

## Executive Summary

Hall County's Comprehensive Plan, *Hall County Forward*, is a policy document that presents the community's primary goals for achieving its long-range vision for growth and development in the unincorporated portions of the county. This executive summary presents **Plan Highlights** and **Putting the Plan into Action**. The first section, **Plan Highlights**, provides a brief overview of the 'Community Vision,' including key goals organized by 'Vision Theme.' **Putting the Plan into Action** summarizes the steps and players involved in the plan's implementation.

### ■ Plan Highlights

Recognizing Hall County will continue to grow in population at a steady pace, this plan is intended to balance opportunities for economic growth with the desire to maintain rural character. This plan also acknowledges the need to plan in more specific detail for green space protection, historic resource preservation and promotion, and coordinated economic development.

The Community Vision, as described by detailed strategies in Chapter 3 and the Future Development Guide in Chapter 4, are summarized below by primary goals organized by three Vision Themes: *Social and Economic Development*, *Development Patterns* and *Resource Conservation*. These themes are intended to organize and represent citizen's ideas and concerns related to the topics of economic development, community revitalization, housing, land use, natural resources and historic resources.

### Social and Economic Development (SED) Goals

SED Goal 1: Supporting existing businesses and focus recruitment efforts on technology businesses and industry

SED Goal 2: Stimulate revitalization activities and redevelopment of aging properties

### Resource Conservation (RC) Goals

RC Goal 1: Protect water resources and improve water quality

RC Goal 2: Support and partner with local organizations to protect the environment

RC Goal 3: Develop and implement a coordinated plan for a linked system of protected greenspace and trails

RC Goal 4: Promote and protect Hall County's history

### Development Patterns (DP) Goals

DP Goal 1: Promote rural development patterns in the North and East Hall areas

DP Goal 2: Maintain greenspace in new development

#### DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

*Hall County Forward* is based on the community's **VISION** for growth and development over the next 20 years. The vision is expressed by a set of goals that address specific needs and opportunities (see Chapter 3) and a Future Development Guide with a map and narrative (see Chapter 4).

**GOALS** define the desired future state of the community and generally relate to big picture ideas.

**STRATEGIES** are specific action steps that when completed should implement the community vision. Strategies are represented in Chapters 3 and 5 of this plan.

Overall, the Comprehensive Plan is used by elected officials to make decisions that guide growth in Hall County.

DP Goal 3: Protect and enhance established neighborhoods

DP Goal 4: Promote quality development

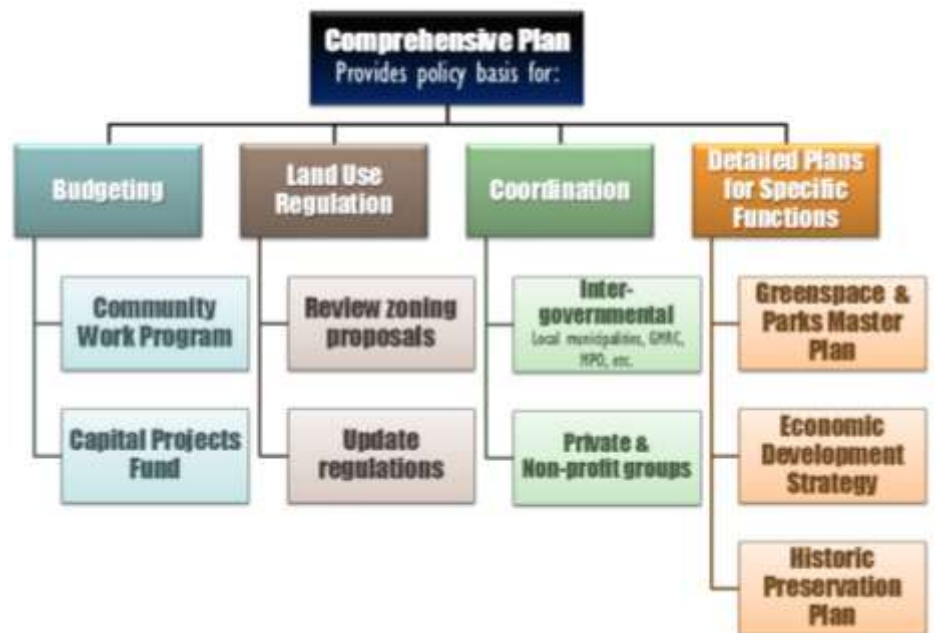
DP Goal 5: Accommodate housing options

DP Goal 6: Coordinate transportation and land use planning

**■ Putting the Plan into Action**

Adopting a comprehensive plan may seem like the end of the process, but actually it represents the beginning of a new phase – implementation. Implementing the plan requires an understanding of the plan recommendations and tools available for putting the plan to work for Hall County. In short, the plan is a tool that provides a policy basis for:

- Budgeting
- Local land use regulation
- Coordination among local governments, state and federal agencies, utilities, regional agencies
- Detailed plans for specific functions
- Promotion and economic development



**Budgeting**

The Implementation Program (see Chapter 5) outlines the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision for future development and for implementing the Future Development Guide. A 5-year Community Work Program (CWP) prioritizes the recommended strategies and assigns responsible parties to each. As presented, it provides elected officials and staff with a prioritized “to-do” list in addition to providing a policy guide.

The Board of Commissioners and administrative staff should consult the CWP each year when developing their annual budget. The CWP prioritizes each strategy and can guide future investment. Items listed in the CWP include recommended programs, regulations, studies, community improvements or investments, or other programs/initiatives.

**Land Use Regulation**

The policy basis for land use regulation occurs in two specific ways. First, the Future Development Guide provides a tool for evaluating rezoning requests. Second, local zoning and subdivision regulations sometimes require amendments based on the Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

### *Future Development Map*

The Future Development Guide (see Chapter 4) consists of the Future Development Map and Character Area Policy. The Future Development Map assigns a unique Character Area to each parcel in Hall County. The Character Area Policy describes with text and illustrations the vision for growth and development for each Character Area shown on the map. The Future Development Map is used to guide future rezonings; proposed zone change requests are reviewed for consistency with the Character Area Policy associated with the Future Development Map.

### *Zoning and Subdivision Regulations*

Evaluation and adoption of changes to regulations that address land use and development is a common follow-up after adoption of a comprehensive plan. The purpose of any updates to the Hall County Zoning Ordinance and/or Subdivision Regulations is to ensure that local regulatory tools support the implementation of the Future Development Map and specified goals in this plan.

### **Intergovernmental Coordination**

The policy basis for coordination occurs in two major components. First, county departments should coordinate their plans with that of the Comprehensive Plan. Second, coordination should occur between Hall County government and other entities, whether at the local (public or private), regional, or state level.

### *Public Service Delivery*

The County should review or develop service plans to ensure that they support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. This includes ensuring that future facilities are planned to meet the service demand promoted by the plan. For example, future planning to offer suburban-scale sewer services should be consistent with areas shown on the Future Development Map (and described in the Future Development Guide) as supporting residential and employment growth.

### *Coordination*

This plan provides the opportunity for the County, municipalities and other entities to view future needs from a common policy playbook. For example, private developers, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and economic development agencies can each see that the community has designated specific areas for future growth and specific areas for rural preservation. As a result, these entities should be able to work together to ensure that their projects and policies support the Community Vision.

### **Detailed Plans for Specific Functions**

Functional plans address specific government services such as parks, recreation, and economic development. This plan recommends preparation of several stand-alone plans that are coordinated with and supplement the Comprehensive Plan. These individual plans can address issues and concerns raised by stakeholders during the public planning process in greater detail than a comprehensive plan.

### *Parks and Greenspace Master Plan*

An expanded update to the 2008 Hall County Parks and Recreation Master Plan can provide an opportunity to address and integrate greenspace and trails into the county-wide plan. This comprehensive update to the existing recreation plan can help Hall County identify potential opportunities for permanently protecting greenspace and evaluate greenway opportunities and trail connections, including expansion of the Highlands to Islands Trail system.

***Economic Development Plan (New)***

A countywide plan can provide a mechanism for the County and its municipalities to coordinate economic development goals and efforts in conjunction with the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce. In general an Economic Development Plan sets policy direction for economic growth and identifies strategies, programs, and projects to improve the economy.

***Historic Preservation Plan (New)***

A Historic Preservation Plan can help Hall County protect historic resources and identify ways to promote its heritage as an economic development tool. Both the 2012 Historic Resources Survey of unincorporated Hall County (prepared by the University of Georgia’s College and Environment Design) and the public-private Healan’s- Head’s Mill restoration project can inform the planning process.

***East-West Corridor Study (New)***

An East-West Corridor Study in the North Hall area can determine the viability of a new connection to relieve congestion on Dawsonville Highway and also establish next steps in project development. This study could be conducted in partnership with the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization, the federally mandated transportation planning agency.