CHAPTER III: THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Henry County and its Cities have a multimodal transportation system that serves all of the various land uses and development patterns within their jurisdictions. While different modes of transportation are found in Henry County (e.g., transit, pedestrian/bicycles, automobile, ridesharing) by far the major means of mobility in the County is the automobile. Given the changing dynamics of the County’s population and the more urbanized nature of its land use patterns, examining the potential role of other transportation modes is appropriate. This view was confirmed through many public workshops and comments received from citizens and community stakeholders. Subsequent chapters of the CTP address the needs and plans for creating a more balanced transportation system with good networks for autos, trucks, bicyclists, pedestrians, and public transportation users.

Components of the System

Henry County has a wide range of transportation facilities that represent a variety of transportation modes for both passengers and freight transport. As part of this study, the current performance of these modes was examined and the expected performance through the year 2030 was modeled. The following components make up the multimodal transportation system in Henry County:

- Roadways
- Freight Railroads
- Bridges
- Bus Transit Systems
- Sidewalks
- Bike Lanes and Trails
- Aviation Facilities

For an efficient transportation system to exist, each mode of the transportation system must be connected to and mutually supportive of each other. Each part of the system is important in that it provides accessibility and mobility to meet the travel requirements of residents and other travelers, or to transport various types of freight.

System Characteristics and Usage

Understanding the various types of transportation infrastructure in Henry County, as well as understanding how it is utilized, will allow Henry County to make informed decisions about investing in transportation infrastructure of all types throughout the planning period (to 2030). This section of the CTP will highlight the following elements of Henry County’s transportation system:

- Major Transportation Corridors;
- Functional Classification System;
- Collector and Local Streets;
- Bridges and Interchanges;
- Freight Transport;
- Aviation Facilities;
- Public Transportation;
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems.
As part of the CTP, a Data Analysis Report was prepared to compile the data and information relevant to transportation in Henry County. The data compiled for the CTP include municipal and county information on traffic counts and crashes, information on local development and special studies, locally-funded transportation projects, including the County’s Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) programs, and pertinent planning information developed for the Joint Henry County/Cities Comprehensive Plan.

The report also documents information gathered by regional and state agencies on traffic volumes, crashes, roadway and bridge deficiencies, regional transit ridership, and planned and programmed transportation improvements, etc. Previous planning efforts, such as the ARC’s 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, its Congestion Management System, Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) projects, were also examined. GDOT’s planning efforts that impact the County include the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Interstate System Plan, and Work Program (its listing of planned and programmed projects).

Roadway characteristics data included roadway functional classification, which GDOT uses for planning and funding purposes, and Henry County uses in reviewing proposed developments. There are currently two separate roadway classification systems for GDOT and the County. The need to more closely align the County’s system with GDOT’s system is discussed in Chapter XII.

Additionally, data collection and analysis focused on non-highway modes of transportation, including local public transportation, express bus service, park and ride facilities, passenger rail, freight rail, bicycle and pedestrian, trail, and airport facilities. The report also examined traffic control systems within the County, including an inventory of existing traffic signals, incident management systems, and a summary of the system performance from the travel demand model. The full report is located in the Appendix.

Figure III - 3 through highlight key aspects of the existing multimodal (roads, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian) transportation system in Henry County. Table III- 2 summarizes key facts about current transportation conditions in Henry County.

**Major Transportation Corridors**

Henry County has an established network of roadways which connect its municipalities. These roadways provide access and mobility throughout the County; however, there are a core set of roadways that serve the majority of the transportation needs, as shown in Figure III - 1. These major corridors provide the key transportation infrastructure in the County, not only for automobiles, but for trucks, railroads, and public transit users. Interstate 75, Interstate 675, U.S. 19/41 (Tara Boulevard), U.S. 23/SR 42 and SR 155 provide for the majority of north-south movements in the County. The major roadway corridors for the east-west movements are SR 20, SR 81, and SR 138.

Norfolk Southern operates rail lines in Henry County and detailed information regarding the rail system is presented in the Appendix. The bicycle and pedestrian network in Henry County is not extensive; however, some major corridors include sidewalks and in some cases, wide shoulders, to accommodate bicyclists. These major corridors are SR 138 and state routes around McDonough Square. Express bus services and local paratransit services use these major corridors as well.
Figure III - 1 Major Transportation Corridors

Interstate 75: Henry County’s Priority Corridor
The I-75 corridor traverses the entire length of Henry County for a distance of just over 17 miles and serves as a nationally-significant artery serving inter-state, inter-regional, regional, and local travel needs. Through most of its length, I-75 is a four-lane divided freeway with seven (7) interchanges located at SR 138/North Henry Boulevard, Hudson Bridge Road/Eagles Landing Parkway, Jodeco Road, Jonesboro Road, SR 20/Hampton Locust Grove Road, SR 155, and Bill Gardner Parkway.
It is part of the National Highway System (NHS) designated by the U.S. Congress and plays an important role in providing mobility for passengers and freight, connecting major military installations to support national defense, and linking major intermodal facilities, such as ports, major commercial service airports, and rail facilities. While I-75 clearly serves a mobility function beyond the needs of Henry County residents, I-75 is a vital transportation asset and high transportation priority for Henry County.

I-75’s Mobility and Land Use Challenges

In Henry County, the I-75 Corridor, while the responsibility of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), strongly influences the land use and development and community character of the lands surrounding it on both sides. Much of the community and regional scale commercial development in Henry County is located along or near the I-75 corridor. Many of the County’s major employers and industries, especially a large number of warehousing and distribution companies, rely on the I-75 corridor for their business functions. Many of the warehouse and distribution areas access I-75 at the GA 20 and SR 155 interchanges. Finally, the relatively large stock of vacant, developable land in Henry County, some of which is in the vicinity of I-75, is attractive to both commercial and residential development.
In terms of mobility, the I-75 corridor presents some particular challenges in Henry County, including:

- The increase in truck travel nationally and in Georgia impacts I-75 in Henry County. The percent of truck volumes on I-75 in Henry County ranges from 7.6% between SR 138 and Redwood Valley Road to 10.5% at Walt Stephens Road\(^1\). This increase in truck traffic is rapidly consuming some of the available roadway capacity.

- Additionally, from time to time, serious truck-related incidents impact traffic operations, forcing travelers to use U.S. 23/SR 42 and U.S. 19/41, the only two continuous north-south routes in Henry County. U.S. 23/SR 42 is located about one to two miles (1-2) east of I-75 and traverses the traditional downtown areas in Locust Grove, McDonough, and Stockbridge, both of which have constrained roadway conditions due to development. U.S. 19/41 is located about five to six (5-6) miles west of I-75. The lack of alternative north-south routes impedes traffic flow, particularly in the I-75 corridor.

- The growth in vehicular traffic, other than trucks, is also placing pressure on the corridor. The average annual daily traffic in 2005 ranged from 111,000 between SR 20 and SR 155 to 156,000 at Walt Stephens Road. This represents an increase of 9 to 18% over 2000 levels\(^2\).

- New commercial and non-commercial development is being attracted to the I-75 corridor in relatively small developments as well as medium-sized and large master-planned developments, and Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), such as the Southpoint Regional Mall. State and local officials are challenged to identify viable alternative north-south corridors that could connect these developments and relieve I-75 as developments are planned and developed in a piecemeal manner. However, some opportunities for service roads or north-south connector roads on either side of I-75 can be found. An example of this approach is Mount Olive Road, located west of I-75, between Jodeco Road and Jonesboro Road. Other such opportunities will also materialize as new development is drawn to the corridor. **Special efforts by Henry County and its municipalities are needed to collaborate during the development review process in the identification of service roads or future road rights-of-way that will serve new and existing development in order to protect mobility in the I-75 corridor.**

### Funding Improvements in the I-75 Corridor

Since I-75 is a NHS route and is part of the Interstate Highway System, the responsibility for planning, developing, operating, and maintaining the route belongs to GDOT. Special funding categories have been established by the U.S. Congress to improve and maintain NHS routes. At a national level, many states, including Georgia, have funding needs for NHS routes that far outstrip their ability to afford improvements and upgrades. The increasing demand in the I-75 corridor throughout Georgia, including Henry County, is placing increasing pressure on GDOT and Georgia’s State Road and Tollway Authority to examine non-traditional methods for financing transportation infrastructure improvements.

Currently, SRTA, along with GDOT, are studying the potential for a “managed lane” concept on I-75 in Henry County whereby certain lanes would be tolled based on levels of congestion and drivers could opt to use express lanes at a price. The toll revenues generated from the priced lanes would help pay for additional roadway capacity (more lanes). The results of this study are expected in mid-late 2007.

The currently adopted ARC Long-Range Transportation Plan (*Mobility 2030*) has identified the following improvements to I-75. The projects shown with an asterisk (*) have funding identified in ARC’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2006-2011. The projects identified in the LRTP do not have an identified funding source associated with them at the present time.

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1 *Truck percentage per the GDOT 2006 vehicle classification counts from the Automatic Traffic Count database. The Truck Percentage by Location includes the following types of trucks: busses, 2-axle single unit trucks, 3-axle single unit trucks, 4-axle single unit trucks, 3-axle or 4-axle single trailers, 5-axle single trailers, 5-axle single trailers, 5-axle multi-trailers, 6-axle multi-trailers, and 7-axle multi-trailers.*

Table III - 1: Mobility 2030 RTP I-75 Improvement Projects in Henry County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Number</th>
<th>Work Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Program Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AR-431 *</td>
<td>Intelligent Transportation System</td>
<td>I-75 Advance Transportation Management System - Communications/Surveillance from Hudson Bridge Rd to SR 155</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-443 *</td>
<td>Intelligent Transportation System</td>
<td>I-75 South Ramp Meters from Cleveland Ave in City of Atlanta to Hudson Bridge Rd in Henry County</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE-AR-232 *</td>
<td>Interchange Upgrade</td>
<td>I-675 at I-75 auxiliary lanes (southbound only)</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE-AR-216 *</td>
<td>Interchange Capacity</td>
<td>I-75 at Jodeco Rd</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE-AR-213</td>
<td>Transit Facility</td>
<td>I-75 Park and Ride Lot at Eagle’s Landing Pkwy</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-H-051 *</td>
<td>HOV Lanes</td>
<td>I-75 High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes from SR 54 (Jonesboro Rd) in Clayton County to Eagle’s Landing Pkwy in Henry County</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-H-052A,B</td>
<td>HOV Lanes</td>
<td>I-75 High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes from Eagle’s Landing Pkwy to SR 155</td>
<td>2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-AR-248</td>
<td>Interchange Capacity</td>
<td>I-75 at I-675</td>
<td>2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE-AR-220</td>
<td>Capacity Improvements</td>
<td>I-75 from I-675 to SR 920/Jonesboro Rd</td>
<td>2030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ARC’s 2030 Regional Transportation Plan Mobility 2030

Although GDOT is responsible for the mainline and interchanges along I-75, the land use decisions and the arterial road system planned, developed, and operated by Henry County and its municipalities also influences the operation of the I-75 corridor. It is vitally important that Henry County and GDOT continue to work together to assure that the I-75 corridor, including its connecting arterials and other local roads in the vicinity, function as efficiently as possible as a holistic, integrated system. These discussions will also require consideration of the nature, location, and intensity of proposed land uses within and near the corridor. GDOT does not have a role in the approval of development proposals, other than to review and comment on DRI applications. So GDOT must rely on coordination with County and municipal officials who are responsible for considering the impacts of new development on the transportation system, including I-75.

Henry County’s transportation planning activities and transportation infrastructure funding programs (i.e. SPLOST and general revenue programs) must be closely coordinated with GDOT initiatives to realize the greatest public benefits for travelers. Henry County and GDOT should also support each other in finding traditional and non-traditional methods of funding transportation improvements in the I-75 corridor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Fact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population, Demographic, and Commuting Trends</strong></td>
<td>• Sixth (6) fastest growing county in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3 to 1 ratio of population to jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 out 3 people commute to jobs outside the County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2/3 of the County’s land is vacant or undeveloped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 4th in the nation in rate of new housing starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Current residential density is 0.75 persons per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2nd least dense county in Metro Atlanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roads and Bridges</strong></td>
<td>• I-75 handles over 130,000 vehicles per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I-75 and I-675 handle the most traffic in the County, followed by U.S. 23/SR 42, U.S. 19/41, SR 138, and SR 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• From 2000 to 2030, the amount of vehicle miles of travel is expected to increase by 118% compared to the region’s growth of 51% (over twice as fast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• About 1 in 4 bridges in Henry County will need to be rehabilitated or replaced in the next 25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety</strong></td>
<td>• About 20,300 vehicular crashes occurred on roads in Henry County in the three-year period from 2002 to 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The intersection of SR 138 and US 23/SR 42 has the highest number of crashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Transportation</strong></td>
<td>• Henry County Transit serves nearly 40,000 round trips per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two express bus routes serve Henry County with about 540 person trips each day (about 137,000 person trips per year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freight Transport</strong></td>
<td>• Two freight rail lines both operated by Norfolk Southern are located in Henry County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: US Census and PB Team
Figure III - 3: Existing Transportation System – Highways and Rail

Source: GDOT and Henry County GIS

Functional Classification

Roadways are grouped into functional classes according to the character of traffic they are intended to serve. In the State of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has the primary responsibility for maintaining a system of classifying roadways. This system is used in making roadway improvement funding decisions statewide. There are four major functional classifications for roadways: expressway or freeway, arterial, collector, and local roads.
• **Expressway/Freeway** - Provides the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with a high degree of access control.

• **Arterial** - Provides the next highest level of service at moderate to high speeds, with some degree of access control. Arterials are typically classified as major arterials or minor arterials.

• **Collector** - Provides a lower level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials. Collectors are typically classified as major collectors or minor collectors.

• **Local** - Consists of all roads not defined as expressways, arterials, or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement.

The County has just over 21 miles of interstate highways (I-75 and I-675), almost all of which are part of I-75. A small portion of I-675 branches off of I-75 in the northwest section of the County and extends northeast, providing a connection to I-285. There are also approximately 203 miles of arterial roadways in the County and 1,136 miles of collectors and local streets. These collector and local roadways connect the neighborhoods and businesses to the major corridors in the County. Figure III - 4 illustrates the GDOT system of functional classification in Henry County.

Over the years, Henry County has developed its own system of roadway classification that is reflected in its Comprehensive Plan. The County’s roadway classifications are not entirely consistent with GDOT’s system, which has caused difficulties for transportation funding decisions as well as land use decisions. The County has indicated its desire to align its roadway functional classification system more closely to GDOT’s, where possible. This will occur through a phased approach to requesting functional classification changes through the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and GDOT. The recommended changes related to roadway functional classification are described in detail in Chapter XII.
Bridges and Interchanges

One of the critical concerns for Henry County is the condition of the numerous bridges and interchanges in the study area. Deficient bridges pose a major obstacle to a fully functional road network due to load limits or other deficiencies. The study area was reviewed to identify all bridges and assess the need for potential improvements. The GDOT Bridge Management System data, in particular the sufficiency rating, were reviewed to identify where and when bridge and/or interchange improvements may be needed.

One hundred and thirteen (113) bridges currently exist within the County. Based on the sufficiency rating, a majority of the bridges are in good condition and not in need of any major maintenance or upgrade activities. There are fifteen (15) bridges that have a sufficiency rating below 50 and are in need of
maintenance and rehabilitation – nine (9) of these structures are already programmed for improvements as part of the Henry County SPLOST or the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Additionally, there are nineteen (19) bridges that have a sufficiency rating below 75 and should be considered candidates for maintenance and rehabilitation during the planning horizon of this study. Three of these structures are already programmed for improvements as part of the Henry County SPLOST or the STIP. The Appendix contains details on these bridges.

Freight Transport

The identification of freight corridors and preservation of freight mobility is a key component of the Joint Henry County/Cities CTP. There are currently five major roadway corridors in Henry County that are designated as truck routes which are shown in Figure III - 5, including I-75, I-675, U.S. 23/SR 42, SR 20, and SR 155. There are two active rail lines in the County that serve freight travel, both of which are north-south lines. It should also be noted that at the time of this writing, the ARC is developing a Regional Freight Mobility Plan. Henry County has been chosen as a land use analysis case study in that planning process. Recommendations of the regional freight plan, as well as other regional and state efforts should be taken into consideration during the implementation of this CTP.

Railroad Facilities

Norfolk Southern operates the two (2) active freight rail lines in Henry County which are part of the 1,777 miles of track in Georgia. Henry County is well served by these lines with approximately 32 miles of rail lines. The lines through the Atlanta area carry mainly through traffic to and from ports in the eastern United States, such as Charleston and Savannah. There are numerous at-grade crossings in the County, consequently, from time to time, rail traffic stops vehicular traffic on the roadway network. Between January 2000 and September 2003, there were no incidents (crashes) reported to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on any of the rail lines operated in Henry County.

The Norfolk Southern mainline between Atlanta and Macon runs through the central part of Henry County. The line primarily parallels US 23/SR 42 and runs through the Cities of Stockbridge, McDonough and Locust Grove. This line bisects these downtowns and there are numerous at-grade crossings in this corridor. According to the Georgia Freight Rail Plan, this line handles approximately 35 to 59 trains a day and carries approximately 52 million gross tons per mile (MGT/M) annually. This line carries the third highest freight tonnage into and out of the Metro Atlanta area.

Norfolk Southern also operates another line between Atlanta and Macon that passes through Henry County. This line enters the County parallel to Highway 3 on the border with Clayton County and runs approximately due south through the City of Hampton and into Spalding County. There are numerous at-grade crossings along this rail line. According to the Georgia Freight Rail Plan, this line handles about four (4) trains per day and carries less than three (3) MGT/M annually. This rail line is a secondary line and currently does not have a major impact on the area. However, this line is under consideration for a proposed commuter rail line which would increase the train traffic through the western part of Henry County and could potentially impact traffic circulation near the line.

Freight Activity and Commodities

Several companies depend on freight operations in Henry County. A majority of these freight operations involve trucks; however some of the businesses are located along railroads and utilize trains for the movement of their freight. The major commodities moved by the railroads that originate within the County include nonmetallic mineral and lumber products, while terminating commodities include building materials such as clay, concrete, glass and stone products. Overall, the Georgia Freight Plan predicts a 1.3% annual growth rate for nonmetallic minerals and concrete/glass products and a declining annual growth rate (~1.6%) for lumber products.

A potential key indicator for growth of freight traffic in Henry County is the activity at the Ports of Savannah and Charleston. Over the period to 2030, the volume of freight through the Ports of Savannah and Charleston is expected to grow. This growth will likely result in increased volumes of train and truck traffic through Henry County, due primarily to its location near I-75. Additionally, the lack of north-south
roadway alternatives to I-75 suitable for freight transport make Henry County vulnerable to serious traffic disruptions when major traffic disruptions on I-75 occur. While I-75 is the responsibility of GDOT, the County should advocate for and participate in transportation strategies to reduce traffic incidents and enhance incident management in the I-75 corridor.

The Metro Atlanta region, including Henry County, has a huge stake in the successful performance of the national, state, regional, and local freight transport system. Figure III - 5 displays the railroad corridors and designated truck routes (Surface Transportation Assistance Act – STAA routes) for Henry County.

Figure III - 5: Freight Transportation Facilities

Source: GDOT Roadway Characteristics Database
Need for Rail/Highway Grade Separations

Throughout the CTP development process, the need for rail/highway grade separations (generally roads over railroads) was raised by citizens and stakeholders. The need for grade separations is apparent because of the close proximity of the Norfolk Southern rail line to the town centers of McDonough and Locust Grove. A rail/highway grade separation is already located on SR 138 in the vicinity of Stockbridge’s town center, near its proposed new City Hall complex.

The detailed identification of grade separations is beyond the scope of the CTP; however, as new transportation projects are identified and evaluated in the McDonough and Locust Grove areas, the potential for new rail/highway grade crossings should be a consideration on a case-by-case basis. The construction of grade separations in some locations in eastern Henry County is problematic due to the presence of historic properties, close proximity to neighborhoods and other sensitive land uses, difficulties with spanning the railroad, impacts on adjacent properties, and the cost of the structures. However, as eastern Henry County continues to grow and develop, and rail traffic grows due to economic activity in Metro Atlanta, the need for separating vehicular and rail traffic will also grow. Grade separations could provide benefits including facilitating local traffic movements and preserving the integrity of emergency vehicle access, particularly in activity centers such as Stockbridge, McDonough and Locust Grove. A challenge for Henry County and its Cities is the high cost of such transportation improvements relative to the benefits they provide.

Aviation Facilities

There is currently one airport located in Henry County, the Clayton County – Tara Field (CTAF) Airport. While the airport is physically located in Henry County west of the City of Hampton, it is owned and operated by Clayton County. The nearest commercial aviation airport is Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA) in Atlanta, which is approximately 18 miles away. Clayton County – Tara Field has one runway which is a 4,500 foot x 75 foot runway with a non-precision approach. Figure III - 6 shows the commercial service and general aviation airports in and near Henry County.

The Clayton County Airport is currently listed by GDOT’s General Aviation System Plan as a Level II Airport – a business airport of local impact. GDOT has established an objective of a minimum runway length of 5,000 feet and a width of 100 feet for Level II airports. Currently, the Clayton County Airport does not meet this objective; however, a 500-foot runway extension to Runway 6/24 has been identified by GDOT as a planned project and would enable the airport to reach Level II status.
There are approximately 181 airplanes based at the airport with an average of 96 operations per day. Approximately 43% of operations are local general aviation and 57% are transient general aviation. The Clayton County – Tara Field airport is currently meeting, and expected to continue to meet, the aviation demands in Henry County.

The land use surrounding the airport consists mainly of open fields with some residences. The Atlanta Motor Speedway (AMS) is located less than a mile from Clayton County – Tara Field and about three (3) miles west of Downtown Hampton. The proximity of the airport to AMS and the large amount of undeveloped or under-utilized land in the vicinity of these two important activity centers makes more intense development of this area likely in the future.
In addition to the Clayton County-Tara Field airport, there are several Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) registered general aviation landing strips throughout the County, including:

- Airfield 8A5 – Moseley Road east of SR 138;
- Airfield 4A0 – Millers Mill Road east of SR 138;
- Airfield GA04 – Mallard Lane north of Hampton-Locust Grove Road;
- Airfield GA36 – River Road west of SR 81;
- Airfield GA88 – Panola Road west of Hearn Road;
- Airfield GA89 – Shoreline Way north of Jonesboro Road;
- Airfield 54GA – Jonesboro Road west of Dutch Town Road;
- Airfield 63GA – Airline Road south of McGarity Road;
- Airfield GA0 – Millers Mill Road east of Springdale Road;
- Airfield 7GA6 – Lester Mill Road north of Hampton-Locust Grove Road; and,
- Airfield (no FAA designation) on Nail Mill Road west of Iris Lake Road.

**Public Transportation**

Limited public transportation services are provided in Henry County. Three types of public transportation services or facilities are currently provided in Henry County: local paratransit services, express bus service, and park and ride facilities. A fourth type is under consideration by GDOT and its planning partners, commuter rail service linking Atlanta and Lovejoy with a proposed extension into Henry County. In 2000, approximately 96% of the County residents drove alone or carpooled to work, and less than one (1) percent used a form of public transportation, according to the U.S. Census. This is not surprising given the lack of travel options present in the County at that time. These statistics represent a time period before GRTA’s Xpress express bus service was an option for Henry County residents.
Local Public Transportation

One type of public transportation service available to County residents is Henry County Transit, a local paratransit service which is targeted to serve seniors, disabled individuals, and low income persons. This transit system consists of vans which operate on an appointment basis for transport within Henry County. Transportation is also provided to Clayton County, but only for medical appointments. Henry Transit
riders tend to be low-income, elderly and transit-dependent individuals whose trips relate to personal business or medical needs. Since it does not provide fixed route, fixed schedule services over a large span of time each day, Henry Transit is not oriented to commute trips. Riders must make reservations 24 hours in advance; however a five-day notice is preferred. The operating hours are from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays. Some of the key destinations for this service include:

- Henry Medical Center;
- McDonough Senior Center;
- Fairview Senior Center;
- Georgia Division of Children and Family Services;
- Henry County Health Department;
- Development Disabilities Center;
- Counseling Centers;
- Henry County Administrative Office;
- Wal-Mart stores; and
- Target.

The fare is $2.00 per stop for seniors (age 60 or older) and $4.00 per stop for riders under 60 years old. Approximately 45% of the riders are seniors. Currently there are approximately 37,100 one-way passenger trips per year. The associated costs for these services are approximately $419,000. Henry County Transit is reimbursed 40% of the costs in federal and state funds for these services.

As part of the services provided to residents of Henry County, the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) is designated to provide transportation for the seniors and disabled individuals to vital DHR services. This service currently yields approximately 41,600 one-way passenger trips per year. The associated costs for these services are approximately $469,600.

Figure III - 7 displays the existing public transportation services and facilities for Henry County. It should be noted that Henry County Transit operates its service countywide.

**Express Bus Service**

Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) is a state authority tasked with improving mobility, air quality and land use practices in areas designated as air quality non-attainment areas throughout Georgia. In Metro Atlanta, GRTA operates a regional commuter bus service called Xpress. Currently there are two (2) Xpress bus routes in Henry County and a third route is planned with initial operations beginning in early 2007.

Route 430 runs along I-75 from a park and ride lot located south of SR 20 on Industrial Parkway (west of I-75) in McDonough to Downtown Atlanta, stopping at both the Five Points MARTA Station and the MARTA Civic Center Station. This route picks up passengers from 5:45 AM to 7:45 AM and from 3:30 PM to 6:10 PM at approximately 15-minute headways. Approximately eight (8) buses serve this route in Henry County each weekday. Ridership for this route has been steadily increasing and as of June 2005, there were approximately 5,500 riders per month.

Route 440 runs primarily along Tara Boulevard (U.S. 19/41) from the park and ride lot at Atlanta Motor Speedway to Downtown Atlanta, stopping at both the MARTA Five Points Station and the MARTA Civic Center Station. Stops are also provided at Clayton County Justice Center and Kelly Avenue/Mt Zion Road. This route operates from 5:30 AM to 8:10 AM at approximately 30-minute headways and from 3:40 PM to 6:35 PM at approximately 30-minute headways in Henry County. Approximately seven (7) buses serve this route in Henry County each weekday. Ridership for this route has been steadily increasing and as of June 2005, there were approximately 7,500 riders per month. Table III - 3 shows the total monthly and average daily ridership for Routes 430 and 440 for the 2005-2006 fiscal year.
The final Xpress route is Route 432 and it is planned to operate between Stockbridge and Downtown Atlanta. The exact route was not yet determined at the time of this report.

### Park and Ride Lots

There are three (3) park and ride lots located in Henry County. Two of them are provided as part of the GRTA Xpress bus system and one is provided by GDOT. The locations are as follows:

- GRTA Xpress Park and Ride Lot - McDonough – Industrial Parkway south of SR 20; and,
- GRTA Xpress Park and Ride Lot - Atlanta Motor Speedway.
- GDOT Park and Ride Lot – I-75 at Jodeco Road

Additional park and ride lot facilities are expected to be constructed as new Xpress bus routes come on line in Henry County. Figure III - 7 illustrates the location of the presently existing lots.

### Passenger Rail Service

At the present time, there is no intercity or regional rail passenger service in Henry County. For several years, the State of Georgia through GDOT and the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (GRPA) have been considering the implementation of a 103-mile commuter rail line connecting Macon and Atlanta. According to projections by GDOT, the number of commuter rail trips expected on the line in 2030 is 7,600 trips per day. Most of these trips are expected to have origins in Henry, Clayton and Spalding Counties traveling into Atlanta. The proposed line will utilize existing rail right-of-way and operate on a
combination of existing and proposed new tracks operated by Norfolk Southern. GRPA has identified benefits of the system including:

- Reduced trips on I-75, equivalent to one lane of traffic;
- Increased time savings and decreased crash rates;
- Controlled traffic environment and improvement of air quality; and,
- Improved rail tracks and stations for Middle and South Georgia.

As an initial step in the commuter rail implementation, GDOT has been working on the implementation of commuter rail service between Downtown Atlanta and Lovejoy, located in Clayton County. There has been some discussion of extending this service and adding a stop in the City of Hampton. The City has already designated a planned site for commuter rail service, if it is implemented.

Some localized impacts from the proposed commuter rail service can be expected on local traffic circulation, including minor delays at rail/highway crossing as passenger trains pass, increased travel activity near commuter rail station areas, etc. A decision on this proposed service has not yet been made; however, a Grade Crossing Safety Recommendations Report was completed in October 2003 and lists recommendations for some at-grade crossings along the proposed commuter rail line. The report recommends closing three public (North Steele Drive, Amah Lee Road and Floyd Road) and six private crossings.

The Henry County Chamber of Commerce and other individuals and organizations in Henry County have been supporters for the implementation of a regional commuter rail initiative. Proponents of the rail service point out that there are very few existing regional transportation arteries (both highways and transit) linking Atlanta’s central core with Henry County and its suburban neighbors. The congested conditions existing in the I-75 corridor now and those expected in the future as well as the lack of opportunities to construct major new roadway corridors to relieve I-75 limit traditional transportation options. Finally, the rapid population and employment growth anticipated for Henry County and other parts of the southern tier of the region and concerns about the cost of fuel all demonstrate the need for more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly travel choices for residents of the Metro Atlanta area, including Henry County. Opponents of the proposal cite concerns about the potentially low ridership levels, the public costs of subsidizing the service, and the low-density development patterns present in large areas of the County and region. All of the points made by both proponents and opponents are important public policy considerations.

Even given these considerations, what is most compelling is that the existing transportation system together with the already planned and programmed future improvements are not sufficient to meet the mobility needs in Henry County and the southern tier of the region as a whole. Regional transportation investments, regardless of which transport mode is implemented, require a significant rethinking of the land use and development patterns that will be served to enable the transportation improvements to be functionally and financially viable. This is true of both highway and public transit system alternatives. The existing low-density development patterns and historic lack of coordinated land use and transportation planning present throughout Metro Atlanta, including Henry County, have made providing high capacity public transportation systems very challenging. More creative, coordinated land use and development planning and regional transportation system planning will be required to address these future needs, throughout the region as well as in Henry County.

While the issue of commuter rail implementation has strong supporters on both sides; the ultimate responsibility for its implementation rests with regional and state agencies, rather than local governments, such as Henry County and its Cities. It should be noted that a significant level of interest in and support for commuter rail service was expressed by local community leaders and citizens through the public outreach activities held for the CTP. A more detailed description of this interest can be found in Chapter V: Community Visioning.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Most of the land area within unincorporated Henry County does not have sidewalks; however, within the four cities, there are sidewalks in key areas, such as portions of Downtown McDonough, Locust Grove, Hampton and Stockbridge. Sidewalks are also provided in several of the newer subdivisions such as Eagles Landing and Heron Bay. Henry County is currently developing priorities for enhancing their bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The County’s goal is to provide a bicycle and pedestrian network to serve the local and regional needs of the communities. These facilities should be promoted as a safe and healthy transportation option throughout the region for potential users.

There are no existing multi-use trails in Henry County; however there are two (2) planned and programmed multi-use trails for Henry County. The Reeve’s Creek Trail is included in GDOT’s State Transportation Improvement Program, while the Locust Grove Connection Trail is part of GDOT’s Construction Work Program. The program dates for these projects have not yet been assigned.

In 2003, a Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was completed by ARC. The Plan is currently in the process of being updated. The 2003 Plan was designed to assist bicyclists in determining the most suitable routes in Henry County. The suitability of a roadway was based on several factors, such as: traffic volumes; speed limits; shoulder width; truck volumes; and number of driveways. Table III - 4 displays the recommended facilities identified in the 2003 Plan that were found to have the highest suitability for bicycle and pedestrian use in Henry County.

As part of the CTP effort, GDOT’s Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (GABPP) was reviewed to identify proposed facilities through Henry County. One statewide route was identified through Henry County. The Central Route Corridor which extends in a north-south direction generally along Highway 3 from Clayton County to Spalding County. The route is approximately 6.7 miles long. This segment is part of the statewide bicycle trail that extends from the March to the Sea Route in Cobb County to US 41 at the Florida/Georgia State Line, covering approximately 329 miles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austin Road</td>
<td>Church Road to Hearn Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Drive</td>
<td>SR 138 to SR 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland Blvd</td>
<td>Downtown Stockbridge to Pinehurst Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfridge Road</td>
<td>SR 155 to Crumbley Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan Drive</td>
<td>E Lake Road to Airline Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pates Creek Road</td>
<td>Noah’s Ark Road to Mitchell Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Parker Road</td>
<td>Clayton County Line to Babbs Mill Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Town Road</td>
<td>Jonesboro Road to Mount Carmel Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Steel Drive</td>
<td>Hwy 3 to Conklee Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges Road</td>
<td>Industrial Pkwy to SR 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner Church Road</td>
<td>SR 155 to Conyers Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Farm Road</td>
<td>Turner Road to N Ola Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Side Drive</td>
<td>Turner Church Road to N Ola Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Drive</td>
<td>SR 81 to Skyline Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwy 3</td>
<td>Amah Lee Road to Oak Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strickland Road</td>
<td>Simpson Mill Road to Hampton Locust Grove Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker Drive</td>
<td>Strickland Road to McDonough Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris Lake Road</td>
<td>King Mill Road to Coan Drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laney Drive</td>
<td>S Ola Road to New Hope Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Bethany Road</td>
<td>Downtown Locust Grove to Price Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Lake Road</td>
<td>Hampton Rd to Colvin Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lester Mill Road</td>
<td>Indian Creek Road to Locust Grove/Griffin Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Ola Road</td>
<td>Leguin Mill Road to Old Jackson Road</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2003 ARC Henry County Bicycle Suitability Map – Atlanta Regional Commission

Citizens and stakeholders suggest that bicycle and pedestrian travel options represent more of a quality of life issue than alternative transportation mode at the present time. However, as the County grows and develops, important opportunities to expand and enhance the bicycle and pedestrian networks in the County and the Cities will materialize. The local government jurisdictions should take advantage of these opportunities as they arise in order to provide viable travel options other than the private car to improve mobility in Henry County.

**Existing and Future Activity Centers**

During the CTP development, a great deal of coordination between the development of the Comprehensive Plan and the CTP was undertaken. This coordination included the identification of key existing and emerging future activity centers that need to be served by the transportation system in Henry County.

Activity centers range in size and composition from small rural crossroad locations to traditional downtowns to large, suburban job centers to unique locations with statewide significance, such as the Atlanta Motor Speedway. They may include a mix of land uses, including residential, office, retail, service, civic, or other uses that create a central focus, cover a relatively defined area, and have recognizable boundaries. Some activity centers are single use in nature (i.e. Atlanta Motor Speedway).

These activity centers are relevant to the CTP because the transportation system must recognize and account for the special mobility and access needs inherent in the nature of each type of activity center. The details of the types, configurations, land use mixes, and other details of the activity centers are documented in the Joint Henry County/Cities Comprehensive Plan. Figure III - 8 illustrates the location of these activity centers. The most significant existing activity centers in Henry County include:

- **Downtown McDonough**
  This activity center contains the county seat for Henry County (Henry County Courthouse) and is the site of one of the County’s most notable and interesting landmarks – McDonough Square. Downtown McDonough has a mix of commercial, office, civic, retail, residential and other uses. One of its challenges is its location at the intersection of five major routes (SR 20, SR 81, US 23/SR 42, and Jonesboro Road, SR 155) in central Henry County. In recent years, US 23/SR 42 has been reconstructed as a set of one-way pairs through McDonough. The proposed McDonough Parkway is intended to provide an alternate route around the central core of McDonough to reduce through traffic around McDonough Square.

- **Downtown Locust Grove**
Downtown Locust Grove is located just south of the intersection of US 23/SR 42 and Bill Gardner Parkway in southeastern Henry County. Its location near the Norfolk Southern rail line presents traffic circulation challenges given the short distance between the downtown area, US 23/SR 42, and the railroad. The presence of SR 42, while providing good access to Downtown Locust Grove, is also problematic because it is used by through traffic, including heavy trucks. It is also a challenge to the downtown area when traffic disruptions on I-75 force more vehicles to use US 23/SR 42. Additionally, the presence of Peeksville Road, an important east-west roadway serving the extreme southeastern part of Henry County, causes traffic circulation problems. The road terminates at US 23/SR 42, just east of Downtown Locust Grove. Realigning it with Bill Gardner Parkway would alleviate this difficulty, but the presence of historic properties in the area complicates the situation. The City of Locust Grove is actively working on attracting new mixed use development to the downtown area and finding a suitable roadway connection from Peeksville Road to Bill Gardner Parkway.

- **Downtown Stockbridge**
  Downtown Stockbridge is located in the area surrounding the intersection of East Atlanta Road and North Henry Boulevard (SR 138) in northern Henry County. The City is in the process of creating a new City Hall complex and mixed use development at this location to serve as a focal point for the community. The City is also working to attract new commercial enterprises along SR 138 in and near the downtown area.

- **Downtown Hampton**
  Downtown Hampton is located in southwestern Henry County just north of the interchange of U.S. 19/41 and SR 20. One of the County’s most significant activity centers is located about two miles west of Downtown Hampton – the Atlanta Motor Speedway. Hampton is the smallest municipality in the County at the present time in terms of population; however, its location near the crossroads of two major regionally-significant roadways could stimulate significantly high levels of growth in the future. At the present time, the local government is not seeking growth opportunities due to its limited infrastructure systems.
Figure III - 8: Existing and Proposed Activity Centers in Henry County

Source: Joint Henry County/Cities Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map as of August 2006
• Eagles Landing/Henry Medical Center area
This activity center is located along Eagles Landing Parkway/Hudson Bridge Road at I-75 in central Henry County. The activity center is a mix of high-end residential, commercial, light industrial, retail, and conservation land uses. The Henry County Medical Center and associated health-related businesses and offices are located in the northeast quadrant of the I-75/Eagles Landing Parkway interchange. On the west side of I-75, a new Wal-Mart, hotel, and restaurant uses have emerged. The combination of these developments make this location an important activity center in Henry County, one which draws local and regional trips to the area.

• Atlanta Motor Speedway (AMS)
The Atlanta Motor Speedway is important not only to Henry County and the City of Hampton, but to the Metro Atlanta region and the State of Georgia. AMS is located in the western part of Henry County just south of Clayton County and west of the City of Hampton. This NASCAR venue draws visitors from across the nation and throughout Georgia to its races several times each year. Thousands of visitors are attracted to AMS for each event which causes severe traffic congestion on roadways in Henry County, including I-75, SR 20, SR 19/US 41, and other county and local roads, especially in and around the City of Hampton. A significant amount of vacant land is located adjacent to AMS which could result in additional transportation demands from new land uses in the future.

• Henry Town Center
The Henry Town Center is located just west of I-75 along Jonesboro Road in west-central Henry County. This area contains some of the County’s largest commercial developments, including Home Depot, Sam’s Club, Best Buy, Target, and other major national chain stores. The area also contains numerous national and local chain restaurants and specialty stores. A new movie theater was recently constructed in the area east of I-75. This major commercial area draws both local and regional trips.

• SR 138 Activity Center
This activity center is located along one of the County’s most significant roadway corridors, North Henry Boulevard (SR 138). The roadway connects the County to Clayton County on the west and Rockdale County on the east. Many of Henry County’s largest clusters of commercial development are located in this area, especially between I-75 and East Atlanta Road, at the center of Stockbridge’s downtown area. This area includes many local and national chain businesses, including furniture and appliance stores, banks, hotels, restaurants, office supply stores, and specialty stores. This activity center is the closest one in the County to the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

In addition to these major existing activity centers, others are emerging, such as Southpoint Mall, a regional mall located just west of I-75 at SR 20. New land uses, in addition to the current residential, office, and commercial uses, are also emerging in the SR 20 corridor west of I-75. Smaller activity centers are emerging near residential areas in the eastern part of the County, especially east of McDonough. All of these areas were identified as part of the Joint Henry County/Cities Comprehensive Plan. A map of these locations can be found in Figure III - 8.

The importance of creating and supporting activity centers of all sizes and compositions in Henry County and its Cities is crucial to maintaining a coherent vision of future growth and development that optimizes the performance of the transportation system. The process for integrating the location of the activity centers with the CTP is described in more detail in Chapter IX.