2025

Comprehensive Plan

CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT
AND
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

TRANSMITTED FOR REGIONAL AND STATE REVIEW:
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This document is the "Community Assessment" portion of the Comprehensive Plan 2025 for the City of Flowery Branch, Georgia. It consists mostly of data inventory and analysis. The rules for local comprehensive planning established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (Effective May 1, 2005) suggest that summaries of data focused on "issues and opportunities" be presented to policy makers. Policy issues and opportunities are described in some detail in this Community Assessment, but the major findings of the community assessment are summarized in a more user-friendly format for local elected officials, citizens, and stakeholders.

PREVIOUS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING EFFORTS

In 1994, as a part of a countywide planning effort, Hall County completed a Comprehensive Plan. Most of Hall County's smaller municipalities participated in that effort, though the focus of effort was Hall County and Gainesville. A Comprehensive Plan report was produced for the City of Flowery Branch (see May 2, 1995 edition). The plan report for Flowery Branch is relatively brief, spanning only some 57 pages. It is relevant in terms of some historical perspective, and the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Mayor and City Council in the mid-1990s. Therefore, it serves most importantly as a starting point for future policy discussions. With the data being over a decade old, and Flowery Branch on the cusp of near revolutionary change, the policies and short-term work program are considered outdated and therefore of only limited value in terms of guiding the City's policies and programs through the year 2025. To the extent data are relevant today, they are incorporated into the 2025 plan after some independent verification. Quantitative data in this 2025 plan document were not based on any numbers from the 1995 plan document.

In June 2004, Gainesville and Hall County adopted a new joint Comprehensive Plan prepared by several planning consultants. In terms of countywide perspectives, that adopted plan is relevant to Flowery Branch. However, that Comprehensive Plan does not single out Flowery Branch, nor does it compile information on the basis of municipalities in Hall County, other than the City of Gainesville. In many cases, the data collection and findings were considered highly relevant to Flowery Branch's Comprehensive Planning effort, and therefore the City's plan makes frequent reference to (and citation of) the *Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan* (June 2004).

STUDY AREA

The study area for statistical and planning purposes is primarily the City limits of Flowery Branch. Data provided from the 2000 Decennial Census are for the City as it existed on April 1, 2000 (see Chapter 1). Most of the discussion focuses on the City limits only, though in places were data are not compiled at the geographic level of cities, county data are utilized.

In terms of land use, the City's planning consultants looked at areas surrounding the City limits, anticipating that some of the areas might eventually be annexed into Flowery Branch. Even if they are not, the land use findings are important in terms of delineating character areas and recommending future land uses.

PURPOSES AND USES OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is sometimes called by other names such as a general plan, development plan, master plan, policy plan, and growth management plan. Regardless of what it is called, there are many major characteristics of a Comprehensive Plan. First, it is a physical plan intended to guide the physical development (and redevelopment) of the City by describing how, why, when, and where to build, rebuild, or preserve aspects of the community. Second, the Comprehensive Plan covers a long-range planning horizon of 20 years (i.e., to the year 2025). Third, the Comprehensive Plan is "comprehensive" in that it covers the entire City limits, plus it encompasses all the functions that make a community work and considers the interrelatedness of functions. The Comprehensive Plan is based on the foundation that if the City knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve numerous purposes. It provides a primary basis for evaluating all significant future development proposals, whether they are requests for rezoning, applications for subdivision plat approval, petitions for design review or demolition of a historic structure, and others. The Comprehensive Plan is also intended to provide guidance for preparing capital improvement programs and budgets. Business persons, investors, and developers can learn from the plan what the future vision of the community is, as well as the overall direction and intensity of new growth and redevelopment. Market analysts and researchers can draw on the wealth of data provided in this Community Assessment for their own specific needs.

The ultimate clients, however, for the Comprehensive Plan are the Mayor and City Council of Flowery Branch. By adopting the plan (see Community Agenda), the Mayor and City Council have made an extremely important expression of their consent and support for the vision, quality community objectives, goals, policies, and strategies contained in the Community Agenda.

AMENDMENT AND UPDATE OF THE PLAN

As an adopted expression of the City's policy, the Comprehensive Plan must be maintained in a manner that it still reflects the desires of the current Mayor and City Council. Developers, the general public, and other agencies have a right to rely on the adopted Comprehensive Plan as an expression of current policy. In cases where it is determined that a particular policy, goal, program, or statement is no longer a valid expression of the City's policy, then the plan needs to be amended. Otherwise, the validity of the plan is weakened, and those that have relied on the Comprehensive Plan when it is not a reflection of current policy have then been, in effect, misled. Local governments are required to update the Comprehensive Plan every five years, and at that time, they are encouraged to provide major rewrites of the Comprehensive Plan. Regardless, the Comprehensive Plan must be comprehensively revised every 10 years.

Amendments may be considered by the Flowery Branch Mayor and City Council whenever it finds it necessary to do so. Amendments should take place any time that the City annexes a significant amount of additional unincorporated land, so as to include the area on the future land use map, and to update population estimates and projections as appropriate. When there is a significant change in policy by the Mayor and City Council, for instance a decision to drop a major capital improvement project that is described in the adopted plan, the plan should be amended.

CHAPTER 1
POPULATION ELEMENT

The Population Element provides an inventory and assessment of trends in population growth and in the demographic characteristics of the population. This information will assist the City in determining community service and infrastructure needs, employment opportunities, and housing needed to support the existing and future population. The information gathered in this inventory is assessed to identify significant trends, issues, and opportunities with regard to the local population and its characteristics (age distribution, educational attainment, income levels, etc.).

The City can also use the information gathered in the Population Element to determine whether the growth trends identified are desirable for the community and whether alternatives for managing or redirecting these trends should be considered. Such an assessment can result in the development of population-specific needs and goals that specify an appropriate rate of growth, and an implementation strategy for managing the community's growth throughout the planning period.

HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS

Table 1.1 shows past population totals and ten-year percent change for the City of Flowery Branch and Hall County. Two nearby cities – Buford, to the south of Flowery Branch in Gwinnett County (with a small part also in Hall County) and Oakwood, abutting Flowery Branch to the north in Hall County.

Table 1.1
Historic Population Trends, 1980-2003
Flowery Branch, Nearby Cities, and Hall County

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000	2003
Flowery Branch	755	1,251	1,806	1,958
Buford	6,582	8,909	10,668	10,820
Oakwood	723	1,797	2,689	3,100
Hall County	75,649	95,428	139,277	156,101

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1980, 1990 (STF1, P001), and 2000 (SF1, P1). 1980 figures reported in the 1992 Georgia County Guide (University of Georgia). 1990 and 2000 Figures reported in the 2002 Georgia County Guide (University of Georgia). 2003 municipal data from: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. June 24, 2004. Annual Estimates of the Population for Incorporated Places in Georgia, Listed Alphabetically: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003. 2003 Hall County estimate from: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. April 9, 2004. Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties of Georgia, Listed Alphabetically: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003. Note: Small discrepancies exist in the reporting of decennial population counts; some sources report adjustments to decennial census figures approved by the U.S. Census Bureau. For instance, some sources report Flowery Branch's 1990 population as 1,343.

The population of Flowery Branch increased by almost 500 persons during the 1980s and then increased by 555 persons, or 44.4 percent during the 1990s (see Table 1.2). During the early 2000s, Flowery Branch's population has continued to increase, attributed mostly to annexation. The historic growth rates provided in Table 1.2 are of little predictive value, since the City has annexed substantial land areas and is already experiencing additional population increases through development of master-planned subdivisions, townhouses and apartments. Growth rates will be much faster in the short-term in Flowery Branch due to extensive development activity (see later section of this element).

Table 1.2
Population Growth Rates, 1980-2003
Flowery Branch, Nearby Cities, and Hall County

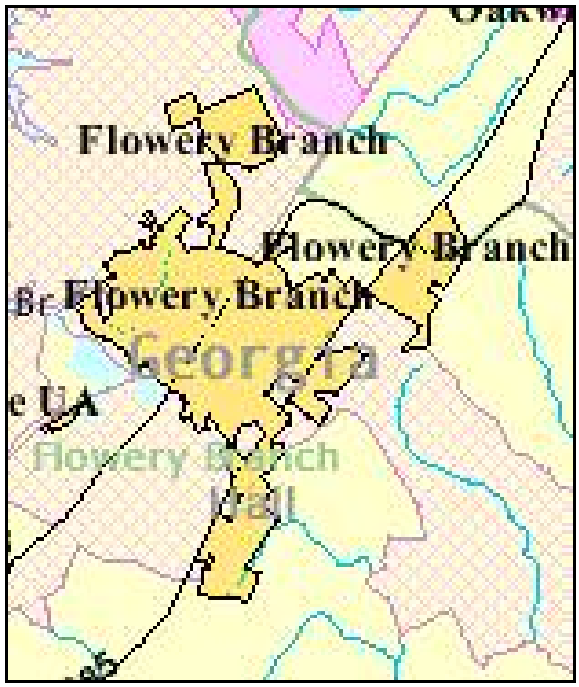
Jurisdiction	1980-1990 % Change	1990-2000 % Change	2000-2003 % Change
Flowery Branch	65.7%	44.4%	8.4%
Buford	35.4%	19.7%	1.4%
Oakwood	148.5%	49.6%	15.3%
Hall County	26.1%	45.9%	12.1%

Source: See Table 1.1.

Flowery Branch's population increased during the decade of the 1980s faster (in terms of rate of increase) than Hall County, then about the same rate as the county during the 1990s. Nearby Oakwood has experienced extensive growth rates, some of which is attributed to annexation.

Flowery Branch's City limits as of April 1, 2000, are shown in the accompanying map (yellow shade with black boundary). The year-2000 boundary is important in terms of noting what areas were in the City as of the decennial census, and what areas have been annexed since the 2000 census.

As of the year 2000, Flowery Branch had annexed residential lands north of the City, including the Newberry Point subdivision and Madison Creek subdivisions west of McEver Road.



Flowery Branch City Limits, 2000
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

<u>Components of Population Change</u>

Population changes in cities occur due to three components -- natural increase or decrease (births minus deaths), net-migration (in-migration minus out-migration) and annexation.

Migration data and vital statistics are generally not available for small cities like Flowery Branch. As noted above, however, much of the recent population growth in Flowery Branch is attributed to a third component of population change – annexation. Future annexations in Flowery Branch cannot be predicted, but a sphere of influence can be established and projections of population within the larger geographic area can be made.

For purposes of estimating the natural increase of Flowery Branch's population, one can use the ten-year (1990-1999), cumulative birth rate for Hall County of 17.3 live births per 1,000 total population (<u>Georgia County Guide 2002</u>, p. 158). The ten-year, cumulative (1990-1999) death rate for Hall County was 7.8 deaths per 1,000 total population (<u>Georgia County Guide 2002</u>, p. 166). Considering births and deaths, the population of Hall County during the 1990s naturally

increased in number at a rate of 9.5 persons per 1,000 annually. Although it can not be assured that the rates of natural increase during the 1990s will hold true for Flowery Branch in the near future, using the historic natural increase rate for the county is an expedient way to account for natural increase in projecting the City's population.

HOUSEHOLD AND GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION

The distribution of population into household (those living in housing units) and group quarters population (institutional settings like nursing homes, correctional institutions, and the like) is important in terms of projecting future populations and also with regard to future community facility needs. In both 1990 and 2000, Flowery Branch's population was comprised entirely of household population. There were no persons living in group quarters within the City in either decade (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3
Historic Household and Group Quarters Populations, 1990-2000
City of Flowery Branch

Type of Population	1990	%	2000	%
Household Population	1,251	100%	1,806	100%
Group Quarters Population	--	--	--	--
Total Population	1,251	100%	1,806	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, Table P015) and 2000 (SF1, Table P26).

HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

A household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. Households are further classified as "family" households (i.e., related by blood or marriage) and "non-family" households (i.e., unrelated persons). The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as "a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption." The numbers and types of households are important because they reflect the needs for housing units and have implications for the appropriate types of housing to provide in the future (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4
Households by Type of Household, 1990-2000
City of Flowery Branch

Households By Type	1990	%	2000	%
Family Households	356	67.6	476	67.4
Non-family Households	170	32.3	230	32.6
Total Households	526	100%	706	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, P027) and 2000 (SF1, P26).

Table 1.5 shows that Flowery Branch increased its number of households by 180 during the 1990s. Of that total, 120 households added during that time were "family" households and only 60 households added were "non-family." Hence, Flowery Branch has generally maintained a 2 to 1 margin of family to non-family households. Table 1.5 shows that in 1990 Flowery Branch had a smaller proportion of family households than Buford, Oakwood, and Hall County.

Table 1.5
Percentage Comparison of Households
Flowery Branch, Nearby Cities, and Hall County

Jurisdiction	1990		2000	
	Family Households	Non-Family Households	Family Households	Non-Family Households
Flowery Branch	67.6	32.3	67.4	32.6
Buford	72.0	28.0	68.0	32.0
Oakwood	70.0	30.0	67.4	32.6
Hall County	76.4	23.6	76.0	24.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, P027) and 2000 (SF1, P26).

As of 2000, the percentage of family households has decreased compared with 1990 in Buford and Oakwood. Hall County's percentage of family households in 2000 was only slightly smaller than 1990.

A detailed classification for City households is provided in Table 1.6, which indicates the number of households by the number of persons living in the household in 1990 and 2000. Of the 180 new households added to Flowery Branch during the 1990s, 80 were two-person households. In both 1990 and 2000, Flowery Branch had few large (6+ person) households, but the numbers of 4-person and 5-person households increased in absolute numbers during the decade. In absolute numbers, three-person households decreased between 1990 and 2000 in the City.

Table 1.6
Households by Number of Persons per Household, 1990 and 2000
City of Flowery Branch

Household by Number of Persons	1990	%	2000	%
1-person household	139	26.4	168	23.8
2-person household	167	31.7	247	35.0
3-person household	134	25.5	123	17.4
4-person household	65	12.4	109	15.4
5-person household	14	2.7	36	5.1
6-person household	5	1.0	14	2.0
7-or-more person household	2	0.3	9	1.3
Total households	526	100%	706	100%

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Tape File 1A, P27. U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P26).

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Table 1.7 shows the persons per household in 1990 and 2000 for both family households and total households. Persons per family is the number of persons in families divided by the total number of families. Persons per household is the number of persons in households divided by the total number of households.

Regarding the average household size, there has been a historic decline in the United States over time. "Between 1950 and 1980, the persons per household ratio declined by an average of 8.4 percent," and "during the 1970s the ratio declined 11.6 percent." The steadily decreasing average household size has been attributed primarily to an increasing number of one- and two-person households, for various reasons, including: postponement of marriage and a resulting increase in the number of never-married persons over thirty years of age; more adults who have been divorced, separated, or widowed and who have been able to live by themselves apart from families and relatives; the "undoubling" of unmarried or previously married adults that have split off from families headed by a married couple or other relative; rises in incomes that enable many single persons to establish their own household, a drop in female fertility, and increased rate of participation in the labor force by women. The decline of the "nuclear" family has also caused the historic average household size to drop over time (Gellen 1985).

Table 1.7
Household Size, 1990-2000
City of Flowery Branch and State of Georgia
(Persons per Household)

Type of Household	Flowery Branch		State of Georgia	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Average Household Size, All Units	2.38	2.56	2.66	2.65
Average Household Size, Owner-Occupied Units	2.47	2.50	2.76	2.71
Average Household Size, Renter-Occupied Units	2.30	2.62	2.49	2.51
Average Family Size	2.85	3.01	3.16	3.14

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991) and 2000 (SF1, P17, P33, H12).

In Flowery Branch in 1990, average household sizes were much smaller than for Georgia as a whole in 1990. In Georgia as a whole, household sizes remained generally steady from 1990 to 2000. In Flowery Branch, however, average household size increased significantly during the decade. The increase was attributed mostly to renter households. Hence, the increase is probably not one of larger family sizes (even though family sizes did increase in the City in the 1990s). Rather, it generally means that non-related individuals living together has increased. That trend is probably explained in major part by the fact that household incomes have not increased proportionally with increases in the costs of occupying housing (whether for purchase or rent). This may represent a "redoubling" effect in the 1990s, reversing the former "undoubling" effect described earlier.

AGE

Age is the single most important dimension of the population. There can be vast differences in the needs of children versus the elderly. Age has a relationship to the labor force – workers include the population ages 16 years and over through retirement age and sometimes beyond. Age has important relationships to housing and can help predict likely first-time homebuyers, renters, owners of second homes, etc. Age can also affect the political situation: for instance, in cities where there is a large percentage of elderly, they sometimes vote down bond referendums for schools.

The relationship of the age of population to the needs for community facilities and services is also very important. For instance, a high elderly population often translates into a need for health care and nursing and personal care homes. On the other hand, a town with many children signals a need for schools, day care centers, and playgrounds. More information on the implications of age is provided by looking at characteristics of various age groups.

Table 1.8 provides age details for the City's population by five-year age cohort in 1990 and 2000. Since the population of Flowery Branch has increased from 1990 to 2000, it is reasonable to expect that most age cohorts would also increase during the decade. That expectation is generally borne out in the age figures, as the age cohorts between ages 30 and 69 all increased significantly in Flowery Branch from 1990 to 2000.

Table 1.8
Historic Population by Age Cohort, 1990-2000
City of Flowery Branch

Age Group	1990	%	2000	%
0-4	103	8.2	166	9.2
5-9	83	6.6	125	6.9
10-14	71	5.7	102	5.6
15-19	66	5.3	113	6.3
20-24	179	14.3	177	9.8
25-29	192	15.3	168	9.3
30-34	116	9.3	178	9.9
35-39	60	4.8	155	8.6
40-44	60	4.8	139	7.7
45-49	50	4.0	105	5.8
50-54	53	4.2	92	5.1
55-59	38	3.0	67	3.7
60-64	37	3.0	63	3.5
65-69	30	2.4	46	2.5
70-74	41	3.3	41	2.3
75-79	29	2.3	24	1.3
80-84	22	1.8	28	1.6
85+	21	1.7	17	0.9
TOTAL	1,251	100%	1,806	100%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, P011) and 2000 (SF1, P12).

Persons 20 to 44 Years Old

This age group is the younger segment of the prime working-age population. This demographic group includes first time home buyers, as well as, households that are upgrading housing for the first or second time. This demographic group also provides the bulk of the labor force. In 1990, this collection of age cohorts comprised almost half (48.5%) of Flowery Branch's population. As of 2000, the share of total City population in those age cohorts declined to 45.3 percent, though the number of persons increased in absolute terms during the 1990s.

The number of persons ages 25-29 decreased in Flowery Branch from 1990 to 2000, and the number of 20-24 year olds also decreased very slightly. In percentage terms, this is a significant finding – persons 20-29 years old made up almost 30 percent of the City's population in 1990, but as of 2000 they comprised less than 20 percent. This means, for whatever reason, that Flowery Branch has not kept its prior (1990) share of younger adults as residents.

Persons 45 to 64 Years Old

This age group is the older segment of the labor force. Some persons in this category will retire early. Persons in this age category typically have the greatest amount of disposable income when compared with other age groups. They are not as likely to change residences, although the more affluent households may look for and purchase second homes. This group is probably less demanding of public facilities and services such as schools and parks.

In 1990, this collection of age cohorts comprised 14.2 percent of Flowery Branch's population. As of 2000, the percentage share of the total population was 18.1 percent. In terms of absolute numbers, the increase is more significant.

Persons 65 Years and Over

This age group is commonly referred to as the "elderly" and the "retirement age" population. Most of the people in this age group are no longer in the work force. While some elderly households may have more disposable income than ever before in their lifetimes, many elderly households will have limited incomes because they are no longer earning wages and salaries. Persons who own residences in this age group are likely to eventually seek alternative housing, because they may own large homes that provide more living space than needed, they have little desire to upkeep residential grounds and structures, they experience a need for closer societal relationships with others as family relationships devolve, and because they are more likely than other age groups to need assisted care or medical attention. Because of differences in life expectancy between men and women, a very high proportion of older persons are and will be women. The differences in life expectancy also contribute to the number of elderly women living alone, many of whom are likely to have inadequate income (Howe, Chapman and Baggett, 1994).

The number of persons ages 70 or more in Flowery Branch has remained relatively steady from 1990 to 2000, rather than increasing. This is not surprising, however, in that Flowery Branch does not have nursing homes, personal care homes, or retirement communities, which would otherwise maintain or attract the senior population. However, there are two nursing homes located within the Flowery Branch zip code. One is located on Conner Road near Jim Crow Road, and the other is located on Cantrell Road north of Thurmond Tanner Road. Chances are good that the elderly residents of Flowery Branch in 1990 were by-and-large the same folks in 2000.

Median Age

Women have a higher median age than men in the City, County, and State as of 2000. This difference is not surprising given the longer life expectancies of females. The median age (Table 1.9) of Flowery Branch's population in 2000 was slightly lower than the County and State as a whole.

Table 1.9
Median Age of the Population, 2000
City, County, and State

Jurisdiction	Median Age, 2000, Both Sexes	Median Age, 2000, Males	Median Age, 2000, Females
Flowery Branch	31.2	30.3	32.6
Hall County	32.2	31.0	33.5
State of Georgia	33.4	32.1	34.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P13).

HISPANIC ORIGIN AND RACIAL COMPOSITION

Hispanic origin is not a race, and thus it is noted separately in Census statistics. From 1990 to 2000, the share of Flowery Branch's total population that is Hispanic or Latino jumped from 1 percent to almost 10 percent of the population (see Table 1.10). That finding is consistent with trends in the state, Atlanta region, and Hall County.

Table 1.10
Hispanic or Latino Population, 1990 and 2000
City of Flowery Branch

Origin	1990	%	2000	%
Not Hispanic	1,238	99.0	1,631	90.3
Hispanic or Latino	13	1.0	175	9.7
Total Population	1,251	100%	1,806	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991, and 2000 (SF1, P4).

During the 1990s, Flowery Branch's population diversified some in terms of race. In absolute terms, the white population increased by more than 400 persons while the Black or African American population increased by 114 persons (Table 1.11).

Table 1.11
Racial Composition of the Population, 1990-2000
City of Flowery Branch

Race	1990	%	2000	%
White	1,102	88.1	1,503	83.2
Black or African American	124	9.9	238	13.2
American Indian and Alaska Native	18	1.4	8	0.4
Asian	--	--	5	0.3
Other race	7	0.6	40	2.2
Two or more races	nc	--	12	0.7
Total	1,251	100%	1,806	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 Summary Population and Housing. Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991, and 2000 (SF1, P3). nc = not classified

Table 1.12 provides a comparison of racial composition. Flowery Branch's population is slightly more homogeneous than Buford and Oakwood. It has fewer persons (3.6 percent of the total population) of other races (or more than one race) than Buford, Oakwood, and Hall County.

Table 1.12
Comparison of Racial Composition, 2000
City, Nearby Cities, and County

Jurisdiction	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	Other Races Or More Than One Race	Total
Flowery Branch	83.2%	13.2%	3.6%	100%
Buford	76.2%	13.3%	10.5%	100%
Oakwood	76.7%	10.4%	12.9%	100%
Hall County	80.8%	7.3%	11.9%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P12).

SEX

Table 1.13 compares the year 2000 population by sex for the City, County, and State. Typically, females outnumber males due to longer lifespans. That was true for Georgia in 2000, but not for Hall County and Flowery Branch. In the County and City, males outnumbered females in 2000. Rarely do the percentages vary more than one percent from parity.

Table 1.13
Population by Sex, 2000
City, County, and State

Jurisdiction	Male	Percent of Total	Female	Percent of Total
Flowery Branch	918	50.8%	888	49.2%
Hall County	70,884	50.9%	68,393	49.1%
State of Georgia	4, 027,113	49.2%	4,159,340	50.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P12).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Knowing the educational levels of the population helps to determine the types of economic development strategies needed. Table 1.14 provides a comparison of selected educational attainment levels of the adult population in 2000. It shows the lower end (non-completion of high school) and the upper end of educational attainment (bachelor's degree or higher).

Table 1.14
Comparison of Educational Attainment, 2000
Persons 25 Years and Over
City, County, Selected Cities and Counties, and State

Jurisdiction	% Not Completing High School	% With Bachelor's Degree or Higher
City of Flowery Branch	32.0%	6.1%
City of Buford	31.9%	13.1%
City of Oakwood	23.0%	10.0%
Hall County	29.4%	18.7%
Forsyth County	14.3%	34.6%
Gwinnett County	12.7%	34.1%
State of Georgia	21.4%	24.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P37).

The figures in Table 1.14 reveal that Flowery Branch had a significant percentage of its population (almost one-third) in 2000 that had not completed high school. That finding is more or less similar to Hall County and Buford, but significantly higher than the state as a whole. On the upper end of the educational spectrum, Flowery Branch had the lowest percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, and at 6.1 percent that number is substantially lower than the state as a whole (24.3 percent). Nearby Oakwood and Buford are also well below the comparable percentage for the state. This is somewhat surprising given the existence of a college in Oakwood, which usually results in a boosting of the educational attainment of residents in the college town and surroundings. Such is not the case in south Hall County. The educational attainment of Flowery Branch's citizenry is well below that of the state as a whole and therefore deserves further attention. Because of the larger percentage of adults without a high school education, many adults in Flowery Branch and nearby cities may find it difficult to find employment other than the most menial, minimum-wage positions.

Table 1.15
Educational Attainment by Sex, 2000
Persons 25 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Educational Attainment	Males	%	Females	%	Total	%
No schooling completed	14	2.3	7	1.3	21	1.9
Less than 9th grade	50	8.3	51	9.7	101	8.9
9th to 12th grade (No Diploma)	126	20.9	114	21.6	240	21.2
High School Graduate (or Equiv.)	231	38.3	222	42.2	453	40.1
Some College (No Degree)	112	18.6	95	18.0	207	18.3
Associate Degree	29	4.8	10	1.9	39	3.5
Bachelor's Degree	22	3.6	19	3.6	41	3.6
Master's Degree	7	1.2	9	1.7	16	1.5
Professional School Degree	6	1.0	0	--	6	0.5
Doctorate Degree	6	1.0	0	--	6	0.5
Total Adult Population 25+ Years	603	100%	527	100%	1,130	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P37).

Table 1.15 provides a closer look at Flowery Branch's adult educational attainment by sex in 2000. These figures underscore the need for adult education programs. A concerted effort to initiate a high-school equivalency program in Flowery Branch could boost approximately one-fifth of the City's 2000 population to the attainment level of at least a high school diploma.

INCOME

Per Capita Income

Table 1.16 provides a comparison of per capita income in 1989 and 1999 for the City, County, State, and Nation. Georgia's per capita income in both years was comparable with (slightly less than) the U.S. as a whole. For residents of Flowery Branch, per capita incomes in 1989 and 1999 were well below all other comparison jurisdictions.

Table 1.16
Comparison of Per Capita Income 1989 and 1999
City, County, State, and Nation

Jurisdiction	1989	1999
City of Flowery Branch	$10,426	$16,970
Hall County	$13,356	$19,690
State of Georgia	$13,631	$21,154
United States	$14,420	$21,587

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF3, P114A) and 2000 (SF3, P82). In The 2002 Georgia County Guide (21st Ed.). University of Georgia.

Median Household Income

Household income is further classified as "family" income and "non-family" income. The median household income takes into account both family and non-family incomes. A median rather than "mean" is used as the reported average, since median numbers are not skewed by a few very large household incomes. See Table 1.17.

Flowery Branch's total median household incomes and median family incomes in 1999 were significantly below those of the County and State. For non-family households, income was higher than Hall County and comparable to the State as a whole. Income levels often correlate highly with education – as education increases, income tends to increase.

Table 1.17
Comparison of Median Household Income in 1999
City, County, and State

Income	City of Flowery Branch	Hall County	State of Georgia
Median Family	$38,500	$50,100	$49,280
Nonfamily Household	$26,181	$25,558	$26,509
Median Household	$35,478	$44,908	$42,433

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P53, P77, P80).

Household Distribution by Income Groupings

Table 1.18 provides greater insight on the distribution of income by income groupings. Both Hall County and Flowery Branch are shown in the table, and income is for the year 1999.

As already alluded to in the discussion of median and per capita incomes, households of Hall County are more affluent that households of Flowery Branch. The City has a larger proportion of its households in the lower income brackets and fewer household in the higher income brackets than Hall County. More than forty (41.4) percent of Flowery Branch's households in 1999 had household incomes of less than $30,000, and nearly three-quarters (72.4 percent) of Flowery Branch's households in 1999 had household incomes of less than $50,000.

Table 1.18
Number of Households by Income Grouping, 1999
Hall County and City of Flowery Branch

Income Grouping in 1999	Hall County		City of Flowery Branch	
	Households	Percent of Total Households	Households	Percent of Total Households
Less than $10,000	3,901	8.2	63	9.0
$10,000 to $14,999	2,307	4.9	38	5.5
$15,000 to $19,999	2,665	5.6	65	9.4
$20,000 to $24,999	2,716	5.7	58	8.4
$25,000 to $29,999	2,909	6.1	63	9.1
$30,000 to $34,999	3,352	7.1	53	7.6
$35,000 to $39,999	2,903	6.1	60	8.7
$40,000 to $44,999	2,991	6.3	50	7.2
$45,000 to $49,999	2,729	5.8	52	7.5
$50,000 to $59,999	4,962	10.6	52	7.5
$60,000 to $74,999	5,372	11.3	49	7.1
$75,000 to $99,999	5,384	11.4	65	9.4
$100,000 to $124,999	2,438	5.1	11	1.6
$125,000 to $149,999	906	1.9	7	1.0
$150,000 to $199,999	803	1.7	3	0.4
$200,000 or more	1,053	2.2	4	0.6
Total Households	47,391	100%	693	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P52)

Poverty Status by Age Group

Table 1.19 provides the age distribution of persons with income in 1999 below poverty level. Persons in the Under 5 years (infants), 6 to 11 years, and 12 to 17 years are legally too young to care for themselves. Persons over 65 (retirement age and often not working), are mostly without opportunities to earn a wage or salary.

Then there is the 18-64 age group (see Table 1.19), which is the working age population. In Flowery Branch in 1999, two-thirds (66.1 percent) of the persons with incomes below poverty

level in 1999 were of working age. In Hall County, the majority (54.8 percent) of persons with incomes below the poverty line in 1999 were working age. This does not imply that all of this age group can work their way out of poverty, however, since some of them may suffer from disabilities, homelessness, medical conditions, etc., as contrasted with persons of able body and mind.

Poverty-stricken children are evident in Flowery Branch – 13.6 percent of persons in poverty in 1999 were 0-5 years old. Flowery Branch's poverty-stricken population is comparable with Hall County's in terms of the percentage who are elderly (10-11 percent).

Table 1.19
Persons Below Poverty Level by Age Group In 1999
Hall County and City of Flowery Branch

Age Group	Hall County		City of Flowery Branch	
	Persons	%	Persons	%
Under 5 years	1,773	10.4	32	13.6
5 years	384	2.3	2	0.8
6 to 11 years	2,060	12.1	15	6.4
12 to 17 years	1,593	9.4	7	3.0
18 to 64 years	9,299	54.8	156	66.1
65 to 74 years	983	5.8	10	4.2
75 years and over	888	5.2	14	5.9
Total persons with income in 1999 below poverty level	16,980	100%	236	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table P87).

FORECASTS AND PROJECTIONS

Hall County Population Projections

The Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Population Element (Adopted June 24, 2004) provides both "demand-based" and "policy-influenced" projections of population. The projections are countywide and therefore include all municipalities including Flowery Branch, though municipal-level projections are not provided in that population element. Table 1.20 presents those projections. Households and projected household size are also shown in Table 1.20.

Demand-based population projections are those that assume past trends will continue and that the rate of growth is acceptable to policymakers. Policy-influenced projections take into account that Hall County's elected officials believed a continuation of demand-based population growth would be too much growth for Hall County. Hence, the policy-influenced projections are aspirational in nature. Total demand-based projections are reduced through downzoning the total residential development capacity of the county. Specific municipal projections other than Gainesville are not provided in the Gainesville – Hall County Comprehensive Plan.

Table 1.20
Hall County (Countywide) Population Projections, 2005-2025
(Persons Except as Noted)

Projection	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Population (Demand-Based)	180,970	237,332	307,089	376,329	437,609
Households (Demand-Based)	62,714	83,514	108,541	132,550	152,943
Average Household Size (PPU)	2.84	2.80	2.79	2.84	2.82
Population (Policy-Influenced)	176,765	215,061	261,291	298,274	325,051

Note: PPU = Persons Per Unit. Source: Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Population Element, Adopted June 24, 2004. Projections by Ross + Associates. Household size projections by Ross + Associates and Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.

Recent and Anticipated Residential Developments

Recent townhouse developments include "Tidewater Cove" near Lake Lanier and "Waterstone Crossing" north of Cantrell Road. "Sterling on the Lake" is a residential subdivision (including detached single-family homes and townhouses) with an expected 1,800-home buildout over a five-year time period. Another subdivision approved in Flowery Branch will add 111 single-family homes in a subdivision named "Mulberry Village" (approximately 30 of which have been issued according to the Flowery Branch City Planner). The City has also approved "Tree Park" Apartments which when completed will consist of 456 units. These new residential communities will lead to substantial population increases in the short-term.

Municipal Population and Household Projections

Table 1.21
Population Estimates and Short-term Projections
City of Flowery Branch, 2003-2010

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Households	753	878	1,003	1,478	1,953	2,428	2,903	3,378
Household Size	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Household Population	1,958	2,283	2,608	3,842	5,078	6,313	7,548	8,783
Group Quarters	0	0	0	0	0	30	60	95
Increment of Natural Increase[1]	--	8	25	36	48	60	72	84
Total Population	1,958	2,291	2,633	3,878	5,126	6,403	7,680	8,962

[1] 9.5 persons per 1,000 annually, considering birth and death rates for Hall County in the 1990s.

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, 2005, based on ten-year birth and death rates for Hall County as reported in The Georgia County Guide 2002 and anticipated housing starts from City of Flowery Branch, May 2005.

The above figures suggest that Flowery Branch will increase in the short-term by approximately 2,367 units/households in the short-term (2006-2010). These residential development approvals mentioned above may be completed in a five-year period and they are spread out over the remainder of the decade in the projection below (see Table 1.21). The development projects described above are not the only residential development the City is likely to experience, either. However, the projections include what is clearly approved for new residential development in Flowery Branch.

At this time, the consultant has elected not to provide long-term population projections. However, long-term (2025) projections will be included at a future date in the planning process, after existing land use mapping is completed and density analyses are completed.

Anticipated Future Trends of the Population

The racial composition of the population in Flowery Branch is not anticipated to change substantially between 2005 and 2010, though it should be noted that Flowery Branch's population is considerably less diverse racially than the county as a whole, and that some changes toward increases in Hispanic populations will occur. The residential development anticipated in the City will consist largely of detached, single-family housing which will probably be occupied by predominantly white, working-age (29-49 year old) household heads. The influx of middle-class suburban families will increase the educational and income characteristics of Flowery Branch's overall population. That influx of middle-class families will bring with them some children, of course.

Many of the City's longer-term residents will "age in place" in existing neighborhoods. The City may witness some increases in the number of elderly residents in the future, and the Planning and Community Development Manager reports some interest on the part of developers to build new developments for seniors. The recent townhouses constructed in the City, as well as the 456-unit apartment complex proposed, will tend to add younger (20-34 year old) persons to the population of Flowery Branch, and these new persons will also raise educational attainment levels and probably income levels of the overall population base of the City.

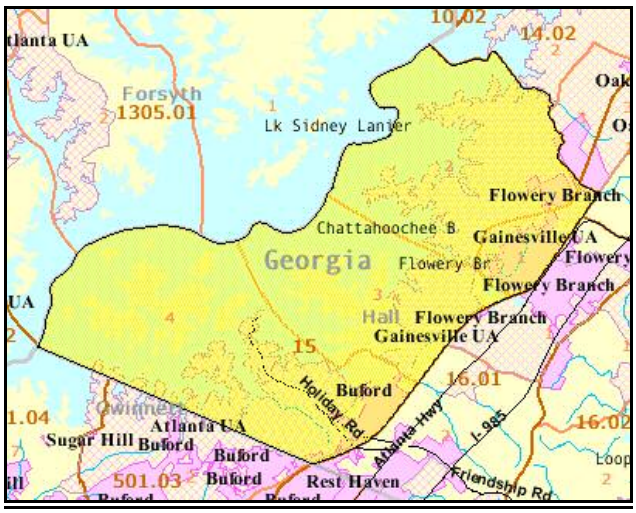
REFERENCES

Gellen, Martin. 1985. *Accessory Apartments in Single-Family Housing*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Center for Urban Policy Research.

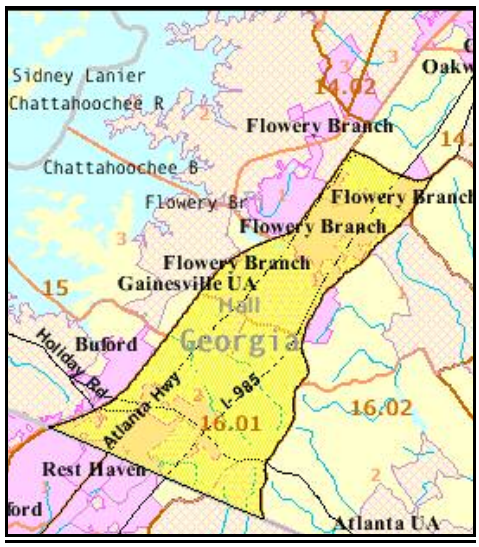
Howe, Deborah A., Nancy J. Chapman, and Sharon A. Baggett. 1994. *Planning for an Aging Society*. Planning Advisory Service Report Number 451. Chicago: American Planning Association.

APPENDIX: CENSUS TRACT GEOGRAPHY

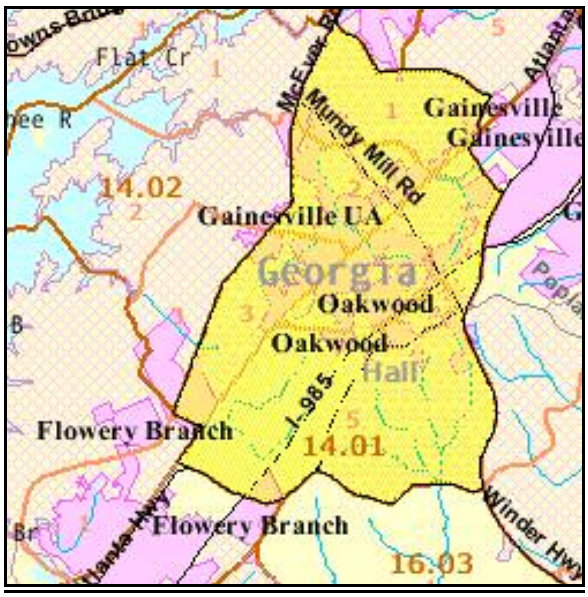
Flowery Branch in 2000 was situated within four Hall County census tracts, as shown in the maps below (see yellow shaded areas with black borders). The portion of Flowery Branch west of west of Atlanta Highway (SR 13) is in Census Tract 15. Most of the rest of Flowery Branch's original City limits is in Census Tract 16.01. Only a small part of Flowery Branch is in Census Tract 14.01, which is centered on Oakwood. Flowery Branch had a small area east of I-985 in Census Tract 16.02 in 2000, but since the 2000 Census the City has annexed over 1,000 acres in that tract. Data are not provided by Census Tract in this element, but having the Census Tract Maps available for future reference is convenient.



Census Tract 15, Hall County
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Census Tract 16.01, Hall County
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Census Tract 14.01, Hall County
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Census Tract 16.02, Hall County
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CHAPTER 2
HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element provides an inventory of the existing housing stock and an assessment of its adequacy and suitability for serving current and future population and economic development needs. The assessment considers whether existing housing is appropriate to the needs and desires of residents in terms of quantity, affordability, type and location, and, if not, what might be done to improve the situation.

HOUSING TYPES AND MIX

Flowery Branch had a very diverse housing stock in 1990, with sizable proportions of multi-family and mobile home[1] dwellings in addition to detached, single-family residences. The only type of housing that was under-represented was townhouses (attached, single-family residences). The percentage (31.3 percent) of total units that were single-family, detached in 1990 is well below many other municipalities which tend to be dominated by one type of housing unit (detached, single-family).

Table 2.1
Types of Housing Units, 1990-2000
City of Flowery Branch

Type of Unit	No. of Units 1990	%	No. of Units 2000	%	Change in Units, 1990-2000
One family, detached	180	31.3	328	41.6	+148
One family, attached	3	0.5	13	1.6	+10
Multiple family	234	40.7	244	31.0	+10
Mobile Home, Trailer, Other	158	27.5	203	25.8	+45
Total	575	100%	788	100%	+213

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991. U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H30).

The City's housing stock increased by only 213 units during the 1990s. It is probable that much of the increase was attributed to the City's annexation of residential subdivisions (detached, single-family units) north of McEver Road. Those annexations increased the share of total housing units met with detached, single-family homes. Mobile homes increased by 45 units during the 1990s but as a percentage share of total housing stock decreased slightly from 1990 to 2000. The 1990s resulted in little change with regard to the number of townhouses or multi-family residences. Since the 2000 Census, the most significant residential development activity in Flowery Branch has been two large developments, Madison Creek, and Sterling on the Lake.

As noted in the Population Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 1, Table 1.21), residential development is about to explode in Flowery Branch. An estimated 2,367 units/households are planned in the short-term (2006-2010) in just three or four developments alone. The household estimates provided in Table 1.21 (see Population Element) assumed that

[1] The U.S. Census Bureau still uses the term "mobile" home, which is now out of vogue. The more accepted term today is "manufactured" home. When referring to Census statistics, the term "mobile" is used but in other respects the preferred term "manufactured" home is used in this analysis.

Flowery Branch had added approximately 250 townhouses during the 2000-2004 period. That assumption, coupled with the figures on housing units supplied by the City Planner provide reasonable information to forecast the mix of housing units in Flowery Branch in 2005 and 2010 (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2
Short-term Forecast of Housing Mix
City of Flowery Branch, 2005 and 2010

	2005	Percent of Total	2010	Percent of Total
Households (from Table 1.21)	1,003	100%	3,378	100%
One family, detached	330	32.9	2,241	66.3
One family, attached	226	22.5	226	6.7
Multiple family	244	24.3	700	20.7
Mobile Home, Trailer, Other	203	20.3	211	6.3
Total Housing Units	1,003	100%	3,378	100%

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. 2005 based on general numbers from City of Flowery Branch.

It is important to note that the short-term forecast is not necessarily a statement of desirable housing mixes – rather, it reflect the substantial residential developments approved already. More development can be approved in any given month, so these numbers should be considered minimums. The housing unit forecasts and percentages could be increased upward with each new residential development approval, and the City can also monitor its residential permits by type of housing unit to continue to monitor the housing mix. Furthermore, annexations, if they occur will almost surely increase the housing stock of the City. Comparing the 2000 housing mix (Census) with 2010 forecasts, one can see that the current housing mix will be radically altered in favor of detached, single-family dwellings in the 2000s. With the addition of the 1,800-home "Sterling on the Lake" community (now under construction, the vast majority of which will be detached, single-family homes but which will also include townhouses), Flowery Branch's housing stock will change from approximately one-third detached, single-family to two-thirds detached, single-family within the decade (and sooner if Sterling is built as planned and on schedule).

Table 2.3
Types of Housing Units by Tenure, 2000
City of Flowery Branch

Type of Unit	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied	
	Units	%	Units	%
One family, detached	221	62.7	64	18.8
One family, attached	3	0.8	10	2.9
Multiple family	3	0.8	209	61.5
Mobile Home	126	35.7	57	16.8
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	--	0	--
Total	353	100%	340	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H32).

Table 2.3 provides a cross-tabulation of the type of housing unit with tenure (owner versus renter occupied). Generally, detached, single-family homes are mostly owner occupied but can

be renter occupied. Townhouses (one-family attached) are similarly often owner occupied but more frequently rented than detached, single-family dwellings. Multi-family residential units are most frequently apartments, and therefore renter occupied, although if they are condominiums (and some of them appear to be according to the census statistics) owner occupancy is possible. Similarly, manufactured homes can be owner or renter occupied.

Mobile homes made up more than one-quarter (25.7 percent) of the total housing stock in Flowery Branch in 2000. Mobile homes comprised more than one-third of owner-occupied units in 2000 in the City. Two-thirds of all mobile homes in the City in 2000 were owner-occupied, while the other one-third was renter occupied. Owner-occupied manufactured homes in Flowery Branch are likely to remain a long-term source of affordable housing – once established, manufactured homes are relatively infrequently relocated or demolished.

A sizable percent (18.8%) of the rental housing stock was detached, single-family dwellings in Flowery Branch in the year 2000, although the absolute number (64) was small. As is alluded to later in this Housing Element, Flowery Branch has a number of relatively small, detached single-family dwellings, and the smaller size may make them less likely to be owner occupied by families and more likely to be occupied by renter households.

OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY

Two measures of the health of the housing market and housing stock generally in the City is to look at overall occupancy characteristics and vacancy rates in comparison with the county and state. Table 2.4 provides those data. Typically, housing occupancies for cities and counties in Georgia are expected to be above 90 percent. In tight housing markets, vacancy rates can be as low as 2.5 percent (some vacancy rate is desirable in that if all housing units were occupied there would be little opportunity to move into the City.

Table 2.4
Housing Occupancy and Vacancy, 2000
City of Flowery Branch, Hall County, and Georgia

Jurisdiction	Occupied Units	% of Total Units	Vacant Units	% of Total Units	Total Units
City of Flowery Branch	693	87.9%	95	12.1%	788
Hall County	47,381	92.8%	3,665	7.2%	51,046
State of Georgia	3,006,369	91.6%	275,368	8.4%	3,281,737

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000(SF3, Table H7). (SF3, Table H6).

In Flowery Branch, the overall vacancy rate of 12.1 percent is higher than would be expected, and significantly higher than for the county's and state's housing stock. One might think that Hall County, with a large number of lakefront homes, might have a higher vacancy rate in that lakefront homes might be more seasonally occupied (and therefore, counted as vacant during the 2000 census). However, data in Table 2.4 suggest that is not the case for Hall County; furthermore, Census statistics show that Hall County only had 940 housing units classified as "for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use" in 200 (Census 2000, SF3, Table H8).

The higher-than-average vacancy rate for Flowery Branch's housing stock in 2000 deserves additional consideration. In 2000, of the 95 total vacant housing units in the City, 38 were for rent and 35 were for sale (representing a fairly even distribution of rental and owner

opportunities in Flowery Branch in 2000). Almost all of the other vacant units were classified as "other vacant" by the Census Bureau in 2000 (Census 2000, SF3, Table H8). Looking at vacancy rates by type of housing unit may reveal additional insight into that issue. Table 2.5 provides average household sizes data for owner versus renter households in Flowery Branch and comparison jurisdictions.

Table 2.5
Average Household Size by Tenure, 2000
City, Nearby Cities, County, and State
(Persons Per Unit, Occupied Housing Units)

Jurisdiction	Persons Per Unit Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Persons Per Unit Renter-Occupied Housing Units
City of Flowery Branch	2.67	2.52
City of Buford	2.90	2.52
City of Oakwood	3.28	2.23
Hall County	2.85	2.99
State of Georgia	2.76	2.49

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H18).

Flowery Branch's household size for renter-occupied units, at 2.52 persons per unit in 2000, is comparable with Buford and Georgia as a whole. The average household size for owner-occupied units in Flowery Branch was the lowest of all comparison jurisdictions shown in Table 2.5. Oakwood's average household size for renter-occupied units is low probably because of the existence of Gainesville College (likely households in that City). Hall County's average household size for renter-occupied units is higher than the state, possibly because of some overcrowding in the Gainesville urban area.

OVERCROWDING

Overcrowding provides an occupancy measure of inadequate housing conditions. An overcrowded housing unit is one that has 1.01 or more persons per room. Severe overcrowding is considered to be occupancy by 1.51 or more persons per room.

Overcrowding of housing units in Flowery Branch is not a substantial problem but the statistics in Table 2.6 reveal that Flowery Branch had a total of 55 overcrowded or severely overcrowded housing units in 2000, constituting 7.9 percent of all occupied housing units. Overcrowding is existed in only 9 owner-occupied housing units, and no owner-occupied units were severely overcrowded in Flowery Branch in 2000. The severely overcrowded units were all rental occupied dwellings. When considered as a percentage of the 340 renter-occupied housing units in Flowery Branch in 2000, overcrowding is viewed as a more significant issue – some 13.5 percent of all renter-occupied housing units in Flowery Branch were overcrowded or severely overcrowded in 2000.

Table 2.6
Overcrowded Housing Units by Tenure, 2000
City of Flowery Branch

Occupants per Room	Owner-Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units	Total	Percent of Total Occupied Units
1.01 to 1.5 occupants per room (overcrowded)	9	34	43	6.2%
1.51 or more occupants per room (severely overcrowded)	0	12	12	1.7%
Total	9	46	55	7.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H20).

Table 2.7 provides data on vacancies by type of housing unit in 2000. For Hall County in 2000, it is not surprising to learn that multi-family dwellings had significantly higher vacancy rates than one-family detached dwellings and mobile homes. In Flowery Branch in 2000, mobile homes had slightly lower vacancy rates than one-family detached and multi-family housing types. It is not uncommon for apartments to have 10-13% vacancy rates. However, the high vacancy rates for single-family detached dwellings in Flowery Branch in 2000 is surprising. Again, one can only speculate, but it may be that the vacant single-family dwellings that were vacant in 2000 were mostly in the City's older, in-town areas which are small and may be obsolete in terms of market preferences if vacated by a household. That issue is further explored in the analysis of additional statistics below on size (bedrooms) of units.

Table 2.7
Vacancy by Type of Unit, 2000
City of Flowery Branch and Hall County

Type of Unit	City of Flowery Branch			Hall County		
	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate
One family, detached	328	43	13.1%	35,873	2,527	7.0%
One family, attached	13	0	--	874	70	8.0%
Multiple family	244	32	13.1%	6,327	518	14.1%
Mobile Home	203	20	9.9%	7,972	550	6.9%
Total Housing Units	788	95	12.1%	51,046	3,665	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H30 and H 31). Note: In Hall County, 19 boats, RV's, or vans were tallied under the "mobile home" category.

One does not know from the data in Table 2.7 whether the 20 vacant manufactured homes are safe and habitable, or whether they (or some percentage of them) are dilapidated or abandoned and therefore unfit for habitation.

TENURE

Tenure, as already alluded to, refers to length or duration of occupancy, and in the context of housing units refers to whether such units are owner occupied or renter occupied. Table 2.8 provides renter versus owner occupancy statistics of the City in comparison with other jurisdictions.

Table 2.8
Housing Units by Tenure, 2000
City, Nearby Cities, County, and State

Jurisdiction	Owner-Occupied Units	% of Total Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units	% of Total Occupied Units	Total Occupied Units
City of Flowery Branch	365	51.7%	341	48.3%	706
City of Buford	2,324	61.3%	1,470	38.7%	3,794
City of Oakwood	292	28.3%	739	71.7%	1,031
Hall County	33,676	71.1%	13,705	28.9%	47,381
State of Georgia	2,029,293	67.5%	977,076	32.5%	3,006,369

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H4).

There are substantial variations in the comparison jurisdictions in terms of the owner to renter ratios (or percentages) as shown in Table 2.7. Whereas Georgia's housing stock has a ratio of more than 2:1 owner-to-renter ratio, Flowery Branch's owner-to-renter ratio is close to 1:1, with only a slight majority of the total housing units owner occupied in 2000. Hall County has a higher owner-to-renter ratio than the state, while Buford falls significantly below the state ratio of 2 owner-occupied units for every renter-occupied unit. Note how Oakwood in 2000 had a very low percentage of its total housing stock as owner-occupied units (less than one-third, at 28.3 percent). The finding that Flowery Branch's housing stock is disproportionately renter occupied when compared with the county and state is not in itself a concern, and the overall City share of owner-occupied housing units will increase remarkably with the addition of "Sterling on the Lake" and other detached, single-family residential subdivisions. Nonetheless, to the extent homeownership is the "American Dream," Flowery Branch's existing housing stock falls behind the state with regard to attaining that standard.

Table 2.9 above shows the distribution of renter and owner-occupied households by the number of persons in the household. These are similar numbers already presented in the discussion of households in the Population Element, but cross-tabulated by renter versus owner status in 2000. The data in Table 2.9 tend to show that, in Flowery Branch, there is an even distribution or similarities among renters and homeowners regardless of the size of household.

Table 2.9
Tenure by Number of Persons per Household, 2000
City of Flowery Branch
(Number of Occupied Housing Units)

Number of Persons in Unit (household)	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number of Units	%	Number of Units	%
1 person	93	26.3	97	28.5%
2 persons	110	31.2	119	35.0%
3 persons	57	16.1	48	14.1%
4 persons	60	17,0	38	11,1%
5 persons	24	6.8	25	7.4%
6 persons	7	2.0	10	3.0%
7 or more	2	0.6	3	0.9%
Total	353	100%	340	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H17).

ROOMS AND BEDROOMS

The Decennial Census provides data on the number of rooms and bedrooms in housing units. Those data are provided Flowery Branch's housing stock in 2000 in Tables 2.10 and 2.11.

Table 2.10
Housing Units by Number of Rooms, 2000
City, County and State

	Flowery Branch		Hall County		State of Georgia	
Number of Rooms in Unit	2000	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total
1 Room	7	0.9	297	0.6	35,912	1.1
2 Rooms	37	4.7	1,545	3.0	117,344	3.6
3 Rooms	55	7.0	3,404	6.7	261,022	8.0
4 Rooms	296	37.6	7,391	14.4	493,235	15.0
5 Rooms	176	22.3	11,473	22.5	705,868	21.5
6 Rooms	111	14.0	11,011	21.6	663,551	20.2
7 Rooms	64	8.1	7,073	13.9	414,712	12.6
8 Rooms	21	2.7	3,896	7.6	285,280	8.7
9 or More Rooms	21	2.7	4,956	9.7	304,813	9.3
Total Units	788	100%	51,046	100%	3,281,737	100%
Median Number of Rooms	4.5	--	5.6	--	5.6	--

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H23 and H27).

Flowery Branch's housing stock in 2000, when compared with the housing stocks for the county and state as a whole, appear to be smaller than average. Flowery Branch's housing stock in 2000 had considerably lower percentages of houses with six or more rooms, as well as, higher percentages in the one to four-room categories when compared with Hall County (and Georgia

except for the three-room category). Overall, the median number of rooms of Flowery Branch's housing stock in 2000, at 4.5, was considerably lower than that of the county and state.

An analysis of the number of bedrooms yields similar findings. Whereas only one-quarter of the total housing stock in Hall County and Georgia in 2000 was comprised of two-bedroom housing units, Flowery Branch had more than half (53.7 percent) of its units in that size category (see Table 2.11). Furthermore, Flowery Branch's housing stock in 2000 was vastly under-represented in terms of homes with three, four, and five or more bedrooms. These findings of smaller house sizes, both in terms of the number of rooms and number of bedrooms) tend to confirm that the City's housing stock is smaller than average. While somewhat speculative, it appears that Flowery Branch's higher-than-average percentage of total housing units that are renter occupied correlates closely with the smaller house sizes. Smaller houses are more obsolete in today's housing market, and fewer of them are likely to be purchased and upgraded (with additions).

Table 2.11
Housing Units by Number of Bedrooms, 2000
City, County, and State

Number of Bedrooms in Unit	Flowery Branch	%	Hall County	%	State of Georgia	%
No Bedroom	9	1.1	500	1.0	51,732	1.6
1 Bedroom	91	11.5	3,413	6.7	320,616	9.8
2 Bedrooms	423	53.7	13,132	25.7	860,625	26.2
3 Bedrooms	225	28.6	25,170	49.3	1,443,663	44.0
4 Bedrooms	37	4.7	6,721	13.2	486,888	14.8
5+ Bedrooms	3	0.4	2,110	4.1	118,213	3.6
Total Units	788	100%	51,046	100%	3,281,737	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H41).

AGE

Another issue is the age of housing – if the homes are too old, then it may not make good economic sense to upgrade them. Table 2.12 provides data on the age of housing units (i.e., range of years that housing structures were built). A comparison with Hall County and the State assists the analyst in determining unique characteristics of the local housing stock.

Hall County witnessed greater percentages of housing units constructed during the 1990s than in the State as a whole or the City of Flowery Branch, as of the year 2000. Approximately one-third of Hall County's total housing stock was built in the 1990s (see Table 2.12). Flowery Branch did not witness the same type of housing construction in the 1990s, though it had significant additions to its housing stock in the 1990s.

Homes built in the 1960s and 1970s tend to be substantially smaller than those constructed in later decades. Flowery Branch's housing stock as of 2000, however, had smaller percentages of total homes built in the 1960s and 1970s when compared with Hall County and the State.

In terms of the oldest homes, Flowery Branch had higher percentages of its total housing stock in those categories when compared with Hall County and Georgia. The figures in Table 2.12

indicate that more than one-quarter (26.3 percent) of the total housing stock in Flowery Branch in 2000 was built before 1960, and 18.2 percent of the total was constructed before 1950.

Table 2.12
Age of Housing Units, 2000
City, County, and State
(Housing Units By Range of Years Structure Was Built)

Year Structure Built	Flowery Branch	%	Hall County	%	Georgia	%
Built 1999 to March 2000	74	9.4	3,263	6.4	130,695	4.0
Built 1995 to 1998	84	10.6	8,509	16.7	413,557	12.5
Built 1990 to 1994	62	7.9	6,060	11.9	370,878	11.3
Built 1980 to 1989	202	25.6	11,336	22.2	721,174	22.0
Built 1970 to 1979	111	14.1	8,532	16.7	608,926	18.6
Built 1960 to 1969	48	6.1	5,425	10.6	416,047	12.7
Built 1950 to 1959	64	8.1	4,005	7.8	283,424	8.6
Built 1940 to 1949	70	8.9	1,715	3.4	144,064	4.4
Built 1939 or earlier	73	9.3	2,201	4.3	192,972	5.9
Total	788	100%	51,046	100%	3,281,737	100%
Median Year Structure Built	1981		1983		1980	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H34, H35).

These housing age statistics are relevant to historic preservation policies. By the end of the decade (in 2010), Flowery Branch will have approximately one-quarter of its housing stock as potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A significant proportion of the City's total housing stock is now more than fifty years old and therefore potentially eligible for such listing.

The age of homes is not in itself an indicator of poor condition. Older homes are sometimes better constructed than newer ones, and the overall condition of homes depends on the amount of upkeep and maintenance by the owners. As homes age, however, more upkeep is needed, and if occupancy goes to renter rather than owner-occupied status, maintenance tends to get deferred. It is therefore important to note the historic potential and physical condition of Flowery Branch's older homes, and consider programs that may preserve and maintain them, whether for owner or renter status.

CONDITION

Two typical measures of substandard housing conditions are the number of housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities and the number of units lacking complete kitchen facilities. Table 2.13 provides data on the structural and plumbing characteristics of the City's housing stock in 2000, as well as comparisons with the County and State. In 2000, Flowery Branch had only five (5) homes that lacked complete plumbing facilities and only two (2) homes that lacked complete kitchen facilities. Such a small number of homes is not cause for concern.

Table 2.13
Structural and Plumbing Characteristics of Housing Units, 2000
City, County, and State
(Percent of Total Housing Units)

Housing Unit Characteristic	Flowery Branch	Hall County	State of Georgia
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	0.2%	0.4%	1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (STF3, Tables H47 and H50).

COST

For purposes of comparative (regional) overview, median property value of housing in 2000 in the Georgia Mountains Region (13 counties) was $114,583 and median monthly rent was $661 (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element, p. 16).

Value of Owner-Occupied Units

Table 2.14 provides data on specified owner-occupied housing units in 2000. More than half (52.3 percent) of Flowery Branch's specified owner-occupied housing stock in 2000 was valued at less than $100,000, and the median housing value for such units was $97,500. The median is even lower when one considers all owner-occupied units in the City. These figures are well below the state median, which is lower than Hall County's median housing values for specified and total owner-occupied units in 2000.

Table 2.14
Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units in 2000
City, County, and State

Range of Value ($)	Flowery Branch		Hall County		Georgia
	Units	%	Units	%	%
Less than $50,000	37	17.1	834	3.1	9.5%
$50,000 to $99,999	76	35.2	8,334	31.7	34.2%
$100,000 to $149,999	58	26.9	8,890	33.8	25.8%
$150,000 to $199,999	40	18.5	3,467	13.2	13.3%
$200,000 to $299,999	5	2.3	2,581	9.8	10.2%
$300,000 or more	0	--	2,209	8.4	7.0%
Total	216	100%	26,315	100%	100%
Median (specified owner-occupied units) ($)	$97,500		$120,200		$111,200
Median (all owner-occupied units ($)	$71,600		$111,500		$100,600

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H74, H76 and H85).

In terms of affordability, this means that Flowery Branch's owner-occupied housing stock is comparably more affordable than in Hall County or the State as a whole, though it has also been noted previously that the housing stock is also smaller in comparison with the County and State. At the higher end of the owner-occupied housing value scale, Flowery Branch had only five (5) owner-occupied homes valued at $200,000 or more in 2000. That means Flowery

Branch's owner-occupied housing stock in 2000 was substantially lower in its share of higher-end, owner-occupied homes. As noted previously, that condition will change remarkably with the addition of home in the "Sterling on the Lake" community, which will have some higher-end homes that will skew overall City statistics upward in just a few years.

Cost Burden of Homeowner Households

It is useful to analyze and determine the extent to which owner and renter households are cost burdened or severely cost burdened with regard to housing. "Cost burdened" is defined as paying more than 30 percent of a household's income for housing, and "severely cost burdened" is defined as paying more than 50 percent of a household's income for housing. Table 2.15 provides such data for specified owner-occupied housing units in Flowery Branch in 1999.

Table 2.15
Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999
City of Flowery Branch
(Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units)

Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999	Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units	% of Units
Less than 30 percent (not cost burdened)	185	85.6
30 to 49 percent (cost burdened)	10	4.8
50 percent or more (severely cost burdened)	21	9.6
Total Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units	216	100%
Median Monthly Owner Cost as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999	16.0%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H94 and H95).

The figures in Table 2.15 show that of the total selected owner-occupied households in Flowery Branch in 1999, 31 households were cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. While the percentages are significant, the overall housing cost burden is not a major issue in the City for owner-occupied households. Note also that the median monthly owner cost, at 16 percent of household income in 1999, is well below the cost-burden range of 30 percent and above.

Renter-Occupied Households

Table 2.16 provides data on housing cost burden for specified owner-occupied housing units in Flowery Branch in 2000.

Flowery Branch in 1999 had only three homes that rented for more than $1,000. The majority of specified renter-occupied units in the Census sample fell within the range of $500 to $749 for monthly rents. The median for specified renter-occupied units in Flowery Branch in 1999 was significantly below the state's median. This shows that rents were affordable in Flowery Branch in 1999.

Table 2.16
Gross Rent, Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000
City and State

Gross Rent ($)	Flowery Branch		Georgia %
	Units	%	
Less than $250	11	3.5	9.3
$250 to $499	96	30.6	25.5
$500 to $749	167	53.2	33.2
$750 to $999	37	11.8	22.1
$1000 or more	3	0.9	9.9
Total Units With Cash Rent	314	100%	100%
Median Gross Rent ($)	$587		$613

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H62 and H63).

Cost Burden of Renter Households

Table 2.17 provides data on the cost burden of specified renter-occupied households in 1999.

Table 2.17
Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999
City of Flowery Branch
(Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units)

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999	Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	% of Units Computed
Less than 30 percent (not cost burdened)	202	66.0
30 to 49 percent (cost burdened)	66	21.6
50 percent or more (severely cost burdened)	38	12.4
Units not computed	34	--
Total Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	340	--
Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999	23.7	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H69 and H70).

Unlike owner-occupied households, cost burden and severe cost burden is much more of an issue for renter-occupied households in Flowery Branch in 1999. More than one-third of renter households were cost burdened or severely cost burdened in 1999. More than one in ten (12.4 percent) were severely cost burdened. Hence, even though rents were comparatively low in Flowery Branch, some renter households are still overburdened with the price they must pay, given their household incomes.

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

> *"Housing is affordable if a low- or moderate income family can afford to rent or buy a decent quality dwelling without spending more than 30 percent of its income on shelter….The increased availability of such housing would enable hard-working and dedicated people—including public servants such as police officers, firefighters, schoolteachers and nurses—to live in the communities they serve….Removing affordable housing barriers could reduce development costs by up to 35 percent; then, millions of hard-working American families would be able to buy or rent suitable housing that they otherwise could not afford"* (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2005).[2]

Usually, a housing needs assessment would begin with a forecast of households and then a prediction of the income levels and preferences of those future households. At the present time, good data for that type of analysis is lacking, and besides, the type of future housing anticipated in the City in the short-term will dictate the types of household moving into Flowery Branch. In other words, supply for new households will drive housing opportunities in the City. The market generally will not respond to the needs of existing lower-income households.

Gainesville-Hall County Assessment

A demand-side analysis of housing needs was conducted for Hall County as a part of the Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Planning process. The analysis did not include individual cities other than Gainesville, nor does it provide data for "other municipalities" as a whole. Although that data appear to be focused on the immediate Gainesville area, the numbers provide some insights that are relevant here. Consulting planners for Gainesville and Hall County found that approximately 86 percent of the demand by type of unit would be for detached, single-family dwellings and approximately 12 percent would be for multi-family dwellings. The remainder would be in other housing types such as duplexes. Of the 86 percent who demand a single-family dwelling, 11.5 percent would be rural, 43.25 percent would be suburban, and 33 percent would be urban (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element, p. 29). These numbers should not necessarily be adopted as rules-of-thumb or policy statements; they provide some insight into likely matches with anticipated housing demands, however.

Statistics from the Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan provide some insight on incomes in relation to housing affordability, as indicated in the passage below:

> *Affordability of housing plays a significant role in overcrowding conditions. With the market rate for a one-bedroom apartment in Hall County at $480 dollars a month, a person working for minimum wage of ($5.15 per hour) would have to work seventy-two hours per week to afford a one-bedroom apartment. The National Low Income Housing Coalition indicates that the hourly wage necessary to afford a one-bedroom apartment in 2003 in Gainesville or Hall County would be $9.23 per hour. Situations such as this cause overcrowding because it*

[2] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. February 2005. *"Why Not in Our Community?" Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing. An Update to the Report of the Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing*.

> *requires two minimum wage incomes to afford one bedroom.* (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element, p. 32).

Flowery Branch Assessment

One simple way to get a picture of the needs of existing households with regard to the cost of owner-occupied housing is to multiply median household income by 2.5 times (which is a figure often accepted by lenders as the maximum amount they are likely to provide a loan for). Using that rule of thumb, the median household income in Flowery Branch in 1999 was $35,478 (see Table 1.17 in the Population Element). An affordable home for purchase for the median household in Flowery Branch in 1999 would be $88,688. As noted in Table 2.14 of this chapter, the medians for owner-occupied units in Flowery Branch in 2000 were $71,600 for all owner-occupied units and $97,500 for specified owner occupied units. Therefore, approximately half of the specified owner-occupied housing stock was affordable to residents of Flowery Branch (see figures in Table 2.14). To the contrary, it is noted that the average sales price for homes in Hall County in 2002 was $165,324 (n = 2,698 units) (Georgia Department of Audits, Sales Ratio Division, accessed via PlanBuilder May 31, 2005), which is quickly increasing beyond the reach of many households, not just those in Flowery Branch.

Because of low incomes, some of Flowery Branch's residents will find it difficult to secure affordable housing, even if some of the housing stock in Flowery Branch is lower than average in value overall. In the year 1999, Flowery Branch had 236 (13.1 percent) of its 1,806 residents classified as poverty level (see Population Element). Poverty-stricken households will find it difficult at any price range to secure adequate housing they can afford.

As noted in Table 2.16, the median gross rent for renter-occupied households in Flowery Branch in 1999 was $587, and the median gross rent accounted for 23.7 percent of renter incomes, on average. The median non-family household incomes (which represents mostly renter households) in Flowery Branch in 1999 was $26,181, or $2,182 a month. Using the rule of thumb that the household should not pay more than 30 percent of its income on housing, Flowery Branch's renter households would not be able to afford, on average, rents of more than $655 a month. That figure is a good estimate of what an affordable rental unit was for non-family households in Flowery Branch in 1999. Though housing costs have gone up considerably, salaries and wages have not been keeping up with housing inflation. At the estimated affordable rental of $655, the need can only be met with relatively small apartment units and/or manufactured homes. All other types of housing are likely to be out of reach in terms of the ability of renter-occupied households to pay. This finding implies that Flowery Branch, in order to meet the needs of lower-income households, will need to provide some opportunities for additional manufactured home subdivisions or parks, as well as relatively low-end multi-family development opportunities.

In terms of housing mix, Flowery Branch's housing stock is comparatively diverse as of the year 2000, but is currently short on higher-end housing. That will change with new residential subdivisions planned inside the City limits, especially included "Sterling on the Lake."

The housing needs of retail workers, who are in the situation described in the above excerpt, need to be considered. National data on occupations and wages reveal that one of the biggest occupations in the U.S. is retail sales persons, half of whom made less than $8.98 an hour in May 2004. The second largest group of workers is cashiers, half of whom were paid less than $7.81 per hour nationally. Hourly wages for other heavily populated occupations ranged from

$7.40 to $14.01.[3] For more information on wages by industry, see the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 3 of this report).

Special Housing Needs

Information available from the Department of Community Affairs' "PlanBuilder" provides some statistics on special housing needs in Hall County. There were 95 reported AIDS cases in Hall County from 1981 to 2000. Approximately 7 percent of the county population, or 9,878 people in 2001, were adults with substance abuse treatment needs.

Little if any information is available for special housing needs in Flowery Branch. One area where the City appears to be deficient now, since it has none (though two are located just outside the City limits), is in terms of institutionalized housing (personal care homes, nursing homes, special care facilities, retirement communities, etc.). As of 2000, only 215 persons in Hall County resided in nursing homes, 190 of whom resided in Gainesville. There were also 145 persons residing in group homes in Hall County in 2000, 95 of whom resided in Gainesville (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element). Over time with an aging population, the need for nursing home beds and other institutionalized residential living facilities will increase.

Another area of special housing needs is for persons with disabilities. Census data provide numbers for persons with disabilities in 2000, but the data do not provide adequate information for projecting housing needs for people with disabilities. Yet another area of special housing needs is emergency and temporary housing for the homeless, battered women and children, and persons suffering from illness or substance dependency. Little information is available on those housing needs, either (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element). One social service organization that has helped respond to the needs for special housing in Hall County is the Salvation Army. That organization helps people in emergencies and provided local assistance to more than 3,600 people in 2002. The Salvation Army maintains a transitional shelter for families to stay for up to three months (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element).

Jobs-Housing Balance

Estimates of employment in Flowery Branch are not currently available. The economic development element provides data on the types of occupations that are most frequent for Flowery Branch's residents. Generally, Flowery Branch has a high proportion of "blue collar" workers. Housing, as this chapter has described, is generally more affordable to Flowery Branch's residents than other nearby jurisdictions and the county as a whole. Flowery Branch is a good location for manufacturing workers given the nearby manufacturing jobs at Wrigley's and other industrial establishments. The housing market in Flowery Branch is also beginning to respond to the need for affordable home for manufacturing-wage workers, with the approval of a new 456-unit apartment complex in the City and construction of two townhouse projects in the City in recent years.

Assuming that employment in the City can be estimated (and there are currently no good sources for such data), the desirable jobs-housing ratio is usually considered to be 1.5 jobs for

[3] *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. June 1, 2005. "Bush still has a job ahead of him." P. A-12 (editorial).

each housing unit.[4] Flowery Branch is current nowhere near such a ratio, it is believed. However, in terms of a relatively small City like Flowery Branch, calculating jobs-housing ratios for the City only would not be meaningful, given that there are major industrial employers just north of the City limits. The concept of jobs-housing balance is important, however, and the Community Agenda will take up that issue when more data on land use are available, which then will allow for better estimates of employment in the City.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section identifies and discusses a range of housing issues important in Flowery Branch's Comprehensive Planning process. Earlier parts of this chapter focus on factual data and conclusions. Later sections of this chapter identify alternatives for meeting affordable housing needs and address the policy questions that will be further consideration by community stakeholders and leaders in the development of a Community Agenda.

The Overall Housing Crisis

Average wages have not kept up with inflation, while housing prices have been soaring. According to national housing expert Peter Marcuse, "prices are escalating and unaffordability is rising, with people paying more and more of their incomes for housing." What is more, "in the United States, public housing (direct provision) has been stopped completely, and new programs reduce what already has been built."[5] What are the causes of this situation? One of them, according to Professor Marcuse, is the economic system which "results in a very uneven distribution of wealth, leaving many with inadequate incomes to pay for the necessities of life at their actual costs of production." The middle class jobs of the industrial economy are fading. Nowhere in the country can a family with one full-time minimum-wage worker (earning $5.15 per hour) afford the cost of a two-bedroom apartment at the 'fair-market' rent (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2001).[6]

Local Fair Share of Regional Housing Needs

There is no regional data base or established regional policy to determine what is a fair share of low income housing for each local government in the Georgia Mountains Region (i.e., 13 counties in Northeast Georgia). Based on the foregoing data analysis in this chapter, it appears that Flowery Branch has a disproportionate (greater than average) share of the county's lower-income, affordable housing. While it may have greater supplies of affordable housing than the rest of Hall County, that point should not lull City leaders into thinking that is has no further role to play in meeting the housing needs of low-income populations.

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[4] Weitz, Jerry. 2003. Jobs-Housing Balance. Planning Advisory Report No. 516. Chicago: American Planning Association.

[5] Marcuse, Peter. 2004. "Housing on the Defensive." *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 4.

[6] Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf, and Todd Swanstrom. 2001. *Place Matters: Metropolitics for the Twenty-first Century*. University Press of Kansas. Cited in Weitz, Jerry. 2003. "Income Disparities, Economic Segregation, and the Role of Planners," *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 3.

Local Regulations

It is important to recognize that housing costs can be influenced by local land use regulations, building rules, and other local policies.

- **Housing and Building Codes.** One of the primary objectives of a housing code is to ensure minimum standards for habitable dwellings and to prevent the deterioration of housing quality. A housing code requires certain facilities (sanitary, water supply, heating, cooking, etc.) to be in every dwelling unit. Such codes also usually establishes minimum dwelling space requirements (e.g., 150 square feet for the first occupant and 100 square feet for each additional occupant) and provisions for the upkeep of home exteriors (walls, doors, windows, etc.). Under such a code, the housing official can designate dwellings as dangerous or unfit for human occupancy, and, if necessary, condemn dangerous or unfit dwellings. Building codes specify minimum standards for construction materials and construction practices when building dwellings, which can also affect cost.

- **Zoning Ordinance.** The location of residential development is governed by use restrictions established by zoning districts. The definition of "family" in the zoning ordinance usually addresses the maximum number of unrelated persons living together in a single-family unit. The permitted uses sections of the zoning ordinance either allow or do not allow certain types of housing units. The minimum size of individual housing units is sometimes specified by minimum floor area requirements in the zoning code. Minimum lot sizes and maximum densities establish how many housing units can be built on a given piece of property. Density restrictions influence both the supply of housing as well as the cost per unit of land (White 1992).[7] Minimum lot widths require certain amounts of street frontage for detached dwellings on individual lots.

- **Subdivision Regulations.** Subdivision ordinances establish standards for streets, drainage, utilities, and other improvements within subdivisions. The layout of blocks and lots is also guided by standards in the subdivision ordinance. Subdivision standards affect the cost of land for development and, therefore, indirectly affect the total costs of housing built on individual lots subject to that ordinance. Approximately 25 percent of housing costs are attributable to land costs in most real estate markets (White 1992).

- **Development Impact Fees.** The City does not currently charge development impact fees for roads, recreation and parks, public safety and fire, and/or other eligible facilities. To the extent that developers and builders can pass on to consumers the extra costs of development impact fees, impact fees increase the costs of housing. There is not a consensus among economists that impact fee burdens are shifted forward to the consumer in the form of increased housing costs. Impact fees can create unintended disincentives for the production of affordable housing (White 1992). Georgia's development impact fee law allows local governments to exempt affordable housing from impact fees, provided that the money that would be collected as an impact fee be made up through some other funding source. Such exemptions must be tied to the City's goals and objectives for producing low- and moderate-income housing.

[7] White, S. Mark. 1992. *Affordable Housing: Proactive & Reactive Strategies*. Planning Advisory Service Report No. 441. Chicago: American Planning Association.

Deinstitutionalization

People with mental illnesses and other disabilities are often released from institutions with nowhere to go. Land use regulations and neighborhood resistance can pose barriers to the development of congregate living facilities and other arrangements to house such persons. Currently, there are no such institutions in Flowery Branch. As alluded to previously, however, during the twenty-year planning horizon (if not sooner) the City will probably experience proposals to develop nursing homes and other congregate care housing facilities.

Manufactured Housing

The City has had a long history of permitting mobile and manufactured homes. Exclusion of manufactured homes has been questioned before in Georgia but is considered acceptable. In a case decided March 10, 2003, by the Georgia Supreme Court (*King v City of Bainbridge*), the City prevailed against a challenge that its zoning regulations were unconstitutional. The *King* decision overruled the longstanding legal precedent established in *Cannon v Coweta County* (a 1990 Georgia Supreme Court decision) that posed more restrictive legal boundaries for local zoning ordinances. The City could prevent or apparently restrict altogether the placement of manufactured homes in the City. However, that is not a recommended policy by the consultant for several reasons, but most importantly, manufactured homes are often less expensive than traditional stick-built homes of comparable size.

The Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards went into effect June 15, 1976 (24 CFR 3280, Revised as of April 1, 2001). Manufactured homes have become safer and more durable since the enactment of the HUD Code in 1976, and their appearance has improved significantly (American Planning Association 2001). The HUD code preempts state and local building code approval by state and local governments, but it does not preempt local governments from adopting and enforcement placement and set-up restrictions (Weitz 2004). [8]

Local government officials sometimes adopt zoning regulations in response to concerns by the owners of stick-built homes who fear the installation of manufactured homes will lower their property values. There are also some widespread social biases against the less affluent households who reside in manufactured homes, due to their possible status as renters, transients, and minorities. Local officials are also sometimes concerned about the potential impacts of manufactured housing on public or social services in the community, or the fiscal impacts such developments create. Policy makers need to recognize that allowing manufactured housing is one of the few existing policies that contribute to affordable housing objectives. Exclusion of factory-built housing prevents lower-income groups from obtaining housing and thus, such exclusion conflicts with the American Planning Association's social equity policies (Weitz 2004).

There is also some concern for the existing character and quality of manufactured housing development in Flowery Branch. Where these places have deteriorated into substandard environments, attention might be given to upgrading or eliminating them using methods including, but not limited to, code enforcement, urban renewal, relocation assistance, utility extensions, and condemnation with appropriate compensation. One idea posed to improve manufactured home parks is for local nonprofit organizations and developers to partner to

[8] Weitz, Jerry. 2004. "Manufactured Housing: Trends and Issues in the 'Wheel Estate' Industry." *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 4.

create new subdivisions with better amenities and qualities that will make them more suitable places to live (Beamish et al. 2001).[9]

As noted in the foregoing analysis, there is a significant number of manufactured homes in the City. The useful life of many manufactured homes in the City has diminished. If older manufactured homes cannot be replaced with new manufactured homes on the same site, then the City may lose affordable (but perhaps substandard) housing units. It seems that a replacement policy for existing manufactured homes would have a small but measurable impact on meeting affordable housing needs. In addition, to meet affordable housing objectives, the City will need to carefully consider its land use policies and permissions for setting up new manufactured homes.

There are a number of "compatibility" standards available, such as provisions for roof pitch, size, skirting, and embellishment of the structure that can make manufactured homes more compatible with nearby stick-built homes. Technology is making manufactured homes better, and there are now two-story manufactured homes available.

Two-story Manufactured Home on Sales Lot in Dawson County, Georgia

Modular or Industrialized Housing

Manufactured homes differ from modular or industrialized housing. Manufactured homes, and modular and industrial homes, are all factory-built housing, but modular and industrialized housing are certified as meeting the state or local building code. For purposes of building code approval, modular housing is equivalent to stick-built housing, and some builders use factory-built modular units in constructing conventional homes (Weitz 2004).

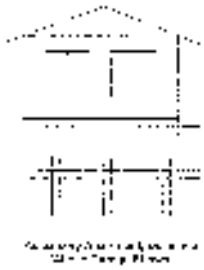
Housing Accessible to Persons with Disabilities

Many Americans are living in homes that are not designed for people with disabilities. The increasing numbers of people with disabilities brought on by the increase in the number of seniors will likely worsen this situation. New homes continue to be built with basic barriers to use by the disabled, and this is unfortunate given how easy it is to build basic access in the great majority of new homes. One solution to the quandaries described above is a form of accessible housing design known as "visitability." Visitability calls for all new homes (both single-family and multi-family) to be designed and built with basic level access. As the name suggests, a primary purpose of this design is to allow people with disabilities to independently

[9] Beamish, Julia O., Rosemary C. Goss, Jorge H. Atiles, and Youngjoo Kim. 2001. "Not a Trailer Anymore: Perceptions of Manufactured Housing." *Housing Policy Debate* 12, 2: 373-392.

access the homes of their non-disabled peers. The design also allows the non-disabled to continue residing in their homes should they develop a disability (Casselman 2004).[10]

Accessory Apartments



An accessory apartments is a second dwelling unit that is added to the structure of an existing site-built single family dwelling, or as a new freestanding accessory building (e.g., residential space above a detached garage), for use as a complete, independent living facility for a single household, with provision within the attached accessory apartment for cooking, eating, sanitation and sleeping. Such a dwelling, whether attached or detached, is considered an accessory use to the principal dwelling.

Accessory apartments are increasingly used in other areas for housing elderly persons who wish to remain close to their families. Seniors are often reluctant to move out of their own unit because the environment is familiar and they are emotionally attached to their homes (Howe, Chapman and Baggett 1994). For detached single-family units owned by single seniors, converting the unit to a principal dwelling with an accessory apartment would allow seniors to stay in their unit while another household occupies previously unused portions of the home. As the homeowner, the senior has the option of living in either the apartment or primary dwelling. The added income and security of having another person close by can be a deciding factor in enabling a homeowner to age in place. Accessory apartments for the elderly also would permit seniors to have some independence while maintaining close proximity to one or more family members (Howe, Chapman and Baggett 1994).[11] Zoning ordinances can provide for the establishment of attached accessory units in existing single-family subdivisions as another method of meeting needs for affordable housing.

ECHO Housing

One variation is to combine a manufacturing housing allowance with the detached accessory apartment approaches described above. “ECHO” stands for elder cottage housing opportunity. ECHO housing is also sometimes referred to as a “granny flat.” This type of alternative living arrangement for a household is a self-contained, usually removable housing unit that is placed on the same lot as an existing single-family dwelling. ECHO housing can be stick-built, but usually they are manufactured homes. When there is no longer a need for the unit, it can be removed from the property (Howe, Chapman and Baggett 1994).

Flexible Houses

A flexible house is a type of design that makes the single family home more affordable by facilitating its adaptation to more and different types of households. This concept is already used in cases where existing homes with surplus space are converted into separate units or accessory apartments. However, the flexible house is different from such situations because conversion potential is specifically designed into the home so that only minor conversions are

[10] Casselman, Joel. 2004. Visitability: A New Direction for Changing Demographics. *Practicing Planner*, 2, 4.

[11] Howe, Deborah A., Nancy J. Chapman, and Sharon A. Baggett. 1994. *Planning for an Aging Society*. Planning Advisory Service Report No. 451. Chicago: American Planning Association.

required to create or remove an accessory apartment. Provisions for flexible housing can provide an alternative for meeting the housing needs of a changing population (Howe 1990).[12]

Flexible houses are "built to adapt to the ever-changing needs of their occupants, including the onset of aging and the development of disabilities." In addition to visitable features, flexible housing calls for a bedroom on the entry-level floor (which can easily be converted into a home office or storage space) and closets on each floor stacked one above the other (which allows for easy conversion to an elevator shaft (Casselman 2004).

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Public Housing Program

The City of Flowery Branch does not have a public housing authority that owns and operates a public housing program.

Community Development Block Grants

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is a highly flexible financing source that can be used to rehabilitate housing, improve infrastructure, and finance other community-determined projects. The City can apply for community development block grants for various purposes. Evidence from practice indicates that CDBG funds are most effective when they are targeted in small areas and combined with other resources (Accordino 2005).[13]

HOME Funds

Communities that receive these funds can help nonprofit agencies with the financing of affordable housing units. The HOME Investment Partnership Program provides block grants for rehabilitation, new construction, and tenant-based rental assistance. The HOME affordable housing block grant provides enough flexibility that local governments can design their own programs for responding to local housing needs. HOME is now a mainstay of local affordable housing production and rehabilitation for hundreds of communities.

Housing Trust Funds

A housing trust fund is an account established by a State or local government, financed from an alternative, non-general revenue source, targeted to provide funds for the provision of affordable housing. Housing trust funds are relatively new, and there were only several dozen operating in the U.S. in the early 1990s. Housing trust funds are often funded from real estate transfer taxes, public and private grants, and development linkage fees (see discussion below) (Connerly 1993).[14]

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[12] Howe, Deborah A. 1990. The Flexible House: Designing for Changing Needs. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 56, 1: 69-77.

[13] Accordino, John. 2005. "Planning for Impact: Richmond Takes an Aggressive Approach to Targeting Neighborhood Revitalization Resources." *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 3, No. 1.

[14] Connerly, Charles E. 1993. A Survey and Assessment of Housing Trust Funds in the United States. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 59, 3: 306-319.

Community Development Corporations

Local governments can form community development corporations to gather resources from public and private sectors to build affordable housing.

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning or land use policies require or encourage developers to set aside a portion of residential projects for low- and moderate-income housing. There is evidence that inclusionary zoning programs have produced more housing in areas where they are used than have federal housing programs. Mandatory set-asides of a portion of the total units for low- and moderate-income households is susceptible to challenge as a regulatory taking or an unlawful exaction, but optional, incentive-based inclusionary zoning has been upheld by certain courts. Density bonuses might be offered in exchange for the inclusion of affordable housing units in proposed developments. For example, an increase in density could be permitted in exchange for making a certain percentage of the total approved units affordable (White 1992).

Development of even voluntary, inclusionary housing program will face a number of issues and challenges. These include but are not limited to the following:

Community opposition. Homeowners in areas adjacent to new developments containing more affordable units are likely to oppose the inclusion of moderate-income residents, due to the additional increment of density (i.e., a “bonus”) needed to make such developments work, as well as the external compatibility of less expensive homes with higher priced neighboring homes. Opposition might be mitigated some by: 1) keeping the amount of density bonus as small as practicable; 2) allowing developers to add exterior amenities to homes that will make them more compatible, while implementing cost-saving features on the interior of homes; 3) focusing on first-time homebuyers as the “target” population in the case of new subdivisions (as opposed to a rental assistance program); and 4) keeping the number of more affordable homes in very small clusters (i.e., approximately five units) to avoid concerns over the creation of mini-ghettos.

Avoiding market price increases. Affordable units are likely to cycle up to higher market rates. Other inclusionary housing programs establish a 10 to 15 year period during which below-market units are restricted under most instances from converting to market rate units. If constructed with fewer interior amenities and more cost-effective building features, the upward market increase might be avoided. That is, a less valuable home should in theory not appreciate or inflate with regard to market price, at least perhaps not out of the below-market range of price.

Developer reactions. As a voluntary program, developers must be enticed to participate. There may be an inclination for developers to buy their way out of conforming with an inclusionary housing policy. That is, some might offer financing for a housing trust fund to construct below-market units elsewhere. While financial set-asides in exchange for relief from an inclusionary housing strategy may benefit below-market rate homeowner needs, the City in adopting an inclusionary housing strategy would be reinforcing the notion that every community or neighborhood has a role in meeting affordable housing needs on some small, incremental scale.

Housing Linkage Policies

Housing linkage policies require that developers of new office, commercial, retail, and/or institutional developments that create a need for affordable housing must construct or rehabilitate affordable housing units or pay a fee into a housing trust fund. The rationale for a linkage program is similar to the justification for development impact fees; additional low-income housing is necessitated by an influx of workers associated with new nonresidential development (White 1992). Local governments cannot require fees that will be used to fund affordable housing in Georgia, but developers might voluntarily agree to provide more low- and moderate-income housing if confronted with the effects large nonresidential developments have on the low- and moderate-income housing market.

Mixed-Income Housing

Most housing developments are currently built with a single type of "product" for a specific target market. This separates people not only by income and race, but also by age. Mixed-income housing refers to the provision of housing within the same development or immediate neighborhood for households with a broad range of incomes. Mixed-income housing refers to a host of housing strategies that provide a broader range of housing types and price ranges.

There are challenges to implementing mixed-income housing. Because there are few existing mixed-income housing developments, there is little market experience. Developers may thus face financial risks and lending challenges. Zoning ordinances can present certain barriers to the densities and innovative site arrangements needed to achieve mixed-income housing and, therefore, may need to be changed in order to implement this tool.

Existing Programs in Gainesville

Gainesville provides a Housing Rehabilitation Program, which provides low-interest loans to low-income households for housing maintenance and repair. Gainesville also has a Nonprofit Development Foundation which has reportedly built significant amounts of affordable housing in the $60,000-$90,000 per unit price range (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element, p. 30-32), and another corporation, Gainesville-Hall County Neighborhood Revitalization, Inc., has been formed (p. 36) Frail elderly are served in the Gainesville area by "The Guest House," an agency providing daily health services through paid staff members and volunteers. The Gainesville Action Ministry and the Salvation Army struggle with issues of homelessness (p. 33) in the Gainesville area. Hall County does not provide such programs. Flowery Branch could look to programs in Gainesville to determine how (or whether) they might be appropriately applied in the City.

CHAPTER 3
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes an examination of Flowery Branch's economic base, labor force, and general economic trends. Considerable attention is given to the economic base and labor force characteristics of the City of Flowery Branch, but also Hall County and the State as a whole. The intent of this chapter is to integrate economic development into the community's Comprehensive Planning process. Upon identification of economic needs, the land necessary to support economic development can be determined, and the community facilities and services needed to support economic development can be provided.

Based on the information gathered in the inventory, an assessment is made to determine which economic sectors are growing and declining locally and which sectors should be encouraged to develop in order to complement or diversify the existing economic base of the City. The assessment includes a determination of whether jobs available in the City are appropriate for the residents in terms of skill and education levels required, commuting patterns, and wages paid, and, if not, what options are available to improve the existing economic situation (i.e., programs of business development, attraction and diversification, or job training). In addition, this analysis determines what existing local economic development programs and tools or community attributes are available and needed to foster economic development.

The results of the assessment lead to the development of needs and goals and an associated implementation strategy that help set forth a plan (in the Community Agenda) for economic development in terms of how much growth is desired, what can be done to support retention and expansion of existing businesses, what types of new businesses and industries will be encouraged to locate in the community, what incentives will be offered to encourage economic development, whether educational and/or job training programs will be initiated or expanded, and what infrastructure improvements will be made to support economic development goals during the planning period. Needs, goals, and implementation strategies are presented in the Community Agenda.

LABOR FORCE

Labor Force Participation in 1990

In 1990 the City of Flowery Branch had a total labor force of 713 persons, with 72.8 percent of the population ages 16 years and older in the labor force. Male participation (80.3 percent) in the labor force was higher than that of females (66.2 percent). Table 3.1 presents information on labor force participation by sex in 1990.

Table 3.1
Labor Force Participation by Sex, 1990
Persons 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent of Males 16+ Years	Female	Percent of Females 16+ Years	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total Persons 16+ Years
In Labor Force	367	80.3%	346	66.2%	713	72.8%
Not in Labor Force	90	19.7%	177	33.8%	267	27.2%
Total Population (16+ Years)	457	100%	523	100%	980	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Comparison of Labor Force Participation in 1990

Table 3.2 shows unemployment and labor force participation rates of Flowery Branch in comparison with nearby cities in 1990. Flowery Branch had a labor force participation rate that was roughly in the middle of the comparison cities. Cities relatively close to Atlanta tended to have higher labor force participation rates while cities in more rural areas tended to have lower rates.

Table 3.2
Comparison of Labor Force Participation, 1990
Flowery Branch and Nearby Cities

Municipality	Percent Labor Force Participation, 1990	Municipality	Percent Labor Force Participation, 1990
Alpharetta	77.4	**Flowery Branch**	**72.8**
Baldwin	62.0	Gainesville	65.2
Buford	67.5	Jefferson	63.0
Cumming	56.4	Norcross	80.4
Dawsonville	56.9	Oakwood	79.8
Duluth	82.7	Roswell	76.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

When comparing Flowery Branch to the nearby municipalities, it is apparent that the City fell roughly in the middle when it came to labor force participation in 1990. When comparing the City to the State and Nation, Flowery Branch's labor force participation rate was higher than both the State (67.9 percent) and the Nation (65.3 percent). Flowery Branch had a labor force participation rate significantly above that of Hall County's largest City, Gainesville, which had a labor force participation of 65.2 percent.

Table 3.3 compares the labor force participation by sex for Flowery Branch, the State of Georgia and the U.S in 1990. Labor force participation in Flowery Branch was higher than the State and Nation for males, females and overall in 1990.

Table 3.3
Comparison of Labor Force Participation by Sex, 1990
Persons 16 Years and Over
City, State, and Nation

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Labor Force	Percent	Not In Labor Force	Percent
City of Flowery Branch - Males	367	80.3%	90	19.7%
City of Flowery Branch - Females	346	66.2%	177	33.8%
City of Flowery Branch - Total	713	72.8%	267	27.2%
State of Georgia - Males	1,804,052	76.6%	549,607	23.4%
State of Georgia - Females	1,547,461	59.9%	1,037,261	40.1%
State of Georgia - Total	3,351,513	67.9%	1,586,868	32.1%
United States - Males	68,509,429	74.4%	23,516,484	25.6%
United States - Females	56,672,949	56.8%	43,130,409	43.2%
United States - Total	125,182,378	65.3%	66,646,893	34.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Employment Status in 1990

Table 3.4 provides data on employment status by sex in 1990. Unemployment for females (6.4 percent) was significantly higher than for males (2.5 percent). Unemployment was not a significant problem or issue in 1990, with a total unemployment rate of 4.3 percent, since it was lower than the State (5.7 percent) and Nation (6.3 percent) in 1990.

Table 3.4
Employment Status of the Labor Force by Sex, 1990
Persons 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent of Male Labor Force	Female	Percent of Female Labor Force	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total Labor Force
Employed (all civilian)	358	97.5%	324	93.6%	682	95.7%
Unemployed	9	2.5%	22	6.4%	31	4.3%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0.0%
Total Labor Force	367	100%	346	100%	713	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Comparison of Employment Status in 1990

Table 3.5 compares Flowery Branch's unemployment rate in 1990 with that of nearby cities. Flowery Branch's 1990 unemployment rate was in the middle range of the comparison cities. Flowery Branch's unemployment rate of 4.3 percent was slightly below that of Gainesville, which had an unemployment rate of 5.0 percent.

Table 3.5
Comparison of Unemployment Rates, 1990
Flowery Branch and Nearby Cities

Municipality	Percent Unemployment, 1990	Municipality	Percent Unemployment, 1990
Alpharetta	2.6	**Flowery Branch**	**4.3**
Baldwin	2.7	Gainesville	5.0
Buford	7.0	Jefferson	3.5
Cumming	7.4	Norcross	2.1
Dawsonville	4.5	Oakwood	4.0
Duluth	3.1	Roswell	2.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Table 3.6 provides comparisons among Flowery Branch, the State, and the nation for males, females, and the total labor force with regard to unemployment rates. In 1990 males in Flowery Branch had higher employment levels than the State and Nation, while females were on par with the State and Nation.

Table 3.6
Comparison of Employment Status by Sex, 1990
Persons 16 Years and Over in the Civilian Labor Force
City, State, and Nation

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Civilian Labor Force, Employed	Percent	In Civilian Labor Force, Unemployed	Percent
City of Flowery Branch - Males	358	97.5%	9	2.5%
City of Flowery Branch - Females	324	93.6%	22	6.4%
City of Flowery Branch - Total	682	95.7%	31	4.3%
State of Georgia - Males	1,648,895	94.8%	89,593	5.2%
State of Georgia - Females	1,441,381	93.6%	98,509	6.4%
State of Georgia - Total	3,351,513	94.3%	188,102	5.7%
United States - Males	62,704,579	93.6%	4,281,622	6.4%
United States - Females	52,976,623	93.8%	3,510,626	6.2%
United States - Total	115,681,202	93.7%	7,792,248	6.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Trends During the Last Decade

Table 3.7 provides annual average data for the labor force, employment, and unemployment in Hall County from 1995 to 2003. Data were not available for Flowery Branch for these years. The labor force in Hall County has grown steadily during the last several years for which annual data are available. The data in Table 3.3 show that Hall County's labor force has been able to find employment. Table 3.7 shows that unemployment has not been a major issue in Hall County. The number of persons unemployed, and the unemployment rate (which was already low as of 1995) dropped from 1995 to 2000. Unemployment increased in terms of both absolute numbers and percentage-wise in 2001 and 2002, corresponding to a national recession, then stabilized in 2003. The number of persons unemployed and the unemployment rate both dropped slightly in 2004.

Table 3.7
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1995 to 2003
Hall County

Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
1995	64,607	62,331	2,276	3.5
1996	65,865	63,739	2,126	3.2
1997	68,040	66,036	2,004	2.9
1998	70,453	68,415	2,038	2.9
1999	71,944	70,173	1,771	2.5
2000	76,782	75,101	1,681	2.2
2001	77,073	74,790	2,283	3.0
2002	77,907	75,113	2,794	3.6
2003	79,022	76,204	2,818	3.6
2004	80,081	77,380	2,701	3.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.data.bls.gov. Accessed 05/11/05.

Labor Force Participation in 2000

Table 3.8 presents the labor force participation by sex in the City of Flowery Branch in 2000. Comparing this to 1990 data (Table 3.1), one can see there have been certain changes in labor force participation by sex. There has not been a significant change in the level of men in the labor force, with 80.3 percent of men in the labor force in 1990 and 81.0 percent in 2000. There was a substantial drop in the percentage of women in the labor force, with 66.2 percent participating in 1990 and only 56.7 percent in 2000. Overall, labor force participation has dropped from 72.8 percent in 1990 to 69.4 percent in 2000. This decline may be attributed to the aging of Flowery Branch's workforce.

Table 3.8
Labor Force Participation by Sex, 2000
Persons 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent of Males 16+ Years	Female	Percent of Females 16+ Years	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total Persons 16+ Years
In Labor Force	595	81.0%	381	56.7%	976	69.4%
Not in Labor Force	140	19.0%	291	43.3%	431	30.6%
Total Population (16+ Years)	735	100%	672	100%	1,407	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

A majority (69.4 percent) of the City's residents ages 16 years and over were in the labor force in 2000. There were 81.0 percent of males ages 16 and over and 56.7 percent of females ages 16 and over were in the labor force in 2000. Males accounted for 61 percent of the labor force in 2000.

Comparison of Labor Force Participation in 2000

As of 2000, the labor force participation for Flowery Branch's population (69.4 percent) was higher than that of the State (66.1 percent) and the Nation (63.9 percent). Flowery Branch had a higher male labor force participation rate (81 percent) than the State (73.1 percent) and the Nation (70.7 percent). Females, on the other hand, had a lower labor force participation rate in Flowery Branch (56.7 percent) than the State (59.4 percent) and the Nation (57.5 percent). See Table 3.9, which compares labor force by sex for Flowery Branch, Georgia and the U.S. in 2000.

Table 3.9
Comparison of Labor Force Participation by Sex, 2000
Persons 16 Years and Over
City, State, and Nation

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Labor Force	Percent	Not In Labor Force	Percent
City of Flowery Branch- Males	595	81.0%	140	19.0%
City of Flowery Branch- Females	381	56.7%	291	43.3%
City of Flowery Branch - Total	976	69.4%	431	30.6%
State of Georgia - Males	2,217,015	73.1%	815,427	26.9%
State of Georgia - Females	1,912,651	59.4%	1,305,594	40.6%
State of Georgia - Total	4,129,666	66.1%	2,121,021	33.9%
United States - Males	74,273,203	70.7%	30,709,079	29.3%
United States - Females	64,547,732	57.5%	47,638,063	42.5%
United States - Total	138,820,935	63.9%	78,347,142	36.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

Employment Status in 2000

For the year 2000, of the 976 persons in the City's labor force, 942 were employed and 34 were unemployed. This represents an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent, lower than that of the State's (5.5 percent) and the Nation (5.8 percent). There were 20 unemployed men in 2000, leading to an unemployment rate of 2.4 percent. There were 14 unemployed women in the City in 2000, leading to an unemployment rate of 5.2 percent.

Table 3.10
Employment Status of the Labor Force by Sex, 2000
Persons 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent of Male Labor Force	Female	Percent of Female Labor Force	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total Labor Force
Employed (all Civilian)	581	97.6%	361	94.8%	942	96.5%
Unemployed	14	2.4%	20	5.2%	34	3.5%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total Labor Force	595	100%	381	100%	976	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

Comparison of Employment Status in 2000

Table 3.11 compares employment and unemployment rates in Flowery Branch with those of the State of Georgia and the Nation in 2000. The overall unemployment rate in Flowery Branch (3.5 percent) was lower than that of the State (5.5 percent) and the Nation (5.8 percent). The unemployment rate among males was below the nationwide male unemployment rate (5.7 percent) and the statewide male unemployment rate (5.0 percent). The unemployment rate for females was 5.2 percent, lower than that of the State (6.1 percent) and Nation (5.8 percent).

Table 3.11
Comparison of Employment Status by Sex, 2000
Persons 16 Years and Over in the Civilian Labor Force
City, State, and Nation

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Civilian Labor Force, Employed	Percent	In Civilian Labor Force, Unemployed	Percent
City of Flowery Branch - Males	581	97.6%	14	2.4%
City of Flowery Branch - Females	381	94.8%	20	5.2%
City of Flowery Branch - Total	942	96.5%	34	3.5%
State of Georgia - Males	2,051,523	95.0%	107,652	5.0%
State of Georgia - Females	1,788,233	93.9%	115,400	6.1%
State of Georgia - Total	3,839,756	94.5%	223,052	5.5%
United States - Males	69,091,443	94.3%	4,193,862	5.7%
United States - Females	60,630,069	94.2%	3,753,424	5.8%
United States - Total	129,721,512	94.2%	7,947,286	5.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

Table 3.12 presents historic unemployment rates for Hall County and surrounding jurisdictions (data were not available for Flowery Branch).

Unemployment rates in Hall County were highest in 2002 and 2003, corresponding to the nationwide recession underway during those years. The unemployment rate in 2004 was down slightly in Hall County from the previous two years, as it was in most other jurisdictions. With the economic recovery expected to continue, it is likely this rate will continue to edge downward, at least in the short term. In 2004 unemployment in Hall County was lower than the State and National levels, but roughly in the middle when compared to surrounding jurisdictions.

Table 3.12
Comparison of Unemployment Rates, 1995-2004
Hall County and Selected Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Alpharetta	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.6	2.3	2.2	2.1
Lawrenceville	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.9	3.9	5.8	5.6	5.2
Gainesville	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.9	2.6	3.5	4.2	4.2	4.0
Banks County	4.6	4.7	5.3	4.0	3.6	3.0	3.7	4.2	3.9	3.4
Barrow County	5.4	3.8	4.0	4.0	2.8	2.9	4.3	5.1	5.2	4.8
Dawson County	3.9	3.2	2.8	2.9	2.5	2.0	2.5	3.8	3.0	2.9
Forsyth County	3.0	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.5	2.2	3.7	3.5	2.9
Gwinnett County	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.9	4.3	4.1	3.8
Hall County	**3.5**	**3.2**	**2.9**	**2.9**	**2.5**	**2.2**	**3.0**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.4**
Habersham County	4.0	5.0	5.0	3.9	3.4	3.2	4.5	3.7	3.5	2.8
Jackson County	4.7	4.1	3.7	4.0	3.4	2.5	3.9	4.5	3.9	3.6
Lumpkin County	3.7	3.2	3.0	3.2	2.1	1.7	2.3	3.1	3.1	3.0
White County	3.1	3.4	4.1	3.8	4.3	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.3
State of Georgia	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.2	3.8	3.5	4.0	4.8	4.7	4.6
United States	5.6	5.4	4.9	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	5.5

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.data.bls.gov. Accessed 05/11/05.

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

Table 3.13 presents the employment by occupation of the civilian labor force ages 16 years and over in Flowery Branch in 1990. Georgia and the U.S. are also presented to offer a comparison to the occupation of workers residing in Flowery Branch. Table 3.13 presents jobs of Flowery Branch residents, ***not*** just the jobs located within the City limits of Flowery Branch. Jobs of Flowery Branch residents, both those working inside the City and outside, are included.

Table 3.13
Employment by Occupation, 1990
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Occupation	City of Flowery Branch	%	GA %	U.S. %
Managerial and professional specialty	72	10.6	24.6	26.4
Technical, sales and administrative support	195	28.6	31.9	31.7
Service	69	10.1	12.0	13.2
Farming, fishing, and forestry*	23	3.4	2.2	2.5
Precision production, craft, and repair	106	15.5	11.9	11.3
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	217	31.8	17.4	14.9
Total	682	100	100	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3, Table 70.

Flowery Branch in 1990 had a nearly even split between white-collar and blue-collar jobs. White-collar jobs are considered to be “managerial and professional specialty,” “ technical, sales and administrative support,” and “service” occupations. Under this definition, 49.3 percent of Flowery Branch residents had white-collar jobs in 1990. This represents a higher percentage of blue-collar jobs than found at the State and National levels. The major reason for this high level of blue-collar jobs is due to the number of persons employed under the operators, fabricators, and laborers classification. This is mainly due to the high level of manufacturing jobs found in Flowery Branch and the surrounding areas.

One of the implications of this finding relates to the education and training needs of Flowery Branch’s workforce. The high level of employment in the operators, fabricators and laborers occupation shows a need for technical trade schools and programs which offer the skills needed to have a workforce skilled for these jobs. The overall difference in employment by occupation when compared to the State shows the needs in Flowery Branch are not the same as the State as a whole. Examining the breakdown by occupation allows for the matching of new jobs with the occupations of City residents.

Table 3.14 presents similar data as Table 3.13 but does so by sex and for the year 2000. The percentages of blue-collar and white-collar jobs in 2000, 50.2 and 49.8 percent respectively, were very similar to the percentages found in 1990. Females were better represented among white-collar occupations, while males were better represented in the blue-collar occupations. The largest variation between the sexes was within the construction field, with 199 males employed in this occupation but only 2 females. It is important to note that direct comparisons between 1990 and 2000 cannot be made due to the changes in industry classifications (SIC to NAICS)[1] between the two Censuses.

[1] SIC stands for Standard Industrial Classification Code. NAICS stands for North American Industrial Classification System.

Table 3.14
Employment by Occupation by Sex
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch, 2000

Occupation	City of Flowery Branch				GA	U.S.
	Male	Female	Total	%	%	%
Managerial professional, and related	74	65	139	14.8%	32.7%	33.6%
Service	62	62	124	13.2%	13.4%	14.9%
Sales and office	85	121	206	21.9%	26.8%	26.7%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	3	3	6	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	199	2	201	21.3%	10.8%	9.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving	158	108	266	28.2%	15.7%	14.6%
Total	581	361	942	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3; Table P50.

In 2000, Flowery Branch mirrored the employment by occupation of the State and Nation in some regards but differed substantially in other ways. Service, sales and office, and farming, fishing and forestry are occupations with similar distributions in Flowery Branch and the State and National levels. Managerial professional and related occupations were represented in Flowery Branch far less in 2000 than at the State and National levels. Only 14.8 percent of Flowery Branch's residents were employed within that occupation in 2000, less than half that of the State (32.7 percent) and Nation (33.6 percent). Construction, extraction and maintenance and production, transportation and material moving were the two occupations represented far greater in Flowery Branch than at the State and National level. Flowery Branch had over twice the percentage of labor force participation of the State or Nation in the construction, extraction and maintenance occupations and nearly twice the State and Nation in production, transportation and material moving occupations.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Table 3.15 presents the industries within which Flowery Branch's civilian labor force worked in 1990. The State and Nation are also presented to offer comparisons. Percentages for Flowery Branch, the State and Nation are comparable for most industry classifications, but Flowery Branch differs substantially within a few categories.

Manufacturing accounts for 18.9 percent of employment in Georgia and 17.7 percent in the U.S., but it accounts for 38.3 percent of employment in Flowery Branch. This means Flowery Branch's working residents are highly reliant on manufacturing jobs. Services, on the other hand, were significantly underrepresented in terms of Flowery Branch's working residents. Services accounted for 29.5 percent of employment in Georgia and 32.8 percent in the U.S. but only 17.7 percent in Flowery Branch in 1990. Most other industries in Flowery Branch were represented comparably to Georgia and the U.S. in 1990.

Table 3.15
Employment by Industry, 1990
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Industry	City of Flowery Branch	%	GA %	U.S. %
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	19	2.8%	2.4%	2.7%
Mining	2	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%
Construction	77	11.3%	6.9%	6.2%
Manufacturing	261	38.3%	18.9%	17.7%
Transportation, communications, and other public utilities (TCU)	29	4.3%	8.5%	7.1%
Wholesale trade	32	4.7%	5.1%	4.4%
Retail trade	88	12.9%	16.5%	16.8%
Finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE)	32	4.7%	6.5%	6.9%
Services	121	17.7%	29.5%	32.8%
Public administration	21	3.1%	5.4%	4.8%
Total	682	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P077.

Table 3.16 presents data for employment by industry by sex according to the 2000 Census. Again, these data refer to residents of Flowery Branch, not employment within the City. Two categories showed significantly higher percentages in the City than in the State and Nation: construction and manufacturing. It is logical that employment in construction is highly represented in Flowery Branch due to the rapid population and employment growth found in Hall County and the Atlanta region. Manufacturing makes up a large employment base for Hall County as it does for Flowery Branch. Educational, health and social services are significantly underrepresented in Flowery Branch when compared to the State and Nation. All of the other industries are similarly represented across all three jurisdictions.

When comparing employment by industry by sex in Flowery Branch with the State and Nation, a substantial variation is apparent. The most notable variation across the sexes is within the construction industry, where 29.9 percent of the male workforce was employed in 2000 but only 0.3 percent of the female workforce. Females had a larger percentage of employees than men in the educational, health and social services industry, where 14.1 percent were employed compared to 2.9 percent of males.

Table 3.16
Employment by Industry by Sex
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch, 2000

Industry	City of Flowery Branch				GA	U.S.
	Male	Female	Total	%	%	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	10	0	10	1.1%	1.4%	1.9%
Construction	174	1	175	18.6%	7.9%	6.8%
Manufacturing	151	120	271	28.8%	14.8%	14.1%
Wholesale trade	22	20	42	4.5%	3.9%	3.6%
Retail trade	64	46	110	11.7%	12.0%	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	23	8	31	3.3%	6.0%	5.2%
Information	11	4	15	1.6%	3.5%	3.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	17	18	35	3.7%	6.5%	6.9%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	29	28	57	6.1%	9.4%	9.3%
Educational, health and social services	17	51	68	7.2%	17.6%	19.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	16	33	49	5.2%	7.1%	7.9%
Other services (except public administration)	15	19	34	3.6%	4.7%	4.9%
Public administration	32	13	45	4.8%	5.0%	4.8%
Total	581	361	942	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census. Summary File 3, Table P49.

Although still a significant proportion of the total workforce, manufacturing was less represented in 2000 than in 1990. In 1990 manufacturing accounted for 38.3 percent of employment for Flowery Branch's workforce but in 2000 it accounted for 28.8 percent. The classification of industries differs between 1990 and 2000 due to the use of SIC classifications in 1990 and NAICS in 2000. General trends can still be noted, such as the decrease in share of employment held by manufacturing and the substantial increase in the share of employment within the construction industry, which rose from 11.3 percent in 1990 to 18.6 percent in 2000. The decline in the percentage share of manufacturing employment in Flowery Branch is consistent with changes in the national economy, which continues to transform from a manufacturing-based to a service-based economy.

PLACE OF WORK OF FLOWERY BRANCH'S LABOR FORCE

Table 3.17 presents the locations of employment for Flowery Branch's labor force in 1990 and 2000. In both 1990 and 2000, the percentages of Flowery Branch residents working inside the

City limits were comparatively low, at 10.6 and 8.8 percent, respectively. In 1990 a majority of Flowery Branch's work force was employed in Hall County (61.2 percent), but in 2000, only 45.8 percent of Flowery Branch's workforce was employed in the county. This may mean that as more jobs have been added to the south of Flowery Branch in Gwinnett County, more of Flowery Branch's residents are finding work there.

The largest shift in place of employment came from those employed in the Atlanta MSA but not in the central City (Atlanta). In 1990, 31.9 percent of Flowery Branch's workforce was employed in the Atlanta MSA but not in Atlanta, compared to 47.5 percent in 2000. Another significant shift came from workers who worked outside the Atlanta MSA but inside Georgia. This category accounted for over 61 percent of Flowery Branch workers in 1990 but only 48.1 percent in 2000. This trend shows that an increasing number of Flowery Branch workers are commuting into the northern part of the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for employment.

Table 3.17
Employment of Labor Force by Place of Work,
1990 and 2000, Workers 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Place of Work	1990		2000	
	Number of Residents Working	% of Total Employed	Number of Residents Working	% of Total Employed
Worked in place of residence (Flowery Branch)	70	10.6%	80	8.8%
Worked in Hall County, not in Flowery Branch	333	50.6%	337	40.0%
Worked in central City of MSA (Atlanta)	45	6.8%	37	4.1%
Worked in Atlanta MSA but not in central City	210	31.9%	433	47.5%
Worked outside Atlanta MSA but in Georgia	403	61.2%	438	48.1%
Worked Outside Georgia	0	0.0%	3	0.3%
Total	658	100%	911	100%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990, and 2000 Census. Summary File 3, Tables P26, P27, and P28.

Each employment location classification increased in absolute numbers between 1990 and 2000, except for those who worked in the central City of the MSA (Atlanta). That classification dropped from 45 people in 1990 to 37 people in 2000. That decrease is more significant when it is considered that during the time period the overall labor force of Flowery Branch increased by 253 people, or 38.4 percent.

Table 3.18 presents the commuting patterns, by travel time, of the Flowery Branch labor force in 1990 and 2000. Overall, the data show that Flowery Branch residents are commuting longer to work in 2000 than they did in 1990. Those commuting 60 to 89 minutes increased from 6.5 percent of the labor force in 1990 to 9.9 percent of the labor force in 2000. Those commuting 90 or more minutes increased from 1.4 percent in 1990 to 3.5 percent in 2000. The categories representing less than 5 minutes, 5 to 9 minutes, 10 to 14 minutes, 15 to 19 minutes, and 20 to

24 minutes all had a lower percentage of the labor force in 2000 than in 1990. The overall increase in commuting times is likely due, in part, to the higher share of Flowery Branch residents who commute into the Atlanta MSA for employment, and increasing traffic congestion there.

Table 3.18
Employment of Labor Force by Travel Time,
1990 and 2000, Workers 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Travel Time	1990		2000	
	Number of Residents	% of Total	Number of Residents	% of Total
Did not work at home:	652	99.1%	892	97.9%
Less than 5 minutes	29	4.4%	25	2.7%
5 to 9 minutes	85	12.9%	58	6.4%
10 to 14 minutes	94	14.3%	86	9.4%
15 to 19 minutes	114	17.3%	153	16.8%
20 to 24 minutes	90	13.7%	121	13.3%
25 to 29 minutes	26	4.0%	57	6.3%
30 to 34 minutes	65	9.9%	159	17.5%
35 to 39 minutes	11	1.7%	29	3.2%
40 to 44 minutes	21	3.2%	32	3.5%
45 to 59 minutes	65	9.9%	50	5.5%
60 to 89 minutes	43	6.5%	90	9.9%
90 or more minutes	9	1.4%	32	3.5%
Worked at home:	6	0.9%	19	2.1%
Total:	658	100%	911	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 and 2000 Census; Table P050 and P31.

PLACE OF WORK OF HALL COUNTY'S LABOR FORCE

Table 3.19 shows the county of employment for Hall County's working residents in 2000. Of the 65,402 residents of Hall County employed, 46,680 worked inside Hall County, or 71.4 percent. Neighboring Gwinnett County represented the second largest share with 11.0 percent. Gwinnett County had a high proportion of Hall County's residents working there because of its close proximity to the county and its large employment base. It is interesting to note that 48.8 percent of Flowery Branch residents worked in Hall County in 2000 compared to 71.4 percent of Hall County residents who worked in Hall County. It is likely that Flowery Branch's location in southern Hall County accounts for a higher proportion of workers commuting to the Atlanta MSA for employment.

Table 3.19
Employment of Hall County Residents
By County of Work, 2000

County of Work	Number of Hall County Residents Working	% of Total Hall County Residents Working
Hall County	46,680	71.4%
Gwinnett County	7,189	11.0%
Fulton County	2,244	3.4%
DeKalb County	1,716	2.6%
Forsyth County	1,577	2.4%
Jackson County	1,205	1.8%
Clarke County	687	1.1%
Lumpkin County	645	1.0%
Other Counties	3,459	5.3%
Total Working	65,402	100%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. 2001. Hall County, Georgia, Area Labor Profile.

EMPLOYMENT IN HALL COUNTY BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE

Table 3.20 presents the location of residency for individuals employed within Hall County in 2000. The majority of workers employed in Hall County also reside in Hall County, 71.1 percent. Gwinnett County accounts for the second largest share of Hall County's workforce with 4.6 percent. The other counties surrounding Hall County each account for less than 4 percent of the total Hall County workforce.

Table 3.20
Employment in Hall County
By County of Residence, 2000

County of Residence	Persons Working in Hall County, 2000	%
Hall County	46,680	71.1%
Gwinnett County	3,015	4.6%
Jackson County	2,367	3.6%
White County	2,124	3.2%
Habersham County	1,979	3.0%
Lumpkin County	1,661	2.5%
Banks County	1,492	2.3%
Forsyth County	1,263	1.9%
Other Counties	5,071	7.7%
Total Working	65,652	100.0%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. 2001. Hall County, Georgia, Area Labor Profile.

If data were available for Flowery Branch, it is likely that a higher percentage of employees would be shown as commuting to Gwinnett County than for Hall County as a whole. Flowery Branch would likely be less represented by the rural counties north of Hall County than for the

county as a whole, due to Flowery Branch's location in the southern portion of Hall County, near the Gwinnett County line.

ECONOMIC BASE

Hall County is known as the "Poultry Capital of the World." Agriculture and agribusiness have long been a vital part of the economic base of the county. Manufacturing has also been a leading source of employment and payroll throughout the county. In recent years, as rapid growth has ensued in the region, the economic base of both Flowery Branch and Hall County have diversified significantly. Currently Hall County is home to 47 Fortune 500 companies, including 40 foreign companies representing 14 nations.

This section explores the economic base of Hall County and the "balance of Hall County", which excludes Gainesville. Data from the economic censuses were unavailable for Flowery Branch. Limited data is available for county business patterns by zip codes. Trends within the economic base are noted by comparing employment and earnings across different years. Each industry represented will be examined and noted for its significance or lack of significance to Hall County and the Flowery Branch area.

Since economic censuses do not report data for small cities, this analysis reports data for the "balance of Hall County" which excludes Gainesville. It is important to note that figures for the "balance of Hall County" include all parts of Hall County outside the Gainesville City limits. Therefore, these figures include north Hall County (Clermont, Murrayville, Lula, etc.) in addition to incorporated and unincorporated south Hall County. Where available, data for the Flowery Branch zip code are provided.

Table 3.21 shows the number of establishments and the sales/receipts of those establishments in 1997. Data representing Hall County and the "balance of Hall County" (excluding Gainesville) are shown. By looking at the percentages under the "balance of Hall County" it is shown that the majority of receipts for services come from Gainesville. Sales receipts from the wholesale sector were the best represented outside of Gainesville, accounting for 41.8 percent of the total. In terms of the number of establishments, Gainesville had the majority of retail and services establishments but just under half of the wholesale establishments.

Table 3.21
Number of Establishments and Sales/Receipts, 1997
Balance of Hall County and Hall County

Industry	Balance of Hall County (excludes Gainesville)				Hall County	
	Number of Establish-ments	% of County Total (by Industry)	Sales ($ 1,000s) Receipts for Services)	% of County Total (by industry)	Number of Establish-ments	Sales Receipts for Services (1,000s)
Retail	213	38.9%	467,587	37.7%	548	1,240,762
Wholesale	122	51.3%	742,602	41.8%	238	1,777,775
Services*	234	34.2%	124,379	26.6%	685	468,017

* Includes educational services, health care and social assistance, arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodation and food service, and other services (except public administration)

Source: US Census Bureau. 1997 Economic Census.

Table 3.22 shows the number of establishments and their annual payroll for Hall County and the Balance of Hall County (excluding Gainesville) in 1997. The economic base of the "balance of Hall County" encompassed 41.2 percent of the establishments in the County and 46.6 percent of the payroll. Manufacturing and arts, entertainment, and recreation were the best represented in the "balance of Hall County," with over 50 percent of the establishments countywide and nearly 60 percent of the payroll for manufacturing and 73 percent of the payroll for arts, entertainment, and recreation. Health care and social assistance establishments were the least represented sectors in the "balance of Hall County," with 21.6 percent of the establishments and only 6.8 percent of the total payroll.

Within the Flowery Branch zip code (30542), there were 352 establishments employing 4,340 persons in 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns). Although this source provides a total for employment, the division of employment among industry sectors (retail, service, etc.) is not provided in that source. The number of establishments is provided, however.

Table 3.22
Number of Establishments and Annual Payroll, 1997
Balance of Hall County and Hall County

Industry (NAICS Code)	Balance of Hall County (Excludes Gainesville, GA.)				Hall County	
	Number of Establish -ments	% of County Total	Annual Payroll ($1,000)	% of County Total	Number of Establish -ments	Annual Payroll ($1,000)
Manufacturing (31-33)	131	58.0%	264,930	59.8%	226	443,089
Wholesale trade (42)	122	51.3%	56,593	8.3%	238	100,572
Retail trade (44-45)	213	38.9%	39,971	34.9%	548	114,566
Real estate & rental & leasing (53)	50	47.6%	3,219	35.6%	105	9,045
Professional, scientific, & technical services (54)	72	33.2%	5,643	17.6%	217	31,997
Administrative & support & waste management & remediation services (56)	50	50.0%	11,398	35.8%	100	31,830
Educational services (61)	9	50.0%	248	25.5%	18	974
Health care & social assistance (62)	53	21.6%	6,518	6.8%	245	95,771
Arts, entertainment, & recreation (71)	19	52.8%	5,239	73.0%	36	7,178
Accommodations & foodservices (72)	71	35.1%	17,920	43.1%	202	41,607
Other services (except public administration) (81)	82	44.6%	4,295	28.0%	184	15,316
TOTAL	872	41.2%	415,974	46.6%	2,119	891,945

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1997 Economic Census.

Within the Flowery Branch zip code (30542) in 2002, there were a total of 352 establishments, of which 71 were construction firms, 40 were retail trade establishments, 32 were administrative support, waste management and remediation services, 30 were manufacturing firms, 30 were wholesale trade establishments, 24 were professional, scientific and technical services, and the remainder were various other types of establishments (U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns).

Table 3.23 presents information on employment by industry sector in 1997. Data for Flowery Branch are unavailable so the “balance of Hall County” and Hall County are shown. The industry sectors most represented in the “balance of Hall County” are arts, entertainment and recreation, with 66.3 percent of the countywide industry total, wholesale trade with 55.6 percent, and manufacturing with 55.4 percent. The industry sectors least represented in the “balance of Hall County” are health care and social assistance with 10.4 percent of the countywide industry total, professional, scientific and technical services with 19.7 percent, and other services with 27.4 percent of the countywide total.

Table 3.23
Employment by Industry, 1997
Balance of Hall County and Hall County

Industry (NAICS Code)	Balance of Hall County (excludes Gainesville)			Hall County
	Employment	% of Industry	% of County Total	Employment
Manufacturing (31-33)	9,154	55.4%	24.1%	16,519
Wholesale trade (42)	1,895	55.6%	5.0%	3,407
Retail trade (44-45)	2,107	33.1%	5.6%	6,357
Real estate & rental & leasing (53)	177	44.4%	0.5%	398
Professional, scientific, & technical services (54)	191	19.7%	0.5%	972
Administrative & support & waste management & remediation services (56)	664	32.2%	1.8%	2,065
Educational services (61)	30	50.0%	0.1%	60
Health care & social assistance (62)	274	10.4%	0.7%	2,626
Arts, entertainment, & recreation (71)	305	66.3%	0.8%	460
Accommodations & foodservices (72)	1,743	41.6%	4.6%	4,192
Other services (except public administration) (81)	236	27.4%	0.6%	860
Total Shown	16,776	--	44.2%	37,916

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1997 Economic Census.

Table 3.24 provides annual employment data for Hall County as a whole from 1998 to 2002. Employment peaked in 2000 and dropped slightly in 2001 and 2002. This correlates with the economic recession that occurred during this time frame. Employment has recovered since then. The largest drop in employment, in terms of employment numbers, between 2001 and 2002 was experienced in the manufacturing sector, which decreased from 19,007 in 2001 to 18,037 employees in 2002.

Table 3.24
Employment by Industry, 1998-2002
Hall County
(Establishments with Payroll Only)

NAICS Code	Industry	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
11	Forestry, fishing, hunting, and agricultural support	29	40	35	40	42
21	Mining	78	101	83	81	75
22	Utilities	156	154	160	234	240
23	Construction	2,439	2,704	2,898	2,849	2,674
31-33	Manufacturing	17,063	18,294	20,064	19,007	18,037
42	Wholesale Trade	3,581	3,973	3,424	3,469	4,076
44-45	Retail Trade	6,737	6,731	7,494	7,021	6,719
48	Transportation and warehousing	1,162	1,165	1,157	1,042	984
51	Information	636	570	739	741	724
52	Finance and insurance	1,803	2,026	2,073	2,303	2,533
53	Real estate & rental & leasing	406	428	410	487	491
54	Professional, scientific, & technical services	1,201	1,345	1,228	1,288	1,322
55	Management of companies and enterprises	172	351	304	315	436
56	Administrative support & waste management & remediation services	2,287	2,743	3,500	3,067	2,923
61	Educational services	910	969	1,117	1,261	1,252
62	Health care and social services	5,802	5,848	5,636	5,893	6,667
71	Arts, entertainment, & recreation	596	589	475	528	595
72	Accommodation & food services	4,203	4,371	4,574	4,558	4,388
81	Other services (except public administration)	2,020	2,134	2,239	2,304	2,280
95	Auxiliaries	167	179	214	210	205
99	Unclassified	13	31	31	50	12
	Subtotal, County Business Patterns	51,461	54,746	57,855	56,748	56,685

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns (CBP), 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

Table 3.25 presents the annual payroll by industry sector from 1998 to 2002. The amounts represent the aggregate of all employees' annual pay. As expected, the manufacturing sector has the highest annual payroll because it is the largest source of employment in Hall County. Despite the decrease in employment after 2000, payroll has continued to increase. This represents the fact that although employment numbers were down, the amount of pay increased enough each year to offset the job losses and still lead to an increasing annual aggregate payroll.

Table 3.25
Annual Payroll by Industry, 1998-2002
Hall County
($1000s)

NAICS	Industry	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
11	Forestry, fishing, hunting, and agricultural support	713	713	566	638	560
21	Mining	3,177	6,618	3,096	3,132	2,946
22	Utilities	6,682	6,886	8,055	10,375	9,622
23	Construction	73,940	84,359	88,713	85,312	86,119
31-33	Manufacturing	520,211	543,070	591,505	578,164	545,871
42	Wholesale Trade	112,937	119,849	125,157	128,648	145,035
44-45	Retail Trade	128,109	144,092	169,069	160,614	154,470
48	Transportation and warehousing	34,188	34,710	35,572	32,997	32,088
51	Information	21,928	21,630	26,974	28,722	26,794
52	Finance and insurance	64,616	72,809	72,444	81,574	98,937
53	Real estate & rental & leasing	10,987	11,399	12,131	14,528	15,695
54	Professional, scientific, & technical services	36,425	41,186	43,904	46,789	55,296
55	Management of companies and enterprises	10,086	14,291	16,907	16,859	21,204
56	Administrative support & waste management & remediation services	39,060	50,844	64,819	61,304	62,026
61	Educational services	16,868	19,707	23,248	27,184	28,331
62	Health care and social services	177,211	193,729	204,884	218,911	243,154
71	Arts, entertainment, & recreation	9,118	8,709	9,699	10,763	102,510
72	Accommodation & food services	50,139	56,699	59,728	59,309	59,281
81	Other services (except public administration)	30,996	37,021	40,208	43,433	44,637
95	Auxiliaries	4,415	4,912	7,508	7,251	8,115
99	Unclassified	353	1,009	980	849	554
	Total	1,352,177	1,474,242	1,605,167	1,617,356	1,743,245

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns (CBP), 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Table 3.26 examines employment in Hall County and Georgia in 1997 and 2002.

Table 3.26
Comparison of Average Employment by Major Industries
1997 and 2002
Hall County and State of Georgia

	1997	%	2002	%
Total				
Hall County	N	--	56,685	100%
Georgia	2,989,849	100%	3,381,244	100%
Construction				
Hall County	N	--	2,674	4.7%
Georgia	163,981	5.5%	186,665	5.5%
Manufacturing				
Hall County	16,519	--	18,037	31.8%
Georgia	533,830	17.9%	449,849	13.3%
Transportation and Warehousing				
Hall County	N	--	984	1.7%
Georgia	85,109	2.8%	119,443	3.5%
Wholesale Trade				
Hall County	3,407	--	4,076	7.2%
Georgia	191,087	6.4%	195,861	5.8%
Retail Trade				
Hall County	6,357	--	6,719	11.9%
Georgia	420,676	14.1%	459,597	13.6%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate and rental and leasing				
Hall County	N	--	3,024	5.3%
Georgia	201,424	6.7%	239,327	7.1%
Services				
Hall County	8,198	--	15,192	26.8%
Georgia	732,247	24.5%	925,916	27.4%
Utilities				
Hall County	N	--	240	0.4%
Georgia	21,420	0.7%	23,825	0.7%

N= Not published for counties

Source: U.S. Economic Census 1997/County Business Patterns 2002

Total Employment

Both Hall County and the State of Georgia had higher total employment in 2002 than in 1997. Data representing 1997 are from the 1997 Economic Census. Data for Georgia from the 2002 Economic Census are not yet available, so County Business Patterns, from the US Census, are shown. The most notable shift in employment in Hall County has been the transformation from a manufacturing-based economy as recently as 1997 to an economy with nearly even employment levels in manufacturing and services as of 2002. As noted previously, total

employment within the Flowery Branch zip code in 2002 was 4,340 persons (U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns).

Manufacturing

Manufacturing is the largest source of employment in Hall County, accounting for 31.8 percent of the employment base according to 2002 data. The "balance of Hall County" had a much higher dependency on manufacturing than the County as a whole in 1997, with 54.6 percent of all jobs classified as manufacturing, compared to 43.6 percent for the County as a whole (Table 3.23). From 1997 to 2002, there was an increase in employment by 9.2 percent in the manufacturing sector. In comparison, the service sector expanded by 85.3 percent in that same time period. Within the Flowery Branch zip code (30542), there were 30 manufacturing establishments in 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns).

Having too great of a dependency on one industry is undesirable, due to the risks associated with having that industry decline. The downturn in the industry would have major ramifications on a community if it supplies a substantial portion of the jobs. Hall County is in a better position today than in earlier years by having a more diversified economic base.

Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

This industry sector accounted for 5.3 percent of the employment base in Hall County in 2002. At the state level this industry accounted for 7.1 percent of employment. Within the Flowery Branch zip code (30542), there were 12 finance and insurance establishments in 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns).

As is typical with the other white-collar industry sectors, the finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing sector tends to be a higher paying industry sector than many others. Increasing the presence of that sector, and other white-collar industry sectors, would help to increase the financial conditions of residents in Hall County. Expanding that industry sector would also serve to further expand the economic base of the community.

Construction

In 2002, the construction industry accounted for 4.7 percent of Hall County's economic base. This is slightly lower than the share of the economic base construction makes up statewide (5.5 percent). Due to the rapid growth occurring in Hall County, this level of construction employment seems to be rather low, possibly indicating that construction firms outside of Hall County are filling the needs for construction labor in Hall County. Within the Flowery Branch zip code (30542), there were 71 construction establishments in 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns). Construction is an industry that has appears to have significant expansion potential in Hall County.

Tourism

Tourism is an important part of the economic base of Hall County. Lake Lanier, a 38,000-acre lake, attracts over 10 million visitors annually, and it forms most of the western border of Hall County. The lake's water sports facilities gained significant attention during the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Rowing and spring canoe/kayaking events were hosted at Lake Lanier. Road Atlanta, a part of the Panoz Motor Sports Group, is another significant tourism venue for the

County, hosting about 12 events per year. In 2001 Hall County received $180 million in tourism income.

Retail Trade

This industry sector accounts for the third largest share of employment in Hall County, with 11.9 percent of the employment base in 2002. Hall County's level of employment in retail trade is slightly below that of Georgia, with13.6 percent. It is beneficial that this sector does not account for too large of a share of employment, because it tends to be one of the lowest paying industry sectors.

Table 3.27 examines the retail trade sector in Hall County in 1997 and 2002 (most recent years available). Each category within the retail trade industry sector is listed along with the number of establishments and number of employees. The retail trade sector was the second largest industry sector in Hall County in terms of employment, with 6,719 employees in 2002. Within the retail trade sector, general merchandise and motor vehicle and parts were the largest sub-sectors, with 1,370 and 1,149 employees, respectively. Employment in the food and beverage places sub-sector increased significantly from 850 employees in 1997 to 1,149 in 2002. Within the Flowery Branch zip code (30542), there were 40 retail trade establishments in 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns).

Table 3.27
Retail Trade Establishments and Employment, 1997 and 2002
Hall County

Type	1997		2002	
	Establish-ments	Employment	Establish-ments	Employment
Motor Vehicle and parts	77	1,141	97	1,303
Furniture and home furnishings stores	30	170	21	141
Electronics and appliance	22	78	18	82
Building materials and garden supply stores	52	756	56	808
Food and beverage places	44	851	57	1,149
Health and personal care	46	359	48	533
Gasoline stations	94	484	87	410
Clothing/clothing accessories	66	419	48	299
Sporting goods, hobby, book & music	28	140	30	176
General Merchandise	13	1,581	20	1,370
Miscellaneous retail stores	56	247	55	307
Nonstore retails	20	131	25	141
TOTAL, Retail Trade	548	6,357	562	6,719

Source: U.S. Economic Census, 1997 and 2002 County Business Patterns.

Table 3.28 presents the retail sales, in thousands of dollars, by store group for Hall County. The largest aggregate of sales came from the motor vehicle and parts dealers sub-sector with

$607,563,000 in sales in 2003. The aggregate of retail sales across all store groups was over $1.77 billion in 2003.

Table 3.28
Retail Sales by Store Group, 2003
Hall County

Store Group	Retail Sales ($1,000 Dollars)
Food and beverage sales	$ 241,872
Food service and drinking places	$139,539
General and merchandise stores	$282,560
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	$31,550
Furniture/home furnishings/appliance stores	$37,550
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	$607,563
Gasoline service stations	$130,241
Building material and garden equipment and supplies	$166,164
Health and personal care stores	$67,710
Total retail sales	$1,771,643

Source: Georgia County Guide; Georgia Statistics System: http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu/

Services

Services were the second largest portion of Hall County's employment base in 2002, behind manufacturing. In 2002, 26.8 percent of jobs in Hall County were classified under the service sector, up significantly from 1997. Hall County is showing signs of shifting from a manufacturing-based to service-based economy.

Table 3.29 presents the number of establishments and employment within the service sector. The service sector includes educational services, health care and social assistance, arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodations and food services and other services. Accommodations and food services have been the largest source of employment in the service sector, and educational services the smallest.

Table 3.29
Service Establishments and Employment, 1997 and 2002
Hall County

Type	1997		2002	
	Establish-ments	Employment	Establish-ments	Employment
Educational Services	18	60	31	1,252
Technical and trade schools	3	0-19	3	0-19
Other schools and instruction	10	36	3	12
Health care and social assistance	245	2,626	314	6,667
Ambulatory health care services	216	1,722	247	2,315
Offices of Physicians	108	890	115	1,365
Offices of dentists	52	281	61	404
Offices of other health practitioners	41	100-249	52	214
Outpatient care centers	3	0-19	5	53
Home health care services	8	347	11	213
Hospitals	1	500-999	3	2,500-4,999
Nursing/residential care facilities	4	100-249	12	500-999
Social assistance	24	100-249	52	862
Child day care services	22	100-249	33	457
Arts, entertainment and recreation	36	460	49	595
Performing arts, spectator sports	8	20-99	12	100-249
Amusement, gambling & recreation	27	381	34	250-499
Accommodations and food services	202	4,192	230	4,388
Accommodation	17	905	23	801
Traveler accommodation	13	500-999	19	500-999
Food services and drinking places	185	3,287	207	3,587
Full-service restaurants	74	1,461	80	1,571
Limited-service eating places	95	1,603	108	1,852
Special food services	15	100-249	18	100-249
Other Services	184	860	342	2,280
Repair and maintenance	103	467	99	459
Automotive repair & maintenance	67	287	70	339
Commercial & industrial machinery	14	104	13	69
Personal/household goods repair	16	56	13	42
Personal and laundry services	81	393	100	394
Personal care services	41	149	47	169
Drycleaning/laundry services	20	123	22	104
Total	685	8,198	966	15,192

Source: U.S. Economic Census 1997; 2002 County Business Patterns.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Table 3.30 presents employment projections for Hall County between 2005 and 2025. In 2005 manufacturing and services were close in terms of employment, but by 2025 there are projected

to be nearly 5,000 more persons employed in the service sector than in manufacturing. Employment in farming is projected to steadily decline during the forecast period.

Table 3.30
Employment Projections by Sector, 2005-2025
Hall County

Category	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	85,915	91,818	97,375	102,629	107,607
Farm	908	845	793	754	724
Agricultural Services, Other	814	812	823	845	878
Mining	179	184	189	194	199
Construction	5,473	5,585	5,668	5,745	5,834
Manufacturing	20,875	22,213	23,274	24,031	24,474
T.C.U.	3,331	3,717	4,039	4,303	4,508
Wholesale Trade	4,810	5,161	5,472	5,741	5,967
Retail Trade	12,662	13,659	14,632	15,583	16,531
F.I.R.E.	5,762	6,182	6,517	6,809	7,077
Services	21,984	23,683	25,627	27,848	30,360
Fed. Civilian Government	477	487	492	490	482
Fed. Military Government	475	481	485	488	488
State/Local Government	8,165	8,809	9,364	9,798	10,085

Source: Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Element, June 2004.

MAJOR, SPECIAL, OR UNIQUE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Major Employers

Table 3.31
Major Employers in Hall County

Name of Firm	Number of Employees
Northeast Georgia Medical Center	4,200
Fieldale Farms Corporation	1,500
Kubota Manufacturing of America	1,500
Peachtree Doors & Windows	750
Wrigley Manufacturing Company, LLC	720
Liberty Mutual Insurance	600
Wal-Mart Super Center	500
ZUA Autoparts, Inc.	430
Siemens VDO	400
Lake Lanier Islands	375
The Longstreet Clinic	309
ZF Industries	277
Rockwell Automation	270
Merial Select	260

Source: Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, 2005.

Table 3.31 presents the fifteen largest employers in Hall County. The Northeast Georgia Medical Center is by far the largest source of employment in Hall County, with 4,200 employees. The second and third largest sources of employment, with 1,500 each, are Fieldale Farms Corporation and Kubota Manufacturing of America.

Business Parks and Office Spaces

Tanners Creek is a master-planned business park located just outside the City limits of Flowery Branch but within the Flowery Branch zip code. Tanners Creek is a mixed-use business park situated on over 150 acres. The business park has frontage on I-985 and access from Thurmond Tanner Parkway. GDOT recently approved a new interchange off of I-985, exit 14, which will be just 1,000 feet south of the business park. Office sites in the business park range from 1 to 7 acres and light industrial sites range from 1 to 30 acres. Tanners Creek is located 10 miles from the Mall of Georgia, which is the largest mall in the Southeastern United States. In addition to office and industrial spaces, there are also sites available for hotels, restaurants and retail inside the business park (Source: www.tannerscreek.com).

Poultry Industry

Hall County is the leading County in the State of Georgia in terms of diversified farm production. The poultry industry generates more than $720 million annually in products and services. Several major poultry producers, including ConAgra, Gress Foods, King's Delight, and Mar-Jac Poultry, are located in Hall County (Source: Hall County Homepage, Economic Development).

Atlanta Falcons Training Facilities

A major economic boost was given to Flowery Branch when the Atlanta Falcons decided to move their training camp to Flowery Branch. To accommodate the needs of the move to Flowery Branch, the Falcons have built dormitory facilities and expanded their current dining facilities at the existing headquarters. City officials expect thousands of people to attend the training camp each summer, which will create more visibility and economic growth for the City. The training and headquarters are valued at roughly $20 million (Source: Hall County Homepage, Economic Development).

INDUSTRY OUTLOOK IN HALL COUNTY

The Georgia Department of Labor provides forecasts of employment by industry and indicators of change from 2000 to 2010 for the Georgia Mountain Region. This region of Georgia, especially Hall County, has seen a rapidly expanding employment base, and the projections show this pattern continuing.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the region's employment will increase by 51,770, from 199,970 in 2002 to 251,740 in forecast year 2012. This is an annual growth rate of 2.3 percent in total employment (Georgia Department of Labor- Employers: Industry Trends).

The forecasts are provided for specific industry sectors (Standard Industrial Classification codes). These forecasts are useful in terms of determining future employment levels by industry sector that are anticipated to increase and decline in Hall County and the surrounding region.

Growing Industries

The industries in the Georgia Mountain Region that are expected to witness the fastest annual growth from 2000 to 2010 include the following: social assistance (6.5 percent annual growth from 2000 to 2010); ambulatory health care services (5.6 percent); credit intermediation and related services (4.5 percent); truck transportation (5.5 percent); specialty trade contractors (4.9 percent); administrative and support services (4.9 percent); merchant wholesalers, durable goods (4.9 percent), building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers (4.4 percent) professional, scientific, and technical services (4.2 percent); and general merchandise stores (4.1 percent). (Georgia Department of Labor- Employers: Industry Outlook).

Declining Industries

The industries in the Georgia Mountains region that are expected to witness the fastest annual declines from 2000 to 2010 include the following: textile product mills (-9.8 percent annual decline from 2000 to 2010); printing and related support activities (-8.6 percent); motion picture and sound recording industries (-6.7 percent); electrical equipment, appliance and component manufacturing (-3.9 percent); broadcasting (except internet) (-2.3 percent); textile mills (-2.2 percent); miscellaneous manufacturing (-2.1 percent); computer and electronic product manufacturing (-2.0 percent); and rail transportation (-2.0 percent) (Georgia Department of Labor- Employers: Industry Outlook).

AVERAGE WAGES

Wage level data are available from the Georgia Department of Labor for the county level but not for cities. Table 3.32 presents the average weekly wages by industry for Hall County and the State of Georgia. The statewide wages are higher than Hall County's for most industry sectors.

The industry with the highest average weekly wages in Hall County was the utilities sector with an average weekly wage of $987 in 2003. The average across all industries in 2003 was $607 for Hall County and $704 for the State of Georgia. In 2001 the average was $576 for Hall County and $676 for the State of Georgia.

Table 3.32
Weekly Wages by Industry, 2001-2003
Hall County and State of Georgia
(Weekly Wages in Dollars)

Industry	Hall County 2001	State 2001	Hall County 2002	State 2002	Hall County 2003	State 2003
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	ND	416	568	409	ND	420
Mining	ND	857	747	915	ND	952
Construction	656	686	667	693	666	710
Manufacturing	627	712	648	727	660	761
Transportation and warehousing	605	807	605	824	620	838
Wholesale Trade	732	1,021	768	1,019	780	1,032
Retail Trade	449	433	459	440	475	454
Utilities	962	1,235	951	1,295	987	1,312
Information	805	1,101	814	1,098	808	1,148
Finance and Insurance	725	1,051	766	1,081	801	1,117
Real estate/rental/leasing	588	562	578	598	618	629
Professional and technical services	677	1,081	720	1,089	772	1,099
Education Services	581	568	596	581	598	680
Health care and social assistance	685	654	712	687	705	694
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	334	523	391	585	371	552
Accommodation and food services	263	257	266	259	262	261
Other services (exc. public adm.)	367	451	383	466	379	483
Public administration	643	568	595	584	ND	602
Unclassified	455	745	526	724	475	688
Total All Industries	576	676	596	687	607	704

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ND: Not Disclosable

Table 3.33 presents average weekly wages by industry in 2002 for Hall County and the Hall County area, supplied by the Georgia Department of Labor. The “Hall County Area” includes Hall County and surrounding counties: Lumpkin, White, Habersham, Dawson, Banks, Forsyth, Jackson, Barrow, and Gwinnett.

Table 3.33
Average Weekly Wage by Industry, 2002
Hall County and Hall Area[1]

Industry	Hall County Weekly Wage	Hall Area[1] Weekly Wage
Goods Producing (Industry Average)	$650	$764
Mining	$751	$874
Construction	$668	$759
Manufacturing	$648	$772
Food Manufacturing	$546	$514
Textile Products	$634	$569
Wood Product Manufacturing	$562	$612
Electrical Appliance	$708	$1,100
Transportation Equipment	$819	$702
Plastics and rubber products	$604	$629
Service Producing (Industry Average)	$561	$681
Wholesale Trade	$768	$1,034
Retail Trade	$459	$483
Transportation and Warehousing	$606	$698
Utilities	$953	$957
Information	$815	$1,134
Finance and Insurance	$766	$940
Real Estate	$578	$682
Professional, Scientific/Tech	$720	$996
Management Companies	$1,048	$1,074
Administrative/waste Services	$387	$508
Educational Services	$457	$481
Health Care/Social services	$712	$655
Arts and Entertainment	$390	$950
Accommodation and Food Services	$266	$246
Government	$600	$648
All Industries	$596	$696

1: Lumpkin, White, Habersham, Dawson, Banks, Forsyth, Jackson, Barrow, Gwinnett and Hall Counties.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor: Resources of Occupational Wages

In Hall County the highest average weekly wage came from the management companies industry sector. The 2002 average wage in this sector was $1,048 per week. Accommodations and food services was the lowest paying industry sector, with a 2002 weekly wage of $266. The average across all of the industry sectors was $596, $100 below the Hall Area weekly wage. Hall County's average weekly wages are below the area average due to Gwinnett and Forsyth Counties, which are a part of the Atlanta metropolitan region where higher wages are paid. Those two counties, have the highest average weekly wages in the Hall County area. The remainder of area counties has wages mainly below those of Hall County.

Table 3.34 presents the average annual wage per job across various jurisdictions. Hall County, the surrounding counties and the State of Georgia are shown. Hall County had a lower average

wage per job than the State of Georgia by nearly $5,000. The only two surrounding counties with a higher average wage are Forsyth and Gwinnett Counties, both part of the Atlanta MSA.

Table 3.34
Average Annual Wage per Job, 2003
Selected Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Average Wage Per Job (Dollars)
Gwinnett County	$40,687
Jackson County	$26,759
White County	$24,243
Habersham County	$26,052
Lumpkin County	$26,593
Banks County	$21,190
Forsyth County	$35,883
Hall County	**$31,246**
State of Georgia	$36,031

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System. Table CA34. December 2003.

SOURCES OF INCOME

This section examines the sources of income for Flowery Branch residents and compares them to the State. Income from sources other than wage or salary incomes, such as social security income, public assistance income and retirement income, are received by a smaller portion of Flowery Branch residents than for the State of Georgia as a whole. Those receiving these types of incomes receive, on average, a smaller amount than the average for the State of Georgia.

Table 3.35 presents the sources of income for Flowery Branch households in 1989. Outside of wage or salary income, which 81.4 percent of Flowery Branch households received, interest, dividends or net rental income and social security income were the two most common sources of income. Only 5.4 percent of Flowery Branch households received public assistance income in 1989, which is below the State level of 8.2 percent.

Table 3.35
Sources of Household Income, 1989
City of Flowery Branch and State of Georgia

Source of Household Income in 1989	Number of Households, City of Flowery Branch	Percentage of Total Households, City of Flowery Branch	Percentage of Total Households, Georgia
With earnings	448	83.4%	83.1%
With wage or salary income	437	81.4%	80.6%
Interest, dividends, or net rental income	117	21.8%	31.5%
Self-employment income	38	7.1%	11.0%
Social security income	116	21.6%	22.9%
Public assistance income	29	5.4%	8.2%
Retirement income	53	9.9%	12.9%
Total households	537	--	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Tables P90-P96.

Table 3.36 presents the sources of income for households in Flowery Branch in 1999. Households with earnings increased from 1989 to 1999, to 85.7 percent of households. Households receiving self-employment income also increased, from 7.1 percent in 1989 to 10.1 percent in 1999. As a percentage share of all households receiving social security, retirement income, and public assistance income all dropped between 1989 and 1999.

Table 3.36
Sources of Household Income, 1999
City of Flowery Branch and State of Georgia

Source of Household Income in 1999	Number of Households, City of Flowery Branch	Percentage of Total Households, City of Flowery Branch	Percentage of Total Households, Georgia
With earnings	594	85.7%	83.8%
With wage or salary income	587	84.7%	81.3%
With self-employment income	70	10.1%	10.9%
Interest, dividends, or net rental income	101	14.6%	28.8%
Social security income	148	21.4%	21.9%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	37	5.3%	4.5%
Public assistance income	16	2.3%	2.9%
Retirement income	56	8.1%	14.4%
Total households	693	--	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3; Tables P56-P65.

Table 3.37 presents the mean income by households by type of income in 1999. Households with earnings had a mean annual income of $42,258, more than $14,000 below the Georgia mean in 1999. Households in Flowery Branch receiving social security, supplemental security income, public assistance income or retirement income all had averages (means) below that of the State. Households in Flowery Branch receiving public assistance income received less than a quarter of the State public assistance income mean in 1999.

Table 3.37
Mean Income by Households by Type of Income, 1999
Flowery Branch and Georgia

Type of Income-Households With:	Flowery Branch Mean Income	Georgia Mean Income
Wage Earnings	$42,258	$56,625
Social Security Income	$7,611	$10,445
Supplemental Security Income	$5,465	$5,889
Public Assistance Income	$425	$2,261
Retirement Income	$12,159	$17,957

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. Tables P56-P65.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Urban Redevelopment Authority

The Flowery Branch previously had a Development Authority, but that entity is defunct. The City is considering establishing an urban redevelopment authority or downtown development authority which can engage in redevelopment activities.

Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce works to promote economic development in Hall County and its cities. The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce works to support an aggressive and sophisticated business environment and make a positive contribution to the greater community. The Chamber serves as a resource for information, a voice for business, and a valuable link to government-related issues.

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce maintains information on sites and buildings available for businesses throughout the area. Currently there are over 2,000 acres of sites available as well as 16 industrial and business parks (Source: Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan).

Economic Development Institute at Georgia Tech

The Economic Development Institute at Georgia Tech operates a regional office in Gainesville and supports new and existing industries in total quality management, ISO 9000, and productivity improvement and computer application, among other areas. The University of Georgia operates the Small Business Outreach Services in Gainesville. This resource assists prospective business owners in the areas of forecasting business results, market analysis and obtaining the information necessary to create a new business (Source: Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan).

Economic Development Council

The economic development council is composed of business and governmental officials who serve to develop and promote programs that will assist expanding businesses and industries with their future expansion needs. The council also seeks to bring quality new businesses and industries to Hall County.

Silicon Lake Lanier

This resource promotes the Lake Sidney Lanier region as a good choice for both living and working. Significant effort is geared toward recruiting technology firms to the region. The following statistics about Hall County's business community are highlighted:

- Gainesville-Hall County is home to: forty seven Fortune 500 companies;
- More than 300 manufacturing and processing firms;
- Forty international companies representing 10 nations;
- Hall County generates more than $720 million in poultry-related products and leads the state in diversified farm production;
- Recent economic development expansions have created roughly 1,700 jobs and nearly $90 million in capital investments.

(Source: www.siliconlakelanier.com)

Gainesville-Hall County Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Gainesville-Hall County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) seeks to disseminate information about the County to bring tourists and businesses to the County. Members of the bureau are listed in publications, have access to membership meetings and receive business lead referrals, among other benefits.

Historical attributes of the region, educational facilities, Lake Lanier attractions, motor sports, wineries, shopping, sports attractions, dining, and mountain attractions are all presented by the Bureau. The Gainesville-Hall County CVB works with numerous organizations including: Gainesville-Hall Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council, Canoe and Kayak, Rowing, Quinlen, Georgia Mountains Museum, Main Street Gainesville, Gainesville Parks and Recreation, Hall County Parks and Leisure Services, Gainesville Symphony, Georgia Winegrass Association, Elachee Nature Center, Georgia Hospitality and Travel Association, Southeast Tourism Society, Georgia Association of Meeting Planners, Georgia Society of Association Executives, and Society of Governmental Meeting Planners (Source: Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan).

Workforce Development

Hall County has a variety of programs to foster workforce development. Quality Education Strategy Team (QuEST) provides Hall County high school students and teachers with a first hand look at the local work force. The Greater Hall Youth Apprenticeship, through QuEST, allows students to participate in structured school and work-based learning. The programs provide on-the-job experience and an appreciation for working in Hall County. Since the program began in 1995, over 200 high school students have been placed in apprentice positions in local industries (Source: Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce: Workforce Development- Chamber Initiatives).

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce also coordinates the "Partners in Education Program". This program directly aids in the creation of a qualified workforce by providing students with an opportunity to learn directly about the business community and increasing career awareness amongst students (Source: Hall County School System).

Georgia Department of Economic Development

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) is responsible for administering many of the state incentive programs as well as providing technical assistance to local governments, development authorities, and private for-profit entities in the area of economic development. GDEcD's primary purpose is to assist potential businesses considering locating in the State of Georgia in identifying an optimal location for their operational needs. GDEcD also assists the movie industry in locating appropriate movie sets throughout the State of Georgia. The identification of international markets for the export of Georgia goods and services is another duty of GDEcD.

The Redevelopment Fund Project, Employment Incentive Program, and the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund are a few of the resources available through the department. GDEcD is a statewide agency, therefore its programs are not tailored directly toward Flowery Branch or any other City. GDEcD will work with local governments and chambers of commerce to assist businesses when dealing with specific localities.

Infrastructure and Amenities

Flowery Branch is in close proximity to Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport (10 miles away) and within moderate proximity to Hartsfield Jackson International Airport (50 miles away). Flowery Branch's location along Lake Lanier and its close proximity to the North Georgia Mountains both benefit Flowery Branch. Gainesville, which is the major City of Northeast Georgia, is located ten miles to the north of Flowery Branch. The City is easily accessible from Flowery Branch via I-985 and McEver Road. Flowery Branch is well positioned to the Atlanta Metro Area due to its proximity along I-985, which leads to I-85 in Gwinnett County. It is also in the process of enhancing its water and sewer infrastructure for future growth.

Georgia Power Company

Georgia Power operates a full-service Community and Economic Development organization that serves the entire State of Georgia. There are 130 local offices Statewide with a primary concern of job development. The purpose of Georgia Power's economic development program is to facilitate the expansion of new and existing companies in Georgia. Experienced leadership, leading edge technology, and targeted research and management tools have all led to the success of the community and economic efforts.

Georgia Business Expansion Support Act

In 1994, the State passed legislation for tax credits against State income taxes to encourage economic development in Georgia. Some of the programs are targeted to specific industry groups, including manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, or research and development, but does not include retail business).

Job tax credits and investment tax credits are available to the targeted industry groups at different levels, depending on the relative need of the area for economic development. Some credits are available to specific industry groups, while others apply to all employers. Overall, Hall County and its cities are categorized as "Tier 3" communities within the plan and qualifying companies are eligible for associated credits. The following is a summary of the various provisions of the Act as they relate Hall County:

Job Tax Credit. Applies to business or headquarters of a business engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, tourism, and research and development industries. It does not include retail businesses. In Flowery Branch, companies creating 15 or more new jobs may receive a $1,750 tax credit. Wages for the new jobs must be at least ten percent (10 percent) above the average wage of the County

Investment Tax Credit. Allows a corporation or person, which has operated an existing manufacturing or telecommunications support facility in the State for the previous three years to obtain a credit against income tax liability. Such companies expanding in Fulton County that invest a minimum of $50,000 qualify for a 1 percent credit. That credit increases to 3 percent for recycling, pollution control and defense conversion activities. Taxpayers qualifying for the investment tax credit may choose an optional investment tax credit with the following threshold criteria. In Tier 3 an Optional Investment tax credit is available, whereby a minimum investment of $20 million would qualify for a 6 percent tax credit. A taxpayer must choose either the regular or optional investment tax credit. Once this election is made, it is irrevocable.

Retraining Tax Credit. Any employer in Hall County that provides retraining for employees to use new equipment, new technology, or new operating systems is eligible for a tax credit worth up to 50 percent of the direct cost of retraining full-time employees up to $500 per employee per approved retraining program per year.

Child Care Credit. Any employer in Hall County that provides or sponsors childcare for employees is eligible for a tax credit of up to 75 percent of the direct cost of operation to the employer. In addition, employers who purchase qualified childcare property will receive a credit totaling one hundred percent of the cost of such property. The credit is claimed at the rate of 10 percent per year for 10 years. These two childcare credits can be combined.

Research and Development Tax Credit. A tax credit is allowed for research expenses for research conducted within Georgia for any business or headquarters or any business engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, or research and development industries. The credit is 10 percent of the additional research expense over the "base amount" provided that the business enterprise for the same taxable year claims and is allowed a research credit under Section 41 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Small Business Growth Companies Tax Credit. A tax credit is granted for any business or headquarters of any business engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, or research and development industries having a State net taxable income which is 20 percent or more above that of the preceding year if its net taxable income in each of the two preceding years was also 20 percent more.

Headquarters Tax Credit. Companies establishing their headquarters or relocating their headquarters within Flowery Branch must pay at least 110 percent of the average wage of

the County, invest a minimum of $1 million dollars and create 50 new jobs may take a credit equal to $2,500 annually per full-time job or $5,000 if the average wage of the new full-time job is 200 percent above the average wage of the County.

Sales Tax Exemptions. Several sales tax exemptions are available within the County, including: manufacturing machinery and computers; primary materials handling; and electricity.

Tax Increment Financing

A Tax Allocation District can be established to enhance the value of a substantial portion of real property in a given district. (For a simplified overview of tax allocation districts, see summary in the box below). It is the unit of geography for tax increment financing. Within a Tax Allocation District, a redevelopment agency can make improvements or construct redevelopment projects that will create a positive climate for additional development. As development occurs and property values rise, the additional increment of property taxes is used to finance the improvements or redevelopment projects that are installed or constructed for purposes of enhancing property value in the Tax Allocation District.

HOW TAX INCREMENT FINANCING
(A TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT)
WORKS UNDER GEORGIA LAW

- The local government designates a redevelopment agency and prepares a redevelopment plan. That plan designates a Redevelopment Area and indicates the improvements and redevelopment projects needed to revitalize the Redevelopment Area.
- A Tax Allocation District is defined and named. It may be all or only a part of the Redevelopment Area.
- At the appropriate time, the local Governing Body holds a special election to get voter approval to establish the Tax Allocation District.
- The Tax Increment Base for real property within the Tax Allocation District is determined and, in essence, “frozen.”
- The redevelopment agency installs improvements or constructs redevelopment projects that will revitalize the area. It finances the improvements or projects by issuing Tax Allocation Bonds. The agency pledges Positive Tax Increments to pay for the long-term bonds.
- If the redevelopment plan works as intended, new projects will locate in the Tax Allocation District and will gradually produce Positive Tax Increments. The Positive Tax Increments are placed in a special Tax Allocation Fund and used to retire the debt (Tax Allocation Bonds).
- When Positive Tax Increments aggregate to the point that all debt is retired, the Tax Allocation District is terminated and all property taxes thereafter are returned to the taxing district (local government) as they would have without establishing the Tax Allocation District.

Once a Tax Allocation District is created and given a formal name, the redevelopment agency must apply in writing to the state revenue commissioner for a determination of the Tax Allocation Increment Base of the Tax Allocation District (O.C.G.A. 36-44-10). The tax increment base is, in essence, frozen and cannot be increased until the Tax Allocation District is terminated (O.C.G.A. 36-44-15). Positive Tax Allocation Increments of a Tax Allocation District

are allocated to the political subdivision which created the district (O.C.G.A. 36-44-11) and placed into a special fund for the Tax Allocation District (O.C.G.A. 36-44-12).

The money in the special fund can only be used to pay redevelopment costs of the district or to satisfy claims of holders of Tax Allocation Bonds issued for the district. All or part of the funds is irrevocably pledged to the payment of the Tax Allocation Bonds. If there is any money remaining after meeting these pledges, it is divided proportionally among the taxing jurisdictions that contributed to the fund. Tax Allocation Districts have no sunset provision, and they are not ended until the Governing Body by resolution terminates them. No district can be terminated until all redevelopment costs have been paid (O.C.G.A. 36-44-12). Property within a Tax Allocation District cannot exceed ten percent (10 percent) of total current taxable value of all taxable property within political subdivision (O.C.G.A. 36-44-17).

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A key to successful economic conditions is having programs and training in place to create a strong local workforce. Hall County is home to three institutions of higher education: Brenau University, Gainesville College, and Lanier Technical Institute. The proper funding of these, and other institutions, are essential to the continued success and expansion of economic development in Flowery Branch and the entire County.

Gainesville College

Gainesville College is a part of the University System of Georgia, located on 150 acres. It is a two-year institution that was established in 1964. The main campus is located in Oakwood, six miles southwest of Gainesville and forty-five miles northeast of Atlanta. The campus location is convenient to Flowery Branch, roughly halfway between Gainesville and Flowery Branch. Ninety percent of students enrolled at Gainesville College are in programs that are transferable to four-year colleges and universities. Over 85 percent of the college's alumni live and work in Northeast Georgia.

Brenau University

Brenau University was established in 1878 as the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary. It became Brenau College in 1900. The university sits on 50 acres in Gainesville. Brenau University includes the women's college, offering traditional liberal arts education, the Academy, the oldest preparatory school for girls in Georgia, as well the Evening and Weekend College, offering bachelor's, master's and Specialist in Education degrees for men and women.

Lanier Technical College

Lanier Technical College is a two-year technical college offering training alternatives ranging from single, focused courses and short certification programs to diploma and associate degree programs. Lanier Tech currently offers 146 programs in four areas of study: allied health, business and computer, technical and industry, and public service programs. The main campus is located in Oakwood. Over 2,000 students are currently enrolled. Georgia's Quick Start Program, a national job training program, was implemented locally by Lanier Tech.

Quick Start

Quick Start is a training program providing high quality training at no cost to qualifying new or expanding businesses in Georgia. Hall County's Quick Start is operated out of Lanier Technical College. Training is provided for all types of companies including manufacturing operations, warehousing and distribution centers, national and international corporate headquarters, information technologies and customer service operations (Source: Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce: Workforce Development- Job Training).

Customized Training and Economic Development Programs

Businesses and industries located in Hall County can receive customized training programs and workshops through Lanier Technical College's Workforce Y2K Program. The training is tailored to meet the needs of the business and its employees.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Rail Transportation

Hall County has good transportation access via railroads. There are three major rail lines located in the County: Norfolk Southern, CSX, and Amtrak. Norfolk Southern and CSX are both freight lines and Amtrak is a passenger rail. There are over 40 freight carriers serving the area.

Road Transportation

Interstate 985 bisects Hall County, providing convenient access to Interstate 85 in Gwinnett County, as well as convenient access to markets in metro Atlanta and South Carolina. North of Gainesville, I-985 becomes State Route 365, providing access to the North Georgia Mountains. U.S. Highway 129, which passes through Gainesville, provides convenient access to Athens.

Air Transportation

Flowery Branch is in close proximity to Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport, which is located ten miles northeast of the City in Gainesville. The airport contains two runways, 5,500-feet and 4,000-feet. The airport is mainly used by private and corporate jets. Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is located 50 miles from Flowery Branch south of Atlanta. Hartsfield-Jackson is the busiest passenger airport in the world, providing flights to destinations all across the globe.

Infrastructure

Adequate water and sewer service are vital to sustaining development. Hall County has entered into an agreement with Flowery Branch to provide commercial sewer capacity in south Hall County, where Flowery Branch is located. Under this agreement, Hall County will have the opportunity to bring commercial, industrial, business and employment opportunities to southern Hall County. Plans call for the County will build and maintain sewer lines in five major corridors: I-985 south of Gainesville, Atlanta Highway, Spout Springs Road, Hog Mountain Road (Friendship Road to Atlanta Highway), and McEver Road. Flowery Branch will provide wastewater treatment. This agreement will help to assure that adequate infrastructure exists in the area to allow the area to continue developing (Source: Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan).

Atlanta Falcons Facility

Flowery Branch is home to the headquarters and training camp of the Atlanta Falcons. To accommodate the needs of the move to Flowery Branch, the Falcons have built dormitory facilities and expanded their current dining facilities at the existing headquarters. City officials expect thousands of people to attend the training camp each summer, which will create more visibility and economic growth for the City. The training and headquarters are valued at roughly $20 million (Source: Hall County Homepage, Economic Development).

Lake Lanier

Lake Lanier is the largest tourist destination in North Georgia. Lake Lanier is a 38,000 lake with a plethora of activities for visitors and residents alike. Flowery Branch is well-suited to capitalize on this resource because of its close proximity to the Lake and "Lake Lanier Islands." Lake Lanier Islands has golfing, a water park, equestrian activities, boating, and biking opportunities, among others.

Road Atlanta

Road Atlanta is another significant tourism draw for southern Hall County. Road Atlanta is widely recognized as one of the premier road courses in the world. The site consists of a 2.54-mile, 12-turn Grand Prix course and a 700-acre park-like facility. Road Atlanta features a wide variety of events, including: professional and amateur auto and motorcycle races, Panoz Racing School, Audi Driving Experience & Audi Teen Driving Experience, Kevin Schwantz Suzuki School, and testing for professional and amateur racing teams. Road Atlanta is located less than 10 miles from Flowery Branch.

Industrial Parks

Hall County has an abundance of industrial parks, with 12 in operation in the County. Considering the Flowery Branch workforce, industrial parks are a likely source of employment for a significant proportion of the City's workforce. Having these located in Hall County is beneficial to keep the Flowery Branch workforce inside the County for employment.

Big Box Retail

As population has continued to grow in the South Hall region, the demand for retail is increasing. According to statistics cited by the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, retail is lacking in Hall County. Hall County is losing significant money to surrounding counties (referred to as "retail leakage"). In Hall County, 19 percent of Hall County's tax dollars are generated from commercial activities, compared to 32 percent in neighboring Gwinnett County. In 2003, 16 percent of shoppers at the Wal-Mart in Buford (Gwinnett County) were from Hall County. That same year, 16 percent of shoppers at the North Georgia Premium Outlets (In Dawson County) were from Hall County.

These statistics indicate there is a need to increase retail opportunities in southern Hall County in order to increase tax revenues as well as limit the amount of travel Hall County residents must undertake to shop. One recommendation given to Hall County by Frank Norton, Jr, president of the Norton Agency, is to seek big-box retail in Hall County. Norton also suggests preserving land along I-985 in the Flowery Branch/Oakwood area for a shopping mall.

Increasing retail space in Hall County will improve the financial health of the community and increase the tax base.
(Source: GHCC- http://greaterhallchamber.com/press/fullarticle.asp?ID=313).

New I-985 Interchange

The Georgia Department of Transportation recently approved a new interchange at I-985, exit 14, which will provide increased access to Flowery Branch. The interchange will provide excellent access to Tanners Creek Business Park, which is located just outside the City limits of Flowery Branch. The new interchange will be located 1,000 feet south of the business park. This increased access will likely make the business park more desirable to businesses that seek direct interstate access to their business. It will also increase business prospects in the vicinity.

Downtown Infill and Redevelopment

Downtown Flowery Branch is an area of mixed-uses, including retail, restaurants and businesses. There is significant potential to expand this district while also revitalizing a nearby area currently containing abandoned and dilapidated buildings. The downtown area has significant potential to be marketed as a unique, traditional downtown that will be a benefit to Flowery Branch when recruiting businesses and new residents.

One of the best-suited areas for an expansion of downtown is along the Railroad Avenue corridor adjacent to Main Street. This is an area with many abandoned and underutilized buildings that have great potential to become integrated into the downtown fabric.

There is significant potential to expand the downtown with infill and an overall redevelopment strategy. Revitalization as well as expansion efforts should be pursued in the downtown district. In addition to downtown, other vacant or underutilized lots should be identified across the City, and when in appropriate locations, retail or other mixed land uses should be considered. This will help expand the tax base while also making better uses of the land.

Small Businesses

Small businesses are the backbone of Hall County's economy. 85 percent of the members of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, and 85 percent of the business enterprises in the U.S. are small businesses. Small business issues are of great importance, and the Greater Hall Chamber's ongoing Business Plan puts a major emphasis on these issues. The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce hosts monthly seminars for small businesses which include the following topics: finding the right entity (sole proprietor, partnership, corporation); technology; accounting and financing; human resource and employee issues; retirement plans, benefits and health insurance; and advertising and marketing (Source: Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce).

ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS

Competition from the Mall of Georgia

Flowery Branch's proximity to the Mall of Georgia, approximately ten miles away in Gwinnett County, has both positive and negative aspects for Flowery Branch. The mall's close proximity provides the Flowery Branch area with excellent access to a wide-array of retail shopping opportunities. From an economic development aspect, the mall's close proximity to Flowery

Branch may limit the City's opportunities in terms of developing a large retail base. The close proximity to the mall limits the amount and type of retail that would be feasible in the City, due to direct competition the Mall of Georgia would provide. Market studies of the Flowery Branch area should be performed to determine which retail types are needed, so as to prevent an overabundance of certain types of retail uses.

Matching Future Jobs with Skills of Labor Force

Hall County's economic base has undergone significant diversification in recent years. This is a desired trend, and if it is going to continue, the County needs to assure that there is a skilled labor force in place to fill new jobs. Bringing in high quality occupations is a desired goal, but it is also necessary to keep an adequate number of entry-level jobs to serve the under-skilled segments of the population.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the following industries are expected to be the fastest growing in the Georgia Mountain Region through 2010: social assistance, ambulatory health care services, credit intermediation and related services, truck transportation, and specialty trade contractors. Knowing what industries are expected to grow the most allows for the County to target growing employment sectors. Poultry has long been important to Hall County, as it is the leading county for poultry in the State. Hall County should work to keep this title and keep a vibrant poultry industry in place.

Workforce Issues

In Flowery Branch and Hall County as a whole, there is a large percentage of jobs in manufacturing and service sector industries. Higher-skilled professions are less represented than at the State level, especially in Flowery Branch. Lacking a workforce skilled in these professions could lead new businesses in those sectors to choose other locations with workforces they consider more suitable for their business. Flowery Branch and Hall County need to continue to further pursue efforts to create a highly skilled workforce that will help bring new, high paying, occupations to the area.

Although the statistics show a need for better technical educational opportunities for Flowery Branch's residents, one has to consider that need in the context of the age distribution. A large percentage of persons without adequate education or training were 55 years old or older in 2000, and they are now 60 years old or older in 2005. It appears unlikely that such individuals would take part in educational opportunities or technical training programs, since they are either now eligible for Social Security or not far from becoming eligible. The younger population in Flowery Branch is believed to be more "white collar" in nature, thus likely to benefit less from any concerted effort at vocational-technical training. It is believed that Lanier Technical College is able to implement whatever technical courses may be needed to serve the blue collar youth labor force.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing has long been the leading source of employment in Flowery Branch. In 1990, manufacturing accounted for 38.3 percent of employment, compared to 18.9 percent in Georgia and 17.7 percent in the Nation (see prior analysis in this chapter). In 2000, manufacturing accounted for 28.8 percent of employment in Flowery Branch, 14.8 percent in Georgia and 14.1 percent in the Nation. It is important for Cities to have a diversified economic base, because

being too dependent on one industry exposes the area to risks if that industry sector enters decline. Flowery Branch's dependence on manufacturing did drop between 1990 and 2000. Although this is good in terms of diversifying the economic base, there are challenges that need to be addressed because of this shift, such as preparing the workforce for new and changing employment opportunities.

Saturation of Industrial Park Potential in Surrounding Areas

The location of industrial parks around Flowery Branch has both positive and negative aspects. Having 12 industrial parks in Hall County provides ample opportunities for Flowery Branch residents to seek employment in industries that would be represented in such parks. However, having such a high number of industrial parks in the area limits the feasibility of Flowery Branch developing its own industrial park to expand the tax base if the City desired.

As prior analysis in this chapter shows, the average wage per job in Hall County in 2003 was $31,246, compared to $36,031 for the State of Georgia. The mean household income in Flowery Branch in 1999 was $42,258, compared to $56,625 in Georgia. These two points highlight the limited incomes found in Flowery Branch and Hall County as compared to the State average. A major goal of the economic development policies should be to recruit above-average paying jobs to increase the income potential for residents. Necessary skills must be taught to the workforce to build a workforce adequate for these jobs. Job and skills training classes must be provided to facilitate those objectives.

SELECTED REFERENCES

Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan
Georgia County Guide
Georgia Department of Labor
Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce Website
Hall County Homepage
Hall County School System
Silicon Lake Lanier Website
Tanners Creek Business Park Website
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U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
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U.S. Census Bureau. County Business Patterns
U.S. Economic Census

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an inventory of the community facilities and services serving the City of Flowery Branch and assess their adequacy. The information contained in this chapter will assist the City in coordinating the planning of public facilities and services with new development and redevelopment projects. After identifying major findings, issues, and opportunities in this Community Assessment, a Community Agenda will be prepared which provides goals, policies, objectives, and programs for the improvement of community facilities and services to meet the long-term needs of the City of Flowery Branch.

WATER SYSTEM

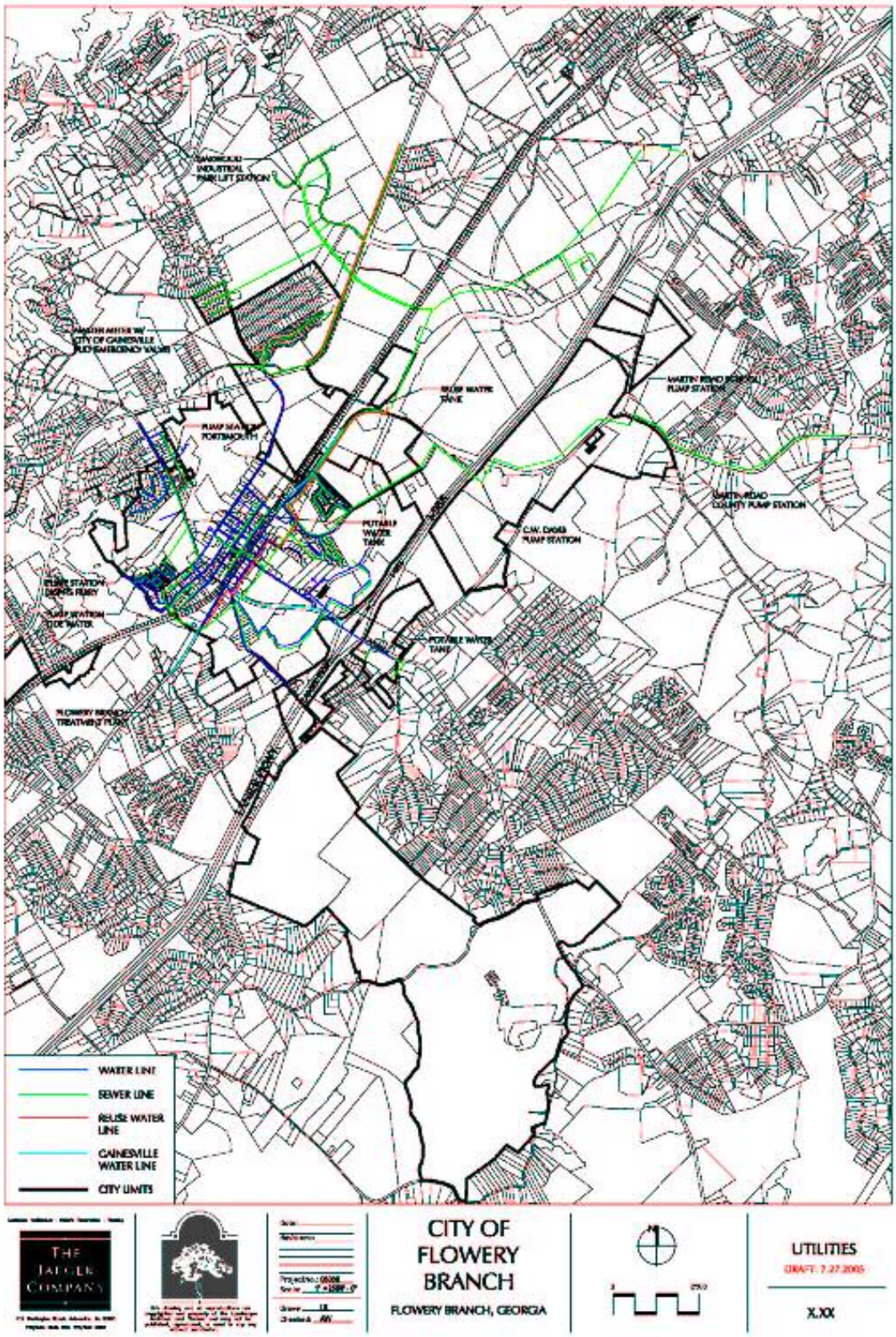
Water Service Generally

Potable water is a vital community service. A lack of adequate water can stifle if not terminate a community's growth and development. As with any growing community, the need for water will continue to increase. Municipal water is best thought of as an integrated system of production, treatment, storage, and distribution. Water systems, regardless of their size, are complicated and expensive operations. Thus, there are many aspects of the water system that are included in the facility analysis and recommendations. Flowery Branch provides water services through its Water and Sewer Department (with a staff of five employees).

Service Providers and Service Areas

Flowery Branch is one of several water providers in Hall County, with the City of Gainesville being the largest water service provider. According to the Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Flowery Branch's service area is small and does not encompass the entire City Limits. The City of Buford, which is partially in Hall County but mostly in Gwinnett County, is a water service provider south of Flowery Branch. Approximately one-half of Buford's water service area is in Hall County. North of Flowery Branch, Oakwood is a water service provider with a small service area encompassing part of its City limits. Hall County provides water to areas in the northern and eastern parts of the county only. Some areas within the City limits of Flowery Branch and all areas surrounding the City are served by the City of Gainesville (Source: Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Community Facilities Element).

Flowery Branch operates a water system which has groundwater as its drinking water source. It serves an estimated population of 2,127 persons. Flowery Branch's permit allows for the withdrawal of 0.363 million gallons of groundwater per day (MGD). The City operates two elevated water tanks. The two storage tanks have a combined capacity of 0.210 million gallons, and the City has identified the need for one additional storage tank. The City Council recently approved the construction of a new 750,000 gallon water tank to ensure adequate supply of stored water and to provide the proper water pressure. Funding to pay for this new tank was already included in a previous bond. The City currently does not sell any of its water to other jurisdictions. In 2005, Flowery Branch was awarded for having the best groundwater operation water plant for cities between 1,000 and 2,499. The honor was awarded by the Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association.


WATER LINE
SEWER LINE
REUSE WATER LINE
GAINESVILLE WATER LINE
CITY LIMITS
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
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Forecasting Future Water Needs

To meet future needs for water, estimates of future consumption are needed. Many factors influence the amount of water used, including the price, leaks in the system, wasteful practices versus conservation measures, the sizes and types of commercial and industrial establishments, and the amount of annexation (or changes to water service area boundaries) and rezoning. If the estimates are too low, the community risks not having enough water to meet its needs. If the estimates are too high, it risks spending substantial sums of money for capacity it will not use.

Domestic water use can vary between 40 and 120 gallons per person per day. Average per capita per day consumption of water for all uses (residential, commercial, institutional, industrial) generally is in the range of 170 to 300 gallons per capita per day. Water use can be much higher than these averages, and there are substantial variations in water use from community to community. For planning purposes in the absence of a water master plan, a level of service of 300 gallons per day per person is recommended.

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

Flowery Branch (Hall County) is part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. The governing board of the district is composed of 17 local elected officials and 10 appointed citizen members. The governing board is responsible for managing the business and affairs of the district. Water-related issues are shared between the Water District and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources. The water district develops regional plans for water supply and conservation as well as stormwater and wastewater. The Georgia EPD approves plans and enforces implementation of the district plans via permits. More on this regional entity is provided in the intergovernmental coordination element.

Water Conservation

It is important that governments take steps to promote water conservation. As population growth continues, there is an increased strain on existing water supplies, so water facility expansion is necessary. Water conservation efforts can minimize the levels of increased expansion by cutting down on the amount of water used per capita. Table 4.1 projects the water usage in 2030 under two scenarios: if the current conditions continued into 2030 adding in the projected growth or if new conservation efforts are put in place, with the same level of growth.

Table 4.1
Water Use Projections, 2030
Hall County and the 16-county Water Planning District

	Baseline	After Conservation Plan
Hall County	55	49
Water Planning District	1,217	1,081

Values represent MGD, AADD. (annual average daily demand in millions of gallons per day)
Source: Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan

A successful conservation management plan does not involve one variable, but rather requires many different issues to be tackled and opportunities to be used. To evaluate which conservation efforts should be utilized, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District used four criteria: technology and market maturity, service area match, customer acceptance and equity, and better measures available. Those efforts which scored low based on the criteria were eliminated from consideration. The conservation efforts were then placed into one of the three programs: Plan A which includes the most cost-effective efforts and involves the smallest change from current policies; Plan B which includes program A, plus additional efforts; and Plan C which includes all of the 20 conservation efforts selected from the initial evaluation. The District chose Plan B, which includes 11 conservation efforts. Table 4.2 lists these 11 conservation efforts.

Table 4.2
Conservation Efforts Selected by the
Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

1	Distribute Retrofit Kits
2	Increase Public Education
3	Provide for or Require Sub-Metering Multi Family Units
4	Regulations for Rain Sensor/ Shut-offs on Automatic Irrigation Systems
5	Commercial Water Audits and Feasibility Reports
6	Require 0.5 gallon/flush Urinals
7	Use Price as a Tool for Water Conservation
8	Leakage Reduction Program Improvements
9	Residential Water Audits
10	District Oversight of Water Conservation
11	Deferral/Downsizing of Capital Improvement Projects

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan.

The City of Flowery Branch is incorporating a water reuse system that will become operational with final permitted of the expanded wastewater treatment plant (see description in next section).

Distribution System Design

Whenever possible, water supply lines should be laid out in a grid-like manner so that there are no dead ends (i.e., a practice called “looping”). The advantage of looping is that there are no dead ends where water can stagnate, and if repairs are required, smaller areas will have the water supply cut off. Sizing the piping system is usually done by the water company using the “Hardy-Cross solution of successive approximations or the nodal method (Colley 1986).

The water system includes other appurtenances in addition to water mains. There are a variety of valves. Gate valves are used to regulate the flow in pipes and are located at many places in the system. Other types of valves in the water system include air-relief, blow-off, and drain values, as well as check valves, pressure-relief valves, air inlet valves and pressure-regulating valves. Thrust blocks, water meters, and fire hydrants are also components of the water distribution system (Colley 1986).

Repair and Replacement of Existing Service Lines

Few local governments can afford to replace obsolete water systems. It is financially feasible to spend smaller amounts of money each year for replacements and avoid the costs of replacing a major portion of the water system at a later time. It is important for the City to anticipate the need to replace obsolete water lines.

Health Hazards

The federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, establishes strict water quality standards. Compliance with the standards developed under this law is mandatory. Many water sources require additional, expensive treatment in order to achieve these new standards. Even after full treatment, including filtration, water is disinfected to ensure the destruction of pathogenic organisms. Bacteriological, physical, and chemical tests are required to be performed on water samples collected regularly from the source, during treatment, and from the distribution system.

Other Quality Standards

Water systems should meet other standards with regard to water color, turbidity, odor, and taste. The City should monitor these other water quality standards and should be responsive to citizen complaints with regard to water quality.

Flow

A major factor in determining pipe sizes and water pressure is provision for fire protection (see discussion of fire hydrants in this section). Building, life safety, and fire codes generally establish recommendations for minimum water flows. For instance, it is often recommended that, for purposes of firefighting, flows of 1500 gallons per minute are needed in commercial areas and at least 1000 gallons per minute be available in residential areas.

Pressure

The optimum range for water system pressure is between 40 and 60 pounds per square inch (psi). A minimum pressure of 20 psi is needed during fires, and customer complaints can be expected when water pressure falls below 20 psi. Too much pressure can cause leakage and failure of older hot water heaters, so a maximum main pressure is 100 psi.

Storage Capacity

Water storage is needed to provide extra volumes of water to fight fires and feed portions of the distribution system during repairs to mains, pumps, and transmission pipes. Distribution system storage facilities may vary considerably, with no apparent recommended professional standard.

Loss and Interruptions

If not already sufficient, contingency plans should be prepared for dealing with major water line breaks, loss of water sources during drought, and other possible damages to the water system such as flooding.

Financial Considerations

Because the water system is a utility, the revenue produced by the system should be sufficient to pay for all necessary capital expenditures, operation and maintenance costs, debt service, administrative costs, and provide a contingency fund for emergencies. Customers should also pay for the amount of water they use. Flat monthly rates for water encourage wasteful practices. Customers requiring very large volumes of water should pay additional demand charges. All customer lines should be metered. Developers of new subdivisions should be required to install the water mains and appurtenances through or along the tract and deed the facilities to the City. If it does not already exist, the City should establish a policy for the "oversizing" of water mains so that when a larger water main is needed than would serve the subdivision or development, the City can contribute a prorated share of the cost to construct a water main that serves a larger population or area.

SANITARY SEWER AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Generally

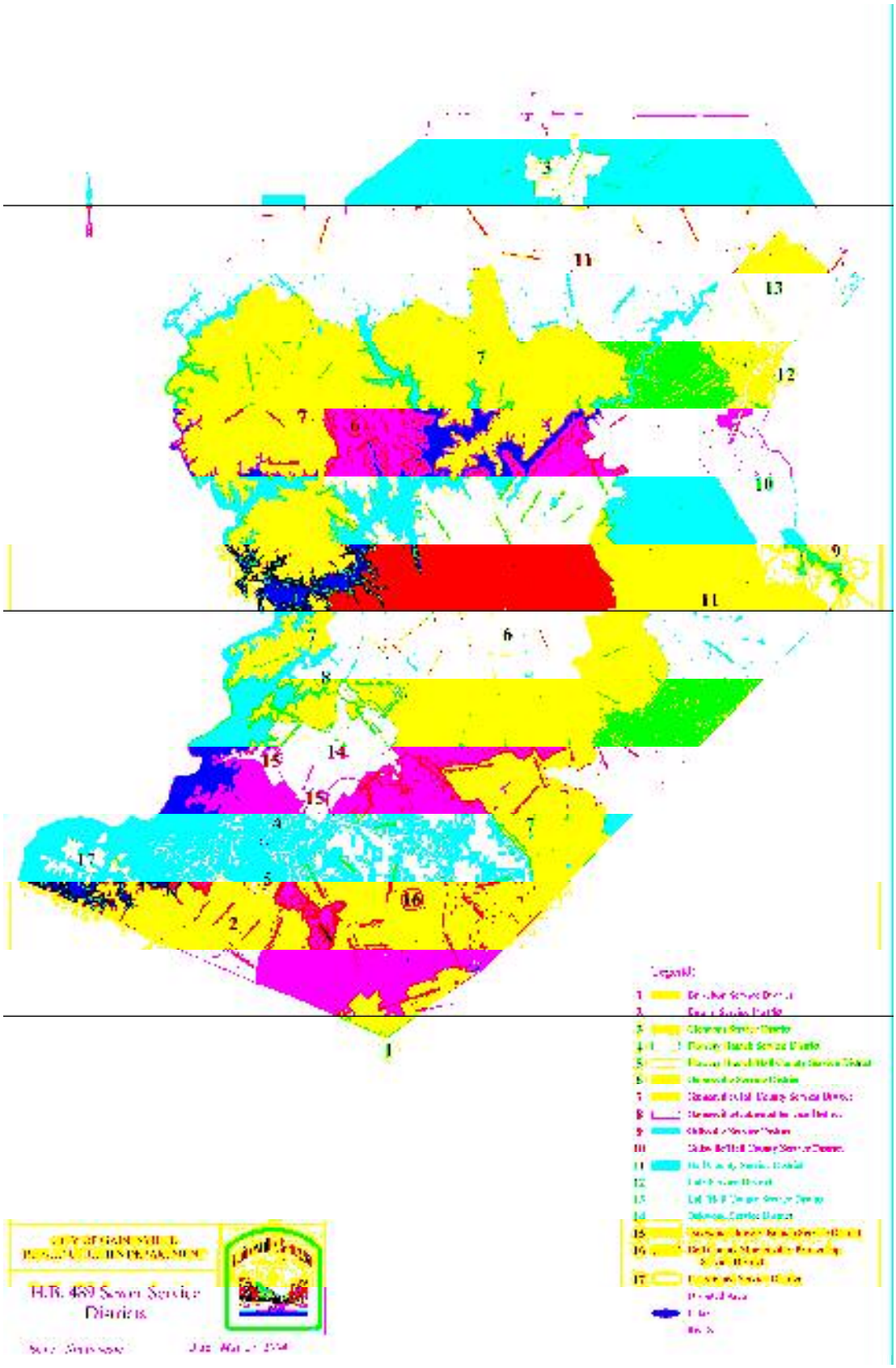
Sanitary sewer systems are indispensable to maintaining community health. The City must be able to manage water-borne waste by operating, maintaining, expanding, and replacing components of the wastewater system to ensure uninterrupted collection, transport, processing, and treatment. Collection and treatment of sewage is one of the most critical elements in the development of any site. A key challenge for the wastewater system is to convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the treatment plant without bypassing flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private properties.

The provision of a wastewater system is a utility, and therefore the revenue produced by the system should be sufficient to pay for all necessary capital expenditures, operation and maintenance costs, debt service, administrative costs, and provide a contingency fund for emergencies.

City Facilities, Service Areas, and Intergovernmental Agreements

Flowery Branch provides sanitary sewer services through its Water and Sewer Department (with a staff of five employees). Flowery Branch's Wastewater Treatment Plant is located on Atlanta Highway. The wastewater treatment plant in Flowery Branch has a 1,000,000 gallon per day (GPD) capacity, but the facility is designed to be expanded to 1,400,000 GPD capacity or greater. Hall County is entitled to 400,000 GPD of that capacity per intergovernmental agreement between Flowery Branch and Hall County dated June 10, 2004. Upon expansion to 1,400,000 GPD, Flowery Branch's share of that capacity will be 600,000 GPD, and the remaining 800,000 GPD will be allocated and reserved for Oakwood and Hall County (see Intergovernmental Agreement between Flowery Branch and Oakwood dated June 10, 2005). Flowery Branch is and will continue to be the sole owner of the wastewater treatment plant, but Oakwood will assist with funding the capital expansion. The plant's current permit, which allows for the discharge of 400,000 gallons per day, is effective until March 4, 2006. The wastewater is discharged into Lake Lanier, part of the Chattahoochee River Basin.

Per the Hall County Service Delivery Strategy, Flowery Branch has its own small service district for wastewater, and in addition, Oakwood and Flowery Branch share a service district in to areas north of Flowery Branch and south of Oakwood.


H.B. 489 Sewer Service Districts
Legend:

An expanded sanitary sewer service area was created by an intergovernmental agreement between Flowery Branch, Oakwood, and the Lanier Technology and Wastewater Development Authority which went into effect on November, 26, 2001 and lasts is effective until 2051. On August 16, 2001 an intergovernmental agreement was approved which allowed for the formation of the Lanier Technology and Wastewater Development Authority. Prior to those intergovernmental agreements, an agreement was created on November 13, 1995 which had the specific purpose of developing, designing, constructing, maintaining and operating a new 2 MGD waste water treatment facility and related infrastructure. Sewer services may be provided by intergovernmental agreements, contractual agreement with a private entity or authority, by constructing and operating the necessary collection and treatment facilities, or by any combination of these.

Per the June 10, 2005, intergovernmental agreement between Flowery Branch and Oakwood, a wastewater service delivery area boundary has been negotiated. The two cities have agreed that H.F. Reed Parkway (east of its intersection with the right-of-way of the Norfolk-Southern Railway line) is the sewer service area and annexation boundary between the two cities.

Spout Springs Water Reclamation Facility

There is a sewage treatment facility that is currently in private hands and serves Sterling on the Lake (in Flowery Branch) and the “Reunion” development. According to the Service Delivery Strategy, that facility could be owned by Flowery Branch or Hall County in the future.

System Design Considerations

In most cases, a sewer system can be accommodated by installing gravity-flow sewer and connecting to the existing public sewer system. When existing sanitary sewer outfalls are too high for the design of a gravity-flow system, a pumped system with forced mains (pressure systems) must be used, with pumping stations located at either the upper or lower end of the force main (Colley 1986).

Sewage flow rates vary during the day. Due to such fluctuations, the sewer pipe sizes are not designed for the average flow, but rather, peak flows. The peak flow is the highest instantaneous rate of flow occurring during the day. Peaking factors should be applied by a civil engineer in considering flow requirements. On larger sites, infiltration of groundwater into the sanitary sewers may be a factor in sizing the pipe (Colley 1986).

Forecasting Future Sanitary Sewer Needs

As a general rule of thumb, approximately 70 to 80 percent of the potable water supplied by any given community’s water system is returned to the sanitary sewer collection system. Sanitary sewer systems are usually sized to accommodate average wastewater flows of approximately one hundred gallons per capita per day (Somers et al 1986). Other sources note that in general “about 60 to 80 percent of the per capital consumption of water will become sewage (Colley 1986), and that an estimated 65 percent of the water used for residential use returns to the sewage system (Brewer and Alter 1988).

Pipe Oversizing

The City’s sewer system master plan should require installation of a conduit larger than necessary to accommodate individual projects, but compensation must be paid or credited to

the builder for the extent of upgrading the sewer. Otherwise, if the City does not dictate quantity, individual builders will determine what quality to use to design the system and undersizing may result (Colley 1986).

Repair and Replacement of Existing Service Lines

Few local governments can afford to replace obsolete sewer systems. It is financially feasible to spend smaller amounts of money each year for replacements and avoid the costs of replacing a major portion of the sewer system at a later time. It is important for the City to anticipate the need to replace obsolete sewer lines.

Health Hazards

Wastewater systems that discharge into receiving waters must apply for a permit to discharge under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Permits require collection of samples, laboratory analyses, reporting, and periodic inspections to assure compliance with regulatory requirements.

STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Overview

Storm water management is concerned with channeling runoff in a safe, controlled manner to protect land areas from erosion and flooding. Like sanitary sewer systems, stormwater drainage systems are gravity-flow, but where more outfalls are available and alternatives other than connecting to the existing network can be used (Colley 1986). The City has a general responsibility for ensuring that sufficient attention is given to storm water impacts, particularly along City streets. Storm drainage facilities must be designed to protect people and property from storm water inundation. Designing storm drainage systems requires engineering expertise and a keen understanding of hydrology, hydraulics, and drainage law.

The design of a municipal storm water drainage system depends on the amount of rainfall, and it also varies based on whether the system is designed to accommodate runoff from a 2, 5, 10, 25, or 100-year event. The quantity of runoff is also directly dependent on the surface condition in the watershed area, the extent and kind of vegetation, topography, and system characteristics (Brewer and Alter 1988).

Surface improvements for controlling storm water are grading, ditches, and storm water inlets. Storm water inlets are located at the low point in ditches or pipes, where the water is collected and routed underground. When piping is required, there are engineering criteria that must be applied. Systems must be designed according to established and accepted engineering specifications. Catch basins, which collect water flowing in streets, need to be located at the low points in streets, at the low points of intersections, usually at one end of the curb returns, and at other intervals to satisfy engineering criteria (Colley 1986).

There are four basic types of drainage structures considered by Brewer and Alter: gutter inlets, curb inlets, combination curb and gutter inlets, and manholes. Combination curb and gutter inlets are very popular, but the type selected should be based on engineering judgment in regard to availability of grates, safety to the public, satisfactory flow, and cost. Manholes are required when there is an abrupt change in grade, a change in pipe size, a junction of several pipes, or a change in horizontal direction. Storm drainage manholes are typically spaced every

300 or 400 feet, with 500-foot spacing permitted for larger size pipe (4' diameter and larger) (Brewer and Alter 1988). To meet water quality objectives, drainage plans should consider the need to use as many natural techniques as possible, including bio-filtration swales, filter strips, and landscaped detention ponds.

District-Wide Watershed Management

The Watershed Management Plan adopted by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District sets forth strategies and recommendations for effective watershed management and control of stormwater runoff throughout the planning district. The plan's major focus is to meet and maintain water quality standards and designated uses of streams and other water bodies within and in those areas downstream from the District. Flowery Branch was recently required to prepare and adopt model ordinances of the District in order to facilitate their implementation of improved wastershed management techniques.

POLICE PROTECTION

Flowery Branch operates its own Police Department. It concentrates its efforts on Community Oriented Policing as well as conducting an aggressive campaign against criminal activity and domestic violence. The Police Department consists of a chief, a lieutenant, and five officers. The Police Department headquarters is located on Main Street in downtown Flowery Branch.

JAIL SERVICES

Hall County provides for the incarceration of detainees countywide. Flowery Branch has an intergovernmental agreement with Hall County for jail services when detention is required for municipal offenses. The 489-inmate capacity jail is located in downtown Gainesville. Jail administration and operation is funded primarily through the county general fund but also from f fines and booking and boarding fees collected by cities.

FIRE PROTECTION

Overview

Planning for fire protection involves several steps, including the identification of the nature and extent of fire risks, establishment of level of service standards, identification of the most efficient and effective use of public resources to obtain the level of service standards, and implementation of a management and evaluation system (Burns 1988). The water system, discussed in another section, is an integral part of fire protection capabilities. Fire houses must be adequate in terms of size (e.g., equipment storage, number of bays for rolling stock, full-time firefighters' quarters, etc.).

Fire protection is broader than many people realize at first glance—fire departments have become providers of emergency medical care, emergency management, disaster assistance, "cat in the tree" calls, rescue services, and many other roles. The overall objective of fire protection services is to "minimize casualties and losses of property from fire by helping to prevent fires from occurring and to reduce losses and casualties from fires that do occur (Hatry et al 1992).

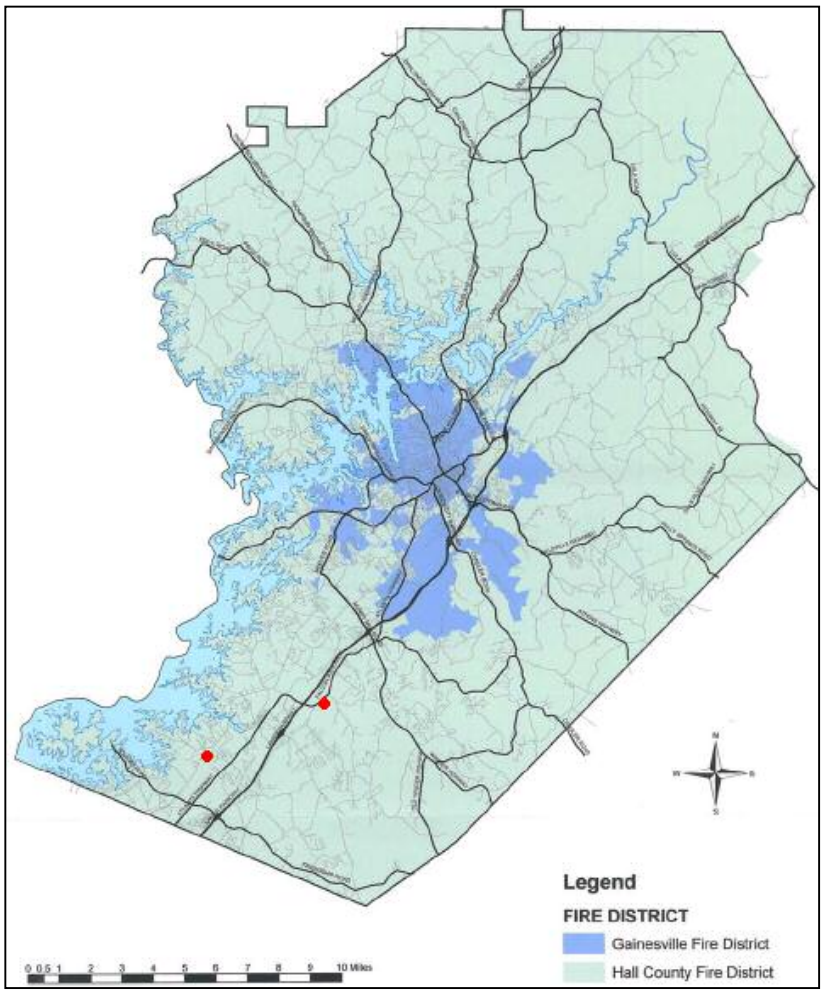
Facilities Serving the City

Flowery Branch is served by the Hall County Fire Department. Flowery Branch became part of the Hall County Fire Department protection area on April 19, 1990. The fire department is divided into two battalions, with Battalion 1 serving the northern half of Hall County and Battalion 2 serving the southern half. Battalion 1 consists of 8 fire stations and Battalion 2 consists of 7 fire stations. The Hall County Fire Department consists solely of full-time paid employees.

Flowery Branch is served by Fire Stations #5 and #8, part of Battalion 2 (see Map 4.1). Fire Station #5 is located at 4245 Atlanta Highway. That station has been in operation since 1973, when the Hall County Fire Department was initially formed. There is usually a staff of five at this fire house. Units responding from this station include a 1,500 GPM pumper with a 750 gallon tank and a FL-60 Advanced Life Support Ambulance.

Station #8 is located at 6175 Gaines Ferry Road. This station was constructed in 1987 and has a normal staff of 5 persons. Units responding from this station include a 1,500 GPM pumper with a 750 gallon tank and a FL-60 Advanced Life Support Ambulance.

Hall County Fire Department Jurisdiction (represented by green)
Fire Stations 5 and 8 represented by red dots



Source: Hall County Service Delivery Strategy.

ISO Rating

ISO (Insurance Services Office) Ratings are used for insurance companies to set premiums within a geographic area. This rating system has been used since 1995. The ratings are from the 1 (best) to 10 (worst). A higher ISO rating results in higher insurance premiums. Most of Hall County is rated a 5 in urban areas. Lowering the rating to a class 4, which is a goal of the county, would have significant impacts on resident's insurance premiums. For a $150,000 house, a class 5 has an annual premium of $578 compared to an annual premium of $388 for a class 4.

Response Time

The speed of providing fire suppression services is essential. Therefore, response time is often one of the more important level of service standards. Speed is a function of distance, and therefore, radii or travel time distances are often plotted around fire stations as a measure of

time as well as distance. Sometimes, average response time statistics can be used or standards established.

A five minute standard is an absolute maximum, because research into fire indicates that temperature increases and the fire builds during the first few minutes—typically three or four. After four or five minutes, unrestrained fire growth leads to flashover or ignition of the total contents of the room (or rooms, or building). Furthermore, five minutes is not sufficient when one considers that an unconscious person with depleted oxygen will typically suffer permanent brain damage after approximately four minutes (Granito and Dionne 1988).

"A relatively high percentage of fire alarms are handled successfully by the first arriving suppression vehicle, provided it arrives quickly, has a sufficiently large crew, and does not have to perform multiple duties such as search and rescue or laddering as well as extinguishment" (Granito and Dionne 1988).

E-911 AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

Emergency 911 services in Flowery Branch are provided by Hall County. Funding is provided by the county's general fund and E-911 fees. The intergovernmental agreement for countywide communication 911 services has been in place since August 20, 1997, and continues to be adequate for countywide services.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) protection in Flowery Branch is also provided by Hall County through the Fire Department. This intergovernmental agreement has been in place since October 7, 1997. Funding is provided by the county's general fund and user fees. This agreement allows for a comprehensive protection package for all citizens in the county and its cities.

UTILITY COMPANIES

The following utility companies service Flowery Branch:

- Telephone: Bell South
- Cable: Charter Communications
- Electricity: Georgia Power Company and Jackson Electric Membership Corporation
- Gas: Atlanta Gas Light

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Administrative employees, such as City management, human services, financial managers, legal services, clerks, and municipal court services, need adequate space for work. Space needs may be based on projections of employees and a certain square footage per employee (e.g., 300 square feet for each employee). In addition, space needs should take into account needs for a comfortable council/court chambers, conference room(s), and storage space.

Flowery Branch has a Mayor/Council form of government. Both the mayor and council members are elected by residents within the Flowery Branch City limits. The City's six-member Mayor and Council members are elected by post and on staggered terms. A council-appointed City Manager is responsible for operations of the City. Flowery Branch's City Manager is responsible for preparing a budget for the Mayor and Council's consideration; recruiting, hiring,

and supervising the government's staff; serving as the Mayor and Council's chief advisor; and carrying out the Mayor and Council's policies. The government office is located on Main Street in the downtown.

City Clerk

The Flowery Branch City Clerk is responsible for the following services:

- Utility Billing
- Property Tax
- Business Licenses
- Alcohol Licenses
- Open Records
- Voter Registration
- Elections

Planning and Community Development

The Planning and Community Development Department is responsible for ensuring that Flowery Branch's building codes, zoning codes, and development codes, among others, are all followed and that Flowery Branch continues to grow in a smart and pro-family/pro-commerce direction. The Planning and Community Development Manager serves as the chief advisor to the Mayor and City Council, the City Manager and appointed boards and commissions on all of the above listed matters. Two building inspectors (part-time, independent contractors) are also assigned to the Planning and Community Development Department.

The department currently operates out of City Hall. However, the City plans to lease additional office space located at 5509 Main Street (two doors down from City Hall) to house the Planning and Community Development Department.

Flowery Branch Municipal Court

The municipal Court of Flowery Branch is located inside City Hall, on Main Street in the downtown district. The municipal court is funded through the Flowery Branch general fund and user fees.

Public Works

The Flowery Branch Public Works Department consists of a staff of seven employees.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Flowery Branch City Park

Flowery Branch operates a City Park located on the shores of Lake Lanier. The park contains a playground, gazebo and picnic seating. The City does not have a parks and recreation department.

Flowery Branch Historic Train Depot and Museum

Downtown Flowery Branch is home to the Flowery Branch Historic Train Depot and Museum. Visitors can find exhibits, pictures, and written material about the community and the 100+ year old Depot. A wooden Caboose built in 1914 is open to visitors at the site.

Atlanta Falcons Training Campus

In 2005 facilities for the Atlanta Falcon's new training campus will be completed. The training camp moved to Flowery Branch from Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, where it was held for the last six years. Visitors will be able to participate in a number of activities at training camp. Along with watching practice, fans can participate in interactive games, obtain autographs and tour the club's Mobile Museum and headquarters. There will also be a number of special activities for children, including Junior Falcons Training Camp, Punt, Pass, and Kick competitions, and appearances by Freddie Falcon. In addition to providing residents with a recreational experience, it is also a large boost for the local economy.

Golf Courses

The Chicopee Woods Golf Course, owned by the Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission, is located north of Flowery Branch in unincorporated Hall County. It is open to the public. Gainesville operates the Chattahoochee Golf Club, which is also open to the public.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Public Schools

Flowery Branch's residents are served by the Hall County School System. The majority of public schools in the Flowery Branch area (4 of 6) were at enrollment levels below capacity during the 2003-2004 school year.. Two schools, Flowery Branch Elementary and Martin Elementary School, were over capacity in 2003-2004. Martin Elementary was significantly over-capacity with an excess enrollment of 176 students. As growth continues in the area, new schools will need to be built or current schools will need expanded capacity to accommodate the growth. Flowery Branch High School had the largest cushion to meet new growth, with a 2003-2004 enrollment that was 358 students below capacity. Table 4.3 provides a listing of all public schools serving the 30542 zip code (Flowery Branch).

Table 4.3
Hall County Public Schools Serving Flowery Branch

School	Address	Zip Code	Enrollment 2003-2004	Over/Under State Capacity
Flowery Branch High	4450 Hog Mountain Rd	30542	967	-358
C.W. Davis Middle	4335 Atlanta Highway	30542	879	-133
Chestnut Mountain Elementary	4670 Winder Highway	30542	529	-21
Flowery Branch Elementary	5544 Radford Rd	30542	629	**+42**
Martin Elementary	4216 Martin Rd	30542	863	**+176**
Spout Springs Elementary	6640 Spout Springs Rd	30542	682	-105

Source: http://georgia.schooltree.org/Hall-County-Schools.html & Gainesville-Hall Comprehensive Plan

Private Schools

As of the 2000 census, 21 students residing in Flowery Branch (grades 1 through 12) attended private schools. This represented 8.2 percent of the total students attending such grades. No students from the City in grades 1 through 12 attended private schools in 1990 according to Census statistics. There are numerous private schools, ranging from pre-elementary to high school, located in Gainesville. Flowery Branch's close proximity, roughly 10 miles, provides for the feasibility of students in Flowery Branch attending one of these private schools. Table 4.4 shows that only one private school is located within the Flowery Branch zip code.

Table 4.4
Private School in Flowery Branch Zip Code

Private School	Address	Zip Code	Grades	Enrollment
Trinity Day School	3428 Atlanta Highway	30542	K-3	4

Source: Georgia Department of Education. Georgia Private Schools by System (Hall County). http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/_dbs/schools/private.asp?

Higher Education

There are four major institutions of higher education in the Flowery Branch area, Brenau University, Gainesville College, Lanier Technical College, and the Gwinnett University Center. A brief description of these facilities follows.

Gainesville College is a two-year institution that was established in 1964 and is a part of the University System of Georgia. The campus occupies 150 acres. The main campus is located in Oakwood, six miles southwest of Gainesville and forty-five miles northeast of Atlanta. The campus' location is convenient to Flowery Branch, with the campus being roughly halfway between Gainesville and Flowery Branch. Ninety percent of students enrolled at Gainesville College are in programs that are transferable to four-year colleges and universities. Over 85 percent of the college's alumni live and work in Northeast Georgia.

Brenau University was established in 1878 as the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary and became Brenau College in 1900. The university sits on 50 acres in Gainesville, roughly 50 miles northeast of Atlanta. Brenau University includes the women's college, offering traditional liberal arts education, the Academy, the oldest preparatory school for girls in Georgia, as well the Evening and Weekend College, offering bachelor's, master's and Specialist in Education degrees for men and women.

Lanier Technical College is a two-year technical college offering completion alternatives ranging from single, focused courses and short certification programs to diploma and associate degree programs. There are 146 programs offered in four areas of study: Allied Health, Business and Computer, Technical and Industry, and Public Service Programs. The main campus is located in Oakwood. Over 2,000 students are currently enrolled.

Gwinnett University Center is located in Gwinnett County. It includes instruction by Georgia Perimeter College and graduate-level courses by the University of Georgia. In June 2005, the Board of Regents approved the creation of a new state college in Gwinnett County, thus formally establishing the 35th institution in the University System of Georgia. The institution will be named formally by September 2005, and the Gwinnett University Center will eventually transition to the new state college. The Gwinnett University Center will be phased out as Georgia Perimeter College students and University of Georgia students graduate or transfer to other institutions. Upon transition, the college will offer all undergraduate education, and the University of Georgia will continue to provide graduate programs and continuing education courses. The facilities accommodate 7,000 students now and are expected to, with expansion, serve more than 20,000 students (Source: www.gwinnettuniversitycenter.com).

HEALTH, HOSPITALS, AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hall County is served by the Northeast Georgia Medical Center, located in Gainesville. In addition to the main hospital, there is the Lanier Park Campus of Northeast Georgia Medical Center, also located in Gainesville. Together, these two facilities make up a 461-bed inpatient, 285-bed skilled nursing center staffed by physicians trained in a variety of medical specialties. Services provided by the Northeast Georgia Medical Center include General Services, Emergency Care, Women and Children's Services, Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health Services, and Community Health Resources. As noted later in this chapter, various public health facilities are provided to Flowery Branch's residents and on a countywide basis by Hall County.

LIBRARIES

Overview

Flowery Branch is served by the Hall County Library System. The closest library branch to Flowery Branch is the Blackshear Place Branch, located near I-985 in Oakwood. The mission of the Hall County Library System is to provide patrons with resources and services that will meet their informational, educational, business and recreational needs. The library provides and maintains an adequate reference collection supporting current and reliable information and works to develop interest in reading and lifelong learning among Hall County residents.

Level of Service/ Forecast Needs Assessment

Hall County has been working towards increasing the number of books per capita for the last two to three years. Rapid population growth in the county has made the task of increasing the per-capita book ratio difficult. The county's ratio of 1.5 books per resident is far below the state average. Construction and start-up of new library branches in North and South Hall, expansion of the East Hall branch and special needs library, expansion of the Murrayville branch and renovations to the Gainesville headquarters are planned in order to expand library coverage in the county. The proposed improvement projects are estimated to cost around $19 million.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Flowery Branch has privatized the collection of solid wastes and collection of recyclables. These services are supported by the municipality's general funds. In addition, Hall County contains 13 compactor sites. Flowery Branch has one of the compactor sites, located at 4395 Atlanta Highway near I-985. All garbage from this and the other compactor sites are transported to Hall County's landfill, on Candler Road, for disposal. Each compactor site in Hall County allows for the following objects: newspaper, glass (clear, green, brown) aluminum cans, aluminum foil, tin cans, corrugated cardboard, magazines, bound books, used motor oil and plastics.

The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 requires local governments to develop a plan for reducing the amount of solid waste going into landfills and other disposal facilities. Such reductions may be accomplished by many techniques, including recycling materials such as plastic, aluminum, and newspaper and the diversion of yard waste from disposal facilities into backyard and other composting operations. The City of Flowery Branch is currently in compliance with that mandate.

In addition to the county-maintained recycling centers, there are numerous private businesses that accept recyclable materials. Table 4.5 presents a listing of these businesses.

Table 4.5
Businesses Accepting Recyclable Materials

Business	Materials Accepted
Regional Recycling	Most metals, aluminum cans, appliances (compressor must be removed)
Gainesville Scrap Iron	Most metals, aluminum cans, appliances (freon must be removed)
Lanier Scrap Metal	Most metals, appliances (freon must be removed), no batteries
RTS Landfill & Recycling Center, Inc.	Construction and demolition waste, yard waste, leaves, limbs
Auto Batteries	Any battery retailer must accept your old battery.
Mail Boxes Etc.	Peanut packaging and bubble wrap
Salvation Army	Usable clothes, rags, household items
Potter's House Thrift Store	Usable clothes, rags, household items
Plastic Grocery Bags	Accepted at Walmart, Bi-Lo, Food Lion, Publix, and Winn Dixie
Roswell Recycling Center	Plastic #1 thru #5, magazines, motor oil, anti-freeze, batteries and boxboard
Applegate	Newspaper, phone books, magazines, other papers
Exclusive Services & Pallet Co.	Wooden pallets
Lanier Pallet Recycling	Wooden pallets
Timco Pallet	Wooden pallets
DOLCO	#6 plastic foam (polystyrene) egg cartons (must be clean)
Dart Container Corp. Of Ga.	#6 plastic foam (polystyrene); ex: egg cartons/meat trays (clean)
Shape Formation	Expanded polystyrene; ex: packaging peanuts, sheets, blocks
Allied Foam	Accepted molded polystyrene (must be cleaned)

Source: Hall County Website; Recycling Options

OTHER FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The following services, listed alphabetically are provided mostly by Hall County (except as noted). Since the facilities are mostly not provided by the City itself, they are only briefly noted. Additional information on selected Hall County community facilities can be found in the Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Community Facilities Element.

Animal Control

The Animal Control Unit is funded by Hall County out of its general fund, and the City of Gainesville also contributes to this service by intergovernmental agreement. The facility is co-located with the Human Society on W. Ridge Road in Gainesville.

Building Inspections

Flowery Branch provides a building inspection program and is currently served by two building inspectors (part-time, independent contractors) in the Planning and Community Development Department.

Business Licensing

Flowery Branch provides its own business licensing services, as well as beer and wine licenses. These services are administered by the City Clerk.

Clerk of Courts

This is a countywide service provided to all residents of Hall County. The Clerk of Court is located in government facilities in downtown Gainesville.

Convention/Public Assembly

The City of Flowery Branch is not served by convention or major public assembly facilities. Gainesville operates the Georgia Mountains Center and a Civic Center both located within the City of Gainesville.

Coroner

This is a countywide service provided by Hall County. A formal agreement between Hall County and its municipalities exists and is valid through 2009, according to the Service Delivery Strategy. Hall County contracts with medical doctors in Gwinnett County for medical examiner services.

Court System

Superior Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, and Probate Court are provided on a countywide basis by Hall County, and facilities are located in downtown Gainesville. Flowery Branch operates its own municipal court.

Department of Family and Children Services

The Hall County Department of Family and Children Services is a division of the State Department of Human Resources. It provides social services on a countywide basis. Funding is provided by Hall County's general fund and the State of Georgia.

E-911

This is a countywide service (emergency calls) provided by Hall County. Gainesville and Hall County entered into a contractual agreement in 1997 to provide these services countywide.

Elections

Hall County provides countywide election services, but Flowery Branch administers its own municipal elections. Countywide elections are administered and supervised by the County Registrar and an Election Board of Supervisors.

Emergency Management

This service is provided countywide by Hall County. The County funds this service through its general fund, but a small share of funding is received from federal and state grants. The Emergency Management Department is staffed by professionals. Hall County has prepared and adopted an Emergency Operations Plan to prepare itself for disasters.

Emergency Medical Services

This service is provided countywide. Hall County provides all transport and advanced life support services through the Fire Department.

Engineering

The City of Flowery Branch provides its own engineering services. Presently, work is contracted to private engineering firms including Pond & Company and Moreland-Altobelli Associates.

Equalization Board

This is a countywide service. The Equalization Board is mandated by the state, and its purpose is to hear property appraisal appeals that are not resolved by the Hall County Board of Assessors.

Extension Service

This is a countywide service provided by the Hall County Cooperative Extension Service as a direct division of the University of Georgia's College of Agriculture. It provides technical and education support in areas of agriculture, natural resources and horticulture.

Human Resources

The City of Flowery Branch provides its own personnel and human resources services.

Indigent Defense

This is a countywide service. According to the Hall County Service Delivery Strategy, Flowery Branch will provide and pay for indigent defense services involving cases brought before Flowery Branch's municipal court.

Jail/Detention Center

Hall County operates a detention facility in downtown Gainesville. By formal agreement, Hall County incarcerates detainees of Flowery Branch Municipal Court in the county detention facility and recovers costs from the City of Flowery Branch for booking and detaining.

Law Enforcement

The Hall County Sheriff's Department serves residents of Flowery Branch in terms of court support and certain law enforcement activities. As noted earlier in this chapter, Flowery Branch operates its own police department for general law enforcement activities in the City.

Mental Health

This is a countywide service provided by Georgia Mountains Community Services, a nonprofit corporation. Funding comes from a combination of Hall County, federal and state funds.

Probation

Flowery Branch, along with Hall County, Gainesville, Oakwood, and Braselton, contract with a private company, Maximus Probation Services, for this service on an as-needed basis. It is funded through violator fees.

Public Health

This is a countywide service provided by Hall County and includes vital records, environmental health, medical and dental clinic, immunizations, and family planning and child health. It is funded primarily by Hall County but with contributions from the City of Gainesville and occasional state and federal grants.

Public Land and Building Maintenance

Flowery Branch is responsible from buildings and grounds maintenance for municipal properties within its jurisdiction.

Public Transportation

As more fully described in the Transportation Element, Flowery Branch is not served by a public transportation system, except for the Rural Transportation program (fixed route and special request services) which is operated out of the Community Service Center in Gainesville.

Road Maintenance

Flowery Branch is responsible for the upkeep of City streets. Services are provided either through private service providers or Hall County. Flowery Branch is allotted a specific number of days annually where it can commission the county to provide services. Flowery Branch is also eligible for funding from the state Local Assistance Road Program (LARP).

Street Lighting

Flowery Branch is responsible for street lighting services in the City.

Tax Assessment

Tax assessment of properties in Hall County and each of the municipalities is a countywide service. Offices of the county tax assessor are located in downtown Gainesville. Hall County provides a tax digest to the City for use in preparing municipal tax statements.

Tax Collection

Hall County collects countywide taxes while Flowery Branch collects its own municipal taxes.

Voter Registration

This is a countywide service provided by Hall County.

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CHAPTER 5
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

The intergovernmental coordination element identifies existing coordination mechanisms and further opportunities for such coordination. More and more, effective planning efforts for community facilities, environmental protection, transportation, and land use are increasingly beyond the abilities of single jurisdictions. This chapter identifies areas where intergovernmental coordination is ongoing, as well as, issues that may require intergovernmental cooperation in the future. The examples of possibilities for intergovernmental coordination are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. Flowery Branch should continue to look for ways to increase the levels of cooperation in all functional areas.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

Much of the information listed in this element is not unique from the rest of this plan. That is, it is intended to cut across the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan (community facilities, land use, natural resources, etc.) and provide an overall framework for pursuing intergovernmental coordination. In that light, this element frequently cross-references the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan and notes how other elements call for such intergovernmental coordination efforts.

JURISDICTIONS

Although Flowery Branch is an independent government, it can not function without cooperation with other jurisdictions. Flowery Branch is a City located within Hall County, so cooperation between Flowery Branch and Hall County is not only important, it is necessary. Flowery Branch and Hall County must continue to work together to provide the best services possible to the citizenry of Flowery Branch. In addition to working with the county, it is to the benefit of Flowery Branch and its citizens for the City to work with other cities within Hall County including Gainesville, Oakwood, Lula, Buford, Gillsville and Clermont.

LOCAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Wastewater Management: South Hall Sewer Service District

The South Hall Sewer Service District was created to improve the adequacy of sewer coverage in the southern portions of Hall County. This are intergovernmental agreements between Flowery Branch, Oakwood, Gainesville, and Hall County. The Lanier Technology and Wastewater Development Authority was created out of one of those agreements to provide sewer service in the area. This agreement helps facilitate growth in South Hall County and allow for increased residential development as well as commercial and business growth which is vital to the cities and county for future tax base.

Other Agreements

The City of Flowery Branch has various other agreements with Hall County for the provision of services (see Community Facilities and Services Element).

Education

Flowery Branch is served by the Hall County Public Schools. The community facilities section of the comprehensive plan has a complete listing of schools in the Flowery Branch area.

Economic Development Council (EDC)

The Gainesville and Hall County Economic Development Council (EDC) was created in1994 as a partnership between the business community and the governments of Gainesville and Hall County. Flowery Branch and Oakwood have both joined the EDC. The council is a useful marketing tool for Flowery Branch because it has the resources and influence to both market the community and encourage quality economic growth as well as increase the tax base. The EDC has brought new businesses and facilitated the expansion of existing businesses in unincorporated Hall County, Gainesville, Oakwood and Flowery Branch since its inception.

REGIONAL ENTITIES

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District was established by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001 via Senate Bill 130 to address the need for comprehensive water resources management. The water planning district's major purpose is to promote intergovernmental coordination for all water issues, to facilitate inter-jurisdictional water-related projects, and to enhance access to funding for water-related projects among local governments.

The district's jurisdiction encompasses 16 counties, including Hall. It is required by state law to prepare three long-term plans: a long-term wastewater management plan; a water supply and water conservation management plan, and a district-wide watershed management plan. The following plans were adopted in September of 2003: District-wide Watershed Management Plan, Long-term Wastewater Management Plan, and Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan.

Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center

The Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center (formerly Georgia Mountain Area Planning and Development Commission), is the regional planning agency for Hall County and a 13-county region of northeast Georgia. The organization's mission statement lists the following as the major purposes of the organization:

- To provide technical assistance to member governments that would tend to enable them to have modern and cost-effective operations, and
- To foster economic development in the region which will increase the number of jobs available and personal incomes, and
- To perform research on the population, economy, resources and other characteristics of the area which might be useful in the formation of the public and private policies and programs, and
- To act as a regional forum where local leaders could have discussion and make recommendations concerning multi-jurisdiction problems and interests, and

- To provide lawful services to governments or individuals when such are ordained by the Board of Directors and requested by member governments, and
- To study and make recommendations concerning an effective balance between growth factors and the need for conservation of the area's natural resources, and
- To study the area's human resources and to make recommendations concerning education; cultural facilities and programs; the alleviation of suffering caused by income, health status, age or other factors; and the overall quality of life, and
- To provide for harmonious relationships among cities, counties, the State of Georgia and the government of the United States (Source: Georgia Mountains RDC-Mission Statement).

KEY STATE AGENCIES

Georgia Regional Transportation Authority

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority was created in 1999 by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority Act (Senate Bill 57). Former Governor Roy Barnes was a strong advocate for the creation of this authority. The authority has jurisdiction over any County that is designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a non-attainment area under the U.S. Clean Air Act amendments of 1990. The authority has many broad powers, including development of a regional transportation plan and control over public transportation systems. Flowery Branch's transportation plans are subject to review and approval of the authority and the City's plans need to meet the overall vision of the authority. In addition, the authority has powers to restrict access to roadways within its jurisdiction. Failure of the City to cooperate with the authority would result in the loss of all State grants except those related to physical and mental health, education, or police protection.

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

In addition to the need to maintain a cooperative relationship with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, the need also exists to continue to foster new relationships with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). GDOT was created in 1972 by former Governor Jimmy Carter. Flowery Branch is eligible to receive State and Federal transportation funds through GDOT. Road proposals and plans require approval of GDOT.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for multiple forms of transit, not simply roadways. GDOT plans, constructs, maintains and improves the state's road and bridges; provides planning and financial support for other modes of transportation such as mass transit and airports; provides airport and air safety planning; and provides air travel to state departments. The Department also provides administrative support to the State Tollway Authority and the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (Source: GDOT homepage).

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Interaction with the Department of Natural Resources is required in terms of the City's historic preservation activities.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. This State department has major review functions in terms of this Comprehensive Plan, amongst others. State policies are sometimes articulated by this agency. The Department of Community Affairs provides extensive resources in the areas of building codes, coordinated planning, and housing, among others. The DCA's overriding purpose is to seek out ways to improve the quality of life for Georgians.

FEDERAL ENTITIES

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Corps of Engineers has responsibility for the management of Lake Lanier. Because the City is in close proximity to the lake, and has a small amount of frontage on the lake, it is required to interact and coordinate with the Corps. Continued cooperation with the Corps is expected throughout the planning horizon.

Appalachian Regional Commission

Flowery Branch is within the jurisdiction of the Appalachian Regional Commission. This agency was created in 1965 to improve the poor economic conditions of the Appalachian region and improve the quality of the life in the region, including north Georgia residents under the agency's jurisdiction. The commission is a potential source of state and federal resources to assist the City with various programs. The Commission's scope goes beyond economic-related issues. Unlike economic development agencies, which tend to primarily to offer grants and loans, the Commission performs advocacy, regional planning, and research activities in combination with its special grant programs. The Appalachian Regional Commission is the only entity with this level of a regional mandate for Appalachia.

In its 2005-2010 Strategic Plan, *Moving Appalachia Forward*, the Appalachian Regional Commission lists the four major goals for the region. These goals include increasing job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation, strengthening the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy, developing and improving Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive, and building the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia's isolation. Flowery Branch differs from much of Appalachia due to its close proximity to Atlanta. It is well connected to transportation networks and has seen rapid growth, both population and employment, in recent years.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE AREAS

Annexations

In 1997, the Georgia General Assembly enacted the Local Government Services Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). This bill was created to limit competition and duplication among local governments and authorities providing local services and also establishes processes to resolve disputes when a County objects to a municipal annexation. It is important to have legislation of this nature due to the past problems that have arisen when Cities and Counties were in dispute over cities annexing unincorporated lands.

Air Quality

Hall County was recently designated as part of the 20-County, 8-hour ozone air quality non-attainment area. Because Flowery Branch is located in Hall County, this poses unique challenges related to transportation issues in the City. Local land use and transportation policies of the City are expected to comply with regional (Hall County Metropolitan Planning Organization) transportation plans and work toward implementation of the State Implementation Plan for air quality. Violations of air quality standards are regional, but all local governments need to investigate transportation-related sources that contribute to air quality non-attainment and propose and implement plans, programs, and regulations that will help implement regional and State plans for removing non-attainment status.

Because of Hall County's designation as a non-attainment area, all transportation projects in Flowery Branch, and the county, must follow additional federal transportation planning and programming regulations. Projects that add capacity must undergo testing to ensure they meet Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) standards.

Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs)

Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) are those developments that are likely to have effects outside of the local government jurisdiction in which they are developed. The DRI process was established in 1989 by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) established the procedures for review of these projects. The DRI process is utilized to improve communication between affected governments and provide a means of assessing potential impacts and conflicts the development may create. The number of DRI projects has increased substantially in recent years, with 17 such developments in 1995, 78 in 2000 and 133 in 2004. In 1999 the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) was created and is now involved with the DRI process.

Water Supply and Water Conservation

The *Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan*, prepared by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, includes policies and programs to foster coordinated water supply and conservation decisions among the local governments in the 16-County district, including Hall County and Flowery Branch. Water reclamation, conservation (11 specific measures), and system connections (in the event of failure or drought) are integral elements of the plan.

Local governments are expected to integrate this regional plan and implement local water plans consistent with the district's management plan. The plan took into consideration the Tri-State water limitation negotiations (Georgia, Florida, and Alabama), and it is designed to meet the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's (EPD's) in-stream water quality and flow standards, according to water use classification. Even with the strategies outlined in the regional water plan, district water supplies will exceed demands by only approximately 10 percent in 2030.

The water plan is intended to be flexible in that it has provisions for the development and updating of local plans and updating of the regional water plan every five years. Core goals of water conservation, new reservoirs, sharing of resources, interconnection requirements, and reclamation and reallocation provisions will not be changed to accommodate local preferences.

The plan recommends five local reservoirs in the near future that are currently in various stages of the permitting process. These reservoirs may provide an additional 114 million gallons per day (MGD) of water supply in the District. Most existing water treatment plants will remain in service, but some service areas will need to be reconfigured by 2030 and treatment methods will need to be standardized to meet interconnection requirements.

Four new treatment plants are planned by 2005, which will add 168 MGD of capacity. As also noted in the discussion of the district's *Long-range Sewer Management Plan*, the water plan relies on indirect potable reuse (i.e., reclaimed water that is returned to water supply) to meet future potable water demands. Conservation efforts are forecasted to provide savings of up to 9 percent in water use by 2030. These water conservation measures will be implemented by 2006 and continue thereafter throughout the planning horizon to 2030. Table 5.1 lists the water conservation program measures.

Table 5.1
Water Conservation Program Measures
Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

• Conservation pricing	• Distributing low-flow retrofit kits to residents
• Assess and reduce water system leakage	• Conducting commercial water audits
• Legislation requiring plumbing retrofits on home resales	• Conducting residential water audits
• Legislation to require low-flush urinals for new non-residential buildings	• Implementing an education and public awareness plan
• Requiring sub-unit meters in new multi-family residential buildings	• Review and oversee water conservation implementation and performance

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. *Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan*. Atlanta: Atlanta Regional Commission.

Local government responsibilities for implementation of the regional water plan include the following:

- Own and operate utilities that manage water supply systems and water conservation programs.
- Plan and construct water supply infrastructure for water supply.
- Participate in the District and its regional efforts for water resources management.
- Implement a water conservation program.
- Expand, construct, upgrade, and retire water treatment plants and distribution infrastructure.
- Provide for interconnections of water systems for reliability.
- Develop local water management plans.
- Fund capital improvements.
- Evaluate opportunities for public-private partnerships.

Local water management plans will need to be adopted to include the elements shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2
Local Water Planning Elements

Traditional	Regional
• 30-year planning horizon with 5-year updates	• Water conservation
• Water treatment	• Education and public awareness activities
• Water service areas	• Water reuse Inter-jurisdictional dialogue, cooperation, and resource sharing
• Transmission and distribution systems	• Drought and emergency planning
• Capital improvement plans	• Net return and consumptive use calculations
• County-wide and basin-wide perspectives, including system interconnections	• Coordination with wastewater and watershed plans (with clean water as the primary goal)

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. *Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan*. Atlanta: Atlanta Regional Commission.

The regional water plan identifies the following local planning actions needed for implementation: Water management planning; and review of local plans for consistency with the District plan. Senate Bill 130 mandates that local governments within the District shall implement the provisions of the district plans that apply to them. The Director of EPD may also modify existing permits to make them consistent with the District plan.

Findings and Recommendations Specific to Flowery Branch and Hall County

Surface water provides more than 99 percent of the district's water supply, and the most significant water bodies are Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River. Returning reclaimed water to Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee is an objective that will pose significant responsibilities on Flowery Branch and Hall County. Groundwater is also a source of water in certain areas of the district, including Flowery Branch.

The regional water plan shows that Flowery Branch has an average annual monthly withdraw of 0.4 MGD from groundwater. The plan calls for one new reservoir in Hall County, Glades Reservoir. Glades Reservoir will be in the Chattahoochee River Basin and will occupy 733 acres. The reservoir will have an estimated yield of 4.5 MGD. Table 5.3 highlights the water demands expected in Hall County by 2030.

Table 5.3
Projected Water Demand, 2030
Hall County

Water Demands & Capacities	2030 Projected Demand (AADD-MGD)	2030 Projected Demand (PDD-MGD)
Hall County	49	78
Total Projected Demand	49	78
2005 Capacity Retained	23	38
New Capacity for 2030	26	40
Total Planned 2030 Capacity	49	78

Note: AADD-MGD is annual average daily demand in millions of gallons per day.
Note: PDD-MGD is peak daily demand in millions of gallons per day.

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. *Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan*. < http://www.northgeorgiawater.com/pdfs/JJG-WS/11-03FINALWSPLAN/APPENDIX%20B.PDF>

Long-Term Wastewater Management

The *Long-term Wastewater Management Plan*, prepared by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, represents a departure from existing plans by recommending consolidated facilities (i.e., fewer, more regionalized plants). It provides for local ownership and operation of wastewater facilities, but it proposes to increase inter-jurisdictional collaboration to gain efficiencies and avoid duplication. Goals of the wastewater management plan include enhancing water quality, sustaining economic development, distributing costs equitably, measuring implementation, and advancing the education and awareness of the public.

The regional plan recommends reclaiming water to the natural environment to sustain water supply sources (indirect potable reuse). It also recommends septic system inspection and maintenance programs. Septic systems treat approximately one-fifth of the district's wastewater. Local government implementation responsibilities will include, among others, the following:

- **Map existing facilities.** Map sewer systems by 2008.

- **Maintenance system.** Develop computerized maintenance management systems for local sewer systems by 2008. These inspection and maintenance program components need to comply with requirements of the current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program and the proposed regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

- **Septic tank maintenance.** Establish septic system inspection and maintenance programs, including requirements for pumping septic tanks every five years. Also, local health departments need to create data bases of existing septic tank systems and establish additional septic system design requirements to supplement existing regulations of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, to make them more effective.

- **Planning.** Review local wastewater management plans for consistency with the District's plans by 2005. Develop local wastewater management plans, and integrate

the district's regional plans (i.e., conform to the core principles of the Long-term Wastewater Management Plan). Local plans need to define areas to be served by wastewater collection systems and areas that will not be served. Local planning studies involving more than one jurisdiction will be needed. Transitional areas that use septic systems may be identified until a collection system is extended at a later date (which needs to be specified). The plan recommends planning elements as summarized in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4
Local Wastewater Planning Elements

Traditional Elements	Regional Elements
• Flow projections	• Sewer System Master Plan
• Collection	• Inter-jurisdictional Projects
• Treatment technology	• Septic System Transition Plan
• Reclamation/Reuse	• Consumptive Use
• Effluent management	• Coordination with Water and Watershed Plans
• Biosolids management	
• Capital improvement plans	

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. *Long-term Wastewater Management Plan*. Table 10-1.

- **Plant construction and decommissioning.** Expand, construct, upgrade, and retire wastewater treatment plants as called for in the plan. Plants with less than 3 MGD are proposed to be reduced (phased out) during the planning horizon.

- **System performance and reliability improvements.** Enhance the reliability of wastewater treatment plants and pumping stations. Meet Reliability Class I standards, as defined by the U.S. EPA.

- **Water reuse and reclamation.** The plan calls for reclaiming water for Lake Lanier by Forsyth, Gwinnett, and Hall Counties. The goal of Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is to reuse 10 percent of the water withdrawn for potable and non-potable facilities.

- **Higher levels of treatment.** Higher levels of treatment will be needed to address requirements for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), in-stream nutrient standards (EPD and EPA), and indirect potable reuse standards. To provide the necessarily higher levels of treatment, local governments will need to implement advanced treatment technologies to produce reuse-quality effluent.

- **Public connection policies.** Develop public sewer connection policies, if needed.

- **Grease management.** Develop a grease management program beginning 2009.

- **Policies regarding private plants.** Develop policies and conditions for allowing private wastewater systems.

- **Promote public education and awareness.** This includes helping the District to meet the performance standard that 75 to 90 percent of the population will be reached by the year 2006 with regard to education and public awareness programs.

- **Fund capital improvements.** Approximately 345 MGD of additional treatment capacity will be needed in the district's jurisdiction by 2030.

- **Evaluate opportunities for public-private partnerships.**

Table 5.5 examines the wastewater implementation plan in Hall County for 2005 through 2030.

Table 5.5
Wastewater Implementation Plan
2005-2030, Hall County

Project Type, Project Capacity, and Plant Capacity by Year	Gainesville Riverside WTP	Gainesville Lakeside WTP	Hall Cedar Creek WTP	Cedar Creek Reservoir	Demand Projections and Total Capacity (MGD-PDD)
By 2005					
Proposed Project Type	No expansions proposed	No expansions proposed	Initial Construction	Initial Construction	
Project Capacity (MGD-PDD)	--	--	2.5	7 MGD-AADD Yield	
Plant Capacity 2005 (MGD-PDD)	25	10	2.5	N/A	37.5
2006 to 2010					
Proposed Project Type	Expansion of one facility		Expansion	None	
Project Capacity (MGD-PDD)	12		8.5	--	
Plant Capacity 2010 (MGD-PDD)	47		11	N/A	58
2011 to 2020					
Proposed Project Type	Expansion of one facility		None	None	
Project Capacity (MGD-PDD)	14		--	--	
Plant Capacity 2020 (MGD-PDD)	61		11	N/A	72
2021 to 2030					
Proposed Project Type	Expansion of one facility		None	None	
Project Capacity (MGD-PDD)	6		--	--	
Plant Capacity 2030 (MGD-PDD)	67		11	N/A	78

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. *Long-range Wastewater Management Plan*. Appendix B.

District-wide Watershed Protection

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has approximately 1,100 miles of waterways that do not meet State water quality standards. Stormwater runoff from urban areas and nonpoint sources is the major source of water quality problems, either causing or contributing to 99 percent of violations. Many of the streams in the District do not meet their designated uses. The health of the region's lakes, including Lanier, is threatened.

The *District-wide Watershed Management Plan* includes recommendations for source water protection that focus on addressing potential pollutant sources. Streams that do not support their designated uses are placed on a list of "impaired waters," also known as the "303(d)" list. The plan includes strategies to maintain water quality as new development occurs, encourage

stormwater pollution prevention, meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) strategies, protect drinking water supply watersheds, restore substantially impacted watersheds, and govern uses in a way that meets watershed protection goals. The overall goal is to move towards meeting and maintaining water quality standards and designated uses of streams and other water bodies in the District.

Local policy recommendations of the *District-wide Watershed Management Plan* center on resource protection, reduction of impervious cover, and septic tank management.

- **Changes to local ordinances.** New model ordinances are to be adapted by local governments to address post-development stormwater management for new development and redevelopment, floodplain management/ flood damage prevention, conservation subdivision/ open space development, illicit discharge and illegal connection, and litter control. All local governments in the District are required to implement the District's Model Stormwater Management Ordinances as the first implementation milestone (O.C.G.A. 12-5-570). In addition, local governments are required by the State Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act to adopt a local erosion and sedimentation control ordinance and Best Management Practices (BMP) criteria, standards and specifications outlined in the *Manual for Erosion Control in Georgia* (Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, 5th ed.).

- **Education and public awareness.** Senate Bill 130 established a goal that 75 to 90 percent of the District's population will have achieved awareness of water resource protection issues by the end of 2006. This is proposed to be achieved through identifying target groups and educating them on the importance of watershed protection.

- **Water quality monitoring.** A water quality monitoring plan is included in the District-wide Watershed Management Plan. Local governments will need guidance from the plan in meeting the requirements of the Phase 1 NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) stormwater program, as well as the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's requirements for watershed assessments and the TMDL program. TMDL strategies implementation is a key priority within the first years of plan implementation.

- **Source water protection.** The plan contains actions to protect water supply watersheds.

- **Watershed improvement plans for restoration and retrofit.** Local governments will be required to develop a watershed improvement plan for substantially impacted watersheds (i.e., those that do not meet water quality standards and designated uses). Implementation will be costly and require several years of planning, funding, and construction. Restoration and retrofit projects will be implemented during the planning horizon (to 2030); a long period is established for implementation due to the high costs of restoration and the need for additional study to define specific requirements on a subwatershed level.

- **Training and certification programs in stormwater management.** The plan recommends that local governments adopt standard training and certification programs for site designers and engineers to assure that the standards and criteria in the *Georgia*

Stormwater Management Manual (Atlanta Regional Commission 2001) are properly incorporated into future development projects.

- **Environmental Magistrate.** The regional plan recommends that local governments create an official judicial mechanism to handle citations and citizen complaints regarding violations of water quality ordinances.

- **Inventory the local stormwater system.** Local governments are expected to inventory stormwater facilities and conveyance locations, elevations, outfalls, contributing drainage, receiving drainage, control structures, material types, vegetative species, and other pertinent information needed to define the kind of maintenance for stormwater facilities and conveyances.

- **Define operations and maintenance responsibilities.** All local governments are expected to define the maintenance responsibility and level of service relative to those parts of the stormwater system and types of services for which they will be responsible. This should include schedules for periodic inspections and maintenance. This also includes development of policies for private stormwater facilities.

The requirements for watershed improvement planning are shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6
Watershed Improvement Planning Framework

Task	Description
Inventory Existing Systems	Identify and map drainage systems
	Identify existing BMPs and those that may be retrofitted
	Identify existing flooding and erosion problem areas
	Identify impacted areas requiring immediate action
Evaluate Retrofit and Restoration Alternatives	Develop conceptual plans
	Evaluate effectiveness and implementation constraints
	Prioritize retrofit or restoration alternatives
	Look for opportunities for multipurpose projects to share funding burden
Develop Watershed Improvement Plan	Plan for improvements to drainage systems and stream reaches
	Develop implementation schedule
	Develop cost estimates for all planned projects
Implement Watershed Improvement Plan	Initiate project improvements
	Monitor performance
Re-evaluate Program	Prepare annual reports
	Conduct use attainability analyses in areas that will clearly not meet goals

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. *District-wide Watershed Management Plan*. Table 5-7.

CHAPTER 6
TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Transportation Element provides an inventory and assessment of existing conditions and trends covering several modes of transportation. In addition, it describes characteristics of the roadway, bicycle and sidewalk networks. This information will assist the City in determining transportation needs to support future population and employment growth.

An accessible, efficient and safe transportation network is a vital component of the City's general well being. The transportation network enables residents to travel to work, receive services, obtain goods, and interact with others. Transportation is especially crucial in the area of economic development where access to transportation facilities plays a major role in a prospective industry's decision to locate in a particular area. An assessment of the existing transportation network throughout Flowery Branch and the surrounding area is provided to help determine future transportation needs. The examination of travel characteristics, statistics, and trends undertaken in this chapter offers insight and solutions in terms of addressing Flowery Branch's transportation issues and needs.

Establishment of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

In 2002 it was announced that Gainesville and its surrounding areas qualified as its own urbanized area, based on the 2000 Census. The Gainesville urbanized area contains the majority of southern and central Hall County. Due to this designation, Hall County had to meet federal requirements, including the formation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) will ensure that existing and future transportation expenditures are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process (3-C planning process). (Source: Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study)

The Transportation-Air Quality Connection

Hall County was recently designated as part of the 20 county, 8 hour ozone air quality non-attainment area. Because Flowery Branch is located in Hall County, this poses unique challenges related to transportation issues in the City. In metro Atlanta, 52 percent of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions (one of the pollutants that, with sunlight and heat, create ozone, a primary component of smog) come from on-road mobile sources: cars and trucks. As such, local land use and transportation policies of the City are expected to comply with regional transportation plans and work toward implementation of the State Implementation Plan. Violations of air quality standards are regional, but all local governments need to investigate transportation-related sources that contribute to air quality non-attainment and propose and implement plans, programs, and regulations that will help implement regional and State plans for removing non-attainment status (Source: Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study).

Because of Hall County's designation as a non-attainment area, all transportation projects in Flowery Branch, and the county, must follow additional federal transportation planning and programming regulations. Projects that add capacity must undergo the Gainesville-Hall

Metropolitan Planning Organization's testing to ensure they meet Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) standards.

TRANSPORTATION CHARACTERISTICS OF FLOWERY BRANCH'S CITIZENRY

The 2000 Decennial Census provides data that help understand the transportation behavior of Flowery Branch's citizenry.

Vehicles Per Household

Table 6.1 shows the number of vehicles available per household in 2000. A relatively substantial number of households did not have access to a vehicle in 2000 (11.1 percent). Renter-occupied households were more likely to have no access to a vehicle (15.9 percent), than in owner-occupied households (6.5 percent). This underscores the importance of having public transportation available so all households have access to employment and services.

Despite the presence of households with no vehicle access, the majority of households in Flowery Branch have access to multiple vehicles. In 2000, 88.9 percent of households in Flowery Branch had access to a vehicle and 51.3 percent had access to at least two vehicles.

Table 6.1
Vehicles Per Household By Type of Housing Occupancy, 2000
City of Flowery Branch

Vehicle Availability	Owner-Occupied Housing Units	%	Renter-Occupied Housing Units	%	All Housing Units	%
No vehicle available	23	6.5	54	15.9	77	11.1
1 vehicle available	103	29.2	157	46.2	260	37.5
2 vehicles available	138	39.1	119	35.0	257	37.1
3 vehicles available	58	16.4	10	2.9	68	9.8
4 vehicles available	28	7.9	0	0.0	28	4.0
5+ vehicles available	3	0.9	0	0.0	3	0.4
Total	353	100%	340	100%	693	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000 Summary File 3; Table H44

Means of Transportation to Work

Commuting to work via automobile accounts for nearly all traveling to and from work. Table 6.2 examines the means of transportation to work of Flowery Branch's workforce in 2000. The rate of automobile usage, 96.3 percent, far exceeded that of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. The majority of automobile usage was with a single occupant. Single occupant automobile usage represented 75.3 percent of commuting trips, while carpooling represented 21.0 percent. The suburban and rural character of Flowery Branch are the main reason for this dependency on the automobile. Just 3 workers, or 0.3 percent, used public transportation to travel to work in 2000.

Table 6.2
Means of Transportation to Work, 2000
Workers 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Means of Transportation to Work	Number of Persons	Percent of Total
Car, truck, or van:	877	96.3%
-----Drove alone	686	75.3%
-----Carpooled	191	21.0%
Public transportation:	3	0.3%
Motorcycle	0	0.0%
Bicycle	0	0.0%
Walked	7	0.8%
Other means	5	0.5%
Worked at home	19	2.1%
Total	911	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 3; Table P30.

Travel Time to Work

Table 6.3
Travel Time to Work, 2000 for Workers 16 Years and Older
City of Flowery Branch

Travel Time to Work	Number of Workers	Percent of All Workers
Less than 5 minutes	25	2.7%
5 to 9 minutes	58	6.4%
10 to 14 minutes	86	9.4%
15 to 19 minutes	153	16.8%
20 to 24 minutes	121	13.3%
25 to 29 minutes	57	6.3%
30 to 34 minutes	159	17.5%
35 to 39 minutes	29	3.2%
40 to 44 minutes	32	3.5%
45 to 59 minutes	50	5.5%
60 to 89 minutes	90	9.9%
90 or more minutes	32	3.5%
Worked at home	19	2.1%
Total	911	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 3; Table P31

Travel time to work is a function of distance traveled and levels of congestion. Table 6.3 presents the travel times to work that Flowery Branch workers face on average. The largest travel times in 2000 were 30 to 34 minutes (17.5 percent of the workforce) and 15 to 19 to minutes (16.8 percent). There was also a substantial portion (13.4 percent) of the workforce who traveled an hour or longer to work. This segment of the workforce is likely traveling into the Atlanta region for employment.

Table 6.4 compares the average commuting time in Flowery Branch to that of Georgia and the Nation.

Table 6.4
Average Commuting Time, 2000
Hall County Comparison

Location	Average Commute Time (in minutes)
Flowery Branch	30
Georgia	28
United States of America	26

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 3; Table P31, P33

Flowery Branch's average commute time of 30 minutes in 2000 was higher than that of the State (28 minutes) and the Nation (26 minutes). Those Flowery Branch residents commuting to the Atlanta MSA for employment are likely the cause of the above average commute time for Flowery Branch as a whole.

Time Leaving for Work

Table 6.5 illustrates the times that Flowery Branch workers were leaving home for work in the year 2000. The data show that there was not one definite peak time, but rather an extension of the morning rush hour. This spread is beneficial in the sense that it lessens the level of congestion that would occur with a traditional peak hour. The time frames of 6:00 to 6:30, 6:30 to 7:00, 7:00 to 7:30 and 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. all had relatively high shares of commuters leaving home for work in 2000. Flowery Branch also had a significant share of workers who left home for work after noon (19.2 percent).

Table 6.5
Time Leaving Home to Work, 2000
Employed Workers 16 Years and Over
City of Flowery Branch

Time of Day Leaving for Work	Number of Workers	Percentage of Total Workers
12:00 a.m. to 4:59 a.m.	16	1.8%
5:00 a.m. to 5:29 a.m.	21	2.3%
5:30 a.m. to 5:59 a.m.	33	3.6%
6:00 a.m. to 6:29 a.m.	101	11.1%
6:30 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	106	11.6%
7:00 a.m. to 7:29 a.m.	170	18.7%
7:30 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.	132	14.5%
8:00 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.	74	8.1%

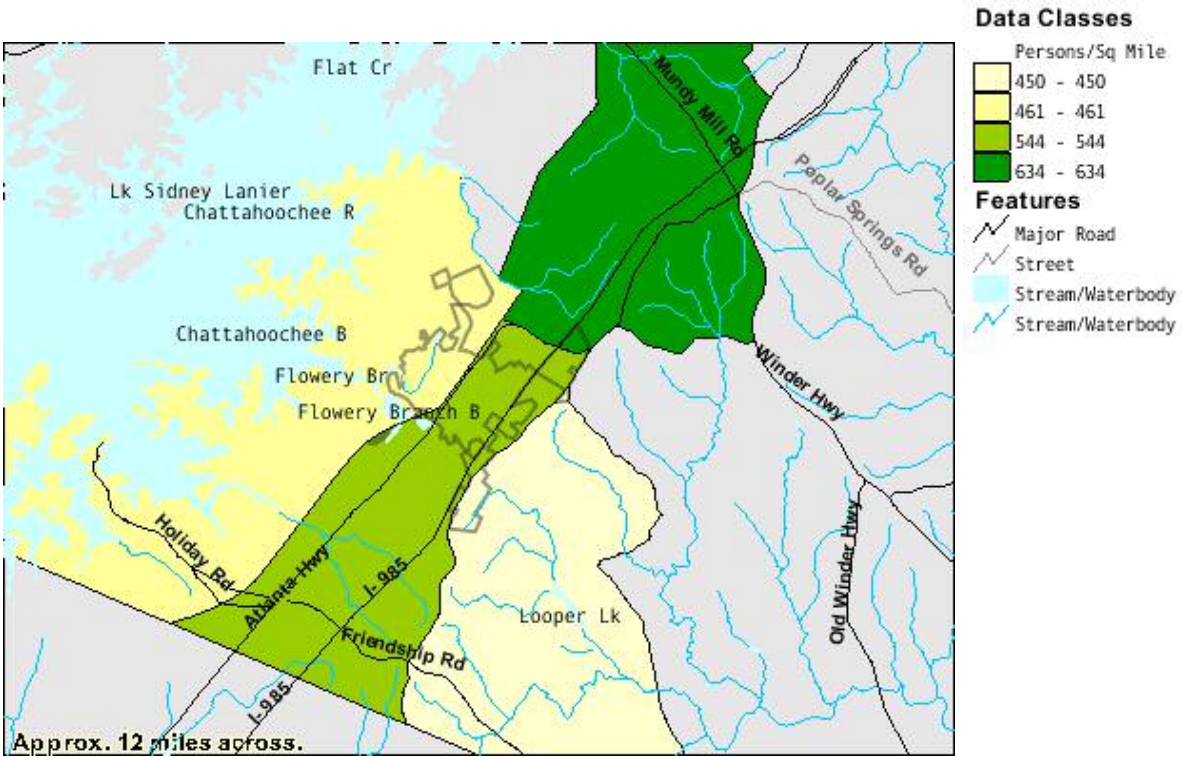
Time of Day Leaving for Work	Number of Workers	Percentage of Total Workers
8:30 a.m. to 8:59 a.m.	22	2.4%
9:00 a.m. to 9:59 a.m.	25	2.7%
10:00 a.m. to 10:59 a.m.	12	1.3%
11:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	5	0.5%
12:00 p.m. to 3:59 p.m.	89	9.8%
4:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.	86	9.4%
Worked at home	19	2.1%
Total	911	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 3; Table P34

Population Density

The census tracts that fall at least partly within the city limits of Flowery Branch are relatively low density, ranging from 540 persons per square mile to 634 persons per square mile. Lower density development has important implications for mass transit. It is more difficult to support mass transit opportunities in less densely developed areas because of the lack of potential ridership in a given location. Population density is shown on Map 6.2.

***** Flowery Branch's city limits are denoted by the gray lines
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000



Population Density by Census Tract, 2000
City of Flowery Branch and Surrounding Area

CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL TRAFFIC

There is a substantial amount of north-south cross-jurisdictional traffic which passes through Flowery Branch on I-985 and to a lesser extent on Atlanta Highway (SR 13). Both roadways provide access to Gainesville to the north and Gwinnett County to the south. Because Lake Lanier west of Flowery Branch forms an impediment to travel, there is a limited amount of cross-jurisdictional traffic oriented in an east-west direction through Flowery Branch. Lake Lanier does lead to increased traffic in Flowery Branch, however, because of the high level of tourism the lake attracts. Adjacent to the Flowery Branch Park is a marina, which means that boats are towed on trailers through the City along relatively narrow roadways. The movement of boats through the City thus poses some issues.

COUNTY ROAD SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Table 6.6 presents the lane miles of roadways in Hall County in 1997, 2000, and 2003. The lane miles are classified as state highways, county roads, and city roads. Hall County has one interstate highway located within the county, I-985, which connects to I-85 in Gwinnett County.

Table 6.6
Mileage of Public Roads
Hall County, 1997, 2000 and 2003

Type of Road	1997	2000	2003
State Highways	239.98	247.14	235.41
County Roads	975.48	968.52	1,031.55
City Roads	122.36	122.36	144.41
Total Mileage	1,337.82	1,338.02	1,411.37

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation: 400 Series Reports, Report 441

Between 1997 and 2003, Hall County saw very little change in the lane miles of public roads. There was an increase of 0.2 lane miles between 1997 and 2000, and an increase of 73.35 lane miles between 2000 and 2003. The rapid population and employment increases in the area during this time frame, combined with a lack of roadway expansion, has led to and will continue to lead to increased congestion unless transportation improvement are made. It is important to note that transportation improvements do not necessarily mean automobile-related transportation, but in the short term this is the most likely type of transportation improvement projects to occur.

RECENT ESTIMATES OF ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

Table 6.7 below shows data collected by the Georgia Department of Transportation for 1992 and 2002. for major roads within the Flowery Branch area, or those within the county that carry major traffic flows and which are therefore possibly relevant to future transportation planning in Flowery Branch.

Table 6.7
Hall County Traffic Volumes, Selected Roads
1992 and 2002

Road (Station No.)	Count Location	1992 AADT	2002 AADT	Percent Change
EE Butler (SR 11) (121)	W of I-985	28,298	37,115	31
Cleveland Hwy. (SR 11) (134)	Northern Gainesville	30,415	38,035	25
Atlanta Hwy. (SR 13) (194)	Southern Gainesville	32,866	34,990	6
Athens Hwy. (SR 11) (116)	Southeast of Gainesville	16,380	28,528	74
SR 365 (212)	Northeast of Gainesville	18,376	32,057	74
Dawsonville Hwy. (SR 53) (267)	W of Gainesville	17,043	22,785	34
Mundy Mill Road (SR 53) (285)	Oakwood	23,584	32,489	38
Candler Road (SR 60) (303)	N of Candler	6,652	11,367	71
Interstate 985 (409)	S Hall	26,352	43,834	66
SR 365 (215)	Lula	18,151	29,160	61
Browns Bridge Road (SR 369) (429)	E of Lake Lanier	12,305	15,734	28

AADT= Average Annual Daily Traffic

Source: Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan; Georgia DOT Traffic Data

Average daily traffic is usually obtained through machine counts. They may be street counts (total volume without regard to direction) or directional counts. Directional counts are used for capacity analyses, planning improvements, obtaining accumulations within a cord, etc. Counts are generally obtained through the use of mechanical traffic counters. The average daily traffic counts are used to measure the present demand for service on the streets and highways. These volumes are also used to locate areas where new facilities or improvements to existing facilities are needed.

UNDERSTANDING LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR ROADS

It is important in the planning process to understand and determine the level of service (LOS) on area roadways before new development is permitted. Levels of service are indicated by letter grades “A” through “F” which have been assigned to each link in accordance with its computed volume-to-capacity ratio. A LOS “A” represents the best operating conditions while a LOS “F” represents poor operating conditions (also see Table 6.8 below). The criteria for the LOS guidelines are as follows:

- LOS “A”, “B”, and “C” indicate conditions where traffic can move relatively freely.
- LOS “D” means that vehicle speed begins to decline slightly with increasing flows. Speed and freedom of movement are severely restricted.
- LOS “E” describes conditions where traffic volumes are at or close to capacity, resulting in serious delays.
- LOS “F” is a breakdown in vehicular flow. This condition exists when the flow rate exceeds roadway capacity. LOS “F” is used to describe conditions at a bottleneck or breakdown as well as the condition of traffic downstream from that point.

Table 6.8
Level-of-Service Values

Level-of-Service	Volume-to-Capacity
A-C	<= 0.70
D-E	>=0.71<=0.99
F	>=1.00

Source: GDOT Standards; Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study 2030 Long Range Plan

Within the city limits of Flowery Branch, there was only one location where a level-of-service of "F" existed in 2000. This was at the southbound I-985 ramp to Spout Springs Road. I-985 throughout Flowery Branch and the surrounding areas had a level-of-service in the "D-E" range in 2000.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROADS

Functional classification is used to characterize roadways and obtain an understanding of the character of service the roadway is intended to provide. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) classifies roadways as interstate, arterial, collector, or local street. A functional classification describes the degree to which a particular roadway provides mobility and access (Source: Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study).

Table 6.9 presents the average annual daily traffic on various functional classifications of roadways in Hall County in 2000. The interstate classification, specifically I-985, had the highest annual daily traffic in 2000 with an average daily traffic count of 19,333. All of the roadway classifications were in the "A" to "C" level-of-service range, except for ramps to I-985, which had a volume/capacity ratio of 0.8, placing it at a level of service "D."

Table 6.9
2000 System Performance by Functional Class
Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study Area

Functional Class	Avg. Annual Daily Traffic	Avg. Volume/Capacity Ratio
Interstate	19,333	0.7
Arterial	9,561	0.4
Collector	2,453	0.2
Local Road	1,073	0.1
Ramps	4,665	0.8

Source: Gainesville-Hall Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element: Georgia Department of Transportation

Table 6.10 presents roadway capacities by functional classification of the roads. The overwhelming majority of roadways, 874.1 lane miles, have capacities of less than 20,000 vehicles per day. Interstate 985 had a capacity (vehicles per day) of 30,000-34,999, and the 41.1 lane miles of arterial roadways had a capacity of over 35,000 vehicles in 2000. All 198.5 lane miles of local roads and 4.5 lane miles of ramps had capacities of under 20,000 vehicles in 2000.

Table 6.10
Roadway Capacities by Functional Class in Miles of Road
Hall County, 2000

Functional Class	Less than 20,000	20,000-24,999	25,000-29,999	30,000-34,999	Greater than 35,000	Total
Interstate	0	0	0	67.0	0	67.0
Arterial	62.4	63.4	10.7	11.5	41.1	189.1
Collector	608.7	48.0	4.7	1.9	0	663.3
Local Road	198.5	0	0	0	0	198.5
Ramps	4.5	0	0	0	0	4.5
Total	874.1	111.4	15.4	80.4	41.1	1122.4

Source: Gainesville-Hall Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element; Georgia Department of Transportation

Interstates

This type of road is defined as significant highways that feature limited access and continuous, high-speed movements for a wide variety of traffic types. This type of roadway is intended to transport people and goods over long distances at high speeds with a minimum amount of friction from entering and exiting traffic.

Arterials

These roads connect activity centers and carry large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds. These roadways typically have a certain degree of access control.

Collectors

These roads usually connect residential areas to activity centers. Their purpose is to collect traffic from streets in residential and commercial areas and distribute it to the arterial system.

Local Streets

These roads feed the collector system from low volume residential and commercial areas. Local streets tend to be located in neighborhoods and rural areas (Source: Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study; GDOT).

The functional classification of roads in the Flowery Branch area is shown on the following map and in Table 6.11. All other roads are local (see local road inventory provided in Table 6.12).

Table 6.11
Functional Classification of Major Roadways
Flowery Branch

Road	From/To	Functional Classification	Notes
Interstate 985	City limit to City limit	Urban Interstate Principal Arterial	4-lane roadway/ highest traffic volume in City
McEver Road	City limit to City limit	Urban Minor Arterial	2-lane roadway
Atlanta Highway (13)	City limit to City limit	Urban Minor Arterial	2-lane roadway
Spout Springs Road	Atlanta Highway to City limit	Urban Minor Arterial	2-lane roadway
Lights Ferry Road	S of McEver Road	Urban Minor Arterial	2-lane roadway
Hog Mountain Road	City limit to City limit	Urban Collector	2-lane roadway
Jim Crow Road	N of McEver Road	Urban Collector	2-lane roadway

Source: Derived From Map 6.3 (Georgia Department of Transportation).

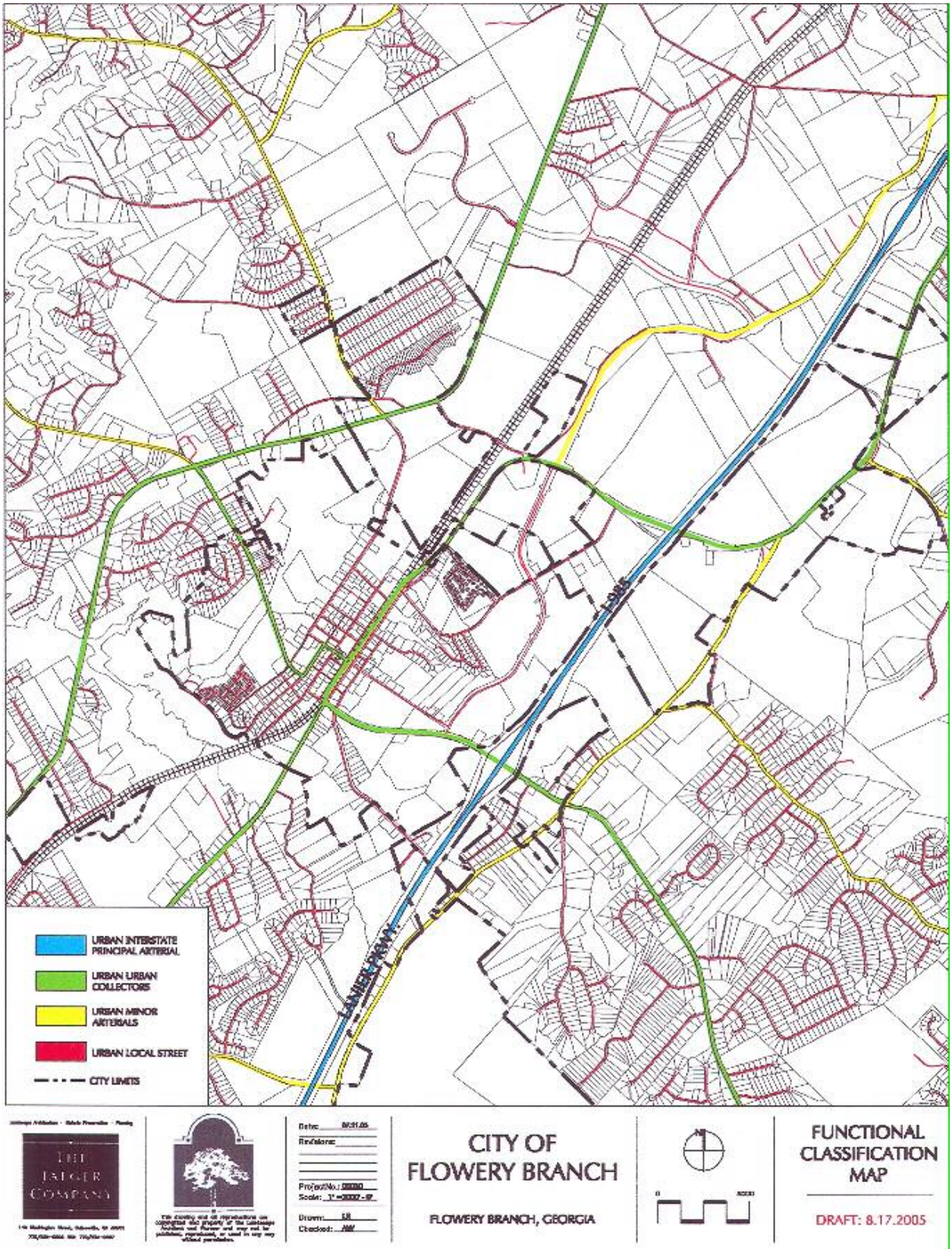

URBAN INTERSTATE PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL
URBAN URBAN COLLECTORS
URBAN MINOR ARTERIALS
URBAN LOCAL STREET
CITY LIMITS
LANIER PKWY
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP
DRAFT: 8.17.2005

Table 6.12
Local Road Inventory

Road	From:	To:	Notes
Above Tide Pl			Tide Water Cove Subdivision (private)
Atlanta Highway	City limits	City limits	
Boston Trail	Lights Ferry Rd	Valley Forge Dr	Entrance road to subdivision
Cantrell Rd	Atlanta Hwy	Radford Rd	2-lane roadway
Chariot Rd	Cantrell Rd	---	
Chattahoochee Rd	Gainesville St	Cantrell	
Chestnut St	Gainesville St	Railroad Ave	
Chestnut St	Atlanta Hwy	Mulberry St	
Chinook Ct	Jim Crow Rd	---	Ends at cul-de-sac
Church St	Near F.B. Park	Past Chattahoochee	
Debbie La	Lights Ferry Rd	---	Dead-ends past Tanner St
Gainesville St	McEver Rd	Lights Ferry Road	2-lane
Gainesville St	Lights Ferry Road	Mitchell St	1-way, westbound
Germantown Dr	Saratoga Dr	City limits	
Hog Mountain Rd	City limits	City limits	Access to Flowery Branch Industrial Park
Holland Dam Rd	Spout Springs Rd	Hog Mountain Rd	
Independence Dr	Valley Forge Dr	---	Dead-ends north of Valley Forge Dr
Interstate 985	City limits	City limits	4-lane divided highway
Jim Crow Rd	McEver Rd	City limits	
Jones St			
Kettle Creek Way	Germantown Dr	---	Dead-ends west of Germantown
Knight St	Mitchell St	Church St	1-way southbound
Lake Sterling Dr	Spout Springs Rd	---	Southern portion under construction
Lights Ferry Rd	Mitchell St	City limits	Truck Route
Lorimar Ct	Jones St	---	narrow
Main St	Gainesville St	Railroad Ave	(Truck Route from Railroad Ave to Mitchell St)
E. Main St	Atlanta Hwy	Spout Springs Rd	
Martin St	Gainesville St	Mitchell St	
Martin St	Mitchell St	Railroad Ave	1-way northbound
McEver Rd	City limits	City limits	
Mitchell St	Main St	Southwest bound	Truck Route
Mitchell St	Main St	Pine St	
Mitchell St	Pine St	Spring St	Narrow
Mohave Ct	Jim Crow Rd	---	Ends at cul-de-sac
Mooney Dr	Mitchell St	---	Narrow
Morrow Dr	Lights Ferry Rd	City limits	Portion unpaved
Mulberry St	Spring Street	---	Ends just west of I-985
Newberry Point Dr	Jim Crow Rd	Jim Crow Rd	Loop
Oak Street	Hog Mountain Rd	City limits	

Road	From:	To:	Notes
Park Rd	Mitchell St	---	Marina Access
Pine St	Gainesville St	Church St	Poor pavement conditions
Porter Rd	Spout Springs Rd	Hog Mountain Rd	
Portside Way			Tide Water Cove Subdivision (private)
Radford Rd	McEver Road	City limits	
Railroad Ave	Chattahoochee St	Snelling Ave	Truck Route east of Main St
Reed St	Gainesville St	Church St	1-way southbound
Saratoga Dr	Valley Forge Dr	---	End at cul-de-sac north of Valley Forge
Shoreline Circle			Tide Water Cove Subdivision (private)
Shoreview Circle			Tide Water Cove Subdivision (private)
Silver Tide Way			Tide Water Cove Subdivision (private)
Snelling Ave	Church St	Atlanta Highway	Becomes Spout Springs Rd beyond south of railroad.
Splash Water Dr			Tide Water Cove Subdivision (private)
Spout Springs Rd	Atlanta Hwy	City limits	Access from I-985
Spring St	Gainesville St	---	Ends southeast of Atlanta Hwy
Tanner St	Gainesville St	Mitchell St	
Tanner St	Mitchell St	Church St	Narrow
Thurmond Tanner	Spout Springs Rd	Radford Rd	4-lane divided highway
Treehouse Dr	Lake Sterling Dr	---	Contains model homes for Sterling on the Lake Subdivision
Valley Forge Dr	Boston Trail	---	Ends at cul-de-sac west of Independence Dr
Victoria Ct	Victoria Dr	---	End at cul-de-sac west of Victoria Dr
Victoria Dr	Cantrell Rd	Chariot Rd	

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. June 2005.

HIGHWAY AND MAJOR ROAD ASSESSMENT

Interstate 985

Functional Class: Urban Interstate Principal Arterial. Interstate 985 contains four lanes of travel through running generally north and south through the Flowery Branch area. It connects with Gwinnett County and the Atlanta Region to the south (terminates into I-85) and Gainesville, northern Hall County, and Habersham County to the north.

McEver Road

Functional Class: Urban Minor Arterial. McEver Road contains two lanes of travel through Flowery Branch. McEver, Road becomes Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to the south in

Gwinnett County. It is the most important north-south arterial west of the City, between downtown Flowery Branch and Lake Lanier.

Atlanta Highway (State Route 13)

Functional Class: Urban Minor Arterial. Atlanta Highway has two lanes of travel through Flowery Branch. After Interstate 985, it is the most important north-south arterial and connects Buford, Oakwood, and Gainesville. South of Hall County, the highway is known as Buford Highway, and the arterial provides access into DeKalb County and further points south.

Spout Springs Road

Functional Class: Urban Minor Arterial. Spout Springs Road provides direct east-west access to Flowery Branch from Interstate 985, exit 12. This road is a major development corridor within the City of Flowery Branch. East of I-985, the road is presently (June 2005) being widened.

Hog Mountain Road

Functional Class: Urban Collector. Hog Mountain Road is the major north-south roadway for the areas of Flowery Branch that are east of Interstate 985. This majority of lands within the city limits in this area are newly annexed.

Downtown Streets

Functional Class: The majority of streets in the downtown core are rural local roads. In the downtown area the majority of the streets serve residences. Two major exceptions are Main Street, which has a mix of commercial and other uses, and Railroad Avenue, which serves mostly industrial uses and local traffic to the downtown businesses. Many of the downtown streets are relatively narrow. Some are designated for one-way travel, including Gainesville Street, which is a two-lane roadway until just southwest of Martin Street, where it becomes one-way toward the Flowery Branch City Park.

Truck Routes

Many of the roads in the downtown Flowery Branch area are narrow and not conducive to larger vehicles such as buses or trucks. There are truck route signs downtown to guide trucks to the proper routes, which include Railroad Avenue, Main Street between Railroad and Mitchell, and Mitchell Street to Lights Ferry Road.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Congestion Management Systems (CMS) is a systematic process for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for lessening congestion and improving the area's mobility to meet State and local needs. CMS are required according to USDOT planning regulations for areas with over 200,000 people. The Gainesville-Hall area does not apply but the portion of the Atlanta Urbanized Area which extends into southern Hall County must comply with the requirements set forth by CMS. As the Gainesville-Hall County area continues to grow it is likely that the 200,000 population threshold will be reached and those planning regulations will be needed within the area.

ACCIDENT DATA

The Office of Traffic Safety and Design at the Georgia Department of Transportation maintains accident frequency data. The goal of the State is to assist in the statewide reporting of accurate crash reports and maintain a repository of timely and accurate data related to motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and fatalities. Utilizing this information is important to the planning and programmatic functioning of law enforcement agencies, government entities, including the Department of Transportation, highway safety advocates, and community coalitions.

Table 6.13 provides vehicle accident information for 1998-2003. According to the data, the rate per 10,000 licensed drivers of crashes has steadily declined since 2000. The actual number of accidents has increased, but due to the rapid growth and influx of new registered drivers, the rate has been declining.

Table 6.13
Vehicle Crashes and Rate Per 10,000 Licensed Drivers, 1998-2003
Hall County

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Crashes	5,049	5,424	6,113	5,721	5,963	6,127
Rate	553.9	561.6	611.6	536.4	516.3	500.6

Source: Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, Crash Analysis, Statistics & Information

Table 6.14 presents the number of vehicle injuries and deaths in Hall County between 1998 and 2003. The same pattern that was found in Table 6.13 exists, with the rates of both vehicle injuries and deaths steadily declining since 2000. In 2000 there were 147.8 injuries per 10,000 licensed drivers and 3.30 deaths per 10,000 licensed drivers compared to 191.9 vehicle injuries per 10,000 licensed drivers and 2.53 deaths per 10,000 licensed drivers in 2003. There were 31 vehicle deaths in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Table 6.14
Vehicle Injuries and Deaths Per 10,000 Licensed Drivers, 1998-2003
Hall County

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Injuries	2,152	2,183	2,477	2,215	2,228	2,349
Rate	236.1	226.0	247.8	207.7	192.9	191.9
Deaths	27	36	33	31	31	31
Rate	2.96	3.73	3.30	2.91	2.68	2.53

Source: Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, Crash Analysis, Statistics & Information

Table 6.15 presents the number of licensed drivers in Hall County. Between 1998 and 2003 there was an increase of 31,248 licensed drivers. This represents an increase of 34.3 percent over the five-year time frame. The rapid increase helps explains why there was a decrease in the rate of accidents despite an increase in the number of accidents.

Table 6.15
Licensed Drivers, 1998-2003
Hall County

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Licensed Drivers	91,147	96,584	99,949	106,649	115,485	122,395
Percent Increase	--	6.0%	3.5%	6.7%	8.3%	6.0%

Source: Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, Crash Analysis, Statistics & Information

EXISTING ROADWAY CONDITIONS

Expanding the roadway network to accommodate future growth is important but it is also vital to maintain the network already in place. Table 6.16 highlights the pavement conditions in Hall County in 2001 by functional classification.

Table 6.16
Pavement Condition of Lane Miles
Hall County, 2001

Functional Classification	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Total
Interstate	0	0	0	66.3	66.3
Arterial	63.4	58.6	43.9	64.3	230.2
Collector	67.0	113.5	51.4	59.0	290.9
Total	130.4	172.1	95.3	189.6	587.4

Source: Gainesville-Hall County Transportation Study; Georgia Department of Transportation

As of 2001, there were 130.4 lane miles of roadways in Hall County with poor pavement conditions. This represented 22.2 percent of all lane miles in the county. State roadways under this classification typically have the pavement rehabilitated or replaced by GDOT. Local roads are typically improved by cities or counties, because those roadways do not fall under State jurisdiction.

Pavement conditions are classified according to PSR, or Pavement Service Rating. This standard measure of pavement conditions is used by GDOT for statewide pavement ratings. A PSR rating of less than 3.5 is considered poor, 3.5-4.0 is average, 4.1-4.5 is good and 4.6-5.0 is excellent.

TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS

Table 6.17 presents historic and projected traffic counts at certain locations in 2000 and 2030. All areas are expected to see substantial increases in traffic volumes. Atlanta Highway south of Gainesville and Candler Road north of Candler, both in the southern Hall area, are expected to see the largest traffic volume increases, both increasing over 300 percent. These rapid increases in traffic volumes will have implications for future transportation planning efforts and roadway expansions.

Table 6.17
Historic and Projected Traffic Volumes, 2000 and 2030
Hall County

Highway (Station No.)	Count Location	2000	2030	Percent Increase
Athens Hwy. (US 129) (114)	W of Jackson County line	9,440	31,080	229%
Cleveland Hwy. (US129) (145)	N of Gainesville	12,930	24,270	88%
Athens Hwy. (US 129) (116)	SE of Gainesville	20,300	61,160	201%
Atlanta Hwy. (SR 13) (165)	S of Gainesville	9,280	45,140	386%
SR 365 (212)	NE of Gainesville	29,380	59,830	104%
Dawsonville Hwy. (SR 53) (267)	W of Gainesville	24,380	56,920	133%
Mundy Mill Road (SR 53) (283)	Oakwood	26,310	53,910	105%
Candler Road (SR 60) (303)	N of Candler	12,940	54,020	317%
Interstate 985 (409)	South Hall	41,860	87,590	109%
SR 365 (215)	Lula	26,400	59,750	126%
Browns Bridge Rd (SR 369) (429)	E of Lake Lanier	15,610	41,510	166%

Source: Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan; Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Table 6.18 provides a listing of proposed transportation improvement projects in the Flowery Branch/Southern Hall County area. Under the description of the project a range of dates is listed in brackets; these dates are the expected time frames for construction of the project. The projects listed are being pursued by GDOT, Hall County and its municipalities in order to meet the long term transportation needs of the area over the next 25 years.

A transportation project in downtown Flowery Branch, the Flowery Branch Streetscape, will be significant to the city. It is a streetscape project that will upgrade Main Street in downtown. Plans for the project include burying overhead wires, replacing the current sidewalks with new bricked sidewalks, adding decorative streetlights, and adding additional landscaping. This project will increase the appeal of downtown Flowery Branch and make the City's downtown even more viable.

Another planned project which will be significant to Flowery Branch is the I-985 interchange planned at Martin Road. This interchange will be in the northern Flowery Branch region and will provide improved access to this region of the city. The interchange will likely lead to an increased level of commercial and other developments because of the improved access. All the remaining projects will have at least a minor impact on Flowery Branch due to their location in the southern/central Hall County area, in the general vicinity of Flowery Branch.

Table 6.18
Proposed Transportation Improvement Projects
Flowery Branch Area

Project	Road	Project Termini	Project Cost (thousands)	Description [Time Frame]
Flowery Branch Streetscape	Main Street	Main Street to Railroad Ave	$402	An enhancement project to improve the downtown historic Flowery Branch streetscape. [2005-2010]
Winder Highway Widening	Winder Hwy (SR 53)	Cedar Ridge Dr to SR 211	$15,670	Widening from end of 4 lane south of SR 13/Atlanta Hwy to Tanners Mill Road. {2005-2010}
Friendship/ Thompson Mill Rd Widening & Relocation	Friendship/ Thompson Mill Roads (SR 347)	I-985 to SR 211	$33,527	Widening of Friendship and Thompson Mill Roads from I-985 to SR 211. Predominantly new alignment just west of Spout Springs to Old Winder Hwy. [2005-2010]
McEver Road Intersections	McEver Rd	---	$7,500	Intersection improvements/upgrades to 5 intersections (Jim Crow, Lights Ferry and Gaines Ferry in the Flowery Branch area). [2005-2010]
Friendship Road widening to Lake Lanier Islands	Friendship Rd	I-985 to Lake Lanier Islands	$5,328	Widening of Friendship Road from I-985 to Lake Lanier Islands. [2011-2020]
New I-985 Interchange – Martin Road	I-985/ SR 365	Martin Road to HF Reed	$11,010	Construction of a new interchange on I-985 connecting to Martin Road and HF Reed Industrial Boulevard. [2011-2020]
Atlanta/Buford Highway Widening	Atlanta Highway	Thompson Mill Rd to SR 347	$3,146	Widening of Atlanta Highway from Gwinnett County up to SR347/ Friendship Road. [2011-2020]
Spout Springs Road Widening	Spout Springs Rd	Hog Mountain Rd to Gwinnett Co.	$18,411	The widening from two to four lanes of Spout Springs Road. [2011-2020]
Martin Road Widening	Martin Rd	New Exit 13 to SR 53	$11,044	The widening from two to four lanes of Martin Road. [2011-2020]
McEver Road Widening	McEver Rd	SR 347 to Jim Crow Road	$14,962	The widening from two to .four lanes of McEver Road. [2021-2030]
Atlanta Highway/ Falcon Pkwy Widening	Atlanta Hwy/ Falcon Pkwy	Radford Rd to SR 53	$11,775	The widening from two to four lanes of Falcon Pkwy (Atlanta Highway). [2021-2030]
McEver Road Widening	McEver Rd	Jim Crow Rd to SR 53	$14,962	The widening from two to four lanes of McEver Road. [2021-2030]
Hog Mountain Road Widening	Hog Mountain Rd	Gwinnett Co. To Atlanta Hwy/ Falcon Pkwy	$17,485	The widening from two to four lanes of Hog Mountain Road. [2021-2030]

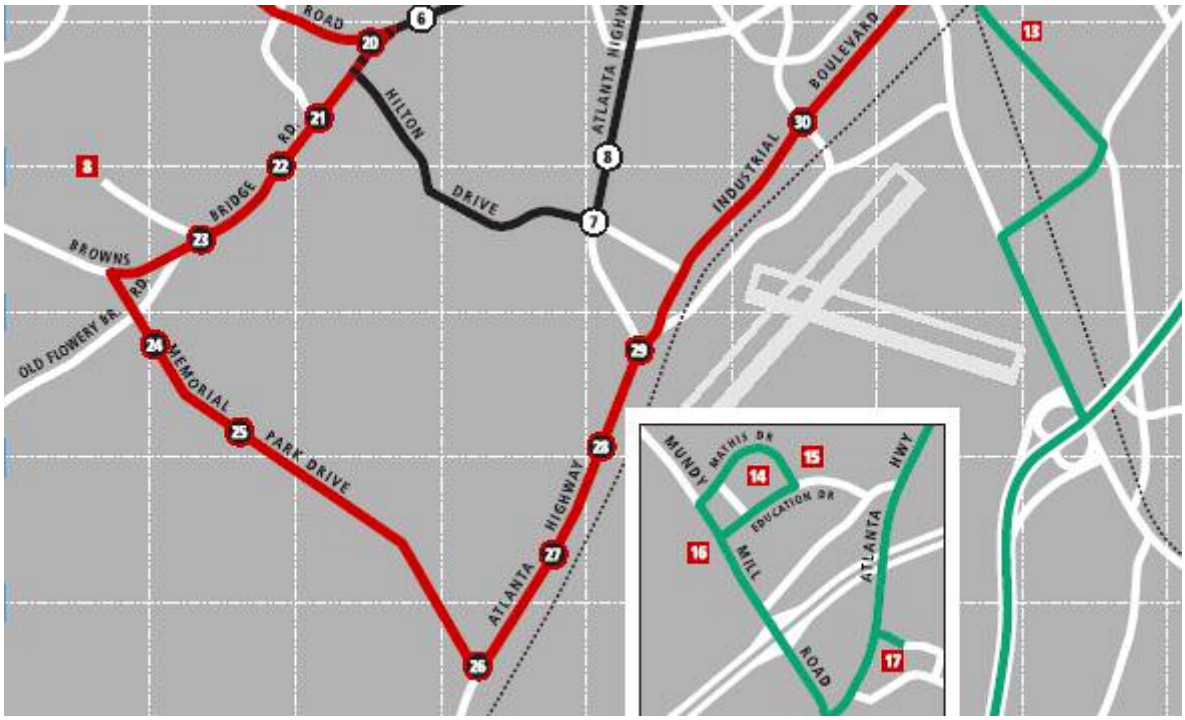
Source: Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

Most of the projects involve adding lanes to existing roads, thus increasing capacity and helping to ease traffic congestion. These roadway expansion projects will help to improve the level-of-service on these roadways.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public Transit in Flowery Branch

There are currently no assigned public transportation routes in Flowery Branch. The figure below shows the closest bus routes to Flowery Branch, which are just under 10 miles to the north of the City. Residents of Flowery Branch do have access, however, to public transportation under the rural demand response service (Dial-A-Ride) operated by Hall Area Transit (HAT). Four transit vans currently serve the Dial-A-Ride program. Requests for this service must be made at least 24 hours in advance (Source: Hall County Website; Red-Rabbit Transit Information Page).



Source: Hall County Website; Red-Rabbit Transit Information Page: http://www.hallcounty.org/files/pdfs/RR-MAP.pdf

Bus Routes in Closest Proximity to Flowery Branch

Commuter Rail

GDOT is currently working on plans for commuter rail between Atlanta and Gainesville. The line would start at Lenox, in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta, and have stops at Norcross, Duluth, Suwanee, Sugar Hill, Oakwood and Gainesville. This route would pass through Flowery Branch, and with a stop in neighboring Oakwood, would offer expanded public transportation options for residents in Flowery Branch. This rail-line would allow for Flowery Branch residents to have direct access to Atlanta without the necessity of an automobile. If this project comes to fruition it will greatly expand public transportation options for residents in Flowery Branch.

The same rail line connecting Gainesville to Atlanta would also be used as part of an intercity rail program envisioned by GDOT. The Intercity Rail Passenger Plan considers the possibility of having passenger rail services between Atlanta and Greenville, South Carolina, passing through Gainesville. This rail line is also part of the federally designated Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor project, which proposes high speed passenger rail service between Washington, DC and Atlanta.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Lee Gilmer Airport

The local economy gets a big boost from companies that use Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport for corporate travel, located in Gainesville (north of Flowery Branch on I-985). The airport has two runways, the longest runway being 5,500 feet. A 4,000 foot runway is used during daylight hours. The airport has 106 aircraft based on the facility, and operations average approximately 100 per day. The airport offers a full range of typical airport services including maintenance, instruction, fuel sales, storage, aircraft rental, transient parking and car rental (Source: Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element).

In 2003, Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport was the recipient of $1.5 million in federal assistance for the installation of an instrument landing system. The system is intended to provide an accurate and dependable way of navigating runways as well as allowing a pilot to determine an aircraft's position by means of instrumentation. This system will accommodate larger aircraft that could not use the airport without this technology (Source: *Gainesville Times*, October 25, 2003).

Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport

Just under an hour away from Flowery Branch is Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, which is the busiest passenger airport in the world.

Aviation System Planning

In 2001, the Georgia Department of Transportation began updating the State's Aviation System Plan. The process included taking a full inventory of the State's public use airport system, identifying each airport's functional role within the system, evaluating each airport's performance, identification of any deficiencies within the system which provided for the long-range system needs, documenting specific airport projects and the impact each will have, and the estimation of costs related to all airport projects. (Source: Georgia Department of Transportation. http://www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/planprog/intermodal/aviation/Documents/PDF/GA_Aviation_systems_plan_brochure_2003.pdf)

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

The Norfolk Southern Atlanta/Gainesville Railroad parallels US Highway 23 (SR 13) and passes through Flowery Branch (Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element).

WATER TRANSPORTATION

There is no commercial freight movement by water in Flowery Branch or Hall County. However, there is a commercial marina on Lake Lanier (Starboard Marina) just outside the City limits, which allows for the loading, unloading, and mooring of pleasure craft.

PARKING

Minimum Planning Standards of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs specifies that transportation elements should include an inventory of existing public parking areas and determine where parking is inadequate. The standards also suggest that the plan consider excess or obsolete surface parking facilities which may need to be retrofitted for redevelopment.

Flowery Branch does not have public parking areas, although on-street parking is provided along Main Street in the commercial part of downtown. Given that only one major commercial shopping center currently exists in the City, there is no oversupply of parking and no obsolete parking facilities in the City.

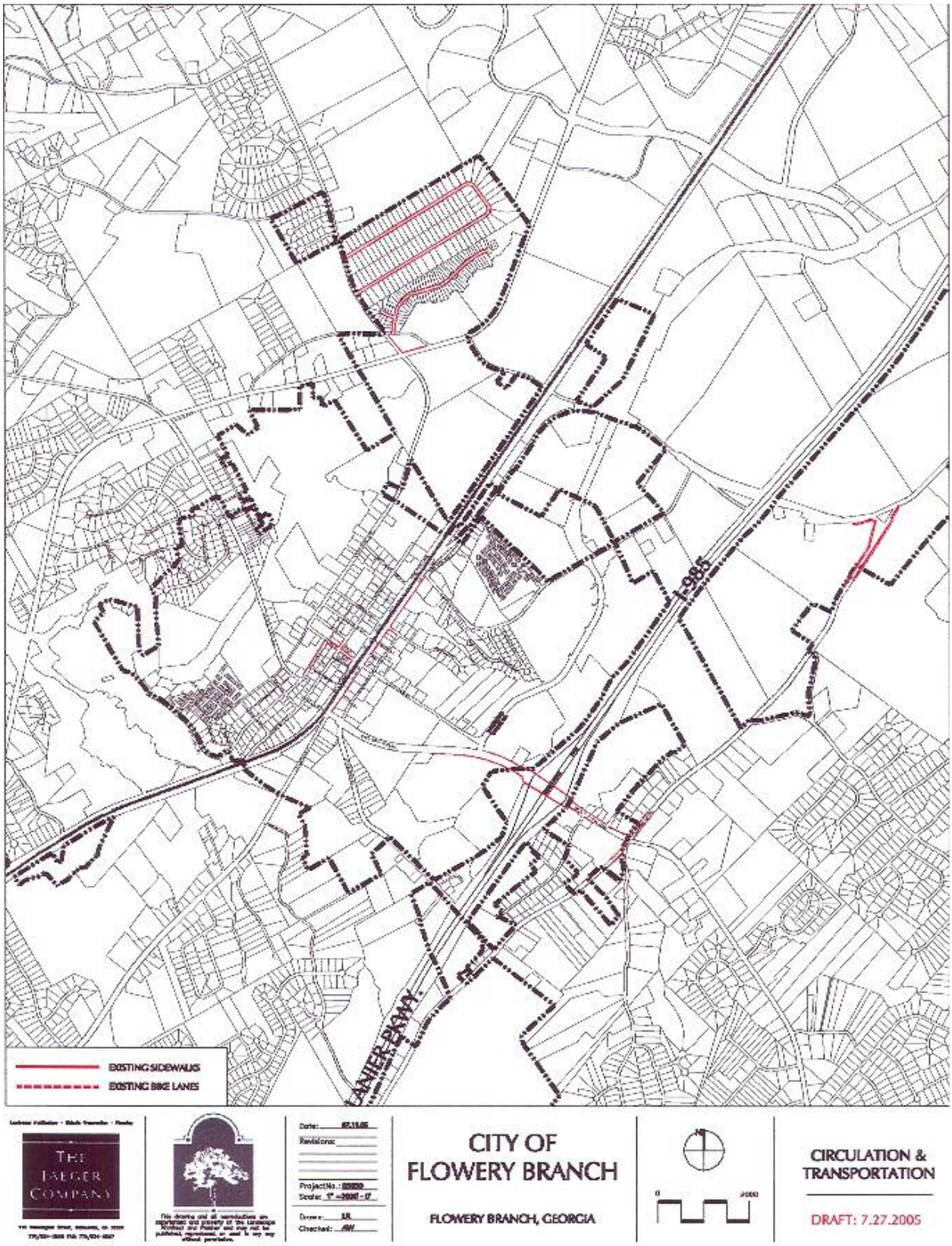
ALTERNATIVE MODES

Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities within the city limits of Flowery Branch are clustered, for the most part, in the downtown area. There are very few sidewalks within the city and those in existence are narrow and fragmented. The most substantial sidewalks are approximately seven to eight (7-8) feet wide along downtown building frontages on Main Street between Railroad Avenue and Church Street. These sidewalks continue west on axis into the next block on Main Street between Church and Mitchell Streets. Here the sidewalks become narrower and are separated from the roadway by a six to eight (6-8) foot grassed strip at the back of curb. Sidewalk segments connect perpendicularly to the sidewalks on Main Street south on one side of Mitchell Street and north and south on both Church Street and Railroad Avenue. These sidewalk segments do not continue to the end of their respective blocks.

For an approximate six (6) block long stretch east of the railroad corridor, sidewalks are present along building frontages on the east side of Atlanta Highway. These sidewalks connect a city cemetery, a post office and several small businesses. Footpaths along both sides of Spout Springs Road are evident just east of the intersection of Thurmond Tanner Road. Short segments of sidewalk flank the driveway entrance to the Exxon Station on the north side of Spout Springs Road but do not connect to the store or to any other sidewalks along Spout Springs Road. Combination walkway and bike lanes paved in asphalt with curbed edging pick on both sides of Spout Springs Road and connect under the Interstate 985 overpass. East of the interstate on the north side only of Spout Springs Road, newly constructed ten (10) foot wide concrete sidewalks tie into the asphalt pedestrian route and continue east to the intersection of Hog Mountain Road. There are newly designated crosswalks that parallel Spout Springs Road at street intersections and drive entrances to businesses along the north side of the road. No sidewalks are present on the south side of Spout Springs Road, nor are there any crosswalks connecting across the street to a new shopping center in this location.

There are also existing sidewalks along Jim Crow Road and within the Madison Creek, Newberry Point, and Sterling on the Lake subdivisions (see map on following page).


I-985
LANIER PKWY.
EXISTING SIDEWALKS
EXISTING BIKE LANES
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
CIRCULATION & TRANSPORTATION
DRAFT: 7.27.2005

Bicycle Routes

Georgia's Bicycle Master Plan, created by GDOT, proposes a network of 14 named and numbered routes totaling 2,943 miles that are or will be particularly well suited for bicycle use. The Statewide Bicycle Route Network includes a State Bicycle Route within the Flowery Branch-Hall County borders. State Bicycle Route 55 runs north-south along US 23 north to Gainesville.

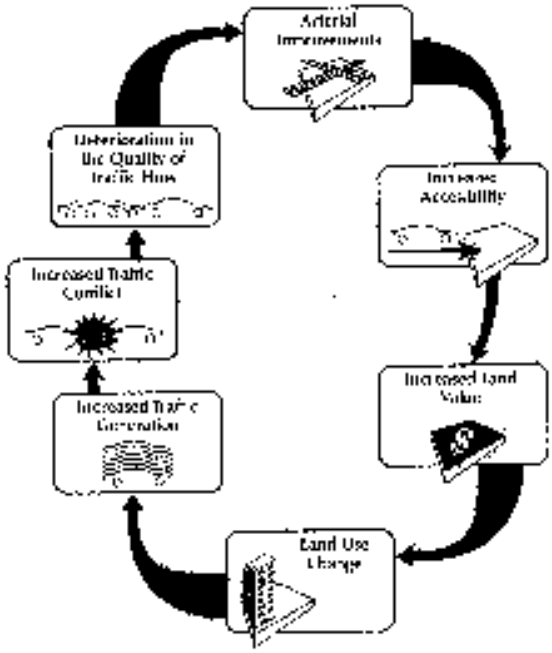
Dedicated bicycle routes within Flowery Branch are fragmented like the sidewalk system. Bike lanes are present for a short distance on both sides of Spout Springs Road near the intersection of Thurmond Tanner Road, terminating at the interstate. As mentioned above, pedestrian or bike connection is possible via curbed asphalt linkage routes on both sides of Spout Springs Road under the interstate overpass. The ten (10) foot wide sidewalks on the north side of Spout Springs Road are wide enough to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Upon reaching the intersection of Hog Mountain Road, the beginnings of bike lanes in both directions and on both sides of Hog Mountain Road are being established with the current road widening project.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Transportation and Land Use

There is a high reliance on vehicle use for mobility because of the separation of land uses and the lack of other viable modes of transportation. Single-family subdivisions are often located in areas distant from employment centers, leading to a reliance on vehicles for commute trips and increases in vehicle miles traveled. Similarly, housing is not often located within mixed-use developments or even in convenient walking distance to employment centers, thus requiring vehicle use when public transit is not available. Working at home (i.e., home occupations) reduces vehicle travel. The opportunity to walk to destinations also reduces vehicle use. The density and pattern of land use has a major bearing on the modes and distances of travel.

The illustration to the right provides a good description of how development and transportation create a vicious cycle that leads to ongoing transportation needs. Major highway corridors increase accessibility and land values. This leads to land use change (primarily commercial development) within and along highway corridors. As additional development occurs, more traffic is generated which increases conflicts and deteriorates the quality of traffic flow of the arterial road. Improvements are then needed.



Source: Transportation and Land Development, 2nd Ed., Figure 1-1.

Cycle of Transportation and Land Use Development

Access Management

Access management specifications need to be applied when existing development is modified or new buildings are added. It is desirable to limit access onto arterial roads to mostly from existing access points. For those parcels that do not currently have direct access to abutting arterials, it is desirable to provide connections to access roads as opposed to new curb cuts or access points directly onto the arterial. The necessary spacing of driveways (and roads) depends on speed limits and must account for driver perception and reaction time. On state highways, driveways are subject to Georgia Department of Transportation Regulations for Driveway and Encroachment Control, dated March 2, 2004, updated 12/01/04, or any official revisions thereto, and other adopted local or state regulations. By providing for the connections among parcels via frontage roads and inter-parcel access easements, the number of additional access points onto arterial roads can be minimized.

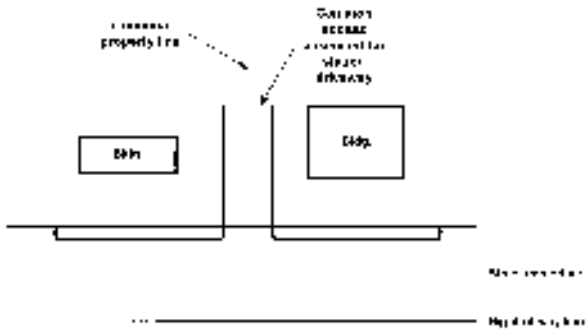
Aligning access points on opposite sides of a road or highway is important in terms of vehicular safety and the economy of road construction. Aligning access points (curb cuts) on opposite sides of the roads is considered essential when the road is divided by a median and a median break occurs. The entire parcel, rather than simply a particular project, needs to be considered in formulating and approving access plans.

In the event that a subdivision or land development required to file development plans with the City has access to a city street which is an unimproved or substandard road, improvements need to be considered through a development agreement.

Inter-parcal Access

Consideration needs to be given to how each land development will connect with compatible land use developments that it abuts. In order to do so, each land development has to be planned with driveway connections across property lines, when the abutting land uses are compatible. When cut or fill is involved in the grading of an individual building pad or development site, the finished grade of the parking lot or driveway needs to be terminated far enough inside the property to allow for the slope to return to that of the natural ground at the property line.

In cases where a parcel has access to a state highway or arterial street, shared driveways between two parcels, including common access easement at the property line, may be needed. In such cases, each property owner provides for and grants a common access easement to facilitate the movement of motor vehicles across the site.



Common Access Easement and Shared Driveway

The finished grade of any parking lot or driveway should be no more than fifteen (15) percent higher or lower than the natural ground elevation of the property at each abutting property line with frontage on the highway, to allow for driveway connections at acceptable grades. In addition to transportation benefits, proper grading at property lines also provides for a blending of the finished site elevations in a manner so that stark contrasts in the landscape will not occur and so that grading practices will be more in keeping with the natural topography.

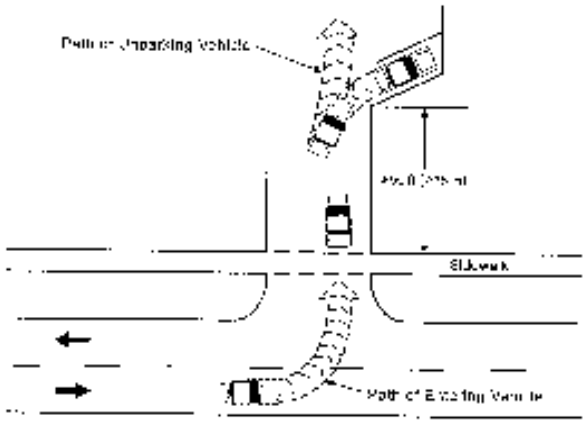
Off-Road Pedestrian Trails and Greenways

The cross-sectional widths of multi-use paths are usually twice that of a typical sidewalk. Multi-use paths are designed to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians. Multi-use trails are paths that do not permit motorized vehicles (except for publicly authorized emergency and service vehicles) and which may be used by multiple non-motorized users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair users, joggers, pet owners, roller bladders, skateboarders, etc.

On-site Circulation Standards for Land Development

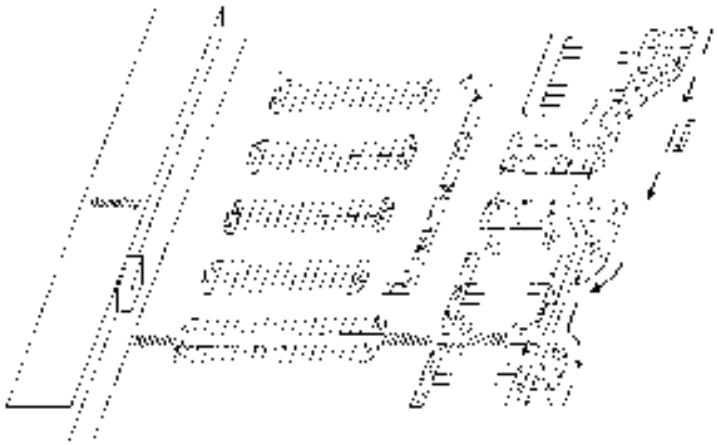
Service functions (e.g., deliveries, maintenance activities) need to be integrated into the circulation pattern in a manner which minimizes conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians. Access for service vehicles, trash collection and storage areas need to be located on alleys where alleys exist. When no alley exists, access needs to be provided to the rear or sides of buildings being served. Larger commercial developments need to have service and loading areas separate from main circulation and parking areas.

Driveway entrances need to provide a 100 foot deep clear zone between the pavement of an arterial road and the first turning movement. On any other road (city street) the clear zone or throat length normally needs to be at least 50 feet before a turning movement occurs (including parking), to provide sufficient queuing room for cars and/or delivery vehicles exiting the street.



Provide adequate driveway throat length
Source: Stover, Vergil G., and Frank J. Koepke. 2002. *Transportation and Land Development* (2nd Ed.). Washington, DC: Institute of Transportation Engineers. Figure 7-22, p. 7-31.

Except for detached, single-family dwellings, pedestrian access needs to be provided to individual developments and each establishment within the development. Pedestrian ways need to be well defined, take as direct a path as possible, and they separated where practical from automobile access ways. Parking aisle dividers are appropriate locations for pedestrian access facilities.



Direct Pedestrian Travel from Street to Store Front
Source: Stover, Vergil G., and Frank J. Koepke. 2002. *Transportation and Land Development* (2nd Ed.). Washington, DC: Institute of Transportation Engineers. Figure 8-28, p. 8-35.

Municipal Street Standards

It is increasingly accepted that street design standards have historically overemphasized automobiles, but that they need to introduce human-scale design. Many suburban communities have minimum street width requirements that are much greater than necessary, resulting in the wasteful use of land and encouraging motorists to speed through subdivisions. Many existing street standards have borrowed provisions of state highway manuals and applied them to neighborhoods, and such standards are increasingly out of character with the neighborhood and produce inappropriate behavior (e.g., speeding) by motorists (Burden et al. 2002).

Efforts to reform current street standards often must confront opposition from traffic engineers and fire chiefs, who might insist that the existing street standards (which require wide pavement widths and generous turning radii) are required to ensure public safety. Street width standards

can be reduced, however, without compromising safety, function, and performance. Space needed for emergency vehicles is less than most local governments previously thought (Transportation and Growth Management Program 1998).

Traffic engineers cite the well-known "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets" (1994) (a.k.a., the "Green Book") of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in support of maintaining wide streets and generous geometric requirements for streets. As proponents of more human-scaled streets have noted (Marriott 1998; Burden 2002), however, AASHTO's Green Book supports in many ways the design of streets for pedestrians and bicyclists. When opposition to smaller street widths is encountered, proponents can cite the Green Book (excerpted by Burden et al. 2002) which indicates that, for certain single-family residential neighborhoods, it is acceptable and safe to have streets so narrow that there is only one unobstructed lane.

One evolving concept is the "healthy street typology," or a recasting of conventional street standards to be more human scale. Table 6.19 summarizes a healthy street typology.

Table 6.19
A Healthy Street Typology

Type	Purpose	Right-of-Way Width	Road Pavement Width	Other Features
Alleys	Service access	20 feet	10-12 feet	
Lanes	Access to homes	38 feet	16-18	Landscaping and sidewalks
Streets	Access to single and multi-family housing	48-50 feet	24-26 feet	Landscaping and sidewalks; on-street parking on both sides
Avenues	Connect neighborhoods to town centers	80 feet	48 feet	Raised center median; landscaping, sidewalks, bike lanes, and on-street parking on both sides
Main Streets	Neighborhood and commercial access	60 feet	36 feet	Landscaping, sidewalks, and on-street parking on both sides
Boulevards	Multi-lane access to commercial buildings; carry regional traffic	104 feet	70 feet	Raised center median; landscaping, sidewalks, bike lanes, and on-street parking on both sides
Parkways	Carry traffic through natural areas; not designed to accommodate adjoining development	120 feet	44 feet	Four travel lanes; raised center median; landscaping and trails (separate bike and pedestrian access) on both sides

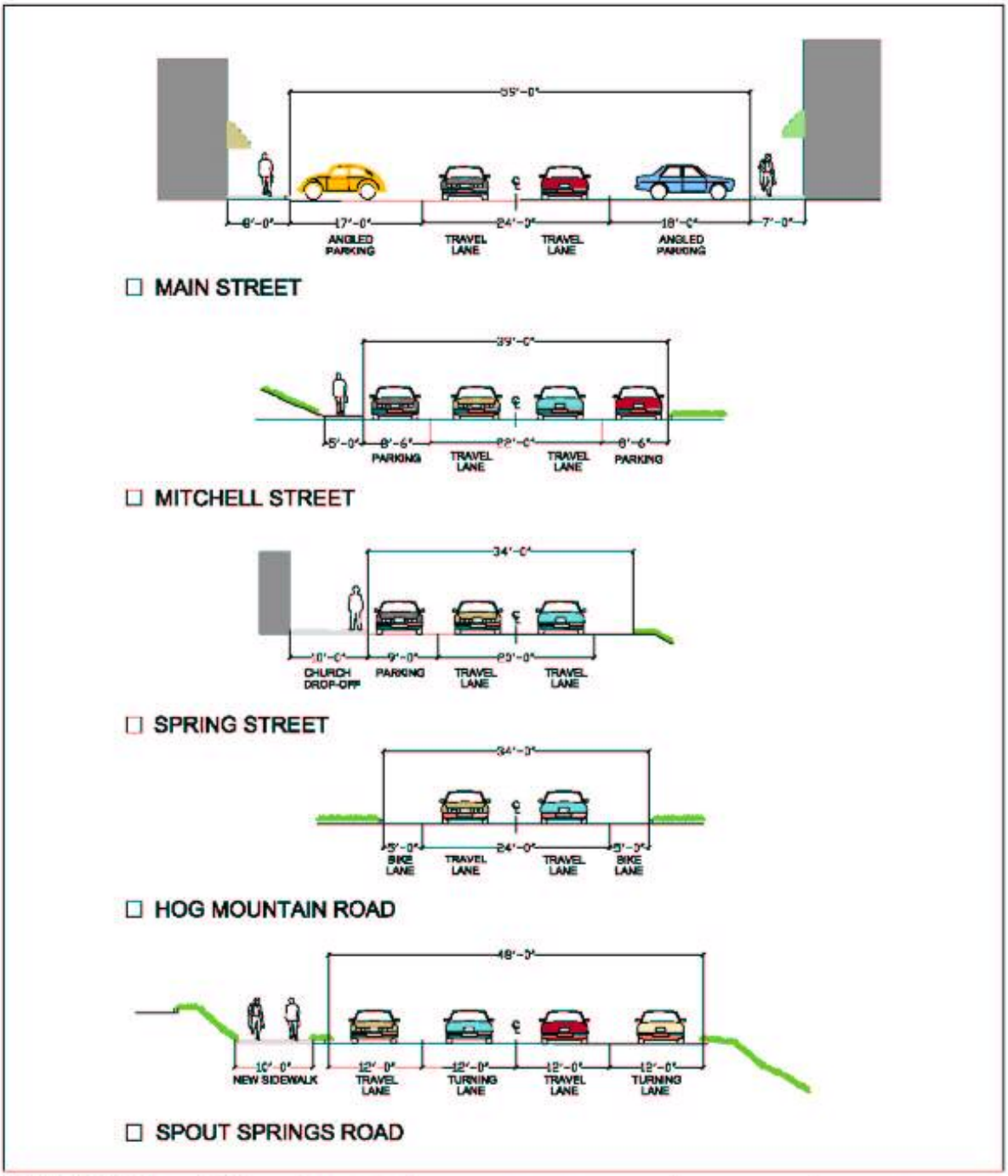
Source: Derived from Burden et al. 2002.

Some or all of these healthy streets may form the basis for a revised system of municipal street specifications. Flowery Branch does not have alleys, but they might be considered in future

development, particular around the central business district. Alleys are sometimes prohibited in conventional suburban subdivision codes. In others, they are permitted but perhaps discouraged with excessive pavement width requirements. In neotraditional developments (TNDs), alleys are encouraged. Many TNDs have alleys, with garages and carports fronting the alley rather than the street. "Locating garages and driveways at the rear of properties [and accessed by alleys] improves the streetscape by eliminating the sight of cars parked in driveways and avoiding house designs that present the garage as the dominant feature seen from the street" (Urban Land Institute et al. 2002).

Burden et al. (2002) suggest that lanes can be as skinny as 16-18 feet of pavement width and rights-of-ways as narrow as 38 feet. The local street network plan for Eugene, Oregon, provides specifications for access lanes with pavement widths of 21 feet to 28 feet depending on use and flow options. Most local governments, however, will not reduce their pavement width for a lane below 20 feet due to fire code requirements for access.

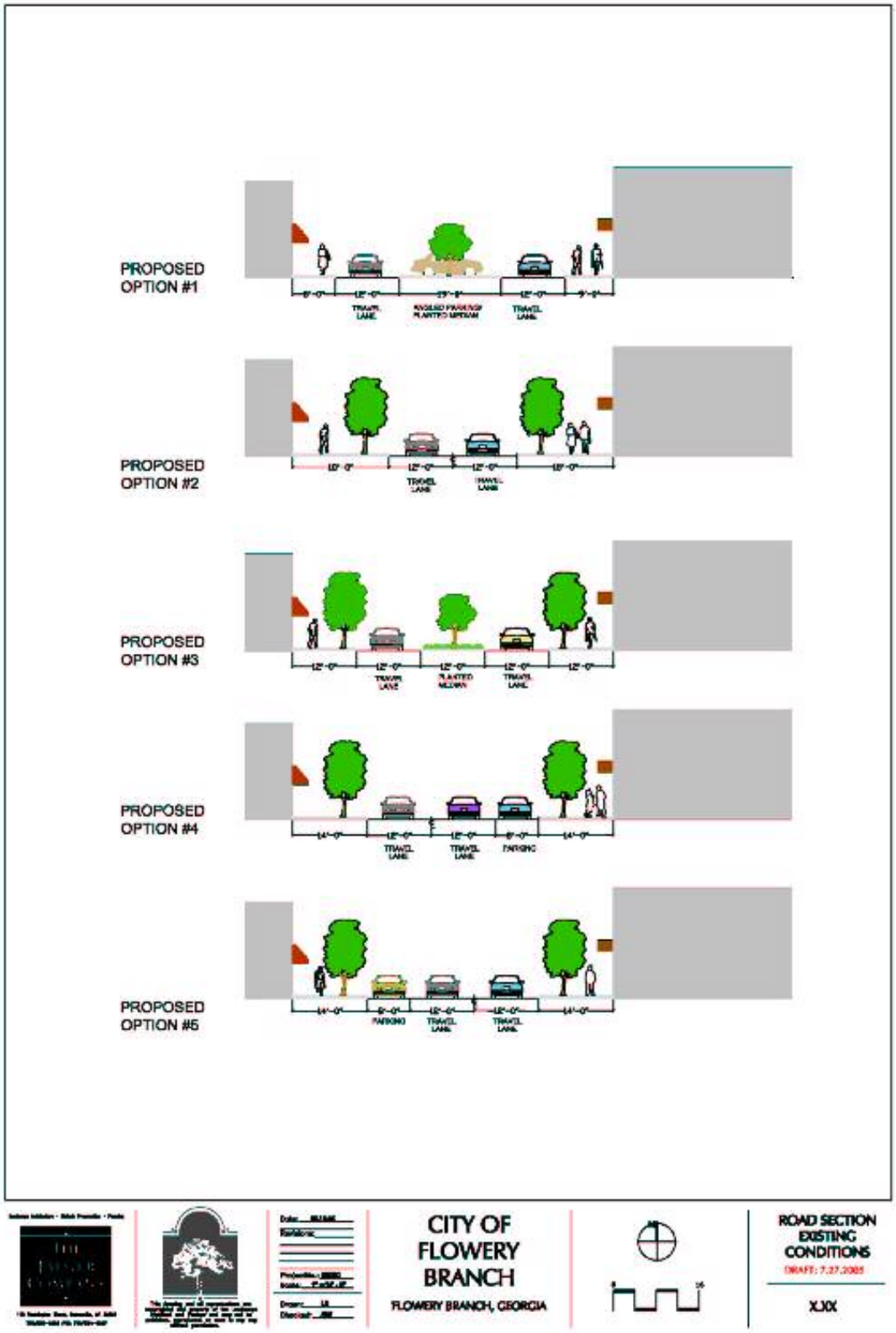
The two following pages show cross-sections of existing local street conditions and alternatives for municipal street standards. The community agenda will establish the city's preferred standards.



CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH

FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA

ROAD SECTIONS EXISTING CONDITIONS


PROPOSED OPTION #1
PROPOSED OPTION #2
PROPOSED OPTION #3
PROPOSED OPTION #4
PROPOSED OPTION #5
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
ROAD SECTION EXISTING CONDITIONS
X.XX

Parking for the Downtown

The comprehensive plan is likely to call for a compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use downtown area as a part of the visioning effort. Additional development will require more parking facilities, and detailed planning efforts need to plan for off-site parking areas in appropriate locations to serve the anticipated expansion of the City's central business district.

Skinny Streets in the Downtown

As a part of this transportation element, the City's planning consultants have conducted an inventory of streets. As is well known to residents, the most of the existing streets in the older part of Flowery Branch (i.e., the downtown area inside the original circle of the City) are quite narrow, and some are designated for one-way travel. On the positive side, the existing streets form a grid pattern of "skinny streets" and therefore contribute substantially to the character of the downtown. Traditional Neighborhood Development can occur and will be promoted by taking advantage of the small-block network of local streets.

On the other hand, however, the skinny streets pose important issues, such as whether they are wide enough to be safe for travel (especially if traffic volumes increase). In addition, only a few of the existing skinny streets in the downtown have sidewalks, and adding sidewalks, street trees, or any other streetscape improvements (including drainage) is likely to be problematic. This poses a dilemma for the City – the skinny streets are quaint and contribute to downtown character and should not be altered from that viewpoint; yet, improvements are needed to support additional development in the downtown.

Extension of Downtown Street Grid and Local Street Network Planning

To ensure compatibility with the unique street grid pattern in Flowery Branch's downtown, development in and near the downtown core needs to be served with adequate road capacity, pedestrian friendly design features, good connectivity, and improved streetscapes. From a town planning standpoint, the small block pattern found in the center of downtown could be extended as more dense, urban development proceeds outward. The comprehensive plan should provide for some guidance as to how new local roads around the downtown area might be constructed to maintain character and continue interconnectedness. The City should participate in the design of these roads, and the installation of streetscape improvements. Such new roads must be relatively narrow to avoid extensive right-of-way dedication and to be consistent with the city's narrow street pattern, but they must also be sufficiently wide to provide for sidewalks and street trees. Buildings allowed per development along these streets should have little if any setback from these additional streets, consistent with established development in the City.

The conventional hierarchy of streets (i.e., local collectors joining collector streets which empty onto arterial streets) has resulted in limited travel route options and congestion of collectors and arterials in suburban areas. A fully developed suburban residential area is unlikely to have many physical options for installing additional local streets, and those options that may exist are not often easily accepted by existing residents. In cases where some undeveloped land exists among developed subdivisions in the area, planners should consider proposing additions to the system of local roads so that a connected pattern of local streets will form a more accessible local street network.

Railroad Crossings

In places, city streets cross, at-grade, the Norfolk Southern Railroad right-of-way which parallels Atlanta Highway (SR 13). Trains travel through Flowery Branch on a regular basis, and safe passage across railroad tracks is essential. Warning systems including flashing lights and gate are critically important to reduce accident potential. The Georgia Department of Transportation is in part responsible for ensuring that city streets provide safe railroad crossings.

Detailed Planning for Corridors

Most corridor improvement strategies begin with an analysis by a planning and design team of professionals. Such studies can be expensive and take months to complete. A consensus of stakeholders needs to be built during the process, or opponents may surface and voice their concerns. Hence, extensive public involvement is required. Coordination of private landowners, utility provides, and government agencies, especially in the acquisition of improvement easements, is also challenging. More detailed corridor planning may be desirable for one or more major highway corridors in the City.

Establishment of Scenic Corridors

There are areas of Flowery Branch that offer scenic views, but it would be unusual for the City to designate a scenic corridor unless it were a logical extension of a more regional scenic route.

Context-Sensitive Street Design

Context-Sensitive Street Design (CCSD) is an approach to roadway planning, design, and operation that fits in appropriately with the context of adjacent uses of land. The concept respects traditional street design objectives for safety, efficiency, and capacity, but it also pays more attention to concepts of compatibility, livability, sense of place, urban design, and environmental impacts. CSSD considers access for alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycling, walking and transit, but it also takes stock of the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and community impacts of street projects.

Context-Sensitive Street Design is especially helpful in protecting environmentally sensitive areas, preserving historic resources, and respecting rural character. Because the street includes all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians, it increases transportation choices. Respecting the existing neighborhood street design in new road construction enhances the stability of neighborhoods. Streets that encourage walking provide better prospects for mixed-use development and redevelopment (Atlanta Regional Commission 2004).

Development regulations need to accommodate variations in street design standards (width, construction materials, engineering geometry, etc.) and provide street standards appropriate for the various contexts found in the community (e.g., historic districts, environmentally sensitive areas, rural areas, skinny streets in the downtown, etc.).

Street Lighting

The city needs knowledge about where the greatest street-lighting needs are before it can propose or improve the street lighting system. Total annual cost of operation is an important consideration in determining whether to provide night time visibility via street lighting. The

necessary visibility will vary according to the classification of roadway. Street lights should be required to conform to construction standards and specifications for light levels, glare reduction, uniformity, and color.

Travel Demand Management

Travel demand management is an organizational program that focuses on strategies to reduce automobile travel during peak periods of the day. Some of the initiatives have immediate effects while others take time to work. Usually, no single strategy by itself has the potential to materially influence traffic conditions on the road system. However, if multiple TDM strategies are pursued, a meaningful reduction in motor vehicle traffic during peak periods is possible. Effective strategies used elsewhere include: implementing staggered work hours at employment centers; shuttle services to link regional transit lines with major employers; providing incentives for urban design features that will support pedestrian and transit travel, marketing transit services and reduced/subsidized fare programs; zoning that permits multi-use developments in specified areas; ridesharing; and parking management.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is concerned with reducing vehicle speeds, vehicle noise, visual impacts, and sometimes traffic volumes. Techniques consist of a series of raised speed humps, raised tables, or other devices along with appropriate traffic control signage to slow speeding and/or discourage cut-through traffic. Traffic calming techniques use various means to influence the behavior of motorists: physical, psychological, visual, social, and legal (regulatory and enforcement). Although traffic management and calming techniques are often used in areas other than residential neighborhoods, most programs are focused in residential areas, where traffic problems are more prevalent and have the most influence on the day-to-day livability of the community (see GDOT, *Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Initiative – Pedestrian Facilities Design Guide*, Updated July 25th 2003). Traffic calming techniques must meet acceptable engineering principles. Table 6.20 provides a listing and description of commonly used traffic calming devices.

Table 6.20
Common Traffic Calming Devices

Technique	Description
Speed humps/tables	A speed hump is wider and smoother than a speed bump, and effective in slowing cares as they approach.
Traffic circles	Circular raised islands centered within intersections.
Chicanes	Alternately placed curb extensions into the street that force motorist to drive in a serpentine pattern.
Curb bulb-outs	Curb extensions placed at mid-block locations or intersections which narrow the street to provide visual distinction and reduce pedestrian crossing distances.
Narrower streets	Narrower streets limit the expanse of pavement visible to the driver and can be effective in slowing traffic, especially when lined with trees.
Special paving	Alternative road surfaces, such as brick, colored concrete, or special pavers, can be used at crossings, intersections, or along the sides of the street to break up the visual expanse of pavement and define areas of pedestrian travel.

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation. Pedestrian Facilities Guidebook.

Parking Standards and Maximum Parking Requirements

Poor design of parking lots can lead to damage to the environment and may require the community to subsidize the interests of a commercial enterprise at the expense of the community's environment. It is reasonable to require that development prevent environmental damage through good design of parking lots. Possible negative effects of parking and loading areas include creation of heat islands and changes to microclimate, isolation of pedestrians, increased stormwater runoff, and reduced stormwater infiltration into the ground.

Large parking lots can create heat islands where pavement absorbs solar radiation during the day and remains warm well into the night. When heat islands exist, cooling costs are higher than normal. Strategies can be used to reduce heat islands and their effects.

Large areas of paving are necessary to accommodate automobiles, but they can be unfriendly to pedestrians without specific regulations requiring that designers accommodate pedestrians. Large, open parking areas are conducive to high speeds and random maneuvers which can endanger pedestrians. Wide driveway aisles and access roads also increase speeds and discourage pedestrian travel. Street and parking lot design is moving away from automobile-centered standards toward a more balanced approach that includes pedestrians.

Parking lots can be seas of asphalt contributing to the degradation of local water quality. Parking lots can be more compatible environmentally if environmental protection measures are incorporated into design standards and regulations. Porous pavement and grass pavers reduce runoff by allowing it to pass through the paved surface and infiltrate back into the soil and groundwater. Utilizing porous pavements and grass pavers also reduces or eliminates land dedicated to surface storm water management facilities. Porous pavement designs and grass pavers are appropriate in some instances. Other types of stormwater management facilities are also more environmentally compatible, such as vegetative swales and bioretention.

Past off-street parking requirements have called for huge, expanses of parking around shopping centers and malls, some or much of which remains unused for most of the year. The risk of lost retail sales because of insufficient customer parking, as well as parking requirements for commercial loans, have led in part to the overbuilding of parking lots. This has worked to the benefit of retailers but has been shown to have undesirable environmental impacts, and those costs have been borne by communities. Certain parking areas are used only a few days of the year, yet the impacts of excess pavement continue every day, regardless of whether the parking is used or not. Studies have shown that at least one-half of the parking spaces in shopping centers are vacant at least 40 percent of the time (Urban Land Institute 1982, as cited in Shoup 1995). Parking lot construction is a considerable factor in the cost of development. Reducing parking areas reduces development costs. Therefore, reductions in the size of paved parking and flexibility in the types of pavement and parking designs are beneficial to all concerned.

Maintenance Programming for City Streets

The maintenance of local roads is often ignored or underfunded by many local governments. Maintenance costs of the road system tend to mount, and the problem increases when local officials defer maintenance for "just one more year." The City needs to know when to carry out road maintenance and rehabilitation projects to upkeep the local road system. If improvements

are not conducted in a timely manner when needed, the quality of local roads decreases and the costs to repair or rehabilitate them increases. For instance, it costs more to rehabilitate if the City delays until a street is in very poor condition (Bailey et al. 1986). Also, the cost escalates three, four, or five times higher the longer the delay. For these reasons, a pavement maintenance system is desirable; such systems are available to most local government agencies at reasonable cost.

Surface treatment, crack filling, and pothole filling are a routine part of a pavement management program. Surface treatment consists of a thin coating of asphalt with stone chip rolled in; this treatment will give a five-year life under moderate traffic conditions. Crack filling is needed to prevent water from entering the base and weakening the street; proper crack filling requires a "sufficient depth of a compressible, expandable asphalt-based material that adheres thoroughly to the sides of the crack (Bailey et al. 1986). The city's pavement maintenance program should also include correction of any soft spot locations (weak base) and the routine filling of potholes.

Street "rideability" (surface condition) can be rated using trained observers or by mechanical roughness-measuring devices. For instance, the visual rating scale provided in Table 6.21 could be applied from an automobile:

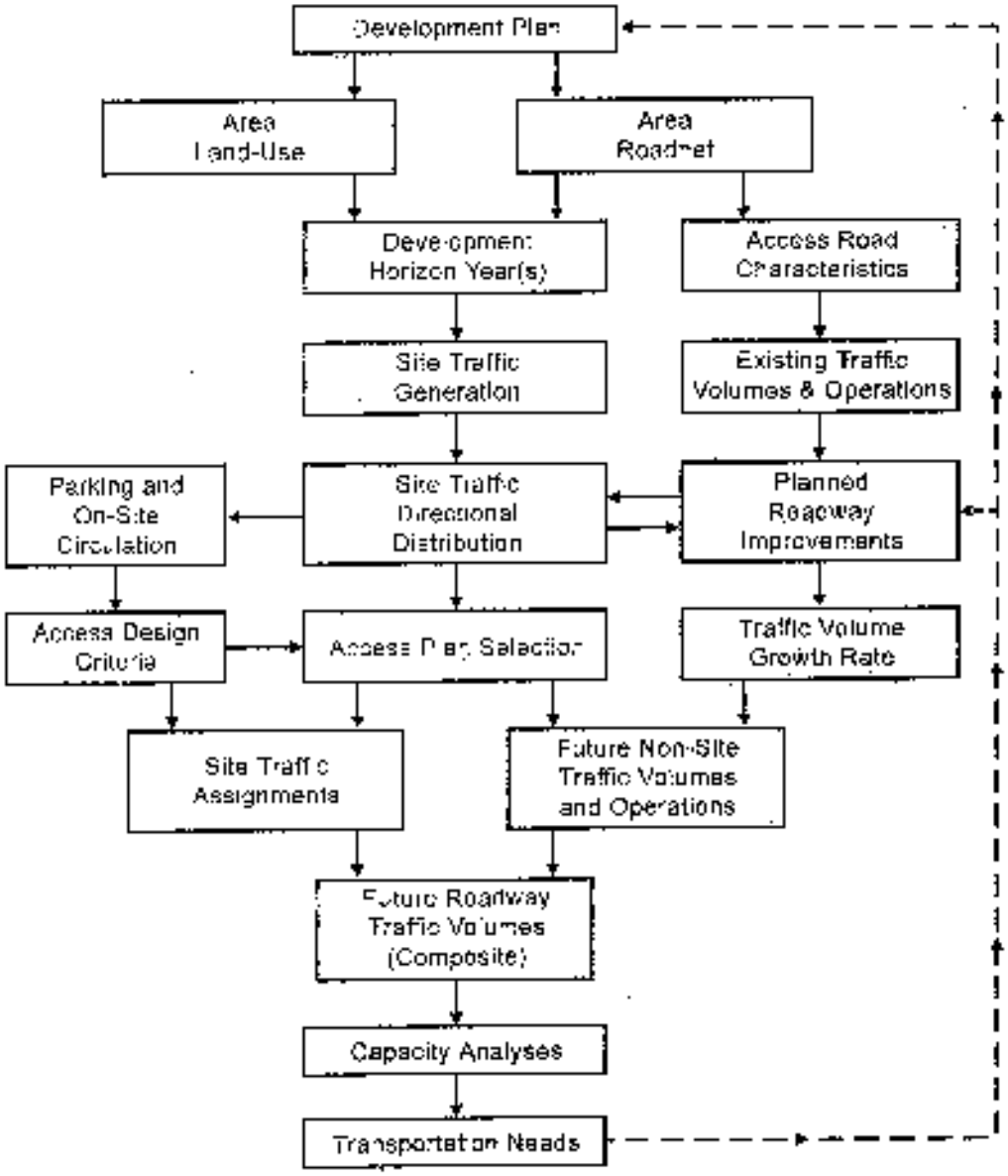
Table 6.21
Rating Scale for Street Rideability

Condition	Description
1	Smooth
2	Slightly bumpy
3	Considerably bumpy
4	Severe jolt or potential safety hazard

Source: Hatry et al. 1992.

Traffic Impact Studies

A traffic impact study for developments generating 100 or trips in a peak hour or 1,000 vehicle trips per day are needed to determine the most appropriate road improvements, including driveway locations, and as a basis for determining improvements required to the road system. Prior to development approval, additional road right-of-way for a local road or frontage road may be needed at intersections or at other locations fronting the property where turning lanes, storage lanes, medians, or realignments are required for traffic safety, and where the existing right-of-way would be inadequate to accommodate the road, drainage, and utility, and other improvements necessitated by the development.



Source: Transportation and Land Development, 2nd Ed., Figure 2-2

Traffic Impact Analysis Process

Americans With Disabilities Act Accessibility

The ADA is federal civil rights legislation passed in 1990 which requires accessibility for disabled persons. Curb (wheelchair) ramps provide access between the sidewalk and roadway for people using wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, crutches, handcarts, bicycles, and also for pedestrians with mobility impairments who have trouble stepping up and down high curbs. Curb ramps must be installed at all intersections as mandated by federal legislation. Wheelchair ramps must have a slope of 1:10 and must be designed in accordance with the ADA guidelines. All newly constructed and altered roadway projections must include curb ramps.

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PHOTO APPENDIX
SELECTED ROADS IN FLOWERY BRANCH

Atlanta Highway SW from Spring

Cantrell Road S from Atlanta Highway

Chariot Road (S)

Chattahoochee Street SE from Gainesville St.

Chestnut St. SE from Gainesville St.

Chestnut St. NW toward Atlanta Highway

Chinook St. SW

Church St. SW

Debbie Lane (NE from Tanner)

Gainesville St. NE from Main St.

Gainesville St. SW from Martin Way

Germantown Road (N)

Hog Mountain Road (N)

Holland Dam Rd (S) from Spout Springs Rd.

Jim Crow Road

Knight Street

Lake Sterling Drive (S from Spout Springs Rd.)

Lights Ferry Rd (S from Gainesville St.)

Lorimar Court

Main St. (NW toward Atlanta Highway)

Martin Street SE

McEver Rd (E from Jim Crow)

Mitchell St. (SW toward Tanner St.)

Mohave Court

Mooney Dr. (SE from Mitchell)

Morrow Road (N part Unpaved)

Mulberry St. (NE)

Newberry Point Drive (NE)

Oak Street (E from Holland Dam)

Pine St. (NW from Gainesville St.)

Porter Rd. (S toward Spout Springs)

Portside Way

Radford Rd. (E Toward Jim Crow)

Railroad Avenue

Reed Road (SE from Gainesville Street)

Saratoga Drive

Shoreview Circle

Silvertide Way

Snelling Ave. (Becomes Spout Springs)

Spring Street (NW toward Atlanta Highway)

Tanner Street (NW from Mitchell)

CHAPTER 7
NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The City of Flowery Branch is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources that are evident in its unique water features, rolling hills and scenic vistas. The identification and conservation of these resources is vital to ensuring a healthy and sustainable natural environment in the face of the inevitable development of the city. Opportunities for careful stewardship of the city's diverse resources are a logical extension of any inventory and assessment of Flowery Branch's natural resources. The inventory of natural resources is divided into three primary sections: hydrology, geology, and geography.

The Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan was adopted recently in 2004 and much of the natural resources data has not changed since that time; therefore, this section relies heavily on data presented for Hall County in the comprehensive plan.

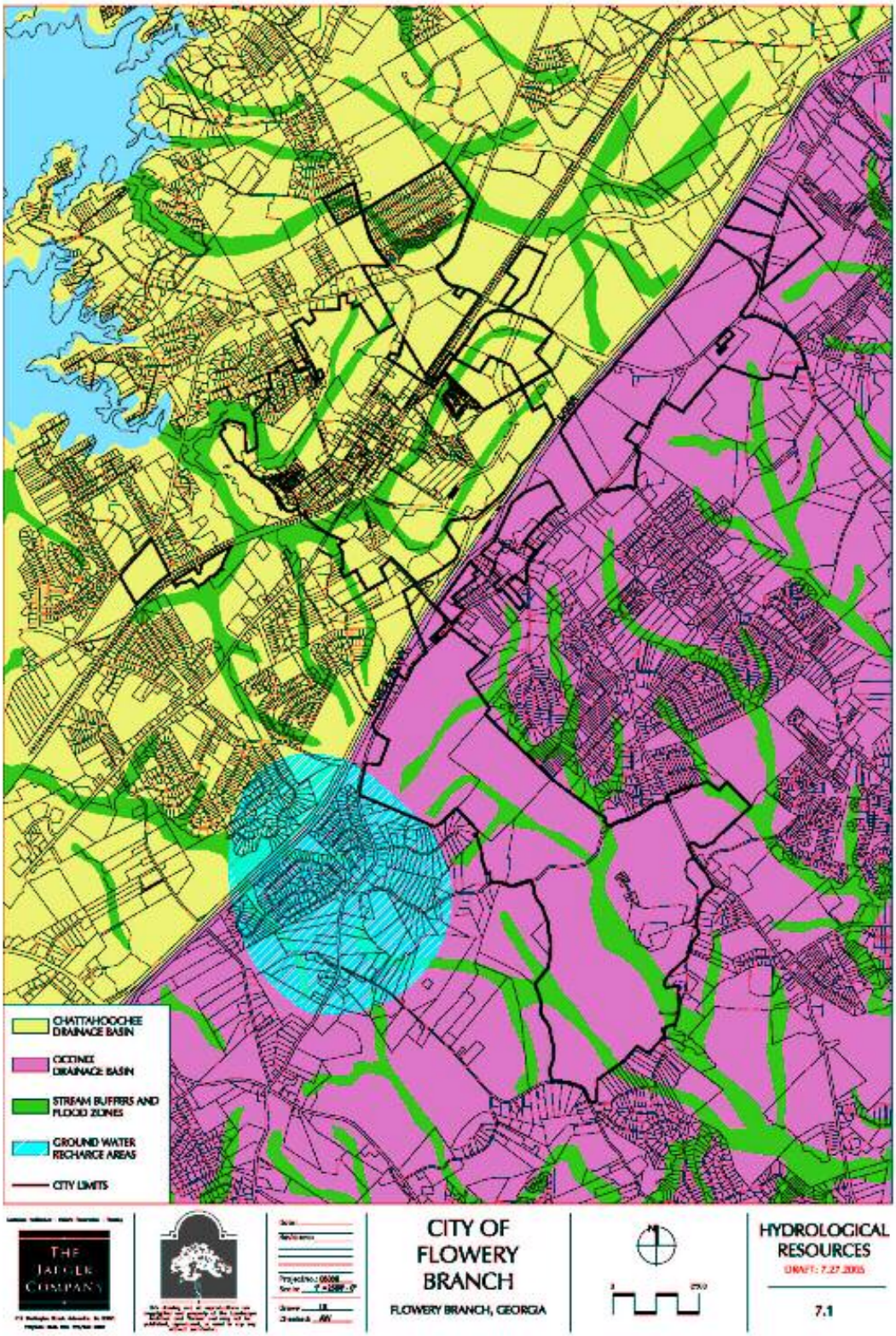
HYDROLOGY

Public Water Supply and Watersheds

The City of Flowery Branch is drained by both the Chattahoochee and Oconee River Basins. These two river systems are the major watersheds within the City of Flowery Branch; the dividing line between the two river basins is the path of Interstate 985/Highway 365 which marks the Chattahoochee Ridge (see Map 7.1). In the Chattahoochee River Basin, all rivers and streams ultimately flow to the Gulf of Mexico. All of the Oconee River Basin's rivers and streams eventually flow to the Atlantic Ocean.

The headwaters of the Chattahoochee River Basin extend into the Blue Ridge Mountains and include a drainage area of approximately 1,800 square miles in the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) which includes Flowery Branch. The Chestatee and Little Rivers both feed the Chattahoochee River which is then impounded by Buford Dam to create Lake Sydney Lanier. Buford Dam, and thus the flow of the Chattahoochee River, is controlled by the Army Corp of Engineers. The river continues in a southwesterly direction through Atlanta and on to Columbus, Georgia, and the Gulf of Mexico. According to the 2004 Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has completed a 2030 Needs Assessment for the Chattahoochee River Basin that includes the current conditions and projected needs for water supply and wastewater. The two-sub-basins identified in the stuffy for the Chattahoochee River Basin are the Upper and Lower Chattahoochee River Basins. Flowery Branch is located within the Upper Chattahoochee River Basin, along with the rest of Hall County.

The Oconee River Basin drains an eastern portion of the City of Flowery Branch; this area is part of the MNGWPD planning area and currently features low-density residential development. The headwaters of the Oconee River are the Middle and North Oconee Rivers that form in Hall County and ultimately join together in Athens to form the Oconee River. The MNGWPD indicates that the waters of the Oconee River Basin, although not in high demand at this time, will be in higher demand in the future. For example, the construction of the Cedar Creek Reservoir on a tributary of the North Oconee River in Hall County will pull seven million gallons per day for use in a Hall County water treatment plant.


CHATTAHOOCHEE DRAINAGE BASIN
OCCONEE DRAINAGE BASIN
STREAM BUFFERS AND FLOOD ZONES
GROUND WATER RECHARGE AREAS
CITY LIMITS
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
HYDROLOGICAL RESOURCES
7.1

Although not within the city limits of Flowery Branch, the North Oconee River and new reservoir are both within the boundaries of the adopted 1999 North Oconee Water Supply Watershed Overlay Zone. This zone maintains stream buffers and setback requirements for the development in the watershed, as well as limits impervious surface to 25% within the watershed.

Part of the *2030 Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan* for the NQMWPD presents findings for current and future water consumption for the planning area, including the City of Flowery Branch. The table below includes figures for all sixteen counties within the planning district:

Baseline Water Use Projection by County (MGD / AADD)*

County	2001	2030 Projection Range
Bartow	20	47 to 54
Cherokee	18	40 to 46
Clayton	32	40 to 46
Cobb	85	113 to 130
Coweta	13	27 to 31
DeKalb	97	129 to 148
Douglas	11	23 to 26
Fayette	13	23 to 27
Forsyth	16	56 to 65
Fulton	186	244 to 281
Gwinnett	90	160 to 5183
Hall	26	48 to 55
Henry	18	40 to 46
Paulding	8	25 to 29
Rockdale	11	25 to 29
Walton	9	19 to 21

* Million Gallons Per Day / Annual Average Daily Demand
Source: Table E 4-6. Section 4 of the Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan. September, 2003.

Protected River Corridors and Floodplains

Hall County provides a local ordinance that sets minimum protection standards of twenty-five (25) and fifty-foot (50) setbacks for all streams and rivers. An exception is a 150 foot setback required within the North Oconee Watershed Protection area. The flood control measures established by the Corp of Engineers for Lake Lanier provide protection for the city from the threat of flooding beyond the boundaries of the Chattahoochee watershed's rivers and streams. Although the flood-prone land area of the Oconee River Watershed is larger than the Chattahoochee basin, with as many as 10,000 acres as potential for flooding, the Oconee basin is currently a less-densely populated area and, therefore, flooding is a less serious threat.

Wetlands

The U.S. Department of the Interior recorded the wetlands of Hall County on the national Wetlands Inventory Maps prepared in April of 1982. Wetlands were identified through analysis of aerial photographs based on vegetation, visible hydrology and geography. The map shows

that a majority of wetlands in Flowery Branch are located along streams, riverbanks and lakes. These locations have minimal impact on development.

Due to their contribution to water quality, fish and small animal habitat, erosion control, and wildlife food sources, wetland areas are protected under federal law. Wetlands are additionally protected under Georgia's *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* and a local Hall County ordinance that meets this state mandate. The protection ordinance allows only those land uses that do not impair the wetland function long-term, such as timber production and harvesting, wildlife and fisheries management, wastewater treatment, recreation, natural water quality treatment or purification, or other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Approximately 383 acres or 11% of the total 3,310 acres making up the city of Flowery Branch are categorized as stream buffer zones, or wetlands (see Map 7.1).

Recharge Areas

Recharge areas are defined by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as any portion of the earth's surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. There are three significant ground water recharge areas in Hall County; one of them is located south of the city limits of Flowery Branch and is indicated on Map 7.1.

In order to protect groundwater supplies, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs mandates that local governments with significant groundwater resources adopt and implement a groundwater recharge protection ordinance. Hall County has adopted a zoning ordinance that addresses development standards within its recharge areas. Protection measures include a prohibition on hazardous waste disposal facilities and new sanitary landfills without synthetic liners and leachate collection systems, increased lot sizes for dwellings served by individual septic systems, and secondary containment for new above ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks.

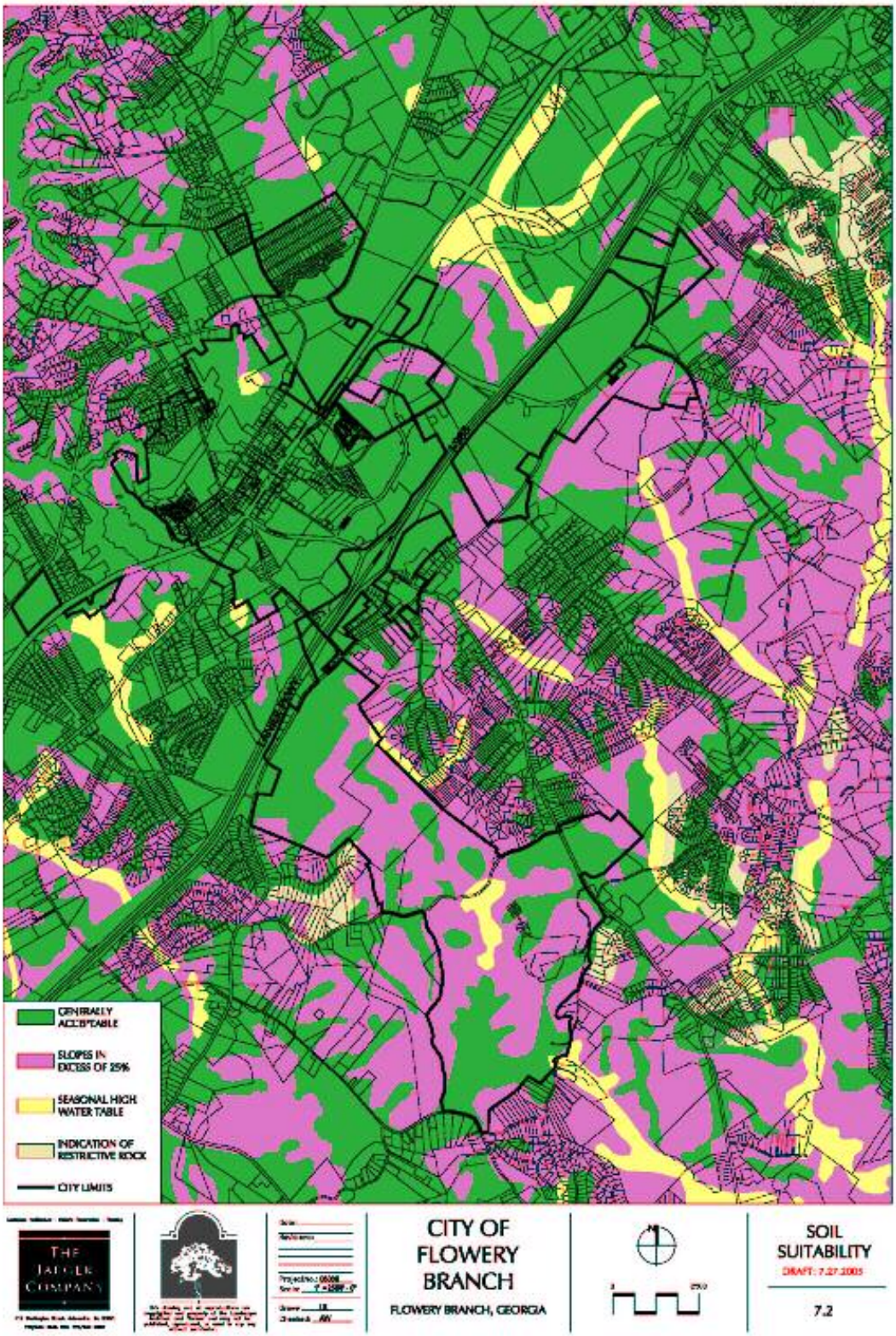
GEOLOGY

Developable Soils and Steep Slopes

Soils are discussed based on their suitability for development. There are a variety of factors that influence soil behavior, including available water capacity, slope stability, permeability and erodibility. Soil types, once established, greatly affect drainage systems, pipelines, foundations for small buildings, construction and maintenance of roads, and sewage and refuse disposal systems.

As described in the Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Hall County is located in the Southern Piedmont area on the upper province of the Piedmont Plateau. The plateau is characterized by a series of prominent hills near the base of the Appalachian Mountains with a complex mineral composition of the soil is complex. The soil is sandy-clay to clay subsoils.

A severe soil limitation classification indicates that one or more site features are so unfavorable or difficult to overcome that a major increase in construction effort, special design or intensive maintenance is required. For some soils classified as severely limited, such alternatives may not be feasible.


GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE
SLOPES IN EXCESS OF 25%
SEASONAL HIGH WATER TABLE
INDICATION OF RESTRICTIVE ROCK
CITY LIMITS
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
SOIL SUITABILITY
DRAFT: 7.27.2005
7.2

Soils that have properties unfavorable to the use of septic tank filter fields, such as a high water table or potential for flooding, are given a rating that indicates several soil limitation. This rating does mean that septic tanks cannot be used on these soils; rather, it suggests that anything but low-density development may produce health or water quality problems.

A soil survey of Hall County was prepared by the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture from 1966 to 1977 that classified all the soils in the county, including an assessment of those soils that have limitations for development.

Slopes are considered steep if they are over 15%. Soils associated with steep slopes typically require substantial alteration for building development. Additionally, these soils typically pose severe limitation to septic tank drain fields. Due to its rolling topography, the City of Flowery Branch has a large amount of the land that is considered steep slopes. Approximately, 755 acres—or 22%—of the soils within the city of Flowery Branch represent soils on steep slopes. Development on steep slopes is not desirable from an environmental perspective because it causes erosion and greater storm water run-off. However, development of steep slopes within the county has proven somewhat popular due to the advantage of building on ridgelines in order to partake of scenic views, especially near the lake.

Although there are many steep slopes in Flowery Branch, there are no protected mountains in the city limits, or within Hall County.

Although this land use study deals with a municipal jurisdiction that will be planned for strategic growth, there are some areas of the city with good agricultural soils that have been farmed for more than 100 years. Incentives to encourage the continued use of farmlands should be considered by the city.

GEOGRAPHY

Endangered and Protected Species Habitat

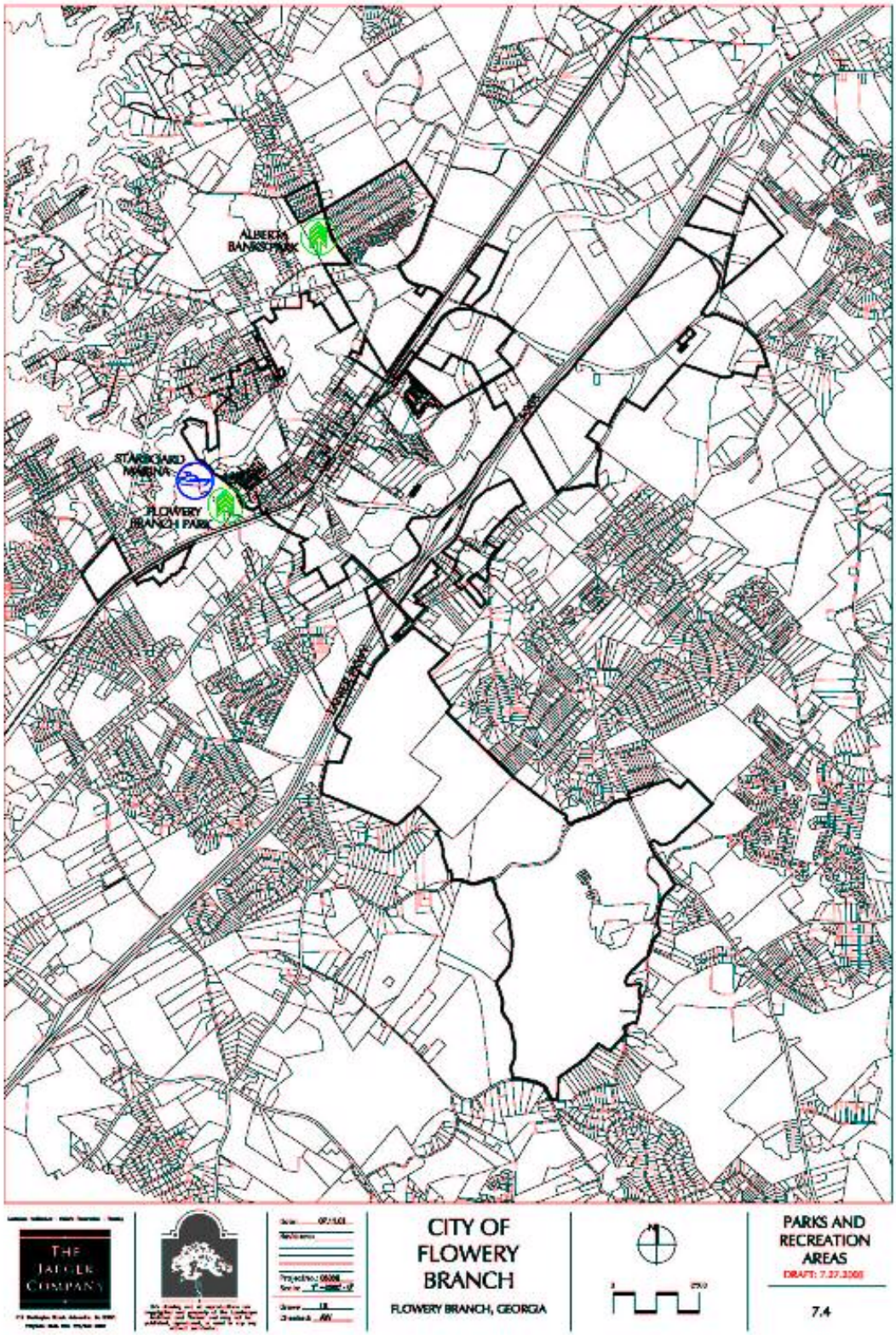
According to the 2004 Gainesville-Hall County Comprehensive Plan, there are two general areas of habitat for endangered or protected plant species located within the city of Flowery Branch (see Map 7.3). Conserving the diversity of native plant life primarily depends on preserving forested areas, or protecting habitat from development. The areas in Flowery Branch potentially inhabited by endangered plant species (noted with the common and scientific names) include the Ozark Bunch Flower (Melanthium woodi) and the Indian Olive (Nestronia umbellula).

Park and Recreation Areas

Flowery Branch operates a park that is located on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property at Lake Lanier. The City of Flowery Branch does not have any city parks of its own, but the citizens of the municipality have adjacent park and recreation areas to enjoy. These parks are owned by federal and county agencies, as well as private parties, and include Alberta Banks Park, Flowery Branch Park and Starboard Marina (see Map 7.4).

A Parks Facilities Master Plan was prepared for Hall County in 1999 that includes an inventory of sixteen (16) county park and recreation facilities, including Alberta Banks Park. The Army Corp of Engineers also maintains 10,518 acres of property, including Flowery Branch Park.

MELANTHIUM WOODII
AREAS WITH PROTECTED SPECIES
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
PROTECTED SPECIES HABITAT
7.3


ALBERTA BANKS PARK
STARBOARD MARINA
FLOWERY BRANCH PARK
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS
7.4

The future addition or creation of park acreage, with both passive and recreational amenities, would be of tremendous benefit to the citizens of Flowery Branch and should be considered in future development plans.

Gateways and Scenic Views

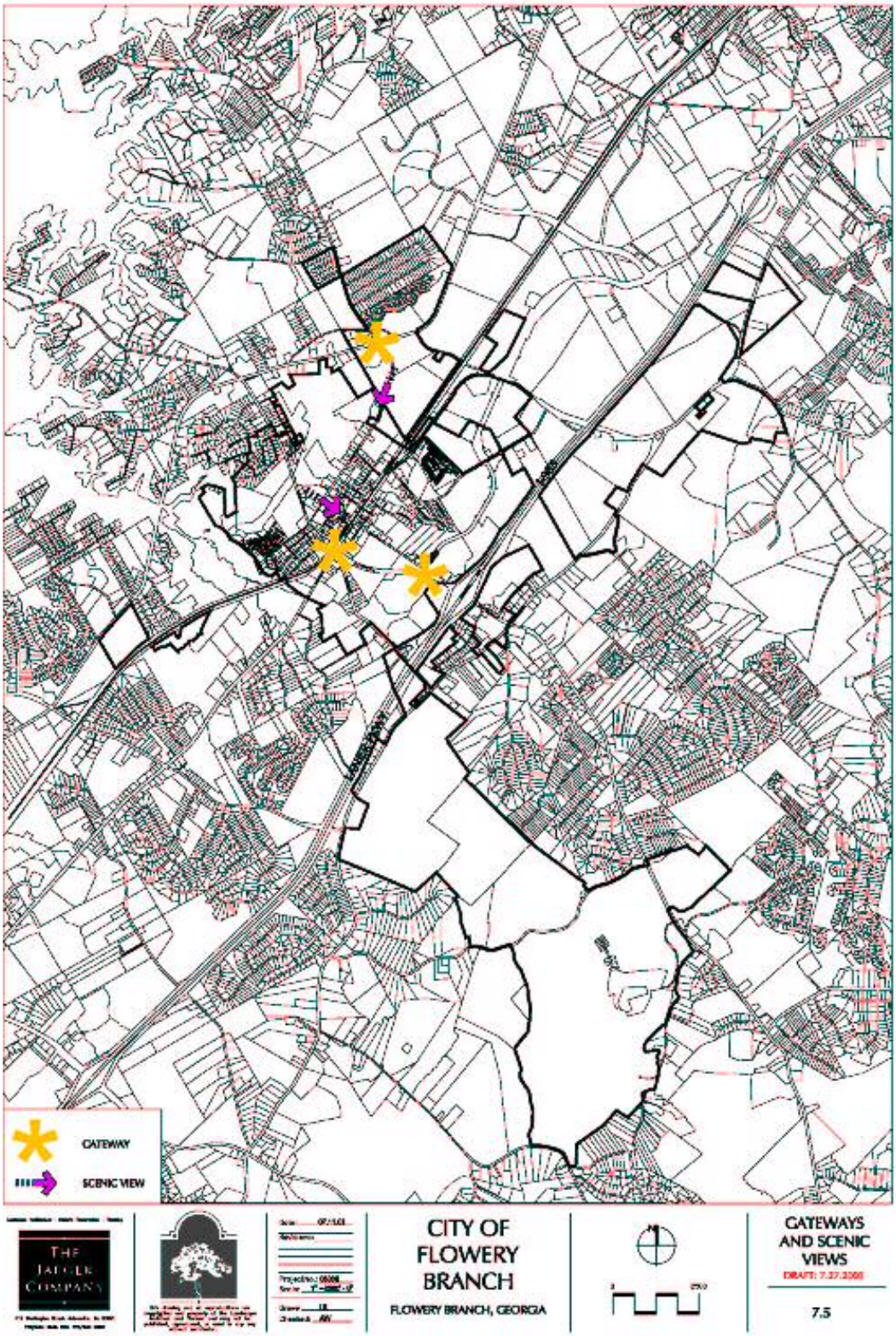
The rolling topography and scenic quality of the historic downtown of Flowery Branch provides attractive vistas and potential gateways within the city (see Map 7.5). One scenic vista is found while driving south along Gainesville Street as the road meanders toward downtown through grassed farmland on either side. Continuing to Main Street from Gainesville Street, a scenic view is offered after turning left of Main Street and traveling down the hill; looking southeast from Main Street toward Atlanta Highway offers an attractive scene of the historic pattern of houses and streets as they falls and rise on the other side of the highway. Despite the scenic potential and accessibility of Lake Sidney Lanier, there are few views to the lake from the city limits due to vegetative screening along the Starboard Marina. The cove at Flowery Branch Park does provide an interesting backdrop for visitors, but lacks a striking natural experience.

Other opportunities for scenic enhancements in Flowery Branch are community entrances or gateways. Primary corridors that provide gateway opportunities for Flowery Branch include:

Entry into the city of Flowery Branch from I-985 at Spout Springs Road;
Entry into the city of Flowery Branch from Atlanta Highway into the downtown area; and
Entry into the city of Flowery Branch from the intersection of McEver Road and Gainesville Street.

These gateway areas should be enhanced and maintained, along with any other primary corridors that may be added in the future (such as a new interchange at I-985).

A part of the Hall County Heritage Trail also winds its way through the heart of Flowery Branch; this trail is intended to provide a scenic and historic experience for tourists as they drive through Hall County. The Lake Lanier/Flowery Branch/Oakwood Trail follows Atlanta Highway south to Snelling Street, turns right and continues through downtown Flowery Branch, and follows Gainesville Street and Jim Crow Road north out of the town limits.


GATEWAY
SCENIC VIEW
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
GATEWAYS AND SCENIC VIEWS
7.5

CHAPTER 8
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes an assessment of Flowery Branch's existing historic resources and current preservation planning efforts. The intent of this chapter is to identify the significant historic buildings and places within the city limits of Flowery Branch with the purpose of encouraging further preservation or adaptive reuse of these resources.

The heart of Flowery Branch has always been its historic downtown and historic transportation-related and industrial resources. The retention and rehabilitation of these and other resources will provide a unique economic development vehicle for the progress of the city. The retention of Flowery Branch's historic buildings should be a vital component of a heritage tourism initiative in the county.

③ Do you know?

- $1 million spent rehabilitating a historic building ultimately adds $2.3 million to Georgia's economy -- creating 39 jobs (more than equivalent to new construction) and adding $819,000 to the household incomes of Georgia residents.*
- Historic sites rank high in every survey of tourist preferences and heritage tourism travelers spend more money and stay longer than the average U.S. traveler. In 1996, Georgia's tourists spent over $453 million on historic-related leisure activities.*
- Federal tax credits for certain expenses incurred in connection with the rehabilitation of an old building are available to owners and some long-term renters of income-producing properties -- 20 percent for a historic building and 10 percent for a non-historic building. Georgia law provides an owner of an historic property which has undergone substantial rehabilitation an eight-year freeze on property tax assessments.*
- Preservation through rehabilitation is less expensive on average than new construction. The more historic fabric saved, the less hauled off to landfills and the less expensive the rehabilitation. This little known fact is irrefutably documented in US and Georgia state tax credits.

** Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation*

FLOWERY BRANCH HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

A post office was established at Flowery Branch on November 14, 1871, with A.P. Cagle as postmaster. This is the earliest reference found for the community, which according to the *History of Flowery Branch* was originally called "Anaguluskee", an Indian word that means "flower on the branch." The *Gainesville City Directory* states that the town was incorporated in 1874. An article in the *Gainesville Eagle,* titled "A Letter From Athens," states that the Richmond and Danville Air-Line Railroad was completed to Gainesville in 1871. This railroad later became part of the Southern Railway Company in 1894, and in 1980 the railroad became a part of the Norfolk Southern Railway. It appears that the creation of the town is directly related to the building of the railroad.

A later article in 1878 describes Flowery Branch as “the first station on the Airline South” with “well constructed and neatly painted houses.” There were several businesses, such as Pirkle and Young, a repair shop for agricultural implements, wagons, and buggies; a furniture shop; and the Porter House, a hotel. A more detailed description appeared in 1879, which stated that the community was “a lively little town” and a “place of heavy trade” with several hundred bales of cotton exchanging hands there. Census records in 1880 show the town to have a population of 289 residents with seven stores, three bars, a cabinet shop, a blacksmith shop, a buggy and wagon shop, two hotels, two cotton gins, two churches, and a good academy.

In 1880 Flowery Branch was called the “busiest little town on the Airline” which “brought more cotton and sold more goods than anyplace on the road.” It was expected that there would be 5,000 bales of cotton sold that year. The guano business also was booming with 815 tons sold last spring. An Odd Fellows Society with its own hall was established and a Masonic Lodge had been organized.

The *Gainesville City Directory* of 1882-1883 described the town to be “one of the prettiest and most energetic towns between Gainesville and Atlanta. At present, it stands at the head of shipping points, shipping the astonishing amount of 7,000 bales of cotton annually for the last few years besides a large amount of country produce of various kinds.” Its role as a regional market was confirmed through the statement that Jackson, Gwinnett, Forsyth, Dawson, and Lumpkin counties made Flowery Branch their shipping point. The *Directory* also noted that a fire had swept through a large portion of the town in December of 1881, but that most of the burnt district had been rebuilt.

Businesses listed in the *Directory* include the following: McAfee Brothers, general merchandise; W.B. and T.H. Porter, a new firm with general merchandise and the headquarters for the sale of the Estey Sewing Machine; The Store and Tannery and Shoe Shop, operated by F.S. Barrett, who maintained the tannery one-half mile from town, Boring and Mahaffey, general merchandise; Harmon and Canning, also general merchandise who began operation in 1870 and were noted to be the oldest in the town; Frank Davie, general merchandise and whiskey; V.A. Garrison, whiskey and confections; James F. Duffey, jewelry and musical instruments; the Hughs Hotel; and J.D. Bagwell, manufacturer of wagons, carriages, and buggies. Bagwell’s operation had relocated from Gainesville in 1882, which give an idea as to the inviting business climate offered in Flowery Branch.

By 1890 the population had reached 350 people and at the turn-of-the-century the town had 420 residents. In the early 1900’s several new industries were established, including several mills, and a furniture manufacturing company, known as Chattahoochee Furniture. In 1903 a new charter was enacted. The town limits were established at one-half mile in every direction from the Southern Railroad depot. A mayor and alderman form of government was established with powers to grant liquor licenses; license livery stables; collect taxes on real and personal property; allow a tax assessment against telegraph, telephone, railroad, and banking businesses; and preserve, protect, and beautify cemeteries. It also noted that the mayor and alderman could require that the railroad make crossings where the rail line crossed public streets. They also were given the power to establish a school system and lay out streets.

Sanborn Insurance Company maps in 1912 provide a plan view of the central business district. All of the structures now standing on the north side of Main Street appear to be in existence in 1912. These buildings included the four concrete block buildings at the west end that were used for a general store, the post office, a grocery, and general store, respectively. Ben Hurt, a cotton

buyer who also sold general merchandise in the building, supposedly built the end building. The other buildings in the block were constructed of brick and were used as a grocery, dry goods, bank, hardware, and another grocery respectively. All of the buildings are shown with porches across the front facades and the hardware store also included an exterior stairway. There was a cistern at the eastern end of Main Street. Several brick structures on Railroad Avenue were attached to the Main Street structures and were used for hay storage and a furniture store. The furniture store appears to have been an early home for the Chattahoochee Furniture Company, which had is lumberyards directly to the north. The south side of Main Street contained frame structures, which are no longer extant. These were in use as a livery business and fire department with several being vacant.

In 1915, the south side of Main Street gained a substantial building, known as the Carlisle Building. Eli Carlisle, a prosperous farmer in the community, contracted with a local builder, George Brown, to build a large two-story brick corner building with a basement. The bricks were supposedly made in nearby Oakwood and bartered in exchange for cordwood. The building served multiple purposes with retail establishments on the main floor, a livery and sales stable in the basement, and apartments on the third floor.

Sanborn maps from 1924 show a few changes to the north side of Main Street and brick buildings on approximately one-half of the south side of Main Street. Changes to the north side included the reuse of two of the concrete buildings as a garage and the building (now in ruins) that was used as City Hall.

The Carlisle Building was the largest structure on the south side of Main and at the time of mapping was being used as office and supply storage for the Georgia Chair Company, as well as another office, store and drug store. The two remaining brick structures in the block included a drug store built by Dr. Orr, who maintained his office at the rear, and a structure, then in use for cotton storage, which was later used by Mr. Porter as a grocery store and storage for what locals call his “rolling store.” During the depression, Mr. Porter loaded his truck with goods and made weekly trips into the surrounding counties to sell the items and replenish his supplies with weekly excursions to Atlanta.

In 1937 the town charter was amended, but the city limits remained the same as previously established. The Council and Mayor were authorized to grant or refuse franchise to provide the town with electric lights, waterworks, gas, and sewerage.

Also in the 1930’s a small factory was established in a former cotton gin and under the direction of Mrs. Bayard McIntosh, “Bungalo Rugs” were produced. These were hand-woven rugs made from cotton, which used mostly waste products from the cotton knitting mills. Other industries came to Flowery Branch in the 1940’s and 1950’s, which helped to stabilize is population after a drop of approximately 50 residents from 1920 to 1930.

From the 1890s through the first half of the twentieth century, small companies in Flowery Branch became successful producers of furniture, footwear, floor rugs, and other items. The Chattahoochee Furniture Company began its operation in Flowery Branch around 1890 and has continued to manufacture household furniture from its facilities on Railroad Avenue for more than 100 years.

With an economic base that depended not only on agriculture but could also rely on its manufacturing sector, Flowery Branch is different from many small towns in Georgia. Despite the collapse of the northeast Georgia cotton market during the 1920s, the population of Flowery

Branch continued to grow throughout the first half of the twentieth century. From a population of around 500 in 1912, the town grew to include more than 600 residents in 1924. By the year 2000, the town's population grew to more than 1500. An example of one of these industrial concerns is Mooney Manufacturing that produced furniture in Flowery Branch from the late 1930s until the death of Eugene Mooney in 2000. Also, the Georgia Shoe Company moved to Flowery Branch during the 1940s and expanded its manufacturing and warehouse facilities in 1954, and again during the 1960s. These companies shipped many thousands of their products along the rail lines that run through Flowery Branch to other parts of Georgia and beyond.

The remarkable stock of historic commercial, industrial, and residential properties reflects a long period of the growth of the town. Buildings associated with the history of transportation, including the railroad depot and two historic gas stations, are also present in Flowery Branch and are representative of the town's developmental history.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN FLOWERY BRANCH

National Register District

Flowery Branch has only one listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Flowery Branch Commercial District, listed in 1985, recognizes the historic significance and distinctive architectural character of the collection of commercial buildings along the town's main street. The circa 1890 Chattahoochee Furniture Company office on Railroad Avenue is a contributing building in this district. Several buildings included in this district have been restored since 1985 to accentuate their character-defining architectural features. Unfortunately during the 1990s, the two-story Carlisle Building, one of the twelve contributing properties to the district, was demolished. Additionally, recent alterations to two storefronts on Main Street appear to have compromised the historic integrity of those two retail units.

It is important to note that several properties in Flowery Branch may hold enough significance to merit individual listings in the National Register of Historic Places. Among these are the Black-Butler House and Farm, Bagwell House and Farm, the Knight House, and the Young Family Cemetery. It is also possible that a new Flowery Branch Historic District could be established to include the current Flowery Branch Commercial Historic District as well as the residential properties that help complete the historic core of the city.

The National Register of Historic Places is our nation's official list of historic places deemed worthy of preservation. The National Register of Historic Places plays the central role in recognizing buildings, sites, districts, structures and objects significant in national, state *or* local history, archeology, architecture, engineering or culture. Listing in the National Register does not guarantee full protection from demolition, but any development project using federal money or requiring a federal permit must undergo Section 106 review, required by the Historic Preservation Act, to consider the impact the project might have on nearby sites that are on or eligible for the National Register. Nominations to the National Register are submitted to and approved by the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Register is maintained by the National Park Service, but the vast majority of the buildings on the list are privately owned.

Local Historic Districts

Flowery Branch has two local historic districts that include buildings along the roads most frequently traveled by visitors to the town. The Railroad Historic District runs along Atlanta Highway/Georgia 13 and includes the city cemetery, several residential buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a factory associated with the Georgia Shoe Manufacturing Company, the two early-twentieth century gas stations, and a small group of houses built during the 1940s and 1950s at the northern edge of the district. The Cotton Historic District extends from the south end of Railroad Avenue to Main Street, then along Main Street to its western terminus. This second local district takes in the commercial buildings listed on the National Register in 1985 as well as the Mooney Manufacturing complex, and eight houses constructed from circa 1890 to 1910.

A local historic district or local landmark is designated under city or county ordinance that seeks to retain the character of the building or area. To receive local designation, a building or district must be historically, architecturally or culturally significant and retain most of its character. The goal of local designation is to preserve the unique character of the district, while allowing new construction to include architectural designs that are compatible with the neighboring historic buildings and their surroundings. A historic preservation commission reviews and comments on projects affecting designated buildings. Under most local laws, owners of designated properties cannot demolish, move or change exterior features of the structure without permission from the preservation commission. The local preservation process in Georgia is governed by the Georgia Historic Preservation Act of 1980 which is the enabling legislation that allows local communities to adopt a historic preservation ordinance and establish a preservation commission.

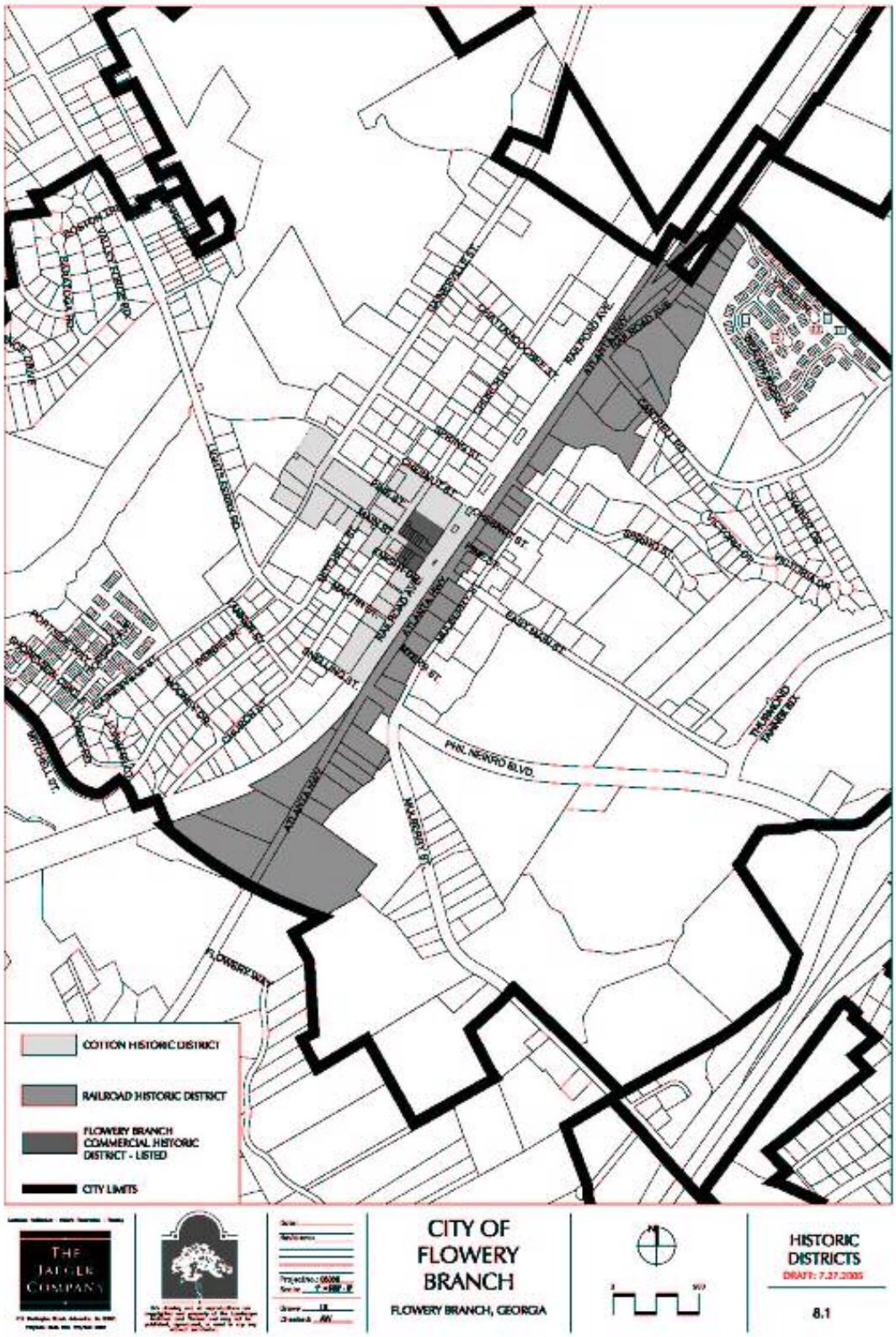
City-Wide Historic Resource Survey

A comprehensive historic resource survey was completed for Flowery Branch in 2003. The Flowery Branch Historic Preservation Commission sponsored the survey, using a grant from the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, along with supplemental funds provided by the City of Flowery Branch.

The field survey of the historic properties located within the city limits of Flowery Branch began October 15, 2003 and was completed by December 15, 2003 (see Table 1.1: Georgia DNR Historic Resources Survey, 2003) (reproduced with revisions at the end of this chapter, see Table 8.1). The city limits of Flowery Branch cover[ed] a land area of two and a half square miles. Of this area, approximately two square miles were built before the late 1950s according to the Hall County Tax Assessor's office and were included in this survey. The boundaries for the survey area are as follows:

- Eastern half of city: from the 4700 hundred block to the 5500 block of Georgia 13 (Atlanta Highway) and all streets east of Atlanta Highway between Spout Springs Road on the south up to and including Cantrell Road on the north. The recently constructed Thurmond Tanner Industrial Parkway (not surveyed) marks the eastern boundary of the survey area.

- Western half of city: all streets west of Atlanta Highway (including the Railroad corridor) between Snelling Avenue and Lights Ferry Road on the south and the northern end of Gainesville Street. Debbie Lane and the southern extensions of Church and Mitchell Streets were also surveyed.


COTTON HISTORIC DISTRICT
RAILROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT
FLOWERY BRANCH COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT - LISTED
CITY LIMITS
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
HISTORIC DISTRICTS
DRAFT: 7.27.2005
8.1

Beyond the boundaries described above the Young Family Cemetery, located at the intersection of Atlanta Highway and Hog Mountain Road was also surveyed.

One hundred and sixty resources were catalogued in this survey. The condition of these resources ranges from fair to excellent. Most properties have been altered in some way including: vinyl siding, replacement windows and/or doors, and some properties have lost their original chimneys. However most of the properties have retained their overall historic appearance and continue to provide good examples of popular late nineteenth and early twentieth century house forms. Summary findings of the historic resource survey are described in the following paragraphs.

Historic properties in Flowery Branch are located along streets laid out in a grid pattern. Residential properties are generally set back from the streets and adjacent properties by front and side yards. Most residential resources are modest in size and style; however, there are a variety of these house types. Early house types found in Flowery Branch include two modified I-house plans, one Georgian house, 11 central hallway cottages, nine gabled-wing cottages, five Georgian cottages, and two New South cottages. Flowery Branch also contains excellent examples of early house types that served communities with a large population of industrial or agricultural workers. Among these are several saddlebags and pyramid cottages, a double pen and a triple pen (triplex). These buildings date from circa 1890 to circa 1920. Many examples of house types that were popular from the 1920s to the early 1950s also exist in Flowery Branch. Among these are bungalows, side-gabled cottages, extended hall-parlor cottages, minimal traditional houses (small cottages from the post-World War II era), as well as a number of ranch houses. House styles represented in Flowery Branch include Folk Victorian, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival.

Historic commercial and industrial buildings in Flowery Branch date from as early as the late nineteenth century. The earliest are the Chattahoochee Furniture Company office and manufacturing buildings on Railroad Avenue and a collection of brick and masonry retail buildings on Main Street. These one and two-story buildings are good examples of the commercial architecture that was popular in small towns in Georgia and the southeast during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Significant architectural details include corbelled and stepped cornices, arched and trabeated windows, and brick pilasters that are representative of Italianate and Stripped Classical styles. Three buildings have rusticated concrete block facades and metal cornices with floral designs. Along the Atlanta Highway and Railroad Avenue corridor are several excellent examples of early twentieth century commercial and industrial buildings, including two gas stations constructed in 1935 and 1940, as well as examples of earlier house types.

A list of the surveyed resources is found in Table 1.1: 2003 Georgia DNR Historic Resource Survey.

Rural Resources

Pockets of Flowery Branch maintain a somewhat rural character, such as the farms along Gainesville Street and some areas south of I-985. Farms are especially desirable for their potential economic value, as well as their aesthetic and historic contributions. In order to encourage the continued use of farms, it is vital that the city consider incentives that will make farming a viable alternative as the tax values in the city continue to rise. The development

pressures in Flowery Branch are significant, with many new single-family and multi-family residential projects currently being constructed on former farms or forest land.

Transportation Resources

The historic significance of the railroad in Flowery Branch cannot be overstated; the construction of the Richmond and Danville Air-Line Railroad was completed to Gainesville in 1871 helped solidify the existence of Flowery Branch. The transportation of cotton was the mainstay of Flowery Branch until the 1920s; in the 1950s the inception of local furniture manufacturing also utilized the railroad to some extent. Event though the current economic viability of the railroad has ceased in Flowery Branch, the remnants of the transportation corridor, such as the depot and railroad car, remain as potential economic engines for the local tourist industry.

Archeological Sites

There are areas in the city that may contain sites of archeological interest, especially any area adjacent to Lake Lanier that might contain pre-1950s materials dating prior to the flooding for the creation of the lake. There is no survey of confirmed or potential archaeological sites in Flowery Branch.

BETTER HOME TOWN PROGRAM IN FLOWERY BRANCH

Flowery Branch currently maintains a Better Home Town Program through the auspices of the city. Established in Flowery Branch in 1999 through a competitive application process, this state-wide economic development program has made a tremendous impact on the development and redevelopment of downtown Flowery Branch in a short amount of time. This downtown program assists small towns in Georgia in the redevelopment of their historic commercial areas and is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs through the Office of Downtown Development.

The Flowery Branch Better Home Town program is an invaluable tool for the city in developing and maintaining downtown economic viability within the context of historic preservation. Part of the success of the program is its four-point approach to downtown revitalization: Organization, Design, Economic Restructuring, and Promotion. The organization of downtown events has been successful in galvanizing citizen participation and interest in the future of Flowery Branch, including the volunteer staffing and maintenance of a visitor center at the Depot, the installation of downtown beautification projects, and the development of downtown events such as the Boo! Run and Santa at the Depot. A valuable organization that thrived with the help of the Better Home Town Program was the Friends of the Depot. The future of this organization needs to be addressed in order to continue the care and promotion of the Depot.

An active and successful Better Home Town Program can be life-changing for a community and includes the following benefits:

- Enhances community pride and quality of life
- Preserves and creates jobs
- Enhances industrial, commercial and professional development
- Increases collaboration between public and private sectors in order to attain common goals
- Bolsters property values throughout the community

- Grows existing businesses, attracts new businesses, and reinforces other economic development activities
- Protects and utilizes the historic assets in downtown
- Increases the tax base by developing vacant and underutilized buildings to higher and better uses

An important incentive for maintaining a Better Home Town Program is that an active program can generate grant funding for a variety of downtown projects, such as streetscape enhancements, preservation projects, and community improvement projects of all kinds. For example, the city is currently developing plans for a downtown enhancement project with Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds granted by GDOT.

As a Better Home Town, Flowery Branch receives technical assistance, advice, training, on-site visits, and design services to help in implementing the program. But, of course, the benefits are not to the city alone: residents can look forward to an improved quality of life.

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TABLE 8.1
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
Hl-FB-001	5214 Railroad Avenue	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1910	Reed House
HL-FB-002	5208 Railroad Avenue	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1890	
HL-FB-003	5202 Railroad Avenue	Saddlebag - Two doors	No Academic Style	1889	
HL-FB-004	5205 Railroad Avenue	Not Applicable	No Academic Style	1950	Hamilton Cabinet and Shutters
HL-FB-005	5003 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - High Style	1920	
HL-FB-006	5011 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Georgian Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1905	
HL-FB-007	5109 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Georgian House	No Academic Style	Ca. 1890	
HL-FB-008	5203 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Not Applicable	Craftsman - Elements	1940	
HL-FB-009	5207 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Not Applicable	Craftsman - Elements	1935	Gulf Service Station
HL-FB-010	East side Railroad Avenue at Main Street				Railroad Car
HL-FB-011	SW Corner Railroad Avenue at Main Street	Not Applicable	Folk Victorian - Elements	Ca. 1890	Flowery Branch Train Depot
HL-FB-012	5185 Church Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1944	
HL-FB-013	5318 Railroad Avenue	Single Retail	Stripped Classical	Ca. 1890	Chattahoochee Furniture Co. (Now Country Craft Furniture)
HL-FB-014	5536 Railroad Avenue	New South Cottage	Folk Victorian - Elements	Ca. 1890	Crow Realty Company
HL-FB-015	5316 Railroad Avenue	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-016	5324 Railroad Avenue	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1900	
HL-FB-017	5526 Railroad Avenue	Central Hallway (Passage) - one room deep	No Academic Style	1900	

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-018	5305 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	House - Central Hallway	No Academic Style	1895	Phillips Hotel and Boarding House; W.A. Black House
HL-FB-019	5624 Church Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - Elements	1935	
HL-FB-020	5628 Church Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - Elements	1950	
HL-FB-021	5627 Church Street	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-022	5605 Church Street	Double Shotgun	No Academic Style	1925	
HL-FB-023	5110 Chattahoochee Street	Georgian Cottage	No Academic Style	1900	Addition - McIntosh House
HL-FB-024	5216 Church Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-025	5238 Church Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1890	
HL-FB-026	5246 Church Street	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1930	
HL-FB-027	5403 Spring Street	Saddlebag - Central door	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-028	5404 Spring Street	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1910	
HL-FB-029	5407 Spring Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-030	5408 Spring Street	Not Applicable	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-031	5504 Gainesville Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1915	
HL-FB-032	5514 Gainesville Street	Georgian Cottage	Unknown (Insufficient information)	1889	Davie House
HL-FB-033	5710 Gainesville Street	Ranch	Colonial Revival - Elements	1946	Mooney House
HL-FB-034	5707 Main Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-035	5702 Main Street	Single Retail; Not applicable	No Academic Style	Ca. 1936	Mooney Manufacturing Company
HL-FB-036	5510 Church Street	Georgian Cottage	Folk Victorian - Elements	1890	The Yacht Club Restaurant

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-037	5603 Main Street	Queen Anne Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1917	Major McGill's Fish Restaurant
HL-FB-038	5507 E. Main Street	Ranch	Moderne - Elements	1955	Hall Creek Village Office
HL-FB-039	5490 E. Main Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1930	
HL-FB-040	5464 E. Main Street (aka 5464 Mulberry Street)	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1890	
HL-FB-041	5491 E. Main Street	Ranch	Colonial Revival - Elements	1950	
HL-FB-042	5483 E. Main Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-043	5475 E. Main Street	War Years Cottage	Moderne - Elements	1950	
HL-FB-044	5461 E. Main Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - Elements	1955	
HL-FB-045	5130 Railroad Avenue	Bungalow - Front Gable	Moderne - Elements	1943	
HL-FB-046	5124 Railroad Avenue	Gabled Wing Cottage	Greek Revival - Elements	1900	
HL-FB-047	5125 Railroad Avenue	Community Store	No Academic Style	1950	Conner Fertilizer Warehouse
HL-FB-048	5118 Railroad Avenue	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	Ca. 1925	
HL-FB-049	5114 Railroad Avenue	Double Pen	No Academic Style	1920	
HL-FB-050	5104 Railroad Avenue	Not Applicable	International - High Style	1945	
HL-FB-051	5103 Spring Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1920	
HL-FB-052	5107 Spring Street	Unknown (Insufficient information)	No Academic Style	1915	
HL-FB-054	5323 Spring Street	Not Applicable	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-055	5403 Mulberry Street	Extended Hall - Parlor	No Academic Style	1920	
HL-FB-057	5437 E. Main Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1940	
HL-FB-058	5207 E. Main Street	Double Pen; Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1920	

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-059	5208 Mulberry Street	War Years Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1935	
HL-FB-060	5205 Mulberry Street	Extended Hall - Parlor	No Academic Style	1940	
HL-FB-062	5607 Main Street	Single Retail	Moderne - Elements	1950	Jerri's Kutz 'n Kurlz
HL-FB-063	5602 Pine Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1920	
HL-FB-064	5807 Tanner Street	War Years Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1950	
HL-FB-065	5608 Pine Street	Saddlebag - Two doors	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-066	5502 Chestnut Street	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	1898	
HL-FB-067	5410 Chestnut Street	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1900	
HL-FB-068	5304 Church Street	Double Pen	No Academic Style	1910	
HL-FB-069	5215 Spring Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1935	
HL-FB-070	5611 Church Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1940	
HL-FB-071	5609 Church Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1940	
HL-FB-072	5615 Church Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1945	
HL-FB-073	5634 Martin Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1940	
HL-FB-074	5727 Mitchell Street	Not Applicable	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-075	5722 Mitchell Street	Not Applicable	International - High Style	1944	Flowery Branch School (currently Townview Apartments)
HL-FB-076	5715 Mitchell Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1945	
HL-FB-077	5719 Mitchell Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1945	
HL-FB-078	5734 Mitchell Street	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1915	
HL-FB-079	5633 Church Street	Georgian Cottage	No Academic Style	1910	

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-080	5636 Church Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-081	5640 Church Street	War Years Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1948	
HL-FB-082	5641 Church Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1945	
HL-FB-083	5644 Church Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-084	5703 Church Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-086	5803 Tanner Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1951	
HL-FB-087	4761 Victoria Drive	Pyramid Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1930	
HL-FB-088	4755 Cantrell Road	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1930	
HL-FB-089	4733 Cantrell Road	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1930	
HL-FB-090	4776 Cantrell Road	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	1920	
HL-FB-091	4739 Cantrell Road	Ranch	No Academic Style	Ca. 1935	
HL-FB-092	GA 13 at Cantrell Road			Ca. 1880	Flowery Branch Cemetery
HL-FB-093	5540 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Not Applicable	International - Elements	1955	Georgia Shoe Mfg. Co (Now Flowery Branch Antiques Market)
HL-FB-094	4763 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Ranch	No Academic Style	1945	
HL-FB-095	4783 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	English Cottage	English Vernacular Revival - Elements	1948	
HL-FB-096	5315 Gainesville Street	Pyramid Cottage	No Academic Style	1935	
HL-FB-097	5311 Gainesville Street	Pyramid Cottage	No Academic Style	1916	
HL-FB-098	5303 Gainesville Street	Pyramid Cottage	No Academic Style	1913	
HL-FB-099	5280 Gainesville Street	Saddlebag - Central door	No Academic Style	1889	

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-100	5270 Gainesville Street	Saddlebag - Two doors	No Academic Style	1900	
HL-FB-101	5260 Gainesville Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	Craftsman - Elements	1937	
HL-FB-102	5254 Gainesville Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - Elements	1930	
HL-FB-103	6011 Mitchell Street	Not Applicable	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-104	5245 Gainesville Street	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1890	Black-Butler House and Farm
HL-FB-105	5007 Spring Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-106	5621 Church Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-107	5806 Church Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	Ca. 1940	
HL-FB-108	5403 Gainesville Street	War Years Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1940	
HL-FB-109	5306 Gainesville Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - Elements	1930	
HL-FB-110	5608 Gainesville Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1935	
HL-FB-111	5609 Main Street	I House - Double Pen	Colonial Revival - Elements ; No academic style	1890	Knight House
HL-FB-112	5221 Chattahoochee Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1953	
HL-FB-113	4769 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Ranch	No Academic Style	1940	
HL-FB-114	5609 Gainesville Street	War Years Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1935	
HL-FB-115	5109 Chattahoochee Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1950	
Hl-FB-116	6015 Mitchell Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	Colonial Revival - Elements	1950	
HL-FB-117	4729 Cantrell Road	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1940	
HL-FB-118	5220 Gainesville Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - High Style	1920	Bagwell House
HL-FB-119	5803 Church Street	Georgian Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1915	Duke House

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-120	5804 Gainesville Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1952	
HL-FB-121	5815 Lights Ferry Road	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - Elements	1927	
HL-FB-122	5909 Gainesville Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1954	
HL-FB-123	5809 Church Street	New South Cottage	No Academic Style	1900	
Hl-FB-124	5818 Church Street	Extended Hall - Parlor	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-125	5824 Church Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-126	5831 Church Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1948	
HL-FB-127	5919 Church Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-128	5924 Church Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-129	5105 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Gabled Wing Cottage	No Academic Style	Ca. 1900	
HL-FB-130	4933 GA 13 (Atlanta Highway)	Georgian Cottage	No Academic Style	1930	
HL-FB-131	GA 13 (Atlanta Highway) at Hog Mountain Road				Young Family Cemetery
HL-FB-132	5805 Lights Ferry Road	Ranch	No Academic Style	1954	
HL-FB-133	5903 Lights Ferry Road	Bungalow - Front Gable; Ranch	No Academic Style	1941	
HL-FB-134	5739 Mitchell Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-135	5805 Mitchell Street	Ranch	Colonial Revival - Elements	1952	
HL-FB-136	5809 Mitchell Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-137	5812 Mitchell Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1948	
HL-FB-138	5904 Mitchell Street	Central Hallway Cottage	No Academic Style	1919	
HL-FB-139	5908 Mitchell Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1953	

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-140	5912 Mitchell Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	Ca. 1950	
HL-FB-141	5914 Mitchell Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	1946	
HL-FB-142	5921 Mitchell Street	War Years Cottage	No Academic Style	1941	
HL-FB-143	5927 Mitchell Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	Craftsman - Elements	1950	
HL-FB-144	5928 Mitchell Street	Bungalow - Front Gable	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-145	5931 Mitchell Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	1950	
HL-FB-146	5932 Mitchell Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	Ca. 1945	
HL-FB-147	6003 Mitchell Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	1940	
HL-FB-148	6006 Mitchell Street	Ranch	No Academic Style	1946	
HL-FB-149	6005 Mitchell Street	Side-Gabled Cottage	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-150	5934 Lights Ferry Road	Ranch	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-151	5519 Main Street	Single Retail	No Academic Style	1954	Flowery Branch Post Office (now Police Department)
HL-FB-152	5940 Lights Ferry Road	Ranch	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-153	5948 Lights Ferry Road	Ranch	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-154	5952 Lights Ferry Road	Ranch	No Academic Style	1955	
HL-FB-155	5515 Main Street	Not Applicable	Colonial Revival - Elements	1955	City Hall
HL-FB-156	5506 Main Street	Single Retail	Italianate - Elements	1897	The Bank of Flowery Branch
HL-FB-157	5504 Main Street	Retail and Office	Stripped Classical - high style	Ca. 1890	Sample Pleasures Antiques
HL-FB-158	5508 Main Street	Single Retail	No Academic Style	Ca. 1890	Voltage Hair Studio

Survey Number	Address	House Type	Style	Structure Date	Additional Information
HL-FB-159	5510 Main Street	Retail and Office	No Academic Style	Ca. 1890	Common Grounds Coffee Shoppe
HL-FB-160	5512-5514 Main Street	Multiple Retail	No Academic Style	Ca. 1910	
HL-FB-161	5516 Main Street	Single Retail	No Academic Style	Ca. 1910	Healthquest Fitness
HL-FB-162	5518 Main Street	Retail and Office	No Academic Style	1906	Rosewood Deli and Catering
HL-FB-163	SW Corner of Church and Pine Street	Not Applicable	No Academic Style	Ca. 1890	Cotton Warehouse
HL-FB-164	5509-5511 Main Street	Multiple Retail	No Academic Style	Ca. 1915	

Rural Resources

Pockets of Flowery Branch maintain a somewhat rural character, such as the farms along Gainesville Street and some areas south of I-985. Farms are especially desirable for their potential economic value, as well as their aesthetic and historic contributions. In order to encourage the continued use of farms, it is vital that the city consider incentives that will make farming a viable alternative as the tax values in the city continue to rise. The development pressures in Flowery Branch are significant, with many new single-family and multi-family residential projects currently being constructed on former farms or forest land.

Transportation Resources

The historic significance of the railroad in Flowery Branch cannot be overstated; the construction of the Richmond and Danville Air-Line Railroad was completed to Gainesville in 1871 helped solidify the existence of Flowery Branch. The transportation of cotton was the mainstay of Flowery Branch until the 1920s; in the 1950s the inception of local furniture manufacturing also utilized the railroad to some extent. Event though the current economic viability of the railroad has ceased in Flowery Branch, the remnants of the transportation corridor, such as the depot and railroad car, remain as potential economic engines for the local tourist industry.

Archeological Sites

There are areas in the city that may contain sites of archeological interest, especially any area adjacent to Lake Lanier that might contain pre-1950s materials dating prior to the flooding for the creation of the lake. There is no survey of confirmed or potential archaeological sites in Flowery Branch.

CHAPTER 9
LAND USE AND CHARACTER AREA DELINEATION

While every element of the Comprehensive Plan is central to implementation of the City's vision, goals, policies, objectives and strategies, it is this Land Use Element that is most influential in terms of everyday decision-making. The Land Use Element is most often (and properly) cited in support or denial of zoning and other land use changes. The most important graphics of the Comprehensive Plan are the Future Development Map and, if provided, the Future Land Use Plan Map, which are not presented here but which are formulated as a part of the Community Agenda. Those maps will continue to be cited as an overall expression of the City's land use policy, though care must be taken to interpret that map with due regard to the goals, policies, strategies, tools, and objectives of the Community Agenda.

RELATIONSHIP OF LAND USE TO OTHER ELEMENTS

In many ways, land use provides the central organizing element of the entire Comprehensive Plan. Natural resource protection goals and policies are necessarily implied within the City's land use policies (see the Community Agenda), where they have not been reiterated or referred to explicitly. Community facilities and services plans are based in large part on desired land use patterns and future development concepts portrayed on the Future Development Map and Future Land Use Plan and described in the Community Agenda. The land use patterns recommended on these maps reflect the City's vision and history. Housing policies are integrated in the land use recommendations of the land use plan. Economic development objectives are fulfilled, if not directly recognizable, in terms of the overall design of the future development map and future land use plan. Transportation plans influence land use patterns and vice versa, and those occurrences are taken into account.

HISTORIC LAND USE TRENDS

The City's comprehensive plan (prepared by the consulting firm Hanson-Taylor, Inc. and adopted in 1995) provides a primary source of data on land use trends that are reiterated here. The Future Land Use Plan map presented in the 1995 comprehensive plan also provides insights to the delineation of preliminary character areas.

City Limits in 1994

As of 1994, the City Limits of Flowery Branch were still limited mostly to the original circular boundary, although some annexation had occurred by that time. City limits in 1995 extended northwest, past the circular boundary, along the northeast side of Lights Ferry Road and along the northwest side of Gainesville Street. An area adjacent to Lake Lanier was also in the City Limits in 1995. Also, the city had at that time annexed eastward along the southwest side of Cantrell Road to the westernmost right-of-way of I- 985. The only property east of I-985 in the City Limits of Flowery Branch at that time was a block of land north of Spout Springs Road between I-985 and Porter Road.

City Form

In 1994, the city retained its circular city. Within the original City circle, the city's development form was divided by the railroad which runs in a southwesterly-northeasterly direction. Atlanta Highway (SR 13) parallels the railroad on the south side. The overall layout of the central part

of the City consists of a four-block deep, linear stretch of residential and commercial development running parallel to the railroad and Atlanta Highway (SR 13). Development surrounding this central area was mostly sparsely developed, rural countryside.

Land Use in 1994

An existing land use inventory was conducted in 1994, and the results of that inventory are shown in Table 9.1. More than two-thirds (almost 70 percent) of the land in Flowery Branch was undeveloped and agriculture in 1995. Residential development of all types totaled 159 acres (19 percent of total land area in the City). The residential development pattern in Flowery Branch in 1994 was dominated by the older, established neighborhoods adjoining the city's central business district. However, other residential development had a "mixed neighborhood" and "conventional subdivision" character. Duplex development existed along Lorimar Drive and Chariot Road. Apartments existed in the Old Flowery Branch School (renovated and reused) and in other locations including Reed Street, Mulberry Street, and between Gainesville and Mitchell Streets. A mobile home park with 150 lots was approved in the early 1980s along Lights Ferry Road, and numerous other manufactured homes existed in dispersed locations throughout the City.

Table 9.1
Existing Land Use, 1994
City of Flowery Branch

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total Land Area
Agriculture	105	12.5%
Single-family residential, site built	117	13.9%
Mobile homes/mobile home parks	39	4.6%
Multi-family residential	32	3.8%
Public/institutional	14	1.7%
Office/services	5	0.6%
Commercial	9	1.1%
Light industrial	17	2.0%
Heavy industrial	15	1.8%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	7	0.8%
Park/Recreation/Conservation	1	0.1%
Undeveloped	478	57.0%
Total	839	99.9%

Source: Hanson-Taylor, Inc. City of Flowery Branch, Georgia. 1994 Comprehensive Plan. May 2, 1995 Edition.

Much of the industrial land was located within the City's central business district. Commercial development in 1994 was extremely limited, and most commercial businesses existing at that time were located along Atlanta Highway (SR 13). The City's wastewater treatment plan was located on seven acres and was designated transportation, communities, and utilities.

FUTURE LAND USE 2015 (1994 PLAN)

The future land use plan map, prepared and adopted as a part of the Flowery Branch Comprehensive Plan in 1995, is important in that it represents the adopted land use policy of the City (until replaced by an updated comprehensive plan). The 1995 plan provides a point of

departure for a complete reconsideration of future land use patterns in Flowery Branch. The plan did not propose to retain any agricultural or forest lands. The acreage estimates provided for future land use in the 1995 plan are not reiterated here.

Residential

The 1995 future land use plan divided residential use designations into “low density (0-1.9 units per acre), “low-medium density,” (2.0 to 4.9 units per acre), and “medium density” (5 to 9.9 units per acre). Low density residential areas would consist of mostly single-family, site-built homes and some mobile homes. The low-medium density category would allow for single-family, townhouse, and mobile home parks. The medium density category would include townhouses, mobile home parks, and some apartments in addition to public and semi-public uses.

Low-medium and medium density residential would exist east of Atlanta Highway (SR 13) north of East Main Street all the way to where community commercial development was envisioned close to I-985. Certain blocks of land in the original settlement area of the city (small grid section) was also designed for low, low-medium, and medium density residential development. Similarly, a variety of residential densities were envisioned for that part of the City south of Lights Ferry Road and north of Lake Lanier, all west of the original settlement area of the City. Outlying areas in the northwestern part of the city would be low-density residential development.

Town Center

The 1995 plan envisioned the concentration of development activity within the downtown (basically, a one or two-block area west of the railroad along Main Street) to provide a strong “City Center” (also called “town center”) for the surrounding residential communities. The town center was envisioned to include a mix of uses traditionally found in downtowns, including civic buildings, reuse of historic structures, offices, retail establishments, service uses, restaurants, and offices. Historic preservation and revitalization would be the primary emphases for the town center.

Community Commercial

Community commercial development would also generally surround the town center on all sides. The 1995 future land use plan also liberally designated community commercial land in between Mulberry Street near the downtown along both sides of Spout Springs Road all the way to I-985, as well as within the two quadrants of land east of I-985 west of Hog Mountain Road (only some of which was inside the City limits in 1994). The plan also indicates the land at the I-985 interchange (Spout Springs Road, Exit 3) had opportunities for development as an “enterprise development district.” Community commercial development would also extend between Gainesville Street and the railroad right-of-way in the northernmost part of the City limits (and beyond). The community commercial designation was envisioned to include community-serving commercial uses such as supermarkets, small department stores, professional offices, personal services establishments, and restaurants.

Industrial and Employment

Industrial development would occur immediately north of the town center and community commercial development, as well as triangles of land in northern and southern parts of the City between the railroad right-of-way and Atlanta Highway (SR 13). In addition, a large block of

land northeast of the then-City-limits was designed "employment" and corresponded with the developed and developing industrial area bisected by Cantrell Road.

CRITIQUE OF THE ADOPTED 1995 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Some ten years after its preparation and adoption, in 2005 it is relatively easy to criticize the recommendations of the plan, though some of the land use recommendations and policies continue to have major relevance to Flowery Branch. While the basic tenants of the 1995 land use plan remain sound, several observations are noted here as to possible deficiencies of that plan (i.e., what may no longer be appropriate. These criticisms should be viewed not as derogatory to the prior planning consultant, but rather, stemming from the benefit of observations and experience ten years after the plan was prepared and adopted (i.e., the plan's obsolescence).

Expansion of City Limits Through Annexation

The 1995 plan does not take into account substantial annexation of residential subdivisions and commercial development north of McEver Road and beyond, as well as a large, master-planned residential community south of Spout Springs Road east of I-985. Those annexations and the development that is taking place or has taken place within those areas is reason alone for a wholesale reconsideration of the 1995 plan.

Oversupply of Community Commercial

The city's planning consultants in 1994 liberally applied the community commercial designation. Some areas designated in the 1995 plan for community commercial land use have developed for residential uses, though the vast majority of the land currently remains undeveloped. Spreading community commercial development north of the original settlement pattern also raises questions of need (given mostly low-density residential surroundings) and possible competition with the town center and other more appropriately situated and designated community commercial areas. In addition, blocks surrounding the town center that were designated as community commercial in the 1995 land use plan are for all intent and purposes reasonably considered a part of an expanded town center (the designation of which was probably drawn too small).

In-town Industrial Areas

As noted previously, the 1995 plan designated significant land areas for future industrial development just north of the town center and in triangles of land in the northern and southern parts of the City. Some industrial development existed at that time, and the City in 1994 had a number of industrial structures that could be used or reused for industry. While some of the land areas are or still could be used for industry, more appropriate industrial land exists in planned industrial parks north and northeast of the city. Another reason to question these in-town industrial designations is that heavy industry and even light industry might be incompatible with other designations of the future land use plan. Yet another possible reason to reconsider those designations is the fact that manufacturing is generally in decline, and less land is needed to meet forecasted market demands for industrial-type uses.

Undersupply of Open Space and Recreation

The 1995 plan did not designate any future land for parks, recreation, open space, and conservation beyond the 1-acre park that existed at that time, nor did the 1995 land use plan designate any "green" corridors or conservation areas.

Undersupply of Civic and Public-Institutional Uses

Similarly, the 1995 plan did not contemplate any expansion of public uses, such as churches, schools, nursing homes, and other similar uses of an institutional nature.

EXISTING LAND USE IN 2005

The minimum standards of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs require that local comprehensive plans include an existing land use map. That map also needs to conform to specific categories which are described in detail below.

Existing Land Use Categories

The minimum required categories are as follows:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Undeveloped/Vacant
- Mixed Use

More detailed categories can be used in classifying existing land use, if they can be grouped into one of these standard categories.

Single-Family Residential: Single-family dwelling units and manufactured homes on individual lots.

Multi-Family Residential: Residential buildings containing two or more dwelling units, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and apartments. Mobile home parks are also included within this category.

Commercial: Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities.

Industrial: Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, and other similar uses.

Public/Institutional: State, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices,

schools, military installations, etc. Institutional uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.

Transportation, Communication and Utilities: Major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

Park/Recreation/Conservation: Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These lands may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses.

Agriculture and Forestry: Land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.

Vacant/Undeveloped: Lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or where developed for a specific use that has since then been abandoned.

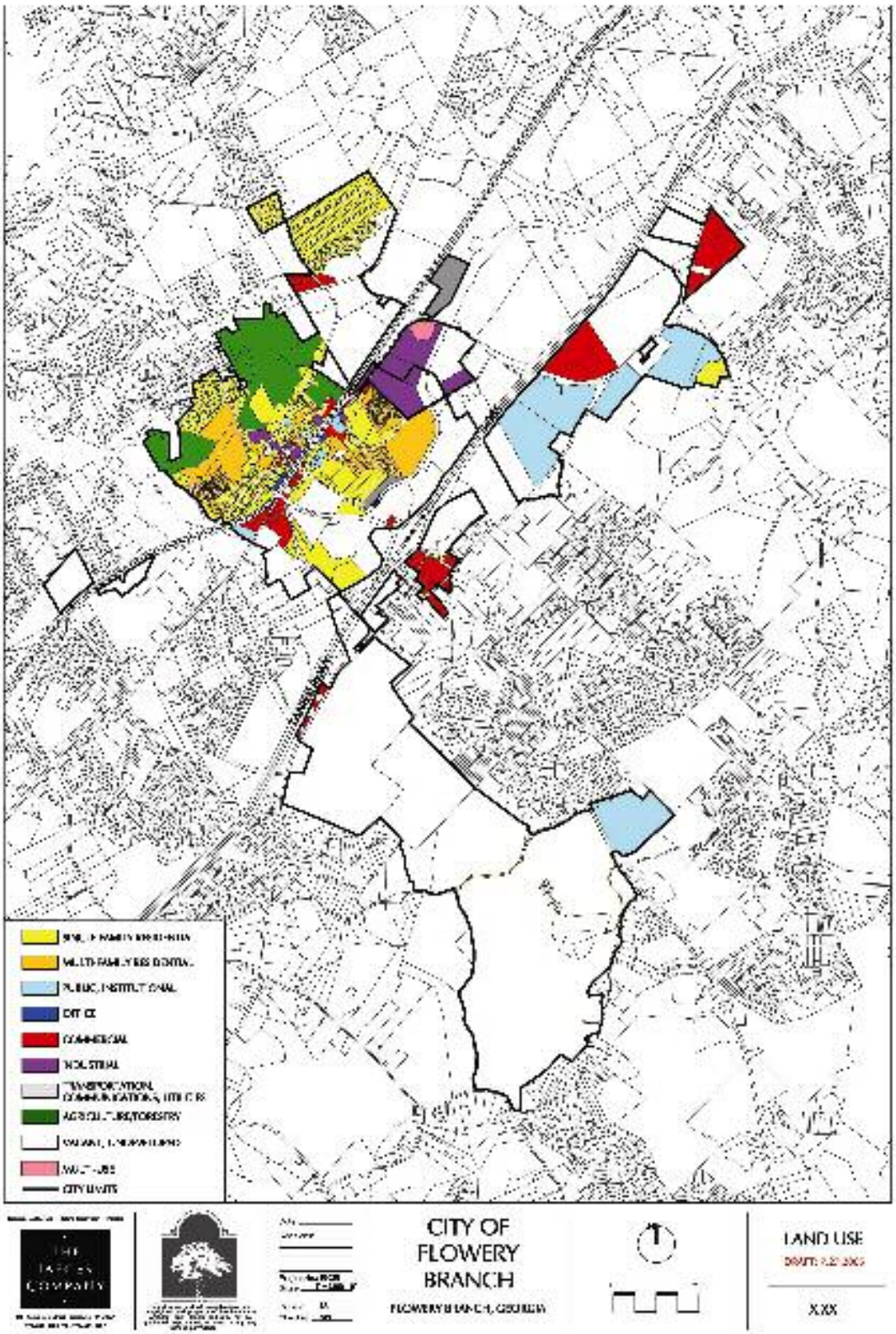
Mixed Use: (created and applied at the discretion of the community; not used for purposes of classifying existing land use)

Table 9.2 provides the estimates of acreage devoted to each of the required existing land use categories.

Table 9.2
Existing Land Use, 2005
City of Flowery Branch

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total Land Area
Single-family residential, including manufactured homes on individual lots	413	12.5%
Multi-family residential including mobile home parks	182	5.5%
Public/institutional	263	7.9%
Commercial (including offices and mixed use)	188	5.8%
Industrial	88	2.6%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	31	0.9%
Park/Recreation/Conservation	0	--
Agriculture/Forestry	173	5.2%
Undeveloped/Vacant	1,974	59.6%
Total	3,312	100%

Source: The Jaeger Company, 2005.
Note: The Corps property which is a city-operated park is located outside of the city limits.


CITY OF
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Summary of Existing Land Use in 2005

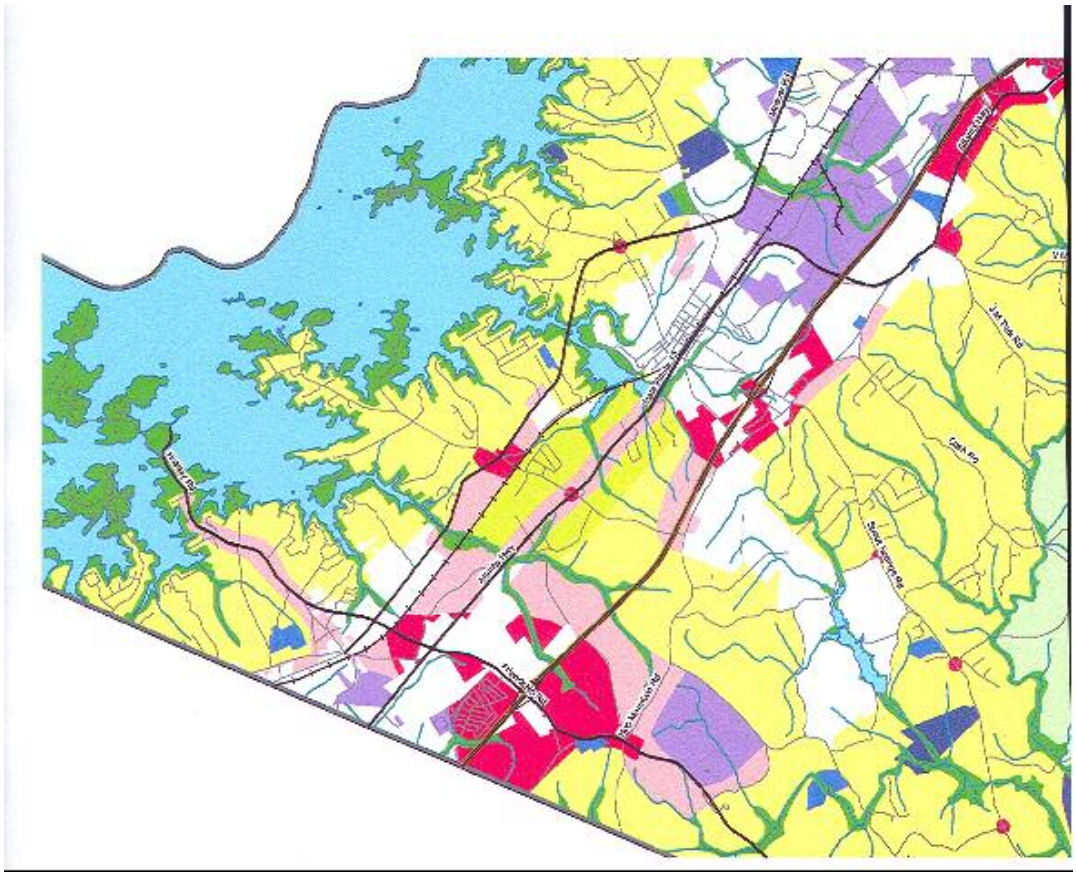
A wide variety of residential land use patterns exist in Flowery Branch. There are older, site-built, single-family dwellings in the originally settled area of the City. The City annexed some single-family dwellings built within conventional subdivisions northwest of the town center (west of McEver Road). A number of manufactured and mobile homes exist on individual lots in various places throughout the City, and there is one 150-space mobile home park on the south side of Lights Ferry Road. The City is also home to a limited number of two-family dwellings (duplexes). Apartment buildings exist in several locations of the City, including the conversion of the Old Flowery Branch School. More recently (during 2004 and 2005), townhouse developments have been under construction, as well as additional site-built dwellings in various new, conventional suburban subdivisions.

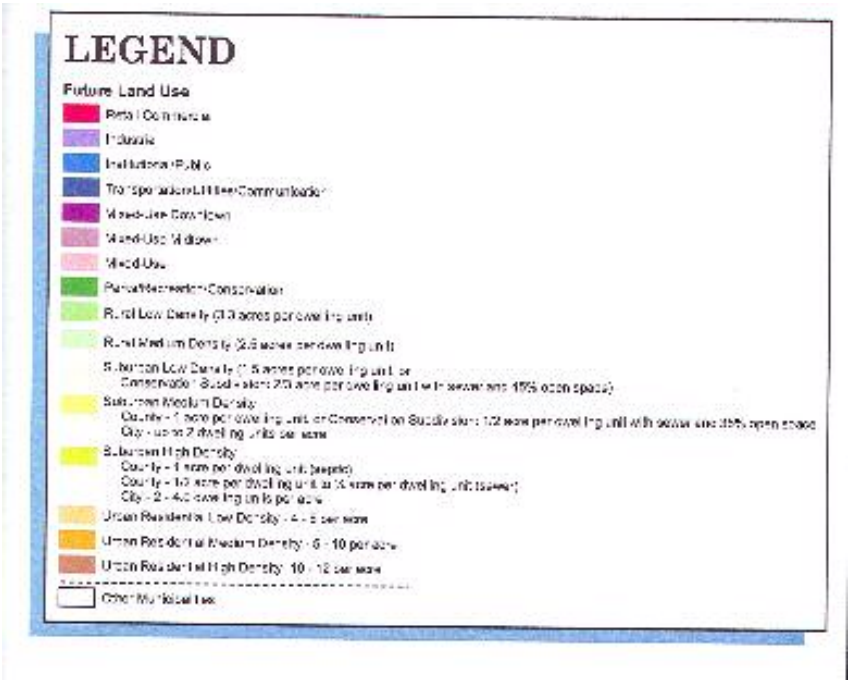
There are a few scattered industrial developments in the City of Flowery Branch, most of which are located north of the downtown area along Atlanta Highway. Commercial development is concentrated in three areas: The small town center (downtown central business district) along Main Street, highway-oriented commercial uses along most of Atlanta Highway (SR 13), and a highway commercial area including a shopping center (anchored by a Publix grocery store) east of I-985 along both sides of Spout Springs Road. There is also a neighborhood commercial node developed at the intersection of McEver Road and Jim Crow Road.

A few public-institutional uses exist, mostly churches, in and near the downtown. County elementary and high schools and the Atlanta Falcons Training Facility are significant institutional uses located in a corridor pattern between I-985 and Hog Mountain Road north of Spout Springs Road. A large church is under construction on 65 acres on the north side of Spout Springs Road east of I-985 generally across from the Sterling on the Lake subdivision (under construction). Other public-institutional uses include the city's water treatment plant, a spray irrigation field, and two water storage tanks. City Hall and the Police Department are located on Main Street within the area designated as commercial (town center or central business district). County fire stations are not located within the city (see community facilities element). Park and recreation uses are limited to Railroad Park and the four-acre lake park.

Existing and Future Land Use in Unincorporated Fringe Areas

Generally, the unincorporated areas surrounding Flowery Branch to the west, south, and east consist predominantly of conventional suburban subdivisions with detached, single-family dwellings. The Hall County Future Land Use Plan (adopted in 2004) indicates that single-family residential development will be the predominant land use pattern west of the Flowery Branch City Limits, along properties fronting Lake Lanier and McEver Road. The county plan designates those single-family residential areas for densities of approximately one acre per dwelling unit (or up to two units per acre within cities). South of Flowery Branch's current city limits, along Atlanta Highway (SR 13), the county's land use plan designates most areas as suburban residential (one unit per acre on septic tank, one-half acre lot on public water, and 2-4 units per acre if located within a city. Residential land use of 1-2 units per acre is called for in that area south of Flowery Branch not fronting Atlanta Highway but between it and I-985. East of I-985 along both sides and south of Spout Springs Road, the future land use plan for Hall County reflects the existing, single-family residential pattern of land use and designates these areas as residential use at a density of 1-2 units per acre. All lands surrounding the Sterling on the Lake Subdivision are similarly designated for lower density residential use.





Hall County Future Land Use Plan
(Flowery Branch Area Only Shown)

Properties fronting Atlanta Highway (SR 13) south of Flowery Branch are designated for mixed-use development. East of I-985, along Hog Mountain Road in unincorporated areas, Hall County's adopted land use plan calls for commercial uses north and south of the intersection of Hog Mountain Road and Spout Springs Road (outside City Limits) and mixed land uses as one moves away from the commercial node at Spout Springs Road along Hog Mountain Road. To the north of the City in unincorporated areas, the prevailing pattern of existing land use is industrial development, and the county's future land use plan reflects that prevailing land use pattern.

RECENT AND ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS

Table 9.3 provides recently permitted or planned developments anticipated in Flowery Branch. Development that is anticipated or already underway, at 1,091 acres, is greater in size than all land within the entire city limits in 1994 (reported to be 839 acres, see Table 1 in this chapter).

Table 9.3
Planned Developments in Flowery Branch as of July 2005

Name of Development	Location	Acreage	Single-family Units	Multi-family Units	Total Units	Other use (specified)
Sterling on the Lake	Spout Springs Rd.	897	(unspecified)	(unspecified)	1,794	Not specified
Clarkstone Village	Cantrell Road	15	67	0	67	None
Mulberry Village	Mulberry Street	26	111	0	111	None
Tidewater II & III	Mitchell Street and Lights Ferry	28	0	224 (townhouses)	224	None
Waterstone Crossing	Atlanta Highway near Cantrell Rd.	22	0	204	204	None
Tree Park	Cantrell Rd. & Thurmond Tanner Pkwy.	38	0	456	456	None
Price of Peace Church	Spout Springs Rd.	65	0	0	0	Church
Total		1,091	178+	884+	1,959	--

Source: City of Flowery Branch, Planning and Community Development Department. 2005.

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

This section provides an assessment of likely issues with future development patterns in Flowery Branch, following the specific items of the DCA rules required to be included in the Community Assessment.

Areas of Significant Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural conditions such as wetlands, significant groundwater recharge areas, and steep slopes pose relatively few limitations on development in Flowery Branch. The City's rich heritage suggests that future development in the original settlement area of Flowery Branch needs to be sensitive to and compatible with existing historic resources. The City has recognized two historic districts in the original settlement pattern of the City.

Areas Where Rapid Development or Change of Use is Likely to Occur

Rapid development is likely in most undeveloped areas of Flowery Branch, as noted by the developments that have been approved recently as summarized in Table 3. Inquiries regarding land development proposals in the City are coming on a weekly if not almost daily basis, according to discussions with the Planning and Community Development Manager. Properties close to the I-985 interchange are approved for mixed-use development and others nearby are being considered for larger-scale retail development. Proposals for subdivision development have been discussed with the City on agricultural land in the northwestern part of the City along Gainesville Street. The eastern part of Flowery Branch, along Spout Springs Road, is rapidly developing with the Sterling on the Lake planned residential community and the Price of Peace Church, as noted in Table 3. One area where rapid development is not anticipated in the near future, but which is desirable, is the collection of City blocks north of the designated town center (see discussion below).

Areas Outpacing Availability of Facilities and Services

Generally, Flowery Branch is planning for expansions of its water and sewer systems to keep pace with anticipated development (see community facilities and services element). As extensive development occurs inside and outside Flowery Branch's borders, one can anticipate that Spout Springs Road (which interchanges with I-985) will likely become more congested. Thurmond Tanner Road has been constructed which opens up a large area of the city to commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential development.

In some areas of the city, anticipated growth and development is likely to overtax the city's street system. This is particularly true for possible intense urban development in and surrounding the town center, where the current city street system is very narrow. In addition, existing crossings of the railroad are "at grade," and as additional traffic occurs due to development, those at-grade intersections with the railroad may get congested and cause delays when trains traverse the City. Pedestrian access in most areas of the City is considered deficient and unsatisfactory.

With Lake Lanier and county parks in the area, Flowery Branch is not void of parks and recreation opportunities. However, its municipal park and recreation program is not developed to any extent (i.e., mostly limited to parkland leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along Lake Lanier). The projected residential development will create additional demands for active and passive recreation on the part of the City, even if county facilities are nearby and some new development offsets some of the demand for recreation with private facilities.

The planning process conducted in 2004 made note of a lack of a formal stormwater drainage system in the downtown area. Revitalization and redevelopment plans will need to consider the increases of stormwater as development occurs in the downtown and how to handle and treat the increased stormwater flows.

Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Aesthetic Improvement

No formal study of redevelopment potential has been completed. However, there are blocks within the downtown area that are considered obsolete and probably require redevelopment. The 1995 comprehensive plan found that there was strong potential for the rehabilitation of the town center. It also found that there was a concentration of substandard housing located on Cantrell Road, including houses fronting on Old Factory Mill Road. The city has recently begun

to consider establishing an urban redevelopment agency or downtown development authority to spur revitalization efforts where necessary.

The 1995 comprehensive plan found that overall physical improvements in the City were needed, and that significant maintenance of the housing stock is needed. While that finding still holds true in 2005, it is believed, there are no clear signs that the lack of maintenance has led to the need for residential redevelopment. The City has a project to improve the streetscape of Main Street and the Railroad Street area in the vicinity that has been funded (see Table 6.18, transportation element). The 1995 comprehensive plan also noted that the entrances along Atlanta Highway (SR 13) "are not pleasing and need protection from strip development" (p. 22). Land use and urban design plans will consider the appropriateness of various agency formations for redevelopment, the possible benefits of more detailed corridor plans, and additional aesthetic improvements via implementation of design guidelines and design-related regulations.

During the planning phase conducted in 2004, specific aesthetic objectives for historic districts were articulated, including a landscape design for Railroad Park, directional signage to historic districts, installation of landscaping at the intersection of Phil Neikro Boulevard and Atlanta Highway (in the Railroad Historic District).

Abandoned Structures or Sites

There are some areas that contain unused (perhaps abandoned) structures. The most significant of those are found north and west of the downtown central business district and consist primarily of industrial-type buildings, structures, and sites. Also, some of the lots in the original settlement pattern are used for storage of boats and other equipment which could be relocated to more appropriate locations, thus freeing up city blocks for new development.

Areas With Significant Infill Development Opportunities

The 1995 comprehensive plan found that Flowery Branch had 478 acres out of 839 acres that were undeveloped, thus representing tremendous amounts of infill development opportunities. That statement is true today in 2005, it is believed, even though there has been some significant development in the city during the past decade. There are substantial opportunities for new residential development inside the city, much of which is now (in 2005) beginning to occur. The 1995 plan also found that there were gaps in residential development west of the railroad that detracted from neighborhood cohesiveness.

In terms of commercial development, the 1995 plan noted some underutilization of commercial buildings. The opportunities for development in the city, however, are considered mostly "greenfield," or areas that have not been in the path of development before but which will develop for the first time as the wave of development activity reaches the locality.

Areas of Significant Disinvestment

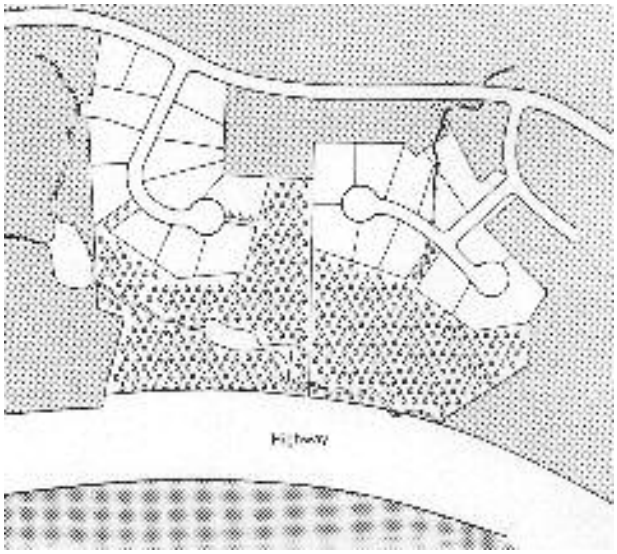
The 1995 comprehensive plan noted that Atlanta Highway (SR 13) threatens to cut off historic resources east of the railroad, and that isolation can cause neglect/decline. Multi-family dwellings along Chariot Drive appear to be experiencing a lack of investment and upkeep. Sometimes, rental property owners do not have much of an incentive to upgrade rental units and the surrounding properties, especially when occupied by households with lower comparable incomes. That is, improving the buildings may not increase the rents that can be gained from

the properties. With the exception of these multi-family dwellings along Chariot Drive, there are no concentrated patterns of disinvestment in real property in Flowery Branch. There are some older manufactured and/or mobile homes that been in place beyond their usual or expected life span. While along commercial corridors there is usually some signs of vacant buildings (which may eventually lead to disinvestment), the Atlanta Highway corridor in Flowery Branch does not show visible signs of disinvestment.

Noise Impacts from Major Highway Corridors

Flowery Branch is bisected by Interstate 985. The potential impacts of noise on adjacent and nearby land uses is a concern, particularly for residential properties. Residential developments, if located near the interstate corridor, will need to carefully consider the potential impacts of noise on residential living conditions.

Noise analysis is performed by determining existing and future traffic noise levels for a site and surrounding areas. Noise impacts can be very subjective, since the data is dependent on the relative distance of the observer or receptor from the source of noise.

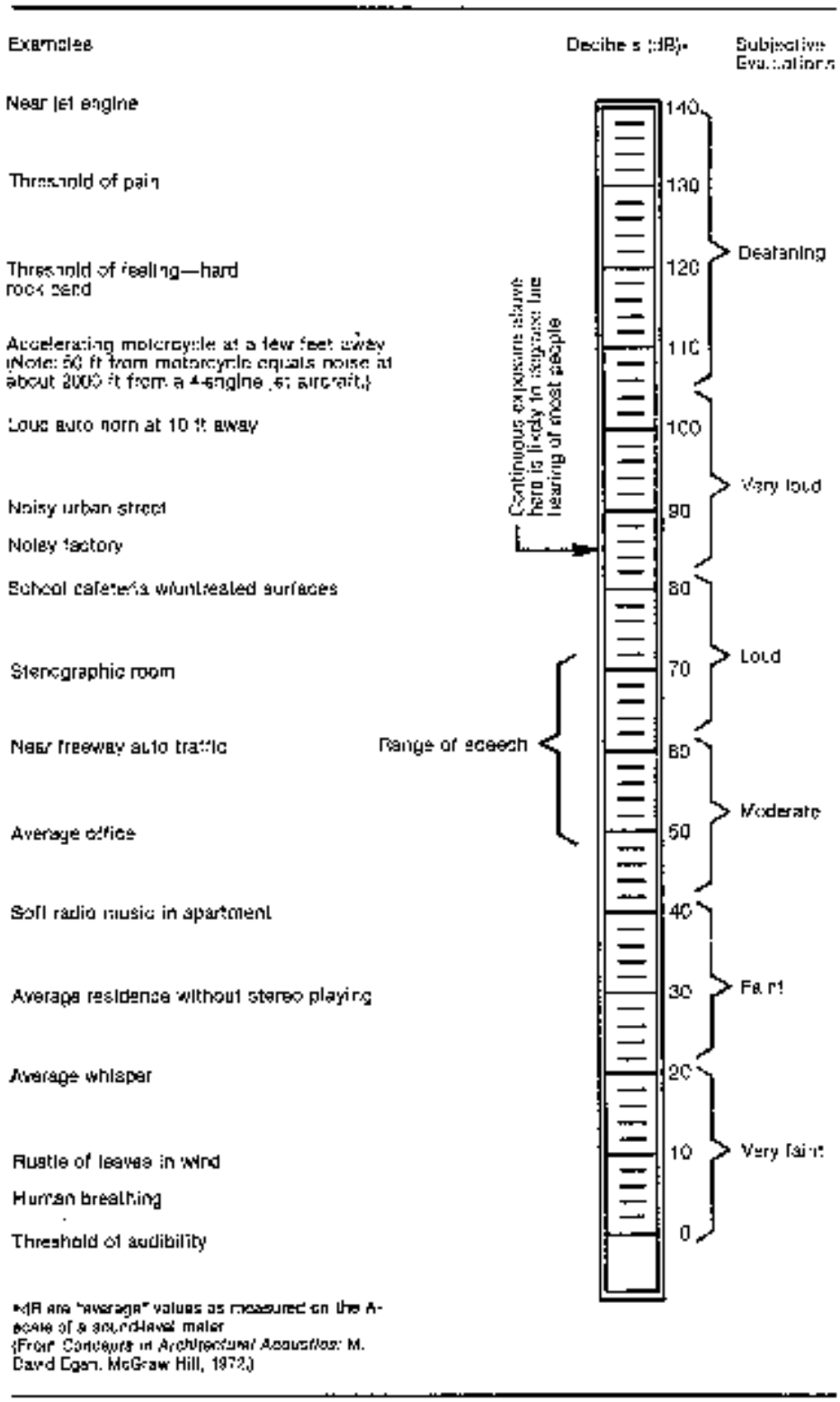


Illustrative Noise Mitigation, Residential Development

Generally, noise levels of 60 to 70 dBA can be compared to that of an air conditioner or lawn tiller running outside—or a clothes washer inside. Noise levels higher than 70 dBA approximate a lawn mower or other somewhat excessive noise.

Two studies have been completed within the last ten years for a north Gwinnett County area close to Flowery Branch along the I-985/I-85 corridors. The noise studies were developed using the FHWA Noise Prediction Model that has evolved through best practices and a series of adjustments based on factors such as the grade of the road, shielding of road facilities, and traffic flow.

A 1996 study was completed as part of a Master Plan for the North Advanced Water Reclamation Facility Site Development Master Plan; this facility is located immediately northeast of the convergence of I-985 and I-85 in Gwinnett County. Existing traffic nose levels were evaluated, as well as predictions developed for future noise data for the project site. This noise study was divided into two analysis years: 1) 1996 and 2) 2020 predictions, based on the widening of SR 20, the addition of the Mall of Georgia, and the construction of an outer loop around Atlanta. The results of the noise impact study indicates that traffic noise levels in 2020 will increase most in the areas closest to the interstate corridors, due to the dramatically increased traffic volumes from additional development and roadway improvements. Maximum noise levels for the site in 1996 range from 57 to 73 dBA, while noise levels for 2020 are predicted to be in the 60 to 76 dBA range.



Sound Acceptability Thresholds

A more recent noise impact study was conducted in 2002 for the conceptual master plan for the Gwinnett County Environmental Learning Center/Natural and Living History Museum. This site is located adjacent to the F. Wayne Hill Water Resources Facility, located northeast of the convergence of I-985 and I-85 that was analyzed in the 1996 report above. The study resulted in the delineation of noise contours that illustrated the noise levels within the potential park site; topography was not included as a factor in the study, however, so noise levels will probably fluctuate according to the terrain (noise will increase on the ridges due to the lack of shielding provided by vegetation). Current noise levels for the site ranged from 70 dBA immediately adjacent to the roadways to 60 dBA within the site. The potential building site on the interior of the property was not determined to have negative noise impacts from adjacent roadways. However, areas on the periphery of the potential park site were determined to have noise levels in the 65-70 dBA range that would have a negative impact on visitor experience of nature trails in that area. Recommendations based on the noise data collected for this study were to consider developing nature trails on creek corridors located on the quieter, interior areas of the site.

ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Current and proposed policies and development patterns must be analyzed for consistency with the "Quality Community Objectives" adopted by the Department of Community Affairs and articulated in the minimum planning standards effective May 1, 2005. This section addresses mostly the current policies and regulations of Flowery Branch and the characteristics of its existing development patterns that support or do not support the various quality community objectives. Each quality community objective is shown below in quotes, bold, italicized, followed by a response or assessment. In conducting this analysis for selected objectives, where appropriate the City's planning consultant reviewed the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development regulations in addition to review of existing development patterns.

"Regional Identity Objective: Regions should promote and preserve an "identity," defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics."

Flowery Branch identifies with Hall County, Lake Lanier, and the Georgia Mountains Region. While there is no regional architecture per se, except perhaps for a number of residential dwellings that are Craftsman style. Flowery Branch has made efforts to preserve its historic resources which help contribute to the overall attractiveness of the county and region. Flowery Branch shares characteristics of "small town flavor" with Hall County's other small towns, including Clermont, Lula, and Oakwood among others. City leaders have recognized the common economic linkages Flowery Branch has with nearby municipalities and Hall County. Participation in the Economic Development Council (see economic development element) is a prime example. Another example of working together to promote common economic linkages is the water and sewer planning of the city and its cooperative provision of such services per agreements with Oakwood and Hall County. Progress is being made toward promoting a specific "identity" for the city, and part of that thus far has centered on Flowery Branch as home of the Atlanta Falcons Training Facility.

"Growth Preparedness Objective: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities."

The primary means of the City to facilitate growth is through its provision of public water and sanitary sewer services. The City has approved projects that will expand the capacity of its water and sewer systems to facilitate the needs of anticipated new development. As noted in this chapter and the community facilities element, better infrastructure is needed in the City's town center and originally settled area, where streets are narrow, formal drainage facilities are absent, and the sidewalk system is nearly non-existent. Clearly, in order to facilitate the type of development Flowery Branch wants for its town center and in-town neighborhoods, additional road and utility improvements will be needed.

One deficiency noted in the Population Element (see Chapter 1 of this Community Assessment) was the lower education levels of the labor force. In order to satisfy that part of this quality community objective, the City will need to pursue additional efforts if possible to increase educational attainment of the citizenry.

With regard to land use regulations, the City recognizes that its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are outdated and need to be rewritten. For the types of growth the City seeks to achieve, which include traditional neighborhood development, subdivisions that provide permanent greenspace, and quality non-residential development, the zoning ordinance will need to be comprehensively retooled. Other than providing for a planned unit development zoning district, Flowery Branch's zoning ordinance does not provide for all of the types of quality growth and development characteristics that are desired by City leaders and staff.

"Appropriate Business Objective: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities."

The Economic Development Element (Chapter 3 of this Community Assessment) reveals that Flowery Branch's workforce is predominantly "blue collar," or dominated by the skilled trades such as operators, laborers, fabricators, and industrial plant workers. There is an extensive area of existing and planned industrial development just north of the City Limits of Flowery Branch, and those opportunities are sufficiently matched with the needs of the local labor force. Expansion of manufacturing jobs will create good-paying jobs appropriate to the labor force in the City.

Flowery Branch will also soon witness extensive growth of its commercial base, which will add numerous retail and service employment positions. While these jobs pay comparatively lower wages than manufacturing jobs, they are considered appropriate businesses in terms of economic development. For more information on job skills, see Chapter 3 of this Community Assessment.

"Educational Opportunities Objective: Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions."

As noted in both the economic development element (Chapter 3) and community facilities and services element (Chapter 6) of this Community Assessment, there are appropriate educational and training opportunities available to residents of Flowery Branch: Lanier Tech, Gainesville College, and Brenau University provide higher education and vocational/technical school

training opportunities. The Hall County Board of Education works to ensure that its high school curriculum provides the appropriate training for its graduates to seek employment in the county. Other economic development activities also support this quality community objective. For more information on educational opportunities, see Chapter 3 of this Community Assessment. This assessment underscores the need to improve educational attainment of the citizenry.

"Employment Options Objective: A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce."

The needs of Flowery Branch's labor force are heavily concentrated in the manufacturing industry and blue-collar occupations. As noted previously, Hall County, Oakwood, and Flowery Branch have put into place the basic infrastructure and land needed to expand the manufacturing base in southern Hall County. While less is known about the specific number of jobs in the City (and the larger Flowery Branch zip code), there is a suitable diversity of jobs available even after recognize the reliance upon manufacturing jobs in south Hall County. Because of abundant manufacturing jobs north of the City, it is less important for Flowery Branch to try and provide for all workforce needs (i.e., diverse job opportunities) all within the City Limits itself.

"Heritage Preservation Objective: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character."

Current municipal policies and ordinances support this quality community objective. Flowery Branch has delineated two historic districts and established a Historic Preservation Commission to ensure compatible development and preserve historic buildings within the two historic districts. This Community Assessment provides for a detailed inventory of historic resources and an assessment of what is needed to further preserve the history and cultural heritage of Flowery Branch. As noted earlier in this chapter, the City's planning consultants are preparing an urban design inventory and the City will consider specific measures to protect and promote aesthetic characteristics of the community. Policies for the protection of scenic features are not currently in place, but the City has adopted regulations for the protection of wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and water supply watersheds (i.e., the state environmental planning criteria).

"Open Space Preservation Objective: New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors."

Current policies and regulations of the City of Flowery Branch do not fully satisfy this quality community objective. The City's zoning districts, including the planned unit development district, do not specifically require open space as a part of new development, with the exception of a 10 percent open space set-aside requirement for the central business district zoning district. Residential developments are not presently required to provide for parks, recreation sites, and greenways, though they are not prevented from providing such facilities. As noted above, the City's zoning ordinance needs to be retooled to provide for conservation subdivisions and other open space requirements in addition to buffers which are already required for wetlands and within water supply watersheds (and which may form the basis for preservation of wildlife corridors).

"Environmental Protection Objective: Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved."

Flowery Branch has adopted regulations that provide for the basic minimum required level of environmental protection of wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and water supply watersheds. Beyond these areas, there are few if any sensitive environmental areas that require additional land use regulations. Vegetation, tree removal, and grading practices, however, are probably not sufficiently addressed in the city's current land use regulations, as the zoning ordinance does not require landscaping to any significant extent.

As noted in the transportation element (see Chapter 6 of this Community Assessment), Flowery Branch's transportation planning must conform to air quality considerations now that it is a part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Hall County.

"Regional Cooperation Objective: Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources."

Protecting the water quality of Lake Lanier and other surface waters are the most significant opportunities for Flowery Branch to work with other regional partners to attain the protection of regional natural resources. Beyond environmental protection, Flowery Branch meets this objective by working cooperatively with Hall County in terms of economic development and community facilities and services, and with its sister city to the north, Oakwood, in terms of water and sewer services for economic development. Past economic development studies of the I-985 corridor (see discussion in Chapter 3 of this Community Assessment) have helped to identify common economic development needs in southern Hall County. Flowery Branch's officials continue to be open to considering collaborative solutions to the problems and issues of the City and Region.

"Transportation Alternatives Objective: Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged."

Flowery Branch's existing policies, regulations, and development patterns generally do not satisfy entirely this quality community objective. With the exception of rural, on-demand transit, Flowery Branch is not served by public transportation (see Chapter 6 of this Community Assessment). An inventory of pedestrian facilities shows substantial deficiencies in the pedestrian infrastructure network that will need correcting in the City's Community Agenda. The city's zoning districts, except for the planned unit development district, are mostly single-function land use districts that do not provide adequately for the mixing of land uses that are more likely to promote walking and biking to destinations. The low-density residential patterns currently require virtually all residents to get around by automobile, and there are currently no viable alternative transportation modes to the automobile. The low-density pattern does not facilitate public transportation, even if intensification were to be promoted by City land use policies. The most likely response of the City, in an attempt to satisfy this objective, will be to provide a sidewalk construction program and retool land use regulations so that pedestrian needs are

adequately met in the site plan review process. It is unlikely that Flowery Branch can realistically be provided with significant public transportation opportunities in the future (see Chapter 6, Transportation Element).

"Regional Solutions Objective: Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer."

Flowery Branch is a party to Hall County's service delivery strategy and is open to regional solutions to problems and issues the City, nearby municipalities, the County and the region will need to confront in the future.

"Housing Opportunities Objective: Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community."

As noted in the Housing Element (Chapter 2 of this Community Assessment), the housing stock in Flowery Branch provides for a wide variety of housing types and densities, ranging from low-density suburban lots, in-town living, manufactured homes on individual lots, a mobile home park, duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. The housing stock in Flowery Branch matches well the needs of blue-collar workers employed by nearby manufacturing establishments. The quality of housing, because it is older, needs improvement in some areas of Flowery Branch. New single-family subdivisions are helping to provide some newer, larger, and higher value housing in the City to help meet the needs of middle and upper income families and households.

"Traditional Neighborhood Objective: Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity."

Other than developer-initiated planned unit developments, the City's zoning ordinance does not provide for the objectives of traditional neighborhood development and mixed land uses. The City's current policies, regulations, and land development patterns do not meet this quality community objective. The City land use regulations will need to be retooled to more adequately provide for mixed-use development and traditional neighborhood development, both of which are considered appropriate in or surrounding the town center and in other designated locations within the City. Human scaled development is not current assured or even encouraged by current city regulations, although patterns in the City's two historic districts are more likely to be pedestrian friendly. The urban design inventory, conducted as a part of this planning process, will help facilitate the preparation of plan components that will better facilitate mixed land uses, traditional neighborhood development, and pedestrian activity.

"Infill Development Objective: Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community."

As noted elsewhere in this Community Assessment, most development in Flowery Branch is more appropriately characterized as "Greenfield" development rather than infill development. However, it was also noted how the large amount of vacant/undeveloped land in the City

provides for substantial development opportunities within the City Limits. Conversion of land at the periphery is happening inside and outside the City Limits of Flowery Branch.

In the case of Flowery Branch's original settlement area, the infrastructure needed to support further infill development, redevelopment, and compact urban form generally are insufficient (as opposed to being available and underutilized). The City can promote development closer to the downtown and originally settled area through the provision of adequate infrastructure (e.g., wider streets, sidewalks, and drainage improvements), and in order to promote any infill strategy or intensification policies for compact urban growth, Flowery Branch must be prepared to provide infrastructure upgrades. Also, Hall County comprehensive planning policies (land use) are compatible with the city's policies, in that they provide for higher density new or infill development on tracts of land served by municipal water and sanitary sewer service.

"Sense of Place Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment."

Flowery Branch's policy of promoting a town center with unique characteristics is highly consistent with this quality community objective. The character areas recommended in this Community Assessment (and as finalized in the upcoming Community Agenda) will address the proper locations of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places. The urban design inventory and element, prepared as a part of this Community Assessment (see Chapter 10) will help advance prospects for creating new developments with a sense of place.

THE CHARACTER AREA DELINEATION PROCESS

DCA's rules require that a map of "recommended character areas" be developed based on an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the community, as an integral part of this Community Assessment. This means that the Flowery Branch's planners take the first "shot" at drawing and describing Character Areas.

DCA's local planning standards emphasize that the initial delineation of character areas must be considered in the context of the supporting analysis of data and information, which is also a part of this Community Assessment. Planners delineating character areas must look beyond just the design aspects of various neighborhoods, centers, and corridors. All the data and analysis within the Community Assessment, including maps of environmentally sensitive areas, are to be looked at holistically in order to avoid conflicts among various objectives of the comprehensive plan.

As a part of the public participation process (i.e., in public forums called for in the approved Community Participation Program), the preliminary Character Areas and a vision for each (provided later in this chapter) will be presented, and the issues and opportunities associated which each Character Area will be discussed. During the community visioning process which takes place before the Community Agenda is prepared, the recommended Character Areas will be considered by the public and confirmed, refined, and modified as appropriate. One of the key objectives of the Public Participation Program is to "adjust boundaries, modify, add, or subtract character areas based on stakeholder perspectives about future development patterns."

The public during the public participation/visioning process, will determine the appropriate land uses, development (or preservation) objectives and strategies, and implementation techniques for each Character Area. Discussion will be focused during the participation process on which land uses are appropriate and should be permitted in each Character Area. It may be possible to move toward consensus on Character Areas and also arrive at acceptable implementation strategies, particularly if the character area recommendations are developed with some degree of detail and with an eye toward specific implementation issues.

PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS

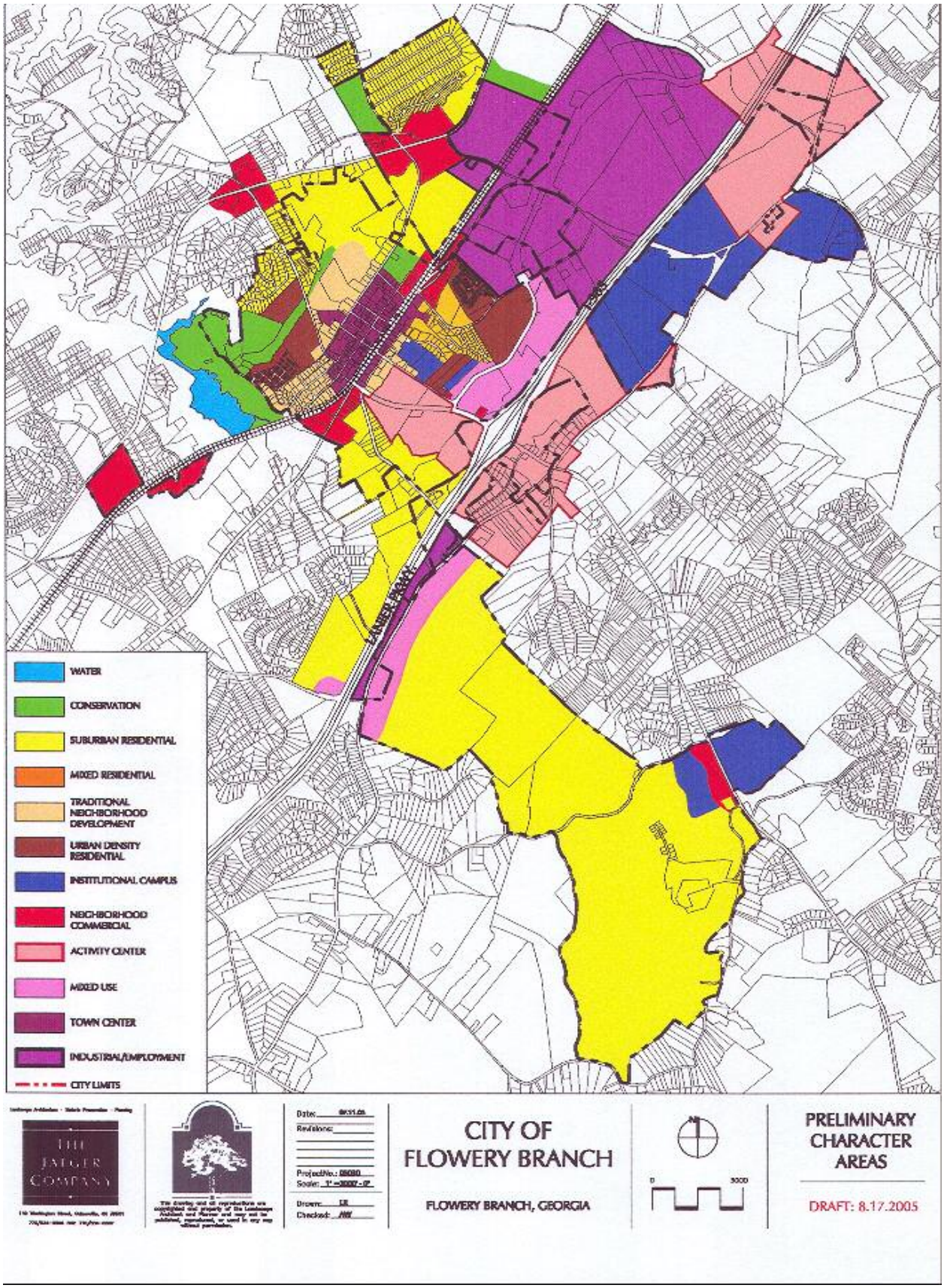
Consistent with the specified process, this section of the Community Assessment articulates preliminary recommendations for the establishment of Character Areas. Each of these initial proposals is listed and described in the following paragraphs. It is important to note here that the character areas must correspond with all areas of the City (that is, they must be drawn to include all areas of the City Limits). In addition, in order to accommodate possible annexation, a surround fringe area is included in the character area delineation process, along with a proposed overall "sphere of influence" or annexation boundary. Initial recommendations include 12 character areas listed below (descriptions follow):

- Town Center
- Traditional Neighborhoods
- Suburban Neighborhoods
- Mixed Housing
- Urban Density Communities
- Institutional Campus
- Neighborhood Commercial Node
- Activity Center
- Employment
- Mixed Use
- Conservation

Town Center

This character area consists of a small, compact area corresponding with the city's downtown central business district. Acceptable uses include residences, businesses, offices, civic buildings and uses, institutional, and mixed-use developments. In addition, this character area is proposed to expand into abutting blocks of the downtown area and incorporate redevelopment and revitalization objectives of a compact, pedestrian-friendly downtown.

Within this character area, participation of other agencies such as an urban redevelopment agency, downtown development authority, and/or the Historic Preservation Commission will be required in terms of development planning.


WATER
CONSERVATION
SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL
MIXED RESIDENTIAL
TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
URBAN DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS
NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
ACTIVITY CENTER
MIXED USE
TOWN CENTER
INDUSTRIAL/EMPLOYMENT
CITY LIMITS
THE JAEGER COMPANY
CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH
FLOWERY BRANCH, GEORGIA
PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS
DRAFT: 8.17.2005

Traditional Neighborhoods

This character area corresponds with residential blocks within the originally settled area of Flowery Branch, surrounding the town center. A key characteristic of the traditional neighborhood is the rectangular or square block, lot, and street pattern that exists in the originally settled neighborhoods of Flowery Branch. Acceptable uses are primarily single-family residences, stick-built (excluding manufactured homes). Some other forms of housing such as duplexes and accessory apartments may be permitted. This character area promotes dwellings that have little if any setback from city streets, and densities are in the range of 3-5 dwelling units per acre.

Suburban Neighborhoods

This character area corresponds with conventional suburban subdivisions with larger lots (1/2 acre or more) that have cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets. Houses are setback from the road, and lots are spacious. Streets are built to relatively wide standard when compared with traditional neighborhoods. Connectivity is not necessarily provided, although an objective of this character area is to provide for pedestrian activity and connections among subdivisions to provide more of a true “neighborhood” feel, as opposed to each tract being developed without consideration of connecting to abutting properties.

Another key objective for this character area is the provision of connected open spaces that are permanently protected. With such protected open space, it is possible for this character area to preserve a more rural, open-space feel if conservation lands are set aside and scenic view analyses are incorporated into development plans. Acceptable uses include single-family residences, stick-built (excluding manufactured homes), along with supportive civic, institutional, and recreational uses. These areas are served by public water supply but not necessarily sanitary sewer service. Through master planning or planned unit development processes, such as that followed in the Sterling on the Lake development, other housing types such as townhouses and condominiums may be included in the housing mix.

Urban Density Communities

This character are corresponds with the highest density residential developments in the city, including apartment complexes, townhouse developments, and mobile home parks. Densities range from 6 to 10 units per acre and more. Acceptable uses include multi-family development and supportive civic, institutional, and recreational uses.

Mixed Housing

This designation has characteristics of traditional neighborhoods and applies mostly within the originally settled area of Flowery Branch, but the difference is these are smaller homes and include manufactured homes on individual lots. These character areas may have issues of housing maintenance and some areas designated as such may be eligible for community development block grants, targeted housing programs, neighborhood self-help programs, and other revitalization activities.

Institutional Campus

This character area corresponds with large institutional campuses including the Atlanta Falcons Training Facility, Hall County public schools, and large churches. These are mostly single-function land use districts that where public access is controlled or limited. In the case of schools, pedestrian accessibility is promoted, although other institutions are largely reliant on the automobile for access.

Neighborhood Commercial Node

This character area corresponds with the existing developed commercial node at Jim Crow Road and McEver Road. The character is one of suburban shopping, service, and dining opportunities, laid out primarily for access by automobile but also with pedestrian linkages to surrounding and nearby neighborhoods. Acceptable uses include businesses, offices, services, restaurants, institutions, and civic uses.

Activity Center

This designation corresponds to areas surrounding and near I-985 interchanges. One of these areas is developed for predominantly commercial (region-serving) uses. While this character is likely to be dominated by commercial uses, it is also intended to accommodate mixed-use

developments. The widest possible range of uses is contemplated in this character area, except for industry and single-family or manufactured homes.

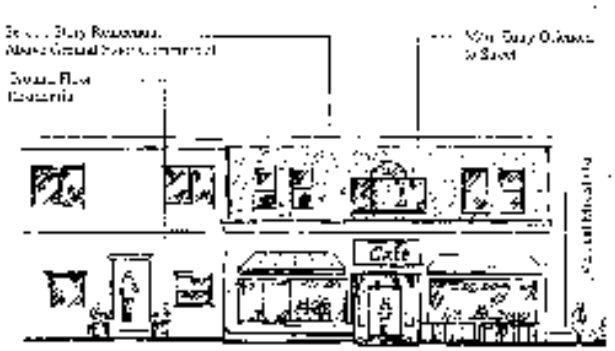
This character area is also intended to apply to the new (proposed) interchange on I-985 which will connect with Thurman Tanner Road. Special design principles apply in this character area to ensure connections for vehicle and pedestrian access is provided and quality construction is promoted.

Employment

Consistent with the 1995 future land use plan, this character area corresponds with the manufacturing district partially within and north of the City Limits. Light and heavy industries are the primary use contemplated within this Character Area. Within these areas, truck traffic is frequent, and individual manufacturing establishments are not necessarily connected with one another.

Mixed Use

This character area is intended to correspond with new "greenfield" areas that can be developed with a combination of different land uses. Acceptable uses include all types of residential uses, offices, commercial, and civic/institutional.



Conservation

This character area has very limited application in Flowery Branch but corresponds to lands that are or should be set aside for greenspace, or which will have very limited low-density residential use.

Tables 9.4, 9.5, and 9.6 provide additional summary descriptions of the distinctive features of the recommended character areas.

Table 9.4
Function, Access and Open Space of Character Areas

Character Area	Predominant Function	Mobility and Access	Open Space Provided	Measure(s) of Development Intensity
Town Center	Mixed-use	Pedestrian-friendly	Plazas and small urban pocket parks	Floor-area ratio
Traditional Neighborhoods	Residences and civic uses/buildings	Pedestrian-friendly	Greens, plazas, and pocket parks	Maximum building coverage; residential density limitations
Suburban Neighborhoods	Predominantly residences	Accommodates pedestrians but mostly automobile dependent	Swim and tennis centers, community buildings, greenways, greenspace	Minimum lot size, minimum lot width, maximum building coverage
Mixed Housing	Mixes of stick-built and manufactured homes	Accommodates pedestrians but mostly automobile dependent	Connections to municipal parks or other open spaces in the city	Minimum lot size, minimum lot width, maximum building coverage
Urban Density Communities	Multi-family planned communities	Accommodates pedestrians but mostly automobile dependent	On-site active recreational facilities, some passive recreation; connections to other open spaces	Maximum units per acre; open space ratio
Institutional Campus	Single-function institution	Automobile dependent except for schools	May be provided on campus	Maximum building coverage; open space ratio
Neighborhood Commercial Node	Primarily commercial serving suburban neighborhoods	Accommodates pedestrians but mostly automobile dependent	Limited to suburban plazas or small open spaces	Square footage per acre or floor-area ratio; open space ratio
Activity Center	Mixed use	Pedestrian friendly but primarily automobile oriented	Greens, plazas, and pocket parks	Floor-area ratios, open space ratios
Employment	Single-function industry	Automobile dependent	No formal open space except for use by employees	Maximum building coverage
Mixed Use	Mixed-use	Pedestrian-friendly	Plazas and small urban pocket parks	Floor-area ratio
Conservation	Natural resources protection; parkland	Access is limited to conservation-compatible activities	Passive recreation opportunities may be provided	Impervious surface ratio

Table 9.5
Physical Improvements Within Character Areas

Character Area	Blocks and Lots	Street Characteristics	Pedestrian Walkway Type	Infrastructure Responsibilities
Town Center	Grid block pattern	Skinny streets with sidewalks and street trees	Distinctive materials (e.g., stamped concrete) with variable widths	Public and private partnership; urban redevelopment agency sponsorship
Traditional Neighborhoods	Grid block pattern	Skinny streets with sidewalks and street trees	Concrete sidewalks with planter islands	Public and private partnership; urban redevelopment agency sponsorship
Suburban Neighborhoods	Curvilinear	Wider streets with or without sidewalks	Accommodated within road or concrete, 5' wide or trails, 8-10' wide in natural areas	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Mixed Housing	Undefined	Skinny streets with or without sidewalks	Accommodated within road or concrete, 5' wide	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Urban Density Communities	Undefined	Private internal streets with connections to public sidewalk system	Sidewalks, 5' wide	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Institutional Campus	Undefined	Accommodates assembly traffic	Sidewalks, 5' wide for schools only	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Neighborhood Commercial Node	Private driveways with interparcel connections	Private driveways serving autos and sidewalks	Concrete, 6-8 feet wide depending on intensity	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Activity Center	Grid block pattern	Skinny streets (connected local network) with sidewalks and street trees	Concrete, 6-8 feet wide depending on intensity	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Employment	Designed for trucks	Disconnected; serving only one use	Generally not provided	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Mixed Use	Grid block pattern	Skinny streets with sidewalks and street trees	Distinctive materials (e.g., stamped concrete) with variable widths	Private subdivider installs all improvements
Conservation	Restricted	Minimal impervious surface necessary	Trails, 8-10' wide in natural areas	Improvements are limited to essential infrastructure

Table 9.6
Likely Implementation Measures
In Addition to Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

Character Area	Development Guidance	Environmental Impact Review	Fiscal Impact Review
Town Center	Guidelines Provided	Not required	Not required
Traditional Neighborhoods	Guidelines Provided	Not required	Not required
Suburban Neighborhoods	N/A	Not required	Recommended
Mixed Housing	N/A	Not required	Not required
Urban Density Communities	Guidelines Provided	Not required	Recommended
Institutional Campus	N/A	Not required	Not required
Neighborhood Commercial Node	Guidelines Provided	Not required	Not required
Activity Center	Guidelines Provided	Recommended	Recommended
Employment	N/A	Not required	Not required
Mixed Use	Guidelines Provided	Not required	Not required
Conservation	N/A	Required	Not required