2022 Comprehensive Plan

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INTRODUCTION 1

Purpose

Planning is the act of looking toward the future, regarding the possibilities, and then choosing a particular course or set of actions in order to achieve a desired set of outcomes. It is the art of deliberately choosing your actions based on a specific goal, be it a secure retirement, the most fulfilling trip, or a successful business venture. Planning is how we achieve control over our fates, or at the least realize more of what we want, and less of what we don't.

> **"Always plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark."**
>
> **Richard Cushing**

The purpose of local government planning is to provide guidance for everyday decision-making by government officials and other community leaders. This document, the *2022 Comprehensive Plan for Hart County*, represents the culmination of the efforts to plan for the future of the county, the residents, and various stakeholders by identifying the critical issues and goals for the community and outlining a series of recommended actions and policies that will help secure the desired well-being of Hart County.

Communities in Georgia have been producing local comprehensive plans since at least 1989, when the State first produced formal guidelines and standards, born from the recognition that governments engaged in routine planning tended to demonstrate more effective fiscal policies and popular support for closely linking investments with desired objectives and critical issues. The craft has evolved over the years, as have the requirements for each document, but the practice has helped both local governments and the State more closely align policies and budgets with constituent interests, yielding a healthier Georgia and healthier communities, by design.

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 Affair'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 for Hart County to maintain their Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. The elements required of Hart County as part of these standards are as follows:

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.

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.

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.

Assessment of Community Broadband Technology Capacity. The purpose of the broadband assessment is to facilitate the "promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services" throughout each community in recognition of how vital this technology is for economic development. In an effort to provide advance compliance with this standard the County and municipalities will provide a brief analysis of their needs and objectives regarding broadband technology.

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.

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.

(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.

Other elements and topics of consideration may be included at the local government's discretion, and it is encouraged that planning participants reflect on all the critical issues and objectives that should be addressed to advance the community toward its desired vision.

The comprehensive plan was prepared in accordance with minimum procedural requirements for local plans, which include a public hearing prior to substantive work on the plan, and a public hearing prior to transmittal of the comprehensive plan for review by Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) and Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Public Participation

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

Public involvement for Hart County featured 4 public hearings in the summer and fall of 2022, stretching from July through October. Each meeting focused on a particular phase of the planning process, confirming the general vision, reviewing nominated issues, and prioritizing potential action items. Additional meetings among staff and select stakeholders were also held, as well as an invited presentation to the Hart County Rotary. While attendance ranged from 12-30 persons per event, participation among those in attendance was strong, particularly in reviewing critical issues and assessing practical ways for Hart County to address prospective changes.

A link on the Hart County web site directed citizens to the online survey.

Additionally, the process saw strong participation through an online survey promoted via the County's web site, social media, and the local newspaper. The survey invited comment regarding Hart County's strengths and weaknesses, the values people wished to see embodied a generation from now, and to identify priorities in areas such as economic development and housing. People were also free to write in their concerns and ideas for helping improve the community. More than 460 responses were generated, with the input helping shape the discussion at committee and public events as the process sought to confirm the overall direction and strategies for the County.

The County also used an advisory committee to oversee the process, intended to ensure representation from a variety of different demographic groups within Hart County. Included in this Committee were members from the agricultural industry and other businesses, residents from the lake shore, rural and urban areas, someone from the school system, and both long-time and short-time residents. The advisory committee participated through both public meetings, special online forums, and direct email discussion to review materials and guide the direction of the plan document.

HART COUNTY PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lee Adams
Steve Burton
Bobby Fleming *(Agriculture)*
Jay Floyd *(School system, retired)*
Bill Fogerty
Pat Goran *(Water and Sewer Authority)*
Kevin McCraney *(Ga. Power)*
Julie Mouchet *(Finance)*
Angie McGee
Fort Oglesby
Terri Partain *(Realtor)*
Gina Temple
Shannon Vanskike
Toy "Cynthia" Wilkins
Zack York

Survey sheet from a public forum

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.

Profile - Hart County

Hart County, Georgia, sits along the state's eastern boundary with South Carolina as now formed by Lake Hartwell and the Savannah River. It was once part of the lands of the Cherokee Nation, including a historic assembly ground that the Cherokee called "the Center of the World." The landscape is defined by many low rolling hills, various creeks and streams, with woodland in between. It has a legacy of soil fertile for agriculture and has been home to many villages and communities using the land for crops, trade posts, and way stations for traveling up and down the river.

Today, Hart County is an evolving rural community. Agriculture remains prevalent, from varieties of crops and cattle to a healthy share of the region's poultry farms. Other industry has come and gone, as a region once thick with textile manufacturing has given way to a myriad of small items manufacturing, warehousing, and some goods production. Recoveries from the Great Recession of 2008 and the recent Covid-19 pandemic have fostered an intent to improve the diversity of local industries, and the County has worked with the local school system and other partners to enhance educational resources for area students and the resident labor force.

Festival scenes in downtown Hartwell

Hartwell is the County seat and the largest population and employment center, though it remains a modest rural city. There are a handful of industrial facilities across the city, but the fabric of the community is defined by a historic downtown featuring vintage early 20th-century shopfront buildings and many historic homes and residential streets around the commercial core. Subdivisions and a mix of other uses have radiated outward from Hartwell, branching into the rural landscape as roads connecting the city with other destinations defined not only travel patterns but new land uses, as well.

Bowersville is the other municipality solely in Hart County, but at less than 500 people and with no commercial center it functions more like a community crossroads than a town. It is set along the county's western edge amidst a variety of farmsteads. There are also the larger cities of Royston and Lavonia straddling the Hart County line, with both serving as commercial and industrial centers, plus the city of Cannon is just west of the county boundary. As a result of their presence in the area, Hart County has remained a predominantly rural community in between these pockets of urban form.

Lake Hartwell

Arguably the defining trait of modern Hart County is the presence of Lake Hartwell. A reservoir that was completed in 1962 after the construction of the Hartwell Dam, Lake Hartwell has a surface area of approximately 56,000 acres and today serves as a major source for power generation, public water supply, and recreation. The popularity of lake frontage has shaped development patterns all along the reservoir, and Lake Hartwell has been a major tourist attraction for locals and for visitors from throughout the region.

AREA POPULATION TRENDS

	2010	2015	2020	Δ 2010 - 2020	
				#	%
Hart County	*25,213*	*25,415*	*26,406*	*1,193*	*4.73%*
Bowersville town	465	478	495	30	6.45%
Canon city (pt.)	43	43	45	2	4.65%
Hartwell city	4,469	4,346	4,446	(23)	-0.51%
Lavonia city (pt.)					
Royston city (pt.)	648	641	643	(5)	-0.77%
Unincorporated	19,588	19,907	20,777	1,189	6.07%
Georgia	9,687,653	10,183,353	10,710,017	1,022,364	10.55%
Franklin County	22,084	22,281	23,504	1,420	6.43%
Elbert County	20,166	19,303	19,335	(831)	-4.12%
Madison County	28,120	28,431	30,457	2,337	8.31%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2022

Hart County has not seen much growth over the past two decades, but it sits along the I-85 corridor that links the rapidly growing metro areas of Atlanta, Gainesville, and Anderson. New employment centers and large-scale residential development is creeping along this corridor toward Hart County, and it is projected that within the next five years the area will see a significant influx of new construction, new residents, and demand for more services to accommodate additional growth.

Vision Statement

A vision for the community's future 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.

The vision statement for Hart County originated from the previous planning cycle in 2016, derived from the various comments and suggestions raised during public meetings and through the available survey process. The updated statement (shown below) encapsulates the basic principles and values desired by existing residents and stakeholders, particularly in illustrating the way the community wishes to retain its existing character while simultaneously embracing the potential for projected economic development. It specifically uses several of the words (seen at right) used by residents to illustrate values they feel describe the county as it is today *AND* that they desire to see embodied by the county a generation from now. This statement, then, reflects the general direction of Hart County favored by area residents and key stakeholders.

Most Common Values Cited in Planning Process
Safe
Friendly
Charming
Beautiful
Rural
Home/ Hometown
Small town
Quaint
Peaceful
Affordable
Growing

"Hart County, Georgia, is a charming lakeside community that celebrates our agricultural heritage, the outdoor spirit, southern hospitality, and a commitment to our rural character

We will strive to be friendly neighbors and good leaders through clear and efficient governance, the wise stewardship of our resources, investing for future prosperity, and providing a safe and affordable hometown for all."

HART COUNTY VISION STATEMENT

Stakeholder Input

The effectiveness of any planning process requires identifying the needs that must be addressed to achieve a community's goals, clarifying the targets for the local government. While having the raw data about a community's demographics helps understand current conditions, engaging with area residents, business leaders, and other key stakeholders ensures that the plan will be built upon the interests and ambitions of the public, which helps ensure local leaders will be making future decisions in line with the residents' vision for the community.

Throughout the public process an online survey was available to area residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. The survey was used to help define the prevailing interests and concerns of the community, with questions about the performance of public facilities and services, about the values they'd like to see Hart County embody in the future, and their preferences regarding priorities for housing, economic development and more. There were several options for where respondents could also write in answers to give more complete, open-ended comments, as well. In all, more than **560 responses** were collected, and the information from these surveys were used throughout the process to refine the ongoing discussion of what was important to Hart County. *(A full summary of survey results can be found in the appendix.)*

"The greatest investment in the future is our young families, teenagers and children."

"Growth came quicker than anyone could have predicted. Vacation rental traffic is providing both an economic benefit and strain. Growth cannot outpace the infrastructure."

"People that are moving here are moving here because they like what is here. We need to remember that and stay true to ourselves and don't go changing what is obviously attractive enough for people to want to move here."

"Focus on bringing some type of business/growth to our communities ASIDE from industrial. Give the employees of these business somewhere to spend their money instead of driving to Anderson or Lavonia."

The first two public forums provided the general public with an overview of local comprehensive planning in Georgia, a discussion of changes and trends since the last plan update for Hart County (2016), and discussion about key issues facing the community. The forum in September focused on consideration of priorities for the County and a discussion of land use. It's accepted that Hart County does not currently employ any land use management policies apart from subdivision regulations, but concerns over the potential negative impacts of growth suggests there will be the need to review options in the near future or risk taking in the types and volumes of changes that residents do not want. As a result, regardless of land use discussions participants emphasized a strong desire to retain the county's rural character, small town charm, and reletive affordability.

SWOT Analysis

One facet of the public input process asks residents and stakeholders to assess their community's respective Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. In doing this analysis, communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions to better achieve the desired vision.

Via both the online surveys and during public forums, participants were asked to identify those things they considered key assets about their community as things they didn't want to change or were critical to achieving positive growth. For weaknesses, residents offered those elements of Hart County that needed improvement or were seen as a liability in achieving desired progress. For Opportunities, participants were invited to nominate unique ideas or possible projects and policies that might advance the community in a positive way. Lastly, residents were asked about outside forces or trends that posed a risk or negative impacts to the area.

On the whole, participants cited a preference for things that preserved the area's rural character and strengthened Hart County's role as a safe and prosperous residential hometown. While there were preferences for some changes that might introduce new commercial or recreational opportunities, participants were adamant about the desire to ensure progress does not come at a substantial cost, either directly affecting the cost of living or in creating nuisances that detract from the quality of life.

STRENGTHS/ KEY ASSETS	WEAKNESSES/ LIABILITIES
• Lake Hartwell • Downtown Hartwell • Area agriculture • Small-town charm • School system • Parks and recreation amenities (Incl. lake) • People • Public safety • Local businesses • Botanical garden • Arts community • Cateechee	• Traffic • Limited housing options • Insufficient broadband access • Limited options for entertainment • Limited control over development • Lack of activities for kids/ families • Need for improved building inspection/ dilapidated properties • Need for improved communications from the County (to the public and the Cities.)
OPPORTUNITIES/ UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES	THREATS/ OUTSIDE RISKS
• More lakeside access/ parks • More parks and recreation facilities • Economic development along I-85 corridor • Potential to enhance tourism	• Drug abuse • Crime/ Gangs • Impacts of growth/ Uncontrolled growth • Traffic • Lack of affordable housing • Lack of land use management • Growth coming from outside the county

2022 Priorities

To achieve its stated vision a community must understand those obstacles and issues that must be addressed to reach the goals implied. The comprehensive planning process asks communities to assess the information outlined 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. Based on the stakeholder input and on considerations of local conditions and resources, the following represents key priorities for Hart County today:

Need to be able to manage projected growth and have a clearer vision for future

Residents, visitors, and local business leaders cherish the scenic beauty and pastoral nature of Hart County. They appreciate economic development and expect some change, but are desperate to maintain the rural, lakeside character that currently defines the hometown they love. The County can be proactive in preserving rural character without impeding economic growth and should work with partners in securing economic development in appropriate areas, actively directing growth to parts of the community capable of sustaining heavy commercial activity and limiting the pressure to locate such development elsewhere.

Need to improve communication and coordination from/among governments, and commit to consistently improving local leadership

Expectations and demands regarding how governments communicate with their residents and business leaders has evolved. New technologies and a heightened awareness of Dahlonega's potential means citizens may have different performance measures than past generations. Today's citizens want efficiency, but they also expect a quality return on their investments.

Need to preserve the local cost of living & commit to fiscal efficiency

Hart County currently has some levels of long-term budgeting and is engaged in social media, but measures remain that could improve how information is shared and used. The County could also benefit from assurances their communication methods are in step with projected trends for future generations. Such efforts, combined with improved communication, would ensure area stakeholders the County is doing its part to keep taxes low.

Need to preserve local agriculture through improved engagement and awareness

An active agriculture industry, particularly larger farm operations for either livestock or row crops, is considered a key component of communities being perceived as rural. It not only speaks to the wide-open spaces and limited population, but it demonstrates how the community is tied to the land and speaks to the local culture. Hart County needs to do what it can to preserve active agriculture in the area, but to retain this culture but also as a buffer against unchecked or incompatible growth.

Need to maintain clarity regarding State & federal projects that impact Hart County

The State of Georgia and the Army Corps of Engineers are among key outside agencies that are responsible for existing or potential projects within or near Hart County. Things such as the reservoir, the interstate, or plans for passenger rails service through the region. Knowing that future investments by these agencies can have significant impacts on the area, the County must stay vigilant in monitoring plans and progress for such projects and be poised to offer direction and/or plan for responses.

Support the commitment to a high standard of crime management & public safety

Just the perception of crime can influence a community, and as Hart County is poised for at least some growth and change area residents are concerned about the ability of local law enforcement to manage possible increases in crime. The County must work with the Sheriff's Department and the local Cities to ensure long-range budgeting accounts for needed improvements and that the public has access to factual information about trends in the area so as to avoid hysteria.

Need to improve local transportation planning

The prospect for increased development in Hart County denotes not only the probable need for new and upgraded roads, but also means the need to consider concerns for traffic in new areas, increasing demands for pedestrian infrastructure and/or rural transit, and a possible shift in the efficiency of current maintenance practices. The County should review improvement plans for existing infrastructure and consider a formal long-range strategy capable of sustaining a larger population and employment base.

Continue commitment to strengthening and diversifying the local economy

There is a demand for more and better job opportunities, and support for "appropriate" retail. The desire among residents is that efforts supporting business expansion do so with an emphasis on sustaining the community's rural character, minimizing the potential nuisances of the need for major impacts on the landscape.

Need to both preserve, and maximize use of, Lake Hartwell

Lake Hartwell is undeniably a critical asset to the community. The County needs to ensure their policies regarding growth and development preserve the integrity of the watershed and the viability of the lake for recreational use. Opportunities for expanded tourism and public access should be explored, but the County should also avoid overcrowding or greatly altering the character of the community in pursuit of tourism.

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This is not to be considered the full account of every issue that faces Hart County, nor anything to prevent the County from acting on other needs or opportunities as they arise. It does, however, attempt to identify the most critical issues that the County MUST address if it's to achieve the vision desired for the community. If Hart County is acting on these items, then most participants in the process feel that the County will be moving in the right direction and doing what it can to preserve the best parts of the community while also pursuing possible improvements where needed.
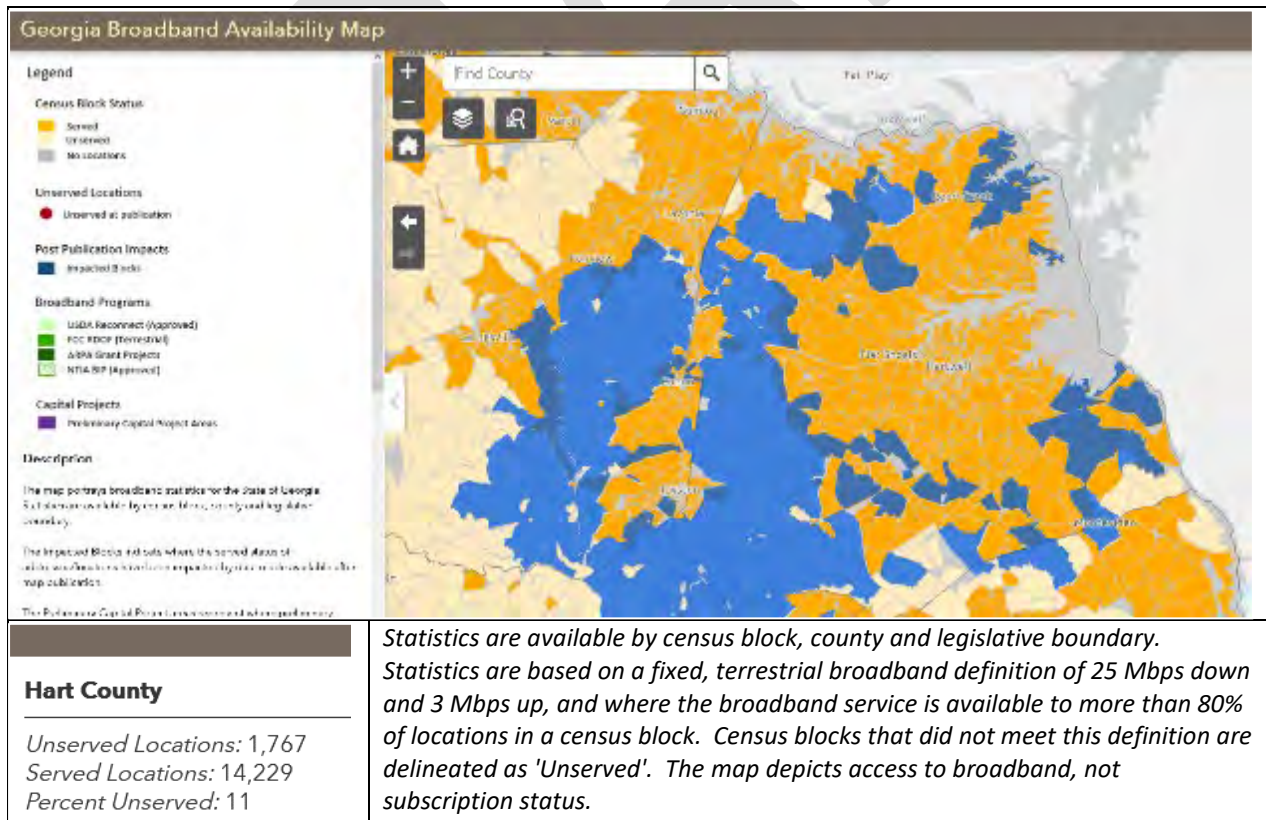
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY — 3

Broadband Assessment

The growing importance of access to reliable and high-speed, high-capacity internet connections cannot be overestimated. Unserved and underserved areas of Georgia will not remain economically competitive without sufficient internet infrastructure, as this technology becomes the default utility for all manners of communication. To address this issue the Georgia General Assembly amended the provisions of local planning in Georgia by passing the "Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act" to facilitate the enhancement and extension of internet access in communities. The ACE Act requires all local governments to incorporate the "promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services" into their local plan. Once these are in place the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Economic Development will identify and promote facilities and developments that offer broadband services at a rate of not less than 1 gigabit per second in the downstream to end users that can be accessed for business, education, health care, government.

One of the first products to come out of the Georgia Broadband Initiative was an inventory of general conditions across the State regarding access to high speed/ high-capacity broadband technology. Utilizing demographic data from the US Census Bureau and cross-referencing that information with knowledge of broadband infrastructure, the Department of Community Affairs produced a series of maps depicting the state of broadband accessibility in rural areas.

Hart County

Unserved Locations: 1,767
Served Locations: 14,229
Percent Unserved: 11

Statistics are available by census block, county and legislative boundary. Statistics are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, and where the broadband service is available to more than 80% of locations in a census block. Census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated as 'Unserved'. The map depicts access to broadband, not subscription status.

Hart County does have access to the North Georgia Network (NGN), an incorporated cooperative providing a regional fiber optic system with over 1,600 linear miles of infrastructure. The NGN was conceived to aid rural Georgia, knowing that a fast, reliable, and affordable fiber optic network is vital to modern economic development. The NGN provides infrastructure that loops through the northeast Georgia mountains with 100 gigabit core line and connects to most schools, colleges, business parks and civic institutions in the region.
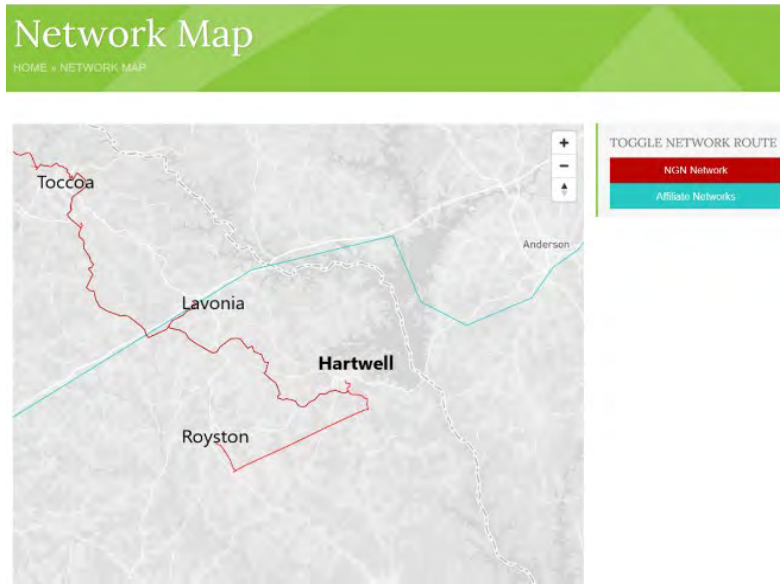
In and around the City of Hartwell there is reliable, high-speed internet access envisioned by the Georgia General assembly. HTC, a local telecommunications company, has built a fiber optic network capable of delivering 1 gigabit per second services to all end users in the area, whether business or residential. As of July 1, 2021, HTC's cable modem system was upgraded to allow for gigabit services to be delivered to all customers remaining on that system. At that time, the vast majority of all Hart County residents will have access to gigabit service. In addition, Hart County has access to multiple internet middle mile providers, including Georgia Public Web (GPW), Segra and AT&T.
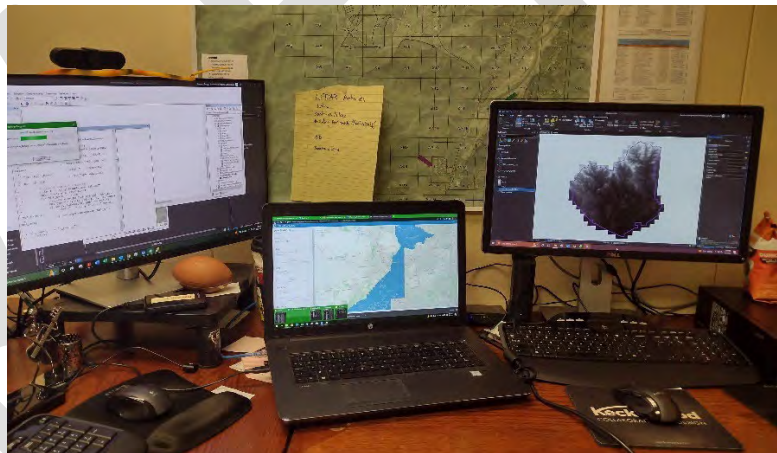
As an additional reference Hartwell and Hart County were included in the 2014 Georgia Mountains Digital Economy Plan (DEP), one of several such plans developed for each region across Georgia in accordance with standards defined by the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA). The DEP was designed to identify and coordinate the resources and efforts related to improving the region's infrastructure in support of hi-tech industries and economies. As each regional plan is completed, the State and its partners can begin directing their energy and resources with clearer focus and understanding of needs from every part of Georgia. While specific investment actions have not been identified as part of this initial process, the DEP provides a work scope that addresses key focus areas and recommendations that will help the GMRC, its member governments and regional stakeholders move forward with an understanding of the regional and state context for building network connectivity, improving educational resources and fostering technology hubs. With continued coordination and monitoring of progress, it is hoped these efforts will make the region a more effective and efficient place enabling all manners of business to realize their potential in accessing and utilizing electronic data.

Priorities for Broadband Network Enhancements
• Ability to increase "last-mile" connections in residential areas
• Support Hartwell's Smart City Grant application
• Monitor status of network with local Chamber, Development Authority, and School System

Environmental Assessment

A region's natural resources are the native conditions and elements that contribute to the local character and livelihood, such as the rivers and lakes supplying public water, mineral deposits that support local industry, or a scenic park serving locals and tourists. These resources can, when properly managed, greatly serve a community's health, culture, and economy. However, because these sites and conditions are highly susceptible to disturbance from human activity, they are also regarded environmentally sensitive and need to be preserved for public benefit.

Clean Water Act Compliance

Y	**Any "not supporting" 303(d) listed waterbodies?** *(See Below)*
	If yes, these waterbodies have been found contaminated to the extent that they are not considered supporting their designated use. As such the local community should seek to manage land uses within the watershed so as to yield healthier water quality.
Y	**Any 305(b) listed waterbodies?** *(See Below)*
N	*Do the Implementation Plans/Watershed Management Plans require any outstanding actions from the local government?*
	If yes, please include these actions within the Implementation Program.

Georgia employs two tiers of water quality standards for environmental planning purposes: A general criteria applicable to all waters and more detailed, specific criteria for each of six designated uses. The general criteria (shown below) are qualitative and reflect the goals form Georgia's streams, rivers, ponds and lakes. These are established to ensure consistency across resource initiatives and to keep a comprehensive perspective in everything EPD does to maintain water quality. Once designations are made, the State of Georgia assesses its water bodies for compliance with water quality standards criteria established for their designated uses as required by the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Assessed water bodies are placed into one of three categories depending on water quality assessment results: *Supporting* designated use, *Not Supporting* designated use, or *Assessment Pending*. These water bodies are found on Georgia's 305(b) list as required by that section of the CWA that addresses the assessment process and are published in Water Quality in Georgia (GA EPD, 2019).

Coldwater Creek

Hart County currently features eight (8) stream segments that are listed as *Not Supporting* their designated use, and one other with their *Assessment Pending*. These waters are the ones in need of ongoing monitoring and possible future mitigation to ensure the water quality does not become so impaired as to harm wildlife or people. Most of the pollution issues in Union County concern Biota – Fish impairment (commonly associated with chemicals like phosphates) or fecal coliform bacteria, with both attributed to non-point source contamination, meaning the polluting agents aren't coming from a pipe or obvious source but are instead washing into the streams from broad areas. Currently, the County and Georgia EPD have plans in place to address these issues, with most streams having already been reviewed as part of a watershed management plan or comparable assessment. So long as the County continues to enforce proper standards and that all stakeholders encourage best practices regarding livestock management and chemical applications it is hoped the conditions will improve.

Hart County also has another five (5) streams that have been monitored as part of past contaminant concerns but that have since been restored to supporting standards. These streams are still tested and monitored by EPD, however, and no additional action is needed regarding their protection at this time.

State Listed Water Bodies in Hart County *(2020)*

NAME	LOCATION	SIZE (miles)	CAUSE	SOURCE
Supporting or Assessment Pending				
Beaverdam Creek*	Pruitt Creek to unnamed tributary approx. 0.3 miles from county line	4.0		
Boyds Creek	Headwaters to Little Coldwater Creek	6.0		
Cedar Creek	Downstream Hartwell WPCP to Little Cedar Creek	8.0		
Coldwater Creek	Robinson Branch to SR 77	3.0		
Lightwood Log Creek	Headwaters to Lake Hartwell	6.0		
Savannah River	Lake Hartwell to Cedar Creek	6.0		
Non-Supporting				
Cedar Creek	Little Cedar Creek to Savannah River near Montevideo	4.0	FC	NP
Little Beaverdam Creek	Headwaters to Reservoir 30	8.0	Bio F	NP
Little Cedar Creek	Headwaters to Cedar Creek	5.0	Bio F	NP
Little Coldwater Creek	Headwaters to Boyds Creek	5.0	Bio F	NP
Little Shoal Creek	Headwaters to Lake Hartwell	6.0	Bio M, Bio F	NP
Reed Creek	Upstream Lake Hartwell	5.0	FC	NP
Shoal Creek	Pooles Creek to Lake Hartwell, Parkertown	1.0	FC, Bio M	NP
Shoal Creek	Headwaters to Pooles Creek	7.0	Bio M	NP

Legend				
*	Assessment Pending	**FC**	Fecal Coliform	
NS	Not Supporting	**NP**	Nonpoint source pollution	
Bio F	Biota – Fish Impairment			

Source: Georgia EPD, 2020

State-Designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Present in Hart County	Not Present in Hart County
Floodplains	*Forest Lands*
Ground Water Recharge Areas Water Supply Watersheds	*Registered Plant & Animal Habitat*
Wetlands	*Prime Agricultural Lands*
Protected Rivers	*Protected Mountains*
	Steep Slopes

Note: While Hart County has pockets of forested land, the county does not exhibit expanses of significant woodlands to register on the list of ESAs. Similarly, while Hart County does have an extensive amount of agricultural activity, the soil and climatological conditions did not warrant a State-level designation of critical agricultural areas. This does not prohibit the County from recognizing locally significant agricultural zones, however.

Lake Hartwell

Within Hart County are several resources covered by the *Environmental Planning Criteria*. The Criteria was established through the Georgia Planning Act as a method of identifying minimum standards that should be implemented to protect Georgia's most sensitive natural resources including wetlands, water supply watersheds, protected rivers, groundwater recharge areas, and mountain protection areas. Local governments are encouraged to adopt regulations for the protection of relevant natural resources to maintain their eligibility for certain state grants, loans, and permits. DNR has developed model ordinances to be used as guides for local governments as they develop the necessary regulations to meet EPD standards. Hart County and its municipalities have regulations in place to address these environmental conditions, however from time to time it may review these standards and policies to see if they need revisions or updates.

Throughout this process, Union County understands their need to be compliant with all applicable State laws and regulations regarding environmental planning and protection. 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 *Georgia 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

(Hart County's environmentally sensitive areas can be visualized on the map of Area's Requiring Special Attention, seen in following pages.)

Community Facilities & Services

Public facilities and services are those elements vital to a population's health, safety, and welfare that are most effectively provided by the public sector, such as sewerage, law enforcement and school services. This element examines the community's ability to adequately serve the present and projected demands for such services, identifying concerns with the spatial distribution and conditions affecting service delivery. These assessments can then assist in projecting future demands and in planning future capital improvement projects.

The Department Heads for Hart County were surveyed independently for their thoughts on the existing levels of performance for their departments and needs for their department in order to sustain levels of service as the county grows and changes. Based on responses received, few Hart County departments indicated that they had long-term operation plans and budgets, with some indicating they had not formal strategy to pay for capital expenses. (Other than SPLOST nominations.) Of the ones that did, the plan for Parks and Recreation is almost 10 years old and was not fully implemented due to limited funding. The absence of forecasted budgetary needs indicates a limited capacity for the County to formulate an effective gameplan for achieving major one-time expenses, let alone feel assured their investments are part of an optimal, coordinated strategy.

Our Dept. has a long-range plan and budget	Without major investment, we can maintain current levels of service…	
	…for now.	…even if the county grows.
Administration/ BOC Parks and Recreation	Roads Transit Courts Property Appraisal Coroner	Coroner

This could prove critical given the number of departments that indicated they faced at least some significant needs if they were forced to keep up with a growing Hart County. As population growth typically entails some change in demand for services, many Departments implied they would need not only increased personnel but also some combination of vehicles, operating space, and equipment. Demand was particularly strong for space among the various Court operations, implying the County should at least formally explore a new/expanded courthouse and a new indoor recreation facility.

What is clear is that the County would benefit from having all departments produce long-term capital improvement plans, which accounted for the possible needs to accommodate population growth over a 20 or 25-year horizon. Doing this would empower the Commissioners with a greater sense of potential demands and, more importantly, the budget and logistical realities among their various options.

Q6: On a scale of 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good), please rate your satisfaction with the following services:
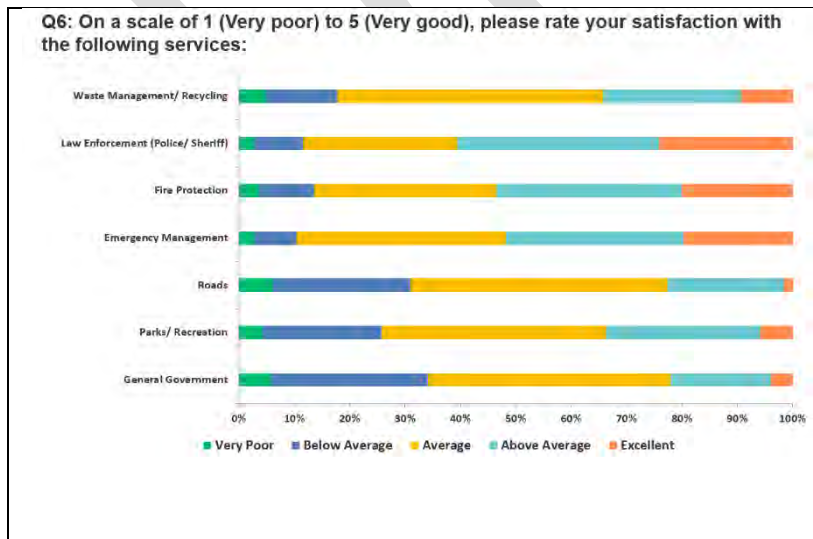
Participants in the online survey scored most governmental services average or above average. The exceptions were for roads, parks and recreations, and general government. Roads is as much a factor of traffic as it is road conditions, meaning improving this score will be as much about growth management as actual physical improvements. Based on comments, the score for parks and recreation predominantly reflects the desire for more options and locations.

Targeted mid-to-long term Needs/Objectives by Department

Probate Court
- Need courtroom space that is designed for courts other than Superior courts for continual access
- Office space and storage is certainly limited
- Parking at the courthouse and the access to offices is an issue for the elderly and handicapped
- A minimum of 1 to 2 additional fulltime clerks.
- Currently no fulltime security located at the courthouse
- Insufficient storage for the preservation of records

Magistrate Court
- A new facility for magistrate & probate courts with our own court rooms
- Space

Clerk of Superior Court
- Scanning and indexing of Deeds, Liens, Criminal and Civil filings and Grantor Grantee books
- Need for more office space
- It would be adding another employee in the next 10 years and a new filing system
- A larger courthouse w/ more parking
- Internet issues need to be addressed

Administrative/ BOC
- Staffing (3-4 additional personnel); Need to improve employee retention
- Equipment, space, filing system

Emergency Services
- Replacement ambulances
- A 3rd EMS substation
- Increase in fulltime FF, increase in LEO, EMTs'/Paramedics, and other support staff

Property Appraisal
- We are short at least two positions
- The vehicles are old and are in poor condition
- We struggle to compete with local starting salaries for the current appraisers as well as new hires
- *"If (Hart County) continues to grow, we would need at least one additional personnel every two to three years."*

Recreation and Parks
- Need an indoor recreation center/ gym to provide a multitude of programs and activities.
- Need more staff for programs, maintenance, and custodial support
- Need replacement of worn-out equipment and park amenities, updated computer hardware/software and better phone system
- Need more parks property in other areas of the county for future growth
- *Long-range plan was completed 5+ years ago but hasn't been implemented due to funding*

Transit Supervisor
- Extra drivers
- Another bus

Senior Center
- Facility maintenance, handicap accessibility
- Need more staff support
- Increased traffic is making it increasingly difficult for seniors that drive to our center
- Due to a lack of volunteers, we have a substantial waiting list for home delivered meals

Roads
- Funding for major bridge and culvert repair
- Personnel + equipment: Pickups, dump trucks, backhoes and trailers.
- Need lots of contract work for removal of tree limbs that our boom mowers can't reach.
- Concern wages aren't high enough to get and keep qualified workers.

"Barely enough help when everyone is here. When someone is out, we are limited on what can get done. All our equipment is barely getting by. Pretty much everything will need replacing within the 10 years with a few exceptions."

Water & Sewer Authority
- Complete planned Northeast Hart County Water System Expansion (underserved, densely populated portion in Reed Creek area. Map in appendix.)
- Need to expand the water system for improved better fire protection
- Need to update long-term maintenance plans for full system

E-911
- Updated equipment (Next Gen CAD
- New facility/ Centralized communication center that is secure and acoustically sound
- 4 more full-time personnel

Land Use Assessment

Land use management policies represent guidelines for shaping development patterns that provide for efficient growth while also protecting sensitive social and environmental areas. Communities should consider 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.

Development Trends and Forces

The predominant forces driving development patterns in and around Hart County are the Lake Hartwell reservoir and the connection to I-85. The reservoir is the primary driver, both as a magnet for tourism and the related industries and as a lure for specialty residential development. Various scales of housing have been built with access to the shorelines all around the lake in both Georgia and South Carolina, including both full-time residences and vacation properties. All indications are the Lake will continue to grow more popular as the region grows in population, with more and more day visitors seeking recreation opportunities. This will in turn raise demand for tourism-supporting industries as well as secondary entertainment options for those visitors in the area for longer.

The access to I-85 is critical in that the interstate is fast becoming a major goods manufacturing and distribution corridor between Atlanta and Greenville. Recent or planned employment centers in the area include the projected 2,000+ employee SK Batteries manufacturing facility in Commerce, a new lithium-ion battery recycling plant will be locating in Stephens County, and a home building manufacturing and warehousing facility in Franklin County, expecting to produce 200 new jobs along Old Federal Road. With medical facilities and utility capacity enabling advanced industrial development around nearby Lavonia, a variety of employment options are projected for northern Hart County. Much of this will have a residual impact on Hartwell, either as some manufacturers seek an alternative location or as workers for the other industries locate within the established city for other quality of life factors.
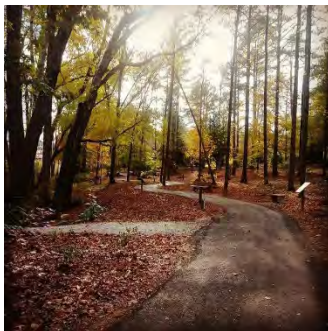
Scenes from the Hart County Botanical Gardens.

Additional development influences to consider:

- Access to broadband technology enabling smaller businesses to survive anywhere, leading to more people seeking communities based on lifestyle.

- Housing supplies will be critical as the region's economy grows, leading demand for new developments and putting pressure on established neighborhoods to revitalize or risk becoming depressed. Demand for specialty units or even select urban-scale housing is expected to increase.

- Other regional assets attracting economic development include St. Mary's Medical Center in Lavonia and the private airfield just across the county line in Canon. The hospital, in particular, provides a level of service critical to the county's ability to attract and retain major employers.

- There are additional opportunities available within the areas of tourism, recreation, and film production. All three sectors show strong growth projections for the Georgia Mountains Region and Hart County has much to offer regarding all three. All of these would not only present ways

to bring outside revenue into the community but also match well with the rural character cherished by County residents.

- Sustaining & advancing the agricultural industries. Though advancing suburbanization threatens to reduce farmland in the area, agriculture and related businesses remain vital to the region's economy and will take on increased importance as the need for food products grows. There are opportunities with higher demand for Georgia Grown products and farm-to-table options.

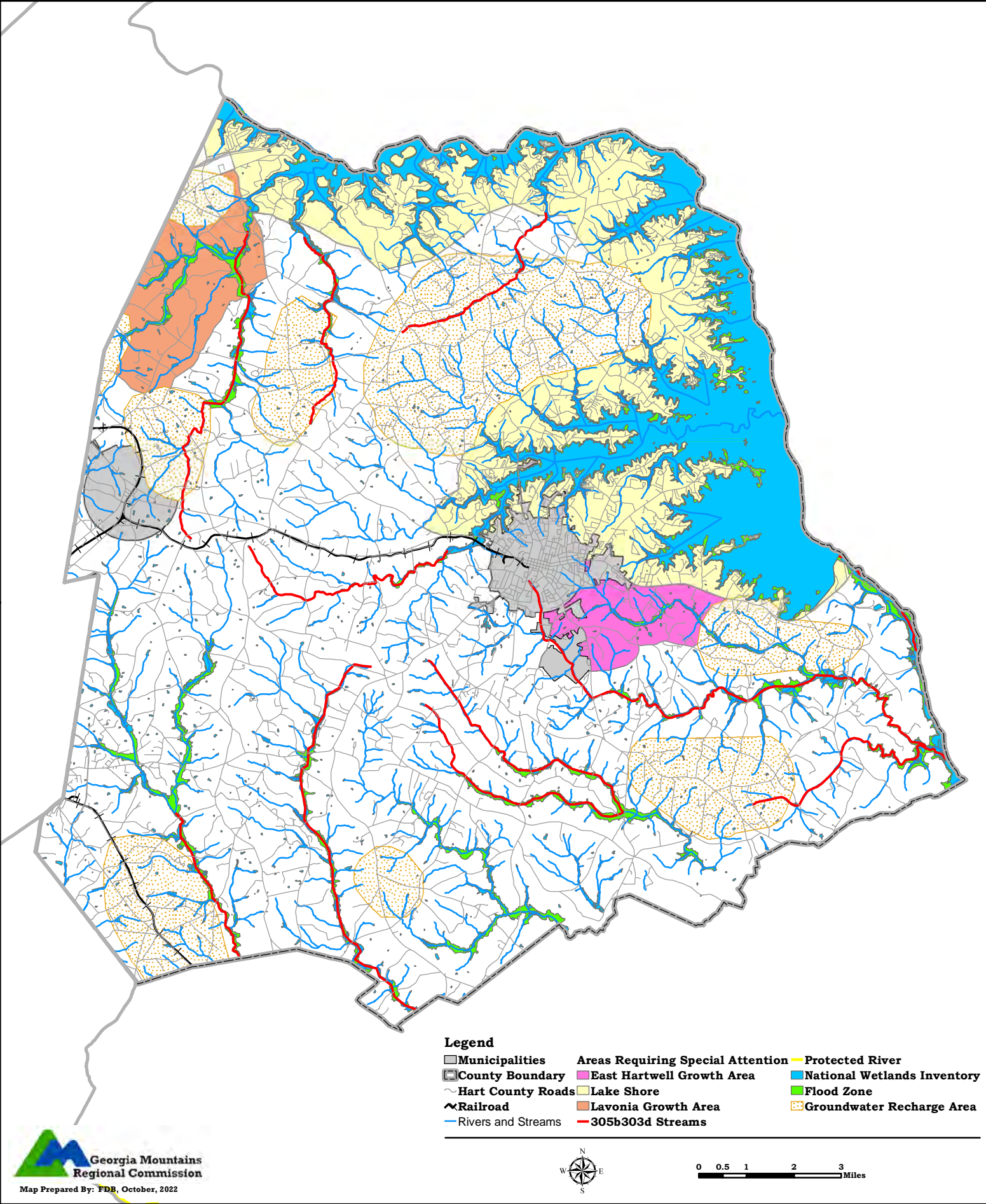*Areas Requiring Special Attention*

Analysis of prevailing development trends assists in the identification of preferred patterns for future growth. More specifically such analyses can identify those areas requiring special attention regarding management policies, such as natural or cultural resources likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development. As part of this process, stakeholders and local governments are encouraged to evaluate the presence of subsets of their communities subject to special circumstances such as:

- ✓ *Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur*
- ✓ *Areas where the pace of development has/ may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation*
- ✓ *Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness*
- ✓ *Large, abandoned structures or sites, including possible environmental contamination.*
- ✓ *Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites).*
- ✓ *Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole*

Upon consideration of development trends and land use issues in Hart County, the following priorities stand out for the 2022 planning period:

- **Lavonia Growth Area** - This features the growing city and its adjoining industrial district which has become the foremost employment and economic center within the tri-county area. Access to the hospital and the recent completion of improvements to SR 17 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 the shoreline is largely built out the pressure for more development around the lake will remain strong for some time. While developers seek to "upzone" properties for higher-end residential units, efforts are also ongoing to improve and expand targeted areas for public access. As development pressures increase, the need to retain the environmental integrity of the watershed grows more critical.

- **East Hartwell Growth Area** – The area along US 29 stretching eastward from downtown Hartwell to the Lake Hartwell dam has evolved over the past 15 years into a commercial and residential growth corridor. This corridor harbors most of Hartwell's conventional retail and dining establishments, and the proximity to both the lake and to local schools and parks has attracted residential activity. This part of Hart County is projected for continued growth in the near future.

- **Environmentally Sensitive Areas** – Hart County abides the State regulations regarding these vital natural resources. Maintaining their integrity is considered crucial to retaining the health of the local ecology, which is of particular importance to the area's agricultural industry.

Areas Requiring Special Attention - Hart County

Map Prepared By: FDB, October, 2022

Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission

Legend

Municipalities	Areas Requiring Special Attention	Protected River
County Boundary	East Hartwell Growth Area	National Wetlands Inventory
Hart County Roads	Lake Shore	Flood Zone
Railroad	Lavonia Growth Area	Groundwater Recharge Area
Rivers and Streams	305b303d Streams	

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Miles

Interstate Corridor Development - Hart County

Avalon

Martin

Lavonia

Bowersville

Homer

Carnesville

Maysville

Royston

Franklin Springs

Commerce

Legend

- ⬢ New/Proposed Employment Centers
- ▬ I - 85
- ∿ Roads
- Lakes
- Municipal Boundary

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Map Prepared By: FDB, October, 2022

0 0.5 1 2 3 Miles
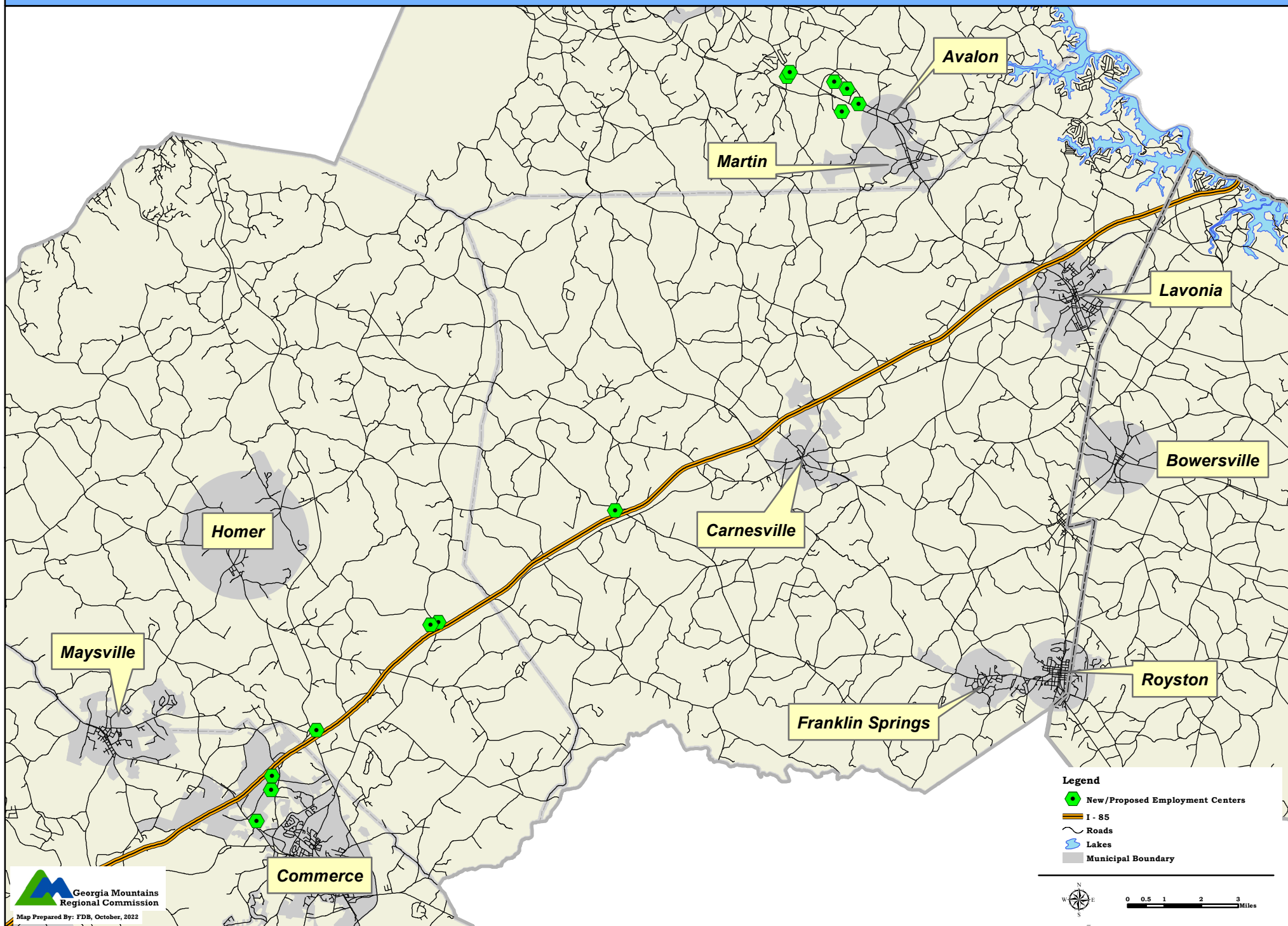
Recommended Development Character

Land use planning focuses on the physical appearance (aesthetics) and function of a particular area. The use of Character Areas in this process is a way to 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. Taking these attributes into account, and with regard to the growth pressures acting on a community, development strategies are thus tailored and applied to each individual Character Area, with the goal of retaining the existing character of healthy areas and promote a new, more desirable characteristics in areas that need improvement.

It must be noted here, then that 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.

Respecting this reality for 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.
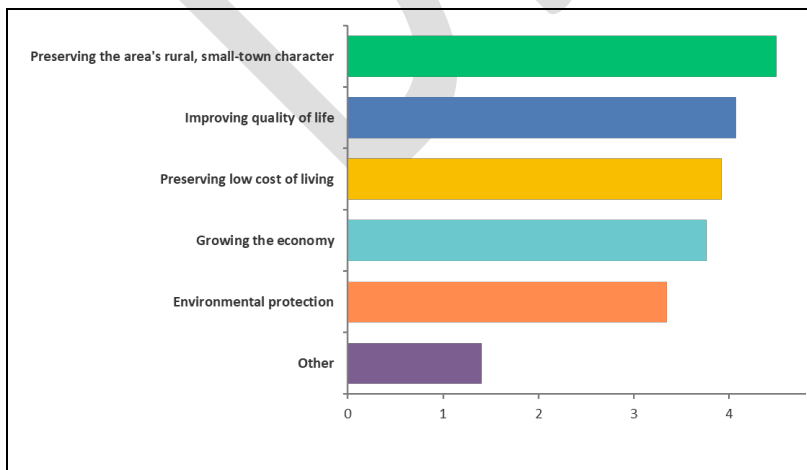
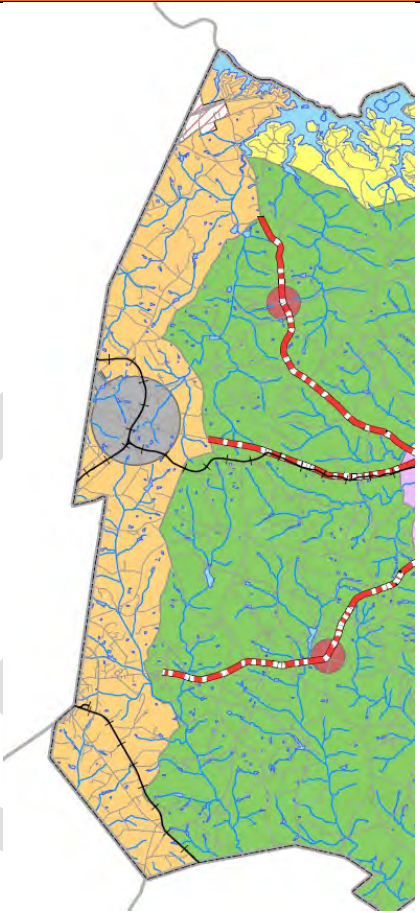As echoed throughout the planning process, the overall development goal desired for Hart County is to retain as much of its rural character as possible. Participants in the online emphasized objectives that retained the existing quality of life and cost of living over an emphasis on economic development. Submitted comments supported the same notion, celebrating the area's beauty, serene natural settings, and agricultural lifestyle.

To achieve these goals, the County should work with the municipalities to steer higher density land uses toward the existing urbanized neighborhoods and targeted 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. The County should also maintain/ employ policies that support agricultural uses, large lot residential forms, and conservation design models.

To achieve the general goals for land use, and in recognition of the key forces acting on the county, the recommended Character Areas have been updated from 2016 to reflect a more consolidated approach to both managing the lake front (now one consistent district) and in recognizing the potential growth along the whole of the SR 17 corridor: While more intensive development will most likely occur closer to the cities of Royston and Lavonia, more rural forms of subdivisions or ag-based/rural business may locate along this route to serve area residents. Utility capacity will largely restrict anything out of character with the rest of Hart County within this district.

Recommended Character Areas for Hart County

> ***Lake Hartwell Corridor***
> ***I-85 Corridor***
> ***Greater Hartwell***
> ***Rural Hart County***
> ***SR 17 Corridor***
> ***Arterial Corridors***
> ***Crossroads Community***

	SR 17 Corridor
Implementation Measures ✓ Attempt to concentrate growth ✓ Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers ✓ Monitor development for application of environmental standards ✓ Encourage open-space preservation *Development Types Allowed* • Residential & subdivisions with amenity areas • Churches • Low-impact commercial, office, and warehousing • Parks and recreation • Light industrial (with proper buffering) • Architecturally encouraged to match design styles in the city • Minimize surface parking • Conservation design preferred • Sidewalks encouraged near cities • Should blend with architectural character of community	

Description:

The goal of this area is to support the various municipalities as commercial and/or social centers. It allows the collection of neighborhood scale residential use with a variety of commercial, office and other public uses.

Given the presence of water and sewer service it is expected that Royston and Lavonia 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. Both cities currently feature 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 light, low-impact 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.

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.

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.

	I-85 Corridor
Implementation Measures ✓ Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to attract/ control development ✓ Attempt to concentrate some growth so as to deflect pressure from elsewhere in County ✓ Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers ✓ Encouraging infill where possible ✓ Monitor development for application of environmental standards *Development Types allowed* • Industrial • Transportation, Utility • Institutional	

Description:
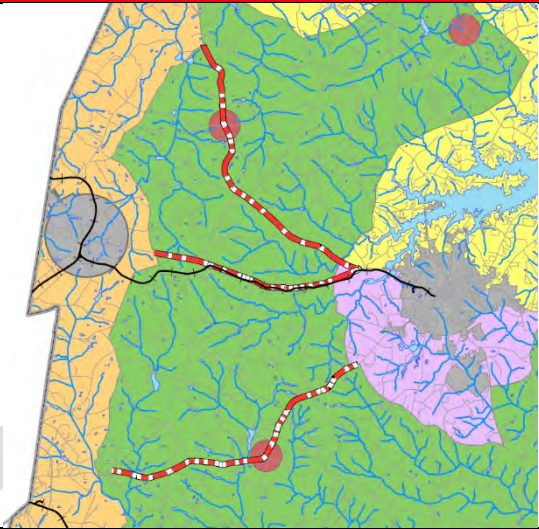
As the only portion of the county with direct access to the Interstate this area has been significant to Hart County's industrial growth over the past 15 years. In conjunction with the Ga 17 corridor and the City of Lavonia, the I-85 corridor has attracted heavier commercial and industrial growth than 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.

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.

	Arterial Corridors
Implementation Measures: ✓ Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development ✓ Monitor development for application of environmental standards *Development Types Allowed* • Rural residential, subdivisions • Agricultural, agritourism • Recreational, institutional • Neighborhood commercial & office • Conservation design preferred	

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.

	Crossroads Community
Implementation Measures: ✓ Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development ✓ Monitor development for application of environmental standards *Development Types Allowed* • Agritourism • Recreational, institutional • Neighborhood commercial & office	

Description:

Intended to complement the Arterial Roads Corridors, these are the key intersections that already have at least some commercial or institutional presence and will likely serve as a nexus for further activity in the future. The ambition is to foster hubs for commercial activity in these areas, allowing for concentration of uses that won't necessarily need to feature purely rural forms or scales. It will also allow for the concentration of traffic and utilities, minimizing the potential impacts on neighboring uses.
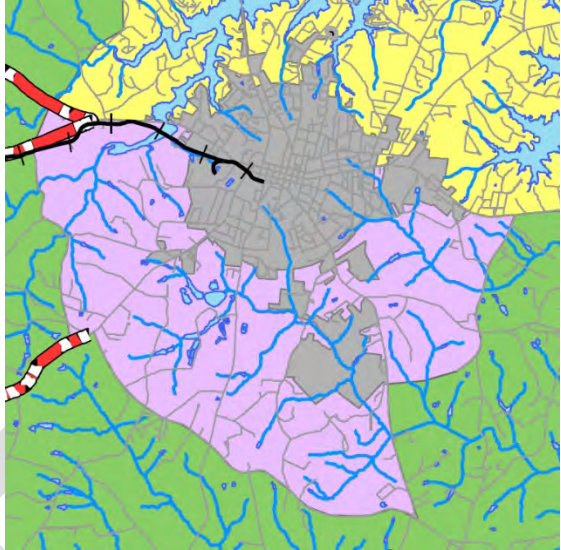
	Greater Hartwell
Implementation Measures: ✓ Select allocation of water, sewer and paved roads within this area to manage development ✓ Attempt to concentrate some growth ✓ Encourage development of commercial, office and industrial centers ✓ Monitor development for application of environmental standards ✓ Encourage open-space preservation *Development Types Allowed* • Residential & subdivisions with amenity areas • Churches & small-scale institutional • Minimize surface parking • Should blend with architectural character of community • Conservation design preferred • Commercial, office, and low-impact warehousing or industrial	

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.

Lake Hartwell Corridor

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

Development Types Allowed
- Overlay limiting impervious surfaces
- Passive recreational or eco-tourism
- State Parks and wildlife management areas
- Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred
- Low-impact, outdoor-themed retreat and conference facilities

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.
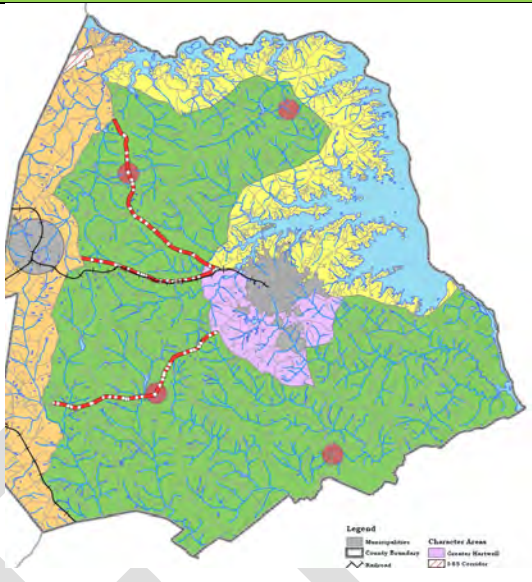
Of more concern to lake-front properties will be the overall scale of activity. Many roads around the lake remain unpaved and sewer service remains at a premium. So as to minimize the impact of development, human activity, flood hazards and deterioration of the shoreline and stream banks, the overall 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.

	Rural Hart County
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 *Development Types Allowed* • Rural residential, Large-lot (3+ acres) single-family detached preferred • Agricultural uses • Churches & small-scale institutional • Minimize surface parking • Should blend with architectural character of community • Conservation design subdivisions	

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.

Development Character Areas - Hart County
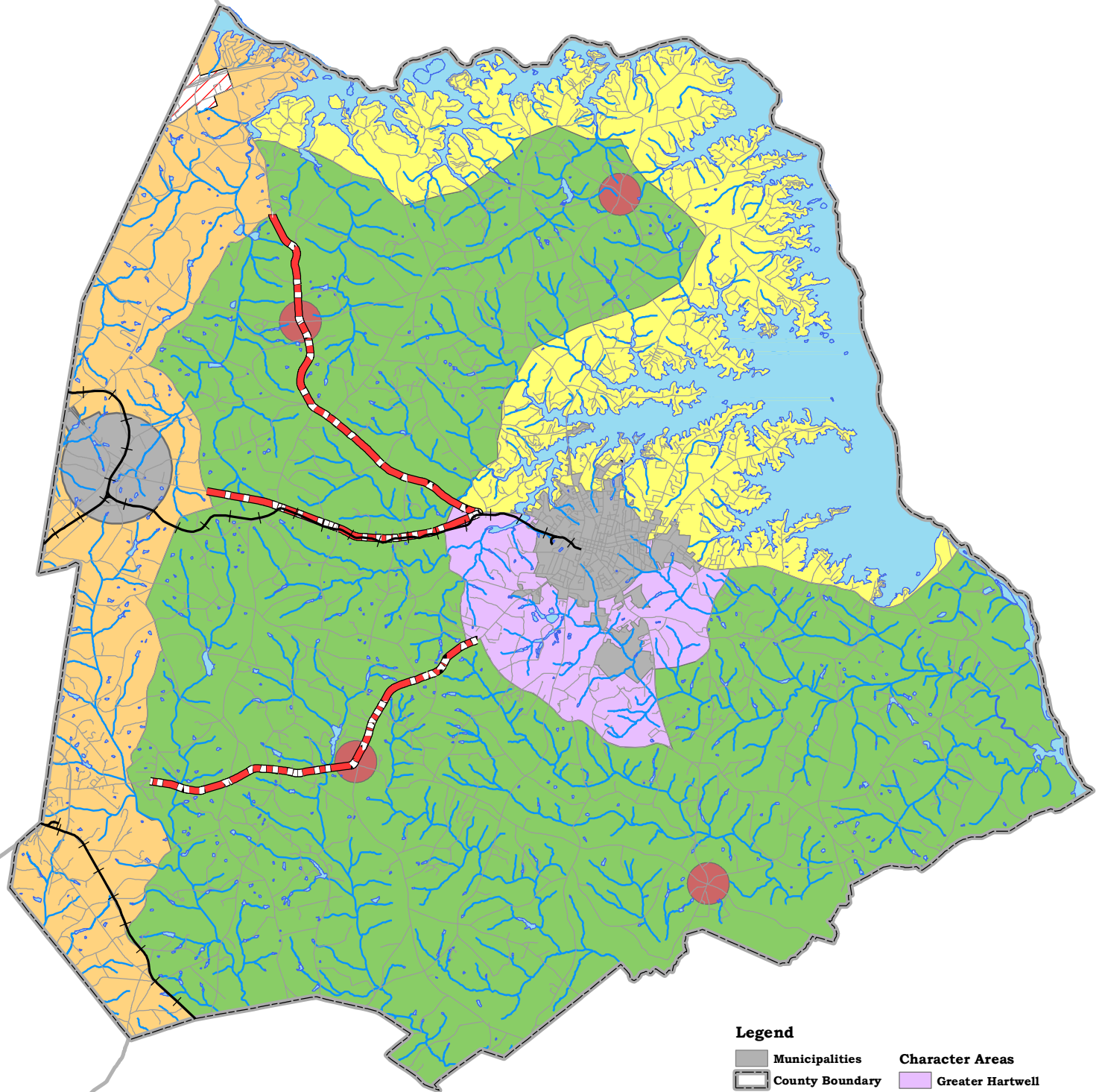
Legend

Municipalities

County Boundary

Railroad

Hart County Roads

Lakes and Ponds

Rivers and Streams

Character Areas

Greater Hartwell

I-85 Corridor

Lake Hartwell Corridor

Rural Hart County

State Route 17 Corridor

Arterial Corridors

Crossroads Community

Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission

Map Prepared By: FDB, October, 2022

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Miles

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM 　　4

While the Future Development Map illustrates the physical conditions expressed within the Vision, 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.

The Implementation Program features four main components.

Needs, Opportunities, and Mitigation Strategies
These reflect an assessment of the conditions and factors influencing the area and people, stakeholder knowledge of the community and comments received throughout the planning process. To effectively realize their vision for the future a community must develop a well-defined implementation plan. By identifying the core issues and priorities of the community, the government and its partners can develop specific strategies that must be accomplished to fulfill the desired goals and objectives of the vision. It is critical that these issues and opportunities be clearly defined and understood by the stakeholders because they form the basis for the development of the community's long and short-term action plans.

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

Community Work Programs
The third forward-thinking element of the Implementation Program is the CWP. 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.

Policies and Long-Term Objectives
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.

Needs, Opportunities, and Mitigation Strategies

Need: Ability to manage projected growth and have a clearer vision for future
- Conduct public forum to define what's "rural" in Hart County; Strategize how to preserve those areas
- Ensure development policies concentrate growth near urbanized areas with existing utility and infrastructure capacity (P)
- Promote conservation design subdivisions (P)
- Minimize expansion of utilities & infrastructure in agricultural part of community (P)

Need: To improve communication and coordination from/among governments, and commit to consistently improving local leadership
- Conduct public exercise to assess, rate, and improve how the County interacts with citizens and other partners
- Establish/ Upgrade official communications policy as needed
- Establish professional education standards for elected and appointed officials
- Establish a leadership program within the community that creates an annual opportunity for students and citizens to learn about government operations

Need: To preserve the local cost of living & commit to fiscal efficiency
- Establish/ Celebrate standard for fiscal reporting
- Conduct review of the process for public involvement in property tax assessments
- Develop quantitative performance measures for County departments
- Develop template for County departments to report budgets for long-term capital projects
- Develop/ Update master plans for Parks and Recreation Dept. and Road Dept.
- Annually meet with School System to review budgets and impacts of growth (P)

Need: To preserve local agriculture through improved engagement and awareness
- Have annual _State of Hart Agriculture_ presentation to Commission (P)
- Review and update development policies (land use and capital projects) to preserve prime agricultural land
- Review and assess performance of existing conservation easements

Need: To maintain clarity regarding State & federal projects that impact Hart County
- Have annual reports on status of all key State and federal projects/ resources (P)

Opportunity: To support the commitment to a high standard of crime management & public safety
- Confirm crime rate statistics and trends with Sheriff; Review messaging & public awareness (tout successes)
- Develop "Safety by Design" policies
- Implement community involvement initiatives
- Develop quantitative performance measures for County departments
- Develop template for County departments to report budgets for long-term capital projects
- Annually review Sheriff's Department coordination with other agencies (P)

Need: To improve local transportation planning

- Establish/ Review a long-term road improvement plan
- Produce annual reports/ forum with Chamber to discuss transportation issues (invite GDOT) (P)
- Develop a long-term transit program strategy
- Review policies regarding management of dirt roads & flood prone corridors; Update as needed
- Convene committee to recommend bike/ trail options

Opportunity: To continue commitment to strengthening and diversifying the local economy

- Convene committee to identify areas suitable for receiving future industrial and (heavy) commercial growth
- Work with School System creating a guide for locating future school sites
- Convene committee to address demand for child-care services
- Develop report on local housing market; Explore options for spurring compatible housing growth

Need: To both preserve, and maximize use of, Lake Hartwell

- Review environmental goals with USACE and State DNR; Identify any needed actions from the County
- Establish benchmarks/ goals regarding lake tourism and events

Need: Water system improvements & expansion

- Implement Northeast Hart County water system expansion
- Conduct formal assessment identifying water system improvements necessary in support of fire protection
- Develop formal long-range water & sewer system maintenance plan

Need: To address operational space for all County departments

- Conduct a facility needs assessment for each County department
- Convene a working committee among staff to explore long-term space needs for courts

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 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 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 regarding 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
- 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
- Assist IBA with targeted recruitment
- County manager to meet with cities quarterly and GMRC and adjoining counties annually
- Develop/maintain a report on economic development efforts; Annually present to Commission
- Attempt to concentrate growth (around the cities and I-85 corridor)
- 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
- Convene a working committee among staff to explore long-term space needs for courts infrastructure capacity (P)
- Promote conservation design subdivisions (P)
- Minimize expansion of utilities & infrastructure in agricultural part of community (P)
- Annually meet with School System to review budgets and impacts of growth (P)
- Have annual State of Hart Agriculture presentation to Commission (P)
- Have annual reports on status of all key State and federal projects/ resources (P)
- Annually review Sheriff's Department coordination with other agencies (P)
- Produce annual reports/ forum with Chamber to discuss transportation issues (invite GDOT) (P)

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
Begin Comprehensive Plan update	Complete	
Complete Comprehensive Plan update	Complete	
Encourage staff from each local government to hold an annual development forum	Postponed	Deferred due to pandemic; Repurposed as "Countywide Economic Development Forum."
Invite ACCG (or other entity) to review and offer guidance on best practices for public relations	Postponed	Deferred due to pandemic; Now included in "Establish/ Upgrade official communications policy"
Develop report concerning EPD listed waters in the county	Complete	
Solicit report assessing performance of conservation easements	Postponed	Deferred due to other priorities
Establish policies for, and encourage, conservation design subdivisions	In progress	
Update Long Range Roads Plan	Postponed	Deferred due to other priorities; Now "Establish/ Review a long-term road improvement plan"
Develop financial performance monitoring for each department	Postponed	Reviewing samples/ model material
Review development policies and ordinances for ways to direct growth toward cities/urban areas; Amend as needed	Complete	Policy/ Standard practice
Conduct assessment to confirm costs of jail expansion vs. new construction	Complete	
Report identifying options for funding jail improvements	Complete	
Implement Phases 1-5 of line extensions	In progress	
Solicit report profiling sub-market housing conditions in the county	Postponed	Deferred due to pandemic
Solicit study assessing options for new recreation or tourist attractions for the area	Postponed	Deferred due to pandemic
Solicit ideas to bring lake theme into county	Postponed	Deferred due to other priorities
Report regarding water system expansions	In progress	
Solicit report identifying targeted standards for new housing	Complete	
With the Cities, develop an industrial build-out scenario for the County	In progress	
Expand or build new jail	In progress	
Update Comprehensive plan	Complete	

Short-Term Work Program

Note 1: The information presented in these tables is considered tentative and is to be used as a tool for a community's budgeting process. <u>Local governments are not committed to spending exactly the amounts shown on each project listed in their Work Programs.</u> The costs and dates shown are projections, used to help the community weigh priorities in each fiscal year. Projects may be accomplished in different years than displayed here depending on fiscal conditions, grant opportunities, or other factors.   Governments are also encouraged to find cheaper means to achieve the stated outcomes where possible, and often projects can be accomplished with thoughtful application of staff time and other resources over a length of time.

Similarly, communities are free to pursue other projects beyond the work scope presented here. The action items in the Work Program are simply to illustrate what a community has identified as plausible measures for addressing the needs and opportunities presented within their comprehensive plan.

Note 2: Some items listed will explore assistance through the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) via their discretionary contract elements with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). These items will include "DCA" under the list of potential funding sources.

Glossary of Acronyms

TBD:	"To be Determined"
NA:	"Not Applicable"
ACCG:	Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
DED:	Ga. Department of Economic Development
DCA:	Ga. Department of Community Affairs
GDOT	Ga. Department of Transportation
DNR	Ga. Department of Natural Resources
GMRC:	Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
HCCS:	Hart County Charter System
HCWSA:	Hart County Water & Sewer Authority
CoC	Hart County Chamber of Commerce
IBA:	Industrial Building Authority
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2022-2024	Construct new jail	TBD	TBD	County
2023	Establish policies for, and encourage, conservation design subdivisions	$1,000	County	County, GMRC
2023	Countywide Economic Development Forum	NA	NA	County, CoC, IBA, GMRC
2023	Public exercise re: County communications	NA	NA	County, GMRC
2023	Establish/ Celebrate standard for fiscal reporting	NA	NA (Staff time)	County, ACCG
2023	Develop performance measures for County departments	NA	NA (Staff time)	County, ACCG, GMRC
2023	Develop template for long-term capital budgeting	NA	NA (Staff time)	County, ACCG, GMRC
2023	Develop/ Update master plan for Parks and Recreation Dept.	$15,000	County, Grants	County, GMRC
2023	Confirm crime rate statistics and trends with Sheriff	NA	NA (Staff time)	Sheriff
2023	Committee to address demand for child-care services	NA	NA	County, CoC, IBA
2023-2024	Develop financial performance monitoring for each department	TBD	TBD	County
2023-2024	Implement Phases 1-5 of line extensions	$1,000,000	CDBG/SPLOST/WSA	County; HCWSA
2024	Solicit report assessing performance of conservation easements	$1,000	TBD	County
2024	Solicit report profiling sub-market housing conditions in the county	$5,000	County, ARC	County
2024	Solicit study assessing options for new recreation or tourist attractions for the area	TBD	TBD	County, CoC
2024	With the Cities, develop an industrial build-out scenario for the County	$10,000	DED, IBA	IBA, County, Cities
2024	Establish/ Upgrade official communications policy	$5,000	County, DCA	County, GMRC
2024	Establish professional education standards for officials	NA	NA (Staff time)	County, ACCG
2024	Establish a leadership program	TBD	TBD	County, HCCS
2024	Review/ Update public involvement in property tax assessments	$5,000	County	County, Tax Assessor
2024	Develop/ Update master plan for Road Dept.	$15,000	County	Road Dept.
2024	Review/ Update development policies to preserve prime agricultural land	$5,000	County, DCA	County, GMRC
2024	Committee to identify areas for future industrial growth	$5,000	County, DCA	County, GMRC
2024	Creating a guide for locating future school sites	NA	NA (Staff time)	County, HCCS

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2024	Conduct a facility needs assessment for each Dept.	$10,000	County, DCA	County, GMRC
2024-2026	Northeast Hart County Water System Expansion	$5,000,000	HCWSA funds; Grants; Loans	HCWSA
2025	Water System Master Plan	$100,000	HCWSA funds; Grants; Loans	HCWSA
2025	Develop "Rural Hart County Preservation Strategy"	$10,000	County, DCA	County, GMRC
2025	Develop "Safety by Design" policies	$10,000	County, DCA	County, Sheriff, GMRC
2025	Establish/ Review a long-term road improvement policy	NA	NA (Staff time)	Road Dept.
2025	Review policies re: unpaved roads & flood prone roads	NA	NA (Staff time)	Road Dept.
2025	Committee to recommend bike/ trail options	$5,000	County, GDOT	County, GMRC
2025	Review environmental goals	NA	NA (Staff time)	County, USACE, DNR, GMRC
2025	Establish benchmarks/ goals regarding lake tourism and events	$5,000	DED, DCA	County, CoC
2025	Assessment of water system needs for fire protection	TBD	HCWSA	HCWSA, Fire Dept.
2025	Develop formal long-range water & sewer system maintenance plan	$15,000	HCWSA	HCWSA
2026	Develop a long-term transit strategy	$5,000	GDOT	County, GMRC
2026	Solicit ideas to bring lake theme into county	TBD	TBD	County, CoC
2027	Update Comprehensive plan	$40,000	DCA	County, GMRC

APPENDICES

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Population and Demographic Profile

Area Labor Profile for Hart County

Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results

Sample Records of Public Involvement

Quality Community Objectives Assessment

SWOC Assessment – GMRC Digital Economy Plan

Northeast Hart County Water System Expansion

Population and Demographic Profile

	Hart County, ...
Population Summary	
2000 Total Population	22,997
2010 Total Population	25,213
2021 Total Population	26,668
2021 Group Quarters	663
2026 Total Population	27,376
2021-2026 Annual Rate	0.53%
2021 Total Daytime Population	24,642
Workers	8,319
Residents	16,323
Household Summary	
2000 Households	9,106
2000 Average Household Size	2.47
2010 Households	10,121
2010 Average Household Size	2.43
2021 Households	10,875
2021 Average Household Size	2.39
2026 Households	11,216
2026 Average Household Size	2.38
2021-2026 Annual Rate	0.62%
2010 Families	6,998
2010 Average Family Size	2.94
2021 Families	7,374
2021 Average Family Size	2.93
2026 Families	7,560
2026 Average Family Size	2.93
2021-2026 Annual Rate	0.50%
Housing Unit Summary	
2000 Housing Units	11,111
Owner Occupied Housing Units	66.2%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	15.7%
Vacant Housing Units	18.0%
2010 Housing Units	13,007
Owner Occupied Housing Units	58.5%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	19.3%
Vacant Housing Units	22.2%
2021 Housing Units	13,978
Owner Occupied Housing Units	58.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	19.8%
Vacant Housing Units	22.2%
2026 Housing Units	14,431
Owner Occupied Housing Units	58.6%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	19.2%
Vacant Housing Units	22.3%
Median Household Income	
2021	$47,300
2026	$50,253
Median Home Value	
2021	$177,747
2026	$220,559
Per Capita Income	
2021	$26,351
2026	$28,682
Median Age	
2010	42.6
2021	44.9
2026	45.9

Data Note: Household population includes persons not residing in group quarters. Average Household Size is the household population divided by total households. Persons in families include the householder and persons related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Per Capita Income represents the income received by all persons aged 15 years and over divided by the total population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

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	Hart County, ...
2021 Households by Income	
Household Income Base	10,875
<$15,000	13.5%
$15,000 - $24,999	12.5%
$25,000 - $34,999	10.4%
$35,000 - $49,999	15.9%
$50,000 - $74,999	17.6%
$75,000 - $99,999	12.6%
$100,000 - $149,999	10.9%
$150,000 - $199,999	4.0%
$200,000+	2.8%
Average Household Income	$64,536
2026 Households by Income	
Household Income Base	11,216
<$15,000	12.2%
$15,000 - $24,999	11.9%
$25,000 - $34,999	9.8%
$35,000 - $49,999	15.8%
$50,000 - $74,999	18.0%
$75,000 - $99,999	13.0%
$100,000 - $149,999	11.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	4.6%
$200,000+	3.0%
Average Household Income	$69,927
2021 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	
Total	8,106
<$50,000	10.8%
$50,000 - $99,999	17.3%
$100,000 - $149,999	14.5%
$150,000 - $199,999	13.4%
$200,000 - $249,999	8.0%
$250,000 - $299,999	8.0%
$300,000 - $399,999	14.1%
$400,000 - $499,999	6.0%
$500,000 - $749,999	5.0%
$750,000 - $999,999	2.0%
$1,000,000 - $1,499,999	0.5%
$1,500,000 - $1,999,999	0.2%
$2,000,000 +	0.1%
Average Home Value	$235,329
2026 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	
Total	8,452
<$50,000	7.5%
$50,000 - $99,999	13.5%
$100,000 - $149,999	12.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	12.9%
$200,000 - $249,999	8.5%
$250,000 - $299,999	9.2%
$300,000 - $399,999	17.2%
$400,000 - $499,999	7.9%
$500,000 - $749,999	7.0%
$750,000 - $999,999	2.8%
$1,000,000 - $1,499,999	0.6%
$1,500,000 - $1,999,999	0.2%
$2,000,000 +	0.1%
Average Home Value	$272,545

Data Note: Income represents the preceding year, expressed in current dollars. Household income includes wage and salary earnings, interest dividends, net rents, pensions, SSI and welfare payments, child support, and alimony.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

	Hart County, ...
2010 Population by Age	
Total	25,213
0 - 4	6.1%
5 - 9	6.0%
10 - 14	6.3%
15 - 24	11.6%
25 - 34	10.4%
35 - 44	12.7%
45 - 54	14.7%
55 - 64	14.1%
65 - 74	10.2%
75 - 84	5.8%
85 +	2.0%
18 +	77.7%
2021 Population by Age	
Total	26,668
0 - 4	5.3%
5 - 9	5.8%
10 - 14	6.0%
15 - 24	9.6%
25 - 34	12.3%
35 - 44	11.1%
45 - 54	12.6%
55 - 64	14.7%
65 - 74	13.5%
75 - 84	6.8%
85 +	2.2%
18 +	79.8%
2026 Population by Age	
Total	27,376
0 - 4	5.2%
5 - 9	5.5%
10 - 14	6.1%
15 - 24	10.1%
25 - 34	10.0%
35 - 44	12.0%
45 - 54	11.9%
55 - 64	14.1%
65 - 74	14.0%
75 - 84	8.7%
85 +	2.4%
18 +	79.6%
2010 Population by Sex	
Males	12,455
Females	12,758
2021 Population by Sex	
Males	13,248
Females	13,420
2026 Population by Sex	
Males	13,649
Females	13,727

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

	Hart County, ...
2010 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	25,213
White Alone	77.4%
Black Alone	18.7%
American Indian Alone	0.1%
Asian Alone	0.9%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	1.7%
Two or More Races	1.3%
Hispanic Origin	3.1%
Diversity Index	40.4
2021 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	26,668
White Alone	75.3%
Black Alone	19.2%
American Indian Alone	0.1%
Asian Alone	1.3%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2.1%
Two or More Races	1.9%
Hispanic Origin	4.0%
Diversity Index	44.2
2026 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	27,376
White Alone	74.4%
Black Alone	19.4%
American Indian Alone	0.2%
Asian Alone	1.6%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2.3%
Two or More Races	2.2%
Hispanic Origin	4.4%
Diversity Index	45.8
2010 Population by Relationship and Household Type	
Total	25,213
In Households	97.4%
In Family Households	83.3%
Householder	27.8%
Spouse	20.5%
Child	29.9%
Other relative	3.4%
Nonrelative	1.8%
In Nonfamily Households	14.1%
In Group Quarters	2.6%
Institutionalized Population	2.6%
Noninstitutionalized Population	0.0%

Data Note: Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race. The Diversity Index measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

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	Hart County, …
2021 Population 25+ by Educational Attainment	
Total	19,518
Less than 9th Grade	5.0%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	12.0%
High School Graduate	30.1%
GED/Alternative Credential	6.5%
Some College, No Degree	21.1%
Associate Degree	8.2%
Bachelor's Degree	10.9%
Graduate/Professional Degree	6.2%
2021 Population 15+ by Marital Status	
Total	22,086
Never Married	26.5%
Married	51.9%
Widowed	7.7%
Divorced	13.9%
2021 Civilian Population 16+ in Labor Force	
Civilian Population 16+	10,513
Population 16+ Employed	96.3%
Population 16+ Unemployment rate	3.7%
Population 16-24 Employed	10.4%
Population 16-24 Unemployment rate	3.3%
Population 25-54 Employed	63.9%
Population 25-54 Unemployment rate	3.5%
Population 55-64 Employed	17.3%
Population 55-64 Unemployment rate	6.4%
Population 65+ Employed	8.4%
Population 65+ Unemployment rate	0.7%
2021 Employed Population 16+ by Industry	
Total	10,119
Agriculture/Mining	5.2%
Construction	7.2%
Manufacturing	24.9%
Wholesale Trade	1.7%
Retail Trade	12.5%
Transportation/Utilities	5.6%
Information	1.0%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	2.7%
Services	33.9%
Public Administration	5.3%
2021 Employed Population 16+ by Occupation	
Total	10,119
White Collar	50.2%
Management/Business/Financial	15.8%
Professional	14.4%
Sales	7.4%
Administrative Support	12.6%
Services	15.4%
Blue Collar	34.4%
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	2.4%
Construction/Extraction	5.1%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	4.3%
Production	12.7%
Transportation/Material Moving	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

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	Hart County, ...
2010 Households by Type	
Total	10,121
Households with 1 Person	27.4%
Households with 2+ People	72.6%
Family Households	69.1%
Husband-wife Families	51.1%
With Related Children	19.1%
Other Family (No Spouse Present)	18.1%
Other Family with Male Householder	4.5%
With Related Children	2.4%
Other Family with Female Householder	13.6%
With Related Children	8.9%
Nonfamily Households	3.4%
All Households with Children	30.7%
Multigenerational Households	5.0%
Unmarried Partner Households	4.8%
Male-female	4.2%
Same-sex	0.6%
2010 Households by Size	
Total	10,121
1 Person Household	27.4%
2 Person Household	36.2%
3 Person Household	15.6%
4 Person Household	12.4%
5 Person Household	5.4%
6 Person Household	1.9%
7 + Person Household	1.0%
2010 Households by Tenure and Mortgage Status	
Total	10,121
Owner Occupied	75.2%
Owned with a Mortgage/Loan	42.4%
Owned Free and Clear	32.9%
Renter Occupied	24.8%
2021 Affordability, Mortgage and Wealth	
Housing Affordability Index	152
Percent of Income for Mortgage	15.8%
Wealth Index	64
2010 Housing Units By Urban/ Rural Status	
Total Housing Units	13,007
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Area	0.0%
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Cluster	23.2%
Rural Housing Units	76.8%
2010 Population By Urban/ Rural Status	
Total Population	25,213
Population Inside Urbanized Area	0.0%
Population Inside Urbanized Cluster	25.5%
Rural Population	74.5%

Data Note: Households with children include any households with people under age 18, related or not. Multigenerational households are families with 3 or more parent-child relationships. Unmarried partner households are usually classified as nonfamily households unless there is another member of the household related to the householder. Multigenerational and unmarried partner households are reported only to the tract level. Esri estimated block group data, which is used to estimate polygons or non-standard geography.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

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	Hart County, ...
Top 3 Tapestry Segments	
1.	Rooted Rural (10B)
2.	Southern Satellites (10A)
3.	Small Town Simplicity (12C)
2021 Consumer Spending	
Apparel & Services: Total $	$15,742,940
Average Spent	$1,447.63
Spending Potential Index	68
Education: Total $	$10,178,558
Average Spent	$935.96
Spending Potential Index	54
Entertainment/Recreation: Total $	$27,452,069
Average Spent	$2,524.33
Spending Potential Index	78
Food at Home: Total $	$46,580,070
Average Spent	$4,283.22
Spending Potential Index	79
Food Away from Home: Total $	$29,232,213
Average Spent	$2,688.02
Spending Potential Index	71
Health Care: Total $	$57,503,730
Average Spent	$5,287.70
Spending Potential Index	85
HH Furnishings & Equipment: Total $	$17,750,501
Average Spent	$1,632.23
Spending Potential Index	72
Personal Care Products & Services: Total $	$6,673,673
Average Spent	$613.67
Spending Potential Index	68
Shelter: Total $	$136,112,507
Average Spent	$12,516.09
Spending Potential Index	62
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind: Total $	$21,297,389
Average Spent	$1,958.38
Spending Potential Index	82
Travel: Total $	$17,648,207
Average Spent	$1,622.82
Spending Potential Index	64
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs: Total $	$9,957,760
Average Spent	$915.66
Spending Potential Index	83

Data Note: Consumer spending shows the amount spent on a variety of goods and services by households that reside in the area. Expenditures are shown by broad budget categories that are not mutually exclusive. Consumer spending does not equal business revenue. Total and Average Amount Spent Per Household represent annual figures. The Spending Potential Index represents the amount spent in the area relative to a national average of 100.
Source: Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2018 and 2019 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Esri.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.
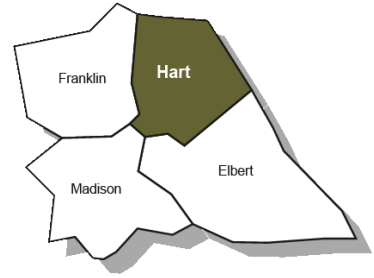
May 18, 2022

Area Labor Profile for Hart County

Hart

County

Georgia
Area Labor Profile

Updated: Sep 2022

Annual Labor Force Activity - 2021

2021 ANNUAL AVERAGES

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Hart	11,640	11,184	456	3.9%
Elbert	7,810	7,429	381	4.9%
Franklin	10,111	9,740	371	3.7%
Madison	13,599	13,184	415	3.1%
Hart Area	**43,160**	**41,537**	**1,623**	**3.8%**
Georgia	5,186,969	4,983,732	203,237	3.9%
United States	161,204,000	152,581,000	8,623,000	5.3%
Anderson, SC	90,029	86,686	3,343	3.7%
Oconee, SC	34,123	32,885	1,238	3.6%

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
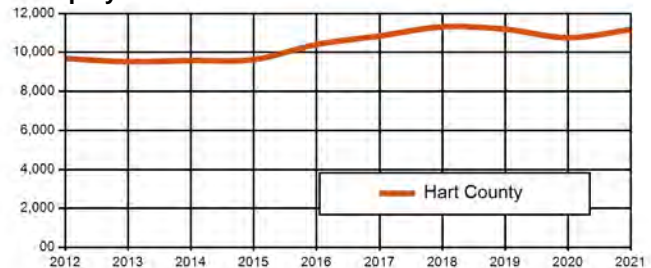
Unemployment Rate Trends
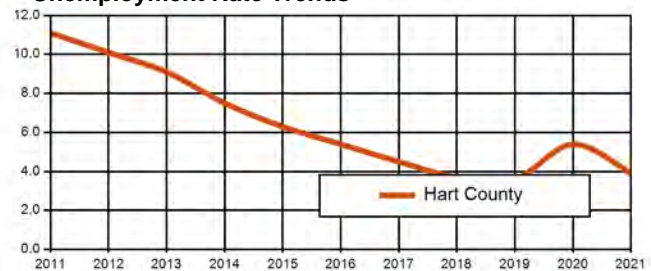
Population Estimates
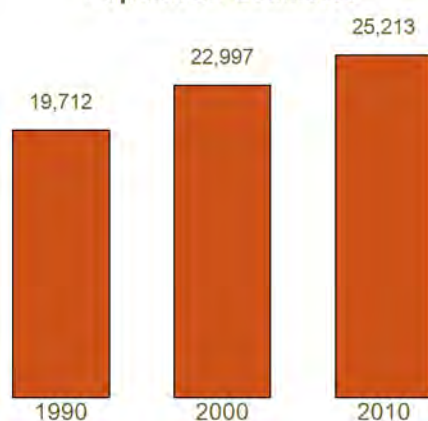
Population

	2010 Census	2021 Rank	2021 Estimate	% Change 2010-2021	2025 Projected*	% Change 2010-2025
Hart	**25,213**	**72**	**26,409**	**4.7**	**26,461**	**4.9**
City of Hartwell	4,469					
Hart Area	**352,980**		**386,769**	**9.6**	**398,332**	**12.8**
Georgia	9,687,653		10,799,566	11.5	11,335,283	17.0
United States	308,745,538		331,893,745	7.5	349,439,199	13.2
Anderson, SC	185,414		206,908	11.6	208,820	12.6
Oconee, SC	71,983		79,203	10.0	87,500	21.6

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

Industry Mix - 1st Quarter of 2022

INDUSTRY	Hart NUMBER OF FIRMS	Hart EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	Hart EMPLOYMENT PERCENT	Hart WEEKLY WAGE	Hart Area NUMBER OF FIRMS	Hart Area EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	Hart Area EMPLOYMENT PERCENT	Hart Area WEEKLY WAGE
Goods-Producing	**103**	**2,582**	**36.9**	**926**	**477**	**7,408**	**30.4**	**920**
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	15	197	2.8	818	46	440	1.8	772
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	*	*	*	16	168	0.7	1,368
Construction	56	294	4.2	772	240	1,078	4.4	879
Manufacturing	31	2,091	29.9	958	175	5,721	23.5	925
Food	6	1,135	16.2	1,021	13	1,482	6.1	983
Textile Mills	1	*	*	*	3	*	*	*
Apparel	1	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Wood Product	2	*	*	*	15	181	0.7	762
Printing and Related Support Activities	2	*	*	*	4	45	0.2	700
Chemical	2	*	*	*	5	*	*	*
Plastics and Rubber Products	3	*	*	*	7	347	1.4	885
Fabricated Metal Product	5	204	2.9	815	37	743	3.1	922
Machinery	3	*	*	*	9	*	*	*
Computer and Electronic Product	1	*	*	*	1	*	*	*
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	2	*	*	*	4	325	1.3	920
Transportation Equipment	1	*	*	*	9	496	2.0	893
Furniture and Related Product	1	*	*	*	5	*	*	*
Miscellaneous	1	*	*	*	4	*	*	*
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	0	0	0.0	0	57	954	3.9	823
Service-Providing	**343**	**3,276**	**46.9**	**708**	**1,420**	**12,235**	**50.3**	**731**
Utilities	5	*	*	*	8	173	0.7	1,490
Wholesale Trade	18	76	1.1	993	109	1,057	4.3	1,009
Retail Trade	80	1,007	14.4	520	315	3,009	12.4	545
Transportation and Warehousing	8	54	0.8	759	57	922	3.8	1,016
Information	6	*	*	*	18	156	0.6	1,485
Finance and Insurance	25	134	1.9	1,266	88	497	2.0	1,364
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	12	35	0.5	685	39	103	0.4	713
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	45	277	4.0	1,020	130	545	2.2	852
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	0.0	0	9	195	0.8	1,450
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	24	271	3.9	957	97	657	2.7	832
Educational Services	5	30	0.4	519	12	342	1.4	515
Health Care and Social Assistance	33	385	5.5	867	139	1,694	7.0	826
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	128	1.8	399	22	163	0.7	438
Accommodation and Food Services	43	607	8.7	329	138	2,087	8.6	331
Other Services (except Public Administration)	31	87	1.2	783	99	509	2.1	645
Unclassified - industry not assigned	**41**	**33**	**0.5**	**1,282**	**140**	**125**	**0.5**	**813**
Total - Private Sector	**487**	**5,891**	**84.3**	**806**	**1,897**	**19,643**	**80.7**	**802**
Total - Government	**29**	**1,101**	**15.7**	**765**	**132**	**4,703**	**19.3**	**755**
Federal Government	6	73	1.0	1,392	27	292	1.2	1,325
State Government	13	130	1.9	757	47	368	1.5	694
Local Government	10	898	12.8	715	58	4,043	16.6	720
ALL INDUSTRIES	**516**	**6,991**	**100.0**	**800**	**2,029**	**24,345**	**100.0**	**793**
ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia					**359,250**	**4,592,735**		**1,304**

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 1st Quarter of 2022.

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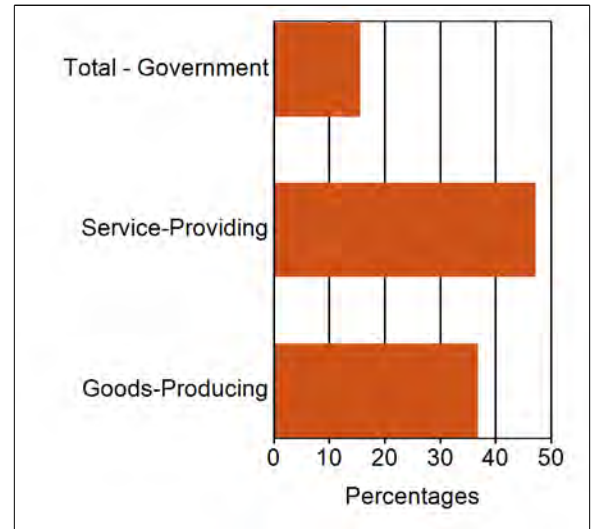
Hart Per Capita Income

Year	Per Capita Income
2016	$33,650
2017	$36,087
2018	$38,125
2019	$37,701
2020	$39,402

Hart Industry Mix 2022

Top Ten Largest Employers - 2022*

Hart

Hart Electric Membership Corporation
Ingles Markets, Inc.
Lake Foods, LLC
Nestle Purina Petcare Company
Pharma Tech Industries
Ritz
Rose Acre Farms,Inc.
Royston, LLC
The Home Depot
Walmart

Hart Area

	COUNTY
AutoZone, Inc.	Franklin
Carry-On Trailer, Inc.	Franklin
Lake Foods, LLC	Hart
Mollertech South, LLC	Elbert
Nestle Purina Petcare Company	Hart
Pilgrim's Pride Corporation	Elbert
Royston, LLC	Hart
St Marys Sacred Heart Hospital, Inc.	Franklin
The York Group	Elbert
Walmart	Hart

*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 First Quarter of 2022. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Education of the Labor Force

Hart Area

	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+. Some College category represents workers with some college with no degree less than two years.

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

High School Graduates - 2021

	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	PRIVATE SCHOOLS*	TOTAL
Elbert	171	--	171
Franklin	238	--	238
Hart	222	--	222
Madison	304	--	304
Hart Area	**935**	**--**	**935**

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

* Private schools data is not available for 2021 from Georgia Independent School Association.

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

Colleges and Universities

Hart Area

Elbert

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

Franklin

Emmanuel College   www.ec.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 - 2021*

| PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2019	2020	2021	2019-2020	2020-2021
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping°	128	128	118	0.0	-7.8
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General	38	41	34	7.9	-17.1
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist°	11	15	15	36.4	0.0
Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Other°	7	7	14	0.0	100.0
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician°	101	67	63	-33.7	-6.0
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician°	150	157	130	4.7	-17.2
Biology Technician/Biotechnology Laboratory Technician°	19	9	11	-52.6	22.2
Business Administration and Management, General°	18	77	63	327.8	-18.2
CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician°	18	5	28	-72.2	460.0
Child Care Provider/Assistant°	223	114	161	-48.9	41.2
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician	9	15	10	66.7	-33.3
Commercial Photography°	33	13	9	-60.6	-30.8
Computer Installation and Repair Technology/Technician°	136	52	157	-61.8	201.9
Computer Programming Special Applications°	48	20	24	-58.3	20.0
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General°	189	150	172	-20.6	14.7
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies°	87	59	71	-32.2	20.3
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	25	11	10	-56.0	-9.1
Data Processing and Data Processing Technology/Technician°	29	38	25	31.0	-34.2

Technical College Graduates - 2021*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2019	2020	2021	2019-2020	2020-2021
Dental Assisting/Assistant	11	9	9	-18.2	0.0
Dental Hygiene/Hygienist	11	8	15	-27.3	87.5
Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician°	29	18	30	-37.9	66.7
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General°	20	9	22	-55.0	144.4
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	25	39	82	56.0	110.3
Electrician°	133	81	201	-39.1	148.1
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)°	189	99	68	-47.6	-31.3
Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other	9	11	11	22.2	0.0
Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant°	39	11	39	-71.8	254.5
Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician	2	8	6	300.0	-25.0
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/°	137	129	102	-5.8	-20.9
Hospitality Administration/Management, General°	64	26	35	-59.4	34.6
Hotel/Motel Administration/Management°	15	7	7	-53.3	0.0
Human Resources Management and Services, Other°	11	9	7	-18.2	-22.2
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology°	24	40	32	66.7	-20.0
Interior Design°	47	15	23	-68.1	53.3
Legal Assistant/Paralegal	14	6	9	-57.1	50.0
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	54	65	57	20.4	-12.3
Lineworker°	62	61	81	-1.6	32.8
Machine Shop Technology/Assistant°	81	25	34	-69.1	36.0
Marketing/Marketing Management, General	8	8	3	0.0	-62.5
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, Other	7	8	8	14.3	0.0
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder°	1	15	15	1400.0	0.0
Medical Office Assistant/Specialist°	10	9	4	-10.0	-55.6
Medical/Clinical Assistant	44	51	52	15.9	2.0
Medium/Heavy Vehicle and Truck Technology/Technician°	72	27	54	-62.5	100.0
Meeting and Event Planning°	14	7	8	-50.0	14.3
Network and System Administration/Administrator°	36	32	38	-11.1	18.8
Pharmacy Technician/Assistant	7	8	6	14.3	-25.0
Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist°	12	9	14	-25.0	55.6
Physical Therapy Technician/Assistant	17	15	14	-11.8	-6.7
Professional, Technical, Business, and Scientific Writing°	2	4	1	100.0	-75.0
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	16	15	15	-6.3	0.0
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	53	54	54	1.9	0.0
Social Work, Other°	33	29	24	-12.1	-17.2
Surgical Technology/Technologist	14	8	9	-42.9	12.5
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor°	74	79	81	6.8	2.5

Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results
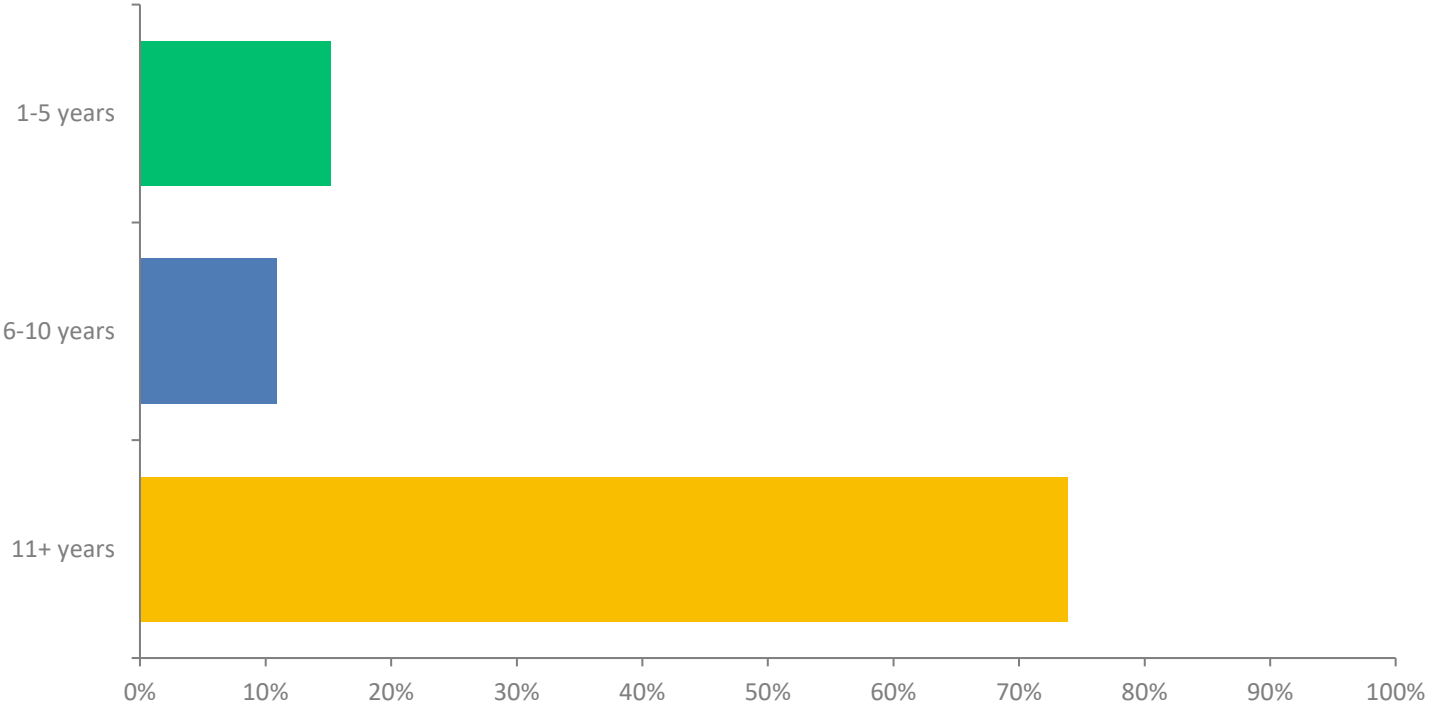
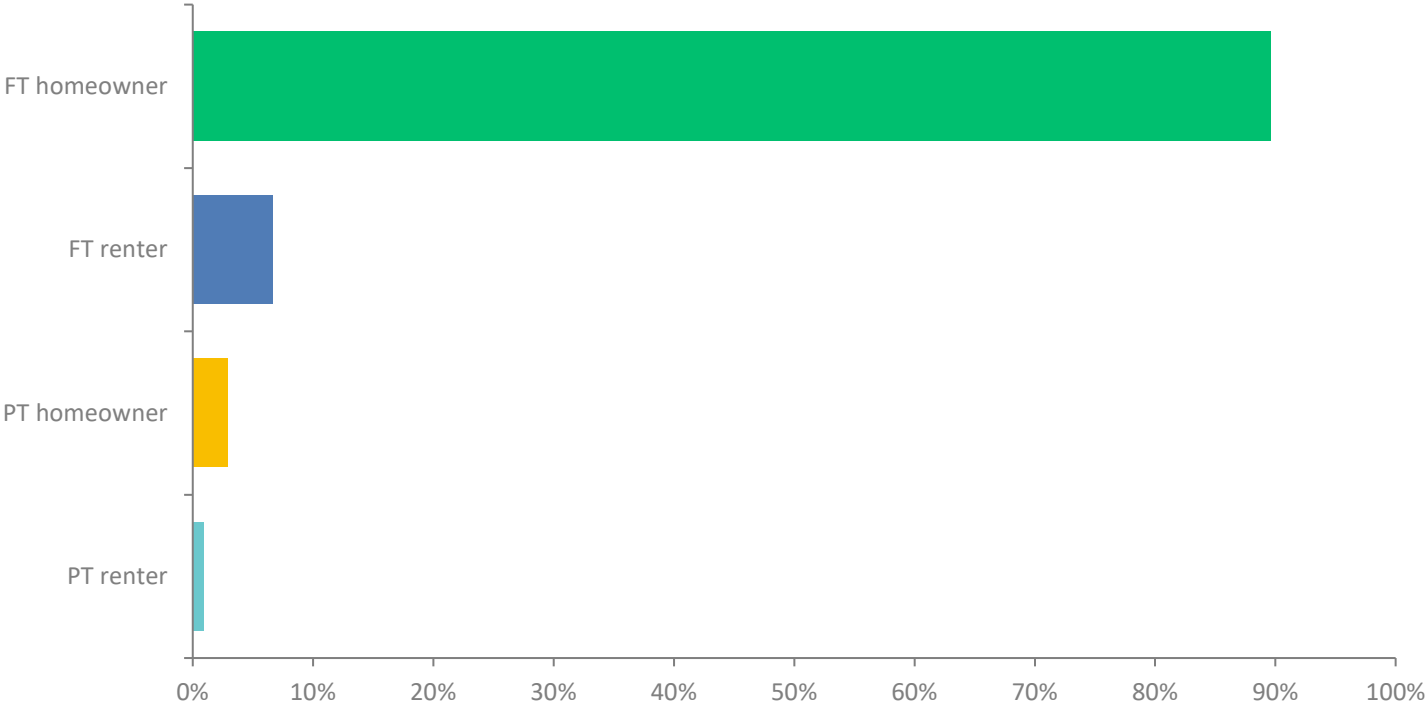# Q1: I am a resident in:

Answered: 568   Skipped: 0
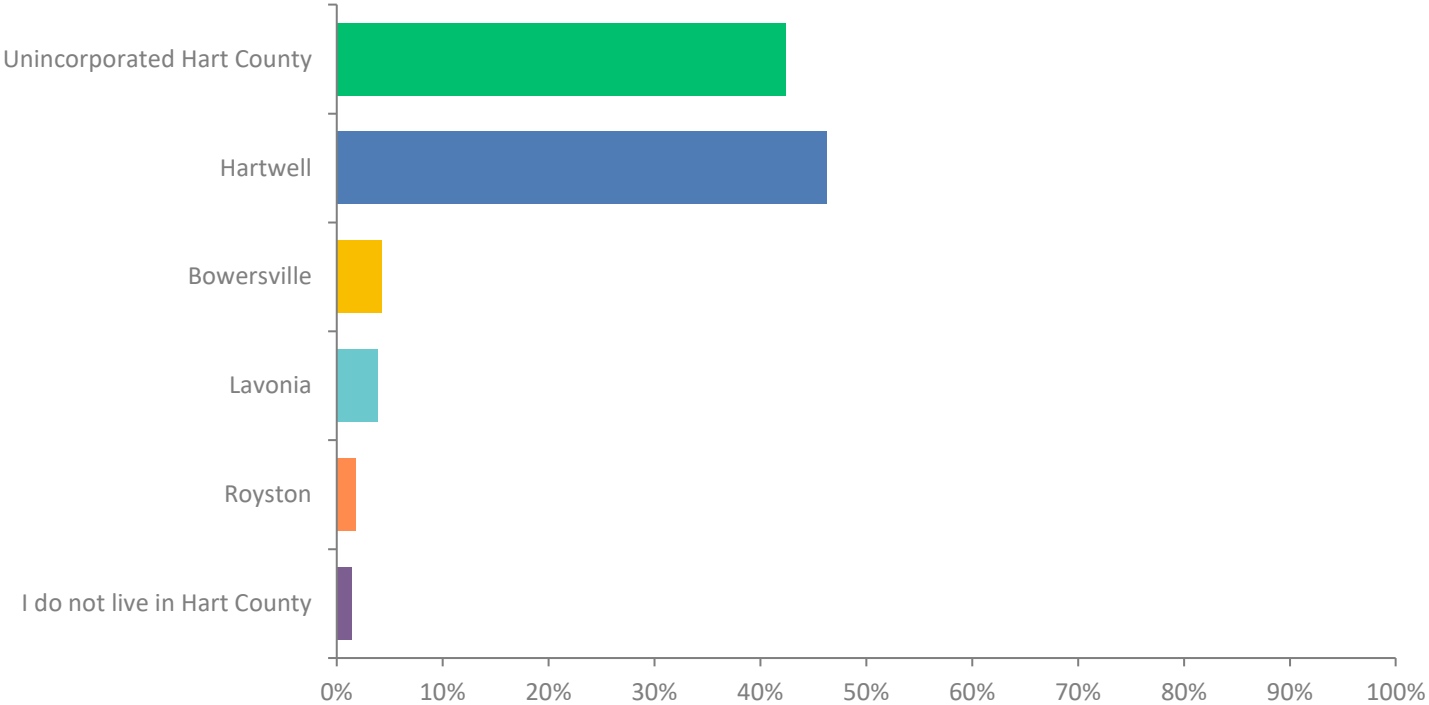
Q2: For Hart County residents, how long have you lived within Hart County?
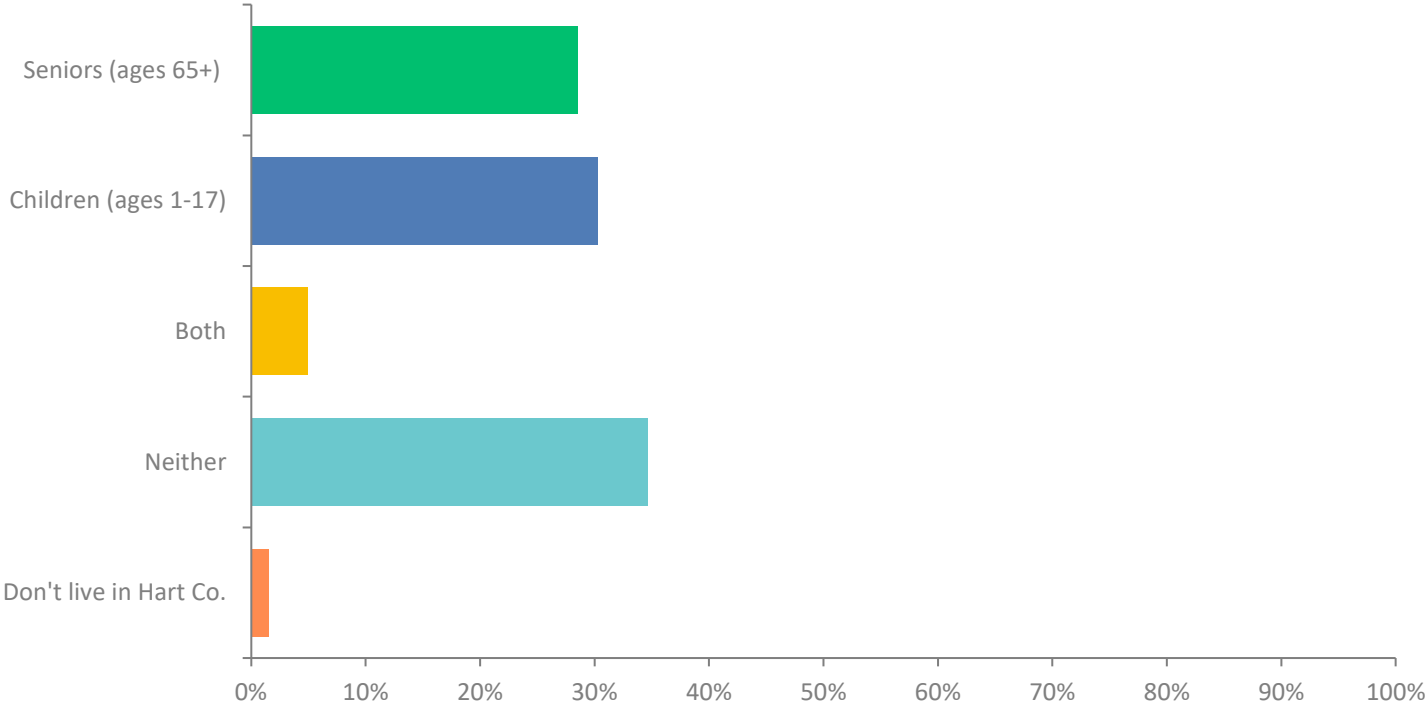
Answered: 559   Skipped: 9

Q3: For Hart County residents, what is your housing status? (FT = Full time resident. PT = Part time resident)
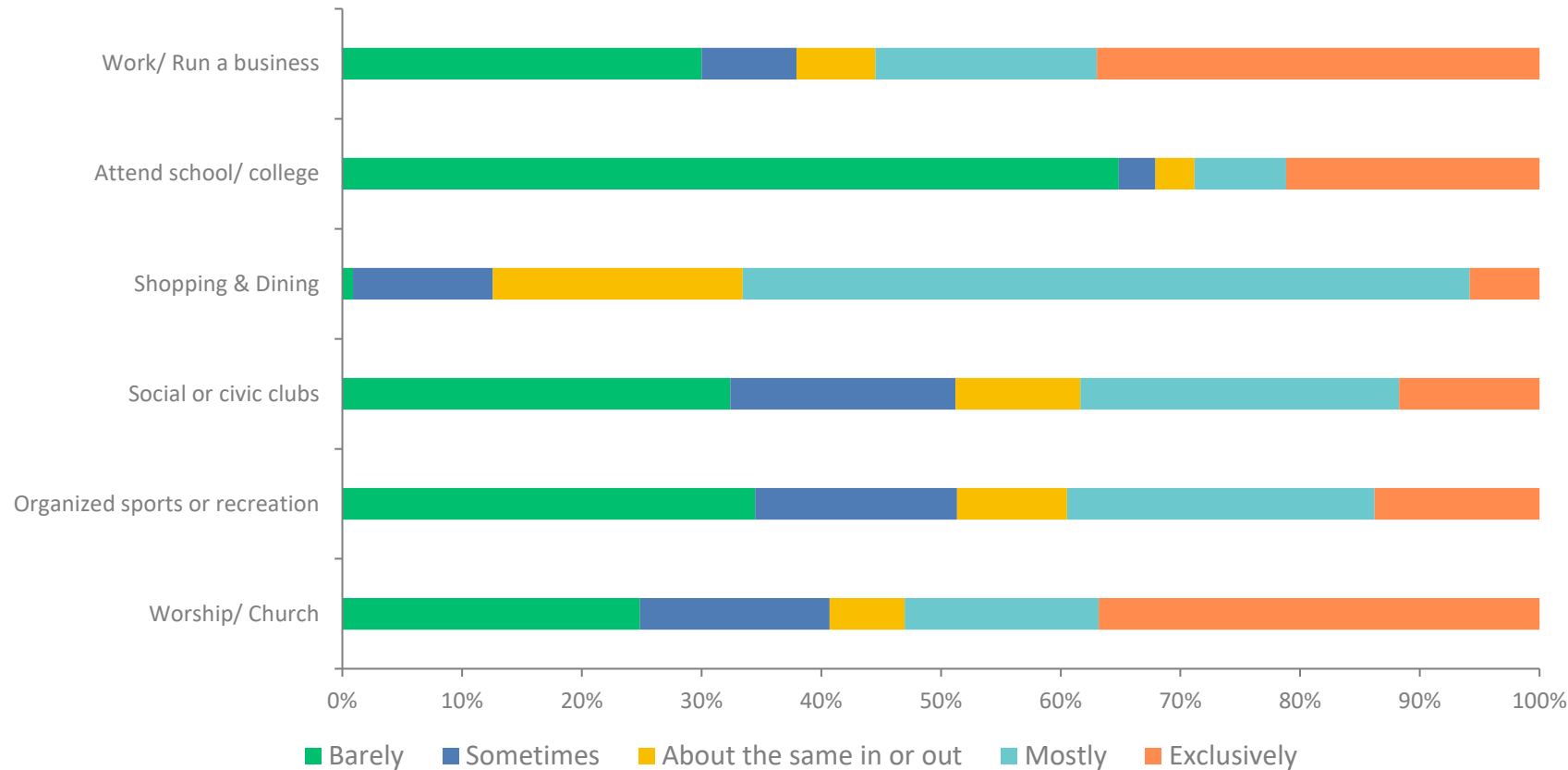
Answered: 557   Skipped: 11

Q4: Do you have any seniors or children in your household?
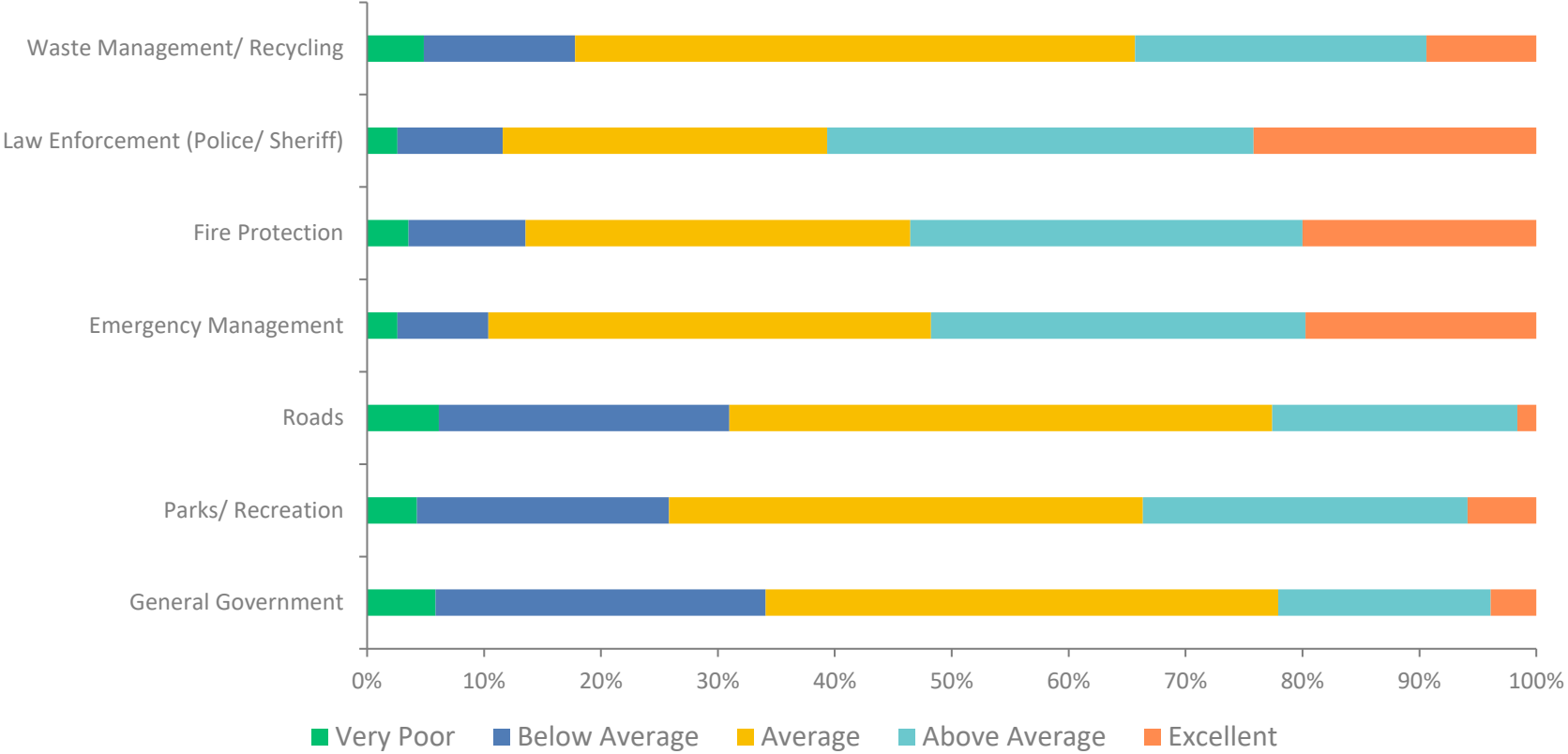
Answered: 568   Skipped: 0

Q5: How frequently do you do these activities within Hart County?

Answered: 568   Skipped: 0

Legend: Barely ■ Sometimes ■ About the same in or out ■ Mostly ■ Exclusively

Q6: On a scale of 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good), please rate your satisfaction with the following services:

Answered: 310   Skipped: 258

Legend: ■ Very Poor ■ Below Average ■ Average ■ Above Average ■ Excellent

Categories (top to bottom): Waste Management/ Recycling, Law Enforcement (Police/ Sheriff), Fire Protection, Emergency Management, Roads, Parks/ Recreation, General Government

Q7: If you have public water service, please rate the quality of that utility.
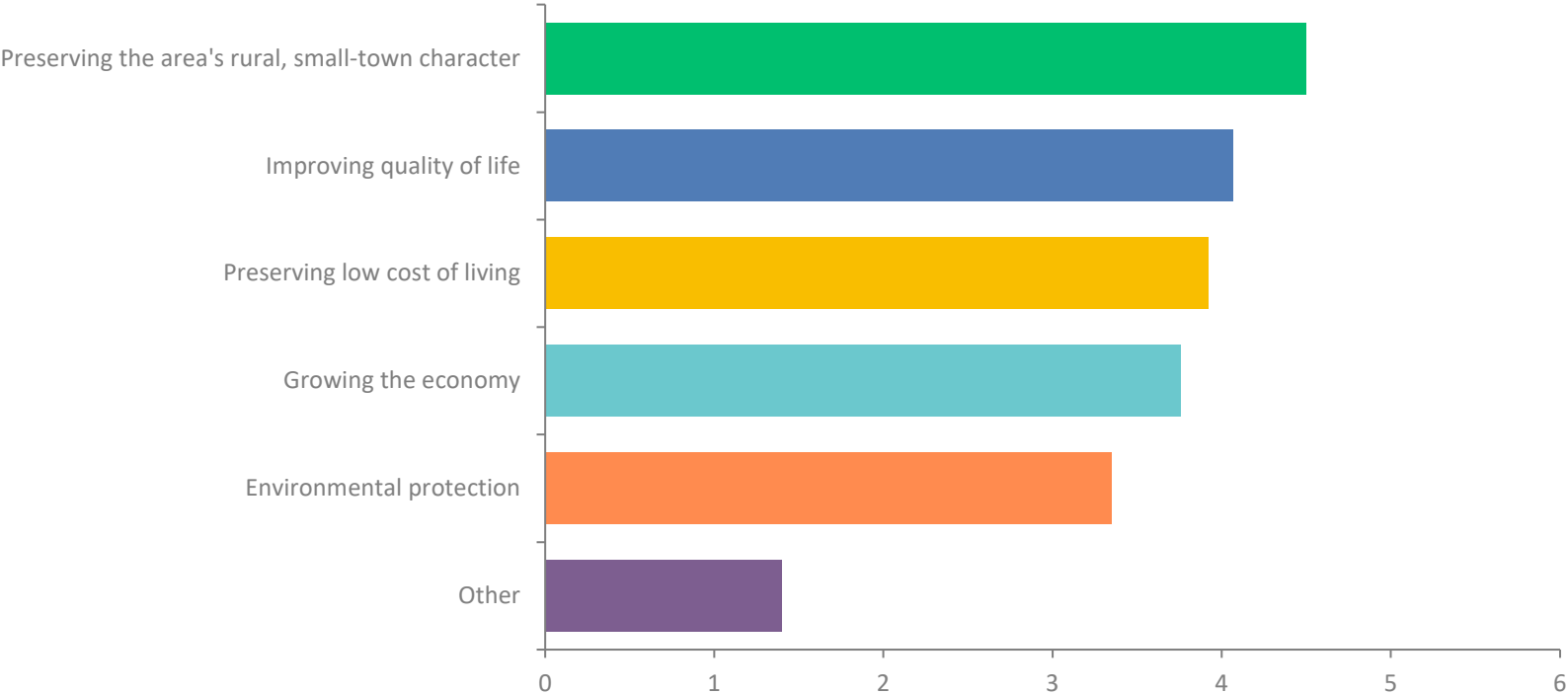
Answered: 184   Skipped: 384

Q8: If you have public wastewater service, please rate the quality of that utility.
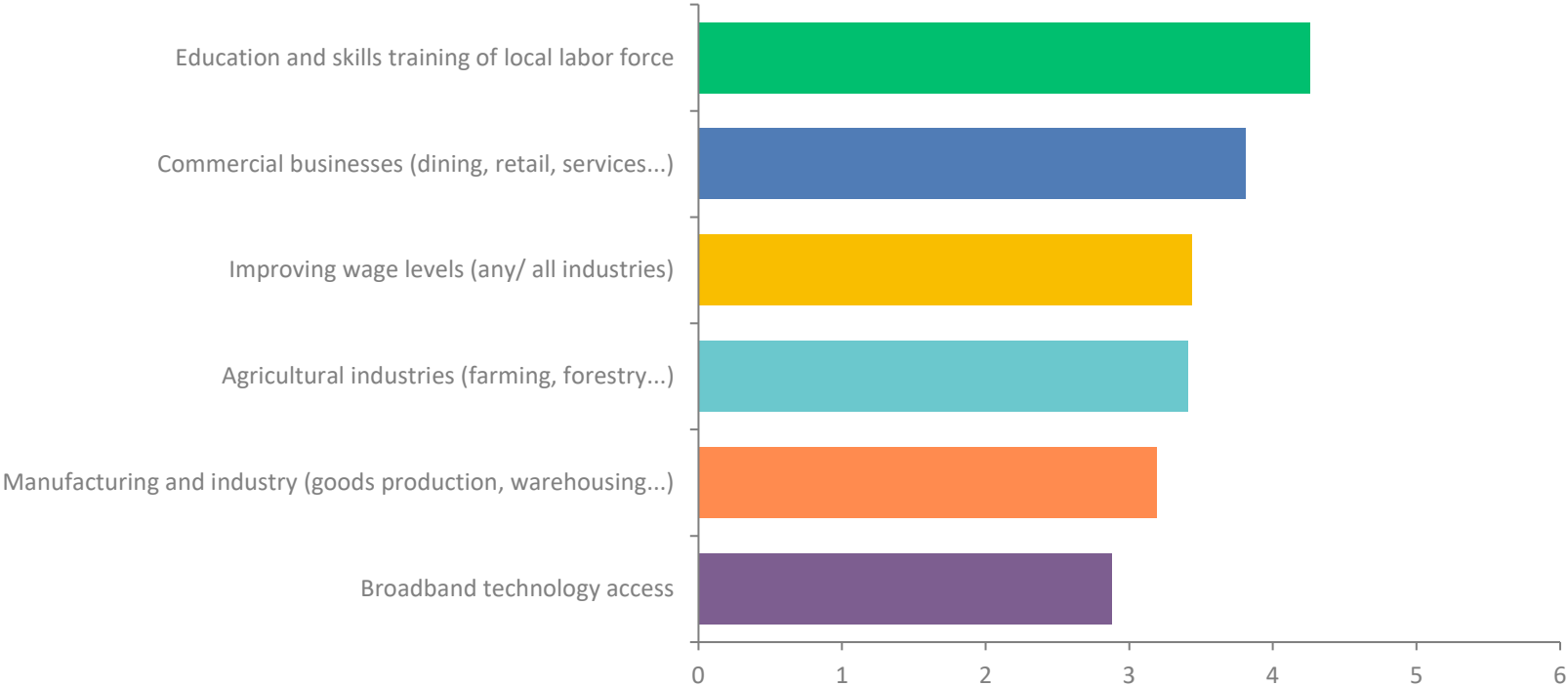
Answered: 88   Skipped: 480

Q14: With #1 being the most important, please rank these in terms of what you feel is most important to Hart County.
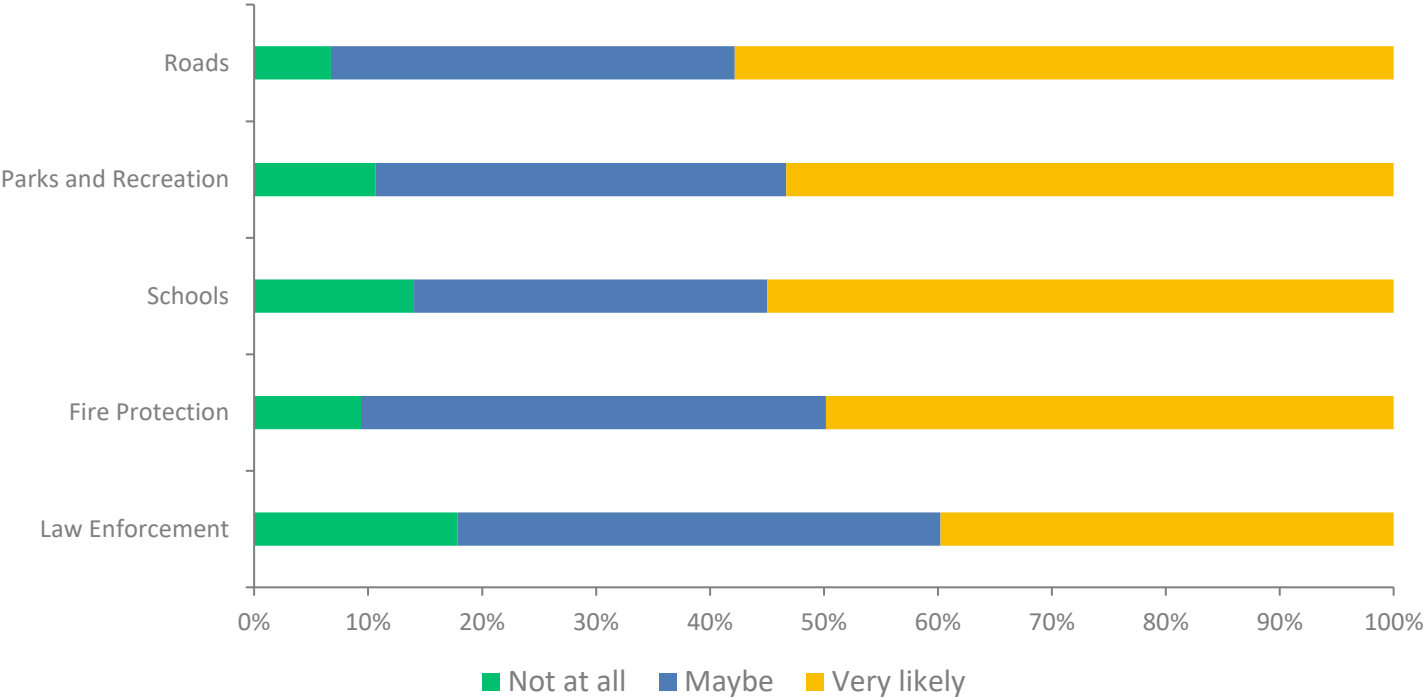
Answered: 276   Skipped: 292

Q15: Please rank the following economic development priorities for Hart County, with #1 being the most important.

Answered: 276   Skipped: 292

Q17: For which of the following public facilities and services (if any) would you consider it a good thing to grow the tax base if it meant more/better services?

Answered: 276   Skipped: 292

Q18: Please indicate how strongly you feel any of the following housing issues is a priority for Hart County.

Answered: 276   Skipped: 292

Legend: Low Priority · Medium Level Priority · High Priority
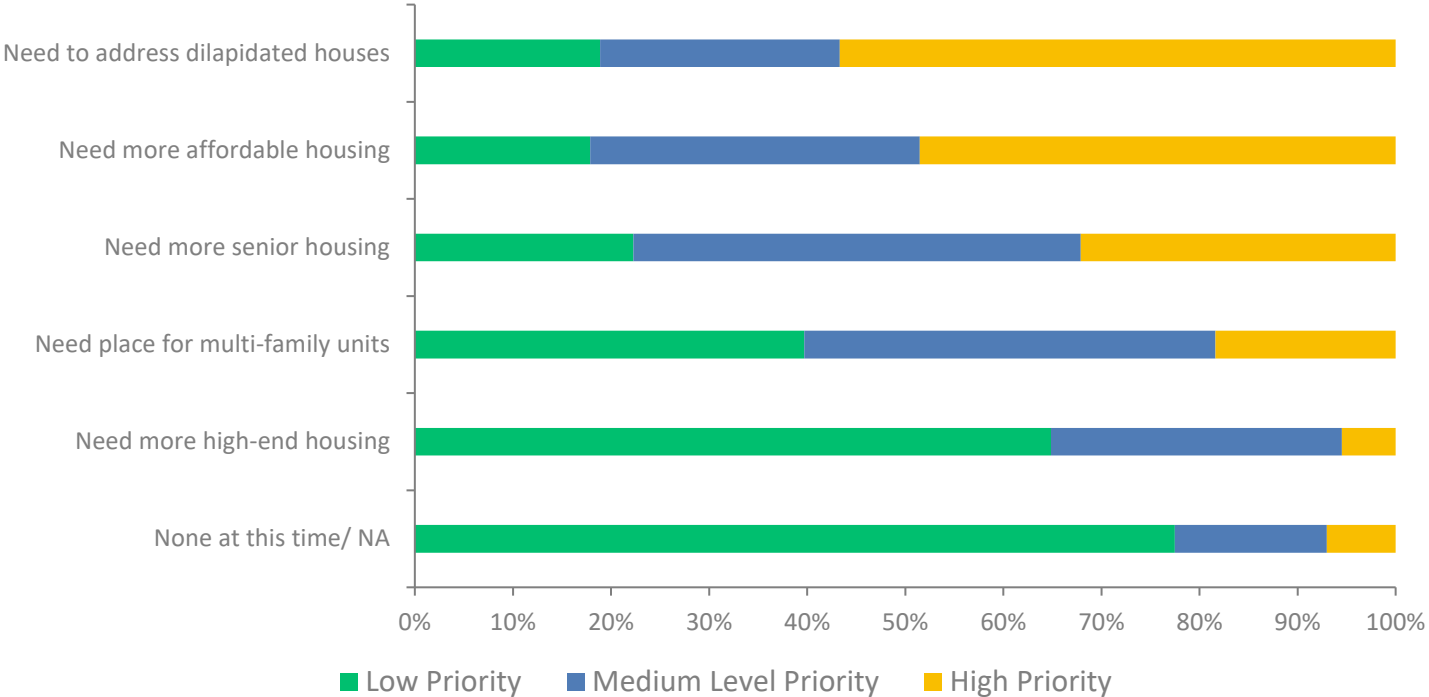
Sample Records of Public Involvement

HART COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE FORUM
Commission Chambers ~ 6:00 PM – 6/16/22

Please Sign In

Name	Name
Toy Cynthia Wilkins	
Gina Temple	
Bill Fogerty	
Angie McGee	
Lee Adams	
Fort Oglesby	
Marshall E. Graham	
Bobby Fleming	
(illegible)	

HART COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE & PUBLIC FORUM
Agriscience Center - 7/14/22

Please Sign In

Name	Name
Jay Floyd	
Gina Temple	
Jeri Partain	
Kevin MccLaney	
Pat Goran	
Shannon Vanstuke	
Bill Fogerty	
Terrell Park	
Jim Owens	
Rita Chapman	
Buck Chapman	
Beverly Brown	
Cathy Boyce	
Andrew Friedman	
Kim Nyggitalha	

HART COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE & PUBLIC FORUM
Agriscience Center - 8/11/22

Please Sign In

Name	Name
Temi Partain	Kevin Geraty
SHANNON VANSKIKE	Charles Fulton
BILL FOGERTY	Tracy Hicks
PAT GORAN	LARRY TORRENCE
Angie McGee	Buck + Rita Chapman
Julie Mouchet	
Bobby Fleming	
Jay Floyd	
THEO DERLETH	
Tommy Madden	
PHIL HERTZ	
Ann Perry Ayers	
Lindsey Ingle	
Rita Chapman	
Buck Chapman	
Rhea Ingram	
Skylar Toth	
Nathan Buffington	

HART COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE & PUBLIC FORUM
Agriscience Center - 9/8/22

Please Sign In

Name	Name
Kevin McCraney	Shannon Vanskik
PAT GORAN	Jerri Partain
Bill Leard	Julie Mumht Georgia
LARRY TORRENCE	Gretchen TORRANCE
Rhea DIGNAM	Jim Owens
BOB & KAREN SWANSON	Lindsey Ingle
	Katie Hampe

Residents, leaders discuss language in comprehensive plan

By Josh Brannen
Staff writer

Elected officials and community leaders hosted a public meeting Aug. 11 to discuss a second reading of the Hart County Comprehensive Plan, in which residents identified priorities for the county's posterity.

The comprehensive plan is the state-required document that will help shape and coordinate local work programs for Hart County.

The planning process is designed to ensure that major projects and policies for Hart County are developed with public input, ensuring coordination between local and state level interests.

Adam Hazell director of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC), expounded on what residents have identified as important to them and what they want Hart County to be for future generations.

"What we did was an update on the county's vision statement that's on the comprehensive plan, which is what [the county] wants to showcase where we want to go in a generation or so," Hazell said. "The county's leadership is going to need a plan put in place like the comprehensive plan so they can have something to look back on when trying to decide how to grow and what to bring in.

"We found six general categories of issues that were outlined in the slideshow."

At the meeting, six priorities for residents were:

• Managing growth with a clearer vision for future
• Communication, coordination, and leadership
• Preserving the cost of living and fiscal efficiency
• Ensuring capital projects benefit residents
• Doing more to preserve agriculture
• Clarity regarding state and federal projects

In the managing growth with a clearer vision category, residents expressed they want growth to be kept in line with the rural nature of Hart County, and want the comprehensive plan to define how [leadership] can minimize the impact of growth on the community's character as well as efficient use of utilities and infrastructure.

"Managing growth; clearer vision for future is the big one," Hazell said. "It's not to say that Hart County is adverse to growth, but [people] want to make sure that whatever comes in is sensitive to the context of the community such as heavy traffic, adverse pollution, crime, that sort of thing. Trying to make sure that whatever growth happens is done in a harmonious manner."

The ability to assess and rate county leadership as well as improving communication on important topics being discussed and decided upon was another topic that residents wanted to refine.

"Communication, coordination, leadership: That just has to do with making sure that the constituents and the elected officials are much more in agreement and understanding of one another at how the county is transmitting information and making it available to the public," Hazell said. "The constituents of Hart County are looking to leadership to convey certain messaging that demonstrate how [leadership] is responding to their concerns."

Preserving the cost of living and fiscal efficiency was the third priority identified. Residents want to keep taxes low but use them in a manner that gives them their "bang for their buck." According to Hazell, residents want their tax money used in a way that has an "eye towards performance measures that ensure responsible fiscal efficiency." In addition, residents want the ability to establish a review process for property tax assessments, the ability to create long-term budgets for capital projects, and performance measures for county departments.

The fourth priority is to ensure that capital projects benefit existing households in Hart County and emphasize parks & rec., local roads, and schools.

"[Residents] want to make sure that investments made towards infrastructure, utilities, parks, whatever, are done primarily with an eye towards existing residents," Hazell said. "Again, this doesn't reflect the idea that residents don't want growth or economic development, but the emphasis from the community is on the idea of hometown; what are we doing to make that much more viable or efficient for existing residents? It gives [current] residents a reason to stay invested into the community."

The fifth priority residents want the comprehensive plan to focus on is preserving agriculture. According to Hazell, residents see agriculture and rural life in Hart County as "co-linked," and would be to move towards a industry thriving in light of pressure to sell to suburbs or whatever?"

The sixth priority identified was clarity on state and federal project plans. Residents want to know how I-85 expansion might impact Hart County, and they want to know how they can get this information quicker so they can be aware of what to do if a project is being built or postponed.

"If leadership in the county are doing things on behalf culture and rural life in Hart County as "co-linked," and to get away from that "trait" would be to move towards a different direction.

"[Residents] know that the agricultural industry is a large part of the ruralness of Hart County, and not just the farms but the businesses that support the farms," Hazell said. "So the question is if the county commissioners and the county policies, do they have their ear to the ground with regard to what the agricultural community needs?

"Do they stop every once and awhile to understand if something is not working for keeping the agricultural of these issues within the reality of their fiscal limitations and their limited powers, then they're acting within the interests of what gets Hart County towards their constituents' interests," Hazell said. "We're going to keep building on this to create the worklist that we need to define the general direction that we want for the future of Hart County."

A third meeting for the comprehensive plan will be held Sept. 8. The discussion is expected to take a deeper dive into the priorities and incorporate hard data.

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.
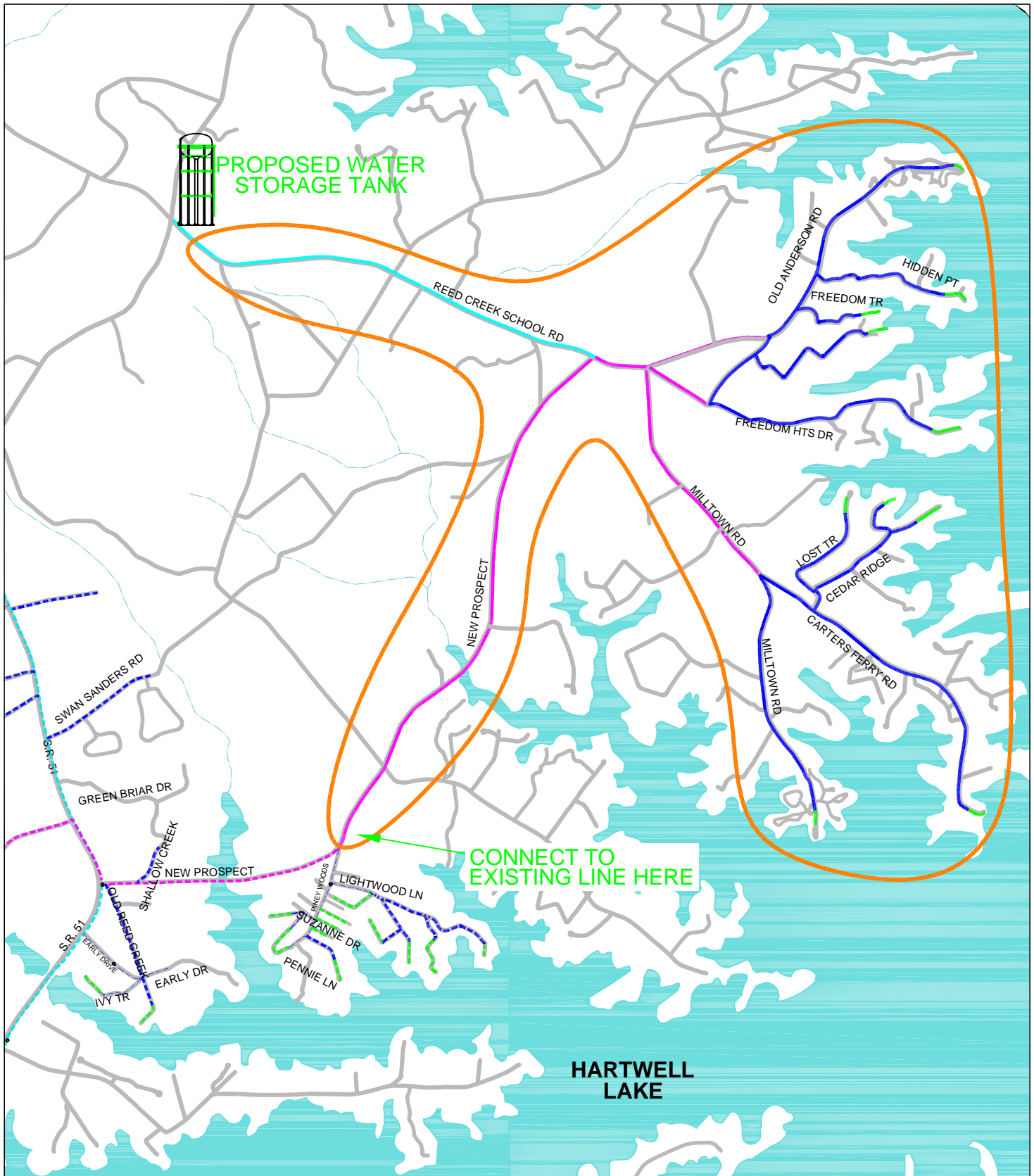
SWOC Assessment – GMRC Digital Economy Plan

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Workforce/ Education	Higher Educational Institutions – University of North Georgia, Brenau, North Georgia Technical School, Lanier Technical School,	Limited existing hi-tech labor force	Economic and demographic growth of metro Atlanta	Attraction/ Retention of top technology talent
	Faster Business Start-up Time	Low family income	Job fairs held within the region by GMRC Workforce Development	Competition from other metro areas
	Dawson GigCenter – Business start-ups			
	GMRC Workforce Development			
	Strong Dev. Authorities and Chamber offices to assist start-up businesses and industries			
Infrastructure	Cooperative EMC's that deliver good products	System Redundancy. Residents and Businesses need more choices for internet service.	Tourism/outdoor recreation related industry	Topographically the GMRC Region is difficult to traverse for aerial line installation
	North Georgia Network	Cost prohibitive		
	Access to metro Atlanta	Geographic isolation		
	Ga 400 – Technology Corridor			
	Residents ability to telecommute			
Local Government	GMRC fostering cooperation	Limited funding resources	Educating local government on importance of broadband access	Finding Grant funds for broadband projects
	Quality Development Authorities and Joint Development Authorities	State needs to put more emphasis on education		Need to better communicate to State Legislators the Region's needs regarding broadband initiatives & projects

Goal: *Ensure new telecommunication networks for needed accessibility and reliability to support the growth of the regional economy.*

Strategy: *Prepare to meet industry and business telecommunication needs by assisting with fiber optic network development.* The purpose of this strategy is to support, develop, and provide educational opportunities regarding telecommunication systems in the region.

Strategy: *Promote and support the use of health information technology (IT).* The purpose of this strategy is to encourage local partnerships between health providers and local leaders in using telecommunications and other information technology to improve care to patients and lower health costs.

Northeast Hart County Water System Expansion

PROPOSED WATER STORAGE TANK

CONNECT TO EXISTING LINE HERE

HARTWELL LAKE

Roads / Labels:
REED CREEK SCHOOL RD
OLD ANDERSON RD
HIDDEN PT
FREEDOM TR
FREEDOM HTS DR
MILLTOWN RD
LOST TR
CEDAR RIDGE
CARTERS FERRY RD
NEW PROSPECT
SWAN SANDERS RD
S.R. 51
GREEN BRIAR DR
SHALLOW CREEK
NEW PROSPECT
OLD REED CREEK
EARLY DRIVE
EARLY DR
IVY TR
PENNIE LN
SUZANNE DR
PINEY WOODS
LIGHTWOOD LN

LEGEND

TARGET AREA BOUNDARY

OCTOBER 2021

WATER SYSTEM LEGEND

EXISTING		PROPOSED
	12" DIAMETER WATERLINE	
	8" DIAMETER WATER LINE	
	6" DIAMETER WATER LINE	
	2" DIAMETER WATER LINE	

HART COUNTY WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY
SFR
WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
SCALE: 1" = 3000'