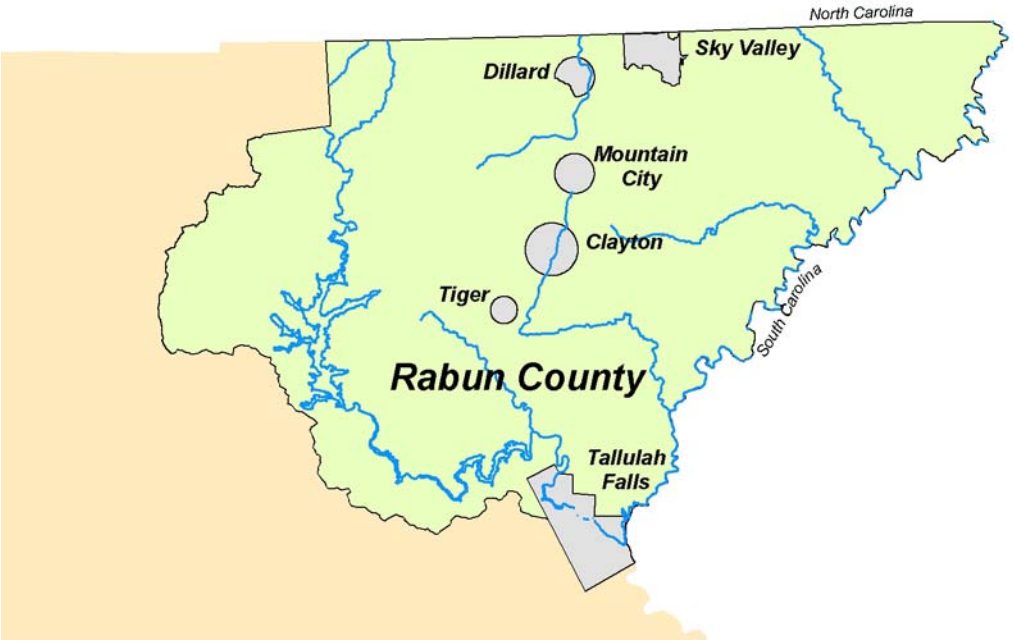
# RABUN COUNTY
# Cities of:
# Clayton, Dillard
# Mountain City,
# Sky Valley,
# Tallulah Falls
# and Tiger
# Georgia




# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# 2005 – 2025

**September 2006**

**Prepared Under Contract By:**
**Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center**

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

The following chapter is devoted to an introduction of the Comprehensive Plan for Rabun County and the Cities of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls and Tiger, including background information related to the plan, public participation and a community vision.

***Directive and Purpose of the Plan***

In 2003, Rabun County and the Cities contracted with the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center to prepare a full update to current Comprehensive Plan. Aside from the basic need for a plan to guide growth and development, the requirement of a plan by the Georgia General Assembly (pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989) to be eligible for certain state grants and loans provides the major impetus for each local government to embark on the comprehensive planning process.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide the basic data and analysis required in the "minimum planning standards" and the maintenance of "Qualified Local Government" (QLG) status as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) The minimum standards include the following elements: population, housing, economic development, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, community facilities, transportation, land use and intergovernmental coordination. In addition, the state standards require an implementation segment to the plan. The format of the comprehensive plan text parallels the minimum planning standards by devoting a chapter to each required plan element.

A "Comprehensive Plan" known by other names such as a general plan, development plan, master plan, policy plan and growth management plan, has several characteristics. It is a physical plan intended to guide the physical development of a community by describing how, why, when and where to build or preserve the community. The plan is also long range, in that it considers a horizon of twenty years. It is utopian in the sense that it is a picture of what the community desires to become, but it is also realistic with regard to anticipated social, economic, physical and political constraints. The plan is comprehensive because it covers the entire county and each city geographically, encompasses all the functions that make a community work, and considers the interrelationships of functions. A comprehensive plan is a statement of policy, covering future direction

desired by the community in each plan element, and it is a guide to decision making for the elected and appointed local government officials and other members of the citizenry.

Comprehensive planning is also a continuous process. Formulation of this text and maps is the ultimate objective; the use of the plan is what is important, and a comprehensive plan is only as good as the measures used to implement the plan. No single document can pose solutions to all community problems, and the comprehensive plan must be a flexible, continuous and changing activity that is periodically updated based on changing conditions, the shifting of resources and the alteration of goals.

In addition to providing a general organization of the local community interests, the comprehensive plan serves the following purposes and functions.

The comprehensive plan represents a focusing of planning thought and effort – an attempt to identify and analyze the complex forces, relationships and dynamics of growth in order that they can be shaped and directed in accordance with recognized community goals and aspirations. It is a realistic appraisal of what the community is now, a normative and futuristic blueprint of what the community wants to be, and a specific set of programs for achieving community desires.

The plan is based on the foundation that if a community knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there. The plan attempts to recognize the relationship between diverse development goals and objectives and establishes a meaningful basis for the resolution of conflicts. A comprehensive plan functions as a master yardstick for evaluating all significant future development proposals. The plan is intended to provide the essential background and perspective for decision making in respect to regulations, land subdivisions, public investment and capital improvement programs. The plan also provides guidance to businesses and development regarding the development policies and the future direction and intensity of growth. For the community at large, the plan (if properly implemented) assures that land use and service delivery conflicts will be resolved if not avoided, that misuses of land will not occur, that traffic congestion will be minimized or averted, that community facilities will be located in areas where people can best access and use them, and that the community's growth will take place in an orderly, rational manner.

***Previous Planning Efforts***

In 1992 through 1994, Rabun County and Cities prepared a comprehensive plan that meeting all the minimum planning standards. Update to the plan's Short Term Work Program took place in 1999. Though very useful the existing comprehensive plan is outdated and no longer adequately serves its purposes. With significant growth and development since the plan was first formulated some twelve years ago, Rabun County and its cities now face new development trends and more complex growth issues.

***Public Participation***

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

At a minimum, the public participation program must provide for: adequate notice to keep the general public informed of the emerging plan; opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the plan; hold the required public hearings; and, provide notice to property owners through advertisements in the newspaper (legal organ) of the planning effort soliciting participation and comments. In addition, Rabun County and Cities must provide opportunities for public participation through other means and methods to help articulate a community vision and develop associated goals including an implementation program.

A planning schedule for completion of the plan must was developed. The schedule is found below:

| **ACTIVITY** | **DATE** |
|---|---|
| Initial Public Hearing | April 2004 |
| Steering Committee Solicited and Selected | May 2004 |
| Plan Kick-Off Meeting | May 2004 |
| Data Collection | June 2004 – April 2005 |
| Community Visioning Development and Sessions | August – October 2004 |
| Community Survey | November 2004- February 2005 |
| Sub Committees Organized | January 2005 |
| Inventory Analysis | February – April 2005 |
| Assessment of Needs | April – June 2005 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Articulation of Goals | June – July 2005 |
| Work Program Development | July 2005 |
| Public Hearings | August 2005 |
| Plan Submitted for Review | September 2005 |
| Plan Adopted | November 2005 |

Specific public participation activities were initiated with the solicitation of citizens to serve on an appointed steering committee. This committee represented citizens with varying and broad backgrounds and interests in the community. The 20-member committee included lifetime residents as well as new comers of Rabun County, including representatives from each city. This committee met on a monthly basis tracking and discussing the progress of the plan as well as identifying significant issues for the committee to review and discuss. The committee organized the community visioning sessions and the community input survey that is presented in detail later in this chapter. The steering committee meetings were well publicized and attended. One meeting had a public attendance of almost 90 persons.

The steering committee divided amongst themselves to serve on sub-committees addressing the elements within the plan. The sub-committees were at liberty to solicit additional members of the public to participate in the planning process. The sub-committees met as often as bi-weekly to analyze and discuss the plan data, identify needs and to develop specific goals and policies. Most of the sub committee meeting included participation from the public. Some sub-committee meeting had as many as 30 persons attending and participating in the review of data and providing comments to plan committee members. The public was also at liberty to provide local data and comments via email to steering committee members and to GMRDC staff.

Final public hearings were announced according to local public hearing procedure requirement to solicit additional public participation and comments. In addition, final work sessions were held with local government leaders to discuss plan status, plan data and garner

additional comments from elected officials.

***COMMUNITY VISION***

A vision for the future of the community must be included in the comprehensive plan. The community vision is intended to provide a complete picture of what the community desires to become. The community vision must be based on public input, the assessment of current and future needs and be supported by the goals, policies and objectives in the comprehensive plan.

In addition, there must be consistency between the community vision and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Quality Community Objectives as well as consistency with the community visions of other communities within the region.

***Participation***

A confluence of related events created greater-than-normal interest in the comprehensive plan revision process in Rabun County. Among them:

- An increased pace of land development in the US 441 and US 76 corridors.
- Erosion and sedimentation problems into nearby creeks due to land disturbance.
- Land use controversies involving the location of a high-voltage electricity transmission line and the replacement of a bridge over the Chattooga River.
- Relatively extensive revision to the county's zoning ordinance in 2002 and 2003.
- Public debate and colloquia on land use planning sponsored by non-governmental organizations, including the Rabun County Chamber of Commerce, the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, the Woman's Club, the Chattooga Conservancy and other groups, dating back to 2002-2003.
- Transition from a three-member board of commissioners to five members (2004), with land use issues playing a significant role in the campaigns.
- Creation of a new Convention and Visitors Bureau for the county

It was thus not so surprising that Rabun County's visioning process attracted such widespread attention, and drew such wide turnout from county residents

County commissioners and city officials then appointed the 20 members of the comprehensive plan revision committee, which organized itself into subcommittees under the direction of its chairwoman, Janine Bethel. The chairwoman, building on the community-wide interest in this plan, also invited and welcomed public

participation in the detailed work of the subcommittees. Many sectors in the county, including land development, realty and conservation interests took part in the subcommittee discussions, debate and plan revision process.

Not long after the steering committee was organized and began meeting it was realized that a concerted effort should be made to reach out to the public and solicit more than their comments on the comprehensive plan, but their visions and hopes for Rabun County and its cities. The committee also decided that it would also attempt to include particular segments of the local population that most likely would not participate in the general public hearing process.

Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center contracted the services of Community and Economic Development Specialists from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to conduct a series of community visioning sessions. Three sessions would be held, one for the public in general, one targeting the Latino population and one focusing on the senior population. The three sessions were well publicized and more than 150 citizens participated in sharing their vision for the future of their community. Disappointingly, the session targeting the Latino community only had a few participants, but the attendance was made up with additional members of the community who could not attend one of the other two sessions.

In conducting the session, participants were asked to respond to a series of broad questions designed to create a framework for the development of a community survey and vision. Respondents to the questions individually in a written format and then participated in small group discussion to develop consensus findings. Each sub-group response was then reviewed with the overall participant body in an attempt to allow for clarification and additional discussion.

The four questions posed before the participants are as follows:

1) In looking ahead 20 years, what are the features of Rabun County that must be preserved or protected?
2) In looking ahead 20 years, what must be accomplished to attain a higher quality of life?
3) What must take place in order to achieve the vision identified?
4) Is there anything else that you would like to communicate to the committee developing the comprehensive plan?

All responses were recorded and presented in a 50-page document that is found in Appendix A of this plan. Many of the respondents concerns and visions for the community are presented, discussed and addressed in the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The results from the community vision sessions were also utilized in the development of a community survey. Once again the Carl Vinson Institute of Government was employed to develop and administer a scientific survey presenting questions on a variety of issues sensitive and unique to the Rabun County community. Some of the issues included land use, zoning, economic development, housing, and community services needs.

Approximately 2,000 households were randomly selected to participate in the survey. Of those, 90 percent were randomly selected from a listed sample of residents in the county, and the remaining percent of households were randomly chosen from those residences located either on Lake Burton or Lake Rabun.

At the close of the survey, 523 surveys were completed as part of the scientific sample. Respondents to the survey identified that Rabun County's two greatest strengths were it natural beauty and environment, and the citizens of Rabun County. On the other hand, survey participants said that the two greatest weaknesses of Rabun County were management of rapid growth and development, and government communication and cooperation.

Details of the survey are located in Appendix B of this plan. Once again, many of the items identified in the community survey are discussed and addressed in the different elements of the comprehensive plan.

It should also be noted that steering committee members held a small visioning session with local high school seniors. Also requested was that members of the community collect and present photos of things they liked and did not like in Rabun County and Cities. The planning committee also allowed local children to take pictures and identify what they did and did not like in Rabun County

Based on the responses in the community vision sessions, community survey and through the input of the various sub-committees working on the comprehensive plan a community vision sub-committee was able to create a community vision for Rabun. County.

***COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT***

Rabun County's Community Vision Statement is provided in the following paragraphs. This statement is told from the perspective that it is currently 2025 and describes how the community would like Rabun County to progress between the years of 2005 and 2025.

Rabun's population continues to grow and change through 2025. The population mix alters. Many newcomers settle here because of the natural environment. But increasing numbers of youth remain in residence and join the work force. The economy of the county becomes more prosperous.

There are several reasons for these changes. One of the challenges faced by county leaders over this period was better management of growth and change. Fortunately, regulations protecting the county's natural resources were introduced together with better enforcement of development zoning and improved intergovernmental communication and cooperation. Not everyone agreed that the government should have the authority to control private uses of land, but as the county grew there was a shift in opinion about land use protection with both newcomers and young families favoring more stringent enforcement of regulations affecting clean air and water and greenspace protection. There was also a shift in the business climate in favor of more environmentally responsive businesses and a new interest in affordable housing. There is now increasing support for public-private collaboration in the development of more reasonably priced housing for local residents.

***Vision***

Rabun County balances the rights of all individuals to pursue life, liberty and prosperity with the need to protect the common good embodied in our heritage, abundant natural resources and rural, small-town charm.

***Goals***

***Visioning and Public Participation:***

Encourage the widest possible dissemination of information by all means possible – town hall meetings, media publicity, Internet networks, and plain old “kitchen-table discussion,” and actively involve residents of all of Rabun’s cities and unincorporated areas, elected officials, clergy and community leaders in the conduct of public affairs.

***Natural Resources:***

Protect and conserve the natural resources we hold in common: Our vast forest, clean air, biodiversity, unspoiled night skies, agricultural and open mountain land – whether publicly or privately owned. Lead the state of Georgia in protecting its headwaters, creeks, rivers, lakes natural acoustics and viewsheds.

***Historic and Cultural Resources:***

Honor the rugged, serene landscapes, pastoral beauty and rich history granted our citizens; defend the people's right to freedom of religion; respect historic and cultural resources, old-fashioned common-sense values of moderation, and sharing that will become more prized in the rush of the oncoming century.

***Transportation:***

Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged. Provide comprehensive infrastructure for local and regional motor vehicles mass transit bicycle, pedestrian alternatives, and animal traffic.

***Population:***

Adequately and accurately verify our true population in decennial censuses, including all recent immigrants; honor and cherish the wisdom and experience of both our youngest and most senior citizens; protect the rights of all men, women and children; provide all residents a safe and healthy quality of life.

***Economic Development:***

Provide access to adequate education for workers in the service sectors and construction trades as well as the highly technical manufacturing, distribution and information industries that characterize the transition from the 20$^{th}$ to 21$^{st}$ Century; promote programs and policies that preserve farming and encourage sustainable "green" industries, including eco-sensitive tourism, hospitality trades, the arts, and small-scale agri-tourism; quickly provide all Rabun businesses and households with the option of linking to high-speed Internet service by whatever technology possible.

***Community Facilities and Services:***

Encourage and/or provide adequate, accessible, and affordable school, transportation, municipal water and sewer, enclosed public meeting facilities, fire protection, hospital, health and wellness, recreation, energy and communications infrastructure required of our growing and diverse population. Do so while protecting and

conserving the "green infrastructure" that is the basis of the county's strength and individuality, and without harming either the unalienable rights of the individual citizen or the public's collective rights.

***Land Use:***

Protect the rural and small-town character of our crossroads communities, pastures, orchards, vineyards, forests, lakes and waterways; preserve agricultural land; steer intense land development to urban areas and corridors and designated commercial zones; responsibly manage future land development so as to balance the individual's right to profit from such growth with the people's overall goal of protecting and enhancing our natural resources.

***Housing:***

Provide well-located, sanitary, adequate and affordable housing to all residents, regardless of income level.

***Intergovernmental Planning and Services:***

All local, regional, state and federal government entities in Rabun County, especially all City and County Governments, and the Rabun County School Board, independent authorities, the U.S. Forest Service, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and Georgia Department of Transportation, shall cooperate and work together for the good of all county residents and willingly share information about their activities with the public and always work to protect the public health, welfare, and safety.

***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL***

***Regional Identity Objective*** – Rabun County and each city are active members of the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center and are linked with the many communities within the region through its abundant natural scenic beauty and rich Appalachian culture. Lands managed by the U. S. Forest Service are found in nine of the thirteen counties in the Georgia Mountains Region. Settlement patterns in the region are similar from the Native Americans to the gold mining operations to the influence of the Tennessee Valley Authority and other electrical cooperatives and mills.

***Growth Preparedness Objective*** **-** Rabun County continues to make improvements in infrastructure and coordination of development service areas and activities. Additional improvements such as the creation of a planning and building program, the development of improved regulatory guidelines for growth, sustainable economic development planning, organic farming practices, and leadership development will help the county

achieve the quality growth it desires. The City of Clayton is committed to providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate past and current growth. Other cities are further committed to making the necessary improvements to accommodate projected growth needs.

***Appropriate Business and Educational Opportunity Objectives*** – Rabun County is fortunate that they have a workforce with skill levels appropriate for industry and businesses in the community. With North Georgia Technical College campuses located in Clayton, Clarkesville Blairsville, and Toccoa, industries in the county are able to benefit from the skills of the graduates provided by the college. This plan suggests placing a North Georgia Technical College representative on the Economic Development Authority to assist in the development of the appropriately needed skills for existing industry and businesses as well as in providing skilled workers for industries and businesses that are being recruited into the area. The need for higher education degrees, beyond technical skills, within the county has been identified in the plan and is a goal for the future.

***Employment Options Objective*** – There is a variety of businesses, industries and services located within Rabun County. The development of economic, industry marketing and recruitment plans and teams, as called for in this plan, will help continue to provide a wide range of job opportunities in the area with industries that are green and friendly to the quality of life that is offered in Rabun County.

***NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES GOAL***

***Heritage Preservation Objective*** – Rabun County is rich in historic and archeological resources. The county benefits from a very active local historical society. The plan calls for further preservation opportunities by identifying additional historic districts, calling for an updated survey, and encouraging protection of important archeological sites that could potentially be lost to development. The county provides a variety of cultural experience opportunities for residents and visitors. The creation of a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) will help organize many of these event and activities as well as market their accessibility to the public in general.

***Open Space Preservation Objective*** – Sixty-three (63) percent of the land in Rabun County is owned by the federal government and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The State Parks and Georgia Power lakes provide additional open space in the County. Generally, scenic views and open spaces in the county and city are threatened. Many of the resources in Rabun County are connected through the use of trails, greenways and wildlife corridors.

***Environmental Protection Objective*** – Currently, water supply watersheds, wetlands, mountains, river corridors, lakes, flood plains, steep slopes, sensitive soils, and prime agricultural areas are protected adequately. Measures to protect these sensitive resources in the future are recommended in the plan.

***Regional Cooperation Objective*** – Rabun County and its cities should work together to provide protection for the sensitive resources in the county. The County also participates with the Georgia Mountains Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Regional Task Force providing guidance and input on TMDL planning and implementation for those streams in the county and region not meeting designated uses.

***COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL***

Transportation Alternative Objective – Rabun County has limited alternative transportation facilities. Some of the cities contain only limited public sidewalks for pedestrian travel, but there is no linkage among the facilities and much of it is in a state of disrepair. It should be the goal of the County and Cities in the plan to develop a pedestrian plan. Rabun County has a variety of walking trails within the parks and on public land. There needs to be a plan to develop trails and paths linking communities and resources. A State designated bicycle route in the County is State Bike Route 85, the Mountain Crossing Corridor. Numerous walking and hiking trails are found on U. S. Forest Service land, including the Appalachian Trail and Bartram Trail.

The widening of U.S. 441 is having a tremendous impact on Rabun County and its cities. The widening is threatening businesses and sections of cities through displacement**.** A plan to mitigate the impact should be developed to assist in the transition as the project is completed. The County must have a major say on whether the proposed Interstate 3 connecting Savannah, Georgia with Knoxville, Tennessee is to traverse within its boundaries.

***Regional Solutions Objective*** – Rabun County actively participates in regional programs and funding in areas of public safety, courts, animal control, planning, and economic development. The cities and county willingly participate in regional activities and solutions that will improve efficiency in service delivery and costs saving to tax payers.

***HOUSING OPPORTUNTIES GOAL***

***Housing Opportunities Objective*** – The median price of a home in Rabun County is higher than the State average, which causes some concerns over housing affordability. However, the community in general supports providing a whole range of housing opportunities in order for those working in the cities and county to

be able to affordably live here too. The plan recommends a variety of housing types and locations meeting the needs of senior citizens and families with low or moderate incomes.

***LAND USE GOAL***

***Traditional Neighborhood Objective*** – Traditional neighborhood patterns are solely located in the cities. The cities should be committed to continue this type of development as there are a number of small vacant lots and properties dotted around the city that will more than likely be converted to single and multi family uses. The plan identifies the need for some development within the County to occur in close proximity to the cities at higher densities, taking advantage of infrastructure and close distances to community goods and services.

***Infill Development Objective*** – Infill development opportunities exists for all cities. Infill within the cities is projected to occur, as they do not aggressively annex unincorporated property to grow.

***Sense of Place Objective*** – The largest population center in Rabun County is Clayton, home too much of the county government. It is the center of many of the county's businesses and services. It has the greatest concentration of infrastructure. Each of the other cities, Mountain City, Dillard, Tiger, Tallulah Falls, and Sky Valley serve as focal points for smaller populations. Each has a unique character and look reflecting their historic development, which makes them attractive to the people who chose to live there. The schools, churches and civic organizations of these communities provide an important part of the social fabric of Rabun County as well as the physical infrastructure.

The historic clustering of dwellings, businesses and infrastructure has created unique and attractive locations with important visual aspects related to the life style and topographic aspects of this county.

Our sense of place resides in memory. If we do not protect the landscape and architecture, the natural and the built parts of our past, we will have no sense of place.

Insert photo pages of community vision

likes, 3 pages

dislikes 4 pages

(Pages 1-14 – 1-20)

# Community Vision: Likes

Continued redevelopment and infill of Rabun County's towns will increase the vitality of the County's residential and commercial areas.

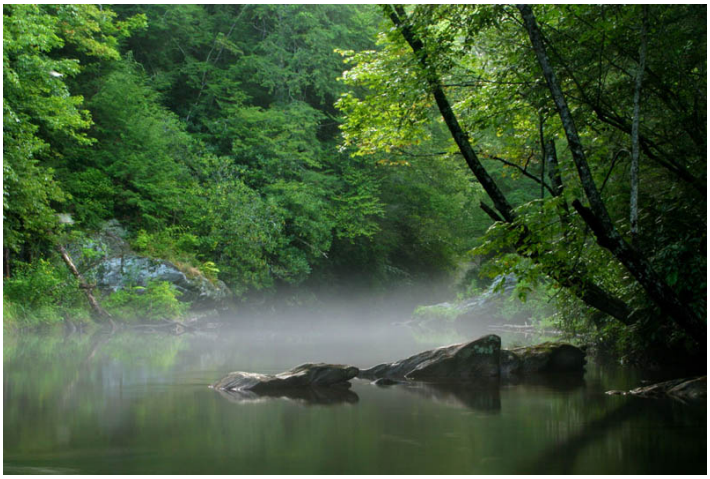
Industry is welcome in Rabun County; however, proper siting and mitigation of pollution is necessary. The National Textiles plant provides an excellent use of vegetation to minimize visual and noise pollution.

The York House is listed on the National Historic Register and is the oldest continuously operating Inn in Georgia. This is an excellent example of the preservation of historic buildings through private interests.

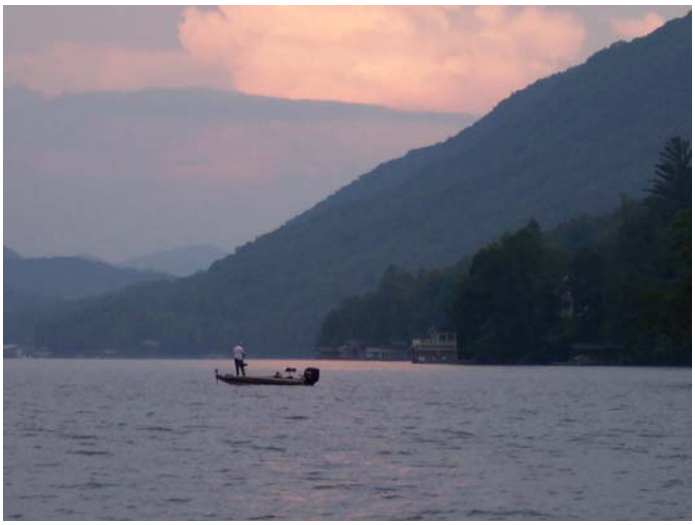
The Rock House was constructed in 1934 as a Works Progress Administration building and is currently being used as a community facility. The Rock House provides the community with historic significance while maintaining functionality within the community.

This picture of the Wolf Fork Valley exemplifies Rabun County's vision of its rural areas, as a mixture of agriculture and forest lands

The maintenance of clean air and viewsheds are important in Rabun County, along with the protection of its mountainous areas.



Rabun County has abundant surface and ground water resources, which serve recreational and economic functions in the County. Protection of these resources is important to the citizens of Rabun County.

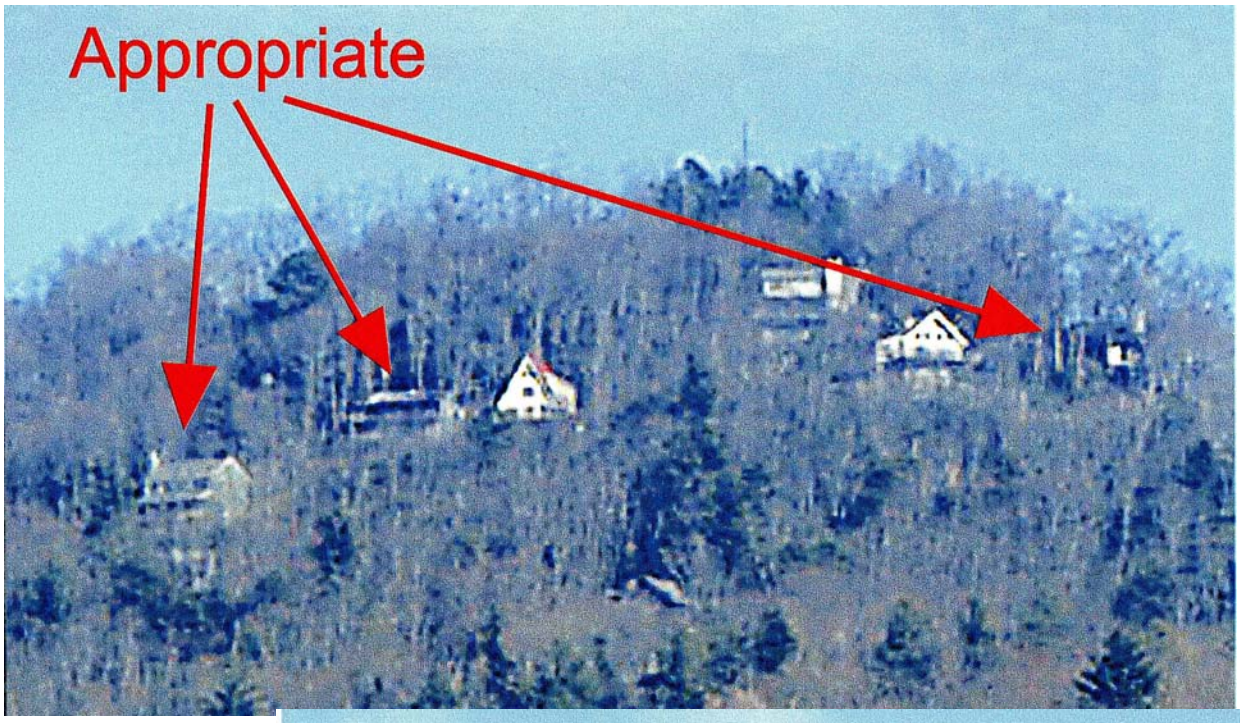


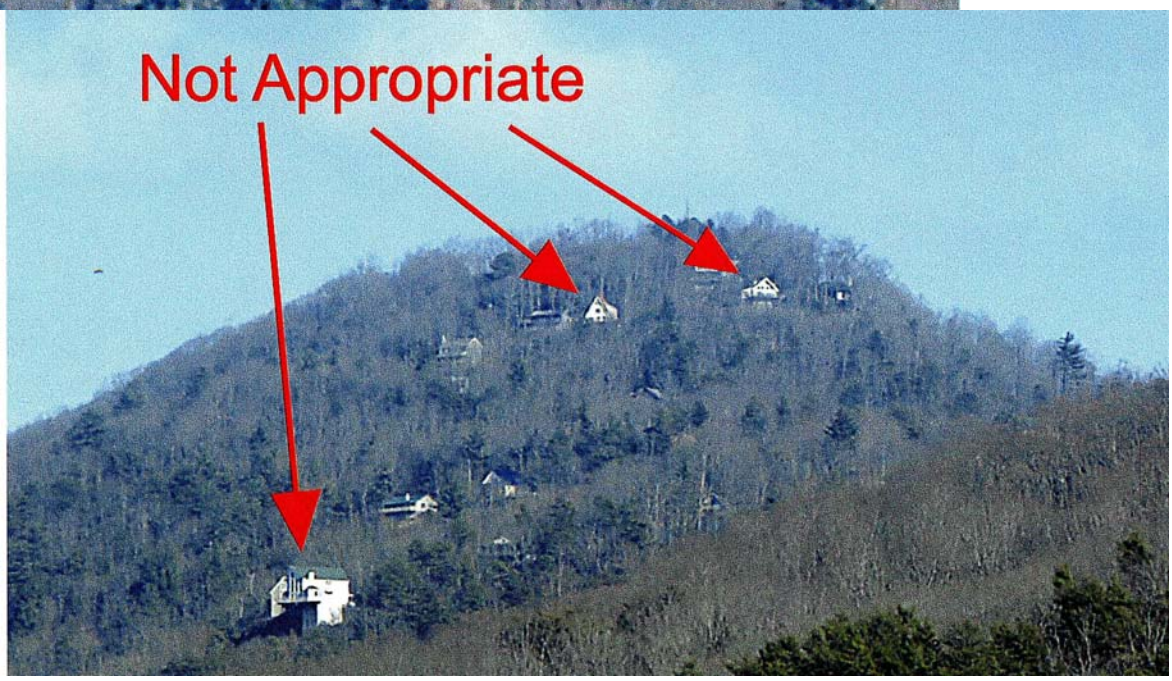
Rabun County's lakes provide a unique experience of solitude in a picturesque setting.

Agriculture is an important sector in Rabun County's economy and also provides habitat areas and open space. Agricultural diversity further adds to the stability of this market.

The Rabun County farmers market provides opportunities for local exchange of goods and community interaction.

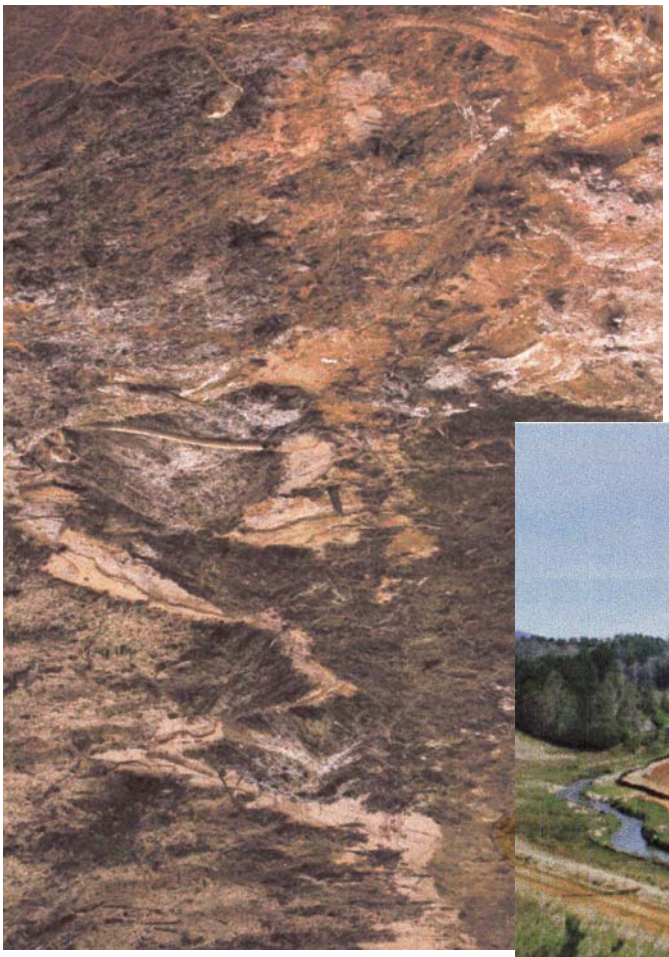
# Community Vision: Dislikes



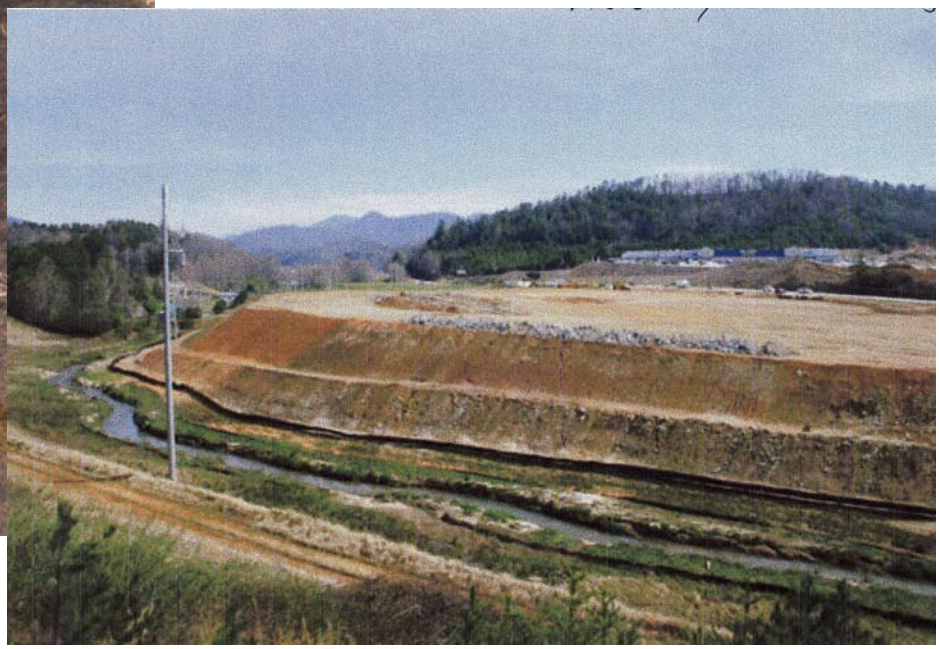



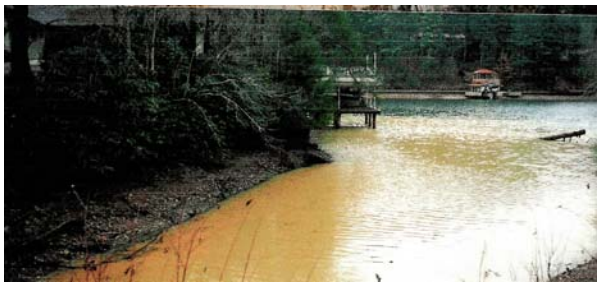

Viewsheds and mountain top protection are important to the citizens in Rabun County. Development on steep slopes and ridge tops endanger the environmental quality of the County and impair the scenery that Rabun County is known for. These pictures illustrate how small changes in site design and layout can have a positive impact on the visual quality of the County.

While the citizens of Rabun County and surrounding areas require services, care should be taken to consider environmental constraints and visual quality with the placement of future infrastructure.



Developable land in Rabun County is limited. Currently, large developments rely heavily on earth moving activities to provide sufficient level terrain for construction. Unless very carefully managed, these sites cause irreversible changes to the landscape.





These pictures of Timson Creek show stream sedimentation as a result of upstream development. The implementation of BMP's around construction sites is a critical step in minimizing environmental degradation associated with construction.

Stream buffers are an important feature to maintain stream quality.  This picture of Stekoa Creek illustrates the lack of stream buffers throughout the County.

# CHAPTER 2

# POPULATION ELEMENT

Included in this chapter is an inventory and analysis of the population and related demographics for Rabun County, Georgia, including its municipalities. An understanding of population growth and other population characteristics is an important first step in the development of a comprehensive plan. The dynamics of the population have an impact on all other elements found within the comprehensive plan. This element serves as the foundation for policy and goal development and implementation addressing the needs for growth. Analysis of this data allows communities to see the changes that have occurred in population over time. Historic population data, and the accompanying trends, enable managers to evaluate previous population growth or decline in perspective as they evaluate the other planning elements.

## *INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF THE POPULATION*

### *TOTAL POPULATION*

Current population figures enable communities to make decision about community facility and public service adequacy. Informed decisions can be made, based on current population data, concerning housing stock and employment opportunities, among other things. If changes need to be made to accommodate growing numbers, the community can plan accordingly to bring the revealed inadequacies up to an acceptable level.

**TABLE 2-1**
**POPULATION TRENDS, 1980-2000**

| AREA | 1970 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1980-1990% CHANGE | 1995 | 2000 | 1990-2000% CHANGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rabun County** | 8,327 | 10,466 | 11,165 | 11,648 | 11.3 | 13,149 | 15,050 | 29.2 |
| **Clayton** | 1,569 | 1,838 | 1,724 | 1,613 | - 12.2 | 1,855 | 2,019 | 25.2 |
| **Dillard** | 186 | 238 | 218 | 198 | - 16.4 | 198 | 198 | 0.0 |
| **Mountain City** | 594 | 701 | 743 | 784 | 11.8 | 800 | 829 | 5.7 |
| **Sky Valley** | --- | 65 | 126 | 187 | 185.0 | 199 | 221 | 18.2 |
| **Tallulah Falls** | 255 | 162 | 155 | 147 | - 42.4 | 151 | 164 | 11.6 |
| **Tiger** | 312 | 299 | 300 | 301 | --- | 304 | 316 | 5.0 |
| **Unincorp. County** | 5,598 | 7,253 | 7,881 | 8,509 | 17.3 | 9,752 | 11,303 | 32.8 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

The total population in Rabun County increased by 3,402 persons from 1990 to 2000. (Table 2-1) This translates to a 29.2% rate of growth for the ten-year period. The growth rate for the recent decade almost tripled from the previous ten years. Most of the growth occurred in the unincorporated portion of Rabun County as it increased by more than 32% during the ten-year period. Using mapping and census data it was also revealed the 76.2% of the Rabun County population live within two miles of U.S. 441 or U.S. 76. Both of these routes are surrounded by public lands thus concentrating the population and growth into two major strips, one north-south (US 441) and the other east-west (US 76). The other major part of the county where growth is occurring is along the shores of the lakes on the west side of the county.

The City of Clayton not only continues to be the largest city in the county, but is also the fastest growing municipality in the county as well. Clayton grew at a rate of 25.2% over the past decade to over 2,000 persons. This is a reversed trend from the previous decade where the city lost population. Clayton is geographically centered in the middle of the county and is bisected by the two major county routes U.S. 441 and U.S. 76. Because Clayton is the county seat and the economic center of the county, and because of it infrastructural capacity, the city will continue to grow and develop at a rapid pace over the next ten years.

The City of Dillard basically saw no resident population growth over the past ten years. Most full-time residential growth in the area is occurring just outside the city in the unincorporated parts of the county. The growth that Dillard is seeing is the seasonal population from second home development.

The population in Mountain City grew by 45 persons from 1990 to 2000, a growth rate of 5.7%. In 2000 there were 829 residents in the city. Mountain City purchased sewer capacity from the City of Clayton and installed sewer lines to serve future growth. It is anticipated that the city will see substantial commercial and residential growth over the next ten years due to the increase in the land-carrying capacity that sewer infrastructure brings to an area.

The City of Sky Valley experienced a growth rate of 18.2% from 1990 to 2000. The city population grew from 187 persons to 221 over the ten-year period. The growth is coming from the baby-boom generation that is now retiring. The city has had some major rezoning recently and should see continued strong growth in the full-time and seasonal populations in the future.

Tallulah Falls saw positive growth during the recent decade. The town had experienced negative growth from 1980 to 1990. However, the town grew to a population of 164, an 11.5% rate of growth. Part of this comes from the town annexing outlying residential parcels as well as having more traffic in town with the opening of

Tallulah Gorge State Park. This growth trend is expected to continue for the town and may even increase with additional planned infrastructure improvements.

The Town of Tiger experienced a modest five percent growth from 1990 to 2000. This population increased to 316 persons. Tiger has purchased sewer capacity from the City of Clayton and will most likely see a fairly rapid increase in the area growth.

**TABLE 2-2**
**POPULATION TRENDS**
**RABUN COUNTY AND THE STATE OF GEORGIA, 1990-2000**

| AREA | 1990 POPULATION | 2000 POPULATION | % GROWTH RATE | ACTUAL CHANGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rabun County** | 11,648 | 15,050 | 29.2 | 3,402 |
| **Habersham County** | 27,261 | 35,902 | 30.0 | 8,641 |
| **Stephens County** | 23,257 | 25,435 | 9.4 | 2,178 |
| **Towns County** | 6,754 | 9,319 | 38.0 | 2,565 |
| **State of Georgia** | 6,478,216 | 8,186,453 | 26.4 | 1,708,237 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Table 2-2 compares Rabun County's growth with surrounding communities and the state. Rabun County is very similar to most counties in the region in that they are growing at a rate higher than the state. The growth trend in the Georgia Mountain Region is expected to continue for the next 20 years.

**TABLE 2-3**
**LOCATION OF POPULATION**
**DISTRIBUTION BY CENSUS DIVISION**
**1990 AND 2000**

| CENSUS TRACT | POPULATION | | | | | HOUSING UNITS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1990 | 2000 | 2000 Share | 1990-2000 CHANGE | 1990-2000 % CHANGE | 2000 |
| **9701** | 3,647 | 4,627 | 30.7% | 980 | 26.9 | 3,050 |
| **9702** | 4,648 | 5,850 | 38.9% | 1,202 | 25.9 | 3,182 |
| **9703** | 3,353 | 4,573 | 30.4% | 1,220 | 36.4 | 3,978 |
| **TOTAL** | 11,648 | 15,050 | 100% | 3,402 | 29.2 | 10,210 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Rabun County is divided into three census tracts. Tract 9701 is located in the north central portion of the county. It incorporates Dillard, Mountain City Sky Valley and the northeast quadrant of Clayton. Tract 9720 wraps around Tract 9701. It extends from the eastern boundary of the county to the west and includes the remaining parts of Clayton. Tract 9703 is located south and west quadrants in the county and includes Tiger and the lake communities.

Census data reveals that all three-census tracts are growing quickly. Tract 9702 has grown the most and is growing the fastest of all three census tracts. This tract includes some of the large scale developments that have occurred in the county in recent years such as Waterfall and Kingwood.

***FUNCTIONAL AND SEASONAL POPULATION***

Table 2-4 presents functional population information for the City of Clayton. The functional population is the day-time population. Because Clayton is the county seat and the economic center of Rabun County the day time population is much higher than the resident population. This provides insight on the scheduling and provision of services for the city. Based on business license data there are approximately 4,515 persons working in Clayton during business hours. The daily visitor population includes tourists stopping at venues inside the city limits as well as area residents from the county and other incorporated communities that travel to Clayton for shopping and services. The functional population in Clayton during the winter is estimated to be 10,605 people and the peak summer population for the city rises to 18,115. Thus the functional population is anywhere between four and eight times the resident population of the city. Most of the resident growth in Rabun County is actually occurring in the unincorporated areas of the county. However, as the population grows so will the functional population of Clayton because it will continue to be the center of economic and social activity in Rabun County. Water, sewer, public safety and other services provided by Clayton should continue to plan their future growth around the needs of the functional population.

**TABLE 2-4**
**FUNCTIONAL POPULATION**
**CITY OF CLAYTON**
**2005**

| RESIDENT POPULATION | LABOR FORCE | EMPLOYMENT | DAILY VISITOR POPULATION | FUNCTIONAL POPULATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2,270 | 820 | 4,515 | 4,100 Winter-Low<br>12,150 Summer-Peak | 10,605 Winter-Low<br>18,115 Summer-Peak |

Source GMRDC Estimate, 2005.

Because there are so many second homes and numerous visitors to Rabun County on a daily basis the resident population taken by the U.S. Census is not the true population of Rabun County. This is important because the services provided by the county and its municipalities should be planned around the seasonal and functional population on a daily basis. Table 2-5 identifies the total peak day population estimate for Rabun County through 2025. This estimate includes the resident, peak day second home population and the peak day visitor population.

It is estimated that the peak population in Rabun County in the year 2000 was 41,275 persons. The resident population calculates to be about 36% of the total population. By the year 2025 the total peak day population in Rabun County is estimated to be 81,801. By this year the resident population increase to slightly over 48% of the total. It is vital that the county be aware of this type of data because residents have different demands for government services than visitors.

**TABLE 2-5**
**PEAK SEASONAL POPULATION**
**RABUN COUNTY**
**2000**

| YEAR | RESIDENT | SECOND HOME (PEAK DAY) | VISITOR (PEAK DAY) | TOTAL (PEAK DAY) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 15,050 | 7,225 | 19,000 | 41,275 |
| 2005 | 17,759 | 8,665 | 21,000 | 47,424 |
| 2010 | 20,955 | 8,606 | 24,000 | 53,561 |
| 2015 | 25,146 | 7,711 | 27,500 | 60,357 |
| 2020 | 31,432 | 6,566 | 31,500 | 69,498 |
| 2025 | 39,290 | 6,011 | 36,500 | 81,801 |

Source: GMRDC Estimate, 2005.

***POPULATION PROJECTION***

Forecasting future population is important in planning for future services by local governments. Rabun County has experienced rapid growth over the past few decades. The marketing of the county's natural beauty and quality of life has assisted in the population and economic increase in the area. Many persons are choosing to retire to Rabun County, or are choosing to live in the county and commute to other employment centers. The growth in the county has allowed many residents to find new employment opportunities as some industries and businesses have left. Table 2-6 presents population projections for Rabun County and each municipality through the year 2025.

The rate of growth in the county is expected to increase over the next two decades. It is forecasted that the county will grow by more than 39% from 2000 to 2010 to a population of 20,955. The county population projection for 2020 is approximately a 50% growth over the previous decade. The projection of 2025 is 39,290. Much of this growth will occur in the form of second home occupants becoming full-time residents. However, Rabun County will continue to attract new comers due to the quality of life that is provided all the natural beauty and resources.

Most of the forecasted population growth is expected to occur in the unincorporated parts of the county with some residential and the majority of commercial growth occurring in the cities. Residential growth in municipalities is more difficult to forecast because cities can annex large area and developments in exchange for the provision of infrastructure and services that may not be provided by the county. The City of Clayton is expected to grow at about 30% over the next ten years with a 2000 population of 2,633. The trend is expected to continue to 2024 with a population of 3,424.

Dillard's population is expected to increase to 227 by 2010 and to 300 by 2025, a 34% increase from 2000.

Mountain City is expected to grow, but only at a modest rate. The 2010 population figure for the city is projected at 882 and the town is expected to grow to 977 by 2025.

It is anticipated that the growth in Sky Valley will continue at the same rate that has occurred over the past decade, 18%. However, the city's projection could change dramatically based on the fact that the majority of vacant land is owned by one entity, a development company.

Tallulah Falls is projected to increase in population at a slightly increase rate over the next twenty years. The state park is having an impact on the town's growth. By 2010 the town is projected to have 229 residents. By 2020 the population is expected to be more than double over the 2000 census count. The town will have 385 residents by 2025.

The Town of Tiger is expected to grow to 365 persons by 2010, which is a 15% rate of growth. The trend will slightly increase to about 19% over the following decade leaving the city with a population of 434 in 2020.

**TABLE 2-6**
**POPULATION PROJECTIONS**
**2005 – 2025**

| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rabun (Uninc.) | 11,364 | 13,731 | 16,445 | 20,092 | 25,776 | 33,208 |
| Clayton | 2,019 | 2,270 | 2,633 | 3,013 | 3,424 | 3,651 |
| Dillard | 198 | 209 | 227 | 247 | 273 | 300 |
| Sky Valley | 221 | 237 | 259 | 309 | 371 | 441 |
| Mountain City | 829 | 855 | 882 | 913 | 944 | 977 |
| Tallulah Falls | 164 | 192 | 229 | 277 | 335 | 385 |
| Tiger | 316 | 336 | 365 | 398 | 434 | 474 |
| TOTAL | 15,050 | 17,759 | 20,955 | 25,146 | 31,432 | 39,290 |

Source: 2000 U.S. Census; GMRDC Population Projections, 2004.

***AGE OF THE POPULATION***

Breaking the local population down by age provides insight to local governments on the types of services that may need to be provided. For example an older population has significantly different needs than a population that is dominated by young families.

Table 2-7 shows that the median age in Rabun County and its cities have increased at a rate higher than the state. In 2000, the median age in Rabun County had increased to 42 years versus the State at 33.4 years. The City of Sky Valley had the highest median age of 63.6 years while Clayton had the lowest median age at 39.7 years.

**TABLE 2-7**
**MEDIAN AGE OF PERSONS, 1970-2000**

| YEAR | RABUN CO. | CLAYTON | DILLARD | MTN CITY | SKY VALLEY | TALLULAH FALLS | TIGER | GEORGIA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1970** | 30.2 | 31.3 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 25.9 |
| **1980** | 34.2 | 35.6 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 28.6 |
| **1990** | 39.2 | 45.0 | 45.2 | 40.0 | 57.8 | 40.1 | 38.0 | 31.6 |
| **2000** | 42.0 | 39.7 | 48.0 | 40.5 | 63.6 | 41.5 | 43.5 | 33.4 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

The population is broken down by age groups in Tables 2-8 through 2-14 for the years 1980 to 2000. This breakdown reveals that nearly one third of the county population is age 55 and over. The increasing number of elderly persons in the county will impact the health care and the delivery of social services in the county.

Surprisingly the 45 – 54 age group increased the most over the past ten years. This scenario is interesting because this age group is not considered to be one that would normally have a high number of persons that are retired. Most persons in this age group are considered to be a part of the working population. However, it was determined that that some of the members of this group have come to Rabun County to establish second careers, starting many of the support services that currently exist in Rabun County and telecommuting. These persons are at a point in their lives where they can afford to live in a location such as Rabun County. It appears that Rabun County can be called a second career community as well as a second home community. It was also determined that some of these persons have come (or come back) to Rabun County to help take care of aging parents.

The age groups where young persons are entering the workforce, 18-20 and 21-24, both reported losses in their numbers. This is because many of these persons leave for post-secondary education opportunities, the military, or for employment in other communities. Rabun County has no post-secondary institutions within its boundaries to keep young people in town to attend college. And, not enough new jobs are created for these persons to keep them in the area as well.

**TABLE 2-8**
**Rabun County: Population by Age Projected**

| Category | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0 – 4 Years Old** | 607 | 640 | 672 | 765 | 857 | 988 | 1,220 | 1,395 | 1,671 | 1,950 |
| **5 – 13 Years Old** | 1,442 | 1,403 | 1,364 | 1,589 | 1,813 | 2,008 | 2,353 | 2,612 | 3,021 | 3,480 |
| **14 – 17 Years Old** | 712 | 617 | 522 | 569 | 616 | 666 | 725 | 784 | 819 | 864 |
| **18 – 20 Years Old** | 454 | 463 | 471 | 459 | 446 | 472 | 538 | 551 | 570 | 601 |
| **21 – 24 Years Old** | 610 | 571 | 531 | 572 | 613 | 631 | 657 | 691 | 732 | 775 |
| **25 – 34 Years Old** | 1,527 | 1,528 | 1,528 | 1,645 | 1,761 | 1,884 | 2,077 | 2,265 | 2,523 | 3,182 |
| **35 – 44 Years Old** | 1,228 | 1,457 | 1,686 | 1,869 | 2,052 | 2,485 | 2,937 | 3,757 | 4,734 | 6,002 |
| **45 – 54 Years Old** | 1,101 | 1,245 | 1,389 | 1,792 | 2,195 | 2,924 | 3,744 | 4,550 | 5,756 | 7,089 |
| **55 – 64 Years Old** | 1,228 | 1,299 | 1,370 | 1,669 | 1,967 | 2,355 | 2,883 | 3,258 | 4,522 | 6,083 |
| **65 and over** | 1,557 | 1,836 | 2,115 | 2,423 | 2,730 | 3,346 | 4,087 | 5,055 | 7,084 | 9,264 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. GMRDC estimate.

Age data for the City of Clayton reveals that, while there is a large, older population in the city, some of the younger age groups are increasing more rapidly. The 25-34 age group grew the most from 1990 to 2000. The growth in this age group most likely accounts for the large increases in the two youngest age groups (0-4 and 5-13). Together these age groups reveal that much of the growth the occurred in Clayton over the past decade was from young families moving into town. Some of the reasons for families moving into Clayton are that housing is more affordable and most jobs in Rabun County are located in town. This is a trend that is projected to continue throughout the horizon of this plan.

**TABLE 2-9**
**Clayton city: Population by Age**

| Category | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0 – 4 Years Old** | 84 | 86 | 87 | 102 | 116 | 134 | 153 | 195 | 237 | 335 |
| **5 – 13 Years Old** | 220 | 181 | 142 | 175 | 207 | 210 | 232 | 265 | 298 | 328 |
| **14 – 17 Years Old** | 117 | 85 | 52 | 59 | 65 | 85 | 115 | 147 | 181 | 227 |
| **18 – 20 Years Old** | 85 | 76 | 67 | 66 | 64 | 62 | 66 | 70 | 76 | 82 |
| **21 – 24 Years Old** | 96 | 88 | 80 | 103 | 126 | 143 | 161 | 200 | 240 | 331 |
| **25 – 34 Years Old** | 230 | 216 | 202 | 251 | 300 | 340 | 381 | 473 | 566 | 779 |
| **35 – 44 Years Old** | 175 | 176 | 176 | 203 | 230 | 262 | 293 | 366 | 439 | 606 |
| **45 – 54 Years Old** | 190 | 176 | 162 | 194 | 225 | 245 | 265 | 312 | 358 | 464 |
| **55 – 64 Years Old** | 227 | 205 | 183 | 198 | 213 | 225 | 247 | 279 | 320 | 358 |
| **65 and over** | 414 | 438 | 462 | 468 | 473 | 507 | 521 | 549 | 599 | 676 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. GMRDC estimate.

The age groups in Dillard are very similar to the county in that the majority of the population is in the older age groups. The 55-64 age group increase by two and a half times over the past decade, while the age 65 and over actually decreased in numbers over the same time frame. All of the younger age groups saw little or no change from 1990 to 2000. The working age groups, between 25 and 54, make up just over one third of the total population in town. Most of these people likely work in businesses in Dillard and the surrounding community. It is expected that each age group will not change too drastically over the horizon of the plan, and each age group will continue to hold its share of the population.

**TABLE 2-10**
**Dillard city: Population by Age**

| Category | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0 – 4 Years Old** | 12 | 14 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 21 |
| **5 – 13 Years Old** | 30 | 24 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 26 |
| **14 – 17 Years Old** | 17 | 13 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 16 |
| **18 – 20 Years Old** | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 11 |
| **21 – 24 Years Old** | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 15 |
| **25 – 34 Years Old** | 29 | 22 | 15 | 17 | 19 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 22 | 25 |
| **35 – 44 Years Old** | 36 | 32 | 27 | 24 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 24 | 25 | 28 |
| **45 – 54 Years Old** | 14 | 20 | 25 | 27 | 29 | 33 | 37 | 40 | 44 | 48 |
| **55 – 64 Years Old** | 30 | 23 | 15 | 27 | 38 | 40 | 44 | 46 | 48 | 50 |
| **65 and over** | 55 | 58 | 60 | 49 | 38 | 49 | 52 | 53 | 56 | 60 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. GMRDC estimate.

The City of Mountain City has the most evenly distributed population in the county. The 45-54 age group increased the most over the past ten year from 77 persons to 114. The other age group that increased significantly was the 5-13 age group that increased from 85 to 108 over the same time frame. Mountain City is in close proximity to the National Textile and Fruit of the Loom manufacturing plants in Rabun Gap. It is likely the many of the city's residents work in these facilities. Mountain City also has a fairly large retirement population that makes up about 30% of the city population.

Forecasts show that the 35-44 age group is expected to increase the most through the horizon of this plan followed by the 45-54 age group. As long as there are sufficient employment opportunities in the Mountain City area these age groups will dominate the city population.

**TABLE 2-11**
**Mountain City: Population by Age**

| Category | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0 – 4 Years Old** | 41 | 42 | 42 | 49 | 55 | 59 | 62 | 66 | 69 | 73 |
| **5 – 13 Years Old** | 93 | 89 | 85 | 97 | 108 | 112 | 112 | 119 | 123 | 127 |
| **14 – 17 Years Old** | 43 | 46 | 48 | 44 | 40 | 39 | 39 | 45 | 47 | 49 |
| **18 – 20 Years Old** | 30 | 31 | 31 | 26 | 20 | 18 | 15 | 13 | 14 | 18 |
| **21 – 24 Years Old** | 54 | 46 | 38 | 35 | 31 | 25 | 20 | 18 | 18 | 20 |
| **25 – 34 Years Old** | 110 | 105 | 100 | 101 | 101 | 99 | 97 | 94 | 95 | 97 |
| **35 – 44 Years Old** | 59 | 91 | 123 | 120 | 116 | 123 | 135 | 145 | 163 | 181 |
| **45 – 54 Years Old** | 74 | 76 | 77 | 96 | 114 | 124 | 134 | 144 | 150 | 159 |
| **55 – 64 Years Old** | 89 | 87 | 85 | 93 | 100 | 103 | 106 | 108 | 111 | 114 |
| **65 and over** | 108 | 132 | 155 | 150 | 144 | 153 | 162 | 162 | 154 | 139 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. GMRDC estimate.

Population by groups for Sky Valley is presented in Table 2-12. Sky Valley is dominated by the retirement age population it was designed for. The median age in the city in the year 2000 was over 63 years of age. This is reflected in the age group data, as almost 50% of the local population is age 65 or older. The 55-64 age group makes up another 25% of the city population as well. Both of these age groups grew the fastest over the past ten years and it is anticipated that they will continue to make up the majority of the population over the next twenty years.

**TABLE 2-12**
**Sky Valley city: Population by Age**

| Category | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0 – 4 Years Old** | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 14 | 16 |
| **5 – 13 Years Old** | 8 | 11 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 17 | 22 | 25 |
| **14 – 17 Years Old** | 0 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 10 | 15 |
| **18 – 20 Years Old** | 0 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| **21 – 24 Years Old** | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 11 |
| **25 – 34 Years Old** | 3 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 18 |
| **35 – 44 Years Old** | 10 | 15 | 19 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 20 | 27 | 34 |
| **45 – 54 Years Old** | 8 | 14 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 22 | 25 | 30 | 37 | 44 |
| **55 – 64 Years Old** | 19 | 32 | 44 | 51 | 57 | 62 | 68 | 78 | 89 | 104 |
| **65 and over** | 15 | 39 | 62 | 82 | 101 | 103 | 110 | 126 | 143 | 164 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. GMRDC estimate.

Tallulah Falls saw a modest increase in total population this past decade. Most of it occurred in the 45-54 age group, which doubled from 17 to 36 persons. Almost all the other age groups in town experience either no growth or slightly negative growth. However, the older age groups are forecasted to increase their numbers most quickly over the next two decades. Due to the opening of the state park, visitors are discovering the Tallulah Falls area. This translates into visitors moving to Tallulah Falls as they retire.

**TABLE 2-13**
**Tallulah Falls: Population by Age**

| Category | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0 – 4 Years Old** | 6 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 21 | 23 | 26 | 28 | 31 |
| **5 – 13 Years Old** | 23 | 19 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 20 | 23 | 26 |
| **14 – 17 Years Old** | 9 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 20 | 22 |
| **18 – 20 Years Old** | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 15 |
| **21 – 24 Years Old** | 9 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 19 |
| **25 – 34 Years Old** | 31 | 26 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 21 | 24 | 27 | 30 | 32 |
| **35 – 44 Years Old** | 19 | 26 | 33 | 28 | 22 | 24 | 29 | 36 | 41 | 46 |
| **45 – 54 Years Old** | 20 | 19 | 17 | 27 | 36 | 40 | 44 | 48 | 56 | 64 |
| **55 – 64 Years Old** | 12 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 19 | 24 | 34 | 45 | 54 |
| **65 and over** | 26 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 23 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 63 | 76 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. GMRDC estimate.

Tiger is mainly dominated by growth in the older age groups. The 45-54 age group increased by 81% from 1990 to 2000. However, the 5-13 age group grew by 45% over the same time frame.

Tiger has recently purchased sewer capacity from the City of Clayton. This could most likely have an impact on future growth in the town where the older age groups may not be as dominant as they currently are.

**TABLE 2-14**
**Tiger Population by Age**

| Category | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0 – 4 Years Old** | 12 | 16 | 20 | 17 | 13 | 15 | 18 | 22 | 26 | 30 |
| **5 – 13 Years Old** | 45 | 38 | 31 | 38 | 45 | 47 | 50 | 55 | 61 | 67 |
| **14 – 17 Years Old** | 31 | 23 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 18 | 22 | 26 |
| **18 – 20 Years Old** | 9 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 21 |
| **21 – 24 Years Old** | 10 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 16 |
| **25 – 34 Years Old** | 42 | 44 | 46 | 40 | 34 | 34 | 37 | 40 | 41 | 45 |
| **35 – 44 Years Old** | 36 | 39 | 42 | 41 | 39 | 38 | 40 | 45 | 47 | 49 |
| **45 – 54 Years Old** | 36 | 32 | 27 | 38 | 49 | 54 | 60 | 64 | 69 | 75 |
| **55 – 64 Years Old** | 36 | 34 | 32 | 36 | 39 | 42 | 47 | 51 | 55 | 62 |
| **65 and over** | 42 | 51 | 59 | 62 | 64 | 68 | 72 | 74 | 81 | 92 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. GMRDC estimate.

***POPULATION BY RACE***

An analysis of the racial composition of Rabun County reveals that in 2000 almost 95% of the county population is white. The black population in Rabun County increased nearly threefold from 41 persons in 1990 to 119 in 2000. However, the black population makes up less than one percent of the total population in Rabun County.

Approximately 2.6% of the population identified themselves as “other”. It is assumed that the majority of these persons are of Hispanic origin and marked this category because the 2000 Census did not recognize Hispanic origin as a race. According to the census a person can be black or white and be Hispanic. However, there is a Latino population in Rabun County that considers themselves their own race and therefore chose to place themselves in the “other” category.

**TABLE 2-15**
**Rabun County: Racial Composition**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Population** | 10,466 | 11,648 | 15,050 |
| **White** | 10,351 | 11,526 | 14,280 |
| **Black** | 65 | 41 | 119 |
| **American Indian Eskimo or Aleut** | 34 | 47 | 64 |
| **Asian or Pacific Islander** | 11 | 8 | 61 |
| **Other** | 2 | 26 | 396 |
| **Persons of Hispanic Origin** | 47 | 52 | 6 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

One of the larger issues surrounding the Latino population in Rabun County is the actual number of persons of this race. Many are migratory workers employed in agriculture and other industries in the county. There also are hundreds of undocumented Latinos living and working in Rabun County. They are employed in day and low skilled wage positions found in construction, landscaping, agriculture, domestic services and other services. No formal count or census has been conducted to determine the actual number of Latinos in the county, but several informal estimates have been undertaken by local churches and social service organization. The number that continues to be presented in discussions is 5,000 persons. The local school system has identified that approximately 197 or 8.7% of the students attending local schools are Hispanic. Using this percentage and applying the assumption that much of the Hispanic population are young, single males looking for employment opportunity it can be determined that about ten to fifteen percent of the county population is Latino. Applying this methodology to the 2005 estimate for Rabun County would identify that there are between 1,775 and 2,665 persons of Hispanic origin residing in Rabun County.

Data on the racial composition in each of the cities in Rabun County are presented in Tables 2-16 through 2-21. The City of Clayton is the only municipality in the county that has much racial diversity. In 2000 just over 84% of the population was recorded as being white. Just over 2.7% of the city population was black, 1.5% reported being Asian or Pacific Islander and about one percent of the person were reported as some type of Native American. Slightly less than 10% of the population was classified as other, which is most likely Hispanics who marked this category on the census form.

**TABLE 2-16**
**Clayton: Racial Composition**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Population** | 1838 | 1613 | 2019 |
| **White** | 1266 | 1533 | 1707 |
| **Black** | 8 | 38 | 56 |
| **American Indian Eskimo or Aleut** | 4 | 11 | 18 |
| **Asian or Pacific Islander** | 1 | 8 | 30 |
| **Other** | 0 | 23 | 190 |
| **Persons of Hispanic Origin** | 7 | 40 | 297 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The remaining cities and towns in Rabun County are predominantly white with only a small percentage of the local population made up of minority races. Some cities, much like the county and Clayton have persons reporting being of Hispanic origin.

**TABLE 2-17**
**Dillard: Racial Composition**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Population** | 238 | 198 | 198 |
| **White** | 165 | 198 | 186 |
| **Black** | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| **American Indian Eskimo or Aleut** | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **Asian or Pacific Islander** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Other** | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| **Persons of Hispanic Origin** | 1 | 0 | 25 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

| TABLE 2-18<br>Mountain City: Racial Composition | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Population** | 701 | 783 | 829 |
| **White** | 758 | 781 | 753 |
| **Black** | 9 | 0 | 5 |
| **American Indian Eskimo or Aleut** | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| **Asian or Pacific Islander** | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| **Other** | 0 | 0 | 37 |
| **Persons of Hispanic Origin** | 4 | 0 | 63 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

| TABLE 2-19<br>Sky Valley: Racial Composition | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Population** | 65 | 189 | 221 |
| **White** | 232 | 180 | 211 |
| **Black** | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| **American Indian Eskimo or Aleut** | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| **Asian or Pacific Islander** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Other** | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| **Persons of Hispanic Origin** | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-20**
**Tallulah Falls: Racial Composition**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Population** | 162 | 139 | 164 |
| **White** | 85 | 139 | 164 |
| **Black** | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **American Indian Eskimo or Aleut** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Asian or Pacific Islander** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Persons of Hispanic Origin** | 0 | 4 | 0 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-21**
**Tiger: Racial Composition**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Population** | 299 | 326 | 316 |
| **White** | 116 | 326 | 310 |
| **Black** | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| **American Indian Eskimo or Aleut** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Asian or Pacific Islander** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Persons of Hispanic Origin** | 0 | 0 | 6 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

***EDCUATIONAL ATTAINMENT***

Education attainment and achievement data for Rabun County and all municipalities is presented in Tables 2-22 through 2-30. This data reveals that the education levels in Rabun County are increasing for persons age 25 and older. In 1990 a total of 62.7% of persons age 25 and over had a high school education or higher. This percentage increased significantly to 75.4% in 2000. For persons having a bachelor's degree or higher the percentage increased from 11.6% in 1990 to 17.7% in 2000. When comparing Rabun County to the State of Georgia the state has a higher percentage of persons with a high school diploma or higher at 78.6%, and has a much higher percentage of persons having college degrees, 24.3%.

Part of the population in Rabun County are people who retire to the county and have earned high school and college degrees. The remaining portion is taking advantage of the educational opportunities provided by the many colleges and universities that are in close proximity to Rabun County.

The national and world economies are rapidly becoming technology based and require increased levels of education, training and skills. Technical and advanced educational skills are now necessary to excel and remain competitive in the modern workplace. Rabun County residents must take advantage of the post-secondary educational opportunities to improve their employability. Also, a well educated and well trained workforce is a prime consideration of companies looking to relocate or expand in Georgia.

**TABLE 2-22**
**Rabun County: Educational Attainment**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over** | 6645 | 8099 | 10675 |
| **Less than 9th Grade** | 1920 | 1322 | 908 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | 1649 | 1695 | 1721 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | 1618 | 2742 | 3737 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | 695 | 1019 | 1997 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 381 | 430 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | 759 | 594 | 1078 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 346 | 804 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The adult population in Clayton actually saw a decrease in total education levels from 1990 to 2000. While the number of persons with less than a ninth grade education decreased significantly over the decade, the number of persons with a 9th to 12th grade education with no diploma increased by more than 50% over the same time frame. In addition the number persons with only a high school education slightly decreased.. This is reflective of the younger families moving into Clayton. These persons have lower levels of education and skills, and earn lower wages. Thus they can only afford the modest housing opportunities provided for in the city. Also noteworthy is that the number of persons that have college degrees in the city increased though not significantly.

All the other local governments have experienced slight increases in the level of education in the adult population.

**TABLE 2-23**
**Clayton: Educational Attainment**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over** | 810 | 1019 | 1353 |
| **Less than 9th Grade** | NA | 263 | 192 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | NA | 221 | 333 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | NA | 337 | 327 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | NA | 165 | 303 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 55 | 31 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | NA | 110 | 114 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 34 | 53 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-24**
**Dillard: Educational Attainment**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over** | 105 | 109 | 140 |
| **Less than 9th Grade** | NA | 11 | 9 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | NA | 24 | 24 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | NA | 38 | 26 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | NA | 28 | 35 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 8 | 2 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | NA | 25 | 19 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 11 | 25 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

| TABLE 2-25<br>Mountain City: Educational Attainment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over** | 486 | 411 | 562 |
| **Less than 9th Grade** | NA | 108 | 79 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | NA | 115 | 116 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | NA | 214 | 198 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | NA | 58 | 92 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 11 | 26 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | NA | 18 | 23 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 14 | 28 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

| TABLE 2-26<br>Sky Valley: Educational Attainment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over** | 149 | 151 | 203 |
| **Less than 9th Grade** | NA | 10 | 0 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | NA | 16 | 8 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | NA | 41 | 29 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | NA | 26 | 47 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 20 | 10 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | NA | 38 | 66 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 12 | 43 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-27**
**Tallulah Falls: Educational Attainment**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over** | 55 | 62 | 138 |
| **Less than 9th Grade** | NA | 4 | 6 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | NA | 10 | 16 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | NA | 35 | 41 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | NA | 16 | 31 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 2 | 8 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | NA | 13 | 25 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 13 | 11 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-28**
**Tiger: Educational Attainment**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over** | 75 | 200 | 219 |
| **Less than 9th Grade** | NA | 50 | 22 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | NA | 69 | 49 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | NA | 65 | 59 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | NA | 13 | 48 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 12 | 7 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | NA | 9 | 18 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 22 | 16 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-29**
**Georgia: Educational Attainment %**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Less than 9th Grade** | NA | 12.0 | 7.6 |
| **9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)** | NA | 17.1 | 13.8 |
| **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)** | NA | 29.6 | 28.7 |
| **Some College (No Degree)** | NA | 22.0 | 20.4 |
| **Associate Degree** | NA | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | NA | 12.9 | 16.0 |
| **Graduate or Professional Degree** | NA | 6.4 | 8.3 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 2-30**
**Rabun County: Education Statistics**

| Category | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)** | 71% | 85% | 75% | 75% | 72% | 79% | 69% |
| **H.S. Dropout Rate** | 11.1% | 9.7% | 10.2% | 7.7% | 9.6% | 6.3% | 8.5% |
| **Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges** | 10.1% | 10.3% | 35.2% | 21.3% | 25.2% | NA | NA |
| **Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools** | 10.1% | 9.0% | 12.5% | 7.5% | 14.6% | 12.3% | NA |

Source: Georgia Department of Education

**TABLE 2-31**
**Georgia: Education Statistics**

| Category | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)** | 82% | 76% | 67% | 68% | 66% | 68% | 65% |
| **H.S. Dropout Rate** | 9.26% | 8.60% | 7.30% | 6.50% | 6.50% | 6.50% | 6.40% |
| **Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges** | 35.0% | 30.0% | 30.2% | 38.8% | 37.5% | 37.3% | 36.1% |
| **Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools** | 5.4% | 6.2% | 7.1% | 6.5% | 6.4% | 7.4% | 8.8% |

Source: Georgia Department of Education

A comparison of educational statistics of Rabun County to the State of Georgia shows the local students have consistently scored higher than the state on all components of the required high school graduation test. However, the dropout rate in Rabun County is higher than the average for the state. Also, a significantly lower percentage of Rabun County graduates are attending public colleges in Georgia when compared to the state average. On the other hand, a higher percentage of graduates from Rabun County are attending technical schools as compared to the rest of the state. The last two statistics presented reflect the fact that there is no public two or four year

college in very close proximity to Rabun County, but local students are taking advantage of North Georgia Technical College campuses being close by in Clarkesville and Blairsville.

This data does not consider many students from Rabun County attending college at the several private institutions that are within reasonable driving distance of the area.

***HOUSESHOLD CHARACTERISTICS***

In the year 2000 there were 14,776 persons living in households (Table 2-30). This is over 98% of the population. This is statistic is significant considering the median age of the population. The majority of the population is made up of persons that are retired and relatively active and healthy for their age. On the other hand, many in Rabun County are in need of temporary and permanent nursing care. The rise in home health care as a way to keep medical costs down has reduced the demand of such facilities. Many older residents are also taken care of by family members. Only 284 county residents were living in group quarters and more than one-half of those reside in Clayton. Group quarters include institutional facilities such as nursing homes and related facilities, detention facilities and dormitories. The data presenting the numbers in Clayton have most likely changed as the new county detention center is relocated in the county. However, the nursing and assisted living facilities in Rabun County have an occupancy rate of nearly one hundred percent year round. Based on population projections by age, the number of beds or rooms for assisted living or nursing care should increase to more than 500 over the next ten to fifteen years

**TABLE 2-30**
**HOUSEHOLD AND GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION**
**1990 AND 2000**

| AREA | TOTAL PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLDS | | TOTAL PERSONS IN GROUP QUARTERS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1990 | 2000 | 1990 | 2000 |
| **Rabun County** | 11,460 | 14,766 | 188 | 284 |
| **Clayton** | 1,451 | 1,866 | 162 | 153 |
| **Dillard** | 198 | 198 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mountain City** | 781 | 829 | 3 | 0 |
| **Sky Valley** | 187 | 221 | 0 | 0 |
| **Tallulah Falls** | 147 | 164 | 0 | 0 |
| **Tiger** | 301 | 305 | 0 | 11 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The data presenting the number of persons per household are typical of a growing, aging population (Tables 2-31 and 2-32). This data can shed light on the type of housing facilities and community services each local government may need to permit and provide over the next decade or two in order to address the needs of the population. The number of persons per household in Rabun County has decreased over the past ten years from 2.48 to 2.35. All of the cities within the county saw a decrease in the number of persons per household, with the exception of Clayton. The City of Sky Valley, which is strictly a second home retirement community showed a 2000 figure of less than two persons per household. This is a trend that is most likely to continue over the planning horizon to under 1.4 persons per household. In fact this trend is projected to occur throughout most of the county and cities with the exception of Clayton. However, the extension of sewer to Mountain City and Tiger may have an impact on these communities in that development could occur at higher densities allowing housing in these areas to be more affordable for families.

The number of persons per household in Clayton actually increased from 1990 to 2000 from 2.16 person per household to 2.29. This is due to most of the affordable housing in Rabun County is located in the city where younger couples are moving into town and are renting many of the smaller houses that are close to jobs and schools. Another reason for the increase in this statistic can be attributed to the increase in the Latino population, which typically includes families that are young and larger in size. The number of persons per household in Clayton is projected to increase over the next ten years and then slowly decrease over the following ten years. This is due to the infrastructure capabilities in Clayton allowing higher housing densities (affordability), and also because it will continue to the center of economic activity in Rabun County.

**TABLE 2-31**
**HOUSEHOLDS AND SELECTED HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**
**1980, 1990 AND 2000**

| AREA | TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS | | | PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Rabun County** | 3,909 | 4,649 | 6,279 | 2.65 | 2.48 | 2.35 |
| **Clayton** | 709 | 673 | 816 | 2.59 | 2.16 | 2.29 |
| **Dillard** | 90 | 82 | 88 | 2.64 | 2.43 | 2.25 |
| **Mountain City** | 269 | 316 | 363 | 2.61 | 2.47 | 2.28 |
| **Sky Valley** | 26 | 85 | 112 | 2.50 | 2.20 | 1.97 |
| **Tallulah Falls** | 60 | 63 | 71 | 2.70 | 2.52 | 2.31 |
| **Tiger** | 116 | 118 | 137 | 2.58 | 2.56 | 2.23 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**TABLE 2-32**
**HOUSEHOLD SIZE PROJECTIONS, 2004-2024**

| AREA | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rabun County** | 2.66 | 2.48 | 2.35 | 2.27 | 2.20 | 2.12 | 20.4 | 1.96 |
| **Clayton** | 2.42 | 2.16 | 2.29 | 2.33 | 2.38 | 2.42 | 2.38 | 2.33 |
| **Dillard** | 2.64 | 2.43 | 2.25 | 2.15 | 2.06 | 1.96 | 1.86 | 1.76 |
| **Mountain City** | 2.61 | 2.47 | 2.28 | 2.20 | 2.12 | 2.03 | 1.95 | 1.87 |
| **Sky Valley** | 2.50 | 2.20 | 1.97 | 1.84 | 1.71 | 1.57 | 1.44 | 1.31 |
| **Tallulah Falls** | 2.45 | 2.33 | 2.31 | 2.28 | 2.24 | 2.21 | 2.17 | 2.14 |
| **Tiger** | 2.58 | 2.55 | 2.23 | 2.14 | 2.06 | 1.97 | 1.88 | 1.79 |

Source: GMRDC Projection, 2005.

***INCOME CHARACTERISTICS***

The per capita income in Rabun County (Table 2-33) has risen by nearly 85% over the past decade, from $11,161 in 1990 to $20,608 in 2000. Much of this rise is attributed to the incomes of those who are retiring to Rabun County. This fact is supported by observing the increase in the per capita income for those cities where retirees are also locating in Rabun County. Tremendous increases are seen in Dillard, Sky Valley and particularly Tallulah Falls. Sky Valley shows the highest per capita income in 2000 at $31,511, while Tallulah Falls saw the largest increase over the past decade with its per capita income more than doubling to over $26,600.

On the other hand, in Clayton, Mountain City, and Tiger the per capita income rose significantly less over the same time frame to well under $16,000, which is about 75% of the county figure. Age group data shows that the residents in these cities are younger and are more of the working population in Rabun County. Because most of these persons are young, they have less education and professional skills and therefore have lower incomes. They locate into these areas because this is where housing is affordable in the county.

The average per capita income for the State of Georgia far exceeds the incomes in Rabun County and most of its cities. In 2000, the per capita income for Rabun County was less than 75% of the state average. Some of the cities in Rabun County show an even lower comparison of about 65% of the state average in Dillard down to about 55% in Mountain City. Only Sky Valley shows a higher per capita income than the state. The large increase in income in Tallulah Falls over the past ten years has made it more comparable with the state that it was in 1990.

**TABLE 2-33**

| Georgia: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 8,474 | --- | 17,722 | --- | 27,794 | | | | | |

| Rabun County: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 5,464 | 8,313 | 11,161 | 15,885 | 20,608 | 24,394 | 28,180 | 31,966 | 35,752 | 39,538 |

| Clayton: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 5,460 | 8,728 | 11,996 | 13,987 | 15,977 | 18,606 | 21,236 | 23,865 | 26,494 | 29,123 |

| Dillard: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 5,974 | 9,097 | 12,219 | 15,085 | 17,951 | 20,945 | 23,940 | 26,934 | 29,928 | 32,922 |

| Mountain City: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 4,867 | 6,496 | 8,124 | 11,680 | 15,235 | 17,827 | 20,419 | 23,011 | 25,603 | 28,195 |

| Sky Valley: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 6,419 | 13,245 | 20,071 | 25,791 | 31,511 | 37,784 | 44,057 | 50,330 | 56,603 | 62,876 |

| Tallulah Falls: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 6,753 | 9,850 | 12,947 | 19,805 | 26,663 | 31,641 | 36,618 | 41,596 | 46,573 | 51,551 |

| Tiger: Per Capita Income (in dollars) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **Per Capita Income** | 3,974 | 7,193 | 10,411 | 12,932 | 15,453 | 18,323 | 21,193 | 24,062 | 26,932 | 29,802 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Household income in Rabun County and cities is presented in Table 2-34 through Table 2-40.

Despite the decrease in the size of households in Rabun County, the average household income increased by nearly 70% from 1990 to 2000. The average household income in the county rose by almost $20,000 over the past ten years. Again, this is attributed to the higher incomes of the retirement population that has moved into the county over the recent decade. This population has pushed the average household income in the county to actually be higher than the state average household income. In 1990 the county household income was slightly less than the state average at $27,716 locally compared to the state average of $29,021. However, in 2000, the county average household income was $47,108 compared to the state average of $42,433.

Looking at the municipal data reveals that both Sky Valley and Tallulah Falls have average household incomes over $66,000. The income in these households are more than 40% above the county average, more than 45% above the State average and more than double the household average income in Tiger. The average household income for Tallulah Falls increased by more than 160% from 1990 to 2000. This has occurred due to the town annexing areas for high end residential development.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the average household income in Tiger increased only slightly over the past ten years.

| **State of Georgia: Average Household Income (in dollars)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | --- | 29,021 | 42,433 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The data tables also present the distribution of household incomes for the county and each city. These tables show a tremendous increase in the number of households that fall into the higher income categories ($50,000 +) for the county, Dillard, Sky Valley, and Tallulah Falls. While Clayton, Mountain City and Tiger each had an increase in the number of households in the higher income categories, the majority of households in these cities still remain in the lower to middle income categories. Again, this is due to younger, working class families locating in these cities to live and work.

**TABLE 2-34**

| Rabun County: Average Household Income (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | 27,716 | 47,108 |

| Rabun County: Household Income Distribution | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 3891 | 4676 | 6307 |
| **Income less than $5000** | 793 | 401 | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 888 | 604 | 724 |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 724 | 593 | 447 |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 528 | 595 | 378 |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 380 | 1006 | 1160 |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 210 | 333 | 537 |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 117 | 317 | 410 |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 94 | 325 | 705 |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 40 | 165 | 620 |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 20 | 144 | 478 |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 70 | 64 | 409 |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 24 | 129 | 439 |

| Rabun County: Household Income Dist (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Income less than $5000** | 20.38% | 8.58% | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 22.82% | 12.92% | 11.48% |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 18.61% | 12.68% | 7.09% |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 13.57% | 12.72% | 5.99% |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 9.77% | 21.51% | 18.39% |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 5.40% | 7.12% | 8.51% |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 3.01% | 6.78% | 6.50% |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 2.42% | 6.95% | 11.18% |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 1.03% | 3.53% | 9.83% |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 0.51% | 3.08% | 7.58% |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1.80% | 1.37% | 6.48% |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0.62% | 2.76% | 6.96% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-35**

| Clayton: Average Household Income (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | 27,395 | 35,415 |

| Clayton: Household Income Distribution | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 709 | 673 | 786 |
| **Income less than $5000** | 88 | 97 | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 116 | 111 | 136 |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 90 | 96 | 114 |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 64 | 68 | 63 |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 47 | 119 | 138 |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 16 | 47 | 59 |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 11 | 47 | 74 |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 6 | 21 | 57 |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 3 | 18 | 53 |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 6 | 8 | 37 |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 4 | 14 | 28 |

| Clayton: Household Income Dist (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Income less than $5000** | 12.41% | 14.41% | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 16.36% | 16.49% | 17.30% |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 12.69% | 14.26% | 14.50% |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 9.03% | 10.10% | 8.02% |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 6.63% | 17.68% | 17.56% |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 3.81% | 4.01% | 3.44% |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 2.26% | 6.98% | 7.51% |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 1.55% | 6.98% | 9.41% |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 0.85% | 3.12% | 7.25% |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 0.42% | 2.67% | 6.74% |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 0.85% | 1.19% | 4.71% |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0.56% | 2.08% | 3.56% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-36**

| Dillard: Average Household Income (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | 29,692 | 41,214 |

| Dillard : Household Income Distribution | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 90 | 90 | 67 |
| **Income less than $5000** | 12 | 11 | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 14 | 5 | 5 |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 12 | 8 | 7 |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 8 | 15 | 4 |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 6 | 15 | 12 |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 3 | 11 | 1 |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 2 | 12 | 3 |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 1 | 6 | 9 |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0 | 3 | 9 |

| Dillard: Household Income Dist (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Income less than $5000** | 13.33% | 12.22% | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 15.56% | 5.56% | 7.46% |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 13.33% | 8.89% | 10.45% |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 8.89% | 16.67% | 5.97% |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 6.67% | 16.67% | 17.91% |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 3.33% | 12.22% | 1.49% |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 2.22% | 13.33% | 4.48% |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 1.11% | 6.67% | 13.43% |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 1.11% | 4.44% | 5.97% |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 1.11% | 0.00% | 11.94% |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1.11% | 0.00% | 7.46% |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0.00% | 3.33% | 13.43% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-37**

| Mountain City: Average Household Income (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | 19,840 | 34,361 |

| Mountain City: Household Income Distribution | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 269 | 311 | 368 |
| **Income less than $5000** | 54 | 24 | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 65 | 49 | 63 |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 54 | 66 | 31 |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 39 | 43 | 52 |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 28 | 62 | 54 |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 15 | 18 | 21 |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 9 | 16 | 41 |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 6 | 18 | 54 |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 4 | 13 | 16 |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 1 | 0 | 13 |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 1 | 0 | 15 |

| Mountain City: Household Income Dist (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Income less than $5000** | 20.07% | 7.72% | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 24.16% | 15.76% | 17.12% |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 20.07% | 21.22% | 8.42% |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 14.50% | 13.83% | 14.13% |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 10.41% | 19.94% | 14.67% |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 5.58% | 5.79% | 5.71% |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 3.35% | 5.14% | 11.14% |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 2.23% | 5.79% | 14.67% |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 1.49% | 4.18% | 4.35% |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 0.37% | 0.00% | 3.53% |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1.12% | 0.64% | 2.17% |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0.37% | 0.00% | 4.08% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-38**

| Sky Valley: Average Household Income (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | 44,475 | 66,577 |

| Sky Valley: Household Income Distribution | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 26 | 90 | 119 |
| **Income less than $5000** | 16 | 10 | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 20 | 0 | 8 |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 17 | 7 | 4 |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 12 | 14 | 5 |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 9 | 14 | 12 |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 5 | 3 | 15 |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 3 | 11 | 8 |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 1 | 2 | 16 |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1 | 8 | 16 |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0 | 12 | 17 |

| Sky Valley: Household Income Dist (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Income less than $5000** | 61.54% | 11.11% | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 76.92% | 0.00% | 6.72% |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 65.38% | 7.78% | 3.36% |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 46.15% | 15.56% | 4.20% |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 34.62% | 15.56% | 10.08% |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 19.23% | 3.33% | 12.61% |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 11.54% | 12.22% | 6.72% |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 7.69% | 3.33% | 8.40% |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 3.85% | 6.67% | 6.72% |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 3.85% | 2.22% | 13.45% |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 3.85% | 8.89% | 13.45% |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0.00% | 13.33% | 14.29% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-39**

| Tallulah Falls: Average Household Income (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | 25,266 | 66,820 |

| Tallulah Falls: Household Income Distribution | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 66 | 54 | 82 |
| **Income less than $5000** | 7 | 4 | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 6 | 14 | 16 |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 5 | 6 | 0 |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 3 | 2 | 16 |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 1 | 15 | 11 |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0 | 2 | 5 |

| Tallulah Falls: Household Income Dist (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Income less than $5000** | 10.61% | 7.41% | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 9.09% | 25.93% | 19.51% |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 7.58% | 7.41% | 0.00% |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 7.58% | 11.11% | 0.00% |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 4.55% | 3.70% | 19.51% |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 3.03% | 0.00% | 2.44% |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 1.52% | 5.56% | 4.88% |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 1.52% | 27.78% | 13.41% |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 0.00% | 5.56% | 10.98% |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 0.00% | 1.85% | 12.20% |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1.52% | 0.00% | 10.98% |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0.00% | 3.70% | 6.10% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 2-40**

| Tiger: Average Household Income (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Mean Household Income** | 28,424 | 32,230 |

| Tiger: Household Income Distribution | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 116 | 136 | 133 |
| **Income less than $5000** | 11 | 13 | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 9 | 29 | 14 |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 8 | 19 | 13 |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 6 | 24 | 20 |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 4 | 15 | 28 |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 1 | 15 | 20 |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 0 | 5 | 4 |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0 | 3 | 6 |

| Tiger: Household Income Dist (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Households** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Income less than $5000** | 9.48% | 9.56% | NA |
| **Income $5000 - $9999** | 7.76% | 21.32% | 10.53% |
| **Income $10000 - $14999** | 6.90% | 13.97% | 9.77% |
| **Income $15000 - $19999** | 5.17% | 17.65% | 15.04% |
| **Income $20000 - $29999** | 3.45% | 11.03% | 21.05% |
| **Income $30000 - $34999** | 1.72% | 0.00% | 8.27% |
| **Income $35000 - $39999** | 0.86% | 2.21% | 6.02% |
| **Income $40000 - $49999** | 0.86% | 11.03% | 15.04% |
| **Income $50000 - $59999** | 0.00% | 5.15% | 5.26% |
| **Income $60000 - $74999** | 0.00% | 3.68% | 3.01% |
| **Income $75000 - $99999** | 1.72% | 2.21% | 1.50% |
| **Income $100000 or more** | 0.00% | 2.21% | 4.51% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Data in Tables 2-41 and 2-42 show there were 1,649 persons in Rabun County living below the poverty level, which is 11.1% of the county population. For the cities, Mountain City has the highest number of number of persons living below the poverty level. Also in Mountain City just over one-fourth of the persons living below the poverty level are children. The City of Tiger also has a high percentage of persons and children living below the poverty level. These two cities have the lowest per capita and household incomes in the county.

**TABLE 2-41**
**2000 POVERTY CHARACTERISTICS**

| POVERTY CHARACTERISTIC | Rabun Co | Clayton | Dillard | Mtn. City |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Persons Below Poverty Level** | 1,649 | 252 | 23 | 149 |
| **% Total Persons Below Poverty Level** | 11.1 | 14.6 | 10.8 | 18.1 |
| **Total Persons 65 Years and Over Below Poverty Level** | 343 | 39 | 6 | 31 |
| **Related Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level** | 346 | 53 | 5 | 50 |
| **% Related Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level** | 11.0 | 14.3 | 9.3 | 25.8 |
| **Total Families Below Poverty Level** | 355 | 35 | 4 | 36 |
| **Families Below Poverty Level with Female Householder (No Husband Present)** | 69 | 0 | 0 | 15 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

**TABLE 2-42**
**2000 POVERTY CHARACTERISTICS**

| POVERTY CHARACTERISTIC | Sky Valley | Tallulah Falls | Tiger | Georgia |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Persons Below Poverty Level** | 11 | 19 | 52 | 1,033,793 |
| **% Total Persons Below Poverty Level** | 4.8 | 10.6 | 18.2 | 13.0 |
| **Total Persons 65 Years and Over Below Poverty Level** | 2 | 11 | 17 | 102,228 |
| **Related Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level** | 19 | 0 | 10 | 354,633 |
| **% Related Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level** | 5.3 | 0 | 20.4 | 16.7 |
| **Total Families Below Poverty Level** | 5 | 2 | 6 | 210,138 |
| **Families Below Poverty Level with Female Householder (No Husband Present)** | 1 | 0 | 2 | 120,303 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Table 2-43 shows that over 73% of the households in Rabun County have income through wage and salary earnings. Only 2.5% of the households in Rabun County rely on public assistance for part of their income, while 13% of the households have some income derived from self employment. Typical of the population in Rabun County, over 36% of the households in the county receive social security income and 19.4% of households have retirement income as well.

**TABLE 2-43**
**HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE OF INCOME, 2000**
**RABUN COUNTY**

| INCOME TYPE | # OF HOUSEHOLDS | % OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS | MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wage and Salary Earnings** | 4,809 | 73.1 | 43,927 |
| **Self-Employment** | 885 | 13.0 | N/A |
| **Social Security** | 2,280 | 36.2 | 10,884 |
| **Public Assistance** | 159 | 2.5 | 1,560 |
| **Retirement** | 1,224 | 19.4 | 18,996 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Additional income data for the cities in Rabun County (Table 2-44 and Table 2-45) show percentages of how households derive their income.

**TABLE 2-44**
**HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE OF INCOME, 2000**

| | CLAYTON | | | DILLARD | | | MTN CITY | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME TYPE** | **# OF HOUSEHOLDS** | **% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS** | **MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($)** | **# OF HOUSEHOLDS** | **% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS** | **MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($)** | **# OF HOUSEHOLDS** | **% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS** | **MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($)** |
| **Wage and Salary Earnings** | 506 | 75.4 | 32,378 | 77 | 79.4 | 51,908 | 301 | 76.2 | 34,565 |
| **Self-Employment** | 54 | 8.0 | N/A | 10 | 10.3 | N/A | 45 | 11.4 | N/A |
| **Social Security** | 348 | 44.3 | 10,563 | 24 | 35.8 | 8,913 | 130 | 35.3 | 9,487 |
| **Public Assistance** | 24 | 3.1 | 558 | 4 | 6.0 | 450 | 18 | 4.9 | 944 |
| **Retirement** | 132 | 16.8 | 13,816 | 17 | 25.4 | 37,659 | 47 | 12.8 | 14,758 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

Most of this data is reflective of the population in each of the cities. For example, Clayton, Mountain City and Tiger show the lowest percentages of households that receive some type of retirement income. On the other hand, more than 65% of the households in Sky Valley receive social security as part of their income. Clayton, which has the youngest population, shows only about 8% of the households earning part of their income from self-employment.

**TABLE 2-45**
**HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE OF INCOME, 2000**
**SKY VALLEY, TALLULAH FALLS, AND TIGER**

| | SKY VALLEY | | | TALLULAH FALLS | | | TIGER | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME TYPE** | **# OF HOUSEHOLDS** | **% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS** | **MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($)** | **# OF HOUSEHOLDS** | **% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS** | **MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($)** | **# OF HOUSEHOLDS** | **% OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS** | **MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ($)** |
| **Wage and Salary Earnings** | 39 | 70.9 | 39,727 | 65 | 76.5 | 63,092 | 72 | 61.5 | 35,022 |
| **Self-Employment** | 11 | 20.0 | N/A | 5 | 5.9 | N/A | 21 | 17.9 | N/A |
| **Social Security** | 78 | 65.5 | 14,140 | 22 | 26.8 | 10,791 | 53 | 39.8 | 9,806 |
| **Public Assistance** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2.4 | 200 | 2 | 1.5 | 2,350 |
| **Retirement** | 61 | 51.3 | 20,907 | 10 | 12.2 | 10,980 | 20 | 15.0 | 9,780 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census.

***NEEDS AND ASSESSMENT***

Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Rabun County grew at a rate of nearly 30%, which is faster than the State of Georgia. The county continues to be a popular location for second homes and retirees. The area of the county that is growing the fastest is the area in the west part of the county around the lakes. In spite of the growth, nearly three fourths of the county population lives within two miles of U.S. 441 or U.S. 76. This is caused by the constraint of land owned by the federal and state governments and by Georgia Power.

The second home and seasonal population at times will swell to approximately three times the resident population throughout the year (more than 41,000). Summer and fall tend to be the peak times for such activity, placing stress on county services, public safety in particular. This number is expected to double over the next twenty years and should be considered in all planning activities of the county

The City of Clayton experienced a residential growth rate of more than 25% over the past decade. The City serves as the center of economic activity for Rabun County and therefore actually has a much higher functional population during the business hours of the day. Between workers and visitors, the city plays host as many as 10,000 to 18,000 persons per day. The city public safety department and utilities must make sure that this is the focus of their planning and activities.

The total county population is projected to increase from 15,050 in 2000 to 39,290 by 2025. The majority of this growth will come from in-migration of retirees and second home owners making their Rabun County house their permanent residence. Most the of growth is expected to occur in the unincorporated portions of Rabun County. However, the improvement and expansion of infrastructure and annexation by the cities could increase their population growth beyond what has been projected.

The age of the population in Rabun County is expected to continue to increase due to the popularity of the area as a second home and retirement community. Most likely the county will need to improve it emergency response services because as the age of a population increases so do the call for emergency services. Most of the younger families and persons in the county will continue to move into Clayton, where housing is smaller and more affordable and is close to jobs. This trend is expected to continue as the city provides the infrastructure that allows for housing densities to occur where it is affordable to live. Because sewer infrastructure has been extended to Mountain City and Tiger, these areas will most likely open up and provide for more affordable housing opportunities for young families.

Though the census data does not accurately reflect the dynamics of the county, Rabun county has seen a tremendous increase in the Latino population over the past five to ten years. Many of these persons work in agricultural and service jobs and may not be accounted for in official census counts. The application of rational methodologies identifies that there are most likely around 2,700 Latinos in Rabun County, which is about 18% of the total population. Many of these persons speak little or no English and have very low educational level and professional skill. The local governments and other public entities in Rabun County should take special measures to assist these persons in their need for community services and assistance, including housing and employment.

Education levels are increasing in Rabun County. The migrating population, though retired, have high levels of education. In addition, more students are completing their high school education and are seeking post secondary training. Many young people must travel outside of the county to seek post secondary education and training opportunities, and often times these persons do not return to Rabun County to work. Those that do remain generally have little or no work experience and lower levels of education. They stay and work mainly in the local service jobs which provide mostly lower wages. These persons tend to move into Clayton and Mountain City where housing is more affordable and they can also locate closer to employment opportunities.

Considering the county has an aging population, only a small percentage of people live in-group quarters. The majority of the population, over 98%, live in household situations. This may be due to the fact that many older persons now receive home health services and they are also being looked after in a home situation by children or siblings. The number of persons per household in Rabun County is decreasing. It is expected that by 2025 that the number of persons per household in Rabun County will be less than two. In spite of improved health services, because the population is aging and households are getting smaller, there will be a need for increased assisted living and nursing facilities (beds) in Rabun County over the next twenty years. This trend is also true for most of the municipalities in the county with the exception of Clayton. The city actually saw an increase in the number of persons per household over the past decade. This is due to many younger families moving to the city because of its smaller and more affordable rental housing opportunities. Since Clayton provides the infrastructure needed for affordable housing the city as well as the county should look at developing a variety of housing opportunities and programs for younger, growing households. The expansion of sewer to Mountain City and Tiger may also accommodate the needs of these types of households as well.

Household income in Rabun County has increased significantly over the past decade to the point where the local county household income is higher than the state average. However, the local number is skewed because of the extremes seen at the municipal level. Sky Valley and Tallulah Falls show household income more than 40% higher than the state average, while Tiger shows an average household income one-third lower than the state level. When looking at the distribution of household income, the higher income categories have increased the most over the past ten years throughout most of the county with the exception of Clayton and Mountain City where the lower and middle incomes contain the most households. This trend is expected to continue in the county and cities over the next ten years as the retirement community and mountains continue to attract retirees and second home residents, and the working population will continue to locate in or near the economic centers in the county.

Per capita income in Rabun County and cities is much lower than the state per capita income. Once again, Sky Valley and Tallulah Falls are the exceptions where they are either higher or about the same as the state average. Both of these cities include a retirement population with higher incomes. A concern with this trend is that as households in Rabun County get smaller the focus and importance on increased per capita income becomes greater. This could mean that eventually household incomes will not increase as much as they have been in the past or could even become smaller.

Just over 11% of the population in Rabun County live under the poverty level and about one third of these persons live within a municipality. One in five in the county that live under the poverty level are children. Another one in five are over the age of sixty five. This basically tells us that about 40% of the county population that lives under the poverty level is not part of the working population in Rabun County and rely on assistance of other persons for the provisions they have. Local efforts should be studied and improved to in order to provide sufficient services addressing the needs of this population.

***POLICY, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS***

- Track and identify the high growth areas to determine how to improve county and city services meeting the needs of the growing population, including the seasonal/second home population.
- Encourage infrastructure and service expansion only where it is feasible and encourage growth to take place where such services can be practically provided.
- Develop necessary measures to maintain Clayton as the economic and activity center of Rabun County.

- As growth continues address the needs of affordable housing through local and state policies and programs.
- Study and develop a program that will identify and address the needs of the Latino population, helping them incorporate into the Rabun County community.
- Encourage satellite post-secondary education programs in Rabun County that will serve existing industries and emerging sectors. Develop a program that will make use of the education and skills of the higher educated retirement population to train and assist younger workers in the development of their professional skills.
- Address the needs an aging population by: 1) encouraging the necessary health care facilities and programs to locate in Rabun County; and, 2) ensure that an adequate supply of housing is available meeting senior citizens needs.
- Encourage volunteerism in Rabun County and Cities addressing and assisting the needs of those who may not be able to provide for themselves.

# CHAPTER 3

# HOUSING ELEMENT

## *INTRODUCTION*

The characteristics and trends of residential development in a community are important indicators of future housing needs and policies. In the County and the Cities, with the exception of Sky Valley, housing is divided into three categories: single-family, multi-family and mobile homes and trailers. Seasonal units are counted as part of the overall housing total but are also divided among single-family, multi-family and mobile home categories. In other words, seasonal homes are not in addition to the three categories above. Rather, they are included in them. The most pressing housing needs in the communities were identified through steering committee meetings in which citizens of the County and Cities participated. These needs are identified at the end of this element and are incorporated into goals, policies and the implementation strategy.

The purpose of assessing the County's housing stock is to:

a) Determine future housing needs in conjunction with population projections and community goals and policies.

b) Discover and investigate any local housing problems such as substandard housing, sewer availability, etc.

c) Assess whether an adequate, affordable and varied supply of housing is being offered.

d) Provide a sound basis for managing housing development and supply in the future.

### *Overview of Rabun County Housing Patterns*

#### ***Rabun County***

Primarily rural, low density, single-family homes and a significant number of mobile homes and trailers, some of which are located in mobile home parks, characterize housing patterns throughout unincorporated Rabun County. Multi-family housing is extremely limited throughout the County and consists of several apartment buildings and a number of duplexes. As can be expected, densities are higher in and around the cities. Further out, farm style houses are common, often situated on large lots with barns and other auxiliary structures. Also prevalent in rural areas and mountainous terrain are seasonal and vacation homes. According to the 2000 Census figures, approximately 1/3 of the single-family housing is seasonal homes, occupied for only a portion of the year. The 2004 tax digest indicated that approximately 67% of the single-family homes are seasonal in nature, though affecting this figure are tax bills sent to mortgage companies outside the county for residences living in the county. The demand for housing is seen in the number of housing units added to the overall stock, 5,422 units added from 1980 to 2000.

Mostly they were single-family housing units closely followed by seasonal housing units. The trend of converting Rabun County from a rural setting to suburban particularly along the corridors is predicted to continue well into the future. The period of development from 1980 to 1990 saw the largest growth with an addition of 3,095 units for a total 7,883 units in 1990. From 1990 to 2000 the growth rate slowed marginally, from 7,833 units to 10,210, a gain of 2,327 units. *(See Tables 3-1, 3-51)*

Please note that Rabun County housing figures in this element include unincorporated areas and the six Municipalities.

***Clayton***

Clayton is the largest and the most densely populated city in Rabun County. Clayton provides approximately 270 multi-family housing units, 98 are public housing units operated by the Clayton Housing Authority. The Authority operates three separate complexes, which are available to qualified residents of Rabun County. Currently there are 22 units at the intersection of U.S. 441 and U.S. 78, 39 units on Shadyside Drive and 37 units on Dunlap Street. According to the Clayton Housing Authority, there is an increasing need for more public housing; primarily due to the rapidly increasing land values and the high cost, low supply of rental housing and few low to moderate-income single-family houses in the County. The Authority has identified the need for new public assisted housing units by the end of the planning period. These units could be developed as part of the HUD "family self-sufficiency program" in which residents are able to buy into their unit and eventually own it. The program requires responsibility on the part of the resident, and the award is vested interest in a housing unit.

Another program enabling responsible, but less fortunate, members of the community to have a respectable home is the Habitat for Humanity Program. Currently, the program is most active in Clayton; expansion to other cities and unincorporated areas is greatly needed.

Multi-family housing developments located in Clayton are inevitable. Citizens would like to see tasteful developments, at reasonable prices. Growth of multi-family units comes as a result of the increasing land values and single-family home values. These units should provide a viable option for those unable to afford single-family housing. To necessitate the growth of multi-family units the infrastructure needs to be expanded and updated.

Clayton offers a mixture of single-family homes in various sizes and styles, most of which are situated on moderate to small urban lots. In addition, mobile homes are relatively common, comprising 93 units, 15.7% of the total housing stock. Mobile homes and trailers will decrease over time due to land use regulations, such as zoning. *(See Tables 3-2, 3-8)*

***Dillard***

Housing in the City of Dillard has developed linearly along U.S. 441 corridor due to slope development limitations on the surrounding mountainsides. The majority of homes are single-family residential units with nine mobile homes and or trailers and ten multi-family housing units. With only 112 units, Dillard has the second smallest housing stock in the County. Dillard's housing stock is relatively young with approximately 76.6% of the housing being built after 1979, the second largest percentage of housing was built prior to 1940, approximately 40.1% (and the smallest percentage of housing units) occurred between 1940 to 1960 with 15.1% of the housing units being built. Several of the homes built prior to 1940 are historically significant and some have been preserved. Dillard serves primarily as a tourism center and includes the famous Dillard House and many antique shops. *(See Tables 3-3, 3-9)*

***Mountain City***

Mountain City, located just south of Dillard along U.S. 441, was laid out in 1907. The main residential area is situated east of U.S. 441 on the lower slopes of a hilly mountainside. The majority of the housing stock in Mountain City is single-family units, 276 (269 detached single-family and 7 attached single-family units). Mobile homes and trailers follow single-family units, with 129 units and multi-family housing with smallest number of units at 27.

There is existing infrastructure in Mountain City, yet it will need to be updated and expanded to meet future housing projections. One area expected to grow in the future is multi-family housing. This is due to several factors including the rising price of land, the rising price of housing units and the availability of land to develop.

Mountain City has a relatively young housing stock with 121 units built from 1960 to 1979, followed by 60 units built during 1940 to 1959 and 57 units were built preceding 1939. *(See Table 3-4, 3-10)*

***Sky Valley***

Sky Valley is situated in the mountains of the northeastern part of the County. Consisting of single-family seasonal housing, the City relies almost entirely on income collected from these residences. New development in Sky Valley is to continue at a rapid pace with the projected total housing units increasing by approximately 125% from 2000 to 2025 (704 units in 2000 to 1545 in 2025). There are three mobile homes or trailers in Sky Valley and it is projected by 2025 there will be no mobile homes or trailers. In general the housing stock for Sky Valley is very young with 175 units built between 1970 and 1979 and 18 units built between 1940 and 1969. *(See Tables 3-5, 3-11)*

***Tallulah Falls***

Once a popular resort town boasting grand vacation inns, Tallulah Falls is a shadow of its former self. Two events dramatically impacted Tallulah Falls, a large fire in the early 20th century and the damming of the falls that had made the town famous. The fire nearly razed the entire town and Georgia Power dammed the falls for power generation. Today Tallulah Falls attracts tourists who come to see the Tallulah Gorge. Tallulah Falls has the smallest number of housing units (111) compared to the rest of Rabun County and the other cities. Single-family homes comprise 89% of the housing stock and mobile homes or trailers comprise the remaining 11%. It is estimated that approximately 24 housing stock units were built before 1940 while 17 units were built between 1950 and 1979. Mobile homes are not allowed in the city unless they are classified as "double-wide manufactured homes and resemble a single-family house".

Future housing in Tallulah Falls is severely limited by the vast amounts of land zoned SL, Sensitive Lands. These areas are suitable for low-density residential development as septic tank drainage fields must be large, there are limited impervious surfaces and slopes are often too steep for development. *(See Tables 3-6, 3-12, 3-56)*

***Tiger***

The City of Tiger, located southwest of Clayton, is a small community with homes clustered tightly around the town's core. Many of the older homes are situated near the core lending to a quaint town feeling that should be preserved. 33 homes were built before 1959 while 46 homes were built between 1960 and 1979. Tiger has a total housing stock of 142 units of which the majority (69.0%) are single-family housing followed by mobile homes or trailers at 28.9%. The numbers of mobile homes in the future will decrease over time due to ordinances prohibiting new mobile homes and trailers. Minimal growth is projected for the future housing development in Tiger with a total of 148 units by 2025. *(See Tables 3-7, 3-13, 3-57)*

***Housing Supply and Characteristics***

This section analyzes historic and current trends in Rabun's housing sector. The analysis includes types of housing and changes in these types over a period of time, chronology of residential development and vacancy rates of renter and owner-occupied units. Where applicable, the housing data is compared to the Sate of Georgia's data. Please note that data either at the State level or at Rabun County level was not available for all categories.

***Rabun County***

Housing in Rabun County is characterized primarily by single-family detached homes, which make up 76.6% (7,824 units) of the total housing stock. While the overall growth of housing in Rabun County has increased by 53% from 1980 to 2000, the percentage increase was the greatest from 1980 to 1990 with a 39.2% increase and the percent increase was 22.7% from 1990 to 2000.

The number of single-family housing units increased at a slower rate from 1990 to 2000 (2,327 units) than from 1980 to 1990 (3,095 units). The greatest growth area is seen in the multi-family housing with 11 units being added to the overall total housing stock from 1980 to 1990 and 393 units being added to the overall housing stock. The increase in multi-family housing units is due to various factors including: rising prices of land and existing homes and the overall number of seasonal homes versus full-time residences. Mobile homes and trailers enjoyed rapid growth from 1980 to 1990 with an increase of 7.5% (596 units), but from 1990 to 2000 the increase was minimal, 2.7% (294 units). Overall, mobile homes and trailers grew from 1980 to 2000 by 8.8% (890 units). The percentage decline in mobile homes and trailers is a result of the rising land values, rising costs of mobile homes and trailers and ordinances in the cities and county prohibiting or restricting new placements of mobile homes and trailers.

Of the County's 10, 210 total housing units, 4,987 (48.8%) are owner-occupied and 1,292 units (12.6%) are renter-occupied. These figures change very little from the previous decade, owner-occupied units increased by 1% and renter-occupied units increased by 1.8%. The reasons for the marginal increases are due to several factors including the increasing number of seasonal housing units. The overall vacancy rate, percentage wise, for Rabun County declined from 1990 (41.2%) to 2000 (38.5%). The number of vacant units increased from 3,253 in 1990 to 3,931 in 2000. This means as the number of vacant homes increases it is doing so at a slower rate than there are homes being added to the overall housing stock. When compared to the State of Georgia, Rabun County's ownership percentages are lower for 1990 (58.2% for the State and 47.8% for Rabun County) and 2000 (61.8% for the State and 47.8% for Rabun County). Rabun County's vacancy rate was much higher than the State's rate for 1990 (41.2% for Rabun County versus the State's 10.3%) and 2000 (38.5% for Rabun County versus the State's 08.3%). Rabun County's vacancy rates are distorted due to numerous seasonal homes being counted as vacant.

The cost of living in Rabun County is high due to the rising land values and home values. From 1990 to 2000 median property values increased by $46,300 (58.8% increase), from $66,100 in 1990 to $112,400 in 2000. Median rent values showed dramatic increases as well, from $292 in 1990 to $439 in 2000 (66.5% increase). When compared to Georgia's median property values, Rabun County is marginally higher than the State value in 2000 ($112,400 for Rabun County and $111,200 for Georgia). The median rent values for Rabun County were moderately below Georgia's median rent ($439 for Rabun County versus $613 for Georgia). Many citizens feel while the median values for Rabun County and Georgia are near each other, they are too expensive for many people to afford property and the rental values are skewed because decent, livable rental housing is much higher than the median value, which is brought down by the numerous cheaper rental units that are in various states of decay. *(See Tables 3-1, 3-26, 3-27, 3-34, 3-35)*

***Clayton***

Housing in the City of Clayton consists primarily of single-family housing, 620 units (63.1%). There are 270 multi-family units (27.4%) and 93 mobile homes or trailers comprising 9.4% of the total housing stock. In 2000 there were 983 units an increase of 130 units from 1990 and an increase of 201 units from 1980.

Of the City's 983 units, 46.9%, or 462 units are owner-occupied, and 33.2%, or 327 units are renter-occupied. For Clayton, the percentage of owner-occupied units increased from the previous decade's 44.5% and the renter-occupied units decreased marginally in percentage from 34.3% in 1990 to 33.2% in 2000. The decrease in the percentage of renter-owned units is not reflected in the number of units, which increased from 293 in 1990 to 327 in 2000. The increase in the number of renter-owned units was offset by a larger increase in the number of owner-occupied units. When comparing Clayton's occupancy characteristics to the State of Georgia's for 2000, Clayton is far under the state owner-occupied percentage of 61.8% and substantially higher than the State's percentage of renter-occupied units of 29.8%.

The vacancy rate for Clayton in 2000 was 19.7%, or 194 units, a moderate decrease from the previous decade's 21.1% or 180 units. While the number of vacant units has increased by 14 units the overall percentage decreased due to the large number of owner-occupied and renter-occupied units being added to the housing stock. The vacancy rate is not a true reflection of vacant units because many of the seasonal units are recorded as vacant. The State of Georgia for 2000 is 8.3%, which is substantially lower than Clayton's 19.7%.

The cost of housing in Clayton, like the State of Georgia, has risen dramatically from the previous decade. Currently the median home value in Clayton is $96,300; an increase of $33,500 dollars from 1990 ($62,800), and a 53.3% increase. Median rents in Clayton mirror the rapid growth both in the City and the State. In Clayton the median rents rose from $297 to $454, increasing $157 or 52.8%, from 1990 to 2000. The Sate of Georgia's median property values increase by 57.2% from 1990 to 2000, slightly higher than Clayton's 53.3 % and Georgia's median rents increased by 41.5% moderately lower than Clayton's median rent percentage increase of 52.8%.

One factor to examine with the increasing property values is the impacts it is exerting on the people. As the property value increases so does the amount of income spent on the house, often resulting in people becoming cost-burdened by their property. Cost-burdened is defined as those spending greater than 30% of their income towards their property and those that spend 50% or greater are seen as severely cost-burdened. In Clayton those that are cost-burdened (30% to 49% of income goes toward property) has increased by 28 persons to 104 people, a 36.8% increase. For the severely cost-burdened sector (50% or greater of income goes toward property), no data was available for 1990, but in 2000 there were 81 persons severely cost-burdened. A large number of persons were not counted in determining cost-burdened levels for numerous factors and if counted might change some of the cost-burdened levels. Those not counted dramatically increased from 16 in 1990 to 55 in 2000, a 243.75% increase.

As property values rise, more people are forced to live together and combine their resources to pay for property creating situations of overcrowding in a housing unit. Overcrowding is when the total number of persons in a home is greater than one person per room in the housing unit. Clayton saw an increase of 4.4% in the number of cases of overcrowding in the total occupied housing units from 20 (2.9% of the total occupied housing units) to 58 (7.3% of the total occupied housing units). When comparing Clayton's increase to the State of Georgia's minimal increase of 0.8%, Clayton is has a substantially higher percentage of overcrowding. *(See Tables 3-7, 3-8, 3-14, 3-20, 3-27, 3-28, 3-35, 3-37, 3-44, 3-50, 3-52)*

***Dillard***

The city of Dillard has the second smallest total number of housing units in Rabun County at 112 units; Tallulah Falls has the smallest. Of these 112 units, 93, or 83%, are single-family housing units, 10, or 9%, are multi-family housing units and the remaining 9 units, or 8%, comprise mobile homes or trailers. Overall growth in the housing stock has grown 15.4% since 1980, a gain of 15 housing units. From 1980 to 1990 there was a gain of 7 units for 7.2% increase and from 1990 to 2000 a gain of 8 units for a 7.6% increase occurred. This marginal growth trend is predicted for the future with the overall housing stock to increase to 131 units from 2000 to 2025.

For single-family homes in Dillard, there was no change in the number of units and percentages from 1980 to 1990. From 1990 to 2000, 9 units were added for a 10.7% increase in single-family housing. Mobile homes and trailers have fluctuated in numbers and percentages increasing by 6 units (66.6%) from 1980 to 1990 and then declining by 6 units (66.6%) from 1990 to 2000. Mobile homes and trailers will decrease in number and percentage over time due to land use regulations such as zoning. Multi-family housing has seen the greatest growth in Dillard, yet the percentages are skewed because of dealing with a limited numbers of units. From 1980 to 1990, one unit was added to the multi-family housing stock for a 33.3% increase, from 1990 to 2000, 6 units were added for a 150% increase. Overall from 1980 to 2000, there was a gain of 7 multi-family units, or a 233.33% increase.

Vacant units in Dillard account for 32.1% of the housing stock, a total of 36 units. This number is skewed by some seasonal units, which are located in the city and counted as vacant. The vacancy rate has declined from the previous decades' 34.1%. Comparing the vacancy rate of Dillard to the State of Georgia, Dillard has an extremely high vacancy rate. Georgia's vacancy rates are 10.3% for 1990 and 8.3% for 2000. Owner-occupied units in Dillard have declined from 54.8% in 1990 to 49.1% in 2000. When comparing owner-occupied units in Dillard with the State of Georgia's increase from 58.2% to 61.8%, Dillard is far below Georgia's percentages. While owner-occupied units have decreased from 1990 to 2000, renter-occupied units increased from 12.5% in 1990 to 18.8% in 2000. These percentages are substantially lower than Georgia's 31.4 % of renter-occupied units in 1990 declining to 29.8% in 2000.

Median housing values in Dillard are currently $138,900 and $444 for median renting values. The median property values increase by $59,400, or 74.8%, from 1990 to 2000. Median rent values increased by $175, or 65%, from 1990 to 2000. When compared to the State of Georgia, which had an increase of 57.2 % in the median property values from 1990 to 2000, Dillard was substantially higher than the State's percentage and for the State the median rent values increased by 41.5% from 1990 to 2000, much lower than Dillard's 54.9% increase for the same period. The escalating median values indicate the rapid rate at which property is being sold and rented. Often this condition leads to problems in the future, for example, limiting those who are able to purchase a home or rent property.

One factor to examine with increasing property values is the impact it exerts on the population. As the property value increases so does the amount of income spent on the house, often resulting in people becoming cost-burdened by their property. In Dillard those in the cost-burdened category decreased by 11 persons to 5 people in 2000, or a decline of 220%. No data was available for 1990 for those in the severely cost-burdened category, yet in 2000, 5 people in Dillard were severely cost-burdened. In 2000 there were 10 persons not counted in determining

cost-burdened level, a dramatic increase from 0 persons in 1990. Theses 10 people were not counted in determining cost-burdened levels for numerous factors and if counted might change some of the cost-burdened levels.

Another factor resulting from rising median property and rent values is that more people live in one unit in order to defray the rising costs. Overcrowding is when the total number of persons is greater than one person per room in the housing unit. In 1990, 2.8% of the total occupied housing units were overcrowded and by 2000 this increased to 5.2% of the total occupied housing units. When comparing Dillard's percentages of overcrowded occupied living units to the State of Georgia's 4% in 1990 and 4.8% in 2000, Dillard started out below the State percentage in 1990 substantially increasing over the State's percentage in 2000. *(See Tables 3-3, 3-15, 3-21, 3-27, 3-29, 3-38, 3-45, 3-50, 3-53)*

***Mountain City***

Overall, Mountain City has 435 housing units in 2000, a modest increase of 3.3% or 14 units from the 110 units (33.8%) in 1990. Growth from 1980 to 1990 increased by 96 units or 29.5%. Of the current 435 housing units, 276 (63.4%) are single-family housing units, 129 units (29.7%) are mobile homes or trailers. The remaining 25 units or 6.9% are multi-family units.

Single-family residences dominate the makeup of Mountain City although the overall growth in single-family housing is moderate with an increase of 6.6% from 1990 to 2000. From 1980 to 1990 there was an increase of 6.14% or 15 units for a total of 259 units in 1990. Overall, there was an increase of 13.1% or 32 units from 1980 to 2000. Multi-family housing has grown at the fastest pace of any housing type in Mountain City. From 1980 to 1990 the number of units declined from 9 units to 6 units, a 50% decline and from 1990 to 2000 an increase of 19 units, a 316% increase; from 1980 to 2000, 16 units were added, a 177.7% increase. Mobile homes and trailers rapidly increased from 72 units in 1980 to 134 units in 1990, a gain of 62 units or 86.11% dropping slightly to 129 units in 2000, a decline of 3.9% or 5 units. Overall mobile homes and trailers increased by 57 units, or 79.1% from 1980 to 2000.

Vacant units in Mountain City account for 14.7% of the total housing units built, a decrease of 15.5% from 1990's 27.2%. When comparing this vacancy rate to that of the State of Georgia's rates of 10.3% in 1990 and 8.3% in 2000, Mountain city is above the State's percentage for both decades, while the percent decrease for Mountain City is greater than the States' decrease of 2%. Owner-occupied units in Mountain city have essentially remained the same from 1990's 68.8% to 2000's 68.9%. When compared to the State of Georgia's 58.2% in 1990 and 61.8 % in 2000, Mountain City remained substantially above the State's percentages. The number of renter-occupied units

has increased in Mountain City from 14.5% in 1990 to 16.3% in 2000. When comparing these percentages to the State of Georgia's percentages for 1990 at 31. 4% and 2000 at 29.8%, in both decades Mountain city has remained well the below the State's percentages.

Median property values in Mountain City are $74,6000 and median rent is $444. Median property values increased by 41.2%, or $21,800, from 1990 ($52,800) and median rents increased by 29.3%, or $108, from 1990 ($369). When compared to the State of Georgia's percentage increase of 57.2% for median property values from 1990 to 2000, Mountain City is substantially lower than Georgia's percentage change. Median rents for Georgia increased by 41.5% from 1990 to 2000, substantially higher than Mountain City's median rent percent change.

One factor to examine with the increasing property values is the impact it is exerting on the population. As the property values increase so does the amount of income spent on the house, often resulting in people becoming cost-burdened by their property. Mountain City has seen a dramatic reduction of 59.2% or 16 fewer people, being cost-burdened, from 43 people in 1990 to 27 people in 2000. There is no data for those severely cost-burdened for 1990, yet in 2000, 37 people were cost-burdened. One factor that can alter cost-burdened levels includes those not counted in determining cost-burden levels. The number of those not counted decreased marginally from 14 people in 1990 to 12 people in 2000, a reduction of 2 people or 16.6%.

Generally associated with increasing property values are people living in fewer units or numerous people sharing a single unit causing overcrowding. Mountain City has seen a marginal increase in the percentage of units that are overcrowded, from 3.2% in 1990 to 4.0% in 2000. When compared to the State of Georgia, which was at 4.0% in 1990 and 4.8% in 2000, Mountain City is marginally lower than the State's percentages. *(See Tables 3-4, 3-16, 3-27, 3-30, 3-35, 3-39, 3-46, 3-50, 3-54)*

***Sky Valley***

The City of Sky Valley is predominantly a resort community with a small year-round population. The inclusion and, in some cases, the exclusion of the seasonal housing units can distort many of the housing figures.

The City of Sky Valley contains 704 units of which 488 (69.3%) are single-family housing units. The 213 (30.3%) of the units are multi-family housing units and the remaining 3 units ( 0.4%) are mobile homes or trailers. Growth of the total housing units for Sky Valley was the greatest between 1980 and 1990 when 390 units added to the total housing stock. These numbers are a reflection of the Sky Valley Resort being constructed and opened, not of a general growth trend. From 1990 to 2000, Sky Valley grew from 421 units to 704 units, an addition of 283 units, a growth of 67.2%.

Single-family homes comprise the bulk of the housing stock for Sky Valley in 2000. Growth in the single-family housing stock is misrepresented by the massive build-out from 1980 to 1990 with 327 units being added for a total of 421, a growth of 1,488.4%. From 1990 to 2000, 75 single-family units were added to the housing stock bringing the total to 488 units, an 18.2% growth. Multi-family housing units did not exist in 1980 though by 1990, 4 units were added to the housing stock. From 1990 to 2000, 209 multi-family housing units were added for a total of 213. Mobile homes and trailers encompass the smallest type of unit in the housing stock. 1980 had the highest number of mobile homes with 5 and by 1990 that number declined to 3, for a 66.6% decrease. Between 1990 and 2000 there is no change in the numbers for mobile homes and trailers. Mobile homes and trailers will most likely decrease in number and percentage due to increased private restrictive covenants.

Vacant units in Sky Valley comprise 83.2% of the total housing stock, an increase from 70.7% in 1990. Owner-occupied units have declined marginally from 16.8% in 1990 to 16% in 2000. Renter-occupied units decreased from 1.9% in 1990 to 0.7% in 2000. When comparing the vacancy rate of Georgia, 10.3% in 1990 and 8.3% in 2000, Sky Valley is exceedingly higher than the State, yet this is an erroneous representation of vacant units in Sky Valley due to seasonal and recreational housing units are counted as vacant units. The owner-occupied percentages for Sky Valley are significantly lower than the State's percentages of 58.2% in 1990 and 61.8% in 2000. Again, these numbers are a misrepresentation because of the seasonal housing. Sky Valley's renter-occupied housing units fell well below the State's percentages of 31.4% in 1990 and 29.8% in 2000.

Median property values in Sky Valley are $188,900 and the median rent is $477. Median property values increased from $162,500 in 1990 to $188,900 in 2000, an increase of $26,400 or 16.25%. Median rents grew from $369 in 1990 to $477 in 2000, an increase of $192 or a 54.9%. When comparing the median property values for Sky Valley to Georgia's 57.2% gain, Sky Valley is substantially lower than the State. Median rents increased for Georgia by 41.5%, moderately lower than Sky Valley's median rent.

One factor to examine with the increasing property values is the impact the population. As the property value increases so does the amount of income spent on the house, often resulting in people becoming cost-burdened. Sky Valley has seen a decline in the number of cost-burdened from 17 people in 1990 to 6 people in 2000, a decline of 11 people or 183.3% decrease. For those that are severely cost-burdened, no data was available for 1990 and the number of severely cost-burdened was 13 in 2000, 116.6% greater than those that are cost-burdened in 2000. One factor that can alter cost-burdened levels includes those not counted in determining cost burden levels. There were 2 people not counted in 2000, a drop of 4 people from 1990, a 200% decrease.

Generally associated with increasing property values are people living in fewer units or numerous people sharing a single unit, causing it to be overcrowded. Overcrowding occurs when there are more people living in an occupied housing unit than there are total rooms. Sky Valley had no cases of overcrowding in 1990 and 2000. This is a result of the primary residence being seasonal in nature. *(See Tables 3-5, 3-17, 3-23, 3-27, 3-31, 3-35, 3-40, 3-47)*

***Tallulah Falls***

The City of Tallulah Falls contains the smallest number of total housing units in Rabun County with 111. Of these 111 units, 96, or 86.5% are single-family units and the remaining 15 units (13.5%) are mobile homes or trailers. Growth in Tallulah Falls is minimal. In 1980 there were 83 units, which grew to 85 units in 1990. The greatest growth spurt occurred between 1990 with 85 units and 2000 with 111 units, a 30.5% increase. From 1980 to 2000, 28 units (33.7%) have been added to the housing stock in Tallulah Falls.

Single-family housing dominates the housing stock being 78.3% of the total stock in 1980, 94.1% in 1990 and 86.5% in 2000. The increase of single-family housing units between 1980 and 1990 came as a result of no multi-family units being listed in 1990 and then the overall percentage decreased slightly in 2000 because of the addition of mobile homes and trailers. Multi-family housing only existed in 1980 with 11 units (14.4%) and completely disappeared by 1990. Mobile homes and trailers have remained fairly consistent from 1980 to 1990 with 6 units in 1980 and dropping to 5 units in 1990 and then increasing by 7 units (140%) to 12 units in 2000. Overall, from 1980 to 2000 mobile homes and trailers have increased by 6 units (100%). Mobile homes and trailers will decrease in number and percentage over time due to land use regulations such as zoning.

Vacant units in Tallulah Falls are 27.9% a dramatic decrease from the 85% in 1990. Owner-occupied units have virtually remained the same from 1990 (68.8%) to 2000 (68.9%). Renter-occupied units have increased marginally from 14.5 % in 1990 to 16.3% in 2000. When comparing Tallulah Falls to the State of Georgia's vacancy rate of 10.3% in 1990 and 8.3% in 2000, Tallulah Falls is dramatically higher than the State. The owner-occupied rates of Tallulah Falls have remained slightly above State levels (58.2% in 1990 and 61.8% in 2000). Renter-occupied rates for Tallulah Falls are substantially lower than the State's rates of 31.4% in 1990 and 29.8% in 2000.

Median property values in Tallulah Falls are $133,900 and median rents are $275. The median property values increased by $71,800, a 115.6% gain from $62,100 in 1990 to $133,900 in 2000. When comparing this figure to that of the State of Georgia's 57.2% gain from 1990 to 2000, Tallulah falls is nearly double the State's percentage increase. Median rents have decreased by $13, a 4.7% drop, from $288 in 1990 to $275 in 200. When comparing this figure to that of the State of Georgia's 41.5% increase, Tallulah Falls is substantially lower.

One factor to examine with the increasing property values is the impact on the population. As the property value increases so does the amount of income spent on the house, often resulting in people becoming cost-burdened. Tallulah Falls has seen a 100% decline in those that are cost-burdened from 25 people in 1990 to 0 in 2000. For those severely cost-burdened, no data was available for 1990 and the number of severely cost-burdened in 2000 was 9 people. One factor that can alter the cost-burdened levels includes those not counted in determining cost burden levels. There were 8 people not counted in 2000, a drop of 11 people from the 19 in 1990.

Generally associated with increasing property values are people living in fewer units or numerous people sharing a single unit, causing it to be overcrowded. Overcrowding occurs when there are more people living in an occupied housing unit than there are total rooms in that housing unit. Tallulah Falls saw a substantial increase in the numbers and percentages of overcrowded units, from 0 in 1990 to 6 in 2000, representing 7.5% of the total occupied housing units. *(See Tables 3-6, 3-18, 3-24, 3-27, 3-32, 3-35, 3-41, 3-48, 3-50, 3-56)*

***Tiger***

The City of Tiger contains 142 total housing units, 98 units (69.0%) are single-family housing units, 3 are multi-family housing units (2.1%) and the remaining 41 are mobile homes and trailers (28.9%). Mobile homes and trailers will decline in number and percentage over time due to land use regulations such as zoning. Growth in Tiger has been minimal and in the most recent decade it has decreased slightly. From 1980 to 1990 Tiger grew from 137 units to 146 units, a gain of 9 units, or 6.6% growth, but from 1990 to 2000 there was a marginal decline of 4 units (2.8%) from 146 units to 142 units in 2000. From 1980 to 2000 a total of 5 units have been added to the housing stock for a growth percentage of 36.4%.

Single-family housing dominates the overall housing stock in Tiger, with 69.8%, followed by mobile homes and trailers with 41 units (28.9%) in the smallest category is multi-family housing with 3 units (2.1%). Single-family housing has changed little in the numbers of units while the percentages have fluctuated slightly from 70.8% in 1980 to 66.4% in 1990 rising to 69.8% in 2000. Multi-family housing has continually declined from 10 units(7.3%) in 1980 to 5 units (3.4%) in 1990 to 3 units (2.1%) in 2000. Mobile homes and trailers have grown since 1980 from 30 units (21.9%) to 43 units (29.5%) in 1990 slipping to 41 units (28.9%) in 2000.

Vacant units in Tiger are 12%, a dramatic decrease from 59.6% in 1990. Owner-occupied units in Tiger rose dramatically from 64.4% in 1990 to 92.9% in 2000. Renter-occupied units increased slightly from 13% in 1990 to 14.8% in 2000. When comparing the State of Georgia's vacancy rate of 10.3% in 1990 dropping to 8.3% in 2000, Tiger's dramatic decrease puts them moderately above the State's percentage. The State of Georgia's owner-occupied rate of 58.2% in 1990 rose to 61.8% in 2000. Tiger's owner-occupied rate is substantially higher than the State's percentage. The State of Georgia's renter-occupied rate of 34.3% in 1990 declined marginally to 33.2% in 2000 placing Tiger well below the State's percentage.

Median property values in Tiger are $75,900 and median rents are $663. Median property values have increased by $25,400 (50.3%) from $50,500 in 1990 to $75,900 in 2000. When comparing this figure to the State of Georgia's percentage increase of 57.2%, Tiger is marginally lower than the State. Median rents have increased by $470 (243.5%) from $193 in 1990 to $663 in 2000. When comparing this figure to the State's median rent percentage gain of 41.5%, Tiger is dramatically higher than the State's percentage.

One factor to examine with the increasing property values is the impact on the population. Tiger has seen a minor decrease in the numbers of persons that are cost-burdened from 13 in 1990 to 11 in 2000, an 18.2% decline. For those severely cost-burdened, no data was available for 1990 and the number of severely cost-burdened in 2000 was 13 people. One factor that can alter the cost-burdened levels includes those not counted in determining cost burden levels. There were 6 people not counted in 2000, an increase of 1 person from the 5 in 1990.

Generally associated with increasing property values are people living in fewer units or numerous people sharing a single unit, causing it to be overcrowded. Tiger had a substantial drop in the percentage of overcrowded occupied housing units, from 5.3% in 1990 to 2.4% in 2000. When compared to the State of Georgia's 4% in 1990 growing to 4.8% in 2000, Tiger is 50% lower than the State for 2000. *(See Tables 3-7, 3-19, 3-25, 3-27, 3-33, 3-35, 3-42, 3-49, 3-50, 3-57)*

***Rabun County Comprehensive Plan – Housing Assessment***

The future growth of Rabun County is dependent of having a wide strata of people working, shopping and most importantly living in the County and its cities. Several factors exist today and will continue to exist in the future that will greatly limit the availability of housing to those needing low to moderate-income housing. These factors need to be addressed by the local governments and solutions found so that the growth in housing needs will be met at all levels.

Three factors that have the greatest influence on the future of housing in Rabun County are the cost of land, price of land development, and supply and demand. Land values in Rabun County and the cities have continued to grow at an accelerated pace. Much of the demand for land comes from high-dollar developments that cater to a select cliental. Much of the high cost is a result of the limited amount of land available for future development. As this is happening a large segment of the population, those looking for low to moderate-income housing, are forced further and further away from the cities and in some cases out of the county to find affordable housing.

Alternatives for those looking for low to moderate-income housing are to rent single family units, which may be in various stages of dilapidation. Mobile homes or trailers used to be a viable option for low to moderate-income housing. From 1980 to 2005 the number of mobile homes or trailers has increased by 1,113 units, a 39% increase. However, from 1980 to 2025 it is projected that mobile homes and trailers will increase by 890 units. Mobile homes and trailers will decrease in number and percentage over time due to development codes and land prices.

There is a need for the building of low to moderate-income housing in both the county and in the cities. Options include creating areas set aside for development of low to moderate-income housing, working with banks to create low interest loans, working with Georgia Mountains RDC in creating a region wide housing group to assist the local governments to meet necessary housing needs.

***Rabun County***

Rabun County consists of primarily low density, single-family homes and a significant percentage of mobile homes, with higher densities in and around the Cities. Multi-family housing exists on a limited scale. Approximately one-third of the housing in Rabun County is seasonal homes, according to the Census figures for 2000, locally, the number can be as high as 67%, based on 2004 tax digest, though this does not take into account tax bills sent to mortgage companies outside Rabun County use by residents living in Rabun County. This type of housing presents unique challenges in assessing housing trends. Studies to see how seasonal housing impacts population projections, how it influences the overall full-time housing numbers and influences property values over a project time frame.

In order to accommodate the projected growth within Rabun County during the planning period of 20 years, approximately 5,422 units will need to be added to the existing housing stock. The greatest portion of which should be single-family housing, followed closely by multi-family housing. A key factor to monitor is the rising price of land in Rabun County and in the cities. The rising costs limit those who can afford to live, build and own property in the County. This in turn will impact the types of housing being built, the number of renters versus owners and the scale of development.

For those looking to own housing and can only afford low to moderate-income housing, they are extremely limited in the options available to them. Several factors include rising land values, rising home values, lack of economic opportunities to earn income for purchasing a home and the limited amount of land available for future development. A general need exists to educate builders, community leaders and citizens on the need for low to moderate-income housing. This plan highlights some of the difficulties faced by those looking for low to moderate-income housing and a more in-depth housing study could prove beneficial to fully address this issue. *(See Table 3-51)*

***Clayton***

Housing for low to moderate-income families has become a major issue in Clayton. The majority of housing being built is market rate single-family housing and seasonal housing. Currently there are approximately 98 public housing units in Clayton and according to the Clayton Housing Authority the waitlist is so long that applications are not being taken. Compounding the problem of finding affordable housing is the rising land values in the City, preventing many from owning property or homes or being able to rent. This leaves those looking for low to moderate-income housing with few alternatives

By 2025, it is projected that Clayton will need an additional 201 additional housing units and a large percentage of those need to be for low to moderate-income housing. Clayton needs to look into creating high-density, single-family housing neighborhoods for low to moderate-income families. To create such neighborhoods requires the existing infrastructure to be updated and expanded; work with developers to create incentives for them to build low to moderate-income housing and with government programs to allow those in low to moderate-income housing to work towards ownership of the homes. Another option is to create multi-family housing units. If these are created they need to be built in such a manner as to preserve the rural setting common with single-family housing. *(See Table 3-52)*

***Dillard***

Dillard's housing stock consists primarily of single-family housing with few multi-family housing and mobile homes or trailers. With 112 housing units, Dillard has the second smallest number of housing units in the County. Growth in the housing stock is minimal for Dillard with an increase of 19 units by 2025 to meet population growth projections. The projections show only a slight increase in the number of single-family units and multi-family units while the number and percentage of mobile homes and trailers will decrease over time due to land use regulations such as zoning. *(See Table 3-53)*

***Mountain City***

Single-family homes and mobile homes and trailers dominate the housing stock in Mountain City. The majority of project housing stock growth is in multi-family housing. This course of change can be due to several factors including the rising cost of land, lack of new construction of single-family houses and the expansion of the existing infrastructure.

Mountain City has taken steps in providing housing for low to moderate-income families with the construction of a 64-unit apartment. The apartment building is a mix of market rate while the other apartments' rent is scaled on income levels. *(See Table 3-54)*

***Sky Valley***

Nearly all the residences in Sky Valley are single-family seasonal residences and the city relies on income collected from them. Of the 704 residential units, 426 are single-family residences. Growth in the area is to continually increase the numbers of housing stock, but the single-family house will remain dominant. There are few year-round residents and that number is projected to remain small with the majority of housing to be seasonal and timeshare units. *(See Table 3-55)*

***Tallulah Falls***

Tallulah Falls has a total of 111 residential units of which 96 are single-family houses with the second-most common housing stock are mobile homes and trailers. The numbers and percentage of mobile homes is to decrease over time due to land use regulations such as zoning. Growth is projected at a slow pace with an addition of 35 residential units by 2025.

Two majors face Tallulah Falls' housing; limited amount of land to build upon due to environmental conditions and finding willing buyers and builders to create new subdivisions. Mobile homes are not allowed in the city unless they are classified as "double-wide manufactured homes" and resemble a single-family house. The majority of the recent expansion in Tallulah Falls has been for commercial development. *(See Table 3- 56)*

***Tiger***

With a total of 142 residential units, Tiger contains mostly single-family houses and mobile homes and trailers. Single-family houses represent 69% of the housing stock at 98 units and mobile homes represent 28.8% of housing stock with 41 units. Mobile homes and trailers will decrease in number and percentage over time due to land use regulation.

Tiger contains many older housing units clustered around the commercial center. The projected growth in housing for Tiger is minimal with a projected total of 148 units by 2025. Development will most likely occur at a piecemeal, one-at-a-time type of development. To encourage development, Tiger should improve and expand its infrastructure. *(See Table 3-57)*

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Goal |
|---|
| Create a housing environment in Rabun County and Its cities that produces a well-stratified socio-economic Community |
| **Policy** |
| Determine the current housing environment in Rabun County and the cities to access current conditions, trends, problems, and needs |
| Educate community leaders, citizens, and builders on the current housing environment, the ramifications this environment is having on the community now and in the future and educate them on various solutions and mitigating measures to prevent a housing crises in the future |
| **Objectives** |
| Provide data trends for all communities in Rabun County and the cities. This needs to be updated on an annual basis |
| Provide support and assistance to the Rabun County Housing Authority |
| Provide support and assistance to the Georgia Mountains RDC's region wide housing and growth initiative |
| Work with the building community to create strategies for increasing the number and availability of low to moderate-income housing |

**TABLE 3-1**

| Rabun County: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 4,788 | 7,883 | 10,210 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 3,706 | 6,118 | 7,681 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 20 | 57 | 143 |
| **Double Units** | 135 | 86 | 87 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 128 | 176 | 546 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 13 | 75 | 61 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 50 | 0 | 29 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 717 | 1,313 | 1,607 |
| **All Other** | 19 | 58 | 49 |

| Rabun County: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 77.4% | 77.6% | 75.2% |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0.4% | 0.7% | 1.4% |
| **Double Units** | 2.8% | 1.1% | 0.9% |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 2.7% | 2.2% | 5.3% |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0.3% | 1.0% | 0.6% |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 1.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| **50 or more Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.1% |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 15.0% | 16.7% | 15.7% |
| **All Other** | 0.4% | 0.7% | 0.5% |

**TABLE 3-2**

| Clayton: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 782 | 853 | 983 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 538 | 514 | 616 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 16 | 9 | 4 |
| **Double Units** | 35 | 39 | 30 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 60 | 151 | 209 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 43 | 19 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 43 | 0 | 12 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 90 | 81 | 93 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 16 | 0 |

| Clayton: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 68.8% | 60.3% | 62.7% |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 2.0% | 1.1% | 0.4% |
| **Double Units** | 4.5% | 4.6% | 3.1% |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 7.7% | 17.7% | 21.3% |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0.0% | 5.0% | 1.9% |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 5.5% | 0.0% | 1.2% |
| **50 or more Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 11.5% | 9.5% | 9.5% |
| **All Other** | 0.0% | 1.9% | 0.0% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-3**

| Dillard: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 97 | 104 | 112 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 85 | 84 | 93 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| **Double Units** | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 9 | 15 | 9 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Dillard: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 87.6% | 80.8% | 83.0% |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0.0% | 1.0% | 0.0% |
| **Double Units** | 0.0% | 1.9% | 5.4% |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 2.1% | 1.9% | 3.6% |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 1.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **50 or more Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 9.3% | 14.4% | 8.0% |
| **All Other** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-4**

| Mountain City: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 325 | 401 | 435 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 244 | 259 | 269 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| **Double Units** | 3 | 6 | 7 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 4 | 0 | 15 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 72 | 134 | 129 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 2 | 5 |

| Mountain City: Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 75.1% | 64.6% | 61.8% |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.6% |
| **Double Units** | 0.9% | 1.5% | 1.6% |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 1.2% | 0.0% | 3.4% |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 0.6% | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| **50 or more Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 22.2% | 33.4% | 29.7% |
| **All Other** | 0.0% | 0.5% | 1.1% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3- 5**

| Sky Valley : Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 31 | 421 | 704 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 26 | 411 | 426 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 2 | 62 |
| **Double Units** | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 0 | 0 | 185 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 1 | 24 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 1 | 0 |

| Sky Valley : Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 83.9% | 97.6% | 60.5% |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0.0% | 0.5% | 8.8% |
| **Double Units** | 0.0% | 0.7% | 0.6% |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 26.3% |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0.0% | 0.2% | 3.4% |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **50 or more Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 16.1% | 0.7% | 0.4% |
| **All Other** | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.0% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-6**

| Tallulah Falls : Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 83 | 85 | 111 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 65 | 80 | 96 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| **Double Units** | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 6 | 5 | 12 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Tallulah Falls : Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 78.3% | 94.1% | 86.5% |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.7% |
| **Double Units** | 6.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 4.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **50 or more Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 7.2% | 5.9% | 10.8% |
| **All Other** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-7**

| Tiger : Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 137 | 146 | 142 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 97 | 97 | 98 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Double Units** | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 30 | 43 | 41 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 1 | 0 |

| Tiger : Types of Housing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 70.8% | 66.4% | 69.0% |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Double Units** | 4.4% | 3.4% | 2.1% |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 2.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **50 or more Units** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 21.9% | 29.5% | 28.9% |
| **All Other** | 0.0% | 0.7% | 0.0% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-8**

| Clayton : Age of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Built 1970 - 1979** | 234 | 232 |
| **Built 1960 - 1969** | 103 | 83 |
| **Built 1950 - 1959** | 97 | 123 |
| **Built 1940 - 1949** | 116 | 52 |
| **Built 1939 or earlier** | 104 | 117 |

**TABLE 3-9**

| Dillard : Age of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Built 1970 - 1979** | 27 | 13 |
| **Built 1960 - 1969** | 20 | 11 |
| **Built 1950 - 1959** | 5 | 11 |
| **Built 1940 - 1949** | 7 | 6 |
| **Built 1939 or earlier** | 25 | 45 |

**TABLE 3-10**

| Mountain City : Age of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Built 1970 - 1979** | 125 | 77 |
| **Built 1960 - 1969** | 54 | 44 |
| **Built 1950 - 1959** | 59 | 35 |
| **Built 1940 - 1949** | 35 | 25 |
| **Built 1939 or earlier** | 48 | 57 |

**TABLE 3-11**

| Sky Valley: Age of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Built 1970 - 1979** | 150 | 175 |
| **Built 1960 - 1969** | 5 | 2 |
| **Built 1950 - 1959** | 4 | 8 |
| **Built 1940 - 1949** | 5 | 8 |
| **Built 1939 or earlier** | 4 | 0 |

**TABLE 3-12**

| Tallulah Falls : Age of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Built 1970 - 1979** | 9 | 5 |
| **Built 1960 - 1969** | 26 | 7 |
| **Built 1950 - 1959** | 24 | 5 |
| **Built 1940 - 1949** | 7 | 0 |
| **Built 1939 or earlier** | 43 | 27 |

**TABLE 3-13**

| Tiger: Age of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Built 1970 - 1979** | 45 | 24 |
| **Built 1960 - 1969** | 43 | 22 |
| **Built 1950 - 1959** | 19 | 16 |
| **Built 1940 - 1949** | 2 | 7 |
| **Built 1939 or earlier** | 40 | 20 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-14**

| Clayton: Condition of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total housing units** | 853 | 983 |
| **Complete Plumbing Facilities** | 847 | 965 |
| **Lacking Plumbing Facilities** | 6 | 18 |
| **Complete kitchen facilities** | 844 | 967 |
| **Lacking complete kitchen facilities** | 9 | 16 |

**TABLE 3-15**

| Dillard : Condition of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total housing units** | 104 | 112 |
| **Complete Plumbing Facilities** | 106 | 105 |
| **Lacking Plumbing Facilities** | 0 | 7 |
| **Complete kitchen facilities** | 106 | 105 |
| **Lacking complete kitchen facilities** | 0 | 7 |

**TABLE 3-16**

| Mountain City : Condition of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total housing units** | 401 | 435 |
| **Complete Plumbing Facilities** | 443 | 430 |
| **Lacking Plumbing Facilities** | 0 | 5 |
| **Complete kitchen facilities** | 443 | 432 |
| **Lacking complete kitchen facilities** | 0 | 3 |

**TABLE 3-17**

| Sky Valley: Condition of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total housing units** | 421 | 704 |
| **Complete Plumbing Facilities** | 377 | 704 |
| **Lacking Plumbing Facilities** | 0 | 0 |
| **Complete kitchen facilities** | 377 | 704 |
| **Lacking complete kitchen facilities** | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 3-18**

| Tallulah Falls : Condition of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total housing units** | 85 | 111 |
| **Complete Plumbing Facilities** | 134 | 109 |
| **Lacking Plumbing Facilities** | 2 | 2 |
| **Complete kitchen facilities** | 134 | 111 |
| **Lacking complete kitchen facilities** | 2 | 0 |

**TABLE 3-19**

| Tiger: Condition of Housing | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total housing units** | 146 | 142 |
| **Complete Plumbing Facilities** | 194 | 139 |
| **Lacking Plumbing Facilities** | 6 | 3 |
| **Complete kitchen facilities** | 194 | 142 |
| **Lacking complete kitchen facilities** | 6 | 0 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-20**

| Clayton : Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 853 | 983 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 180 | 194 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 380 | 462 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 293 | 327 |

**TABLE 3-21**

| Dillard: Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 104 | 112 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 36 | 36 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 57 | 55 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 13 | 21 |

**TABLE 3-22**

| Mountain City : Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 401 | 435 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 109 | 64 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 276 | 300 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 58 | 71 |

**TABLE 3-23**

| Sky Valley : Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 421 | 704 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 298 | 586 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 71 | 113 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 8 | 5 |

**TABLE 3-24**

| Tallulah Falls : Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 85 | 111 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 73 | 31 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 30 | 64 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 33 | 16 |

**TABLE 3-25**

| Tiger : Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 146 | 142 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 87 | 17 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 94 | 104 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 19 | 21 |

**TABLE 3-26**

| Rabun County: Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 7,883 | 10,210 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 3,253 | 3,931 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 3,772 | 4,987 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 858 | 1,292 |

**TABLE 3-27**

| Georgia: Occupancy Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units Built** | 2,638,418 | 3,281,737 |
| **Housing Units Vacant** | 271,803 | 275,368 |
| **Housing Units Owner-occupied** | 1,536,829 | 2,029,293 |
| **Housing Units Renter-occupied** | 829,786 | 977,076 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-28**

| Clayton: Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 62,800 | 96,300 |
| **Median rent** | 297 | 454 |

**TABLE 3-29**

| Dillard: Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 79,500 | 138,900 |
| **Median rent** | 269 | 444 |

**TABLE 3-30**

| Mountain City Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 52,800 | 74,600 |
| **Median rent** | 369 | 477 |

**TABLE 3-31**

| Sky Valley : Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 162,500 | 188,900 |
| **Median rent** | 350 | 542 |

**TABLE 3-32**

| Tallulah Falls : Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 62,100 | 133,900 |
| **Median rent** | 288 | 275 |

**TABLE 3-33**

| Tiger: Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 50,500 | 75,900 |
| **Median rent** | 193 | 663 |

**TABLE 3-34**

| Rabun County: Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 66,100 | 112,400 |
| **Median rent** | 292 | 439 |

**TABLE 3-35**

| Georgia: Housing cost (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Median property value** | 70,700 | 111,200 |
| **Median rent** | 433 | 613 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-36**

| Rabun County: Cost-burdened | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **30% - 49%** | 676 | 576 |
| **50% and greater** | NA | 394 |
| **Not computed** | 130 | 347 |

**TABLE 3-37**

| Clayton : Cost-burdened | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **30% - 49%** | 76 | 104 |
| **50% and greater** | NA | 81 |
| **Not computed** | 16 | 55 |

**TABLE 3-38**

| Dillard : Cost-burdened | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **30% - 49%** | 16 | 5 |
| **50% and greater** | NA | 5 |
| **Not computed** | 0 | 10 |

**TABLE 3-39**

| Mountain City: Cost-burdened | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **30% - 49%** | 43 | 27 |
| **50% and greater** | NA | 37 |
| **Not computed** | 14 | 12 |

**TABLE 3-40**

| Sky Valley : Cost-burdened | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **30% - 49%** | 17 | 6 |
| **50% and greater** | NA | 13 |
| **Not computed** | 6 | 2 |

**TABLE 3-41**

| Tallulah Falls : Cost-burdened | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **30% - 49%** | 25 | 0 |
| **50% and greater** | NA | 9 |
| **Not computed** | 19 | 8 |

**TABLE 3-42**

| Tiger: Cost-burdened | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **30% - 49%** | 13 | 11 |
| **50% and greater** | NA | 13 |
| **Not computed** | 5 | 6 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-43**

| Rabun County: Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 4,630 | 6,279 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 156 | 238 |

**TABLE 3-44**

| Clayton: Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 673 | 789 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 20 | 58 |

**TABLE 3-45**

| Dillard: Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 70 | 76 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 2 | 4 |

**TABLE 3-46**

| Mountain City: Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 334 | 371 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 11 | 15 |

**TABLE 3-47**

| Sky Valley : Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 79 | 118 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 3-48**

| Tallulah Falls : Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 63 | 80 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 0 | 6 |

**TABLE 3-49**

| Tiger: Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 113 | 125 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 6 | 3 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 3-50**

| Georgia: Overcrowding | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total occupied housing units** | 2,366,615 | 3,006,369 |
| **More than 1 person per room** | 95,828 | 145,235 |

**TABLE 3-51**

| Rabun County: Types of Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 4,788 | 6,336 | 7,883 | 9,047 | 10,210 | 11,566 | 12,921 | 14,277 | 15,632 | 16,988 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 3,706 | 4,912 | 6,118 | 6,900 | 7,681 | 8,675 | 9,669 | 10,662 | 11,656 | 12,650 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 20 | 39 | 57 | 100 | 143 | 174 | 205 | 235 | 266 | 297 |
| **Double Units** | 135 | 111 | 86 | 87 | 87 | 75 | 63 | 51 | 39 | 27 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 128 | 152 | 176 | 361 | 546 | 651 | 755 | 860 | 964 | 1,069 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 13 | 44 | 75 | 68 | 61 | 73 | 85 | 97 | 109 | 121 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 50 | 25 | 0 | 15 | 29 | 24 | 19 | 13 | 8 | 3 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 16 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 717 | 1,015 | 1,313 | 1,460 | 1,607 | 1,830 | 2,052 | 2,275 | 2,497 | 2,720 |
| **All Other** | 19 | 39 | 58 | 54 | 49 | 57 | 64 | 72 | 79 | 87 |

**TABLE 3-52**

| Clayton : Types of Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 782 | 818 | 853 | 918 | 983 | 1,033 | 1,084 | 1,134 | 1,184 | 1,234 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 538 | 526 | 514 | 565 | 616 | 636 | 655 | 675 | 694 | 714 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 16 | 13 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Double Units** | 35 | 37 | 39 | 35 | 30 | 29 | 28 | 26 | 25 | 24 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 60 | 106 | 151 | 180 | 209 | 246 | 284 | 321 | 358 | 395 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 22 | 43 | 31 | 19 | 24 | 29 | 33 | 38 | 43 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 43 | 22 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 90 | 86 | 81 | 87 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 95 | 96 | 97 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 8 | 16 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 3-53**

| Dillard : Types of Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 97 | 101 | 104 | 108 | 112 | 116 | 120 | 123 | 127 | 131 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 85 | 85 | 84 | 89 | 93 | 95 | 97 | 99 | 101 | 103 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Double Units** | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 14 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 9 | 12 | 15 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 3-54**

| Mountain City : Types of Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 325 | 363 | 401 | 418 | 435 | 463 | 490 | 518 | 545 | 573 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 244 | 252 | 259 | 264 | 269 | 275 | 282 | 288 | 294 | 300 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 16 |
| **Double Units** | 3 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 4 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 23 | 26 | 29 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 72 | 103 | 134 | 132 | 129 | 143 | 158 | 172 | 186 | 200 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |

**TABLE 3-55**

| Sky Valley : Types of Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 31 | 226 | 421 | 563 | 704 | 872 | 1,041 | 1,209 | 1,377 | 1,545 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 26 | 219 | 411 | 419 | 426 | 526 | 626 | 726 | 826 | 926 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 1 | 2 | 32 | 62 | 78 | 93 | 109 | 124 | 140 |
| **Double Units** | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 93 | 185 | 231 | 278 | 324 | 370 | 416 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 24 | 30 | 36 | 42 | 48 | 54 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

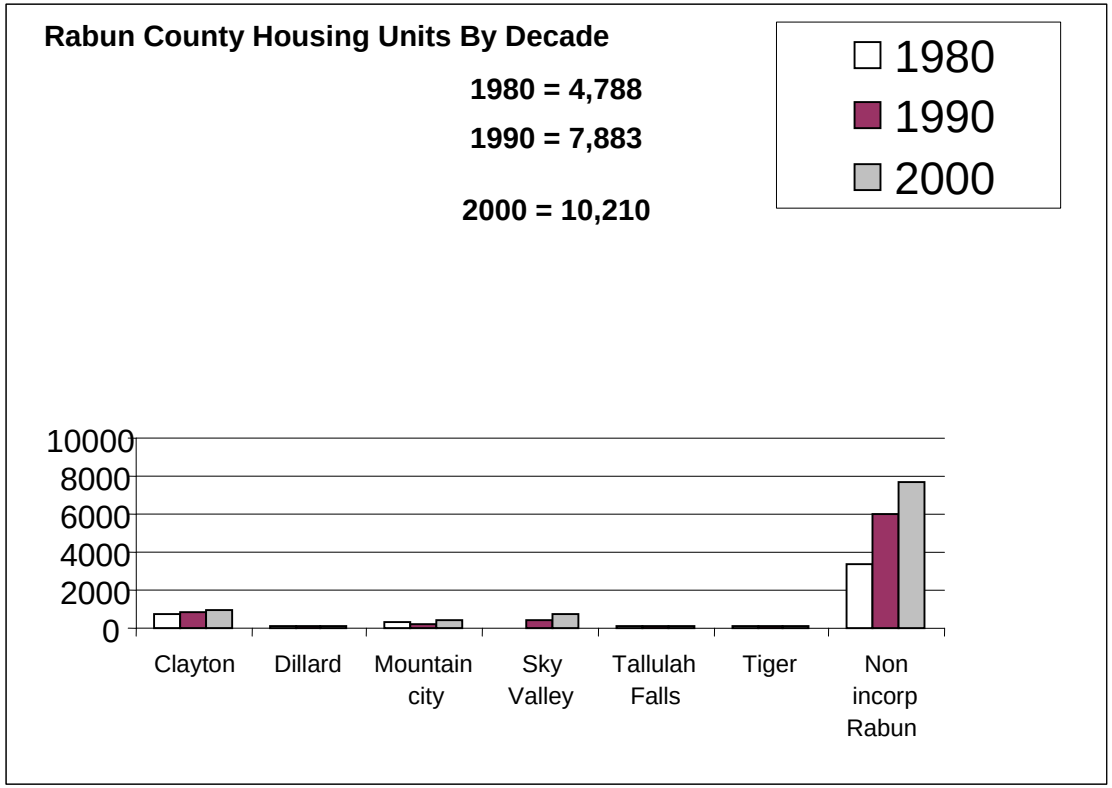
**TABLE 3-56**

| Tallulah Falls: Types of Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 83 | 84 | 85 | 98 | 111 | 118 | 125 | 132 | 139 | 146 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 65 | 73 | 80 | 88 | 96 | 104 | 112 | 119 | 127 | 135 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Double Units** | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 6 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 20 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 3-57**

| Tiger : Types of Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1980** | **1985** | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2005** | **2010** | **2015** | **2020** | **2025** |
| **TOTAL Housing Units** | 137 | 142 | 146 | 144 | 142 | 143 | 145 | 146 | 147 | 148 |
| **Single Units (detached)** | 97 | 97 | 97 | 98 | 98 | 98 | 99 | 99 | 99 | 99 |
| **Single Units (attached)** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Double Units** | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **3 to 9 Units** | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **10 to 19 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **20 to 49 Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **50 or more Units** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mobile Home or Trailer** | 30 | 37 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 44 | 47 | 49 | 52 | 55 |
| **All Other** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE A** Rabun County Housing Units by Type By Decade/ By Type



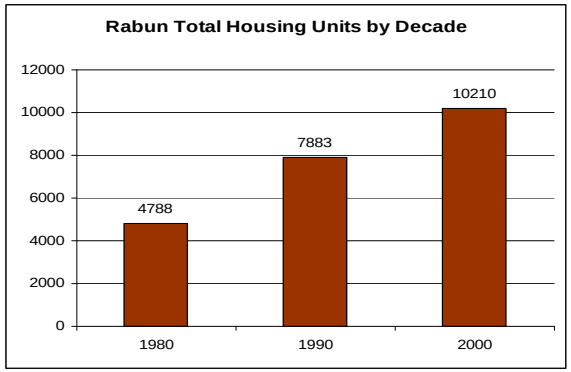
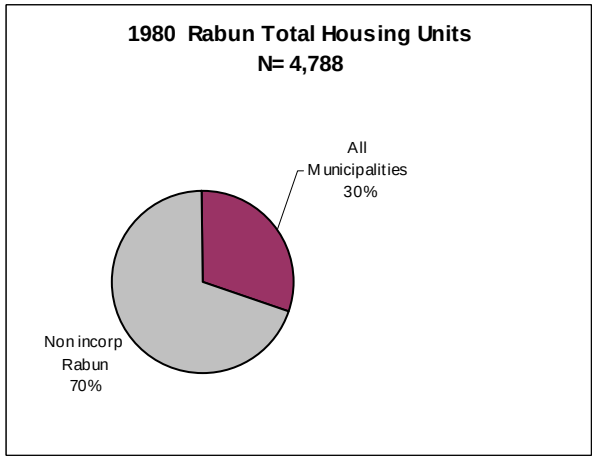
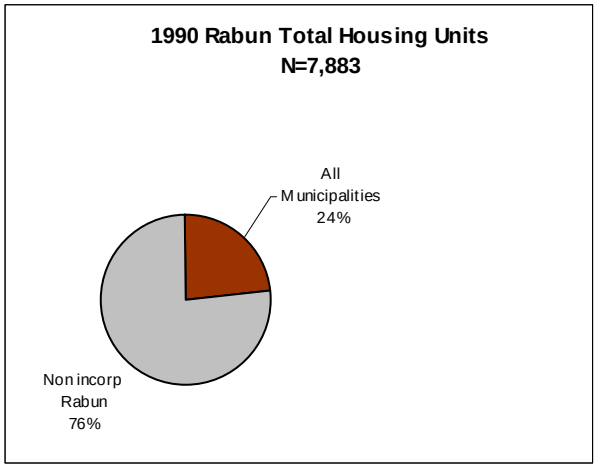
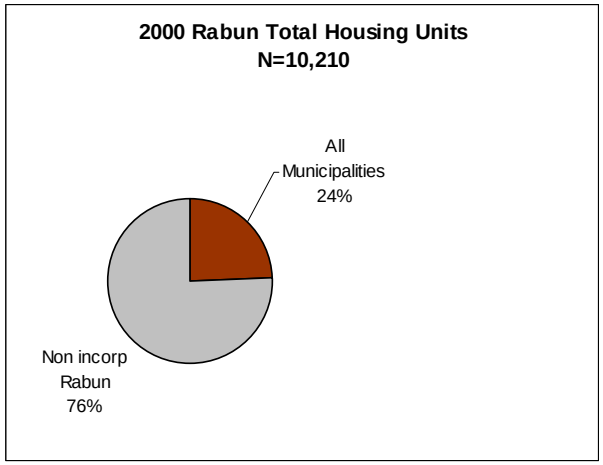



**TABLE B Rabun Housing Comparison of Homes in Municipalities versus Homes in Unincorporated Rabun County**



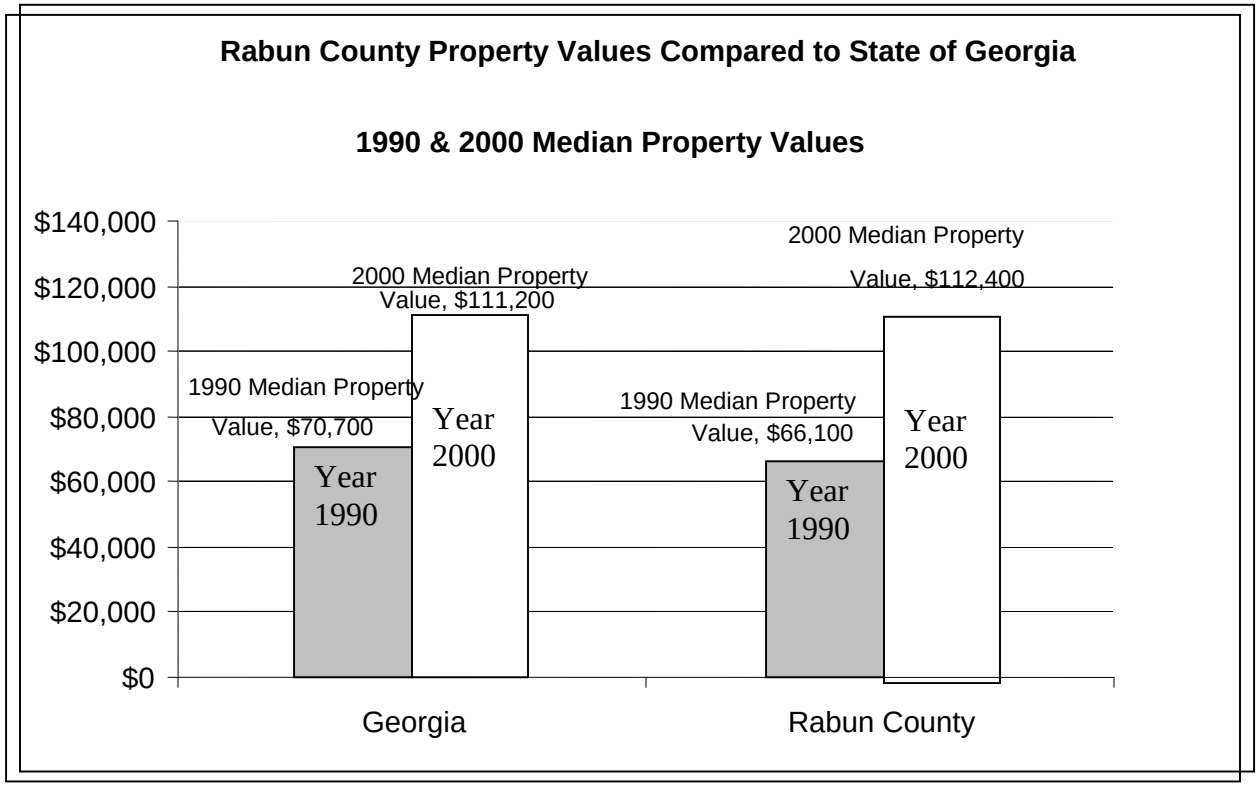




## Rabun County Municipalities

- Clayton
- Dillard
- Mountain City
- Sky Valley
- Tallulah Falls
- Tiger

**TABLE C** Rabun County Property Values Compared to State of Georgia

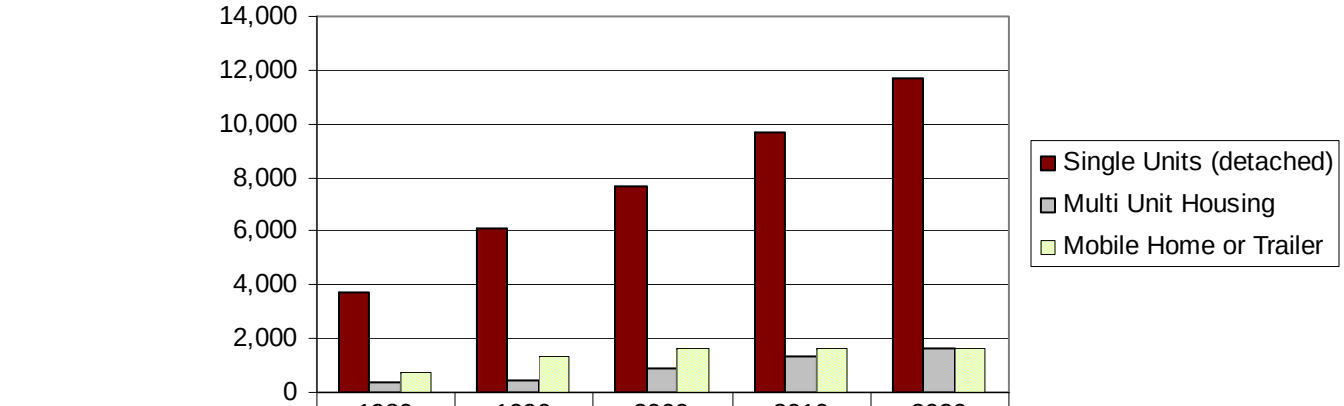



**Median** The median is the score that divides the distribution of the data points into two equal parts so that half the cases are above the median and half are below it.

**The median property values are based on census data. They are mostly assessed values derived from what the person filling out the census form put as the value.**

The median is different from the average (also called mean). Average is obtained by adding up all the scores and dividing by the total number of scores

**TABLE D** Rabun County Housing1980, 1990 and Projections for 2010 and 2020




| | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Single Units (detached) | 3,706 | 6,118 | 7,681 | 9,669 | 11,656 |
| Multi Unit Housing | 365 | 452 | 922 | 1,340 | 1,620 |
| Mobile Home or Trailer | 717 | 1,313 | 1,607 | 1,607 | 1,607 |

The projections on Chard D regarding mobile homes were adjusted by the Housing Subcommittee due to variances limiting mobile homes; the subcommittee did not project growth for mobile homes

Data Source: Georgia Mountains RDC Word Document, Data Based on 2000 Census and Input from housing Subcommittee members

# CHAPTER 4

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The minimum planning standards specify that a comprehensive plan contain an economic development element. This element provides local governments the opportunity to inventory and assess the community economic base, labor force characteristics and local economic development opportunities and resources, to determine economic needs and goals, and to integrate economic development planning with land use, community facilities and other planning considerations.

## *THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT*

By its very nature, economic development is rarely confined to a single jurisdiction. An assessment of economic assets, problems and opportunities should consider the local economy in a regional context, including such factors as the predominant industries in surrounding counties, nearby educational institutions and vocational training programs, proximity to major market areas, access to regional transportation systems, and other regional assets.

## *ECONOMY OF THE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGION*

Rabun County and its municipalities lie within the thirteen county Georgia Mountains Region, which has a total labor force of approximately 216,000 people. The regional unemployment rate in March 2000 was 2.9%, although some counties in the region had lower jobless rates. Approximately 156,600 people were employed within the region in 1989, which means that at least 59,400 people, or 27.5% of the total resident labor force, work outside the Georgia Mountains region. Although these figures indicate that the region is "job short" (less jobs than persons in the work force), joblessness is not a severe problem because of available job opportunities in other regions and a tolerance for longer work-commuting times.

With the exception of Forsyth and Hall Counties, the Georgia Mountains region remains a largely rural area with local economies that have not taken on an urban/suburban, diversified, service-based character.

Manufacturing employment and payroll generally composes one-fourth of the region's economic base. Retail trade and service employment comprise 13% and 35%, respectively, of total regional employment in 2000, while government jobs constituted approximately 14% of total regional employment. Construction jobs are a major contributor to the region, primarily responding to the rapid residential growth in Forsyth and Hall Counties and the second-home market that has boomed in the mountains and around the lakes in the region.

Although statistics generally do not reveal the importance of agriculture, the farming and forestry sectors are quite significant in the regional economy. Poultry production is the largest agricultural sector. Tourism, which is considered to be a combination of retail and service establishments benefiting from visitors to the area, is a major contributor to the regional economy. The attractiveness of the region to tourists is due largely to the existence of vast recreational opportunities provided in the Chattahoochee National Forest, which encompasses about one-fifth of the total land area in the region. Small-scale "cottage industries" such as antique shops and craft stores contribute significantly to the regional economic base, although the impact is difficult to quantify because such establishments usually are family-run without employee payroll records.

***OTHER REGIONAL ECONOMIC INFLUENCES***

Rabun County and its cities are also influenced by the mountain economy of north Georgia outside the Georgia Mountains region. Furthermore, the adjacent counties and cities in North Carolina maintain some significant economic linkages with Rabun County, although these impacts (beyond commuting patterns) are not quantified in this study.

Historically, Rabun County's economy has been dependent upon the manufacturing sector for the bulk of its economic activity. In the past twenty-five years tourism, agriculture and second home development have emerged as primary industries in Rabun County. All commerce must travel via the highway network, and when the widening of U.S. 441 in completed, Rabun County and its municipalities will have increased accessibility to the regional markets to the south and north. This increased accessibility will bring more consumers, those permanent as well as visitors into each community.

***ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS***

***ECONOMIC BASE***

This section of the plan concerns Rabun County's economic base. Economic base refers to the industries that serve those in Rabun County, as well as those outside the county. The main theme of economic base theory is that the economic growth of an area is dependent on outside demand. An area's growth depends on its ability to export goods and services outside its territorial boundary.

The economic base is made up of the export industries in Rabun County. The non-basic or local serving sector is made up of those industries that service Rabun County residents and workers in the basic sector. According to this theory, total employment equals basic sector employment and local serving employment. The theory also explains that both the basic sector and the local serving sector are affected by outside demand. If outside

demand for Rabun County exports of products and services increases, then the basic sector expands. This, in turn, generates an expansion in the local serving industries.

Basic and local serving industries are identified through the use of location quotients, which are measures of the relative specialization of an area. The basic employment of an area is determined by the use of the Location Quotient (LQ) equation:

$$LQ = \frac{\text{(Employment in Industry X in Rabun County/ Total Employment in Rabun County)}}{\text{(Employment in Industry X in Georgia/Total Employment in Georgia)}}$$

Employment by Industry for Rabun County and the State of Georgia are located in Tables 4-1 and 4-2. Using this data the basic employment industries for Rabun County has been determined through use of the Location Quotient equation. The results of these computations are presented in Table 4-3.

Basic employment industries in Rabun County in 1990 included: agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining; construction; manufacturing; arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and foodservices; and, other services. In the year 2000 the only basic employment industries were: construction; manufacturing; and, arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services. Also found in Table 4-3 is the change in the impact of each industry in Rabun County over the past ten years. During this time frame only five of the thirteen employment sectors have strengthened their position in Rabun County.

The ratio of basic employment to local serving employment is called the economic base ratio (EBR). If, in a particular community for every basic worker there are two non-basic workers, the economic base ratio would be 1:2. This means that for every job created in the base economic sectors (or industries), two jobs will be created in the supporting activities of the non-basic sector. On the other hand, if the base ratio is 2:1, then the economic multiplier is three, when basic employment increases by one, a total of three new jobs, including basic and non-basic, will have been created. By multiplying the change in the basic sector by the base multiplier, an estimate of total impact on the regional economy that results from a change in demand of basic goods can be computed.

**TABLE 4-1**
**Rabun County: Employment by Industry**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Employed Civilian Population** | 4,465 | 5,478 | 6,582 |
| **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining** | 120 | 189 | 63 |
| **Construction** | 424 | 660 | 998 |
| **Manufacturing** | 1,673 | 1,372 | 1,558 |
| **Wholesale Trade** | 58 | 65 | 137 |
| **Retail Trade** | 596 | 900 | 754 |
| **Transportation, warehousing, and utilities** | 229 | 218 | 205 |
| **Information** | NA | NA | 77 |
| **Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate** | 187 | 308 | 361 |
| **Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services** | 130 | 216 | 400 |
| **Educational, health and social services** | 666 | 752 | 967 |
| **Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services** | 259 | 62 | 501 |
| **Other Services** | 63 | 501 | 270 |
| **Public Administration** | 60 | 235 | 291 |

**TABLE 4-2**
**Georgia: Employment by Industry**

| Category | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Employed Civilian Population** | NA | 3,090,276 | 3,839,756 |
| **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining** | NA | 82,537 | 53,201 |
| **Construction** | NA | 214,359 | 304,710 |
| **Manufacturing** | NA | 585,423 | 568,830 |
| **Wholesale Trade** | NA | 156,838 | 148,026 |
| **Retail Trade** | NA | 508,861 | 459,548 |
| **Transportation, warehousing, and utilities** | NA | 263,419 | 231,304 |
| **Information** | NA | NA | 135,496 |
| **Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate** | NA | 201,422 | 251,240 |
| **Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services** | NA | 151,096 | 362,414 |
| **Educational, health and social services** | NA | 461,307 | 675,593 |
| **Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services** | NA | 31,911 | 274,437 |
| **Other Services** | NA | 266,053 | 181,829 |
| **Public Administration** | NA | 167,050 | 193,128 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

| TABLE 4-3<br>Location Quotient Analysis: Rabun County | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** | **Sector Change** |
| **Total Employed Civilian Population** | 5,478 | 6,582 | |
| **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining** | 1.292 | 0.691 | - |
| **Construction** | 1.737 | 1.911 | + |
| **Manufacturing** | 1.322 | 1.590 | + |
| **Wholesale Trade** | 0.233 | 0.540 | + |
| **Retail Trade** | 0.998 | 0.956 | - |
| **Transportation, warehousing, and utilities** | 0.447 | 0.517 | + |
| **Information** | N/A | 0.332 | N/A |
| **Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate** | 0.863 | 0.838 | - |
| **Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services** | 0.806 | 0.644 | - |
| **Educational, health and social services** | 0.920 | 0.835 | - |
| **Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services** | 1.096 | 1.065 | - |
| **Other Services** | 1.062 | 0.866 | - |
| **Public Administration** | 0.794 | 0.879 | + |
| **Economic Base Ratio (EBR) = Total Employment/Basic Employment** | 1.97 | 2.15 | |
| **Economic Base Multiplier = EBR + 1** | 2.97 | 3.15 | |

Source: GMRDC, 2005

In 1990, the local economic base multiplier in Rabun County was 1.97. This means that for every one basic job in the county there were almost three (2.97) local serving jobs, and for every one job created in the basic sector nearly three more were created by that job.

Ten years later in 2000, the EBR was 2.15, which places an even greater emphasis on the impact of basic employment in Rabun County. For every job created in the basic employment sectors, the economic basic multiplier suggests that more than three (3.15) jobs will be created in the local serving jobs. One daunting fact is the inverse of this situation where the loss of a job in a basic sector has a tremendous negative impact on the local serving economy.

This data emphasizes the importance of basic employment sectors or industries to Rabun County. It will be useful in the direction of local economic policy and efforts in order to attract and retain these basic sector industries as well as for support industries.

Trends in employment by industry will be presented and analyzed later in this chapter, including the Location Quotient for each industry as well as municipal data.

***MAJOR EMPLOYERS***

The major employers in Rabun County are listed below in Table 4-4. The largest employers in the county are in the manufacturing, hospitality, banking and retail industries. Most of these employers fall into basic industries as identified in the Location Quotient analysis.

**TABLE 4-4**
**Rabun County: Major Employers, 2005**

| Employer | Location | Product | Employees |
|---|---|---|---|
| **AID Corporation** | Clayton | Aircraft Components | 43 |
| **Community Bank and Trust** | Clayton | Full Service Banking | 19 |
| **Dillard House** | Dillard | Resort and Dining | 150 |
| **Georgia Power Company** | Rabun County | Power Utility | 67 |
| **Gap Manufacturing** | Rabun Gap | Precision Fabrication | 26 |
| **Kingwood Golf and Resort** | Rabun County | Golf Club and Resort | 70 |
| **Mountain Heritage Bank** | Clayton | Full Service Banking | 16 |
| **National Textiles** | Rabun Gap | Spinning | 410 |
| **Fruit of the Loom** | Rabun Gap | Apparel Finishing | 920 |
| **Rabun County Bank** | Clayton | Full Service Banking | 57 |
| **Regions Bank** | Clayton, Dillard | Full Service Banking | 45 |
| **Rabun County Government** | Clayton | County Government Services | 150 |
| **Rabun County Hospital** | Clayton | Hospital and Medical Services | 121 |
| **Rabun County School System** | Rabun County | Education | 360 |
| **Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School** | Rabun Gap | Education | 105 |
| **Reeves Ace Hardware** | Clayton | Hardware and Building Supplies | 90 |
| **United Community Bank** | Clayton | Full Service Banking | 33 |
| **United States Forest Service** | Clayton | Forest Management | 35 |
| **Vulcan Materials** | Rabun Gap | Rock Quarry | 18 |
| **Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.** | Clayton | Retail Goods | 280 |
| **Waterfall County Club** | Rabun County | Golf and Country Club | 65 |

Source: Rabun County Chamber of Commerce, 2004.

Rabun County has lost several manufacturers over the past four years. However, there are a few that have continued to remain, Fruit of the Loom and National Textiles, because they have continued to improve and make use of new technology in their respective industry. These two companies meet they desire expressed in the Community Visioning sessions that Rabun County wants to have industries that are high tech (skills and wages) and do not

pollute. In spite of this the county could benefit from a Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP) survey to assist in helping existing industry remain in Rabun County.

One shift seen in the employment climate in Rabun County is that the banking industry is now becoming a major employer in the area with six banks. A few other changes in major employers are the addition of Wal-Mart, a major retailer, as well as the two golf and country club/residential developments, Kingwood and Waterfall.

***PERSONAL INCOME***

Income data for Rabun County, presented in Table 4-5 and 4-6, is reflective of the population. The County has a higher percentage of households who rely on retirement, social security and interest/dividend income that compared to the State of Georgia (Table 4-7). Rabun County also has a higher percentage of households who earn self-employment income as well. These earning most likely come from local businesses who provide services to the retirement population. Conversely, the county has a lower percentage of households who rely on wage and salary income than compared to the remainder to the state. In addition, households relying on public assistance income are a very small percentage of total income in Rabun County. This statistic also reflects the low unemployment rate in Rabun County.

**TABLE 4-5**
**Rabun County: Personal Income by Type (in dollars)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 | % Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total income** | 128,326,752 | 295,793,100 | 130.4 |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 81,272,873 | 178,706,700 | 119.9 |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 1,852,074 | 8,660,400 | 367.6 |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 11,519,882 | 29,947,400 | 160.0 |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 12,751,081 | 28,435,900 | 123.0 |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 12,671,044 | 24,724,900 | 95.1 |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 964,641 | 2,103,600 | 118.1 |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 7,295,157 | 23,214,200 | 218.2 |

**TABLE 4-6**
**Rabun County: Personal Income by Type (in dollars)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total income** | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 63.3% | 60.4% |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 1.4% | 2.9% |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 9.0% | 10.1% |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 9.9% | 9.6% |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 9.9% | 8.4% |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 0.8% | 0.7% |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 5.7% | 7.8% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

**TABLE 4-7**
**State of Georgia: Personal Income by Type (%)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total income** | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 78.5% | 78.2% |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 1.1% | 1.7% |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 6.3% | 5.6% |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 5.6% | 5.3% |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 4.3% | 4.0% |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 0.7% | 0.8% |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 3.4% | 4.6% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

Personal income data for the municipalities in Rabun County are presented in Tables 4-8 through 4-19. There is a stark contrast between households in Dillard and Sky Valley and those in Clayton, Mountain City, Tiger and Tallulah Falls.

Household incomes from the county's two northernmost cities largely come from retirement, social security and interest/dividends. However, Dillard did see a large percentage change in wage and salary income over past ten years based on the number of service-oriented businesses now in the city.

| TABLE 4-8<br>Clayton: Personal Income by Type (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total income** | 18,437,022 | 28,898,500 |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 11,314,469 | 14,953,200 |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 258,795 | 1,856,500 |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 1,543,912 | 1,624,400 |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 2,081,923 | 4,673,600 |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 2,349,624 | 3,675,900 |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 260,160 | 291,200 |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 628,139 | 1,823,700 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

| TABLE 4-9<br>Clayton: Personal Income by Type (%) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total income** | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 61.4% | 51.7% |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 1.4% | 6.4% |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 8.4% | 5.6% |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 11.3% | 16.2% |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 12.7% | 12.7% |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 1.4% | 1.0% |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 3.4% | 6.3% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Personal income earned in the municipalities located in the central and southern portions of the county come more from wages and salaries as well as self-employment income. This is where the economic center of the Rabun County is located and where most businesses for goods and services are located.

| TABLE 4-10<br>Dillard: Personal Income by Type (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total income** | 2,434,720 | 3,626,800 |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 946,654 | 2,231,800 |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 17,952 | 44,400 |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 206,671 | 259,800 |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 435,538 | 199,600 |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 250,606 | 213,900 |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 2,088 | 37,100 |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 575,211 | 640,200 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

| TABLE 4-11<br>Dillard: Personal Income by Type (%) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total income** | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 38.9% | 61.5% |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 0.7% | 1.2% |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 8.5% | 7.2% |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 17.9% | 5.5% |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 10.3% | 5.9% |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 0.1% | 1.0% |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 23.6% | 17.7% |

| TABLE 4-12<br>Mountain City: Personal Income by Type (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total income** | 6,269,349 | 12,473,000 |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 3,961,937 | 9,061,700 |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 93,766 | 402,200 |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 553,165 | 547,400 |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 334,262 | 372,400 |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 798,278 | 1,233,300 |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 82,920 | 162,400 |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 445,021 | 693,600 |

**TABLE 4-13**
**Mountain City: Personal Income by Type (%)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| Total income | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Aggregate wage or salary income for households | 63.2% | 72.7% |
| Aggregate other types of income for households | 1.5% | 3.2% |
| Aggregate self employment income for households | 8.8% | 4.4% |
| Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income | 5.3% | 3.0% |
| Aggregate social security income for households | 12.7% | 9.9% |
| Aggregate public assistance income for households | 1.3% | 1.3% |
| Aggregate retirement income for households | 7.1% | 5.6% |

**TABLE 4-14**
**Sky Valley: Personal Income by Type (in dollars)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| Total income | 3,780,379 | 7,456,600 |
| Aggregate wage or salary income for households | 1,664,013 | 1,795,500 |
| Aggregate other types of income for households | 12,312 | 288,700 |
| Aggregate self employment income for households | 351,543 | 270,300 |
| Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income | 718,643 | 2,719,900 |
| Aggregate social security income for households | 475,888 | 1,102,900 |
| Aggregate public assistance income for households | 24,630 | 4,000 |
| Aggregate retirement income for households | 533,350 | 1,275,300 |

**TABLE 4-15**
**Sky Valley: Personal Income by Type (%)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| Total income | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Aggregate wage or salary income for households | 44.0% | 24.1% |
| Aggregate other types of income for households | 0.3% | 3.9% |
| Aggregate self employment income for households | 9.3% | 3.6% |
| Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income | 19.0% | 36.5% |
| Aggregate social security income for households | 12.6% | 14.8% |
| Aggregate public assistance income for households | 0.7% | 0.1% |
| Aggregate retirement income for households | 14.1% | 17.1% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

**TABLE 4-16**
**Tallulah Falls: Personal Income by Type (in dollars)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total income** | 1,591,770 | 4,744,200 |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 1,219,411 | 2,985,500 |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 3,312 | 228,200 |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 41,000 | 800,000 |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 96,614 | 377,600 |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 161,637 | 237,400 |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 2,736 | 5,700 |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 67,060 | 109,800 |

**TABLE 4-17**
**Tallulah Falls: Personal Income by Type (%)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total income** | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 76.6% | 62.9% |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 0.2% | 4.8% |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 2.6% | 16.9% |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 6.1% | 8.0% |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 10.2% | 5.0% |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 4.2% | 2.3% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

| TABLE 4-18<br>Tiger: Personal Income by Type (in dollars) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total income** | 3,354,026 | 4,415,600 |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 1,982,491 | 2,491,800 |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 24,050 | 167,600 |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 402,700 | 765,300 |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 290,701 | 252,800 |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 388,223 | 519,700 |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 33,876 | 22,800 |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 231,985 | 195,600 |

| TABLE 4-19<br>Tiger: Personal Income by Type (%) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **1990** | **2000** |
| **Total income** | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| **Aggregate wage or salary income for households** | 59.1% | 56.4% |
| **Aggregate other types of income for households** | 0.7% | 3.8% |
| **Aggregate self employment income for households** | 12.0% | 17.3% |
| **Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income** | 8.7% | 5.7% |
| **Aggregate social security income for households** | 11.6% | 11.8% |
| **Aggregate public assistance income for households** | 1.0% | 0.5% |
| **Aggregate retirement income for households** | 6.9% | 4.4% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

***MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS***

Over the past seven years, Rabun County has lost more than 700 jobs in the textile and apparel manufacturing industry. Major manufacturers that left the county (or closed) include: Sara Lee Knits, Don'L, Empire Manufacturing, Gordon Mills, and Lakemont Manufacturing.

Approximately five years ago Wal-Mart opened its doors in Rabun County. It immediately became one of the county's largest employers. However, subsequent years have shown that some local small retail businesses have had to close because they could not compete with the large retailer, thus tempering the local job gain. In addition, retail profits now leave Rabun County rather than remaining in the county.

Much of the job loss in Rabun County has been absorbed by two industries, second home development (construction/sales) and local services.

High-end second home development, as presented in the housing element, dominates the landscape in Rabun County making up almost forty percent of the total housing stock. Two developments, Kingwood and Waterfall, have golf and resort features attached to them. Both of these developments employ 65 to 70 people each as a part of maintaining their activities for residents and visitors.

As the Rabun County population has grown and the second home market has grown the demand for local services has increased. These services include, but are not limited to: entertainment, landscaping and home maintenance, food, recreation, financial, etc,. A strong and increased demand for local services is a trend that is expected to continue as Rabun County continues to be a popular second-home destination.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is currently widening U.S. 441 through Rabun County. The project is expected to be complete within the ten year-horizon of this plan. There are several positive and negative benefits associated with the widening. The positive impacts include the increased accessibility to the metropolitan Atlanta area. Increased accessibility will lower travel time and should make Rabun County more attractive for wholesale and distribution activities. As presented in the population element, almost one million persons live within a fifty-mile radius of Clayton and over 34 million live within a 300-mile radius of the city. Increased accessibility should also increase tourist activity in the county. Increasing volumes of traffic to and through Rabun County has the potential of increasing sales of those businesses located along the corridor.

However, there are some negative impacts to the widening of the highway as well. The actual construction of the project causes major traffic delays and back up which impacts the local tourist activity and local economy. Of

concern as well is the design of the project through parts of Clayton, Mountain City and Dillard where a median is proposed. The width of the project will cause major sections in each town to be taken for right-of-way, thus causing many businesses to close and relocate. This is particularly true for Dillard where most of the existing downtown tourist district is in the path of the widening project. Dillard could face a major economic loss as the project is implemented. It is important for the cities and county to develop a plan of action that will address the negative impacts widening of U.S. 441.

## *SPECIAL ECONOMIC SECTORS*

### Tourism

Gross tax sales in Rabun County have increased annually for the past ten years, with the exception of 1996 when the Olympic Games were held in Atlanta. According to the Georgia Tourism Industry Association Economic Impact Report, in 2002 the tourism industry in Rabun County saw expenditures of almost $30.5 million and generated slightly more than $920,000 in local taxes. In addition, the estimated payroll for employees in tourism related businesses in 2002 was $8.7 million.

Thousands of tourists are attracted to Rabun County year round by the natural beauty, recreational opportunities, cultural activities, and the peaceful and friendly atmosphere. Within Rabun County there are three state parks, five lakes, two rivers and approximately 150,000 acres of National Forest land that provide outstanding leisure, living and recreational opportunities for visitors and residents. There are numerous businesses located throughout Rabun County and its cities that cater to tourist and seasonal residents. Table 4-20 provides data on the frequency of visitors to various attractions in Rabun County

**TABLE 4-20**
**2004 RABUN COUNTY TOURSIST ACTIVITY**

| Location/Activity | Number of Visitors | Number of Inquiries |
|---|---|---|
| Chattooga River | 64,000 | |
| Kingwood Resort | 5,300 | |
| Rabun County Golf Course | 5,500 | |
| State Parks (3) | 429,000 | |
| Rabun County Welcome Center | 32,000 | |
| Letter Inquiries | | 6,400 |
| Telephone Inquiries | | 15,500 |
| Promotional Inquiries | | 21,000 |
| Dillard House Restaurant | 200,000 | |
| U.S. Forest Service – District Office | | |

Source: Rabun County Chamber of Commerce, 2005.

Tourism is an important component to the Rabun County economy and provides more than 1,200 jobs locally the retail, services, agricultural and public sectors. In the document prepared by the Southern Highroads Development Association, *Strategies for Promoting Tourism Development*, the benefits of tourism are describes as follows:

- Tourism brings dollars from outside the local area.
- Tourism is a growth industry.
- Tourism pays taxes and requires few government services.
- Tourism is a renewable resource.
- Tourism is a clean industry.

Tourism is also an industry that is preferred by local residents and is something that they desire to build upon in the future. The community survey identified strong support for business and economic development in Rabun County that is green, clean and environmentally responsible.

Because over 80% of the land in Rabun County is held by public interests, all local governments should work with the U.S. Forest Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and Georgia Power to develop common strategies for promoting tourism. Many of the most popular destinations in Rabun County are located on these public land. Any campaigns or programs to increase tourism in Rabun County should include representative from these interests.

There is great potential for further development of the tourist industry in Rabun County. The recent creation of a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has the potential to significantly increase Rabun County's ability to build and promote tourism in the county and cities. The CVB aims to position Rabun County and its municipalities in the marketplace as a viable destination for meetings, conventions, and tourism. The CVB will foster the increased use of local resources, goods and services in order to stimulate jobs, business and local tax revenues. The CVB can also serve as a coordinating mechanism for all public and private resources that can benefit from tourist activity.

One particular component of the tourist industry in Rabun County is the number of seasonal/summer recreation camps. There are close to two dozen such operations, some of which have operated for more than fifty years. These camps include some of the more traditional camping facilities and programs such as the YMCA/High Harbor on Lake Burton, and the Rainey Mountain Scout Camp used by the Boy Scouts of America and Camp Pinnacle. Other camps include specialty camps and programs such as Rama Dirom, the Hambidge Center, and Fox Fire

and some of the horse camps. There are the recreational vehicle (RV) campgrounds which are dotted around the county. It has been said that many people return to live in Rabun County because they went to camp in Rabun County.

***EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR***

Employment by sector examines the employment opportunities and challenges in Rabun County for workers. The data does not determine if the workforce consists of Rabun County residents. The data, presented in Table 4-1, is only available at the county level and is also compared to the State in Table 4-2.

***SIGNIFICANT TRENDS***

***Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Mining***

Employment in this sector decreased dramatically from 189 persons in 1990 to 63 persons in 2000. In spite of a large local agricultural presence, local employment in this sector dropped to just less than one percent of the labor force in Rabun County. However, the data does not represent migrant seasonal workers used to plant and harvest crops. The reliance on seasonal migrant workers has increased significantly over the past ten years and is reflected in the census data used in this analysis. The location quotient analysis shows that agriculture is no longer a base industry in Rabun County. However, the 2003 Farm Gate Report produced by the Georgia Agricultural Extension Services shows a total value of agricultural products in Rabun County of almost $29 million. Slightly more than 50% of this value is produced in poultry. Vegetable production and ornamental horticulture each garner about 20% of the total value of agricultural products produced in Rabun County. This means that agriculture in Rabun County is thriving and growing. Although the manner in which employment data is collected does not allow it to be presented as such, agriculture is still a base industry in Rabun County.

Finally the community survey identified strong local support for the continuance of agricultural production and activities in Rabun County. Often times, agricultural lands are also ideal for development purposes. In order to protect the industry (and jobs) from residential local governments and agencies may need to develop some policies and programs to protect significant agricultural lands and to promote agricultural practices and products. As long as farmers are making a profit farming activity will remain part of the Rabun County economy.

***Construction***

Employment in construction increased significantly over the past ten years mainly due to the boom in the second-home market. The employment in this economic sector increased by more than 330 persons from 1990 to 2000. Construction continues to be a base industry in Rabun County and is projected to continue this way throughout the horizon of this plan.

***Manufacturing***

Though census data shows an increase in manufacturing jobs from 1990 to 2000, nearly 700 jobs have been lost since. They have mainly occurred in the textile and apparel industry. The census data showed that manufacturing was about 23.5% of the labor force in Rabun County in 2000, but it is now probably between fifteen and twenty percent in 2005. This is a dramatic drop the industry's share of the labor force and a blow to the diversity of the local economy. In spite of the losses, manufacturing is still a strong industry in Rabun County and contributes well to the local economy. It is important that measures are taken to maintain and build the manufacturing sector in the county. The county may need to conduct a BREP survey to truly discern the needs of local manufacturers and to develop policies and actions to keep them operating in Rabun County.

***Retail***

The retail trade employed 754 persons in 2000. This is a 16.2% decrease in the number of employees in the sector over the past decades. There are several contributing factors to the loss of jobs in this sector.

First is the improved access to retail shopping facilities south of Rabun County. U.S. 441 is now a divided four lane highway to Cornelia in Habersham County with improved access to the Gainesville and metropolitan Atlanta area. The reduction in retail trade may also come from the impact of Wal-Mart opening a new store in Rabun County. While the retail chain is a large employer, jobs are lost from local small businesses that cannot compete with such a retail giant. One last thing that may have contributed to the reduction of jobs reported in this sector is that some tourism-related jobs are now being reported as services. It is estimated that about one-half the retail jobs in Rabun County are related to tourist activity.

***Finance, Insurance and Real Estate***

The economic sector reported a modest employment increase from 1990 to 2000. However, the banking industry in Rabun County over the past five years has increased significantly. There are now six banks in the county that employ close to 200 persons. The strong second-home market has kept employment opportunities in real estate

high, though many work in the industry on a part-time basis. As long as Rabun County continues to attract second-home investment and retirees, the real estate sector will continue to be a strong contributor to the diversity of the labor force and local economy.

***Services***

In 2000 the services sector employed 2,138 persons, an increase of almost 40% from the 1990 count. Over the past decade services also increased its share of the total employment in Rabun County from just over 25% in 1990 to 32.5% in 2000. The increase in this sector is following a national and State trend where even the local economy is becoming more service oriented. This occurrence is natural in that the resident population of the county is increasing quickly and is also boosted by the explosive growth seen in seasonal residents. In spite of its growth, according to the location quotient analysis, the service sector is still not a basic serving industry in the county, meaning that the state and other surrounding areas are experiencing stronger growth in the sector and are providing services in Rabun County. It is anticipated that Rabun County will catch up the with State over the next decade in its percentage of service related jobs.

***PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT***

Projected employment data by economic industry for Rabun County is presented in Tables 4-21 and 4-22. Future employment by industry for the State of Georgia is presented in Table 4-23. Tables 4-22 and 4-23 are formatted in percentages for comparison purposes.

The services sector is projected to see the most growth in Rabun County. By the year 2010 service-related jobs should make up over 35% of all jobs and almost 38% by 2025. The sector that will see the most growth is the construction industry. Employment in construction is forecasted to make up about 20% of the total employed population through 2025. This increase is in response the anticipated growth that will occur as the baby-boom generation continues to retire through 2025.

It is difficult to project changes in the information systems management industry. Technological changes are occurring so rapidly that it could become a major industry in the future. However, it is safe to say that employment in the information industry is expected to increase steadily over the next twenty years as is employment in wholesale and FIRE (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate).

The only anticipated job loss is most likely to occur in manufacturing. This follows a national and State trend. Manufacturing employed approximately 23.7% of the Rabun County labor force in 2000. It is expected to make up just less than 15% of the local labor force in 2010 and only about 11% by 2025.

**TABLE 4-21**
**Rabun County: Projected Employment by Industry**

| Category | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Employed Civilian Population** | 6,705 | 7,412 | 8,002 | 8,652 | 9,087 |
| **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining** | 65 | 75 | 80 | 88 | 96 |
| **Construction** | 1,247 | 1,448 | 1,619 | 1,780 | 1,861 |
| **Manufacturing** | 1,040 | 1,091 | 1,070 | 1,055 | 1,003 |
| **Wholesale Trade** | 157 | 177 | 196 | 216 | 236 |
| **Retail Trade** | 794 | 833 | 919 | 960 | 1,005 |
| **Transportation, warehousing, and utilities** | 209 | 220 | 229 | 238 | 245 |
| **Information** | 85 | 104 | 136 | 168 | 207 |
| **Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate** | 405 | 448 | 492 | 595 | 589 |
| **Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services** | 468 | 535 | 603 | 670 | 738 |
| **Educational, health and social services** | 1,042 | 1,118 | 1,193 | 1,268 | 1,343 |
| **Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services** | 562 | 622 | 683 | 743 | 804 |
| **Other Services** | 322 | 374 | 425 | 477 | 529 |
| **Public Administration** | 309 | 327 | 357 | 394 | 431 |

**TABLE 4-22**
**Rabun County: Projected Employment by Industry (%)**

| Category | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Employed Civilian Population** | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining** | 0.97 | 1.01 | 1.0 | 1.02 | 1.06 |
| **Construction** | 18.60 | 19.54 | 20.23 | 20.57 | 20.47 |
| **Manufacturing** | 15.51 | 14.72 | 13.37 | 12.19 | 11.04 |
| **Wholesale Trade** | 2.34 | 2.39 | 2.45 | 2.50 | 2.60 |
| **Retail Trade** | 11.84 | 11.23 | 11.48 | 11.10 | 11.06 |
| **Transportation, warehousing, and utilities** | 3.12 | 2.97 | 2.86 | 2.75 | 2.70 |
| **Information** | 1.27 | 1.40 | 1.70 | 1.94 | 2.28 |
| **Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate** | 6.04 | 6.04 | 6.15 | 6.88 | 6.48 |
| **Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services** | 6.98 | 7.21 | 7.53 | 7.74 | 8.12 |
| **Educational, health and social services** | 15.54 | 15.08 | 14.91 | 14.66 | 14.78 |
| **Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services** | 8.38 | 8.39 | 8.54 | 8.59 | 8.85 |
| **Other Services** | 4.80 | 5.05 | 5.31 | 5.51 | 5.82 |
| **Public Administration** | 4.61 | 4.41 | 4.46 | 4.55 | 4.74 |

**TABLE 4-23**
**Georgia: Projected Employment by Industry (%)**

| Category | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Farm** | 1.24% | 1.11% | 1.00% | 0.90% | 0.82% |
| **Agricultural Services,** | 1.15% | 1.16% | 1.17% | 1.17% | 1.16% |
| **Mining** | 0.18% | 0.17% | 0.17% | 0.16% | 0.15% |
| **Construction** | 6.05% | 5.94% | 5.80% | 5.66% | 5.52% |
| **Manufacturing** | 12.07% | 11.56% | 11.03% | 10.50% | 9.97% |
| **Trans, Comm, & Utilities** | 6.17% | 6.19% | 6.16% | 6.09% | 5.97% |
| **Wholesale Trade** | 5.74% | 5.73% | 5.71% | 5.69% | 5.66% |
| **Retail Trade** | 17.08% | 17.32% | 17.51% | 17.65% | 17.76% |
| **Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate** | 7.05% | 6.98% | 6.91% | 6.83% | 6.76% |
| **Services** | 29.27% | 30.10% | 31.07% | 32.16% | 33.35% |
| **Federal Civilian Government** | 1.76% | 1.63% | 1.53% | 1.43% | 1.35% |
| **Federal Military Government** | 1.82% | 1.71% | 1.61% | 1.51% | 1.42% |
| **State & Local Government** | 10.44% | 10.40% | 10.33% | 10.22% | 10.10% |

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

***WEEKLY WAGES***

Weekly wage data is presented in Table 4-24. This data reveals that wages in Rabun County are significantly lower than State average. Depending on the industry, Rabun County wages are anywhere from 50% to 75% of the State average. Based on data presented in the housing element of this plan, this means that Rabun County could become a place where the working population cannot afford to live.

In 2000 the highest paid industries in Rabun County were transportation and utilities, and manufacturing. The lowest wages in the county were found in agriculture and in the retail trade.

**TABLE 4-24**
**AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES (in dollars $)**

| Employment Sector | 1980 | | 1990 | | 2000 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rabun County | Georgia | Rabun County | Georgia | Rabun County | Georgia |
| **Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries** | N/A | 179 | N/A | 276 | 253 | 389 |
| **Mining** | N/A | 323 | N/A | 589 | N/A | 866 |
| **Construction** | 187 | 264 | 268 | 434 | 402 | 621 |
| **Manufacturing** | 199 | 261 | 342 | 449 | 493 | 683 |
| **Transportation, Utilities** | 316 | 372 | 456 | 603 | 663 | 895 |
| **Wholesale** | 210 | 337 | 380 | 603 | 357 | 932 |
| **Retail** | 148 | 164 | 189 | 236 | 285 | 334 |
| **Services** | 148 | 214 | 277 | 414 | 375 | 612 |
| **Government** | 148 | 287 | 363 | 457 | 426 | 667 |
| **F.I.R.E.** | 233 | 274 | 305 | 543 | 358 | 907 |
| **All Industry** | 180 | 248 | 282 | 425 | 415 | 622 |

Source: Georgia Employment and Wages, Georgia DOL.

***UNEMPLOYMENT***

Rabun County's unemployment rate over the past ten years has improved dramatically as presented in Table 4-25. In 1993 the county had a much higher unemployment rate than surrounding counties, the region and the State of Georgia. However, the trend began to change in 1996 when Rabun County had a comparably lower unemployment rate than surrounding communities and the State. In the year 2000 the unemployment rate in the county was less than two percent. Rabun County compares most closely with Towns County to the west. Both counties have very similar physical and socio-demographic characteristics.

**TABLE 4-25**

| **Georgia** | **1993** | **1994** | **1995** | **1996** | **1997** | **1998** | **1999** | **2000** | **2001** | **2002** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Labor Force | 3467191 | 3577505 | 3617165 | 3738850 | 3904474 | 4014526 | 4078263 | 4173274 | 4131569 | 4292330 |
| Employment | 3265259 | 3391782 | 3440859 | 3566542 | 3727295 | 3845702 | 3916080 | 4018876 | 3966348 | 4071469 |
| Unemployment | 201932 | 185722 | 176306 | 172308 | 177179 | 168824 | 162183 | 154398 | 165221 | 220861 |
| Unemployment Rate | 5.8 | 5.2 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 5.1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| **GA Mtns Region** | **1993** | **1994** | **1995** | **1996** | **1997** | **1998** | **1999** | **2000** | **2001** | **2002** |
| Labor Force | 174978 | 182916 | 188489 | 197101 | 209494 | 219628 | 228568 | 237296 | 241198 | 246820 |
| Employment | 166225 | 175556 | 180815 | 189468 | 201797 | 212749 | 222176 | 231406 | 233463 | 236850 |
| Unemployment | 8753 | 7360 | 7674 | 7633 | 7697 | 6879 | 6392 | 5890 | 7735 | 9970 |
| Unemployment Rate | 5.0 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 3.1 | 2.8 | 2.5 | 3.2 | 4.0 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Habersham County** | **1993** | **1994** | **1995** | **1996** | **1997** | **1998** | **1999** | **2000** | **2001** | **2002** |
| Labor Force | 14339 | 14300 | 14465 | 14600 | 15113 | 15459 | 15753 | 15853 | 15648 | 16168 |
| Employment | 13710 | 13680 | 13876 | 13876 | 14347 | 14851 | 15189 | 15317 | 14945 | 15529 |
| Unemployment | 629 | 620 | 589 | 724 | 766 | 608 | 564 | 536 | 703 | 639 |
| Unemployment Rate | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 3.9 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 4.5 | 4.0 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Rabun County** | **1993** | **1994** | **1995** | **1996** | **1997** | **1998** | **1999** | **2000** | **2001** | **2002** |
| Labor Force | 6078 | 6536 | 6826 | 6765 | 7046 | 7047 | 7270 | 7708 | 7375 | 7566 |
| Employment | 5574 | 6209 | 6538 | 6531 | 6818 | 6852 | 7062 | 7572 | 7169 | 7359 |
| Unemployment | 504 | 327 | 288 | 234 | 228 | 195 | 208 | 136 | 206 | 207 |
| Unemployment Rate | 8.3 | 5.0 | 4.2 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 1.8 | 2.8 | 2.7 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Stephens County** | **1993** | **1994** | **1995** | **1996** | **1997** | **1998** | **1999** | **2000** | **2001** | **2002** |
| Labor Force | 12402 | 12353 | 12492 | 12733 | 12882 | 12639 | 11916 | 11661 | 11530 | 12383 |
| Employment | 11626 | 11737 | 11838 | 11901 | 12155 | 11926 | 11334 | 11233 | 10836 | 11701 |
| Unemployment | 776 | 616 | 654 | 832 | 727 | 713 | 582 | 428 | 694 | 682 |
| Unemployment Rate | 6.3 | 5.0 | 5.2 | 6.5 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 4.9 | 3.7 | 6.0 | 5.5 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Towns County** | **1993** | **1994** | **1995** | **1996** | **1997** | **1998** | **1999** | **2000** | **2001** | **2002** |
| Labor Force | 2749 | 2994 | 3129 | 3457 | 3777 | 3852 | 3961 | 4087 | 3987 | 4562 |
| Employment | 2529 | 2849 | 3000 | 3258 | 3403 | 3667 | 3801 | 3939 | 3881 | 4443 |
| Unemployment | 220 | 145 | 129 | 199 | 374 | 185 | 160 | 148 | 106 | 119 |
| Unemployment Rate | 8.0 | 4.8 | 4.1 | 5.8 | 9.9 | 4.8 | 4.0 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 2.6 |

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 1993-2002.

***LABOR FORCE ANALYSIS***

***LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION***

Data for labor force participation for 1990 and 2000 in Rabun County, all municipalities and the State is presented in Tables 4-26 through 4-33. The data included all males and females age 16 and older. The Rabun County labor force increased by almost 20% over the past decade to 6,927 persons. In 2000 approximately 57.4% of the labor force in the county were males. This is a slight increase from 1990, which was 53.6%.

The female's participation rate in the labor force decreased over the past decade from 46.4% in 1990 to 42.6% in 2000. This is significant because in most communities the female participation rate in the labor force is increasing due to the need for two-income households. The most likely reason for the decrease in the rate is due to the increase in the number of females in Rabun County that are in the older and retired age groups. These persons are counted, but do not participate in the labor force.

**TABLE 4-26**
**Rabun County: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 9,460 | 12,157 |
| **In labor force:** | 5,819 | 6,927 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 5,809 | 6,924 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 5,478 | 6,582 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 331 | 342 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 10 | 3 |
| **Not in labor force** | 3,641 | 5,230 |
| **Total Males** | 4,490 | 5,942 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 3,124 | 3,977 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 3,114 | 3,974 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 2,988 | 3,775 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 126 | 199 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 10 | 3 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 1,366 | 1,965 |
| **Total Females** | 4,970 | 6,215 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 2,695 | 2,950 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 2,695 | 2,950 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 2,490 | 2,807 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 205 | 143 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 2,275 | 3,265 |

The labor force in Clayton grew by almost 11% from 1990 to 2000. Roughly 60% of the labor force is made up of males. This too is an increase over the past decade. What is also significant is that the unemployment rate in 2000 in Clayton was 11.6%. This rate was much higher than the county in 2000.

**TABLE 4-27**
**Clayton: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 1,353 | 1,543 |
| **In labor force:** | 685 | 759 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 685 | 759 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 655 | 671 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 30 | 88 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Not in labor force** | 668 | 784 |
| **Total Males** | 602 | 727 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 372 | 452 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 372 | 452 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 360 | 392 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 12 | 60 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 230 | 275 |
| **Total Females** | 751 | 816 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 313 | 307 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 313 | 307 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 295 | 279 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 18 | 28 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 438 | 509 |

The labor force in Dillard increased by 14 persons from 1990 to 2000. Male participation increased by 18 persons, while female participation deceased by four. Only three persons were unemployed in Dillard in 2000.

**TABLE 4-28**
**Dillard: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 156 | 170 |
| **In labor force:** | 89 | 100 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 89 | 100 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 89 | 97 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 0 | 3 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Not in labor force** | 67 | 70 |
| **Total Males** | 60 | 78 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 44 | 59 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 44 | 59 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 44 | 56 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 0 | 3 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 16 | 19 |
| **Total Females** | 96 | 92 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 45 | 41 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 45 | 41 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 45 | 41 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 51 | 51 |

The labor force in Mountain City increased by about 18.5% during the past ten years. However, the male participation in the labor force deceased from over 55% in 1990 to 49.2% in 2000. Female participation is now slightly over 50%. Based on the lower household incomes in Mountain City females are entering the labor market to help make financial ends meet. This is the opposite of what has been experienced in the county and other cities.

**TABLE 4-29**
**Mountain City: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 639 | 650 |
| **In labor force:** | 339 | 402 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 339 | 402 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 319 | 395 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 20 | 7 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Not in labor force** | 300 | 248 |
| **Total Males** | 301 | 285 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 188 | 198 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 188 | 198 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 174 | 194 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 14 | 4 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 113 | 87 |
| **Total Females** | 338 | 365 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 151 | 204 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 151 | 204 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 145 | 201 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 6 | 3 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 187 | 161 |

The labor force in Sky Valley actually decreased from 1990 to 2000 by six people. The data truly reflects the fact that the city is a retirement and second home-community.

**TABLE 4-30**
**Sky Valley: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 172 | 210 |
| **In labor force:** | 64 | 58 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 64 | 58 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 55 | 55 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 9 | 3 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Not in labor force** | 108 | 152 |
| **Total Males** | 87 | 95 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 40 | 42 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 40 | 42 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 37 | 39 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 3 | 3 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 47 | 53 |
| **Total Females** | 85 | 115 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 24 | 16 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 24 | 16 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 18 | 16 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 6 | 0 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 61 | 99 |

Labor force participation for Tallulah Falls shows that there was an increase by 18 persons during the last ten years. This was made up from males entering the labor force as the number and percentage of females decreased by seven persons. There were no persons unemployed in 2000 in Tallulah Falls.

**TABLE 4-31**
**Tallulah Falls: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 105 | 152 |
| **In labor force:** | 67 | 85 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 67 | 85 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 67 | 85 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 0 | 0 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Not in labor force** | 38 | 67 |
| **Total Males** | 45 | 81 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 30 | 55 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 30 | 55 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 30 | 55 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 0 | 0 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 15 | 26 |
| **Total Females** | 60 | 71 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 37 | 30 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 37 | 30 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 37 | 30 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 23 | 41 |

People participating in the labor force in Tiger actually decreased over the past ten years. This is mainly attributed to the number of females leaving the labor force who are living in the town. Most are women who are older and are retired or who cannot work.

**TABLE 4-32**
**Tiger: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 273 | 240 |
| **In labor force:** | 146 | 125 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 146 | 125 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 144 | 117 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 2 | 8 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Not in labor force** | 127 | 115 |
| **Total Males** | 132 | 119 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 68 | 67 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 68 | 67 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 68 | 64 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 0 | 3 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 64 | 52 |
| **Total Females** | 141 | 121 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 78 | 58 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 78 | 58 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 76 | 53 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 2 | 5 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 0 | 0 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 63 | 63 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The labor force in the State of Georgia increased by over 23% from 1990 to 2000. However, the female participation rate in the labor force increased by almost 24% during the past decade, while the male participation rate increase by just over 22%. Overall in the State of Georgia more women are entering the labor force. This is because women continue to become better educated and because of the need for two income-households in current economic climate.

**TABLE 4-33**
**Georgia: Labor Force Participation**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Males and Females** | 4,938,381 | 6,250,687 |
| **In labor force:** | 3,351,513 | 4,129,666 |
| **Civilian Labor force** | 3,278,378 | 4,062,808 |
| **Civilian Employed** | 3,090,276 | 3,839,756 |
| **Civilian unemployed** | 188,102 | 223,052 |
| **In Armed Forces** | 73,135 | 66,858 |
| **Not in labor force** | 1,586,868 | 2,121,021 |
| **Total Males** | 2,353,659 | 3,032,442 |
| **Male In labor force:** | 1,804,052 | 2,217,015 |
| **Male Civilian Labor force** | 1,738,488 | 2,159,175 |
| **Male Civilian Employed** | 1,648,895 | 2,051,523 |
| **Male Civilian unemployed** | 89,593 | 107,652 |
| **Male In Armed Forces** | 65,564 | 57,840 |
| **Male Not in labor force** | 549,607 | 815,427 |
| **Total Females** | 2,584,722 | 3,218,245 |
| **Female In labor force:** | 1,547,461 | 1,912,651 |
| **Female Civilian Labor force** | 1,539,890 | 1,903,633 |
| **Female Civilian Employed** | 1,441,381 | 1,788,233 |
| **Female Civilian unemployed** | 98,509 | 115,400 |
| **Female In Armed Forces** | 7,571 | 9,018 |
| **Female Not in labor force** | 1,037,261 | 1,305,594 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

***EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION***

Employment by occupation data is presented in Tables 4-34 and 4-35. In 1990, the majority of jobs in Rabun County were in the sales and office occupations and were closely followed by the production, transportation and material moving occupations. These two occupational categories made up for about one-half of all the occupations in Rabun County. In 2000, occupations have become more diversified where four of the six occupational categories show 20% more of the occupations in the county. Management and professional occupations have increased from 16.4% of the total in 1990 to 22.25 in the year 2000. Construction, maintenance and extraction occupations have increased to more than 20% in the recent decade as well. Both sales/office occupations and production have decreased during the past ten years.

**TABLE 4-34**
**Rabun County: Employment by Occupation (%)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL All Occupations** | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Management, professional and related occupations** | 16.4% | 22.2% |
| **Service occupations** | 13.9% | 13.6% |
| **Sales and office occupations** | 25.4% | 20.8% |
| **Farm, fishing and forestry occupations** | 2.7% | 0.5% |
| **Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations** | 17.3% | 20.2% |
| **Production, transportation and material moving occupations** | 24.0% | 22.8% |

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE 4-35**
**State of Georgia: Employment by Occupation (%)**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **TOTAL All Occupations** | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| **Management, professional and related occupations** | 24.7% | 32.7% |
| **Service occupations** | 11.5% | 13.4% |
| **Sales and office occupations** | 31.9% | 26.8% |
| **Farm, fishing and forestry occupations** | 2.2% | 0.6% |
| **Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations** | 9.0% | 10.8% |
| **Production, transportation and material moving occupations** | 20.4% | 15.7% |

Source: U.S. Census

When compared to the State, occupations in Rabun County are more evenly distributed. In 2000, nearly one third of all occupations in the state are management, professional and related occupations. Rabun County still has a higher percentage of persons in production and material moving as compared to the state and nearly twice the percentage of occupations in construction, extraction and maintenance.

***COMMUTING PATTERNS***

Commuting patterns are presented for all local governments in Rabun County are presented in Tables 4-36 through 4-42. The data shows that just over 17% of the labor force in Rabun County commutes to another county (or state) for employment. This rate is the lowest in the Georgia Mountains Region where some counties have close the 60% of the local labor force commuting to other areas for work. The low rate in Rabun County basically says that people working in the county live in the county as well.

**TABLE 4-36**
**Rabun County: Labor Force by County**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | 11,648 | 15,050 |
| **Worked in State of residence** | 5,179 | 6,031 |
| **Worked in county of residence** | 4,591 | 5,265 |
| **Worked outside of county of residence** | 588 | 766 |
| **Worked outside of state of residence** | 218 | 398 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF1)

In Clayton less than one-half of the labor force actually works in the city. They most likely travel to a job in the county. Data for the remaining cities in Rabun County are presented in the following tables. It is interesting to note that none of the cities report persons working outside the state, even though Rabun County borders North Carolina and South Carolina. Almost all of the workers in Mountain City (92.1%) travel outside the city limits to their place of employment.

**TABLE 4-37**
**Clayton: Labor Force by Place of Work**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | 1,613 | 2,019 |
| **Worked in State of residence** | 635 | 671 |
| **Worked in place of residence** | 289 | 273 |
| **Worked outside of place of residence** | 346 | 398 |
| **Worked outside of state of residence** | 0 | 0 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF1)

**TABLE 4-38**
**Dillard: Labor Force by Place of Work**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | 199 | 198 |
| **Worked in State of residence** | 86 | 94 |
| **Worked in place of residence** | 51 | 45 |
| **Worked outside of place of residence** | 35 | 49 |
| **Worked outside of state of residence** | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 4-39**
**Mountain City: Labor Force by Place of Work**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | 784 | 829 |
| **Worked in State of residence** | 314 | 380 |
| **Worked in place of residence** | 39 | 30 |
| **Worked outside of place of residence** | 275 | 350 |
| **Worked outside of state of residence** | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 4-40**
**Sky Valley: Labor Force by Place of Work**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | 187 | 221 |
| **Worked in State of residence** | 55 | 54 |
| **Worked in place of residence** | 10 | 13 |
| **Worked outside of place of residence** | 45 | 41 |
| **Worked outside of state of residence** | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 4-41**
**Tallulah Falls: Labor Force by Place of Work**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | 147 | 164 |
| **Worked in State of residence** | 62 | 78 |
| **Worked in place of residence** | 24 | 6 |
| **Worked outside of place of residence** | 38 | 72 |
| **Worked outside of state of residence** | 0 | 0 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF1)

**TABLE 4-42**
**Tiger: Labor Force by Place of Work**

| Category | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|
| **Total population** | 301 | 316 |
| **Worked in State of residence** | 144 | 117 |
| **Worked in place of residence** | 17 | 10 |
| **Worked outside of place of residence** | 127 | 107 |
| **Worked outside of state of residence** | 0 | 0 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF1)

## *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES*

### *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES*

The Rabun County Economic Development Authority was formed to promote and develop industry in Rabun County. A local county or city government is permitted to support its Development Authority by dedicating the proceeds of an advalorem tax to the Authority (up to 1 mill for counties and up to 3 mills for cities). Other support can include proceeds from a local hotel-motel tax and/or providing the Development Authority with property to be used for a proper public purpose. Some of this support may be "passed-through" indirectly to a project. The Economic Development Authority also has the capacity to issue bonds. The Economic Development Authority has been responsible for the development of the Business/Technology Park at Boggs Mountain Road and U.S. 441.

The Rabun County Chamber of Commerce is a membership supported economic development and community action agency which serves the business community of Rabun County. The Chamber's outreach programs and efforts include: economic development, small business assistance, community affairs, tourism and community leadership and involvement. The Chamber sponsors events and programs designed for economic development. The Chamber of Commerce is a private organization which represents its members. The Rabun County Convention & Visitors Bureau (RCCVB) is a new (2005) organization dedicated to the promotion of tourism in Rabun County. The RCCVB is funded from the county's and cities' Hotel/Motel taxes and private donations.

Regional planning and development functions for a 13-county area are provided by the staff of the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center at Gainesville, which provides regional planning and extensive assistance and guidance to local governments, including economic development and grant writing and administration.

The U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) includes Rabun County among its AREA DISTRESS listings as being eligible for Grants up to 50% of a project due to low Per Capita Income. An additional 10% is allowed because we are served by the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, giving a total of 60%.

The University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Gainesville and Athens offices offers professional consultants to provide management and technical assistance to business owners and prospective entrepreneurs. Consultants regularly visit and assist companies on-site. Help can include financial analysis, market strategy creation, procurement assistance and export assistance and business plan development.

North Georgia Technical College maintains a close relationship with the business and industrial community to keep in step with the latest operating equipment and the skills needed to meet the requirements of each industry.

***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND TRAINING***

"Quick Start", Georgia's program to aid new industries and train their employees, is administered in the area by North Georgia Technical College. The main campus is located in Clarkesville and a new campus is opening up in Stephens County.

Under this program, the State of Georgia pays for screening, hiring, and training of workers, using curricula developed jointly by "Quick Start" specialists and the new or expanding industry. Workers may be trained on equipment owned by the State, or on special equipment loaned by the industry, either for in-depth pre-employment training in a skill, or in short courses designed to help workers upgrade skills and acquire new skills.

"Quick Start" will provide staff members to visit a company to prepare a training program for a new plant in Rabun County. Together a company and the Quick Start staff will get a plant in production faster.

The Private Industry Council (PIC) is controlled locally by an area-wide Board of Directors. An On-The-Job (OJT) training program is available to Rabun County employers under the Federally-funded Job Training Partnership Act.

The PIC program is designed to provide skills to those who lack them and allow local employers to train new employees in their method of operation with an overall goal of retaining the trainee as a productive employee after training is completed. The employer selects as many trainees as needed from those qualified and sent by the PIC office. The employer retains the final hiring and dismissal authority. The employer's customary personnel policies apply allow to employees being trained under the PIC program as they do to other employees. The employer is reimbursed for as much as 50% of the hourly rate of the trainee during the training period.

The Vocational (Career) Department serving Rabun County High School offers a variety of programs that serve students.

Rabun County residents are fortunate to have several institutions of higher education within an hours drive located in three states (Table 4-43). Each of these institutions provides a variety of degrees and certificates allowing local students an opportunity to increase their skills and level of education. North Georgia Technical College will conduct courses and classes in the local community if levels of enrollment are high enough.

**TABLE 4-43**
**POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS**
**IN THE RABUN COUNTY AREA**

| INSTITUTION | LOCATION | DISTANCE FROM CLAYTON |
|---|---|---|
| North Georgia Technical College | Clarkesville, Blairsville, Toccoa | 29, 58 and 30 miles |
| Piedmont College | Demorest | 33 miles |
| Young Harris College | Young Harris | 38 miles |
| Truett-McConnell College | Cleveland | 43 miles |
| Clemson University | Clemson, SC | 45 miles |
| Western Carolina University | Cullowee, NC | 45 miles |
| Brenau College | Gainesville | 56 miles |
| Gainesville State College | Oakwood | 64 miles |
| Lanier Technical College | Oakwood | 64 miles |

Source: GMRDC, 2005

**SUMMARY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- Though manufacturing has experienced recent significant losses in the textile sector, it is still a very strong industry in Rabun County and is still a basic serving industry. Fruit of the Loom and National Textiles are both companies that have invested in upgrades and technology in order to stay competitive in the world marketplace. It is very important that the Chamber, Development Authority and all local governments work with all the manufacturers in the county (large and small) to determine what their needs are in order for them to remain in Rabun County. The proposed Business Retention and Expansion Process (BREP) could be conducted to determine local manufacturing needs.
- Information and technology are becoming increasingly important in the workplace. One of the major problems in Rabun County is the lack of broadband technology and services that could increase productivity and competitiveness for existing industry and assist in the marketing and recruitment of new industry and business. While broadband should be made available across the whole county, the service should be particularly targeted for the business and technology park, where wireless access for research and information management and transfer will be a requirement and for the City of Clayton, the business hub of the county.
- Construction and development should continue to play an important role in the local economy. The second-home market should stay strong through the horizon of this plan (ten years) as the last of the baby-boom generation retires around the year 2025. As these people retire they will seek homes for recreation and retirement. Rabun County offers a great deal of beauty and quality of life that will continue to attract retirees who will need living quarters and places to shop.
- As the population in the county grows, the service sector will continue to grow and dominate the employment in Rabun County. Most of these services will focus around the retired population and their particular needs. Specific types of services that should stand out are medical and rehabilitation services, food services, entertainment, and financial services.
- The banking industry is becoming a major employer and player in the local economy. The county now has six different banks that employ more than 200 persons. Many of these banks exist locally due to the growth in the retirement population. It will be important for these institutions to recognize that the service population is growing as well. This segment of the population has needs for housing and for business and could translate into additional local growth in their industry.

- Tourism and recreation continues to play a major role in the local economy. Hundreds of thousands of visitors travel to and through Rabun County each year. The Chamber and Economic Development Authority estimate that 30-40% of taxable sales in Rabun County are tourist related. It has also been calculated that tourism provides about 1,200 jobs locally. Some of the major contributors to the recreation and tourism sector include the U.S. Forest Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and Georgia Power. Over 70% of all the land in Rabun County is held and managed by these three agencies. Each provide a variety of recreation opportunities for visitors and residents. It will be important for the local governments to coordinate with these agencies on the development, implementation and promotion of recreation and tourism activities. The creation of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) will help in the marketing of local tourism resources and programs, such as all the summer camps and campgrounds in Rabun County. The CVB will also be charged in the development of new markets and new recreation/tourism products/convention or educational programs. One area of the county that is relatively undeveloped for tourist accommodation services is in the Tallulah Falls area. While there is not the infrastructure for large hotels to be located in the community, the market for Bed and Breakfast type facilities exists and should be developed.
- The widening of US 441 should improve accessibility to Rabun County as well as improved movement through the county. However, the widening is disruptive during construction and will also displace several businesses that are located along the highway that rely on visitor traffic. Dillard and Mountain City are most likely to receive the largest negative impact from the displacement of businesses and loss of parking. It is important that all local governments, the Chamber, Economic Development Authority and the newly created CVB develop a plan of action to mitigate the negative circumstances that will be generated by the widening project.
- Agriculture is an important industry in the local economy. The latest estimated value of agricultural products produced in Rabun County is about $29 million. While about one-half is related to poultry production, vegetable and ornamental horticulture industries are rapidly growing in Rabun County and account for about 40% of the total Farm Gate Value. Rabun County are benefiting from an informal network of seasonal produce markets, wineries and plant nurseries. While these activities are growing

other parts of agriculture face tremendous pressures to convert the value of the land to development. This scenario will likely happen unless some type of plan at the local government level that will encourage and assist farmers in keeping their land agricultural practices.

- Unemployment in Rabun County is currently much lower than the State and most surrounding counties. However, average weekly wages in the county are much lower than the State average. This could create a problem for the working population in Rabun County, especially as land and housing values increase. All local agencies need to plan for and recruit industries that provide higher wages for workers. In addition, there need to be programs and training available to ensure that a skilled labor force is available for industry. North Georgia Technical College has the Quick Start Program and will also come into a community and provide curriculum courses if the local demand is high enough.
- Local infrastructure management should be key to the expansion and growth of the local economy. This includes water, waste water, roads, natural gas, electricity, and information technology. Infrastructure development and management should be coordinated with all appropriate local agencies and department.
- One of the enduring characteristics of Rabun County is its "small-town charm." This was identified in the Visioning sessions and is a frequent statement from tourists as heard by our merchants. Maintaining and enhancing that small-town experience is important to the development of tourism in Rabun County. The critical areas for this are Downtown Clayton and Dillard. Downtown Clayton, as the County Seat and the center of the County is the most critical of the two. While the mixture and quality of shops has remained attractive, the streetscape and storefronts have weakened and deteriorated over the years and would benefit from renovation. This renovation and enhancement should be a priority.

***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: POLICIES, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS***

The purpose of this section is three-fold: 1) to draw from the inventory and analysis and develop policy statements for communities, 2) to develop specific actions to pursue those policies, and, 3) to create subsequent implementation strategies which are designed to provide a work program for achieving objectives and actions. Responsibilities for each objective and action item should be agreed to by the involved organizations

**Objective: Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for economic development in Rabun County.**

With a comprehensive and clearly defined strategic plan, the county can move proactively to attract and encourage new businesses and to assist existing businesses to expand and flourish. The county can maximize the return it receives for the dollars it invests in economic development.

**Action:** Complete the Entrepreneur and Small Business Development Program with the State Department of Economic Development and present the results to the County, cities, Rabun County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) and Economic Development Authority (EDA).

**Action:** Develop inventory of tourism "products" in Rabun County along with the State Department of Economic Development. Develop tourism focus.

**Action:** Work with appropriate organizations to develop a strategic plan and a five-year plan of action.

**Action:** Develop metric to be used to measure progress and establish reporting system.

**Action:** Develop "brand" Rabun County. Review/revise logo and slogan to reflect new direction/focus.

**Action:** Establish a website that is technologically up to date and is functional for all three economic organizations. This is a critical investment that must be made.

**Action:** Develop a close working relationship with the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

**Objective: Expand and diversify the industrial base of Rabun County.**

Rabun County and the cities have a variety of economic development tools available to expand the variety and number of its businesses and industries. Sometimes overlooked in this process are small businesses (under 50 employees), which make up over 80% of all business start-ups in the United States.

**Action:** Develop a consistent and appropriate incentives package to offer prospective business and industries.

**Action:** Support existing and anticipated technical and adult educational opportunities and expansions for Rabun County.

**Action:** Maintain and update a list of available industrial sites within Rabun County with key information and pictures. Maintain and update list with pictures on website.

**Action:** Update profile of Rabun County with 2000 census data to reflect changing trends in the county.

**Action:** Develop the proposed Business and Technology Park to attract high technology industries and distribution activities (if strategy determines this is appropriate).

**Action:** Develop specific incentives to encourage businesses that are environmentally responsible to locate in Rabun County.

**Objective: Promote Rabun County as an ideal location for business and industrial development through aggressive marketing strategies.**

**Action:** Develop a target industry plan for marketing Rabun County and its cities to business and industry.

**Action:** Develop an aggressive marketing plan for statewide distribution.

**Action:** Evaluate dedicating specific millage from the county budget for funding economic development. Currently, state law allows up to one mil to be dedicated for economic development (Rabun County currently invests less than 1/10$^{th}$ of a mil for this activity.

**Action:** Assess the use of SPLOST funds for economic development.

**Objective: Develop retention and expansion programs that aim at assisting existing business to remain and, if possible, to expand.**

**Action:** Support, publicize and recognize outstanding efforts of existing business.

**Action:** (Chamber, Development Authority) Undertake a Business Retention and Expansion Process (BREP) to survey existing industries.

**Action:** (Chamber, Development Authority) Develop a retention assistance plan for existing business and industries. This plan should include appropriate incentives for expanding businesses

**Objective: Encourage the expansion of high-speed Internet bandwidth service to key businesses and business areas in the county.**

**Action:** Work with appropriate telecom entities and state agencies to rapidly implement technology improvements.

**Action:** Investigate the feasibility of installing wi-fi or wi-max in Downtown Clayton.

**Policy: Protect and enhance the Rabun County market area for retail trade.**

**Action:** Develop a market study to determine fully the extent of the Rabun County market area, and to identify what segments are being diverted to larger markets.

**Action:** Encourage local retailers to develop common promotional activities to expand retail trade and market power.

**Action:** Coordinate a merchant/small business educational program with North Georgia Technical Institute and the Extension offices from the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech.

**Action:** Develop a local business technical assistance program through the UGA SBDC and SCORE.

**Objective: To increase the number of visitors and seasonal residents to Rabun County and Cities.**

**Action:** Work with Georgia Power and the U.S. Forest Service to promote off-season recreational activities such as winter white water sports, and indoor/outdoor educational programs to extend the tourist season.

**Action:** Continue to utilize resources made available by the State of Georgia, Georgia Power, and the Forest Service to promote Rabun County and its cities as a tourist destination.

**Action:** Continue to work on goals identified by Southern Highroads Development Association, especially the Southern Highroads Scenic loop.

**Action:** Work with local developers to plan for retirement communities, Elderhostels, and other living and recreational facilities designed with retirees and seniors in mind.

**Action:** Continue to enhance and expand the local annual festivals. Encourage the development of a fall festival.

**Action:** Investigate profitable attractive recreational activities, which could be offered in Rabun County, including both outdoor adventure and less physically demanding activities (i.e.: nature trails, golf and tennis)

**Action:** Promote the development of a passive park and greenway along the U.S 441 corridor. This could provide a pedestrian linkage to all cities from Dillard to Tallulah Falls.

**Action:** Encourage the development of B&B accommodations to support the activities generated by Tallulah Falls Gorge State Park.

**Action:** Encourage the streetscape and storefront improvements and enhancements needed in Downtown Clayton.

**Objective: To provide adequate services to foster industrial and commercial expansion.**

**Action:** Reduce the amount of water losses in the system in order to prevent moratoriums on hookups to the system. Rehabilitate aging water lines and facilities as needed. Seek State and Federal assistance when the opportunity arises.

**Action:** Continue to upgrade sewer system and treatment facilities to develop additional capacity for industrial and business expansion.

**Action:** Establish wastewater treatment capabilities to service economic expansion in the southern end of the county.

**Objective: Enhance and improve the educational skills of the labor force in Rabun County.**

**Action:** Develop and coordinate an English as Second Language (ESL) program for the growing Latino labor force.

**Action:** Support and strengthen existing adult literacy and GED programs in Rabun County. Investigate in providing such classes in Spanish for Spanish-speaking adults.

**Action:** Develop a mentoring and training program utilizing the higher education and professional skills of the retired population and assisting young members of the workforce who have less education and professional experience.

**Action:** Encourage satellite post-secondary education programs in Rabun County.

**Objective: To utilize local resources to enhance the positive aspects and minimize the detrimental effects of the widening of U.S. 441/23 through Rabun County.**

**Action:** Lobby Georgia DOT to carefully study proposed median breaks and to provide as many median breaks as feasible.

**Action:** Develop a plan to address and mitigate any adverse environmental or economic impacts of the widening of U.S. 441 through the county and cities.

**Action:** Once widening is complete, develop signage to "Stop and Shop" in Rabun County and all its cities.

**Objective: Plan and coordinate the creation and expansion of the infrastructure required to support the county's development.**

**Action:** Bring all interested parties together to develop a consensus on the control and development of the county's key infrastructure requirements including: water, wastewater, road, natural gas, electricity and information technology. Participants should include: Rabun County, Clayton and all cities, Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority, Georgia Power, HEMC, Alltel, etc.

**Objective: Encourage and assist in the preservation of agricultural land and sound agricultural activities.**

**Action:** Encourage farmland preservation policies and programs, including local education on the economic value of preserving farmland and agricultural practices.

**Action:** Update and revise local ordinances that would encourage preservation and safeguarding of agricultural lands in Rabun County and Cities.

**Action:** Work with local farmers and landowners to create and promote agri-tourism in Rabun County.

**Action:** Work with the Georgia Department of Economic Development to promote the wine industry in Rabun County.

# CHAPTER 5

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT

The community facilities element provides local governments the opportunity to inventory a wide range of community facilities and services, to assess their adequacy for serving the present and future population and economic needs, and to articulate community goals and an associated implementation program for providing the desired level of public facilities and services throughout the planning period. The purpose of this element is to assist local governments in coordinating the planning of public facilities and services in order to make most efficient use of existing infrastructure as well as future investments and expenditures for capital improvements and long-term operation and maintenance costs. Each local government must address in this element those facilities that provide services within its jurisdiction. A list of community facilities in Rabun County and their location are found in Table 5-1.

## *INVENTORY*

### *POLICE PROTECTION*

The Rabun County Sheriff's Office is the agency responsible for the law enforcement in unincorporated Rabun County. The Office of the Sheriff has three main functions: (1) law enforcement; (2) operating and maintaining the county jail; and, (3) serving as officers of the court. Law enforcement functions include: protection of life and property; preservation of the public peace; prevention, detection, and investigation of criminal activity; apprehension and confinement of offenders and the recovery of property; the expeditious movement and control of vehicular traffic and the investigation of traffic accidents; control of crowds at public events; rendering of services and protection of property during civil emergencies or natural disasters.

Officers of the courts include providing bailiffs and court security and serving all subpoenas for the Superior, Magistrate, Juvenile and Probate Court.

The sheriff's department employs the sheriff, a chief deputy, three criminal investigators, one drug agent, twelve deputies, one school resource officer, one jail administrator, sixteen jailors and five dispatchers.

The ratio in unincorporated Rabun County for officers is one officer per 792 persons. This ratio is much higher than neighboring counties where the ratio is about one officer per 1,000 persons. Response times to calls vary in the county between two and twenty minutes depending on the location from which the call was made in the county. Data on response time can be used to improve the level of response for law enforcement services. In addition, other crime statistics are used to determine the need for additional personnel and equipment.

However, the analysis of response time using GIS and related emergency planning tools could greatly improve the level of service provided by police personnel.

The new county detention center, which opened in 2005 is designed to hold approximately 100 inmates. The facility has capacity to serve the county and cities for the next ten years, through 2015.

The City of Clayton operates an eleven-officer police department, including police chief, located within the Rabun County Public Safety Center. There is about one officer per 200 residents in the city. The continued increase of population within Clayton will require more officers and personnel with specialized training in language and culture.

The City of Dillard operates a police staff with three full-time officers and one clerk. The department is presently serving the needs of the city. Continuing education and training along with the latest law enforcement techniques are ever-present needs of the department.

Mountain City operates a two-person police department. The department provides city patrol and traffic enforcement for the city. The city is currently underserved and is in need of additional personnel. Continuing education and training along with the latest law enforcement techniques are ever-present needs of the department.

Sky Valley operates a seven-officer police department. The department is located at the entrance to the city. The department is extremely cramped in the existing facility and is in need of a new and larger facility to provide adequate space for officers and administrative personnel. In order to adequately serve its citizens, the department is also in need of an upgrade in their communications equipment. Continuing education and training in the latest law enforcement techniques are on-going needs for the officers.

The Town of Tallulah Falls employs two full-time police officers. Because the town lies in two counties, the police department must coordinate activities with both Rabun and Habersham County Sheriff's Departments. The town police department also has additional shared responsibilities because of the Tallulah Falls Gorge State Park where many hikers fall and are injured each year. In 2004, the town annexed the Hickory Nut Mountain development. This annexation together with anticipated growth automatically requires the need for at least one additional police officer.

The Rabun County Sheriff's Department provides police protection in the City of Tiger.

The Rabun County Marshal's Office is located in the Rabun County Courthouse. The Marshal's office is currently charged with enforcing local ordinances, and is the probation officer for misdemeanor crimes from the Superior, Magistrate and Probate Traffic Courts. The Marshal's Office provides bailiff services to the Magistrate and Probate Traffic Courts.

The Marshal's Office currently has three sworn officers, one probation officer and one administrative assistant who also serve as chief registrar for the voters. The Board of Registrars maintains the voting list of the county for the State and oversees absentee voting.

**TABLE 5-1**
**COMMUNITY FACILITES IN RABUN COUNTY**

| Facility Name | | | Location | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rabun County Public Library | | | Clayton | |
| Landfill/transfer/recycling stations | | | Various Locations | |
| Tallulah Falls School | | | Tallulah Falls | |
| Tabernacle Baptist Church School | | | Clayton | |
| Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School | | | Rabun Gap | |
| Tallulah Falls Fire Department | | | Tallulah Falls | |
| Lakemont-Wiley Volunteer Fire Department | | | Lakemont, Old 441 | |
| Tiger Volunteer Fire Department | | | Tiger | |
| Tallulah Persimmon Volunteer Fire Department | | | Persimmon, US 76W | |
| Lakes Fire Department | | | Lake Burton | |
| Lakes Fire and Rescue | | | Lake Rabun | |
| Lakemont Fire Department | | | Lakemont | |
| Clayton Volunteer Fire Department | | | Clayton | |
| Warwoman Volunteer Fire Department | | | Warwoman Rd | |
| Satolah Volunteer Fire Department | | | Satolah, GA SR 28 | |
| Chechero Volunteer Fire Department | | | Chechero, US 76E | |
| Valley Volunteer Fire Department | | | Dillard, Bettys Crk Rd | |
| Wildcat Fire Department | | | GA SR 197 | |
| Sky Valley Fire Department | | | Sky Valley | |
| Rabun County Detention Center | | | Boen Crk Rd | |
| Rabun County Courthouse | | | Clayton | |
| Tallulah Falls City Hall | | | Tallulah Falls | |
| Tiger City Hall | | | Tiger | |
| Clayton City Hall | | | Clayton | |
| Mountain City City Hall | | | Mountain City | |
| Dillard City Hall | | | Dillard | |
| Sky Valley City Hall | | | Sky Valley | |
| Rabun County Middle/High School | | | Tiger/US 441 | |
| Mountain Lakes Medical Center | | | Clayton | |
| Rabun County Park | | | US 441 | |
| Mountain City Park | | | Darling Springs Road | |

**TABLE 5-1 (Continued)**
**COMMUNITY FACILITES IN RABUN COUNTY**

| Facility Name | | | Location | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rabun County Sheriff's Office | | | Clayton | |
| Tallulah Falls Police Department | | | Tallulah Falls | |
| Clayton Police Department | | | Clayton | |
| Mountain City Police Department | | | Mountain City | |
| Dillard Police Department | | | Dillard | |
| Sky Valley Police Department | | | Sky Valley | |
| Rabun County Marshal's Office | | | Clayton | |
| South Rabun Elementary School | | | Tiger | |
| Clayton Elementary School | | | Clayton | |
| Rabun Gap Community School | | | Rabun Gap | |
| Boggs Mtn Animal Shelter | | | Boen Crk Rd | |
| Rabun County Health Department | | | Clayton | |

***FIRE PROTECTION***

Fire protection in Rabun County is provided by twelve Rabun County Volunteer Fire Departments. The county is divided into twelve fire districts where each is served by a department. The department's stations are located strategically to lower the response times to fires and other emergency calls. Over 90% of the area in Rabun County is within five miles of a fire department station.

The U.S. Forest Service also participates in fire fighting activities in Rabun County, as the Forest Service is responsible for all fire suppression activity in the County, which includes private lands, but excludes structures. The Forest Service acts as first responders on any forest fire on non-structural fire within the unincorporated area of the county. The Forest Service coordinates fire protection with the local fire department.

Rabun County has consolidated its twelve fire departments into the Rabun County Fire Service. This service is coordinated through a Fire Safety Committee and administered by a part-time county fire chief. The fire departments are all staffed by volunteers; volunteer firefighters must complete the basic firefighter course offered through the Georgia Fire Academy.

Rabun County provides funding for the operation and maintenance of these departments and purchases equipment and vehicles. Each of the twelve departments retains its autonomy, which allows it to keep the proceeds from any fund-raising activities. The fire departments are centrally dispatched through a 911 system allowing multiple station response.

Rabun County provides workman compensation and funds membership in the Georgia Firefighters retirement program for all qualified firefighters.

The Rabun County Fire Service is also working on reducing the Insurance Services Offices (ISO) rating for Rabun County. The ISO rating is a numerical rating from 1 to 10, which can be applied to a fire district for determining insurance rates. The lower the number the better the fire protection and, consequently, the lower the fire insurance rates. ISO ratings are determined by a number of factors including response time, training, equipment, water supply, communications, and dispatching. One fire district had its ISO rating reduced to a 5 partially due to the creation and expansion of the county water system. Fireboats have been stationed on Lakes Rabun, Seed, and Burton together with a system of standpipes for water supply.

One concern of the fire services is the lack of ingress and egress to structures in some of the parts of the county. An enforced fire code could help alleviate this problem.

***EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES***

Rabun County emergency medical services (EMS) is operated out of the EMS building located in Clayton. The EMS provides ambulance and paramedic services to all of Rabun County.

Presently, the full-time staff consists of twelve paramedics, five basic emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and one administrative person. The part-time staff consist of eight paramedics and fifteen EMTs.

There are seven ambulances, one of which is four-wheel drive for snow and bad weather. The administrative personnel work a forty-hour workweek. The medical personnel work a schedule of twenty-four hours on and forty-eight hours off. Three crews are generally scheduled to be on at any given time. Call time is voluntary at present. The response times are very good with 95% of the calls being answered within ten minutes except for trips out of the county.

***EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT***

Rabun County operates an Emergency Management Agency (EMA) in coordination with the Georgia EMA and U.S. Federal EMA. The EMA assists in coordinating emergency and disaster responses and educates the public on disaster preparedness. Rabun County operates a volunteer rescue squad through the EMA office.

The Rabun County Rescue Squad building is located in Tiger. There are presently 25 volunteers and seven vehicles in the rescue fleet. The response times in the county vary, but most are within five to twenty minutes. The U.S. Forest Service will assist upon request with search and rescue and with river rescue needs.

### *911 - DISPATCH CENTER*

The 911 Dispatch Center is located in Clayton in a building they share with Rabun County EMS. The center has twelve full-time dispatchers and six part-time dispatchers. They work a rotation of twelve-hour shifts.

All dispatchers are required to attend the forty-hour Communication Class mandated by the State of Georgia. In addition to the mandated class they also attend a three-day emergency medical dispatch course, which gives pre-arrival emergency medical instruction.

The center dispatches calls for all Rabun County law enforcement agencies, as well as EMS, Fire and Rescue Departments.

### *SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT*

#### *Collection*

Rabun County has seven collection sites throughout the county to collect bagged municipal solid waste and recyclable materials. County personnel collect this waste and recyclable material from the remote sites and bring the material to the Solid Waste Facility in Tiger. At the Solid Waste Facility the recyclable material is stored until enough of the same material (i.e., aluminum and tin cans, plastics, card board) is collected and then baled for sale to the recycle market. The bagged solid waste is brought to the transfer station and loaded on a semi-trailer to be hauled out of the county to a private landfill (R & B Chambers Waste) located in Banks County, Georgia.

The location of the manned remote sites is:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Boggs Mountain<br>718 Longview Rd. | Rabun Gap<br>144 Kelly's Gap Rd. | Warwoman<br>5869 Warwoman Rd. | Tallulah Falls<br>9976 Hwy 441 S |
| Chechero<br>1776 Hwy 76 E | Charlie Mountain<br>1405 Charlie Mountain Rd. | Lake Burton<br>Laurel Lodge Rd. | |

All collection sites with the exception of Boggs Mountain and Lake Burton are open from 7 am – 7 pm, seven days a week. The Boggs Mountain site is open from 7 am – 5 pm Monday through Friday, and 7 am – 12 pm on Saturdays. The site is not open in winter on weekends. The Lake Burton site in open only from Friday to Monday.

Rabun County has a Construction and Demolition Landfill located on Longview Road. This landfill is restricted to accept only those materials of low pollution potential such as shingles, sheetrock, wood, from construction or demolition sites.

The Cities of Clayton, Dillard and Tallulah Falls contract with private haulers for curbside pick up for their residents. The City of Sky Valley provides pick-up services using city personnel. The residents of Mountain City and Tiger and all residents in the unincorporated areas of the county must carry their own garbage to the closest county collection site.

***Disposal***

Rabun County closed its landfill in September of 1993 and is currently paying a private company to dispose of its municipal solid waste. The facility is in compliance with Subtitle D of the Resource Conservation and Reclamation Act (RCRA). Rabun County will be required to monitor groundwater around the site for a minimum of thirty years unless exempted by the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

***Recycling***

Rabun County has a very active recycling program. All remote collection sites accept from residents and business; card board, glass, aluminum cans, metal items, plastics, mixed papers, and newspapers for recycling. The main recycling center at Longview Road accepts the same materials as the remote sites plus large items such as appliances. The collected material from the remote sites are taken to the main recycling center by county personnel to be stored until enough of the same material is acquired to bale and then the material is sold to the recycling market. All money from recycling is retuned to the county general fund.

Additional information on solid waste and related activities can be found in the county solid waste management plan. However, needs surrounding solid waste in Rabun County center around better enforcement of the county litter ordinance (especially securing waste in vehicles as it is hauled) and the need for better education on littering and recycling. The North Georgia Resource Management Authority provides public outreach, education and technical assistance on solid waste management issues.

***WATER SERVICES***

In an effort to satisfy the needs and increasing demand associated with development in the area and to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act, Rabun County and the City of Clayton have developed the Clayton-Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority (CRCWSA). The CRCWSA has negotiated for a water withdrawal permit for Lake Rabun and has constructed a treatment plant, which is located just below Lake Rabun Dam, on property purchased from Georgia Power. The current capability of the treatment plant is rated at 2.0 million gallons per day (mgd). Water lines for CRCWSA extend along the 441 corridor from Tiger north to Rabun Gap. The CRCWSA water system has a storage capacity of 1.85 million gallons and an estimated consumption of 750,000 gallons per day. The CRCWSA is currently in the process of expanding its water treatment capacity to 4.5 million gallons per day and installing water lines along Lake Rabun, Warwoman, Wolffork, and Chechero roads.

The City of Sky Valley acquires water from six municipal groundwater wells that are each approximately 250 ft deep. These wells are placed into the Crystalline Rock Aquifer to provide dependable quantity and quality of drinking water, and provides a 3.0 mgd capacity to its citizens. The City of Sky Valley also has a surface water withdrawal permit for Mud Creek, but is currently not utilizing the river's water. It is possible that Sky Valley will begin water withdrawals within the next 10 years, depending on future demands on the City's water systems.

The City of Dillard has water services, which are an extension of services provided by the CRCWAS. Private wells are also used for water in Dillard.

The Town of Tallulah Falls operates a public water system that serves the city and immediate area. The source for the water system is through the use of ground water well near City Hall.

Citizens in unincorporated Rabun County largely rely on private springs or groundwater sources. Groundwater wells vary in depth due to the geologic properties in Rabun County. Deep soils provide a limited quantity of water for residents in valleys, while citizens on steeper slopes and high elevations most commonly drill through the crystalline bedrock to access sufficient supplies of drinking water. Because groundwater flows through fractures in the crystalline bedrock, the horizontal location, depth, and quantity of groundwater in the crystalline bedrock varies significantly from site to site. Similarly, because of the variability in groundwater in the crystalline bedrock, studies have only been able to identify a general range of bedrock water yields, which was found to be 2 to 200 gallons per minute. Developing a better knowledge of the groundwater quantity and quality available and its general location would serve the county in the future and allow proper growth management to occur.

Some organizations in Rabun County have private surface or ground water withdrawal permits. These permits are issued and enforced through the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and are not under the jurisdiction of either Rabun County or its cities and thus are out of the scope of this plan. These systems are not insignificant in Rabun County because they are community systems that serve from a few to nearly one hundreds residents. County and city governments should consider their options in attempting to exercise control over any attempt to withdraw surface or ground water for purely commercial gain.

***SEWAGE SYSTEM AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT***

The City of Clayton provides wastewater treatment to the towns of Clayton, Mountain City, and Tiger. The City of Clayton wastewater treatment plant is located in Clayton and operated by the City of Clayton. The City has a permit to treat and discharge up to 1 million gallon per day (GPD) into Stekoa Creek. The system serves approximately 1,450 residential and commercial customers. Of special concern is the piping system that is prone to leakage and has been identified as a significant contributor to the degradation of the County's surface water quality. Nonetheless, one of the benefits of sewer systems is its ability to improve environmental conditions by increasing the allowable density of development (thereby minimizing the effects of sprawl) and lowering the potential for septic field leakage.

Some large private users have their own self-contained waste treatment systems, but the majority of unincorporated Rabun County is served by septic systems. While septic systems are appropriate for many areas, variables such as soil type, soil depth, and slope angle affect the absorption and filtration capability of septic tanks and drain fields. Septic systems need a minimum thickness of two to three feet of unsaturated soil and separation from bedrock. Treatment does not occur if untreated wastewater is allowed to leak into bedrock or enter soil that is filled with water at any time during the year. Similarly, the functioning ability of septic systems is generally acceptable to a slope of 25 percent. Between 25 percent and 35 percent slope, modifications are necessary to ensure the systems functioning ability. In general, the western and northern sections of the County are most impacted by steep slopes. These locations include areas surrounding the Tennessee Valley Divide and the area between route 76 and Lake Rabun. The Georgia Human Resources Division of Public Health discourages the placement of septic systems on slopes greater than 35 percent.

Numerous EPA studies in Rabun County identify poorly maintained septic systems as a major cause for water quality degradation in the county. Uninformed and untrained system owners (private land owners) have the

responsibility for operating and maintaining their septic systems. Through this arrangement, operation and maintenance functions are driven mostly through complaints or failures. Typical failures to septic systems include unpumped and sludge-filled tanks, clogged absorption fields, and hydraulic overloading caused by increased occupancy and greater water use following the installation of new water lines to replace wells and cisterns. In addition, in many cases onsite system planning and site functions are not linked to larger ground water and watershed protection programs. The challenge for onsite treatment regulators in the future will be to improve traditional health-based programs for ground water and surface water protection while protecting and restoring the county's watersheds. The EPA has identified a number of shortcomings of management programs that have resulted in poor septic tank system performance, public health threats, degradation of surface and ground waters, property value declines, and negative public perceptions. These shortcomings include:

- Failure to adequately consider site-specific environmental conditions.
- Codes that thwart adaptation to difficult local site conditions and are unable to accommodate effective innovative and alternative technologies.
- Ineffective or nonexistent public education and training programs.
- Failure to include conservation and potential reuse of water.
- Ineffective controls on operation and maintenance of systems, including residuals (septage, sludge).
- Failure to consider the special characteristics and requirements of commercial, industrial, and large residential systems.
- Weak compliance and enforcement programs.

These problems can be grouped into three primary areas: (1) insufficient funding and public involvement; (2) inappropriate system design and selection processes; and (3) poor inspection, monitoring, and program evaluation components. While Rabun County and the County Health Department are not necessarily prone to above-mentioned shortcomings, serious consideration should be given to the extent that each of these deficiencies impacts Rabun County.

Major attention and funding should be allocated to areas where major problems are occurring within the City of Clayton’s wastewater collection system. Major problems are occurring with infiltration within the collection system due to aging in and around Clayton and in the extension to Mountain City due to improper installation.

The City of Dillard operates a small wastewater systems that mainly serves the commercial district in the city. The treatment system consist of the use of oxidation ponds and after treatment is discharged into the Little Tennessee River. The system has a treatment capacity of 100,000 gallons per day (GPD).

Because of the limitation of the floodplain that comprises more than half of the city, the only available land for development lies along the U.S. 441 corridor, and around George Mountain. Steep slopes and floodplains are not well suited for septic systems, so public sewer would be the best option for future development in Dillard. The city should continue to investigate expansion of wastewater treatment to serve both the commercial and residential growth that is anticipated to come in the future.

***Wastewater Alternatives***

Opportunities exist for the implementation of alternative wastewater treatment methods for both the CRCWSA and individual landowners. Development of a land application system (LAS) for the CRCWSA would allow wastewater treatment plant effluent to be used as a fertilizer and soil conditioner. Small, privately managed, land application systems are currently being used within the county and public land application systems are operating in neighboring counties. Numerous types of land application systems exist; however, the most common forms are spray fields, tile fields, percolation ponds, and evaporation basins. Appropriate design, placement, and operation of the LAS is compulsory to minimize environmental and health risks associated with an improperly functioning system. Additional site placement requirements and regulations beyond those specified by the Department of Natural Resources should be considered for a large scale, public, LAS due to the County's unique physiographic setting and environmental importance and sensitivity. There are special concerns regarding the location of land application systems near groundwater recharge areas and many constituents feel that stream buffers adjacent to LAS's should be substantially increased over the 35 foot minimum established by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Similarly, there are major concerns about the use of lands managed by the Forest Service as a receptor for LAS material.

Other possible alternative to community wastewater treatment includes the development of engineered wetlands. Engineered wetlands have been proven to adequately manage wastewater needs for developments that do not have access to traditional sewer systems but are still spaced on small lot sizes. These community sewer systems require significantly-sized open areas, and while it is commonly necessary to cluster homes as a result, the ancillary

benefits include the preservation of open space with the potential for trail and other recreational developments, protection of wildlife habitat, and the reduction of environmental impacts from residential developments.

Treatment alternatives for septic systems are numerous. Individual or multiple-household septic systems may utilize an in-ground trench, an at-grade trench, a mound, a constructed (lined) wetland, or drip or spray irrigation system to disperse and treat septic tank effluent. Enhancement devices may be added to improve the performance of the system. These enhancements include peat or sand filters, aerobic septic tanks, or the separation of solid wastes into a composting system. Due to different site parameters, a combination of treatment and management systems should be considered to achieve the best combination of price and filtering capability. Similarly, the permitting authority must approve the system's design prior the installation of the system.

***HOSPITALS AND OTHER HEALTH FACILITIES***

Rabun County is well served by a number of health care facilities and service providers. It is the purpose of this section to present existing facilities and services and assess their adequacy and availability.

***Hospitals***

Rabun County is currently served by one hospital, Mountain Lakes Hospital. The hospital facility includes 49 beds and provides an number of services that include; blood bank, emergency room care, inpatient surgery, clinical laboratory, out patient (occupational and physical therapy and speech pathology), pediatric, pharmacy, radiology and respiratory care. The hospital has 42 full-time or visiting physician or surgeons, 14 registered nurses, 26 license practical nurses, and 72 other employees working in professional, food, maintenance and administrative services.

The facility and operations were recently acquired by a private health care enterprise, PRM, Incorporated. The focus of the new owners and management will be to improve facility and community services. The new owner has committed to significant capital improvements, though they have not been specifically identified at the current time. In the contract of the sale of the facility Rabun County has reserved the right to reacquire the hospital if contractual obligations have not been met within five years.

***Other Medical Facilities and Services***

Mountain Valley Medical Center is a private outpatient care facility located in Dillard.

Traces of Tiger is a personal-care home located in Tiger. The facility has 39 beds, including 24 independent-living apartments and eight assisted apartments. The facility consists of 31,500 square feet and has

nursing, rehabilitation, food and administrative staff. Nurses are on staff 24 hours per day in the event that residents require medical assistance. The facility has an occupancy rate close to 100%.

Mountain View Health and Rehabilitation Center located in Clayton is a 120 bed, 34,000 square foot, facility that provides nursing and convalescent services. Because of the growing elderly population in Rabun County this facility maintains nearly a 100% occupancy.

The Rabun County Health Department is under the operation of the State of Georgia District 2, Department of Human Resources. The department receives some operating funds from the County. The Center has many clinics to protect our community from health risks, to promote healthy behaviors and lifestyle and to prevent disease and disabilities. Prevention is the backbone of public health and the scope of service at this Center has a broad range.

Some of the clinics provided are: Women's Health, blood pressure screening, pregnancy testing, dental clinic, well-child clinic, hearing and vision testing, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program, X-ray clinic, nursing services, vital records, environmental health (water testing, rabies control, restaurant inspections and septic system permitting), lab services and child safety seat programs.

The current facility was constructed fifteen years ago and is at capacity. The department will need to either expand the existing facility or construct a new facility to serve future projected growth in the county. Possible funding to accommodate facility growth could come from a Community Development Block Grant.

The Rabun County Mental Health Department is under the operation of the State of Georgia District 2, Department of Human Resources. The department receives some operating funds from the County.

The Mental Health Department provides a comprehensive system of diagnostic, in-patient, outpatient, day treatment, residential and employment services and treatment of options for County citizens who have mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse disabilities.

The current level of service provided by the Mental Health Department is marginal at best. Future expansion and funding of mental health services is primarily dependant upon the caseload methodology of the Georgia Department of Human Resources and will be addressed by the State as Rabun County continues to grow.

## *PARKS AND RECREATION*

Rabun County is blessed with thousands of acres of open space, forestland, lakes, rivers and hiking trails, which are open to the public. Most of these are owned by either the U.S. Forest Service, Georgia Power or the State of Georgia. Local parks open to the public, and owned by a city or the county, will be discussed exclusively in this element. Also included is a discussion of National Recreation and Parks Association standards compared to existing parkland in Rabun County and cities. The acreage standard selected is 6.25 acres per 1,000 people, which is an appropriate standard for rural areas. Other parks and recreation areas are also presented in the Natural Resources Element.

Community and town parks are an integral part of socialization among individual within a city or county. Oftentimes the park is the center of community activity. Well planned parks provide opportunities to all age groups. Small-town parks need not be sophisticated or large, rather they should be centrally located and provide space for modest social and physical activities. Community parks serve a larger purpose in that they must provide more active components such as swimming pools, ball parks, tennis courts, and walking paths, etc. Both types of parks are present in Rabun County and are discussed below.

### *Rabun County Parks and Recreation*

The Rabun County Community Park, which is operated by the County Parks and Recreation Department, is located on U.S. 441 just south of Rabun County High School. The Park covers fifty-six acres and has a number of activities and classes for all ages. There are five ball fields for softball and baseball, and one multi-purpose field. Also available are two gyms with three regulation basketball courts, picnic tables, a pond, a horse ring, a pavilion, swimming pool, and children's playground with pavilion. Classes and activities offered include karate, gymnastics, aerobics, little league baseball, softball and T-ball, youth football, soccer and basketball, and adult basketball, volley ball, softball and swimming. The park has paved parking areas, walking trails and a maintenance shop.

Future plans for the park include the completion of 4 new ball fields, 2 for women's fast pitch softball and two for Little League and men's softball. These fields will have lights and concession stands. Also in the future plans for the park is the creation of a multi-use covered pavilion for equestrian events. This area will have paved parking as well. Future plans include the addition of 10 walking/hiking trails, and new tennis courts. With soccer

being the fastest growing sport in the country, there is anticipated need for additional soccer fields. The county currently owns additional property adjacent to the park to accommodate future expansions.

Other future plans for parks space in the County include the development of a greenway the eventually run north – south throughout the county. The possibility of the conversion of the railroad right-of-way bed of the old Tallulah Falls Railroad would ideally serve as path for such a greenway. A project of this magnitude would take the cooperation of all local governments in Rabun County as well as others in the Georgia Mountain Region. The benefits of implementing such a greenway is truly worth the efforts of initiation, planning and coordinating such an activity.

***City of Clayton***

The only park land in the City of Clayton is located on Main Street in downtown. It comprises both sides of Savannah Street and is approximately 7,500 square feet. The Rock House is located on one section of the park area and houses an assembly room and a public restroom. The park area is utilized by the Downtown Merchants Association and the city government for the purpose of providing public entertainment on weekends. The grounds of the park area are maintained by the local garden club and the local women's club.

Future plans within the city limits include the land behind the old elementary school that is owned by the Rabun County Board of Education. The proposed greenway route will begin on the southern border of the city and could possibly travel along Stekoa Creek, meandering through the downtown area of Clayton and back along Stekoa Creek to the northern city limits.

The City of Clayton owns and manages the Rabun County Golf Club. The golf course is open to the public with annual memberships available. The course has nine holes and rates and fees are reasonably priced. The course is heavily used indicating the potential need for an additional public facility in the county. A large percentage of the golfers are retired citizens who have relocated to the county or tourists visiting during the peak seasons. Golf courses represent an economic development tool for Rabun County and a way to encourage tourism.

***Dillard***

The City of Dillard has an area in front of City Hall that is used for community events. In addition to this open area, the adjacent community canning kitchen is being considered for renovation for use as a Welcome Center for the city. Besides the public facilities in the city, the Dillard House Resort offers a farm zoo as well as public riding stables.

***Mountain City***

The Mountain City Park covers an area of 1.5 acres and is located on Darling Springs Road. The park currently has a basketball court, a water fountain, grills and picnic tables, swings, slides, sandboxes and a covered shelter. Walkways bordered with cross ties and mulched with wood chips add aesthetic value and reduce maintenance costs. The city has a goal to add a ball field for community games and an area for horseshoes.

***Sky Valley***

The City of Sky Valley has a resort that provides both a ski area and an 18 hole golf course that is open to the public.

***Tallulah Falls***

The Town of Tallulah Fall owns a parcel of land on River Street and uses this for evening entertainment and community events. The Tallulah Gorge State Park is partially located within the city limits and provides many recreation activities and services through the Department of Natural Resources. Some of these activities include hiking, white water kayaking, picnicking and swimming on the lake. The park center includes an interpretive center for residents and tourists in the area.

***Tiger***

At this time, Tiger does not have a designated park. However, the Rabun County Senior Center is located in the city, a facility for a number of senior activities, including an exercise pool.

***Other Areas in Unincorporated Rabun County***

The Chattahoochee National Forest occupies approximately 63% of Rabun County. The many recreation facilities include: six camp grounds, one horse camp, OTV trails, horse trails, the Bartram Trail, Appalachian trail, other hiking trails and mountain biking trails. The total miles of trails through Rabun County exceeds 120 miles.

There are three state parks in Rabun County. Moccasin Creek State Park: Moccasin Creek State Park is located 17 miles west of Clayton on Lake Burton, and offers fishing, swimming, picnicking and camping. The park consists of 32 acres with 52 campsites. Black Rock Mountain State Park: This Park is the highest State Park in Georgia. Located west of Mountain City, the Park is known for its 360-degree views of surrounding areas. Six overlooks, ten miles of trails, and a 17-acre lake provide opportunities for nature lovers. Facilities available include a welcome center, rental cabins, RV hook ups, tent sites and picnic shelters Tallulah Gorge State Park: Governor Zell Miller designated The Tallulah River and Gorge as a State Conservation Park. The State Parks Department has developed the park to provide amenities for visitors, including a new $200,000 Jane Hurt Yarn Interpretive Center.

This 15,000 square foot interpretive center opened in 1996 and features displays on the history of the area, wildlife, and other local and regional information.

***Tourism and Recreation***

It is imperative that in order to encourage tourism in the county, there must be ample recreation opportunities available for all types and ages of people. For example, not everyone can hike in the mountains or raft down whitewater rapids. Rabun County offers an abundance of recreation options, but more activities and facilities need to be available to the leisure tourist.

Another consideration for tourism recreation is visibility. If recreational activities are not readily accessible or visible, they are often over-looked. The county recently created a Convention and Visitors bureau (CVB) that will work on the development and promotion of Rabun County recreation and cultural activities. One focus of the CVB will be developing, organizing and promoting outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities, and a variety of educational courses offered by private instructors.

One major component of recreation tourism in Rabun County is the number of summer camps that are in operation. There are about 18 camps for people of all ages and backgrounds offering a variety of recreation and outdoor education activities. It is said that many people return to Rabun County because they attended camp here at some time in their lives.

The creation of the CVB will greatly benefit the tourism recreation industry in Rabun County. Not only will the county benefit economically from such an institution, but also the CVB will encourage the development of even more such events for local community members to enjoy and take part in.

***Recreation Facility Needs***

In comparing the needs of recreation facilities and programs, Table 5-2 identifies projected recreation facility needs for Rabun County in 2025.

According to national standards, currently there is a need for additional swimming and soccer facilities in Rabun County. Soccer fields are of particular importance as it is growing in popularity among youth, and it is also one of the more important recreational activities that the Latino population participates in at the adult level.

When considering park acreage in the county, national standards identify a potential need for 184 additional acres in Rabun County. However, when consideration is to the State Park facilities and U.S. Forest Service facilities, there is more than adequate park acreage for citizens in Rabun County. What the county will need more of in the future (2025) are more active recreation facilities for youth and adult organized sports and leisure

activities. The county will need additional facilities for basketball, swimming, tennis and meeting leisure/community meeting space by 2025.

While there are many hiking trails available in Rabun County, including these at the Rabun County Community Park, there is a need for walking facilities in Rabun County to be easily accessible to the public and have some connectivity to other community facilities and destinations. The development of a greenway or trail system would provide a pathway that would extend the length of the county north and south, and travel through every municipality in Rabun County. A facility such as this would serve the citizens in the county and many of the cities.

**TABLE 5-2**
**RABUN COUNTY RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROJECTED NEEDS**

| Facility | Existing | NRPA Standard | Current Need | Projected Need 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Park Acreage * | 59 acres | 6.25 ac/1,000 pop | 34 additional acres | 184 additional acres |
| Baseball/Softball Fields | 9 | 1/3,000 | 0 additional | 4 additional fields |
| Football Fields | 2 | 1/20,000 | 0 additional | 0 additional |
| Basketball Courts | 4 | 1/5,000 | 0 additional | 4 additional courts |
| Swimming Pools | 1 | 1/10,000 | 1 additional pool | 3 additional pools |
| Soccer Fields | 1 | 1/10,000 | 1 additional field | 3 additional fields |
| Tennis Courts | 4 | 1/5,000 | 0 additional | 4 additional courts |
| Recreation Building | 1 | No standard | 0 additional | 1 additional building |
| Golf Courses | 4 | 1/20,000 | 0 additional | 0 additional |

* Including municipalities, excluding State Parks, USFS facilities and Georgia Power facilities.

Rabun County will need to focus many of its recreation facilities and programs towards the growing retirement population. Retirees are becoming more and more active and now eagerly participate in many active and leisure recreation programs. A recreation needs study would serve the county well in assessing the status of recreation programs and services in the county as well as detailing specific needs for the future. One particular area of interest would be the need for additional and larger capacity meeting facilities in the county.

***EDUCATIONAL FACILTIES***

The Rabun County Board of Education, located in the Mountain City School Building on U.S. 441 in Mountain City, operates and provides educational services for the County. The primary challenge facing the School Board is meeting the needs of a growing population. Rabun County schools have grown at a rate of 5.26% over the last 5 years, which equals 2.5 classrooms a year.

The Rabun County Board of Education employs 380 people at the five schools and the central office. There are two primary schools, one elementary school, one middle school and one high school. The two primary schools, Rabun Gap Community School and South Rabun Elementary School serve grades K-2. Rabun County

Elementary serves grades 3-6. Rabun County Middle School serves grades 7-8 and Rabun County High School serves grades 9-12.

The Rabun County School System provides an after-school program five days a week for grades K-8 with transportation provided each afternoon. At the high school, tutorial programs are offered three days a week after school. During the summer months there is a full day summer school for grades K-8 free of charge. Breakfast, lunch and transportation are provided each day. Grades 9-12 have summer school, graduation test review sessions, and a S.A.T. camp for students.

Students at the high school are able to take courses for college credit and courses for technical school credit. There are several work-study programs and a Youth Apprenticeship Program for students who can receive credit toward graduation while working in the county.

| RABUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **School** | **Year Built** | **Capacity** | **Enrollment - 2005** |
| Rabun County High School - Grades 9-12 | 1977, 2000 renovation | 800 | 650 |
| Rabun County Middle School – Grades 7-8 | 1977, 2001 renovation | 350 | 350 |
| Rabun County Elementary School – Grades 3-6 | 2004 | 1,100 | 730 |
| South Rabun Elementary School – Grades K-2 | 1933, 1984 renovation | 350 | 365 |
| Rabun Gap Community School – Grades K-2 | 1988 | 280 | 240 |

Source: Rabun County BOE, 2005.

***Private Schools***

Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School is a boarding prepatory school for grades 6 – 12. The school and 1,400 acre campus is well known for its excellent curriculum and beautiful buildings and campus. Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School has a student population of approximately 285, half of which are boarding students. The school is located in the Rabun Gap community, which is located between Mountain City and Dillard on U.S. 441.

The Tallulah Falls School is a private education facility for grades 6-12. The school was founded in 1909, and is owned and operated by the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs. The school has a student population of approximately 170 students. About 85% of the students are boarding students living on the 600 acre campus.

***Post-Secondary Education***

Several post-secondary education facilities are in close proximity to Rabun County and offer a variety of adult technical and higher education programs to provide the labor force with the necessary education and skills to be competitive in today's market place.

Rabun County residents are fortunate to have several institutions of higher education within a one-hour drive located in three states (Table 5-3). Each of these institutions provides a variety of degrees and certificates allowing local students an opportunity to increase their skills and level of education. North Georgia Technical College will conduct courses and classes in the local community if levels of enrollment are high enough.

**TABLE 5-3**
**POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS**
**IN THE RABUN COUNTY AREA**

| Institution | Location | Distance from Clayton |
|---|---|---|
| North Georgia Technical College | Clarkesville, Blairsville, Toccoa | 29, 38 and 30 miles |
| Piedmont College | Demorest | 33 miles |
| Young Harris College | Young Harris | 38 miles |
| Truett-McConnell College | Cleveland | 43 miles |
| Clemson University | Clemson, SC | 45 miles |
| Western Carolina University | Cullowee, NC | 45 miles |
| Brenau College | Gainesville | 56 miles |
| Gainesville State College | Oakwood | 64 miles |
| Lanier Technical College | Oakwood | 64 miles |

Source: GMRDC 2005.

***LIBRARIES***

The Rabun County Public Library's history can be traced to the mid-1920s. Its beginnings are credited to the efforts of the Clayton Women's Club. The public library has evolved from a one-person room setting to today's modern facility complete with computer research equipment. The library is open 50 hours per week.

The library is located on Highway 76 West near the courthouse. It is an 8,600 square- foot facility that houses a full-service library for Rabun County citizens and visitors. In addition to a 35,000 volume collection of printed materials, the library has a collection of more than 4,000 audios and videos, numerous periodicals and newspapers, computers, and high speed internet service access for all patrons. The children's library offers books for all ages, story hours, vacation reading programs audio-visual materials and computers.

The demand for library services and programs has exceeded the capacity of the current facility. With the commitment and support of the Rabun County Board of Commissioners, the Library Board of Trustees and administration applied for and received grant funds to expand the library. This project will increase the facility to approximately 12,000 square feet, and will provide comfortable, inviting space for in-house reading and browsing, and additional computers. The addition and renovation project is scheduled to begin in the near future, and should serve Rabun County's library needs for the next ten years. Long Term planning should include a larger facility or the creation of a branch library strategically located in another area of the county.

Libraries are also located in each of the public and private schools in Rabun County. These facilities are open to students during the academic year.

## *GENERAL GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES*

### *County Facilities*

General government facilities include city halls, county courthouses, and other local general government administration buildings. The purpose of this section is to assess whether provision of these facilities are adequate for the needs of the county and each city.

The Rabun County Courthouse is the primary administrative building in the County. Within the Courthouse are housed: court rooms, judge's chambers and related rooms, the Clerk of Courts, the Tax Commissioner and Assessor, a law library, the Soil Conservation Service, the Board of Commissioners, Juvenile Court Services, Probation, Veterans Administration, and county transit operations, Marshal's office and Probate Judge.

Despite ongoing renovations and improvements, administrative space for county functions are at capacity. The county will need to either expand its current facility, move some county functions to satellite facilities or build a new, larger administrative facility.

Rabun County has a Civic Center (the Old Gymnasium). The facility has a main and lower level. The main level has a seating capacity of 600 for a seated banquet or 600+ for a concert. The lower level is set up as a 1950's style diner, featuring a Wurlitzer Jukebox. The lower level is more accommodating for smaller events such as birthday parties, receptions or meetings.

The Rabun County Senior Center is located in Tiger. The Rabun County Senior Center is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., and offers a number of activities for seniors, including a noon meal, craft projects, field trips, and swimming. The facility has an exercise pool, game room, quilt room, a computer lab, TV room and dining room. The center is also responsible for the Meals on Wheels program. This program provides hot meals and daily personal contact for the homebound elderly. However, because of its location there is difficulty in getting meals to some parts of the county (northern portions in particular) due to regulatory mileage requirements.

***County Services***

**Board of Commissioners -** The Board of Commissioners office & staff provide support for the Board of Commissioners, as well as managing and coordinating the activities of the departments under the Commission. In addition, all public accommodations licenses, beer & wine licenses and business licenses are processed and issued by this office. Included in the Board of Commissioners office is the Finance Department. This department is responsible for accounting for all financial transactions, disbursement of funds, preparation of payroll, facilitating development of the annual county budget, monitoring of revenues and expenditures against budgeted amounts, investment of funds and control of fixed assets. Rabun County Transit/Rabun County Dial-A-Ride is also operated from this department. Dial-A-Ride provides accessible, affordable and convenient public transportation to county residents. The service operates Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. on a demand-response system. Rabun County Dial-A-Ride is wheelchair accessible.

**Board of Registrars -** Registering to vote in Rabun County can be done at the registrars' office; when applying for a driver's license, or at the Rabun County Library.

**Building and Grounds -** The Building and Grounds department is responsible for maintaining the county Courthouse and all county buildings

**Clerk of Superior Court -** The major responsibilities of the clerk include the maintenance of court records and the registration of property transactions.

**County Marshal -** The County Marshal is responsible for enforcement of all County Ordinances, some State Laws, Soil Erosion Plans & Enforcement, Adopt-A-Highway program, Animal Control and Scrap Tire Enforcement Program. This department is also responsible for collecting probation fines and fees, and provides bailiff services to the Magistrate and Probate Traffic Courts.

**E911 -** The E911 department is the central emergency communications department. All emergency calls are received by this department. E911 dispatches the calls to appropriate law enforcement, fire, ambulance, animal control and public workers, keeping tapes and records of all calls.

**Emergency Medical Services -** The Emergency Medical Services have qualified Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics that respond to all vehicle incidents and other emergency situations providing medical care including transport and rescue.

**Emergency Management Agency** - The Emergency Management Agency is responsible for the coordination of local, state and federal assistance where needed to protect the lives of people and their property. Evacuation plans, medical assistance, temporary housing, food and clothing are all part of the plans that are coordinated through this office.

**Mapping and Addressing -**The Mapping and Addressing department is responsible for issuing 911 street addresses for new homes or businesses, which are constructed in the county, maintaining the E-911 database, and installation and maintenance of all street and road signs in the county.

**Probate Judge -** The Probate Judge's office provides a variety of services to the public. These services include providing the standard Georgia forms for the probate of decedents wills and processing administration of estates, filing wills for safekeeping for the public, recording of all estate documents, issuing, processing and recording Georgia marriage licenses and receiving applications for Georgia firearms permits and issuing those licenses once background checks are completed. The Probate Judge also holds traffic court to process and dispose of traffic citations written by the Georgia State Patrol and the Rabun County Sheriff Department. In addition, the Probate Judge serves as the Superintendent of Elections and conducts all primary, general and special elections held in Rabun County. The Probate Judge serves as the Local Registrar of Vital Records, which holds custodial copies of vital records such as births and deaths for Rabun County. The Rabun County Law Library is also available in this office for public use.

**Recreation Department -** The Recreation Department is responsible for all county recreation programs such as baseball, football, and basketball. This includes the scheduling of all games, running of concession stands, and the hiring of game officials.

**Recycle Department -** The Recycle Department is responsible for operating the recycle drop-off centers located throughout the county and the main recycling center at Boggs Mountain Road.

**Road Department -** The Road department maintains the county's roads and bridges relative to pavement repair and resurfacing, right-of-way landscape mowing, scraping of gravel roads, maintenance of roadway drainage and bridge construction and maintenance. Also, this department is responsible for construction of new county roads and paving of county roads.

**Soil Erosion -** The Soil Erosion officer is responsible for all soil erosion plans and enforcement of all ordinances regarding soil erosion.

**Solid Waste -** The Solid Waste Department collects and disposes of solid waste material in accordance with local, state and federal environmental laws. This department is responsible for the operation of the transfer station at Boggs Mountain Road. The transfer station allows the loading of solid waste materials from dumpsters, private vehicles and garbage trucks onto semi-trailers, which haul the waste to a contracted landfill. In addition to this, this department is also responsible for the operation of the Construction and Debris Landfill where non-polluting materials will be buried.

**Sheriff Department -** The Sheriff's Department is responsible for all law enforcement activities within the unincorporated areas of the county. These activities include, but are not limited to: Protection of life and property, preservation of the public peace, prevention, detention, and investigation of criminal activities. Duties include service and execution of warrants, bailiff duties to the Superior Courts, service of summonses and subpoenas and the service of other civil process papers. The Sheriff also serves as the official jailer of the County and operates the county Detention Center.

**Tax Assessor -** The Tax Assessor office appraises taxable property, maintains county tax records, prepares annual assessments and assists the Equalization Board.

**Tax Commissioner -** The Tax Commissioner is responsible for the collecting of taxes such as, property tax, personal property tax, mobile home, vehicle tax and license plates. In addition to this, the Tax Commissioner is responsible for distributing the property tax receipts to the State, County and School Board.

**Fire Department -** Rabun County has twelve volunteer Fire Departments. The Fire Committee consists of five members. These volunteer County Fire Departments provide fire suppression, and fire prevention services.

***Municipal Facilities***

Clayton City Hall is located on Church Street. The City Manager, Clerk and Council offices, among others, are located in Clayton City Hall. City administrators would like more office space and a more modern facility, but the current location is sufficient. However, a long-range goal of the City is to construct a new City Hall or renovate the existing building to accommodate growth. This capital improvement is expected to occur within the planning horizon of twenty years, but a specific time or funding sources have not been designated.

In Dillard, the City Clerk and the Police Department are located in the Old Dillard School House, which has been converted to the Dillard City Hall and Community Center. Elections are held in the building and there is a small auditorium, which can be rented by citizens. City administrators feel that the facilities are adequate for the size of the community, and will be throughout the planning period. The City would like to renovate the building, however, to better house offices and community functions. Creation of a small park on the grounds is also a long-range goal of the City. The City also owns the adjacent cannery, which is planned to be converted to a community meeting and civic space.

The Clerk of Mountain City operates City Hall in a used double-wide mobile home unit. The building also houses the police department. City Hall serves as a community center facility for local meetings, receptions and gatherings. The building is in need of extensive repairs. The city either needs to undertake major renovations on the facility or build a new city hall. The city is also in need of a maintenance/storage building to house city vehicles and equipment.

Administrative offices for the City of Sky Valley are located in the City Hall on S.R. 246 prior to entering the residential and resort area of the city. Located in City Hall are the offices of the city manager, clerk, administrative assistant and mayor. Behind City Hall is the Road Department. The city administrative facilities are at capacity and additional space is needed. Meeting space is also needed for City Council and community meetings. In order to meet these needs, either the current facility needs to be expanded or a new facility needs to be constructed.

City Hall in Tiger is located in the facility with the county rescue. The building also serves as a meeting place for local citizens and is currently meeting the city's administrative needs.

Administration for the City of Tallulah Falls is operated out of City Hall, which is located on Main Street. Offices include the City Clerk, Fire Department, Police Department and the Water Department. A community room is located in the lower level, and serves as a gathering place for social functions and citizen meetings. The City feels that government facilities should be expanded to better accommodate administration of the City within the planning horizon (20 years). In addition, an outdoor pavilion for community gatherings would better serve the City's residents.

***Other Services***

Rabun County is served by a natural gas company, Toccoa Natural Gas, whose line generally tracks the US 441 corridor from Tallulah Falls to the North Carolina line; a regulated telephone carrier, Alltel; and three electricity distribution companies, Georgia Power Co., Habersham EMC and Haywood EMC (in Sky Valley only).

In addition, Georgia Power Co. and the transmission arm of the Georgia EMCs, Georgia Transmission Corp. (GTC) are members of the state's Integrated Transmission System, which distributes high-voltage, wholesale electric power to retail customers such as EMCs.

All three types of utilities are generally regulated by a specific set of state laws, with local governments having little say in the placement of utility lines and corridors, much as occurs with highway widening and new construction.

Efforts to regulate the placement of high-voltage electric transmission corridors, as occurred in Rabun at the turn of the century with GTC's 7-mile transmission line from Tiger to the North Burton substation on US 76, did not survive legal challenge (up to and including review by the Georgia Supreme Court.). Challenge to the USDA Forest Service permit for this line (which crosses the Chattahoochee National Forest) also was struck down on court appeal.

***SUMMARY NEEDS AND ASSESSMENT***

- Rabun County has approximately one law enforcement officer per 792 residents, which is a much better ratio than many surrounding communities. To maintain this level of service the county will need to employ additional during the horizon of this plan.
- The City of Clayton Police Department should consider including language and cultural training in the future if the Latino population continues to increase. The city will also need to employ additional officers in order to maintain the current level of service.
- The new county detention center has been designed to accommodate the prison population in Rabun County for the next ten to fifteen years.
- The Rabun County Marshal's Office will need to increase its staff over the next twenty years in order to maintain the same level of service. In addition, the county will need to employ additional officers to deal with increased enforcement of new and updated ordinances in Rabun County.
- The City of Sky Valley Police Department is in extreme need of a new or expanded facility. The size of the current station does not allow for officers to work efficiently. The department does not anticipate adding officers during the horizon of this plan.
- Fire service in Rabun County and its cities continues to improve. Each department is well equipped with trucks and the volunteer staff is well trained. As water service is expanded throughout the county, local governments should require developers to place adequately sized water lines and hydrants for proper water pressure and flow to fight fire. There may be a need for an aerial truck to fight fire in structures with multiple stories. One additional need for improved fire services in the county is the issue of adequate ingress and egress to some structures. Many roads in the county are private and gated and therefore are not completely accessible to emergency services. Also the many private roads have been constructed so narrow or steep that some structures may not be accessible by the fire department.
- Emergency Medical Services in the county will need to provide additional manpower and equipment over the horizon of this plan.
- Any relocation of the 911 dispatch center to a new facility should include an upgrade to an E911 system that will be able to locate emergency calls made from mobile telephones.

- Public water services are expanding throughout Rabun County via the utilities managed by most of the cities and the Clayton Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority (CRCWSA). Water sources include a withdrawal FROM Lake Rabun and deep wells. The CRCWSA is in the process of expanding its treatment capacity by more than 100%. The authority is also expanding its distribution system and will need to increase its storage in order to provide adequate water pressure in these areas that are expanding. Sky Valley relies on wells as its water source, but also has a water withdrawal permit to be able to address their growth needs in the future. There are also many private community water systems in the county that rely on deep wells for water and may serve up to 100 customers.
- Though the City of Clayton operates an up-to-date waste water treatment facility, many problems exists with the sewerage collection system in the ground. Most of the system is suffering infiltration problems due to age. The plant is often over-whelmed when large storm events take place due to the resulting infiltration problems. The City has granted sewer capacity to Mountain City and Tiger. While the system in Mountain City is relatively new, the lines were not installed properly and suffer from major infiltration problems. Mountain City is currently dealing with replacing portions of the line, but has no plan to replace all of it due to costs. Both Clayton and Mountain City are in need of financial assistance to pinpoint their problems and upgrade the collection system.
- Rabun County enjoys much scenic beauty due to the thousands of acres of public lands that are available for recreation purposes through the U.S. Forest Service, State Parks and Georgia Power. The cities and county do not lack for green space and passive park activities. However, there will be a growing need in the county for additional recreation programs and facilities. Based on population projections the county will need a number of fields, courts and pools for organized recreation activities and programs. In addition, the county will need a multipurpose recreation building for indoor instruction programs and meeting spaces. The age population of the county is expected to continue to increase, therefore recreation programming may need to be adjusted to address the needs of seniors. One the other hand there is a growing Latino population that have interests in recreation activities that are not being met. A leisure services and recreation facility study is needed to identify and address the needs of the population in the future.

- The Rabun County School System is reflective of the county population growth in that it is steadily growing on an annual basis. The county schools have address growth through extensive renovations and expansions at the high school and Rabun Middle School and the construction of a new elementary school. However, the growth in the student population has continued and three of the five school facilities are near or at capacity. In spite of renovations in 2001 the middle school is at capacity and is in need of another expansion or new larger facility. South Rabun Elementary in located in Tiger is currently over capacity and is in immediate need of a major expansion. Rabun Gap Community School is also near capacity and should have an expansion scheduled within the next five years.
- There are no post secondary facilities located in Rabun County. Many bright students leave to county to continue their education and develop their professional skills. The county, cities, chamber and development authority should work with some of the local higher education schools to develop a satellite facilities for higher education in Rabun County.
- The library's demand for services and programs has exceeded the capacity of the current facility. With the commitment and support of the Rabun County Board of Commissioners, the Library Board of Trustees and administration south and received grant funds to expand the library. This project will increase the facility to approximately 12,000 square feet, and will provide comfortable, inviting space for in-house reading and browsing, and additional computers. The addition and renovation project is scheduled to begin in the near future, and should serve Rabun County's library needs for the next ten years. Long Term planning should include a larger facility or the creation of a branch library strategically located in another area of the county.
- In spite of renovations many of the administrative facilities are at capacity and are in need of additional space. The county will either need to expand the current courthouse facility, relocate some of the county functions to satellite facilities or build a new, large facility strictly for county administrative services. A space needs study would shed some light on the real space needs for many county functions as well as place a cost on each of the options.
- Clayton City Hall is in need of an expansion and renovation, but such improvements have only gone as far a being discussed by city council. No such improvements, though needed, have not been scheduled and budgeted for.
- Both the City of Sky Valley and Tallulah Falls are in need of expanded and improved facilities for city hall to meet the needs of their administration and for community meeting purposes.

***POLICIES, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS***

**Objective: To provide coordinated, efficient and effective public safety services within Rabun County**.

**Action:** Investigate coordination of training schedules for all law enforcement officers, add officers to improve and maintain sufficient levels of safety service. Include in training, language and cultural training targeted towards the Latino population.

**Action:** (All Local Governments) Continue ongoing replacement and upgrade of vehicles and equipment.

**Action:** (All Local Governments) Improve and expand law enforcement facilities as needed to ensure administrative efficiency.

**Objective: To enhance and fire protection services in Rabun County.**

**Action:** ( Rabun County) Fund the fire service from the property tax base.

**Action:** (Rabun County) Employ a full-time professional a County Fire Chief (administrator) and provide office space and administrative support.

**Action:** (Rabun County) Employ paid firefighters in all stations. Augment with volunteers as needed.

**Action:** (Fire Departments) Coordinate training and develop a centralized training center.

**Action:** (Rabun County) Develop and enforce fire codes, especially allowing for ingress and egress for fire vehicles.

**Action**: (Fire Departments) Continue to improve the mutual aid and response plan for fire fighting in Rabun County.

**Action:** (Clayton-Rabun WSA, Local Governments) Expand water systems to areas of Rabun county to lower and maintain ISO ratings. Require as development occurs adequate sized water line and hydrants.

**Action:** (Fire Departments, Rabun County) Continue to upgrade equipment, education and training through fund raising activities. Purchase an aerial truck to fight fires in structures with multiple stories.

**Action:** (Local Governments) Lobby Georgia DOT to include in the design plans of US 441 widening emergency access points for public safety and emergency vehicles.

**Objective: To provide effective emergency response services to Rabun County.**

**Action:** (Rabun County) Complete the E911 emergency reporting system to encompass the entire county and centralize dispatching for all public safety and emergency response services, including being able to respond to locations made from wireless telephones.

**Action:** (Rabun County) Complete a Disaster Preparedness Plan for Rabun County through FEMA, GEMA and Homeland Security. Apply for funding as needed.

**Objective: To develop existing transportation facilities within Rabun County, both to upgrade for existing service and future residents, and to encourage economic growth.**

**Action:** (All local governments) Continue restriping, resurfacing, and bridge repairs/replacement as needed in the cities and county.

**Action:** (All local governments) Continue to work with the LARP and Georgia DOT to resurface streets and roads and improve drainage.

**Action:** (All Local Governments) Plan and apply for Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds to extend and improve sidewalk, pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the county.

**Action:** (All Local Government) Develop, where possible, use the old Tallulah Falls Railroad bed for a bicycle and pedestrian facility that would link every local government in Rabun County.

**Action:** (All local governments, Chamber) Lobby Georgia DOT to minimize negative impacts of the widening of US 441 through the county and cities.

**Objective: To upgrade and expand water supply and treatment, and improve public water service within the municipalities of Rabun County.**

**Action:** (CRWSA) Continue to upgrade and expand treatment facility for increased capacity and seek additional withdrawal increases as necessary.

**Action:** (CRWSA, Municipal Water Systems) Continue the expansion of the water distribution system to provide coverage to all of the designated service areas, following long term planning.

**Action:** (CRWSA, Municipal Water Systems) Plan and implement the necessary measures that will reduce unaccounted for water less and will increase water system revenues.

**Action:** (CRWSA, Municipal Water Systems) Update mapping of water system infrastructure to assist in long term planning and tracking water loss.

**Action:** (CRWSA, Municipal Water Systems) Continue to seek funding sources and alternatives that will aid in the expansion and improvement all water systems in Rabun County.

**Action:** (All Local Governments) Develop water sharing agreements in order to drought proof the county.

**Action:** (All Local Governments) Adopt and enforce the necessary measures to protect Rabun County water resources.

**Objective: To provide adequate wastewater treatment and sewage service to accommodate existing and future development.**

**Action:** (CRWSA, Dillard) Continue expansion and upgrade of the waste water treatment facilities in Rabun County and investigate additional opportunities for treatment and disposal of waste water, which may include additional discharge, land application, or other innovative methods of disposal.

**Action:** (Clayton, Mountain City, Dillard, Tiger CRWSA) Continue maintenance and upgrade on the waste water collection system to reduce leakage and infiltration into the system.

**Action:** (Clayton, Mountain City, Dillard, Tiger, CRWSA) Investigate funding sources that could provide assistance in the upgrade and improvement to the wastewater treatment facilities and sewage collection systems in Rabun County.

**Action:** (Dillard, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls) Continue to investigate the development of sewer services in Sky Valley via the Dillard system or by a private land application system.

**Objective: To provide quality park and recreation facilities and services to residents of Rabun County.**

**Action:** (Rabun County) Conduct a recreation and leisure services and facility study for Rabun County.

**Action:** (Rabun County) Pursue long range and short term improvements to Rabun County parks and recreation.

**Action:** (Rabun County, Cities) Investigate additional parkland acquisition for future improvements to the park system, including the State new greenspace funds for land acquisition.

**Objective: Ensure that each community within the county has a park available to its citizens**.

**Action:** (Clayton) Continue negotiations with the private sector to locate and develop a new City of Clayton Park. Continue working to secure the old U.S.F.S work center.

**Action:** (Mountain City) Pursue funding in order to make improvements to city park.

**Action:** (Dillard) Determine cost of developing a park on the grounds of city hall. Seek appropriate assistance and funding.

**Action:** (Tiger) Allocate funds for the development of a park at the multi-purpose civic building. Seek appropriate assistance and funding.

**Objective: Pursue economic development through tourism by providing diverse recreational opportunities.**

**Action:** (Chamber, CVB) Investigate profitable and attractive recreational activities, which could be offered by Rabun County. Focus on activities geared towards the retired population (i.e., golf, tennis, walking trails) and activities, which do not require an "outdoor adventure" mentality or state of health.

**Action:** (All local governments) Promote the development of a passive park and greenway along the US 441 corridor, possibly using the old Tallulah Falls Railroad right of way bed or along the improvements by Georgia DOT for US 441.

**Action:** (Rabun County) Plan and develop an equestrian facility for public use.

**Action:** (Chamber CVB) Plan and encourage the development of agri-toursim with the local farming community.

**Objective: Maintain government facilities, which adequately meet the needs of Rabun County and each of the cities. Plan for the expansion or replacement of administrative facilities when the need has been identified.**

**Action:** (Rabun County) Study and determine the space needs for county department that are now located in the courthouse, estimate costs and make appropriate recommendations for future facilities.

**Action:** (Clayton, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls) Plan, design and allocate funding for the expansion and renovation of city hall facilities for improve meeting and administrative space.

**Objective: Ensure quality education through the provision of superior facilities, teaching programs and vocational training.**

**Action:** (Board of Education) Make the recommended in improvements to the school facilities that are at or near capacity as proposed in the Five-Year Facilities Plan.

**Action:** (County, Board of Education, Chamber, Development Authority) Continue working towards the establishment of vocational training programs through joint ventures of private enterprise and public education.

**Action:** (County, Chamber, Development Authority) Identify and locate a facility that could serve as a satellite location for post secondary education opportunities to take place in Rabun County.

**Action:** (Chamber, Development Authority) Work with North Georgia Technical Institute to bring on site instruction to Rabun County in industries that are growing in Rabun County (i.e. Hydroponics, vineyards, organic farming).

# CHAPTER 6

# NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

An important step in land use planning is the assessment of how natural resources can be responsibly utilized, managed, developed, and preserved within a community. The natural environment is vulnerable to man's actions, and at the same time, they can constrain the way in which land is developed. It is the purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan to present characteristics of existing natural resources, to address important issues related to these resources, to identify those which are sensitive or significant, and to develop ways to best protect and manage them.

## *NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY*

The following section includes an inventory and analysis of Rabun County's natural resources. A summary and needs assessment is included at the end of this element and subsequent goals, policies, and actions are presented in the corresponding section of this plan.

### *Physiography and Climate*

Affectionately referred to as the place "where Spring spends Summer," Rabun County is known for its mild climate and extraordinary natural beauty. Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of the Appalachian Mountain Chain, Rabun County is blessed with thousands of acres of woodland, streams, high ridges and fertile valleys. Situated in the extreme northeastern corner of the state, the County is bounded by North Carolina on the north, South Carolina and the Chattooga River on the east, Habersham County on the south, and Towns County and the Appalachian Trail on the west. The County also contains significant portions of the Little Tennessee River, Tallulah River, and Chattooga River. The U.S. Forest Service owns sixty-three percent of the County land, Georgia Power Company owns approximately eight percent and one percent is owned by the State of Georgia.

The majesty of the Blue Ridge Mountains is enhanced by favorable weather conditions. The Southeast Regional Climate Center’s station in Clayton Georgia has recorded data from 1971 to 2000. The average temperature during this time was 57 degrees, with average summer maximum temperatures range between the low and mid 80’s, while daily highs in the winter average in the low 50’s. During the summer, low temperatures fall to the high 50’s and low 60’s while in the winter, lows average in the high 20’s to low 30’s. In an average year, 71 inches of measured precipitation fall in Clayton, but significantly higher rainfall occurs on higher elevations in

Rabun County. The precipitation pattern has a late winter/early spring maximum with a secondary peak during late summer. March is the wettest month of the year, and averages 7.28 inches, while November is the driest month, averaging only 4.64 inches of precipitation per month.

Rabun County lies in two primary physiographic districts: the Blue Ridge Mountains District and the Gainesville Ridges District. The Blue Ridge Mountains District, part of the Blue Ridge Province, occupies almost the entire County with the exception of a small portion along the Chattooga River. Rugged mountains and ridges ranging in elevation from 3,500 to 4,700 feet characterize the Blue Ridge Mountain District. Varying degrees of erosion have carved the mountains with both narrow and wide stream valleys. Many of these valleys lie 1,500 to 2,000 feet below adjacent mountaintops. In the southeastern edge of the county lies a small strip of the Gainesville Ridges District, which is part of the Piedmont Province. The Gainesville Ridges District is characterized by northeast trending, low, parallel ridges dissected by narrow stream valleys. The Gainesville Ridges of Rabun County range from 1,500 to 1,600 feet in elevation.

The geologic history of the County includes violent mountain building during the Triassic Geologic Period and subsequent massive earth moving erosion that smoothed the craggy mountains into today's rolling ridges and valleys. Mineral resources in the County include granite, feldspar, mica, kyanite, talc, soapstone, quartzite, pyrite, and gold.

***Water Resources***

***Public Water Supply***

In an effort to satisfy the needs and increasing demand associated with development in the area and to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act, Rabun County and the City of Clayton have developed the Clayton-Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority (CRCWSA). The CRWSA has negotiated for a water withdrawal permit for Lake Rabun and has constructed a treatment plant, which is located just below Rabun Lake Dam, on property purchased from Georgia Power. The current capability of the treatment plant is rated at 2.0 million gallons per day (mgd). Water lines for CRCWSA extend along the 441 corridor from Tiger north to Rabun Gap. The CRCWSA water system has a storage capacity of 1.85 million gallons and an estimated consumption of 750,000 gallons per day. The CRCWSA is currently in the process of expanding its water treatment capacity to 4.5 million gallons per day and installing water lines along Lake Rabun, Warwoman, Wolffork, and Chechero roads.

The City of Sky Valley acquires water from six municipal groundwater wells that are each approximately 250 ft deep. These wells are placed into the Crystalline Rock Aquifer to provide dependable quantity and quality of drinking water, and provides a 3.0 mgd capacity to its citizens. The City of Sky Valley also has a surface water

withdrawal permit for Mud Creek, but is currently not utilizing the river's water. It is possible that Sky Valley will begin water withdrawals from Mud Creek within the next 10 years, depending on future demands on the City's water systems.

The City of Dillard has water services, which are an extension of services CRCWSA.

Citizens in unincorporated Rabun County largely rely on private springs or groundwater well sources. Groundwater wells vary in depth due to the geologic properties in Rabun County. Deep soils provide a limited quantity of water for residents in valleys, while citizens on steeper slopes and high elevations must commonly drill through the crystalline bedrock to access sufficient supplies of drinking water. Because groundwater flows through fractures in the crystalline bedrock, the horizontal location, depth, and quantity of groundwater in the crystalline bedrock varies significantly from site to site. Similarly, because of the variability in groundwater in the crystalline bedrock, studies have only been able to identify a general range of bedrock water yields, which was found to be 2 to 200 gallons per minute. Developing a better knowledge of the groundwater quantity available and its general location would serve the county in the future and allow proper growth management to occur. Cooperation from the Department of Natural Resources and EPA would be necessary to conduct such a study.

Some organizations in Rabun County have private surface or ground water withdrawal permits. These permits are issued and enforced through the DNR and are not under the jurisdiction of either Rabun County or its cities and thus are out of the scope of this plan.

***Sewage System and Waste Water Treatment***

The City of Clayton provides sewer collection and treatment to the towns of Clayton, Tiger and Mountain City. A municipal wastewater treatment plant is located in Clayton and is operated by the City of Clayton. Of special concern is the piping system that is prone to leakage and has been identified as a significant contributor to the degradation of the County's surface water quality. Nonetheless, one of the benefits of sewer systems is its ability to improve environmental conditions by increasing the allowable density of development (thereby minimizing the effects of sprawl) and lowering the potential for septic field leakage.

Some large private users have their own self-contained waste treatment systems, but the majority of unincorporated Rabun County is served by septic systems. While septic systems are appropriate for many areas, variables such as soil type, soil depth, and slope angle affect the absorption and filtration capability of septic tanks and drain fields. Septic systems need a minimum thickness of two to three feet of unsaturated soil and separation from bedrock. Treatment does not occur if untreated wastewater is allowed to leak into bedrock or enter soil that is filled with water at any time during the year. Similarly, the functioning ability of septic systems is generally

acceptable to a slope of 25 percent. Between 25 percent and 35 percent slope, modifications are necessary to ensure the systems functioning ability. In general, the western and northern sections of the County are most impacted by steep slopes. These locations include areas surrounding the Tennessee Valley Divide and the area between route 76 and Lake Rabun. The Georgia Human Resources Division of Public Health discourages the placement of septic systems on slopes greater than 35 percent.

Numerous EPA studies in Rabun County identify poorly maintained septic systems as a major cause for water quality degradation in the county. Uninformed and untrained system owners (private land owners) have the responsibility for operating and maintaining their septic systems. Through this arrangement, operation and maintenance functions are driven mostly through complaints or failures. Typical failures to septic systems include unpumped and sludge-filled tanks, clogged absorption fields, and hydraulic overloading caused by increased occupancy and greater water use following the installation of new water lines to replace wells and cisterns. In addition, in many cases onsite system planning and site functions are not linked to larger ground water and watershed protection programs. The challenge for onsite treatment regulators in the future will be to improve traditional health-based programs for ground water and surface water protection while protecting and restoring the county's watersheds. The EPA has identified a number of shortcomings of management programs that have resulted in poor system performance, public health threats, degradation of surface and ground waters, property value declines, and negative public perceptions. These shortcomings include:

- Failure to adequately consider site-specific environmental conditions.
- Codes that thwart adaptation to difficult local site conditions and are unable to accommodate effective innovative and alternative technologies.
- Ineffective or nonexistent public education and training programs.
- Failure to include conservation and potential reuse of water.
- Ineffective controls on operation and maintenance of systems, including residuals (septage, sludge).
- Failure to consider the special characteristics and requirements of commercial, industrial, and large residential systems.
- Weak compliance and enforcement programs.

These problems can be grouped into three primary areas: (1) insufficient funding and public involvement; (2) inappropriate system design and selection processes; and (3) poor inspection, monitoring, and program evaluation components. While Rabun County and the County Health Department are not necessarily contributors to the above-mentioned shortcomings, serious consideration should be given to the extent that each of these deficiencies impacts Rabun County.

***Wastewater Alternatives***

Opportunities exist for the implementation of alternative wastewater treatment methods for both the CRCWSA and individual landowners. Development of a land application system (LAS) for the CRCWSA would allow wastewater treatment plant effluent to be used as a fertilizer and soil conditioner. Small, privately managed, land application systems are currently being used within the county and public land application systems are operating in neighboring counties. Numerous types of land application systems exist; however, the most common forms are spray fields, tile fields, percolation ponds, and evaporation basins. Appropriate design, placement, and operation of the LAS is compulsory to minimize environmental and health risks associated with an improperly functioning system. Additional site placement requirements and regulations beyond those specified by the Department of Natural Resources should be considered for a large scale, public, LAS due to the County's unique physiographic setting and environmental importance and sensitivity. There are special concerns regarding the location of land application systems near groundwater recharge areas and some constituents feel that stream buffers adjacent to LAS's should be substantially increased over the 35 foot minimum established by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Similarly, some citizens are concerned about the use of lands managed by the forest service lands as a receptor for LAS material.

Another possible alternative to community wastewater treatment includes the development of engineered wetlands. Engineered wetlands have been proven to adequately manage wastewater needs for developments that do not have access to traditional sewer systems but are still spaced on small lot sizes. These community sewer systems require significantly sized open areas, and while it is commonly necessary to cluster homes as a result, the ancillary benefits include the preservation of open space with the potential for trail and other recreational developments, protection of wildlife habitat, and the reduction of environmental impacts from residential developments.

Treatment alternatives for septic systems are numerous. Individual or multiple-household septic systems may utilize an in-ground trench, an at-grade trench, a mound, a constructed (lined) wetland, or drip or spray irrigation system to disperse and treat septic tank effluent. Enhancement devices may be added to improve the

performance of the system. These enhancements include peat or sand filters, aerobic septic tanks, or the separation of solid wastes into a composting system. Due to different site parameters, a combination of treatment and management systems should be considered to achieve the best combination of price and filtering capability. Similarly, the permitting authority must approve the system's design prior the installation of the system.

***Water Supply Watersheds***

A watershed is the area of land from which runoff water flows into a stream or lake. A water supply watershed, therefore, is a watershed from which drinking water is extracted. Protection of water supply watersheds is important to ensure safe drinking water for Rabun County inhabitants.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources provides recommended protection criteria for water supply watersheds. At the present, there are no water supply watersheds in Rabun County that require special protection, as defined by the Department of Natural Resources. However, the City of Sky Valley has a permit to withdraw water from Mud Creek, and will likely begin withdrawals in the future. Once Sky Valley initiates water withdrawals, the Mud Creek watershed will fall within the DNR's water supply watershed protection designation. The City of Clayton has a water withdrawal permit on Blacks Creek. This source will be used as a back-up and for emergency purposes. There is an existing source water assessment study for this water supply source on file with Georgia DNR EPD.

The Clayton-Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority operates a surface water intake on Lake Rabun. However, Lake Rabun's primary purpose is for the generation of electricity and is thus exempt from the Department of Natural Resources' watershed protection measures. Voluntary protection of the Lake Rabun watershed in accordance to DNR standards is recommended to ensure clean and reliable sources of drinking water.

In the future, if any municipalities are affected by the protected watershed designation they must incorporate the following water supply watershed protection criteria into their Comprehensive Plans and implementation strategies.

***Watershed Protection Criteria for a Small Water Supply Watershed***

- Maintain a 150-foot buffer around water supply watershed reservoirs.
- Within a seven-mile radius upstream from the water supply intake, maintain a 100-foot buffer on each side of perennial streams flowing into the intake area or the reservoir.

- Outside of the 7-mile radius, maintain a 50-foot buffer on each side of perennial streams, which flow into the intake area or reservoir.
- Within a seven-mile radius upstream from the intake, require 150-foot setbacks (i.e., no impervious surface) on each side of perennial streams flowing into the intake area or the reservoir.
- Outside of the 7-mile radius, require 75-foot setbacks (i.e., no impervious surface) on each side of perennial streams flowing into the intake area or reservoir.
- New landfills must have synthetic liners and leachate collection systems.
- No new hazardous waste treatment or disposal facilities are allowed.
- Within a 7 mile radius upstream from the intake, new hazardous materials handlers must perform operations on impermeable pad having a spill and leak collection system.
- Impervious surfaces shall be limited to 25% of the entire watershed or existing use, whichever is greater.
- Reservoir management plans shall be developed by the reservoir owner, for approval by the Department of Natural Resources, in order to address buffer maintenance and restrictions on recreational activities.

***Watershed Protection for a Large Water Supply Watershed***

- A large water supply watershed has 100 square miles or more of land within the drainage basin upstream of a governmentally owned public drinking water supply intake.
- The stream corridors of a large water supply watershed tributary to the water supply intake shall have no specified minimum criteria for protection, except the stream corridors of the perennial tributaries of a water supply reservoir in a large water supply watersheds are protected as described below.
- The corridors of all perennial streams in a large water supply watersheds tributary to a water supply reservoir within a seven (7) mile radius of the reservoir boundary are protected by the following criteria:
- A buffer shall be maintained for a distance of 100 feet on both sides of the stream as measured from the stream banks.
- No impervious surface shall be constructed within a 150-foot setback area on both sides of the stream as measured from the steam banks.
- Septic tanks and septic tank drainfields are prohibited in the 150-foot setback area described above.

- The remainder of a large water supply watershed tributary to the water supply intake shall have no specified minimum criteria for protection, except that new facilities, located within seven (7) miles of a water supply intake or water supply reservoir, which handle hazardous materials of the types and amounts determined by the Department of Natural Resources, shall perform their operations on impermeable surfaces having spill and leak collection systems as prescribed by the Department of Natural Resources.
- The water supply reservoirs in large water supply watersheds will be managed by a water supply reservoir management plan.

These criteria are intended as a guide for water supply management. Local governments are not required to adopt these criteria, but failure to do so could lead to permit denial by the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources.

Watershed protection is also required on Federal lands through the Forest Land Management Plan. Setbacks and land disturbing activities in the National Forest are already regulated more strictly than on non-federal lands.

***Protected River Corridors***

Rabun County's stream systems are of great value for aesthetics, biological habitat, recreation, and their related economic importance. The Federal Government, the State of Georgia, and the local governments of Rabun County have taken action to help protect the County's streams.

Under definition of the Georgia Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act, streams with an annual average discharge of 400cfs, have established river corridor protection measures, which have been established by the DNR. The Chattooga River and the Tallulah River south of Lakemont have been identified as protected river corridors (Map 6-1). Due to the location of these rivers, only the U.S.F.S, the County, and the City of Tallulah Falls are affected by the Act. The Department of Natural Resources requires that local governments containing protected rivers adopt River Corridor Protection Plans as part of their comprehensive plans and map the protected area, which includes a 100 foot buffer to be maintained along the stream banks.

Development in the Chattooga River protected corridor is not considered an issue, due to its designation as a Wild and Scenic River. This designation provides greater protection to the river than DNR criteria. However, the Tallulah River does not have such a designation. Therefore, affected communities must assess the impact of development within the corridor and develop a strategy to minimize potential problems in the future. Currently, the river downstream of Tallulah Falls Dam is not experiencing negative impacts associated with development or

contamination. Currently, the only potentially significant negative environmental impact within the protected river corridor is associated with the expansion of 441 between Tallulah Falls Dam and Tiger which has resulted in significant sedimentation of the Tallulah River within the protected corridor. Although this is a temporary disturbance, Rabun County is encouraged to adopt a river corridor criteria to satisfy DNR requirements and ensure continued permitting through the DNR.

DNR's river protection criteria are discussed briefly in the following paragraph:

*In a protected river corridor, natural vegetative buffers must be maintained, extending on both sides, 100 feet from the top of the riverbank. In addition, handling areas for the receiving and storage of hazardous waste and landfills are prohibited. Single-family dwellings are allowed within the buffer under the following conditions: 1) the dwelling complies with zoning regulations, 2) the dwelling is on a minimum 2 acre parcel, 3) density allowed is only one dwelling per 2 acres, and 4) septic tanks may be located within the buffer but associated drainage fields may not. Existing industrial and commercial land uses within the corridor are exempt from the above criteria provided that: 1) they do not impair the drinking quality of the river water, and 2) industrial and commercial activities meet all state and federal environmental rules and regulations.*

***Trout Stream Protection Areas***

Additional river protection in the County includes specific provisions with regards to "trout stream protection areas." The Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act establishes a 50 foot buffer along the banks of any state waters that are classified as “trout streams” except where a roadway drainage structure must be constructed or on small springs or streams that have an average annual discharge of 25 gallons per minute or less shall have a 25 foot buffer. Designated trout streams in Rabun County are classified as either primary streams, where trout can both survive and reproduce, or secondary trout streams, where streams support trout populations but the conditions are not suitable for reproduction. Primary trout streams in Rabun County include the Chattooga River and its tributaries, the Little Tennessee River and its tributaries, and the Tallulah River and its tributaries. The only secondary trout streams in Rabun County are Mud Creek from Sky Valley to its intersection with the Little Tennessee River and the Little Tennessee River downstream from the US Hwy 441 bridge. Strict enforcement of trout stream protection measures is necessary to maintain water quality and habitat.

***Stream Protection on Lands Managed by the Forest Service***

Forest Service policies concerning stream protection have an impact on Rabun County and warrant further consideration. The Forest Service provides numerous protection measures and management prescriptions for streams, riparian corridors, and watersheds. A riparian corridor is defined as a management prescription designed to

include much of the riparian area. This riparian area includes corridors along all defined perennial and intermittent stream channels that show signs of scour, and around natural ponds, lakeshores, wetland, springs, and seeps. Within the riparian corridor management prescription area, management practices are specified to maintain riparian functions and values. The standards used by the Forest Service in the riparian corridor are too numerous to list here. These standards exceed minimum state requirements for stream protection. The Forest Service's Land and Resource Management Plan provides details concerning stream protection, and should be referenced for additional information. The management role of the Forest Service is also further discussed in the Park, Recreation, and Conservation section of this Plan.

***Floodplains***

A floodplain consists of "the channel and the relatively flat area adjoining the channel of a natural stream or river which has been or may be covered by flood water. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has produced Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS), which identify the 100 year flood level for Rabun County and its municipalities (Map 6-2). FIRMS identify the areas that are candidate for federal flood insurance. The cities of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, and Tallulah Falls all have flood hazard areas identified within their jurisdictions and are enrolled in the national flood insurance program. While FEMA has identified small areas of flood hazard in Tiger, the city is not enrolled in the federal insurance program. FEMA does not identify any flood hazard areas in Sky Valley.

Currently, Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Tallulah Falls, and Rabun County have floodplain management ordinances and participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. These ordinances limit development within the 100 year floodplain only to uses appropriate for flood areas. Municipalities not covered by flood insurance are not financially protected in the event of a flood and federal loaning institutions will not provide loans for activities in flood prone areas. In addition, the existence of flood maps and floodplain management ordinances help to steer improper uses away from floodplains, therefore reducing the risk of floodplain damage, danger, and public and private loss. A Floodplain Management Ordinance must regulate all areas within a municipality's 100-year floodplain before the National Flood Insurance becomes

effective. Under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1963 and the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, all communities are required to meet the minimum federal requirements for floodplain management, but may impose more stringent or comprehensive regulations. Below is a list of uses commonly allowed within designated 100 year flood plain and typically included in municipal floodplain ordinances, although ordinances and allowed uses within the 100-year floodplain may vary.

**Permitted Uses**

A. Agriculture, only structures for temporary shelter allowed

B. Dams

C. Public parks and recreation areas and facilities, only structures for temporary shelter allowed

D. Bridges, culverts, and the roadway fill related to the above structures

E. Parking areas

F. Outdoor storage

G. Fences that permit the free flow of water and debris

H. Public utility poles, towers, pipelines, sewer and other public and semi-public utilities.

I. Signs and sign structures provided they permit the free flow of water and debris.

FEMA and local emergency management do not identify the potential threat and impact of low-lying areas below the dams in Rabun County if there was a dam break or excessive water release. The county should work with state and federal officials to address this concern.

***Water Quality and Stormwater Management***

Development, urbanization and increase of concrete surfaces and other nonporous areas (called impervious surfaces) increase the amount of stormwater runoff and contribute to channels and quicken the speed at which water travels. Forests and grasslands once able to accommodate the volume of water produced by rain showers have been replaced by parking lots, streets, and buildings, which do not absorb or retain water. The result is sheets of water flowing rapidly over these man-made surfaces, picking up pollutants and sediments, and transporting them to nearby streams and storm sewers. As a result, the volume, rate and pollutant loads of stormwater are dramatically increased. Some of the pollutants found in stormwater include sediment, fertilizers, animal wastes, oil, grease, and heavy metals. The end result is water quality deterioration.

***Chattooga River***

The Chattooga Wild and Scenic River is one of the most prized assets of the County's natural beauty. Designated a "Wild and Scenic River" (the first in the country) in 1974, by the Federal Government, the river is managed under strict preservation guidelines. Hiking trails follow the river corridor, which is popular with trout fisherman. Challenging rapids make rafting, kayaking, and canoeing the most popular activities on the Chattooga River. The upper portion is also a very popular fishing destination. Management of the Chattooga River has been difficult because it crosses the boundaries of three states (Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina), is partly

under the supervision of three different National Forests (Nantahala, Chattahoochee, and Sumter), and 32% of its watershed is privately owned. Despite these difficulties, significant measures have taken place to protect the Chattooga River. The Chattooga River Ecosystem Management Demonstration Project was conducted from 1993 to 1995. This project helped identify the needs of the watershed and sources of contamination including sediment and fecal pollution. The Chattooga Conservation Plan has also been developed by the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition, the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, and The Conservation Fund to help develop a sense of direction concerning the approach to preserving, restoring, and maintaining the Chattooga River watershed.

In 1999, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performed the study *Assessment of Water Quality Conditions Chattooga River Watershed Rabun County, GA, Macon County, NC, and Oconee County, SC.* This study performed water quality tests in Rabun County on Stekoa Creek, Warwoman Creek, West Fork of the Chattooga, and the Upper, Middle, and Lower Chattooga River.

Stekoa Creek was found to have a fair biological ranking and impacted habitat conditions, which are the result of sedimentation. The study also recommended the listing of Stekoa's biological community as partially meeting its designated use, as a result of sediment related impacts. Five tributaries of the Stekoa were sampled as well: Pool Creek, Saddle Gap Creek, Scott Creek, Chechero Creek, and Cutting Bone Creek. Overall, it was found that Stekoa Creek, Chechero Creek, Saddle Gap Creek, and Pool Creek do not fully support their designated uses. Scott Creek was found to be threatened because of sediment issues and Cutting Bone Creek had an environmental rating of good, but was also recommended to be placed on a "watch" list due to sedimentation. Further discussion of Stekoa Creek is provided in the Stekoa Creek section.

Warwoman Creek was also measured for sediment, use support, chemical and physical analysis, biological community, and habitat. Warwoman Creek was rated as partially supporting with sedimentation being the largest concern. Eight tributaries of Warwoman Creek were identified and tested. Of these streams, Walnut Fork, Sarah’s Creek, Martin/Finney Creek, Tuckaluge Creek, and Hoods Creek were all found to be fully supporting their designated uses. Marsingills Creek and Goldmine Branch were identified as threatened, and Roach Mill Creek was listed as fair. As with Stekoa Creek, sedimentation issues posed the greatest challenge in maintaining designated uses.

The West Fork of the Chattooga River was found to have excellent or good qualities for all of the criteria tested. Ten tributaries: Holcomb Creek, Tottery Pole, Big Creek, Laurel Creek, Reed Mill Creek, Law Ground Creek, Abes Creek, West Fork Overflow Creek, Clear Creek, and East Fork Overflow Creek were sampled. Sedimentation was a problem for Big Creek, Reed Mill, Laurel Branch, Clear Creek, and Law Ground Creek.

Testing of the headwaters of the Chattooga River was performed in the area upstream from the West Fork of the Chattooga River. Two locations of the mainstream of the Chattooga River were sampled as well as numerous tributaries, which included Ridley Creek, Hedden Creek, Reed Creek, Fowler Creek, Scotsman Creek, King Creek, and Pig Pen Creek. Sediment posed a problem for Hedden Creek, Ammons Branch, and Fowler Creek. Norton Mill Creek showed impairment in the macroinvertebrate community. It should be noted that not all of the streams in the headwaters are fully located in Rabun County and thus may not apply to this Plan.

The testing on the Middle Chattooga sub-watershed included the main channel of the Chattooga River at the 76 Bridge as well as Adline Creek, Dicks Creek, Pole Creek, Licklog Creek, Buckeye Branch, Fall Creek, and Reed Creek. Buckeye Branch and Dicks Creek were noted for high levels of sedimentation.

The lower Chattooga sub-watershed included Cliff Creek, Camp Creek, and Long Creek. Long Creek showed signs of macroinvertebrate impairment, however, the cause is unknown.

Because sedimentation is the foremost pollutant in the Chatooga River watershed, the Chattooga River Watershed Assessment identifies numerous sources for sediment including: urban/suburban area disturbances, fair-poor pasture, animal access to streams, eroding stream banks, eroding road banks, road crossings, and poor riparian conditions. While the assessment only considers the Chattooga watershed, streams throughout Rabun County will have similar levels of impairment due to comparable land use throughout the county.

Table 6-1 identifies the streams that the Chattooga River Watershed Assessment recommends be included in Georgia's EPD 303d list. It is also recommends that Warwoman Creek (lower), Cutting Bone Creek, Martin/Finney Creek, Tuckaluge Creek, Hoods Creek, Hedden Creek, and Dicks Creek all be placed on a watch list for future monitoring.

**Table 6-1**
**STREAMS RECOMMENDED FOR**
**GEORGIA'S EPD 303d LIST**

| Stream | Use Support Status | Pollution of Concern |
|---|---|---|
| Stekoa Creek | Partial Support | Excessive Sedimentation |
| Scott Creek | Partial Support | Excessive Sedimentation |
| Saddle Gap Creek | Partial Support | Excessive Sedimentation |
| Pool Creek | Partial Support | Excessive Sedimentation |
| Chechero Creek | Not Supporting | Excessive Sedimentation |
| Warwoman Creek (upper) | Partial Support | Excessive Sedimentation |
| Law Ground Creek | Partial Support | Excessive Sedimentation |
| Roach Mill Creek | Partial Support | Biological Community and Habitat Impairment |

***Stekoa Creek***

A great concern in the County is the pollution of Stekoa Creek. Erosion and sedimentation, along with excess concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria has degraded Stekoa Creek to the point where it no longer meets its designated use. The US EPA has developed Total Daily Maximum Loads (TMDLs) for fecal coliform and sedimentation. Identified sources of pollution include rural unpaved roads, development, leaking septic systems, silvicultural activities, and stream bank erosion. A TMDL implementation plan has been developed for Stekoa Creek and in 2005, the EPA is planning on reviewing the efforts that have transpired in attaining the goals of this implementation plan.

Local organizations have found it necessary to help protect Stekoa Creek. The Stekoa Creek Greenway is a linear park that is being developed along Stekoa Creek near the town of Clayton. When fully completed, the park is expected to run on a north to south axis from the North Carolina state line south to Tallulah Gorge. An east to west axis is also planned for the Greenway, which will link the Bartram Trail with the Appalachian Trail. The greenway will contain walking trails, benches, informational kiosks, and educational centers. The Stekoa Creek Greenway will provide environmental benefits to the stream through the development of a buffer along its banks, which is expected to improve water quality and habitat, and provide a setting for environmental education. The Stekoa Creek Greenway group is also working with the Georgia DOT in an effort to incorporate a DOT mitigation bank into the greenway. This mitigation bank is a natural area that is maintained to offset the construction of road projects. Property along the greenway will also be acquired through donations and the creation of conservation easements, where landowners agree not to conduct certain activities within designated segments of their property, in this case within a certain distance from the river. In turn, landowners are allowed deductions on their property taxes and the quality of the river water is protected. This tool has been effectively utilized in the Broad River Corridor of Georgia and is an effective and agreeable method to aid water quality protection. Monies for the greenway are available through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21), the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and grants from private associations.

***TMDL***

Section 303 of the Clean Water Act establishes water quality standards and provides for the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The TMDL is a program that is used to calculate the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet its water quality standards. These water quality standards are established by the State of Georgia and depend on the waterbody's designated use. There are three designated use categories: drinking water, swimming, and fishing. These designated uses form a scale of water quality, with drinking water having the most stringent standards.

The TMDL establishes the allowable load of pollutants from both point and non-point pollution sources and also incorporates the waterbody's designated use classification to ensure that the waterbody can be used for its intended purpose. The TMDL program also establishes the need for an implementation plan for waters impaired primarily by non-point sources. These TMDL implementation plans address impaired waterbody's through regulatory and non-regulatory approaches which include public education and participation along with local and regional watershed management programs and initiatives as well as section 319 (of the Clean Water Act) non-point source management program.

Table 6-2 identifies the stream systems that have been tested through EPA's TMDL program and do not support or partially support its designated use. As of 2005, only a small portion of the streams in Rabun County have been tested through the TMDL program, and it is likely that other streams in the County do not meet their designated uses.

**Table 6-2**
**STREAMS PARTIALLY SUPPORTING OR NOT SUPPORTING THEIR DESIGNATE USE**

| Basin/Stream | Criterion Violated | Status | Stream Reach |
|---|---|---|---|
| West Fork of the Chattooga | Fecal Coliform | Partially Supporting | |
| Warwoman Creek | Fecal Coliform | Not Supporting | Sarah's Creek to Chattooga River |
| Little Tennessee River | Fecal Coliform | Partially Supporting | Dillard to Stateline |
| Stekoa Creek | Fecal Coliform | Not Supporting | Clayton to Chattooga River |
| Tallulah River | Fecal Coliform | Not Supporting | Upstream of Lake Burton |

***Lakes***

Major lakes in Rabun County include Lake Burton, Seed Lake, Lake Rabun, Tallulah Falls Lake, and Lake Tugalo. Each of these reservoirs are predominantly fed through the Tallulah River, with the exception of Lake Tugalo, which is also replenished by the Chattooga River. According to the DNR, in 2004, each of Rabun County's reservoirs fully supports their designated use. Nonetheless, continued monitoring of water quality in these reservoirs is necessary in the future. Maintaining water quality in reservoirs is most effectively accomplished by mitigation or restoration efforts throughout the reservoir's watershed. This watershed approach is the same technique used for mitigation and restoration efforts provided through the TMDL process and should lend itself to existing water quality improvement projects throughout the county.

While there are few documents that catalog the water quality for Rabun County's reservoirs, Georgia Power has recently (2004) published the Lake Burton Ecosystem Status Report. Georgia Power monitors water quality of its reservoirs on a three-month cycle for a number of indicators including dissolved oxygen, water temperature, pH, Secchi Values, total phosphorus, chlorophyll, tropic state, turbidity, and fecal coliform. The Georgia Power study found that over the past 10 years, water quality measurements have remained very consistent and overall water quality has not been degraded. Siltation is noted as being the number one concern for the Lake's well being. Significant inputs of sediment have been recorded from the feeder streams of Lake Burton, especially from the Tallulah River and Timson Creek. It is estimated that 75% of Lake Burton's sediment comes from unpaved roads or road construction activities, runoff from building constructions, and homeowner's activities, respectively.

Georgia Power also estimates that the housing density around Lake Burton has increased by 100% over the past 10 years. The majority of these housing units are summer or vacation homes. Year round populations are estimated at 25% of all residents

Lake Burton is the first of a series of lakes located along the Tallulah River in Rabun County. It is impossible to make precise extrapolations as to the environmental conditions of the reservoirs downstream of Lake Burton. Yet, because of similar land use throughout the entire Tallulah River watershed, water quality of the reservoirs downstream can be assumed to be vaguely similar to that found on Lake Burton. The *Lake Burton Ecosystem Status Report* summarizes the existing and future condition of Lake Burton and the other large reservoirs in Rabun County when it says, "Fortunately, because of many good management practices, a very forgiving lake and a load of good luck, Lake Burton appears to be in good shape. However, many of the potentially bad influences on the lake's health take time and repetition to do their damage. So now is the time to implement the best management practices for the lake and its environs".

Lake Tugalo, part of which is located in Tallulah Falls, is the most downstream reservoir of the Georgia Power lakes in Rabun County. This seldom visited reservoir has an area of 579 acres and is located at the confluence of the Tallulah and Chattooga Rivers. Rabun County, Habersham County, and South Carolina's Oconee County all converge at Lake Tugalo. This lake is worthy of special note because of its pristine environmental setting. Adjacent to Lake Tugalo are canyon-like walls rising nearly 1,000 feet above the surface of the water. The Chattahoochee National Forest (Georgia) and the Sumter National Forest (South Carolina) largely manage the land surrounding Lake Tugalo. Currently, outboard motors are restricted to 25 hp, which promotes canoe and kayak travel. Due to the unique natural setting and remote location, the Town of Tallulah Falls and Rabun County should support conservation efforts in and around Lake Tugalo.

***Water Quality Protection Alternatives***

Regardless of ordinances in place, pollution from stormwater runoff still occurs. Stekoa Creek is a prime example. The primary source of pollution is from sedimentation associated with construction sites, and dirt roads. Along with these inputs, leaking septic tanks, and pesticides from farms are carried into the stream by rainwater. The result of these human contributions is a polluted stream that feeds into the federally listed National Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. It is often difficult to monitor every site for stormwater problems and pollutants; but when specific water bodies are endangered, immediate action should be taken.

Improving water quality in Rabun County is necessary. There are a number of alternatives available for county and municipal governments to address water quality issues. Adoption of standards at least as stringent as the environmental planning criteria for water supply watersheds and river corridor protection is a first step to minimize water quality degradation and will help ensure the allocation of DNR permits in the future.

Additional measures can be implemented to further encourage water quality protection and includes: impervious surface setbacks, land use limitations, the requirement of stormwater collection and management plans for individual developments and/or the county and its municipalities, land acquisition of critical parcels, and public education. Individually, each of these alternatives will provide a measure of protection for Rabun County's waters, however, development of an enforced and comprehensive watershed protection regulation and/or a stormwater management ordinance is recommended to provide both broad based and specific protection for the county's waters. There are numerous elements that may be included in such ordinances, and the county and its cities should consider as many options as possible, but commonly included components are described below.

Development requirements or design standards often form the basis for water quality protection and are often intended to strengthen existing standards. In Rabun County, development requirements would bolster provisions set forth in the Erosion and Sedimentation Act. Establishment of performance standards for developments may also be included. These standards include hydrologic and hydraulic evaluations, evaluations of Best Management Practices (BMP), and evaluations of downstream impacts. Scoring of the performance standards will be based on the development's ability to minimize, store, and treat stormwater runoff as well as other environmental criteria. Performance standards include a classification by development type as well as a defined method of scoring. Further, identification of both general and critical watershed areas can provide universal protection throughout the county as well as supplementary protection for districts that are susceptible to land disturbing activities, contain sensitive habitats, or require remediation or restoration. Multiple protection measures can be consolidated into a single overlay zone for these critical watershed areas. Both general and critical watershed areas may include numerous protection measures. Typical measures include:

- Density and built-upon area coverage limits by development type.
- Stream buffer requirements.
- Limitations on stream channelization.
- Maintenance plan for BMP's
- Prohibited uses.
- Runoff control methods.
- Natural Infiltration: Areas designed to infiltrate a specific quantity of stormwater runoff.
- Permanent wet detention ponds: Permanent pools that collect and treat stormwater runoff and its pollutants. These sites generally hold stormwater runoff for a period of four to six days.
- Permanent retention ponds: Large permanent pools used for low-density applications.

Other methods:

- Existing ponds and lakes
- Experimental filter basins
- Regional lakes

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center both have model ordinances that can be referenced. The Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (GSMM) also provides guidance for the design and evaluation of stormwater management facilities and may be cited for further descriptions of runoff control methods.

Along with the development of protection measures for the county's water bodies, the county and its municipalities should consider all available opportunities to improve the quality of its waters. Funding opportunities for research, educational programs, and restoration projects are available from sources including state and federal agencies. Section 319 of the Clean Water Act provides funding for projects that reduce non-point source pollution. These projects vary in scope and scale but include the installation of BMP systems for stream and lake watersheds and basin-wide education programs. Similarly, the EPA's TMDL program offers a variety of opportunities for the community and should be fully supported.

***Wetlands***

Wetlands serve as important fish and wildlife habitats and breeding grounds and are an integral part of the food chain. Numerous plant varieties and animal species have adapted to the special conditions of freshwater wetlands and cannot survive elsewhere. Wetlands act as water filters and play an important role in water quality. They serve as storage areas for storm and floodwaters as well as natural recharge areas where ground and surface water are interconnected. In addition, wetlands are aesthetically pleasing and can be used as recreational areas.

The Corps of Engineers defines freshwater wetlands as: "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency or duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas."

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for restoring and maintaining the environmental integrity of the nation's wetlands. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act is the major federal regulatory tool for preserving the nation's wetlands, and is jointly administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA. Under Section 404, a permit is required for wetland disturbing activities. Clean Water legislation discourages any alteration or degradation to wetlands unless it can be proven that no long-term adverse impacts or loss of wetlands will result.

Currently, neither Rabun County nor its cities have ordinances that specifically address wetland protection. However, if significant wetlands are to be disturbed (i.e., discharge of fill into a wetland), the 404 permitting process is utilized. Due to the limited number of significantly sized wetlands in Rabun County and its cities, this is rarely necessary (Map 6-2). Rabun County municipalities recognize wetlands as a precious resource and the 404 permitting process is currently effective for protecting larger wetlands, but efforts to preserve rare "mountain bogs" should be pursued. Located at the heads of streams, along seepage slopes and near springs, they contain saturated peat-rich soils and support a variety of trees, shrubs, and rare plants. If attention is focused on any wetlands, it should be the mountain bogs because of their rare nature and vulnerability. Plant collection, livestock grazing, and ditching have already disrupted a number of these sensitive and unique natural communities. Enforcement of wetlands protection should be a higher priority in all areas of the County.

The Georgia Planning Act of 1990 requires that local governments recognize wetlands identified in the Heritage Wetlands Inventory, which is sponsored by The Department of Natural Resources.

The National Wetlands Inventory has identified most significant wetlands in the County, including agricultural ponds, detention ponds, and stream channels. The creation of a map that identifies only sensitive, rare, and significant wetlands should be undertaken in the future, perhaps at the County level. This map could serve as a red flag system for development, would contribute to the protection of the most important wetlands, and would enable communities to consider potential problems associated with wetland disturbance. In addition to mapping wetlands, the Georgia Planning Act of 1990 requires that local land use plans address the following wetland considerations:

1. Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
2. Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare or endangered species.
3. Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
4. Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
5. Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.

6. Whether the project contains significant state historical and archaeological resources, defined as "Properties On or Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places."
7. Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.
8. Whether wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.

Also required by the Georgia Planning Act of 1990 criteria for wetlands protection, land use plans will include a list of uses that are acceptable and unacceptable within an identified wetland. The criteria states that acceptable uses may include:

1. Timber production and harvesting
2. Wildlife and fisheries management
3. Wastewater treatment
4. Recreation
5. Natural water quality treatment and purification

The criteria also states that unacceptable uses may include:

1. Receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste or other contaminants,
2. Hazardous or sanitary waste landfills,
3. Other uses unapproved by local governments.

Because 63 % of the land in Rabun County is managed by the National Forest, wetland protection measures, if adopted, can only go so far. It is also important that the U.S. Forest Service continue to be aware of, and sensitive to the needs and desires of, the County. Adhering to best management practices for vegetation management and watershed restoration are significant steps in the right direction, and will aid in preserving some of these wetlands for a period of time.

***Groundwater Recharge Areas***

In order to avoid toxic and hazardous waste contamination to drinking water supplies, groundwater recharge areas must be protected. Groundwater recharge takes place when precipitation infiltrates into soil and rock and becomes stored in the soil pores or fractures in the rock. While recharge takes place throughout practically all of Georgia's land area, the rate or amount of recharge reaching underground aquifers varies from place to place depending on geologic conditions.

In the Piedmont Province of Georgia, the most reliable sources of groundwater are from zones where the underlying bedrock has been intensely fractured. From the fall line south, large aquifers are common. In the Blue Ridge Mountains Province and most of Rabun County, however, significant areas of groundwater recharge occur only in areas of “thick soils”. While these "thick soils" have groundwater recharge potential, they are not as reliable for drinking water as aquifers.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has mapped "significant recharge areas" in the Hydrologic Atlas 18 (1989 edition.). The presence of a "significant recharge area" means that a local government is expected to comply with Official Code Georgia Annotated 12-2-8, by adopting, implementing, and enforcing ordinances for recharge area protection. It should be noted that the recharge areas mapped are those regions likely to have the greatest vulnerability to pollution of ground water from the surface and near surface activities of man. Two small areas of significant groundwater recharge are located in Rabun County (Map 6-3). The first is located near the City of Tiger and the second is found near Rabun Gap. Local governments containing significant groundwater recharge areas are encouraged to adopt regulations at least as stringent as those outlined by the Department of Natural Resources.

Each city and county that has a designated significant ground water recharge area within its boundaries is required to consider and subsequently adopt all or a portion of the following recommended criteria for the protection of ground water recharge areas:

- New hazardous waste facilities are to be prohibited
- Sanitary landfills will be required to have synthetic liners and leachate collection systems.
- Industrial facilities, which handle, treat or store toxic materials will be required to perform such operations on an impermeable pad having a spill and leak collection system.
- Above ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks, having a minimum volume of 660 gallons, will require secondary containment.
- Agricultural waste sites over a certain size must be lined.
- Permanent storm water infiltration basins may not be constructed in areas of high pollution susceptibility.
- Subdivision requirements must be modified to require larger lots in areas of high pollution susceptibility.
- Subdivision requirements must be modified to require larger lot sizes in areas, which must employ septic tanks.

Soil Types and Development Limitations

***Soil Associations and Limitations***

There are seven major soil associations present in the County. A soil association represents a unique natural landscape, which usually consists of one or more major soils and some minor soils. Map 6-4 identifies the location of major soil associations in the County and Table 6-3 provides additional information on the capability of each soil classification. The associations are described below:

1. Toxaway-Transylvania-Toccoa These soils are located on broad floodplains in the valleys of mountain, are poorly drained and highly subject to flooding. Stream bank erosion is a serious problem and slopes tend to be less than 2 percent. These soils are good for row crop production and some woodlands. They rate extremely low for urban and most recreational uses due to wetness and flooding.
2. Bradson-Dyke-Dillard These soils are found on stream terraces and colluvial areas. Slopes are smooth and convex, ranging from 2 to 10 percent. These soils are found primarily in central Rabun County and accounts for about 3 percent of the land area. The soils are good for cultivated crops and pasture and rate relatively well for urban uses, but sanitary facilities must be installed with care. These soils are highly suited for recreational uses.
3. Hayesville-Bradson-Tusquitee These soils are found on broad ridgetops and on the hillside of mountain plateaus. Slopes range from 10 to 25 percent. Approximately 22 percent of the County's land area is contained within this soil unit. The soils are mainly use for pasture and woodland and are relatively poor for farming and urban uses because of slope. Erosion hazards are a concern.
4. Saluda-Rabun-Evard These soils are found on narrow ridgetops and on long sides of mountains, which range in elevation from 1,500 to 3,300 feet. Slopes range from 10 to 15 percent. Most of these soils account for about 25 percent of the total land area. Primarily wooded, they have poor potential for farming, urban and recreational uses because of slope. They are best suited for woodland. Erosion is a primary concern.

5. Saluda-Ashe These soils are found on the uneven sides of mountains that range in elevation from 1,800 to 4,500 feet. Slopes range from 25 to 90 percent. Found throughout the County, these soils can be found near Lake Burton. Comprising about 8 percent of the County's land area, they are poor soils for farming, urban, and recreational uses because of slope. Ice damage and soil erosion are concerns.
6. Tusquitee-Ednevville-Porters These soils are found in colluvial areas and on narrow ridgetops of mountains ranging in elevation from 2,500-4,500 feet of more. Slopes range widely from 10-75 %. These soils are found mostly in the northern and western parts of the County, and account for 35% of the land area. Wooded and stony, these soils are poor for farming, urban and recreational uses. However, some less sloping areas have good potential for pastureland. Erosion and ice damage are concerns.
7. Lily-Ramsev-Saluda These soils are found on narrow ridge tops on long, uneven and complex mountainsides that range in elevation from 1,500 to 3,300 feet. Slopes range from 10-90%. Found near Tallulah Falls, the soils comprise only 3% of the County's land area. The soils are wooded and have poor potential for urban, farming and recreational uses. On less sloping areas there is fair pastureland. Erosion is a concern.

Please note that soil conditions vary widely from site to site. Site specific soil analysis is necessary to determine development limitations. The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides detailed information on the soil properties and their location within Rabun County. It is recommended that the city and county officials consult the Soil Survey of Rabun County during site plan reviews.

**TABLE 6-3**

**SOIL CAPABILITY**

| Symbol | Soil Name | Acres | Development Limitations | Septic Tank Suitability | Flooding Frequency | Depth to Bedrock (in) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACE | Ashe-Porters Association, moderately steep | 3580 | Severe | Severe | None | 20-40 |
| ADG | Ashe association, stony, very steep | 11690 | Severe | Severe | None | 20-40 |
| BrC | Bradson fine sandy loam, 2 to 10 percent slopes | 3310 | Moderate-Severe | Slight | None | >60 |
| BrE | Bradson fine sandy loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 22260 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| Ch | Chatuge loam | 590 | Severe | Severe | Occasional | >60 |
| DhC | Dillard sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes | 1030 | Severe | | None | >60 |
| DyC | Dyke loam, 2 to 10 percent slopes | 1260 | Severe | Moderate | None | >60 |
| DyE | Dyke loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 1730 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| EdE | Edneyville sandy loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 7862 | Severe | Severe | None | >40 |
| EPF | Edneyville-Ashe association, stony, steep | 13320 | Severe | Severe | None | >40 |
| EVF | Evard association, steep | 10650 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| FaC | Fannin fine sandy loam, 2 to 10 percent slopes | 0 | Severe | Severe | None | 20-40 |
| FaE | Fannin fine sandy loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 0 | Severe | Severe | None | 20-40 |
| HaC | Hayesville fine sandy loam, 2 to 10 percent slopes | 300 | Moderate | Moderate | None | >60 |
| HaE | Hayesville fine sandy loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 22380 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| LhE | Lily fine sandy loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 2280 | Severe | Severe | None | 20-40 |
| PCF | Porters association, stony, steep | 12490 | Severe | Severe | None | 40-72 |
| PCG | Porters association, stony, very steep | 5900 | Severe | Severe | None | 40-72 |
| RaE | Rabun loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 2770 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| RbF | Rabun stony loam, 25 to 50 percent slopes | 3500 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| RLF | Ramsey-Lily association, stony, steep | 2790 | Severe | Severe | None | 7-20 |
| Rx | Rock outcrop | 940 | Severe | Severe | None | 0 |
| SAE | Saluda association, moderately steep | 12930 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| SAF | Saluda association, steep | 35260 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| SBG | Saluda and Ashe stony soils, very steep | 6770 | Severe | Severe | None | 20-60 |
| To | Toccoa fine sandy loam | 1250 | Severe | Severe | Common | >60 |
| Tp | Toxaway silt loam | 2980 | Severe | Severe | Frequent | >60 |
| Tr | Transylvania-Toxaway complex | 4580 | Severe | Severe | Frequent | >60 |
| TuC | Tusquitee loam, 4 to 10 percent slopes | 2460 | Slight | Slight | None | >60 |
| TuE | Tusquitee loam, 10 to 25 percent slopes | 10150 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |
| TVF | Tusquitee -Haywood association, steep | 28700 | Severe | Severe | None | >60 |

***Soil Erosion***

Excessive soil erosion and sediment runoff frequently occur from land development sites. The formation of rills and gullies and the loss of topsoil are common problems associated with erosion. Sediment runoff, a direct result of erosion, can cause water pollution and sediment build-up in streams, often leading to wildlife habitat destruction. Mountain streams are especially susceptible to contamination by sediment.

Because of the problems associated with soil erosion, Rabun County and some of its cities enforce provisions of the Georgia Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act as part of either their zoning ordinances, development regulations, or permitting processes. Some of these control standards include: minimizing cut-fill operations; retaining as much natural vegetation on the site as possible; installing temporary vegetation on exposed and vulnerable soil areas; trapping sediment run-off by use of silt traps, sediment basins, etc.; and minimizing the length of time a disturbed area is exposed. Also included in these controls are specific provisions with regards to trout stream protection areas, which are discussed in the Trout Stream Protection section of this Plan. The presence of steep slopes is an additional factor that should be considered at land development sites and handled through the permitting process. However, specific provisions for steep slope development are not explicitly spelled out in soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinances, but should be considered due to the County's topography.

Due to the small size and low operating costs of several cities, it is difficult to effectively control development activities. Consolidation of a permitting system, which would include enforcement of soil erosion and sedimentation control measures, would be beneficial.

Typically, building permits are not approved if site plans and the permitting process find that the site is unsuitable for the type of proposed development. For example, land subject to flooding, improper drainage and erosion, excessively steep slopes, or unsuitable soils or surface conditions may not be developed unless steps are taken to mitigate negative effects. The type of development (i.e., industrial, single-family home, recreation, roads, etc.) as well as percolation rates and other factors are taken into consideration to determine the soil's suitability. These land suitability requirements can effectively protect sensitive soil types and slopes from irresponsible development practices, but are not adequately enforced properly at the county and municipal levels. Again, several of the cities within the County are not sufficiently staffed or funded to adequately assess site development limitations.

***Steep Slopes***

Slopes in the County range from nearly level to 90%. Steep slopes are classified as areas with a slope of 25% or greater, and account for 43% of the county's area (103,500 acres) (Map 6-5). Privately-owned property with steep slopes account for 21,000 acres of Rabun County. The prevalence of severely steep slopes imposes extreme development limitations and excessive erosion conditions including mudslides and landslides.

Some developers avoid extremely steep slopes, but vacation homes are often perched on the sides of mountains to afford a view of the beautiful landscape. This practice has become more common in recent years. Other locations of concern regarding steep slopes include the area surrounding Lake Rabun and Lake Burton and the 441 corridor. All of these locations have both steep slopes and the potential of being developed. Other cities in the County do not occupy areas with such steep terrain; however, steep slopes are considered an environmental limitation for all of Rabun County and its municipalities. Related control mechanisms already in place, such as site plans, development regulations, and soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinances should be strengthened. These control mechanisms can be included in existing ordinances or developed as a stand-alone measure.

Many of Rabun County's citizens have been attracted to the county because of its natural setting. Thus, maintaining this natural setting is important to most property-owners in the county. Voluntary education programs for citizen and civic leaders on the implementation of best management practices can significantly limit the impact of erosion associated with steep slopes. Similarly, new technology for soil stabilization such as the use of new compounds in hydroseeding, the use of geotextiles, and other BMP's will become increasingly available in the future. It is in the best interest of Rabun County and its municipalities to remain informed of these new technologies and disseminate this knowledge to its citizens.

***Protected Mountains***

The DNR has established standards for the protection of mountain areas through provisions of the Georgia Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act. Specifically, affected "mountains" are: those areas which have a slope of 25% or greater for at least 500 horizontal feet, and all areas which lie above 2,200 feet in elevation. The crests, summits and ridge tops of mountains whose flanks meet the criteria for a protected mountain shall also be included within the protected area, even though the slopes may be less than 25%. The areas that fall within the mountain protection criteria are identified in map 6-6. Privately held lands that fulfill the mountain protection criteria are identified in map 6-7.

Two important factors greatly minimize the impact of the Act on the County. First, the 63% of land managed by the USDA Forest Service, in which the majority of Rabun's high mountains are located, are protected to a higher degree than provided in the mountain protection criteria. Of the remaining lands, approximately 8,900 acres of privately owned lands in Rabun County fall within the mountain protection criteria. Second, the Act was watered down to the point that regulations have little impact on mountain protection. However, the criteria set forth for mountain protection are a step in the right direction. The governments within the County that are affected by the Mountain Protection Act are Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls, Tiger and unincorporated Rabun County.

Population projections indicate that Rabun County's population will increase significantly between 2005 and 2025. Because of the large land holdings of the Forest Service and steep terrain of the County, developable land in Rabun County will become increasingly scarce in the future. This trend will drive a push for the development of private land holdings that are classified under mountain protection. In the past, many city and county governments in Rabun County have not identified the need for strict enforcement of mountain protection regulations. Nonetheless, this plan supports increased efforts for all affected governments in Rabun County to meet and enforce the criteria for mountain protection. Further, protection of all steep slopes in the county is recommended to limit the negative environmental impacts associated with the erosion of steep slopes.

The Department of Natural Resources requires that local governments containing protected mountains adopt Mountain Protection Plans as part of their comprehensive plans and map the protected areas. An overview of the criteria is provided in the following paragraph:

- Land disturbing activities must comply with the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act, state and local well and septic requirements, and all water related Acts.
- No more than one single-family structure per acre may be built. Multi-family dwellings are limited to four per acre.
- Structures shall not extend more than 40 feet, as measured from the highest point at which the foundation of such structure intersects the ground, above the uppermost point of the crest, summit, or ridge top of the protected mountain on which the structure is constructed.

- No person engaging in land-disturbing activity shall remove more than 50 percent of the existing trees which exceed eight inches in diameter as measured at a point on such a tree four and one-half feet above the surface of the ground unless such person has filed with the application a plan of reforestation developed by a registered forester.

***Prime Agricultural and Forest Land***

***Prime Forest Land***

Rabun County contains an abundance of prime forest land, most of which is contained within the boundaries of the Chattahoochee National Forest and is not under the County's jurisdiction. Forest types include White Pine-Hemlock, Shortleaf Pine, Oak-Pine and Oak-Hickory. It is important that, as timber is harvested in the National Forest and private lands, replanting programs are promptly begun to preserve and regenerate this important natural and economic resource. Forest Service officials are taking a more environmentally sensitive approach towards protecting wildlife habitats and sensitive ecosystems. National Forests must now have guidelines for ecosystem management, which is comprised of a management prescription for each ecosystem as well as a description of the emphasis for the area, desired condition, goals, objectives, and standards.

Regardless of new direction in the Forest Service, citizens and government officials alike should always monitor activities within the National Forest and report irresponsible logging activities, illegal ATV use, wild flower harvesting, poaching, etc.

In 1998, the Forest Statistics for North Georgia identified 207,300 acres of total forestland in Rabun County (87% of the total area in the county). Privately owned forestland in Rabun County accounts for 57,900 acres (24%).

***Prime Agricultural Land***

Private landowners in Rabun County manage substantial amounts of prime forestland, but only a small portion of the county is used for agricultural purposes. The Soil Survey for Rabun County only identifies 9,850 acres, or 4% of the land area in Rabun County, as prime agricultural lands. The 2002 Census of Agriculture, developed by the Department of Agriculture, reported the area actually used as farmland in Rabun County to be 9,977 acres, or 4.2% of the County's land area. This contrasts with the 1992 area that was used as farmland, which was 12,733 acres or 5.4% of the County’s land area. The average farm size has also declined from 97 acres in 1992 to 68 acres in 2002. Of the land occupied by the 146 farms that were identified in Rabun County in 2002, 3,641 acres (1.5% of the County’s land area) were classified as cropland, while 2,266 acres were identified as harvested

cropland (less than 1%). Both cropland and harvested cropland have been in decline since the 1992 Census of Agriculture. The 1992 study identified 6,865 acres as total cropland in Rabun County, which represents a 53% loss in agricultural land between 1992 and 2002. The figures for harvested cropland are similar. In 1992, 3,625 acres were harvested, which is a 62% decline in land actively used for agriculture. Irrigated acreage in the county was 409 acres in 2002, but has declined sharply from 3,314 acres in 1992. Despite the decline of lands used for agricultural purposes, agriculture remains a significant portion of the County's economy. The value of crops in 2002 was estimated to be 2.3 million dollars, while livestock and poultry were valued at 8.2 million dollars. Prime agricultural areas in Rabun County are located in stream valleys and on gentle slopes adjacent to floodplains.

These locations coincide with prime developable lands. As a result, the conversion of farmland into developed areas is common in locations that are transitioning from a traditionally agricultural economy to an economy based on the services, tourism, or industry. Increasing development pressures in Rabun County will speed the rate of farmland conversion.

There are a number of options available to the county concerning the conversion of farmland. First, the county can do nothing. This is not recommended because of the increased hazard of flooding associated with development of flood prone areas, the eradication of habitat, and the loss of an economic sector and its cultural significance. Farmland can be protected to some extent through incentives offered to agricultural landowners. These incentives can include measures such as updating existing tax incentives. Lowering the standards for the agricultural conservancy program would allow more landowners to participate and preserve their property. The county can also safeguard agricultural landowners by supporting the purchase of agricultural easements and by providing protection from nuisance lawsuits. The final option for the protection of agricultural lands in Rabun County is to develop ordinances that regulate the development of agricultural lands throughout the county. Offering incentives to farmers is the recommended method for protecting agricultural lands in Rabun County.

***Sensitive Plants and Animals***

Rabun County is home to numerous species of plants and animals, which are classified by the Federal government as endangered or threatened. Some of the species are endangered nationwide and/or statewide, while others are limited to regions and even individual counties. Various environment watchdog groups concerned with the continued over-harvesting of plants for medicinal use have also created "At Risk" or "To Watch" categories specifically for plants that are often harvested for the commercial herb market. While many of these plants are abundant locally, continued over-harvesting and environmental pressures on wild populations could cause their

status to become threatened or endangered. State and Federal legislation relating to endangered plants and animals include the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the State Wild Flower Preservation Act of 1973, and the Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973.

The following list includes all plant and animal species that are classified as endangered, threatened or unusual, and are protected by State or Federal legislation. These species either reside or could reside in the County. "Endangered species" refers to any resident species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its habitat range. "Threatened species" refers to any resident species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its habitat range.

***Protected Plant Species***

Carex amplisquama: Fort Mountain Sedge - Threatened

Habitat: Found in dry, rocky, thin woods at high elevations.

Carex manhartii: Bryson: Manhart Sedge - Threatened

Habitat: Found at middle elevations (2,000-4,000 ft.) in slightly acidic to circumneutral soils supporting cove hardwoods of basswood, yellow buckeye, and silverbell.

Carex misera: Buckley: Wretched Sedge - Threatened

Habitat: Restricted to rocky crevices at high elevation on mountain balds.

Cymophyllus fraseri: Fraser Sedge- Threatened

Habitat: Found in moist, mixed hardwood - hemlock ravines, usually with a dense, evergreen heath understory. In Georgia, the heath understory consists of mountain laurel and/or rosebay rhododendron.

Cypripedium acaule: Pink Lady's-slipper, Moccasin flower - Unusual

Habitat: Found in acid soils of pinelands, upland woods with pine, occasionally on the edges of rhododendron thickets, and in mountain bogs.

Cypripedium calceolus var. parviflorum: Small Yellow Lady's-slipper-Unusual

Habitat: Occurs infrequently in rich deciduous woods and is known to exist in five Georgia counties.

Cypripedium calceolus var. pubescens: Yellow Lady's-slipper - Unusual

Habitat: Primarily found in rich, moist, hardwood coves and forests.

Helonias bullata: Swamp Pink- Threatened

Habitat: Found in coldwater seepage swamps on the Blue Ridge (mountain bogs) with purple pitcher plant, red maple, mountain laurel, Carolina sheep laurel, rosebay rhododendron, and thickets of tag alder and peat moss.

Hydrastis canadensis: Goldenseal - Endangered

Habitat: Found in rich woods and cove forests in the mountains, particularly in deciduous woods with circumneutral to basic soils.

Isotia medeoloides: Small Whorled Pogonia- Threatened

Habitat: Found in partially shaded gaps in mixed deciduous-conifer woods with an open understory and sparse herbaceous layer. Red maple, chestnut, oak, tulip tree, and either white pine or Virginia pine are dominant canopy species. Lowbush blueberry is common in the understory. Indian cucumber-root and New York fern are common herbaceous associates.

Lindernia saxicola: False Pimpernel - Endangered

Habitat: Found in rock crevices, often inundated, near Tallulah Falls.

Lysimachia faseri: Fraser Loosestrife- Rare

Habitat: Moist, open, gravel bars and stream banks; edges of sandstone and granite outcrops

Nestronia umbellula: Nestronia, Indian Olive, Conjurer's Nut - Threatened

Habitat: Primarily found in dry, open, upland forest of mixed hardwood and pine.

Platanthera integrilabia: Monkey Faced Orchid- Threatened

Habitat: Found in red maple-blackgum swamps, along sandy, damp, stream margins, or on seepy, rocky, thinly vegetated slopes. Common associates include green woodland orchid, white violet, cowbane, and grass-of-Parnassus. The typical habitat is a seasonally wet, perched, sandy swamps near a spring dominated by red maple, black gum or swamp tupelo.

Rhus michauxii: False Poison Sumac- Endangered

Habitat: Found on the Piedmont Plateau in rocky, open woods, especially in soils high in magnesium, also on sand hills of the Inner Coastal Plain.

Sanguisorba Canadensis: Canadian Burnet- Threatened

Habitat: Found in wet meadows, moist cliff ledges, and along open stream banks. Sometimes associated with pitch pine in near neutral soils.

Sarracenia purpurea: Flytrap, Indian Pitcher, Northern Pitcher plant - Endangered

Habitat: Found in sphagnum bogs, often in laurel and rhododendron thickets and in wet pineland savannahs.

Senecio millefolium: Blue Ridge Golden Ragwort - Threatened

Habitat: Restricted to rock outcrops at high elevations.

Shortia galacifolia: Oconee-Bells, One-Flower Coltsfoot, Shortia - Endangered

Habitat: Found in woods along mountain streams, usually growing under rosebay and mountain laurel.

Trillium persistens: Persistent Trillium - Endangered

Habitat: Restricted to the Tallulah-Tugaloo River system, where it is typically found on steep slopes growing under rhododendrons in mixed pine-hemlock-hardwood forests.

A number of other protected plant species may be found in Rabun County. The Louise Gallant Herbarium, which is maintained by Rabun Gap Nacoochee School, conducts ongoing floristic surveys and has identified approximately 1,000 plant species in Rabun County. Table 6-4 identifies additional protected species that have been identified by the herbarium.

**TABLE 6-4**

| Species | Common Name | Legal Status |
|---|---|---|
| Calystegia sericata (House) Bell | Silky Bindweed | SC |
| Carex scoparia Schkuhr ex Willd. | Sedge | SC |
| Comptonia peregrina (L.) Coult | Sweet Fern | SC |
| Dryopteris goldiana (Hooker) A. Gray | Goldie's Wood Fern | SC |
| Gentiana decora Pollard | Gentian | SC |
| Leucothoe recurva (Buckely) Gray | Fetterbush | SC |
| Lycopodium clavatum L. | Running Clubmoss | SC |
| Lycopodium tristachyum Pursh | Ground Cedar | SC |
| Panax quinquefolius L. | Ginseng | SC |
| Sarracenia purpurea L. | Northern Pitcher Plant | GE |
| Trichomanes boschianuim Strum. | Appalachian Filmy Fern | SC |
| Tsuga caroliniana Engelm. | Carolina Hemlock | SC |
| Legal Status: GE-endangered, GU-Unusual, SC-Special Concern | | |

While significant shelter is provided for protected species through existing State and Federal legislation, Rabun County and its municipalities should support the efforts of community groups and citizens to identify and catalog the existence of additional species throughout the County. Specific colonies of endangered, threatened and unusual plants, and habitats of animals, should be set aside for protection as they are identified. In addition, the city and county governments should take steps to educate citizens about the importance of protecting and preserving these plants. In addition, illegal collection of plants within National Forest areas should be reported. Many populations of rare, threatened and endangered plants have dwindled significantly due to illegal plant collection in Rabun County. The article, *Preliminary Results of a Floristic Survey of Rabun County, Georgia* provides a description of the numerous plant communities in Rabun County. General categories of these communities are:

The Chestnut or Oak-Chestnut community is a forest located on moderate elevations with dry slopes and ridges at elevations between 1,300 and 4,500 feet. The chestnut blight has changed these forests from their original composition; oak and hickory trees with an understory of rhododendron and azaleas now dominate this forest type.

The Oak and Oak-Pine Communities occupy moderate elevations of 1,600 to 3,500 feet, with dry slopes and ridges. Oak, pine, and hickory trees with an understory of heath, sourwood, and black gum are common in this community.

Mixed Mesophytic Communities, or Cove Hardwoods, are forests of moderate elevations that are commonly found in coves and moist lower slopes with a northern exposure. The canopy of the Cove Hardwoods can be highly varied because of a large number of tree species supported in this forest type: buckeye, maple, and poplar trees are common.

Balds are treeless areas on high elevation ridgelines and mountaintops. The heath bald or shrub bald, is dominated by dense rhododendron thickets, are the most common form of bald found in Rabun County.

Cliffs and Gorge Walls are areas with vertical cliffs, which are either dry and exposed, or wet and shaded. These cliffs and walls are primarily found along the Blue Ridge, Tallulah Gorge, and Chattooga Gorge. A number of distinctive plant species are found in this unique setting.

Mountain Bogs are a fragile environment that is commonly found near the headwaters at the head of valleys. This wet, boggy habitat supports many plant species currently listed as threatened or endangered. Discussion in the Wetlands section provides additional information on the Mountain Bog.

The Mountain River and Flood Zone community includes the Chattooga and Tallulah Rivers. Vegetation in this area develops on rocky or gravely river margins or islands. These zones are usually dominated by alders.

Because of their unique characteristics, Disturbed Areas are described as their own community. Disturbed areas include roadsides, power line cuts, fields, lawns, and other areas that receive constant disturbance by man. Weedy and invasive species that thrive in these areas include various brambles (blackberry, raspberry, etc.), privet, kudzu and honeysuckle.

***Protected Animal Species***

US- Indicates species with federal status (Protected, Candidate, or Partial Status)

GA- Indicates Georgia protected species

Aneides aeneus Green Salamander: GA

Habitat- Moist rock crevices and the canopies of trees in hardwood forests.

Corynorhinus rafinesquii Rafkensque's Big-eared Bat: GA

Habitat- Pine forests, hardwood forests, caves, abandoned buildings.

Cryptobranchus alleganeinsis Hellbender: US

Habitat- Clear, cool, mountain streams and rivers with large rocky substrates.

Glyptemys muhlenbergii Bog Turtle: US

Habitat- Mountain bogs; wet meadows; edges of mountain streams.

Notropis hypsilepis Highscale Shiner GA

Habitat- Flowing areas of small to large streams over sand or bedrock substrates.

Notropis photogensis Silver Shiner: GA

Habitat- Large creeks to small rivers in riffles to flowing pools over firm substrates.

Notropis scepticus Sandbar Shiner: GA

Habitat- Large streams to medium-sized rivers in flowing pools over sandy to rocky substrates.

Phenacobius crassilabrum Fatlips Minnow: GA

Habitat- Riffle areas in small to medium rivers.

Tamiasciurus hudsonicus Red Squirrel: US

Habitat- High-elevation pine or mixed hardwood forests.

Additional endangered animals that may reside in the County include the Bald Eagle, Cougar, Indiana Bat, Peregrine Falcon, Olive Darter, and Bachman's Warbler.

***Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas***

***Forest Service***

Rabun County has an abundance of parks, recreation, and conservation areas, primarily because of its scenic beauty and forest resources. As stated previously, 63% of the land in the County is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Many hiking trails, camping areas, and trout streams are open to public use. Renowned trails include the Bartram Trail and the Appalachian Trail. The forest is visited by hundreds of thousands of nature and outdoor lovers each year. The Tallulah Ranger District office is located on U.S. 441 just south of downtown Clayton. The office is large enough to include interpretive exhibits, films, and a book and map shop. The Ranger's Station is public relations oriented and provides an abundance of information to aid tourists in discovering the natural beauty of the National Forest.

Because much of Rabun County is under the management of the Forest Service, a closer look at Forest Service policy is warranted. The Forest Service is the sole manager of lands classified as National Forest. This Plan makes no recommendations or inferences towards the management of Forest Service system lands. Instead, this section identifies the different roles of the Forest Service throughout Rabun County so that the county and its municipalities can blend their management strategies with those of the Forest Service.

The Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest guides all natural resource management activities to meet the objectives of Federal law, regulations, and policy. However, the Forest Plan has no effect on private, state, or Georgia Power properties. The Forest Plan employs an adaptive management approach, which uses scientific knowledge and experience to progress towards ecological and socioeconomic objectives in a manner that allows assumptions to be tested and adjustments to be made as knowledge is gained. The Forest Plan is structured with two levels of direction that generally increase in degree of constraint from the first to second level. The land area to which the levels apply generally decrease from first to second level. The first level is a forestwide direction that usually applies at the geographic scale of the entire Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, although some scales such as the ecological section unit or Forest specific directions may be specifically written. The second level is an individual management prescription (MRx) direction. The individual management prescription applies to specific land areas in which the prescription will take place. Both levels contain management direction that consists of goals, objectives, and standards. Goals provide direction for a program such as recreation or wildlife, objectives identify the steps taken to achieve the goals, and standards are used to limit type, timing, intensity, method, location, and so on of actions taken to reach an objective.

It is important to consider both the forest-wide direction and the management prescription to understand the overall management strategies for any given land parcel. Along with the adaptive management approach used by the Forest Service, a system for public involvement is also used for decisions to be made about certain activities proposed by the National Forest, which compliments its adaptive management approach to issues.

Forest wide direction was established through the consideration of twelve issues associated to Southern Appalachian Forests that include:

- Terrestrial Plants and Animals and their Associated Habitats
- Threatened and Endangered and Sensitive/Locally Rare Species
- Old Growth
- Riparian Area Management, Water Quality, and Aquatic Habitats
- Wood Products
- Aesthetics/Scenery Management
- Recreation Opportunities/Experiences
- Roadless Areas/Wilderness Management
- Forest Health
- Special Areas and Rare Communities
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Access/Road Management (Travel Management)

Additional issues affecting the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests included:

- Chattooga River Watershed
- Red-cocked Woodpecker
- Recreational Gold Collecting
- Special Uses

Each classification of forest wide direction is also accompanied by management prescriptions, which apply, to various types of areas on the forests (Map 6-8). Lands assigned to the various prescriptions have different attributes that require a slightly different management emphasis. These differences are reflected in the management prescriptions applied to each area. Rabun County has approximately 24 different management prescriptions that are administered by the Forest Service. For a full understanding of the scope of the management of any given area, it is necessary to cross reference the management prescription with the associated forest-wide direction in the Forest

Plan. The following descriptions of the different management prescriptions only provides information on the emphasis of each prescription and is only provided as a brief overview of the current and projected management strategies that are implemented by the Forest Service. The Forest Plan should be referred to for the analysis and full descriptions of each management prescription.

**Custodial:** These areas are managed at a minimum level prior to disposal or land exchange. No expenditures are involved except those required by law or to protect human health or safety. No resource is emphasized.

**Designated Wilderness:** Allows ecological and biological processes to progress naturally with little to no human influence or intervention. Minimum impacts made by those who seek the wilderness as a special place offering opportunities to experience solitude and risk in as primitive surroundings as possible may occur.

**Recommended Wilderness Study Area:** Focuses on managing these areas to protect wilderness characteristics pending legislation as to their classification, and providing for existing uses where compatible with protecting wilderness character. No resources would be emphasized in these areas.

**Designated Wild River Segment:** These areas are congressionally designated corridors, and are managed to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of the river and its surroundings. The river will be preserved in a free-flowing condition for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Designated Recreational River Segment**: Congress designated these scenic river segments and their associated corridors as a part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. They are managed to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values that led to their designation. The river itself is preserved in a free-flowing condition for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of present and future generations. Recreation opportunities emphasize relatively low development levels.

**Designated Scenic River Segment:** Congress designated these recreational river segments and their associated corridors as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. They are managed to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values that led to their designation. The river itself is preserved in a free-flowing condition for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of present and future generations. A range of recreational opportunities is provided in this prescription area. These opportunities area characteristic of, and in harmony with, the natural setting of the individual river segments.

**Recommended Wild River Segment:** The streams that are listed in this management prescription are recommended for further study for their suitability for possible designation of Wild River. They are managed to protect and perpetuate the outstandingly remarkable values that qualifies them for further study. The streams would be preserved in a free-flowing condition for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Recommended Scenic River:** The streams that are listed in this management prescription are recommended for further study for their suitability for possible designation of Wild River. They are managed to protect and perpetuate the outstandingly remarkable values that qualifies them for further study. The streams would be preserved in a free-flowing condition for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Appalachian National Scenic Trail Corridor:** Management practices are designated to protect the A.T. experience, preserve and strengthen the role of volunteers and volunteer organizations, provide opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation experiences, and provide for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural and cultural qualities of the land through which the A.T. passes. Lands adjoining the prescription area seen from the A.T. will be managed for multiple use under the provisions of this plan, in a manner, which will reasonably harmonize with and be complementary to the A.T. experience.

**Botanical-Zoological Area:** The emphasis of the Botanical-Zoological Area is to serve as a network of core areas for conservation of significant elements of biological diversity. They are for the purpose of; (a) perpetuating or increasing the numbers of existing individual plant or animal species that are of national, regional, or state significance as identified on Threatened/Endangered Species lists; and/or (b) to perpetuate plant and animal communities that are unique on National Forest at the scale of their ecological section or subsection unit but not rare at regional scale.

**Scenic Area:** Scenic areas are managed to protect and enhance the outstanding natural beauty, special ecological features, watershed integrity, mature forest habitat, scenic recreation opportunities, and other distinctive values for which they were selected. Forest health is maintained to protect the values for which the area was established, including scenery and recreation.

**Regional Forester Designated Scenic Areas (Pre-1985):** Scenic areas designated by the Regional Forester are managed to protect and enhance the outstanding natural beauty, special ecological features, watershed integrity, mature forest habitat, scenic recreation opportunities, and other distinctive values for which they were designated. Forest health is maintained to protect the values for which the area was established, including scenery and recreation.

**Regional Forester Designated Outstandingly Remarkable Streams:** River/stream segments and associated corridors are managed to protect and perpetuate their unique values. The recreational opportunities are characteristic of, and in harmony with, the natural setting of the individual river/stream segments. Management is similar to designated or recommended scenic segments of wild and scenic rivers.

**Natural Areas-Few Open Roads:** These areas provide recreation opportunities in isolated areas where users can obtain a degree of solitude and the environment can be maintained in a near-natural state. These areas are managed at overall low management intensity.

**Areas Managed to Restore or Maintain Old Growth Characteristics:** This prescription, along with other prescriptions that result in the same conditions, provides an overall network of large (2,500+ acres), medium (100 to 2,499 acres), and small (less than 100 acres) old growth blocks. The emphasis is forest restoration then maintenance of old-growth forests for their associated wildlife, botanical, recreational, scientific, educational, cultural, and spiritual values. Within this prescription, forest management activities are allowed for those associated values within the constraints of restoring or maintaining old-growth conditions.

**Dispersed Recreation Area:** These areas receive moderate to high recreation use and are managed to provide the public with a variety of recreation opportunities in a setting that provides quality scenery, numerous trails and limited facilities. The management emphasis is to improve the settings for non-formal outdoor recreation in manner that protects and restores the health, diversity, and productivity of the watersheds.

**Dispersed Recreation Area with Vegetation Management:** These areas receive moderate to high recreation use and are managed to improve the settings for non-formal outdoor recreation in a manner that protects and restores the health, diversity, and productivity of the watersheds where the areas area located. These areas will be suitable for timber production in order to maintain the long-term goals of a diverse and vigorous forest for scenery, recreation, and wildlife. Forest management operations focus on what is retained in the stand, not on wood fiber production. Forest management practices are modified to recognize the recreational and aesthetic values of these areas.

**Mix of Successional Forest Habitat:** In these areas, the emphasis will be to provide habitats associated with mid-to-late successional forest habitats. Management activities are designed to: (1) retain a forested canopy across at least 50 percent of the prescription area, (2) maintain or enhance hard and soft mast production, (3) increase vegetative diversity (structural and spatial), and (4) limit motorized access across the prescription area.

**Forest Interior, Mid-to-Late Successional Forest Habitats:** The emphasis is on providing optimal to suitable habitat for a variety of plant and animal populations associated with mid-to-late successional deciduous forest habitat, while maintaining habitat for forest interior species. Management activities are designed to maintain forest cover over more than 70 percent of the prescription area; increase vertical vegetative diversity (canopy, sub-canopy, shrub, and herbaceous layers all present and fairly well developed); maintain hard and soft mast production; provide a dispersed system of permanent and transitory openings; control motorized access across the prescription areas; and minimize habitat fragmentation from significant linear rights-of-way.

**High Elevation, Early-Successional Habitat:** Sustain a distribution of early-successional grass/shrub and seedling/sapling habitat in high elevations (3,000 feet and higher). These areas will be managed to create and maintain a structurally diverse landscape with a mix of forest successional conditions.

**Watershed Restoration Area:** Management emphasis would be on improving conditions where past land uses have degraded water quality or soil productivity. The long-term goal of these watersheds is to showcase restored and resilient watersheds where proper multiple use management practices are applied. When this goal is achieve, these watersheds are allocated to a different management prescription.

**Rare Communities:** Rare communities are assemblages of plants and animal that occupy a small portion of the landscape, but contribute significantly to plant and animal diversity. They generally are limited in number of occurrences, are small in size, and have relatively discrete boundaries. Rare communities, wherever they occur on the forest, will be managed under this prescription to ensure their contribution to meeting goals for community diversity, endangered and threatened species recovery, and species viability. All known rare community sites are allocated to this prescription. As new rare community sites are found, they will be added to this prescription without plan amendment, unless such additions would result in large shifts in land allocation or expected benefits and outputs.

**Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to their Ecological Potential:** The purpose of this prescription is the restoration of historical plant associations and their ecological dynamics to ecologically appropriate locations. Focus is on: (1) communities in decline, (2) communities converted from historic composition by land uses, (3) communities on ecologically appropriate sites but unable to maintain themselves, and (4) communities infrequent on national forest but not regionally rare. Suitable-to-optimal habitats to support populations of the plant and animal species associated with these communities will also be maintained.

**Riparian Corridors:** Riparian Corridors are managed to retain, restore and/or enhance the inherent ecological processes and functions of the associated aquatic, riparian, and upland components within the corridor. The Riparian Corridor prescription differs from other prescriptions in that this prescription is embedded within each of the other management prescriptions; it does not stand-alone. The Riparian Corridor prescription must be identified and considered whenever any of the other management prescriptions are to be implemented at the project/site specific level. The Protected Rivers section of this plan also describes the classification and implementation of the Riparian Corridor prescription.

**Remote Backcountry Recreation -Few Open Roads:** These lands are managed to provide users with a degree of solitude and a semi-primitive experience in large remote areas that still allow the use of limited public motorized access on existing, open motorized roads. Areas will be 2,500 acres or greater in size unless adjacent to a prescription that also provides a semi-primitive experience.

***State Parks***

**Moccasin Creek State Park**: Moccasin State Park is located 17 miles west of Clayton on Lake Burton, and offers fishing, swimming, picnicking and camping. The park consists of 32 acres with 52 campsites.

**Black Rock Mountain State Park:** This Park is the highest State Park in Georgia. Located just west of Mountain City, the Park is known for its 360-degree views of surrounding areas. Six overlooks, ten miles of trails, and a 17-acre lake provide opportunities for nature lovers. Facilities available include a welcome center, rental cabins, RV hook ups, tent sites and picnic shelters

**Tallulah Gorge State Park:** Governor Zell Miller designated The Tallulah River and Gorge as a State Conservation Park. The State Parks Department has developed the park to provide amenities for visitors, including the Jane Hurt Yarn Interpretive Center. This 15,000 square foot interpretive center opened in 1996 and features displays on the history of the area, wildlife, and other local and regional information.

The Tallulah Gorge is open to private boaters on specific release weekends, which are typically the first two weekends in April and the first three weekends in November. Fine-tuning of the water releases and subsequent boating activities in the Tallulah River gorge are currently underway. Current water releases vary. Saturday releases are 500 cfs, while Sunday discharges are 700 cfs. These water releases have been well received by the whitewater community, and a small festival has been created for whitewater enthusiasts during release weekends. There is some pressure to allow whitewater rafting in the river, but many feel that this would spoil the river's character and would not be an appropriate use. Safety considerations are a factor, as access to the area is limited. It is extremely difficult

for rescue parties to reach the gorge bottom and bring an injured person out. Helicopters are even reluctant to venture into the gorge.

Water releases through Tallulah Gorge for aesthetic purposes are also scheduled during weekends from late April through late May, every weekend in September, and eight dates scattered throughout the month of October. The Chamber of Commerce promotes water releases for both aesthetic and recreational purposes and points out that it also attracts tourist that are not necessarily involved with whitewater activities. There is no doubt that the Tallulah Gorge Park will bring many more visitors to Rabun County. This tourist market must be accommodated and planned for.

***Wilderness Areas***

Two wilderness areas are located in Rabun County, and constitute a combined total of nearly 5,500 acres.

**Ellicot Rock Wilderness:** The Ellicot Rock Wilderness was designated in 1975, and now contains approximately 8,300 acres between Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Ellicot Rock occupies 2,021 acres in northeast Rabun County. This area is known for its beautiful stretches along the Chattooga River and dense white pine and hemlock forests.

**Southern Nantahala Wilderness:** The Southern Nantahala Wilderness is located in the extreme northwest corner of Rabun County. The Southern Nantahala Wilderness, which was established in 1984, covers a total of 23,473 acres between Georgia and North Carolina. In Rabun County, the wilderness covers 3,370 acres. Four miles of the Appalachian Trail provide the only developed access to the Georgia portion of the Southern Nantahala Wilderness, which makes this one of the most isolated areas in Georgia.

***Wildlife Management Areas***

Contained within the National Forest are two Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs): Lake Burton WMA (12,600 acres), and Warwoman WMA (15,800 acres). WMAs are set aside by the federal government for game management and hunting. Rabun Bald, the second highest mountain in Georgia, is located in the Warwoman Wildlife Management Area. The summit can be reached only by trail.

***Recreation Areas and Lakes***

**Warwoman Dell Recreation Area:** The Warwoman Dell Recreation Area, located near the pristine Warwoman Wildlife Management Area, offers picnic areas and hiking trails. One of the trails leading from Warwoman Dell goes to the Black Diamond Railroad tunnel, which was constructed before and after the Civil War, but was never completed.

The County contains four significant lakes: Tallulah Lake, Lake Rabun, Lake Burton, and Seed (Nacoochee) Lake, all of which are owned and managed by the Georgia Power Company. The lakes are excellent recreation areas. Activities on the lakes include fishing, water skiing, and boating.

**Lake Burton:** Lake Burton is fed by the Tallulah River, covers 2,775 miles, and has 62 miles of shoreline. The lake is formed by the 128 foot tall Burton Dam, which was constructed in 1919 to generate hydroelectric power. Recreational opportunities on the lake include fishing, swimming, and boating. Jones Bridge Recreation Area is located on the north end of the lake and provides open space for outdoor recreation and picnic areas. Timpson Beach is located on the southeast side of Lake Burton and offers picnic facilities and restrooms along with a beach. Moccasin Creek State Park is located on the west side of Lake Burton and provides facilities including a boat ramp, fishing pier, and handicap access. Moccasin Creek is also described in the State Parks section.

**Seed Lake:** This relatively small reservoir is located between Lake Burton and Lake Rabun, on the Tallulah River. Nacoochee Dam was constructed in 1926 for hydroelectric power and is 75 feet tall and 490 feet in length. The only recreational facility on Seed Lake is Lake Seed Campground, which offers camping, a beach, picnic tables, and a fishing pier.

**Lake Rabun:** This reservoir is created by the 108 ft tall Mathis Dam, which began operation in 1924. Facilities on this lake include Rabun Beach and Nacoochee Park. These facilities both offer picnic facilities, fishing, and restrooms. Rabun Beach, which is managed by the Forest Service, also includes handicap access, a boat ramp, and overnight camping.

**Tallulah Falls Lake:** Constructed in 1913, Tallulah Dam is stands at 126 feet tall and is used to produce hydroelectric power. Recreational facilities on this lake include Terrora Park, Terrora Campground, and Tallulah Point. Terrora Park includes picnic tables, handicap access, restrooms, beach, and bank fishing. Terrora Campground offers 50 campsites, a pavilion, play area, and restrooms. Finally, Tallulah Point offers picnic facilities and restrooms.

***Scenic Trails***

**Appalachian Trail***:* The Appalachian Trail is a National Scenic Trail that begins on Springer Mountain in Georgia and extends 2,174 miles to Mount Katadin in Maine, and was designated as the first National and Scenic Trail by the National Scenic Trails Act of 1968. Although this is a long distance trail, it is most commonly used by day, weekend, or other short distance hikers. In Rabun County, the trail roughly follows the Tennessee Valley

Divide from the intersection of Rabun, Habersham, and Towns County to Black Mountain (located slightly north of route 76).

**Bartram Trail:** The Bartram Trail is a designated National Recreation Trail. The trail is the approximate route taken by the explorer and botanist William Bartram during his travels of the southeast in the 18th century. The Bartram Trail covers 37 miles in Rabun County and parallels the Chattooga River, then gains elevation on the way to Rabun Bald, and finally continues to its terminus on North Carolina's Cheoah Bald.

***Scenic Views and Sites***

In a place as beautiful as Rabun County, there are more scenic sites than one can mention. Waterfalls, mountainscapes, and lake settings are countless. Citizens have identified a number of sites that are worthy of special attention. One site that has been acknowledged is Mud Creek Falls, which can be viewed while driving up to Sky Valley. These falls are privately owned but should be protected because of their strategic location and scenic quality.

Also significant is the Rabun Gap "view shed" which opens up as you approach it, offering a landscape of farmland, mountains, and historic buildings. The County should ensure, through development regulations, that the visual quality of this area not be altered. Industrial development can be located in the gap, but should be "tucked away" from the highway as it is now. Rabun Gap is famous for its picturesque beauty, and for those who do not travel into the more remote mountain or lake areas, it may be one of their most memorable experiences in the County.

In addition to the sites mentioned above, the "Southern Highroads Scenic Loop" is an ongoing cooperative project between Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The Southern Highroads Development Association markets the scenic drive to bring economic opportunities to adjacent mountain communities. Additional plans include a system of interlocking trails, brochures, and visitor information centers. Those involved with development of the scenic loop would like to see it designated as a Scenic Highway by the federal government. The route would then be labeled a Scenic Drive on road maps and in atlases. For more information regarding the Southern Highroads Scenic Loop and related projects, please refer to the Tourism section of the Economic Development Element.

The draw of Rabun County's viewsheds is significant and worthy of protection for both environmental and economic reasons. The protection of the scenic quality of the County both for visitors to the County as well as for its residents will ensure that future improvements are compatible with existing land forms, particularly ridgelines

and views of the County's many unique geologic features and the existing landscape of the County's mountainside areas. Rabun County and its municipalities need to consider the overall scenic qualities of the county from a viewshed standpoint as development continues. Viewshed protection can come in a number of forms. Unregulated opportunities include developing "viewshed designated roads", planting trees to block blemishes to existing views, and maintaining existing openings along designated public roads to preserve views. Consideration in the development review process for design and landscaping to accommodate viewshed needs and the promotion of architectural designs that are compatible with hillside terrain and minimize visual impacts can be incorporated into unregulated measures for viewshed protection. Finally, regulations that provide hillside development standards and minimize cut-and-fill operations

Maintaining and improving the natural and scenic beauty of Rabun County is an important step in preserving the character of this area. County-wide clean-up efforts are organized through adopt-a-road and Project Ryan (an after school program). Other efforts throughout the county include the "adopt a highway" program and annual lake cleanup programs supported by the Lake Burton Civic Association, Lake Rabun Association, and Georgia Power. Concerned citizens in Rabun County are also establishing a series of land stewardship training programs for Rabun County citizens. These workshops will provide training on citizen-based conservation, land use planning techniques, and methods for guiding elected officials. The Plan supports these local efforts to improve the county’s natural resources and improve the quality of living in Rabun County.

***Ecological Integrity***

Ecological integrity is a concept that needs to be considered for the future of Rabun County's natural systems. Ecosystems have integrity when their native components are intact. These components include physical elements, biodiversity, and ecosystem processes. The physical elements are composed of soils, rocks, and water. Biodiversity can be described as the composition and abundance of species and communities in an ecosystem, while ecosystem processes are the engines that make ecosystems work, such as fire, flooding, and predation. Preserving ecological integrity addresses the maintenance or restoration of the diversity of genes, species, and communities native to the region. Ecological integrity must be assessed and understood at a landscape scale. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that Rabun County must be managed in a larger context than its own boundaries. Integrating the County into its surrounding natural landscapes and ecosystems is necessary to sustain and promote diversity and ecosystem health, instead of fragmenting individual areas into protected islands.

Each section of the Natural Resources element provides insight into the condition of the County's specific resource and indicates some broad trends in the overall ecological integrity within the county. Nonetheless, the county should support additional research activities from the site-specific scale to regional scale to establish the overall interconnectedness and linkages associated with ecological integrity. Maintaining conductive relations with both the Forest Service and State Park Service is necessary to ensure ecological integrity is preserved in the future

***Needs Assessment:***

Rabun County and its municipalities are not sufficiently staffed or funded to adequately assess site development limitations, code violations, and other associated issues.

Increasing funding for code enforcement programs in the county and its municipalities can be accomplished through permitting fees.

Rabun County and its participating municipalities have a number of existing codes. Enforcement of existing codes is essential to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of area citizens and for the protection of the County's natural resources. A number of options for code enforcement exist:

- Unincorporated Rabun County and each municipality within the county can all maintain their own, individual, code enforcement programs.
- Unincorporated Rabun County can maintain its own code enforcement program and the cities can form a joint enforcement program.
- Both unincorporated Rabun County and its cities can all participate in a joint enforcement program.
- Code enforcement can be contracted to a private enforcement or engineering firm for the county and/or its cities.

Development and enforcement of exact guidelines for the variance process is necessary to implement existing codes.

The type and rate of development throughout Rabun County is negatively impacting the County's natural resources. Opportunities exist to accommodate growth while improving the natural resources of Rabun County.

Alternatives to standard developments:

- Planned Unit Development (PUD): This subdivision type provides contiguous open space and natural areas by efficiently clustering development on the less vulnerable parts of the site. Permanent protection of the open spaces typically depends on a use of a conservation easement.
- Low Impact Development (LID): Implements storm water management tools that encourage water to soak into the ground or be used by plants as it would under natural conditions. LID incorporates rain gardens, green roofs, and pervious alternatives to pavement into development projects.

Promoting responsible development:

- Incentive Zoning: A tool that communities can employ to gain qualities it wants such as natural resource conservation or energy/resource efficiency in exchange for something the private developer would like, such as higher density.
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): A way of regulating land use that involves shifting the location of development to the areas most suitable for it, while maintaining the community's overall number of housing units. TDR programs create 'sending areas'(to be preserved) and 'receiving areas', which have increased densities. Developers purchase the development rights from the sending area and use them to increase existing or planned densities in the receiving areas.

The Department of Natural Resources provides recommended criteria for mountain protection. The governments within the County that are affected by the Mountain Protection Act are unincorporated Rabun County, Sky Valley, Dillard, Mountain City, and Clayton. Adoption and enforcement of standards at least as stringent as those set forth by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is mandatory for the protection of these areas. Further, there is a need for Rabun County and its cities to adopt protection measures above the minimum requirements established by the DNR.

Rabun County’s mountain ridgelines are among the most valuable and fragile natural resource in the County. The wise use and protection of these resources are essential to maintaining the high quality of life in the County. The County’s mountain ridgelines provide substantial environmental, recreational, and aesthetic benefits to Rabun County. Rabun County thus has a strong interest in protecting these resources for the use and enjoyment of current residents and visitors, as well as for future generations. While current regulations applicable to land development in the County, including both state and local regulations, offer some degree of protection to the mountain ridgelines and surrounding lands, additional protection is required and desired to specifically prevent the

degradation or destruction of these critical resources. Rabun County must identify and implement measures and legal mechanisms intended to better protect mountain ridgelines in the County from encroachment by uses, development intensities, and structures that are inconsistent with and threaten the environmental quality, scenic value, recreational value, economic value, and desirability of such resources.

Development on steep slopes (slopes of 25% or greater) both above and below the elevation for mountain protection (2,200 ft) has a strong negative impact on the natural resources of Rabun County and its municipalities. Mountain streams are especially susceptible to contamination by siltation due to erosion. The provisions provided in the Erosion and Sedimentation Act should be rigorously enforced in the future, as stream pollution has become a problem in many parts of the County. It is also recommended that the County and all of its cities adopt and enforce additional measures to minimize the negative impacts of development on all steep slopes in unincorporated Rabun County and its municipalities. Protection measures for steep slopes may be incorporated into the mountain protection ordinance or remain a separate regulation.

Protection for the streams that flow through Rabun County and its participating municipalities is necessary to maintain ecological integrity, the quality of public drinking water supplies, and overall health and welfare of Rabun County's citizens. Recommended stream protection measures include:

- Enforcement of provisions established in the Erosion and Sedimentation Act.
- Extension of riparian buffers to a minimum of 100 ft for all streams and their tributaries in Rabun County and its municipalities.
- Development and enforcement of a watershed protection ordinance.
- Development and enforcement of stormwater management regulations.
- Review and revision of the building permitting process.

Development of a watershed protection ordinance is recommended to maintain the health and welfare of Rabun County citizens and to provide sustainable environmental conditions within the county. Various forms of watershed protection ordinances can be developed for Rabun County and its municipalities, and can be designed in conjunction with the provisions established through the Erosion and Sedimentation Act, DNR's Environmental Planning Criteria, and other protection measures. These ordinances may include the following:

- Density and built-upon area limitations, which may include buildings, pavement, gravel, etc.
- Overlay zones: Districts that overlap areas with existing regulations to provide greater protection for critical areas.

- Watershed development plans for land disturbing activities within the watershed area.
- Identification of prohibited uses.
- Runoff control methods.
- Natural infiltration
- Permanent wet detention ponds
- Permanent retention ponds
- Experimental filter basins
- Other BMP's

Uncontrolled stormwater drainage or discharge carry pollutants and nutrients into receiving waters, increase the likelihood of flooding, and may result in state and federal fines, increases in water treatment costs, and the endangerment of public and private property and human life. Stormwater management regulations should require construction of drainage systems that aesthetically and functionally approximate natural systems, establish provisions for the long-term responsibility for and maintenance of structural stormwater facilities and nonstructural stormwater management practices, and establish administrative procedures for the submission, review, approval, and disapproval of stormwater management plans.

Currently, many of the streams in Rabun County that flow through significant stretches of private lands do not meet or partially meet their water quality standards. The county and its participating municipalities should take advantage of funding opportunities provided by the federal and state government to address point and non-point source pollution, such as Section 319 of the Clean Water Act and EPA's TMDL program.

Rabun County’s lakes (specifically Lake Burton, Seed Lake, Lake Rabun. Lake Tallulah, and Tugalo Lake) and the surrounding lands are among the most valuable and fragile natural resources in the County. The wise use and protection of these resources are essential to maintaining the high quality of life in the County. These lakes provide substantial environmental, economic, recreational, and aesthetic benefits to Rabun County. Rabun County thus has a strong interest in protecting these resources for the use and enjoyment of current residents and visitors, as well as, for future generations. While current regulations applicable to land development in the County, including both state and local regulations, offer some degree of protection to the lakes and surrounding lands, additional protection is required and desired to specifically prevent the degradation or destruction of these critical resources. Rabun County must identify and implement measures and legal mechanisms intended to better protect Lake Burton, Seed Lake, Lake Rabun, Lake Tallulah, and Tugalo Lake and land located adjacent to and near such lakes from

encroachment by uses, development intensities, and structures that are inconsistent with and threaten the water and environmental quality, scenic value, recreational value, economic value, and desirability of such lake and adjacent land.

Future development of the Lake Rabun, Seed Lake and Lake Burton area is of concern due to the combination of both privately held lands and steep slopes. These two factors have the potential to lead to high levels of sedimentation and fecal coliform counts in the Tallulah River watershed. Protection of the lands located upstream of the Lake Rabun public supply water intake is recommended to maintain the quality of drinking water for the Clayton Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority. Though this area is not subject to DNR watershed criteria, and local governments are not required to legally adopt these criteria, failure to do so could lead to the degradation of public water supplies.

Currently, Rabun County, Mountain City, Clayton, Sky Valley and Tallulah Falls participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. The ordinances associated with the NFIP limit development within the 100-year floodplain to uses appropriate for flood areas and are sufficient to meet current needs. The county and its municipalities should monitor floodplains to ensure these sensitive habitat areas remain intact and the safety and welfare of the County's citizens is maintained.

Under definition of the Georgia Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act, the Chattooga River and a portion of the Tallulah River have been identified as Protected River Corridors. Only unincorporated Rabun County and the City of Tallulah Falls are affected by the Act. In compliance with the Act, affected municipalities should officially adopt DNR's protection criteria as part of this plan.

Currently, neither Rabun County nor its cities have ordinances that specifically address wetland protection. However, if significant wetlands are to be disturbed (i.e., discharge of fill into a wetland), the 404 permitting process is utilized. The 404 permitting process is currently effective for protecting larger wetlands, but efforts to preserve rare "mountain bogs" on private lands should be pursued. Plant collection, past livestock grazing, ATV use, and ditching have already disrupted many of these sensitive and unique natural communities.

The City of Tiger and unincorporated Rabun County contain significant groundwater recharge areas. While these areas are not heavily used, adoption of groundwater recharge protection standards at least as stringent as those outlined by the Department of Natural Resources should be developed and enforced to protect these resources in the future.

Agricultural areas, which are located primarily in floodplains, absorb rainwater and help replenish groundwater supplies and reduce flooding. Agricultural areas also enhance the quality and biological integrity of sensitive natural areas by acting as a buffer between development and natural areas. Conversion of farmland to other uses has been occurring in the County. Measures of protection should be established to preserve these agricultural areas. Some possibilities include:

- Revision of the farmland protection program
- Protection from nuisance lawsuits
- Purchase of agricultural conservation easements

Rabun County is home to many species of plants and animals that are classified by the Federal government as endangered or threatened. State and Federal legislation provides protection for endangered and threatened species. However, specific colonies of endangered, threatened and unusual plants, and habitats should be set aside for protection if they are identified. In addition, illegal collection of plants within National Forest areas should be reported. Several species of rare, threatened and endangered plants have dwindled significantly in number due to illegal plant collection. Further study and local protection of these plants may be necessary in the future.

Current parks, recreation, and conservation areas provide ample recreational opportunities for locals and visitors. However, management concerns will mount in the future due to increased use of these areas. Conflicts of interest associated with increased use of parks, recreation, and conservation areas will need to be planned for in the future by county, forest service, and state park officials.

A protection corridor for 441 should be developed due to the increased amount of growth that is expected in the future and the vulnerability of this corridor to environmental degradation because of the occurrence of high elevations, steep slopes, and threatened and protected waterways, such as Stekoa Creek, Little Tennessee River, and the Tallulah River, that all occur within a short distance from, or bisect this thoroughfare.

Similar protection corridors should also be established along route 76 and Warwoman Road as these locations continue to be expanded and adjacent lands developed. Both of these roads cross multiple tributaries of the National Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. This corridor would help alleviate the environmental threats to the Chattooga River, which include sedimentation and fecal coliform pollutants that are occurring mainly from tributaries in Rabun County, as well as preserving the increasingly rare agricultural lands and the scenic and historic qualities within these corridors.

## COMPREHNSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Resource | Type of Statement and Priority | Description | Rabun County | Sky Valley | Dillard | Mountain City | Clayton | Tiger | Tallulah Falls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Resources | Goal | To conserve the natural resources of the community and to provide a better living environment for residents and tourists of the county | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Natural Resources | Policy (C) | Increase the ability of the county and its cities to completely address permitting for site development, code enforcement, and associated duties by 2007. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Natural Resources | Policy (C) | Develop and enforce exact guidelines for the variance process. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Natural Resources | Policy (C) | Develop a community based quality growth commission to facilitate the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Natural Resources | Objective (F) | Review the permitting and varience process by 2007 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Water Supply Watersheds | Goal | To provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the public and a healthy economic climate concerning drinking water. | x | x | | | | | |

## COMPREHNSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Resource | Type of Statement and Priority | Description | Rabun County | Sky Valley | Dillard | Mountain City | Clayton | Tiger | Tallulah Falls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Water Supply Watersheds | Policy (C) | To encourage wise development in water supply watersheds | x | x | | | | | |
| Water Supply Watersheds | Objective (C) | To address watershed protection for the water intake on Lake Rabun and Lake Burton by 2008. | x | | | | | | |
| Protected Mountains | Goal | To protect the community, mountains, ridgetops, ground and surface water sources, and the soil against adverse land disturbing activities. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Protected Mountains | Policy (C) | Enforce provisions established through the Erosion and Sedimentation Act. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Protected Mountains | Policy (C) | Develop and enforce a Mountain Protection Ordinance that is inclusive of all areas located above 2,200 feet and all steep slopes (regardless of elevation) by 2006. | x | x | x | x | x | x | |

## COMPREHNSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Resource | Type of Statement and Priority | Description | Rabun County | Sky Valley | Dillard | Mountain City | Clayton | Tiger | Tallulah Falls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Protected Mountains | Objective (C) | Update and evaluate the Mountain Protection Ordinance by 2010 | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Watershed Protection | Goal | To protect river systems as they are of vital importance for habitat, the control of erosion and river sedimentation, and to help absorb flood waters. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Watershed Protection | Policy (C) | Develop and enforce a Watershed Protection Ordinance that provides additional protection for trout streams and all waters identified in the CWA's 303d and 305b listings, by 2006 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Watershed Protection | Objective (F) | Review the above-mentioned river Watershed Protection Ordinance by 2010. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Watershed Protection | Policy | Develop and enforce stormwater management regulations that compliment the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act by 2008. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

## COMPREHNSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Resource | Type of Statement and Priority | Description | Rabun County | Sky Valley | Dillard | Mountain City | Clayton | Tiger | Tallulah Falls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Watershed Protection | Objective (F) | Review the above mentioned stormwater management regulations by 2012. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Wetlands | Goal | To protect wetlands as they are of vital importance for habitat of threatened and endangered species | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Wetlands | Policy | To encourage educational awareness of the mountain bog. | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Flood Plains | Goal | To protect natural systems, developments, and communities located in floodplains. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Flood Plains | Policy (C) | Encourage the conservation and appropriate use of floodplains. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

## COMPREHNSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Resource | Type of Statement and Priority | Description | Rabun County | Sky Valley | Dillard | Mountain City | Clayton | Tiger | Tallulah Falls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flood Plains | Policy (C) | Monitor flood prone areas to ensure that current regulations continue to provide for the safety and welfare of area citizens. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Soils | Goal | To wisely use soils found in the county | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Soils | Policy (C) | To encourage county and city staff to apply information found in the Soil Survey to decisions regarding development and land use. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Soils | Policy (C) | To support the Health Department in enforcement of septic tank permitting regulations. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Steep Slopes | Goal | To protect the community, mountains, ridgtops, ground and surface water sources, and the land against adverse land disturbing activities on lands of greater than 25% slope. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

## COMPREHNSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Resource | Type of Statement and Priority | Description | Rabun County | Sky Valley | Dillard | Mountain City | Clayton | Tiger | Tallulah Falls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Steep Slopes | Policy (C) | To create awareness of better site design of new developments as it relates to maintaining the existence of natural drainage patterns. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Steep Slopes | Policy (C) | To develop and enforce an ordinance that includes development limitations on steep slopes by 2006 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Steep Slopes | Objective (F) | Update and evaluate the ordinance that includes development limitations on steep slopes by 2010 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Protected Plants and Animals | Goal | To protect Rabun County's biodiversity. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Protected Plants and Animals | Policy (F) | Develop environmental educational programs for citizens as well as city and county officials. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

## COMPREHNSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

| Resource | Type of Statement and Priority | Description | Rabun County | Sky Valley | Dillard | Mountain City | Clayton | Tiger | Tallulah Falls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scenic, Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas | Goal | To maintain and further develop the quality, quantity, and integrity of Rabun County's open areas. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Scenic, Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas | Policy (C) | Maintain conductive relations between citizens, city and county officials, and Forest Service and State Park Officials. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Scenic, Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas | Policy C) | Support community driven efforts to develop and maintain park, recreation, and conservation areas within the county. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Agricultural Lands | Goal | To maintain agricultural areas for their environmental qualities | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Agricultural Lands | Policy (F) | Provide support for the conservation of farmlands | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Priority Rankings: C-Current Priority, F-Future Priority | | | | | | | | | |

# CHAPTER 7

# HISTORY AND CULTURE ELEMENT

## *Introduction*

The people of Rabun County are blessed with a rich cultural heritage that enriches the lives of those lives of those who live and visit the area. In creating a picture of these two elements for this Comprehensive Plan, citizen volunteers realized what we are attempting to document is far more than a list of old buildings, cemeteries or civic organizations. Our history and culture are an ever-changing dynamic relationship between people who are here now, people who have been here in the past, and those who will come after us. Well-preserved buildings or archaeological sites only serve to remind us of life in other times.

This element provides many examples of places and buildings that demonstrate historical significance in our community. These places and buildings come alive when we recall or learn the stories and experiences of the people whose lives took place there.

Therefore, this element is also the preservation of the meaning behind the stories, ways of life, struggles and successes that occurred in these places that gives them meaning, something that is difficult to convey in the space of one survey. We are able to present most of the information here because the dedicated volunteers at the Rabun County Historical Society who are recording and maintaining the archives that reminds us of the county's history.

Another major source that preserves the essence of this region's history is the archive maintained by the Foxfire Foundation. The collection assembled by students of local schools includes thousands of photos, taped interviews, video recordings and slides that preserve the words of many Rabun County residents about their lives here during the past 100 years.

Rabun County has good reason to place great value on our historical and cultural resources. They contribute to the aesthetics and character of our community and can serve as important resources as we look for even more ways to strengthen the local economy. Rabun County is rich in historical sites. Many are endangered due to neglect or proposed developments.

The historic buildings and places here are a reminder of the stories that give meaning to our lives and deepen our appreciation for this place, and our role in creating the ongoing story of Rabun County. The new comprehensive land use plan must include adequate steps to ensure that sufficient resources are appropriated for active education about, as well as recognition and preservation of local history and culture.

***Historical Element***

***History of Rabun County***

Rabun County was created by an act of Legislature in December, 1819 and named for William Rabun, governor of Georgia from 1817 to 1819. Rabun County is located at the most extreme northeast corner of the state and is bordered on the north by North Carolina, and on the east by South Carolina. The most mountainous county in Georgia, it is part of the Appalachian Mountain Range. The highest point it the county is Rabun Bald at 4,711 feet above sea level. The Eastern Continental Divide runs through the county, and regional watersheds drain into both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

The earliest European settlers of Rabun County were the Scots and Irish. Like the Cherokee, these settlers built their homes of logs and practiced sustenance farming in isolated mountain coves. There is some evidence of small-scale plantation farming in the antebellum period around Rabun Gap and Dillard. It was one of five Georgia counties who did not secede from the Union during the War Between the States. Rabun County was an isolated community with a small population and very little economic development throughout most of the 19th century.

In the early 20th century, the face of the county began to change. Railroad lines, better roads, and a highway were built. Suddenly, remote areas of the county became accessible. The Tallulah Falls Railroad was established in 1882, bringing the first summer visitors into the area. Hotels, resorts and boarding houses were built throughout the county. Tallulah Falls became famous for its accommodations, entertainment and outdoor recreation. Unfortunately, a massive fire destroyed most of the buildings in Tallulah Falls in 1921. The railroad operated until the 1950s. Today the only existing railroad building is the station at Tallulah Falls, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

When logging became a major business in the area during the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Morse Brothers Lumber Company of Helen, Georgia built a logging railroad. It ran along the western edge of Rabun County and extended north to Tate City

(Towns County). The railroad ceased operations in 1935 after the county had been largely clear-cut. Most of the county was extensively logged during this period. Part of the present Highway 197 follows the route of this timbering railroad.

During the Great Depression, Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) road-building projects were established, employing many county residents and providing access to more remote parts of the county, including a road west over the mountains to Towns County.

In the 1950s, the north end of US Highway 441 was partially when a new highway was built straight through the center of the county. Many older Rabun County historical sites are visible along the route of what is now known as Old Highway 441.

A second major change came about with the establishment of the United States Forest Service early in the 20th century. The USFS purchased extensive tracts of land and today owns slightly more than 60 percent of the land in Rabun County.

A third major change also occurred early in the 20th century with the purchase by the Georgia Power Company of the entire Tallulah River basin in order to build an electrical power generators using the river water. When the great falls of the Tallulah were diverted and silenced, the resort town of Tallulah Falls declined.

Several damns were built creating Lakes Rabun, Burton, Tallulah, Tugalo and Seed. The new lakes covered some of the richest farmland in the county and forced the relocation of the entire community of Burton, the second largest in the County. The lakes fostered the establishment of many resorts, children's summer camps, fishing camps and summer homes along their shores. Today, the Georgia Power Company owns and controls 8 percent of the land in Rabun County.

***Inventory of Historical Buildings and Sites***

This element is comprised of three sections: inventory, assessment and recommendations. The inventory is a gathering of data for various types of physical resources; residential, commercial, industrial, public institutions, transportation, rural resources and archaeological. The assessment portion examines the inventory to determine current activities, areas of need as well as areas that are not in a state of need. The recommendation section outlines potential procedures for preserving the historical inventory and offers guidance designed to meet current and future needs.

The following list is of significant historic buildings, sites and structures found throughout Rabun County. The first section lists properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places while the second section lists buildings, structures and sites that are potentially eligible for listing. This chart is mapped out on the "Historic Resources Map" (Map 7-1)

***Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places:***

1. **The Hambidge Center Historic District:** The Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences is a retreat center for artists and scientists. Noted weaver, Mary Crovatt Hambidge, established it in 1934. Located on Betty's Creek Road, seven miles west of Dillard, this site was listed on the NRHP in 1982 and includes several historic buildings and a gristmill.

2. **Hoojah Branch Site:** This archaeological site contains remains of a Cherokee village settlement. It was listed on the NRHP in 1987. The exact location is not given to prevent the site from damage.
3. **Tallulah Falls Railroad Depot:** Located on the US 441. The Depot was built in 1914, replacing an earlier depot that had burned. This is the only remaining station from the once famous Tallulah Falls Railroad, which extended as far north as Franklin, North Carolina. The depot is now an arts and crafts cooperative and popular tourist attraction. The depot was listed on the NRHP in 1988.
4. **York House:** Located on York House Road, south of Dillard. This house was listed on the NRHP in 1992. The York House is a large two-story antebellum home, built in 1851. The original portion of the house is of log construction. In 1896, twenty-six rooms were added to the structure to create a hotel. Today, the York House is a popular bed and breakfast inn.
5. **Henry Kilby House:** Located on Patterson Gap Road, west of Dillard. The Henry Kilby House was listed on the NRHP in 2005. This is an original family farmhouse that has been restored to its original condition by the present owners. The Henry Kilby house was built in 1898.

***Other Significant Historic Buildings and Sites:***

These resources are not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but are considered eligible for future listing.

6. **Miller-Gibson-Fisher House**: Located at Wolf Fork Road and US 441, between Dillard and Mountain City. The Fisher home is often referred to as the "White House" because for years it was the only painted house in Rabun County. The home might have been built around 1828 by General Miller, an early Rabun County settler. Lumber to build the home was shipped by oxcart, from Augusta. Near the home is an old, hand-hewn smokehouse.
7. **Holden House:** Located in the city of Clayton on the corner of Church and Hamby Streets. This home represents one of the few remaining grand antebellum homes in Rabun County.
8. **Original Dillard House:** Located on the corner of Franklin Street and Old US 441 in Dillard, dates from the mid to late 19th century. William Franklin, the son of an early Rabun County settler, built this home before the Civil War. The original home was a plantation-plain type of house. When the railroad was built, the house was enlarged to accommodate visitors. Mr. and Mrs. Z. B. Dillard operated the "Dillard Inn" for many years. It was then turned over to other family members and renamed "Oak Lawn."

9. **Howell-Blalock Home Place:** Located at the corner of Bridge Creek Road and Syrup City Road in Tiger. This fine Victorian home has twelve-foot ceilings and a large porch and is situated on a beautifully maintained site.
10. **Fred Moss House:** Located on Highway 441 at the Habersham County line in Tallulah Falls. This is a beautifully restored Queen Anne style house, dating from the late 19th to early 20th century. According to residents, the house was a popular inn during the heyday of Tallulah Falls in the early part of the 20th century. It is now a restaurant known as "Isabelle's."
11. **The Rock House:** Located at the corner of Main Street and Savannah Streets in Clayton. The building was built during the WPA era (ca. 1934) and was renovated in 1993. Originally the building was known as the "Community House". Today it is used for community gatherings.
12. **The First United Methodist Church:** Located in Clayton. The church displays rock veneer work indigenous to Rabun County. The Church was constructed in 1923.
13. **Wolf Creek Baptist Church:** Located in the Wolf Creek Community. The church was built in 1904 and at one time served as a school for 37 students. The church features two entrances, one for men and one for women. The church is significant because it represents the remains of a once thriving community, which is now virtually extinct.
14. **Foxfire Center:** Located on Cross Street, one half mile east of Hwy 441 in Mountain City. The Foxfire Center includes a collection traditional Appalachian buildings including 12 historic log cabins. All of the cabins have been thoroughly researched, restored and are in excellent condition.
15. **Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School:** Located in Rabun Gap on Highway 441. The school, founded by Andrew J. Ritchie, was begun as a learning institution for entire families. The three main buildings of the school are built in the Colonial Revival Style and were constructed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The school has long been part of the cultural history of the County.
16. **Clayton's Historic Downtown:** Main Street, downtown Clayton. This area retains much of its historic integrity and character through the numerous residential and commercial buildings. These buildings date from the 19th century through the 20th century. Many of these buildings have played an important role in Rabun County history and are worthy of potential listings on the National Register of Historic Places.
17. **Lake Rabun Hotel:** This historic hotel built in 1922 is still in operation on the shores of Lake Rabun. It contains hand-made mountain laurel and rhododendron furniture circa 1929.

18. **Georgia Power Dams and Generating Stations:** Built in the early 1900's, these facilities were the major engineering accomplishments for hydroelectric plants, in particular the Mathis Dam and tunnel from Lake Rabun to Tallulah Falls Power Plant.

***Residential Resources***

Like the Cherokee who were the county's original residents, the first Europeans to settle in the region lived in hand-built log cabins. After the establishment of sawmills in the area, frame dwellings became more common.

A historic resource survey of extant buildings and structures was conducted in 1996. This survey identified a total of 242 resources. Of the 242 resources, 42 were identified as potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The resources within the city limits of Clayton are considered a potential NRHP district.

Sixty percent of the residential resources that currently exist in the county were built between 1900 and 1950. Side-gable bungalows were among the most common house types in Rabun County. In rural area, the I-house, central hall cottage and bungalows (front and side-gabled) are the most prevalent. There are approximately twice as many resources in the rural areas of the county than in the towns and cities. The most widely used building material is wood.

***Commercial Resources***

The main commercial area of Rabun County is downtown Clayton, the county seat. Many of these buildings played a role in city and county history. Central to the character of the downtown district is the Rock House, built in 1934 by the WPA and CCC. The 1926 Derrick Filling Station, now restored and rehabilitated as Prater's Main Street Books and the 1933 Derrick Ford Showroom, restored and rehabilitated as Butler Galleries, are examples of older buildings finding new uses. Other historic buildings include the 100-year-old Cannon Department Store building, the old Belk Building, the Old Clayton Inn (ca. 1947) and the Old Rabun County Courthouse, which was erected in 1879, has been moved twice. The oldest known building in the downtown area is the Old Tom Hamby Building, now Blalock Insurance. Two other significant buildings located just outside of the central business district are the Beechwood Inn on Highway 76 West, and Old Parker's Ranch.

In Tiger, several buildings reflect the commercial history of the area such as the Old Store at the crossroads, the newly restored Tiger Drive-In movie theater, and the Massee Packing House located just south of the town center.

The Nelson Cathey Store and the Bell Jones Service Center are important commercial buildings in Mountain City.

Dillard's best-known commercial building is the Dillard House, originally built in the 1890s, now a nationally known restaurant and resort. Several historic brick commercial buildings, ca. 1910, are also located along Highway 441 in downtown Dillard.

Tallulah Falls boasts several historic commercial buildings. The Old Town Station, 1914, and the Old Moss House, 1890, are now both restaurants. Other commercial buildings include the Tallulah General store, 1922, and the Gorge Overlook, 1930.

Several other commercial areas remain along Old Hwy 441 crossroads such as the historic Old Alley Grocery Store, which still operates in Lakemont.

***Archaeological Resources***

Rabun County has not undertaken a formal survey of' its archaeological resources. Knowledge of such sites consists of research conducted by various means, including surveys, investigations and oral histories. Many archaeological sites in Rabun County have not been identified and most are difficult to locate.

In *Sketches of Rabun County History*, A.J. Ritchie states that the first discovery of gold was made by John Morris on Dick's creek in the western part of the county. This was followed by discoveries at several places along Dick's Creek, and on Moccasin and Wildcat Creeks along the Tallulah River.

Nearly all of the local gold mining companies were formed with capital from sources outside Rabun County. The most active period of gold mining was just prior to the Civil War. There were two gold mining belts in the county: one in the eastern portion of the county, the other, the Dahlonega Belt, which begins in the western portion of the county. It is not known how much gold was mined because no records exist. However, it is agreed that more money was put in the ground than was mined out. Today, the remains of these mines are often hidden in dense underbrush, and usually consists of scaring caused by the type of mining operations.

Other minerals were also mined in Rabun County. Ruby corundum, citrine (a pale smoke quartz), bulbs of siderite and amethyst were all mined in the county. The Weisner Quartz site near Tallulah Falls mined citrine and siderite. In 1963, an ad in the Clayton Tribune listed a notice by one J.B. Murry who wished to sell his amethyst mine, home and a cold spring, all of which are located in the city limits of Clayton.

There are numerous Cherokee settlement sites located throughout the County, with only a few people knowing the exact locations. One site listed on the National Register of Historic Places is the Hoojah Branch Site.

The archaeological sites of Rabun County should be investigated further and documented. Care should be taken to prevent damage to them by "pothunters" and amateur archaeologists.

***Transportation Resources***

Transportation resources refer to modes of transportation and transportation routes that are significant in Rabun County, such as footpaths, trails, trains, highways and airports.

Rabun County is located on the southern edge of the Appalachian Mountains bordered by North Carolina on the north and South Carolina on the east. U.S. Highway 441/23 and Georgia 15 intersect our county from the north to the south, while U.S. Highway 76 and Georgia 2 move east and west across the county. Much of old U.S. 441 remains as a north-south corridor; it connects several communities and becomes Main Street in Clayton. Georgia 28 crosses the northeast corner of the state linking North Carolina with South Carolina. Georgia 28 and 106 leaves U.S. 441, north of Dillard, passing Sky Valley in northern Rabun County ending in Highlands, North Carolina. Georgia 197 leaves U.S. Highway 76 and winds along the western shore of Lake Burton.

The railroad played a key roll in the development and growth of Rabun County. The Tallulah Falls Railroad bisected the county, connecting many of the small communities and creating growth around the county. Today, the only remains of the railroad are some of the rail beds and the Tallulah Falls Railroad station, which is now a co-op for regional artists to display and sell their work. One segment of the former railroad bed, Short Line Trail, has been converted to a footpath for public use.

In Rabun County, there are two nationally significant hiking trails, the Appalachian Trail and Bartram Trail. The Appalachian Trail is the longest continuous hiking trail in the country. It begins in Georgia, winds through the northwest corner of the county from Addis Gap to Blue Ridge Gap, and continues north to Maine. The Bartram Trail is named after the 18$^{th}$ century naturalist, William Bartram, who traveled throughout Georgia and the Carolinas in 1773. His account of his travels, descriptions of native flora, fauna and the native peoples he encountered, provide a vivid picture of life in the area at the end of the 18$^{th}$ century. The trail roughly traces Bartram's route through Georgia.

***Industrial Sites***

**Sylvan Falls Mill:**

Located at Wolf Fork Road at Taylor's Chapel Road in Mountain City. For 100 years, a working gristmill operated on this site at Sylvan Falls. The present structure was restored in the 1950s. The current owners continue to mill cornmeal and flour, in addition to running a bed and breakfast in the millhouse.

**Black Diamond Railroad Tunnel:**

Located in the Warwoman Wildlife Management Area. The Black Diamond Railroad Tunnel has an interesting history. The tunnel is the legacy of an attempt to build a railroad across the northeastern part of the County. The project, originally called the Blue Ridge Railroad, began before the Civil War. It was revived after the war as the Black Diamond Railroad, but proved to be unsuccessful. The tunnel is tucked away in the mountains and is a splendid reminder of days when iron horses ruled transportation.

**Burton Dam and Power Plant:**

Located on Burton Dam Road, 2 miles east of Highway 197. The Burton Dam was completed in 1919. It is 1,043 feet long and 121 feet high with a generation capacity of 6,120 kilowatts.

**Seed Lake Dam and Power Plant:**

Located on Burton Dam Road, 6 miles east of Highway 197 at Bear Gap Road. Built in 1926, the Seed Lake Dam and Power Plant is 490 feet long and 75 feet high and can generate 4,800 kilowatts.

**Rural Resources**

Rural resources include landscapes, farm complexes and barns, and crossroad communities throughout Rabun County.

**Tenvannah Farm:**

Located on U.S. 441 North. This is a working farm complex dating from ca. 1820 that retains all the original acreage. The Scruggs Family, who built and occupied the original farmhouse, previously owned the property. Dr. Harry and Lucie Brown built the 1950s ranch style house. Dr. Brown inherited the property from his grandmother. The property is sited on a major highway within the city limits of Mountain City. The highway divides the property with the west side occupied by cultivated fields and the east side by farm buildings. This farm complex is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Scruggs Farm Complex:**

This is located on York House Road. The main farmhouse was built in 1915. A 1950s ranch style house, three agricultural buildings, a barn and two storage sheds remain on the site. The farm is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Also located on the property is a last remnant of the Tallulah Falls Railroad bed, which is also eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Flat Creek Community:**

Located in the southwest section of Rabun County along Flat Creek where it flows in to the Tallulah River. This area is situated on a beautiful plateau just below Gap Mountain and is bordered on the other side by the

Tallulah River. This area had a school until consolidation of all county schools some years ago. There is an active church, Flat Creek Baptist Church, which was established in 1870, a well-maintained cemetery, and a community building used for homecomings, religious functions, and educational/civic opportunities. This community is an example of an area in Rabun County that still maintains the common bond of its residents.

**Lakemont:**

This community, located on Old Highway 441 South, was established when Lake Rabun was created and has become a tourist destination. Alley's Grocery, a general store built in 1920, was the post office for Lakemont. Across the highway was the Lakemont depot where visitors departed for their cabins on the lake. Lakemont had its own school and church, Lakemont Baptist Church, located on the banks of Tiger Creek. In recent years, several commercial enterprises have moved into the area adjacent to Alley's Grocery, which is still in business. New additions include the Lakemont Fire Department. Since the relocation of Highway 441 bypassed the community and the post office moved closer to the new highway, the community is not as active as it once was and is in danger of fading away.

**Persimmon Community:**

Located in the western part of Rabun County near Persimmon Creek is the active and thriving community of Persimmon. Local lore says the community got its name from a large persimmon tree located next to the post office, which was in Welborn's store. At that time the post office was named Blalock. The community has two churches, King Presbyterian and Persimmon Baptist. Persimmon Baptist was established in 1828 and has one of the oldest cemeteries in the County. It had a school building until consolidation and it now serves as a community activities building. Residents have created a small museum with photographs and artifacts from the community. In the early days, Persimmon was noted for its moonshine industry. The valley was the ideal location for residences, while the remoteness and the mountainous areas were ideal for manufacturing whisky. The people of this community have bonded together to keep their culture intact. The Persimmon community still organizes clean-up days, a Halloween carnival, singings and fundraisers. It is a good example of how a small community can come together for the common good. Their willingness to work with each other to accomplish community involvement is extraordinary.

**Pine Mountain Satolah Communities:**

The Pine Mountain and Satolah Communities are located in the rugged wooded terrain along SR 28. These are some of the areas that saw the earliest settlers that came from the Carolinas. Also the area served as a passageway and hunting grounds for the Indians. The early settlers worked on small farms, hunted and fished.

Mills were built on Hedden and Talley Mill Creeks. For a time in the 1800s to early 1900s the area experienced a brief, but intense, period of industrialization, dotted by asbestos, corundum, amethyst, mica, soapstone and placer gold mining operations. The area was also extensively logged. It was during this time that rooming houses were built and a post office was established, but by 1978 the community had dwindled and the only the municipal building remaining is the combined firehouse/community center. One factor that has remained in both communities since the days of the first settlers is a deep sense of rugged individualism instilled in the early days and passed down through the generations.

***Institutional Resources***

***Churches***

Today, as in the past, churches play an important role in the lives of the local community. Early churches established in the county include Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Church of God and Church of Christ. Early settlers constructed churches soon after arriving. For many years, missionaries traveled through the area conducting services. Most churches served functions beyond just religious services, such as community gatherings and schools.

The two oldest churches in Rabun County are Clayton Baptist in Clayton and Head of Tennessee Baptist in Dillard. Local families established these churches soon after the State Legislature created the county. Clayton Baptist Church, established August 1819, is the oldest church in the county. Originally located on Highway 76 East outside the Clayton city limits, the church was later moved when Thomas Red Kelly donated the current site in 1850 for a church and cemetery. Clayton Cemeteries, Inc. maintains the Clayton Cemetery. The church is very active today.

Head of Tennessee Baptist Church is located in Dillard and remains on the original site with its associated cemetery. It was established in 1824 as a Mission Church of Franklin, N.C.

Clayton Methodist Church, established in 1837, is located on Main Street in Clayton.

Antioch Methodist Church in the Warwoman Community, established in 1875 when Col. Sam Beck deeded land to be used as for the church and cemetery. The church has a well-maintained cemetery.

Wolf Creek Baptist Church, located in the southern part of the county on Wolf Creek Road, was established in 1851 and maintains a cemetery.

Persimmon Baptist Church, located in the western part of the county, was established in 1828. The church remains on the original site with the cemetery located across the road. In the cemetery are some of the oldest graves in Rabun County.

***Schools***

Education of children in the early days of Rabun County was considered the responsibility of the parents. Those that could afford to do so, sent their children to academies, but many children received little or no education. In 1857, a county board of education was organized. Early schools were established in various places, and community churches often served as schools. By 1906, there was considerable progress in building schoolhouses, which replaced the use of churches. In 1911, Georgia law stated that trustees for each sub-district had to be elected by the people and the county Superintendent of education was to be elected to a four-year term. In 1914, Supt. Chastain and M. L. Duggan conducted a detailed survey of all the schoolhouses in the county. The survey included detailed records and photographs. A copy of the survey is on file with the Rabun County Historical Society.

In 1925, emphasis was placed on consolidation of the schools in Rabun County to improve instruction and equalize educational opportunities offered to all the students. The WPA assisted in construction of new schools, some which are still extant though being used for other purposes today.

The first four-year high school in Clayton was established in 1920 with the first graduating class in 1921. The county Board of Education established a four-year high school in Clayton in April 1925. The site of the original school is now the site of the present day Rabun County Library, Rabun County Health Department and the Civic Center on Highway 76 West.

In 1975, Rabun County High School was moved to Highway 441 South in Tiger after the building in Clayton burned. Also at this location is the Rabun County Middle School and the newly constructed Rabun County Elementary School. The old location of the elementary school in Clayton on Highway 76 West is vacant. The other two elementary schools in the County are Rabun Gap Elementary School on Betty's Creek Road in Dillard and South Rabun Elementary School in Tiger.

***Other Historic and Cultural Resources***

These resources are just as significant as those previously listed, but they do not fall into one of the designated categories. Resources that fall into this category include cemeteries, burial grounds and other cultural activities.

***Civilian Conservation Corp Camps:***

The early 1930s was a time marked by devastating economic hardship and unemployment, better known as the Great Depression. President Franklin Roosevelt created the New Deal to encourage meaningful employment while improving the country as a whole. One program was the Emergency Conservation Works Act, more commonly called the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This program was created in March 1933 and continued through 1942. Camps were created in every state, Hawaii and Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Much of the work conducted by the CCC included soil conservation, forestry management and road construction.

Rabun County had four CCC camps that were operated in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and the Army. The men in the camps were paid $1.00 per day for a total of $30 per month. Each man was allowed to keep $5.00 and the rest had to be sent home to his parents. When the major portion of the trainees came to Rabun County for the first two camps, they arrived the on longest passenger train ever seen in Clayton with 8 passenger cars and two baggage cars. There were 253 men on the train for the camps at Warwoman and Tree, while 105 other men went on to Franklin, North Carolina. Food for the trainees was purchased locally which benefited the local community.

**Company F-5, Tree, Georgia:**

This is the present site of one the first Forest Service Camp Site on the Tallulah River. The camp was completed and occupied on June 1, 1933. The work done by the men was completed entirely in the Nantahala National Forest. The men constructed ten miles of trails to the top of Standing Indian Mountain. They also completed 6,000 acres of timber stand improvements and pruned several hundred acres of white pines.

**Camp F-6, Camp 457, Camp Warwoman:**

The men constructed the road up Hale Ridge from Warwoman Road to Scaly Mountain, North Carolina and the Pool Creek Road from Warwoman over to Chechero. They constructed the fire tower on Rabun Bald. The men were responsible for maintaining the Rabun Bald Trail (also known as the Bartram Trail). The Warwoman Dell Picnic Area and its fish hatchery was one of the major projects.

**Camp F-9, Camp Lake Rabun:**

This is presently the site of the Lake Rabun Campsite. The camp was surrounded on three sides by Forest Service land and on one side by Lake Rabun. Some 204 young men who had been inducted at Fort Benning on May 18, 1933, built their camp and constructed trails in the national forest until March 1934. After that the road crews came in and began work on local roads. Some of the roads these men built in the area include the truck road from Tiger through the Liberty Gap Community to the road just below Burton Dam.

**Camp F-10, Company 1443, Camp Gaften:**

This camp, located on Moccasin Creek about one-fourth of a mile from Lake Burton, housed 205 men from the central part of the state. The men arrived June 22, 1933. The camp was located within the National Forest and much of the work was done the forest. Many miles of roads, including Highway 197, telephone lines and fire lines were constructed. One of the major accomplishments of Camp Gaften was an eight-page newspaper published monthly by enrollees Nathan W. Gibson and Henry E. Lohilly.

**Works Projects Administration:**

The Works Progress Administration was created in 1935 as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, being renamed in 1939 to the Works Projects Administration (WPA). The goal was to relieve unemployment through useful construction projects. Also part of the WPA was the Federal Art project, Federal Writer's Project, and the Federal Theater Project. The program provided work relief only and the money had to come from the States. The WPA provided jobs at rates slightly below prevailing rates to employ as many unemployed workers as funds permitted. WPA projects in Rabun County included numerous road projects, the construction of buildings, recreational facilities, and privies. In addition, workers manufactured garments, canned food, repaired books, and served school lunches. Many workers also received further education while participating in the project.

***Cemeteries:***

A survey has been completed of the more than 175 cemeteries in Rabun County. These include many small family cemeteries. This is an on-going project that involved many Rabun County residents. Information for each gravestone has been recorded and is on record with the Rabun County Historical Society.

***Strategies for Historic Preservation***

The following are elements of a potential preservation plan for Rabun County. These are only suggested steps; extensive research and time is needed to fully complete such a plan.

***Survey***

The most recent survey of Rabun County's historic resources was done in 1996 by the Department of Natural Resources. The survey is lacking in several areas; for example, there is no mention of farmscapes or cemeteries. The plan needs to be updated as many buildings that no longer exist need to be deleted.

Surveys can be used to identify individual buildings and districts for possible listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the Georgia Register of Historic Places; support local designation of buildings and districts; expedite environmental review by governmental agencies; aid in preservation and land use planning; and

promote research of the State's history and architecture. Through public participation, surveys can increase awareness of, and interest in community history.

***Recognition of Historic Resources***

Once a community knows what its historic resources are, it can begin to recognize these resources and bring community attention to their significance. One tool communities can use to achieve this is the National Register of Historic Places. Although listing the National Register does not protect properties from alteration and demolition, it serves as a good way to bring recognition of and pride in communities' historic properties. National Register landmarks and districts also serve to pinpoint areas in a community where preservation and local protection can be implemented. The preservation planner at the Georgia Mountains RDC or the State Historic Preservation Office in the Department of Natural Resources can be contacted to assist in the determination of eligibility of the resources and in preparation of a National Register nomination.

Presently, five county landmarks are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Hambidge Center Historic District, York House, Tallulah Falls Depot, Indian Mound, and the Henry Kilby House.

Once all the County's resources have been determined, the community could then decide which are most important to persevere and the property owners could then be informed of the benefits of preservation including:

1. Historic resources are top tourist attractions. Revitalized buildings and districts attract new businesses; increase tourism, while stimulating retail sales and increasing sales tax revenue.
2. Historic rehabilitation creates new jobs, both during construction and later in the establishment of new businesses that strengthen the local economy.
3. Property values increase in revitalized areas.
4. Tax incentives are available for revitalization.
5. Fewer resources are required to rehabilitate old buildings than to demolish and replace with new construction.

Goals and priorities should be set for the preservation of these resources. Such goals might include: preserving specific rural areas of the county; implementing heritage education programs that spotlight the county's archaeological and agricultural heritage; and supporting local civic and community groups who are actively working to preserve regional history and culture.

Tools for achieving these goals may include a survey, preservation ordinances, certified local governments, and a community development program. For example, the city of Clayton could create a walking tour of the downtown Main Street district, develop research of each building and submit a nomination to become a National Register

Historic District. A Better Hometown program could be established by individual cities in the county. Taking better care of the archival materials and records that have been collected by the local historical society, including the construction of a new building to house the collection (slated to begin in 2005) should be a priority. New and updated zoning ordinances and prompt enforcement of violations should also be part of an effective preservation plan.

## GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

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| **Goal** |
| • To preserve the historic, cultural and archaeological resources of Rabun County |
| **Policy** |
| • Encourage and support the efforts of the Rabun County Historical Society |
| • Encourage inclusion of all worthy historical buildings, structures, sites and districts for listing on the National Register of Historic Places |
| • Encourage property owners to take advantage of Federal and State investment tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings |
| • Promote adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures whenever possible |
| • Continue research program on cemeteries in Rabun County |
| • Create opportunities for visitors and residents to learn more about the county's history through the development of educational materials and programs. |
| **Objectives** |
| • Publish and distribute a list of historic properties and scenic routes through the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Include these sites on county maps. |
| • Encourage a comprehensive survey of historic resources in Rabun County |
| • Utilize Federal, State, Regional and University programs which provide funding, staff and services to enhance the county’s historic preservation program |
| • Encourage City of Clayton to create a walking tour of Main Street with descriptions of each building and its history |
| • Encourage the County to construct a new historical records/archives building in 2005 |
| • Encourage participation in Better Hometown Program by eligible communities |
| • Encourage the City of Clayton to create a historic district in the downtown and revitalize the area with new sidewalks, better lighting and attractive landscaping |
| • Encourage county and city governments to work with the Rabun County Historical Society to accomplish objectives |

***Rabun County Cultural Identity and Resources***

Culture is a difficult thing to assess or inventory. After all, it is a reflection of who we are and what we create together as a community. Being totally enmeshed in it ourselves, we struggle to separate from a living dimension of what we are in order to create a picture or snapshot, frozen in time, that accurately reflects cultural life in Rabun County. In this process, we discover that our cultural identity is much more than a list of non-profit groups, civic organizations, clubs, guilds, annual fairs, parades, monuments or buildings; it is a living entity that is constantly evolving. A description of cultural identity not only includes activities, but also ideas, values, traditions, patterns of speech and the material culture of place.

In Rabun County, we have identified three strands of living experience that are woven together to create our unique cultural identity. They are difficult to unravel as each occurs in relation to all of the others. This is an attempt to describe them in hopes of including their individual values into long-range plans for county growth.

The first is the experience of long-time residents who are descendants of early settlers in the region. This group brings traditional values and ways of life that have left their mark on the area for hundreds of years. Their presence still lingers in the cultural values of present generations, but many have disappeared or been transformed as the county has become more accessible to new residents and ever increasing numbers of visitors, along with the general changes wrought by time. The cultural life of this group has been chronicled in detail by Foxfire, one of the most respected cultural organizations in the county.

Foxfire started thirty-nine years ago as a student-produced folklore magazine in a local high school. Over the years, the project has evolved into a series of books and magazines based on interviews conducted by students of their grandparents and other community elders. They recorded stories that had almost been forgotten about the heritage of the Appalachian area, preserving a culture and way of life that has almost disappeared. The sale of Foxfire books, which have now reached almost eight million copies, has generated royalties that allowed the establishment of the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center in Mountain City. This facility serves as a functional museum of Southern Appalachia with self-guided and guided tours for learners of all ages. The Museum now features over 20 log structures. The Heritage Center is also home to the Foxfire Archive. The archives include over 3,000 hours of taped interviews, more than 81,000 black and white photos, over 10,000 colored slides and 1,100-videotaped interviews.

Another significant cultural institution that has influenced the cultural flavor of the area is the Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences. In 1934, Mary Crovatt Hambidge purchased 850 acres on Betty's Creek Road in Rabun Gap to establish a retreat center for artists. Her initial goal was to establish a cottage industry for

local women weavers to practice their art and to provide a source of financial support for their work. Together they formed the "Weavers of Rabun" and went on to create fabric that was sold in some of the country's finest retail stores.

Today, the Hambidge Center continues to support the arts by providing artists and scientists with the setting, solitude and time for creativity. The Hambidge Center is dedicated to the belief that artists are important—they are our antennae to the world. The Center, which is located on 600 pristine acres, is also committed to protect and sustain its natural environment. It is a natural repository for both protected and endangered species of native plants, and preserves twenty-three historically significant structures, many that are included in the National Register of Historic Places, on its grounds. Today, Rabun County is a magnet for many artists and scientists who can live and work here.

The second is the experience of new permanent residents to the county. Consequently, Rabun County is now home to a number of community groups dedicated to promoting the performing arts. These include the North Georgia Community Players a community theater group currently located in the theater of the Old Dillard School in Dillard; the North Georgia Arts Guild, an artists' organization that sponsors street fairs, art camps, field trips, and art workshops for anyone interested in art; the Rabun County Music Festival, a musical production company that offers summer concerts featuring noted musicians such as members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

Rabun County also enjoys several well-attended social events each year. These include Rhapsody in Rabun, a fundraising event that each year raises a significant amount of financial support for local non-profit community groups, and the Valentine's Day Sweetheart Ball that provides funds for Fighting Abuse in the Home (FAITH).

New residents working together with long-time residents have developed and transformed many local events and organizations. These include Celebrate Clayton, an arts and music celebration in downtown Clayton, formerly celebrated for many years as a mountain fair known as Mountaineering Days, the Dillard Bluegrass and BBQ Cook-Off, The Boggs Mountain Animal Shelter, and the Board of Realtors Tour of Homes.

The diversity of the Rabun County community has been further enriched with the growth of the Latino community in recent years. These groups, many who have emigrated from Mexico and other parts of Central and South America, have introduced their own customs, traditions and cultural identity to the area. Their numbers are growing each year and their influence will most likely continue to add to the cultural wealth we all enjoy.

The third group experience is that of part-time residents and visitors. Their experience includes participation in community sponsored events that celebrate both the homegrown and new, imported values of Rabun County. In addition, they seek out recreation and outdoor activities such as rafting on the Chattooga River, recreational activities in our two state parks, the white water release in the Tallulah Gorge, hiking and camping in the national forest, and boating and swimming in local lakes and rivers.

All of these groups have many things in common. They all share an appreciation for the stunning natural beauty and innate wildness of the Rabun County landscape. This resource cannot be put into a neat category or under the auspices of a particular organization or local government. It is not a commodity that can be packaged and marketed. It is intrinsic to the place and permeates every aspect of cultural life that goes on here.

As the evolution of the culture of Rabun County continues to change and grow, influenced by both residents and visitors, many of the community's core cultural values are transformed into something new.

One example is the transformation of traditional kinship networks that have provided help in time of need for family and community members. As the population of the county grows, this core value has been transferred to the large number of civic and social organizations that offer help and support. These groups include the Rabun Aid Project (RAP) that organizes students to perform home repairs and other tasks for senior members of the community, Fighting Abuse in the Home (FAITH) that offers legal support, counseling and refuge for victims of domestic violence, and Meals on Wheels, which delivers hot, hearty meals to people unable to prepare their own meals. Community Partnership, an umbrella organization that offers a variety of social services, reports that the number of volunteers from all age groups and economic groups in Rabun County is one of the highest in the state. Most local aid organizations are completely staffed by volunteers.

A second noteworthy feature of cultural life is the large number of churches in the county. Recent statistics indicate approximately 58 active congregations in Rabun County. These churches are responsible for many aid organizations and contribute to cultural life through annual events such as "His Last Days Passion Play" and Sunrise Services on Easter at Black Rock Mountain State Park and Tallulah Falls.

As Rabun County culture is a living, breathing part of every aspect of life here, the shape of its future, and ours, is uncertain. However, the core values that have shaped it will influence the future shape of all other aspects of our county: economic development, housing, natural resources, and government. Community spirituality, volunteerism, appreciation of nature and its innate wildness, civic pride, frontier individuality and self reliance, family kinship experience, are all hallmarks of the way in which Rabun County citizens will attempt to shape their future.

## GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

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| **Goal** |
| • Preserve, celebrate and express the evolving cultural identity of the people of Rabun County |
| **Policy** |
| • Encourage county organizations involved in documenting, preserving, celebrating and expressing the unique cultural character of the people of Rabun County |
| • Promote adaptive reuse of culturally significant buildings and structures as community centers |
| **Objectives** |
| • Publish and distribute a list of cultural events. |
| • Consider the creation of signage at the intersection of US 441 and Savannah St. (76 West) that spotlights community sponsored cultural events |
| • Promote the creation of an affordable, centrally located venue for festivals, concerts, plays, etc, suitable for both outdoor and indoor events |
| • Support a partnership between local governments, the Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors' Bureau, area businesses, and cultural organizations in order to develop cultural festivals that specifically showcase the diversity of cultural expression in Rabun County (such as the revival of Mountaineer Days) |

# CHAPTER EIGHT

# TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

## Transportation Overview

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census Data, Rabun County has an estimated population of 15,050 persons and is comprised of some 377 square miles. The density per square mile for this area is approximately 39.9 persons and 29.22 housing units. The City of Clayton, likewise, has a total population of 1,876 persons with a total square mileage of approximately 3.13 miles. The density per square mile for Clayton is 599.4 persons and 321.4 housing units. The City of Dillard has a total population of 213 persons with a total square mileage of approximately 1.53 miles. The density per square mile for Dillard is 139.2 persons and 75.2 housing units. The Town of Mountain City has a total population of 824 persons with a total square mileage of approximately 1.79 miles. The density per square mile for Mt. City is 460.3 persons and 258.1 housing units. The City of Sky Valley has a total population of 228 persons with a total square mileage of approximately 3.03 miles. The density per square mile for Sky Valley is 75.3 persons and 222.8 housing units. The Town of Tiger has a total population of 286 persons with a total square mileage of approximately 0.82 miles. The density per square mile for Tiger is 286 persons and 161 housing units. The estimated work-eligible population (16 years and over) for Rabun County is 6,920 persons; of those individuals 6,420 persons are in the labor force.

In evaluating the transportation network of a community it is important to evaluate certain economic and social patterns that impact such infrastructure. For this reason, a list of relevant employment and commuting census data is listed in the tables below. These tables provide the reader with an understanding about the uses of Rabun County's transportation network and the factors, which impact this network.

*Table 8.1* provides a comparison between Rabun County and statewide statistics for place of work for workers. It is important to recognize that the majority of Rabun County's work population (52%) remained inside the county while 47% worked outside the county. Finally, one percent (1%) of the total eligible workers traveled outside of the state for work. By knowing where people are working transportation planners are able to better understand traffic patterns.

**Table 8.1**

**P26. PLACE OF WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER--STATE AND COUNTY LEVEL [5] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over**

| | Rabun County, Georgia | Clayton city, Georgia | Dillard city, Georgia | Mountain City town, Georgia | Sky Valley city, Georgia | Tiger town, Georgia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total: | 6,429 | 671 | 94 | 380 | 54 | 117 |
| Worked in state of residence: | 6,031 | 629 | 90 | 352 | 45 | 110 |
| Worked in county of residence | 5,265 | 571 | 89 | 307 | 37 | 103 |
| Worked outside county of residence | 766 | 58 | 1 | 45 | 8 | 7 |
| Worked outside state of residence | 398 | 42 | 4 | 28 | 9 | 7 |

Furthermore, *Table 8.2* helps to define how people chose to travel to work. This table reflects the commute travel modes for Rabun County. Not surprisingly, 93.3% of all working residents traveled to work by vehicle in 2000. Of those traveling to work by vehicle, 85.5 % chose to drive alone while 14.5% chose to carpool, 2 % chose to walk or ride a bike to work, 0.69% chose other means, and 3.7% worked from home. Public transportation consisted of only 0.19% of the traveling population. Of these individuals, 38.9% chose to ride the bus and 61.1% chose to use a taxicab.

## Table 8.2

**P30. MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [16] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over**

| | Rabun County, Georgia | Clayton city, Georgia | Dillard city, Georgia | Mountain City town, Georgia | Sky Valley city, Georgia | Tiger town, Georgia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total: | 6,429 | 671 | 94 | 380 | 54 | 117 |
| Car, truck, or van: | 6,029 | 655 | 79 | 375 | 50 | 117 |
| Drove alone | 4,804 | 490 | 52 | 269 | 40 | 85 |
| Carpooled | 1,225 | 165 | 27 | 106 | 10 | 32 |
| Public transportation: | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bus or trolley bus | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Streetcar or trolley car | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Subway or elevated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Railroad | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ferryboat | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Taxicab | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Motorcycle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bicycle | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Walked | 106 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Other means | 19 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Worked at home | 229 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 |

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

*Table 8.3* further defines the vehicle occupancy types for workers who chose to carpool. The average carpool for Rabun County was 2-persons per vehicle. The data reveals that 82.1% were 2 person carpools, 13.6% were 3 person carpools, 1.4% were 4 person carpools, 2.0% were 5 to 6 person carpools, and 0.86% were 7 or more person carpools.

## Table 8.3

**P35. PRIVATE VEHICLE OCCUPANCY FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [10] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over**

| | Rabun County, Georgia | Clayton city, Georgia | Dillard city, Georgia | Mountain City town, Georgia | Sky Valley city, Georgia | Tiger town, Georgia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total: | 6,429 | 671 | 94 | 380 | 54 | 117 |
| Car, truck, or van: | 6,029 | 655 | 79 | 375 | 50 | 117 |
| Drove alone | 4,804 | 490 | 52 | 269 | 40 | 85 |
| Carpooled: | 1,225 | 165 | 27 | 106 | 10 | 32 |
| In 2-person carpool | 945 | 122 | 16 | 87 | 10 | 21 |
| In 3-person carpool | 196 | 16 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| In 4-person carpool | 42 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| In 5- or 6-person carpool | 29 | 5 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 4 |
| In 7-or-more-person carpool | 13 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

*Tables 8.4 and 8.5* provide a better understanding about the average trip length (time) for workers in Rabun County. *Table 8.4* reveals that the average travel time for workers was somewhere between 10-20 minutes in length for those who didn't work at home. The maxiumum travel time was 90 minutes or more, which comprised only 4.5% of the working population.

## Table 8.4

**P31. TRAVEL TIME TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [15] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over**

| | Rabun County, Georgia | Clayton city, Georgia | Dillard city, Georgia | Mountain City town, Georgia | Sky Valley city, Georgia | Tiger town, Georgia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total: | 6,429 | 671 | 94 | 380 | 54 | 117 |
| Did not work at home: | 6,200 | 663 | 90 | 378 | 50 | 117 |
| Less than 5 minutes | 275 | 33 | 18 | 5 | 12 | 2 |
| 5 to 9 minutes | 989 | 181 | 30 | 106 | 0 | 20 |
| 10 to 14 minutes | 1,005 | 107 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 26 |
| 15 to 19 minutes | 1,126 | 107 | 10 | 27 | 22 | 20 |
| 20 to 24 minutes | 816 | 80 | 11 | 26 | 6 | 27 |
| 25 to 29 minutes | 243 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| 30 to 34 minutes | 744 | 44 | 5 | 18 | 2 | 14 |
| 35 to 39 minutes | 125 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 3 | 0 |
| 40 to 44 minutes | 126 | 17 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 45 to 59 minutes | 324 | 29 | 4 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| 60 to 89 minutes | 184 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 6 |
| 90 or more minutes | 243 | 48 | 3 | 36 | 0 | 1 |
| Worked at home | 229 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 |

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

*Table 8.5* breaks the travel time down further by observing the types of transportation utilized along with travel lengths. Some 54.6% of workers traveling by non-public transportation means, and spent less than 30 minutes traveling to work. Additionally, 24.4% traveled 30-44 minutes, with the remaining 22.9% of the population traveling 45 or more minutes.

## Table 8.5

**P32. TRAVEL TIME TO WORK BY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER WHO DID NOT WORK AT HOME [13] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over who did not work at home**

| | Rabun County, Georgia | Clayton city, Georgia | Dillard city, Georgia | Mountain City town, Georgia | Sky Valley city, Georgia | Tiger town, Georgia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total: | 6,200 | 663 | 90 | 378 | 50 | 117 |
| Less than 30 minutes: | 4,454 | 515 | 78 | 271 | 45 | 96 |
| Public transportation | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other means | 4,438 | 515 | 78 | 271 | 45 | 96 |
| 30 to 44 minutes: | 995 | 71 | 5 | 33 | 5 | 14 |
| Public transportation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other means | 995 | 71 | 5 | 33 | 5 | 14 |
| 45 to 59 minutes: | 324 | 29 | 4 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Public transportation | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other means | 315 | 29 | 4 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| 60 or more minutes: | 427 | 48 | 3 | 49 | 0 | 7 |
| Public transportation | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other means | 413 | 48 | 3 | 49 | 0 | 7 |

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

*Table 8.6* shows the various times workers leave their homes to travel to work. According to the data, the majority of workers left home between 6:30 and 8:30 A.M. in order to reach work on time. Therefore, the average weekday peak hours of travel would be between 6-9 o'clock in the morning.

**Table 8.6**

**P34. TIME LEAVING HOME TO GO TO WORK FOR WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER [17] - Universe: Workers 16 years and over**

| | Rabun County, Georgia | Clayton city, Georgia | Dillard city, Georgia | Mountain City town, Georgia | Sky Valley city, Georgia | Tiger town, Georgia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total: | 6,429 | 671 | 94 | 380 | 54 | 117 |
| Did not work at home: | 6,200 | 663 | 90 | 378 | 50 | 117 |
| 12:00 a.m. to 4:59 a.m. | 148 | 19 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| 5:00 a.m. to 5:29 a.m. | 346 | 16 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| 5:30 a.m. to 5:59 a.m. | 347 | 31 | 3 | 17 | 0 | 2 |
| 6:00 a.m. to 6:29 a.m. | 339 | 37 | 0 | 35 | 3 | 12 |
| 6:30 a.m. to 6:59 a.m. | 852 | 71 | 5 | 68 | 3 | 13 |
| 7:00 a.m. to 7:29 a.m. | 1,005 | 93 | 22 | 35 | 0 | 7 |
| 7:30 a.m. to 7:59 a.m. | 1,184 | 156 | 10 | 45 | 6 | 32 |
| 8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m. | 468 | 80 | 16 | 41 | 13 | 13 |
| 8:30 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. | 342 | 13 | 7 | 19 | 6 | 1 |
| 9:00 a.m. to 9:59 a.m. | 285 | 36 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 6 |
| 10:00 a.m. to 10:59 a.m. | 79 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 11:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m. | 63 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| 12:00 p.m. to 3:59 p.m. | 201 | 16 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| 4:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. | 541 | 81 | 16 | 71 | 0 | 15 |
| Worked at home | 229 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 |

U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000

## Land Use and Transportation

The high reliance on vehicle use for mobility is to a large extent the result of the separation of land uses. Single-family subdivisions are located in the county in areas distant from employment and activity centers, leading to a greater reliance on vehicles and an increase in vehicle miles traveled, as has been noted in the previous section. Likewise, current housing opportunities within Rabun County are not often located within a convenient walking distance to employment/activity centers, thus requiring vehicle use when public transit is not readily available. Working at home (i.e., home occupations) helps to reduce vehicle travel. Offering opportunities to walk to destinations also reduces vehicle dependency. The density and patterns of land usage has a major bearing on the modes and distances of travel.

Rabun County recognizes the intrinsic relationship between Land use patterns/densities and travel patterns/behaviors. As a result, the county's comprehensive plan supports mixed uses in the downtown central business district, and the mixing of office and commercial uses so that daily lunchtime trips are shortened, reduced, or completely eliminated.

## A. Inventory & Needs Assessments

According to the University of Georgia's annual publication of *The Georgia County Guide 2004, 23rd* Edition, Rabun County has approximately 525.39 miles of roadway. There is 63.13 miles of state route, 385.57 miles of county roads, and 55.66 miles of city streets that comprises Rabun County's roadway network. *The remaining 21.03 miles of roadway is privately owned US Forest Service facilities. Although these facilities play an important part in the road network of the county, technically they are outside the jurisdiction of Rabun County and are thus not discussed further in this document.* The GCG report indicates that these numbers represent a 5.8% increase since 1994. Of the total road mileage, 341.41 miles or 65% is paved and 183.98 miles or 35% is unpaved. This is an increase of 26.5% in the amount of paved mileage for the county since 1994. The GCG data further reveals that there are 19,767 registered vehicles and 12,740 licensed drivers in Rabun County. These local drivers along with the countless number of visitors and tourists, who come to Rabun County annually, traveled some 606,601 daily vehicle miles.

The Georgia Department of Transportation's annual 400-Series Reports for 2003, indicates that the City of Clayton has approximately 24.33 miles of roadway. There is 4.36 miles of state route, 8.42 miles of county roads, and 11.55 miles of city streets that comprises Clayton's roadway network. The report indicates that these numbers represent a 1.2% increase since 1993. Of the total road mileage, 23.9 miles or 98.2% is paved and 0.43 miles or 1.8% is unpaved. This is an increase of 3.4% in the amount of paved mileage for the city since 1993. The total daily vehicle miles traveled for 2003 was 75,307.8 miles. This represents a 37.5% increase from 1993.

These same reports indicate that the City of Dillard has approximately 7.00 miles of roadway. There is 1.17 miles of state route, 2.30 miles of county roads, and 3.53 miles of city streets that comprises Dillard's roadway network. The report indicates that these numbers represent a 0.9% increase since 1993. Of the total road mileage, 6.3 miles or 90% is paved and 0.7 miles or 10% is unpaved. This is an increase of 1.8% in the amount of paved mileage for the city since 1993. The total daily vehicle miles traveled for 2003 was 21,464.8 miles. This represents a 47.6% increase from 1993.

Likewise, the Town of Mountain City has approximately 12.14 miles of roadway. There is 1.7 miles of state route, 3.25 miles of county roads, and 7.19 miles of city streets that comprises Mountain City's roadway network. The report indicates that these numbers represent a 11.2% increase since 1993. Of the total road mileage, 10.97 miles or 90.4% is paved and 1.17 miles or 9.6% is unpaved. This is an increase of 13.3% in the amount of paved mileage for the city since 1993. The total daily vehicle miles traveled for 2003 was 34,706.81 miles. This represents a 54.8% increase from 1993.

The City of Sky Valley has approximately 28.81miles of roadway. There is 0.00 miles of state route, 2.09 miles of county roads, and 28.81 miles of city streets that comprises Sky Valley's roadway network. The report indicates that these numbers represent a 17.1% increase since 1993. Of the total road mileage, 26.45 miles or 91.8% is paved and 2.36

miles or 8.2% is unpaved. This is an increase of 47.5% in the amount of paved mileage for the city since 1993. The total daily vehicle miles traveled for 2003 was 21,200.6 miles. This represents a 55.5% increase from 1993.

Finally, the Town of Tiger has approximately 5.65 miles of roadway. There is 0.00 miles of state route, 3.51 miles of county roads, and 2.14 miles of city streets that comprises Tiger's roadway network. The report indicates that these numbers represent a –0.53% increase since 1993. Of the total road mileage, 5.44 miles or 96.3% is paved and 0.21 miles or 3.7% is unpaved. This is an increase of 15.4% in the amount of paved mileage for the city since 1993. The total daily vehicle miles traveled for 2003 was 4,647.8 miles. This represents a 26.1% increase from 1993.

Currently, there are no publicly owned airport facilities within the county, however there is one privately owned airport. Typically, services are obtained from facilities in surrounding communities. In addition, there is not a rail system that provides passenger or freight services within the county, and thus services are obtained through facilities located in surrounding communities. Finally, there are no navigable waterway systems for Rabun County. Rabun County does, however, operate a county transit system (US DOT 5311- Rural Transit Program) that offers an on-demand service program and sidewalks exist within the Cities of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City and Tiger.

**Roadways**

In order to determine the adequacy of a roadway system, it is necessary to inventory all road facilities according to how they fulfill two purposes: (1) movement of traffic, and (2) access to property. By evaluating the degree to which a particular roadway serves each of the two basic functions, a functional classification can be determined.

**Functional Classification**

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently in any major way. Rather, most travel involves movement through a network of roads. It becomes necessary then to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a roadway network. Functional classification is routinely used for planning roadway system development, determining the jurisdictional responsibility for particular systems, and fiscal planning. Therefore, understanding the function of a road is critical to the transportation planning process. The parameters established by a road systems function will greatly impact the need for future improvements to the system.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have identified 11 different types of Functional Classifications

in the United States. Each individual State's designated Transportation Agency is responsible for the classification of all roads in the public road system. In Georgia, this responsibility belongs to the Department of Transportation (GDOT). *Table 8.7*, shown below, identifies the different types of classifications used for roadways in Georgia.

**Table 8.7**
**Types of Functional Classifications**

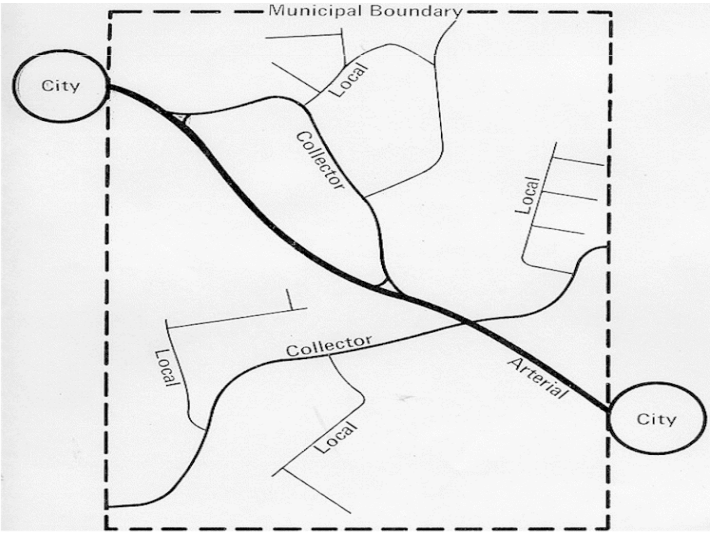
| Key For Functional Classification | Stands For |
|---|---|
| IPA | Interstate Principal Arterial |
| PAR | Principal Arterial- Rural |
| MAR | Minor Arterial- Rural |
| MCR | Major Collector- Rural |
| NMC | Minor Collector- Rural |
| LOC | Local- Rural |
| UFY | Freeway- Urban |
| UPA | Principal Arterial- Urban |
| MAS | Minor Arterial- Urban |
| CST | Collector Street- Urban |
| LOU | Local- Urban |

*Source: GDOT, Office of Transportation Data*

***(Note: For the purpose of this document, only rural classifications are relevant to Rabun County.)***

Generally, most roadways fall into one of four broader categories-- *principal arterial, minor arterials, collector roads, and local roads.* **Arterials** provide longer through travel between major trip generators (larger cities, recreational areas, etc.); and **collector** roads collect traffic from the local roads and also connect smaller cities and towns with each other and to the arterials; finally, **local** roads provide access to private property or low volume public facilities. *Figure 8.1* below, shows a diagram map of these four categories.

***Figure 8.1:*** *Illustrates Functional Classification Categories*




**Arterial Roadways**

Generally, the primary function of an arterial roadway is to move traffic thru a defined region or corridor. The most common rural arterial systems are Interstate facilities. These roadways typically provide limited access to the facility and carry large volumes of traffic at higher speeds. With in municipal boundaries and in some rural non-municipal areas, these systems may provide limited access to cross streets and driveways to private property. There are two different types of arterial roadways: principal (major) arterials and minor arterials.

Principal (major) arterials serve major activity centers and major corridors within a community or defined area and typically have the highest traffic volumes. These roadways carry a large proportion of trips with origins and destinations within the surrounding region. They also serve to move thru-traffic into and out of the region or area by connecting them to other communities. These roadways may provide access to private property or be a controlled access facility. Typically, these facilities have 100 to 200 feet right-of-way, four or more lanes, and may be divided by a median or some type of barrier. Speeds are generally high- ranging from 45 mph to 70 mph. Interstates and freeways are the best example of such road systems.

Minor arterials are often classified as streets and highways (non-interstate or freeways) that interconnect with and compliment the principal (major) arterials. These roadways serve trips of moderate length and emphasize more land access than major arterial roads. Minor arterials usually have 80 to 120 feet of right-of-way and have wide intersections with turn lanes. These roadways may have up to five lanes of traffic. However, most facilities in rural areas are two lanes. Speed limits are moderately high- ranging between 45-65 mph. Most State Routes typically fall into this category. The rural minor arterial road system should, in conjunction with the principal arterial system, form a rural network having the following characteristics:

- Link cities and towns (and other traffic generators, such as major resort areas, that are capable of attracting travel over similarly long distances) and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service.
- Be spaced at such intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas of the State are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway.
- Provide (because of the two characteristics defined immediately above) service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those predominantly served by rural collector or local systems. Minor arterials therefore constitute routes whose design should be expected to provide for relatively high overall travel speeds, with minimum interference to thru movement.

***Figure 8.2:*** *Illustrates Arterial Road Characteristics*

***Characteristics of Arterial Highways Summary***

1. **Long Distance**
2. **Higher Speeds**
3. **Higher Volumes of traffic – Multilane Facilities**
4. **Interstate Travel - Interstate System**
5. **Links Major Cities**
6. **Statewide and Inter-county Travel**
7. **Area Service Coverage**

According to the most recent data available for Rabun County, there are three roadways that classify as arterial roads. Two are classified as Rural Principal Arterial (PARs) roadways: SR2/US 76 (major portions) and SR15/US 441. One is classified as minor arterial: *SR 2/US 76 (small portion).*

**Collector Roadways**

The primary purpose of a collector road is to collect traffic from other roadways in commercial and residential areas and then distribute that traffic onto arterial road systems. Some collector roads serve thru-traffic as well as local traffic, which accesses nearby destinations. Essentially, collectors are designed to provide a greater balance between mobility and land access within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. The makeup of a collector facility is largely dependent upon the density, size, and type of abutting developments. Additionally, due to the emphasis on balancing between mobility and access, a collector facility is better designed to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian activity while still serving the needs of the motoring public.

Collectors typically have 60-100 feet right-of-ways and two to four travel lanes. Collectors intersect with cross-streets and driveways more frequently than arterial systems. Speeds and traffic volumes along these roadways are moderate. Posted speed limits are generally between 30-55 mph.

There are two types of Collectors: major collectors and minor collectors- although there are only slight differences between the two.

Major Collector routes should: (1) Provide service to any county seat not on an arterial route, to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance, such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks, important mining and agricultural areas, etc.; (2) link these places with nearby larger towns or cities, or with routes of higher classification; and (3) serve the more important intra-county travel corridors. There are ten Rural Major Collector Roads (MCRs*)* in Rabun County: *SR 28, SR 197, SR 246, CR 46, CR 21, CR 149, CR 153, CR 217, CR 218 (portion),* and *CR 219.*

Minor Collector routes should: (1) Be spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road; (2) provide service to the remaining smaller communities; and (3) link the locally important traffic generators.

There are seventeen Minor Collector Roads (NMCs) in Rabun County: *CR 7, CR 59, CR 60, CR 61, CR 80, CR 81, CR 87, CR 88,CR 90,CR 94, CR 97, CR 111, CR 214, CR 216, CR 218 (portion), CR 220 and CR 221*.

***Figure 8.3:*** *Illustrates Collector Road Characteristics*

**Characteristics of Collector Highways Summary**

1. **Shorter Trips**
2. **Moderate Speeds**
3. **Lower Volumes of Traffic - Two Lane Facilities**
4. **Intra-county Travel**
5. **Serves:**
    a. **County Seats**
    b. **Larger Towns not on Higher System**
    c. **Consolidated Schools**
    d. **Shipping Points**
    e. **Larger Manufacturing Areas**

**Local Roadways**

Local roadways, because of their design features, are influenced less by traffic volumes and are tailored to provide more local access and community livability. Mobility on local facilities is typically incidental and involves relatively short trips at lower speeds to and from collector facilities. They are designed for neighborhood environments. This "neighborhood" nature requires travel speeds to be generally lower than collectors and arterials. Posted speed limits on local city streets generally range between 15 and 35 mph, depending on available right-of-way and the adjacent land uses. Local county roads are generally posted between 30-55 mph. Traffic volumes on local streets are generally less than 5,000 vehicles per day, and often vary depending on available right-of-way and the adjacent land uses.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety and aesthetics are generally high priorities on local road systems in and around residential and commercial areas. Wider travel lanes and broader turning radii, to accommodate larger vehicle sizes, are major considerations on local streets in industrial/commercial areas.
The rural local road system should have the following characteristics: (1) Serve primarily to provide access to adjacent land; and (2) provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other higher systems. Local roads will, of course, constitute the rural mileage not classified as part of the principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector systems.

***Figure 8.3:*** *Illustrates* Local Road Characteristics

**Characteristics of Local Highways Summary**

1. **Adjacent Land is Primary Function**
2. **Shortest distances**
3. **Low Speeds**
4. **Low Volumes**
5. **Roads not Falling in Higher Systems**

**Road System Inventory**

The majority of all roadways in Rabun County are functionally classified as rural local roads. Rabun County's remaining roadways are classified respectively as follows: major collectors- rural; minor collectors- rural; and principal arterials- rural. These roadway classifications can be further analyzed using the Georgia Department of Transportation's 400-Series Reports. *Table 8.8* provides a more detailed breakdown of the various functional classes for Rabun County roadways by mileage, route type, and road system.

**Table 8.8**
**Mileage By Route Type and Road System**
**Rabun County**
**12/31/2003**

| | STATE ROUTE | | COUNTY ROAD | | CITY STREET | | TOTALS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Type Road System*** | ***Mileage*** | ***VMT*** | ***Mileage*** | ***VMT*** | ***Mileage*** | ***VMT*** | ***Mileage*** | ***VMT*** |
| RURAL PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL | 35.87 | 248823.81 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 35.87 | 248823.81 |
| RURAL MINOR ARTERIAL | 8.15 | 23187.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 8.15 | 23187.00 |
| RURAL MAJOR COLLECTOR | 19.11 | 23826.70 | 45.77 | 54967.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 64.88 | 78793.70 |
| RURAL MINOR COLLECTOR | 0.00 | 0.00 | 53.15 | 101380.90 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 53.15 | 101380.90 |
| RURAL LOCAL | 0.00 | 0.00 | 286.65 | 115556.70 | 55.66 | 38858.80 | 342.31 | 154415.50 |
| RURAL TOTAL | 63.13 | 295837.51 | 385.57 | 271904.59 | 55.66 | 38858.80 | 504.36 | 606600.90 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| TOTALS | 63.13 | 295837.51 | 385.57 | 271904.59 | 55.66 | 38858.80 | 504.36 | 606600.90 |

*Source: GDOT 400 Series Reports # 445.*

Furthermore, *Table 8.9* indicates the major road inventory for Rabun County with corresponding classifications, number of lanes, and agency jurisdiction/responsibility.

**Table 8.9**
**Major Road Inventory By Functional Classification,**
**Number of Lanes, and Jurisdiction-**
**Rabun County**

| Road Number | Name of Raodway | Descriptions (From/To) | Functional Classification | Number of Lanes | Jurisdiction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SR 2 / US 76 | None | Towns Co line to SC State line | PAR/MAR | 2-5 | State/Federal |
| SR 15 / US 441 | None | NC State line to Habersham Co line | PAR | 2-5 | State/Federal |
| SR 28 | None | NC state line to SC State line | MCR | 2 | State |
| SR 197 | None | US 76 W to Habersham Co line | MCR | 2 | State |
| SR 246 | None | US 441 N&E to NC state line to Sky Valley to NC | MCR | 2 | State |
| CR 7 | Kelly's Creek & School Farm Rds | SR 246 south to US 441 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 14 | Syrup City Road | CR 217 east to CR 149 (Old US 441 Tiger) | MCR | 2 | Local |
| CR 21 | McCrackin Rd & Wiley Connector | CR 153 (Old US 441 Lakemont) to US 441 & east to dead end @ Pole Bridge Creek | MCR | 2 | Local |
| CR 59 | Pool Creek Rd | CR 60 south to US 76 E | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 60 | Sandy Ford Rd | CR 61 east to dead end @ Dicks Creek | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 61 | Sandy Ford & | CR 219 S&W to dead end | NMC | 2 | Local |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | John Houck Rds | @ Bucks Creek | | | |
| CR 80 | Crow Creek & Low Gap Rds | CR 217 east to CR 218 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 81 | Low Gap Rd | CR 80 south to Habersham Co line | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 87 | Persimmon Roads | CR 90 south to CR 216 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 88 | Mellie Keener Road | CR 90 & 222 south to CR 216 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 90 | Persimmon Road | CR 231 east to CR 222 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 94 | Charlie Mountain Murray Cove Rds | CR 97 S&W to CR 217 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 97 | Charlie Mtn Rd | US 76 W south to CR 217 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 111 | Bald Mtn & Rabun Branch Rds | Unknown | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 149 | Old US 441 N&S | N of Clayton at US 441 south thru Clayton to Tiger 4-way stop | MCR | 2 | Local |
| CR 152 | Old US 441 S | Lake Rabun Rd south to US 441 | LOC | 2 | Local |
| CR 153 | Old US 441 S | Tiger 4-way stop S to Lake Rabun Road | MCR | 2 | Local |
| CR 214 | Unknown (Sky Valley Ford Mtn Area) | SR 246 S&E to Sky Valley & east to NC state line | NMC/LOC | 2 | Local |
| CR 216 | Wolffork, Blue Ridge Gap, Persimmon Creek & Persimmon Rds | US 76 W south to Habersham Co line | NMC/LOC | 2 | Local |
| CR 217 | Bridge Creek, Burton Dam & Tiger Conn Rds | SR 197 N east to Tiger & on to US 441 | MCR | 2 | Local |
| CR 218 | E&W Wolfcreek, Seed Lake & Lake Rabun Roads | CR 217 east to Lakemont & on to US 441 and east to US 76 E | MCR/NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 219 | Warwoman Road | US 441 east to SR 28 | MCR | 2 | Local |
| CR 220 | Bettys Creek Road | NC State line SW to US 441 | NMC | 2 | Local |
| CR 221 | Germany & Devils Branch Roads | CR 216 SE to US 76 W | NMC | 2 | Local |

*Source: Compiled by Georgia Mountains RDC based on data from GDOT, 2003.*

## Traffic Counts

*Table 8.10* provides the most current traffic counts available for Rabun County. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is the total volume on a roadway segment for one year divided by the number of days in the year. The AADT estimates are shown on the AADT MAP. All traffic count data is provide by the Georgia Department of Transportation and generated using data elements contained in the MTPT evaluation conducted during this study. For further details refer to *Appendix A*.

**Table 8.10**
**2002 Traffic Counts**
**Major Roads in Rabun County**

| Road Number | Name of Roadway | F.C. | Highest AADT |
|---|---|---|---|
| SR 2 / US 76 | None | PAR/MAR | 9,080 |
| SR 15 / US 441 | None | PAR | 17,410 |
| SR 28 | None | MCR | 450 |
| SR 197 | None | MCR | 955 |
| SR 246 | None | MCR | 4,501 |
| CR 7 | Kelly's Creek & School Farm Rds | NMC | 3,320 |
| CR 14 | Syrup City Road | MCR | 400 |
| CR 21 | McCrackin Rd & Wiley Connector | MCR | 1,480 |
| CR 59 | Pool Creek Rd | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 60 | Sandy Ford Rd | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 61 | Sandy Ford & John Houck Rds | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 80 | Crow Creek & Low Gap Rds | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 81 | Low Gap Rd | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 87 | Persimmon Roads | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 88 | Mellie Keener Road | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 90 | Persimmon Road | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 94 | Charlie Mountain Murray Cove Rds | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 97 | Charlie Mtn Rd | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 111 | Bald Mtn & Rabun Branch Rds | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 149 | Old US 441 N&S | MCR | 7,500 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CR 152 | Old US 441 S | LOC | |
| CR 153 | Old US 441 S | MCR | 1,594 |
| CR 214 | Unknown (Sky Valley Ford Mtn Area) | NMC | 1,480 |
| CR 216 | Wolffork, Blue Ridge Gap, Persimmon Creek & Persimmon Rds | NMC | 1,260 |
| CR 217 | Bridge Creek, Burton Dam & Tiger Conn Rds | MCR | 1,820 |
| CR 218 | E&W Wolfcreek, Seed Lake & Lake Rabun Roads | MCR/NMC | 11,180 |
| CR 219 | Warwoman Road | MCR | 9890 |
| CR 220 | Bettys Creek Road | NMC | 1,804 |
| CR 221 | Germany & Devils Branch Roads | NMC | 950 |

***Source: Compiled by Georgia Mountains RDC based on Data from GDOT and MTPT Software.**

When comparing AADT data it must be understood that traffic counts vary considerably from day to day, season to season, and year to year. Certain environmental factors and social patterns such as days of the week, different seasons of the year, weather, special events, and other anomalies can all have an impact on the raw data that is collected and the averages, which result for them. For the reason, FHWA and GDOT have established control factors, which help to account for and "factor-out" these anomalies. Thus, GDOT is able to reduce the probability of generating faulty data.

**Levels of Service**

The Florida Department of Transportation's Quality/Level of Service Handbook, 2002 Edition best defines Level of Service (LOS) as "a quantitative stratification of the quality of service" for a segment of or an entire roadway. Quality of Service (QOS), likewise, is defined as "a traveler-based perception of how well a transportation service or facility operates." In more simple terms, Level of Service (LOS) is a measurement of how well a roadway segment or intersection operates. There are six levels involved in such evaluations. These quantitative stratifications are represented as alphabet characters and range from A (best) to F (worst), and each letter represents a capacity of service based upon established characteristics and average travel speeds (ATS). Florida's Q/LOS Handbook's Rural Undeveloped and Rural Developed characteristics best describe the typical roadways in Rabun County. Thus, these were applied during the evaluation process for the purpose of this document. *Table 8.10*, provides a listing of the LOS thresholds, which were used for the evaluation of services. The more uniform, 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 2000) characteristics are more applicable to Urbanized area and do not take into account the rural factors which impact Rabun County, and thus were not utilized for this analysis.

**Table 8.11**
**Rural Levels of Service (LOS) Thresholds**

| *LOS* | *2-lane Hwy (ru) v/c* | *2-lane Hwy (rd) % FFS* | *Multilane Hwy (ru) v/c* | *Multilane Hwy (rd) v/c* | *Arterials ATS* | *Intersections/ Non-State Signalized Control Delay* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***A*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***> 42 mph*** | ***≤ 5 sec*** |
| ***B*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***> 34 mph*** | ***≤ 10 sec*** |
| ***C*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***> 27 mph*** | ***≤ 20 sec*** |
| ***D*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***> 21 mph*** | ***≤ 30 sec*** |
| ***E*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***> 16 mph*** | ***≤ 40 sec*** |
| ***F*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 0.34*** | ***≤ 16 mph*** | ***> 40 sec*** |

*Source: Florida Department of Transportation's 2002 Quality/Level of Service Handbook*

v/c = Demand Capacity Ratio % FFS = Percent Free Flow Speed
ATS = Average Travel Speed ru = rural undeveloped rd = rural developed

Rabun County desires to maintain an overall level of service (LOS) of "D" or better for all major roadways within the system, with an optimal LOS of "C" or better. An analysis of the network reveals that most roadways exceed this standard, however, there are a few that fall below the desired LOS. *Table 8.12*, below, provides an overview of the LOS Analysis and recommendations for action for the major roadways inventoried under this plan. For a detailed analysis for these facilities, as well as for all local roadways evaluated for Rabun County, please refer to *Appendix A*.

**Table 8.12**
**Lowest Levels of Service and Required Actions for Major Roads in Rabun County**

| Road Number | Road Name | F.C. | Current LOS | 10 Yr LOS | 20 Yr LOS | Action Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SR 2 / US 76 | None | PAR/MAR | B,C,D,E, F | C,D,~ | D,E,F, ~ | N,M,L |
| SR 15 / US 441 | None | PAR | B,C,F | B,C,D E,~ | E,F,~ | N,M,L |
| SR 28 | None | MCR | A | A | A | X |
| SR 197 | None | MCR | A,D | A,B,~ | C,~ | X,N |
| SR 246 | None | MCR | D | ~ | ~ | N |
| CR 7 | Kelly's Creek & School Farm Rds | NMC | B,C | B,C,D | D,E,~ | M,L |
| CR 14 | Syrup City Road | MCR | A | A | A | X |
| CR 21 | McCrackin Rd & Wiley Connector | MCR | A,B | A,C | A,D,E | X,L |
| CR 59 | Pool Creek Rd | NMC | B | C | D | L |
| CR 60 | Sandy Ford Rd | NMC | A,B | A,C | A,D | X,L |
| CR 61 | Sandy Ford & John | NMC | A,B | A,C | A,D | X,L |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Houck Rds | | | | | |
| CR 80 | Crow Creek & Low Gap Rds | NMC | A,B | A,C | A,D | X,L |
| CR 81 | Low Gap Rd | NMC | A,B | B,C | C,D | X,L |
| CR 87 | Persimmon Roads | NMC | A,B | B | D | L |
| CR 88 | Mellie Keener Road | NMC | B | C | D | L |
| CR 90 | Persimmon Road | NMC | B | B | D | L |
| CR 94 | Charlie Mountain Murray Cove Rds | NMC | B | B | D | L |
| CR 97 | Charlie Mtn Rd | NMC | B | B,C | D | L |
| CR 111 | Bald Mtn & Rabun Branch Rds | NMC | B | C | D | L |
| CR 149 | Old US 441 N&S | MCR | A,D,E | B,~ | C,D,~ | X,N,L |
| CR 152 | Old US 441 S | LOC | A | A | A | X |
| CR 153 | Old US 441 S | MCR | A,B | A,C | A,B,E | X,L |
| CR 214 | Unknown | NMC | A,B | A,C | A,D | X,L |
| CR 216 | Wolffork, Blue Ridge Gap, Persimmon Creek & Persimmon Rds | NMC | A,B | A,B,C | A,C,D | X,L |
| CR 217 | Bridge Creek, Burton Dam & Tiger Conn Rds | MCR | A,B | A,B | B,C,D | X,L |
| CR 218 | E&W Wolfcreek, Seed Lake & Lake Rabun Roads | MCR/NMC | A,B | A,B,C | A,D | X,L |
| CR 219 | Warwoman Road | MCR | A,B | B,C | D,E | L |
| CR 220 | Bettys Creek Road | NMC | B | C | D | L |
| CR 221 | Germany & Devils Branch Roads | NMC | A | A | B | X |

*Source: Compiled by Georgia Mountains RDC based on data from GDOT, 2003.*

*Action Key: X= No Action; I= Immediate Action; N= Near Term; M= Medium Term; and L= Long Term*

**System Deficiencies**

As discussed in the previous Levels of Service section, a number of roadways were identified as exceeding the thresholds for LOS. There are numerous road segments that are currently failing or will be failing in the very near future (LOS "E", "F", or "~"). Most of these roadways exist within or near the City of Clayton and are primarily State Route systems. Additionally, there are several road segments that on the borderline of the thresholds or will be breaching the thresholds over the period covered under this document. The majority of these roadways are a part of the local system (either county roads or city streets). For further details please refer to Current, 10-year, and 20-year Level of Service maps.

*Note:* In addition to this document, the reader should consult GDOT's Multi-modal Transportation Study Final Report conducted for Habersham, Rabun, Stephens, and White Counties prepared by the Day-Wilburn Associates, Inc. in July 2003.

**Roadway Improvements**

As previous mentioned under *Table 8.12*, the system analysis for Rabun County evaluated the road network for needed improvements and identified several roadways, which required either minor or major improvements. These recommended improvements where listed as being needed immediately or in the near, medium, or long term range in order to meet the established Level of Service goals for the county. Minor improvements are defined as facility improvements such as road widening of the average lane width up to 12-feet and shoulder widths up to 6 feet. Major improvements are defined as facility improvements with additions of: (1) a passing lane for two-lane facilities; and/or (2) one or more additional lane(s) in each direction (total of two more lanes) if a multilane or freeway facility.

Both major and minor improvements were identified as being needed for the following roadways:

- ✓ SR 2/US 76
- ✓ SR 15/US 441
- ✓ SR 246
- ✓ CR 7
- ✓ CR 21
- ✓ CR 59
- ✓ CR 60
- ✓ CR 61
- ✓ CR 80
- ✓ CR 81
- ✓ CR 87
- ✓ CR 88
- ✓ CR 90
- ✓ CR 94
- ✓ CR 97
- ✓ CR 149
- ✓ CR 153
- ✓ CR 214
- ✓ CR 216
- ✓ CR 217
- ✓ CR 218
- ✓ CR 219
- ✓ CR 220
- ✓ CR 221

For a complete list of recommendations and associated costs please refer to *Appendix A* of this document.

**Bridges and Major Culverts**

GDOT maintains a management system on every bridge and major culvert in the state. These Inventory Data Listings include the following relevant information:

- Location
- Sufficiency rating
- Facility carried
- Features intersected
- Year constructed
- Year reconstructed (if applicable)
- Date of last inspection
- Design load
- Structure and foundation type
- Appurtenances information
- Work programming data
- Hydraulic data
- Number of lanes
- Length, width and clearance
- Posting data

The structures are graded by a sufficiency rating, which is used to determine scheduling for rehabilitation or reconstruction of the facility. With adequate maintenance, any structure with a rating above 75 should still be in acceptable condition 20 years from its rating date. Those structures with a rating between 65 and 75 are more marginal, and those with a sufficiency rating below 65 are likely to require major rehabilitation or reconstruction within the next 20 years.

Rabun County currently has on hundred and four (104) locally owned structures that meet the state qualification to be classified as bridge/culvert structures. It must be noted that more bridge/culvert structures exist throughout Rabun County. There are numerous privately owned structures and other structures that may be considered bridges/culverts. However, these structures do not meet the established criteria to be classified under the state law of what is considered to be a "bridge structure," therefore they are excluded from consideration. Additionally, there are several bridges that are owned and maintained exclusively by the state. These structures are also being excluded from consideration in this document. All routine inspections are conducted on a two-year schedule and performed by certified bridge inspectors of the Georgia Department of Transportation. Rabun County receives a report from GDOT at the end of each cycle, which details the status of each structure. Rabun County and GDOT work cooperatively to ensure that necessary bridge repairs are conducted. These work projects are scheduled into the Georgia Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. This program establishes funds to cover the expenses for federal aid and state aid projects. The table below summarizes the total number of bridges with a sufficiency rating below the

recommended 65 under the most recent Bridge Report conducted for Rabun County. Appendix B provides the detailed report.

**Table 8.13**
**Bridge and Major Culvert Locations**
**with Sufficiency Ratings below 65**

| Roadway Type Carried by Structure | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **State Route** | **County Road** | **City Street** | **Total** |
| 2 | 41 | 4 | 47 |

*Source: Georgia Department of Transportation*
*Rabun County Bridge Report, 2002*

It is the desire of the Rabun County community to support necessary bridge replacement projects to ensure safe transportation over such facilities. Rabun County and its municipalities encourage GDOT to assist in such activities, where possible. It is also the expressed desire of Rabun County's citizens to see such project conducted in a manner that promotes the least amount of negative impact to our community and produces the least amount traffic flow delays.

Currently, there are no officially designated evacuation routes for Rabun County. Rabun County has, however, identified *SR 2/US 76 and SR 15/US 441* as potential or likely evacuation routes in the event of some catastrophic event. Therefore only bridges located along these routes would be considered under this document. At this time all of these bridges appear to be in sufficient condition to serve the evacuation needs of the community.

## Signal Warrants and Traffic Control

Currently there are six (6) traffic signals located within the planning area. The majority of these signals are located within or near the city limits of Clayton. A list of these signalized intersections is contained below:

1.) US 76 at North Main Street
2.) US 441 at US 76 West and Warwoman Road
3.) US 441 at Walmart's Driveway
4.) US 441 at US 76 East and Cheechroo Road
5.) US 441 at SR 246
6.) US 441 at Kelley's Creek Road (flashing caution light)

There are no locally owned facilities at this time. All traffic signals are located at intersections with state routes and therefore are owned and maintained by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Traffic controls are generally required to conform to the standards and guidelines established under the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways. Any future additions in traffic signals, which may become necessary during the planning horizon (determined by a signal warrant), will

most likely occur at intersections of state routes and local roads, thereby becoming GDOT's responsibility.

## Roadway Signage

All road signs are erected in accordance with the Georgia Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways. Requirements for signage depend on whether they are erected on conventional roads, expressways, or freeways. The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for signage in the rights-of-ways of all state routes. The location and composition of Rabun County's and the 's signage meet applicable specifications.

## Public Transit

Currently, Rabun County operates a 5311-Rural Public Transit Service Program. The services are established as demand-response system with a typical 24-hour advance service request. Operational hours are from 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday with some after-hours, special events, & emergency trip demand services. The program operates 4 buses within the county and runs an average of 12 Trips per day. Program officials estimate that 80% of their current cliental is elderly (over 65 years). The remaining transit users are low-income or DFACS clients. The program is also handicap accessible.

The program's current operational status appears to be adequate to meet the basic needs of the community. There are, however, future plans to expand the services where possible as rider-ship/demand increases. Additionally, there are plans to evaluate the needs for connectivity into surrounding communities as a means of increasing rider-ship. Program officials have also indicated a desire to expand the services to include a fixed-route system for the community in an effort to increase effectiveness in services.

## Airports and Air Transportation

Neither Rabun County, nor any of its municipalities operate an airport facility. All air transportation services are obtained through the use of surrounding facilities in other counties. For example, Lee Gilmer Airport in Gainesville, Habersham County Airport in Cornelia, Blairsville Airport in Blairsville, and Lumpkin County-Wimpy Airport in Dahlonega, Georgia. It is not anticipated that Rabun County will establish such facilities during the planning period covered under this document.

## Pedestrian Pathways: Sidewalks and Recreational Trails

Currently, the only public owned and maintained sidewalks, which exist in Rabun County, are located primarily within the Cities of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley and Tiger. Both Clayton and Mountain City have an extensive network of sidewalks that provides pedestrians access throughout the downtown area and into its outlying neighborhoods. Sidewalks typically exist along both side of the roadway within the city limits. Clayton and Mountain City, both maintain an ongoing program to replace

and/or repair deteriorating sidewalks and construct new sidewalks whenever possible. The other communities have limited facilities that are not as comprehensive as Clayton and Dillard, however, there is a desire to develop improved access in these communities.

For further details please refer to the Existing Sidewalks Map on the following page. Other sidewalks may exist within Rabun County and its municipalities, however, they are privately owned and maintained, and therefore, they are outside the scope of this documents evaluation.

**Pedestrian Facility Recommendations**

Whether performing improvements to existing sidewalks or designing new pedestrian facilities, efforts should be made to create a pleasant and safe walking experience for all users. The following recommendations are made to help in achieving this goal.

*Existing Sidewalks*

Sidewalks throughout the planning area should be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Adequate curb cuts and railings (if necessary) should be installed. Repairs to cracked and deteriorating concrete should be made on a regular basis. Children and older adults are often the largest users of sidewalks. This group of pedestrians may have mobility issues that would be made more difficult by uneven pavement. For safety, sidewalks should be in good condition.

In making repairs to existing sidewalks, care should be taken if historic paving materials are present. Many of the communities within the Georgia Mountains region have sidewalks built with hexagonal pavers. These pavers may be a character-defining element of a historic district and should be carefully repaired and preserved in place. Historic commercial buildings often have small ceramic tiles at the recessed entrances of stores that abut the sidewalk. When repairing or replacing sidewalks, these historic tile entrances should not be disturbed.

When existing sidewalks are in need of major repair or where a road project requires sidewalk reconstruction, every attempt should be made to improve sidewalks with a planting strip between the road and sidewalk. Planting strips that separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic are widely accepted as a way of helping pedestrians feel safer and more comfortable. The design of planting strips depends largely on the volume and speeds of traffic and whether or not on-street parking exists. GDOT has several recommendations for planting strip designs and should be consulted when the time comes to make improvements to sidewalks.

*New Sidewalks*

Building new sidewalks is the second, but equally important, priority for pedestrian facility enhancements. When making recommendations for new sidewalks, first priority is to link existing sidewalk sections with new sidewalks. This creates a continuous

sidewalk path and reduces the need for pedestrians to cross the street or walk on roadways. In general, this is necessary in city centers where sidewalks may have been built in stages or as part of the construction of a building site.

New sidewalks should extend existing sidewalks to local schools, parks, recreation centers, institutions, and commercial activity nodes. GDOT recommends that, whenever possible, sidewalks should be located on both sides of the street. Where sidewalks have not previously existed, constructing sidewalks on one side of the street is acceptable for the short-term. As with improvements to existing sidewalks, new sidewalks should be ADA accessible and have a planting strip.

It is recommended that subdivision regulations for sidewalks meet the same standards as city and county sidewalks to include planting strips and ADA compatibility. In addition, subdivision sidewalks should link to public sidewalks to provide a continuous path.

When building new sidewalks in listed or eligible historic districts, a preservation professional should be consulted to identify significant landscape elements that should not be altered. New sidewalks are compatible with historic districts when done sensitively. Planners may want to recommend incorporating appropriate historic paving materials into the design of a new sidewalk.

Pedestrian amenities such as street furniture and lighting improve the quality of the pedestrian experience. Street furniture includes benches, trash receptacles, bike racks and newspaper boxes. The installation of these items should be carefully planned to allow for the uninterrupted flow of traffic. Too much street furniture creates clutter and maintenance issues that can be a nuisance for the pedestrian. It is recommended that street furniture be clustered in areas that receive at least a moderate amount of foot traffic and out of the path of pedestrians. National standards have been established for the minimum space requirements for street furnishings. These standards should be consulted when planning new streetscapes. GDOT can also assist local governments in this regard.

Proper lighting for pedestrians is an important safety consideration. Most urban areas have adequate lighting in place. For pedestrian purposes it is recommended that lighting fixtures be shorter than typical street lighting. Generally, lighting fixtures for pedestrians should not exceed 15-feet. Care should also be taken to choose lighting fixture styles that are appropriate to the character of the neighborhood. Overly stylistic lights would not typically be appropriate for historic rural communities such as Rabun County and the Cities of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Tiger, and Sky Valley. Simple contemporary fixtures are often more compatible. Lighting fixtures should be directed toward the sidewalk area and not upward. Light that is pointed at the sky creates a glow that can hamper the vision of pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, it becomes necessary to add more lighting, which raises the cost. It is recommended that light fixtures be positioned for maximum effectiveness, thereby increasing the quality of the pedestrian experience and decreasing the cost to the community and the negative impacts of environmental or light pollution.

**Other Alternate Mode Recommendations**

Some types of facilities, such as multi-use trails and scenic highways, encourage use by more than one mode of travel. Because multi-modal use creates the need for some additional considerations, some further recommendations are mentioned below.

*Multi-use Trails and Paths*

Multi-use trails are off-road paved (either pervious or impervious) trails that are shared by pedestrians and cyclists and used for other activities such as horseback riding. These trails are usually considered to be recreational, but people also use short segments for daily activities when they are located near commercial activity centers. GDOT recommends that multi-use shared paths be 10-feet in width, at a minimum. However, a 12-foot or more width offers greater comfort for users. These trails are popular with both locals and tourists. As an example, the Silver Comet Trail in Georgia currently has 38 miles of shared trails with plans for a total of 51 miles. Eventually the trail will connect with the Chief Ladiga Trail in Alabama to cover 101 miles from Atlanta to Anniston, Alabama.

**Bicycle Travel**

Bicycle users have various levels of expertise, which makes different types of facilities more desirable. Cyclists are typically separated into three groups: Type A, Type B and Type C. These types are described in the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities as follows:

- Type A Cyclists: Advanced or experienced riders who generally use their bicycles as they would a motor vehicle.
- Type B Cyclists: Basic or less confident adult riders who may also be using their bicycles for transportation purposes, e.g. to get to the store or visit friends, but prefer to avoid roads with fast or busy motor vehicle traffic unless there is ample roadway width to allow easy overtaking by the faster traveling motor vehicle.
- Type C Cyclists: Children, riding on their own or with parents, who may not travel as fast as their adult counterparts but still require access to key destinations in their community, such as schools, convenience stores and recreation facilities.

Cyclists desire safe routes to go to work and school, complete errands, and ride for health and recreational reasons. Cyclists are also discouraged from riding on sidewalks, which can create safety hazards for pedestrians. In order to provide safe and attractive routes for cyclists, bike routes should be recommended for local designation. There are several acceptable ways to delineate a bikeway. These different types depend greatly on the volume and speed of traffic and are typically chosen during the design phase of the bikeway project.

For the purposes of future guidance for appropriate bikeway selection, the types of bikeways will be discussed. Bicycle facilities have four basic types (three on-road

facilities and one off-road facility) that are described in more detail below. In addition, recommendations from a study for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center completed in August 2002 titled "Bicycle Facility Selection: A Comparison of Approaches" will be summarized. For further information on bicycle facilities, the following sources can be consulted:

- Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Georgia Department of Transportation;
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center;
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

The simplest type of bikeway is a paved shoulder. Especially in rural areas, AASHTO suggests that paved shoulders of a four-foot width minimum can act as a bicycle facility. GDOT has guidelines available for signing a bike route. It is recommended that all routes, whether they are a paved shoulder or striped bike lane, be signed. Type A cyclists are typically comfortable with this type of bikeway, but Type B and Type C cyclists may not prefer it.

The next level of bikeway is a wide outside lane or shared lane. As the name suggests, bicyclists share the outside lane of traffic with motorists. Generally the minimum width of an outside lane must be 14-feet and should not include the gutter pan. It is acceptable to reduce the width of an interior lane of traffic in order to provide for a wider outside lane according to AASHTO. This allows for safer bicycle travel without widening the roadway.

The final on-road bikeway is the bike lane. A bike lane is a striped separate lane designated solely for bicycles. A minimum four-foot wide lane is acceptable for lanes with no curb, gutter or parking. A minimum of five-feet is necessary for lanes that are adjacent to parking. In some situations where bicyclists must share the lane with parallel parking areas, a minimum of 11-feet is necessary for lanes with no curb and 12-feet for lanes with a curb face. Bike lanes require a solid Rabun line stripe to separate it from vehicular traffic.

An additional off-road bikeway is a separated lane. This lane is located adjacent to a road and may have a planting strip or cement wall between the lane and road. The less-experienced Type B and Type C cyclists favor the security of this type of bikeway. These are used most often for recreational use in Georgia and none are recommended in this plan.

For cyclists to be able to use their bikes for daily activities, it is necessary to provide bike racks in public areas such as schools, government buildings, parks, and commercial activity centers. Bike racks should support a bicycle in two places and prevent the wheel from tipping. All racks should be anchored so that they cannot be stolen. Racks should be located near the entrances of buildings and under cover, if possible.

Rabun County does not have any locally designated bike routes, however it does have a good network bike facilities that are designated as part of the State Bike System. State Bike Route 90/Mountain Crossing and State Bike Route 85/Savannah River Run are currently the only officially designated routes for bike riders in Rabun County. SBR 90/Mounatin Crossing is an extended east/west route that stretches 210.3 miles from the Whitfield County, Georgia to Rabun County, Georgia. The Rabun County portion of the route covers portions of CR 217 and 218 from west at the Habersham County line at SR 197 to Lakemont in the east, where it connects into SBR 85. SBR 85/Savannah River Run, likewise, is an extended north/south route that stretches 314 miles from Savannah to northern Rabun County where it connects with North Carolina. The Rabun County portions of this route run along US 441 and Historic US 441 from the Habersham County line north to the North Carolina state line. There are no other facilities that exist in the county except the multi-use facilities located with the city and county parks.

Under the Rabun County Multi-modal study conducted in 2003, there are additional plans to develop future bike facilities and/or create new "designated" bike routes. For further detail please refer to the Multi-modal study and the attached maps in Appendix ??? which identify the planned and proposed facilities for Rabun County. In addition, the Georgia Mountains RDC is in the process of developing a Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that includes additional proposed projects for Rabun County. It is, therefore, the goal of the community to expand existing facilities and develop new facilities where physically and financially possible in support of the projects identified in these plans and documents.

## 8.3 Community Goals and Strategies

The Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element for Rabun County and its municipalities represent an effort to define a set of transportation programs and projects that address existing and future transportation needs within the county. The plan's recommendations will guide future transportation investments and provide mobility solutions to accommodate population and employment growth in this area.

Thoughtful goals and effective performance measures ensure a long-range, needs-based perspective that assists in effectively identifying and implementing appropriate transportation initiatives for Rabun County and its municipalities. The goals and performance measures must be compatible in order to develop a transportation network that also addresses regional needs.

Performance measures are necessary tools in needs-based plan development because they can track performance over time and assist in identifying improvements. They provide accountability and link strategic planning to resource allocation. By defining specific performance measures, Rabun County will be able to measure the effectiveness of selected projects and programs in meeting goals. Performance measures as a package indicate the extent to which the current and recommended programs help achieve established goals.

The federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) emphasizes that transportation infrastructure investment should be driven by the need for improvement. The goals and performance measures established for Rabun County and its municipalities were designed to meet the area's specific transportation needs, while simultaneously incorporating sensitivity to the transportation efforts of the region's multiple planning partners. The goals and performance measures for the area, provided in *Table 8.16* consider the objectives outlined in the GMRDC's Regional Comprehensive Plan.

## Goals and Performance Measures

Four Transportation planning goals have been established for Rabun County. The first goal is to improve accessibility and mobility of people and goods. The accomplishment of this goal will be measured by establishing a threshold for 2025 roadway LOS C or better and monitoring performance roadway levels of congestion. The number of alternative roadway connections with capacity for high volume flows will also serve as a measure of transportation access and mobility.

**Table 8.16**
**Goals and Performance Measures**

| Goals | Performance Measures |
|---|---|
| • Improve accessibility and mobility of people and goods. | • MTPT 2025 roadway LOS C or better.<br>• Provides alternative roadway connections with capacity for high volume flows. |
| • Enhance Safety | • Will reduce accident occurrences.<br>• Locations with significant numbers of correctable vehicle crashes.<br>• Provides additional improvements to pedestrian facilities for activity centers.<br>• Provides additional bike lanes or separated bike paths along corridors with high vehicle/bike friction. |
| • Preserve and improve the existing system, environment, and quality of life. | • Present serviceability ratings (PSR) of 3.0 or above.<br>• Bridge sufficiency ratings above 75.<br>• Number of actively protected wetlands, greenspace (i.e., forest buffers, productive agriculture lands, and scenic view sheds) and historic areas protected from encroachment from transportation projects.<br>• Burdens or benefits to environmental justice communities.<br>• Number of pedestrian facilities for activity centers.<br>• Connectivity of bike facilities to regional network.<br>• Percent of area served by transit.<br>• Number of design features that encourage transit patronage. |
| • Ensure multi-jurisdictional coordination to facilitate interregional connectivity and | • Ongoing communication between regional jurisdictions. |

| | |
|---|---|
| foster regional economic development. | • Number of alternative roadway connections between jurisdictions with capacity for high volume flows. |

The second goal is to enhance safety. The achievement of this goal will be measured by: (1) monitoring and reducing accident rates, and (2) monitoring and reducing the number of locations with correctable vehicle crashes. Other performance measures for this goal include increasing the number of pedestrian facilities for activity centers, and the number of miles of bike lanes, or separated bike paths along corridors with high vehicle/bike friction.

Thirdly, Rabun County and its municipalities will preserve and improve the existing system, environment and quality of life by monitoring performance measures such as present serviceability ratings for pavement, bridge sufficiency ratings, the number of wetlands and historic areas protected from encroachment from transportation projects, and burdens on and benefits to environmental justice communities. This goal will also be measured by the number of pedestrian facilities for activity centers, connectivity of bike facilities to the regional network, the percent of area served by transit, and the number of design features that encourage transit patronage.

Finally, the fourth goal is to ensure multi-jurisdictional coordination to facilitate interregional connectivity and foster regional economic development. Achievement of this goal will be measured by the level of ongoing communication between regional jurisdictions and the number of alternative roadway connections with capacity for high volume flows.

Ensuring that the goals for Rabun County and its municipalities are achieved requires an accurate inventory of the existing transportation infrastructure and a detailed analysis of the operating conditions and services for inventoried facilities. Both of these were conducted early in the planning process and are outlined in previous sections.

Future growth forecasts are essential for developing long-range transportation plans to determine overall needs and the level of transportation strategies required to meet those needs. Transportation planning is an ongoing process where planning factors, such as growth and the assessment of needs, are periodically monitored and reevaluated. The rapid growth in this area requires an effective monitoring and update function of the planning process. Planning assumptions and transportation strategies must be evaluated periodically, as needed.

**Decision Context**

As the planning process entered the project development phase, a “decision context” within which strategies would be recommended was developed. To ensure that the

overall goals for Rabun County are achieved, recommended programs and projects should work to achieve established goals. Whether or not the goals are successfully achieved is assessed objectively by comparing existing and future conditions, using the defined set of performance measures and thresholds.

Four primary "decision context" questions were used to examine potential projects before developing the preferred program of projects:

***1. Do the strategies meet the plan's goals and objectives?***
The recommended program should demonstrate, through specific performance measures, that the plan's goals and objectives have been met.

***2. Are the strategies appropriate and proportional to needs?***
Specific performance measures are useful tools for evaluating plans, but may not tell the whole story. Strategies must not only be effective, but also appropriate and proportional to needs.

***3. Are strategies cost-effective?***
Federal law requires transportation plans to be fiscally constrained. Nevertheless, detailed scrutiny is required to ensure the best possible use of financial resources.

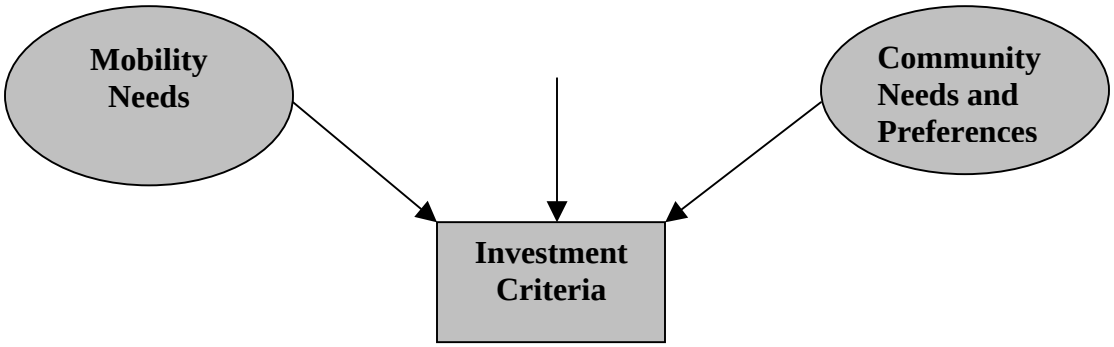
***4. Are other options viable?***
All viable options must be considered. Population and employment densities determine cost-effectiveness. System optimization improvements, such as improving intersection Geometrics and signal timing are low-cost options to alleviate localized congestion.

**Investment Criteria**

Investment criteria guide the transportation planning process and provide a framework for the development of programs and projects. Within the decision context, financial effectiveness analysis is conducted based on identified established investment criteria. Investment criteria ensure that the counties gain the most cost-effective improvements when developing a program of projects.

Community needs and preferences were defined through a series of discussions with community stakeholders and other public involvement efforts. Mobility needs were identified through technical analysis.

**Figure 39**
**Development of Investment Criteria**




Goals and objectives, mobility needs, and community preferences combine to define a series of six primary investment criteria:

**Investment Criteria:**

- ***Efficiency improvements***
- ***Mobility options***
- ***Congestion relief***
- ***Accessibility to interstates and major highways***
- ***East-west connectivity***
- ***North-south connectivity***

Using previously described investment criteria; potential improvement strategies were initially identified and applied to the transportation system. Lower-cost improvements addressing system efficiency or travel demand were considered prior to more costly strategies. Where less expensive measures do not provide adequate improvement, increased system capacity solutions were considered. Finally, the package of improvements in each program category (such as roadway, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian) is evaluated to ensure that transportation improvements work together to define a fully integrated multi-modal transportation system.

**Coordination with Regional Planning**

The Georgia Planning Act was adopted by the General Assembly in 1989 as a means to encourage better management of growth in the booming areas of the state, while encouraging the less prosperous parts to avail themselves of opportunities for growth. The Planning Act established a coordinated planning program for the State of Georgia, which provides local governments with opportunities to plan for their future and to improve communication with their neighboring governments. The Act established a "bottom-up," comprehensive planning approach initially to be conducted at the local government level, and then at the regional and state levels. The Planning Act also assigns local governments certain minimum responsibilities to maintain "Qualified Local Government" (QLG) status, and thus, be eligible to receive certain state funding.

The cornerstone of the coordinated planning program is the preparation of a long-range comprehensive plan by each local government in the state. This plan is intended to highlight community goals and objectives as well as determine how the government proposes to achieve those goals and objectives. Municipal and county plans are then used as the basis for a regional development plan.

Regional Development Centers (RDC) are charged with the responsibility of promoting the establishment, implementation, and performance of coordinated and comprehensive planning by municipal and county governments. The RDC is expected to plan for conformity with minimum standards and procedures established by the Planning Act. As the designated RDC for the Georgia Mountains area, the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center addresses regional issues and mobility needs through planning efforts that culminate in the development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Rabun County and its municipalities should continue to work closely with each other, the RDC, and other municipalities and local governments in surrounding counties to ensure regional coordination in the development of these plans.

To address regional transportation planning impacts, Rabun County and its municipal governments must work closely with the GDOT Office of Planning and the GDOT District One Office in Gainesville, Georgia. GDOT's Office of Planning assigns specific planning resources to ensure a regional and statewide perspective in planning for Rabun County. The GDOT District One Office also offers personnel and other resources to bring regional and local perspective to the transportation planning process. Transportation solutions are identified for Rabun County and other counties through the development of improvement projects included in the six-year GDOT Construction Work Program (CWP) and the three-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

**Transportation Investment Strategies**

An inventory of potential strategies was evaluated for the purpose of developing this document. These strategies have the potential to reduce congestion, increase capacity, and improve the quality of life for Rabun County in the future. Programs and projects to address identified needs in Rabun County were drawn from the three classifications presented below.

- Growth Management
- Safety and Operations
    - Traffic System Operations Optimization
    - Intersections and Interchanges
- Infrastructure Enhancements
    - Roadway Projects
    - Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

### *Growth Management*

Despite the population growth projected for Rabun County over the next 30 years, reduced traffic congestion and improved quality of life can be achieved by managing the type and location of growth. Planning the location of community activities and services closer to neighborhoods and one another could substantially reduce vehicle trips. Mixed land use planning on a regional, community, and activity center level will improve accessibility to major destinations. By clustering or mixing uses in a small area, community residents have access to most of their daily needs within a short multi-purpose drive, bicycle ride, or walk from home. Schools, shopping centers, and places of employment are popular destinations and should be developed in locations providing maximum accessibility by the residents of the community or region.

An essential tool in controlling transportation demand, land use regulations such as zoning or subdivision development codes can enable growth, while reducing traffic congestion throughout Rabun County. Traffic congestion will decrease as vehicle trips shorten and transit, bicycling and walking become viable travel options as strong growth management efforts are pursued.

### *Safety and Operations*

Non-capacity adding projects, such as safety and operational projects, can address specific location or community needs. These improvements address the need to maximize the efficiency and safety of the existing roadway network as a foundation for providing an overall transportation system that meets future demands. Safety and operational projects normally address issues such as sight distance limitations, sharp turning radii, intersection angles, and signage placement. The projects are essential to meeting the transportation needs of the community without adding roadway capacity. The safety and operations category is a key element of the recommended program of projects.

### *Traffic System Operations Optimization*

Small-scale improvements can be incorporated into the existing roadway network to improve the flow of traffic, and they usually have a relatively short completion schedule and lower cost than roadway widening or new construction. Whenever possible, traffic operation improvements should be considered before determining the need for a widening or new construction project. Traffic operations can be optimized in many ways, including providing inter-parcel access, adding medians, closing curb cuts (driveways), adding turn, acceleration or deceleration lanes, or installing or upgrading traffic signals. Coordinated signal timing plans link together the operations of a series of traffic signals located close enough together to impact traffic conditions along an entire corridor. Developed to vary by time of day and day of week, coordinated signal timing plans improve the efficiency of signal operations along congested corridors, increasing the corridor’s effective capacity by ten to fifteen percent.

### *Intersections and Interchanges*

Another transportation improvement strategy that addresses safe and efficient travel on the roadway network is the improvement of intersections and interchanges. Many transportation conflicts resulting in congestion and safety issues are found at intersections and interchanges. Their improvement is vital to the safety and efficiency of the transportation network and builds a foundation for a network that meets future demands.

Intersection improvements can correct roadway deficiencies, increase safety, and result in increased capacity without the need to widen or make additional improvements to the roadway. Intersections with high crash rates or severe congestion should be considered for improvements. In addition to intersection improvements, the conversion of critical intersections on high volume roads into interchanges provides effective capacity increases along corridors.

### *Infrastructure Enhancements*

The need to maximize the effectiveness of existing roadway infrastructure is critical in maintaining an efficient transportation network. Potential infrastructure improvements include transit systems, roadway projects, bike and pedestrian facilities, and other strategies requiring capital investment.

### *Roadway Projects*

Roadway improvements identified through the roadway analysis and public involvement process are the central feature of the long-term planning effort. Additional roadway projects that increase levels of service, reduce congestion, and improve safety become the foundation for meeting transportation needs over the planning period, but may be subjected to air quality emissions testing conducted region-wide.

Rabun County and its municipalities are actively pursuing the development and maintenance of a road network that accommodates continuing growth. A list of current and future projects was discussed in earlier sections and in the sections: Improvement Projects and Potential Funding Sources listed below. You may also refer to Appendix A for further details.

### *Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements*

Used for recreation as well as transportation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities serve as an integral element of a multi-modal transportation network. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are vital for providing links to transit, accommodating short trips between neighborhoods and community facilities, and providing circulation between land uses in denser activity centers. The connection of neighborhoods to activity centers, such as employment centers, community facilities, and retail opportunities, by way of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, will improve resident accessibility to these locations. Demand for

bicycle and pedestrian facilities have grown substantially since the inception of ISTEA and TEA-21, which have provided more funding for these modes.

Georgia's Statewide Bicycle Plan, created by GDOT, proposes a statewide network of 14 named and numbered routes totaling 2,943 miles that are or will be particularly well-suited for bicycle use. As previously stated, there are only two State Bike Route located within the planning area: SBR 85 and SBR 90. There are currently additional plans to establish new bike routes, as documented in the Multi-Modal Study and GMRDC's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Further discussions have occurred during the planning effort, which indicates a desire to explore new biking and pedestrian opportunities throughout Rabun County.

**Road Improvement Projects**

All transportation improvement projects within Rabun County are funded through the Georgia Department of Transportation. All projects for the county and city are planned and programmed as part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This document details the projects identified by the state through the planning process and are prioritized according to their importance and the availability of funds thru the Congressional balancing process. The STIP includes Highway, Bridge, Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transportation Enhancement activities, and Public Transportation (transit) projects. Projects in the STIP emphasize the maintenance, safety, and improvement of existing transportation facilities and public transportation systems. Project related costs, such as Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right of Way (ROW), and Construction are identified for highways, and Capital and Operating costs for public transit projects. The STIP must fiscally balanced, and include only those projects with funding available or that have a reasonable expectation of obtaining funds. The STIP covers projects to be developed over a three-year period and is updated on an annual basis. There are 3 major funding categories for Road Improvement projects under the STIP:

- Federal Aid
- State Funds
- Local Funds

The Georgia Department of Transportation has identified two projects under the current STIP for FY 2004. They include the following projects:

- STP 0000306- Bridge Replacement- SR 28 @ North Fork Chattooga River
- STP 0005388- Misc. Improvements- GA SR 246/NC SR 106- Advanced Truck Warning System
- STP 121950- Passing Lanes/Realignment- SR 2/US 76 from Lake Burton Bridge to Charlie Mtn Road (CR 94)
- STP 122320- Widening- SR 15/US 441 from north of Tallulah Falls to south of Clayton.
- STP 171580- Bridge Replacement- CR 80/Low Gap Rd @ Tallulah River
- STP M002587- Bridge Maintenance- SR 15/US 441 @ Betty's Creek

GDOT has also begun work for the newest STIP (draft) update, which includes projects for FY 2005, 2006, and 2007. This draft includes projects, which are a continuation of Project numbers: 0000306, 005388, 171850, and M002587. This document identifies two additional projects for Rabun County:

- STP 0006322- Bridge Replacement- SR 2/US 76 @ Chattahoochee River at SC state line.
- STP M002788- Resurface & Maintenance (Deck Replacement)- SR 2/US 76 and SR 15/US 441

The next STIP update is not planned until FY 2006. Furthermore, GDOT's 6-year Construction Work Program (CWP) identifies long-range projects, which have a completion date beyond FY 2006. For a complete list of details regarding these projects for Rabun County please refer to GDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and Construction Work Program documents.

*Potential Funding Sources*

The most likely funding sources are identified for each project, based largely on the location of the project and responsible agencies. In some situations, it may be possible for the county or local agencies to accelerate the process of upgrading facilities by increasing local funding participation. The most likely funding sources for Rabun County are listed as follows:

- General Funds
- Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST)
- Local Options Sales Tax (LOST)
- FHWA, Transportation Enhancement Activities funds
- FTA, Rural Public Transportation funds
- State Aid, County / City contracts
- Federal Lands Program, Scenic Byways

Other options, considered less likely for Rabun County specifically, include:

- Appalachian Regional Commission program grants
- Transit fare-box revenues
- Public/private partnerships, such as Community Improvement Districts (CIDs)
- Development impact fees

Rabun County will continue to seek out other funding opportunities where available and will pursue all efforts to reasonably secure federal, state, and local funds, in an effort to maintain and improve the transportation network for the its citizens. However, it must be mentioned that Rabun County's ability to obtain such funding hinges on favorable economic conditions and the highly competitive nature of the demands on transportation funding for such projects within the Congressional District, which serves the area and surrounding communities.

*Project Phasing*

Although a large number of transportation projects have been recommended, it is not practical or feasible to implement all improvements simultaneously. A phasing plan was therefore developed to provide a starting point to use in prioritizing the recommended projects for further evaluation, funding, and implementation. The prioritization was based on the level of deficiency to be mitigated or eliminated by the project, the estimated cost and the difficulty of implementation from a planning or design perspective. The three time periods used were as follows:

• Short-range period: 2004 through 2007
• Medium-range period: 2008 through 2014
• Long-range period: 2015 through 2025

The specific phase recommended for each improvement was previously outlined in earlier discussions under Table 8.12. Also see Appendix A.

*Project Implementation*

In order to enhance the potential of success for this proposed plan, the following implementation guidelines are offered:

- Continue public outreach efforts for project-specific details as part of studying the project feasibility.
- Secure funding for each short-range project.
- Identify ways to utilize resources to accelerate the planning, design and construction process for the recommended projects.
- Undertake study to determine more detailed cost and design elements for the recommended projects.

**Conclusions**

Rabun County has had a steady growth in its population and it has seen an increase in tourist activity due to a multitude of scenic attractions in the county and surrounding communities in the region. The associated traffic generates difficult transportation planning challenges for the area. Improvements were selected that can be implemented without changing the fundamental character of the study area. The purpose of this element was to provide information and transportation recommendations for Rabun County in order to address their transportation needs. It is highly recommended that Rabun County and its municipalities jointly invest in the long-range transportation planning process as established by the Multi-modal Transportation Study completed by Day-Wilburn and Associates in July 2003. It is very important that the community complete the recommendations as outlined in that document and where possible expanded upon its efforts by engaging the following practices:

- ✓ Complete a Corridor Transportation Management Study for SR 2/US 76, SR 15/US 441 and SR 75ALT, SR 115 & SR 384.
- ✓ Complete a Corridor Transportation Management Study for downtown Clayton.
- ✓ Engage in Pedestrian and/or Bike Planning for all of Rabun County and its municipalities. Complete a comprehensive pedestrian and/or bike community plan, if possible.
- ✓ Develop an effective implementation strategy for needed road projects.

# CHAPTER 9

# LAND USE ELEMENT

This chapter is devoted to a description of the existing land use in Rabun County, including all the municipalities. This inventory and analysis of land use patterns and trends shall serve as a basis for discussion of present and anticipated land use problems and issues. The result of the analysis will be recommendations regarding future land use and the establishment of a set of policies to guide the physical development or conservation of land.

## HISTORIC FACTORS AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The growth of Rabun County has been influenced by three major factors. The following is a discussion of these factors:

First, the natural features of Rabun County have been the largest determinant of land use patterns in the County. Rabun County sits within the Blue Ridge Mountains Physiographic District, which is characterized by rugged mountains and ridges. Differing rates of erosion by rivers and streams have produced valleys 1,500-2,000 feet below the adjacent summits. This erosion has caused steep topography in the area. Because the Appalachian Mountains are very old in the geologic sense, even small creeks and streams can produce wide valleys.

The topography of Rabun County caused the majority of settlement to occur in the valleys created by rivers and streams. Because the valley floors are lined with sediment deposited by the erosion of the mountain ridges, the soils are loosely packed and are subject to flooding. With the advent of floodplain regulations, activity within the floodplain has been limited. This has caused growth to reach up into the mountain ridges and hills, to the edge of the National Forest.

The natural beauty produced by the steep mountains and ridges, and the lush vegetation and water features have brought tourists, nature lovers and naturalists from all over to live in and enjoy Rabun County. There are many private summer camps and recreational areas nestled in the gaps and hillsides of Rabun County. There are numerous places that cater to the seasonal tourists in the mountainous areas, providing rustic charm and scenic views.

The natural features of Rabun County have affected the availability of water for human needs. Water, and the ability to utilize a steady, reliable source, is a prime consideration in determining the density of land use. Because Rabun County is underlain by hard, crystalline rock, water has few places to collect underground in large quantities. Therefore, water for drinking, agriculture or industrial uses in any large quantities must be

collected from other sources. The best sources are the many streams and lakes in Rabun County. Rabun County has the distinction of having the highest average amount of rainfall in the State of Georgia. Therefore, water has played an important part recently in land use patterns.

The second factor influencing growth in Rabun County is transportation. Because of the elevational and topographical differences with the Piedmont region to the south, Rabun County, and much of the Blue Ridge area remained relatively isolated from the rest of Georgia until the Twentieth Century. The Tallulah Falls Railroad, developed in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, brought tourists to visit the resorts at Tallulah Falls. This railroad was extended to Dillard in the early part of this Century and later as far as Franklin, North Carolina. This railroad ran generally along the same alignment as Old U.S. 441. The architectural styles and land-use patterns along this corridor still show the effects of the railroad, which was abandoned in the 1960's.

Road construction projects in the 1930's connected Rabun County to its mountain neighbors and improved accessibility. The relocation of U.S. 441 in the 1960's illustrates the effects of transportation on land use. The alignment of U.S. 441/23 was moved eastward, opening an additional part of the County to development and affecting the land uses along (now) Old U.S. 441. The new alignment of 441 follows the floodplain of Stekoa Creek south of Clayton and bypasses Lakemont, Tiger, and downtown Clayton. This new road brought strip corridor development to Rabun County. The new road made it easier for tourists and nature lovers to gain access to Rabun County.

However, the lack of rail access has limited the industrial development potential of Rabun County. All raw materials and finished goods must be hauled in and out by truck. This has helped protect many of the natural features from pollution and other industrial development impacts. Because of limited industrial development, many Rabun County residents must travel long distances to work. This is the result of the land, water and transportation constraints on land use in the County.

The third and final factor affecting the historical development of Rabun County has been the purchase of large amounts of land by the United States Forest Service, the State of Georgia and Georgia Power. The Forest Service began buying non-productive mountain land in the twentieth Century, and now owns more than sixty-five percent of the area in Rabun County. The presence of the National Forest has limited private development in many desirable areas, and at the same time has prevented over-development. Both of these factors have raised the value of privately-held land in Rabun County.

Georgia Power bought the entire Tallulah River basin in the early part of this Century. The basin was bought to harness the water for hydroelectric generation. Its purchase and development has had two significant effects on the land use in Rabun County. The damming of the Tallulah River inundated several small communities along the River and silenced the Tallulah Falls. This caused dealt a serious blow to the City of Tallulah Falls. The second effect of the purchase of the Tallulah River basin has been in the successive development along the shores of the lakes and river. Lakes Seed, Burton and Rabun have been developed as upscale residential communities with adjacent commercial and recreational uses. The rapid development along the lakes of this area has placed a strain on the ability of Rabun County to provide services to the area. The State of Georgia partnered with Georgia Power to create Tallulah Falls Gorge State Park and Jane Hurt Yarn Interpretive Center. This facility along with the renewal of water releases in the gorge for white-water rafting have created a renaissance of tourism and second home development in the Town of Tallulah Falls. The natural beauty found in the mountains and on the lakes in Rabun County has made the area attractive for second-home development. More than one third of the housing in Rabun County is second-home development. The temporary population in the county resulting from this type of development may increase to up to three times the resident population in the county.

**CLASSIFICATIONS OF EXISITNG LAND USES**

The minimum planning standards enacted pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 established a minimum classification scheme for land use plans to follow. This scheme includes nine minimum classifications:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/institutional
- Transportation/communications/utilities
- Park/recreation/conservation
- Agriculture
- Vacant

**Residential**

The predominant use of land within the residential category is single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.

**Commercial**

This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building. Local governments may elect to separate office uses from other commercial uses, such as retail, service, or entertainment facilities.

**Industrial**

This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses, organized into general categories of intensity.

**Public/Institutional**

This classification includes certain federal, state, or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government buildings complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, and hospitals. Facilities that are publicly owned, but would be classified more accurately in another land use category, should not be included in this category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities should be placed in the Park/Recreation/ Conservation category; landfills should fall under the Industrial category; and, general office buildings containing government offices should be placed in the Commercial classification.

**Transportation/Communication/Utilities**

This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

**Conservation/Park/Recreation**

This classification is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, land placed in a conservation protection program or similar uses.

**Agriculture**

This category is for land dedicated to agriculture, farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, poultry and livestock production) or other similar rural uses such as pasturelands not in commercial use.

**Forest**

This classification is for land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting or other similar rural uses such as woodlands not in commercial uses.

**Vacant/Undeveloped**

This category includes lands which do not contain any improved land uses as mentioned in the previous existing land use categories or land that has been abandoned from a previous use or improvement.

**Forest Service Ownership**

This category includes land owned by the federal government, U. S. Forest Service.

**EXISITNG LAND USE INVENTORY**

The existing land inventory was developed using GIS and database technology. The GIS layers were actual tax parcel data and then developed using a windshield survey of the parcel data. The parcel codes were converted to the land uses required by the Minimum Planning Standards and overplayed on top the tax parcels.

The land use inventory from the previous Comprehensive Plan developed a land use inventory through a windshield survey. This type of inventory is subject to numerous errors from incorrect analysis and properties that are not accessible because of private roads, easements and driveways.

Due to the differences in inventory methodology there is a vast difference in the existing land use inventory from 1992 to 2004.

Tabulation of the 2005 existing land use inventory is presented in the following tables. The data is also presented on the Generalized Existing Land Map for Rabun County and all cities.

**RABUN COUNTY**

**TABLE 9-1**
**EXISTING LAND USE FOR**
**UNINCORPORATED RABUN COUNTY**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 28,924 | 12.9% |
| Commercial | 610 | 0.3% |
| Industrial | 716 | 0.3% |
| Public/Institutional | 370 | 0.2% |
| TCU | 179 | 0.06% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 2,066 | 0.9% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation - FS Ownership | 148,164 | 65.9% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 43,213 | 19.3% |
| Vacant | 510 | 0.2% |
| Water | 3,707 | 1.6% |
| Incorporated Areas | 12,107 | 5.4% |
| **TOTAL** | **224,751** | |

**Residential**

Residential land use in Rabun County makes up almost 29,000 acres or 12.9% of the land in the county. Residential development in the county is scattered throughout the county mainly along the roads and on the shoreline of the several lakes and streams in the county. Residential settlement patterns generally follow the valleys and gaps in the county. However, as construction techniques have improved and become more affordable, residential development in the county has begun to take place on the sides and tops of the many ridges and mountains. Due to the large amount of public land in Rabun County most of the development, including residential occurs in close proximity of the two major highways that cross the county. Nearly 75% of the county residents live within two miles of US 441 or US 76.

**Commercial**

Commercial land uses in unincorporated Rabun County occupy 610 acres of land. This is less than one half of one percent of all land in Rabun County. These uses are mainly made up of small stores, gas stations, and tourist related business located along US 441 and other major thoroughfares in the county. Some additional commercial land uses are located along the lakes to cater to visitors and residents in the area.

**Industrial**

There are 778 acres of land in Rabun County that are dedicated to industrial land uses. This is also less than one half of one percent of all land in the county. Most of the industrial land uses in Rabun County are

manufacturing operations. The majority of industrial land uses are located in the northern portion (Rabun Gap area) of the county between Mountain City and Dillard.

**Public/Institutional**

Public and institutional land uses in Rabun County consists of public use such as government facilities, schools, and quasi-public uses such as churches. These types of land uses occupy 370 acres in the county. Many of these types of uses are dotted around the county and are difficult to locate on a land use map. They include fire stations, transfer and recycling stations, and post offices.

**Transportation/Communications/Utilities (TCU)**

These types of land uses include the Georgia Power facilities used in the production and transmission of power, as well as the communication facilities, such as transmission towers and switching stations. They also include major roadways. TCU land uses in Rabun County occupy 179 acres of land in the county. This land use excludes the large tracts of land owned by Georgia Power that are either vacant or used for recreation purposes.

**Park/Recreation/Conservation (PRC)**

PRC lands in Rabun County are made up 2,066 acres, which is slightly less than one percent of the total land in the county. These land areas include the state parks, local parks, and areas along major tributaries. Additional land that falls under this category, but is significant in its own right is the land that is owned by the federal governments and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. More than 65% of the total acreage in Rabun County is owned by the federal government. The national forest is visited by thousands of outdoor enthusiasts each year. Another sub-category of PRC includes the acres that are covered by water. There are four significant lakes in Rabun County that provide excellent recreation opportunities. Water covers more than 3,700 acres in the county or 1.6% of the total land use.

**Agriculture/Forestry**

Land used for agriculture and forestry makes up the majority of privately held land in Rabun County. Land used for agricultural purposes can be found in the floodplain and lowland areas along many of the major tributaries flowing throughout the county. Forested lands accounts for much of the land on ridgetops and mountain side adjacent to the valleys. Agricultural and forested land occupies more than 43,000 acres or about 19% of the total lands in Rabun County. According to the latest agricultural statistics there are an estimated 9,500 acres of land used for farming activities in Rabun County. These two land uses are most often converted to other land uses such as residential, commercial and industrial.

**Vacant**

Most of the land in Rabun County is classified as some type of land use. However, there are often smaller lots dot the county that exist with no use attached to them. Usually vacant lots are associated with municipal settings and exist prior to development. There are 510 acres in Rabun County that are classified as vacant.

**MUNICIPALITIES**

**City of Clayton**

**TABLE 9-2**
**EXISTING LAND USE FOR CLAYTON**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 801 | 43.7% |
| Commercial | 251 | 13.7% |
| Industrial | 8 | 0.4% |
| Public/Institutional | 104 | 5.6% |
| TCU | 2 | 0.1% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 1 | 0.1% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 398 | 21.7% |
| Vacant | 271 | 14.8% |
| **TOTAL** | **1,836** | |

Almost 44% of the total land use in Clayton is residential land use. The city serves as the center of economic activity in Rabun County and therefore has the highest concentration of residential density in all of Rabun County. This is also due to the infrastructure that has been made available by the city in order to increase the development capacity of the land. No one part of Clayton is dominated by residential land uses. Most of the older residential areas occurred in close proximity of the town center and along the Stekoa Creek stream bed. In more recent years residential development has occurred on an infill basis on the vacant tracts found on the hillsides in the city.

Since Clayton is the economic center in Rabun County a large portion of the land use is dedicated to commercial activity. Most of this type of land use is found in the town center and along the US 441 corridor and other major roads in the city. Commercial acreage in the city total approximately 250 acres or 13.7% of the land use. Most of the commercial areas recently developed in the city are occurring on the south side of town along US 441 and along Stekoa Creek.

In spite of the availability of infrastructure there are only eight acres of industrial land use in Clayton. In times past there was more, but most of the industries have either relocated or closed and such parcels are now classified as vacant.

There are 105 acres in Clayton that are classified as institutional land use. Most of this land includes the county and city government facilities, the hospital, churches, and US Forest Service station. This type of land use makes up over 5.5% of the land use in the city.

There is still a significant amount of land in Clayton that is classified as agriculture/forestry. Most of this acreage is large wooded hillsides in the city that have not yet been developed. Some of these areas are lowlands along creeks in floodplain areas where development will most likely not take place.

There are 271 acres of land in Clayton that are considered vacant or undeveloped. This classification comprises almost 15% of the total land in Clayton. Most of this land still exists in larger tracts and could be developed. This category also includes tracts that have vacant or dilapidated structures on them and could possibly be redeveloped into another land use.

**City of Dillard**

**TABLE 9-3**
**EXISTING LAND USE FOR DILLARD**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 260 | 26.3% |
| Commercial | 83 | 8.4% |
| Public/Institutional | 10 | 1.0% |
| TCU | 6 | 0.6% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 617 | 62.4% |
| Vacant | 13 | 1.3% |
| **TOTAL** | **989** | |

The City of Dillard is largely made up of low intensity land uses. The largest land use classification in the city is agriculture/forestry. These lands occupy almost two-thirds of all the land in the city. These lands are mainly low lands and floodplains and are used for agricultural purposes. It is doubtful that much of this land can be developed for commercial or residential purposes due to the extreme size of the floodplain.

Commercial land use in Dillard is narrowly centered along US 441, where local stores and tourist-related shops located to take advantage of the traffic on the highway. There are 83 acres of commercial land uses in Dillard. Any new commercial development in the city will have to take place away from the highway as there are few other land uses occurring within the highway corridor.

Most of the residential land use in Dillard has taken place on the west side of US 441 on Betty's Creek Road. Some of the residential areas parallel the commercial strip running through the middle of town. Residential land use occupies over 26% of the total acres in the city.

**Mountain City**

**TABLE 9-4**
**EXISTING LAND USE FOR MOUNTAIN CITY**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 554 | 50.6% |
| Commercial | 80 | 7.3% |
| Public/Institutional | 20 | 1.8% |
| TCU | 1 | 0.1% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 10 | 0.9% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 130 | 11.9% |
| Vacant | 300 | 27.4% |
| **TOTAL** | **1,095** | |

More than one-half of all the land in Mountain City is dedicated to residential land uses. The city has a variety of new and older homes scattered throughout, many of which are renter-occupied households who have jobs in the manufacturing plants located close by in Rabun Gap. Some of the residences are second homes as well.

US 441 continues to be the focus for commercial activity in the city, with the exception of one large commercial recreation camp facility located in the southeast part of town. There are no industrial operations in Mountain City and no areas that are designated as being an industrial land use.

Mountain City still has a significant amount of vacant land (300 acres), but most of this property is located on very steep slopes that would be very difficult to develop into any other land use, including residential.

Most of the institutional land in Mountain City includes churches as well as the Board of Education offices, city hall and City Park. These uses occupy 20 acres of land in the city.

There are still significant tracts of land dedicated to the agricultural/forestry land use classification. Most of this land is part of the flood plain that is the beginning of the Little Tennessee River. Some of the land is used for farming and portions are wooded. Because they are mostly in a floodplain these lands are not likely to be developed.

**City of Sky Valley**

**TABLE 9-5**
**EXISTING LAND USE FOR SKY VALLEY**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 349 | 20.0% |
| Commercial | 34 | 1.9% |
| Public/Institutional | 11 | 0.6% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 336 | 19.2% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 333 | 19.1% |
| Vacant | 684 | 39.2% |
| **TOTAL** | **1,747** | |

The City of Sky Valley is not dominated by any one type of land use. Residential development, which makes up about 20% of the land use, is scattered throughout the city amongst the many vacant lots. Due to environmental limitations some of the vacant lots may never be developed unless wastewater infrastructure is developed and expanded throughout the city.

The City has a significant amount of park/recreation/conservation land (336 acres, 19.2%) due to the golf course facility that serves as the resort's primary featured amenity.

The city still has a very large amount of land that is either forested or is undeveloped. (There are no agricultural lands in Sky Valley) However, much of this area is located on very steep slopes and would be difficult and expensive to develop. These areas most likely will not develop unless some type of public sewer is made available to the city.

**Town of Tallulah Falls**

**TABLE 9-6**
**EXISTING LAND USE FOR TALLULAH FALLS**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 289 | 5.5% |
| Commercial | 16 | 0.3% |
| Industrial | 0 | 0.0% |
| Public/Institutional | 271 | 5.2% |
| TCU | 1,247 | 23.9% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 2,380 | 45.7% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation - FS Ownership | 449 | 8.6% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 523 | 10.0% |
| Vacant | 37 | 0.7% |
| Water | 196 | 3.8% |
| **TOTAL** | **5,212** | |

The Town of Tallulah Falls is dominated by the transportation/communication/utilities land use and the park/recreation/conservation land use. Most of this land is made up of property owned by the Georgia Power Company and is utilized by the State of Georgia for the Tallulah Falls Gorge State Park. These two land use categories make up almost 70% of the land use in Tallulah Falls. About another nine percent of the land in the town is owned by the federal government and managed by the U.S. Forest Service, and 3.8% of the land area in Tallulah Falls is covered by water.

The other predominant land use in the town is the Tallulah Falls School, which is classified as an institutional land use. This category also includes the city hall.

Residential land use occupies only 5.5% or 289 acres of the total land in town. Recent residential development occurred when the town annexed a subdivision. This annexation had a large impact on the increase of the town population, as well as the socio-economic data associated with households.

There is very little commercial land use activity in Tallulah Falls, only 16 acres. This was mainly due to the lack of activity and lack of infrastructure in town. The existing commercial land uses are mainly focused around the tourism that is created by the natural features of the gorge and the recreation facilities located on the lake. However, the creation of the state park and the new water release schedule for white water activity have created a renewed interest in the town as a destination for daily recreational activity. Commercial land use surrounding recreational tourism is most likely to take place along the vacant and forested land along US 441.

There is no land in Tallulah Falls that is utilized for industrial purposes.

**City of Tiger**

**TABLE 9-7**
**EXISTING LAND USE FOR TIGER**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 196 | 40.4% |
| Commercial | 9 | 1.8% |
| Industrial | 1 | 0.3% |
| Public/Institutional | 35 | 7.2% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 127 | 26.1% |
| Vacant | 118 | 24.3% |
| **TOTAL** | **485** | |

The majority of land use in the City of Tiger comes in the form of residential land use. Just over 40% of the total land is used for residential purposes in the form of single-family housing on lots and moderately sized tracts of land. No single area of town is dominated by residential development.

The city is still relatively undeveloped with large tracts of vacant land scattered around the city. There are also several large forested tracts in the town as well that could possibly be developed into residential subdivisions in the future.

Tiger contains several public/institutional uses. They include the Rabun County Senior Center, South Rabun Elementary School, the city hall/emergency rescue complex, post office, churches, and a private assisted living center. These facilities combine to make up over seven percent of the land use in Tiger.

Commercial development in Tiger is scattered throughout town and are either local home-based businesses or related to tourism. The Tiger Drive In is also a prominent commercial land use in town. There is a small area in Tiger that is identified as an industrial land use, which contains a concrete facility that occupies approximately one acre of land.

**LAND USE PATTERNS AND DENSITIES RELATED TO INFRASTRUCTURE**

The area in the county with the highest density of land uses is within the City of Clayton. The City is the county seat and serves as the economic center for the county. The major arterial transportation routes intersect in Clayton. The city participates in the CRCWA public water system and operates the majority of public waste water treatment in the county. These facilities are aging and are operating near or at capacity, therefore limiting development only within the city limits.

The transportation corridors are impacting some of the recent growth in Rabun County. Nearly three-fourths of the population lives within two miles of either U.S. 441 or U.S. 76. These corridors are basically shaped by the boundaries of the Chattahoochee National Forest in Rabun County. The expansion to provide water service around the lake has created significant residential growth in this area.

**AREAS BLIGHTED, TRANSITIONAL OR IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT**

Areas within the county that may be considered blighted are some of the trailers and old commercial structures along U.S 441. Many of the blighted properties along the highway will be impacted by the widening project underway, and will disappear as it is constructed.

There are several lots in Mountain City that have older dilapidated structures that appear to be abandoned. Most of these structures were once cabins serving as second or vacation homes. They now need to be demolished and removed and the properties need to be redeveloped.

**ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND OR RESOURCES**

These areas include the National Forest lands, State Parks, the area around the lakes and other trout streams throughout Rabun County. Also, areas that require mountain protection, protected river corridors, water supply watershed protection, and wetlands are recognized as environmental sensitive resources in the county. Two specific areas in Rabun County worthy of special consideration are the Chattooga River and the Tallulah Falls Gorge.

The mountain and ridge tops in Rabun County and its cities currently have no protection or guidance for development. In addition, more than 90% of the private land in the county is associated with unstable soils on extremely steep slopes (25% or more).

**PROBLEMS WITH EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

There are some regulations and codes in place to manage growth and development in Rabun County. However, weak enforcement (and lack of enforcement in some cases) has resulted in problems related to incompatibility of zoning, subdivision development building codes and erosion and sedimentation control. There are no regulations in place to prevent the encroachment of development on mountain tops and ridgelines.

**INFILL OPPORTUNITIES TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

There are vacant properties and large undeveloped tracts of land within the cities in Rabun County; therefore infill development is an issue that cities will more than likely be faced with. Also, because of the higher density of land use within the cities and easy access to goods and services there is an opportunity to encourage traditional neighborhood design and development to occur.

Though limited, some opportunities for infill do exist for the county. Land use management regulations, incentive and tools could assist in keeping development in areas already developed with infrastructure capacity available. This would reduce some of the leap frog development that is occurring in the county. Transportation improvements and policies in areas already developed would also enhance their attractiveness for new development

**LAND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IMPACTING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The antiquated regulations that are in place could lead to continued development and code enforcement problems in Rabun County and its cities. Due to the amount steep slopes and associated sensitive soils in Rabun County a higher standard for erosion and sedimentation control as well as stormwater management is needed.

Due to the widening of U.S. 441, the county and cities along the highway have an opportunity to create specific development and design standards for the corridor as it redevelops.

A county-wide planning and building department or agency, guided by a planning board and staffed by professional planners, is needed to oversee the implementation of the future land plan (and to make necessary plan amendments), enforce all ordinances, and to conduct all necessary inspections. The department should be self-supporting.

**PROJECTION OF FUTURE LAND USE NEEDS**

Projected future land use is presented and discussed for Rabun County and Cities in this section. These future land use projections are based on the forecasts for population, housing and economic employment to the year 2025. They also take into account recommended policies and actions from the various elements in the Comprehensive Plan designed to guide wise land use decisions, which will enhance development and conserve and protect important resources at the same time. Future land use needs are presented in tabular format and also on the Future Land Use Maps for the county and each municipality.

**Rabun County**

**TABLE 9-8**
**FUTURE LAND USE FOR RABUN COUNTY, 2025**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 31,930 | 14.2% |
| Commercial | 1,150 | 0.5% |
| Industrial | 680 | 0.3% |
| Public/Institutional | 455 | 0.2% |
| TCU | 101 | 0.0% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 2,110 | 0.9% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation - FS Ownership | 148,164 | 65.9% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 40,136 | 17.9% |
| Vacant | 25 | 0.0% |
| Water | 3,707 | 1.6% |
| Incorporated Areas | 12,107 | 5.4% |
| **TOTAL** | **224,751** | |

**Residential**

Residential land use in Rabun County is projected to increase by slightly more than 3,000 acres over the next twenty years. This does not necessarily correspond with the projected rate of increase in the population. This is due to the fact that Rabun County has a housing stock that contains almost 40% second homes. It is anticipated that a significant portion of the population increase will come from the conversion of these houses from second/vacation homes to full-time residences. Nevertheless the conversion of some of the forested and vacant land in Rabun County will be converted to residential land use. Areas where such changes are anticipated to occur are

presented on the Future Land Use Map. These areas take into consideration several issues and policies that are presented and discussed in this plan. For example, it is better to locate future residential development in areas where infill can take place. This improves efficiency and cost effectiveness in the delivery of county services to areas where services are already being provided versus extending or expanding those services into undeveloped areas. Where possible, future residential development on the map has been buffered away from water resources and the national forest boundary, as well as to minimize the impact in areas of steep slopes and on the local viewshed. Also, prime agricultural land was identified and left on the future land use maps as to what they should be utilized for. The map includes the designation of reserved environmental strips or corridors across the county and providing possible links or greenways to the cities and communities in Rabun County.

The map also identified that the maximization of residential development should occur in close proximity to the cities in Rabun County where infrastructure and services already exists, and housing can be affordable.

**Commercial**

Commercial development is expected to increase dramatically over the next twenty years. Commercial land use will almost double to 1,150 acres by 2025. Most of the growth is expected to occur within the US 441 corridor in medium to large retail shopping facilities. The county should ensure that the re-emergence of tourism-related shops will occur in shopping facilities and venues rather than dotted individually along US 441. This improves the marketability and accessibility of local products as well as increases the safety of travelers on US 441.

**Industrial**

Industrial land use in Rabun County will actually decrease over the next twenty years. This is due to the continuance of some industry relocating operations out of the country and the recruitment of new green industry that is high tech, requires smaller facilities and will have a smaller impact on the resources in the county. It will be important for the county (and cities) to be able to target desirable, community friendly industries, offer the necessary incentives and provide superior facility support services in the future.

**Public/Institutional**

Public institutional land is projected to increase to 455 acres by the year 2025. This is based on the future space needs for county facilities, schools, churches, and health care facilities.

**Transportation/Communication/Utilities**

Land use for TCU is expected to increase to slightly over 100 acres. This is based on the need for additional road facilities, road and utility right-of-way and improved communication.

**Park/Recreation/Conservation**

This land use category is expected to increase by about 45 acres based on recreation needs for active and passive facilities, including greenways, and meeting the demands of the projected population.

**Park/Recreation/Conservation-Forest Service Ownership**

The Chattahoochee National Forest is a national treasure of Rabun County. This forest protects the county's waterways and serves as a vast preserve of bio-diversity wildlife and scenic vistas enjoyed by residents and thousands of tourists alike. Management of this national forest rests with the USDA Forest Service. This is a governmental situation in that local and state elected officials cannot easily influence federal decisions. Nevertheless, the National Forest is so important to the future of Rabun County that this Comprehensive Plan offers the following statement of principles regarding the future use of this land.

- **Transfer of national forestland to other municipal uses.** Rabun County and its cities favor continued, but highly limited transfer of national forestland to other municipal uses within Rabun County when such transfer works to the greater good of the public.
- **Transfer of other "surplus" national forestland.** The federal government at various times contemplates sale of national forestland to the private sector for residential, commercial or industrial development. In general, Rabun County and its cities oppose such sales. However, the County and Cities recognize that in extraordinary circumstances some sales may be beneficial to both the Forest Service and Rabun County and, therefore, each sale should be evaluated based on its merits.
- **National forest land swaps.** Under current laws and practices, the USDA Forest Service is permitted to exchange national forestland in one area for private land of equivalent dollar value anywhere else in the country. In general, Rabun County and its cities oppose such land swaps. However, the County and Cities recognize that in extraordinary circumstances some swaps may be beneficial to both the Forest Services and Rabun County and, therefore, each swap should be evaluated on its merits. Consistent with the above statements of principles, Rabun County and its cities oppose a net decrease in acreage of the national forest in Rabun County.

**Agriculture/Forestry**

Forestry land and some agricultural land are expected to be the lands that are converted to other land uses to accommodate growth. It is projected that about 3,000 acres will disappear from this land use category. These lands will mainly be converted to residential, commercial and institutional uses.

**Municipalities**

**TABLE 9-9**
**FUTURE LAND USE FOR CLAYTON**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 949 | 51.7% |
| Commercial | 335 | 18.2% |
| Industrial | 7 | 0.4% |
| Public/Institutional | 76 | 4.1% |
| TCU | 2 | 0.1% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 1 | 0.1% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 272 | 14.8% |
| Vacant | 194 | 10.6% |
| **TOTAL** | **1,836** | |

**TABLE 9-10**
**FUTURE LAND USE FOR DILLARD**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 300 | 30.3% |
| Commercial | 99 | 10.0% |
| Public/Institutional | 12 | 1.2% |
| TCU | 6 | 0.6% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 572 | 57.8% |
| Vacant | 0 | 0.0% |
| **TOTAL** | **989** | |

**TABLE 9-11**
**FUTURE LAND USE FOR MOUNTAIN CITY**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 611 | 55.8% |
| Commercial | 105 | 9.6% |
| Public/Institutional | 22 | 2.0% |
| TCU | 3 | 0.3% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 15 | 1.4% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 110 | 10.0% |
| Vacant | 229 | 20.9% |
| **TOTAL** | **1,095** | |

**TABLE 9-12**
**FUTURE LAND USE FOR SKY VALLEY**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 588 | 29.3% |
| Residential, Future Annexations | 262 | 13.1% |
| Commercial | 34 | 1.7% |
| Public/Institutional | 11 | 0.6% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 210 | 10.5% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 235 | 11.7% |
| Vacant | 670 | 33.3% |
| Vacant, Future Annexations | 127 | 6.3% |
| **TOTAL** | **2,010** | |

**TABLE 9-13**
**FUTURE LAND USE FOR TALLULAH FALLS**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 306 | 5.9% |
| Commercial | 46 | 0.9% |
| Industrial | 0 | 0.0% |
| Public/Institutional | 277 | 5.3% |
| TCU | 1,247 | 23.9% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation | 2,380 | 45.7% |
| Park/Rec/Conservation - FS Ownership | 449 | 8.6% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 487 | 9.3% |
| Vacant | 20 | 0.4% |
| Water | 196 | 3.8% |
| **TOTAL** | **5,212** | |

**TABLE 9-14**
**FUTURE LAND USE FOR TIGER**

| Land Use Class | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential | 268 | 55.2% |
| Commercial | 14 | 3.0% |
| Industrial | 1 | 0.3% |
| Public/Institutional | 36 | 7.5% |
| Agriculture/Forestry | 84 | 17.4% |
| Vacant | 81 | 16.7% |
| **TOTAL** | **485** | |

**AREAS LIKELY TO BE ANNEXED**

Projected land use within each city includes acreage projections within the current city boundaries. However, the minimum planning standards require that municipalities consider future land use designations of areas that could potentially be annexed sometime in the future. The cities in Rabun County do not have a history or aggressive policies towards annexation. Areas that are most likely to be annexed by any city in Rabun County is adjacent to the existing city limits along the transportation corridors and where infrastructure can be extended for municipal services. This does not mean that the cities have any immediate intention of annexing these areas into their jurisdictions.

**TIMING OR SEQUENCING OF INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

Forecasted populations identifies that there is sufficient water supplies for the next five years. However, permits applying for increased treatment capacity for projected water needs to needs to take place immediately.

Sewer needs are immediate in the form of a treatment plant upgrade, permitted increased treatment capacity and improvements to the collection system. Without these activities first taking place commercial and industrial development will be limited in the future.

The expansion of natural gas service in Rabun County and improved broadband Internet services should be considered and coordinated with the appropriate providers as areas are planned and proposed for development.

The conversion of dirt or gravel roads to paved roads creates improved access and attractiveness and opens areas for increased development. Priority is placed on roads that have the most traffic.

**ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS**

As stated in the existing land use assessment, environmentally sensitive areas in need of protection include land adjacent to the National Forest lands, State Parks, the area around the lakes, rivers, and other trout streams.

Also included are areas that require mountain protection, protected river corridors, water supply watershed protection, and wetlands.

Lands that are developed adjacent to the National Forest are subject to potential wildfires without the necessary blazes or buffers to protect them. An Urban Rural Interface Program may be needed to address this issue as the county grows and development takes place on the slopes, ridgelines and mountaintops in Rabun County.

Unstable soils on steep slopes (over 25%) make up more than 95% of the private land in the county, slopes over 40% more than 75% of the county. Most of the residential development is projected to occur on these slopes. A higher standard for development is needed in these areas to prevent problems with stormwater management and erosion and sedimentation control.

**AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

Since Rabun County was part of the last remaining Indian land in Georgia, the Archaeological potential in the area is very promising. These resources should be surveyed, documented, recognized and protected, if possible.

Other areas of special interest and that may require protection include the wild and scenic Chattooga River, Tallulah Gorge, and the scenic/agricultural area in Rabun Gap.

**TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

Because of infrastructure most of Traditional Neighborhood Design type development or higher density development will more than likely occur either within or around the cities where wastewater services are available. This type of development will take place on most of the vacant lots located in the towns and adjacent to the existing city limits.

Higher density land uses in the county are projected to occur adjacent to the cities where infrastructure already exists. The county should try to provide some types of incentives to encourage garden home neighborhoods for senior citizens or housing for young families who desire smaller homes on smaller properties close to community goods and services.

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT LAND USE TRANSITION**

The U.S. 441 corridor is expected to experience a significant land use transition as the highway-widening project takes place. Many of the existing land uses, including buildings and structures, along the highway are being relocated and reconstructed. It is important that the county (and cities) act quickly in creating land use development standards and design criteria to enhance and protect the corridor from becoming one large commercial strip that is unorganized, unattractive and dangerous to drivers and pedestrians.

**AREAS PROPOSED FOR REDEVELOPMENT**

The U.S. 441 corridor is the area in the county and cities where redevelopment will be focused. The widening of the highway is removing several older and less attractive uses from the corridor landscape. Local government have an opportunity to guidance on how they would like the corridor to redevelop. This includes some industrial land uses (and structures) that are no longer operating in Rabun County.

**FACTORS INFLUENCING GROWTH PATTERNS**

The primary factor that will continue to influence growth patterns in Rabun County is the abundance of natural resources and scenic lands. This includes the mountains, lakes, Tallulah Gorge and other streams as well as and the presence of public lands (National Forest, State Parks, Georgia Power). This type of setting is extremely attractive to the retirement population, the second home market and to tourists. The widening of U.S. 441 will have an impact on growth in Rabun County and all of its cities because the improved facility will make the area more accessible to outlying areas

**QUALITY AGRICULTURAL, RURAL AND FORESTED LANDS**

Quality agricultural lands are located around the county. Most are located in river or stream bottoms or in flood prone areas that are restricted to development. Policies to protect significant agricultural land and to promote agricultural practices and products will help preserve these lands for agricultural uses. As long as farmers are making a profit the land uses will remain as a part of the future in Rabun County.

Besides public lands, about 15% of the county is projected to remain as a forested land use. These are areas that are projected to not be formally developed to another form of land use for a variety reasons (accessibility, extremely steep slopes, private conservation trusts, owners only interested in holding tracks, etc) during the next twenty years. These lands are not concentrated in any one part of the county, but are scattered throughout.

**Potential Land Use Tools**

Rabun County and its cities have at their disposal a variety of land use planning tools, ordinances and policies that can help shape the type and pace of development, safeguard heritage and agricultural properties and properly locate commercial and industrial land uses. These tools include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Building and home occupancy permit ordinances
- Conservation easements, including agricultural conservation easements
- Conservation subdivisions
- Development bonds

- Electric utility planning and siting ordinances and memoranda of understanding with electric distribution and transmission utilities regarding rights-of-way maintenance, underground sites, "smart" substations and integrated resource planning
- Environmental and ecological mitigation measures
- Erosion and sedimentation control ordinances
- Farmland protection and preservation ordinances
- Flood control ordinances
- Forestland protection in coordination with USDA Forest Service
- Forest stewardship and conservation programs
- Green space and greenway conservation programs
- Groundwater recharge protection ordinances
- Home construction, contractor and trades inspection ordinances
- Homeowner incentives and credits for distributed electricity generation, including solar, thermal, fuel cell, windmill generation
- Impact fee ordinance
- Lake shoreline protection and zoning
- Large lot ordinances
- Mountaintop and ridge top development ordinances
- Nuclear waste/nuclear material, toxic waste, and medical waste transport and siting ordinances
- Open space and urban parkland protection measures
- Overlay distinct ordinances
- Planned Unit Development ordinances
- Permit moratoria
- Protected river corridor ordinances
- Runoff control measures
- Scenic highway designations
- Septic tank inspection and pump-out ordinances
- Solar access right ordinances

- Solid waste regulation and recycling ordinances
- Storm water management ordinances
- Stream buffer ordinances
- Subdivision ordinances, including conservation subdivision ordinances
- Telecom tower sight location and permitting ordinances
- Transferable Development Rights ordinances
- Watershed protection ordinances
- Water and sewer expansion planning and permitting
- Waters supply monitoring and testing
- Wetlands control ordinances
- Wildlife corridor protection
- Zoning ordinances, invaliding "incentive zoning" and proffers

# CHAPTER 10

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

As stated in the minimum planning standards, the Intergovernmental Coordination Element provides Rabun County, Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls, and Tiger an opportunity to inventory existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes with other local governments and governmental entities that can have profound impacts on the success of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. This purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of each community and articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases involve multiple governmental entities.

## INVENTORY OF EXISTING ACTIVTIES, PROGRAMS AND CONDITIONS

Rabun County is bordered by Habersham County, Towns County, the State of North Carolina and the State of South Carolina. Located within the County are the municipal governments of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls, and Tiger. Coordination between the County and these cities is of course essential to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Under the state requirements of HB 489 (Service Delivery Strategy), Rabun County and cities within are required to coordinate actions and decisions relative to annexation and land use. Although not required, coordination with the surrounding counties does play an important role in Comprehensive Plan implementation.

### Local Government Entities Boards, Authorities, and Programs

Rabun County government operates on the commission/manager form of government. The County has a Board of Commissioners made up of 5 members serving staggered four-year terms, each representing a district within the county. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for hiring a county manager that provides general day-to-day management operations of county government. The county government sets and approves the budget for all departments, sets the millage rate each year, and provides funds for operation of all county departments.

The City of Clayton is governed by a five-member city council and an elected mayor who employs a city manager that oversees day-to-day operations of city government.

The City of Dillard is governed by a council of six members and an elected mayor. The city employs a clerk who manages much of the daily operations of the city with the guidance of the mayor.

The City of Mountain City is governed by a four-member city council and an elected mayor who employs a city clerk that oversees day-to-day operations of the city under the guidance of the mayor.

The City of Sky Valley is governed by a five-member city council and an elected mayor who employs a city manager that oversees day-to-day operations and all departments of city government.

The Town of Tallulah Falls is governed by a four-member city council and an elected mayor who employs a city clerk who manages much of the daily operations of the city with the guidance of the mayor.

The City of Tiger is governed by a four-member city council and an elected mayor who employs a part-time city clerk that oversees operations of the city under the guidance of the mayor.

Coordination efforts between Rabun County and its municipalities are essential to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. All levels of staff and elected officials are involved in the coordination process which is outlined in the Service Delivery Strategy discussed is detail later in this Chapter. Implementation/ coordination is achieved through various memoranda of understanding or other agreements between Rabun County, Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley, Tallulah Falls, and Tiger.

The Rabun County Board of Education is the governing body of the Rabun County School System. The primary role of the Board is to carry out policies of the system, which are executed under the direction of a School Superintendent. Coordination among governments, agencies, other boards and the public is required in locating new schools, educational programs, and the joint use of certain facilities.

The Clayton Housing Authority (provides management and oversight for all public housing in Rabun County. The authority is a municipal corporation created by the city. The Clayton Housing Authority has a five-member board of which are appointed by the City of Clayton representing the city's interests. The authority employs six persons.

The Rabun County Development Authority, created as a local Development Authority in accordance with Georgia state law, works to attract new industry and expand existing industry in the county. Its nine members meet quarterly, or in called meetings as necessary, to report on projects, plan strategy, consider inducement resolutions for new industries, and to acquire and develop industrial buildings, industrial sites and industrial parks.

The Clayton Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority provides water services within its respective service area, which is about 60% of Rabun County, as agreed upon in the Rabun County Service Delivery Strategy.

The Rabun County Historic Society provides historic preservation and museum services within Rabun County and each City. The County provides a building to house the society's office and museum and provides insurance coverage. The society also charges membership fees and accepts donations.

Adjacent local governments include Habersham County to the south, Towns County to the west and Oconee County, South Carolina to the east. Rabun County is bordered on the north by the State of North Carolina, including Cherokee, Macon and Clay Counties.

Coordination with these local governments is essential to the planning, development and service delivery process. Rabun County is a member of the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center (GMRDC), which coordinates local and regional planning and development activities for all of the above counties with the exception those in North Carolina and South Carolina. The RDC coordinates the review process for all developments that are at such a large scale they may have impacts beyond their jurisdictional boundaries (regional in nature) and may cause inter-jurisdictional conflicts. This review, titled Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review notifies all surrounding local governments and potential impacted agencies of the proposed development and allows them an opportunity to review the project (development) and provide comments about its potential impact on them. The RDC will then provide comments and recommendations on the proposed project to the local government prior to the local government making a decision allowing the project to proceed or be denied.

## OTHER UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Rabun County Sheriff Department is responsible for the police protection, service and safety of Rabun County citizens. The department operates a patrol, investigations, jail and public and school education division as well as participating in a drug task force. The sheriff Department may assist the County Marshal in the enforcement of its local county ordinances and regulations.

The Rabun County Marshal patrols county buildings and facilities and serves criminal and civil papers for the Magistrate Court. The County Marshall assists other county officers and Sheriff officers when requested. The Marshal enforces county ordinances and serves as the probation office for the county

The Clerk of Courts is an elected official and is responsible for all the civil and criminal filings made in the Rabun County Superior Court. It also serves as the official recorder of real estate documents for the County maintaining records of deeds, plats, etc. The Clerk also provides the jury pool for Grand Jury and civil and criminal trials.

The Magistrate Judge is an elected official in Rabun County. The Magistrate Court office processes various criminal and civil matters and small claims up to $15,000. The criminal section issues warrants, hold bonds, committal, dispossessory and first appearance hearings for certain offenses. The civil section issues notices of foreclosure, garnishments and Fi-FA's. The Magistrate Judge also performs marriages.

The Judge of the Probate Court is an elected official. The office is the custodian of vital records that allows the issuance of certified copies of birth and death certificates. The office maintains marriage records and copies of the legal organ. The Probate Court is responsible for the probate and administration of estates along with guardianships of minors and incapacitated adults. The court also handles misdemeanor traffic violations for the county. The Probate Judge also performs marriages.

The Juvenile Court handles all cases involving delinquent, unruly, and deprived children, as well as cases involving custody, child abuse, abortion notification, and termination of parental rights, and provides probation supervision of children on probation. Juvenile court also handles all traffic cases involving children under the age of 17, regardless of the jurisdiction of the incident.

The Cities of Clayton, Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley and Tallulah Falls provide police protection inside their respective city limits with a police staff of uniformed officers and patrol cars. Response times within the Cities are as low as one to two minutes, as the department has a service area of approximately one to two square miles.

## MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL AND REGIONAL ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS

The Rabun County Chamber of Commerce operates the Welcome Center and is active in tourism development in the Rabun County area. Volunteers and paid staff of four, including an Executive Director, serve the mountain tourists and visitors to the community. The Chamber has about 450 members and is governed by a volunteer President and a Board of Directors representing businesses in the community.

The Habersham Judicial Circuit Court serves three counties that include Habersham, Rabun and Stephens. There is a joint agreement among the counties to fund the court services along with state funding. It is determined that the service is meeting current needs and is adequate to serve the county over the planning horizon.

The Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center provides land planning, transportation planning, historic preservation planning, water resource and water quality planning, economic development assistance, and grant assistance to the county and city. GMRDC has a regional plan and coordinates the review of local plans and developments of regional impact. The Georgia Mountains Regional Economic Development Corporation provides economic development and loan assistance to the city and county.

Electric power is distributed in Rabun County by the Habersham Electric Membership Corporation, Georgia Power Company and Haywood Electric Membership Corporation. Natural Gas is provided in Rabun County by the City of Toccoa.

## STATE AGENCIES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides assistance to the county and city through its numerous programs. These programs include assistance in the areas of planning, housing, quality growth, downtown development and community development. Rabun County is also a member of the Region 2 Regional Advisory Council.

The Georgia Department of Transportation operates a maintenance and engineering post for localized road maintenance and improvements. The department also does the local transportation planning for Rabun County out of the District 1 Office located in Gainesville, Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Labor maintains a State Employment Security Office at the Blairsville Career Center in Union County and in Gainesville, Hall County, Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources owns several recreation facilities within Rabun County, including three State Parks and other important historic and archeological resources. The Environmental Protection Division of DNR regulates permits for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater management

Agricultural services are provided countywide by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. This program is funded jointly by Rabun County and the State of Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Human Resources provides health services and mental health services through the Rabun County Health Department and the Rabun County Department of Mental Health. These two departments are funded by local, state and federal funds and grants.

The Georgia Department of Family and Children Services provides social and protective service assistance to needy families and children within the County. These services are funded by county, state and federal funds and grants.

## FEDERAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS

The United States Forest Service manages more than 150,000 acres of land in Rabun County. The service also operates the Tallulah District Ranger office in Clayton. Occasionally the Forest Service will conduct land swaps on an as-need basis with local governments and private individuals to consolidate their property and management of the forest. Because of all the Forest Service land located in Rabun County, the federal government provides a token reimbursement to the county for the loss of taxable lands.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is a federal corporation that provides low cost, reliable electric power to the citizens living within the Tennessee River Watershed. Rabun County lies on the southeastern edge of

the Tennessee River watershed. The agency serves a number of purposes other than recreation, including flood control and power generation.

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a federal-state partnership that works with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life. The ARC program is administered at the state level by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Each year ARC provides funding for several hundred projects throughout the 13 Appalachian states in support of economic and human development. These efforts seek to augment ARC's highway development program and bring more of Appalachia's people into America's economic mainstream. The projects directly address ARC's five goal areas: education and workforce training, physical infrastructure, civic capacity and leadership, business development, and health care. In helping Appalachian states meet community needs in these five goal areas, ARC has supported a variety of innovative projects and initiatives. Each year throughout the Region, ARC programs create thousands of new jobs, increase school readiness, improve local water and sewer systems, expand access to health care, assist local communities with strategic planning, and provide technical, managerial, and marketing assistance to emerging new businesses.

Rabun County is one of 35 counties in North Georgia eligible for assistance and programs activities from ARC. It is imperative that goals, policies and objectives at the local level be consistent and applicable to the mission goals of the ARC. The goals, policies and objectives found in each element of this plan are all relevant to ARC policies.

The U.S.D.A Natural Resource and Conservation Service provides technical assistance on natural resources issues and assist individuals, groups, and communities within the county to implement soil and water conservation practices to protect the privately owned land in Rabun County and cities. This program is jointly funded by county and federal funds.

**Service Delivery Strategy**

In accordance with the Service Delivery Act (HB 489), the Rabun County and Cities Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) was developed, submitted and approved in 1999. This state law requires that local government and related entities cooperate with the delivery of various community services as agreed upon by the local governments. The SDS identifies local community services, assigns service areas and responsibilities (including funding), and provides a methodology for the delivery of community services that include a variety of implementation tools such as ordinances and contracts.

In accordance with the SDS law, a local government's existing strategy must be updated concurrent with the local government's Comprehensive Plan. To ensure consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and Service Delivery Strategy (SDS), the services to be provided by the local governments, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, cannot exceed those identified in the SDS. Also, there must be consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the SDS.

The following services are included in the SDS:

- Building Services
- Chamber of Commerce
- City Court
- Clerk of Court
- Coroner
- County Marshal
- DFACS
- Downtown Development
- E911
- Economic Development
- Elections
- Emergency Management
- EMS
- Equalization Board
- Extension Service
- Fire Protection
- Golf Course
- Historic Preservation/Museum
- Humane Society/Animal Shelter
- Jail
- Jury
- Law Enforcement
- Library

- Magistrate Court
- Mental and Public Health
- Planning and Zoning
- Parks
- Probate Court
- Public Housing
- Public Defender
- Public Transit
- Recreation
- Road Maintenance
- Senior Citizens Center
- Sewer
- Shop Maintenance
- Soil Erosion and Sedimentation
- Solid Waste
- Superior Court
- Tax Assessment
- Tax Collection
- Water

All of these services are presented and discussed in other elements (Community Facilities and Services, Natural Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Transportation) within the Comprehensive Plan.

The SDA also includes an agreement between Rabun County and the Cities to implement a process for resolving land-use disputes over annexations. Under the agreement between the Cities and the County prior notification of annexation activities will be given to the County by the City providing full information on the proposed land use or zoning classification and area to be annexed. The county will respond to the City within 15 working days of its agreement or objection to the proposal. In the event of disagreement between the City and County, the dispute will go through the agreed upon mediation process.

To ensure compatible and non-conflicting land use Rabun County and its cities should provide land and water planning through ordinances for the following: Zoning, Subdivision Regulation, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, Wetlands Protection, Floodplain Regulation, nuisance and litter control. Expansion of water and sewer services and land use modifications must comply with these resolutions and ordinances

There are additional departments or services identified in the SDS not addressed in this element, but are departments or units of local government, and are solely funded out of the county or city budget and are addressed and assessed in the community facilities element of this plan.

**ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS**

- The current methodology for resolving land disputes within the county and for coordinating planning activities, via regional hearings for local planning and communicating large scale developments, and DRI reviews works well for Rabun County and its municipalities.
- A better method of communication and coordination needs to exist with the adjacent counties in North Carolina and South Carolina.
- The Rabun County level of need with the Appalachian Regional Commission is skewed by the higher income retirement population that is locating to the area. Looking below the surface there are several low and moderate-income individuals and families who are in need of training and jobs.
- A better methodology needs to be developed that will help the federal government understand the enormous loss in tax base to Rabun County as a consequence of the extensive land holding of the National Forest Service, and increase their annual reimbursement to a fair value.
- Though agreed upon in the SDA, some of the municipal police departments and the Rabun County Sheriff Department could consolidate their services.
- To date, the Cities in Rabun County have not had a history of an aggressive policy of annexation. As required by the minimum planning standards for this plan, the future land use map for the Cities presents land use designations on property that could potentially be annexed into the City. This does not mean that the City will undertake annexation of those lands. The present uses are consistent with future land uses identified by Rabun County.
- Currently the Rabun County Service Delivery Strategy for coordinating local government services and related program is functioning adequately. As the Cities or County move forward with improved land development regulations the strategy will need to be amended.

## COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

| ELEMENT | TYPE OF STATEMENT PRIORITY | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| Intergovt. Coordination | Goal | Resolve all land and services conflicts as prescribed in the Service Delivery Strategy. |
| Intergovt. Coordination | Goal | Establish a method of communication and coordination with the bordering counties in North Carolina. |
| Intergovt. Coordination | Goal/Policy | Study and encourage improvements in federal government policy for local government reimbursement for loss of local property tax base. |
| Intergovt. Coordination | Policy | Encourage all planning, development and growth within the county to be coordinated, and opportunity for county departments and agencies to be afforded comments and input on growth. |
| Intergovt. Coordination | Goal | Update the Service Delivery Strategy as needed and as growth occurs. Ensure that the SDA is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. |
| Intergovt. Coordination | Goal | Revise and update existing programs and ordinances that will further protect the public water supply. |

# CHAPTER 11

# IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to reiterate strategies for the implementation of various goals, objectives, and policies established in the Comprehensive Plan. An implementation strategy is necessary to help ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is used by community leaders as a guide to decision-making. Also, it is the intent of the 1989 Georgia Planning Act that plans can be implemented and used in the local, regional, and state planning process. As mentioned in the introduction (Chapter 1), it is the intent that this chapter can be separately copied as a "policy plan" component.

Minimum planning standards for local plans require the development of a Short Term Work Program, which consists of community programs and projects needed to meet the goals and objectives, public facilities necessary to meet the standard of living desired by the community for existing residents and the projected population five years into the future, and a general description of any land development regulations expected to be adopted or amended to help achieve the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan in the next five years. The local planning standards also require that the Short Term Work program be revised every five years, with annual updates encouraged.

## LEGAL STATUS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan carries with it no weight of law, and the governing bodies are under no legal obligation to implement the comprehensive Plan. However, the plan represents a broad-based consensus on needed programs and improvements in the future.

## CONFLICT BETWEEN POLICIES AND MAPS

In the event that one or more goals, objectives, strategies, and/or policies, or any portion of the text conflict with the Future Land Use Plan 2025 Maps, the provisions of the text shall govern. This is the case because the Future Land Use Plan 2025 Map, while substantially detailed, is not intended to dictate the exact use of each parcel in the community. Rigid application of this map is not expected because it is intended to be applied generally, and because there will undoubtedly be justifiable departures from the design of the plan map. Implementation of the overall general policies is what is most important. However, substantial and/or successive departures from the plan map should result in an amendment to the plan text and map.

## CONFLICT BETWEEN POLICY STATEMENTS

It is anticipated that instances will arise where certain goals and policies will conflict with other policy statements. For instance, the economic development strategy of promoting suitable job opportunities may conflict with the goal of preserving the rural character of the community. The goals, objectives, strategies and policies are all considered to be of equal value on their face. That is, such policy statements are not always ranked by order of importance in the plan. In cases of conflicts, the Planning Commissions and/or Governing Bodies must decide, as individual instances arise, which of the conflicting policies will prevail.

## EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Some of the local governments do not have zoning regulations. The Comprehensive Plan does not specifically state that adoption of zoning regulations are immediately necessary to ensure implementation of the Future Land Use Plan 2025 for the county, but that the issue should be closely studied and addressed from the adoption of this plan update. The plan finds and recommends that the local governments move forward with some type of coordinated program to address growth and development issues.

Improvements in existing regulations are needed in all jurisdictions. Presently the county has some land development requirements, however, they are likely to be insufficient to adequately address the growth issues facing the county. Planning and enforcement of regulations are in need of improvement and support.

None of the local governments in Rabun County have addressed the DNR Part V Criteria for environmental planning. These rules require local government to address and protect those environmentally sensitive resources that exist in their jurisdiction.

## GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

Once the inventory of existing conditions and the assessment of current and future needs have been completed, minimum planning standards require the development and articulation of immediate and long term goals, policies and objectives. These goals are based on the needs identified and provide guidance on how the community will address and attain them during the planning period.

At the end of each element is a comprehensive listing of recommended goals, policies, and objectives. The statements are provided and it is intended that a policy component can be extracted and consulted by interested individuals, without the need to review statistical details of the plan text.

## SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM (STWP)

The Short Term Work Program (STWP) is the implementation part of the Comprehensive Plan that lists specific actions and objectives to be undertaken annually by each local government over the upcoming five years to implement the approved Comprehensive Plan. Each item in the STWP refers to an element within the plan to justify the action; provides a description of the action to be taken; information on estimate costs; item responsibility; and, possible technical assistance and funding sources for the item.

A Short Term Work Program has been developed separately for each local government. Each local government is responsible for implementing its own STWP. At the end of the five years each local government is required to prepare a Report of Accomplishments reporting on the items it the STWP. And, each local government must prepare a new STWP for the next five years to continue implementing the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.

**COMP PLAN SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM**
**2005 - 2009**

| PLAN ELEMENT | DESCRIPTION | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | ESTIMATED COST; DEPT. RESPONSIBLE | DEPARTMENT FUNDING & ASSISTANCE SOURCES |
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**COMP PLAN SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM**
**2005 – 2009**

| PLAN ELEMENT | DESCRIPTION | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | ESTIMATED COST; DEPT. RESPONSIBLE | DEPARTMENT FUNDING & ASSISTANCE SOURCES |
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