

The Citizens' Vision of Our Future

Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia

Final Vision Statement
and Action Steps



The Future Is Ours to See

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Introduction

This is the final report of the VISION 2030 community visioning project for Gainesville-Hall County, Ga., which began in September 2005 and was concluded in June 2006 with the publication of this report.

VISION 2030 grew out of a special leadership summit held in March 2005, in which more than 100 diverse community leaders learned about community visioning, heard from the leader of a community visioning effort in Greenville, S.C., and voted overwhelmingly to begin a similar process for Gainesville-Hall County.

The goals of the year-long process were to:

- Engage hundreds of citizens in describing the community they'd like to live, work and raise families in.
- Draft a "common vision" for Gainesville-Hall County that captures the major elements of these vision meetings.
- Convene a number of planning groups to draft recommendations for achieving the common vision – and ensure that average citizens are represented on these groups.
- Bring together citizens to review and critique the work of the planning groups.
- Make every document and decision available for public comment, through open meetings, public communications and an easily accessible web site.

The end product, which is the report you hold in your hands, is a set of long-term goals and plans for Gainesville-Hall County that, we believe, the vast majority of citizens will recognize as their own and support wholeheartedly.

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce is the sponsor of VISION 2030.

How We Developed These Recommendations

VISION 2030 began in September 2005 with 12 vision meetings, held in different locations in Hall County. The two-hour meetings were well-publicized, and more than 800 citizens participated.

The sessions were open-ended. We asked those attending to describe the community they'd most like to live in over the next 25 years (by 2030). We also asked them to list

the things they considered the community's most valuable assets – and should be preserved – and the things they felt needed change. From these sessions, we gathered more than 4,000 ideas, images and recommendations. (Reports of these meetings, including every idea collected, were made available on the www.vision2030.org web site.)

From these 4,000 ideas and images, we developed in December 2005 a “Common Vision” – a statement of the broad themes that ran through the vision meetings. We e-mailed the Common Vision to every participant and posted it on the VISION 2030 web site and asked for suggestions and comments. In early January, we revised the Common Vision, based on the suggestions received. (The revised Common Vision is presented on pages 6-7.)

With the Common Vision in hand, we drafted 14 “Strategic Tasks” – things that must be accomplished if Gainesville-Hall County is to achieve the vision. (Examples: Change the way development is planned, create innovative transportation connections between Hall County and Atlanta and Athens, make Gainesville-Hall County a center for the arts and culture, and so on.) In late January, we formed seven planning groups to draft “Action Steps” that could achieve these major community tasks. Each group was assigned one to three of Strategic Tasks.

From January to March, the planning groups met five times (once in an orientation meeting, four times in planning sessions). The meetings were well publicized and all 800 citizens who had participated in the fall vision sessions were invited, through e-mails and postcards, to participate. Some came for one or two meetings, many participated in all five. Citizens were free to join any planning group they wished. Between 100 and 130 citizens were at each of the five meetings.

Each planning group began its work by reviewing the citizen ideas from the fall meetings that were most closely related to its task. Most did additional research, and some invited experts to brief them. Over the course of the meetings, each group drafted Action Steps for its own tasks and sometimes offered ideas related to other groups' work.

After the final planning meeting, VISION 2030 organizers took the groups' work and did three things:

- Organized the Action Steps in logical sequence.
- Where a group had offered ideas outside its assigned tasks, placed the ideas in their proper categories.
- Edited the Action Steps for grammar and clarity.

In April, the VISION 2030 Steering Committee met and made further editorial changes – eliminating some proposed Action Steps they saw as duplicative, adding others that seemed logical – and approved this document for public release.

Finally, in early May, we made the draft report available to the public for comment. We held a set of “Community Day” activities, at which citizens were invited to drop by the

Greater Hall Chamber building, review the Big Ideas, comment on them, receive a copy of the entire report and, later on, send us their comments and suggestions about the entire report. Based on these citizen comments, we made a number of editorial changes – although there were no major revisions to the Big Ideas or Action Steps – and completed this final report.

How This Report Is Organized

There are four major sections of this report:

- The Common Vision, as revised in January 2006: This document reflects the major themes from the citizen vision sessions last fall.
- “Big Ideas”: This is a list of the 15 most dramatic changes citizens could expect to see in 2030, if VISION 2030 is implemented. This will give you an overview of the major proposals in the VISION 2030 report.
- The Strategic Tasks and Action Steps: These are the detailed tentative VISION 2030 recommendations, as drafted by the planning groups and edited by the Steering Committee.
- An appendix section with ideas and approaches that are referred to elsewhere in the document. The documents refer to the pages where they are mentioned.

What’s Ahead for VISION 2030

In summer 2006, VISION 2030 organizers will announce a set of implementation strategies aimed at making sure that the Common Vision, Big Ideas and Action Steps become a reality by 2030.

Editorial note: Throughout this document, you’ll find the term “Gainesville-Hall County” used. This is the name of the metropolitan area that includes all of Hall County, including municipalities such as Lula, Oakwood and Flowery Branch. So while we may not mention the other municipalities by name, please keep in mind that they are included in Gainesville-Hall County.

A Common Vision for Gainesville-Hall County*

Vision: **Gainesville-Hall County is known as a 21st century community of towns.**

Description:

In 2030, Gainesville-Hall County is known across the country as a **21st century community of towns**, a county on the edge of a major metropolitan area that has developed itself with **human scale** and **connectedness** as guiding principles. What this means is that incorporated and unincorporated parts of the county are developed as walkable, bikeable communities, often around town squares. One of the aims of this kind of development is to help people know one another better and be connected with their community.

As Gainesville-Hall County residents have grown more connected with one another, they've deepened their **appreciation of and concern about all races and ethnic groups**. The school systems have become national models for their ability to educate immigrant and disadvantaged children. And the county and its towns pride themselves on their diversity of leadership and cultural offerings.

Gainesville-Hall County residents are deeply committed to **education and personal improvement**. The school systems are ranked among the state's top 10 percent for high school graduation rates, and the higher education institutions now offer four-year degrees in 70 percent of the most sought-after degree programs in the U.S., sometimes in partnership with colleges and universities elsewhere. As a result, most Gainesville-Hall County residents can live at home and receive the undergraduate education they desire. Post-secondary institutions also offer adult-learning programs that are considered the most effective in Georgia, with the result that educational levels and workforce skills are constantly being upgraded in Gainesville-Hall County. Also constantly improving is the health of its citizens, thanks to healthcare institutions that provide residents with high-quality, affordable care.

These are among the reasons Gainesville-Hall County has become a **center for the healthcare industry and technology companies**. Gainesville-Hall County has another advantage in seeking advanced industries: its excellent transportation connections with Atlanta, Georgia Tech and Hartsfield-Jackson Airport and Athens and the University of

Georgia. It also helps that Gainesville-Hall County wisely planned the location of its research and industrial parks and built the infrastructure to serve them.

That planning is also shown in the amount of **parks, recreational areas and other green space** that Hall County governments have been able to preserve. Because of this, it has the greatest amount of protected green space per capita of any urban county in Georgia. Gainesville-Hall County residents are deeply protective of their most important outdoor asset, Lake Lanier, and have found innovative ways of opening the lake to more people while improving its water quality.

Lake Lanier is a major asset for Gainesville-Hall County's **tourism and cultural offerings**, but Hall has developed other tourism venues as well. As a result, Hall County is consistently ranked among the top five tourist destinations in Georgia. Similarly, Gainesville-Hall County has developed such a wide range of cultural venues and events that people now travel to Gainesville-Hall County for its performances and exhibits. In fact, more than half those who visit cultural activities in Hall County live outside the county.

Finally, Gainesville-Hall County's leaders have created **numerous innovative partnerships** in making these things a reality – partnerships among the localities; between state leaders and local leaders; between governments, non-profits and businesses; throughout the faith communities; and among institutions, such as colleges and school systems.

From the neighborhood to county leadership, then, Gainesville-Hall County has dedicated itself to creating connections among people and institutions. That has been the source of its success.

** Gainesville-Hall County is the name of the metropolitan area that encompasses Hall County, Ga. It includes other municipalities, from Clermont to Flowery Branch. This document should be seen as including these municipalities, along with the City of Gainesville and Hall County.*

The Big Ideas from VISION 2030

In 2030 . . .

1. Development in most of Gainesville-Hall County is built around town squares, where people can walk, bike or use golf carts to reach many important services – and people get to know their neighbors easily.
2. All students in Gainesville or Hall County high schools have taken some classes from a post-secondary institution (Gainesville State College, Lanier Technical College, etc.) before they graduate. For some, it means graduation involves receiving three pieces of paper: a diploma, a training certificate from a post-secondary institution and a job offer from an employer.
3. Gainesville-Hall County is a model for providing high-quality, affordable healthcare to its residents. An important part of this initiative is an innovative set of wellness programs, which involves residents in managing their own health.
4. Gainesville-Hall County is a center for healthcare education, employment, life-sciences companies (including veterinary medicine) and medical-devices manufacturers. These industries work closely together on training and research.
5. There is high-speed rail service linking Gainesville with Athens and the University of Georgia and Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Emory University and Georgia Tech. Each of these destinations is only a 30-minute trip from Gainesville.
6. Gainesville-Hall County has the greatest amount of protected green space (parks, recreation areas and privately owned open land) of any urban county in Georgia. One of its highlights is a network of pathways connecting North Hall, Gainesville and South Hall.
7. There is a major mixed-use community on Lake Lanier, with restaurants, an amphitheater and commercial, retail and residential space. The community is a

tourist attraction and considered a model for the creative blending of residential and commercial development.

8. There is a state-of-the-art regional visitors' center near Interstate 985 that makes Gainesville-Hall County the necessary first stop for tourists looking to explore Lake Lanier and the North Georgia mountains.
9. Gainesville-Hall County is the summer lakeside home of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and host of an annual summer music festival that includes a wide range of music indicative of the community, including international music, pops, opera, country, jazz and gospel.
10. Gainesville-Hall County hosts the Southeastern Community Theater Festival, which brings in groups from schools, colleges and local theaters from around the region every year to compete and learn from one another.
11. There are unique arts districts across Gainesville-Hall County, including ones centered on downtown Gainesville (theater, public art, visual arts, etc.), Lake Lanier (music, amphitheater), Chicopee Woods (outdoor art, amphitheater) and Gillsville/Lula (cultural arts, folk art, pottery).
12. There's an organization whose job is to help Gainesville-Hall County residents connect across racial, ethnic and other barriers. Called OneHall, it is a source of information, leadership development, networking and programs about inclusion and is a reason our community has a good reputation for tolerance and diversity.
13. Gainesville-Hall County's Outreach Center is a national model for integrating residents of all cultures into the life of the community through a multitude of educational, informational, citizenship and English-language programs.
14. The Intercultural Arts Conference Center is a meeting place for groups looking to bring together Gainesville-Hall County's diverse population to work on community issues and a center for ethnic culture and arts. School groups from across the region tour this facility to learn how ethnic groups can work together and learn from one another.
15. There are highway bypasses around Gainesville, and traffic on downtown's Green Street has lessened considerably. The Post Office has been moved to one of the new bypasses, and the historic Green Street area has become a greater community asset.

Ensure that future development preserves the traditional scale of Gainesville-Hall County buildings, streets and public spaces and encourages connectedness among residents, workers and visitors.

Action Steps

- A. Preserve or redevelop Hall County's downtowns as the most important community gathering places, cultural and entertainment areas and town business centers. A key to these downtowns: Enhance town squares where they exist and develop them where they don't.
 - Other key in-town neighborhoods may be part of these redevelopment efforts, such as Gainesville's Midtown area.
- B. Develop a "preferred development model" for Gainesville, Hall County and the other municipalities that spells out how these governments would prefer that developments be planned. The model should include:
 - Master plan, zoning ordinances, building codes and land development regulations
 - Planned, mixed-use communities, built around "town squares"
 - Low-impact transportation alternatives (pedestrian, bicycle, golf-cart, etc.)
 - Areas of higher density balanced by open space and areas of lower density
 - Features that encourage connectedness and neighborliness, such as front porches
 - Identify an existing organization that will coordinate the implementation of the master plan
- C. Create redevelopment strategies for older subdivisions that move them closer to the preferred development model of mixed-use, low-impact transportation alternatives and open space.
- D. Identify transportation corridors early so they may be incorporated into the land-use plans of Gainesville, Hall County and the other municipalities and acquired in a timely fashion.

Raise high school achievement so that all Gainesville-Hall County public school students obtain a high school diploma or equivalency degree to be prepared for employment and/or post-secondary education.

Action Steps

- A. Concentrate resources on the youngest children, as success before age 8 is critical to success in later years.
 - Strengthen and coordinate community programs to include mentoring and asset building to help new parents prepare their children for success in school.
 - Make sure every newborn's home has books and materials supporting education for young children.
 - Provide parenting classes for every family and make available adult literacy and English language classes.
 - Enlist early childhood care programs in providing education for children ages birth to 5.
 - Establish the policy that all children in school must read at or above grade level by grade 3.
- B. Ensure linkages between 0-5 education and K-12 education.
- C. Engage the community and the schools in describing a "pathway to success" for children. This description would include academic work and life skills that should be mastered by children at various stages in their development.
 - Put in place systems in the schools for monitoring children along the pathway.
 - Create effective remediation programs to help children return to the pathway if they fall behind.
- D. Create a seamless transition from high school to post-secondary education in Gainesville-Hall County.
- E. Strengthen partnerships between the public schools and post-secondary institutions so students can take classes at Gainesville State College or Lanier Technical College – with the classes providing both high school and post-secondary credit.
- F. Work with local employers to better define present and future work skills, with the aim that, for some students, high school graduation will involve receiving three pieces of paper – a diploma, a training certificate from a post-secondary institution and a W-4 employment form from an employer.
- G. Encourage school personnel teams to go out to student homes to improve student attendance and parent participation.
- H. Use "40 Developmental Assets" as a model for engaging the community in promoting children's strengths. (A brief report on 40 Developmental Assets is included as an appendix to this report.)
- I. Create a locally-funded loan program to assist with college tuition for minority education majors who return to teach in the Gainesville City and Hall County School Systems. A suggested method for the loan program would be one year or work would cancel one year of debt.

- J. Increase post-secondary entrance rates by 10 percent within 5 years for Gainesville-Hall County minority students.

Increase post-secondary offerings so that Gainesville-Hall County residents have access to education for the employment opportunities in greatest demand.

Action Steps

- A. Begin the Gainesville-Hall County Education Consortium, which would bring together the leaders of the Gainesville and Hall County school systems, Gainesville State College, Brenau University, Lanier Technical College and the county's private schools.
 - Use the consortium for joint learning and planning.
 - The consortium should meet six times a year and, from time to time, invite guests to share their plans and needs.
- B. Establish a partnership between post-secondary institutions and employers to plan for future skill needs and establish degree programs that will be most in demand.
- C. Make Gainesville-Hall County a pioneer in delivering post-secondary instruction through alternative means, such as the Internet or satellite instruction, and alternative times, such as evening, weekends and collaborations with institutions to provide post-secondary degrees not currently offered.
- D. Make Gainesville-Hall County a center for education and training for healthcare in general and the medical devices industry in particular.
 - Expand programs within middle and high school programs in both Gainesville and Hall County schools to introduce and expose children and youth to careers in the healthcare, medical devices and biotech industries so that Gainesville-Hall County can provide adequate skilled work force.
 - Develop health science and engineering magnet high school modeled after the A.R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering Magnet School in Augusta, GA.
 - Develop a multi-institutional Comprehensive Life Science Education Center for allied health professions training at every level (professional and non-professional careers that support the existing health industry and the medical device and biotech industries).
 - Establish a community scholarship fund in support of local students in science and math fields
 - Increase each year the number of minority students and citizens educated for and working in health-related industries
 - Make NEGA a regional center for graduate medical education. Northeast Georgia has long provided placement opportunities for registered nurses, physicians, advanced nurse practitioners and physician assistants in private-physician practices and through the Northeast Georgia Health System . This has allowed the community to recruit some of the brightest and best clinicians in careers often difficult to recruit. By providing the same opportunity through graduate medical education programs (residency and fellowship programs such as MCG etc.) Gainesville- Hall County could enhance its already strong physician medical community with the best and brightest from residency and fellowship training programs.

- Expand the opportunity for clinical training opportunities and sites in the health care industry to support the Comprehensive Life Science Education Center and existing allied health training programs. This would include externships, job shadowing etc., for practical clinical experience.
- Build a collaborative program among post-secondary institutions (Gainesville State College, Brenau University, North Georgia College and State University and Lanier Technical College) to train workers for the medical devices industry.
- Create a commission/council to include stakeholders: local government, current medical industry (physicians and Northeast Georgia Health System), colleges, local business leaders and philanthropists, to become a center for graduate education for physicians, nurses and other health related professionals.

Create the most innovative and effective set of adult-learning programs in Georgia.

Action Steps

- A. Build Georgia's most effective adult literacy program, aimed at making every Gainesville-Hall County adult functionally literate in English.
 - Deliver these programs in a number of settings – in the workplace, in the school systems (so parents can learn in the same facilities as their children), in churches, etc.
 - Make Gainesville-Hall County a model for teaching English language skills to recent immigrants.
- B. Build Georgia's most effective workforce development programs with the aim of providing Gainesville-Hall County workers with skill improvements and/or training for new employment.
 - Make sure that these programs are planned closely with employers, so companies can find the labor force they need and employees can find the companies that need their new and improved skills.
- C. Build a comprehensive set of lifelong learning programs that engage citizens seeking to think innovatively.
 - The aim is to build Gainesville-Hall County's "brain base," which would benefit the civic and cultural life, as well as its economy.

Make Gainesville-Hall County the model place in Georgia for providing high-quality, affordable healthcare for all its residents.

Action Steps

- A. Create a system that provides primary care to all residents. This will relieve the demand on emergency-care facilities, save money and improve health care.
- Address the needs of low-income uninsured individuals and families who are unable to pay for medical services.
 - Expand funding for programs providing free medical services, including medications, labs, diagnostic tests, medical supplies, etc.
 - Identify suitable sources of funding for indigent care (local-option sales tax, etc.)
 - Support existing community consortiums that assist with access to healthcare.
 - Hire physicians/providers; utilize medical residents to provide care in work settings and in Good News Clinics and Health Access Initiative. Example Fieldale clinic
 - Foster spirit of volunteerism of practicing and retired providers to assist in caring for indigent patients in Good News Clinics and Health Access Initiative
 - Utilize technology to create a shared data base for our region to link providers of health care services for all residents to expedite referrals and decrease duplication of services.
 - Address the basic needs of individuals for housing, education, food, and clothing so that healthcare can become a priority
 - Address needs of uninsured individuals and families who can pay for part of their medical care.
 - Develop a sliding fee scale for services.
 - Educate Gainesville-Hall County residents and businesses on the types of insurance available to them and their employees.
 - Example: High-deductible major medical coverage coupled with preventive services that are based on income
 - Address the needs of underinsured individuals and families who may have catastrophic coverage but are self-pay for preventive care and ongoing primary care.
 - Provide education to these individuals and families on healthcare services available for preventive care, medications, etc.
 - Explore the JAX care program in Jacksonville, FL for possibility of replication. The JAX program combines local government funding, hospital funding and donations to provide health care for all residents.
 - Address the needs of those with private health insurance or who are covered by public programs like Medicare and Medicaid.
 - Expand the Doctor Network so that patients have easy access to information about physician practices.

- Expand availability of healthcare services and address transportation to services. One way is by developing community health centers in existing facilities such as schools.
 - Explore shifting funds in community to provide preventive services.
 - An example might be shifting funds from inappropriate emergency room usage to programs providing primary care.
- B. Foster a culture of wellness in the community
- Encourage healthy lifestyles through education and example, utilizing the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2010 initiative. (An explanation of the Healthy People 2010 initiative is included as an appendix to this report.)
 - Develop and implement a coordinated health curriculum and school environment in primary and secondary schools.
 - Encourage daily exercise as part of curriculum.
 - Promote healthy meals in schools; remove cokes, snack foods.
 - Promote family-centered activities. Example: Dads and daughters fun run
 - Place a full-time school nurse in every school as a provider and a partner in health education and prevention.
 - Create wellness programs in businesses.
 - Encourage companies to adopt financial and other incentives for employees with healthy lifestyle (examples: nonsmokers, people who exercise and are not overweight).
 - Encourage businesses to begin exercise programs at work.
 - Provide educational resources to every employer in Gainesville-Hall County aimed at teaching workers about healthy lifestyles, such as nutrition education, smoking cessation, etc. and making employees aware of local resources for learning about healthy lifestyles.
 - Make Gainesville-Hall County a national leader in reducing tobacco use.
 - Foster personal responsibility for health.
 - Educate residents that choices have consequences.
 - Create a public awareness campaign and an outreach program that promote healthy lifestyles. Example: Provide all expectant mothers with educational resources about good nutrition.
 - Secure a proclamation from the City of Gainesville, the Hall County Commission and the other municipalities in support of the campaign.
 - Launch the campaign with an event similar to Hall Reads Together.

Make Gainesville-Hall County a center for the healthcare industry and technology.

Action Steps

- A. Establish a Healthcare Industries Task Force to identify short-term and long-term opportunities for growing or bringing healthcare companies to Gainesville-Hall County. Specific opportunities may include:
 - Life sciences companies, particularly those connected with research at area research universities
 - Medical device manufacturers
 - Veterinary medicine companies, particularly those concerned with avian medicine
- B. Identify major needs of target industries (veterinary medicine, life science companies and medical-device manufacturers) and develop the assets to meet the target industries' needs. Specific needs may include:
 - Excellent transportation connections to Athens (UGA), Atlanta (Emory and Georgia Tech) and Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport
 - Appropriate campus-style development sites, which would have infrastructure such as
 - Fiber-optic telecommunications
 - Sewer capacity
 - Water capacity
 - Roads
 - Shipping services (UPS, etc.)
 - Training programs for employees with local colleges
 - Convenient recreational and housing assets
- C. Create a "future industries" land-use plan that identifies sites for technology, life-science, medical-devices and healthcare industry companies as well as the services needed for those sites, such as sewer, water, energy and telecommunications.
- D. Become an industry leader in medical device development and manufacturing.
 - Support the Featherbone Center Business and Manufacturing Incubator, through partnership/collaboration between Lanier Technical College, Gainesville State College, Brenau University, North Georgia College and State University, the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Emory University and other institutions.
 - Develop and support clinical research relationships for the medical device industry with the Northeast Georgia Health System, private physicians, home health agencies, the Hall County Health Department, the Good News Clinics (community free clinic), etc.
 - Create a shared data base to provide access to health information that may be relevant to these companies' product development efforts.
 - Develop a marketing and image campaign designed to build Hall's healthcare industry.
 - Develop capability to market community to established medical device/biotech industry to locate/relocate in Gainesville-Hall County.

- Assist medical devices entrepreneurs in locating venture capital and other forms of investment capital.
- Develop an appropriate set of local economic incentives for the medical devices industry and advocate for state incentives.

Build excellent transportation systems that connect Gainesville-Hall County to Atlanta and Athens.

Action Steps

- A. Build a multimodal (pedestrian, bike, cars, trucks, rail*) transportation system connecting Gainesville-Hall County to Atlanta and Athens. Incorporate bike paths in this transportation system.
 - Short term: Use HOV lanes for bus system connecting Gainesville to Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Airport.
 - Purchase railroad rights of way in the Gainesville-to-Atlanta or Gainesville-to-Athens corridors for future transit connections.

Implementation Strategies

1. Secure the appointment of a VISION 2030 representative to the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization to work for adoption of the multimodal transportation system connecting Gainesville-Hall County to Atlanta and Athens as one of the MPO's highest priorities.
2. Develop local, state and federal political action agenda for the vision of multimodal connections to Atlanta and Athens.
3. Secure the appointment of a VISION 2030 representative to the Georgia Rapid Rail Authority to explain Gainesville-Hall County's support for commuter rail.
4. Secure the appointment of VISION 2030 representatives to act as liaisons to the Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study and the Atlanta Regional Commission to build support in those regions for transportation connections with Gainesville-Hall County.
5. Work with neighboring political leadership to encourage regional support of the multimodal transportation system.

** Our vision of the rail system is high-speed rail connecting Gainesville to Athens within 30 minutes with one stop in Jackson County and Gainesville to Atlanta within 30 minutes with one stop in Gwinnett County.*

Provide parks and recreational areas and protect adequate green space so that Gainesville-Hall County residents have the greatest amount of protected green space per capita of any urban county in Georgia.

Action Steps

- A. Set goal of setting aside a minimum of ten percent of Gainesville and Hall County's total land area (preserved through conservation easements and other methods) as parks and open space.
- B. Ensure that the park and open space is distributed in every area of the county. Areas of particular interest include:
 - Don Carter State Park
 - Gainesville's Midtown redevelopment area
 - Central Hall Trail
 - Lake Lanier Olympic Center and adjacent land.
- C. Create a network of multiuse pathways that connect north Hall, Gainesville and south Hall.
 - Consider creatively naming these areas the "three rings", "paths to the future", and as Hall County's "people paths."
 - Set as a goal children being able to safely ride their bikes to school. (Explore the federal grants for paths to schools.)
- D. Create an entity that has coordinating responsibility of public parks, greenways and open space.
 - Consider a model like the one for the Metro Planning Organization model, but adapt it to parks and recreation.
 - The entity should also assume responsibility for maintaining public support for green space acquisitions, including explaining the connection between parks and recreation and economic development.
- E. Create a parks and recreation roundtable to build a strong network, to discuss and coordinate issues important to the group, to encourage cooperation and where useful, to submit joint funding applications.
 - Make sure that the group is open and that it includes all of the groups, government agencies and authorities that have interest in or responsibilities for parks and recreation areas and programs.
- F. Create an endowment through the North Georgia Community Foundation for land and park acquisition.
- G. Create a dedicated funding source (millage) for the purchase, protection and development of park and recreation land.
- H. Enact a county "land trust" ordinance that rewards land owners with significant tax benefits if they agree to place land in a conservation easement or other form of permanent open-land protection (e.g., uses the parks system and connects green spaces that integrate alternative transportation).
- I. Set up a nonprofit land trust organization to work with landowners in creating conservation easements or making land donations.

- J. Build public-private “green belts,” a countywide system of pedestrian and bicycle routes connecting Hall’s communities, using electrical transmission and sewer rights of way as a backbone for the system.

Develop tourism attractions at Lake Lanier and elsewhere so that Gainesville-Hall County is consistently ranked among the top five tourist attractions in Georgia.

Action Steps

- A. Build a major new mixed-use waterfront community, with restaurants, amphitheater, commercial and retail on Lake Lanier to offer a new tourism experience – and serve as a model for residential and commercial development.
- B. Develop a new hotel-conference center on Lake Lanier that is part of a larger mixed-use development.
- C. Expand the Lake Lanier Olympic Center into a mixed-use community while preserving and enhancing its 1996 Atlanta Olympics identity as a venue for rowing, canoeing and kayaking events.
- D. Expand and improve – or replace – the Georgia Mountains Center.
 - Develop it as a premier convention center and hotel facility.
 - Develop a city/county partnership with development authority to create necessary infrastructure, including parking and financing to build an upscale hotel/convention center.
 - Widen nearby sidewalks and beautify the streetscape to encourage pedestrian traffic and attract additional retail.
- E. Build a state-of-the-art regional visitors' center convenient to I-985 that makes Gainesville-Hall County the necessary first stop for tourists to Lake Lanier and the North Georgia mountains.
 - Ensure that marketing and signage bring tourists to the new visitors' center.
- F. Create a tourism plan based on targeted markets, utilizing current and future assets, and a branding campaign for tourism in Gainesville-Hall County, including packaging current assets.

Develop a strategy for bringing upscale retail centers to Gainesville-Hall County.

Action Steps

- A. Develop “preferred retail models” for Gainesville, Hall County and the other municipalities that specify the types of retail establishments to be targeted for different areas such as:
 - Downtown centers
 - “Village” developments
 - Regional shopping, particularly upscale shopping malls, lifestyle centers and big-box retailers.
- B. Outline a process for designating land for retail uses and enable the comprehensive plan and zoning to influence future retail areas.
- C. Plan and facilitate the redevelopment of Colonial Lakeshore Mall.

Make Gainesville-Hall County such a center for arts and culture that more than half the patrons attending performances and events live outside the county.

Action Steps

- A. Create an international culinary/arts festival that takes advantages of our local assets.
 - Connect the festival to the International Poultry Exposition and our large poultry industry.
 - Connect the festival with fishing tournaments on Lanier and our connections to fish.
 - Create an on-going culinary and visual arts school that provides opportunities for all members of the community.
- B. Become the summer lakeside home of the Atlanta Symphony orchestra.
 - Connect this to the lake and a mixed used development.
 - Develop necessary infrastructure (symphony hall, amphitheater, etc.)
- C. Create the Southeastern Community Theatre Festival that involves a broad range of theatre (schools, colleges, local theaters) groups.
 - Develop a significant financial award for the theatre group judged as the winners of the festival competition.
 - Connect the festival with a two-week theatre camp.
- D. Hold an annual Summer music festival.
 - Include a range of music that is indicative of our community – international, pops, opera, country, jazz and gospel.
 - Consider a new 2,000 seat performing arts facility or outdoor amphitheatre.
- E. Create arts districts throughout Gainesville-Hall County that are representative of the potential assets in the county. These may include:
 - Downtown Gainesville. Theatre meeting spaces, retail and dining, local museums, public art, amphitheatre, performing arts school, visual art workshops and competitions.
 - Lake Lanier Olympic Center. Mixed-use lake front development, bridge, accommodations, conference space, amphitheatre.
 - Smithgall Woodland Garden. Trails, plants, amphitheatre.
 - Chicopee Woods. Trails, Elachee, conference space, amphitheatre.
 - South Hall

Ensure a high quality of life in Gainesville-Hall County.

Action Steps

- A. Preserve the identities of the many communities in the county.
 - Identify key historic and cultural sites to preserve and enhance.
 - Use arts and culture to create celebrations and festivals that are reflective of these communities.
- B. Maintain the attractiveness of Gainesville-Hall County.
 - Make the main entrances to Gainesville-Hall County attractive and inviting.
 - Use signage that is attractive and reflective of the county's communities.
 - Engage neighborhoods and schools in community landscape design and beautification projects.
 - Enact effective noise ordinances.
 - Enact and enforce litter laws and create effective programs for cleaning up litter.
- C. Create quality and affordable housing in Gainesville-Hall County.
 - Create a housing commission to oversee the development of housing and determine housing needs. This commission should:
 - Identify areas for locating housing or redeveloping housing and neighborhoods.
 - Create a plan to encourage housing for the elderly in appropriate areas of the community. Ensure that it allows for a mixture of incomes.
 - Include plans for a range of housing for the workforce and for people with special housing needs.
- D. Develop community facilities that reach across generations.
 - A special need is for a senior center that is connected to an on-site day care center.

Make Gainesville-Hall County known for its inclusion and respect for its diverse populations.

Action Steps:

- A. Create a diversity council, OneHall, possibly housed at the North Georgia Community Foundation, to help bridge gaps within the community.
 - The mission of OneHall would be to promote inclusion in the community through programs, information, leadership development, awards and networking activities and report to the community on a regular basis on progress.
 - A special mission for OneHall is to develop a set of practical strategies for ensuring that future VISION 2030 projects include and benefit all groups in Gainesville-Hall County.
- B. Build and operate an Outreach Center to better integrate residents of all cultures into Gainesville-Hall County.
 - The mission of the Outreach Center would be to offer programs that assist residents in quickly learning about American life and customs with special emphasis on assisting the Latino population in acquiring English language skills.
 - A special mission would be to assist families from all cultures in understanding American schools and help them prepare children for educational excellence.
- C. Construct an Intercultural Arts and Conference Center to offer arts programs of various cultures and serve as a community meeting facility for groups addressing diversity issues.

Improve relationships between government entities. Encourage and facilitate partnerships between community public/private groups to address emerging issues and effectively implement solutions and major initiatives.

Action Steps

- A. Create an independent organization to direct the implementation of the VISION 2030 goals. This organization will:
- Capitalize on the banner of VISION 2030 as a way to communicate independence and community-responsive change.
 - This organization should depend on the Chamber for its early support but should expand its membership to include other groups.
 - It should explore eventual independence and a full-time paid professional director.
 - Assess and realign (if appropriate) existing issues groups to assign implementation ideas and plans.
 - Demonstrate, through its work, how collaboration and cooperation can work.
 - Aim for early, easy successes to generate enthusiasm and trust in the integrity of VISION 2030
 - Solicit feedback from the community and move forward with plans
 - Conduct annual meetings to address big issues, keep the VISION 2030 work fresh, and provide progress reports to the community
 - Identify 10 to 20 influential “advisor” role leaders and obtain their commitment to VISION 2030. They would be asked to invest their time in advising the VISION 2030 organization on implementation.
 - Create an emerging issues group within the VISION 2030 framework. The group is envisioned as a powerful, influential group who will see the grassroots issues that create community opportunities and problems. The group must be willing to form and “force” important issues.
 - Examples: crime and gangs, development and businesses
 - Bring together interested groups of government officials and individuals that will address issues that occur intermittently.
 - Bringing issues to the next level (either to community agencies or through VISION 2030).
- B. Develop and encourage community leadership that builds trust and a framework of partnership.
- Encourage more frequent meetings by government agencies to engage citizens and community groups (i.e., town-hall meetings).
 - In addition to government-led meetings, encourage civic organizations to bring together appropriate constituent groups to address issues. Use this as a means of identifying emerging leaders and expand connections among these groups.
 - Expand racial, economic and social diversity and find leaders within these groups.

- Increase membership and participation of local citizens in issues at the state level (General Assembly, state agencies, etc.)

Other recommendations

- A. Enhance Gainesville's historic Green Street by moving the Post Office elsewhere and taking other steps to preserve its timeless beauty (example: cataloguing historical houses and trees).
- B. Create a planning overlay for the Highway 365 corridor that ensures future developments there use the "preferred development model" discussed earlier in this document.
- C. Build highway bypasses around and in the City of Gainesville.
- D. Build sufficient parking in Gainesville-Hall County downtowns and ensure that these facilities encourage visitors to park their cars and walk around the downtowns.
- E. Expand and improve Lee Gilmer Airport as a critical asset for corporate growth in Gainesville-Hall County. Look for opportunities to acquire additional land, add new hangers and improve the terminal and provide commuter air service.
- F. In order to expedite a critical part of Gainesville-Hall County's infrastructure and economic development, create a single water and sewer authority for all of Gainesville-Hall County.
- G. To enhance Gainesville-Hall County's economic development, create a free-trade area.
- H. To build tourism in unincorporated Hall County, pass a liquor-by-the-drink referendum.
 - The referendum campaign should thoroughly explain the benefits that passing the ordinance would bring in increased tourism, sales tax revenues, and so on.
- I. Preserve our farming and agribusiness heritage, lands and vocation.
- J. Make Gainesville-Hall County the cleanest and safest community in Georgia. Develop the plans, funding and public-private partnerships to support this effort.

Appendices

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40 Developmental Assets[®]

Through extensive research, Search Institute has identified the following 40 building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

The asset definitions shown in this chart are based on research on adolescents (6th to 12th grades).

Asset Type	Asset Name & Definition
EXTERNAL ASSETS	
Support	Family support Family life provides high levels of love and support.
	Positive family communication Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
	Other adult relationships Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
	Caring neighborhood Young person experiences caring neighbors.
	Caring school climate School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
	Parent involvement in schooling Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
Empowerment	Community values youth Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
	Youth as resources Young people are given useful roles in the community.

	Service to others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
	Safety	Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.
Boundaries and Expectations	Family boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
	School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.
	Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
	Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
	Positive peer influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
	High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
	Constructive Use of Time	Creative activities
Youth programs		Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
Religious community		Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
Time at home		Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

**INTERNAL
ASSETS**

Commitment to Learning	Achievement motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.
	School engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.
	Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
	Bonding to school	Young person cares about her or his school.
	Reading for pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
Positive Values	Caring	Young person places high value on helping other people.
	Equality and social justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
	Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
	Honesty	Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
	Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
	Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
Social Competencies	Planning and decision making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
	Interpersonal competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

	Cultural competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
	Resistance skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
	Peaceful conflict resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
Positive Identity	Personal power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
	Self-esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
	Sense of purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
	Positive view of personal future	Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

This list is an educational tool. It is not intended to be nor is it appropriate as a scientific measure of the developmental assets of individuals.

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities: A Community Planning Guide Using Healthy People 2010

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

I. Is Yours a Healthy Community?

Are the people in your community as healthy and safe as they could be? If not, would you like to change that? This guide can help you make positive changes in your community, whether you are a physician, government official, business owner, truck driver, store clerk, retired person, or almost anybody else.

Indeed, this guide can help you:

- Learn how to build and run a healthy community coalition;
- Find information about your community on many health problems, such as drug abuse, teen pregnancy, depression, and infectious disease; and
- Use Healthy People 2010 to improve the quality of life of the people in your community.

But, first, take a moment to congratulate yourself. Because deciding to make this kind of change is an important first step to making your community a healthier and happier place in which to live, work, and play. And because *YOU* can make a difference!

What Is a Healthy Community?

A healthy community is one that embraces the belief that health is more than merely an absence of disease; a healthy community includes those elements that enable people to maintain a high quality of life and productivity. For example:

- A healthy community offers access to health care services that focus on both treatment and prevention for all members of the community.
- A healthy community is safe.
- A healthy community has roads, schools, playgrounds, and other services to meet the needs of the people in that community. (These items are often referred to as "infrastructure.")
- A healthy community has a healthy and safe environment.

What Is Healthy People 2010?

One tool to help a community create a dynamic vision for its future is Healthy People 2010. Healthy People 2010 is a comprehensive set of health objectives to be achieved over the first decade of the century.

It is designed to serve as a roadmap for improving the health of all people in the United States. It includes national health promotion and disease prevention goals, objectives, and measures that can help serve as a model for you to develop your own goals and objectives to improve the health of everyone in your community.

Healthy People 2010 was developed by citizens from throughout the Nation, in a multiyear process that was coordinated by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For two decades, HHS has used Healthy People objectives to improve the health of the American people. Healthy People 2010 is the third set of health promotion and disease prevention objectives for the Nation.

Goal I: Increase Quality and Years of Healthy Life

Healthy People 2010 seeks to increase life expectancy and quality of life by helping individuals gain the knowledge, motivation, and opportunities they need to make informed decisions about their health. At the same time, Healthy People 2010 encourages local and State leaders to develop communitywide and statewide efforts that promote healthy behaviors, create healthy environments, and increase access to high-quality health care. Given the fact that individual and community health are often inseparable, it is critical that both the individual and the community do their parts to increase life expectancy and improve quality of life.

Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health, 2nd Edition, November 2000.

Goal II: Eliminate Health Disparities

Healthy People 2010 recognizes that communities, States, and national organizations will need to take a multidisciplinary approach to achieve health equity--an approach that involves improving health, education, housing, labor, justice, transportation, agriculture, and the environment, as well as data collection itself. However, the greatest opportunities for reducing health disparities are in promoting communitywide safety, education, and access to health care, and in empowering individuals to make informed health care decisions.

Healthy People 2010 is firmly dedicated to the principle that--regardless of age, gender, race or ethnicity, income, education, geographic location, disability, or sexual orientation--every person in every community across the Nation deserves equal access to comprehensive, culturally competent, community-based health care systems that are committed to serving the needs of the individual and promoting community health.

Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health, 2nd Edition, November 2000.

Healthy People 2010 is designed to achieve two overarching goals: (1) to increase the quality and years of healthy life and (2) to eliminate health disparities. (A health disparity is a gap in the health status of different groups of people, in which one group is healthier than the other group or groups.) These two goals are supported by 467 objectives in 28 focus areas. For details, see

www.health.gov/healthypeople/document/tableofcontents.htm.

Healthy People 2010 also identifies a smaller set of health priorities that reflect 10 major public health concerns in the United States. These 10 topics highlight individual behaviors, physical and social environmental factors, and important health system issues that greatly affect the health of individuals and communities. Examined together, they constitute a set of "Leading Health Indicators" that provides a snapshot of the health of the Nation and serves to provide guidance and focus for the public, media, and elected officials.

A health disparity is an inequality or gap that exists between two or more groups. Health disparities are believed to be the result of the complex interaction of personal, societal, and environmental factors.

In a Snapshot...

Healthy People 2010 identifies a set of health priorities that reflect 10 major public health concerns in the United States. These 10 Leading Health Indicators are intended to help everyone more easily understand the importance of health promotion and disease prevention. Motivating individuals to act on just one of the indicators can have a profound effect on increasing the quality and years of healthy life and on eliminating health disparities--for the individual, as well as the community overall.

Subject/Topic	Public Health Challenge
Physical Activity	Promote regular physical activity.
Overweight and Obesity	Promote healthier weight and good nutrition.
Tobacco Use	Prevent and reduce tobacco use.
Substance Abuse	Prevent and reduce substance abuse.
Responsible Sexual Behavior	Promote responsible sexual behavior.
Mental Health	Promote mental health and well-being.
Injury and Violence	Promote safety and reduce violence.
Environmental Quality	Promote healthy environments.
Immunization	Prevent infectious disease through immunization.
Access to Health Care	Increase access to quality health care.

For more on the Leading Health Indicators, go to <http://www.health.gov/healthypeople/LHI/>.

You can select from one or more chapters in *Healthy People 2010* or use the Leading Health Indicators to help share your own visions of where you want your community to be in the future. These broad visions can help shape your efforts to improve the health of your community.

You can use a variety of techniques, documents, and other resources to help you make a healthy community. This guide will briefly describe some easy-to-understand approaches that can help you get started or help you improve what you have already started.

Healthy People 2010: 28 Focus Areas

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Access to Quality Health Services | 15. Injury and Violence Prevention |
| 2. Arthritis, Osteoporosis, and Chronic Back Conditions | 16. Maternal, Infant, and Child Health |
| 3. Cancer | 17. Medical Product Safety |
| 4. Chronic Kidney Disease | 18. Mental Health and Mental Disorders |
| 5. Diabetes | 19. Nutrition and Overweight |
| 6. Disability and Secondary Conditions | 20. Occupational Safety and Health |
| 7. Educational and Community-Based Programs | 21. Oral Health |
| 8. Environmental Health | 22. Physical Activity and Fitness |
| 9. Family Planning | 23. Public Health Infrastructure |
| 10. Food Safety | 24. Respiratory Diseases |
| 11. Health Communication | 25. Sexually Transmitted Diseases |
| 12. Heart Disease and Stroke | 26. Substance Abuse |
| 13. HIV | 27. Tobacco Use |
| 14. Immunization and Infectious Diseases | 28. Vision and Hearing |