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List of Acronyms

ABD – Aged, Blind, or Disabled
BMP – Best Management Practice
COE – United States Army Corps of Engineers
DCA – Georgia Department of Community Affairs
DOT – Department of Transportation
DNR – Georgia Department of Natural Resources
EPD – Environmental Protection Division (of the Department of Natural Resources)
EDA – Economic Development Authority
EPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
GEDA – Georgia Economic Development Association
GNRR – Georgia Northeastern Railroad
LOS – Level of Service
MGD – Million Gallons per Day
MTPT – MultiModal Transportation Planning Tool
NAICS – North American Industry Classification System
NFIP – National Flood Insurance Program
NGRDC – North Georgia Regional Development Center
NRCS – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
RESA – North Georgia Regional Educational Services Agency
SCS – Soil Conservation Service
SDS – Service Delivery Strategy
SIC – Standard Industrial Classification
STIP – Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
STWP – Short Term Work Program
SWAP – Source Water Assessment Program
SWCC – Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
SWPP – Source Water Protection Plan
TMDL – Total Maximum Daily Load
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
WMA – Wildlife Management Area
WPCP – Water Pollution Control Plant
WSA – Water and Sewerage Authority
Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this Joint Comprehensive Plan is to coordinate planning on interjurisdictional issues and provide a policy framework for guiding long range and day-to-day decision making for local government officials and administrators of Murray County, Chatsworth and Eton. The plan represents participation in the coordinated planning process set forth by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 which requires that local governments prepare a local plan in order to retain their “Qualified Local Government” status. This status is needed for eligibility for state grants, loans, and permits.

The State’s Minimum Planning Standards require an inventory and assessment of characteristics related to population, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, housing, land use patterns, intergovernmental coordination, and transportation. Based upon this background information, communities are asked to assess current issues and project future needs, and develop policies and implementation strategies. Finally, the process requires the preparation of a work program of the specific implementation strategies that the local governments propose to achieve within the five year period after plan adoption.

In addition to being a blueprint for community development and long term growth, a comprehensive plan is used to guide the drafting of future regulations and will become the measure by which the courts judge local zoning decisions once land controls are adopted. Therefore, in order to meet legal challenges to its future growth management strategies, a community’s land development regulations must be consistent with the goals and policies in its comprehensive plan.

The local governments in Murray County adopted their first comprehensive plan per the Georgia Planning Act requirements in 1995. This Comprehensive Plan update is for the 2005 through 2025 planning period. It has been prepared in consideration of the State’s Quality community Goals and Objectives which have been adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

The Public Process

The Georgia Planning Act strongly emphasizes public participation in the process of developing a comprehensive plan. For this plan, seven advisory groups were established to review and comment upon the various plan elements. Each group met to review the inventory and assessment sections and develop goals and objectives. The Land Use advisory group met two times, once to discuss existing land use and another time to review future land use. Following is a list of the public hearings and workshops which were held in conjunction with the preparation of this plan.

- February 17, 2005 – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to present the purpose of the plan, the planning process and schedule, and the public participation program.
- February 22, 2005 – Housing Workshop
- March 1, 2005 – Natural and Cultural Resources Workshop
- March 1, 2005 – Community Facilities Workshop
- March 15, 2005 – Land Use Workshop #1
- March 15, 2005 – Intergovernmental Coordination Workshop
- March 29, 2005 – Land Use Workshop # 2
- March 29, 2005 – Transportation Workshop
June 27, 2005 – The complete draft plan was made available for public review in hardcopy format at the Chatsworth Library, Chatsworth City Hall, Eton City Hall, and the Murray County Commissioner’s Office.

June 30, 2005 – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to brief the community on the contents of the draft Comprehensive Plan; provide an opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions, or revisions; and to inform the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Development Center and Department of Community Affairs for review.

July 2, 2005 – City Council Meeting, City of Eton. Resolution to approve transmittal of the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for review.

August 2, 2005 – County Commission Meeting, Murray County. Resolution to approve transmittal of the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for review.

August 8, 2005 – City Council Meeting, City of Chatsworth. Resolution to approve transmittal of the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for review.

This plan update has been prepared by the North Georgia Regional Development Center with the substantial involvement and input from local elected officials from each jurisdiction, city and county staff, various public and private agencies and groups, and members of the general public.
The Vision

A vision for the future of Murray County, Chatsworth, and Eton evolved out of the planning process and is articulated as follows:

In the year 2025, Murray County, Chatsworth, and Eton will be known as attractive and desirable places to live, work, and play. The prosperity of our community is the result of consistent, deliberate, and unified actions by our citizens, government, businesses, and institutions as we have accepted the challenge and responsibility of working in partnership to achieve a common vision of what our community can and should be. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

A Healthy Economy. We have thriving commercial and industrial areas and strong agricultural establishments. Our economic base has become more diversified and employment opportunities are varied and plentiful. New businesses and entrepreneurs are attracted to our community because of its reputation for livability, its outstanding natural resources, its quality infrastructure, and its educated workforce.

Strong Neighborhoods. All of our neighborhoods are safe and attractive places to live. A range of housing types and prices are available, ensuring that quality housing choices available to all socio-economic groups.

A Sense of Place. We recognize that our community’s abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these remarkable resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned, high-quality growth and development.

Good Planning. The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in our community. The local governments provide exceptional leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community. We have set high standards for all forms of development in our community and the result is attractive, functional, and economically sustainable buildings and places.

Outstanding Public Facilities and Services. Our local governments have a reputation for being committed to providing excellent public facilities and services in a responsible, cost effective manner.

The following images are intended to illustrate the desired characteristics of a healthy economy, strong neighborhoods, and a sense of place.
A Healthy Economy

quality job opportunities

strong industry

well-designed commercial and industrial centers

a variety of shopping opportunities

entrepreneurship
Strong Neighborhoods

- Conservation and neo-traditional subdivisions
- Walkable streets
- A variety of housing types
- Welcoming streetscapes
- Well-designed apartment buildings
A Sense of Place

- rich history
- natural beauty
- abundant wildlife
- attractive parks
- opportunities for people of all ages
- equestrian events