

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A community's economic prosperity and quality of life depends to a large extent on the performance of its transportation system. Not only does the transportation system provide opportunities for the mobility of people and goods, but over the long term it influences patterns of growth and the level of economic activity through the accessibility it provides to land. In addition, it provides connections to the rest of a metropolitan area, state and indeed the world. Communities create plans to help guide the development and interaction among their essential elements, such as neighborhoods and housing, land use, open space and conservation areas, economic activities, educational institutions, civic spaces, and public infrastructure systems, including transportation. Henry County and the Cities of Hampton, Locust Grove, McDonough, and Stockbridge all share an interest in creating quality communities and effective transportation systems. The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) described in this document helps these communities guide the future development of their roads and highways, public transportation systems, and bicycle and pedestrian networks. All of these modes of transportation together will provide the County and Cities with mobility and accessibility that is in concert with their desired land use patterns and community form.

Purpose of the CTP

The purpose of the CTP is two-fold. The first is to develop a coordinated and comprehensive blueprint for addressing transportation needs and policies for the entire Henry County area, including its municipalities. This is the first time such a comprehensive plan including both the County and its Cities has occurred in Henry County. Prior to this, each local government established its own transportation needs and policies. The second purpose of the CTP is to support the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan for all of the five (5) jurisdictions.

The CTP provides an essential policy document for Henry County and its Cities to guide the development of the transportation system for all modes of travel in the short-, medium-, and long-range future. The horizon year for the CTP and the Comprehensive Plan is 2030. The County/Cities shared vision is stated below:

Henry County and its Cities will create a sense of community by working together in a way that respects the role and place for both rural and urban development. The County and Cities will link their land uses with a safe, efficient, balanced, and environmentally friendly transportation system that meets the public's needs, fosters strong economic opportunities, and helps create a high quality of life for future generations.

Linkage to the Joint Henry County/Cities Comprehensive Plan

The CTP will serve as an important supporting element in the Joint County/Cities Comprehensive Plan. Unlike many other local government plans, the CTP and the Comprehensive Plan were developed on parallel and coordinated tracks, during the Fall of 2005 through early 2007. The specific roles that the CTP plays as input into the Comprehensive Plan of the County and the Cities are that it:

- Describes the existing characteristics, strengths, and deficiencies of the multimodal transportation system;
- Identifies a set of transportation goals and objectives which are commonly supported by the County and the Cities;
- Identifies the nature and extent of projected growth in the County through 2030 and the impact of the growth on the transportation system;



- Describes a set of potential transportation and land use strategies and multimodal transportation system improvements that can address the need for better mobility and access in the present time and the future, while helping to create quality development in the County and Cities;
- Provides a more detailed guide to managing mobility and land use aspects of one of the County's most important existing corridors (US 23/SR 42) and a potentially important corridor west of I-75 (the Westside Corridor/Flippen Road Extension);
- Furnishes a forecast of potential financial resources to support transportation system improvements;
- Identifies countywide priorities for improving the transportation system;
- Describes strategies to improve intergovernmental coordination and institutional effectiveness in carrying out transportation planning in the County; and
- Provides recommendations for implementing the CTP and undertaking a continuing transportation planning process for the County.

Besides the traditional coordination between land use and transportation system modeling, additional coordination occurred between the two efforts including a special forum for County and City officials to discuss the need for coordinated transportation and land use planning as well as 15 public workshops addressing both transportation and land use issues. Additionally, members of the CTP Team gave presentations to City officials, business leaders, and other community stakeholders throughout the CTP development process, which focused on transportation, land use/development, and economic development issues. Numerous technical working sessions were held throughout the process between the CTP and Comprehensive Plan project teams to coordinate the technical aspects of the Plans. Both Plans are expected to be adopted by Henry County and the Cities in early 2007. Chapter XIII provides a summary of how the CTP addresses the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Minimum Planning Standards for Local Plans.

Relationship to Other State and Regional Plans

Many of the County's most important roads, such as Interstate 75, State Road 138, SR 155, US 23/SR 42, US 19/41 and others, are owned and maintained by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Similarly, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) is responsible for providing regional express bus services in the Metro Atlanta region. Because these organizations address regional and statewide needs, the Joint Henry County/Cities CTP acknowledges the special roles and responsibilities of GDOT and GRTA with respect to the planning and development of state roads and interstate highways (GDOT) and regional transit (GRTA). The CTP must be fully coordinated with GDOT's plans, programs, and initiatives. Conversely, GDOT must be cognizant of the important role that Henry County and the Cities play in planning, developing, and funding transportation improvements that support and enhance the GDOT-maintained system.

As a member jurisdiction of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Henry County plays an important role in the regional transportation planning activities of the 20-county metropolitan planning organization (MPO) area. The ARC serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Metro Atlanta. Among other duties, it is responsible for:

- Developing the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the 20-county region that meets federal and state transportation planning requirements;
- Developing the region's list of short-range funded transportation projects which are included in ARC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- Providing timely and meaningful opportunities for public participation in the transportation planning process.

Additionally, ARC is responsible for developing coordinated regional land use and transportation policies that form the foundation of Metro Atlanta's transportation system development. ARC also conducts regional and areawide transportation studies that affect the transportation system in Henry County. The



most recent and on-going regional studies potentially affecting transportation in Henry County are shown in Table I - 1. Plans that have been completed are denoted with an asterisk. Other planning initiatives by local jurisdictions that could potentially impact Henry County are also shown. During the development of the Henry County/Cities CTP, numerous coordination meetings were held with ARC staff members, consultant teams for ARC’s regional planning projects, and representatives of adjacent County jurisdictions to obtain information, data, and insights on how other planning studies might affect Henry County and its CTP development.

Major Elements of the CTP

The development of the Henry County/Cities CTP followed the traditional transportation planning process while including several important technical and public involvement innovations. Each element of the CTP listed below will be highlighted in this document. Detailed technical data and information as well as process documentation have been compiled into a separate Appendix.

- Henry County: Past, Present, and Future
- The Transportation System in Henry County
- Needs and Issues
- Community Visioning
- Institutional Issues
- Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures
- The Land Use-Transportation Connection
- Transportation Plan Development
- Corridor and Activity Center Opportunities and Concepts
- Financial Element
- Plan Recommendations and Implementation
- Linkage to the Joint Henry County/Cities Comprehensive Plan

The public involvement activities for the CTP were undertaken under a separate project funded by Henry County. Highlights of the public involvement and stakeholder coordination program are described in this document.

Table I - 1: Current And On-Going Regional And Local Plans Related To Transportation	
Regional Plans:	<i>Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan</i> <i>Regional Freight Mobility Plan</i> <i>Southern Regional Accessibility Study</i> <i>Tara Boulevard Multimodal Corridor Study (U.S. 19/41)</i>
Local Plans:	<i>Spalding County Comprehensive Transportation Plan</i> <i>Clayton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan</i> <i>Fayette County Comprehensive Transportation Plan</i> <i>*DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan</i>

* denotes plan is complete.

Participants in the CTP Planning Process

The development of the Joint Henry County/Cities Comprehensive Transportation Plan was dependent on the participation of many different stakeholders in Henry County. At the decision-making level, the



Henry County Board of Commissioners and the Mayors of Hampton, Locust Grove, McDonough, and Stockbridge served as the policy-makers. County Commissioners, Mayors, and City Council members were periodically briefed on the progress of the CTP development and formal presentations at public meetings were also given by the CTP project team. A special forum was held in February 2006 for all local elected officials to participate in the CTP Shared Agenda Workshop and Peer County Panel. This event, jointly hosted by Henry County and the Henry County Chamber of Commerce, provided an opportunity for local decision-makers to interact with elected officials from other high growth areas of the U.S. (the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC area and Osceola County/Greater Orlando, Florida area).

Staff members from Henry County and its Cities as well as representatives from state, regional, and local jurisdictions participated through the CTP Technical Steering Committee. These representatives include all of the state agencies, regional authorities and planning organizations, and local government jurisdictions that have a relationship to transportation and planning in Henry County.

Key community stakeholders, including appointed representatives from each of the County Commission districts, served on a Public Involvement Advisory Committee. These individuals represented the K-12 education system, civic, medical, and economic development interests in the County. Table I - 2 identifies the jurisdictions represented in both the Technical Steering Committee and the Public Involvement Advisory Committee. Several representatives served in a dual capacity on the Public Involvement Advisory Committee for the CTP as well as the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Finally, and most importantly, continuous efforts were made to engage citizens, businesses, property owners and Henry County citizens to obtain the public's perspective on transportation needs, issues, and priorities. A summary of the CTP public involvement activities can be found in Chapter IV.

Next Steps

The next chapters of this report will explain the planning process, key issues, analysis results, and recommendations leading to the development of the Joint Henry County/Cities CTP. With the adoption of the Plan, Henry County and City decision-makers can proceed in working collaboratively to advance the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the countywide transportation system to the benefits of its citizens. Over time, the CTP will need to be refined and modified to meet the changing needs and expectations of Henry County residents. This Plan will form the basis of a coordinated, comprehensive, and collaborative transportation planning process within Henry County and its Cities, both now and into the future.



Table I - 2: CTP Committee Representation

Public Involvement Advisory Committee

- County Commission Board Appointments (Districts and Chair)
- Henry County Board of Education
- Henry Medical Center
- Henry County Chamber of Commerce
- Henry County Development Authority
- Henry County Council for Quality Growth
- City of Hampton
- City of Locust Grove
- City of McDonough
- City of Stockbridge
- DeKalb County
- Rockdale County
- Clayton County
- Spalding County
- Newton County
- Butts County

Technical Committee Members

- Henry County
 - Planning and Zoning Division
 - Transportation Planning Department
 - Public Works Division (DOT and SPLOST)
 - Sheriff and Fire and Rescue
 - Geographic Information System (GIS)
 - Communications Office
- City of Hampton
- City of Locust Grove
- City of McDonough
- City of Stockbridge
- Henry County Water and Sewerage Authority
- McIntosh Trail Regional Development Center
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
- Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA)
- State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA)

