

5. Issues and Opportunities

5.1 Introduction

To translate a future vision for the community into an implementation plan first requires goal setting and an identification of the issues and opportunities that will likely be faced in making the plan a reality. The overarching goal is to develop a plan that best manages the anticipated growth in the community, and this plan is divided into seven major elements:

- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Transportation

A goal statement for each element and a list of issues and opportunities are presented in the following sections of this chapter. The issues and opportunities were first identified in the Community Assessment and then confirmed and prioritized during the Community Participation Program. Goals were developed using public input and refined by City and County officials. The County-Wide goals, issues, and opportunities are presented first. They apply to the entire county, including all cities and unincorporated areas. Following that is a description of any issues and opportunities that are unique to each city and unincorporated Henry County.

5.2 County-wide Issues and Opportunities

County-wide Land Use

Land Use Goal: Ensure that new developments promote a better sense of place and preserve valued elements of community character.

The term “community” refers to qualities that are not always tangible or apparent. This term refers to the features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. “Sense of place” is another term for community. Land use patterns, infrastructure, and service investment all contribute to this sense of place and the sustainability of the community, because it is the nature and quality of social interactions that is the key to building and sustaining any sense of community.

Land use patterns and design can encourage or discourage the use of public interactive space. Public sidewalks, streets, parks, and civic squares are examples of places that facilitate community interaction. These interactions provide the groundwork for community, tend to minimize economic



stratification, and enable free information exchanges. Part of the vision for the community is to create an environment with a true sense of place.

County-wide Land Use Issues and Opportunities

1. **Loss of scenic areas, open space, and agricultural land.** Henry County is rapidly losing its vacant developable land, agricultural land, scenic areas, and open space to development.
2. **Few community gathering places.** Participants referred to the lack of neighborhood parks, coffee shops, or other gathering places within walking or biking distance of their homes. Much of this problem is the result of an auto-oriented pattern of development where pedestrians are unable to access nearby neighborhoods without using major arterials or highways.
3. **Rapidly Growing Population of Seniors.** Between 2000 and 2026, the share of residents over 65 is expected to increase faster than the growth of the population as a whole. Based on the ARC Adjusted Population Projection, this translates into nearly 52,000 additional seniors living in Henry County in 2030. Quality healthcare, walkability, and transit are typically high priorities for this population segment. These elements can serve as the building blocks for developing a sense of community for everyone.
4. **Reactive response to growth pressure** – The County and its cities have been reactive to the needs of the growing population, rather than proactive in determining where growth can best be supported
5. **Outdated Zoning and Development Regulations.** The County and its Cities have been struggling over the past three years to update their land use regulations. In particular, current codes do not allow for mixed-use developments. Additionally, there is a lack of adequate design standards and sign controls. The Cities and County have the opportunity to include standards for development that enable more traditional-scale development and consider historical areas.
6. **Create attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly activity centers.** One of the mandates from the Community Visioning and Scenario Analysis workshops, completed as part of the preparation for this Plan, was for a series of activity centers strategically located throughout the county. These areas would serve as focal points for development and be designed to provide walking and biking opportunities.
7. **Cluster public facilities within the activity centers.** The activity centers would be priority locations for new community facilities such as parks, schools, libraries, police precincts, recreation centers, and senior centers.
8. **Preserve historic sites before they are demolished or degraded by incompatible development.** Historic sites and cemeteries should be inventoried, documented, and preserved.
9. **Allow greater density in activity centers with a mixture of uses.** Areas that have the necessary infrastructure, including roads, sewer service, and fire protection, are the most appropriate for new activity centers.
10. **Improve the look and image of the community from I-75 and at interstate interchanges.** Many of metropolitan Atlanta's interstates have been lined with unsightly development and large, unattractive signage. The interstate corridor and its interchanges are important gateways into Henry County.
11. **Emphasize infill in the cities.** Encouraging development in the cities instead of in the unincorporated county protects valuable rural and scenic areas.



12. **One Henry Plan.** The County and Cities implementing the same vision for future development is one of the goals of the “One Henry” concept. By working together to implement a unified vision, many the above issues can be resolved.
13. **Cluster Development and Activity Centers.** Create attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly activity centers. These areas would serve as focal points for development and be designed to provide walking and biking opportunities. Public facilities should be clustered within the activity centers. These locations should serve as priority locations for new community facilities such as parks, schools, libraries, police precincts, recreation centers, and senior centers.
14. **Subdivision Design.** The County and its Cities have the opportunity to use subdivision design and development regulations to improve connectivity and traffic flow. Multiple access points, sidewalks, and trails can reduce congestion by making trips shorter and providing alternatives to driving.
15. **Coordination of Land Use and Infrastructure.** Infrastructure, schools, and other community facilities should be coordinated. More efficient coordination of these elements would lead to less sprawl, less congestion, and more efficient delivery of services.

County-wide Economic Development

Economic Development Goal: Attract and retain high-quality and diverse employers with quality of life, education, culture, housing, healthcare, retail, and recreation facilities.

This goal can be realized through quality of life improvements such as cultural, recreational, and education opportunities. Henry County also has the opportunity to broaden its employment base by making more land available for offices.

County-wide Economic Development Issues and Opportunities

1. **Supply of available land for industrial development.** The County’s industrial parks are running out of available sites for future expansion. This is partially a result of success and a result of poor land management practices. In order to continue to attract more industry, the County should set aside prime industrial and office sites for future growth.
2. **Diversification of economic base.** Henry County, like the rest of the country, has seen a dramatic decrease in the number of manufacturing jobs and the role of manufacturing in the overall economy.
3. **Lagging retail services.** Due to the rapid growth of residential areas in the County, Henry County has developed into a bedroom community of Atlanta. Residential growth has outpaced retail development, so there is a lack of local commercial services to support the growth in residential development.
4. **Limited education and job training.** The County offers limited post-secondary education opportunities. Henry County is in great need of a local technical school that would supplement the technical opportunities available through local schools. A local technical college would improve the skills of the labor force and help in local business retention and attraction efforts.
5. **Jobs-Housing Imbalance.** Henry County has a low jobs-housing ratio which indicates that the County serves as a bedroom community. This results in a fiscal imbalance as well as longer commutes. Residential growth is outpacing employment growth. New commercial



development is required to offset the increasing public service demands of the growing population.

6. **Attract jobs and employers that increase the diversity of the County's Economy.** There is an opportunity to nurture the emerging medical, technical, and other professional fields. While manufacturing is declining, the demand for office space is increasing. The County and its Cities should ensure that enough land is available for offices.
7. **Improve overall quality of life.** Quality of life and quality of place have emerged as driving economic forces for employers. The County has the opportunity to market its quality of life by capitalizing on its accessible location and sense of place. It can offer higher quality residential environments and mixed-use development with lifestyle amenities.
8. **Tourism.** Henry County is fortunate to have a very active tourism industry. The Atlanta Motor Speedway, just outside of Hampton, is host to two of the largest NASCAR events each year. Attracting and retaining major sporting events provides an excellent opportunity to support local businesses and help attract national and international industries to the community. Also, each city hosts local festivals that attract tourist to the county and should continue to be supported.
9. **Multifunctional complex and convention center.** The County and its Cities have the opportunity to invest in facilities that attract regionally. Residents cite the need for a convention center, arena complex, and performing arts center.

County-wide Housing

Housing Goal: To provide a variety of housing choices to suit the changing needs and lifestyles of City and County residents.

There are several demographic factors shaping the local housing market in Henry County. Nearly half of family households have children that will likely require a more traditional single-family neighborhood. However, non-family households are increasing at a faster rate than family households, and people living alone represent a significant number (15 percent) of these households. These non-family households create demand for smaller, higher-density housing units. Also, higher-income groups are growing at a significant rate, which creates a need for executive-level housing in the County. Conversely, 9 percent of householders earn less than \$20,000 and are in need of low-cost housing.

County-wide Housing Issues and Opportunities

1. **Continuing need for workforce housing.** Although housing prices in Henry County are considered relatively affordable compared to more urban counties of metro Atlanta, costs are rising more rapidly than incomes. Also, the rental population is underserved with affordable units. Workforce housing can be described as affordable housing options for key members of the local workforce. These employees can include police officers, firefighters, teachers, and nurses, among others. Providing workforce housing options allows these critical personnel the opportunity to live in the same communities in which they work.
2. **Limited non-family housing** – The growing number of non-family households require smaller, higher-density housing units.
3. **Limited executive housing** – The number of households earning more than \$100,000 per year is increasing. There is a need to provide executive-level housing (e.g., \$300,000+) to attract upper management.



4. **Provide for an aging population through additional senior services and housing alternatives.** The Baby Boomer generation is beginning to retire, resulting in one of the nation's greatest demographic shifts. Many of these wealthier, active seniors are looking for alternatives to large-lot, single-family dwellings – neighborhoods with sidewalks, access to transit, and the ability to walk to shops, restaurants, and recreation areas.
5. **Ensure adequate housing to meet the demands of a changing community.** In addition to an increase in seniors, there will be a greater share of single person households and households without children.
6. **Provide enough workforce housing to meet demand.** In 2004, 63 percent of all jobs in metropolitan Atlanta paid less than \$40,000. The County needs to seek ways to provide housing for people at a variety of income levels and at different stages in their life.
7. **Foster redevelopment and infill.** While redevelopment options within the unincorporated County are limited, there is tremendous opportunity for infill within the Cities.
8. **Encourage neo-traditional neighborhoods instead of isolated subdivisions.** Neo-traditional neighborhoods follow historic patterns of neighborhood design. They are compact, walkable, have a connected network of streets, sidewalks, and paths, and have a mixture of housing types, styles, and uses. Neo-traditional developments help foster a sense of community through the use of front porches, neighborhood commercial space, and neighborhood greenspace and parks.
9. **Encourage conservation subdivisions.** Conservation subdivisions are a regulatory tool that allows for clustering of residential development in a portion of a site, while maintaining open space in the remainder of the site. It is used as a way to protect open space in rural areas of the County.

County-wide Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural and Cultural Resources Goal: Preserve and Conserve greenspace, scenic areas, and natural resources and provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

This goal can be realized through resource identification and monitoring, land use policies and regulations, and education. Rapid development has deteriorated the County's natural resources. Also, population growth has outpaced the creation of recreation opportunities within Henry County. Residents of the County have made it clear that these important aspects of quality of life be protected and preserved.

County-wide Natural and Cultural Resources Issues and Opportunities

1. **Scenic Areas, Open Space, and Agricultural Land.** Henry County is rapidly losing its agricultural land, scenic areas, trees, and open space to development. Development regulations should protect valuable open space and agricultural land and preserve views.
2. **Air Quality.** Henry County is one of 20 metropolitan Atlanta counties with poor air quality. The County does not meet Clean Air Act standards for particulate matter or ground level ozone. Regionally, the bulk of the problem originates with automobiles.
3. **Water Quality.** The County and its Cities will need continued monitoring for compliance with the newly adopted water protection ordinances.



4. **Weak preservation measures for important historical resources.** Many of the residents of Henry County place a great value on their community's historic resources. The County's historic resources have not been thoroughly inventoried or protected.
5. **Preservation of Historic Downtowns.** Many residents cite the historic character of the County's cities as important to their quality of life and sense of place. The character of many of the downtown area is threatened by traffic congestion, incompatible development, and loss of businesses.
6. **Comprehensive Greenway System.** The County has the opportunity to develop a system of parks, recreation, and conservation areas that include greenway, bicycle, and pedestrian connections. A County-wide Comprehensive Greenspace Plan that includes the Cities would provide for passive recreation, scenic corridors, and protection of natural resources.

County-wide Community Facilities and Services

Community Facilities and Services Goal: Provide high-quality community facilities and services for current residents and businesses and use thoughtful management of infrastructure to support and direct new growth.

The implementation of the Future Development Map will hinge as much on the location, capacity, and design of the County's infrastructure and community facilities to guide growth as it does on the land use planning and zoning process. Likewise, the efficient operation of the infrastructure and community facilities outlined in this plan depend, in large measure, on achieving the arrangements of land use and development shown on the Future Development Map so that service delivery can be fitted to predictable land use patterns that emerge as the County continues its rapid development.

Community facilities and infrastructure play a key role in Henry County's growth and development. According to the DCA Local Planning Requirements for comprehensive plans, community facilities include a wide range of infrastructure, facilities, and services that typically are managed by different entities: water supply and wastewater treatment, solid waste management, stormwater management, parks and recreation, public safety, general government facilities, educational facilities, and libraries and cultural facilities. The area of transportation has its own separate section of the Community Agenda and is not included here.

County-wide Community Facilities Issues and Opportunities

1. **Performing Arts Center.** The County and its Cities need a multi-use performing arts center. This is both a Cultural and a Community Facilities Issue/Opportunity. Currently, local performing arts groups compete for limited space at local schools.
2. **Regional Coordination for Wastewater Planning.** The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Long-Term Wastewater Plan recommends that wastewater facilities be provided through a regional approach, and permit approvals are often contingent upon this compliance. This recommends the consolidation of all wastewater treatment facilities in the County and phasing out older facilities.
3. **Regional Coordination for Water Supply Planning.** In September 2003, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Board adopted three comprehensive plans to ensure adequate supplies of drinking water, to protect water quality and to minimize the impacts of development on the District's watersheds and downstream water quality. One of these plans



entitled “The Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan” takes a regional approach to solve problems associated with limited water supplies. Henry County and the Cities of Hampton, Locust Grove, McDonough and Stockbridge will coordinate with other local governments in implementing and updating this plan.

4. **Growing Demand for Better Fire Protection.** The Fire Department has the short-term need for additional stations in the Jodeco Road/Oak Grove Road Area and the Luella Community. The relocation of Station #7, along with Station #13, should improve the fire protection for the northeast side of the County. Additionally, there is a need to develop a Hazardous Materials Response Program to address potential accidents on I-75. At least five additional stations are needed to meet long-term capacity needs associated with population growth.
5. **Growing Demand for Jail Facilities and Emergency Communication Facilities.** The County’s Jail is overcrowded. Currently, there are 419 beds for over 500 detainees. Investments in detention facilities are needed to address the current deficiency and to maintain an acceptable level of service into the future. Emergency communications for the County and its Cities are provided by the Emergency Communications Center. The Emergency Communications Center, located in the Henry County Government Center, is physically constrained and cannot be expanded further to accommodate further growth.
6. **Growing Demand for Senior Services.** The Henry County Senior Services Department serves the senior population for all of Henry County. In 2004, this segment of the population totaled over 18,000 individuals. Both existing senior centers are at capacity, and there is currently a waiting list for every service.
7. **School Planning.** Residents are concerned about the overcrowding of schools and the need to be prepared to provide quality schools for the growing community. The roads around the schools are extremely congested. Schools should be located in coordination with infrastructure and land use plans. Alternatives to driving such as bike riding and walking should be available. Residents expect a regular assessment of school capacity and accessibility in relation to county growth patterns
8. **Growing Demand for Park and Recreation Facilities.** Public workshop participants countywide expressed the need for more parks and recreation facilities. Many residents cited the need for passive parks to serve retired persons and additional facilities for teens. A connected system of trails and greenspace is also widely supported.
9. **Use Community Facilities to foster a sense of community.** A community can foster a sense of community by clustering new facilities like parks, schools, libraries, and fire stations. By locating these facilities in Activity Centers the County and its Cities can save on infrastructure costs, reduce traffic congestion, and provide a pedestrian friendly destination.

County-wide Intergovernmental Coordination

Intergovernmental Coordination Goal: Ensure the coordination of local planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, with neighboring communities, and with state and regional plans and programs.

County-wide Intergovernmental Coordination Issues and Opportunities

1. **Regional Transportation Planning.** To ensure the proper coordination and execution of much needed transportation improvements, County officials need to be actively involved in



transportation planning activities at the ARC, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

2. **Land Use Conflicts that Result from Annexation.** Henry County and its Cities have established future annexation areas and service agreements that could serve as a basis for its extraterritorial jurisdiction. It is one of the goals of this plan to establish a joint future land use plan that can help to mitigate these conflicts.
3. **Regular County-Municipal Coordination.** The County does not have a regular meeting process with its neighboring Cities to discuss joint issues. The Cities have regular Henry Municipal Association Meetings. By attending these meetings regularly, the County could take advantage of this opportunity to communicate with the Cities.
4. **Shared Services.** There are several opportunities to share more services. For example, more sharing of Water and Sewer Services would lead to greater efficiency and would advance the goals of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Plans.
5. **Need for Better Land Use-Transportation Coordination.** Much of the County's transportation problems are a result of rapid development, sprawled development patterns, and the lack of a long-range perspective in making land use decisions. This is evident in the lack of transportation connectivity between developments, lack of mixed-use and multi-use developments that would reduce the need for vehicle trips, and lack of adequate transportation infrastructure to support large-scale developments.
6. **Need for better land use-School System Coordination.** Schools have a regional impact greater than many other types of development. Buying inexpensive property, often far from existing neighborhoods and without adequate transportation facilities, can encourage inefficient and sprawling land use patterns.

County-wide Transportation

Transportation Goals (As defined in Chapter VII of the Henry County Comprehensive Transportation Plan):

1. **Enhance mobility for people and goods in Henry County and its Cities.**
2. **Enhance accessibility for people and goods in Henry County and its Cities.**
3. **Reinforce growth patterns that meet County and City visions.**
4. **Protect and enhance the County's and Cities' environmental quality.**
5. **Ensure coordination and among the planning and development activities of the County, its Cities, the school district, the Water and Sewer Authority, and other involved organizations.**

The following community issues and opportunities have been identified through public workshops, community leader interviews, and feedback at presentations to City Councils and their staff. They were compiled by Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) in their efforts to develop the Henry County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

County-wide Transportation Issues and Opportunities

1. **Institutional Issues.** The County's transportation system is hampered by poor coordination among local and regional organizations.



2. **Transportation Needs and Options.** Severe traffic congestion requires more capacity in both the north-south and east-west corridors.
3. **Traffic Safety and Operations are Deficient.** Better traffic incident management should be provided in the southern part of the county and some roads in the county are not paved and should be improved. The County and Cities need more traffic signals and better traffic control and more roadway/rail grade separations are needed in the County. The I-75/I-675 “split” is very congested and should be fixed. This problem appears to be caused by the southbound I-75/I-675 merge.
4. **Need for Better Network of Arterial Roadways.** Future growth in population will require new and improved arterials.
5. **Henry County is a Major Center for Warehouse/distribution Centers.** Truck traffic is a problem in some locations, especially on roads connecting to I-75. The vast majority of warehouse/distribution center truck traffic is focused primarily in the I-75/GA, 155/GA 42 corridor within a few miles of I-75.
6. **Traffic Congestion Threatens to Hamper Economic Development** in Henry County and its Cities. Transportation improvements should support economic development.
7. **Henry County’s Transportation System is dominated by Highways.** There are few facilities for alternative transportation choices.
8. **Maintenance and Operating Costs.** As the transportation system is expanded, maintenance and operating costs will increase significantly in the future. Funding for ongoing system operations and maintenance should be identified.
9. **Funding.** Henry’s acute transportation problems will strain current City and County resources for implementation. The County has the opportunity to explore a range of potential funding sources for transportation, including special purpose local option sales taxes (SPLOST), traffic impact fees, public/private partnerships, tax allocation districts, user fees (tolls), bonds, community improvement districts, federal and state funds, and other innovative sources. Henry County already has the ability to create Community Improvement Districts (CIDs); however, to date this has not been implemented.
10. **Be prepared for improvements.** Right-of-way for future roadways and road widening projects should be protected now.
11. **Alternative modes.** More attention should be given to providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities is needed such as sidewalks, walking trails, and bike paths, especially in commercial areas and near schools, libraries, government buildings, parks, etc. More public transportation services, including commuter rail, express bus service, and park-and-ride lots, should be considered to serve people working in Downtown and Midtown Atlanta, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, and other areas of the region. Trails and sidewalks around the Luella school would reduce school related traffic congestion.



5.3 *Issues and Opportunities in Hampton*

In 2005 the City of Hampton updated its Land Use Plan. The issues and opportunities shown below combine information from the One Henry Community Assessment, the Community Participation Program of the One Henry Plan, and the recently completed Hampton Land Use Plan Amendment. Additional recent planning efforts include the development of a Downtown Master Plan (2002) for the historic downtown area. The vision that was developed as part of the community driven master planning process was to improve the City's quality of life and the economic vitality of the community. Some of the expressed goals included linking transportation and land use decisions, preventing poorly designed commercial development and enhancing the existing commercial development, creating a sense of place/community, protecting natural areas, creating a pedestrian-friendly community, and encouraging diversity in commercial, residential, employment, shopping, and recreation choices.

The Hampton Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan, including the construction of a downtown park, as well as several improvement projects that were recommended in the plan. In 2004 the City was awarded a Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant to implement a significant streetscape improvement project that was identified in the plan. The City also completed a planning process as part of its "Better Hometown" designation in 2001. Some of the main goals expressed in that process were to improve the downtown area and to attract quality development while maintaining the historic integrity of downtown Hampton. The Hampton Better Hometown Manager and the DDA work together to implement downtown redevelopment and enhancement projects.

The issues and opportunities described below are in addition to the County-Wide issues and opportunities described in the previous section. They should be considered together in order to address the complete range of concerns facing the City of Hampton.

Land Use Issues and Opportunities in Hampton

1. **Small town character is threatened.** The City would like the downtown to retain a circa 1950s character with good commercial uses and walkable streets as well as restaurants and outdoor activities. Residents cite the need to retain the small town feel and sense of community in Hampton. Hampton has the opportunity to maintain the City's character as a residential hometown community and be proactive in addressing growth issues. An important step is to protect historic homes and neighborhoods from incompatible uses.
2. **Community gathering places.** Residents are concerned about a lack of community gathering places. Downtown should be the center of activity with offices, signs, lighting, sidewalks, and a welcoming gateway. Parks were also cited as important community gathering places.
3. **Infrastructure and Land-Use Linkage.** Hampton has the opportunity to use infrastructure improvements to guide development patterns.
4. **Capital Improvements Planning.** Planning ahead to meet future demand allows time for budgeting and planning of facilities. Hampton has the opportunity to create Capital Improvements Programs to ensure that adequate facilities and services are provided to residents.



5. **Low-density Residential.** There is a general lack of support for any development over four dwelling units per acre. This acceptance of a low-density residential development pattern is in keeping with the small town character.

Economic Development Issues and Opportunities in Hampton

1. **Redevelopment.** Residents would like to see major road corridors, empty strip malls, and parts of the downtown area revitalized.
2. **Employment Opportunities.** There are currently few major employers or industries in Hampton. The lack of job opportunities encourages commuting into other parts of the Atlanta area. A major employment center is in the planning stages just east of Hampton at SR20 and I-75. This employment center, a regional mall, will attract more development in and around Hampton.
3. **Low Educational Attainment.** Residents of Hampton are less likely to have completed high school than residents in unincorporated Henry County, the Atlanta area, or the state.
4. **Atlanta Motor Speedway.** The Atlanta Motor Speedway brings congestion during race days, additional noise, and the attraction of non-distinct commercial uses. However, the Speedway and the largely undeveloped area surrounding it provide the City and County with the unique opportunity to develop a tourism destination and a Speedway oriented activity center.

Community Facilities Issues and Opportunities in Hampton

1. **Wastewater Planning.** The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Long-Term Wastewater Plan recommends that wastewater facilities be provided through a regional approach, and permit approvals are often contingent upon this compliance. This recommends the consolidation of all wastewater treatment facilities in the County and phasing out older facilities such as the wastewater plant in Hampton.
2. **Capital Improvements Planning.** The Cities have the opportunity to create Capital Improvements Programs to ensure that adequate facilities and services are provided to residents. Planning ahead to meet future demand allows time for budgeting and planning of facilities.

Transportation Issues and Opportunities in Hampton

1. **Commuter rail.** The Georgia Department of Transportation has identified a potential site for a commuter rail facility parking lot south of the downtown area. This facility would serve a future commuter rail line to Macon.
2. **Connected Trail System.** Residents cite the need for pedestrian and bicycle links to parks, schools, downtown, new developments, and other local destinations.

Housing Issues and Opportunities in Hampton

1. **Workforce Housing.** A high percentage of renter households are paying more than 30 percent of their income in rent in Hampton. This indicates that the rental population is underserved with affordable units.
2. **Infill Housing.** There is a need within Hampton to promote infill housing either within or adjacent to the downtown district and activity centers. It is important that the infill be compatible with established neighborhoods and supports the preservation of stable single-family neighborhoods.



3. **Seniors in Poverty.** According to the U.S. Census, the City of Hampton has a higher percentage of seniors living in poverty than in the Atlanta area or Henry County as a whole. As the share of population of seniors grows, addressing the special needs of seniors in poverty will become increasingly important.
4. **Aging population.** Residents cite the need for housing that addresses the needs of older residents. This includes higher density or cluster housing.



5.4 *Issues and Opportunities in Locust Grove*

In 2005 the City of Locust Grove updated its Future Land Use Map and Plan to incorporate large areas annexed primarily since 2002. The City has annexed over 8 square miles of land area into the city limits, growing in size more than 500 percent since 2000. The Land Use Plan applies the commercial center concept and defines distinct areas for the location of appropriately scaled commercial and/or industrial activities. A key component in the updated land use concept is that over half the City's residential and commercial needs to be met in mixed-use areas, be it horizontally integrated or vertically mixed. Residential and mixed-use areas allow for traditional-scale development and to provide for areas with a mixture of land uses. The City is currently working on implementing its land use plan through zoning and development regulations along with timely construction of infrastructure.

Locust Grove completed an Impact Fee feasibility study and adopted a Development Impact Fee Ordinance in June of 2005 to ensure that new developments pay their fair share of the costs of capital improvements. The fees cover Parks and Recreation, Police Services, and Transportation. The issues and opportunities shown below combine information from the One Henry Community Assessment, the Community Participation Program of the One Henry Plan, and the recently completed Land Use Plan Update and Impact Fee report.

Land Use Issues and Opportunities in Locust Grove

1. **Quality Development.** Citizens of the City of Locust Grove have expressed overwhelmingly (over 38 percent) in a recent survey that they want stricter code enforcement and stringent standards on new development. Key to this is better inspection and enforcement of existing codes and for new regulations on development. The City has already instituted several changes in its zoning and building codes to raise the quality of housing construction and has instituted architectural review for all new multifamily, commercial, office, and industrial construction.
2. **Historic Preservation.** Preserving cemeteries, downtown structures, and historic areas is important to residents of Locust Grove. These features, as well as historic neighborhoods, create the unique charm of the city. At least three historic homes have been removed since the late 1990s due to the lack of historic preservation. As a result, the city appointed its first Historic Preservation Commission in April of 2006. The commission is currently undertaking the charge to have a historic survey of properties for inclusion in an overlay for protection of the cultural and historic resources of the city.
3. **Access to Community Facilities.** Traffic congestion is reducing the quality of life as residents find it more difficult to enjoy the City's parks and other public areas. Residents cite the need for improved access to community facilities, especially parks and schools. Also, there is a need to provide alternative transportation choices, primarily bicycle and pedestrian paths. An interconnected system of multiuse trails and sidewalks would enable easier access to these facilities. Some residents indicated that all new developments should include pedestrian access to public amenities. As a result, the City requires installation of multi-use paths within most of its new development areas. Also, the City has a Q23 project in the ARC TIP for \$800,000 in new wide sidewalk development to link areas of the city to the downtown area and the elementary school area.



4. **Prevent Strip Commercialization.** The City seeks to prevent the “commercial creep” of retail and other nonresidential uses along major thoroughfares in an unplanned fashion. The beginnings of this type of activity have already occurred along Bill Gardner Parkway between I-75 and Highway 42. However, there are tremendous opportunities to prevent further strips along Highway 42 and the undeveloped portions of Bill Gardner Parkway. The main tools are the nodal development concept, infill residential along the major thoroughfares where feasible, and strategies to improve access and design within the major retail commercial centers.
5. **High-density Residential.** Historically, there has been a general lack of support for any development over four dwelling units per acre. This acceptance of a low-density residential development pattern exacerbates the sprawling development of the County, does not support transit use, and discourages the construction of different types of housing. The City of Locust Grove has supported increased densities and will be supporting different scales of multifamily-type housing based on the location inside and outside a major commercial node, with particular interest in multi-story buildings near the downtown business core. This will require increasing maximum densities far above the current eight units per acre. These will be limited in terms of maximum lot area, height, and building design considerations to compliment the central business district. Increases in density will also be examined near the Regional Commercial Center and the areas along I-75 where there is ready access to the interstate and to encourage mixtures of uses along this important corridor.

Economic Development Issues and Opportunities in Locust Grove

1. **Low Educational Attainment.** Residents of Locust Grove are less likely to have completed high school than residents in unincorporated Henry County, the Atlanta area, or the state: 84 percent of Henry County residents have a high school diploma; whereas, that number is 72 percent for Locust Grove. Access to higher education opportunities is a goal for the City. City and County leaders are working toward creating a university complex on the south side of the county in the future. In addition, the construction of Strong Rock Christian School in the city will increase education choices for the next generation of city residents. Strong Rock will also offer a two-year collegiate program in the coming years.
2. **Access the Healthcare.** Henry Medical Center is an important asset to the County and all its residents. Residents of Locust Grove cite the need for easier access to basic healthcare. The recent development of the Pinnacle Medical Office Building and a new three-story building on Bill Gardner Parkway are offering more local choices for specialty medical services. Smaller facilities located closer to where residents live shorten trips and provide economic development opportunities in activity centers. Longer-range opportunities include the Strong Rock site, where land is set aside for medical offices and possibly a hospital and related services in the near future.
3. **Access to Basic Retail.** Overall quality of life can be improved by locating basic retail services such as grocery and hardware stores and pharmacies near residents. Many residents of Locust Grove would like to see these and higher-end retail establishments located within the activity centers in Locust Grove. Currently, the city has only one major grocery store and the Tanger specialty outlet mall. Opportunities abound in the Regional Commercial Center at Exit 212 for larger-scale retail, including location of “big box” tenants.
4. **Balanced Employment Opportunities.** The City seeks to provide a balance of employment options, offering residents job opportunities other than those currently existing in Atlanta or



areas near the Perimeter. The City seeks to create an environment for more office and professional development through increasing quality of life and availability of a wide range of housing options. The City seeks more of a balance instead of the continued sprawl of large “high cube” warehousing operations that, for the most part, employ from outside the city and county as a whole.

Natural and Cultural Resources Issues and Opportunities in Locust Grove

1. **Green Developments.** Public workshop participants in Locust Grove would like the City to offer economic incentives to developments for green building, green energy, and innovative approaches to development. Currently, the City has been using its Conservation Residential Subdivision regulations for more open space within developments by clustering lots and setting aside watershed resources, wetlands, and areas of steep slope from excessive grading.

Community Facilities and Services Issues and Opportunities in Locust Grove

1. **Capital Improvements Planning.** The Cities have the opportunity to create Capital Improvements Programs to ensure that adequate facilities and services are provided to residents. Planning ahead to meet future demand allows time for budgeting and planning of facilities. The City of Locust Grove is currently planning and budgeting for several capital improvements, including a Community Center/Conference Center, water improvements, sewer line improvements, and street improvements.
2. **Lifecycle Focused Facilities.** Residents of Locust Grove would like to have more recreational opportunities for all residents at all stages of life. These include passive parks and other recreational facilities linked by a network of greenspace, sidewalks, and trails throughout the City. In addition to the multi-use path systems and new parks, including a new softball complex in the Locust Grove Station development, the City is also working to get a senior center within the city limits.

Transportation Issues and Opportunities in Locust Grove

1. **Context-Sensitive Solutions for Capacity Projects.** The city has several high-priority road projects scheduled for capacity improvements. The projects can be designed to be in context of the area due to sensitive historic areas of the city, including needs for diverting traffic if it is in the best interests of the city. The key projects are Peeksville Road, Highway 42, and Bill Gardner Parkway (Hampton-Locust Grove Road). A key element is to respect the constraints of ROW and the historic buildings in the downtown core.
2. **Interconnected Trail System.** Public workshop participants support a network of trails within Locust Grove. The trails would be appropriate for pedestrians, bicycles, and golf carts. The city requires much of the new developments to accommodate multiuse paths either within or along the public street frontage. A new TIP project will be used to connect part of this emerging path system into the downtown area, where a trailhead is proposed on city-owned property near the intersection of Smith and Cleveland Streets.



Housing Issues and Opportunities in Locust Grove

1. **Promote Balanced Housing Options.** There is a need within the local Cities to promote upper-income housing to balance the predominance of low to moderate income housing development which occurred from 2000 to 2005. The average sale price of a new home in the city is approximately 70 percent of the average home price in Metropolitan Atlanta, making Locust Grove a very affordable market. The upper segment (homes \$250,000 and up) is missing within the city and limits the ability for the city to attract higher-paying jobs and investment for retail, office, and medical development.
2. **Infill Housing.** There is a need within the local Cities to promote infill housing either within or adjacent to downtown districts and activity centers. The City is also providing infill-type developments along certain corridors where one-acre lots were developed prior to sewer availability and along major corridors to prevent strip commercialization. Within the downtown area, housing is encouraged to be vertically-integrated with new and existing development in a more urban scale, with primary interest in the development of lofts, condominiums, and townhomes. Different housing options are being examined for the larger commercial center at Exit 212 and along I-75 to integrate several uses.



5.5 *Issues and Opportunities in McDonough*

The City of McDonough is currently involved in several planning efforts and is working toward addressing the goals, issues, and opportunities stated in this Comprehensive Plan. The City is working to create a 143+ acre park where the community and visitors will have the opportunity to hike, bike, and enjoy a botanical garden, butterfly house, and water features. The City also has an active Main Street Program with the goal of supporting and encouraging economic growth through revitalization efforts, while building constituency with local businesses and the citizens of this community through historical preservation. Also, in 2004 the City completed its Livable Center Initiative Report with the goal of improving the quality of life in and around downtown.

The issues and opportunities shown below combine information from the One Henry Community Assessment, the Community Participation Program of the One Henry Plan, and the recent planning activities of the City of McDonough. The issues and opportunities are in addition to the County-Wide issues and opportunities described in the previous section. They should be considered together in order to address the complete range of concerns facing the City of McDonough.

Land Use Issues and Opportunities in McDonough

1. **Gateway Corridors.** McDonough has the opportunity to create unique and welcoming corridors into the downtown area. The City is working toward creating zoning overlays for each transportation corridor into the City. Each corridor will utilize architectural standards and signage. The corridors will have a signature area that highlights a historic building or other identifying element that references back to the Historic District. Each corridor and its corresponding activity centers will be designed to attract specific types of commercial and housing developments. This will allow for economic prosperity due to the specialized development that will occur along each corridor.
2. **High-density Residential.** There is a lack of support for any development over four dwelling units per acre. This acceptance of a low-density residential development pattern exacerbates the sprawl, does not support transit use, and discourages the construction of workforce housing. The City of McDonough has the opportunity to provide higher density residential in activity centers to accommodate the need for lifecycle and workforce housing. Focusing development and promoting more dense development into walkable, pedestrian friendly activity centers reduces traffic congestion, reduces the cost of providing services, and promotes a sense of community.
3. **Connectivity and Trails.** Many residents expressed the need for greater connectivity within the city of McDonough. A connected trail system throughout the city would promote the City's sense of community and decrease traffic congestion. The City has the opportunity to encourage new developments to provide for pedestrian and bicycle links to neighboring developments.

Economic Development Issues and Opportunities in McDonough

1. **Seniors in Economic Hardship.** According to the U.S. Census, the City of McDonough has a higher percentage of seniors experiencing economic hardship than in the Atlanta area or Georgia as a whole. As the share of population of seniors grows, addressing the economic issues of seniors will become increasingly important. McDonough has the opportunity to enhance the



quality of life for the aging population through additional senior services, and housing and transportation alternatives

2. **Low Educational Attainment.** Research data indicates that residents of McDonough are less likely to have completed high school than residents in unincorporated Henry County, the Atlanta area, or the state. Although monetary success can occur with limited education, it is important that the City create a partnership with the Henry County School System to improve graduation rates and promote continuing education. Also, the City can work towards improving post-secondary education opportunities within the City and the County.
3. **Improve Overall Quality of Life.** Quality of Life and sense of place are driving economic forces for employers. McDonough can offer higher quality residential environments and mixed-use development with lifestyle amenities to attract quality employers.
4. **Historic Districts and Tourism.** The City has the opportunity to increase tourism by promoting its Historic District that includes the Historic Alexander Park Expansion and is anchored by the Historic Square. By linking the historic downtown district with Alexander Park, residents and tourists can move about to various destinations by using multiple modes of transportation without increasing congestion on arterial roads.
5. **Community Arts Center and theatres.** The City and County currently share in the operation and maintenance of a performing arts center. The location and size of the facility has created limitations. Participants in the Community Participation Program support the City in developing venues for performing arts in the Historic Downtown along with Alexander Park.

Natural and Cultural Resources Issues and Opportunities in McDonough

1. **Historic Town Square.** McDonough has the opportunity to preserve and promote its historic town square. Implementing the Livable Centers Initiative recommendations will be an important step in improving the quality of life in the downtown area.
2. **Scenic Areas.** Residents of the City of McDonough are very concerned about the deterioration of scenic areas, trees, and open space due to continued land development. The scenic value of each of the corridors within McDonough is threatened by development pressures.

Community Facilities Issues Opportunities in McDonough

1. **Wastewater Planning.** The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Long-Term Wastewater Plan requires that wastewater facilities be provided through a regional approach. This requires the consolidation of all wastewater treatment facilities in the County and phasing out older facilities such as the wastewater plant McDonough.
2. **Population Growth.** The City's growth puts a strain on all public services. The City needs to accommodate the needs of the growing population and explore ways to grow more efficiently.
3. **Capital Improvements Planning.** McDonough has the opportunity to create Capital Improvements Programs to ensure that adequate facilities and services are provided to residents. Planning ahead to meet future demand allows time for budgeting and planning of facilities.



Transportation Issues and Opportunities in McDonough

1. **Street Connectivity and Mobility.** Improving street connectivity is one of McDonough's most critical needs. Implementing the recommendations of the LCI will increase mobility by providing transportation choices, improving signalization, adding trails and greenways, allowing for pedestrian linkages between developments, requiring connectivity between new subdivisions, and reducing transportation demand.
2. **Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails.** Many residents expressed the need for greater connectivity within the city of McDonough and the need for bike and pedestrian paths linking schools, neighborhoods, and other places within the City. One of the goals of the LCI initiative and this Comprehensive Plan is to provide transportation alternatives and connectivity within the City of McDonough.
3. **Freight Traffic.** Many residents feel that truck traffic is increasing traffic congestion and reducing quality of life. The City is working with the Georgia Department of Transportation to establish a designated truck route to reduce congestion in the downtown area.

Housing Issues and Opportunities in McDonough

1. **Workforce Housing.** A high percentage of renter households are paying more than 30 percent of their income in rent in McDonough. This indicates that the City needs to evaluate diversifying its housing opportunities for affordable units.
2. **Infill Housing.** There are multiple opportunities for infill housing in the downtown area. Infill housing should be encouraged in and near downtown to advance and provide for economic prosperity. Residential infill should follow McDonough's design guidelines developed in conjunction with the LCI study.
3. **Diversify Housing Stock.** There is a shortage of workforce housing and a need for more high-end housing. A more diverse housing stock provides housing opportunities to people at a variety of income levels at different stages in their life.



5.6 *Issues and Opportunities in Stockbridge*

In 2001 the City of Stockbridge completed a Land Use and Circulation Master Plan under the Livable Centers Initiative. The Highway 138/North Henry Boulevard Corridor was the study area.

The goals for the LCI Study were to:

1. Reduce traffic, accidents, and speeds on Highway 138/North Henry Blvd;
2. Provide non-motorized connections between destinations;
3. Preserve existing neighborhoods, while managing new development;
4. Provide adequate open space and recreational facilities;
5. Improve aesthetics and create a sense of place;
6. Strengthen and enhance the central business district; and
7. Mix uses and increase density where appropriate.

Implementation of the LCI program is one planning initiative that the City of Stockbridge has undertaken to address some of the issues and opportunities in the City. The issues and opportunities described below are in addition to the County-Wide issues and opportunities described in the previous section. They should be considered together in order to address the complete range of concerns facing the City of Stockbridge.

Land Use Issues and Opportunities in Stockbridge

1. **Neighborhood Preservation.** Residents of Stockbridge value older, existing neighborhoods and want to see them preserved. These neighborhoods with older housing stock provide stable communities with more affordable homes than new subdivisions. These neighborhoods provide the foundation for the traditional, historic community of Stockbridge.
2. **Quality Development.** Residents would like to see higher quality commercial developments to bring a sense of community throughout the city. A consistent look of quality that includes sidewalks, street lights, and quality design standards are supported.
3. **Infill Housing.** There is a need within Stockbridge to promote infill housing either within or adjacent to downtown districts and activity centers.
4. **Clustered Development.** Commercial development should be concentrated in compact centers or districts rather than letting it spread out along strips. The current zoning map does not identify potential centers or restrict development along roadways.

Economic Development Issues and Opportunities in Stockbridge

1. **Central Business District.** Downtown Stockbridge is currently being redeveloped. Residents would like to see quality design standards and landscaping throughout the city to draw more high-end restaurants, retailers, and other services.
2. **Redevelopment.** Stockbridge has several areas of older strip malls and big box retail that residents would like to see redeveloped.
3. **Improve overall quality of life.** Quality of Life and sense of place are a driving economic force for employers. Stockbridge can offer higher quality, urban residential environments and mixed-use developments with lifestyle amenities to attract quality employers.



Community Facilities and Services Issues and Opportunities in Stockbridge

1. **Wastewater Planning.** The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Long-Term Wastewater Plan requires that wastewater facilities be provided through a regional approach. This requires the consolidation of all wastewater treatment facilities in the county and phasing out older facilities such as the wastewater plant Stockbridge.
2. **Growing Demand for Public Safety Personnel.** The Henry County Police Department (HCPD) provides law enforcement service and public safety to unincorporated Henry County and the City of Stockbridge. The HCPD needs an additional 62 officers to bring the Department up to Association of Chiefs of Police standards.
3. **Capital Improvements Planning.** Planning ahead to meet future demand allows time for budgeting and planning of facilities. The City of Stockbridge has the opportunity to create a Capital Improvements Program to ensure that adequate facilities and services are provided to residents.

Transportation Issues and Opportunities in Stockbridge

1. **Street Connectivity and Mobility.** Improving street connectivity is one of Stockbridge's most critical needs. Implementing the recommendations of the LCI will increase mobility by providing non-motorized connections, strengthening and enhancing the central business district; and mixing uses and increasing density where appropriate.
2. **Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails.** Many residents expressed the need for greater connectivity within the city of Stockbridge and the need for bike and pedestrian paths linking schools, neighborhoods, and other places within the City. One of the goals of the LCI initiative and this Comprehensive Plan is to provide transportation alternatives and connectivity within the City of Stockbridge.

Housing Issues and Opportunities in Stockbridge

1. **Seniors in Poverty.** According to the U.S. Census, the City of Stockbridge has a higher percentage of seniors that live in poverty than in the Atlanta area or Georgia as a whole. As the share of population of seniors grows, addressing the issue of seniors in poverty will become increasingly important.
2. **Senior Housing.** Residents expressed the need for additional housing for seniors. As the population continues to age, this need will only grow. Assisted living facilities and clustered housing were suggested by the public as possibilities.



5.7 **Unincorporated County Issues and Opportunities**

The issues and opportunities described below are in addition to the County-Wide issues and opportunities described in the previous section. They should be considered together in order to address the complete range of concerns facing Unincorporated Henry County.

Land Use Issues and Opportunities in the Unincorporated County

1. **Sprawl Development Patterns.** Development over the past 20 years has occurred in a very disorderly fashion. The most common form of development has been isolated single-family residential subdivisions that have been allowed to pop up in the middle of the countryside miles from any supportive services or employment centers. If this pattern continues all vacant developable land will be consumed within the planning horizon.
2. **Annexation and Land Use Controls.** Rapid annexation has resulted in inconsistent land use regulations and the perception that municipal decision makers will grant higher densities and make land use concessions not offered by the County.
3. **Use of Larger-lot Development as a Growth Management Tool.** The County has used the policy of approving larger-lot subdivisions (one acre or larger lots) as a means to control growth. This form of development, however, is one of the most inefficient to service from an infrastructure perspective and does little to maintain the rural character of the County. Since rural preservation is a goal of the community, alternative growth management tools must be considered.
4. **High-density Residential.** Historically, there has been a general lack of support for any development over four dwelling units per acre. This acceptance of a low-density residential development pattern exacerbates the sprawling development of the county, does not support transit use, and discourages the construction of workforce housing.

Natural and Cultural Resources Issues and Opportunities in Unincorporated Henry County

1. **Preservation of Historic Resources.** The County's historic resources, districts, and sites need protection from demolition, inappropriate modification, or encroachment of incompatible development. The County has the opportunity to protect its historic resources by adopting Historic Preservation Districts and architectural and design guidelines, and by creating a historic preservation commission.

Community Facilities Issues and Opportunities in Unincorporated Henry County

1. **Growing Demand for Better Fire Protection.** The current Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating varies depending on location within the county. The ISO rating can be as high as eight or nine in the unincorporated areas of the County. The Fire Department has the short-term need for additional stations in the Jodeco Road/Oak Grove Road Area and the Luella Community. The relocation of Station #7, along with Station #13, should improve the fire protection for the northeast side of the county.
2. **Growing Demand for Public Safety Personnel.** The Henry County Police Department (HCPD) provides law enforcement service to unincorporated Henry County. According to



interviews with County staff in 2005, the HCPD needs an additional 65 officers to bring the Department up to International Association of Chiefs of Police standards.



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