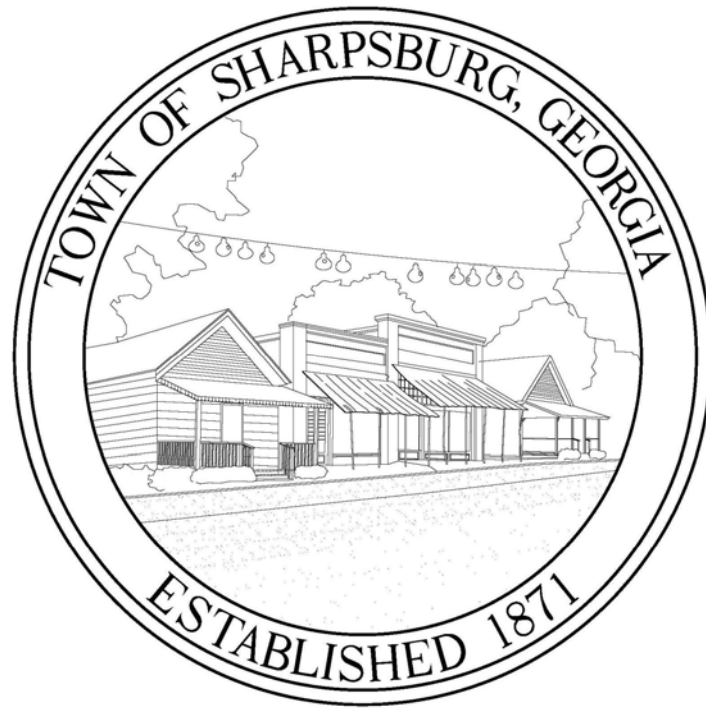


**Town of Sharpsburg 2006-2026 Comprehensive Plan:  
Community Assessment**





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## **Introduction**

The Community Assessment summarizes the local government's evaluation of its development patterns, issues and opportunities, and level of compliance with the DCA's Quality Community Objectives. This Community Assessment was approved by DCA along with the Community Participation Plan and a Technical Addendum. The Technical Addendum contains a more detailed analysis of population, housing, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, economic development, intergovernmental coordination, and transportation.

## **Overview of The Town Plan**

In 2004 the Town of Sharpsburg developed a Vision of its future with the preparation of the Town Plan. The Town Plan portrays a new direction for the citizens of Sharpsburg with new development in the form of traditional neighborhoods, traditional commercial and business areas and a town center, all located within walking distance of citizens living within the present town limits.

The central premise of the Town Plan is that Sharpsburg should preserve and build on its historic character, maintain its small-town feel, and grow as a pedestrian-oriented, compact community in which all of one's needs are accessible within a five-minute walk. Because of the unique historic character of Sharpsburg, specific development guidelines were necessary to ensure that future building and development occurs in a manner that is harmonious with the Town. Guidelines were developed requiring all future development to reflect the traditional character of small towns in the region that were established from approximately 1826 to 1920.

The Town Plan establishes development guidelines through written design criteria, graphic plans, and renderings. The plan uses the original design concepts of early Sharpsburg to forge a new vision which conceptually includes the districts listed below. These districts provide the foundation for the Character Areas defined later in this report.

- Town Center
- Historic District
- Traditional Neighborhoods
- Single-Family Detached Neighborhoods
- Multi-family Neighborhoods
- Traditional Commercial Districts
- Highway Commercial Districts



*The Town Plan includes renovation of  
"Coca-Cola Corner" on Main Street.*



### **Future Annexation Areas**

The Town of Sharpsburg is a very small town, approximately 344.1 acres in size, with a population of approximately 329 persons<sup>1</sup>. While there are undeveloped properties within the corporate town limits, anticipated growth in Coweta County is expected to have profound impacts on Sharpsburg. There are a number of large undeveloped properties along the major roadways outside the town limits. At some point these areas will become desirable locations for future development. The Town Plan recognizes the strategic locations of these properties and that the future quality of development surrounding Sharpsburg is critical to the quality of development within the Town Limits.

The Town Plan provides a model for development of these properties. It is the policy of the Town Plan that future annexations incorporate the design concepts and principles of traditional neighborhood development (TND) in order to provide for continuity of the vision established by the residents of Sharpsburg.

### **Analysis of Existing Development Patterns**

The purpose of this analysis is to gain a clear understanding of the geographic setting within which Sharpsburg is growing and to explore further those issues and opportunities that relate directly to the physical environment. The following analysis looks at three aspects of the existing development patterns in Sharpsburg: Existing Land Use, Areas Requiring Special Attention, and Character Areas.

#### **Existing Land Use**

Sharpsburg has changed very little in total composition since its incorporation in 1871. The limited amount of change has preserved the small-town character and fostered the historic district along Main Street. Some new residential units (multi-family) have recently been constructed on Stovall Street which has accounted for a small increase in population. New



commercial uses have been limited to highway-oriented automotive care centers located at the intersection of Highway 54 and Highway 154. These commercial uses as well as the local convenience stores along Highway 54 serve a larger market than the Town of Sharpsburg and are conveniently located on a main roadway for access.

The limited amount of growth in Sharpsburg has been beneficial in that both the development pattern and the unique character of the Town have been preserved. Table 1:

<sup>1</sup> Source: Population Division, US Department of the Census, released June, 2005



Existing Land Uses shows the existing land uses within the current town limits of Sharpsburg as of January 2006. The existing land uses are described and defined below.

**Table 1: Existing Land Uses**

<b>LAND USE CATEGORY</b>	<b>ACREAGE</b>	<b>% OF TOTAL LAND</b>
Residential (Single-Family)	193.7 Acres	56.3%
Residential (Multi-Family)	2.7 Acres	0.8%
Commercial	24.7 Acres	7.2%
Institutional	23.3 Acres	6.7%
Industrial	4.9 Acres	1.4%
Recreational	0.5 Acres	0.1%
Public Right-of-way	46.4 Acres	13.6%
Vacant	47.9 Acres	13.9%

### **Residential Land Uses**

The Town of Sharpsburg is predominantly residential. Residential land-uses are defined as areas where single family homes and/or multi-family apartments are the predominant use. Existing residential properties in Sharpsburg are generally single-family detached units located on lots larger than one acre.



Single-family residential uses are the most prevalent land use with 193.7 acres, representing 56.3 % of the total land area. Multi-family Residential is a much smaller land use category with 2.7 acres, or 0.8 %. These two categories comprise a total of 57.1 % of the total land area in Sharpsburg. The land development pattern of Sharpsburg has changed very little since the early days when the Town was incorporated as a small, rural town. Some of the large residential tracts in Sharpsburg, exhibit some agricultural land use traits where horses are raised and forest land is maintained. However, agriculture is not the primary function of the land.

### **Commercial Land Uses**

Commercial Land Uses include commercial and office uses such as gas stations, convenience stores, antique shops, and other retail. Originally, commercial land uses were located around the railroad depot and along Main Street. Since the early days of Sharpsburg, commercial uses along Main Street have dwindled. Today, there are eight (8)



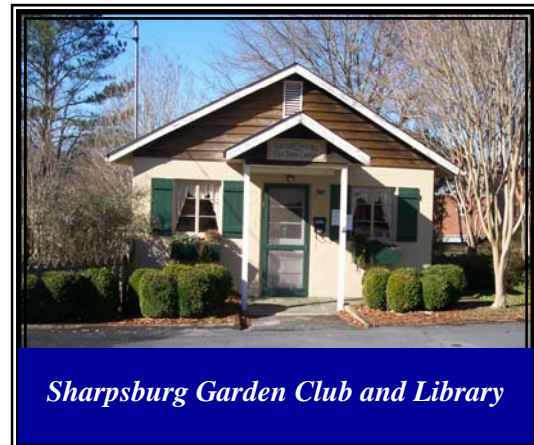


*Antique Shop in Old Town Sharpsburg*

retail businesses located on Main Street. However, in response to the market caused by the growth of Coweta County over the past decade, new commercial businesses have begun to locate on Highway 54 at the intersection with Highway 154 and McIntosh Road. A total of ten (10) commercial properties are located along the Highway 54 Corridor, including automotive care centers, a bank, and convenience stores. Commercial uses are the second most predominant land use category in Sharpsburg, representing 24.7 acres, or 7.2 % of the total land area of Sharpsburg.

### **Institutional Land Uses**

Institutional uses consist of public buildings, such as governmental facilities and churches. In Sharpsburg, the local government utilizes two facilities: the Bridges Recreation center for its administration offices, and the Garden Club building located on Terrentine Street for a library and meetings. The Post Office, constructed in 2002, is located on Highway 54. Two churches are located within the town limits. Institutional land uses are indicated as representing 23.3 acres, or 6.7 % of the total land area of Sharpsburg.



*Sharpsburg Garden Club and Library*

### **Industrial Land Uses**

There is only one industrial use within the town limits of Sharpsburg, a business called N & N Paving. It is located behind the Garden Club on Terrentine Street. This facility is a private business that has a single building used primarily for an office. There is limited outside storage on-site and there is no manufacturing associated with this use. This site is a 4.9 acre site, representing 1.4 % of the total land area of Sharpsburg.

### **Recreation**

There is one parcel of Recreation Land in Sharpsburg, the tennis courts at the Bridges Recreation Center.

### **Public Right-of-Way**

Public Right-of-way is land dedicated to road right-of-ways. This land accounts for 46 acres, or 13.6% of the total land area in Sharpsburg.

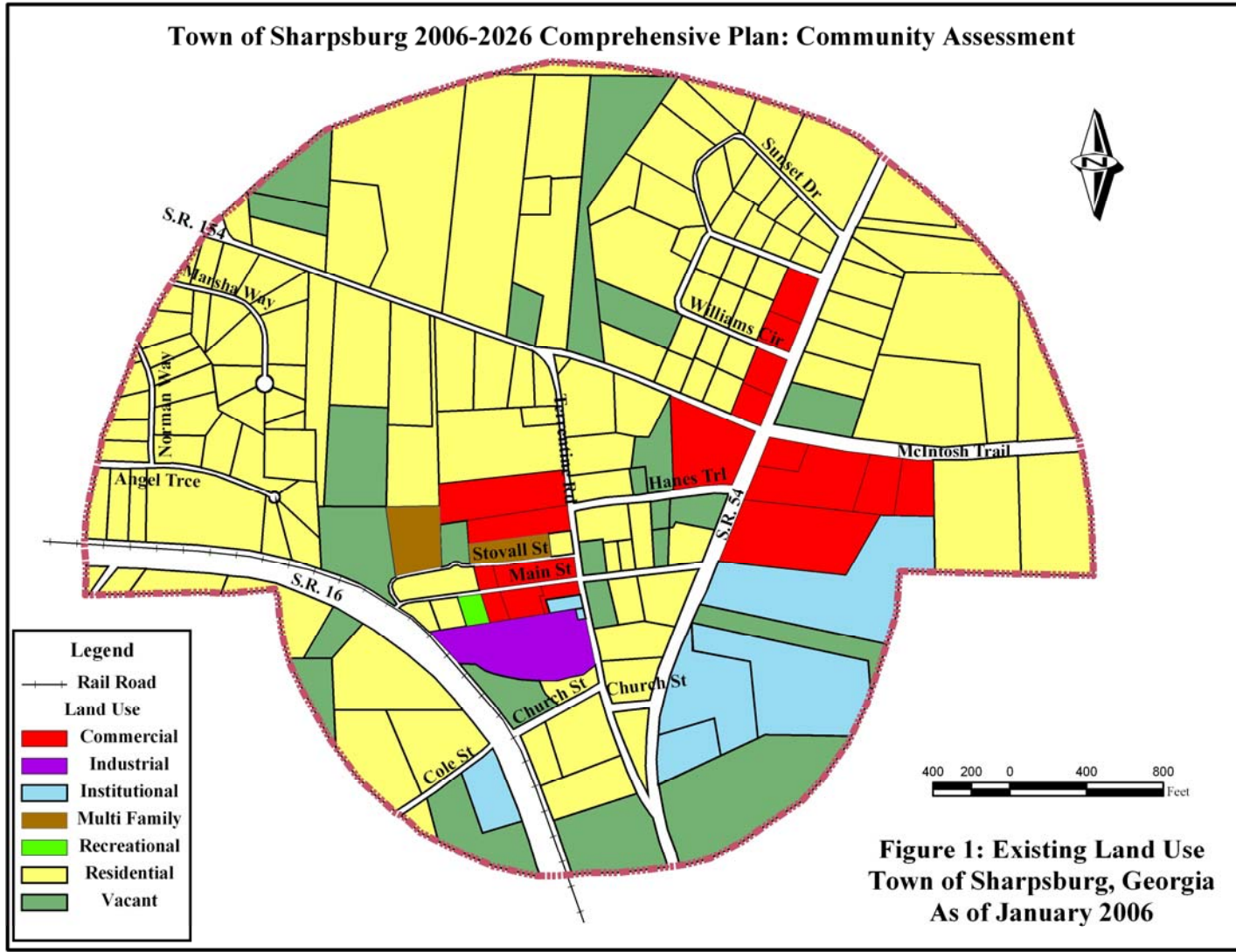


**Vacant**

Vacant properties in Sharpsburg are tracts of vacant land that are forested and remain relatively undisturbed. As indicated in Table 1: Existing Land Uses, vacant land consists of 47.9 acres, or 13.9 % of the total land area.



Figure 1: Existing Land Use







## **Areas Requiring Special Attention**

Coweta County is undergoing rapid population growth. The resulting growth pressures in Sharpsburg make it important to address and plan for its impacts. This section discusses the effects that anticipated growth may have on natural and cultural resources and the potential for infill development throughout the Town. Also included in this section are the areas where development should be directed, areas where it should be avoided, and areas where additional investment may be needed. Figure 2: Areas Requiring Special Attention identifies the location of these areas within Sharpsburg.

### **Natural and cultural resources**

#### *Groundwater Recharge Area*

There is a significant groundwater recharge area within the town limits of Sharpsburg. The groundwater recharge area is located in the southeast quadrant of the town limits. Some examples of potential threats to groundwater supplies include underground storage tanks, septic systems, road salt application and cleaning solvents. The recharge area is protected by inclusion in Sharpsburg's Water Resource District.

#### *Residential Neighborhoods and Historic Town Center*

The historic areas in Sharpsburg are the Town's most prized resources. The residential areas on Main Street and Terrentine Street give the Town its historic and small town character. Some of the houses in the neighborhood are over a century old while others of similar architectural style and size were constructed before 1950. The old buildings located at the town center represent the image of Sharpsburg. Visitors to Sharpsburg are attracted to this commercial area because of the antiques, arts and crafts that are available along Main Street. These valuable historic areas will likely experience infill development and modification to existing structures.



### **Developable Areas**

Because of the rapid pace and low density of projected growth over the next 20 years, all of Sharpsburg developable land is likely to develop within the next twenty years. Development will challenge the community's ability to provide adequate infrastructure, community facilities, and services.

### **Infill development opportunities**

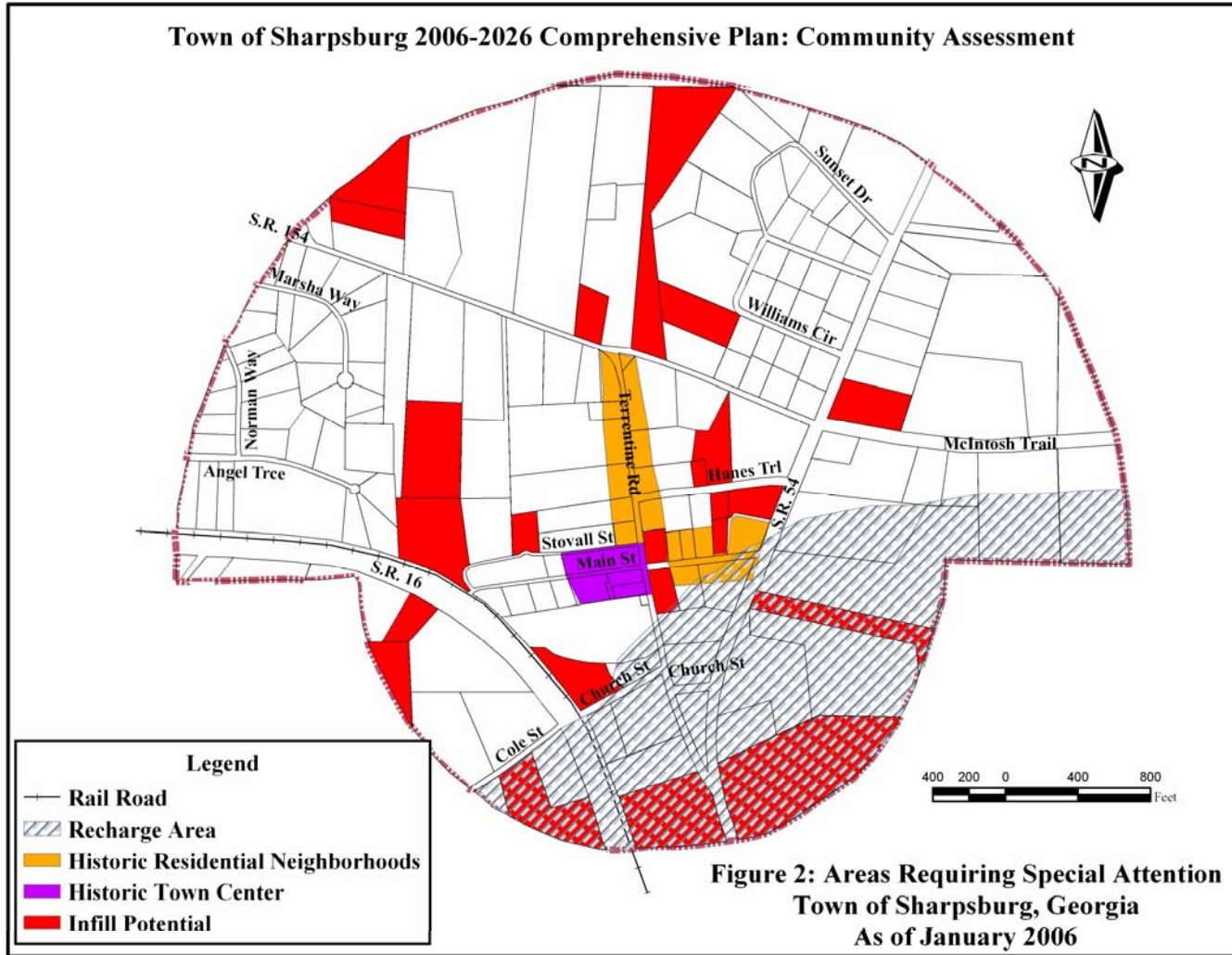
About 48 acres or 14% of Sharpsburg's properties are vacant. This provides a significant opportunity for quality infill development.

### **Brownfields, redevelopment areas, and disinvestment areas**

These special conditions do not exist within the small Town of Sharpsburg.



Figure 2: Areas Requiring Special Attention





**Recommended Character Areas**

The DCA requires the development of “Character Areas” as part of the Rules for Comprehensive Planning to acknowledge the visual and functional differences of various neighborhoods. By identifying desirable neighborhood characteristics, the Town of Sharpsburg will be able to provide more specific guidance for future development through appropriate planning and implementation within each Character Area.

The Character Areas defined in Table 2 and illustrated on Figure3: Recommended Character Areas have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved or have potential to evolve into unique areas. It is important to note while reviewing the Character Area map and descriptions that the identified character may not be accurate for every single parcel, but is rather the overall defining character of the entire area. The development strategies identified within each Character Area are not requirements, but recommendations for the desired types of development and redevelopment. The strategies will be utilized to help define short-term activities and long-term policies for future growth within the Town of Sharpsburg. The Character Area descriptions below are based on the State Planning Recommendations developed by DCA and the Sharpsburg Town Plan.

**Table 2: Character Areas Descriptions**

Character Area	Description/Location	Development Strategy
Historic Downtown	Historic commercial core in downtown Sharpsburg	Downtown should include relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve the greater area. Residential development should reinforce the traditional town center through a combination of rehabilitation of historic buildings in the downtown area and compatible new infill development targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums. Design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses. Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear. Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers,



Character Area	Description/Location	Development Strategy
		health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, and schools.
Historic District	Historic area including the contiguous areas of Main Street and Terrentine Street	Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives. Historic properties should be maintained, rehabilitated, and restored. New development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of that area. Pedestrian access and parks should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area.
Neighborhood Commercial	Commercial area east of SR 54 along McIntosh Trail	Mix of shop-front retail buildings, offices, and attached housing, such as apartments and town homes. Developments should be linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips. There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points.

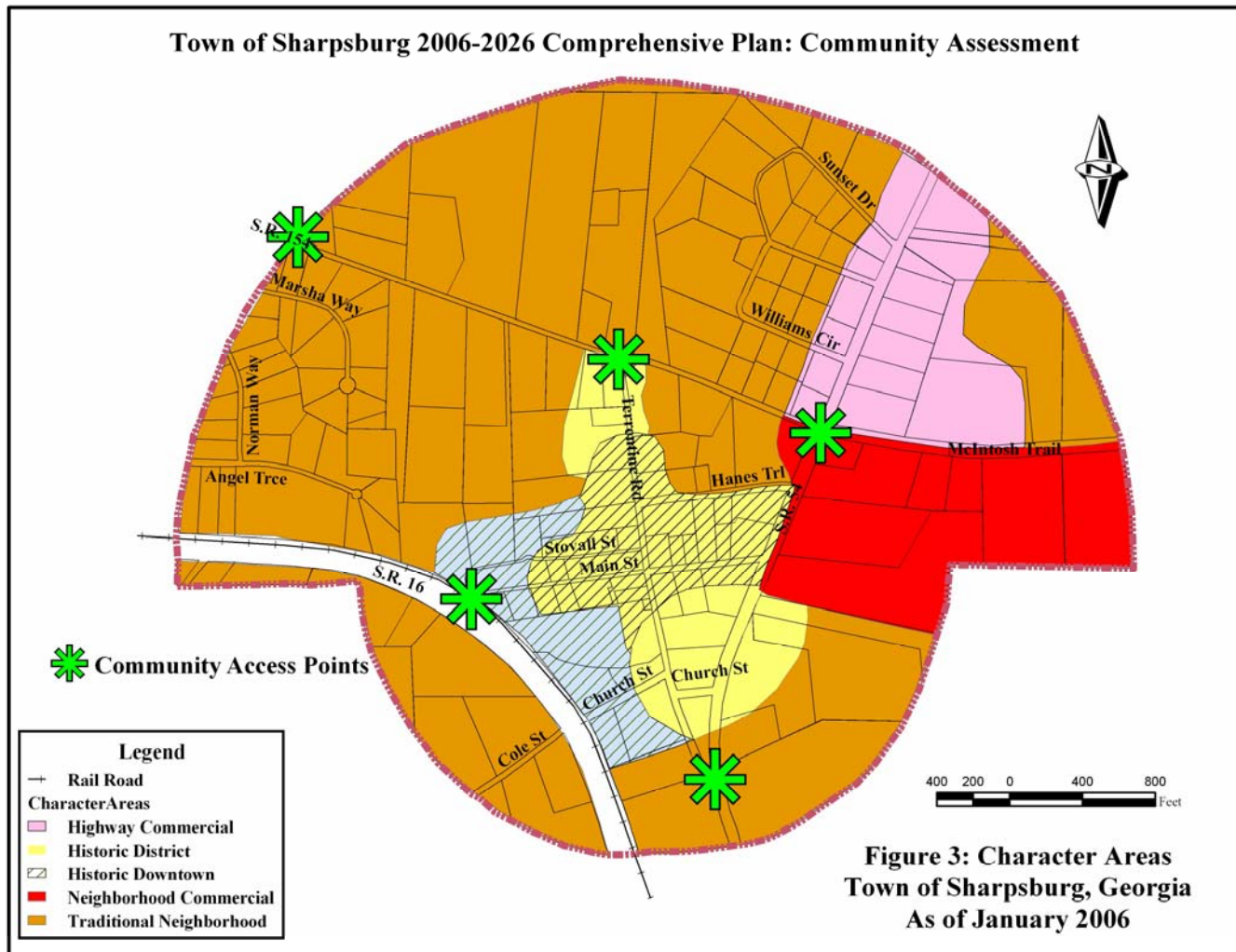


<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Description/Location</b>	<b>Development Strategy</b>
Highway Commercial	Auto-oriented commercial development along SR 54.	Complete and integrate pedestrian improvements and crosswalks throughout. Connect commercial areas to nearby residential areas. The areas should be required to promote pedestrian comfort, safety and convenience; promote high standards of landscape and sign controls to improve corridor appearance and maintain traffic speeds and capacity through access management and inter-parcel access.
Community Access Points	Important entrances to the Town on SR 54, SR 154, and McIntosh Trail.	Focus upon appearance with appropriate signage, landscaping and other beautification measures. Install appropriate directory signage to community amenities and developments. Retrofit or mask unsightly features as necessary.
Traditional Neighborhood	Residential areas outside of the Historic District and Historic Downtown.	Promote new developments that emulate the positive aspects of historic Sharpsburg. Promote moderate density, traditional development (TND) style residential subdivisions. New development should be master planned with mixed uses, blending residential development containing several housing types with schools, parks, and recreation linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips. There should be connectivity and continuity between master planned developments. There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points.





Figure 3: Recommended Character Areas





## Issues and Opportunities

The following Issues and Opportunities were identified using the *Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment Tool* and using the *Typical Issues and Opportunities* in the State Planning Recommendations.

### Population

- **Rapid Population Growth** Sharpsburg's future population, with annexation and development, is expected to reach 5,888 persons by 2026. Various factors will determine the extent of this future growth including the area's public education system, infrastructure capabilities, housing opportunities and economic development trends.
- **Aging Population** The share of residents over 65 is expected to increase dramatically. This presents a clear housing, service, and transportation issue for Coweta County and its cities.

### Economic Development

- **Limited Local Economy** Sharpsburg has a limited economy and depends heavily on Coweta County and the region for employment and services. However, as the demand for development increases in the Sharpsburg area, the local economy will experience profound changes. As the population increases, demand for services will increase and the local economy will respond with new businesses and employment opportunities.
- **Economic Development Program** Coweta County and the City of Newnan have active agencies such as the Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce which have been successful in attracting economic growth to the area, especially over the last decade. It is critical for Sharpsburg to become active in the agencies and programs offered by these agencies. The establishment of a downtown development committee would facilitate economic development in Sharpsburg.

### Natural & Cultural Resources

- **Air Quality** Coweta County and its municipalities including Sharpsburg have fallen out of compliance with the Clean Air Act's air quality standards. The County and its municipalities fall under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, which will affect transportation investment decisions and Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs). The Town of Sharpsburg is under the same restrictions as other non-attainment areas in the metropolitan Atlanta area.
- **Cultural Resources** Coweta County and





Sharpsburg have a wealth of historic resources. The historic resources provide the unique character of the town and could form the foundation of an economic development campaign emphasizing tourism

## **Facilities and Services**

- **Parks and Recreation Facilities**

There is not enough park and recreation space in Sharpsburg. The Town Plan addresses this issue with the incorporation of a Town Square and by requiring open spaces in new development.

- **Capital Improvements Planning**

Meeting the service demand of the explosive population growth will require careful planning. Sharpsburg is developing a Capital Improvements Program to address this issue.

- **Water and Sewer** The Town of Sharpsburg has limited water availability and no sanitary sewer provisions. Sharpsburg obtains water from the adjacent town of Turin. The present demand has consistently been provided through an informal inter-governmental agreement. However, the water system is outdated and needs replacement. Sanitary sewer service is not presently available in Sharpsburg. Historically, septic systems have been used in the Town and in Coweta County with approvals from the State of Georgia. However, recent increased demand for commercial businesses and more diverse housing opportunities have shown that septic systems will not meet the demand of local development. Future growth will require more water than the water supply from Turin and a wastewater management system to replace on-site septic systems.

- **Administrative Space** The administration of town affairs will require additional administrative space. It is estimated, in the short term, that approximately 1000-1200 sf of additional town hall space is necessary.



## **Housing**

- **Mix of Housing Sizes, Types, and Income Levels** There is already a diversity of housing types in Sharpsburg, ranging from single-family detached to multi-family rental units. However, the Town Plan anticipates a significant growth in housing within the present town limits and substantially more with annexation. It will be important to maintain a balanced mix of housing types as the Town grows.

- **Senior Housing** It is expected that the population of seniors will grow dramatically during the planning period. However, there are no provisions for senior housing or



care facilities for the disabled within Sharpsburg. However, there are facilities within Coweta County.<sup>2</sup>

## **Land Use**

- **Strip Development** The location of commercial uses along Highway 54 is of particular concern because pressure from developers and land owners along this major roadway may facilitate strip development.
- **Regional Growth Pressure** It is anticipated that future growth in the Coweta/Fayette County areas will profoundly impact the Town of Sharpsburg. The trend of development in the area has been predominantly single-family residential with associated commercial development located along main arteries for convenient automobile access. As properties within Sharpsburg and adjacent to its borders develop, the character of the Town, its infrastructure, and its ability to provide public services will be affected.
- **Infill limitations** As part of the Town Plan, higher-density infill development is planned and will require a better method of wastewater management.
- **Annexation** Annexing strategic properties provides the following opportunities.
  - The developments planned in the Town Plan will require sanitary sewer service because of the higher-density development around the Town Center. Without sufficient land inside the Town for a new sanitary treatment facility, there is a need for planned growth outside of the town limits. Annexation of strategic areas can allow for private wastewater treatment facilities that will accommodate the planned Town Center.
  - The extension of the conceptual development patterns of the Town Plan beyond the current town limits will further define the Town of Sharpsburg, preserving its small town historic character.
  - The anticipated increase in population through annexation will further support new commercial development and ensure the economic viability of the Town.



*Strip Development on State Route 54*



*Infill opportunity*

<sup>2</sup> The proposed Pathways Communities, Inc. development plans for 75 assisted units to be built in 2011. (plans received as of January 18, 2006)





## **Transportation**

- **Increasing Congestion** Traffic will increase along McIntosh Trail when Vernon Hunter Parkway is extended. The widening of McIntosh Trail is included as a long range project in the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.
- **Pedestrian Network** There are no sidewalks in the Town of Sharpsburg. The Town needs a sidewalk installation program and more funding sources. Sharpsburg has received funding for sidewalks from the USDA and a Transportation Enhancement Grant from TEA-21 administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Also, the Town requires multi-use trails to be included in new development. These trails are designed to provide access to parks, schools, and other amenities according to the goals of the 2024 Plan.

## **Intergovernmental Coordination**

Better coordination on a number of issues between Sharpsburg, Coweta County and the Town of Turin is necessary to further the implementation of each local government's long-range goals. In particular, the Town of Sharpsburg needs to address the following issues:

1. Annexation
2. An inter-governmental agreement on the continuing provision of domestic water service from the Town of Turin.
3. An inter-governmental agreement with Coweta County on the provision of domestic water for future development.
4. A stormwater management agreement with Coweta County to work together on stormwater management and water quality issues within common watersheds.





## **Consistency with Quality Community Objectives**

The following assessment was conducted to address the Quality Community Objectives requirement of Chapter 110-12-1: Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, “Local Planning Requirements”. The analysis below uses the *Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment Tool* created by the Office of Planning and Quality Growth. The completed Local Assessment Tool can be found in the Technical Addendum to this report. In most cases, the Town has already begun to address the QCO, and will continue to work towards fully achieving the quality growth goals set forth by the DCA.

### **Development Patterns**

Traditional neighborhoods, infill development, sense of place, regional identity, and transportation alternatives are Quality Community Objectives relating to development patterns. Sharpsburg’s zoning ordinance has several districts which allow for multiple uses and neo-traditional development. The ordinance encourages infill by allowing small lot development. Sense of place is encouraged through preserving the historic Old Town area and regulating signage. The community has a sidewalk ordinance and connectivity requirements that encourage transportation alternatives. For a more complete assessment of development patterns see the completed *Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment* in the Technical Addendum to this report.

### **Resource Conservation**

Heritage preservation, open space preservation, and environmental protection are Quality Community objectives that relate to resource conservation. Sharpsburg has designated a Town Center district that requires new development to compliment the historic nature of the Town. While the Town does not have a greenspace ordinance, they do encourage greenspace set-asides in their new developments. Also, Sharpsburg has passed all the environmental ordinances recommended by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. For a more complete assessment of resource conservation see the completed *Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment* in the Technical Addendum to this report.

### **Social and Economic Development**

Growth preparedness, appropriate businesses, employment options, housing choices, and educational opportunities are the key components to social and economic development. Sharpsburg has population projections for the next 20 years and is creating a Capital Improvements Program. Sharpsburg allows for multifamily housing and Coweta County provides other housing services. The County also provides educational opportunities for Sharpsburg residents. For a more complete assessment of social and economic development see the completed *Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment* in the Technical Addendum to this report.



### **Governmental Relations**

Local self-determination combines with regional cooperation to form the governmental relations objective. Sharpsburg has clear development guidelines and has recently reviewed and updated its zoning ordinance. Sharpsburg's elected officials understand the land-development process. The town shares services with several local governments. For a more complete assessment of governmental relations see the completed *Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment* in the Technical Addendum to this report.