

# Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia

## ● Assessment Report 2008



## Human Services

Produced for Troup County and the  
Cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville

# PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE IN TROUP COUNTY, GEORGIA

## Human Services Assessment

*Produced for*

Troup County and the Cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville

*Prepared by*

Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute

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June 2008  
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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

In June 2007, leaders in Troup County and the cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville kicked off a two-year strategic planning initiative to create a framework for sustainable development. The goal of the effort is to develop innovative strategies for promoting quality growth, fostering healthy economic development, enhancing the quality of life of residents, and protecting Troup County's natural environment, sense of place, and community. Troup County leadership wants to preserve and enhance places for area residents and businesses by proactively, progressively and fairly directing the community's growth and development to shape its future.

Georgia Tech - through its Enterprise Innovation Institute and Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development - conducted research, assessments, and strategy development in support of this initiative. This report is one in a series of reports entitled *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia* produced by Georgia Tech.

## OVERVIEW

At the heart of sustainable development is the desire to make better or to improve, rather than to simply grow - thus, the difference between development and growth. When considering Troup County's human services, the sustainable development question is how we can work to ensure the basic needs of our residents are addressed, so that they may be better equipped to be fully-functioning members of the local economy. Many of the concerns that human services represent are felt throughout the nation, but that does not detract from the value of individual communities making a stronger commitment to addressing these needs. Human services are particularly important when applied to the needs of youth, as they represent the community's economic future potential.

The purpose of this assessment is to identify key human service needs and opportunities for Troup County in the areas of health care, public safety, family and children, housing, transportation, and community culture and diversity. This assessment is based on several informational inputs, including:

- one-on-one interviews with 154 community stakeholders
- one-on-one interviews with 30 external partners
- a review of dozens of performance metrics
- case study research on three fast growing communities
- a survey of 1,352 high school youth
- one-on-one interviews with 32 human resource professionals in Troup County

To serve as the basis for the region's strategic planning framework, the Leadership Team steering Troup County's efforts adopted 10 strategic goals. The subject of this assessment, human services, is very germane to two of these goals: The Neighborly Community and The Good Habitat Community.

## Acknowledgements

This assessment would not have been possible without the insights provided by leadership at the following organizations:

100 Black Men of Troup County	LaGrange Housing Authority
Alterna Communities	LaGrange Police Department
American Medical Response	LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce
Big Brothers, Big Sisters	NAACP
Boys & Girls Club	Rotary Club
Callaway Foundation	Troup County Fire Department
City of West Point	Troup County Health Department
Clark-Holder Clinic	Troup County Resource Commission
Communities in Schools	Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools
Community Action for Improvement, Inc.	Troup County School System
DASH of LaGrange, Inc.	Troup County Sheriff's Office
Georgia DFACS	Troup Family Connection Authority
Georgia District 4 Health Services	Twin Cedars Youth Services, Inc
Harmony House	United Way of West Georgia
Hogansville Housing Authority	United Way Success by Six
LaGrange College	West Georgia Medical Health System
LaGrange Fire Department	West Point Housing Authority

## THE VIEW FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS<sup>1</sup>

### Community Stakeholders

From June to August 2007, interviews were conducted with 154 community stakeholders. The following points speak to comments received regarding human service related topics.

- **Desired Change: Good Habitat, Neighborly, and Entertaining Community.** When asked what they most desired for community development, after a well-planned and a prosperous community, the next three highest categories of stakeholder responses related to community livability ideals. Leading the pack on this set was providing a good habitat community, the third highest category of responses (13.1 percent). Rounding out the top five were fostering a neighborly community (11.6 percent) and an entertaining community (9.1 percent).
- **Strength: Callaway Foundation.** Related to leading community strengths, the important and catalytic role that the Callaway Foundation has played was widely recognized. The foundation received 36 mentions, with stakeholders citing its work in the development and redevelopment of downtown LaGrange, the contributions it makes to various nonprofit and social service organizations, and the leadership role it plays in helping to shape the community vision for diverse initiatives.
- **Challenge: Transportation.** In the identification of key challenges, the second most frequently mentioned area related to Troup County's transportation system. The lack of public transportation, in particular, was top of minds. Stakeholders also pointed to problems in traffic flow and mobility. Beyond this, some pointed to the lack of east-west connectivity, the need for corridor planning, and ineffectiveness of key intersections.
- **Challenge: Helping At-Risk Population.** Helping the at-risk population ranked fifth among challenges identified, receiving 35 mentions. Stakeholders observed that Troup County could do better in assisting low-income residents, the elderly, unwed mothers, those at risk for dropping out of high school or having a teen pregnancy, and others in disadvantaged situations.
- **Challenge: Embracing Diversity.** Dealing with diversity was also identified as a top 10 challenge for Troup County, receiving 31 mentions. Stakeholders discussed the need for both greater diversity in leadership and for better engaging the current minority leadership in community decision-making was discussed. Some described the community as "still segregated" in a social sense. Others discussed the need to improve the handling of cultural diversity.
- **Opportunity: Housing Development.** One of the leading opportunities identified by stakeholders related to Troup County's housing market. The opportunity to plan and manage growth and reap the associated benefits was a frequently mentioned opportunity, accounting for 40 mentions. Relating to future growth and development, stakeholders saw opportunities for both expanding residential development (33 mentions) and increasing commercial and retail options (32 mentions).
- **Opportunity: Promoting Youth.** Several opportunities related to providing better amenities for citizens such as expanding commercial / retail options, promoting youth and family development, and expanding arts, cultural, and recreational venues.

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<sup>1</sup> Information for this section has been extracted from the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: The VIEW from Community Stakeholders* and the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: The VIEW from Statewide and Regional Partners* reports.

- **Issue: Transportation.** Rounding out the top three most serious issues identified was the need to improve the transportation and the roadway navigation system, specifically, to develop solutions for removing the bottlenecks, to develop a plan for linking transportation to future needs, and to explore the options for providing public transportation.
  - Additional serious issues related to human services identified included engaging the citizenry, housing choice, and public safety.
- **Kia Advantage: Raising Standard of Living.** The stakeholders saw Kia and related developments as key to raising the standard of living and overall prosperity of the citizens within Troup County. As part of this, several discussed the impact of higher-paying jobs on improving the self-sufficiency of the citizenry.
  - Additional advantages related to Kia mentioned by multiple stakeholders included supportive industrial growth, increased cultural diversity, and a stronger housing market.
- **Kia Challenge: Transportation.** Topping the list of challenges Kia may bring was the challenge of improving navigability in the face of growth and the lack of a transportation system that can enable multimodal mobility, more efficient traffic flows, etc. These type challenges received 45 mentions.
- **Kia Challenge: Embracing Diversity.** Again related to Kia, the stakeholders identified the challenges associated with dealing with cultural diversity - namely, those associated with the influx of new residents of different cultures - fifth in frequency among mentions.
  - Additional challenges related to Kia mentioned by multiple stakeholders included costs associated with rising demand for public services, growth being accompanied by greater crime and threats to public safety, and availability of workforce housing.
- **Betterment Activity: Health Care.** In response to being asked to indicate how important stakeholders saw specific community betterment activities, receiving second billing was the need to maintain a strong regional health care system as this received an average rating of 4.81. Healthcare is an essential ingredient of fostering the good habitat community desired in Troup County.
- **Replace: Substandard Housing.** When asked what locally needed to be replaced (versus preserved or improved), substandard housing topped the list, accounting for 31 mentions or 29.5 percent of the total. Here, stakeholders identified areas with blighted and poor housing conditions throughout Troup County within each of the three cities.
- **Meeting Community Needs.** Stakeholders were asked to consider how well the needs of the citizenry are being met through various community program areas. Regarding the social needs of Troup County, the stakeholders were asked to share their views on two key questions. When asked how well the needs of all citizens are addressed, they provided an average rating of 3.4. However, when asked about how well the community deals with diversity, they provided a slightly lower average rating of 3.2. Together, these ratings average to 3.3.

### How Well Are Community Needs Met?



- Leadership Support.** The stakeholders were asked to indicate how supportive Community Leadership is in promoting quality growth. They provided highest marks to the leadership for economic development, and lowest marks to addressing the needs of all citizens.

### How Supportive Is Community Leadership?



- Citizenry Support.** The stakeholders were also asked to indicate how supportive Community Citizenry is in promoting quality growth. Their ratings for the citizens were not as high generally but are in line with the leadership in terms of providing lower marks for addressing the needs of all citizens.

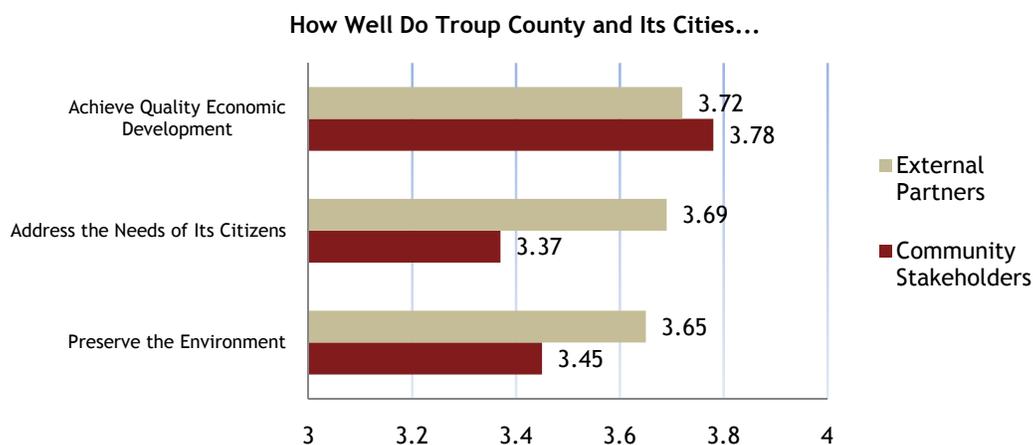
### How Supportive Is Community Citizenry?



## External Partners

Following the internal stakeholder interviews, Georgia Tech launched an external stakeholder input process. Specifically, from September through November 2007, interviews were held with 30 statewide and regional community development partners of Troup County who also have a vested interest in the community's future development.

- When asked what the first thing was that comes to mind when they thought of Troup County, at least one response was the importance placed on improving the lives of children in Troup County. The answers the greatest number of stakeholders gave were the City of LaGrange and Kia.
- Interestingly, external partners rated the community's work to address the needs of its citizens higher than the community stakeholders did, on a scale of 1 to 5.



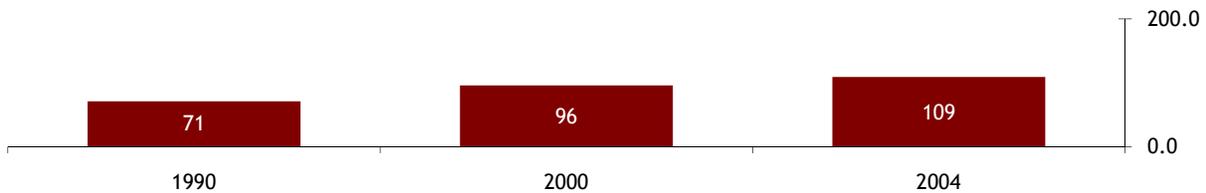
- The external partners listed a number of strengths for Troup County, with location and leadership leading the list. Related to human services, additional strengths listed included the Callaway Foundation and community involvement.
- Regarding challenges, related to human services, the partners pointed to housing affordability and inequities.
- Opportunities identified related to human services included creating equity among citizenry, infill housing, and the Callaway Foundation. Leading the list of identified opportunities were Kia's arrival and building cooperation.
- The leading identified threats were concerns regarding growth management and whether economic development efforts would stagnate in the wake of Kia-related success. Demographic shifts, funding for social services, lack of inclusivity, and social concerns were additional identified threats related to human services.
- Most critical issues related to human services included embracing diversity, housing choice, and reducing crime.

# HEALTH CARE

## State of Health Care in Troup County<sup>2</sup>

- The number of physicians in Troup County has grown substantially, significantly outpacing the County’s population growth. From 1990 to 2000, the number of physicians grew 35.2 percent while the county’s overall population increased by 5.8 percent. From 2000 to 2004, Troup County had an even more significant growth of physicians, by 89.6 percent during a period when the county continued to have only marginal population growth. As of 2004, Troup County had 109 physicians within the community.

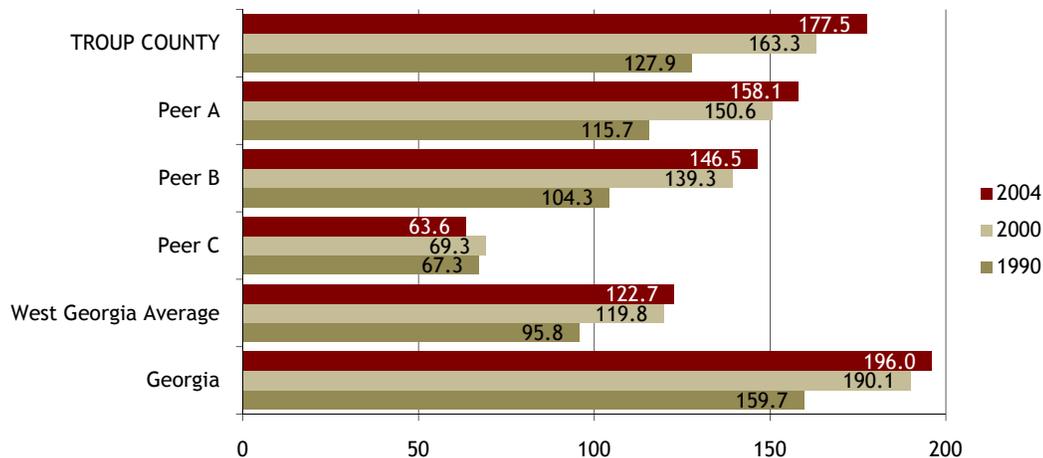
Number of Physicians in Troup County, Georgia



Source: Georgia Board of Physician Workforce

- Given Troup County’s growth in the number of physicians, there has been a significant increase in Troup’s physician rate (rate of physicians per 100,000 people). Still, Troup’s physician rate in 2004 is lower than the state. Troup County had approximately 20 fewer physicians per 100,000 people Georgia. Troup County’s physician rate has consistently been higher than its peers and the West Georgia average.

Physician Rate



Source: Georgia Board of Physicians Workforce

<sup>2</sup> Some information extracted from the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Sustainable Development Report Card*. The peers referenced in this section are Barrow, Bulloch, and Spalding counties, each chosen due to their relative similarities to Troup County in terms of population, proximity to the interstate, percentage of citizens in incorporated and unincorporated areas, etc.

- **Troup County has a strong physician rate for general surgery and OB/GYNs compared to state averages, but lags behind in adult primary care providers and pediatricians.** While the overall physician rate has increased dramatically and surpassed state averages, certain specialties, primarily pediatrics and family practice, continue to fall behind state averages. Troup County has a growing proportion of residents in certain age groups under 19 years of age, suggesting if anything the county's demand for pediatric and family medicine practitioners is greater than the state-wide average demand.

**Physician Rate by Specialty, 2004**

	Family Practice	Internal Medicine	Pediatrics	OB/GYN	General Surgery
Troup Co.	19.5	24.4	13.0	14.7	8.1
Georgia	25.7	29.7	17.8	13.1	8.2

Source: Georgia Board of Physicians Workforce

- **Troup County is home to the West Georgia Medical Center, at which data suggest there is untapped capacity.** The hospital has a bed capacity of 276 and posted an occupancy rate of 40.5 percent in 2004. Troup's hospital occupancy rate was significantly below the state and two of its peer counties, and slightly below the average for West Georgia.

**Hospital Occupancy Rates**

	1990	2000	2004
TROUP COUNTY	47.6	44.3	40.5
Peer A	58.4	51.4	61.3
Peer B	45.9	47.6	53.9
Peer C	57.3	19.0	21.7
West Georgia Average	44.0	34.9	43.5
Georgia	54.5	45.4	50.5

Source: Georgia County Guide, Georgia Department of Health and Human Services

- **A partial explanatory factor for the lower occupancy rate is the average length of stay.** The average length of stay (4.4 days) at West Georgia Medical Center was slightly lower than the average for West Georgia (4.5), the rate for one of its peers, and the rate for Georgia (4.8 days) in 2004.
- **A number of Troup County residents also reportedly utilize the Lanier Health Services hospital, which is right outside the community in Valley, Alabama.** Lanier is a 115-bed private, non-profit hospital with approximately 50 physicians. The facility estimates that 13 percent of its patients are from Georgia.<sup>3</sup>
- **Troup County's outpatient visits have far exceeded its hospital admissions.** Data suggest that historically (as of 1999) Troup County residents have made more use of outpatient facilities than the hospital. This may explain the lower occupancy rates of West Georgia Medical Center compared to the state average.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Lanier Health Services.

**Outpatient Visits Per Hospital Admissions, 1999**

Outpatient Admissions	Visits Per Hospital
Troup County	29.2
Georgia	10.4

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality

- **Troup County has had a higher rate of hospital admissions and emergency department visits than the state.** The high rates of hospital admissions and emergency department visits, coupled with the even higher number of outpatient visits than hospital admissions illustrated in the previous chart, suggest a much greater demand for health care services in Troup than the Georgia average.

**Number of Supply/Utilization Per 1,000 Persons, 1999**

	Inpatient Beds	Hospital Admissions	Emergency Department Visits
Troup County	3.2	151.2	447.0
Georgia	2.6	97.2	345.6

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality

- **The high number of inpatient beds per 1,000 persons and the low occupancy rate of West Georgia Medical Center suggest that at this time Troup County may have the capacity to meet this demand.** However, the data also suggest a potential opportunity to enhance preventative care to reduce the high rate of health care service utilization in the community.
- **Troup County consistently has had a higher rate of preventable or avoidable hospitalizations than the Georgia average.** Affirming the above speculation that there is an opportunity to enhance preventative care, Troup County had a rate of preventable or avoidable hospitalizations of 11.6 for the under 18 population, 11.7 for the 18 to 39 population, and 34.7 for the 40 to 64 population. The state had a lower rate for each age category: 10.2, 7.4, and 22.9, respectively. That pattern holds when the county's rate is adjusted to the state average and when the number of observed preventable/avoidable hospitalizations is compared to expected hospitalizations, measures designed to account for differences in physician style and race/ethnic compositions.

**Preventable/Avoidable Hospitalizations, 1999**

	Ages 0-17			Ages 18-39			Ages 40-64		
	Rate per 1,000 <sup>1</sup>	Adj. to Mean <sup>2</sup>	Observed/Expected <sup>3</sup>	Rate per 1,000 <sup>1</sup>	Adj. to Mean <sup>2</sup>	Observed/Expected <sup>3</sup>	Rate per 1,000 <sup>1</sup>	Adj. to Mean <sup>2</sup>	Observed/Expected <sup>3</sup>
Troup	11.6	1.2	0.8	11.7	2.0	1.3	34.7	1.8	1.2
Georgia	10.2	0.9	0.8	7.4	1.2	0.9	22.9	1.2	0.9

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality

<sup>1</sup> Preventable or avoidable discharges per 1,000 persons, adjusted for age and sex.

<sup>2</sup> Ratio of county rate to the average rate for the state, to account for differences in physician style.

<sup>3</sup> Ratio of "observed" preventable/avoidable discharges to "expected" preventable/avoidable discharges, to account for differences in physician style and area income and race/ethnic composition

- **Troup County has had an above average rate of sexually transmitted diseases.** The county's rate (5.8 per 100,000 persons over age 20) from 2000 to 2004 exceeded that of two of its peers as well as the averages for West Georgia (4.1) and the state (4.2).<sup>4</sup> **Troup County's incidence of tuberculosis appears to be above the norm for its region.** From 1998 to 2005, the county had 26

<sup>4</sup> Source: Georgia County Guide, Georgia Department of Health and Human Services

cases of tuberculosis, exceeding the level of incidences experienced by each of its peers and the average for West Georgia (21). Troup County had the second highest incidence among counties in West Georgia and four of its regional counterparts had less than five cases during this period.<sup>5</sup>

- **Troup County's suicide rate is higher than the regional and state averages.** The county's rate (11.3 per 100,000 population) in 2005 was higher than the West Georgia regional county average (5.8) and the State of Georgia rate (9.8). Two of Troup's peers had higher rates (13.3 and 14.7), but the third peer had a rate of 0.0. The county's rate has risen since its 8.5 figure in 1995, while average rates have declined in the West Georgia region during that same time period. During this time the state's rate increased from 8.8 to 9.8, one of the peer's rates increased, and another one's decreased (the third peer again had a rate of 0.0 in 1995). It is worth noting that the county's 2005 rate was based on 7 suicides, and in 1995 there were 5. In 2005, there was only 1 teen suicide in Troup County. That year, there was only one other teen suicide in the region, and only one of the peers had an instance of teen suicide. That year the state's teen suicide rate was 2.9 per 100,000 people.<sup>6</sup>
- **Troup County appears to have an above average percent of its population (ages 5 and over) with a disability.** In 2000, the year of the most recent data available, the county's rate (23.3 percent) was higher than that for two of its peers, the average for West Georgia (22.5 percent) and the rate for the state (19.7 percent).<sup>7</sup>
  - Troup County's percent of individuals with *physical disabilities* (24.2 percent) was below the average for West Georgia (25.2 percent), but higher than the rate for the state (23 percent), and the rate for two of its peers.
  - Troup County also had a higher percent of individuals with *mental health disabilities* (13.8 percent) when compared to that for one of its peers and the state (13.6 percent), though it was on par with the average for West Georgia (13.8 percent).
  - Notably, there was a lower share (24.1 percent) of persons with a disability that prevented them from gainful employment in Troup County than in Georgia overall (25.2 percent), although the county's percent of such persons exceeded that of two of its peers and the average for West Georgia (23.2).
- **Troup County has a number of facilities that provide mental health and substance abuse treatment services.**
  - Troup County has a mental health clinic which is part of the State of Georgia Department of Human Resources system. The county is on the southern border of the 25-county Georgia Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases Region One Service Delivery Area. The regional offices are located in Rome, Georgia, which is approximately 95 miles away. The division also offers assistance via the Georgia Crises & Access Line 1-800 number.
  - Pathways Center of LaGrange provides outpatient mental health services, with a focus on substance abusers and DUI/DWI offenders. In Columbus, Bradford Health Services provides both inpatient and outpatient alcohol and drug treatment services. Additional outpatient services in Columbus are provided by Georgia Therapy Associates and New Horizons.
  - The LaGrange-based Center for Creative Growth and Human Development provides outpatient mental health services for families and youth and an inpatient residential treatment program for males ages 12 to 17.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Georgia County Guide, Georgia Department of Health and Human Services

<sup>6</sup> Source: Georgia County Guide, Georgia Department of Health and Human Services

<sup>7</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **Troup County has three nursing homes.** Combined, these homes had 404 beds in 2004. The county's bed capacity exceeds that of each of its peers and the average for West Georgia (239). While the county appears to have an above-average level of capacity, it also had a higher occupancy rate than one of its peers, the average for West Georgia, and the rate for the state in 2004. Also, while its peers, the West Georgia average, and the state each had an occupancy decline, Troup County saw a slight increase from 2000 to 2004 bucking the trend and denoting a higher level of demand for such care.

**Nursing Home Occupancy Rates**

	1990	2000	2004
TROUP COUNTY	97.0	94.5	96.2
Peer A	97.6	97.5	96.5
Peer B	94.0	93.5	88.6
Peer C	97.9	99.0	97.8
West Georgia Average	97.9	96.1	93.3
Georgia	94.6	91.0	86.6

Source: Georgia County Guide, Georgia Department of Health and Human Services

- **Troup County has had some growth in its private institutional support for health care.** From 2001 to 2006, the county saw a marginal increase (3.4 percent) in the number of health care and social services organizations, from 118 to 122. Growth in the number of these organizations lagged behind other areas with the average county in the region increasing 11.7 percent, the state of Georgia increasing 22.5 percent, and its peer counties experiencing between 19 and 41.5 percent growth. However, employment by these organizations showed much more substantial growth, increasing from 1,684 to 2,168, or by 28.7 percent during this short time period, signaling a notable increase in the availability of health care and social services. Troup's growth in employment for these organizations topped growth in the state (19.8 percent), the average for West Georgia (23 percent), and one of its peers. Both in 2001 and 2006, Troup County's number of organizations exceeded that of two of its peers, the average for West Georgia and the average for the state. In terms of staff capacity, the county exceeded that of one of its peers and the average for its region in both years and the average for Georgia in 2006.

**Health Care & Social Services**

	2001		2006	
	Organizations	Staff	Organizations	Staff
TROUP COUNTY	118	1,684	122	2,168
Peer A	100	2,366	119	3,452
Peer B	112	1,986	151	2,234
Peer C	41	668	58	1,094
West Georgia Average	67	1,362	75	1,675
Georgia Average	97	1,895	112	2,127

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

- **Troup County has had strongest growth in nursing and residential care facilities and offices of physicians.** Breaking the health care sector down by sub-sector, it is clear that some sectors have had stronger growth than others. Particularly fast-growing has been nursing and residential care facilities, growing their workforce by 90.0 percent in six years.
- **Despite a relatively modest growth rate of 10.5 percent, Outpatient Care Centers represent an important part of Troup County's health care sector, with a Location Quotient of 7.97.** Location Quotients (LQ) demonstrate how the proportional size of a sub-sector in a local economy compares to the national economy. A LQ of 1.00 indicates an average sub-sector size; the 7.97 figure for Troup County's Outpatient Care Centers is exceptionally large, and indicative of the relative importance of these facilities in the community. This explains the previously discussed

remarkably high rate of 29.2 outpatient visits per hospital admissions in Troup County, compared to the 10.4 rate average for Georgia.

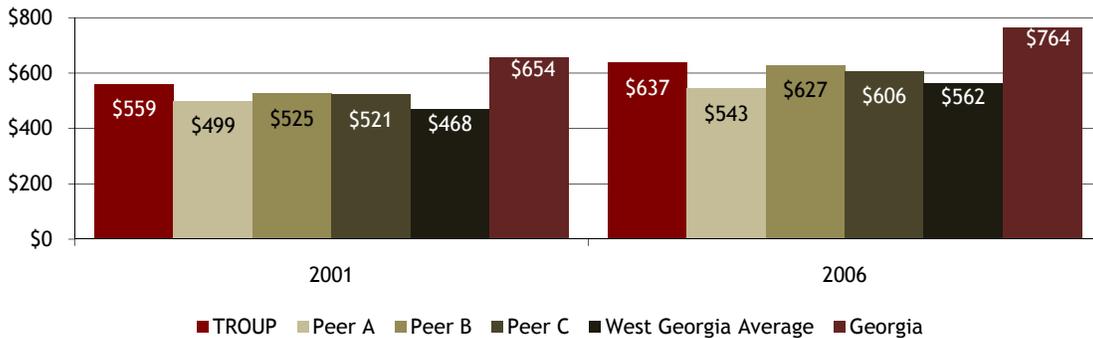
**Health Services Capacity Measured by Employment and LQ, 2000-2006**

Industry Name	Employment '06	% Change '00-'06	LQ '06	LQ Change '00-'06
Health Care & Social Assistance	2,164	40.3%	1.33	0.36
Ambulatory Health Care Services	899	-9.4%	1.69	-0.33
Offices of Physicians	535	23.0%	2.51	0.40
Offices of Dentists	200	12.4%	2.57	0.25
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	60	1.7%	1.06	-0.14
Outpatient Care Centers	147	10.5%	7.97	0.51
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	530	90.0%	1.73	0.84

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Troup County's average weekly wage in health care and social services has risen steadily and is above average for its region.** While in 2001, the average wage for this sector was \$559, it grew 14 percent to \$637 in 2006. This signals that the community has recruited some more experienced or higher-skilled health care and social service professionals, suggesting a potentially increased quality of service in Troup. Comparing growth in wages for other areas shows that Troup's wages grew at a slower rate than the average for West Georgia (20.2 percent), the rate for two of its peers, and the rate for the state (16.8 percent). However, in both 2001 and 2006, Troup County's average wages in health care and social services exceeded that of its peers and the average for its region. Its wage levels are not yet at the level of the state's which is likely due to Georgia's wages being driven by the costs associated with much larger metropolitan areas.

**Average Weekly Wages in Health Care and Social Services**



Source: Georgia Department of Labor

- Troup County's rate of death is higher than the state average, due to higher-than-average rates for the population over 45 years old.** In 2006, Troup County's rate of deaths per 100,000 people was 931.3, substantially higher than the state average of 716.4. Because the rates for all age groups under 44 were lower in Troup than the state, the difference in the community-wide death rates can be explained by the higher-than-average rates of 1078.0 for the 45 to 64 age range and 5023.8 for the 65 and over age range (Georgia's were 705.4 and 4806.6, respectively).

**Deaths by Age Per 100,000 Persons, 2006**

	Troup	Georgia
Total Deaths	931.3	716.4
Infancy (under 1)	7.7	8.1
Early Childhood (1-4)	*	34.7
Later Childhood (5-9)	*	13.8
Early Adolescence (10-14)	*	17.0
Later Adolescence (15-19)	*	71.8
Young Adulthood (20-44)	140.8	150.4
Middle Adulthood (45-64)	1078.0	705.4
Later Adulthood (65+)	5023.8	4806.6
*Less than 5.0		
Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources, Vital Statistics		

- **Troup County's mortality rate has been significantly high.** For the ten-year period of 1995 to 2004, Troup County's overall mortality rate (1,106.4 per 100,000 population) exceeded the rate of each of its peers, the average for West Georgia and the rate for the state.

**Mortality Rate 1995 to 2004**

	<b>Overall Mortality Rate</b> (Deaths Per 100,000 Population)	<b>Infant Mortality Rate</b> (Deaths Per 1,000 Live Births)
TROUP COUNTY	1,106.4	10.2
Peer A	990.2	10.7
Peer B	712.1	11.9
Peer C	740.9	5.5
West Georgia Average	979.4	9.2
Georgia	768.7	8.7
Source: Georgia County Guide, Georgia Department of Health and Human Services		

- **The county's infant mortality rate has also been relatively high.** The county's rate (10.2) for the 10-year period of 1995 to 2004 was notably higher than one of its peers, the average for West Georgia (9.2) and the rate for the state (8.7).<sup>8</sup>
- **Following state-wide trends, the leading cause of death in Troup County, by a large-margin, is heart disease.** In 2006, 330.5 deaths per 100,000 were due to heart/circulatory system disease in Troup County, compared to the 233.7 average for the state. Following heart disease as leading causes of death were cancer (194.5, compared to 156.9 for the state) and pneumonia, emphysema and other respiratory system diseases (85.4, compared to 67.7 for the state).

Additional diseases for which the Troup rate of death was substantially higher than the state average were substance abuse and other mental/behavioral causes (74.3, compared to 27.8), liver disease and other digestive system-related causes (45.9, compared to 25.4), kidney disease and other urinary system-related causes (28.5, compared to 21.9), and anemia and other blood-related causes (7.9, compared to 2.8).

<sup>8</sup> Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources

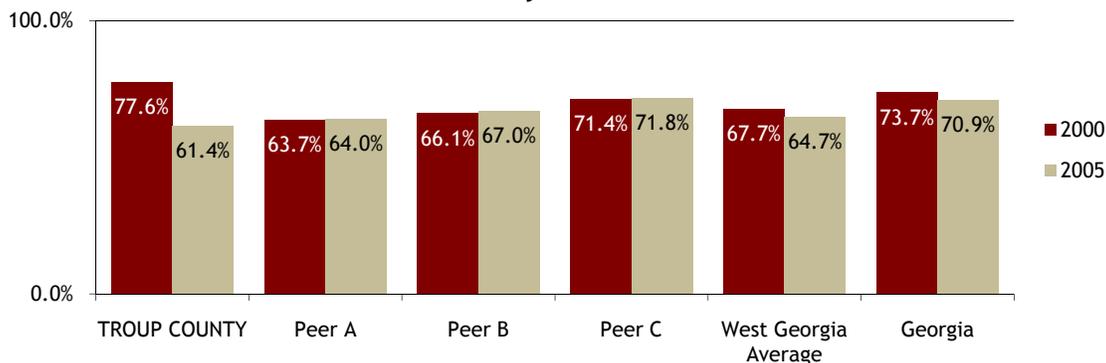
**Deaths by Cause Per 100,000 Persons, 2006**

	Troup Co.	Georgia
Heart & Other Circulatory System	330.5	233.7
Cancer	194.5	156.9
Pneumonia, Emphysema & Other Respiratory	85.4	67.7
Substance Abuse & Other Mental/Behavioral	74.3	27.8
Liver Disease & Other Digestive System	45.9	25.4
Alzheimer's & Other Nervous System	36.4	31.9
Accidents	34.8	39.2
Diabetes & Other Metabolic	28.5	24.8
Kidney Disease & Other Urinary System	28.5	21.9
SIDS (per 1,000 live births)	15.8	22.2
Septicemia & Certain Other Infectious	14.2	26.8
Anemia & Other Blood-Related	7.9	2.8
Pregnancy & Childbirth	0.0	15.5
Suicide	*	9.6
Homicide	*	7.1
Prenatal-Originating Conditions	*	7.0
Congenital Malformation & Chromosomal Abnormalities	*	3.6
All Other	*	2.4

\*Great than 1.0, less than 5.0  
 Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources, Vital Statistics

- **Troup County's Healthy Start Index declined significantly during recent years.** The Healthy Start Index is a measure of the percentage of infants born weighing 2,500 grams or more, born to mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester, and born to mothers who did not drink alcohol or smoke during pregnancy. The county's index shifted from 77.6 percent in 2000 to 61.4 percent in 2005. The index for the region and state also shifted downward, but to a lesser degree than Troup. The county's peers each improved their index during this period. Troup County's 2005 rate was lower than that of its peers, the average for West Georgia, and the rate for the state.

**Healthy Start Index**



Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources and Georgia Family Connections Partnership

- **Corresponding with trends elsewhere, Troup County's teenage pregnancy rate has been steadily decreasing.** However, its rate has consistently remained above average for its region and state. The rate was 46.1 pregnancies per 1,000 female teenagers in 2005, shifting slightly

downward from its rate in 2000 (48.8 births to teenagers aged 10-19) and significantly lower than the rate in 1990 (66.8). It is however still significantly higher than each of its peers, the average for the West Georgia region (37.4), and the rate for the state (37.6). The teenage pregnancy rate decreased on average within West Georgia and within the state overall.

- Teenage pregnancy data collected from Georgia Kids Count confirms the drop in teenage pregnancy in Troup County, and the County's relatively higher rate compared to the other areas studied. According to this data set, the County experienced slightly lower than 20 percent reduction in teenage pregnancies (for female teens ages 15-19) from 2000 to 2005. However, this reduction is still lower than all but one of the areas studied which reduced their rates by over 25 percent.

**Teenage Pregnancy Rate for ages 10 to 19**

	1990	2000	2005
TROUP COUNTY	66.8	48.8	46.1
Peer A	66.8	54.0	45.8
Peer B	48.6	32.1	29.8
Peer C	62.5	44.8	35.5
West Georgia Average	61.4	44.1	37.4
Georgia	60.3	41.1	37.6

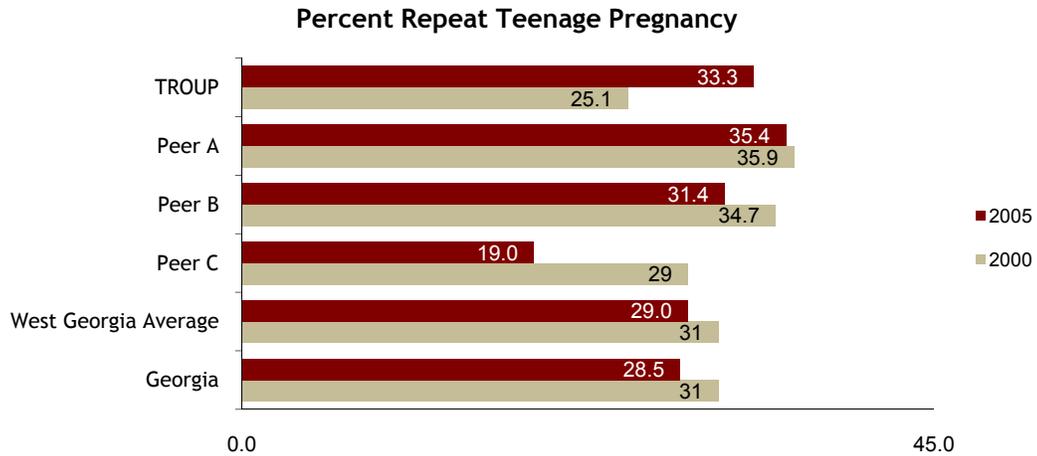
Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources

**Teenage Pregnancy Rate for ages 15 to 19**

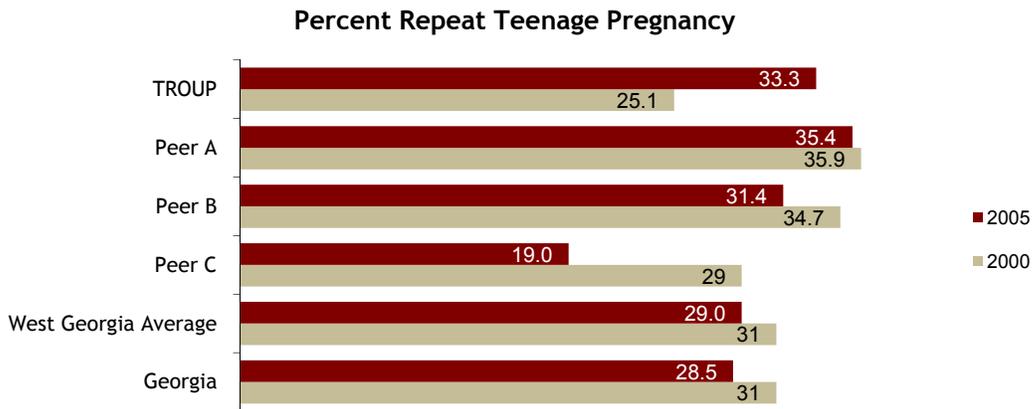
	2000	2005
TROUP COUNTY	57.9	47.6
Peer A	62.3	46.3
Peer B	54.0	46.4
Peer C	55.2	36.1
West Georgia Average	53.7	38.3
Georgia	47.3	23.1

Source: Family Connection Partnership. Georgia Kids Count

- **The repeat teenage pregnancy rate in Troup County has been on the rise.** From 2000 to 2005, Troup County had a sharp spike in its repeat teenage pregnancy rate, from 25.1 to 33.3 percent of pregnancies among females aged 15-19 being "repeats." During the same period, two of Troup County's peers had a decrease, while one had a slight increase. The average for West Georgia and the the state also dropped. The county's rate in 2005 exceeded that of two of its peers, the average for West Georgia, and the rate for the state.
- Data obtained from Georgia Kids Count also affirms the increase in repeat teenage pregnancy (ages 15-19) in Troup County. The repeat teenage pregnancy rate from Kids Count Data follows the same trends as Georgia Department of Human Resources data, even as Kids Count data, overall illustrates lower rates for all areas.
- While Troup County statistics for repeat teenage pregnancy are fairly high, community members gave positive feedback regarding the positive work that Twin Cedar's Circle of Care program is doing to address repeat teen pregnancy. Most recent data are from 2005, so the full impact of the programs' work in more recent years cannot yet be reflected quantitatively.



Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources



Source: Family Connection Program. Georgia Kids Count

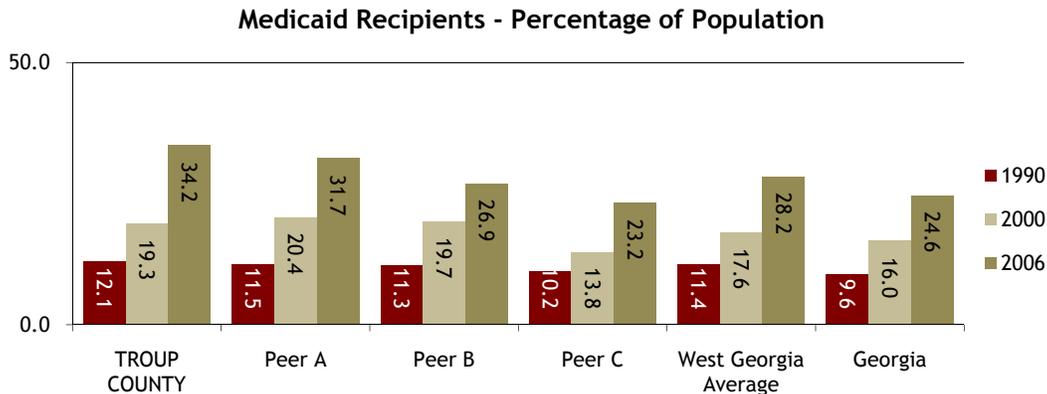
- The Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Incidence Rate for youth in Troup County was 53.7 in 2005, more than twice the incidence rate for the state of Georgia. With the exception of peer A (47.7 in 2005), all other counties have a significantly lower STD incidence rate among their teenage population than Troup County does.

Incidence Rate of STD Per 1,000 Youth Ages 15-19

	2000	2005
TROUP COUNTY	53.0	53.7
Peer A	49.1	47.7
Peer B	27.9	26.6
Peer C	18.3	12.3
West Georgia Average	29.4	30.5
Georgia	29.4	26.0

Source: Family Connection Partnership. Georgia Kids Count

- **Troup County’s percentage of the population without health insurance has been below average.** In 2000, the most recent year the data is available, the county had 15.3 percent of its population without insurance. This rate was lower than two of its peers, the average for West Georgia (16.1 percent) and the rate for the state (15.8 percent) that year. When considering the county’s youth population (those under the age of 18), its rate of uninsured (12.5 percent) remained lower than two of its peers, the regional average (13.1 percent) and the rate for Georgia (14.2 percent).
- **Following the trends of the region, the state, and its peer counties, Troup County’s percentage of residents receiving Medicaid has increased over the years.** The community’s share almost tripled from 1990 to 2006. Troup County’s percentage of Medicaid recipients in 2006 was high compared to each of its counterparts.



Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources

- **In terms of local government support for health and human services, Troup County appears to be lagging.** In 2006, the county dedicated 2.7 percent of its budget to health and human services, a rate which was below the norm when reviewing that of two of its peers and the average for West Georgia.

**Local Government Support for Health & Human Services, 2006**

Health & Human Services	
TROUP COUNTY	2.7%
Peer A	3.4%
Peer B	1.2%
Peer C	4.5%
West Georgia Average	3.1%

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

## The View from Human Services Professionals

The following bullets provide summaries of perceptions shared by local human service professionals during the individual interview process.

- Concerns were raised about the availability of specialty health care services. The perception is that you have to travel outside the county to get specialized care. Two stated examples of under-supplied specialties were urology and hematology.

- There is a perceived shortage of physicians in Troup County. Professionals reported that one issue is that it is difficult to recruit physicians who reportedly can make more money by practicing in Atlanta (and thus be better situated to cover the high cost of malpractice insurance premiums). Further, LaGrange area physicians reportedly make less than their counterparts in Columbus or Newnan.
- In response to this it was suggested that there is an opportunity to conduct an organized effort to recruit physicians, in partnership with West Georgia Medical Center.
- There was also a reported nurse and technical health care position shortage.
- Because financial resources for health care are already tapped out, professionals suggested the community will need to reorganize what resources already exist to address health care concerns.
- Concerns were raised about certain factors impacting ambulatory services, ranging from concerns they are frequently called in non-emergency situations where the patient does not have alternative transportation options, to concerns about the need to address the interconnectability of major thoroughfares to increase accessibility for emergency vehicles.
- Regarding emergency services, it was shared how the police departments, sheriff's office, and fire departments within Troup County are on different radio frequencies thus making it impossible to communicate in real-time. Communications occur through an operator.
- The affordability of health care, even for some with insurance, is a widespread concern.
- Uninsurance rates were reported to be high, particularly among the underemployed. The human service professionals said that many local small businesses find group health insurance cost-prohibitive. The high number of uninsured is reportedly stretching the capacity and resources of the emergency facilities. Now that the free health care clinic has closed, the hospital emergency room has been even further stretched as it has to serve as the primary "health clinic."
- Troup Cares recently received a \$100,500 grant from the Healthcare Georgia Foundation to help fund its health care service for uninsured, but human service professionals shared that the challenge is that it is still working on obtaining sufficient physician volunteers.
- It was reported that there are numerous agencies, for example AmeriCorps, dedicated to addressing the health care and recreational interests of seniors.
- The belief was expressed that local occurrence rates of most diseases are consistent with national trends, but there are concerns regarding the perceived high rate of stroke in the community. A concern was also raised regarding the high-rate of diabetes, obesity, and poor diets in a community where "there are fast food restaurants on every corner." The high drug-use rate was cited as the cause of a reportedly high number of tuberculosis cases in the community. There was a call for more "disease management."
- Human service professionals are concerned that teenage pregnancy rates are high, resulting in strained resources and problematic high school dropout rates. While there are some existing programs (Troup County is reportedly one of only two counties in Georgia with a clinic - SPOT - that works with the local school system on sex education) more services, like a center dedicated to teenage mothers, are needed. In particular, professionals expressed a need for more day care services during traditional and after-work hours. More comprehensive transit services would also help teenage mothers better access job opportunities and health care services for their babies.

- One said that would like to see teenage pregnancy issues addressed within the context of the perceived high rates of teen violence, substance abuse, and poverty, all of which are contributing to the community's high dropout rates.
- There is a perceived need for greater capacity in mental health services for the County, including those services dedicated to youth. One participant said mental health care is the "biggest social need but lack of local care." There is a need for more mental health services to address substance abuse, mental illness, and sexual and other abuse victim concerns. Perception is that there are "no resources" for persons with these challenges. Reportedly, there are no psychiatrists in the County.

## Inventory of Available Programs and Services

The following are some of the health care-related programs and services that serve Troup County residents.

### GENERAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Clark-Holder Clinic	Multi-specialty group physicians practice.
District 4 Public Health	Promotes and enhances prevention of disease and injury.
LaGrange Dental Care Fund	Payment assistance for extractions, fillings, dentures, and other special care procedures, with preference given to seniors, working adults, and children
Partnership for Prescription Assistance	Provides free or low-cost medications, from a coalition of pharmaceutical companies.
Right from the Start	Provides need-based medical assistance to pregnant women and children.
Troup Cares	In January 2008 received a \$100,500 grant to provide health care services to uninsured.
Troup County Health Department	Provides health screenings, child food programs, child safety services, immunizations, dental/hearing screenings, lead poisoning screenings, health check exams, genetic counseling, family planning, blood pressure testing, smoking cessation, and teen pregnancy programs.
West Georgia Medical Center	Hospital and emergency services, as well as special services including education programs in first aid, sex education, child care/babysitting, and smoking cessation.

### MENTAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

AFSAN	Outpatient psychiatric, substance abuse, and marital and family counseling services.
Burwell Psychoeducational Program	Offers therapeutic services; educational services; group and individual counseling; speech therapy; psychiatric services; psychological testing; health education services; and transportation.

Center for Creative Growth & Human Development	Provides outpatient mental health services for families and youth and an inpatient residential treatment program for males ages 12 to 17.
Region One Service Delivery Area	Regional system based in Rome, Georgia, maintains Georgia Crises & Access Line 1-800 number.
Self-Help Harbor, Inc.	Provides meeting space for twelve-step recovery groups to meet (i.e., AA, Alanon, Alateen, OA, etc.)
State Mental Health Clinic	Provides outpatient services for mental health and substance abuse.
Pathways Center of LaGrange	Provides outpatient mental health services for mental illness, substance abusers, and mentally disabled adults.
<i>Columbus</i>	
Bradford Health Services	Provides both inpatient and outpatient services for mental health and substance abuse.
Georgia Therapy Associates	Provides outpatient services for mental health and substance abuse.
New Horizons	Provides outpatient services for mental health and substance abuse.

## **TEENAGE PREGNANCY**

ALPHA Multipurpose Center	Provides workshops on teen pregnancy, parenting, substance abuse, crime prevention, education, and anti-smoking.
Circle of Care	Twin Cedars' program for teenage mothers which provides parent education, community forums, home visits, transportation assistance, diploma completion support, and other services.
LaGrange Pregnancy Care Center	Provides counseling, testing, support groups, religious education, child care/parenting education, child car seat loans, and STD, AIDS, and abstinence education programs.
March of Dimes Foundation	Provides prenatal and child medical care, counseling, educational programs, health screenings, substance abuse outpatient services, pregnancy support groups, exercise programs, genetic testing, maternity services, special education program, and teen pregnancy program.
SPOT	Provides teen pregnancy counseling, birth control, pregnancy tests, pap smears, and STD checks for teenagers (up to 20 years old).

## **ELDERLY SERVICES**

Area Agency on Aging	Located in Franklin, Georgia, serves a 10-county region with a range of elder-services including advocacy, Community Care Service Program, information and assistance screening, case management, congregate meals programs, home delivered meal program, personal care services, homemaker services, respite care, Alzheimer's support groups, day care, kinship care, and lifelong planning.
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Care-Link AmeriCorps	Provides companionship and other assistance to home-bound or otherwise in-need elderly.
Harvest Center Group	Provides health, skills, and other learning opportunities for seniors.
Hogansville Senior Center	Nutritional, recreational, informational, and transportation assistance to elderly.
LaGrange Senior Center	Exercise, arts and crafts, recreation, games, and other fellowship and nutritional activities for seniors. Provides transportation services and meal-delivery for homebound seniors.
Meals on Wheels	Delivers food to home-bound seniors.
Senior Campaign (CareLink)	AmeriCorps members provide companionship and assistance to home-bound individuals.
West Point Senior Center	Nutritional, recreational, informational, and assistance to elderly.

### **ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

American Cancer Society	Support groups and education programs related to cancer prevention, treatment, and recovery.
American Heart Association	Education, advocacy and services for the prevention and treatment of heart disease (located in Columbus)
American Medical Response	Private ambulatory service provider
American Red Cross	Provides disaster/emergency prevention, preparation, and relief services
Babies Can't Wait	Statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities, and their families.
Children's Medical Services	District 4 Health Department. Provide assessment; case management; medical treatment including surgeries, medications, equipment, therapies, and consultations for low-income children with handicapping conditions or chronic diseases.
Community Action for Improvement (CAFI)	Provides health screenings; weatherization services; parent education; mental health services; services for disabled children; unregulated child care provider monitoring program; aging programs.
First United Methodist Church	Offers prescription drug assistance.
Heart Truth for Women	In February 2008, Troup County hosted the second annual Heart Truth for Women luncheon to raise awareness and prevention and diagnosis of heart disease
LaGrange Child Care Council	Provides communicable disease health screening, vision testing, immunizations, speech therapy and referral services.

Medical Reserve Corps    Emergency responders for public health crises

Special Olympics         Sports training and athletic competition for the mentally handicapped.

## Identification of Unmet Needs

The following summarize what were found to be the most pressing needs of Troup County's healthcare services.

- Data and human service professionals' perceptions suggest that Troup County is in need of additional physicians, a need which will only deepen with the County's projected population growth. The County will also need to focus on what particular specialties are most in need, as both professionals' perceptions and the data suggested there are certain ones in which the community may be undersupplied.
- It was also suggested that the community is in need of more nurses and other healthcare staff. Again, the projected population growth will only increase this need, so this is an issue the community will need to address.
- The rates of uninsured and the working poor's reported difficulty affording healthcare services are likely an explanatory factor for the community's high rates of mortality and preventable/avoidable hospitalization rates. Addressing these concerns will help improve the overall health of the community and help alleviate strains on the community's emergency services.
- Many believe that the community would benefit from more comprehensive mental health services to address everything from mental illness to victim services to substance abuse recovery assistance. Available services were identified in this area, so delving deeper into whether this is an issue of perception or reality, and addressing those issues, are important because mental health is a critical determinant of economic potential for the area's youth and adult population.
- Many human service professionals expressed concerns about the local teenage pregnancy rate and the availability of services for teenage mothers. Positive work is occurring on this issue, as the rate has declined and services were identified. But there is a need to further address this concern because the County's rate remains comparatively high and these mothers and their children frequently require support in order to obtain the healthcare and education they need to pursue promising job opportunities.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### State of Public Safety in Troup County<sup>9</sup>

- Troup County's crime rate has fluctuated over the years and has been higher than the norm for its region and state. The county saw its crime rate drop from 1990 to 2000 and then rise again in 2005. This pattern was consistent with the average for West Georgia, the rate for the state and one of Troup's peers. However, Troup County's resulting 2005 rate notably exceeded that of its peers, the average for its region, and the rate for Georgia. When reviewing the average for West Georgia specifically, it appeared to be half of Troup's rate.

Crime Rate Comparison

	1990	2000	2005
TROUP COUNTY	63.98	57.99	69.05
Peer A	70.53	68.97	53.21
Peer B	35.73	20.30	38.00
Peer C	35.54	35.72	44.97
West Georgia Average	34.19	31.43	34.79
Georgia	65.71	41.39	43.72

Note: Numbers are rounded.  
Source: Georgia Department of Education

- The breakdown of crime by offense illustrates on which type of crimes local law enforcement may need to focus its efforts. Certain crimes must be highlighted because of their high incidence rate - most notably larceny - while others are an area of concern because of their growth rate. From 2000 to 2006, the incidences of rape escalated by a significant 125 percent, and assaults by 59.3 percent. Incidences of murder remain very few in number, with just one reported for 2006.

Troup County Crime by Offense

	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Vehicle Theft
2000	1	12	63	123	432	2,650	111
2003	3	22	70	150	504	3,180	179
2006	1	27	90	196	631	2,762	175
% Change	0.0%	125%	42.9%	59.3%	46.1%	4.2%	57.7%

Source: Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- From 2000 to 2006, the domestic violence incident rate remained consistent. The increased percentages of incidences that resulted in an arrest suggest that law enforcement has successfully cracked down on these types of crimes.

<sup>9</sup> Some information extracted from the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Sustainable Development Report Card*. The peers referenced in this section are Barrow, Bulloch, and Spalding counties, each chosen due to their relative similarities to Troup County in terms of population, proximity to the interstate, percentage of citizens in incorporated and unincorporated areas, etc.

**Domestic Violence and Police Action**

		2000	2003	2006
Domestic Violence		60	46	60
Police Action	Arrested	35.0%	41.3%	45.0%
	Citation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Separation	23.3%	4.3%	11.7%
	Mediation	8.3%	0.0%	3.3%
	Other	21.7%	43.5%	36.7%
	None	11.7%	10.9%	3.3%

Source: Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **Troup County has seen a steady increase in its juvenile arrest rate (for ages 10 to 17).** Its rate appears to have consistently exceeded the average for West Georgia and the rate for the state. Georgia has also seen a steady increase, but to a lesser degree than Troup. Two of the county's peers posted 2004 rates largely above Troup County. However, Troup's region and two of its peers saw a decrease in its average rate from 2000 to 2004.

**Juvenile Arrest Rate**

	1990	2000	2004
TROUP COUNTY	3.31%	6.70%	8.06%
Peer A	1.64%	15.79%	13.87%
Peer B	0.75%	3.21%	11.28%
Peer C	1.13%	5.07%	4.48%
West Georgia Average	1.04%	5.96%	5.83%
Georgia	2.89%	4.21%	6.14%

Source: Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **Consistent with the arrest rate, Troup County's juvenile commitment rate has escalated.** At a rate of 19.9 in 2007, the County's rate is significantly higher than the state average of 2.9.

**Juvenile Commitment Rate Per 1000**

	2000	2007	% Change
Troup County	12.6	19.9	58.2%
Georgia	3.0	2.9	-3.3%

Source: Georgia County Guide

- **Troup County has a growing population of juveniles that are designated as "at risk."** While the growth rate has not been as significant as the state's rate since 2000, this is still an indicator for Troup County officials to be concerned about because of its impact on youth's development and potential for workforce preparedness.

**Juvenile Population at Risk, Ages 10-16**

	2000	2007	% Change
Troup	6,366	6,991	9.8%
Georgia	784,310	879,429	12.1%

Source: Georgia County Guide

- **Based on a survey of area youth, 12<sup>th</sup> graders generally feel safer at school than 8<sup>th</sup> graders do.** Of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders, almost 20 percent said school is "not really very safe" and as many as 6

percent said they believe school is dangerous. Comparatively, only 8.0 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders view their schools as not really very safe and a low 1.8 percent believe their schools are dangerous. Consistent with these feelings of safety, about 1 in 4 8<sup>th</sup> graders said they had been bullied within the past 30 days, compared to about 1 in 10 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Within that same 30 day time period, 5.1 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders said they had participated in illegal gang activities, compared to 1.8 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

	Answered "Yes" to: I have Participated in Illegal Gang Activities in the Past 30 days	Answered "Yes" to: I have been bullied by other students in the past 30 days	School is a place at which I feel safe			
			Always	At Times	Not really very safe	No, it is dangerous
8th grade	5.1%	23.4%	29.0%	45.0%	19.9%	6.0%
12th grade	1.8%	9.8%	38.1%	52.1%	8.0%	1.8%

Source: Troup County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Center for Disease Control, 2006

- **Troup County appears to have relatively high motor vehicle crash rates that can be linked to specific behaviors.** The county has an above average rate of crashes involving drivers maintaining unsafe or illegal speeds. From 1996 to 2003, the county’s rate exceeded that of all three of its peers, the average for West Georgia, and the rate for the state. Troup County also has an above average rate of crashes involving alcohol or drug use. During this same period, its rate was higher than that of two of its peers, the average for the region, and the rate for Georgia.

**Crash Rate 1996 to 2003**

	Crashes Per 10,000 Licensed Drivers	
	Unsafe or Illegal Speed Drivers	Alcohol & Drug Use Drivers
TROUP COUNTY	48.4	20.8
Peer A	41.1	20.6
Peer B	29.3	26.0
Peer C	43.2	19.0
West Georgia Average	39.2	16.6
Georgia	34.8	17.8

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

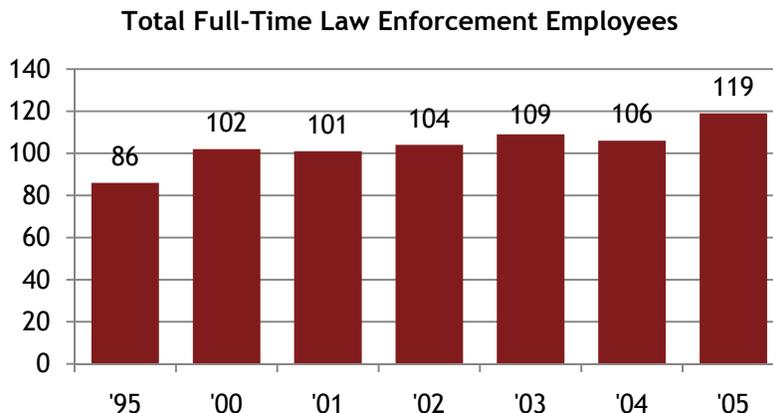
- **Troup County appears to lag behind in terms of local government support for public safety.** In 2006, the county allocated 32.3 percent of its budget to public safety which was notably lower than two of its peers and just below the average for its region (33.7 percent).

**Local Government Support for Public Safety, 2006**

	Portion of Total Budget
TROUP COUNTY	32.3%
Peer A	43.8%
Peer B	28.8%
Peer C	46.7%
West Georgia Average	33.7%

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

- The number of full-time law enforcement employees in Troup County has steadily grown since 1995. From 1995 to 2005, the total grew by 38 percent to 119 employees.



Source: U.S. Department of Justice

- According to the Troup County Sheriff's Office, the drug unit closed down 23 methamphetamine labs in 2001, and 46 in 2002.<sup>10</sup> In 2005, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials closed down three clandestine drug facilities in Troup County (two in LaGrange and one in Hogansville).<sup>11</sup>
- A study of Troup County youth showed that about 1 in 10 8<sup>th</sup> graders use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level, alcohol and tobacco use increases to about 1 in 5 students. Peer approval of alcohol and tobacco use is higher at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade than the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, but approval of the use of other drugs is lower in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade than the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, an explanatory factor for why a smaller portion of 12<sup>th</sup> graders (8.3%) use other drugs than 8<sup>th</sup> graders do (9.0%).

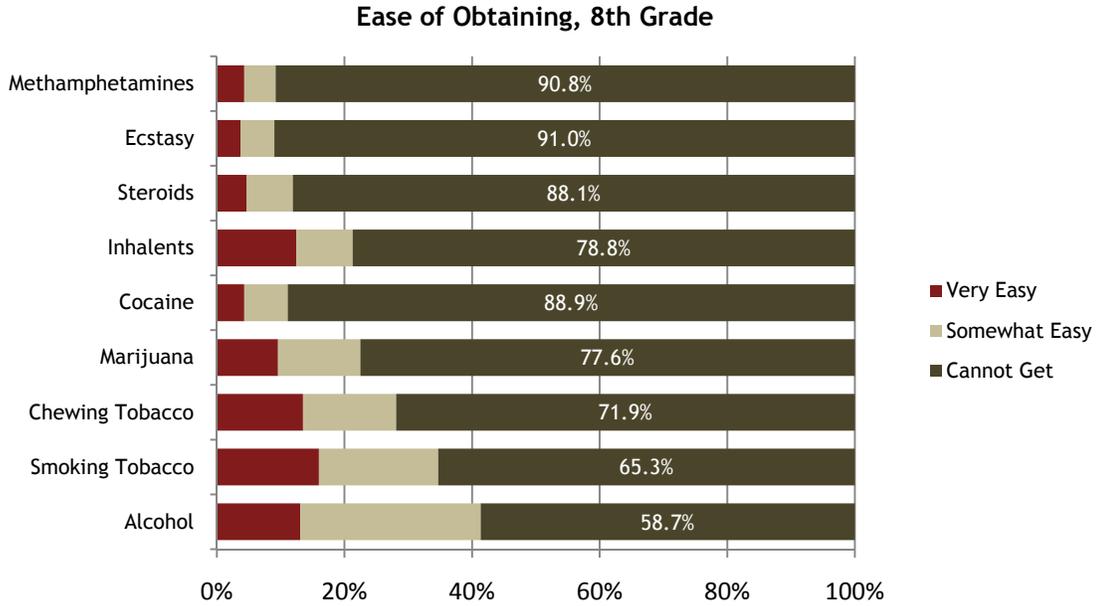
	Answered "Yes" to Alcohol Use	Answered "No" to Peers Disapprove Alcohol Use	Answered "Yes" to Tobacco Use	Answered "No" to Peers Disapprove Tobacco Use	Answered "Yes" to Other Drug Use	Answered "No" to Peers Disapprove other Drug Use
8th Grade	12.3%	29.2%	10.3%	20.5%	9.0%	12.3%
12th Grade	20.2%	47.0%	19.3%	39.3%	8.3%	8.6%

Source: Troup County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Center for Disease Control, 2005

- Most 8<sup>th</sup> graders report that they cannot access drugs, with alcohol and smoking tobacco being the most accessible to them. Chewing tobacco and inhalents were also identified as very easy to get by more than 10 percent of responding 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

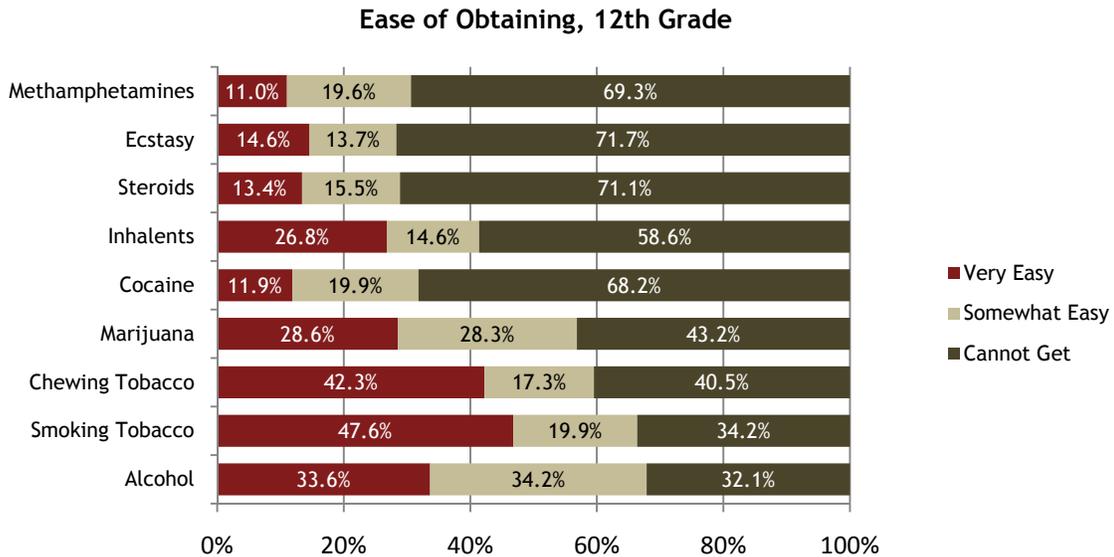
<sup>10</sup> Source: Troup County Sheriff's Office Drug Unit. Accessed 23 February 2008. <<http://troupcountysheriff.org/divisions/drugunit.php>>

<sup>11</sup> Source: National Clandestine Laboratory Register-Georgia. U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. Last updated September 2007. <<http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/seizures/georgia.html>>



Source: Troup County Youth Risk Behavior Survey,  
Center for Disease Control, 2006

- All types of drugs appear to be more accessible to 12<sup>th</sup> graders than 8<sup>th</sup> graders, based on the comparison of reported availability between the two grade levels.** Again, alcohol and smoking tobacco were considered the easiest to obtain, but over 20 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported it was very easy, or somewhat easy, to obtain methamphetamines, ecstasy, steroids, cocaine, and each of the other substances identified by name in the survey.



Source: Troup County Youth Risk Behavior Survey,  
Center for Disease Control, 2006

## The View from Human Services Professionals

The following bullets provide summaries of perceptions shared by local human service professionals during the individual interview process.

- Perception is that demands on law enforcement have already increased, without a strongly corresponding increase in capacity. Escalating challenges which were identified by professionals include an increase in crime rates, mental health trips, foreclosure civil paper deliveries, school visits (in response to on-campus fights and crime), and neighborhood patrols. Additionally, the planned prison expansion is expected to still be short of need by the time it is completed.
- It was reported that the market for hiring local law enforcement is competitive, with the LaGrange Police Department able to offer higher wages than the Troup County's Sheriff's Office.
- Concerns were raised about how well the three police departments and sheriff's office are able to communicate and collaborate with one another.
- There is a need to improve the communication system state-wide so first responders can more easily communicate with the state patrol and responders in neighboring counties.
- There are neighborhood watch programs in place, and the perception is that when there is an escalation in crime, community members do a good job of working together to reinvigorate their watch activities.
- Law enforcement code enforcement activities, where citizens report aesthetic and environmental issues that are breaking local codes, has been a popular effort whose intent is to reduce crime, under the "broken window" crime prevention theory.
- Law enforcement deals with drug-related problems "everyday." Many agree that the drug problem must be addressed. Methamphetamine use is a particular concern. The perception is that both drug use and crime is getting worse.
- There are Drug Free Initiatives to address substance abuse, but more comprehensive services are needed.
- DASH (Dependable, Affordable, Sustainable Housing)'s efforts reportedly have helped reduce crime and drug activity in the neighborhoods where the organization has focused its work.
- Harmony House and Twin Cedars provide some rape crises resources, but a need was expressed for more comprehensive service offerings.
- A professional expressed concern that there is no local legal aid representative.

## Inventory of Available Programs and Services

Beyond the sheriff, police, and fire departments associated with Troup County and the cities, the following are some of the public safety-related programs and services that serve Troup County residents.

### CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMS

ALPHA Multipurpose Center	Provides workshops on crime prevention, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, parenting, education, and anti-smoking.
Crime Stoppers	Facilitates sharing of anonymous tips to support police investigations.
Junior Deputy League	Summer education program covering various safety, awareness, and law enforcement-related topics.
Keep Troup Beautiful	Dedicated to community beautification and recycling efforts (can support “broken window” theory approach to crime prevention).
Neighborhood Watch Program	Law enforcement facilitated neighborhood-based crime watch.
Save Our Children	Focuses on youth violence prevention through mentoring, raising awareness about the issue, and curfew enforcement.
Senior Citizen Academy	Education program covering burglary and theft prevention, frauds and scams, financial safety, driver education, and recognizing elder abuse.
Troup County Juvenile Court	Provides individual and group counseling for at-risk juveniles.
Youth Academy	Summer education programs covering internet safety, drug and gang awareness, decision making skills, positive friendship forming, and law enforcement laws and duties.

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS

AFSAN	Outpatient psychiatric, substance abuse, and marital and family counseling services.
ALPHA Multipurpose Center	Provides workshops on crime prevention, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, parenting, education, and anti-smoking.
CHAMPS	Sheriff Office’s program providing drug and alcohol training for middle schools. Supported by Sheriff’s Department
Communities in Schools	Provides drug and alcohol training for middle schools.
DARE	Police Department’s program providing drug and alcohol training for middle schools.
Self-Help Harbor	Provides meeting space for twelve-step recovery groups to meet (i.e., AA< Alanon, Alateen, OA, etc.)

Troup County DUI/Drug Court	An alternative offered to incarceration for drug and alcohol-related offenses, a key component of the court program is participation in self-help groups.
Troup County Prevention Coalition	Dedicated to addressing tobacco, alcohol, substance abuse, and safety issues.
Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools	Group dedicated to addressing tobacco, alcohol, substance abuse, and safety issues.

### **ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

Georgia Department of Children and Youth Services	Provides supervision, placement, evaluation and referrals of youth under 17 years old committed to DJJ by the court system.
Harmony House	Crisis shelter for victims of domestic violence
Troup County Children & Family Advocacy Council	Provides child abuse prevention, parenting education, violence prevention, teen parent education, and support groups.

### **Identification of Unmet Needs**

The following summarize what were found to be the most pressing needs of Troup County's public safety.

- Crime rates and human service professional comments combined suggest a real need to continue to work on crime prevention and alleviation measures.
- The escalation in juvenile arrest and commitment rates raise concerns about increasing amounts of juvenile delinquency that must be addressed. One human service professional tied this to the need to provide more mentoring and support for at-risk youth, because the presence of a strong adult role model is one of the best means of ensuring an at-risk youth does not become a juvenile offender.
- Many of the human service professionals expressed concerns about the high rates of substance abuse in the county. As will be identified in the View from Youth section later in this assessment, even Troup County's youth are concerned about the reportedly high-rates of drug use in the community. Clearly, there is community-wide consensus that drug activity must be curtailed.

## FAMILY AND CHILDREN

### State of Family and Children in Troup County<sup>12</sup>

- **Troup County appears to have a variety of day care options.** As of August 2006, Troup County was home to 27 child care facilities. This exceeded the number of such facilities in two of its peers as well as the average for its region and state. The county also is reported to have 29 family day care centers.
- **The overwhelming majority of Troup's children receiving assistance for child care services are participants in low-income working program.** Comparatively, the State has higher instances of families participating in one of the other programs outlined in the following chart.

Children in Child Care Receiving Payments by Category, 2007

	Applicant Services	TANF	Transitional	Low-Income Working	Pre-K	Total
Troup	1.4%	3.3%	9.3%	83.1%	1.6%	1,278
Georgia	4.3%	5.9%	14.6%	69.7%	1.7%	102,236

Source: Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Data

- **Using total payments made as the measure, Troup County has a similar trend of the overwhelming majority of child care assistance monies being awarded from the low-income working program.**

Payments for Children in Child Care by Category, 2007

	Applicant Services	TANF	Transitional	Low-Income Working	Pre-K	Total
Troup	1.1%	3.5%	9.4%	83.4%	1.2%	\$2,209,252
Georgia	3.4%	6.3%	16.4%	68.3%	1.2%	\$208,303,572

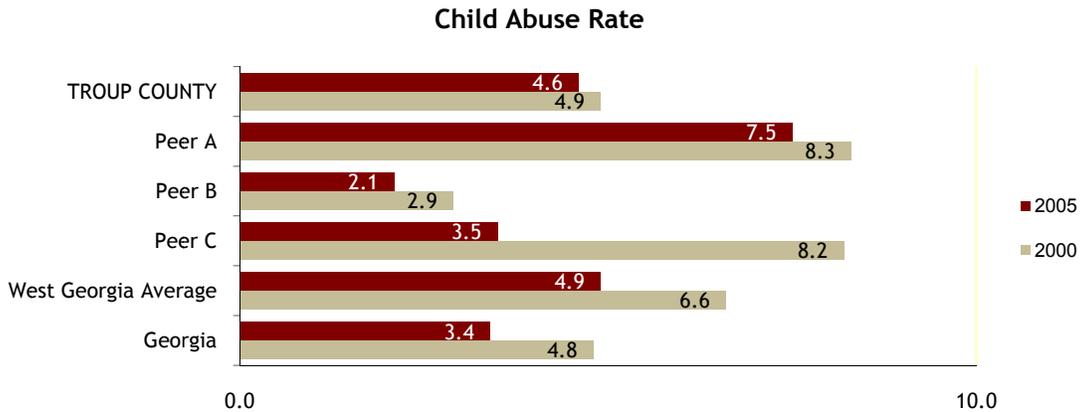
Source: Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Data

- **In 2005, Troup County's incidences of child neglect were 33.6 cases per 1,000 children under age 18.** This rate is much higher than the state average of 16.3 for that year. While some of the difference may be how incidences of neglect are reported in different areas, it still speaks to the need to address neglect prevention measures and strong children support networks in Troup County.<sup>13</sup>
- **Troup County has apparently seen some decrease in its child abuse rate.** While in 2000, its rate was 4.9 substantiated incidents of abuse per 1,000 children under the age of 18, in 2005, it was

<sup>12</sup> Some information extracted from the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Sustainable Development Report Card*. The peers referenced in this section are Barrow, Bulloch, and Spalding counties, each chosen due to their relative similarities to Troup County in terms of population, proximity to the interstate, percentage of citizens in incorporated and unincorporated areas, etc.

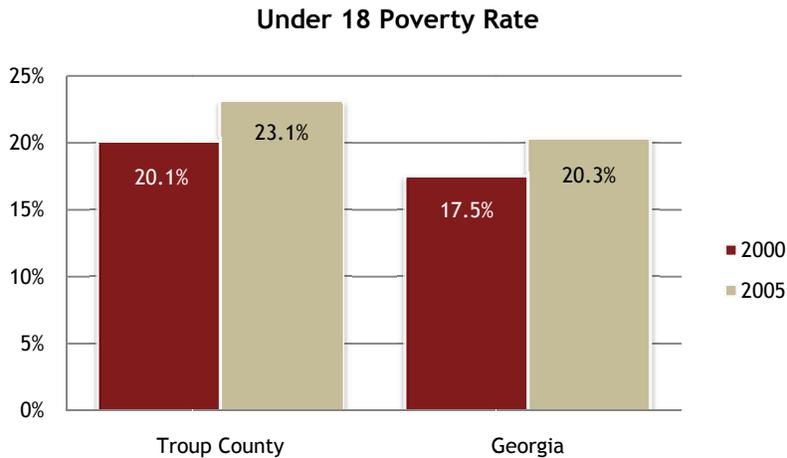
<sup>13</sup> Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources

4.6. Still, the county's rate in 2005 was higher than that of two of its peers and Georgia, though lower than the average for its region.



Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources

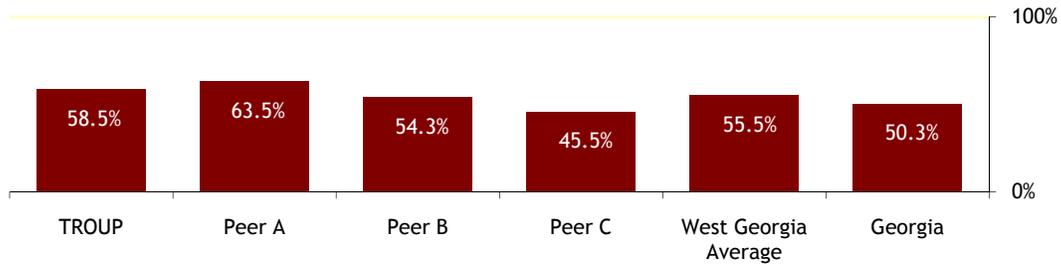
- Consistent with state-wide patterns, Troup County's poverty rate for the under 18 population increased from 2000 to 2005. In 2005, an estimated 23.1 percent of the County's children were living in poverty, which was about three percentage points higher than the state average.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- Troup County's number of students eligible for free lunch has grown in recent years, corresponding with trends elsewhere. It increased from 49.4 percent of all students in 2000 to 58.5 percent in 2006. Troup County's 2006 rate exceeds that of two of its peers, the average for West Georgia, and the rate for the state.

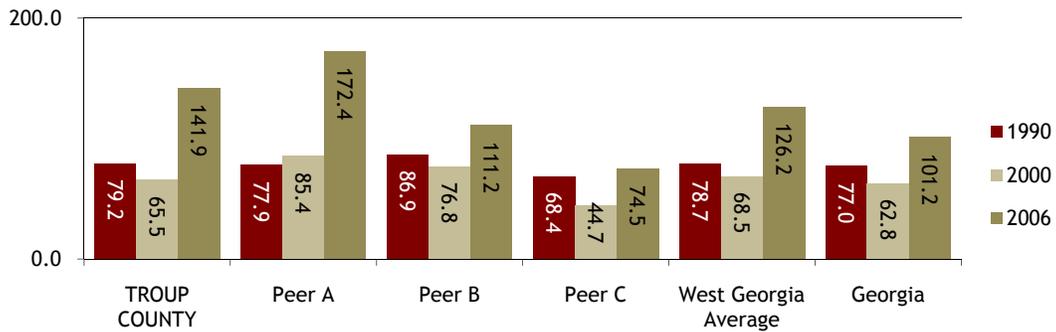
**Percentage of Students Eligible for Free School Lunch 2006-2007**



Source: Georgia Department of Education

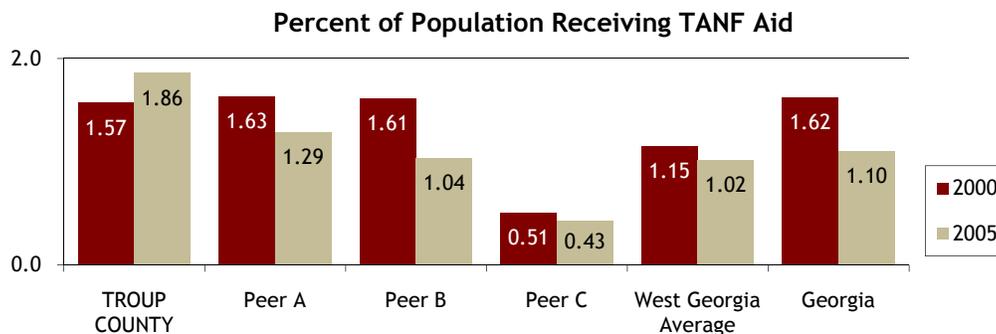
- Troup County’s food stamp participation rate has escalated in recent years.** Its rate in 2006 (141.9 per 1,000 population) represents a significant increase over 2000 (65.5) and 1990 (79.2). This is in line with an overall observable increasing trend in food stamp participation. However, Troup County’s increase from 2000 to 2006 (117 percent) was notably greater than the rate of increase seen in the region (84 percent) and the state (61 percent). As a result, the county’s 2006 rate was notably higher than the average for its region (126.2) and state (101.2) as well as for two of its peers. Similar to Troup, one peer county also experienced a significant increase in food stamp participation of 102 percent from 2000 to 2006.

**Food Stamp Participation Rate**



Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources

- Troup County has also had a steady rise in its percentage of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) recipients.** The county’s rate increased from 1.57 percent in 2000 of its population receiving TANF aid to 1.86 percent in 2005. During the same period, each of Troup County’s peers, all but one of its West Georgia region counterparts, and the state saw their recipient rates decrease.



Source: Georgia Department of Human Resources

## The View from Human Services Professionals

The following bullets provide summaries of perceptions shared by local human service professionals during the individual interview process.

- Perception is that no one is prioritizing the ending of poverty, and there are concerns about a perceived intergenerational “culture of poverty” in Troup County.
- It was recommended that Troup County focus on helping at-risk youth earlier in their education to help strengthen their self-esteem, motivation, and sense of responsibility. Perception of human service professionals is that youth are not being empowered; for example, too many are placed in special education when, due of their intelligence, they would be better situated in a program more focused on behavior or truancy issues.
- Need counselors who can help youth identify what skills they have or need to develop to pursue their career interests.

## Inventory of Available Programs and Services

The following are some of the family and children-related programs and services that serve Troup County residents.

### FOOD, CLOTHING, AND OTHER BASIC FAMILY/CHILD NEEDS

Angel Food Ministries	Discounted groceries for families and seniors in need.
Clothing Center	Provides clothing to those in need.
Community Action for Improvement (CAFI)	Provide healthy meals and snacks for children through its HeadStart program and summer food program.
Courts of Praise Christian Center	Provides pantry items to those in need.
Department of Family and Children Services	Child abuse and neglect services, education and training, emergency food assistance, energy assistance, food stamps, adoption and foster care, Medicaid, child care subsidies, temporary assistance for needy families, and after school services to families in need.

Empty Stocking Fund	Buys toys and clothes for children at Christmas (two funds, one in Hogansville and the other in LaGrange)
First Baptist Church	Provides Soup Kitchen on Tuesdays; Meals on Wheels for elderly; and Christmas events for needy children.
First Presbyterian Church	Provides Soup Kitchen on Thursdays and Meals on Wheels for elderly.
First United Methodist Church	Provides assistance for purchasing prescriptions.
Fish Basket/Grace Covenant Worship Center	Provides year round food assistance.
Goodwill	Provides clothing and household goods.
Hogansville Share	Provides financial assistance with utility bills once every 12 months for city utility users.
Interfaith Food Closet	Emergency, temporary, and senior food assistance.
Saint Vincent De Paul Outreach	Program areas cover thrift store, food pantry, Wheel Appeal temporary housing, Uplift counseling services, emergency shelter, medical care/prescriptions, utility assistance, stranded motorist assistance, and clothing drive.
Salvation Army	Crisis assistance including clothes, shelter, food, furniture, prescriptions, rent, transportation, and utilities. Also offers a summer camp program for youth.

## **CHILD CARE**

Head Start & Early Head Start	Child day care services
LaGrange Child Care Council	Child care services, child care training, health screenings, home safety, vision testing, immunizations, speech therapy and referral services, child food program, and recreational activities.
LaGrange Child Development Center	Day care services for children ages 3 months to 12 years, and after-school care for school-age children.
Maidee Smith Memorial Nursery	Child day care services, with planned activities and learning skills development.
Parents as Teachers	Home and group-based parent education using the Born to Learn curriculum.
Save the Children	Provides child care, respite care, child safety services, educational programs, child food program, nutrition counseling, recreational activities, and pre-school preparation.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H	Youth program focused on leadership development and community involvement, for which the University of Georgia Extension Services is responsible.
ALPHA Multipurpose Center	Provides workshops on crime prevention, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, parenting, education, and anti-smoking.
Big Brothers, Big Sisters	One-on-one mentor relationships for at-risk children approximately ages 6 to 13.
Boy Scouts of America	Character building and physical and mental fitness programs for boys ages 7 to 17, and, via the Exploring program, both boys and girls ages 14-20
Boys and Girls Club	Youth programs focused on education and career development, arts and crafts, sports, fitness and recreation, health and life skills, and character and leadership development
Camp Viola	Summer recreational day camp for children, a program of Twin Cedars Youth Services.
Communities in Schools	Via mentor and tutor relationships with at-risk youth, focused on addressing academic, attendance, literacy, job preparedness, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, low self-esteem, and disruptive and violent behavior.
First Book Troup County	Provides books to children in need.
First Steps	Parenting skills training and child abuse prevention for new parents.
First Tee	Golf and life skills learning program for youth ages 8 to 18.
Foster Grandparent Program	Pairs the elderly with special needs children to foster mutually-beneficial relationships.
Georgia Sheriff's Camp Pioneer	Provides full residential camping programs for boys, ages 6-16, in residential care (normally DFCS).
Girl Scouts of Pine Valley	Character building and skill development for girls.
Harvest Center Group	Provider of enrichment activities, homework and study time, mentoring opportunities, skills enhancement.
Junior Achievement	Elementary school curriculum covers character building-related skills, and middle and high school curriculum covers entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy
Save the Children	After-school initiative focused on providing a safe place with activities and adult supervision.
Success by 6	Awareness-raising, parent education, and increasing access to child care, healthcare, and literacy as a means to preparing youth to enter kindergarten.

Mike Daniels Recreation Center	Recreational facilities and programs.
Twin Cedars Youth Services	Provides residential care, group home, prevention services, education services, assessments/referrals, outpatient groups, after-care services, training, team building, summer camp and teen mothers support.
William J. Griggs Recreation Center	Recreational facilities and programs.

## ADDITIONAL SERVICES

CASA of Troup County	Court-appointed advocates to serve the best interest of abused and neglected children in court cases.
Children's Advocacy Center	Facilities for interviewing child victims of sexual abuse and foster children's supervised visits with their parents
Consumer Credit Counseling	Provides budget and money management advice to low-income persons (in Columbus)
Good Shepherd Programs	Therapeutic horseback riding for disabled children, emergency shelter for children in short-term crises, and a long-term facility for abused, neglected, and other special needs adolescent males (in Warm Springs)
LaGrange Personal Aid Association	Provides emergency assistance during times of distress, illness, misfortune or emergency. Supports the family through rental, mortgage and utility payments when the major income earner is ill or hospitalized and is of work under a doctor's care.
Troup Family Connection Authority	Part of a statewide initiative that brings community partners together to focus on developing healthy children, school success, self-sufficient families, and stronger communities.
United Way of West Georgia	Brings community members together and provides financial support to local organizations addressing prioritized human service needs. The United Way system has about 1,350 independent, community-based organizations in its network.

## Identification of Unmet Needs

The following summarize what were found to be the most pressing needs of Troup County's family and children services.

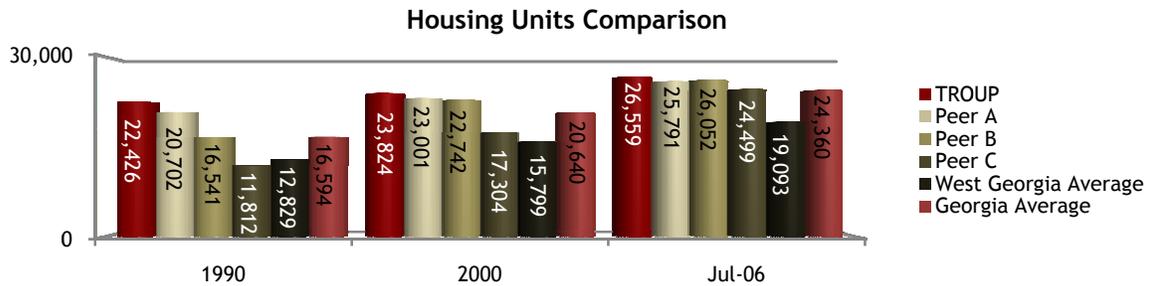
- Troup County's workforce would benefit from advancing child care options, with a focus on preparing children to enter kindergarten. The United Way of West Georgia has already begun an organized effort to address this issue. The momentum created by the United Way should be maintained to advance the potential development of Troup County's youngest residents who represent the community's future.
- In recent years, Troup County's child poverty rate has risen and, possibly related, the community has a high incidence of child neglect. Advancing the economic potential of Troup County's families will be the best means of addressing the standard of living of the community's children.

- Troup County has a number of success stories for providing arts and recreational activities for area youth which the community can continue to leverage to help achieve its youth development goals.

## HOUSING

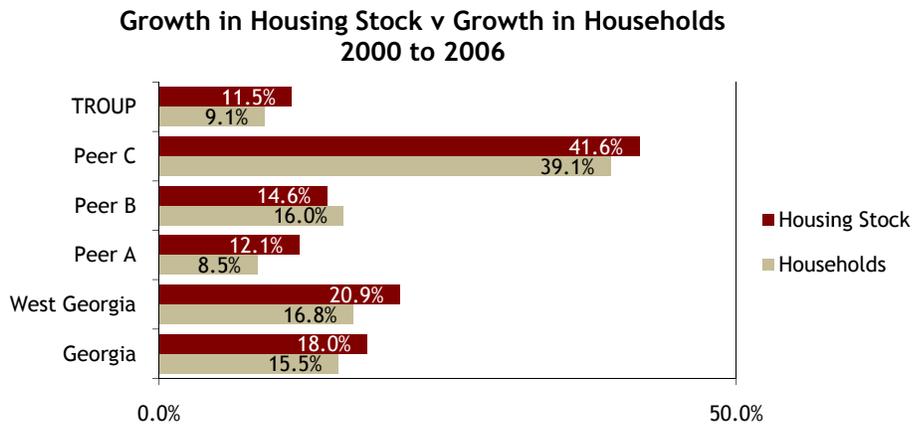
### State of Housing in Troup County<sup>14</sup>

- **The number of housing units has steadily increased.** Troup County's housing stock increased by 6.2 percent during the 1990s and by another 11.5 percent from 2000 to 2006. The county's housing stock has maintained an above average supply. The housing stock growth since 1990 reveals that residential construction activity has grown steadily. When reviewing the number of housing units in 1990, 2000, and 2006, Troup County has maintained a base that exceeded that of its peers as well as the average for West Georgia and the state.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

- **It appears common for housing stock growth to outpace household formation when reviewing what has occurred for two of Troup's peers, its region, and the state.**



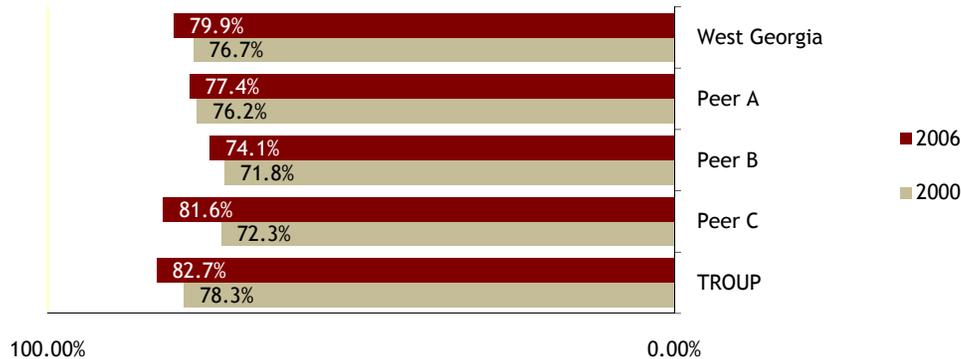
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **Residential property accounts for the vast majority of Troup County's land use development, a share that has been increasing over time.** While the share of land devoted to residential property has increased to some extent, so too has the county's level of residential development. In 2000, residential property accounted for 78.3 percent of all property development (non-motor vehicle-related). By 2006, its share grew to 82.7 percent. Residential property has accounted for a higher share of Troup County's developments than is the case for its peers and region.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Some information extracted from the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Sustainable Development Report Card*. The peers referenced in this section are Barrow, Bulloch, and Spalding counties, each chosen due to their relative similarities to Troup County in terms of population, proximity to the interstate, percentage of citizens in incorporated and unincorporated areas, etc.

<sup>15</sup> Based on data provided by the Georgia Department of Revenue.

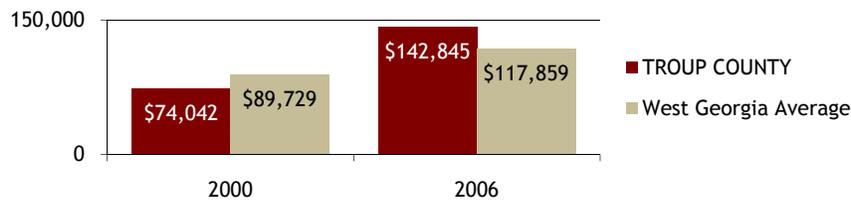
### Residential Development As Percent of All Land Development



Source: Based on data from Georgia Department of Revenue

- **The value of residential construction has increased significantly in recent years.** The value of new residential construction rose from \$43.7 million in 2000 to \$66.9 million in 2006. At the same time, the number of residential permits authorized for construction during this period decreased from 590 to 468. Taken together, what this indicates is a trend toward building higher value units. In 2000 Troup’s average per unit value of residential construction was lower than the regional average. The opposite was true in 2006, suggesting a possible new trend for the future.

### Value for New Residential Construction Unit



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **Growth in building permits for single-family residences far outpaced permits for multi-family residences from 2000 to 2006.** The number of multi-family permits - measured by both buildings and units - actually declined during this period. This was consistent with statewide trends, but the state’s 21.2 percent decline in the number of permitted multi-family units was far less substantial than Troup’s 95.5 percent decline.

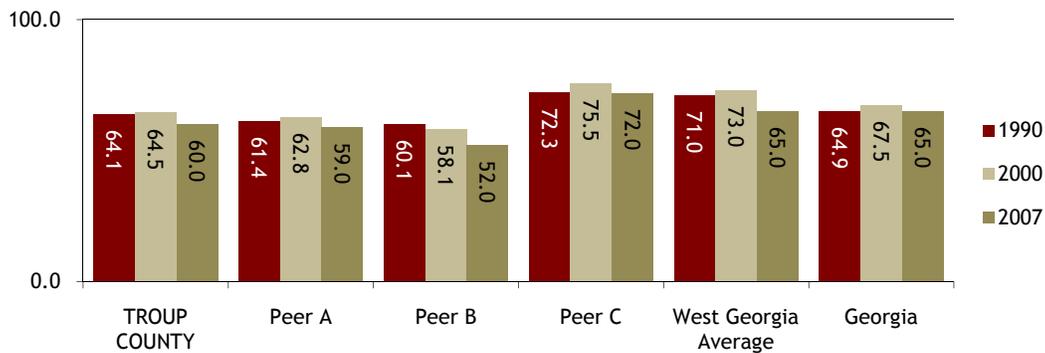
**Building Permits, 2000-2006**

2006					
	Single-Family	Multi-Family		Total	
		Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units
Troup	456	6	12	462	468
Georgia	86,106	1167	18,094	87,273	104,200
% Change, 2000-2006					
	Single-Family	Multi-Family		Total	
		Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units
Troup	40.7%	-66.7%	-95.5%	35.1%	-20.7%
Georgia	25.1%	-31.0%	-21.2%	23.7%	13.5%

Source: University of Georgia Selig Center for Economic Growth

- **Troup County has seen an increase in the presence of mobile homes.** While in 1996, the county had 852 such homes, the number grew to 1,527 by 2000. From 2000 to 2006 the total grew by a more marginal amount to 1,585. This is opposite the trend of its peer group and region which both saw an average drop in mobile homes. Troup’s number of mobile homes in 2006 was lower than that of two of its peers but higher than the average for the West Georgia region (1,162).<sup>16</sup>
- **Troup County’s percentage of owner-occupied units, an indicator of homeownership, has been comparably lower than the norm for its region and state.** Troup County’s homeownership rate was higher than that of two of its peers.

**Homeownership Rate Comparison**

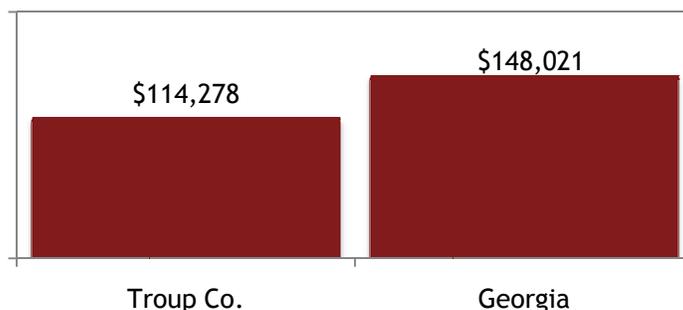


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, HomeGain

- **Troup County’s average home price is much lower than the state average.** The state’s average is brought up by outliers including the central core of the Atlanta metropolitan area.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Georgia Department of Revenue.

Average Home Price, 2007



Source: HomeGain

- Based on household income levels, there is a fairly sizable segment of the Troup County population that cannot afford to purchase an average-priced home in the community. In order to afford the average home on the market in Troup, a prospective home owner needs a household income of approximately \$38,000.<sup>17</sup> However, more than one third (38.9 percent) of Troup County's households earn less than \$30,000. These households comprise a larger share of Troup County's households than they do for two of its peers, the average county in West Georgia, and the state.

Average Home Price v Affordability 2007

	Average Home Price	Required Household Income	Households Below \$30,000
TROUP COUNTY	\$114,278	\$38,093	38.9%
Peer A	\$112,893	\$37,631	36.6%
Peer B	\$122,697	\$40,899	46.6%
Peer C	\$130,381	\$43,460	27.9%
West Georgia Average	\$114,969	\$38,323	34.2%
Georgia	\$148,021	\$49,340	31.1%

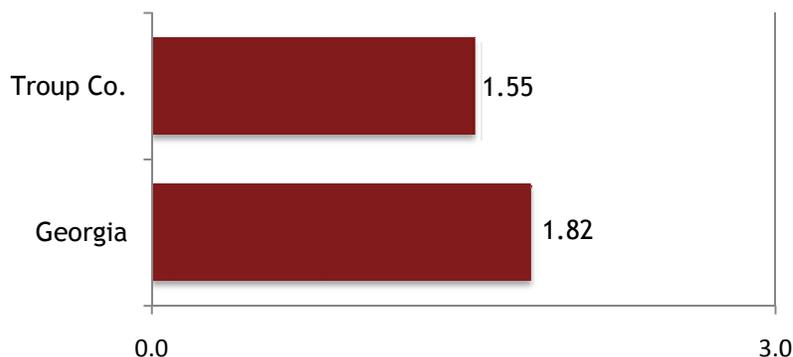
Source: HomeGain.com for average home prices; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. for income

- On the other side of the spectrum, at least 43.2 percent of Troup County households can afford the average home price in the community (using household with an income above \$45,000 as the measure).<sup>18</sup>
- Based on the Housing Affordability Index, the county appears to have a more affordable market than the state average. This index is the ratio of average home price to average household income; thereby, the lower the index, the more affordable the housing market. In 2007, Troup County's index of 1.55 was substantially lower than Georgia's 1.82. However, this is limited measure based on county-wide averages; the previous chart illustrates that a sizeable portion of the community cannot afford to purchase an averaged-priced home in Troup County, explaining the low homeownership rate in the County compared to statewide averages.

<sup>17</sup> Based on a calculation of one-third of the average home price, a common rule of thumb calculation used by the mortgage industry.

<sup>18</sup> Based on data from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

### Housing Affordability Index, 2007



Source: Calculated based on data from HomeGain and Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

- **Just over a third of Troup County households rent their residences.**<sup>19</sup> The county's percentage (36 percent) is higher than the state (33 percent), but only by a small margin.

### Benchmark Household and Rental Rates, 2000

	Troup	Georgia
Total	21,920	3,006,369
Renter	7,788	977,076
% Renter	36%	33%

Source: National Low-Income Housing Coalition

- **Using an estimate of average income for the community's renters, it is estimated that 44 percent of the County's renters are not able to afford the two bedroom fair market rent (FMR).** That suggests many renters have to economize by renting lower-quality apartments or a smaller one-bedroom unit, even though their family size would be better accommodated in a two-bedroom unit. While the state average is seemingly high, at 41 percent, it is noteworthy that the County's percentage is even greater than that. The calculation accounts for the higher-average income and FMRs in the state than the County, so other factors must account for the three percentage point difference the County has over the state average.

<sup>19</sup> The previous homeownership rate is based on the percent of housing units which are occupied; this measure is assessing the rental rates of households (not units).

**Benchmark Fair Market Rent and Affordability for Renters, 2006**

	Troup	Georgia
<b>2007 Fair Market Rent (FMR)</b>		
Zero BR	\$456	\$555
One BR	\$461	\$600
Two BR	\$578	\$679
Three BR	\$731	\$849
Four BR	\$755	\$932
<b>2006 Renter Household Income</b>		
Est. Median	\$26,039	\$32,761
% Median Needed to Afford 2 BR FMR	89%	83%
Rent Affordable at Median	\$651	\$819
% Renters Unable to Afford 2 BR FMR	44%	41%

Source: National Low-Income Housing Coalition

## The View from Human Services Professionals

The following bullets provide summaries of perceptions shared by local human service professionals during the individual interview process.

- Thanks to the work of DASH and private developers making use of Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) tax credits to build subsidy-eligible apartments, additional affordable housing is being created in Troup County, but there is more work to do. DASH was praised by many professionals for its work to create workforce housing.
- Some are concerned that the Kia-related growth will result in furthering the workforce housing shortage and thereby drive prices up and affordability further down. There is also reportedly a challenge competing with the Newnan area which is “overbuilt.”
- There is a reported shortage of quality rental housing, because most of the existing rental housing stock is aged.
- While the homeless population is (perceived to be) small, it is reportedly growing, and the reported lack of a nondenominational shelter is felt by many. Additionally, there is reportedly a large “couch homeless” population living with family or friends, or in motels. One interviewee said that the primary homeless support is the bus tickets LaGrange Personal Aide buys for homeless to visit shelters in Atlanta or Columbus.
- There is a need for transitional housing for recently released incarcerated people to live.

## Inventory of Available Programs and Services

The following are some of the housing-related programs and services that serve Troup County residents.

### HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Chattahoochee Fuller Center Project	Builds houses through volunteer labor and donations.
Community Action for Improvement	Offers housing assistance and support, and development in the Greenville area.
DASH	Promotes redevelopment and home ownership within LaGrange's neighborhoods.
Habitat for Humanity	Builds houses through volunteer labor and donations.

### HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES

Action Ministries	Located in Lanett, Alabama, provides housing for an approximately three to 12 month period for transitional families. Provides rent, utilities, food, and child care for eligible families.
Harvest Center Group	Provides support services in the areas of affordable housing, emergency housing, first-time home buying, and credit counseling.
LaGrange Housing Authority	Rent-subsidized housing for eligible families.
LaGrange Personal Aid Association	Provides rental, mortgage, and utility payment assistance in emergency situations where the primary income provider is unable to work due to illness or hospitalization.
West Point Housing Authority	Rent-subsidized housing for eligible families.

## Identification of Unmet Needs

The following summarize what were found to be the most pressing needs of Troup County's housing market.

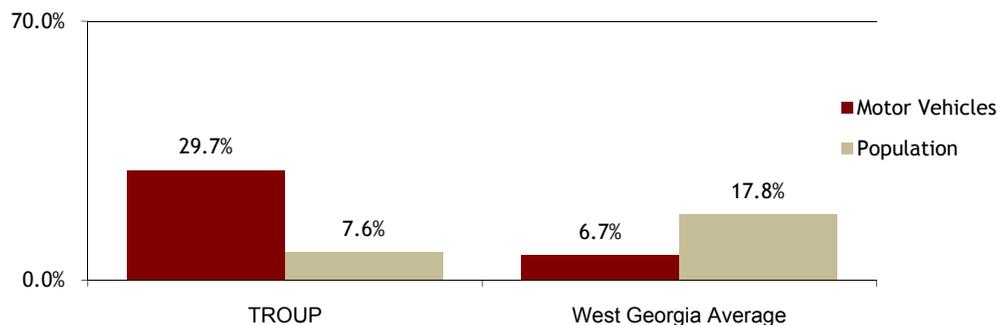
- Available data suggest Troup County's housing market is less affordable than the state average, and the existing stock is not meeting the needs of all components of the workforce. This situation will need to be addressed, particularly as the population continues to grow, potentially causing a further increase in housing prices.
- There's an opportunity to address the concern of human service professions that the needs of transient and longer-term homeless people are not being met, and the housing crises raises concerns about whether the community will face a high number of evictions.

## TRANSPORTATION

### State of Transportation in Troup County<sup>20</sup>

- Troup County's persons per automobile ratio declined to a marginal degree from 2000 to 2006. While in 2000, there were 1.3 persons per automobile, the ratio was 1.1 in 2006. This suggests a slight increase in single occupant vehicles. In 2006, Troup's ratio was lower than its peer group average (1.3) and on par with that of its region (1.1).
- As of 2006, Troup County residents owned an estimated 57,556 motor vehicles, representing a 29.7 percent increase over such ownership in 2000 and far outpacing the county's growth in population (7.6 percent) during this period. The opposite trend occurred in the region, as the average growth in motor vehicles was 6.7 percent compared to an average population growth of 17.8 percent.

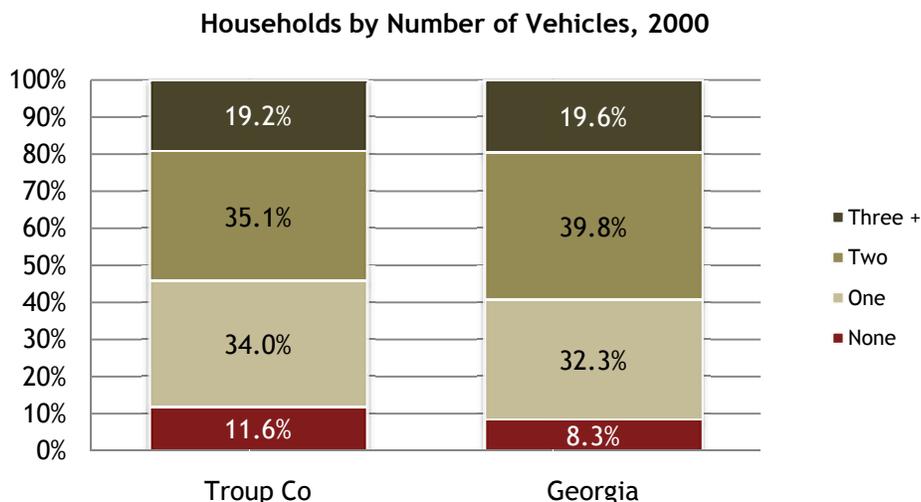
Growth in Motor Vehicle Usage Vs. Population Growth  
2000 to 2006



Source: Georgia Department of Revenue for motor vehicles;  
US Census Bureau for population

- For the most recent data available, Troup County had a larger portion of households without a vehicle than Georgia. In 2000, an estimated 11.6 percent of County households did not have a vehicle, compared to an average of 8.3 percent for the state.

<sup>20</sup> Some information extracted from the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Sustainable Development Report Card*.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **Troup Transit provides appointment-based transportation for area residents.** Certain agencies provide additional need-specific transportation assistance. For example, AmeriCorps helps deliver medicine and food to seniors, and District 4 Public Health, which serves Troup and 11 other counties, offers transportation assistance for HIV/AIDS patients. Another example, the LaGrange Housing Authority provides van service for elderly needing groceries or medicine.

## The View from Human Services Professionals

The following bullets provide summaries of perceptions shared by local human service professionals during the individual interview process.

- The lack of fixed-schedule public transportation service was a significantly expressed concern by most human service as well as workforce development professionals, and other stakeholders. Several referenced taxi service as an available option, but the local taxi companies were also observed to practice price gauging, particularly when visiting low-income areas. There are services dedicated to seniors, including Troup Transit, which serves seniors “on-demand,” rather than with a regular service schedule. The LaGrange Housing Authority also has a van service which drives the elderly to the grocery store and pharmacy.
- A particular concern was raised regarding transportation options to enhance accessibility to healthcare services. The ambulatory service (American Medical Response) reportedly receives regular non-emergency calls from people in need of transportation for basic healthcare services. Also, there was an expressed need for non-emergency transportation for psychiatric cases looking to attend Pathways or another clinic in the area.
- Another specific concern was transportation for children, as the school zone system results in many students living far from their schools and thereby dependent on the school bus system; enhanced public transportation services would alleviate challenges that arise when the school bus is missed.

- In conversations about the need for public transportation, several raised concerns about overcoming the “cultural stigma attached to public transportation” before a real discussion can be held about the feasibility of implementing transit services.

## Inventory of Available Programs and Services

The following are some of the transportation-related programs and services that serve Troup County residents.

Head Start	Plans and coordinates a safe system for transporting children to and from centers, including field trips and medical and dental screenings. Also, Head Start makes buses or vans available for parent transportation and social services needs.
LaGrange Housing Authority	Van service to transport elderly to the grocery store or pharmacy.
LaGrange Senior Center	Provides transportation services and meal-delivery for homebound seniors.
Troup Transit	Appointment-based transit service for the elderly.

## Identification of Unmet Needs

The following summarize what were found to be the most pressing needs of Troup County’s transportation system, as it relates to human services.

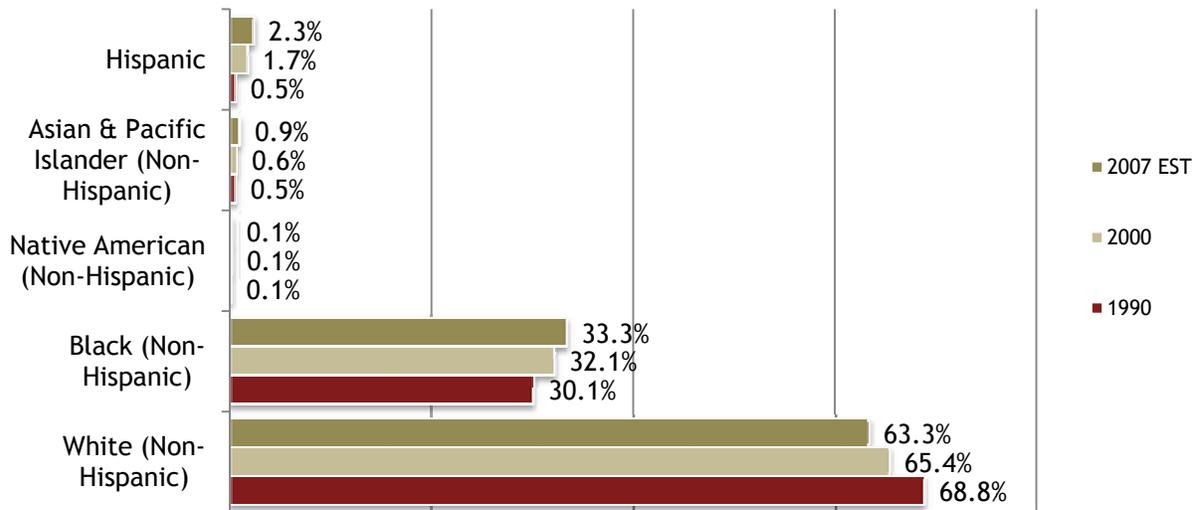
- Nearly every human service professional interviewed identified the lack of adequate public transportation as a serious, often debilitating issue in the community. This was viewed as an issue not only for the low-income residents but also for the workforce. Given rising fuel costs, part of the workforce was described as “transportation poor.” As the population grows, the county will experience even more demand for a more robust public transportation system.

## COMMUNITY CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

### State of Community Culture and Diversity in Troup County<sup>21</sup>

- Troup County’s population has been becoming more diverse over time. While Whites appear to be accounting for lower shares of the county’s population over time, African Americans are accounting for higher shares. In real numbers, the ratio in growth of African American residents to White residents since 1990 is 2-to-1. However, by far, the segment of the population that has grown most significantly is Troup’s Hispanic residents. The county’s Hispanic population has increased five-fold from less than 289 residents in 1990 to more than 1,463 estimated residents in 2007. Those of Asian or Pacific Islander descent grew marginally in presence while the presence of Native Americans appeared to remain stable.

Change in Population by Race / Ethnicity in Troup County, Georgia

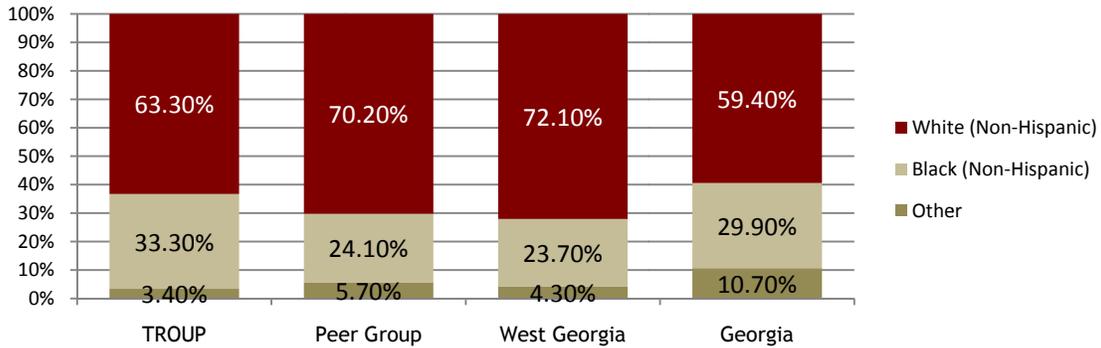


Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

- Troup County has a higher degree of non-White residents than its peer group and region. When compared to the state, the county has a greater share of African American residents but smaller shares of residents of Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Native American origins. Regarding the latter groups, Troup also has lower shares of such residents than its peers and region.

<sup>21</sup> Some information extracted from the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Sustainable Development Report Card*. The peers referenced in this section are Barrow, Bulloch, and Spalding counties, each chosen due to their relative similarities to Troup County in terms of population, proximity to the interstate, percentage of citizens in incorporated and unincorporated areas, etc.

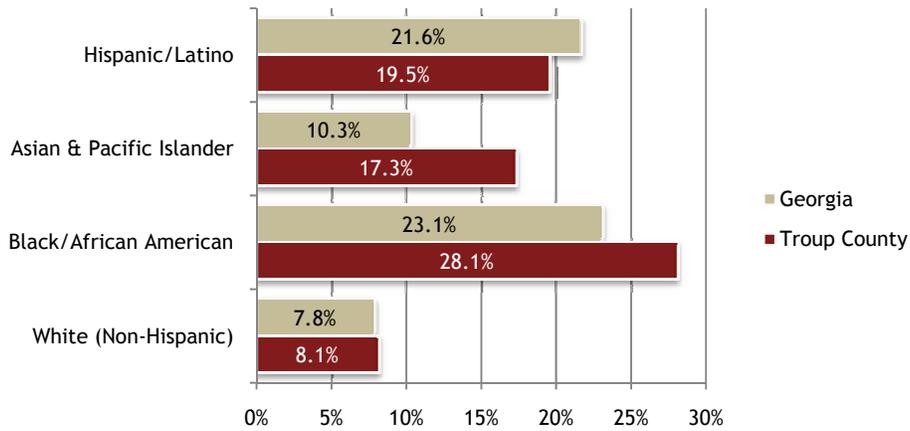
**Population Shares by Race / Ethnicity Comparison 2007**



Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

- Approximately one-in-four African Americans in Troup County is living in poverty.** With a 2000 poverty rate of 28.1 percent, Troup County’s African American population is worse off than the Georgia African American average (23.1 percent) or any other race and ethnic group in the community. The Troup County Hispanic/Latino population has a poverty rate of 19.5 percent, which while quite high, is lower than the state average of 21.6 for this ethnic group.

**Poverty Rates by Race / Ethnicity, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- As of 2000, Troup County had a smaller percentage of foreign-born persons than the State average.** This comparative difference is consistent with the finding that Troup County has a smaller Hispanic population than the state average; Hispanics/Latinos make up the largest portion of foreign born persons in the U.S.

**Citizenship Status, 2000**

	<b>Native</b>	<b>Foreign-Born Naturalized Citizen</b>	<b>Foreign-Born Not a Citizen</b>
Troup County	98.0%	0.6%	1.4%
Georgia	92.9%	2.1%	5.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **Troup County’s non-English speaking households have lower rates of isolation than the Georgia average.** The overwhelming majority - 94.0 percent over the state average of 88.6 percent - of Troup’s households speak English, as of 2000. These patterns may have changed, as from 2000 to 2007 Troup County experienced an estimated five-fold increase in the size of its Hispanic/Latino population.

**Primary Household Language and Linguistic Isolation, 2000**

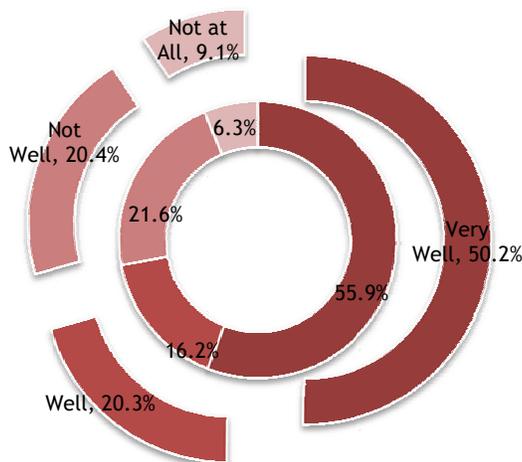
	<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish (% Isolated)</b>	<b>Other Indo- European (% Isolated)</b>	<b>Asian- Pacific Island (% Isolated)</b>	<b>Other Languages (% Isolated)</b>
Troup	94.0%	3.6% (14.4%)	1.5% (10.9%)	0.6% (6.7%)	0.3% (0.0%)
Georgia	88.6%	6.0% (24.5%)	3.2% (10.8%)	1.6% (29.8%)	0.6% (13.3%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **The English-speaking ability of Troup County’s bilingual population is stronger than the Georgia average.** As of 2000, 55.9 percent of the County’s bilingual population spoke English “very well,” compared to the Georgia average of 50.2 percent. While in the State almost 1 in 10, or 9.1 percent, did not speak English at all, in the County the percentage was 6.3 percent.

### English-Speaking Ability of Bilingual Population Over 5 Years Old, 2000

Outer Ring: Georgia  
Inner Ring: Troup County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **Troup County appears to have an above average level of volunteerism.** Following are some observations regarding the level of activity as of 2007.
  - As an indicator of youth volunteerism, Troup County is home to two “Learn and Serve America” programs. The county’s Whitesville Road Elementary has 1,080 participants, accounting for 5.4 percent of the state’s total known participation (20,015). This is notable when compared to Troup County’s estimated share (0.7 percent) of Georgia’s population between the ages of 5 and 19.<sup>22</sup> The county’s other Learn and Serve America program is located at Callaway High School.<sup>23</sup>
  - As an indicator of adult volunteerism, Troup County is home to four AmeriCorps programs. Together, these programs have 33 members, which ranks the county third behind the combined membership of such programs in Atlanta or Macon within the State of Georgia.
  - As an indicator of senior citizen volunteerism, Troup County operates two Senior Corps programs with a total of 124 participants. These participants accounted for 2 percent of the state’s total known participation (6,052). This was higher than the county’s estimated share (0.7 percent) of Georgia’s population ages 60 years and above.<sup>24</sup>
- **West Georgia’s United Way partner agencies have had a four-year volunteer growth rate of 13.2 percent.** While overall growth has been strong, certain agencies have experienced sizeable losses which may be impacting their ability to fulfill their mission. The largest losses were at the American Red Cross (-73.9%), AmeriCorps (-48.0%), LaGrange Empty Stocking Fund (-41.2%), and Communities in Schools (-22.6%)

<sup>22</sup> Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Corporation for National and Community Service

<sup>24</sup> Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

## Unity Way of West Georgia Partner Agency Total Volunteer Estimates, 2006

Partner	2006	% Change '02-'06
American Red Cross	135	-73.9%
Boy Scouts of America	2,329	7.0%
Boys and Girls Club	60	62.2%
Camp Viola	524	89.2%
Care - Link Programs	0	n/a
AmeriCorps	78	-48.0%
Foster Grandparent	8	0.0%
Senior Companion	8	n/a
CASA of Troup County	78	105.3%
Children's Advocacy Center	32	14.3%
Communities in Schools	175	-22.6%
Consumer Credit Counseling	31	19.2%
Dental Care Fund	0	n/a
Girl Scouts of Pine Valley	262	1210.0%
Good Shepherd Therapeutic Center	70	250.0%
Harmony House	19	n/a
Hogansville Empty Stocking Fund	22	4.8%
Hogansville Senior Center	19	280.0%
Interfaith Food Closet	106	n/a
LaGrange Child Development Center	18	-5.3%
LaGrange Empty Stocking Fund	20	-41.2%
LaGrange Personal Aid	12	-7.7%
LaGrange Senior Center	103	442.1%
Literacy Volunteers of America-Troup County	119	28.0%
Maidee Smith Memorial Nursery	13	30.0%
Salvation Army	12	71.4%
Self-Help Harbor, Inc.	11	0.0%
Special Olympics	36	100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>13.2%</b>

Source: United Way of West Georgia

- **Troup County private institutional support to address civic and social needs has increased in recent years.** The county's number of civic and related associations grew 23.4 percent from 2000 to 2005, and employment at these organizations also increased, by 10.3 percent. That staff growth is strong compared to the County's population growth rate of 6.6 percent during this same period. While in 2005 Troup County had more organizations than the Georgia average, it had slightly smaller staff capacity of 472, compared to Georgia's 494.

## Civic &amp; Related Associations

	2000		2005	
	Organizations	Staff	Organizations	Staff
Troup County	77	428	95	472
Georgia Average	49	454	53	494

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- **Troup County’s 501(c)(3) fiscal health indicators suggest growth in reported revenues, but losses in reported assets.** However, the average assets of Troup County’s registered 501(c)(3) organizations are consistent with the state average, as of January 2008. Reported revenues, on the other hand, average \$2.5 million in Troup, compared to the more significant average of \$3.2 million for the state of Georgia.

**Registered 501(c)(3) Organizations, January 2008**

		Regis-tered Orgs	Reported Revenue		Reported Assets	
			Total	Avg. for Reporting Orgs.	Total	Avg. for Reporting Orgs.
Value As of Jan 08	Troup	195	\$220.2 million	\$2,531,433	\$540.7 million	\$6,215,237
	Georgia	26,439	\$33.2 billion	\$3,240,523	\$63.9 billion	\$6,241,752
% Change Jul 07-Jan 08	Troup	38.3%	39.2%	18.4%	-4.6%	-18.9%
	Georgia	43.3%	53.7%	15.8%	40.4%	5.8%

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics

- **Troup County’s public charities predominantly depend on program and contractual sources for their revenue, consistent with the state of Georgia.** On average, the county’s organizations lost revenue in the dues, assessments, and net sales category. Based on the state average, it seems that Troup County may have room to more aggressively seek contributions, gifts, and grants to support its public charities.

**Public Charities Sources of Revenue, 2003**

	Contributions, Gifts & Grants	Program & Contract Revenue	Invest-ment Income	Net Special Event Revenue	Dues, Assessments, Net Sales & Other	Total Revenue
Troup	22.9%	75.2%	2.2%	0.2%	-0.5%	\$164.0 million
Georgia	29.3%	64.4%	3.0%	0.2%	3.1%	\$21.9 billion

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics

- **Troup County’s private foundations rely 73.5 percent on dividend and interest income, a significant difference from the state average of 15.0 percent.** Troup County’s data is likely heavily influenced by the Callaway Foundation

**Private Foundations Sources of Revenue, 2003**

	Contributions, Gifts, and Grants	Dividend & Interest Income	Gross Rents	Net Sales of Other Assets	Inventory Sales & Other Income	Total Revenue
Troup	23.5%	73.5%	0.0%	5.7%	-2.8%	\$630,137
Georgia	58.2%	15.0%	0.3%	22.3%	4.2%	\$1.3 billion

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics

- **The Callaway Foundation is a tremendous asset for Troup County.** In just over 60 years, the Foundation has awarded over \$205 million in grants to different interests in the local community. The figure represents approximately \$3.3 million per year.

## Callaway Foundation Grants, 1943-2006

	Troup County	Total
Arts, Culture, Humanities	\$11,237,548	\$16,064,738
Education	\$53,383,456	\$104,494,329
Environment, Animals	\$843,724	\$3,394,822
Health	\$32,436,642	\$40,473,719
Human Services	\$14,682,685	\$21,693,800
Misc. Mutual/Membership Benefit Orgs.	\$0	\$46,400
Program Related investment	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000
Public/Society Benefit	\$57,899,322	\$65,254,261
Religion	\$32,841,091	\$33,272,039
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$205,074,468</b>	<b>\$286,444,108</b>

Source: Callaway Foundation

- Part of the Callaway Foundation's \$32.8 million in funding to religious organizations has gone directing toward fostering church development. The result, the number of congregations per capita in Troup County is nearly double the estimate for Georgia and the nation. This data support what some human service providers identified in interviews as an untapped resource of significant capacity to help address many of the goals for Troup County.

## Religious Congregations

	Total Congregations, 2000		Congregations Per 1,000 People, 2000	
	All Denominations	Mainline Denominations	All Denominations	Mainline Denominations
Troup County	112	45	1.91	0.77
Georgia	8,962	2,299	1.09	0.28
United States	268,254	83,389	0.95	0.30

Source: Association of Religion Data Archives

## The View from Human Services Professionals

The following bullets provide summaries of perceptions shared by local human service professionals during the individual interview process.

- The general perception is that there is a core group of leaders making human service decisions in Troup County, and that the African American population is not represented in that group. There is also concern that the African American population is not well represented in the business sector.
- Disenfranchisement is felt community-wide, even among youth, as some believe that African American and White students are treated differently by the school system and police departments.
- Several human service professionals shared their perceptions that there is also disconnect among faith-based groups. In addition, an opportunity was commonly identified to engage greater involvement by local faith-based organizations in helping to address community

concerns. For example, it was said that religious leaders and their congregations can do more to help identify at-risk kids and provide them with more after school activities on their premises.

- Concerns were raised about how the new Kia-related international population will impact community culture. There is some concern that the international population Kia will bring to the community is already getting more attention than the Latino and African American populations which have been facing cultural challenges for years.
- In conversations about the need for public transportation, several raised concerns about overcoming the “cultural stigma attached to public transportation” before a real discussion can be held about the feasibility of implementing transit services.
- The parks and recreational centers’ structure and membership fees are viewed by some as creating a barrier of entry and, to some extent, while not intentional, de facto segregation.
- There was a call for more open, creative dialogue regarding differences in culture, circumstance, and background and how to serve and celebrate each,
- There are some programs available to address language barrier concerns in the delivery of health and human services, but a concern was raised as to whether the existing programs were addressing all segments of the population in need of assistance. In particular, it was stated that more outreach to the Latino community is needed.
- It was stated that human service programs need more reliable, permanent financing.
- LaGrange College ended its Bachelor’s program in social services, raising concerns that the local community will no longer have a local supply of providers with a four-year degree. West Georgia Technical College has a two-year degree program dedicated to social services.

## Inventory of Available Programs and Services

The following are some of the diversity and community-related programs and services that serve Troup County residents.

100 Black Men	West Georgia affiliate provides mentoring and an after school program focused on drug and alcohol use prevention.
Callaway Foundation	Community leadership and financial support to address a range of religious, charitable, and educational interests.
CHILI	DASH’s “CHILE” program is a Latino outreach initiative that provides ESOL education, translation assistance, and similar services.
Harvest Center Group	Minority business development support and women’s outreach ministry.
Troup County Resource Commission	Networking and informational group composed of African American elected officials and other leaders in Troup County.
United Way of West Georgia	Brings community members together and provides financial support to local organizations addressing prioritized human service needs. The United Way system has about 1,350 independent, community-based organizations in its network.

## Identification of Unmet Needs

The following summarize what were found to be the most pressing needs of Troup County's community culture and diversity.

- 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.
- There is strong financial and volunteer support of Troup County's non-profit organizations, but there is still opportunity, and need, to expand volunteer hours and contributions to address the many concerns that were raised in the human services assessment.
- Many human service professionals and other stakeholders pointed to Troup County's religious community as one of its greatest assets and a potential source of strong leadership in achieving community-wide goals.

## FUTURE NEEDS

### Benchmark Communities

Three communities were identified as case studies for local leaders' review, based on their population growth over the past 10-25 years being consistent with the projected growth of Troup County over the next 10-25 years.<sup>25</sup> Based on questions designed to encourage the interviewees to think about what lessons they have learned from what has worked or not worked in their communities during their growth periods, the interviews resulted in the following primary notes of potential value for informing and guiding Troup County's strategic planning process:

- In physical infrastructure and human services, any existing capacity issues will increase in the face of growth, and where capacity issues do not currently exist, they will be further exacerbated. One community leader advised that Troup County's leaders accept that early (which they have by engaging in this process) and work to develop community-wide acceptance to develop the political capital that will be needed to pass whatever measures may be needed to expand capacity.
- Challenges can arise when the expectations of newcomers differ from those of the existing population. A solution is to raise awareness via public relations and similar efforts to bring the expectations of the new population in-line with current realities. For the existing population, the awareness campaign must focus on the reality that change is coming, it is inevitable, and it is better to accept and respond to that change now than later. As one community leader put it, it requires changing the whole community's mindset about who the community is and who the community is becoming.
- Responding to the question of how Troup County can best prepare for its expected growth, one community leader said to be sure to have a good comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance in place. Another more specifically said to be sure to have a system that encourages the creation of mixed income and mixed household structure neighborhoods (to avoid high concentrations of service-dependent persons, for example, families with school-age children or the elderly). A third leader pointed out that they are in need of a more diversified housing market, as they have an oversupply of detached single-family homes. Even within that sub-market there are challenges, as the leader said the community has lots of "starter" homes, but not a strong market for second and third-stage homes.
- Additional issues identified of particular applicability to concerns identified for Troup County are:
  - Need for equitable distribution and to having the minority community well-represented in leadership, and to alleviate feelings of minority populations being marginalized.
  - Need to expand its mental health services, by opening a club house and satellite offices of that main clubhouse.
  - Need for public transportation for citizens with and also an ongoing unmet need for community-wide transit services.
  - Need for tremendous support services for the elderly and disabled, and affordable housing.

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<sup>25</sup> The three communities which were selected were Cass County, Missouri; Douglas County, Kansas; and Hanover County, Virginia.

In the end, each of the representatives from the three communities recommended that the more proactive Troup County can be to address its challenges now, the better off it will be later when its population boom occurs.

## The View from Youth

In an online survey of high school students conducted as part of this strategic planning process, Troup County's youth expressed some of their own concerns regarding challenges facing their community.

- In response to a question which asked youth what they viewed as their community's biggest challenges, substance abuse and crime and public safety topped the list.

### What do you think are the biggest challenges facing your community?

Challenge	# of Responses	% of Total
Substance abuse related	227	14.1%
Crime and public safety related	204	12.7%
Community growth/change	159	9.9%
Lack of recreation	145	9.0%
Water related (including the lake)	84	5.2%
Environment/Pollution	65	4.0%
KIA related	62	3.9%
Teenage pregnancy	44	2.7%
Education	39	2.4%
Roads/Traffic/Transportation	33	2.1%
Lack of jobs	31	1.9%
Gas prices	27	1.7%
Racial tension	25	1.6%
See no challenges	97	6.0%
Don't know	62	3.9%

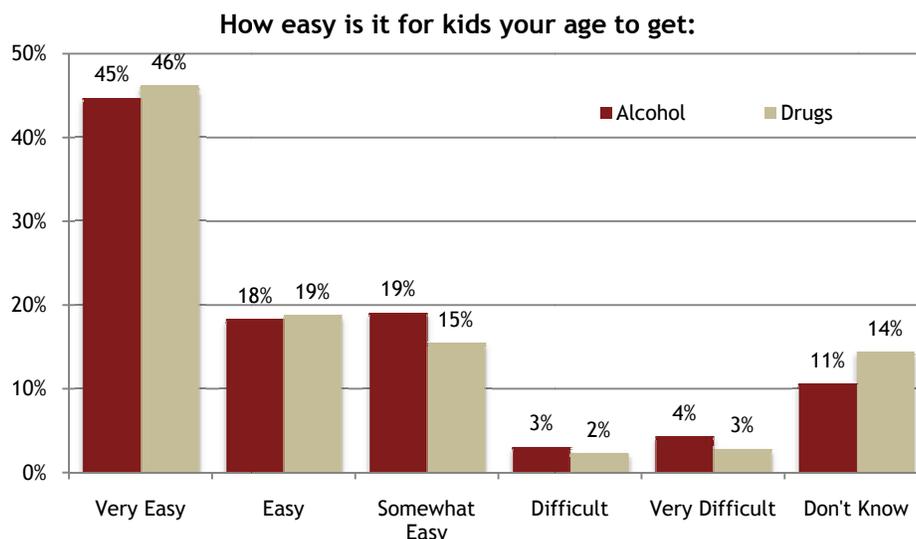
- Community involvement and interactions was the highest ranked action youth said could be taken to make the community better, over substance abuse education/prevention, even though the latter speaks to their highest-ranking biggest challenge.

### What could you do to help address these challenges and make your community better?

Action	# of Responses	% of Total
Community Involvement and Interactions	268	16.1%
Provide Youth with More Opportunities	137	8.3%
Help Handle Community Growth/Change	131	7.9%
Public Safety Improvements	99	6.0%
Environmental Protection	75	4.5%
Substance Abuse Education/Prevention	70	4.2%
Educational Improvements	64	3.9%
Water Conservation/Management	61	3.7%
Improve Job Prospects	31	1.9%
Community Reaction & Involvement with KIA	18	1.1%
Sex Education and Prevention	17	1.0%

Action	# of Responses	% of Total
Racial Understanding and Civil Rights	8	0.5%
Strategies to Reduce Price/Demand of Gas	8	0.5%
Nothing	186	11.2%
Don't know	135	8.1%

- In the survey, 47 percent of youth said they would be interested in becoming more involved in community decision making.
- About half (51%) of the responding youth feel that “adults in my community care about people my age,” and a greater percentage (58%) feel that “adults in my community help me when I need help.”
- Delving deeper into the issue of substance abuse, the majority of respondents said it was easy to get alcohol or drugs, with the latter, drugs, considered easier to access than the former, alcohol.



Respondents (Alcohol Question) = 1,248    Respondents (Drugs Question) = 1,241

- Of respondents, 39 percent said they agree “there are enough places for young people to go that are safe, as well as drug and alcohol free,” while 35 percent disagreed with that statement (the remainder indicated they neither agreed or disagreed).
- Certain human services were identified by the youth respondents as ones of which they would like more. Specifically related to human services, 63 percent of responders indicated they would like more health education programs regarding pregnancy and HIV/AIDS prevention; 55 percent said they would like more alcohol and drug prevention classes; and 54 percent said they would like more conflict resolution or violence prevention activities.

**Percent of Respondents Who Indicated They Would Like  
Specific Service Expanded To Assist Young People in Your Community**

<b>Service</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
Recreation programs	68.6%
Career counseling	68.0%
Academic tutoring and help	65.7%
Health education (pregnancy prevention, HIV/AIDS prevention)	63.0%
Cultural programs	62.7%
Job readiness training	59.3%
Leadership development	57.7%
Alcohol & drug prevention classes	55.1%
Conflict resolution or violence prevention activities	53.6%
Entrepreneurship training	53.6%
Public transportation	52.6%
Health management (nutrition, self-management of chronic conditions such as asthma)	51.3%
Health services (screening, treatment)	50.1%
Mental health services (counseling, referrals for treatment)	45.1%

## DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN TROUP COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

The following chart summarizes the key findings of this assessment into a demand and supply analysis. The purpose is to determine what the key “gaps,” or strategic needs, of Troup County are to address its most pressing human service needs.

	Demand (Observation)	Supply (Services)	Gap (Strategy)
Healthcare	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.	LaGrange College has a Bachelor’s level pre-med program, but there is no local M.D. program.	Focus on retention and recruitment of physicians within the most in-need medical disciplines.
	Projected population growth will also increase the need for more nurses and other healthcare staff.	West Georgia Technical College has a number of associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs within the healthcare field.	Assess existing and projected needs to expand capacity, and where needed, increase interest in, West Georgia Technical College’s and LaGrange College’s healthcare-related programs.
	Troup County’s uninsured and working poor have difficulty affording both preventative and treatment/recovery healthcare services. Additionally, Troup County has a mortality rate above the state average and other measures that raise concerns about the overall health of the community.	District 4 Public Health Services, Troup Cares, and Troup County Health Department are just a few of the resources available for supporting the needs of this population.	Enhance the commitment to Troup County’s existing preventive healthcare to improve the community’s overall health and capacity for treatment and recovery care.
	Many human service professionals interviewed believe that the community would benefit from more comprehensive mental health services to address everything from mental illness to victim services to substance abuse recovery assistance.	There are a number of local agencies which provide services to address mental illness and/or substance abuse, including AFSAN, Center for Creative Growth and Human Development, Pathways, Self-Help Harbor, and the state’s local mental health clinic.	Raise awareness of existing resources, and include psychiatrists and psychologists in the physician retention and recruitment initiative.

	Demand (Observation)	Supply (Services)	Gap (Strategy)
	Good news is the teenage pregnancy rate has declined in recent years, but the County's rate remains quite high compared to the state average.	SPOT provides teen counseling, birth control, pregnancy tests, and STD checks. Another resource, ALPHA, provides teen pregnancy and parenting workshops. Twin Cedars Youth Services has a program, Circle of Care, dedicated to the issue of repeat teen pregnancy.	Continue work to reduce the instances of teenage pregnancy and enhance support networks for teenage mothers.
Public Safety	Troup County's instances of crime have increased in recent years, and have consistently been much higher than the state average.	The Troup County Sheriff's Office and the Police Departments of the cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville serve the community's public safety needs.	Continue to support and advance the crime prevention and response work of the Troup County Sheriff's Office and the Police Departments of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville.
	Troup County's juvenile arrest and commitment rates have increased in recent years.	The Troup County Sheriff's Office and the Police Departments of the cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville serve the community's public safety needs.	Reduce the instances of juvenile crime by maintaining the community's commitment to existing, and future, support services for at-risk youth.
	Troup County's youth are concerned about the reportedly high-rates of drug use in the community, a problem affecting communities everywhere.	Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools was formed to address the substance abuse concerns.	Aggressively work to fight drug and alcohol use and addiction among youth and the adult population.
Family and Children	Troup County has an above average percentage of residents in poverty, and not enough of its citizens are reaching self-sufficiency. In recent years, the child poverty rate has risen and, possibly as a result, the community has a high incidence of child neglect.	There is a very wide range of human service agencies serving basic needs including food and clothing.	Continue to support the needs of working families facing economic challenges and explore opportunities for expanded efforts. Coordinate a public-private prosperity initiative, aimed at lifting up those at the lowest end of the economic ladder.
	Many children enter the school system without being "Kindergarten-ready." Troup County's workforce would benefit from advancing child care options, with a focus on preparing children to enter kindergarten.	Through Success by Six, Born Learning, and the agencies it helps fund, the United Way of West Georgia has made a commitment to addressing this area of concern. Additionally, there are numerous existing agencies aimed at this age group including Head Start,	Increase awareness and support for numerous programs already in existence, and fill in any gaps that may arise.

	Demand (Observation)	Supply (Services)	Gap (Strategy)
		LaGrange Child Care Council, LaGrange Child Development Center, Maidee Smith Memorial Nursery, Parents as Teachers, and Save the Children.	
	Troup County has a number of success stories for providing arts and recreational activities for area youth.	First Tee and the Elijah Kelley Foundation are two unique programs fulfilling this role within the community. There are additional success stories from organizations of longer standing value, such as the Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, and Girls Scouts.	Continue the commitment to maintaining the success of these programs, and raising community awareness, particularly among youth, regarding their availability.
Housing	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.	DASH, Chattahoochee Fuller Center Project, and Habitat for Humanity are three existing entities rehabilitating and building affordably-priced homes.	Work to maintain a range of quality, affordable housing stock to match the range in area income levels, and develop more mixed-income communities.
	Some in Troup County have become concerned that the needs of transient and longer-term homeless people are not being met, and the housing crises raises concerns about whether the community will face a high number of evictions.	LaGrange Personal Aid Association, Harvest Center Group, and the municipal housing authorities help address the needs of certain segments of this population.	Advance awareness and availability of support services for the temporarily and longer-term homeless.
Transportation	Troup County will experience increasing demand for a more robust public transportation system as the population increases.	Troup Transit provides appointment-based transportation services, and there are several additional transportation and delivery services to support the elderly.	Troup County, working in conjunction with the Cities and human service partners, should develop an incremental exploration to expand public transportation services.
Community Culture and Diversity	There is strong financial and volunteer support of Troup County's non-profit organizations, but there is still opportunity to expand efforts to achieve a more cohesive, welcoming community.	There are a wide range of human service agencies identified in the community. The United Way is one of the leading ones due to its funding and organizational support, and the Callaway Foundation has long been a vital funding resource and community leader.	Troup County should continue to expand its commitment (measured in volunteer hours and financial contributions) to the organizations focused on improving the provision of human services in Troup County.

	<b>Demand (Observation)</b>	<b>Supply (Services)</b>	<b>Gap (Strategy)</b>	
	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 Resource Commission and 100 Black Men are two leadership entities representing the African American population.	Troup County should explore all opportunities to embrace and champion its community diversity.	
	Troup County's faith-based community is one of its greatest assets.	Troup County has a large number of churches and synagogues representing a range of faiths and denominations.	Take advantage of this asset as an opportunity to advance the community's goals.	

## RECOMMENDATIONS<sup>26</sup>

The services studied in this assessment speak to basic human needs shared by all members of society: good health, safety, family and support as grow from children into adults, shelter, transportation (to access the jobs that help pay for those preceding needs), and tolerance, respect, and embracement of our similarities and differences. When one or more of these needs is not being met, individuals cannot meet their full economic potential. Like a team, a community is only as strong as its weakest player, so for a community to achieve sustainable economic prosperity, it must find where and how it can act to ensure the basic needs of residents are being met. The Good Habitat Community and Neighborly Community goals speak directly to achieving this end. The following recommendations are offered for consideration to the Troup County Leadership Team. Many of them reflect the strong leadership and capacity in the public, private, and non-profit sectors which already exists, as profiled in the inventories of existing programs and services and the supply and demand analysis. It is important to note that the recommendations are not intended for one entity to implement, but rather for implementation through joint efforts by multiple institutions involved in human services.

### Healthcare

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	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.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Focus on retention and recruitment of physicians within the most in-need medical disciplines.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment Sustainable Development Report Card

While higher than the regional average and its peers, Troup County's physician rate is lower than the State average, suggesting an untapped opportunity to expand healthcare capacities in the local community. This issue was raised in interviews with community members, particularly as it relates to specific specialties that people perceive as undersupplied in the county. Data suggest, based on the county's rates compared to the state average, that Troup County may be undersupplied in the areas of family practitioners, internal medicine, and pediatrics. Specific specialties identified as potentially undersupplied were urology and hematology.

**Y-1 Troup County can bolster its healthcare services by developing a physician recruitment strategy.** By partnering with West Georgia Medical Center and other area healthcare providers, Troup County can develop a relationship-based campaign to recruit additional physicians to the area. Via conferences, job fairs, and similar events, Troup County can raise attention to the attractions of living and practicing medicine in West Georgia. Troup County can also pursue the possibility of a marketing message targeting key markets of potential recruits.

- The strategy should focus on both generalists and the most in-need specialties as a component of the initiative. To prioritize this effort, the community should conduct a more comprehensive assessment of need beyond the initial assessment done within the scope of this strategy development process.
- One potential means of successful recruitment to consider is to create a property tax credit or down payment assistance program to incentivize the relocation. Another program that

<sup>26</sup> Recommendations follow the same coding system utilized in the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development* report.

communities have found successful is to incorporate physician spouse support in the form of job search assistance and social networking opportunities.

**Y-2 Troup County should maintain awareness of the needs of its existing physicians, particularly as it can impact retention.** While the research found no evidence that this is a concern for Troup County, it is still important for Troup County to not lose sight of any potential needs of existing physicians that can be addressed, as it is working on its recruitment initiative. This can be achieved as part of the recommended expansion of the community's business retention and expansion program identified in The Prosperous Community set of recommendations.

**Y-3 Troup County should launch a public relations campaign regarding the quality and availability of healthcare services.** In cooperation with local media and a potential marketing campaign, efforts should be made to raise recognition and awareness of the quality of care, the diversity of specialties available in the community, and to celebrate successful programs.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Projected population growth will also increase the need for more nurses and other healthcare staff.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Assess existing and projected needs to expand capacity, and where needed, increase interest in, West Georgia Technical College's and LaGrange College's healthcare-related programs.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment

The Callaway Foundation is highly recognized for its efforts to provide scholarships to support the greater developing of local capacity in the nursing profession. However, some community stakeholders advocated for expanded efforts in this regard. Their suggestions stemmed from the nursing shortage that is a national concern, and the expectation that demand for services will increase with the aging of the Baby Boom generation, coinciding with a number of nurse retirements of that same generation. As many in the community are already aware, Troup County is not immune to national trends, and the needs may be exacerbated with anticipated future growth. Therefore, continued creative thinking about how to fill nursing positions, as well as other healthcare staff needs, is needed to maintain a strong local and regional healthcare system.

**Y-4 Troup County should conduct a comprehensive analysis of existing and projected healthcare-related workforce needs, and how well West Georgia Tech's and LaGrange College's programming and capacity can match that need.** As part of the analysis, efforts should be conducted to determine if program enrollment is in-line with the amount of employer demand. If enrollment falls short, pursue a marketing campaign focused on raising awareness about the competitive wages these positions can offer and the benefits of the education West Georgia Tech and LaGrange College can provide.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County's uninsured and working poor have difficulty affording both preventative and treatment/recovery healthcare services. Additionally, Troup County has a mortality rate above the state average and other measures that raise concerns about the overall health of the community.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Enhance the commitment to Troup County's existing preventive healthcare to improve the community's overall health and capacity for treatment and recovery care.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment Sustainable Development Report Card

Many in the community interview process expressed concerns regarding the rising costs of healthcare and the high-rates of uninsured, even among the working poor. An estimated 15.3 percent of Troup County’s population is without health insurance. While this is a national concern, and Troup’s uninsurance rate is lower than the state average (15.8 percent), it still represents a community challenge to be addressed. Further, Troup County’s comparatively high mortality rate and its high instances of preventable and avoidable hospitalizations raise concerns about the apparently large portion of the population not receiving the preventative and early diagnosis care that they need.

**Y-5 Troup County should support the work of its healthcare institutions and agencies to raise awareness about disease prevention and treatment services.** Potentially as a component of the “Prosperity Campaign” described in Recommendation P-27, the effort can focus on using community centers and other opportunities to raise awareness about the many resources that are available. An example of how Troup County can help would be to direct people to the many resources available at the Support District 4 Public Health Services’ website.<sup>27</sup> Another example is helping Troup Cares use the \$100,500 grant it was awarded in January 2008 to implement its mission to provide health services to the working poor. A key means of helping Troup Cares will be to help garner physician interest in providing volunteer hours.

**Y-6 To help reduce the number of uninsured residents and enhance coverage affordability, Troup County should continue to support opportunities to help area businesses afford health insurance coverage for their employees.** Small businesses often find it difficult to find affordable health insurance coverage for their employees. Efforts should be made to spread the word on the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce program that provides insurance discounts for its members through Blue Cross / Blue Shield.

**Y-7 Troup County should encourage area employers to promote and incentivize employee fitness.** Employers should be encouraged to utilize the health wellness assessment developed by one of the community’s local registered nurses. The City of LaGrange’s incorporation of this assessment into its “8n8” program, which is a volunteer, team-based effort to promote employee fitness, should be considered a model to be replicated by other employers.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Many human service professionals interviewed believe that the community would benefit from more comprehensive mental health services to address everything from mental illness to victim services to substance abuse recovery assistance.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Raise awareness of existing resources, and include psychiatrists and psychologists in the physician retention and recruitment initiative.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment Sustainable Development Report Card

Many human service providers expressed concerns regarding the availability of mental healthcare in Troup County, as it relates to mental illness, victim services (specifically, services for rape trauma were referenced on several occasions), and substance abuse recovery.

**Y-8 Troup County should create a mental health task force dedicated to raising awareness and working to fill any gaps in existing service capacity to address depression and other mental illnesses, rape and other crises recovery, and substance abuse recovery.** Awareness is an important part of this, as research found Troup County has a number of existing resources to be supported, including the state Mental Health Clinic, Pathways Center of LaGrange, Center for

<sup>27</sup> For more information, visit <http://www.district4health.org>.

Creative Growth and Human Development, the Self-Help Harbor, Twin Cedars Youth Services, and others. The following are a few additional recommendations regarding this initiative:

- Healthcare, human services, faith-based and industry representatives should be encouraged to participate in the task force.
- As part of the effort to garner support and raise awareness, the task force can use available research and data regarding the importance and need for stronger mental healthcare services. The specific needs of youth, adults, and the elderly should be covered in the awareness raising and service gap identification efforts.
- As needed, the task force can establish strong partnerships with inpatient mental health providers and treatment facilities in Columbus and Atlanta. For the longer term, the community's existing mental and healthcare providers can ascertain the potential of serving more inpatient mental healthcare needs locally.
- The task force should partner with the physicians recruitment initiative to work to include psychologists and psychiatrists in the most in-need specialties-focused component of the physician recruitment initiative.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Good news is the teenage pregnancy rate has declined in recent years, but the County's rate remains quite high compared to the state average.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Continue work to reduce the instances of teenage pregnancy and enhance support networks for teenage mothers.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community The Knowledge Driven Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment Sustainable Development Report Card

In the interviews with human service providers, teen pregnancy was identified as a community concern. Data support this, with regards to the teenage pregnancy rate and repeat teenage pregnancy rate. Troup County has a number of existing programs to address teen pregnancy that can be the foundation for building additional support services. Several of these include expanded services targeting teenage mothers; on more than one occasion it was shared that there is a need for more of these types of services for young mothers and their children.

**Y-9 Troup County should focus its efforts to raise awareness regarding its current programs and services and explore opportunities to expand as warranted by demand for such services.** The existing programs include SPOT, which provides teen counseling, birth control, pregnancy tests, and STD checks. Another resource, ALPHA, provides teen pregnancy and parenting workshops. Twin Cedars Youth Services has a program, Circle of Care, dedicated to supporting teenage mothers to help prevent repeat pregnancies.

- Bringing representatives of existing resources together to determine potential opportunities or areas of need to further support teenage parents can help define how existing efforts can be strengthened. Encourage representatives to be open to redirection to ensure no unnecessary duplication of services and fulfill any gaps in support services. Potential focus areas for future expanded support for teenage mothers include child care, tutoring and career development services for mothers, and individual and group-based counseling.

- Y-10** The human service organizations, faith-based organizations, and the school system should each include in their youth services programming and educational information that speaks to birth control and abstinence. In the youth survey, 63.0 percent of respondents said they would like more of these types of education programs. As part of that education, teenage mothers should be asked to be guest speakers, because teens hearing from their own peers can be a powerful means of raising awareness about the impact of becoming a teenage parent can make on a teen’s life in terms of social, athletic, educational and career pursuits.
- Y-11** Troup County should commit to existing and renewed efforts to provide mentoring and career guidance to area youth, as a recognized means of preventing teen pregnancy. It is often said that teen pregnancy rates decline where youth have developed a strong commitment to their academics and career goals through adult mentor relationships.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County’s youth are concerned about the reportedly high-rates of drug use in the community, a problem affecting communities everywhere.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Aggressively work to fight drug and alcohol use and addiction among youth and the adult population.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community The Knowledge Driven Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment 2008 Survey of Troup County Youth

Troup County’s youth are clearly concerned about the prevalence of drugs in their community and identified substance abuse as a major challenge. In the survey, 46 percent said it is very easy to get drugs. With an additional 19 percent indicating the less severe category of easy access to drugs, which makes it a total of 65 percent of Troup County’s youth indicating that if they wanted to, they could easily acquire drugs. Most youth would seemingly support greater awareness building and education concerning drug use, with over half, or 55.1 percent, of survey respondents indicating they would like the number of alcohol and drug prevention classes expanded.

- Y-12** Law enforcement should continue to make cracking down on drug-related criminal activity a top priority. There has been recent success closing down illegal drug lab facilities, and law enforcement should continue to be vigilant with these activities. Communications should remain open between law enforcement and neighborhood leadership about what the community can do to help law enforcement crack down on facilities, dealers, and users.
- Y-13** Troup County should consider drug addiction recovery high on its agenda. This effort could be integrated into the mental health task force suggested in Recommendation Y-8. Although there are a number of local organizations supporting this need, efforts should be made to determine if there are any gaps in services that can be addressed locally. While efforts should be made to expand the relationships with inpatient mental health providers and treatment facilities in Columbus and Atlanta to assist with addressing local needs, for the longer term, the community’s existing mental and health care providers can ascertain the potential of serving more inpatient mental health care needs locally.
- Y-14** Troup County should maintain a strong commitment to Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools, and use this as a vehicle for advancing drug awareness education and other programs directed at the prevention and reduction of drug and alcohol abuse. The group’s work can incorporate existing efforts, as well as add some new approaches based on best practices in drug use prevention. For example, it has been found that allowing students to have small group discussions about drug use and to receive life skills training in refusal

communications can be effective in reducing drug use among juveniles.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, having youth, or “peer,” guest speakers on the topics of refusal communities and the adverse affects of drug use can be very meaningful. To assist its success, Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools should pursue potential funding, for example, the federal Drug Free Communities program grant.<sup>29</sup>

- Y-15** Similar to dealing with juvenile crime, Troup County can work to address juvenile drug use by being a leading advocate of the support and expansion of existing youth development work, particularly mentoring and career development activities. Strong adult mentor relationships and career goal development can help juveniles’ commit to their future and avoid alcohol and drug use.

## Public Safety

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County’s instances of crime have increased in recent years, and have consistently been much higher than the state average.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Continue to support and advance the crime prevention and response work of the Troup County Sheriff’s Office and the Police Departments of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Good Habitat Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment Sustainable Development Report Card

Local reports suggest the crime rate may have declined in recent years for which data are not yet available, but, as of 2005, Troup County’s rate of criminal activity was 69.05, substantially higher than the state’s 43.72 rate. Additionally, community stakeholders expressed the desire to address public safety concerns.

- G-8** Troup County should maintain its commitment to the ongoing work of its Sheriff’s Office and three Police Departments. Troup County can help the four public safety agencies by raising interest in and awareness of the neighborhood watch programs, code enforcement support (based on the broken window theory of crime prevention), crime stoppers, and youth and senior citizen academies. Each of these is a recognized means of addressing public safety concerns and require strong citizen participation. Troup County can help raise awareness about the importance of citizen participation via the local media and faith and community-based organizations in the community.
- G-9** Troup County should invest in additional law enforcement personnel as its population grows. Maintaining a strong police force, in numbers and quality, is the best means of preventing and responding to crime. If community leaders want to commit to reducing the crime rate and keeping it low, additional funding to expand capacity will likely be needed. Additionally, local law enforcement should continue to have a regular, visible presence in key areas of concerns, such as high-crime neighborhoods, downtown and other public meeting places, and schools and college campuses.
- G-10** To support community-wide efforts to enhance collaboration, Troup County Sheriff’s Office, LaGrange Police Department, West Point Police Department, and Hogansville Police Department should identify means of enhancing communications and collaborative efforts.

<sup>28</sup> For more information on these concepts, visit [http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/drug\\_alcohol\\_education\\_prevention.htm](http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/drug_alcohol_education_prevention.htm). For additional thoughts, visit [http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/tss\\_learning.aspx?PageReq=TSSLearningTitleIV](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_learning.aspx?PageReq=TSSLearningTitleIV).

<sup>29</sup> For more information, visit <http://ondcp.gov/dfc/index.html>.

The leadership of the three police departments and the Sheriff's office should gather semi-annually to discuss shared concerns and opportunities to further the community's public safety needs by working together and learning from each other's successes.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County's juvenile arrest and commitment rates have increased in recent years.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Reduce the instances of juvenile crime by maintaining the community's commitment to existing, and future, support services for at-risk youth.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Good Habitat Community The Knowledge Driven Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment 2008 Survey of Troup County Youth Sustainable Development Report Card

In the youth survey, 12.7 percent of respondents said that crime and public safety were the biggest challenge the community was facing, the second-highest rated item. A notable 6.0 percent of respondents (the fourth-highest rated item) said they believe the community could pursue additional public safety improvements. Over the past few years for which data are available, the County's juvenile arrest and commitment rates have increased, and remain higher than Georgia averages. In 2004, the County's juvenile arrest rate was 8.0 percent compared to the state average of 6.1 percent.

- G-11 Troup County should provide strong leadership in the area of juvenile crime prevention by maintaining a commitment to agencies dedicated to youth development, with a particular emphasis on mentoring activities.** Focusing on the interests and career potential of youth via adult mentor relationships is a powerful way to help at-risk youth redirect their future. Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the Boys and Girls Club, and Communities in Schools are just a few of the organizations already dedicated to youth development. Troup County should advocate on behalf of these organizations for increased volunteer participation, particularly from the faith-based and business communities. Garnering support from religious and business leaders to encourage increased participation among their congregations and employees, respectively, can have a meaningful impact.
- G-12 Troup County should devise a support network for juveniles released from detention which focuses on counseling, tutoring and community involvement.** By supporting recently-released juveniles with strong counseling and mentoring relationships, Troup County can help them recognize their potential and identify and pursue career goals. Long-term benefit to the community is a reduction in repeat offenders.
- G-13 Troup County should incorporate conflict resolution education into middle and high school curriculums and human services and faith-based youth programming.** In the youth survey, over half (53.6%) of respondents said they would like more assistance in this area. These types of educational programs can help reduce instances of teenage violence as they help students develop skills in finding more productive means of resolving disagreements. Part of the process can be to encourage students to volunteer to serve as "peer mediators" for their fellow students.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> For more information about a best practice peer mediation program, visit Las Vegas-Clark County's Neighborhood Justice Center at [http://co.clark.nv.us/social\\_service/NJC\\_SPMP.htm](http://co.clark.nv.us/social_service/NJC_SPMP.htm).

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County's youth are concerned about the reportedly high-rates of drug use in the community, a problem affecting communities everywhere.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Aggressively work to fight drug and alcohol use and addiction among youth and the adult population.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community The Knowledge Driven Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment 2008 Survey of Troup County Youth

Troup County's youth are clearly concerned about the prevalence of drugs in their community and identified substance abuse as a major challenge. In the survey, 46 percent said it is very easy to get drugs. With an additional 19 percent indicating the less severe category of easy access to drugs, which makes it a total of 65 percent of Troup County's youth indicating that if they wanted to, they could easily acquire drugs. Most youth would seemingly support greater awareness building and education concerning drug use, with over half, or 55.1 percent, of survey respondents indicating they would like the number of alcohol and drug prevention classes expanded.

- Y-12 Law enforcement should continue to make cracking down on drug-related criminal activity a top priority.** There has been recent success closing down illegal drug lab facilities, and law enforcement should continue to be vigilant with these activities. Communications should remain open between law enforcement and neighborhood leadership about what the community can do to help law enforcement crack down on facilities, dealers, and users.
- Y-13 The proposed mental health task force (Recommendation Y-8), should include drug addiction recovery high on its agenda.** While there are a number of local organizations supporting this need, the task force should determine if there are any gaps in services that can be addressed locally. Additionally, as previously stated, the task force can establish strong partnerships with inpatient mental health providers and treatment facilities in Columbus and Atlanta. For the longer term, the community's existing mental and healthcare providers can ascertain the potential of serving more inpatient mental healthcare needs locally.
- Y-14 Troup County should maintain a strong commitment to Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools, and use this as a vehicle for advancing drug awareness education and other programs directed at the prevention and reduction of drug and alcohol abuse.** The group's work can incorporate existing efforts, as well as add some new approaches based on best practices in drug use prevention. For example, it has been found that allowing students to have small group discussions about drug use and to receive life skills training in refusal communications can be effective in reducing drug use among juveniles.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, having youth, or "peer," guest speakers on the topics of refusal communities and the adverse affects of drug use can be very meaningful. To assist its success, Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools should pursue potential funding, for example, the federal Drug Free Communities program grant.<sup>32</sup>
- Y-15 Similar to dealing with juvenile crime, Troup County can work to address juvenile drug use by being a leading advocate of the support and expansion of existing youth development work, particularly mentoring and career development activities.** Strong adult mentor

<sup>31</sup> For more information on these concepts, visit [http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/drug\\_alcohol\\_education\\_prevention.htm](http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/drug_alcohol_education_prevention.htm). For additional thoughts, visit [http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/tss\\_learning.aspx?PageReq=TSSLearningTitleIV](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_learning.aspx?PageReq=TSSLearningTitleIV).

<sup>32</sup> For more information, visit <http://ondcp.gov/dfc/index.html>.

relationships and career goal development can help juveniles' commit to their future and avoid alcohol and drug use.

## Family and Children

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County has an above average percentage of residents in poverty, and not enough of its citizens are reaching self-sufficiency. In recent years, the child poverty rate has risen and, possibly as a result, the community has a high incidence of child neglect.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Continue to support the needs of working families facing economic challenges and explore opportunities for expanded efforts. Coordinate a public-private prosperity initiative, aimed at lifting up those at the lowest end of the economic ladder.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Prosperous Community The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community The Quality Governance Community
<b>REFERENCE (S):</b>	Sustainable Development Report Card Human Services Assessment

Several indicators point to the need for Troup County to engage in a comprehensive “prosperity campaign” for its most economically vulnerable citizens. Among them is Troup County’s relatively high percentage of households who earn less than \$10,000 a year (12.2 percent). This is higher than both the region and the state percentages. In addition, Troup County’s poverty rate is higher than average for the region and for the state. Troup County’s food stamp participation rate has been increasing, and the percent of residents receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) has increased as well.

The human services professionals in the area discussed how the socioeconomic barriers prevent many of Troup County’s residents from being able to participate in the economy in any meaningful way. The county also appears to slightly lag behind the West Georgia region for the percent of its budget dedicated to health and human services, 2.7 percent to 3.1 percent respectively.

**P-27 Troup County should take a lead role in coordinating a “prosperity campaign” that is focused on improving the human condition.** This should involve a comprehensive effort aimed at reducing poverty and helping more citizens reach self-sufficiency. Key partners should be elected officials and local governments; social service, workforce development and economic development organizations; and local media.

As a part of this effort, develop written brochures, flyers, etc., that can be distributed at each human service, workforce development and government agency. This ensures that no matter how or where a resident comes in contact with a service provider, they will also become aware of the other agencies that exist in the county, and the services they provide. Also distribute the materials at community gathering places, such as churches and recreational centers.

Work with the media to report on the campaign and how people can find information. Develop a one-stop website that provides all of the relevant information on the campaign, participating organizations and available services and products.

For the one-stop website to be most effective, it should maintain up-to-date contact information for how to give or receive support from these agencies. This initiative would

require a designated staff person to be responsible for updating the information and reaching out to local organizations to get information updates. Additionally, local organizations would need to enable its success by directing their clients to the resource, via public computers at their agency, the library, faith-based organizations, and other community centers.

- P-28** Troup County should define a common agenda among service providers to help foster awareness among citizens eligible for government assistance about services and how to utilize the services. Often these campaigns begin by promoting the earned income tax credit (EITC) to community residents, and making sure they are aware of this federal benefit. However, it can also extend to food stamps (EBT cards), Medicare, Medicaid, PeachCare, Head Start, etc. As a part of this effort, develop written brochures, flyers, or other printed material that can be distributed at each social service, workforce development and government agency. This ensures that no matter how or where a resident comes in contact with a service provider, they will also become aware of the other agencies that exist in the county, and the services they provide.
- P-29** Troup County should devise a means of more systematically addressing the needs of the local population. Troup County should continue to investigate the feasibility of utilizing case management tracking software for local agencies to use to advance client services and referral success rates. This could be a powerful tool for advancing the efficiency of the system and its ability to meet the most pressing needs of clients, if there was strong agency participation and HIPAA-related concerns could be appropriately addressed.
- Troup County should host an annual forum for human service providers, to help strengthen interagency networks to increase successful client referrals.
  - Troup County should pursue the possibility of implementing a 2-1-1 line in the community to enhance access to human service resources.
- P-30** Troup County should work to expand its capacity to serve youth. This should be a two-pronged effort of expanding the capacity of existing agencies, for example helping Big Brothers, Big Sisters by advocating for more adults to participate as “Bigs,” and second, to add additional services. The addition of services should focus on building upon resources that already exist. For example, Troup County is known for having a large number of faith-based organizations. This resource could be tapped into by encouraging religious leaders to identify opportunities to provide more after-school activities on their properties, with the support of their congregations. Additionally, the community could explore generating support for using school facilities as the site for additional after-school activities operated by area human service organizations or the schools themselves.
- P-31** Troup County should explore the potential for designating one main coordinator for human services. The coordinator would serve as the point person for all programs relating to human services, ranging from early childhood to elderhood. The opportunities for designating a point person should be explored with area collaborative agencies such as the United Way of West Georgia and the Family Connections Partnership. If there is not existing capacity to provide this role, then consideration should be given to potentially creating and funding a new position housed within one of these agencies or with local government to serve as this point person.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Many children enter the school system without being “Kindergarten-ready.” Troup County’s workforce would benefit from advancing child care options, with a focus on preparing children to enter kindergarten.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Increase awareness and support for numerous programs already in existence, and fill in any gaps that may arise.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Knowledge Driven Community The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Workforce Development Assessment Human Services Assessment

Many community stakeholders expressed an understanding of the importance of the zero to four age range as an opportunity to begin developing skills that will prepare the children for kindergarten. Advancing child care support networks can also help ensure that children are being properly cared for while their dual-income or single parents are at work.

It was shared how kindergarten teachers are faced with the challenge of trying to serve children of varying needs and abilities. Given the importance of this particular year in creating the foundation for learning among children, it is imperative to be able to fully address the needs of each child. It was shared how some children are deficient in Kindergarten and how this can become a handicap, for their self-esteem, ability to learn, and in other ways throughout their school career if their needs are not met. While some kindergarten teachers are assisted by a paraprofessional, this is reportedly not the situation in every classroom.

**K-31 Troup County should approach early childhood development in a holistic collaborative sense through a dynamic partnership among Troup County Schools and various social, health, and workforce development organizations to foster initiatives to help prepare children for the transition to Kindergarten.** Recognizing that a child’s ability to be a successful learner in K-12 depends upon fundamental developmental opportunities from birth through 4 years of age, community professionals should partner on creating a more seamless approach to addressing the needs of children. One workforce developer pointed to the example of how pediatrician offices could be used to provide “incidental learning” opportunities to parents and babies during immunization times.

**K-32 Troup County should support the work the United Way, its affiliates, and other agencies have already begun to strengthen the child care and educational options for children under the age of 6.** Troup County should use the School Readiness Team of stakeholder agencies that the United Way Success by Six program has already assembled to continue to advance its goals of identifying at-risk children, increasing parent awareness, supporting existing programs (including Summer PLAY), and expanding parent education (including Parents as Teachers, First Steps, Coalition for Positive Change, Walt’s World Community Resources). Troup County’s support should take the form of awareness-raising of the good programs already in existence to help garner additional financing and volunteer hours where needed.

**K-33 Troup County should continue to reach out to informal child care provider networks.** Through faith and community-based organizations, youth clubs, the media, and other outlets, awareness should be raised regarding the resources available (for example, the United Way’s Born Learning toolkit) to educate informal child care providers (i.e., family or friends who provide regular child care for small groups of children) about ways to engage and educate children in their care. This awareness-raising campaign can also highlight the many support resources available to parents and these providers. Possibly through the United Way, Troup County can create a coordinated support network for new or otherwise small formal and

informal child care centers so that providers may share experiences and resource ideas with one another.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County has a number of success stories for providing arts and recreational activities for area youth.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Continue the commitment to maintaining the success of these programs, and raising community awareness, particularly among youth, regarding their availability.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Entertaining Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment

Troup County has a number of local celebrities who have committed to sharing their knowledge and success with area youth. Golfer Allen Doyle and *Hairspray* star Elijah Kelley have demonstrated their commitment to their home town via the First Tee and Elijah Kelley Foundation, respectively. Additionally, many in Troup recognize the value of organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, and Girls Scouts as positive experiences that incorporate valuable character building, arts, and recreation into their activities.

- E-6** First Tee, a golf and life skills learning program for youth ages 8 to 18, is a tremendous asset which the community should continue to support and help raise awareness among youth about this opportunity. With its unique approach to tying life skills learning to recreational fun, a scholars program, and the PACE resource center, First Tee offers a range of support for participating youth.
- E-7** Troup County should support the Elijah Kelley Foundation and its plans to create the Elijah Kelley Center for Performing Arts to provide music, dance and drama training. A center of this kind would be a great opportunity to involve area youth in more after-school activities and receive a strong cultural education background. In the youth survey, 9.9 percent of respondents said they would like “training/studio/concerts for music, arts, and hobbies,” and this center would help fill that perceived need. Once open, one means of ensuring the center’s success is to determine a viable option to transport participants from school to the center, to alleviate youth transportation concerns.
- E-8** Troup County should continue to support all of its local entities that make a positive contribution to after-school, weekend, and summer arts and recreational activities for local youth. Just a few of these programs include the Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Twin Cedars’ Camp Viola. An important means of supporting these organizations is to identify ways to provide scholarships for the most in-need students, where membership or activity fees apply.

## Housing<sup>33</sup>

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	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.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Work to maintain a range of quality, affordable housing stock to match the range in area income levels, and develop more mixed-income communities.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Good Habitat Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment The View From Community Stakeholders Sustainable Development Report Card

Housing was one of the frequently referenced community concerns in the interviews with human service professionals. It was also highlighted as one of the leading opportunities identified by the 154 community stakeholder interviewees. Additionally, when these stakeholders were asked what the community most needed to replace, topping the list of answers was substandard housing. Even external stakeholders were aware of housing concerns in the Troup area, citing housing affordability as a weakness and housing choice as one of the critically pressing issues facing the community.

In fact, data show the value of new residential construction in the county has doubled in just six years, from \$74,042 in 2000 to \$142,845 in 2006. In the rental market, it is estimated that 44 percent of Troup County's renters cannot afford the local two bedroom unit fair market rent (Georgia's percentage is 41 percent). With data supporting the perceived affordability concerns, and the expected population growth's natural impact on the local housing market, addressing housing related needs is an area of critical importance for Troup County.

- G-1 Troup County should continue to provide strong support for its agencies focused on affordable housing development.** In LaGrange, DASH (Dependable, Affordable, Sustainable Housing) is well recognized for rehabilitating existing stock and facilitating neighborhood revitalization. In the West Point area, the Chattahoochee Fuller Center Project (CFCP) has had much success taking a block-by-block approach to replacing dilapidated homes with new ones at significantly reduced prices thanks to volunteer hours and donations. Finally, there is a local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity which serves Troup and Chambers County, Alabama. Troup County should demonstrate its commitment to the ongoing success of these agencies by advocating for additional volunteer hours, community fundraising, and corporate sponsorships. Additionally, potentially via the "prosperity campaign" in Recommendation P-27, government and non-profit human service agencies should help raise awareness among eligible parties about the affordable home ownership opportunities these three entities offer.
- G-2 To complement the work of the three agencies identified above, Troup County should consider the possibility of creating a Housing Trust Fund, funded by public and private sector contributions.** The fund would be used to help finance workforce housing development, in the form of grants or loans, in designated areas of need. Eligibility could be tied to location, affordability, number of units in the structure, and even quality of materials and design.
- G-3 Via tax breaks or zoning regulation flexibility, Troup County should incentivize the development of affordable housing.** The three municipalities and the county can use these measures to incentivize developers to reserve a certain percentage of their project to a

<sup>33</sup> Recommendations designed by Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute and Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development.

median income based measure of affordability. For example, the community could offer the incentive to projects which agree to set aside 20 percent of their units for a rent or sales price equivalent to 30 percent of the household income of those with a household income of 80 percent or less of the county’s median household income. Troup County should also use tax breaks or zoning regulation flexibility to incentivize infill development of the most-in need types of residential structures. Infill development puts less strain on infrastructure development costs, and when done in tandem with pedestrian and streetscape improvements, can improve accessibility. To fulfill the gap in multi-family housing options (both owner and renter-occupied) while maintaining a desirable scale, Troup County can focus on encouraging smaller multi-family unit dwelling types, such as duplexes and quadplexes.<sup>34</sup> All such measures should be implemented in a manner that advances the creation of a stronger mixing of incomes in Troup County’s neighborhoods. This recommendation could also dovetail with Recommendation WP-8 regarding joint development review and efforts to regulate and incentivize desired development.

**G-4 West Point, Hogansville, and Troup County should proceed with plans to conduct a housing assessment to facilitate the resolution of substandard housing concerns.** Similarly, LaGrange should maintain its commitment to its existing efforts which have had much reported success.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	While some of the older neighborhoods have declined, much of the quality remaining quality housing stock and historic street patterns remain.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	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.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Good Habitat Community The Well Planned Community The Navigable Community The Environmental Steward Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Redevelopment Assessment A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability Quality Growth Audit

The cities have maintained much of their historic development patterns, which are relatively compact and connected grids with density and the intensity of uses diminishing in a radial fashion from the central business districts. Each downtown has a distinct and charming personality and many of the historic neighborhoods are characterized by a comfortable diversity of architectural styles and some variation in home size and type. Such development is the inspiration for the New Urbanist (or neotraditional) movement, which embraces the concept that well-connected places where walking and public space allow for causal interaction create an authentic and sustainable sense of community.

**G-5 Troup County and the cities should continue to preserve the historic downtowns and neighborhoods.** As DASH’s community supported efforts have shown, progress is being made to address the problems of substandard housing. Still, areas of poor housing remain and efforts must continue. And while some progress has been made in all of the downtowns, continued effort is needed to create vibrant and growing centers. Consider:

- Partnering with local banks to create a Home Improvement Program (HIP) to provide low- and moderate-income residents with technical assistance and low interest rate loans to

<sup>34</sup> Some of the recommendations informed by the June 1, 2004 report, “Making the Case for Mixed-Income and Mixed-Use Communities” developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology for Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. and MICI.

maintain their homes, and thereby help stabilize neighborhoods. In most cases, loans are not repaid unless the house is sold or changes ownership. Such a program can be established throughout county or in select neighborhoods and may be run by the county or cities, or by the housing authorities.

- Creating a Façade Improvement Program for the downtown and select existing neighborhood commercial nodes. Such a program is designed to stimulate private investment in exterior improvements by creating public/private partnerships. Downtown plans should define design guidelines that must be met to qualify for the improvement program.
- Adopting development regulations that ensure that infill development, both commercial and residential, complement the surrounding buildings and neighborhood, particularly in scale, volume, setback, street orientation, and fenestration.
- Encouraging infill and expansion of the downtowns of each of the cities, while maintaining a mixing of uses. Downtowns can support a greater density, intensity, and variety of uses than other areas of the community because they are better served by infrastructure. Encouraging residential development in the downtowns can be a catalyst to reduce commercial space vacancies as businesses start to realize a potential clientele. Downtowns can be attractive residential locations for young couples and singles who want to live near entertainment areas, as well as older adults who may be looking to downsize their homes and live in areas that have more services nearby. When exploring downtown development it is imperative that historic preservation (protecting the architecture and elements that inform the city’s unique character) and green space (giving people living in smaller houses access to public outdoor space) be equally addressed.

**G-6 The cities should look to the character of successful older neighborhoods and areas as inspiration for policies and incentives for new development. They should consider:**

- Conducting an assessment of select neighborhoods to create a Community Design Guidebook to be used by designers of new developments. The neighborhoods selected should reflect the range of densities and housing sizes throughout the cities and should reflect the distinct character of each city. Augmented with environmental goals, the guidelines can be used to offer incentives to encourage developers to create new communities that reflect the character of the existing development.
- Incentives, like density bonuses in appropriate areas, can also be used to encourage the creation of needed housing. Following the inventory of housing supply (quantity and quality) that is scheduled to be part of the county’s comprehensive planning process, a better assessment of housing needs and therefore appropriate policies can be established. Combined with the proposed Community Design Guidebook, it is possible to encourage the development of high-quality affordable housing. The monitoring of available affordable housing should be an important component of any performance or indicator system to monitor progress and illustrate success.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Some in Troup County have become concerned that the needs of transient and longer-term homeless people are not being met, and the housing crises raises concerns about whether the community will face a high number of evictions.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Advance awareness and availability of support services for the temporarily and longer-term homeless.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Good Habitat Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment

Human service providers cited concerns about both short and long-term homeless in the community. While there are some services and support in place, and some homeless at least temporarily find accommodations with friends or family, this is still an area where the community’s support service system could advance assistance options.

**G-7 Troup County should expand housing-related support services for persons in need.** Currently, the primary resources are the housing authorities which provide rent subsidies to eligible families, and LaGrange Personal Aid Association which provides assistance to families in emergency situations (i.e., income-provider becomes ill or is hospitalized). Troup County should look into the possibility of expanding services, via an existing agency or alternative opportunity, for those who are evicted from their homes. Reliable data was not available regarding the size of the County’s long-term homeless population; but, it may be worthwhile to pursue the possibility of a small non-profit shelter to better serve both the long and short-term homeless population.

## Transportation<sup>35</sup>

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County will experience increasing demand for a more robust public transportation system as the population increases.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Troup County, working in conjunction with the Cities and human service partners, should develop an incremental exploration to expand public transportation services.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Navigable Community The Good Habitat Community The Prosperous Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment Transportation Assessment Workforce Development Assessment

Several stakeholders expressed a need for enhanced public transportation services. Approximately 12 percent of households in the county do not have access to a vehicle and in some areas it is as much as 46 percent.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, population projections show a growing older adult population segment, which will have greater need of transportation services.

The lack of reliable or public transportation was the most pervasive concern raised by human service professionals serving Troup County. This critical issue affects everything from a person’s ability to access jobs, training and education opportunities, to healthcare services, and to other basic human service needs. Troup County must determine a suitable option for creating a public transit service.

**N-3 Troup County should explore opportunities to expand the public transportation system.** One mechanism for doing this would be by convening a Task Force composed of representatives from the cities and county, Georgia Department of Transportation, and key human services and workforce development professionals. Whatever the mechanism of choice, the county should consider:

- Assessing the adequacy of the current public transportation system and services provided by individual agencies and explore where the current dial-a-ride system could be expanded to satisfy unmet needs, or if a flexible-route or fixed-route system warrants exploration. The task force should explore the pros and cons of a single-coordinated system, which can benefit from shared vehicle, staff, and administrative responsibilities. If a joint system is

<sup>35</sup> Recommendations designed by Georgia Tech’s Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development.

<sup>36</sup> Or Housing Units, as described by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

- favorable, then careful consideration should be directed to who—public sector, non-profit, or private sector—would operate the system. Depending on which entity operates the system, different requirements, funding sources, and demands will apply to the entity.
- If the assessment identifies the need for a flexible-route or fixed-route system, Troup County should conduct a feasibility analysis that examines areas of demand (where residents in need of such service live), destinations (e.g. hospitals, pharmacies, grocery stores, job centers, community facilities). Care should be taken in examining requirements pertaining to compliance with the American with Disabilities Act in relation to the type of service being operated. Depending on who operates the system and the style of operation, an expanded public transportation system may require wheelchair-accessible vehicles and specially trained personnel, which may be cost prohibitive. In addition, consideration should be given toward exploring environmentally friendly alternatives such as alternative fuel vehicles and electric shuttles. The *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Transportation Assessment* includes case studies of communities with various levels of public transportation services and sources of funding.<sup>37</sup>

## Community Culture and Diversity

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	There is strong financial and volunteer support of Troup County's non-profit organizations, but there is still opportunity to expand efforts to achieve a more cohesive, welcoming community.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Troup County should continue to expand its commitment (measured in volunteer hours and financial contributions) to the organizations focused on improving the provision of human services in Troup County.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community The Well Planned Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	Human Services Assessment

From 2002 to 2006, Troup County's United Way-affiliated volunteer participation increased by 13.2 percent, a testament to the strong commitment and civic-mindedness of the community. The community also has strong financial support, thanks in large part to the Callaway Foundation which has awarded over \$286 million in grants to the local community over the past 60 years. The County's registered 501(c)(3) organizations have an average reported assets of \$6.2 million, consistent with the state average. Average reported revenues, however, lag state averages by about \$700,000. Troup County should continue to leverage its tremendous civic resources to garner new opportunities and new means of supporting the most pressing needs of its citizens.

**Y-16 Troup County should work with local media to raise awareness about the significant charitable spirit which has guided so much of the community's history.** While many know of the generosity of the Callaway Foundation, United Way, and other leading organizations in the community, pursuing a campaign that focuses on how strong Troup's community spirit really is will help additional residents to catch that spirit and want to become more involved. The additional volunteer hours and financial support that this effort could help generate would help fulfill the many needs identified in this strategic planning process.

**Y-17 Troup County should host an annual community-wide volunteer day.** These types of focused efforts can generate interest and participation in volunteer activities, not only for that day, but for the future as participants who enjoy the day look forward to volunteering again.

<sup>37</sup> Jon E. Burkhardt, Charles A. Nelson, Gail Murray, David Koffman., 2004. *Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services*. Transportation Cooperative Research Program, Report 101, Transportation Research Board.

Incorporating youth-focused activities into the day is particularly important, to generate interest in mentoring and other activities to support Troup’s youth. Business leaders, the Callaway Foundation, and other community leaders have a valuable role in raising the profile, and thus the success, of this idea, so should be encouraged to be involved in making it a success.

**Y-18 Troup County’s high schools should consider making volunteer activities a graduation requirement.** This can be a valuable means of garnering not just additional volunteer hours, but also has the potential to develop students’ excitement about being involved in their communities and to develop within them a lifelong commitment to civic involvement. Atlanta has instituted this requirement, so would be a potential resource for identifying the best means of implementing this recommendation.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	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.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Troup County should explore all opportunities to embrace and leverage its community diversity.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	The View From Community Stakeholders Human Services Assessment Workforce Development Assessment

Further embracing and leveraging community diversity was identified by stakeholders and external partners alike as an opportunity for model-setting in Troup County because of the strong civic, business, and political leadership. It was strongly advocated to pursue opportunities to champion the diversity present in the region. Stakeholders also called for better engagement of minorities in community decision-making and leadership roles. Boding well for the future, Troup County Schools has successfully implemented significant efforts to create a more diverse community in its student population at each school, an effort which is anticipated to have longer term positive impacts with regards to addressing the needs of a diverse population. As can be said of health care services or housing affordability, it is true that dealing with the diversity will only be expected to intensify as a challenge with the ensuing growth.

**Y-19 Troup County should garner support for leading a “model” effort of cultural change, with the first step being to foster creative dialogue about diversity in the community.** Troup County can begin building momentum via the LaGrange College Leadership Council, which is a recognized leader in setting the forum for such creative dialogues, most recently on the subject of sustainability. Through such effort, LaGrange College has showcased its talents in playing an important role in the dialogue process.

**Y-20 Troup County should consider creating a “diversity task force” of a wider spectrum of leaders in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.** The purpose of this task force would be to focus on championing and celebrating diversity in the region.

**Y-21 When Troup County formulates a leadership committee or similar group of community members, continued efforts should be taken to ensure that there is effective representation from various constituencies in the community in approximately proportional numbers.** A commitment to this approach should not only include strong representation from the largest race and ethnic groups in the County, but also balanced gender and age membership. This principal should be applied to task forces, councils, and other groups formed

to advance county-wide goals, and other initiatives that help community members feel engaged, such as the chamber’s Leadership Troup and Youth Leadership programs.

- Y-22** Troup County should encourage more emerging community leaders of minority race or ethnic background to participate in leadership development programs. Working with leadership organizations - such as the LaGrange College Leadership Council, Leadership Troup, the Troup County Resource Commission, and faith-based organizations - the community can expand efforts to help identify “next generation” leaders and to encourage them to participate in leadership development programs. To demonstrate its commitment to this effort, Troup County could explore the possibility of providing scholarships or some form of incentive for emerging leaders to participate in a leadership development program.

<b>OBSERVATION:</b>	Troup County’s faith-based community is one of its greatest assets.
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Take advantage of this asset as an opportunity to advance the community’s goals.
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL(S):</b>	The Neighborly Community The Well Planned Community
<b>REFERENCE(S):</b>	The View From Community Stakeholders Human Services Assessment

Many community stakeholders referenced what a valuable role Troup County’s many religious leaders could play in helping to shape the community’s future and achieve the goals of this strategic process. Troup County has capacity in this area, thanks in large part to the role the Callaway Foundation has played in fostering church development in the community. In 2000, it was estimated that Troup County had 1.91 faith-based congregations per 1,000 people, which was much higher than the Georgia average of 1.09 and the national average of 0.95 that year. This strategy speaks to Troup County’s opportunity to leverage this tremendous capital by encouraging religious leaders to be a model to other community leaders and help serve the attainment of community goals by inspiring their congregations, enhancing their programming that supports the goals, and working collaboratively with others.<sup>38</sup>

- Y-23** The leaders of this strategic planning process should reach out to the community’s religious leaders to educate them about the process and how they can help. By raising awareness among religious leaders about the value that will come out of this strategic planning process once successful implementation is achieved, Troup’s leadership can encourage the community’s faith-based leaders to play an active role in helping to achieve its goals.

- Y-24** Troup County’s religious leaders should join to form an Interdenominational Council. The leadership of Troup County’s faith-based organizations has a tremendous opportunity to inspire change and movement among their congregations to help support community-wide goals. From youth mentoring and health issues to community diversity and public safety, religious organizations can play a very important role in the local community. A starting place is for the religious leadership to meet to discuss concerns, determine collaborative approaches to community-wide issues, and share success stories others can implement. This council would provide a forum for these discussions.

<sup>38</sup> Source: The Association of Religion Data Archives