



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TROUP COUNTY, GEORGIA

Executive Summary

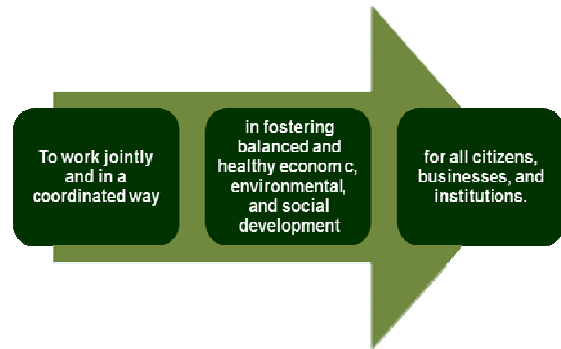
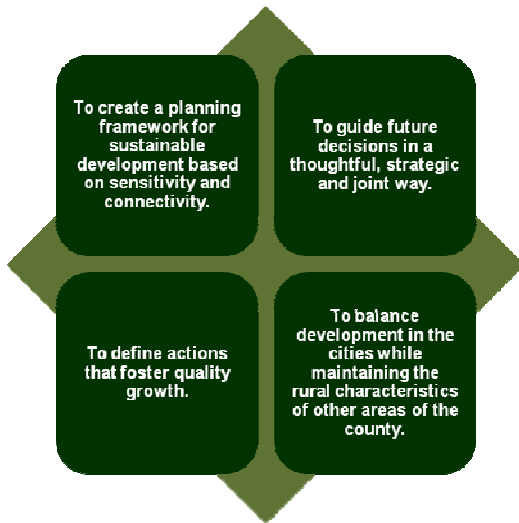
Troup County is at a critical juncture with respect to planning for the future given its unprecedented growth prospects. The county is located in West Georgia on the Georgia-Alabama border and is easily accessible via Interstates 85 and 185. The county is within an hour of Auburn, Columbus, and Atlanta. The county seat, centrally located **LaGrange**, is also Troup's largest city. **Hogansville** is the gateway to Troup County from the north and **West Point** is the gateway to both the county and Georgia from the south. Today, Troup County is home to nearly 65,000 residents.



The *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in Troup County, Georgia* is based on the mutual desire by leadership in Troup County and the Cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville to preserve and enhance places for area residents and businesses by proactively, progressively and creatively directing the community's growth and development to shape its future. This effort has benefitted from the insights of approximately 1,500 community stakeholders and partners and has been aided by the Georgia Institute of Technology.

MISSION

VISION



HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 20,000 jobs and over 1,400 net new firms are anticipated to be created in the nine-county Troup County region due to the economic impact of Kia. The job growth is anticipated to yield a population growth of nearly 50,000 for the nine-county region by 2030. Over 7,000 of the anticipated jobs are directly related to Kia and its suppliers. New



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jobs for the region are expected in virtually every industry sector, with manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and retail leading the pack. In terms of firm creation, wholesale trade; professional, scientific and technical services; and retail trade lead the pack.

- Troup County has more than 63,000 acres of land deemed suitable for development, far exceeding the land needs for population and job growth over the next couple decades. Approximately 6,000 acres of land were identified as highly unsuitable and 58,000 acres as less suitable for development, and ideal for preserving Troup County's natural beauty.
- Top identified strengths include leadership, LaGrange College and West Georgia Technical College, West Point Lake, the Callaway Foundation, the strong citizenry, and area parks and recreation.
- Planning and growth management was the most frequently identified challenge affecting Troup County, followed by challenges relating to transportation, K-12 education, water and sewer infrastructure, and addressing the needs of the at-risk population. Implicit in the identification of these issues is the need for local jurisdictions and institutional partners to work jointly in addressing them.
- When asked to identify the most serious issue affecting Troup County's ability to prepare for the future, the quality of the workforce was mentioned by community stakeholders more frequently than any other.
- Enhancing and protecting Troup County's quality of life has been rated by stakeholders as the most important economic development strategy, pointing to the inextricable link between achieving community livability and community prosperity.
- Troup County has had a growing eye toward sustainability—as evident in efforts such as LaGrange College and its partnership with the United Nations Centre International de Formation des Autorités/Acteurs Locaux (CIFAL) program, the planning initiatives underway by local governments, the innovative conversion of landfill gas to energy, and the growing countywide parks and green space conservation system, to name a few.
- The linkage between arts-related amenities and economic prosperity is well recognized by economic development experts as such amenities are known for keeping and drawing in talented professionals. Related to this, Troup County is well poised to capture some of the "creative class" jobs projected for the region.
- There is a great appetite among the leadership for jointly determining the shape, scale, and direction of future growth and development across the county and for providing supportive mechanisms through local policies and resource allocation.
- Cooperation among governmental agencies was cited as one of Troup County's most pressing issues by community stakeholders and external partners. Kia, and related opportunities, has been largely seen as the catalyst for the county to come together around a common goal, and as being responsible for relationships that are becoming stronger over time.
- Troup County has the potential to become a model region for maximizing the opportunities associated with growth in a joint and quality manner.



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GOALS

The Leadership Team adopted 10 strategic goals to serve as guiding principles for Troup County, based on input provided by the county’s leadership, stakeholders, and external partners. Together, the goals speak to the overall vision of Troup County’s leaders for fostering healthy and balanced economic, environmental, and social development. For each goal, the following pages outline the most key observations from input received and research conducted. Each observation has a corresponding “so what should Troup County do” strategic response identified.

	Observation	Strategic Response
Goal:	<p>The WELL PLANNED Community: Carefully, deliberately and strategically planning for the future; determining where growth and development should go and then allocating resources and available infrastructure to support it.</p> <p>All other goals are in support of this goal to enable a holistic approach for pursuing a sustainable future for Troup County.</p>	
1	<p>Troup County and the cities will experience significant employment and residential growth in the next 25 years, unlike the population and job trends of the past 20 years.</p>	<p>→ Utilize an adaptive planning approach to accurately predict and respond to changing needs and conditions.</p>
2	<p>There is a substantial amount of undeveloped land throughout Troup County, yet community stakeholders and elected officials have expressed a vision to concentrate future development in and around the cities to take advantage of available infrastructure and prevent sprawling development and its associated ills.</p>	<p>→ Explore officially adopting a vision and supporting policies to direct new development to areas in and adjacent to the cities where existing or planned infrastructure capacity is available.</p>
Goal:	<p>The PROSPEROUS Community: Raising the standard and quality of living for citizens through higher performance economic development that provides a diverse mixture of opportunities.</p>	
3	<p>Troup County is becoming increasingly globally relevant.</p>	<p>→ Market area for ‘globility.’ Capitalize on the international destination it has become and foster greater connectivity for foreign-based companies and residents alike.</p>
4	<p>Troup County has an abundance of assets that support the further development of a “creative economy.”</p>	<p>→ Explore the potential for strengthening and leveraging the creative centers of Troup County.</p>



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	Observation	Strategic Response
5	Troup County has numerous institutions of higher learning within a 45-mile radius.	➔ Explore the potential for economically beneficial relationships that can be developed with nearby colleges and universities.
6	Troup County has an above average percentage of residents in poverty, and not enough of its citizens are reaching self-sufficiency.	➔ Continue to support the needs of working families facing economic challenges and explore opportunities for expanded efforts.
Goal:	The QUALITY GOVERNANCE Community: Working progressively in a collaborative fashion with other governments; fostering greater opportunities for citizen engagement; and making forward-thinking decisions based on the collective view of the constituency.	
7	Community stakeholders and external partners thought that building cooperation among local counties, cities and towns was one of the most important challenges and opportunities facing Troup County.	➔ Continue to build upon improved relationships by working on developing internal collaborative partnerships, and external regional partnerships to find solutions where problems present themselves.
8	As the cities and county grow, new issues and the complications of growth will arise. Elected officials, local government staff, residents, businesses, and institutions must work together to respond to new needs and challenges and must enhance their capacity to analyze and plan for the future.	➔ Pursue opportunities to cooperate in ways that benefit all jurisdictions in the areas of land use, and natural resource planning. (This includes investigating new or expanded areas of knowledge that need to be incorporated into local governance.)
9	The City of LaGrange was frequently cited by community stakeholders as a community that has “done it right” and by statewide and regional partners as the “first thing that comes to mind” when they think of Troup County.	➔ Leverage and build upon the LaGrange “brand equity” and economic development capabilities.
Goal:	The KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN Community: Providing the opportunity for an excellent and competitive education for all ages; fostering an excitement about lifelong learning that will motivate young people to stay in school.	
10	There appears to be a significant lack of awareness among the general citizenry about where the economy is heading.	➔ Launch a multi-tiered campaign to raise awareness about future economic trends and implications for future career options.



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	Observation	→	Strategic Response
11	Troup County's workforce has been largely described as not ready for the jobs of today or the future.	→	Align workforce development efforts to address the expected demands to arise due to the impact of Kia and its suppliers and the community's strategy to promote the future development of high growth industries.
Goal:	The ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD Community: Preserving green space and the natural environs; protecting natural resources (e.g., West Point Lake); promoting clean development.		
12	Many community stakeholders expressed a desire for environmental stewardship that balances economic and social factors through a sustainable development approach.	→	Adopt a multi-faceted approach to sustainable development across all development types.
13	Much of the unsuitable land is related to water features that create a natural network connecting the cities to the lake, and various residential areas to civic buildings and downtowns. This would enable recreational enjoyment as well as functional connections between key destinations.	→	Protect environmentally sensitive lands, while simultaneously using the approach to connect people to schools, recreational and entertainment opportunities, and each other.
14	Water quality issues are a serious concern for Troup County.	→	Work to develop county and city collaborative policies and procedures to protect water quality throughout the county.
Goal:	The GOOD HABITAT Community: Facilitating a greater degree of housing choice; increasing the availability of quality housing that is affordable and safe; emphasizing "neighborhood" development; and fostering the availability of comfortable living. This includes ensuring the safety and security for all residents and preserving and enabling the optimal conditions for raising children.		
15	Available data suggest Troup County's housing market is less affordable than the state average, and the existing stock is not meeting the needs of all components of the workforce.	→	Work to maintain a range of quality, affordable housing stock to match the range in area income levels, and develop more mixed-income communities.



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	Observation	→	Strategic Response
16	While some of the more established neighborhoods have declined, much of the remaining housing stock and historic street patterns remain.	→	Troup County should continue to support existing older neighborhoods and explore using historically successful patterns of development to inform policies for future development, especially infill development and the potential for greater mixed-use development within these neighborhoods.
Goal:	The NAVIGABLE Community: Fostering the ease of mobility throughout the community; gearing transportation infrastructure according to future growth plans; providing alternative and viable solutions beyond the automobile.		
17	Troup County lacks the mechanisms and tools to ensure desirable corridor development.	→	Develop land use and transportation policies that elevate design standards, manage traffic flows, and increase opportunities for alternative modes of travel.
18	Troup County will experience increasing demand for a more robust public transportation system as the population increases.	→	Working in conjunction with human services and workforce development partners, develop an incremental exploration to expand public transportation services.
Goal:	The ATTRACTIVE Community: Fostering appealing gateways into the community; retaining the “small town” charm; encouraging aesthetically pleasing development; promoting ongoing beautification.		
19	Given anticipated market demands, Troup County will be at risk for haphazardly placed and designed retail development.	→	Take extra care to avoid low quality retail development.
20	With anticipated new development, additional signage, landscaping (or the lack thereof), and streetscaping have the ability to significantly change the attractiveness of the community.	→	Review, amend, or adopt ordinances to preserve and enhance community aesthetic appeal.



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Goal:	The NEIGHBORLY Community: Meeting the individual needs of all citizens; promoting a friendly environment to existing and new community members of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures; fostering a strong, cohesive sense of community.	
21	Troup County's projected population growth will only increase the need for more physicians. There will be a need not only for more generalists, but also specialists in the most in-demand medical disciplines.	➔ Focus on retention and recruitment of physicians within the most in-need medical disciplines.
22	Troup County's uninsured and working poor have difficulty affording both preventative and treatment/recovery health care services.	➔ Enhance the commitment to Troup County's existing preventive health care to improve the community's overall health and capacity for treatment and recovery care.
23	As is the case for all communities, stakeholders pointed to opportunities for continual improvement in the area of addressing the needs of a population that is significantly diverse and growing in its diversity.	➔ Troup County should explore all opportunities to embrace and leverage its community diversity.
Goal:	The ENTERTAINING Community: Providing a diverse menu of recreational, cultural, dining, shopping, and other amenities for families and residents of all ages.	
24	The Troup County community feels that the Parks and Recreation Department has done a good job of strengthening its assets. West Point Lake is also an important recreational asset.	➔ Continue the commitment to maintaining high-quality parks and recreational infrastructure and expand parks acres and facilities to address population growth and location.
25	Troup County has an extensive range of arts and cultural amenities.	➔ Continue the commitment to maintaining high-quality arts and cultural amenities, and raising awareness about all that is available.

This Executive Summary includes highlights and key observations and recommendations, which are based on interviews of stakeholders and external partners, and a series of independent assessments by the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute and Center for Quality Growth & Regional Development. More findings and details on these and other recommendations are provided in the report, *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development* and in twelve companion reports.