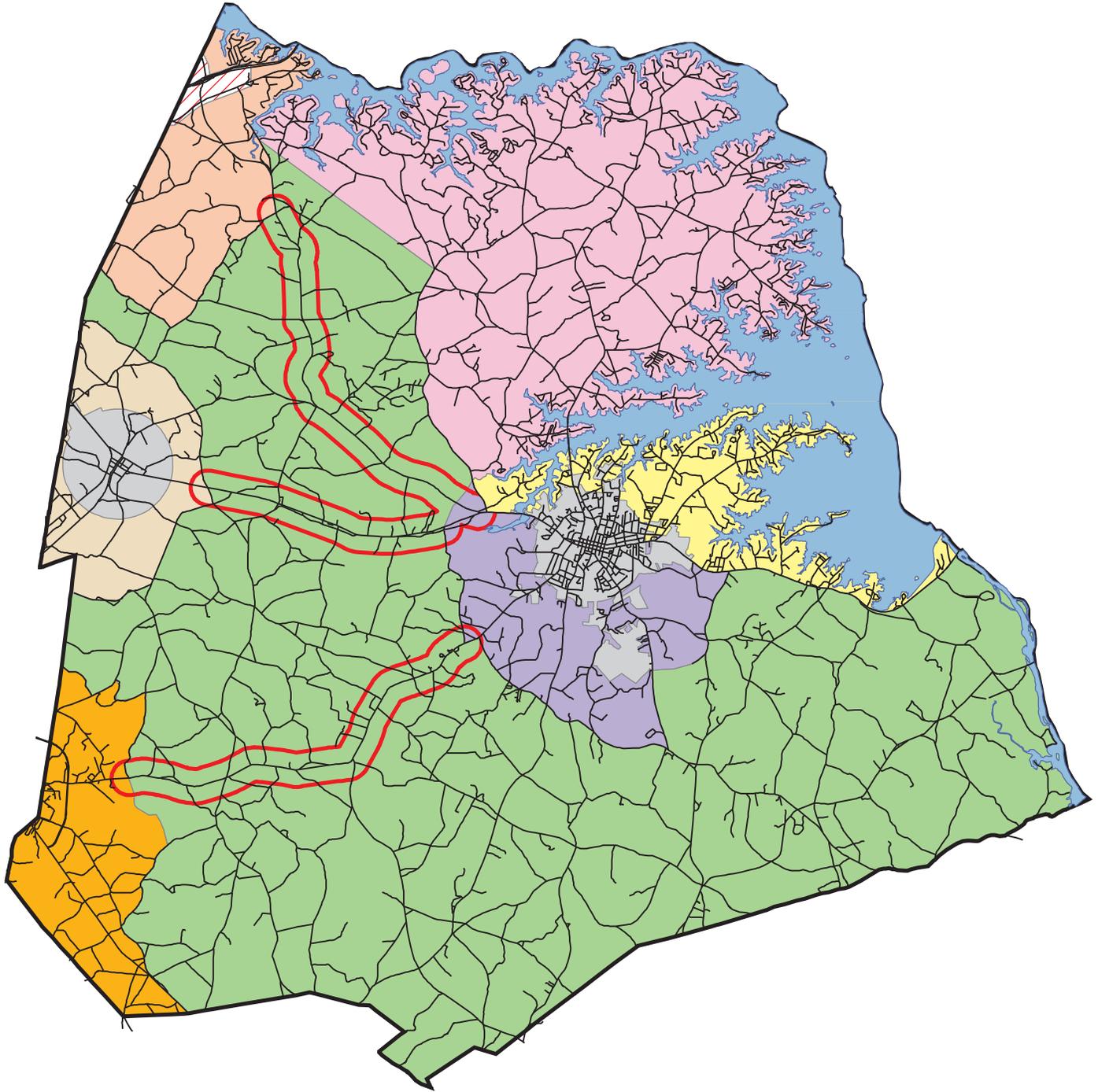
Some residential development is permissible in this area, particularly individual large lot housing and subdivisions employing conservation design. Subdivisions should be designed for compatibility with predominantly rural surroundings. Larger buffer areas along the roadway, preserved open spaces and subdued entrances are encouraged. Ideally volumes of residential activity should be hidden from view.



Small-scale commercial activities are permissible, preferably at major intersections. Development should be relatively small (under 2 stories) and feature small parking areas. Larger operations such as strip centers should be avoided and redirected closer to Lavonia, Hartwell or Royston. Signage should be reserved to minimal sizes and feature minimal lighting.



# Hart County Character Areas



Legend		
	GDOT 2005 Roads	<b>Character Areas</b>
	Railroad	Arterial Corridors
	Rivers & Streams	Greater Lavonia
	Lakes & Ponds	Greater Bowersville
	County Boundary	Reed Creek
	Municipalities	Greater Hartwell
		Lake Hartwell Corridor
		Greater Royston
		Rural Hart County
		I-85 Corridor

## Quality Community Objectives Assessment

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. This assessment should be used a tool by a community to compare how it is progressing toward the sustainable and livable objectives, but no community will be judged on its progress. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles. A majority of positive responses for a particular objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. Negative responses may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives. Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective it may consider this assessment as a means of monitoring progress towards achievement.

### 1. Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

*The County and its partners recognize the importance of a strategic approach to sustaining their strong economy and maintaining the area's vital character. Hart County supports the local Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Development Authority as part of ongoing efforts to support economic development for the community. The County also maintains contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the State for pursuit of assistance and outside funding opportunities in support of economic development opportunities.*

### 2. Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

*The County maintains contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D, the Natural resources Conservation Service, and the Department of Natural Resources to work for the protection and promotion of cultural resources in the area. The governments also employ policies and practices related to State Vital Areas, National Wetland Inventory (FIRM) data and other applicable sources to monitor and enforce the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.*

### 3. Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

*Through this planning process, ongoing efforts to update area mapping, and regular communication with the Cities, Hart County works to ensure local development policies support sustainable development that enables economic growth while managing local resources, utilities and infrastructure.*

#### **4. Local Preparedness**

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

*Through this planning process and ongoing coordination among emergency responders, and through regular communication with other stakeholders (such as the local hospital), the County works to ensure the community is properly poised to prevent, manage and respond to growth pressures and natural and man-made hazards.*

#### **5. Sense of Place**

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

*Hart County will regularly monitor development trends and local land use policies to ensure all is being done to maintain the historic sense of community that defines their community.*

#### **6. Regional Cooperation**

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

*Hart County actively coordinates with each City in maintaining their local Service Delivery Strategy and SPLOST program, and participates with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and other appropriate regional organizations. The County also maintains regular contact with various State Departments to ensure knowledge of, and access to, their programs and resources. The County is considered an active partner in regional activities and currently does not feel threatened or adversely impacted by any regional partners.*

#### **7. Housing Options**

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

*Through this and ongoing planning processes Hart County is actively working to monitor local housing needs and work to enforce policies that promote quality, affordable housing options as needed.*

## **8. Transportation Options**

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

*Hart County manages an active rural transportation planning program for the elderly, disabled, and general patrons. This relies on supplement funding from Federal 5311 and 5310 transit funding and is done in conjunction with the local senior center and other partner facilities and programs. Current plans indicate no need for major changes to this service for 10+ years.*

*The County also participate in the public involvement process for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as able and draws down annual Local Maintenance Improvement Grants (LMIG) to support roadway improvements. As the region grows additional transportation planning would be considered a benefit, if not a necessity.*

## **9. Educational Opportunities**

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

*Hart County works with the Hart County School Board to ensure access for quality primary and secondary educational facilities and programs for area residents. Both the County and the Cities also work with other partners to ensure access to viable post-secondary resources such as North Georgia Technical College and other area educational institutions.*

## **10. Community Health**

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

*Hart County works with Saint Mary's Hospital in Lavonia and the Hart County Department of Public Health to ensure access to quality health care facilities and programs for area residents. The County also works with these and other partners to monitor residents' needs and requests in providing access to these services as the area grows.*

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# IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

# 4

## *Achieving the Vision and our goals for the community*

The Implementation Program is the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision and for addressing each of the Community Needs and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures, both short and long-term, that must be undertaken by the community in order realize the community's goals. Identifying these items helps the community organize their actions

### **Policies, Long-Term Activities and Ongoing Programs**

One type of action a community can establish to achieve its vision is the establishment of policy. These are those ongoing principles and practices that the community will observe in order to realize specific objectives. Some policies may compliment single action-items while others may provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Vision or addressing Community Issues and Opportunities.

In addition to establishing policy, communities may also establish long-term or ongoing programs and activities that support identified objectives. These measures may compliment policies or may simply be action items that must be employed more than once. These are listed here so as to distinguish their need and conditions apart from the single-action items and to identify any required special terms or context.

In addition, several items have been identified as policies, general objections and directions for the communities in regards to different areas of concern. These policies will be used as guidelines for general, long-term practices for the County.

- Support the local Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Building Authority, local educational institutions and other partners in the economic development of the county
- Support the agricultural industry through events, development policies, and through support for economic development and education policies that advance agriculture in the community
- Complete Fire Stations 10
- Continue to improve the quality of local infrastructure and facilities
- Protect the quality of our local natural resources, especially Lake Hartwell and its tributaries
- Continue to work with the municipalities in support of cooperative programs such as the Service Delivery Strategy, Local Option Sales Tax, and other measures that impact the community
- Strive to be a cost efficient government and keep the cost of living in Hart Co. highly affordable
- Implement long range plans for roads, parks and recreation, and ISO fire improvements
- Assist IBA with targeted recruitment
- County manager to meet with cities quarterly and GMRC and adjoining counties annually
- Support efforts to upgrade Hart State Park
- Monitor Army Corps of Engineers management of high water levels
- Maintain protective standards for State Vital Areas
- Develop/maintain a report on economic development efforts; Annually present to Commission
- Host annual forum bringing business leaders with local school officials
- Attempt to concentrate growth (around the cities and I-85 corridor)
- Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers (in and around Royston, Hartwell and Lavonia)

- Encourage open-space preservation
- Encouraging infill where possible
- Monitor development for application of environmental standards
- Quality, controlled public lake access to ensure all residents feel benefits and responsibility
- Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development (is lake side character areas)
- Continue to support Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Council and maintain compliance with State water plan

## Report of Accomplishments

This is the review of the STWP from the previous five years. As a new STWP is produced every five years, the items within the previous STWP must be identified for their status as either complete, in progress, postponed or cancelled. Those items that have been postponed or are in progress must be shown in the next STWP where appropriate, while those items that have been postponed or cancelled must also include a reason for their status.

Action	Status	Comment
Annual report of population and demographic data to County Commission	Cancelled	Data available through internet
Inventory of funding sources for water/ sewer improvements	Complete	
Annual economic report	Complete	
Finalize Long Range Recreation Plan	Complete	
Update Long Range Fire Plan	Complete	Part of Hazard Mitigation Plan
Update Long Range Roads Plan	Complete	
Reed Creek Fire Station Construction	Complete	
Implement Enhance ISO Fire Improvements	Complete	Now ongoing policy
Develop build-out scenario for the County	Cancelled	Deferred as a priority
Fire Station 9 Construction	Postponed	Lack of funding- Moved to long-range goals
Knox Bridge Crossing Road Widening	Complete	
Annual report of population and demographic data to County Commission	Cancelled	Data available through internet
Implement next phase of water system expansion	Complete	Now ongoing policy
Implement next phase of sewer expansion	Complete	Now ongoing policy
Annual economic report	Complete	
Assist IBA with targeted recruitment	Complete	Now ongoing policy
Implement Long Range Recreation Plan	Complete	Now ongoing policy
Fire Station 10 Construction	Postponed	Lack of funding- Moved to long-range goals
Implement Enhance ISO Fire Improvements	Complete	Now ongoing policy
Update Long Range Roads Plan	Complete	
Annual report of population and demographic data to County Commission	Cancelled	Data available through internet
Complete Comprehensive Plan update	In Progress	2017-2018

## Short-Term Work Program

The third forward-thinking element of the Implementation Program is the Short-Term Work Program (STWP). This identifies specific implementation actions the local government or other entities intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This can include any ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, financing arrangements, or other programs or initiatives to be put in place to realize the plan goals.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
2017	Begin Comprehensive Plan update	\$15,000	DCA	GMRC; County
2017	Complete Comprehensive Plan update	\$3,000	DCA	GMRC; County
2017	Encourage staff from each local government to hold an annual development forum	NA	NA	County
2017	Invite ACCG (or other entity) to review and offer guidance on best practices for public relations	\$1,000	County	County
2018	Develop report concerning EPD listed waters in the county	\$5,000	DNR	County, GMRC, NRCS
2018	Solicit report assessing performance of conservation easements	\$1,000	TBD	County
2018	Establish policies for, and encourage, conservation design subdivisions	\$1,000	County	County, GMRC
2018	Update Long Range Roads Plan	NA	NA	County
2018	Develop financial performance monitoring for each department	TBD	TBD	County
2018	Review development policies and ordinances for ways to direct growth toward cities/urban areas; Amend as needed	\$1,000	County	County, GMRC
2018	Conduct assessment to confirm costs of jail expansion vs. new construction	\$2,000	County	Sheriff
2018	Report identifying options for funding jail improvements	NA	NA	Sheriff
2018	Implement Phases 1-5 of line extensions	\$1,000,000	CDBG/SPLOST/WSA	County; Water & Sewer Authority
2019	Solicit report profiling sub-market housing conditions in the county	\$5,000	County, ARC	County

<b>Year</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>2019</b>	Solicit study assessing options for new recreation or tourist attractions for the area	TBD	TBD	County, Chamber
<b>2019</b>	Solicit ideas to bring lake theme into county	TBD	TBD	County, Chamber
<b>2019</b>	Report identifying future water system expansions	TBD	TBD	County; Water & Sewer Authority
<b>2020</b>	Implement Phases 1-5 of line extensions	\$1,000,000	CDBG/SPLOST/WSA	County; Water & Sewer Authority
<b>2020</b>	Solicit report identifying targeted standards for new housing	\$5,000	County, ARC	County
<b>2020</b>	With the Cities, develop an industrial build-out scenario for the County	\$10,000	DED, IBA	IBA, County, Cities
<b>2020</b>	Expand or build new jail	TBD	TBD	County
<b>2021</b>	Update Comprehensive plan	\$20,000	DCA	County, City, GMRC

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# **APPENDICES**

**5**

**Population and Demographic Profile**

**Economic Climate/ Regional Economy**

**Area Labor Profiles for Hart County**

**Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results**

**Records of Public Meetings**

## Population and Demographic Profile

### 2010 Census Profile – Hart County, GA

<b>Total Population</b>		<b>25,213</b>	
<15 yrs		4,654	18.46%
15-64 yrs		16,032	63.59%
65+ yrs		4,527	17.96%
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>			
White		19,515	77.40%
Black or African American		4,710	18.68%
American Indian and Alaska Native		29	0.12%
Asian		218	0.86%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander		0	0.00%
Some Other Race		422	1.67%
Two or More Races		319	1.27%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)		786	3.12%
Not Hispanic or Latino		24,427	96.88%
<b>Households</b>			
In Households		24,550	97.37%
In Group Quarters		663	2.63%
Average Household size		2.43	
Average Family Size		2.94	
<b>Housing Occupancy</b>			
<i>Total housing units</i>		13,007	
Occupied housing units		10,121	77.81%
Owner-occupied housing units		7,613	75.22%
Renter-occupied housing units		2,508	24.78%
Vacant housing units		2,886	22.19%
Homeowner vacancy rate		3.70%	
Rental vacancy rate		10.80%	

**Economic Climate/ Regional Economy**

*as taken from the*

**Georgia Mountains Regional Commission  
Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)  
and Regional Agenda 2015**

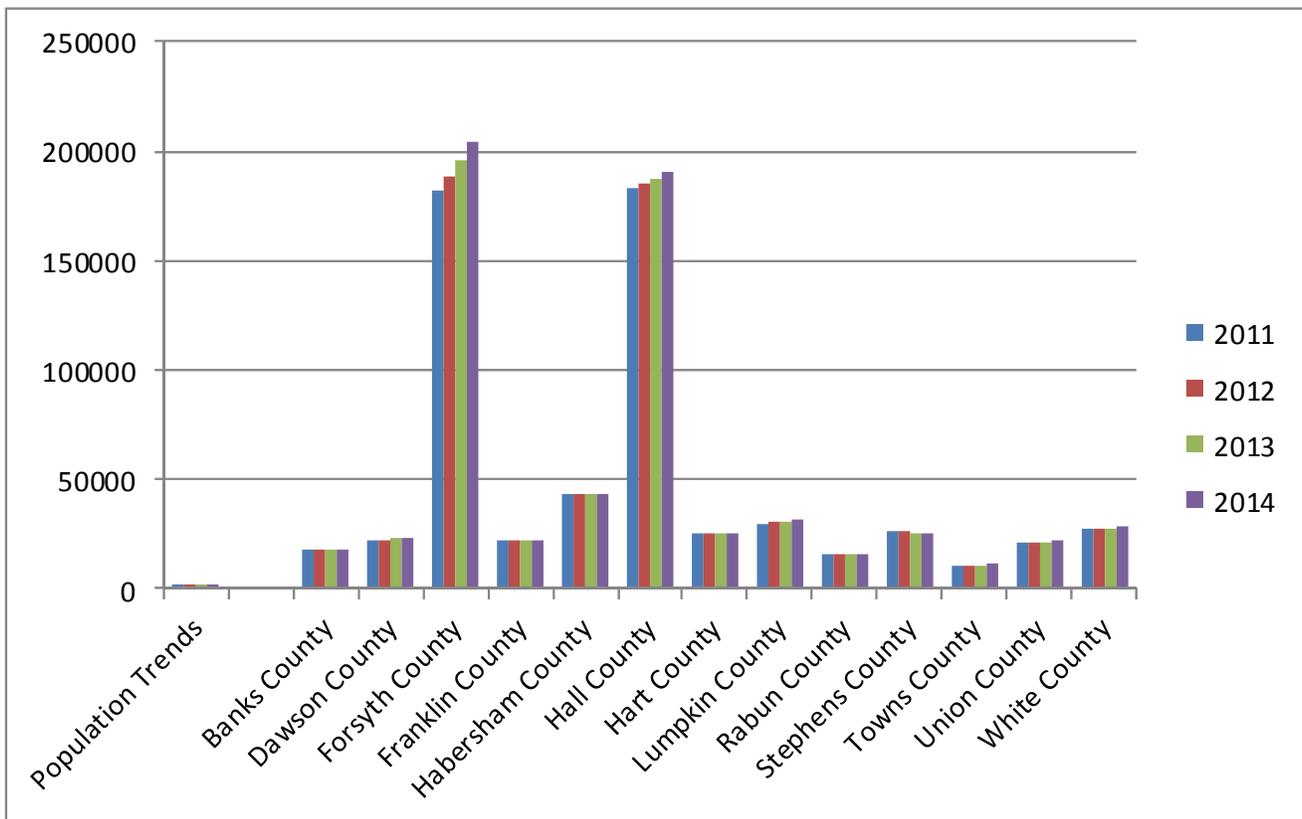
# Economic Climate/Regional Economy

Efforts to predict the future economic profile of the Georgia Mountains Region can be assisted by an understanding of the historic population growth patterns of the region and the existing population profile. Through the understanding of current trends, decision makers can better prepare for regional changes in population age, location, and household makeup. Improving the economic health of the region is a common goal and requires policy makers to understand how changes in the region's population will affect the opportunities for economic growth.

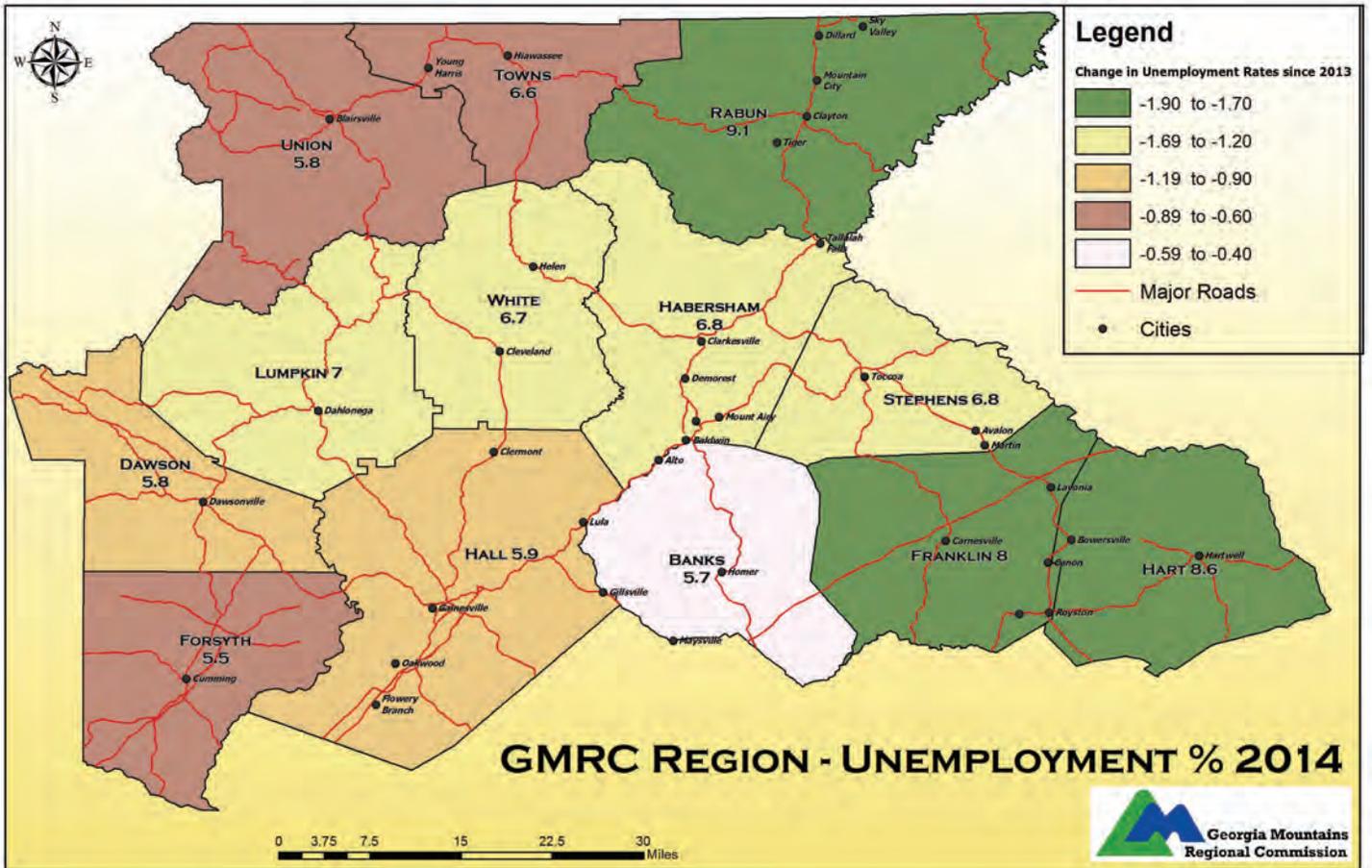
The Georgia Mountains Region has grown tremendously over the past several decades and is currently estimated at 661,659. In fact, the Georgia Mountains Region population growth exceeded both the state and national rates, and it appears that this trend will continue in future years. Much of the growth taking place within the region is occurring in areas where transportation corridors are present. Other migration factors can be attributed to individual economic factors, retirement population, and urban sprawl and spillover from Metropolitan Atlanta.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, it is projected that the region's population in 2025 will reach 1,004,395 persons, reflecting a 62.6 % increase. Therefore, the goals identified in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy—Regional Plan are more important than ever in maintaining the balance between growth and the rural character of the region.

## Georgia Mountains Region—Population



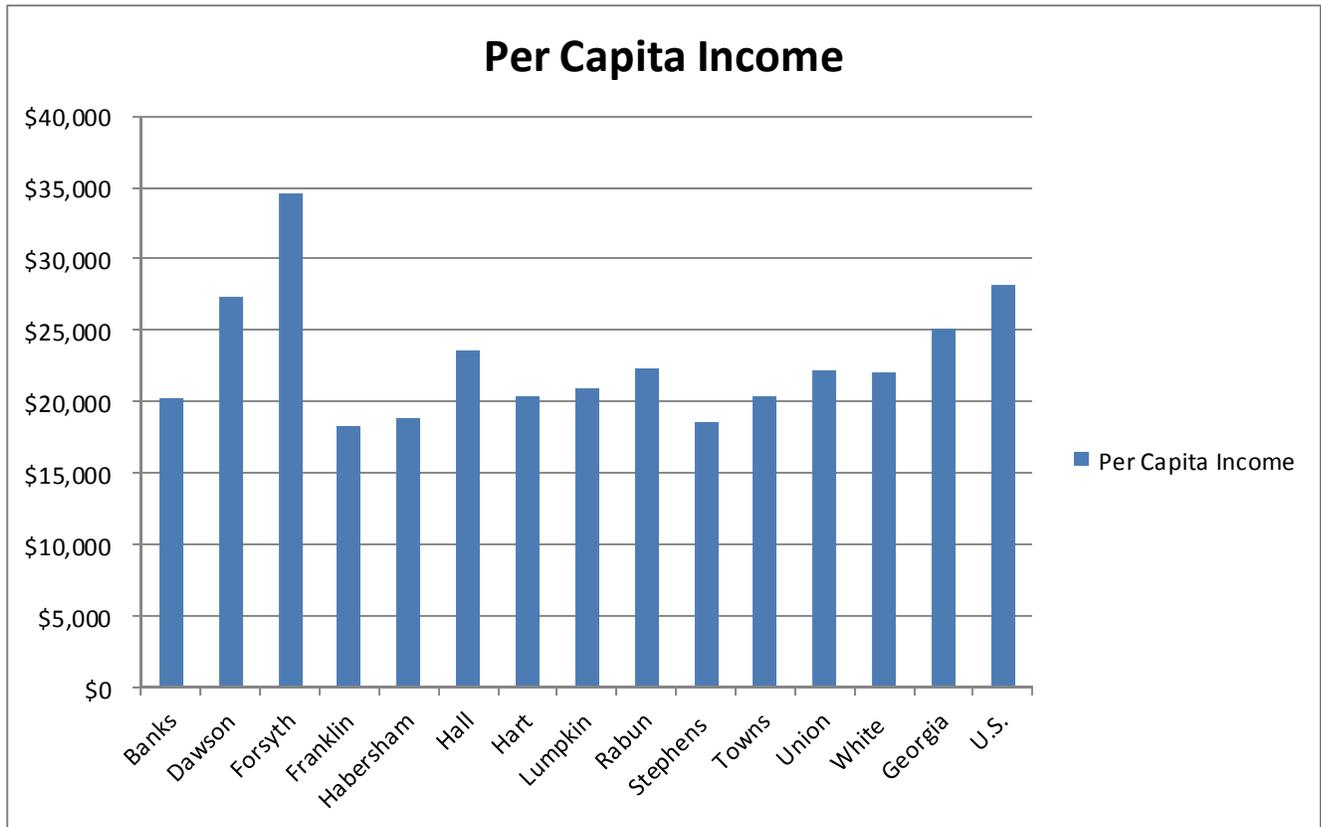
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Unemployment in the Georgia Mountains Region has seen a tremendous decline over the past year with an average current unemployment rate for the region of 6.1% (June 2015) and is even with state at 6.3%, but higher than the U.S. rate of 5.3%. However, it is the lowest rate for regions in the state.

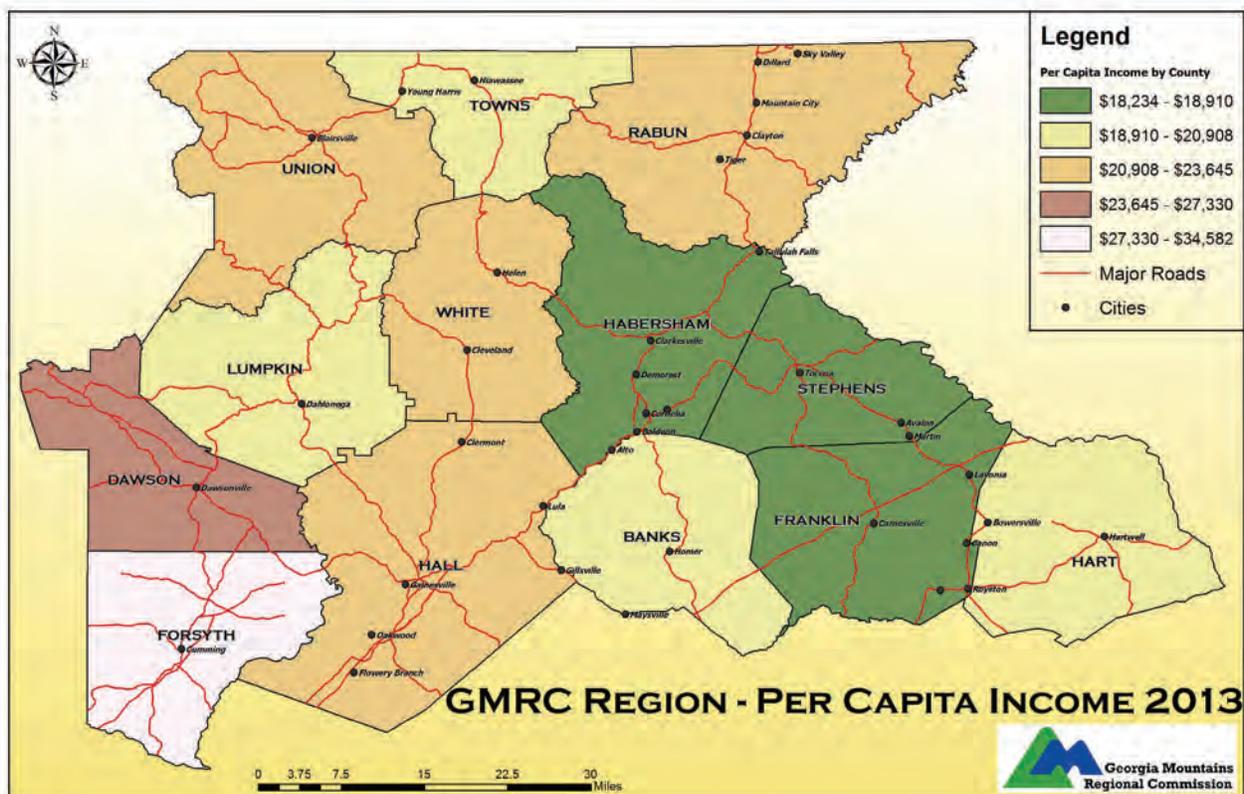
COUNTY	2013 UNEMPLOYMENT	2014 UNEMPLOYMENT	CHANGE
Banks	602	538	-10.60%
Dawson	748	661	-11.60%
Forsyth	5,777	5,171	-10.50%
Franklin	922	764	-17.10%
Habersham	1,552	1,318	-15.1%
Hall	6,055	5,338	-11.80%
Hart	984	801	-18.60%
Lumpkin	1,115	997	-10.60%
Rabun	680	548	-19.40%
Stephens	1,033	856	-17.10%
Towns	410	363	-11.50%
Union	708	613	-13.4%
White	1,017	874	-14.1%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Area Labor Profile

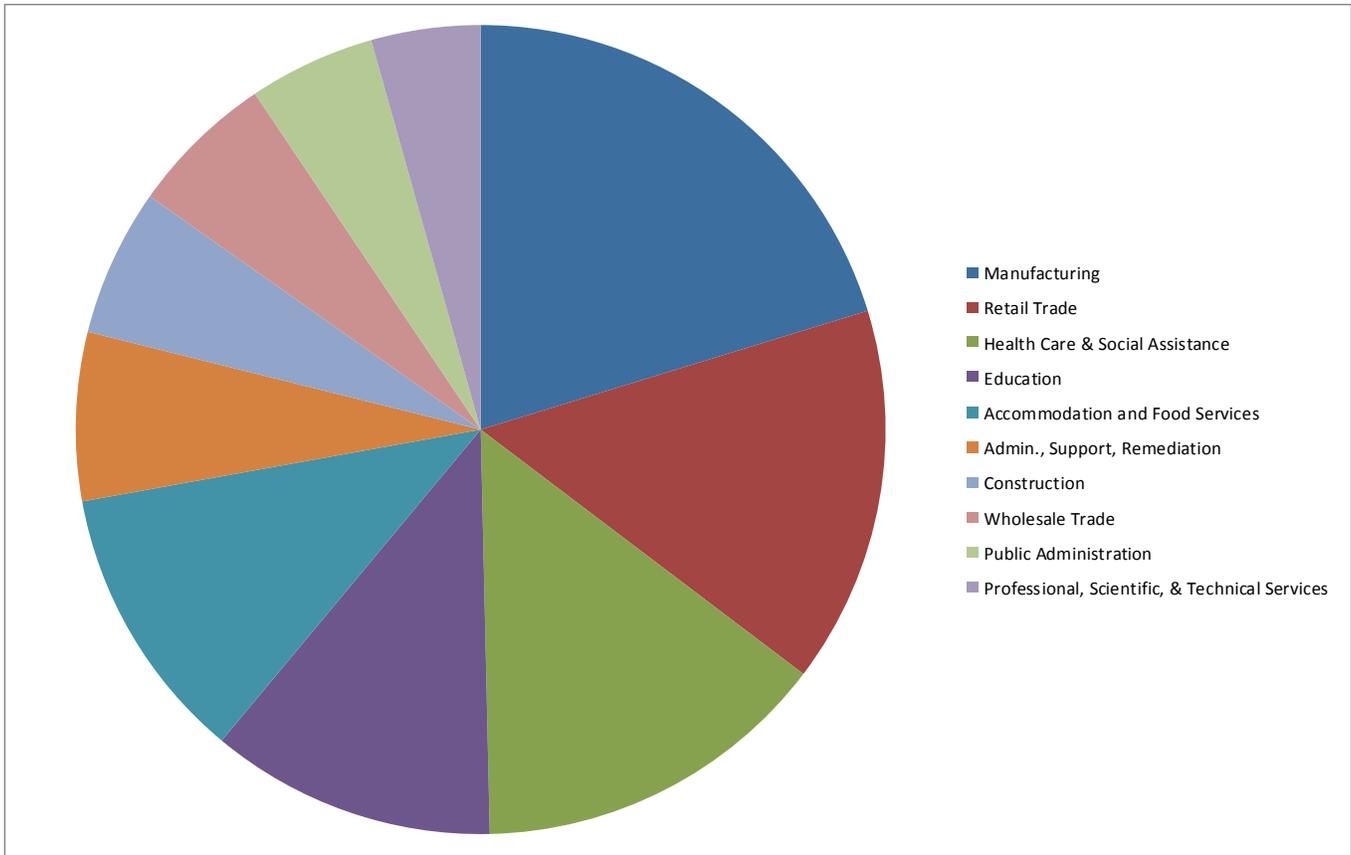


*Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Georgia Department of Labor*

Even with low unemployment rates in the Georgia Mountains region, per capita income throughout the region is lower than state and national averages. The average per capita income in the Georgia Mountains Region is \$22,282 compared to the state average of \$25,182 and the U.S. average of \$28,155.



# Industry Employment Distribution



Source: Georgia Department of Labor

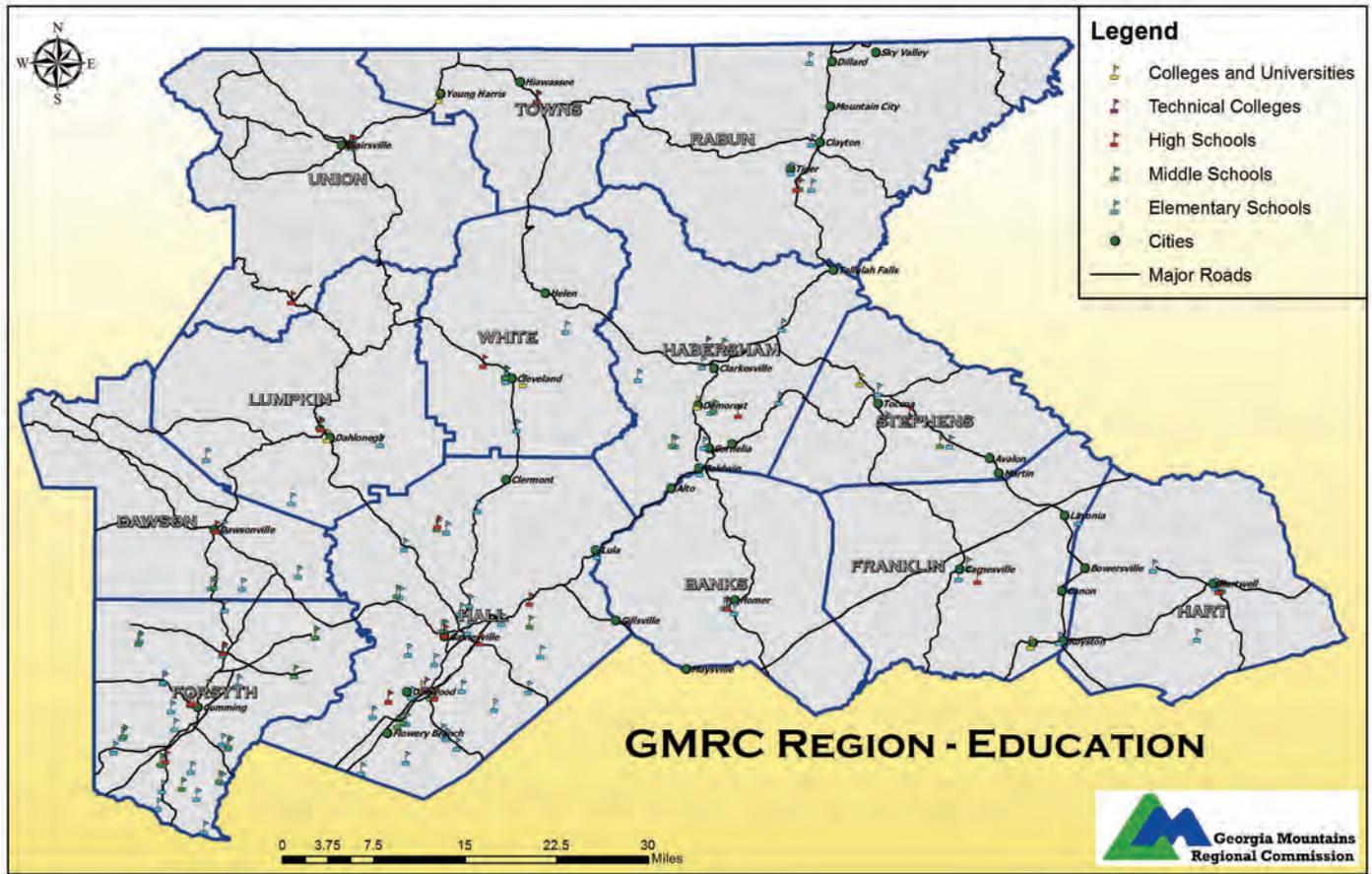
According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the ten largest employers in the region in 2014 were Fieldale Further Processing, Forsyth County School System, Hall County, Hall County School System, Ingles Markets, Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Northside Hospital, Publix Supermarkets, University of North Georgia, and Walmart.

## Education of the Labor Force

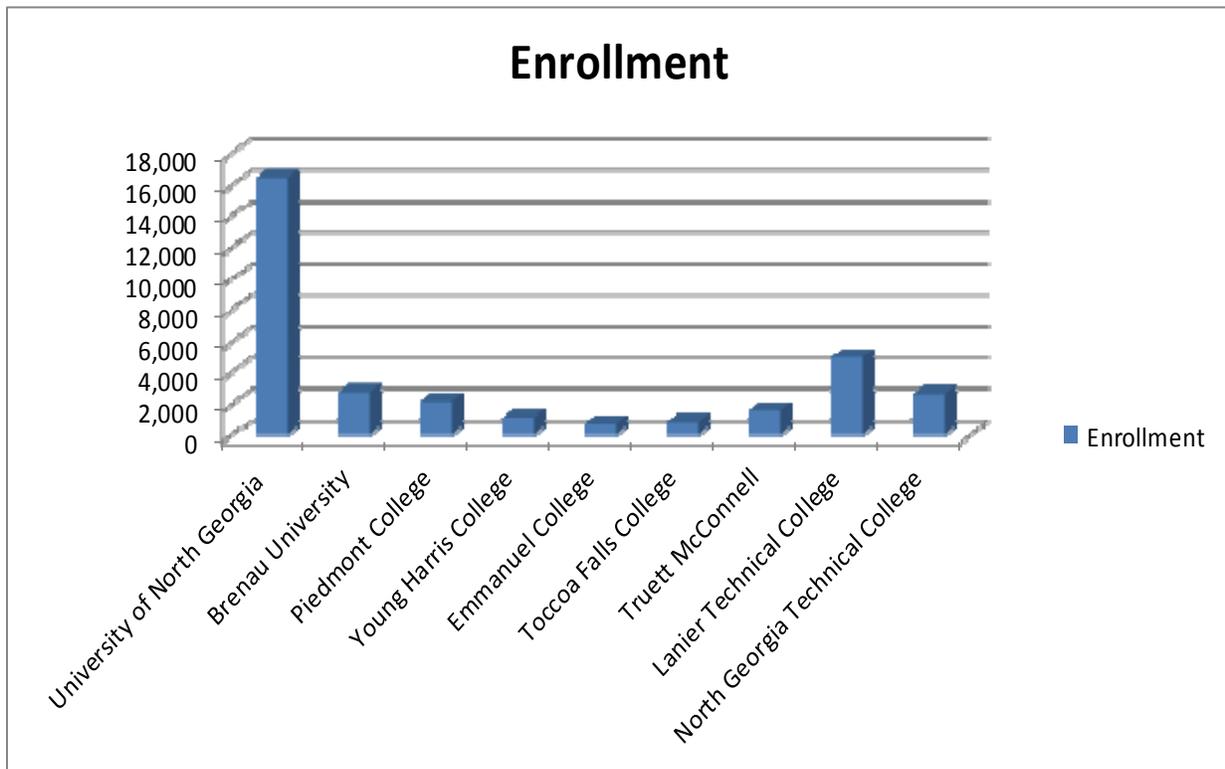
### PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

	<u>18-24</u>	<u>25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
<b>Elementary</b>	4.9%	9.2%	6.4%	5.3%	13.6%
<b>Some High School</b>	19.5%	11.9%	9.2%	9.4%	14.8%
<b>High School Grad/GED</b>	34.9%	29.7%	27.3%	31.7%	31.2%
<b>Some College</b>	33.7%	20.4%	18.4%	20.2%	16.6%
<b>College 2 Year</b>	3.0%	6.3%	7.2%	7.1%	3.6%
<b>College 4 Year</b>	3.7%	16.0%	22.3%	17.0%	12.2%
<b>Post Graduate Studies</b>	.4%	6.5%	9.2%	9.3%	8.0%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor



The economic development programs provided through the colleges and technical colleges provide customized training and other services for business and industry to help existing companies remain in the area and succeed and to stimulate new business start-ups. Quick Start training and services are provided to attract new companies to the area, to assist companies to expand, and to help existing companies to implement new technologies.



Tourism plays an important role throughout the Georgia Mountains Region driving significant business growth and revenue for companies. With moderate climates, advanced transportation infrastructure, long travel seasons, and diversity of attractions, tourism related businesses in the Georgia Mountains Region are able to leverage attractions for both in and out-of-state visitors to increase sales and revenues. According to the Georgia Department of Economic Development, tourism is a \$51.2 billion industry in the State of Georgia. The Georgia Mountains Region is third in annual travel volume by domestic visitors behind only Metro Atlanta and the Georgia Coast. Visitors to the region are attracted by the abundance of outdoor activities, numerous state parks and historic sites, museums, wineries, and mountain arts and crafts just to name a few.

The rowing and kayaking site of the 1996 Olympics is located at 3105 Clarks Bridge Road on Lake Lanier in Gainesville, Hall County, Georgia. It is the only 1996 Olympic Venue still used for its original purpose. The venue is host to year-round competitions, training and special events. The Lake Lanier Olympic Venue has shown an economic impact of \$6.2 million for fiscal year 2015 and a \$7.8 million overall impact for the calendar year 2014-2015.

At an economic impact of \$5.1 billion in 2014, the film industry in Georgia continues to flourish, especially in the Georgia Mountains. All 13 counties within the Georgia Mountains Region are certified as "Camera Ready". The mountains, lakes, and small towns make the Georgia Mountains an ideal location and as a result, several movies and television shows have been filmed in the Georgia Mountains Region in the last year.

## **2013 IMPACT OF DOMESTIC TOURISM EXPENDITURES NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS**

Source: Excerpted from Study Prepared for GDEd by the U.S. Travel Association, Washington, DC

<b>GMRC Counties</b>	<b>Expenditures (\$ Millions)</b>	<b>Payroll (\$ Millions)</b>	<b>Employment (Thousands)</b>	<b>State Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)</b>	<b>Local Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)</b>
<a href="#"><u>Banks</u></a>	14.37	3.22	.15	.57	.43
<b>Dawson</b>	42.32	9.56	.43	1.74	1.21
<b>Forsyth</b>	145.74	35.75	1.60	5.90	4.15
<b>Franklin</b>	35.40	5.11	.28	1.14	1.02
<b>Habersham</b>	45.86	8.81	.45	1.72	1.25
<b>Hall</b>	264.47	54.39	2.51	9.62	7.91
<b>Hart</b>	21.95	5.15	.24	.88	.64
<b>Lumpkin</b>	36.56	6.78	.31	1.34	1.04
<b>Rabun</b>	48.69	11.31	.50	1.92	1.41
<b>Stephens</b>	29.94	5.34	.29	1.05	.84
<b>Towns</b>	42.01	9.21	.41	1.72	1.21
<b>Union</b>	22.94	4.41	.23	.84	.65
<b>White</b>	56.87	12.00	.54	2.10	1.57
<b>Georgia</b>	22,354.00	7,002.66	221.83	988.98	629.75

*Prepared by Cheryl Smith, Regional Tourism Representative, Georgia Department of  
Economic Development*

## Economic Development, Business and Industry

**GOAL:** *To stimulate and strengthen the regional economy through a collaborative effort embracing global trends resulting in job creation and retention, capital investments, and thereby enhancing the tax base and quality of life in the Georgia Mountains Region.*

### **ASSESSMENT**

#### **Tourism**

**Goal:** *Promote awareness of the Georgia Mountains Region as a tourism destination by fostering viable and sustainable initiatives.*

**Strategy ED1:** *Develop a master database of tourism assets in the Georgia Mountains Region.*

**Strategy ED2:** *Develop promotional and educational materials for the Georgia Mountains Region*

**Strategy ED3:** *Foster regional partnerships to create and grow tourism product(s)*

**Strategy ED4:** *Improve infrastructure that supports tourism development.*

Tourism plays an important role throughout the Georgia Mountains Region driving significant business growth and revenue for companies. With moderate climates, advanced transportation infrastructure, long travel seasons, and diversity of attractions, tourism related businesses in the Georgia Mountains Region are able to leverage attractions for both in and out-of-state visitors to increase sales and revenues. According to the Georgia Department of Economic Development, tourism is a \$51.2 billion industry in the State of Georgia. The Georgia Mountains Region is third in annual travel volume by domestic visitors behind only Metro Atlanta and the Georgia Coast. Visitors to the region are attracted by the abundance of outdoor activities, numerous state parks and historic sites, museums, wineries, and mountain arts and crafts just to name a few.

- Atlanta Botanical Garden Gainesville opened in Hall County in the spring of 2015. A 186-acre preserve, this \$20 million development includes gardens, children's garden, and a visitor center.
- The Lake Lanier Olympic Venue continues to be a regional tourism attraction drawing hundreds of thousands visitors annually. The venue is host to year-round competitions, training and special events. The Lake Lanier Olympic Venue has shown an economic impact of \$6.2 million for fiscal year 2015 and a \$7.8 million overall impact for the calendar year 2014-2015. It will host the 2016 Pan-Am Championships for Canoe/Kayak and the 2016 Continental Olympic Qualifier for the Americas.



## **Entrepreneurship**

**Goal:** *To focus on creating new small, high-growth companies in the Georgia Mountains Region.*

**Strategy ED5:** *Provide the Georgia Mountains Region's residents with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start a new business.*

**Strategy ED6:** *Better connect venture capital, investors, and entrepreneurs within the Georgia Mountains Region.*

**Strategy ED7** *Improve access to capital for startup and small businesses.*

**Strategy ED8:** *Promote successful entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial practices in the region.*

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Revolving Loan Fund (GMRC-RLF) was very active in FY 2015. The program works in partnership with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and allows GMRC to assist Region 2 in creating and retaining jobs. As a local economic development initiative, the RLF Program helps expand the region's economy through business development and expansion.

The Revolving Loan Fund is available to businesses of all sizes and varieties. Borrowers are eligible for financing only when credit is not otherwise available. Since inception, the program has loaned out a total of \$4.9 million to 53 businesses throughout the Georgia Mountains Region. Those investments have translated to just over 547 jobs being retained or created.

In FY 2015, the GMRC received numerous inquiries into the RLF Program. Of those inquiries, six applications were submitted and reviewed by the staff. Three of the six applications were analyzed and approved by the RLF committee. The GMRLF Program was able to support community growth in industries such as: wedding and meeting venues, accounting, and landscape to name a few. In FY 2015, the GMRC RLF Program loaned a combined \$215,000 to businesses in the GMRC Region.



The Lanier Technical College Business Incubator is a public/private partnership housed at Featherbone Community. Eighteen businesses have been launched from the program, and 12 more start-ups are in development. Thirteen patents and three copyrights have been developed. The Business Incubator provides entrepreneurs affordable space, access to professional services and educational and technical assistance. Small businesses launched in the Business Incubator have been responsible for the creation of more than 800 jobs since the organization opened seven years ago.

## **Agri-Business**

**Goal:** *To foster sustainable agriculture by creating and/or retaining jobs and private investment within the agricultural sector and by adding value and developing new products and niche markets.*

**Strategy ED9:** *Encourage and support the development of community supported agricultural cooperatives to sustain small and mid-sized producers.*

**Strategy ED10:** *Expand opportunities for production based on the byproducts of value-added processing.*

**Strategy ED11:** *Expand and upgrade infrastructure to support farms.*

**Strategy ED12:** *Support efforts to expand agri-tourism in the region.*

Farmer's Markets continue to flourish throughout the region in many downtown areas, bringing people and the community together. The potential economic impacts of public markets and farmers markets include direct benefits (ex: profits to business owners in the market, job creation, sales and real estate tax revenues, etc.) and indirect benefits (ex: stimulating development downtown, enhancing the park and waterfront as a place, farmland preservation, etc.).



- Hall County's Food and Agribusiness sector has by a wide margin, the largest county economic impact in Georgia with over \$5 billion in economic output and 17,642 direct jobs
- The Georgia Poultry Laboratory Network opened a new science laboratory and headquarters in the Gateway Industrial Centre to fulfill an important food-safety role for Georgia's Poultry industry.
- At a total investment of approximately \$3.2 million, Lake Foods, LLC opened a poultry processing facility in the Hart County Industrial Park and added 110 jobs for area residents.
- As follow up to a 2014 Local Foods Assessment for Georgia Mountains, the GMRC updated inventories of local farmer's markets, public farms, and other agri-business assets throughout the region. The GMRC is working with these and other farmers and stakeholders to increase communication between local growers and consumers. For FY15, the GMRC developed a promotional poster/brochure about publicly accessible local growers based on a template used elsewhere in Georgia. The scope will expand to include all 13 counties.

## Existing Business and Industry

**Goal:** *Increase expansion and retention of the region's existing businesses and industries.*

**Strategy ED13:** *Promote regional leadership and collaboration.*

**Strategy ED14:** *Invest in the beautification and revitalization of downtowns.*

Region 2 experienced a year of significant growth and prosperity with **2,322 jobs created** and **\$352 million in private investment** generated. The below list are a few of the highlights from the last year.

- Wrigley is adding 170 new jobs at the Hall County facility, making it the largest fully integrated chewing gum manufacturer in the world.
- Kubota is developing a new 180-acre campus on Highway 365 in the Gateway Industrial Centre with a \$100 million investment and 650 jobs.
- German automotive supplier of high quality injection molded components will locate its U.S. Operations in Toccoa, creating 200 jobs and investing \$27 million within the first five years.
- Foundations Recovery Network created approximately 180 new jobs in White County.



- King's Hawaiian, a state-of-the-art bakery and distribution company doubled their size of its facility in Oakwood by constructing an additional 120,000 square foot expansion. King's Hawaiian plans to add nearly 400 new jobs and triple its current production.
- Sark announced their decision to open their second copper wire manufacturing/distribution facility in the U.S. in Toccoa, Stephens County.
- Haering, a leading global manufacturer of precision components and subassemblies for the automotive industry will locate a new facility in the Gateway II Industrial Park in Hart County. At a total investment cost of \$54 million, the project will create 400 jobs within the first 5 years.

## **Economic Resiliency**

**Goal:** *Ensure that every community has a strategy and resources in place that specifically directs how to respond in economic recessions and/or when major employment centers are lost.*

In response to the recent global economic recession of 2008-2012, governments and communities are exploring ways of future-proofing their economic development processes. Specifically, while communities know they can't fully immunize themselves from economic downturns, they are strategizing for how best to project potential cycles and prepare and react when downturns occur so that they can more swiftly and more effectively restore their own economies.

**Strategy ED15:** *Ensure all communities have access to, and are aware of, resources providing economic forecasts for their region, county and, where possible, municipality.*

**Strategy ED16:** *Establish a proper chain of communication regarding economic concerns.*

**Strategy ED17:** *Develop, and routinely update, a report assessing the complete arrangement of resources, providers and services for implementing economic crisis response actions.*

**Strategy ED18:** *Conduct a forum or concentrated assessment of the economic health and needs of the region's most prominent industries.*

Rapid Response encompasses the strategies and activities necessary to plan for and respond as quickly as possible following an announcement of closure or layoff. Rapid response delivers services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible. The purpose of Rapid Response is to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for and responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, business and communities. The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Workforce Development Rapid Response area 2 has provided services to approximately 532 dislocated workers since July of 2013.

The University of Georgia—Carl Vinson Institute of Government is also a resource and partnership program that is available to assist local governments in their efforts. The Archway Partnership's purpose is to enhance connectivity between the university and local governments to address the state's critical economic development needs.

The photo to the right was a job fair that Georgia Mountains Regional Commission—Workforce Development's Rapid Response performed on site at McKesson Medical Dispensing for its dislocated workers.



Issue	Mitigation Strategy
Comparably limited support for agribusiness, especially agri-tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a regional food hub</li> <li>• Develop promotional material for area farmer's markets and canneries</li> <li>• Establish a local food guide based on local assessments.</li> <li>• Develop an inventory of tourism industry resources</li> </ul>
Potential for continued growth within tourism sub-markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an inventory of tourism resources</li> <li>• Develop Highway 441 Tourism Study</li> <li>• Initiate GMRC Downtown Association</li> <li>• Assist local governments and business in the development of multi-county tourism task force focusing on Lake Hartwell</li> </ul>
Lack of diversity within economic base; too much reliance on a few large industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a region wide downtown economic database that includes historic resources</li> <li>• Develop a hi-tech strategy for the region</li> <li>• Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC and Universities</li> </ul>
Demand for expansion of goods-production industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC/colleges</li> </ul>
Potential within existing cities to nurture small business and entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and distribute educational materials for entrepreneur programs</li> <li>• Initiate GMRC Downtown Association</li> <li>• Assist local governments and business in the development of multi-county tourism task force focusing on Lake Hartwell</li> <li>• Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop</li> <li>• Develop an entrepreneurship training program for teachers</li> <li>• Identify and create a database of entrepreneur support resources in the region</li> </ul>

<p>Strong potential in health service industries, particularly around existing/ proposed hospitals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a public awareness campaign about health information technology</li> </ul>
<p>Competition from South Carolina and North Carolina – border region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop 1-page fact sheet with state tax incentive information and distribute to local chambers, economic development professionals, and city and counties.</li> <li>• Actively market existing industrial parks</li> </ul>
<p>Need for coordinated informational and directional signage along entrance corridors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMRC to develop new Urban Revitalization Plans for area town centers and historic urban centers</li> <li>• GMRC to develop/collect and distribute guidance material for wayfinding in small cities and towns</li> <li>• Annually—host state tourism representatives tour 1-2 cities in the region to advise on wayfinding strategies</li> </ul>

## Workforce Development

**GOAL:** *To attract and retain business and industry by promoting education and workforce development.*

**Strategy WD1:** *Lower the high school dropout rate.*

**Strategy WD2:** *Retain graduates and the educated workforce within the region.*

**Strategy WD3:** *Partner with local schools, businesses/industries, and civic organizations to promote the importance of an educated workforce.*

**Strategy WD4:** *Increase basic and technical skills.*

**Strategy WD5:** *Help alleviate unemployment and underemployment in the Georgia Mountain Region.*

**Strategy WD6:** *Address lack of family support.*

### ASSESSMENT

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) Workforce Development Department provides day-to-day management of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds that are allocated to the Georgia Mountains Region through the Georgia Department of Economic Development Workforce Division. The department continues to provide oversight of training providers who provide job training and job placement to eligible persons. This department provides assistance to adults, youth, and dislocated workers who meet program criteria. ***The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) went into effect July 1, 2015 thus abolishing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. There are many changes in Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Services within the new WIOA regulations.***

Highlights from 2015 include the following:

#### **Adult and Dislocated Worker**

GMRC Workforce Development (GMWD) Adult and Dislocated Services department served 520 individuals in FY 2015. Training for individuals 18 years or older was provided by Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding. WIA funding allowed these individuals to attend a technical school or college for up to 24 months to receive specialized training to enter today's competitive job force in a Growth and Demand field in the Georgia Mountains.

- Worked with State and Local Offender Transition Centers to train returning inmates to enter the workforce.

- Incumbent Training is available for assistance to qualifying employers to assist with expenses associated with new or upgraded skills training for full-time, permanent employees.



- WIOA offers an opportunity to improve job and career options for Georgia’s workers and companies to fill positions thru the On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program. By promoting OJT, Georgia has the great opportunity to increase its economic health and improve economic competitiveness. We have been working to implement the changes for WIOA as it applies to job seekers and employers in our region.
- Georgia Mountains Workforce Development’s OJT Program assists employers with training costs while putting Georgians back to work. OJT provides employers with the opportunity to train new employees and receive up to 75% reimbursement for their salary during the OJT training period. It also helps employers fill the gap between a potential employees current skills and what is required to fully perform the job.

### **Mobile Training Units**

- From July 31<sup>st</sup> 2013 to present approximately 3,100 people have visited the Mobile Training Vehicles for individualized services. Over 5,100 different actions have been tracked on board the Mobile Units. This includes 1,420 on-line job searches, 1,103 online job applications placed, 974 resumes developed/critiqued, 99 Unemployment Claims, 38 individuals assisted with GED and skills testing, 385 career assessment surveys, and 1,204 people receiving information on the WIOA program and the services provided by Georgia Mountains Workforce Development.



### **Youth Activities**

The GMWD served 356 youth in FY 2015 in the following youth programs:

- Beginning in 2015, an Apprenticeship Program was created with the goal of working with business and industry in coordination with Georgia Department of Economic Development Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Labor, local Technical Colleges, and business and Industry within the Georgia Mountains Region.



## **Area Labor Profile for Hart County**

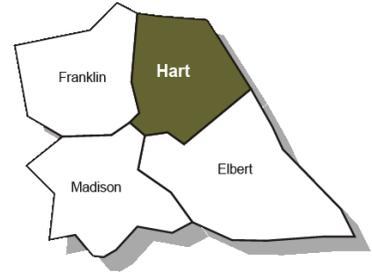


Georgia

## Area Labor Profile

Hart

County



Updated: Jun 2017

## Labor Force Activity - 2016

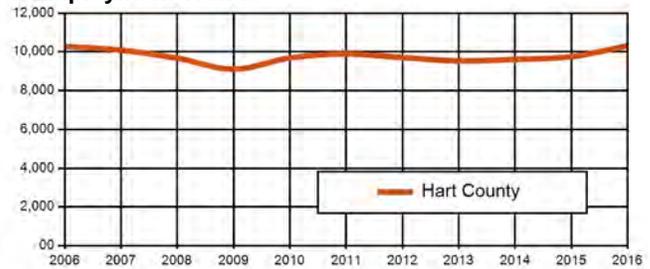
### 2016 ANNUAL AVERAGES

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Hart	10,913	10,317	596	5.5%
Elbert	7,735	7,229	506	6.5%
Franklin	9,728	9,214	514	5.3%
Madison	13,013	12,362	651	5.0%
<b>Hart Area</b>	<b>41,389</b>	<b>39,122</b>	<b>2,267</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
Georgia	4,920,464	4,656,255	264,209	5.4%
United States	159,187,000	151,436,000	7,751,000	4.9%
Anderson, SC	89,362	85,394	3,968	4.4%
Oconee, SC	34,598	32,877	1,721	5.0%

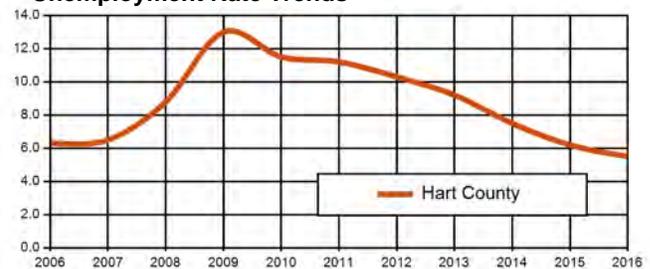
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

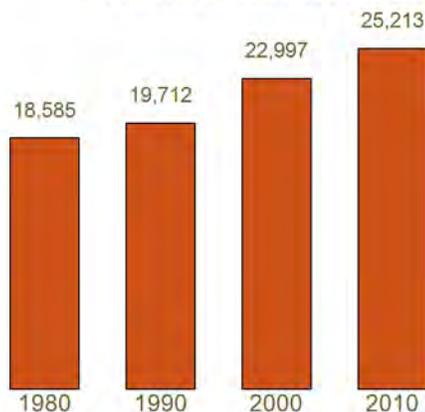
### Employment Trends



### Unemployment Rate Trends



### Population Estimates



### Population

	2010 Census	2016 Rank	2016 Estimate	% Change 2000-2016	2025 Projected*	% Change 2010-2025
<b>Hart</b>	<b>25,213</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>25,553</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>26,310</b>	<b>4.4</b>
City of Hartwell	4,469					
<b>Hart Area</b>	<b>352,980</b>		<b>368,764</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>395,533</b>	<b>12.1</b>
Georgia	9,687,653		10,310,371	6.4	11,538,707	19.1
United States	308,745,538		323,127,513	4.7	349,439,199	13.2
Anderson, SC	185,414		196,569	6.0	208,820	12.6
Oconee, SC	71,983		76,355	6.1	87,500	21.6

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, \*Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

**MARK BUTLER - COMMISSIONER, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
**Equal Opportunity Employer/Program**  
**Auxillary Aids and Services Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities**

Workforce Statistics & Economic Research; E-mail: [Workforce\\_Info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:Workforce_Info@gdol.ga.gov) Phone: (404) 232-3875

# Industry Mix - annual averages of 2016

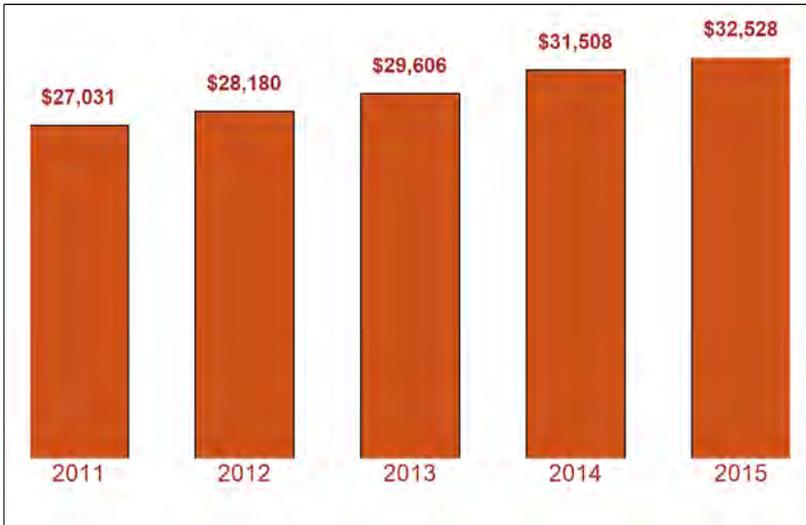
INDUSTRY	Hart				Hart Area			
	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE
<b>Goods-Producing</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>2,083</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>6,515</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>785</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	12	89	1.4	723	39	333	1.5	675
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0.0	0	20	220	1.0	798
Construction	55	261	4.1	796	211	735	3.2	709
Manufacturing	31	1,733	27.1	829	171	5,227	22.8	802
Food	3	*	*	*	7	579	2.5	605
Textile Mills	4	*	*	*	6	139	0.6	760
Apparel	1	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Wood Product	1	*	*	*	11	148	0.6	620
Printing and Related Support Activities	1	*	*	*	3	3	0.0	414
Chemical	2	*	*	*	3	*	*	*
Plastics and Rubber Products	2	*	*	*	6	314	1.4	731
Fabricated Metal Product	7	125	2.0	693	33	546	2.4	729
Machinery	2	*	*	*	10	515	2.2	1,011
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	2	*	*	*	4	208	0.9	865
Transportation Equipment	2	*	*	*	9	1,134	4.9	944
Furniture and Related Product	2	*	*	*	9	*	*	*
Miscellaneous	2	*	*	*	3	*	*	*
Paper	0	0	0.0	0	1	*	*	*
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	0	0	0.0	0	64	1,150	5.0	725
<b>Service-Providing</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>3,113</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>11,686</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>590</b>
Utilities	5	139	2.2	1,190	10	176	0.8	1,257
Wholesale Trade	23	210	3.3	897	121	1,047	4.6	843
Retail Trade	76	910	14.3	410	307	2,847	12.4	437
Transportation and Warehousing	7	25	0.4	565	51	993	4.3	861
Information	8	94	1.5	895	17	209	0.9	1,022
Finance and Insurance	21	128	2.0	913	93	529	2.3	898
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	7	21	0.3	554	35	*	*	*
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	40	140	2.2	755	117	375	1.6	706
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	*	*	*	9	123	0.5	1,107
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	17	361	5.7	767	72	763	3.3	606
Educational Services	3	*	*	*	6	*	*	*
Health Care and Social Assistance	32	362	5.7	752	130	1,798	7.8	631
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	107	1.7	301	20	142	0.6	304
Accommodation and Food Services	29	514	8.1	252	111	1,838	8.0	255
Other Services (except Public Administration)	29	85	1.3	570	99	494	2.2	556
<b>Unclassified - industry not assigned</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>617</b>
<b>Total - Private Sector</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>18,201</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>660</b>
<b>Total - Government</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>4,765</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>641</b>
Federal Government	7	80	1.3	1,218	34	289	1.3	1,187
State Government	12	164	2.6	607	49	450	2.0	562
Local Government	11	930	14.6	599	61	4,026	17.5	611
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>6,384</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>22,967</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>656</b>
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia</b>					<b>304,249</b>	<b>4,262,271</b>		<b>975</b>

Note: \*Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cannot be released. These data use the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categories. Average weekly wage is derived by dividing gross payroll dollars paid to all employees - both hourly and salaried - by the average number of employees who had earnings; average earnings are then divided by the number of weeks in a reporting period to obtain weekly figures. Figures in other columns may not sum accurately due to rounding. All figures are annual averages of 2016.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. These data represent jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

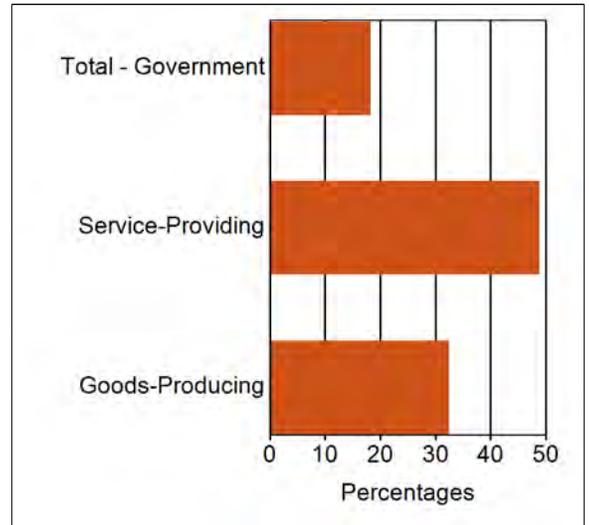
## Hart Per Capita Income

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



## Hart Industry Mix 2016

Source: See Industry Mix data on Page 2.



## Top Ten Largest Employers - 2016\*

### Hart

Fun Spot Manufacturing Llc  
 Georgia Department of Corrections  
 Hart Care Center, Inc.  
 Hart Electric Membership Corporation  
 Ingles Markets, Inc.  
 Lake Foods, LLC  
 Pharma Tech Industries  
 Royston, LLC  
 Tenneco, Inc.  
 Walmart

\*Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state colleges and universities. Data shown for the Third Quarter of 2016. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

### Hart Area

AutoZone, Inc.  
 Carry-On Trailer, Inc.  
 Kautex Textron  
 Pharma Tech Industries  
 Pilgrim's Pride Corporation  
 Royston, LLC  
 St Marys Sacred Heart Hospital, Inc.  
 Star Granite Co, Inc.  
 Tenneco, Inc.  
 Walmart

### COUNTY

Franklin  
 Franklin  
 Franklin  
 Hart  
 Elbert  
 Hart  
 Franklin  
 Elbert  
 Hart  
 Hart

## Education of the Labor Force

### Hart Area

### PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

	PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE				
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	7.9%	6.1%	5.9%	4.2%	5.5%	17.8%
Some High School	18.7%	23.8%	22.2%	16.2%	16.1%	19.8%
High School Grad/GED	39.9%	41.4%	37.6%	41.4%	41.1%	37.3%
Some College	16.7%	24.4%	15.9%	17.4%	17.2%	11.3%
College Grad 2 Yr	5.2%	2.6%	7.2%	7.0%	6.2%	1.8%
College Grad 4 Yr	7.5%	1.8%	8.2%	9.5%	8.8%	6.4%
Post Graduate Studies	4.2%	0.0%	3.0%	4.3%	5.1%	5.6%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 - 65+. The "Some College" category represents workers with less than two years of college and no degree.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2010 Decennial Census.

## High School Graduates - 2016



	<b>PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	<b>PRIVATE SCHOOLS*</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Elbert	149	--	149
Franklin	237	--	237
Hart	203	--	203
Madison	275	--	275
<b>Hart Area</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>864</b>

Note: Public schools include city as well as county schools systems.

\* Private schools data is not available for 2016 from Georgia Independent School Association.

Source: The Governor's Office of Student Achievement of Georgia.

## Colleges and Universities

### Hart Area

#### Franklin

Emmanuel College  
Emmanuel College

<http://www.ec.edu>  
[www.ec.edu](http://www.ec.edu)

#### Elbert

Elbert County Campus (Satellite campus of Athens Technical College) [www.athenstech.edu/](http://www.athenstech.edu/)

Note: The colleges and universities listed include public and private institutions. This list is updated periodically as information becomes available.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

## Technical College Graduates - 2016\*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2014	2015	2016	2014-2015	2015-2016
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping°	128	143	162	11.7	13.3
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General°	77	81	60	5.2	-25.9
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist°	10	9	12	-10.0	33.3
Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Other°	109	34	20	-68.8	-41.2
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician°	100	87	96	-13.0	10.3
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician°	188	133	124	-29.3	-6.8
Biology Technician/Biotechnology Laboratory Technician°	35	27	14	-22.9	-48.1
Business Administration and Management, General°	34	19	29	-44.1	52.6
Business Administration, Management and Operations, Other	12	17	17	41.7	0.0
CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician°	5	2	32	-60.0	1500.0
Child Care Provider/Assistant°	62	59	56	-4.8	-5.1
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician	5	5	15	0.0	200.0
Commercial Photography°	13	13	11	0.0	-15.4
Computer Installation and Repair Technology/Technician°	173	112	147	-35.3	31.3
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General°	161	144	123	-10.6	-14.6
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies°	151	142	113	-6.0	-20.4
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	29	25	20	-13.8	-20.0

# Technical College Graduates - 2016\*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2014	2015	2016	2014-2015	2015-2016
Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation	5	6	3	20.0	-50.0
Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, General°	50	42	50	-16.0	19.0
Data Processing and Data Processing Technology/Technician°	45	39	22	-13.3	-43.6
Dental Assisting/Assistant	12	9	9	-25.0	0.0
Dental Hygiene/Hygienist	11	11	11	0.0	0.0
Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician°	40	32	22	-20.0	-31.3
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General°	14	14	27	0.0	92.9
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	39	48	52	23.1	8.3
Electrical/Electronics Equipment Installation and Repair, General°	4	11	3	175.0	-72.7
Electrician°	77	54	120	-29.9	122.2
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)°	134	122	119	-9.0	-2.5
Engineering Technologies and Engineering-Related Fields, Other	4	7	12	75.0	71.4
Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies°	13	1	8	-92.3	700.0
Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other	5	7	6	40.0	-14.3
Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant°	59	51	39	-13.6	-23.5
General Office Occupations and Clerical Services°	26	22	12	-15.4	-45.5
Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician	6	11	11	83.3	0.0
Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General°	140	189	141	35.0	-25.4
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/°	127	109	99	-14.2	-9.2
Hospitality Administration/Management, General°	42	39	40	-7.1	2.6
Hotel/Motel Administration/Management°	12	10	10	-16.7	0.0
Human Resources Management and Services, Other°	14	8	11	-42.9	37.5
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology°	67	42	38	-37.3	-9.5
Interior Design°	42	28	18	-33.3	-35.7
Legal Assistant/Paralegal	4	2	8	-50.0	300.0
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	38	40	35	5.3	-12.5
Lineworker°	52	45	59	-13.5	31.1
Machine Shop Technology/Assistant°	59	58	32	-1.7	-44.8
Marine Maintenance/Fitter and Ship Repair Technology/Technician	4	9	4	125.0	-55.6
Marketing/Marketing Management, General	13	21	15	61.5	-28.6
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, Other	6	8	14	33.3	75.0
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder°	7	8	13	14.3	62.5
Medical Office Assistant/Specialist°	6	16	10	166.7	-37.5
Medical/Clinical Assistant	40	65	80	62.5	23.1
Medium/Heavy Vehicle and Truck Technology/Technician°	50	60	29	20.0	-51.7
Meeting and Event Planning°	18	11	11	-38.9	0.0

# Technical College Graduates - 2016\*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2014	2015	2016	2014-2015	2015-2016
Network and System Administration/Administrator°	29	44	38	51.7	-13.6
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide°	16	19	1	18.8	-94.7
Pharmacy Technician/Assistant	13	11	19	-15.4	72.7
Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist°	15	15	12	0.0	-20.0
Physical Therapy Technician/Assistant	20	13	14	-35.0	7.7
Professional, Technical, Business, and Scientific Writing°	3	5	5	66.7	0.0
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	16	14	15	-12.5	7.1
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	46	46	49	0.0	6.5
Retailing and Retail Operations°	1	2	2	100.0	0.0
Selling Skills and Sales Operations°	17	16	23	-5.9	43.8
Social Work, Other°	35	23	23	-34.3	0.0
Surgical Technology/Technologist	11	9	7	-18.2	-22.2
Tool and Die Technology/Technician°	5	7	3	40.0	-57.1
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor°	36	52	55	44.4	5.8
Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant°	22	15	21	-31.8	40.0
Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design	7	3	6	-57.1	100.0
Welding Technology/Welder°	87	96	126	10.3	31.3

Definition: All graduates except those listed as technical certificates(°) are diploma and degree graduates. Diploma and degree programs are one to two years in length. Technical certificates are less than a year in length. Duplication may occur due to graduates with multiple awards.

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

\*Data shown represents Annual 2014, 2015, and 2016.

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.

## Georgia Department of Labor Location(s)

### Career Center(s)

37 Foreacre Street

Toccoa, GA 30577-3582

Phone: (706) 282 - 4514

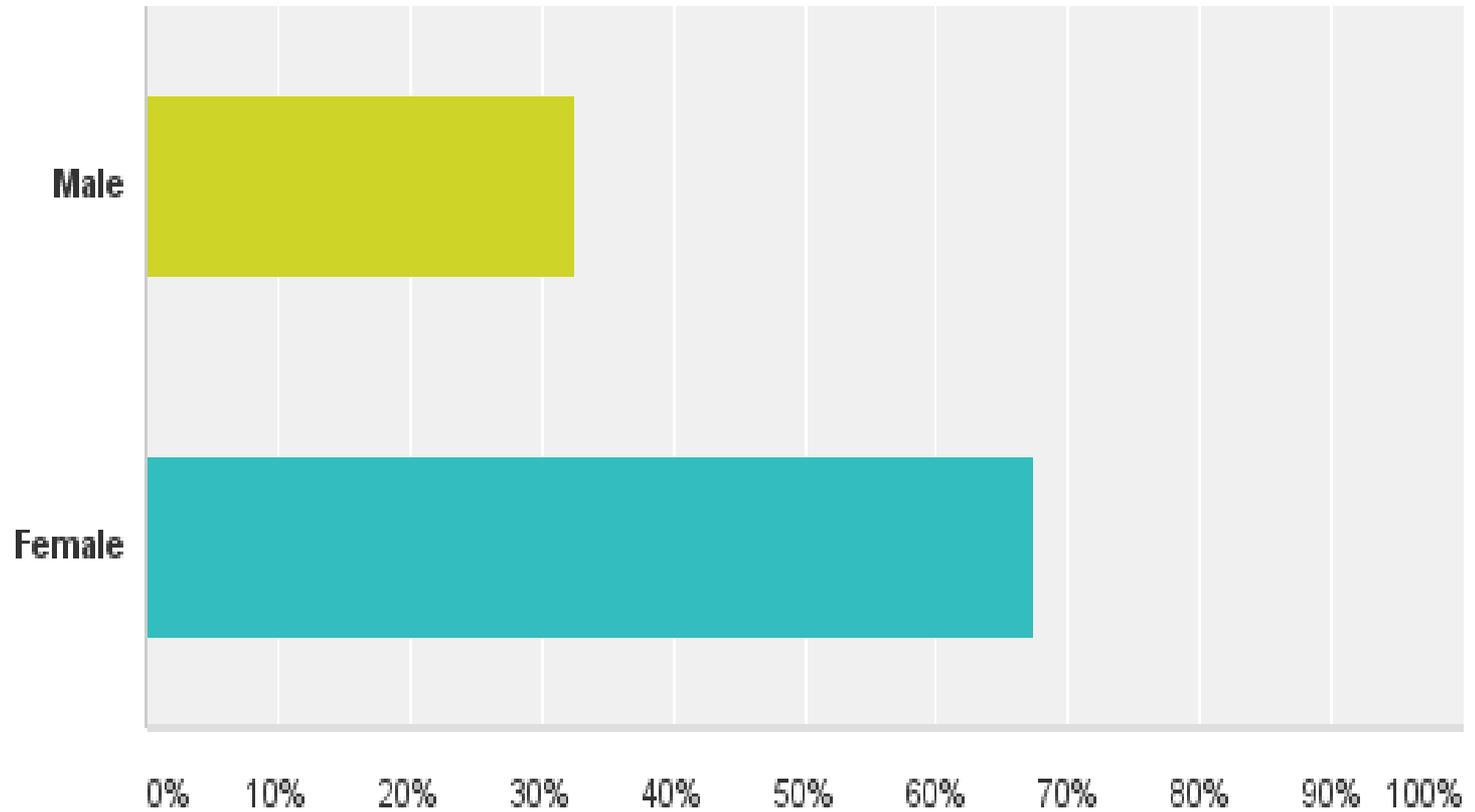
Fax: (706) 282 - 4513

For copies of Area Labor Profiles, please visit our website at: <http://dol.georgia.gov> or contact Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Georgia Department of Labor, 148 Andrew Young International Blvd N.E. Atlanta, GA. 30303-1751. Phone: 404-232-3875; Fax: 404-232-3888 or Email us at [workforce\\_info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:workforce_info@gdol.ga.gov)

## **Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results**

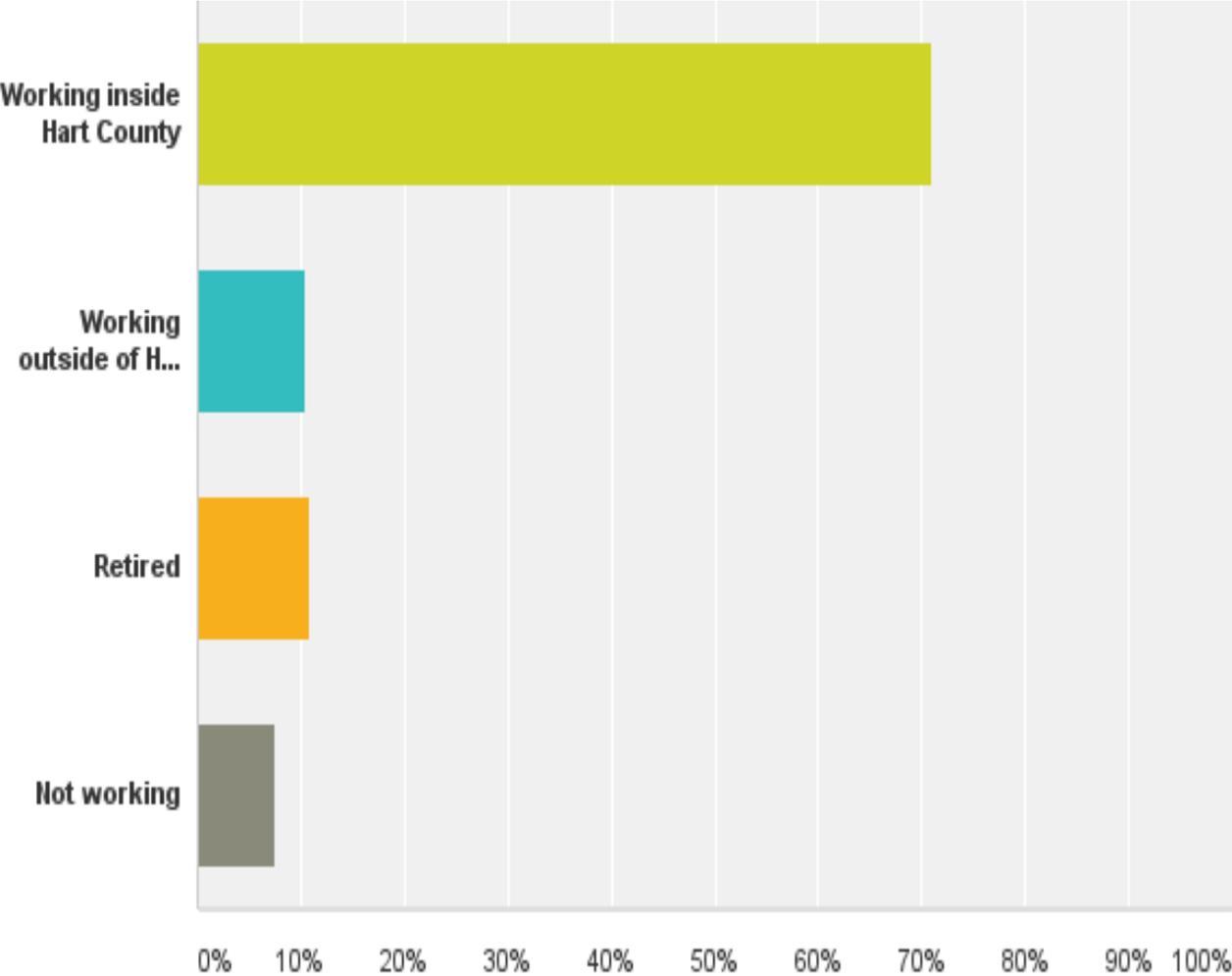
# Q1: I am...

Answered: 304 Skipped: 1



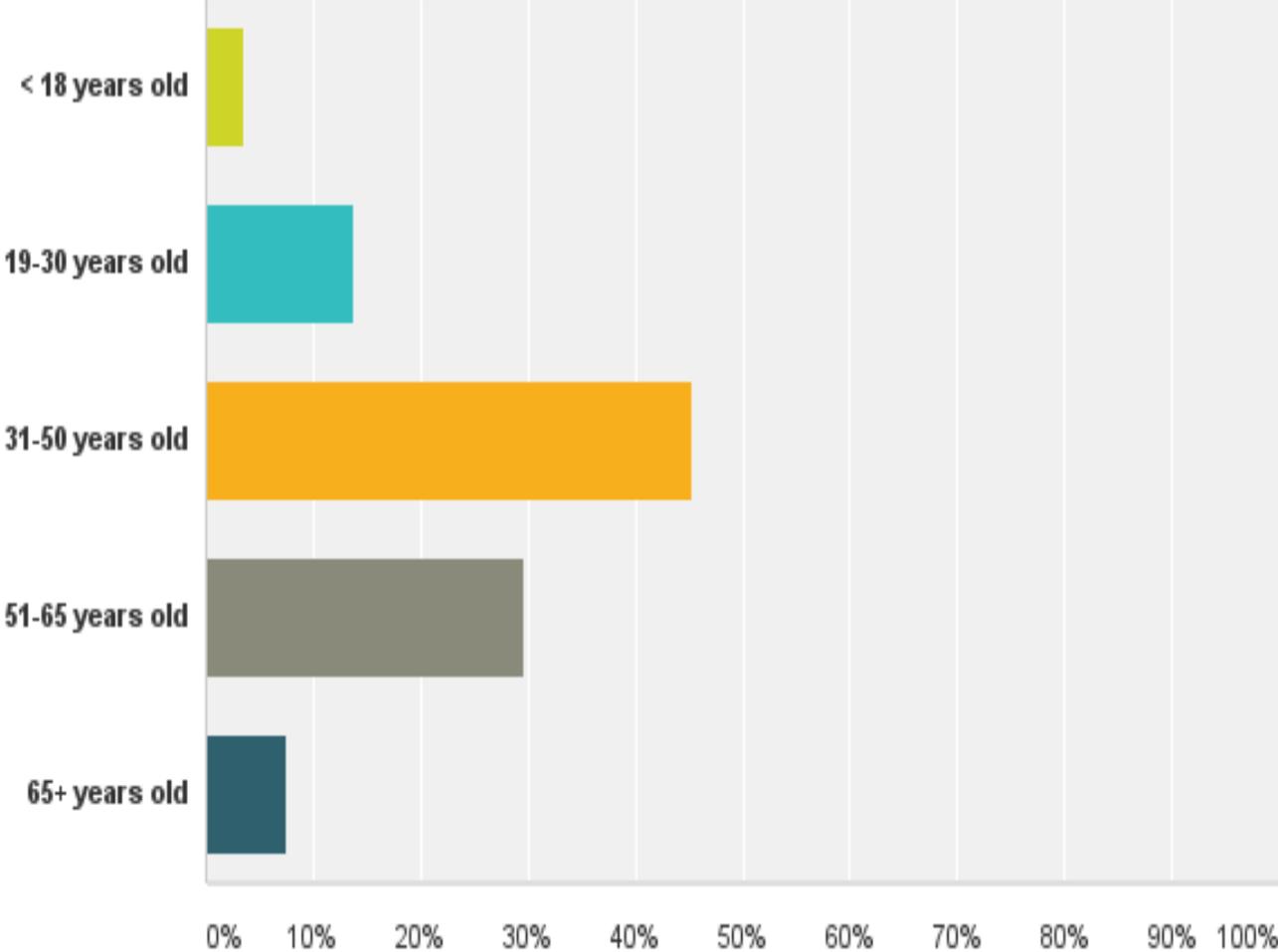
# Q2: I am...

Answered: 304 Skipped: 1



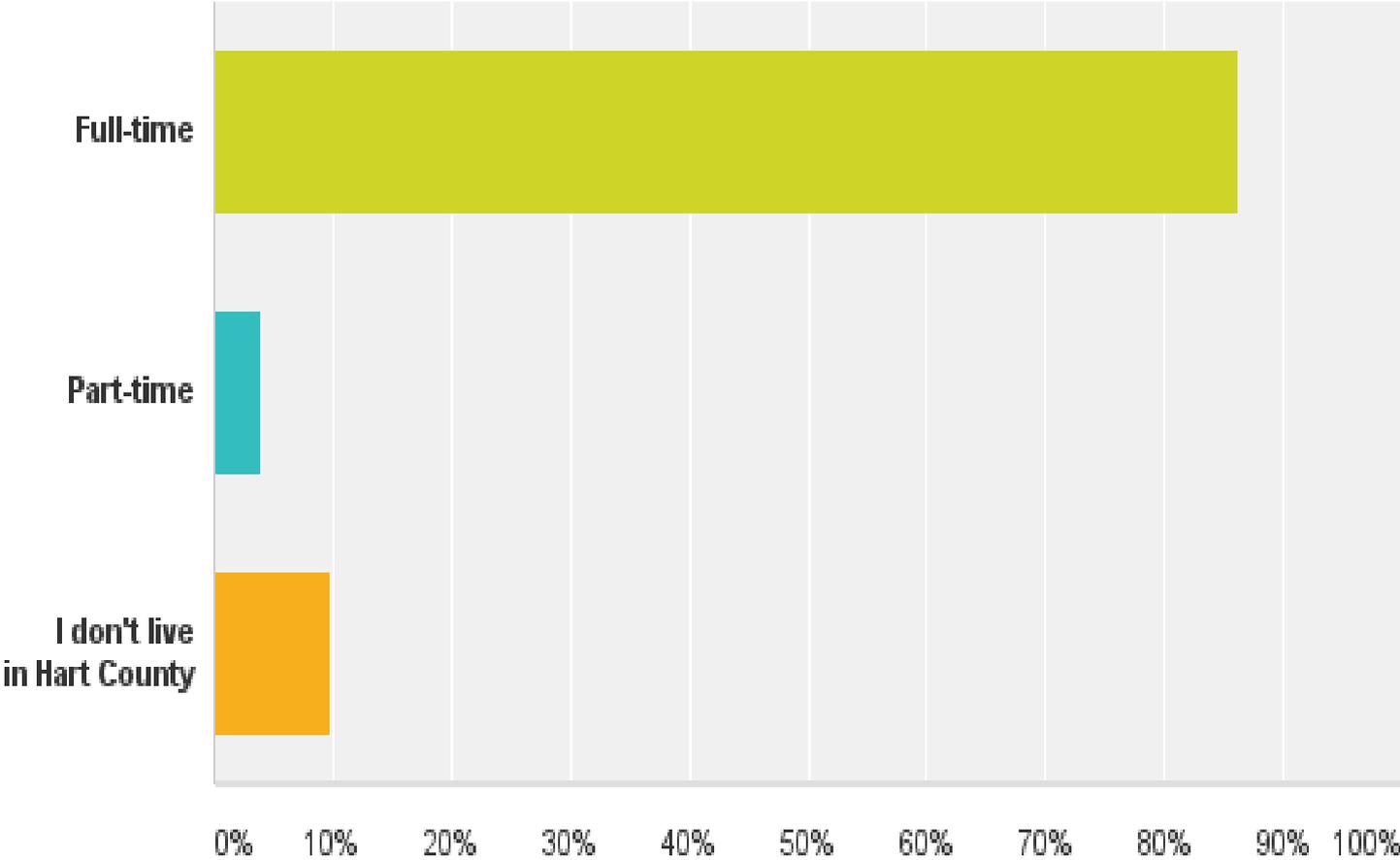
# Q3: My age group is...

Answered: 303 Skipped: 2



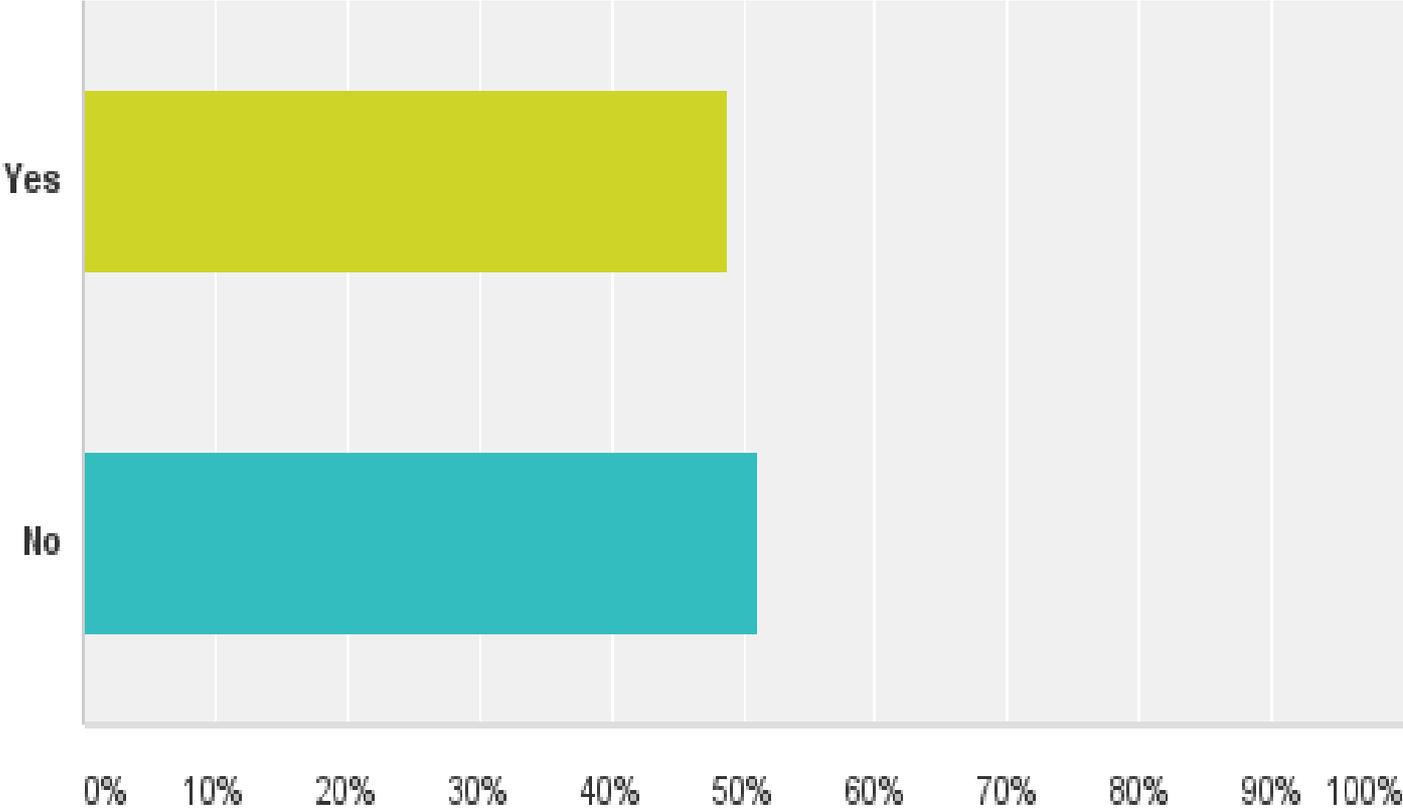
# Q4: I live in Hart County...

Answered: 304 Skipped: 1



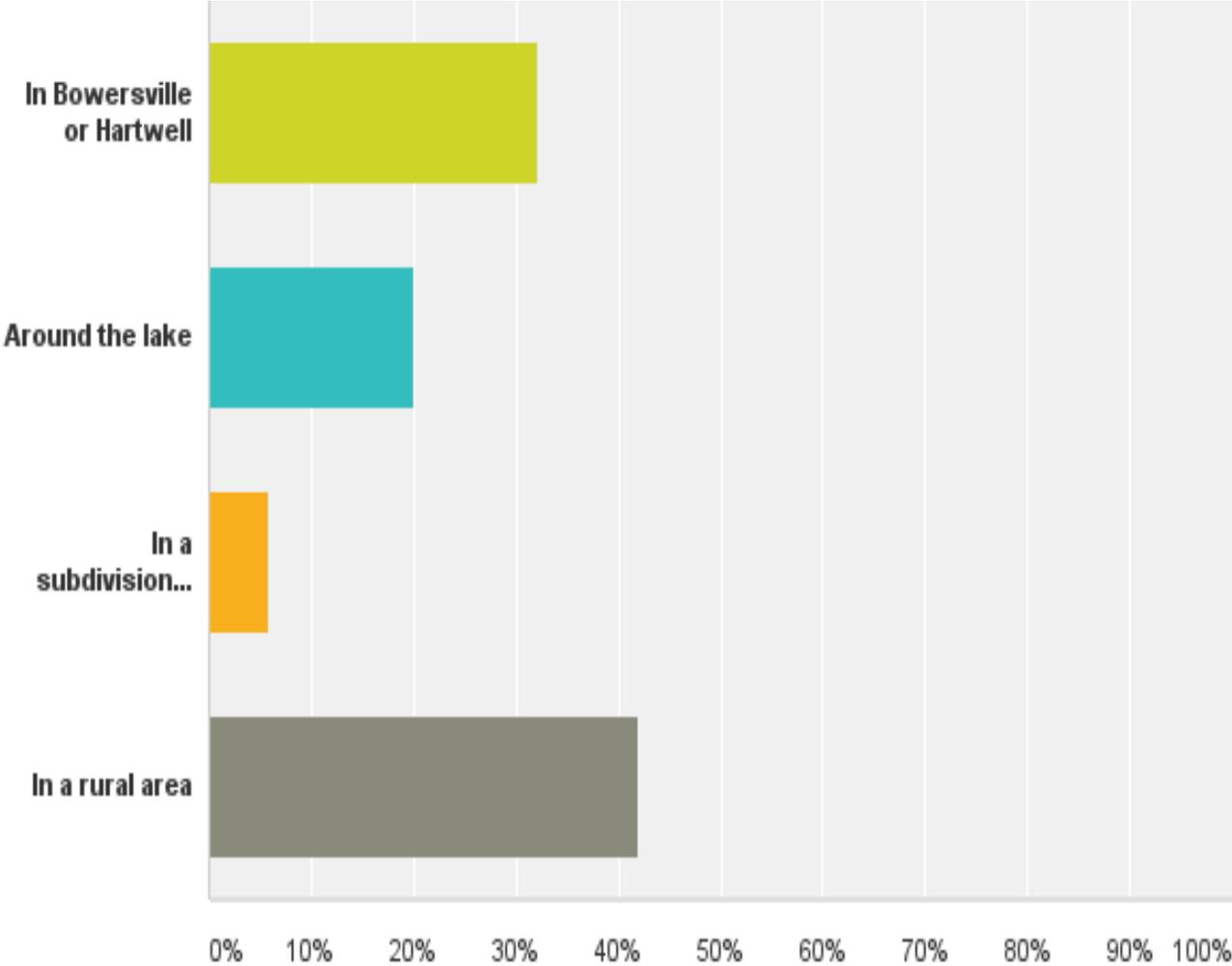
# Q22: Do you have school aged children in your household?

Answered: 297 Skipped: 8



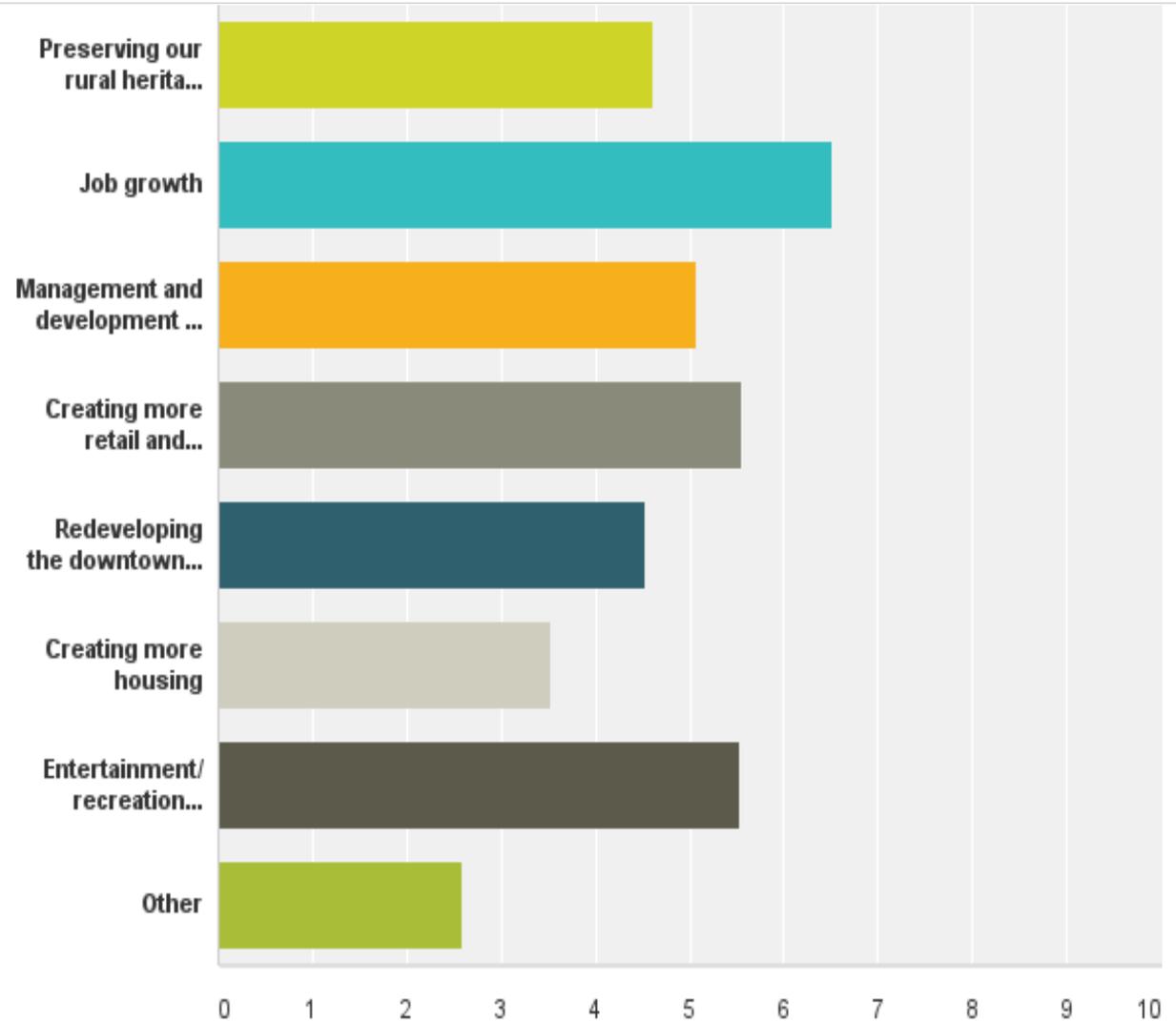
# Q23: Where do you live?

Answered: 293 Skipped: 12



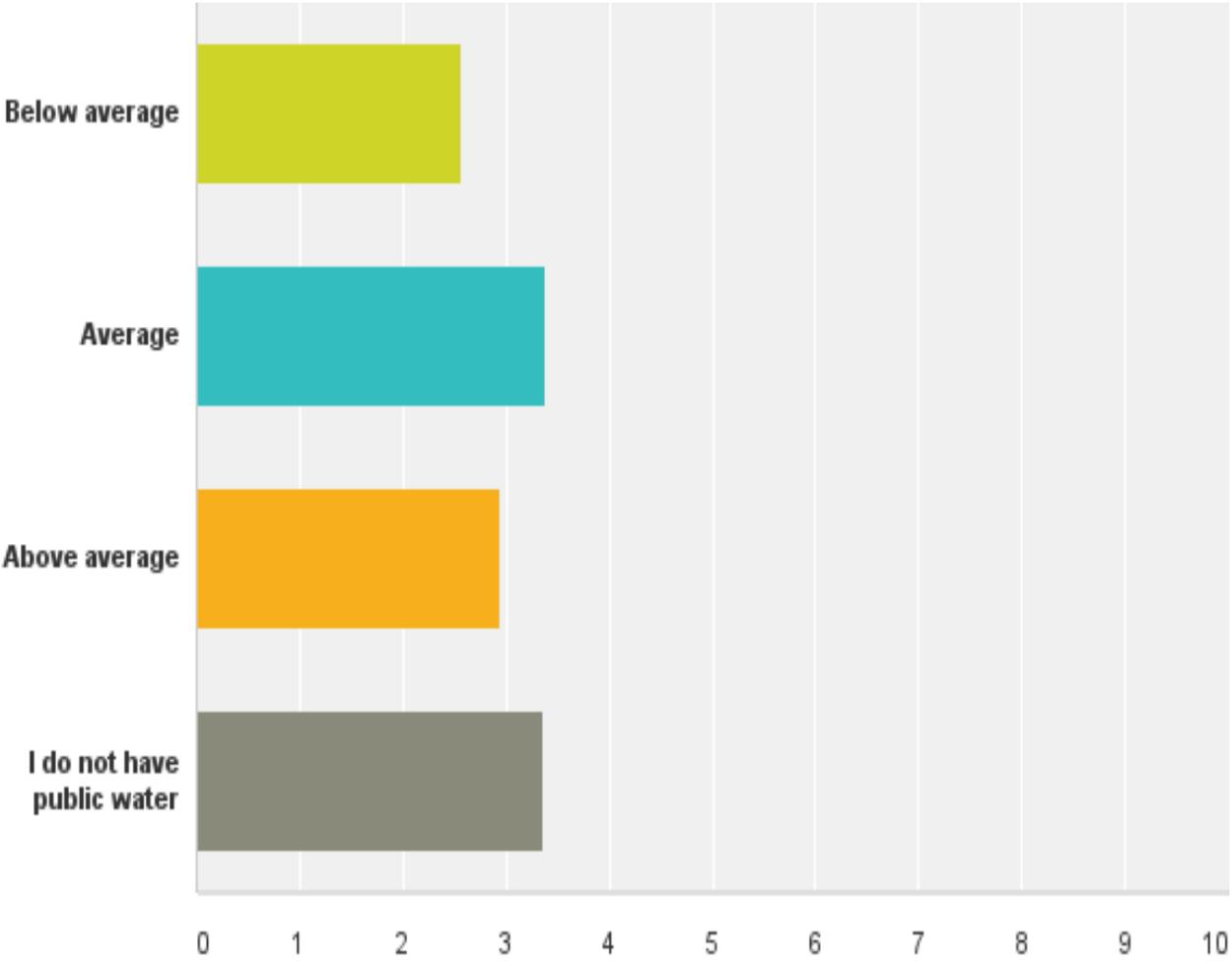
Answered: 298 Skipped: 7

## Q5: Please rank the following issues you feel are vital to Hart County:



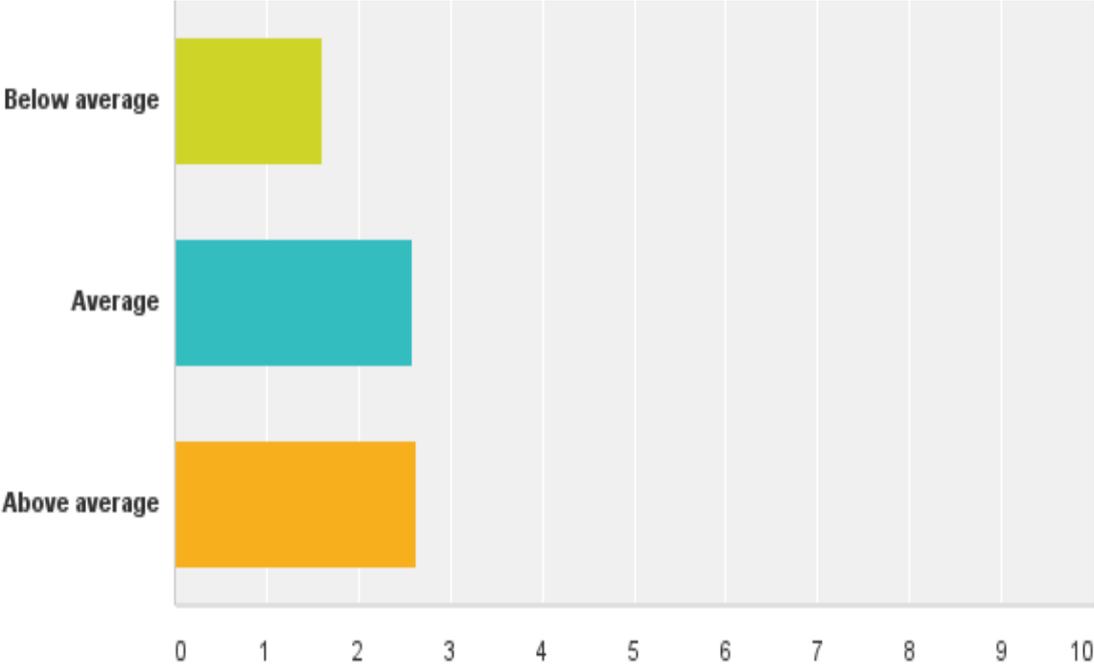
# Q6: Please rate your public water service

Answered: 291 Skipped: 14



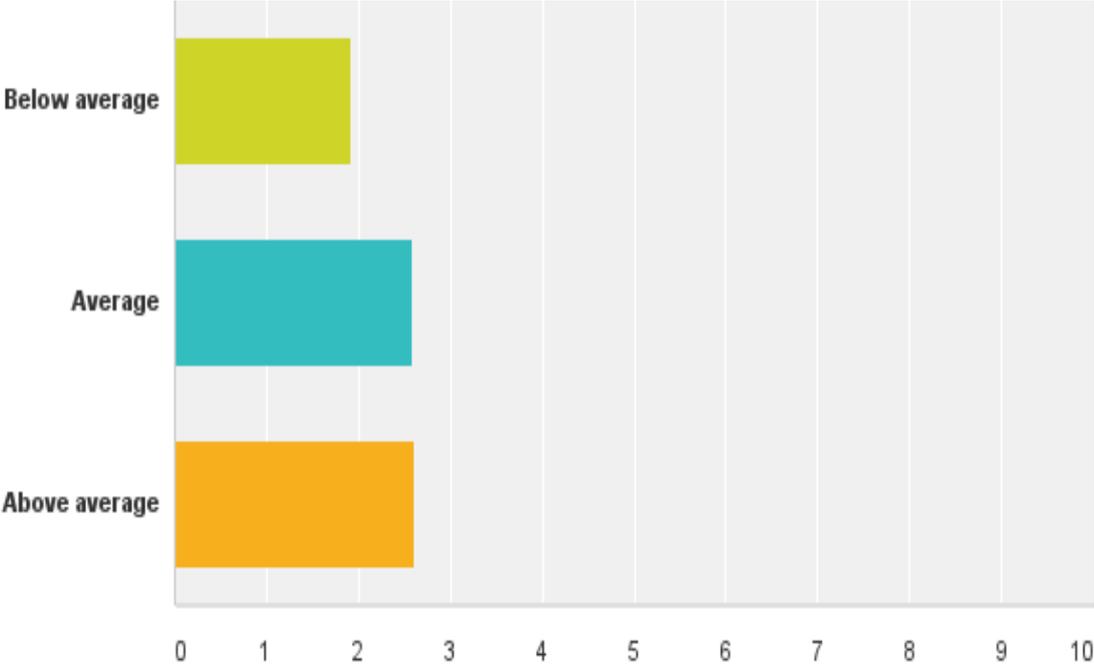
# Q7: Please rate your local law enforcement services

Answered: 293 Skipped: 12



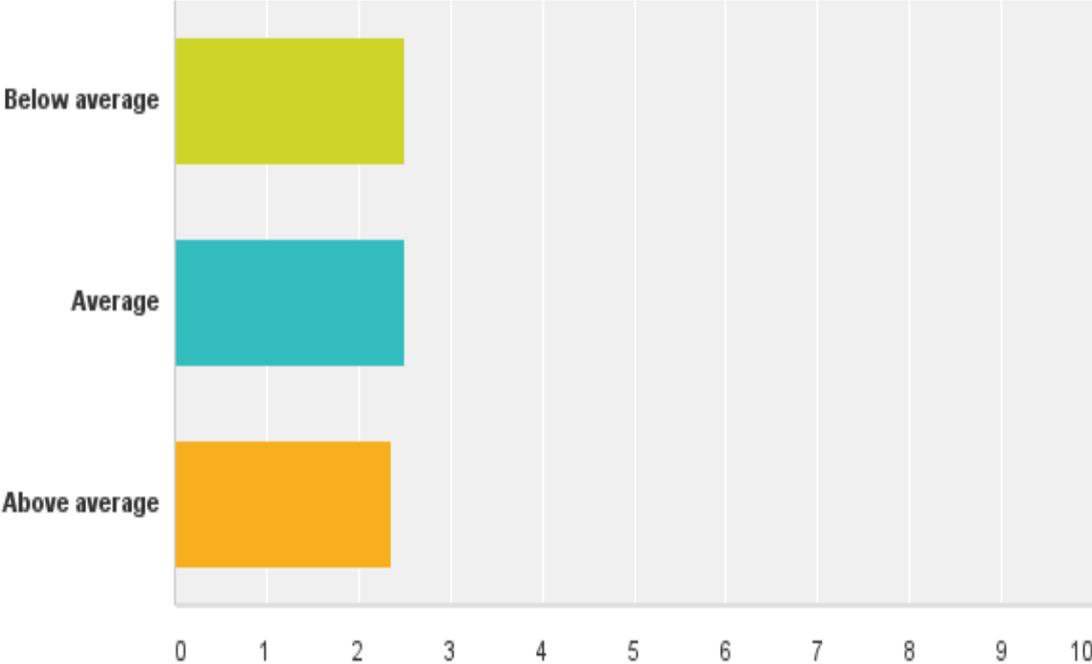
# Q8: Please rate your local fire protection services

Answered: 285 Skipped: 20



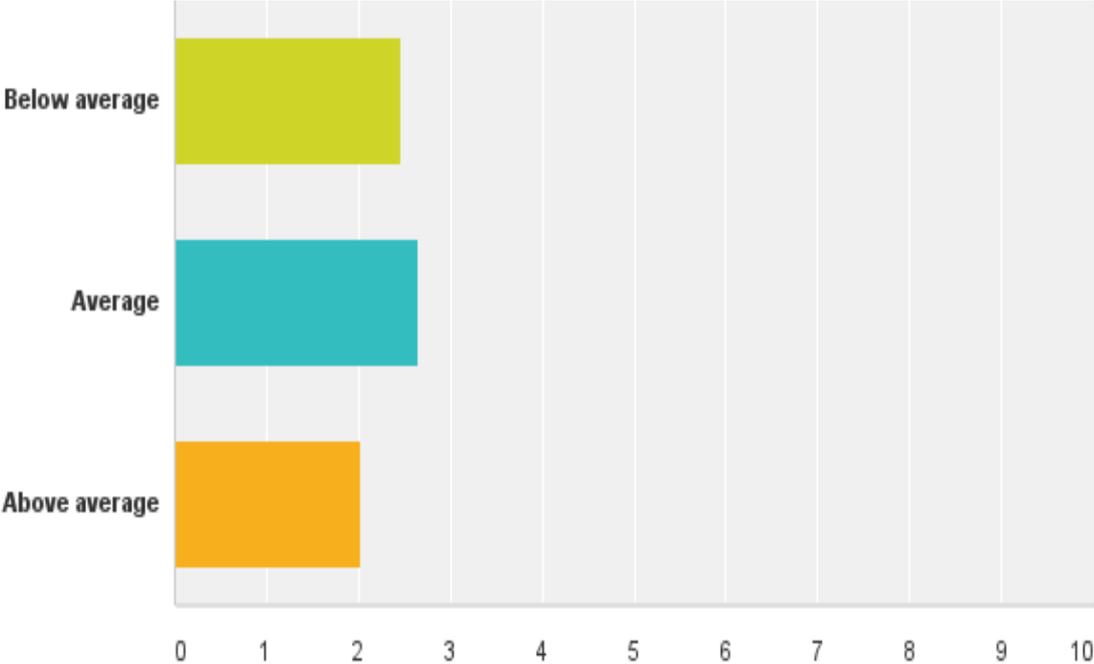
# Q9: Please rate your local parks and recreation services

Answered: 278 Skipped: 27



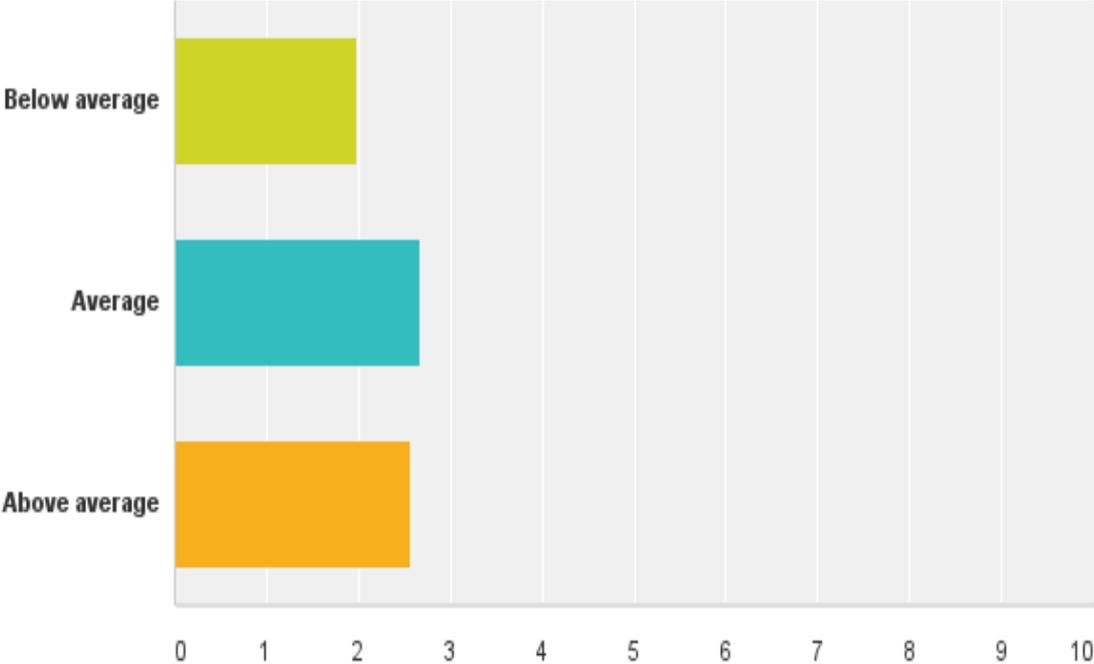
# Q10: Please rate your local roads

Answered: 289 Skipped: 16



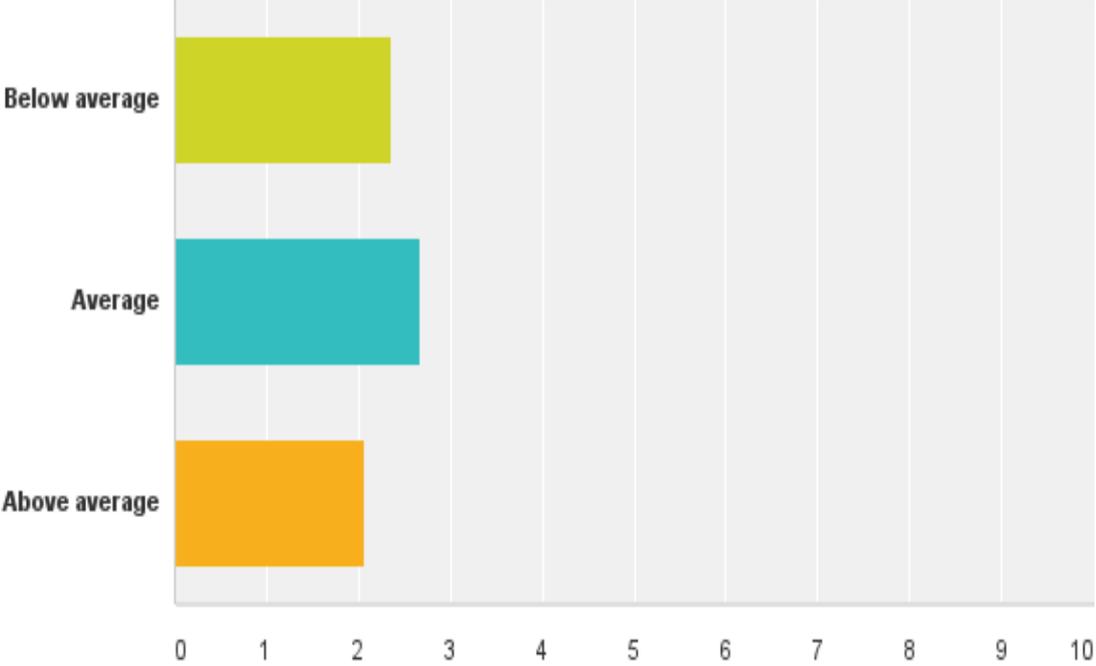
# Q11: Please rate your local emergency services

Answered: 283 Skipped: 22



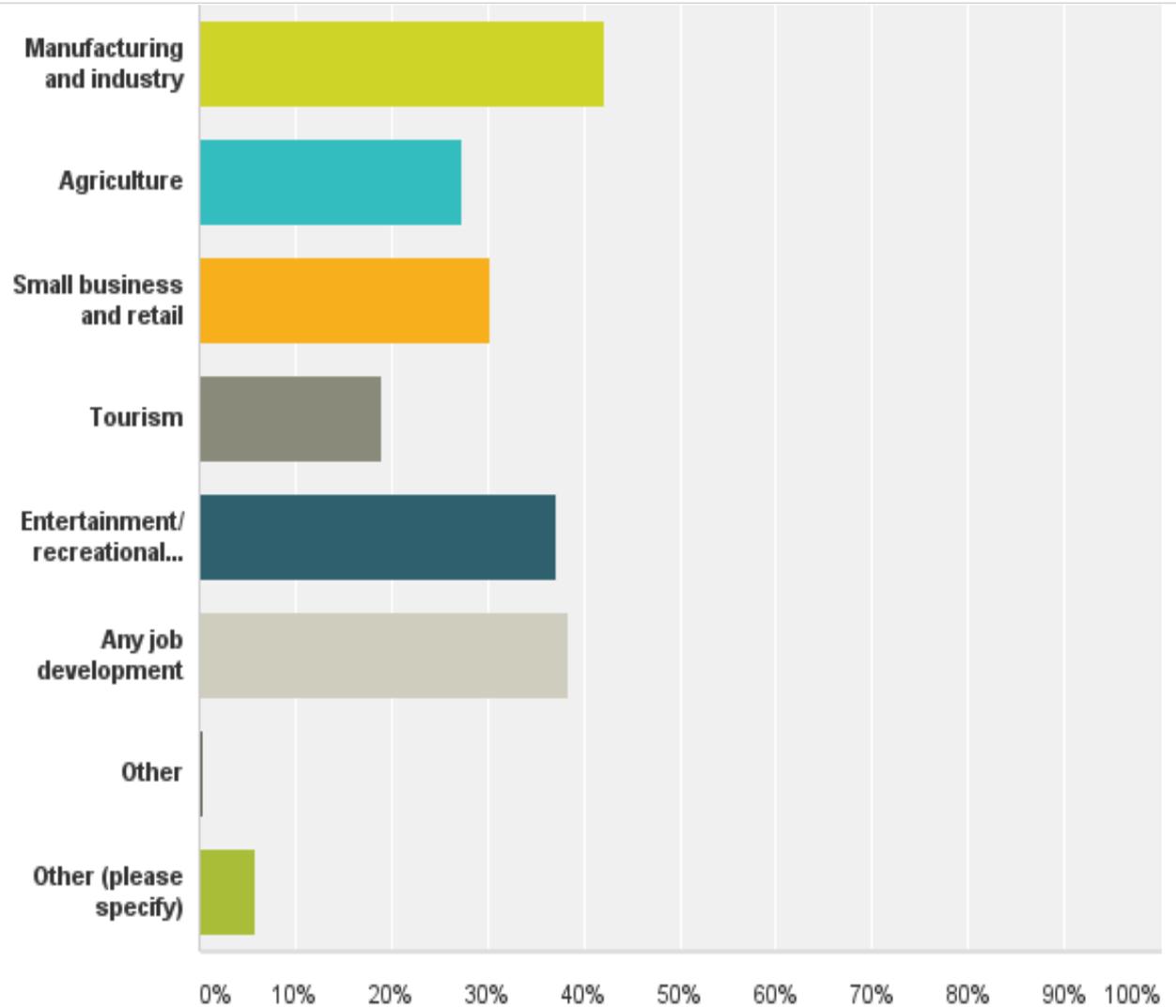
# Q12: Please rate your local general government services

Answered: 273 Skipped: 32



Answered: 304 Skipped: 1

## Q13: Our top two economic development priorities should be:



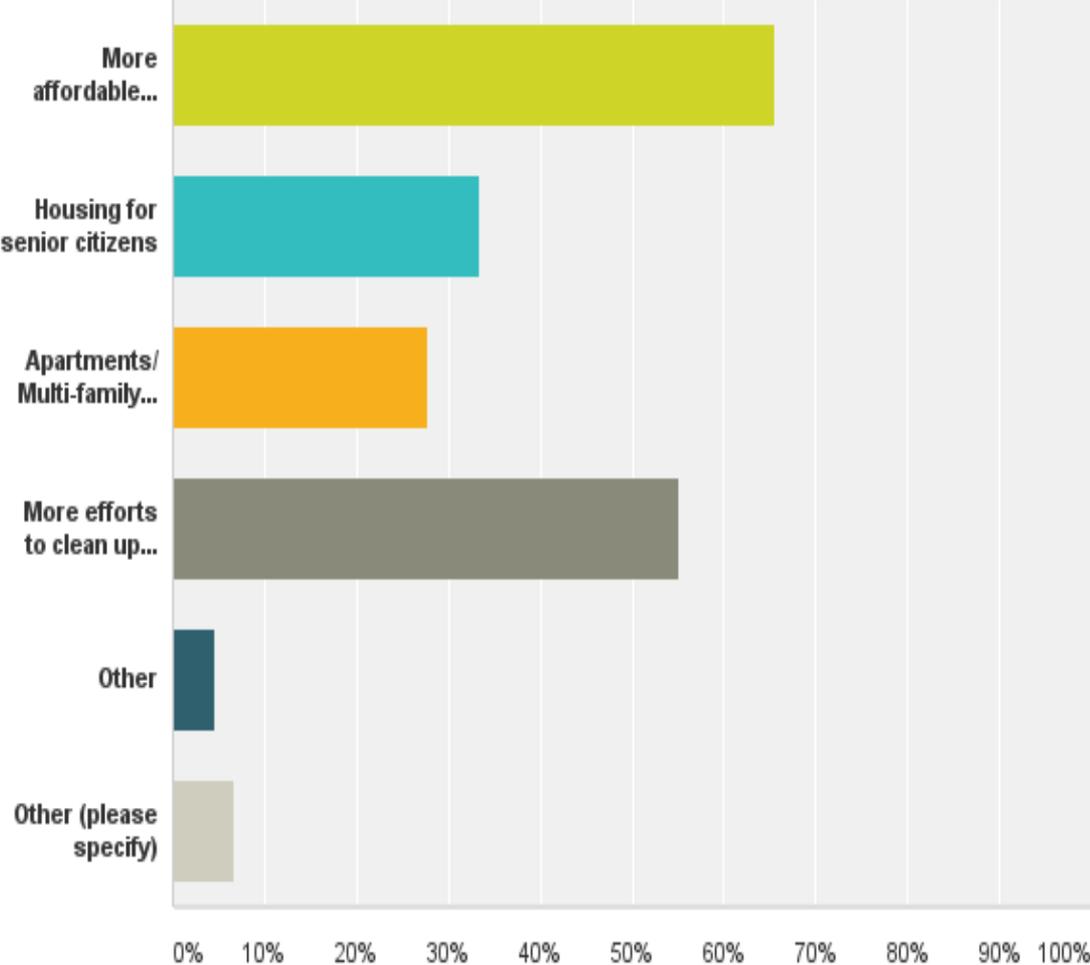
## Q13: Our top two economic development priorities should be:

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- Alcohol (x3)
- Things to do for the kids (x3)
- More things/events oriented around the lake (x2)
- More restaurants (not fast food) (x2)
- Beautification/revitalization of downtown (x2)

# Q14: Our 2 most important housing issues are:

Answered: 299 Skipped: 6



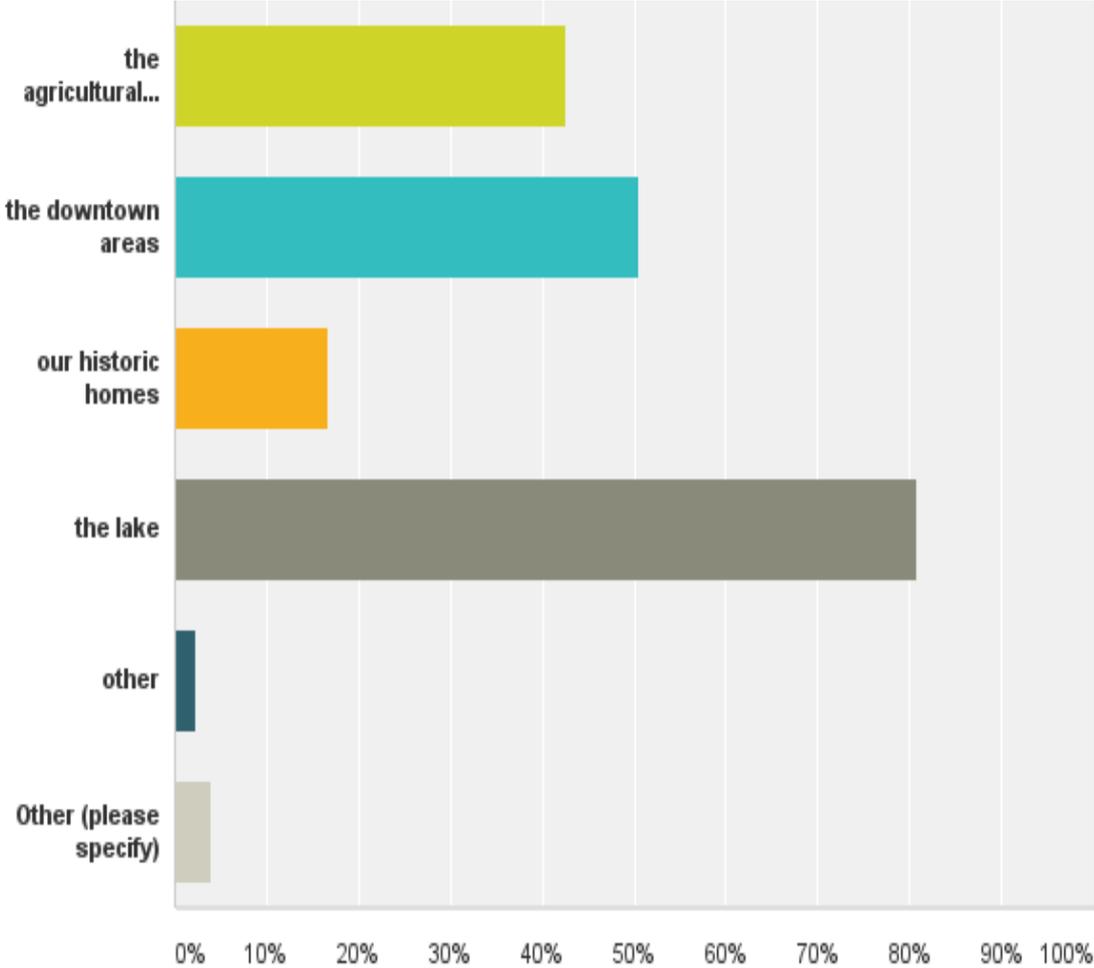
## Q14: Our 2 most important housing issues are:

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- Affordable housing/rental options (x4)
- No problem (x4)
- Zoning/ Lack of controls (x3)

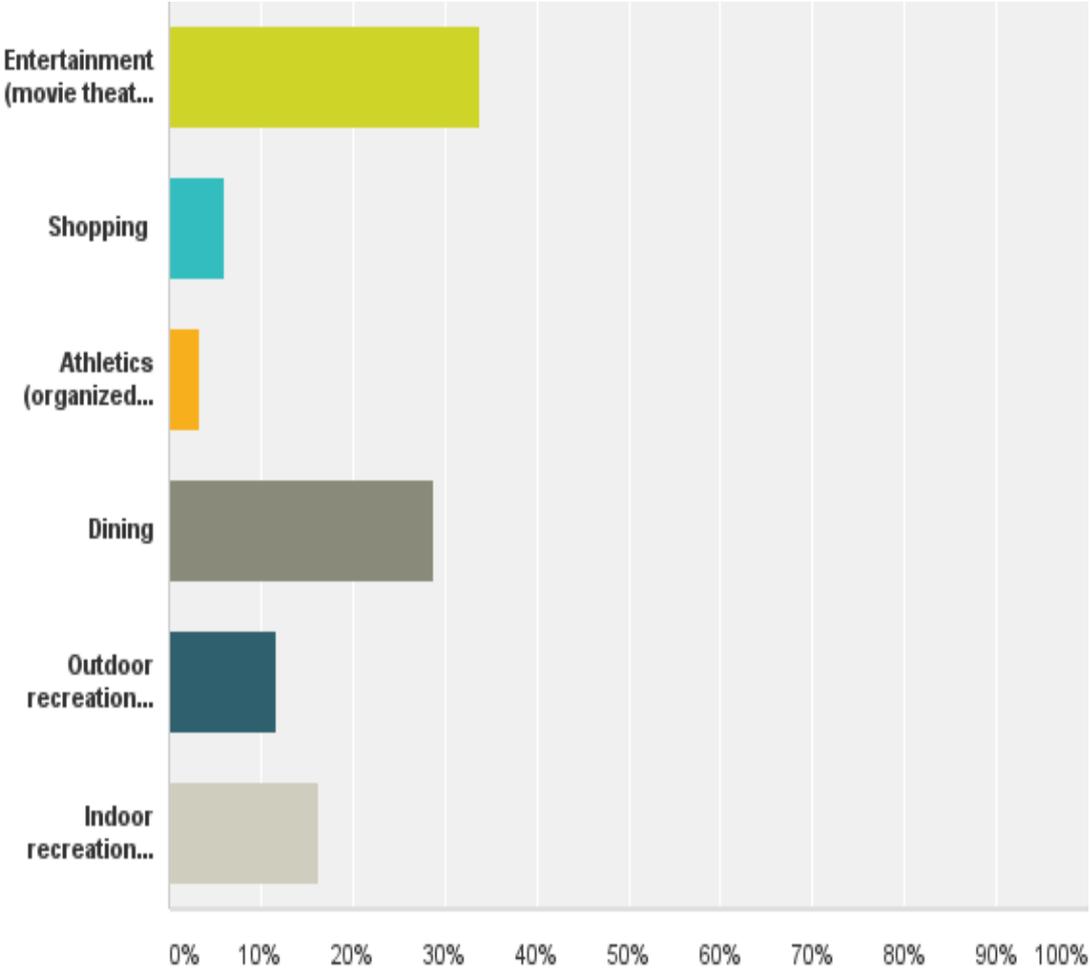
# Q15: Our 2 most important cultural resources are:

Answered: 301 Skipped: 4



# Q16: In regards to entertainment/ recreation, you would like to see...:

Answered: 299 Skipped: 6



## Q17: What... are the top 3 *successes* in Hart County?

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- Lake
- Agricultural (industry/culture)
- Small town feel/ Community
- Industrial Park
- People
- Schools

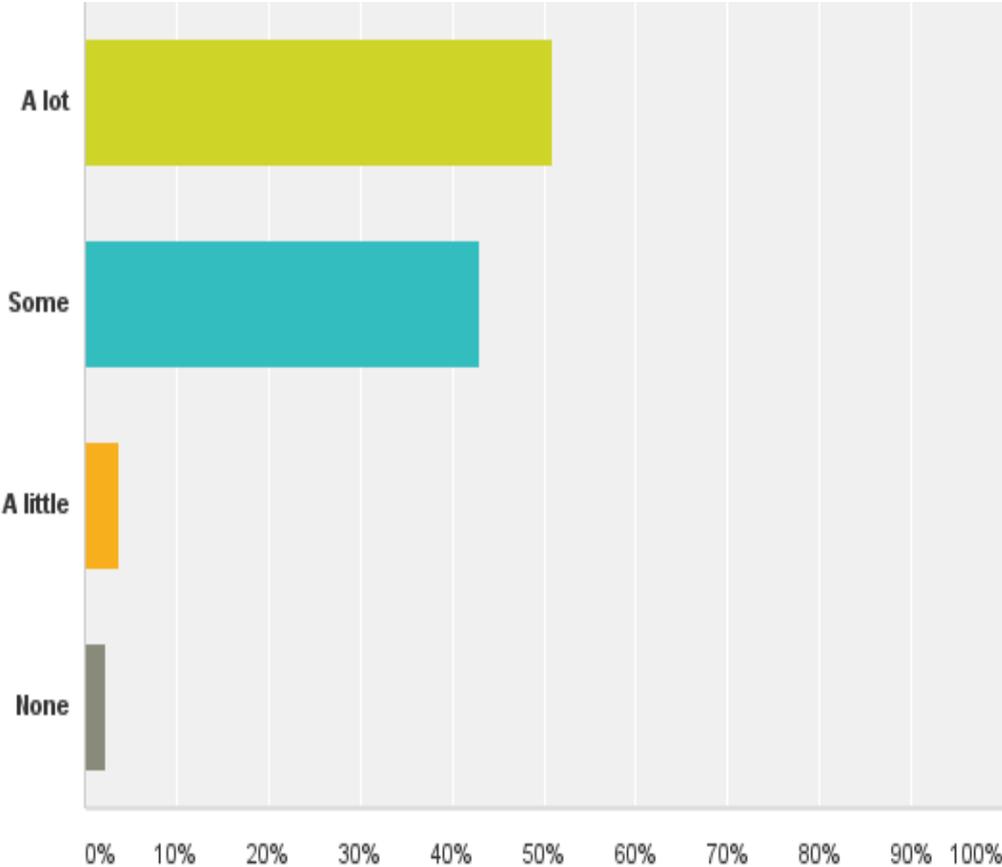
## Q18: What... are the top 3 *challenges* facing Hart County?

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- Lack of jobs
- Lack of entertainment options
- Cost of living/ Cost of government
- Community discord/ disagreement

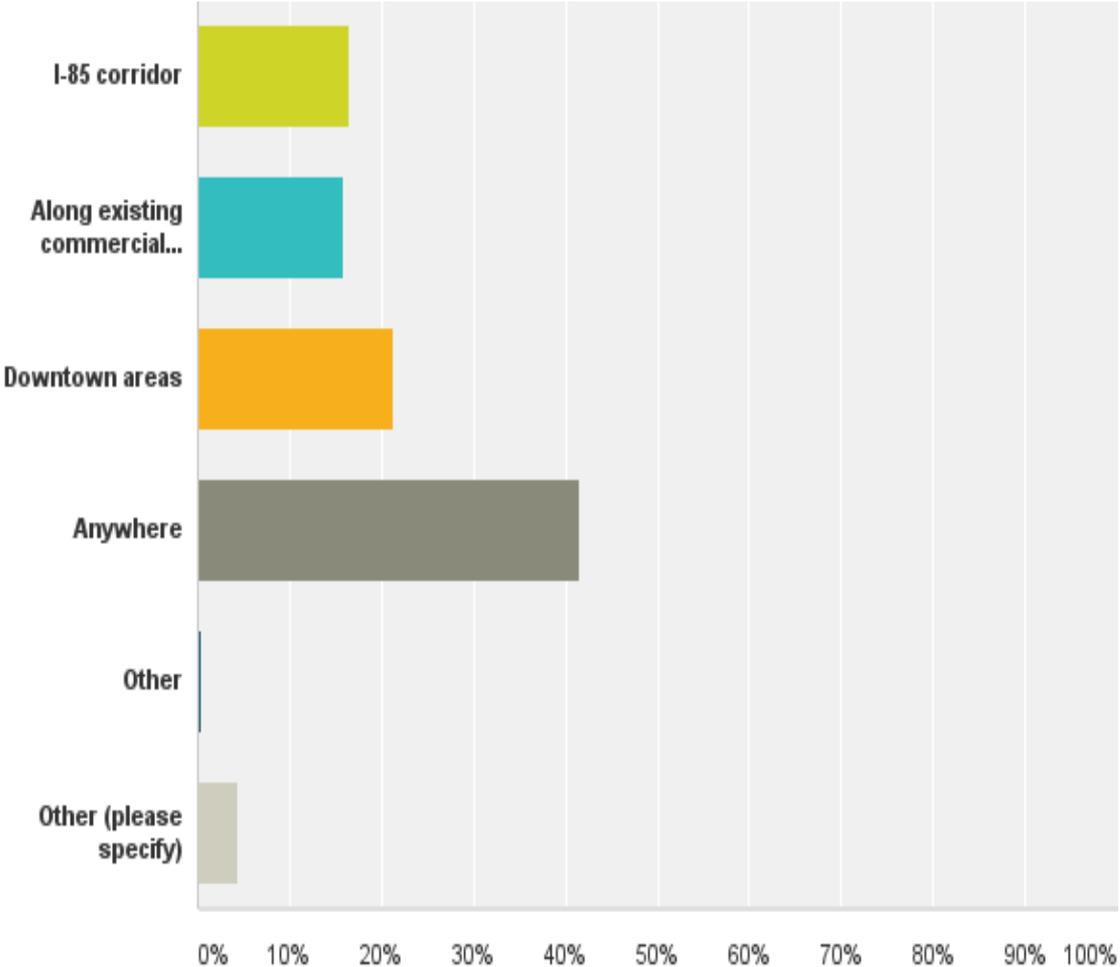
# Q19: How much growth and development should Hart County pursue?

Answered: 298 Skipped: 7



# Q20: Where do you feel growth and development should occur?

Answered: 296 Skipped: 9



## Q21: What 3 things would you like to see in SPLOST?

---

- Roads
- Education
- Water service
- No more SPLOST

## **Records of Public Meetings**

12/6/16

# Hart County Plan Mtg.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Nicki Meyer	Chamber of Commerce
Michelle Welmabee	DDA
Henry Cleary	DDA
Tyrell Pantan	Hart Co. IBoC
Ricky Carter	Hart Co. Commission
Dwayne Dye	Hart Co. IBA
Brandon Johnson	City of Hartsville
Steven Marchet	GFS Insurance Group. (Business At Large)
Matthew Honiotes	Hart BOE
Robert Healer	Hart Co. Chamber -
Jay Floyd	HCCS
Trag Hicks	City of Hartsville

4/18

Hart Plan Mtg.

Name

Terry Byrum

TERREN PARLIAN

JERRY CANNADY

Larry Bramblett

JOEY FLEMING

MARSHALL STAYNER

Nicki Meyer

Charlie Zison

KEVIN McRAWEY

GEORGE

Michelle Wetherbee

Ricky Carter

Dedrick Jay

JACK EDMUNDS

Mark Horne

Eileen Horne

Michael Isom

LARRY TORRENCE

5/30/17

Hart Plans Mrs

Name

Michael Isom

Michelle Wetherbee

Stephen Ayers

Cindy Hensley

Deezye Nolan

Marshall Snyder

Jamill Bell



HART COUNTY

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:  
COMMUNITY LISTENING  
SESSIONS**

MARCH 11, 2017

Facilitation provided on behalf of



**COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS**  
**HART COUNTY**  
**MARCH 11, 2017**

As part of the comprehensive planning process, a series of community listening sessions were held around Hart County. Each group was asked two questions "What are the 'Keepers' or things you love about Hart County?" and "What are the 'Fixers' or things you would like to see improved in the community?" Each group then voted on the issues they felt are the highest priority. Carrie Barnes, a Community Development Consultant from Georgia EMC, facilitated the meeting on behalf of Hart EMC.

## **LISTENING SESSION 1: Adult Learning Center**

### **KEEPERS**

- Active and Successful Industrial Building Authority
- Agricultural community
- Archway Partnership
- Business Development Opportunities such as the Gateway Park and opportunities for small business and large industries
- Cateechee
- City and County parks
- Civic involvement and spirit of volunteerism
- Climate
- Code enforcement in the City of Hartwell
- College and Career Academy
- County services (such as water)
- Diversity
- Diversity of our civic organizations
- Downtown Hartwell
- Hart State Park reopening under new management
- History of our community
- Homegrown arts and culture
- Interstate 85
- ISO Ratings are very low in the City and County
- Lack of traffic
- Lake activities
- Location
- Low millage rate
- New AgCenter is an opportunity for growth
- Our Chamber and Downtown Development Authority
- Police and Sheriff's Department
- Potential of our school system
- Proximity to health care
- Proximity to Higher Education and Continuing Education centers
- Proximity to retail centers

**COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS**  
**HART COUNTY**  
**MARCH 11, 2017**

- Quality of our annual events
- Quality of our future
- Religious community
- Roads are in good shape
- Warm and welcoming personalities
- YMCA

**FIXERS**

- Code enforcement in the County
- Consolidated government
- Continue to expand County water system
- Continue to invest in the Recreation Department
- Coordinate efforts to control lake levels
- Coordination of services between civic organizations
- County sewer system and water treatment plant
- Create a comprehensive approach to addressing the opioid drug problem
- Expand restaurant options on the lake by allowing for Sunday alcohol sales
- Focus on job creation and training to retain our young people
- Help the Hart County Chamber of Commerce to market the county
- Increase communication and cooperation among racial groups in the county
- Land use planning
- Leaders working together for the good of the entire county
- Leadership open minded to changes in millage (i.e. school tax exemption for seniors)
- Long term planning for our community
- More affordable single family and senior housing
- More cooperation with the surrounding 5 counties on Lake Hartwell
- More farmers
- Open minded leadership with good communication
- Overcrowded jail
- Pedestrian and bicycle trails/Connectivity
- Permanent farmers market
- Renovate/Improve/Build a new County Courthouse
- Roads and traffic
- Support TORCH projects
- Trash pickup along roads

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS  
HART COUNTY  
MARCH 11, 2017

**PRIORITY ISSUES**

1. Land Use planning
2. Leaders working together for the good of the entire county
3. Roads and traffic
4. Expand restaurant options on Lake Hartwell by allowing Sunday alcohol sales
5. Increase communication and cooperation among racial groups in the community

**LISTENING SESSION 2: AgScience Center**

**KEEPERS**

- Agriculture
- Continued focus on education
- Continued focus on tourism
- County services are great (EMC, Fire, Law Enforcement, etc)
- County Unity (we represented unified diversity)
- Downtown shops
- Golf Course
- Lake Hartwell
- Lot of potential at our industrial park
- Lots of support for the Arts Center
- Our people & volunteers
- Our religious community provides something for everyone
- Recreation Department
- Small town feel
- The Arts (High Cotton, 2 Community Theatres, Botanical Garden)
- We are a community that is open to growth and progress
- YMCA

**FIXERS**

- Access to emergency medical facilities
- Address drug problem and family issues
- Clean up railroad between Bowersville and Hartwell
- County roadside clean up
- Downtown parking
- Entry level housing
- Improve current programming and activities for Seniors
- New location or facility upgrades for the Post Office
- New or improved county courthouse
- Recreation/Community Center
- Restaurants and dining opportunities

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS  
HART COUNTY  
MARCH 11, 2017

- Road improvements
- Senior housing options (such as Assisted Living)
- Zoning/Land Use Planning

**PRIORITY ISSUES**

1. Access to emergency medical facilities
2. Agriculture
3. Zoning/Land Use Planning
4. Small Town Feel
5. Lots of potential at our industrial park

**LISTENING SESSION 3: Bowersville Community Center**

**KEEPERS**

- Active Chamber of Commerce
- Agriculture resources
- Animal Control
- Churches
- County government
- Family owned businesses
- Freedom
- Good school systems and College & Career Academy
- Healthcare
- Lake resources (such as recreation)
- Location (Proximity to I-85, Atlanta, Athens, Charlotte, etc)
- Low crime rate
- Our 2 industrial parks
- Our history
- Our people
- Our state representative is from our community and lives in Hartwell
- Our terrain (rolling hills)
- Public safety
- Recreation
- Recycling Centers (transfer stations)
- Road department
- Small town, rural atmosphere
- Water upgrades
- We have room for growth

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS  
HART COUNTY  
MARCH 11, 2017

## **FIXERS**

- Road upgrades
- More entertainment opportunities (for children and adults such as movies, bowling, skating, etc.)
- Community Center
- Develop recreation on Lake Hartwell (kayaking, canoeing, bike rentals, trails, etc.)
- Lower taxes
- Transitional senior living opportunities
- Plan with all stakeholders to create a unified vision for our community
- Telecommunication options
- Referendum for alcohol by the drink and package
- More restaurant options
- Continued water expansion
- Renovate the County Courthouse
- More single-family and workforce housing options
- Technical college campus in Hart County
- More collaboration, coordination, cooperation and communication between all county stakeholders
- Identify grants for continuing upgrades to the county
- Clean up litter on roadways
- Continue economic development efforts to attract and retain businesses
- Streamline the process for businesses to get up and running

## **PRIORITY ISSUES**

- 1. Referendum for alcohol sales (by the drink and package sales)**
- 2. Clean up litter on roadways**
- 3. Transitional senior living options**
- 4. Road Upgrades**
- 5. Community Center**

Yamaha motorcycle Anthony Surratt, age 49, of North Carolina was riding a 2009 Honda GL 1800 when he was involved in the

accident. Reeves, of Mebane, North Carolina was a passenger on the motorcycle. Surratt and Reeves were taken to AnMed in Anderson, South Carolina with non-life

threatening injuries.

According to the GSP report, Manning went to the AnMed in Anderson, but was not transported by Hart County EMS.

Hart County sheriff's deputies, Georgia State Patrol troopers, the Hart County Fire Department, and Hart EMS responded to the motor vehicle accident.

Sokol was charged with failure to yield when entering the roadway.

## ... away at age 90

Morgan

... lost a true civil servant last week when lifetime fire chief Maurice Vickery passed away at the age of 90.

Vickery was known by many as the owner of the former Hardware on the lake. One of his greatest contributions to the community was his 43 years of service as fire chief.

During his tenure as fire chief, he oversaw the department's transition to a volunteer fire department that received a Class 1 SO rating.

Under his leadership

that the department went from being an all-volunteer fire department to one that had full-time firefighters.

Vickery had a tremendous influence on his son, Terry, who followed in his father's footsteps and is now the city fire chief.

"I was always following him around to a fire station and jumping in a truck and going to fires with him," Terry Vickery said. "It was just in my blood."

After graduating from Hart County High School in 1943, Maurice Vickery attended Clemson University and later joined the U.S. Navy during

See *Vickery* page 2A

# Comprehensive plan gets second glance 4-20-17

By Michael Isom  
Staff writer

Following last month's three listening sessions, results from over 400 surveys conducted by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) were compiled in a meeting at the AgriScience Center Tuesday night regarding the comprehensive plan for Hart County.

Adam Hazell, planning director with the GMRC, presented the collected data from the surveys to community members for the purpose of ensuring that GMRC is hitting the mark in regard to the community's top concerns.

This effort is part of Hart County's 10-year comprehensive plan.

"What we're focusing on, the

biggest part of it, is the section of the document known as the community vision, where we craft a vision statement, where we identify the needs and priorities going forward," Hazell told the crowd. "Everything else that we want to do, we want to make sure we're doing it heading in the right direction."

Hazell focused on the general issues and values that need to be addressed on behalf of the county as a whole.

The number one issue ranked by survey participants was job growth. Issues with the lack of entertainment/recreation options and creating more retail and commercial opportunities rounded out the top three.

According to the survey, the

See *Plan* page 2A

## Oakview Crossing brings traffic concerns

By Michael Isom  
Staff writer

With the development of Oakview Crossing on Georgia Highway 29 between Ingles and Walmart finally underway, there have been concerns raised about how to handle the traffic situation that the new complex will generate once completed.

With the addition of physicians' offices, a diagnostic center, a senior community, retail space and additional office space, there will be a new significant presence in an already congested area.

Billy Kidd expressed his concern with *The Hartwell Sun*.

"It's not too early to start saying 'What is the solution to this?' We want controlled growth. Can we handle it?" said

Kidd. "I'm really confident that AnMed and the senior housing are really going to be nice additions to the community, but we've got to be able to handle the success that they will generate in the form of increased traffic."

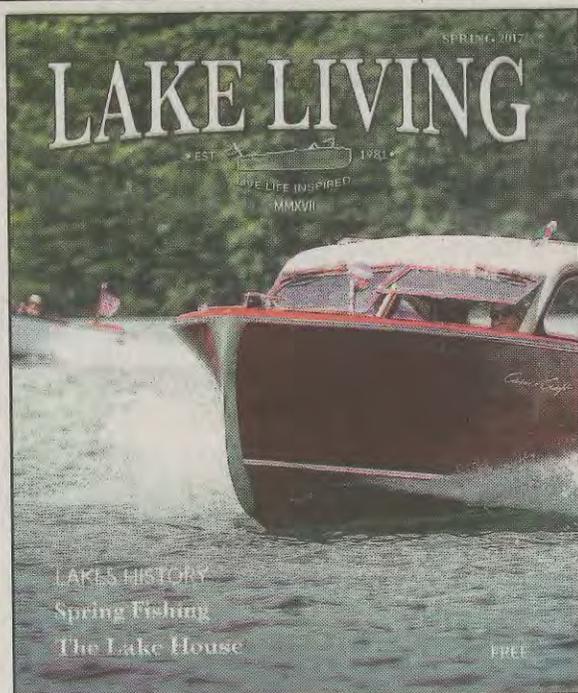
Kidd emphasized the concern for the impact on school traffic on Highway 29 and the safety of the students.

"There's a lot of discussion that's going to be generated, and it needs to be," said Kidd.

City Manager David Aldrich also expressed his concerns for the traffic issues on Highway 29.

However, he explained that the city of Hartwell does not get to dictate how to handle the

See *Oakview* page 2A



top two economic development priorities should be in the manufacturing industry and entertainment/recreation.

Housing was also highlighted in the survey results. The majority of those polled agreed more affordable housing in the community is a priority. In addition, efforts to clean up old and dilapidated housing and the addition of senior housing were presented.

The two most important cultural resources mentioned were the lake and the downtown area. Emphasis was placed on preserving/enhancing/protecting those resources going forward.

Consistencies and themes as a result of the surveys were emphasized for community members repeatedly throughout the meeting.

According to Hazell, many people surveyed wrote in comments indicating that elected officials are not working together properly to address the issues at hand. There were no specific names mentioned in the surveys.

"This isn't to say this is a grand problem, or it's priority number one," said Hazell. "But it's something that needs to be addressed."

Improvement of roads and the proper use of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax were also discussed.

Hazell went on to say that the overall constant presented in the majority of the gathered data is the call for changes.

"This has been reinforced at some of the public meetings as well - yes, people like what you

have, but there is still work to be done. It can and probably should be better," said Hazell.

The floor was then opened for community discussion while Hazell tallied any comments to add to existing data.

The next step is for Hazell to create a finalized list of needs and with it a list of recommended solutions or mitigation strategies. A vision statement for the community will then be drafted for approval.

Hazell will send all drafted documentation to County Administrator Terrell Partain, and a meeting will be scheduled next month to approve the results. The date for the meeting is to be determined. From that meeting, an implementation program will be drafted.



A truckload of food was delivered to Hartwell

# Hunger problem in

By Michael Isom  
Staff writer

Childhood hunger is a real problem in Hartwell County. According to the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, over 62 percent of school children in the county qualify for free or reduced lunches based on household income.

Food insecurity in childhood can have a long-term, negative impact on not only a child's health,

but also their emotional and social/development.

The food bank change that by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, bread and other staple food items can help families free of childhood hunger.

A climate-controlled truck delivers thousands of pounds of food to the Elementary School each month. Volunteers load the truck and a mobile school food pantry in an area developed by the school.

The school has participated in the program since last November.

There are 50 families currently registered for the services and each family is allowed to receive up to 50 pounds of food.

Beegee Elder, the school nutrition manager for the food bank, hopes to expand the service to over 300 families in Hartwell County by next year.

"There is a lot of need here," said Elder. "Three out of four children are going hungry."

In addition to Hartwell County, the food

## Shooting

leg. Algood said the Hartwell Police Department and Hart County Sheriff's Office were trying to locate suspects that were identified by witnesses to the shooting.

"(Rucker) was with his friends when the shooting occurred, and in addition to his friends there were several children standing around the area when the shooting occurred," Algood, the chief investigator in the incident, said. "From what we know right now the whole thing stemmed from a fight

that happened somewhere in Hart County on Saturday night."

Algood added that authorities "have several suspects identified in the shooting."

The victim, said Algood, was treated for his gunshot wound at Elbert Memorial Hospital (EMH) Monday night and was expected to be released.

Several people were outside EMH's emergency room after the shooting, including Elbert County Comprehensive High School Principal

Jason Kouns and Elbert County School System Security Director Shayne Bennett.

"The suspects pulled up and stopped on Campbell Street (in Elberton)," said Algood. "They stopped there and shot at the victim, who was standing in a pavilion between Third Street and Fountain Street."

According to Algood witnesses said there were several shots fired and that investigators on the scene recovered several shell casings.

"We recovered the shell casings but I don't want to say how many," Algood said. "Witnesses reported that there were several

Elberton Police Department spokesman Mike Seymour said Tuesday that the police department had conducted "several interviews" and there would be several more interviews in an effort "to get the story straight."

Seymour said Tuesday there were several more people being interviewed by members of the Hartwell Police Department and the Hart County Sheriff's Office.

"There will be more arrests," said Seymour. "There were a lot of witnesses when the shooting took place."

Seymour added that investigators have also been in touch with North-

From page 1A