

Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia

● Recommendations for a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2008



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

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE IN TROUP COUNTY, GEORGIA

Recommendations for a Strategic Plan For Sustainable Development

Produced for

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

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June 2008
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS REPORT	2
ABOUT TROUP COUNTY	2
THE GUIDING FORCE	3
THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS	5
THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK	7
THE BENCHMARKS	8
RECOMMENDATIONS	9
THE WELL PLANNED COMMUNITY	9
THE PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY	13
THE QUALITY GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY	25
THE KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN COMMUNITY	30
THE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD COMMUNITY	42
THE GOOD HABITAT COMMUNITY	47
THE NAVIGABLE COMMUNITY	53
THE ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY	58
THE NEIGHBORLY COMMUNITY	60
THE ENTERTAINING COMMUNITY	69
IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN	74

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.

This report includes recommendations that were reviewed with the Troup County leadership from March through June 2008.

ABOUT TROUP COUNTY



Troup County was formed on June 8, 1825. It is located in West Georgia on the Georgia-Alabama border and is easily accessible via Interstates 85 and 185. The county is within an hour of Auburn, Columbus, and Atlanta. The county seat, centrally located LaGrange, is also Troup's largest city. Hogansville is the gateway to Troup County from the north and West Point is the gateway to both the county and Georgia from the south. The county's rich history has been shaped by its people. For example, it was home to the Nancy Harts, a legendary group of women who helped to save the area from destruction by Union soldiers in 1865 and to Fuller E. Callaway Sr., the textile magnate whose legacy impact on Troup County can still be felt today.¹

The county's many assets include LaGrange College, West Georgia Technical College, the Callaway Foundation, and West Point Lake. It is home to the headquarters for industrial leaders such as Milliken, Interface, and ITC Holding Company (which is the conglomerate for InterCall, Knology, and several other enterprises). Troup County is also the future home of Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia Inc.'s first assembly plant in North America.

¹ Some information derived from Georgia Department of Community Affairs, County Snapshots.

THE GUIDING FORCE

Leadership Team

Following is the Leadership Team steering the strategic planning effort.

TROUP COUNTY Chairman Ricky Wolfe Mike Dobbs Tod Tentler	CITY OF WEST POINT Mayor Drew Ferguson Ed Moon Sammy Osborne	TROUP COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION Ed Smith
CITY OF LAGRANGE Mayor Jeff Lukken Tom Hall Nick Overstreet	CITY OF HOGANSVILLE Councilman Jack Leidner Bill Stankiewicz	CALLAWAY FOUNDATION Speer Burdette
		LAGRANGE COLLEGE David Rowe

Mission

The Troup County Leadership Team adopted the following as its mission for the region's strategic plan in June 2007:

- To create a planning framework for sustainable development based on sensitivity and connectivity.
- To guide future decisions in a thoughtful, strategic, and joint way.
- To define actions that foster quality growth.
- To balance development in the cities while maintaining the rural characteristics of other areas of the county.

Vision

The Leadership Team adopted the following vision in November 2007 as the guiding beacon for the planning framework based on the input of more than 150 stakeholders.

To work jointly and in a coordinated way in fostering balanced and healthy economic, environmental, and social development for all citizens, businesses, and institutions.

Acknowledgements

The *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia* initiative has largely benefitted from the insights and advisement provided by more than 200 individuals serving Troup County in some capacity. On the following page is a list of many of the organizations represented by these individuals. For several of these organizations, more than one individual contributed. A number of private citizens, including those who are retired, of a civic capacity, or own property but are not affiliated with a particular organization also contributed. The Georgia Tech team is grateful to all the individuals who took time to share thoughts and suggestions, making it possible to serve Troup County and its cities.

100 Black Men of Troup County
Abbott, Jordan and Koon CPA
Adecco
Alternia Community
American Home Shield
American Medical Response
Association County Commissioners of Georgia, Inc.
Atlanta Gas Light Company
Batson-Cook Company
Big Brothers / Big Sisters
Boatwright Accountants CPA
Boys & Girls Club
Callaway Foundation
Callaway Gardens
Camp and Associates
Caterpillar, Inc.
Charter Bank
Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center
City of Hogansville Council & City Administration
City of LaGrange Council & City Administration
City of LaGrange Police Department
City of West Point Council & City Administration
Clark Holder Clinic
Coldwell Banker
Commercial Bank and Trust
Communities in Schools
Community Action for Improvement, Inc.
Comprehensive Search, Inc.
Confidence Missionary Baptist Church
Copeland Realty
Dairy Queen
Daniel Construction of LaGrange
Dan-Ric Homes
DASH of LaGrange, Inc.
Deltacom
Diamond G, Inc.
Diverse Power Incorporated
Dow Jones and Company, Inc.
Dudley's Outdoors
Duracell - Proctor & Gamble
Durand-Wieland
Express Personnel Services
ExxonMobil
ExxonMobil Chemical Company
First Presbyterian Church
First Realty
Fling Insurance
Freudenberg-NOK
Gateway Development Services, Inc.
Gay and Joseph CPA
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Georgia Department of Economic Development
Georgia Department of Family and Children Services
Georgia Department of Labor
Georgia Department of Transportation
Georgia District 4 Health Services
Georgia Electric Membership Corporation
Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority
Georgia Environmental Protection Division
Georgia General Assembly
Georgia Governor's Office of Workforce Development
Georgia Municipal Association
Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education
Georgia Power Company
Georgia Quick Start Program
Georgia Senate
Granger Inns
Gusto Brands, Inc.
Harmony House
Hengstlers Jewelry, Inc.
Hills and Dales Estate
Hogansville Housing Authority
Holmes Pharmacy
Homeworks, Jones, Etheridge, Tomlinson Construction
Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama LLC
Infocus Photography and Corners Custom Frame
Interface FLOR
Interstate Valley Telephone

ITC Holding Company
Jones Brothers Farm
Junior Achievement of East Alabama / West Georgia
Katie's Restaurant
Kelly Services
Key & Gordy PC
Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, Inc.
Kimberly-Clark
Knology, Inc.
LaGrange Academy
LaGrange Center for Community Studies
LaGrange College
LaGrange Daily News
LaGrange Development Authority
LaGrange Employer Committee
LaGrange Fire Department
LaGrange Housing Authority
LaGrange Plant Managers Roundtable
LaGrange Police Department
LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce
Literacy Volunteers Troup County Inc.
Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center
Manpower Inc.
Matthew Orr Insurance Agency
McGage Chapel
McKibben Funeral Home
MEAG Power
Mike Patton Auto
Milliken & Company
NAACP
NeighborWorks America
Nesper International
New Ventures Inc.
NY Life, Inc.
OneGeorgia Authority
Pretty Products, LLC
Rosemount Baptist Church
Rotary Club
Smith Barney
Smith Design Group
St. John's Baptist Church
SunTrust Bank
The Creative Corridor, Inc.
The Valley Partnership
Time Communication
Trinidad Benham Corp.
Troup Baptist Association
Troup County Administration
Troup County Archives
Troup County Board of Commissioners
Troup County Board of Education
Troup County Certified Literate Community Program
Troup County Fire Department
Troup County Health Department
Troup County Resource Commission
Troup County Safe and Drug Free Schools
Troup County School System
Troup County Superior Court
Troup County Tax Commissioners Office
Troup Family Connection Authority
Twin Cedars Youth Services, Inc.
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
United Way of West Georgia
University of Georgia
University of West Georgia
Wal-mart Logistics
Wal-mart Stores, Inc.
WCAG TV-33
West Georgia Education & Career Partnership
West Georgia Health System
West Georgia Society for Human Resources Management
West Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency
West Georgia Technical College
West Georgia Youth Apprenticeship Program Consortium
West Point Downtown Development Authority
West Point Housing Authority
West Point Pharmacy
Woodard and Woodard LLC

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

At the heart of strategic planning is the intent to guide positive and transformational change in a manner that is in line with a community's vision for the future. The strategic planning process for Troup County and the Cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville, began with an investigative process involving research and assessments into Troup County's key strengths, challenges, and opportunities associated with a broad array of subject matters identified by local leaders as critical to explore - and resulting strategy development. The investigation benefited from the insights of hundreds of "thought leaders" - both those within Troup County and those serving Troup County. Following is a brief description of the steps taken during the investigation.

From June through August 2007, Georgia Tech conducted one-on-one confidential discussions with 154 stakeholders from the Troup County region who have a vested interest in the community's future and its goals for sustainable development. The stakeholders were asked questions relating to their vision for Troup County and desirable community development; the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting its future; their preferences regarding future growth and change, including development and redevelopment; and their views about various support mechanisms relating to the community's future potential.

Following the internal stakeholder interviews, Georgia Tech launched an external stakeholder input process. Specifically, from September through November 2007, Georgia Tech conducted one-on-one confidential interviews with 30 statewide and regional partners of Troup County who also have a vested interest in the community's future community and economic development. These partners were familiar with Troup County and shared diverse perspectives on its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and competitive advantages.

The Georgia Tech planning investigation continued through May 2008 and also included:

- **Survey** of 1,352 Troup County high school students who shared ideas for ways the communities could better serve their needs and their vision for the future.
- A **Report Card** evaluation of more than 120 performance indicators related to community growth and change, fiscal capacity, self sufficiency, economic base, workforce, youth development, education, civic and social capital, community health, and environmental preservation.
- A **Quality Growth Audit** of local policies and ordinances germane to community development.
- **Research and Assessments** on Troup County's strategic opportunities in the following areas: spatial planning, redevelopment, business development, workforce development, human services, and transportation. This included one-on-one discussions with more than one hundred Troup County professionals relating to the various assessment areas and a survey of major employers.

Based on their vision for Troup County and input received from the community stakeholders, the Leadership Team steering Troup County's efforts adopted 10 strategic goals to serve as the basis for the region's planning framework. Within each of these goals, the Georgia Tech team investigated key opportunities for the Troup County region. What is common to each of the identified opportunities is that they are

all within the region's ability to pursue. And, the region has a plethora of strong assets that can be leveraged for this purpose.

In strategic planning, when considering each opportunity the first question is how to take an existing asset and focus or refocus it on a strategic directive that meets community goals, rather than how to create something new. At the heart of sustainable development is the desire to make better or to improve, not simply to grow anew. That desire to improve what already exists is the differentiating factor between development and growth. Where there is not something existing to develop into something stronger, some strategic directives will require something new. Examining these questions has been core to the Georgia Tech team's efforts.²

This report has been developed by Georgia Tech with the intention of serving as the basis for the *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in Troup County, Georgia*. It is the "parent" report to the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia* series of reports that includes several "subsidiary" reports of an assessment or supportive research nature, such as (in alphabetical order):

- 2008 Survey of Youth
- A Case Study Review of Auto Plant Communities in the South
- Business Development Assessment
- Human Services Assessment
- Quality Growth Audit
- Redevelopment Assessment
- Spatial Strategy for Sustainability
- Sustainable Development Report Card
- The VIEW from Community Stakeholders
- The VIEW from Statewide and Regional Partners
- Transportation Assessment
- Workforce Development Assessment

For more information on this and other reports developed in support of Troup County's strategic planning efforts, please contact either Joy Wilkins at 404-895-6115 or joy.wilkins@innovate.gatech.edu; or Jason Barringer at 404-385-5126 or jason.barringer@coa.gatech.edu.

² Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Brent Verrill of Georgia Tech's Institute for Sustainable Technology & Development for providing insights regarding sustainable development.

THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Leadership Team adopted 10 strategic goals to serve as guiding principles which frame the Troup County strategic plan and implementation of initiatives in the plan. These goals are based on input provided by the county's leadership, stakeholders, and external partners - and are listed in order of priority as determined by the Leadership Team based on key needs and opportunities. Together, the strategic goals speak to the overall vision of Troup County's leaders for fostering healthy and balanced economic, environmental, and social development.

1. **The WELL PLANNED Community:** Carefully, deliberately and strategically planning for the future; determining where growth and development should go and then allocating resources and available infrastructure to support it. Inherent in this strategic goal is the allocation of future land use.
2. **The PROSPEROUS Community:** Raising the standard and quality of living for citizens through higher performance economic development that provides a diverse mixture of opportunities.
3. **The QUALITY GOVERNANCE Community:** Working progressively in a collaborative fashion with other governments; fostering greater opportunities for citizen engagement; and making forward-thinking decisions based on the collective view of the constituency.
4. **The KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN Community:** Providing the opportunity for an excellent and competitive education for all ages; fostering an excitement about lifelong learning that will motivate young people to stay in school.
5. **The ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD Community:** Preserving green space and the natural environs; protecting natural resources (e.g., West Point Lake); promoting clean development.
6. **The GOOD HABITAT Community:** Facilitating a greater degree of housing choice; increasing the availability of quality housing that is affordable and safe; emphasizing "neighborhood" development; and fostering the availability of comfortable living. This includes ensuring the safety and security for all residents, and preserving and enabling the optimal conditions for raising children.
7. **The NAVIGABLE Community:** Fostering the ease of mobility throughout the community; gearing transportation infrastructure according to future growth plans; providing alternative and viable solutions beyond the automobile.
8. **The ATTRACTIVE Community:** Fostering appealing gateways into the community; retaining the "small town" charm; encouraging aesthetically pleasing development; promoting ongoing beautification.
9. **The NEIGHBORLY Community:** Meeting the individual needs of all citizens; promoting a friendly environment to existing and new community members of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures; fostering a strong, cohesive sense of community.
10. **The ENTERTAINING Community:** Providing a diverse menu of recreational, cultural, dining, shopping, and other amenities for families and residents of all ages.

THE BENCHMARKS

Communities of excellence know that to go from “good to great,” they need to have an accurate understanding of where they are in order to determine where they should go. To this end, two of the key research initiatives conducted by Georgia Tech as part of the strategic planning process are particularly informative.³

First, it is instructive to review the strategic goals according to the totality of strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats identified by community stakeholders. As the below matrix reveals, it is evident that Troup County has the greatest need for improvement in the “well planned” and “neighborly” areas, the greatest advantages to leverage in the “quality governance” area, and the greatest opportunities to pursue in the “prosperous” area. The size of the dot reflects the number of responses received in each category during the community stakeholder interviews.

Strategic Goal	Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities	Threats
1. Well Planned Community	●	●●	●	●●
2. Quality Governance Community	●●	●	●	●
3. Neighborly Community	●	●●	●	●
4. Knowledge Driven Community	●	●	●	●●
5. Prosperous Community	●	●	●●	●
6. Environmental Steward Community	●	●	●	●
7. Entertaining Community	●	●	●	●
8. Navigable Community	●	●	●	●
9. Good Habitat Community	●	●	●	●
10. Attractive Community	●		●	

Second, Troup County’s recent performance (pre-Kia) has been reviewed and examined by Georgia Tech specialists according to several measures in 10 key categories relating to sustainable development, using a rating system of “+” (good overall), “✓” (okay), and “-” (needs improvement). As the below table reveals, it is evident that Troup County has been doing good overall in the areas of community growth and change and fiscal capacity, but in the areas of self sufficiency and youth development the community may need improvement. Important to note is that the “needs improvement” ratings are not an evaluation of existing programs, but simply point to the strongest opportunities to focus improvement or expansion efforts.

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY	RATING
Community Growth & Change	+
Fiscal Capacity	+
Self-Sufficiency	-
Economic Base	✓
Workforce	✓
Youth Development	-
Education	✓
Civic Spirit & Social Capital	✓
Community Health	✓
Environmental Preservation	✓

³ Reference from the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Troup County and the Cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville are fortunate to have an abundance of leadership and civic capital. These communities have already realized a simple truth: that, with the right support, individuals can and do make an incredible difference and everyday people can accomplish extraordinary goals. Such a foundation creates an amazing potential for dynamic implementation associated with the *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in Troup County, Georgia*.

Following are Georgia Tech’s observations and recommendations for this plan. Implementing the strategic plan will require strong collaborative champions representing multiple organizations working in-concert in day-to-day practice. What is critical to recognize is that many of the recommended strategies are intertwined and interrelated as they support or build upon each other; and the success of reaching one goal will depend on the effectiveness of efforts to reach another. Therefore, it is very important to consider these initiatives as part of the ongoing coordination and partnership.

The 10 goals that serve as the guiding framework for the strategic plan appear in order of priority as determined by the Leadership Team based on key needs and opportunities. Under each strategic are sets of recommendations for action-based initiatives, prefaced by: (1) a key observation from the Georgia Tech team based on the assessment process, (2) the team’s recommended strategy for addressing the observation, (3) identification of all relevant goal(s), as some strategies may relate to more than one goal, and (4) report reference(s) for further background information. While some sets of recommendations may be relevant to more than one strategic goal, they appear in this report under the most relevant strategic goal.

The WELL PLANNED Community

The Well Planned Community requires the careful and deliberate consideration of existing conditions, community vision and goals, and future challenges and opportunities. While several key observations and recommendations are provided for this goal, they are closely tied to those associated with all the other goals for a holistic approach to create a sustainable and desirable future for Troup County and the cities.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County and the cities will experience significant employment and residential growth in the next 25 years, unlike the population and job trends of the past 20 years.
STRATEGY:	Utilize an adaptive planning approach to accurately predict and respond to changing needs and conditions.
GOAL(S):	The Well Planned Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability

While community stakeholders and leaders alike welcome this growth, they have also expressed a strong desire to maintain the high quality of life and “small town” character of the area. To achieve this vision, the county and cities should continue to track and adapt to population growth.

- WP-1** The Troup County Leadership Team should identify appropriate indicators for sustainable development that describe the qualities of the community to preserve and enhance itself during implementation of the strategic plan. Using current data, update the indicators annually to measure progress and any degeneration. Indicators may assess both physical and social conditions. For example, the communities may choose to measure the number of acres developed and redeveloped, acres of socially and environmentally important areas newly protected from development or secured for public use, or the ratio of population living in incorporated areas versus unincorporated areas. Social indicators may measure citizen involvement in volunteer and community groups, voter participation, or attendance at local government meetings.⁴
- WP-2** Troup County and the cities should collaborate on annual population estimates. Consider developing a shared methodology for tracking population change that would:
- Use building permit, housing vacancy, utility hook up, and school enrollment data, to estimate current population for each city and the unincorporated area. The estimate can be used to test earlier population projections and to determine when new population projections are needed.
 - Map the location of significant population and employment growth across all jurisdictions to assess potential cumulative impacts; for example, schools, traffic, utilities, and recreational facilities.
 - Share results with all government departments, schools, utilities, public services, and other programs and institutions to encourage them to make adequate plans to serve future needs.
- WP-3** Troup County and its cities should review the *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in Troup County, Georgia*, the local comprehensive plans, and all other plans affecting development on an annual basis to help address unexpected trends and make necessary amendments. Since it is difficult to predict the consequences of the county's economic growth, it will be important to take an incremental approach that can be adapted as policies and processes are tested over time, but remains true to the community's vision and goals.
- Reexamine plans for future land use and development to ensure that adequate land is designated for future residential needs. Use acres available for redevelopment to reduce the amount of undeveloped land needed for new housing. Keep in mind that an oversupply of residential areas in the future land use plan increases the likelihood of potentially costly leap-frog development (new development that is not adjacent to existing development); likewise an undersupply of land available for residential development can result in an unnecessary increase in housing prices.

⁴ See *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Sustainable Development Report Card*.

OBSERVATION:	There is a substantial amount of undeveloped land throughout Troup County that is relatively suitable for urbanization, yet community stakeholders and elected officials have expressed a vision to concentrate future development in and around the cities to take advantage of available infrastructure and prevent sprawling development and its associated ills.
STRATEGY:	Explore officially adopting a vision and supporting policies to direct new development to areas in and adjacent to the cities where existing or planned infrastructure capacity is available.
GOAL(S):	The Well Planned Community The Environmental Steward Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability Redevelopment Assessment The VIEW from Community Stakeholders

As the suitability analysis shows,⁵ there are over 63,000 acres of land that are highly suitable or suitable for new development in Troup County. This far exceeds the land needs for population and job growth over the next 25 years; therefore, it is important to articulate and officially adopt a community vision for growth, one that provides a geographic and temporal sense, as well as a design character, of preferred development. A coordinated and complementary vision among the jurisdictions is important, because of the impacts of development decisions across jurisdictional boundaries.

WP-4 Troup County and the cities should use their comprehensive planning processes to articulate and formally adopt this vision of concentrated cities. The county's current comprehensive planning process is beginning to outline this vision, which must reflect and be reflected in the plans and policies of the cities to be effective. The areas for new development depicted in the character area maps should reflect development needs based on population and employment projections. As suggested in an earlier recommendation, oversupply of land for development can result in premature conversion of rural and agricultural lands to urban areas, disjointed from the surrounding community.

For subsequent comprehensive plan updates, Troup County and the cities should consider a joint or coordinated planning process - synchronizing efforts in terms of timeframe and process - to identify areas of common goals and visions that can further support the development of consistent or complementary policies and development regulations across jurisdictions.

WP-5 The cities should begin to explore the adoption of spatial planning policies. Without guidelines for future growth patterns, unsustainable developments

⁵ The suitability analysis conducted as part of the strategic planning process categorized land in Troup County along a continuum of desirability for development. Various criteria, including presence of wetlands or floodplains, proximity to significant transportation infrastructure, proximity to features that may be detrimental to livability, were weighted by the Leadership Team and used in the model to categorize land as desirable or undesirable for future development. Results of this analysis are in the report entitled *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability*.

(e.g. leapfrog developments and environmentally threatening developments around West Point Lake) may be proposed by developers. Adopting spatial planning policies encourages future development to locate where it is desired. They should consider using containment tools that preserve open space and farmland, minimize the use of land, ensure the orderly transition from rural to urban land use, and reduce the social disruption due to urban sprawl. Such policies include:

- An Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), which is a line drawn around cities that is intended to encourage development within the boundary and not allow or discourage new developments outside the boundary. The boundary is set considering future population growth (usually 20 years projection) and periodically (every 5 years) reviewed to examine whether or not the boundary should be expanded.
- Urban Service Areas (USA) denote a line beyond which a city will not install or upgrade infrastructure or offer services, and is also periodically reviewed. Unlike UGBs, urban development is not prohibited beyond USAs, but developers are burdened with the infrastructure and service costs of the new development.
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program that enables the transfer of development rights from sending areas (e.g., those areas to be preserved for future use) to receiving areas (e.g., those areas ideal for infill development, redevelopment, and expanded development, and areas with available, untapped infrastructure).

WP-6 Troup County and the cities should amend zoning and subdivision regulations according to the shared vision for smart growth and quality development. As the canvas for such growth and development changes, these regulations should be updated. To help inform this effort initially, the Quality Growth Audit performed as part of the strategic planning process, provides a comprehensive assessment of each jurisdiction's current policies and regulations that impact land development practices that influence environmental quality and the welfare of residents, businesses, and visitors. The Quality Growth Audit for Troup County and the cities evaluates existing plans, policies, and practices against the accepted principles of quality growth, sustainable development, context sensitive solutions, and universal design. The audit provides numerous and specific recommendations for amendments to policies, plans, and regulations.

An important issue for Troup County is the expected increase in large-scale developments. These developments can have a serious impact on the communities. Therefore, careful evaluation of Planned Unit Development codes, which often regulates large developments, is necessary to ensure high-quality and environmentally sensitive developments.

WP-7 Troup County and the cities should build upon their collaborative relationships and explore the potential for adopting minimum planning standards or project review criteria that is applicable countywide, and for pursuing development decisions in a joint way. To help guide development in desired areas and to influence the quality of development, there are a number of options to consider, such as:

- A project review rating system (also known as a land use guidance point system or development scorecard) should be explored.

- The jurisdictions should meet at periodic intervals to review the macro implications of large-scale developments planned and underway in the county and to have some dialogue regarding how such implications may affect future development decisions.
- The jurisdictions should explore alternative tools for joint review of development such as a memorandum of agreement to establish procedures for how to jointly review development proposals for properties within certain areas of interest, the potential for creating a design review commission, and revisiting the possibility of a joint planning commission.

WP-8 The cities should amend plans and policies to permit and, as appropriate, create incentives for redevelopment of greyfield and brownfield sites in already developed areas, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings. The cities have opportunities to foster and direct growth in downtowns, commercial corridors, residential neighborhoods, and industrial areas that are prime for redevelopment. In instances where redevelopment would not happen but for public involvement, the cities should examine the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Redevelopment Assessment* for potential options, and should determine which specific redevelopment projects would provide the greatest social, economic, and environmental impacts.

The PROSPEROUS Community

OBSERVATION:	Troup County is becoming increasingly globally relevant.
STRATEGY:	Market area for 'globility.' Capitalize on the apparent international destination it has become and foster greater connectivity for foreign-based companies and residents alike.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community The Knowledgeable Community The Neighborly Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders Sustainable Development Report Card Workforce Development Assessment

The strength of the community, educational assets, and governance are all areas that make Troup County a contender for attracting international residents and investment. This was evident prior to the announcement of Kia. For example, LaGrange had already housed nine foreign-based firms representing five countries before the foreign automaker chose to locate nearby. The notion that LaGrange and its surrounding area has become more global was confirmed by several stakeholders who discussed the city's three international sister city relationships (with Aso, Japan; P'ot'i, Abashis, Georgia; and Craigavon, Northern Ireland, UK), the growing diversity of students enrolled at LaGrange College, and the number of cultures represented by the faith-based and arts and dance communities in LaGrange. The community's eye toward sustainability—as evident in efforts such as LaGrange College and its partnership with the United Nations Centre International de Formation des Autorités/Acteurs Locaux (CIFAL) program, the planning initiatives underway, the innovative conversion of landfill gas to energy, and the growing countywide parks and green space conservation

system, to name a few—also hold international appeal. Troup County Schools' recent enactment of an international accreditation program will also be an asset to this end.

The arrival of Kia in West Point and its suppliers in Troup County will serve to both add diversity to a community that has already been growing in diversity, and to further showcase the area as capable of meeting the needs of international businesses which are considering the best community to trust with their substantial investments. The county's growing international business community, coupled with its proximity to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and institutions of higher learning are significant factors that can be effectively used to market itself as an international community.

P-1 Troup County should build upon LaGrange's already successfully proven economic development program to expand efforts geared toward international markets. The City of LaGrange and surrounding area should market itself as a global community. It should capitalize on the apparent international destination it has become - for foreign-based companies and residents alike. Advertisements should be placed in international business and economic development journals, focusing on businesses that are within the industries of focus. The economic development program should directly court site selection consultants who serve multinational corporations. In addition, expanded efforts should be made to help existing employers identify and connect with international markets for selling products or buying supplies.

P-2 Troup County should strive to be "internationally friendly." Expand efforts to provide outreach and support services to incoming employees and residents from other countries to help them and their families adjust. This should extend beyond the Korean families associated with Kia. For example:

Opportunities to expand LaGrange College's international relations program should be explored. This program is geared toward helping foreign-born residents "learn the ropes" of living in Troup County (and the United States) but has limited coverage because it is currently staffed by a full-time professional with several other responsibilities.

The school system should expand efforts to focus on addressing the needs of international newcomers joining the student and faculty body. It should consider creating a full-time professional position devoted to this purpose.

P-3 Troup County should employ efforts to help foster multicultural awareness. Arts and cultural institutions and institutions of higher learning should continue and, when possible, expand efforts to provide exposure to diverse cultures. The school system could also explore the potential for sister school relationships with schools in the three sister cities of LaGrange and explore other efforts to engage in other types of international exchange programs. For example:

Troup County Schools and area institutions of higher learning serving Troup County should expand their programs of learning to provide offerings focusing on the Korean language, history, and culture. Given Kia and its suppliers are anticipated to be major economic drivers for this region, and the manner in which Korean-based companies operate according to the Korean culture (as opposed to the "corporate culture" that varies through the American free enterprise system), such expanded program offerings could contribute toward fostering greater multicultural understanding,

engagement, and trust that will be critical for knowing how best to support and do business with such companies. This is in similar vein as to how Korean students learn the American culture through their learning institutions given the importance of American economic drivers to Korea.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County has an abundance of assets that support the further development of a “creative economy.”
STRATEGY:	Explore the potential for strengthening and leveraging the creative centers of Troup County.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders The VIEW from Statewide and Regional Partners Workforce Development Assessment

LaGrange is already a creative center for music, visual arts, drama, dance, and many other areas. From the LaGrange Symphony Orchestra and the Lafayette Society of Performing Arts to the assets available through LaGrange College and West Georgia Technical College, there appears to be a critical mass of creative assets that are quite impressive for a city the size of LaGrange. And, given the historic preservation efforts in West Point and Hogansville, there’s incredible potential to develop further creative assets in Troup.

The linkage between arts-related amenities and economic prosperity is well recognized by economic development experts as such amenities are known for keeping and drawing in talented professionals. Related to this, Troup County is well poised to capture some of the “creative class” jobs projected for the region. This includes the professional, scientific, and technical service-related jobs projected to grow in the region due to Kia. Capturing those jobs will depend on the county’s focus on talent development and recruitment, which depends upon its ability to further foster quality places with a mixture of living and amenity options that are often affiliated with downtown areas.

Vibrant downtown centers are often at the heart of creative economies, and all three of Troup County’s cities already have advantages in this regard. Recent efforts relating to revitalizing the downtown areas of LaGrange position the city very well. With the help of the Callaway Foundation, LaGrange’s downtown has become one of the premiere downtowns for a city of its size in Georgia in terms of quality place making. West Point’s depot, collection of unique shops, and potential for loft housing are key assets for the city. The City of Hogansville, with the potential for restoring its downtown theater, its assortment of unique shops, children’s theater, the Hummingbird Festival, and downtown mural, also has the potential to be a creative center.

The natural linkage of all three cities by US Highway 29 adds strategic value to focusing on building creative centers in all three cities. And, the implementation of this strategy will further aid Troup County’s strategy to market itself for a stronger global presence as such assets tend to have high appeal internationally.

P-4 Troup County should consider creating a Creative Centers Coalition among the three cities and the county. The coalition should be a working group comprised of business and civic stakeholders who identify key assets relating to the creative economy and focus energies on strengthening and expanding them

in all three cities. The potential for having this coalition be responsible for implementation of work programs related to The Prosperous Community strategic goal should be explored.

- P-5** Troup County should launch a marketing and branding campaign associated with the creative economy concept. For example, the county could develop a brand identity as the Creative Centers Corridor (tying into the linkage provided by US Highway 29).⁶ The Savannah area has effectively done this with the Creative Coast Alliance. Efforts should be made to deliver an appealing reality in messaging, and in partnership with area media, which includes substantive information that can be confirmed through Internet research or a quick tour of the cities.
- P-6** Troup County should consider its arts and cultural assets as chief assets to protect, sustain, and, when the opportunities arise, to expand. The county should consider creating an Arts Bureau, perhaps as part of the Creative Centers Coalition, and staffed with at least one full-time professional with the responsibility of tracking and providing coordination support to entertainment activities and options, and providing public relations and resource development support to the community's arts and cultural organizations. The county should explore the role LaGrange College, the Callaway Foundation, and West Georgia Technical College can further play in supporting the creative arts given their already strong orientation towards arts and culture. Beyond providing resources or programs, these entities could serve in think tank and advisory capacities.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County has numerous institutions of higher learning within a 45-mile radius.
STRATEGY:	Explore the potential for economically beneficial relationships that can be developed with nearby colleges and universities.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community The Knowledge Driven Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment

While Troup County is home to tremendous higher education assets such as LaGrange College and West Georgia Technical College, it could also stand to benefit from greater linkages to institutions of higher learning in the surrounding region. The appetite for doing so is evident among the governmental and institutional leadership.

- P-7** Troup County should explore the concept of creating a technical problem-solving program for the region's industries that leverages higher educational assets. Options for creating such a program should be explored with West Georgia Technical College and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) programs at Georgia Tech and Auburn University that maximizes and connects industries to the core competencies of each through an agreed-upon and joint approach.

⁶ The Creative Corridor Inc. in Pine Mountain, Georgia was formed in 2004 to foster the appreciation of arts in West Georgia and could be a potential collaborative resource for this effort.

- P-8** Troup County should explore the potential for designating a local facilitator to connect local industries to available resources at institutions of higher learning. Given that many small-to-medium sized industries do not have the resources to conduct research and development in-house, the facilitator should work to connect such industries interested in product development and innovation with area research universities. In addition, the facilitator should serve as a point person connecting local industries with opportunities for continual education and professional development of their existing workforce.
- P-9** The City of West Point and its partners in Troup County should explore options with the State of Georgia and Kia regarding the future use of the Kia Georgia Training Center. In addition to future Kia needs, opportunities for alternative community uses should be explored once the initial purposes for the training center are exhausted.
- P-10** Troup County should promote and encourage greater participation in the cross-matriculation programs available among area institutions. For example, LaGrange College has such programs with Auburn University and Georgia Tech for students interested in engineering or science related pursuits. Participating students attend their beginning years at LaGrange College and then transfer to one of these research universities and earn a degree from both institutions of higher learning. Another example is the cross matriculation programs available through West Georgia Tech and Troup County Schools.
- P-11** Troup County should consult with enrollment offices at nearby institutions of higher learning regarding the Career Pathways curriculum. Given Troup County Schools' progressive approach to not only implementing the Georgia Performance Standards curriculum but also adding additional content tied to specific careers, it should explore the feasibility for becoming a model case for doing so. Specifically, university faculty should be approached to review and provide advisement on the curriculum to ensure capability with university curriculum. In addition, efforts should be made to explore the potential for creating memorandums of understanding regarding university recognition of the Career Pathways programs as being suitable preparation for their classroom instruction while recognizing that such recognition does not guarantee admission. This type of collaboration is not being done yet in the State of Georgia.

OBSERVATION:	Given the Troup County region's favorable competitive position, the county can afford to be SELECTIVE and STRATEGIC in its choices. The region is home to several existing industry sectors that have higher wages and should be encouraged to expand.
STRATEGY:	Focus on industries that are most suitable and offer the greatest opportunity for economic prosperity and lowest risk for community degradation.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	Business Development Assessment The VIEW from Community Stakeholders The VIEW from Statewide and Regional Partners

Troup County's external partners rated the community very highly for its advantages for future economic development. At the same time, community stakeholders expressed clear preferences to not encourage environmentally harmful industries or those that would degrade the community's quality of life. The location quotient analysis of existing industries in Troup County resulted in several industry categories suitable for recruitment and business retention when strategizing to raise the level of prosperous opportunities in the community. Some of these will be positively impacted by Kia and some represent advantages that already existed. Industries with wages higher than the current base offered by existing industries, and in line with Troup County's environmental preservation goals, should be targeted for involvement in strategies promoting recruitment and/or growth. The logic here is that strategies to grow and retain industries should be directed towards industries that can raise the average wage in the county, thus increasing the standard of living for its citizens. Efforts at recruitment and efforts to grow existing industries should also concentrate on industries that serve a national or international market. This is not to say that Troup County should not respond to additional opportunities that arise, provided they are ones consistent with the community's goals and interest in raising the prosperity level of the community.

- P-12 Troup County should review the list of suggested industries to determine the focus of future economic development efforts (marketing, business retention and expansion, entrepreneurial development, workforce development, etc.). This will require joint review by all entities involved in these activities. Once the list is prioritized, additional efforts should be made to gather more and ongoing knowledge about the industries by staying in regular contact with member companies already located within Troup County.**

- P-13 Troup County should customize its marketing materials for each of the industries of focus. The materials should highlight assets and competitive advantages for the particular industry. These will vary by industry. For example, manufacturing operations will have some site selection criteria that differ from professional, scientific, and technical services.**

- P-14 Troup County should frame incentive policies to encourage the desired type of business development within the industries of focus. Internal capacity to conduct fiscal impact analyses (e.g., using a tool such as LOCI or similar software) should be developed to measure the impact of incentives offered to businesses. In addition, Troup County should examine opportunities to create community benefits agreements with business prospects before signing any deal guaranteeing them incentives. Community benefits are locally driven requirements, such as hiring a certain percentage of workers below the median household income or providing on-the-job-training.**

A truly groundbreaking approach would be to collaborate with Montgomery, Alabama, the corridor in between both locations, and other counties within Hyundai and Kia's just-in-time delivery area, on developing joint standards for automotive manufacturing community benefit agreements around workforce hiring and training in return for local government incentives. This would help reduce the anxiety that comes with implementing any regulations on businesses that may offer a neighbor a competitive advantage. Government incentives could be tied to average wage of jobs to be offered - that are X percent above the threshold - or for companies that will provide jobs specifically for the skills possessed by lower-income workers.

- P-15** Troup County should work with existing business-focused organizations - such as the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce, West Georgia Society for Human Resource Managers, LaGrange Employer Committee, and LaGrange Plant Managers Roundtable - to ensure their efforts are focused on supporting companies within the targeted sectors. Consideration should be given to arranging relatively small groups of entrepreneurs and executives within the sectors identified above to meet periodically and discuss topics of interest to their operations. Ideally, membership would be by invitation only and facilitated by a coordinating body. Even with a coordinating body, the sector groups should be designed to be self-regulating by members of the group. Such business groups:
- a. Enable similar businesses and industries to discuss operational challenges, share information, and investigate the potential for strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaborative activities to support their competitive positions.
 - b. Provide regular input to the county and chamber about existing business and industry needs and programs and services that would be helpful for sustaining and expanding their operations.
 - c. Connect existing business and industry with resources available inside and outside the region by maintaining an updated and distributable inventory of those resources and conducting matchmaking when needed.
 - d. Enable existing business and industry to participate in economic development decision-making and provide opportunities for engaging existing industry's help in attracting or growing new industries, particularly those relevant to the cluster.
 - e. Connect existing business and industry with educational seminars and workshops relevant to their cluster.

OBSERVATION:	Community stakeholders observed that while entrepreneurship was an important piece of Troup County's future prosperity, support for entrepreneurs is not as strong as it should be. The growth of business services, retail, and hospitality establishments from the Kia economic impact could be fostered through entrepreneurial support and will help diversify Troup's economy.
STRATEGY:	Expand efforts to support entrepreneurship and small business development.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community The Knowledge Driven Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders The VIEW from External Partners Business Development Assessment

In light of the anticipated growth in auto-related manufacturing industries in and near Troup County, community stakeholders viewed diversifying the county's economic base, as a major opportunity and essential for not becoming too reliant on auto manufacturing. This view was also expressed by several external stakeholders interviewed for this strategic plan. To this end, the analysis of economic impacts

associated with Kia revealed significant anticipated growth in related industries that are often comprised of entrepreneurial and small firms, such as professional, scientific, and technical services, other business services, retail, and hospitality establishments.

Community stakeholders were asked to rate how well the needs of entrepreneurs were being met. On a scale of 1 to 5, where one means “not at all well” and five means “very well”, the stakeholders rated entrepreneurship at 3.30, the lowest rating for any category. Yet stakeholders also stated that entrepreneurship would be a critical component of Troup County’s future prosperity. This is a gap that Troup County can help address.

- P-16** Troup County should focus entrepreneur and small business development efforts on those business and consumer services sectors that are expected to grow substantially in the West Georgia region. Hundreds of these establishments are expected to be created over the next several years and these businesses offer the opportunity to diversify the county’s economy. These types of businesses tend to open in cities, therefore, the leadership in Hogansville, LaGrange, and West Point need to develop a strategy that maximizes their chances of landing these businesses.
- P-17** Troup County should hire a director of small business development to work with potential, existing and growing entrepreneurs, and to develop support services for these entities. This professional should:
- a. Focus on creating networking and mentoring opportunities for small business owners and entrepreneurs.
 - b. Focus on developing a clear web-based resource for listing all available support services and opportunities.
 - c. Work with Troup County Schools to build upon their plans for a small business development curriculum, out of their Career Pathways program, for high school students, and explore with Troup County Schools the opportunities to expand entrepreneur education into the middle and elementary schools.
 - d. Work with area businesses, Chamber, local SCORE chapter and other business associations to develop curriculum, arrange field trips, and arrange speakers.
- P-18** Troup County should continue to build upon the state’s Entrepreneur Friendly Designation through the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce. Efforts to follow up on the surveys conducted for the Entrepreneur Friendly Designation should be supported, such as starting a small business networking group, recruiting more small businesses to participate in trade shows, and conducting follow up customer service surveys with small businesses. Special efforts should be made to engage businesses in Hogansville and West Point, given such businesses encompass much of their economic base.
- P-19** Troup County should explore relationships with Auburn University, Georgia Tech, Columbus State and local colleges to help innovators and entrepreneurs make connections. Opportunities from “incubators without walls” to exploring the feasibility of converting old mill facilities and vacated commercial structures for incubator-type space should be considered.

P-20 Troup County should encourage mixed-use development that incorporates small business clusters in live-work-play type environments. The potential for tying some type of incentive or other benefit to a desired ratio of development dedicated to small business office space incorporated in mixed-use projects should be explored.

OBSERVATION:	Some existing businesses are concerned that Kia will create challenges to their workforce structure and impact prevailing wage and benefit packages that currently exist.
STRATEGY:	Expand support for existing business and industry.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment The VIEW from Community Stakeholders A Case Study Review of Auto Plant Communities in the South

While community stakeholders identified numerous advantages related to the arrival of Kia and its suppliers to the region, concerns relating to the impacts for existing businesses were also shared. In particular, it was speculated that Kia could draw workers away from existing employers and associated economic activity could also elevate area wages. Approximately one-third of the businesses participating in Georgia Tech's 2008 Survey of Employers voiced concerns that the arrival of Kia would have an adverse effect on their hiring practices and overall businesses. However, in examining the experiences of some other auto plant communities, it was found that area wages do increase, but that there is less movement of employees than originally suspected.

P-21 Troup County should consider designating or hiring a full-time professional staff position that is 100 percent dedicated to supporting existing businesses. The professional should be responsible for helping each company avoid impediments that could lead to relocation, take advantage of opportunities to expand, as well as how they can benefit from the arrival of Kia and its suppliers. The professional's responsibilities could include:

- a. Work with businesses in targeted industries on potential retention and expansion-related needs, to strengthen economic diversity.
- b. Foster the continual adoption of the latest technologies to increase productivity and enhance competitiveness.
- c. Help manufacturers examine whether they already have the equipment to develop an input that can be used directly by Kia or one of the many suppliers expected to locate in the region.
- d. Organize business information sessions to update companies, especially those that use the same labor pool, on the status of Kia and their suppliers.
- e. Help retail and service businesses understand how the county's demographic make-up may change over the next several years.

P-22 Troup County should acquire one of the established software programs for tracking information on existing businesses and their needs. The software could help the community develop a strong existing business retention and expansion program, by helping with:

- a. Identifying problems and concerns, and matching identification of the entities that can provide assistance.
- b. Identifying potential supplier and buyer linkages which can be fed directly into the community's recruitment work.
- c. Collecting success stories that can be used in internal and external marketing/public relations work to convey an image that Troup County and the cities are business-friendly places.

OBSERVATION:	An automotive assembly industry cluster is very possible for Troup County and the surrounding region.
STRATEGY:	Create a formal initiative to examine the potential expansion of this industry, building upon the Advanced Automotive Manufacturing group created for workforce development purposes.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	Business Development Assessment Workforce Development Assessment

Given the location of Kia and its suppliers and the proximity of Troup County to advanced auto-related assets in the surrounding West Georgia-East Alabama region, the ripple effect of cluster development could be expanded through strategic efforts.

- P-23 Troup County should create a community-based automotive industry committee.** The goal of this committee should be to monitor the industry for further opportunities for assembly plants and suppliers in the region, and to assess the social and environmental implications of developing such an industry cluster. It should stay abreast of global changes in the industry with respect to markets, technology, and competitors, so it can help sustain a prosperous and growing automotive sector in Troup County and the region.
- P-24 Troup County should inventory assets related to automotive along the I-85 corridor that runs through Alabama and Georgia.** These should include existing industries, higher education, economic development, research, technology, and other supportive assets.
- P-25 In terms of future recruitment efforts, Troup County should be proactive about seeking automotive companies that demonstrate values concerning sustainability in their industrial operations.** Members of the automotive industry are becoming increasingly "clean" due to technologically advancements and corporate willpower. Automotive industry prospects should be examined for their production of waste, energy use, emissions (air, soil, and water), and social implications before a targeted expansion initiative is started.
- P-26 Troup County should explore the opportunities for regional partnerships with other communities in West Georgia and the Columbus, Georgia and Auburn-Opelika, Alabama areas.** Opportunities for a cross-border coalition should be explored by creating a central working group composed of stakeholders from business, higher education, economic development, and government to explore the feasibility for joint initiatives around supporting the

automotive industry. (While the initial focus may be on automotive, additional foci can be explored based on other regional synergies.) This could tie together with the earlier P-14 recommendation regarding community benefits agreements.

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	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.
GOAL(S):	The Prosperous Community The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE (S):	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.

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, 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. Also distribute the materials at community gathering places, such as churches and recreational centers.
- 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.

The QUALITY GOVERNANCE Community

OBSERVATION:	Community stakeholders and external partners thought that building cooperation among local counties, cities and towns was one of the most important challenges and opportunities facing Troup County.
STRATEGY:	Continue to build upon improved relationships by working on developing internal collaborative partnerships, and external regional partnerships to find solutions where problems present themselves.
GOAL(S):	The Quality Governance Community The Well Planned Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders The VIEW from Statewide and Regional Partners A Case Study Review of Auto Plant Communities in the South

Cooperation among governmental agencies was cited as one of Troup County’s most pressing issues by community stakeholder and external partners. External partners cited a lack of cooperation between the county and all three cities as the largest impediment towards pursuing desirable community development. Yet they also believed that Kia has represented a critical opportunity for the county to come together around a common goal, and have observed that relationships have become stronger over time.

Other auto plant communities have also found that they were able to develop more regional economic development cooperation out of the initial plant locating in their community. In each profiled community, employees drove to work from 50 to 70 miles away. Regardless of whether it is planned or not, these regional ties will develop for Troup County simply by having more people coming to work in the immediate area. Therefore, in addition to fostering greater collaborative ties among jurisdictions within Troup County, it makes sense for Troup County entities to also reach out to neighboring areas to build support and momentum for a regional collaboration between Troup-Columbus-Auburn, and all areas in between.

Q-1 Troup County should explore the potential for creating a Municipal-County Leadership Council. The council should comprise the Mayors, County Commissioners, City Council members, and Chiefs of Staff of the three cities and the county and meet on a regular basis. The focus of these meetings should be networking and strengthening friendly relationships. Internal collaboration is the first step towards building a foundation for collaborating externally with surrounding counties and the greater region. (See Recommendations P-26 and Q-3 regarding a regional approach.)

Q-2 Troup County should form a joint planning staff committee. Planning-related staff (planners, engineers, public works, etc.) from each jurisdiction should meet regularly to share information, ideas, and concerns. Parties should understand that planning-related information may be of a sensitive nature, and “rules of order” should be adopted. (This recommendation supports Recommendation WP-7 concerning pursuing development decisions in a joint way.)

Q-3 Troup County should organize a series of regularly scheduled meetings - with representatives from surrounding counties and cities in Georgia and Alabama; businesses; academic institutions; and non-profit organizations - to discuss common concerns and learn from one another. Consideration should be given toward the City of West Point taking a lead role in this effort given its unique position as a city that is shared by two counties and has natural and social synergies with the Alabama cities of Valley and Lanett. This could be the first step towards building a sustainable regional organization that can work on issues involving economic development, community marketing and branding, tourism, transportation, water and workforce development. Meetings do not necessarily have to cover topics of concern; they could initially be just sharing information on what various actors are doing, and searching for common links and opportunities. (This could also provide support for Recommendation P-26 regarding the cross-border coalition should that recommendation be chosen to pursue.)

OBSERVATION:	As the cities and county grow, new issues and the complications of growth will arise. Elected officials, local government staff, residents, businesses, and institutions must work together to respond to new needs and challenges and must enhance their capacity to analyze and plan for the future.
STRATEGY:	Pursue opportunities to cooperate in ways that benefit all jurisdictions in the areas of land use, and natural resource planning.
GOAL(S):	The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders The VIEW from Statewide and Regional Partners

By launching the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia* strategic planning initiative, leaders from Troup County, the cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville, and various anchor institutional partners have been progressively working together to make decisions in a joint and coordinated way. There is a great appetite among the leadership for jointly determining the shape, scale, and direction of future growth and development across the county and for providing supportive mechanisms through local policies and resource allocation. In the face of unprecedented growth for the region, Troup County has the potential to become a model region for the State of Georgia for maximizing the opportunities associated with this growth in a joint and quality manner. Some of these recommendations dovetail with those under The Well Planned Community strategic goal.

Q-4 Troup County should explore the additional human resources and specific expertise that will be required to accommodate growth, rising demand for public services, and the associated new or expanded areas of knowledge that need to be incorporated into local governance. As the cities and county grow, the need for planning, implementation, and administration capacity will increase for all of the jurisdictions. There are several ways to respond to these needs: consolidating or contracting of certain services/efforts among jurisdictions, contracting for services from private firms, or expanding in-house staff (in individual jurisdictions or shared among jurisdictions). The recent arrangement made where the City of LaGrange is providing water service to the City of Hogansville is an example of partnerships that can be developed for

mutual benefit. Regardless of the method, trained professionals knowledgeable about the theory and practice of sustainable development and planning who can work with a variety of stakeholders will be important. (See also Recommendation I-8 for long term considerations.)

- Q-5** Troup County, the cities, school system, and anchor institutions should consider hosting joint workshops and symposiums that bring in experts on specific topics (e.g. conservation easements, innovative storm water management, green architecture) to inform local elected officials and staff and the general public about common interests on a regular basis. Such an approach can be more cost-effective than sending individual local government representatives to off-site conferences and workshops, and it also improves the general public's understanding of planning issues. Experts can meet in a small workshop format with elected officials and staff during the day and speak at larger community events in the evening. The annual conference LaGrange College has been conducting with the United Nations CIFAL program has been a successful practice in this regard and could help set the stage for other follow-on practices.
- Q-6** Troup County should explore the development of a shared Geographic Information System (GIS) that would enable the county, cities, and school system to combine and share resources within and across jurisdictions and with the public. The development of this type of system should be done in conjunction with outside consultants that have an expertise in the development of multi-jurisdictional and multi-departmental information systems and are capable of performing the appropriate needs-assessments and system design. The development of this type of system can greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government interactions with the public, businesses, and other governmental organizations.
- Q-7** Troup County should consider a multi-jurisdictional approach to track the achievement in quality governance. Working with community leaders, identify key indicators of success that can be measured. The Jacksonville, Florida consolidated government uses indicators to ensure that their policies and investment are having desired outcomes. City of Decatur, Georgia has recently started a process to adopt performance measures that reflect both quantitative and qualitative progress. Some communities have employed a "balanced scorecard" system to measure the performance of government programs and functions, such as the City of Charlotte. Such a system enables the jurisdictions to test whether existing or newly enacted policies and plans are having the desired effect. If not, amendments can be made to correct outcomes. An indicator system can also measure the social and geographic distribution of positive and negative impacts, allowing for appropriate adjustments. (NOTE: This recommendation differs from Recommendation WP-1 that calls for the tracking of sustainable development indicators. The performance indicators suggested in this recommendation are at the local government programmatic and policy level, rather than community level as suggested in WP-1.)

OBSERVATION:	The City of LaGrange was frequently cited by community stakeholders as a community that has “done it right” and by statewide and regional partners as the “first thing that comes to mind” when they think of Troup County.
STRATEGY:	Leverage and build upon the LaGrange “brand equity” and economic development capabilities.
GOAL(S):	The Quality Governance Community The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders The VIEW from External Partners

When talking about LaGrange, more than anything else, the external partners cited leadership. They provided compliments regarding the political, business, and civic leadership in the city, as well as the cooperation between them. They also praised LaGrange for having a viable and quality downtown, LaGrange College, and a strong economic development program. LaGrange was also top of mind among community stakeholders when asked to identify communities that “did it right” - the city received second billing only to Peachtree City and Fayette County. Praise was provided by stakeholders within LaGrange and those affiliated with other jurisdictions such as Hogansville, West Point, and the county for the city having good leadership and “quality governance” - that is, a significant depth of local government expertise, capacity, and resources. The Callaway Foundation was also cited as a major asset to quality governance. Stakeholders within and outside LaGrange pointed to the potential opportunity for other local governments in Troup County to benefit from LaGrange’s competencies.

Given the growth expected within and around LaGrange, it is likely that the city’s population will eventually exceed 50,000 people, elevating Troup County to Metropolitan Statistical Area status. Its potential for serving as a greater economic engine for the region is anticipated to expand significantly.

Q-8 Troup County jurisdictions should explore opportunities to tap into LaGrange’s marketing capacity and leverage the city’s brand equity. The communities should explore options for creating a brand marketing message that builds on the market value of LaGrange while positively featuring Hogansville and West Point as gateway cities and showcases all three cities as part of Troup County. (This could be linked with Recommendation P-5 regarding Creative Centers should that recommendation be chosen to pursue.)

Q-9 Troup County should consider leveraging the strength of the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce and LaGrange Industrial Development Authority by expanding the mission of these organizations to serve the Cities of West Point and Hogansville. The chamber should consider:

- a. Opportunities to explore how the LaGrange economic development program could be expanded to represent all of Troup County in marketing, recruitment, site selection, and public relations efforts should be considered
- b. Employing dedicated staff persons who will be responsible for the expanded geographic service areas.

- c. Fostering the development of knowledge about and interest in economic development throughout Troup County through a locally based Economic Development Academy among adults tied to Leadership Troup program or other similar offering through the chamber.

OBSERVATION:	Local stakeholders identify 'engaging the citizenry' as the fifth most serious issue, and 'quality governance' ranked as the third greatest weaknesses.
STRATEGY:	Explore ways to enable and encourage the public to be actively involved in the planning processes by providing easily access the information and opportunities for involvement.
GOAL(S):	The Quality Governance Community The Well Planned Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders Redevelopment Assessment

A strong and informed citizen base is critical for the successful implementation of community betterment efforts such as those identified in the strategic planning process. To this end, Troup County's strong citizenry was identified as a leading strength by community stakeholders. While engaging the citizenry was identified as a leading issue, the stakeholders discussed a pervasive civic attitude and a desire to have greater communication from local government. The challenges of maintaining a strong citizenry will be exacerbated in the face of growth as it becomes more difficult to foster social connectivity and the incorporation of new residents in civic life.

Q-10 Troup County and the cities should explore options for strengthening its community engagement framework. For example, the region should consider:

- o Designating Citizen Participation Advocates to represent the interests of many neighborhoods and communities on planning and local government needs. Volunteer leaders of "neighborhood planning units (NPU)" in larger communities often play this role.
- o Creating a public relations / community relations post to be housed within local government where the full-time job would entail representing the local governments to the citizens and employing various communications channels to keep the citizenry informed.
- o Continuing to improve e-Government (online government) services by which Troup County and the cities can efficiently exchange public services and information with citizens and other stakeholders. The service should enable citizens to engage in communications with agencies and post problems, comments, or requests for services. One effective method to communicate with residents is through visualizations, like interactive mapping service, that help citizens understand the future of Troup County as well as its existing conditions. The county and cities should explore the opportunity to have a consolidated Web portal for citizens and businesses to access e-Government services.
- o Exploring the use of vacant downtown storefronts to share information about the future of the county and cities and to engage residents and business owners in the creative visioning and decision-making process.

Partnering with building owners and the development authorities to make use of vacant storefronts can provide space for informative posters, meeting announcements, and models; they can also be staffed on select days to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to ask questions and get involved or may be used for small meetings and events. Other communities have used this strategy with great success.

OBSERVATION:	No matter the year or the decade, success boils down to leadership - the ability to partner effectively and collaboratively for positive change. Troup County is currently the beneficiary of such leadership in local governance.
STRATEGY:	Engage in planning and initiatives that enable ongoing leadership succession in local governance at the elected and staff capacities.
GOAL(S):	The Quality Governance Community The Well Planned Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders The VIEW from Statewide and Regional Partners

Q-11 Troup County and the cities should utilize Leadership Troup and other similar programs to conduct the early identification of potential and emerging leaders and engage them in civic matters at the earliest possible opportunity. Efforts should be employed to recruit participation in such programs that reflects the diversity of Troup County in terms of age, gender, income, location, race / ethnicity / nationality, and occupation.

Q-12 Troup County Schools should explore the potential for expanding training options in civics through local schools. Consideration should be given toward expanding or providing such offerings as early in the school career as possible. For high school programs, the new curriculum developed by the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) should be considered for adoption.

The KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN Community

OBSERVATION:	Troup County, like is common elsewhere, is dealing with the challenges of talent retention, especially among its young adult population.
STRATEGY:	Explore initiatives to best leverage the realities associated with internal and external migration.
GOAL(S):	The Knowledge Driven Community The Prosperous Community The Neighborly Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment 2008 Survey of Youth A Case Study Review of Auto Plant Communities in the South

A common trend among individuals who are coming of age is a desire to experience something new and often they will leave their hometowns to do so, even if it means leaving for the next county or two over. At the same time, Troup County has several communities that are desirable places to live and appealing to persons of all ages.

- K-1 **Troup County should launch a campaign to attract 20-somethings from outside Troup County.** The county should leverage its appeal and market itself to the 20-somethings located outside Troup County who might see the county as the answer to their desire for that “something new.”
- K-2 **Troup County should develop an initiative to keep Troup County on the minds of its departing citizens.** For example, many of the 20-somethings may desire to come “home” when they become 30-somethings. In addition, by proactively “keeping the door open,” Troup County has the opportunity to leave a lasting positive impression with its departing citizens which might make their return more likely. The county should consider inviting those who leave Troup County for school, work, or other options to register their new contact information with the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce or other entity to enable continued connectivity.
- K-3 **An agency such as the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce should develop a young professional networking group that is both informational and social.** The group can host activities and events that correspond with areas of employment such as finance, management, the arts, entrepreneurship, real estate and others.
- K-4 **Troup County should explore efforts to create expanded opportunities for civic involvement for youth.** Many of the participants in Georgia Tech’s *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: 2008 Survey of Youth* expressed significant appreciation for being invited to provide input. Troup County should regularly seek out the opinions of young people on civic issues and create opportunities for them to participate on non-profit and public boards. Existing leaders should be tasked with identifying candidates for emerging leadership and providing one-on-one mentorship.
 - Troup County should consider creating a “community planning academy” for high school and college students. This academy could introduce students to the principles and policies associated with developing “well-planned” communities. A similar program was done on a pilot basis through the Urban Land Institute in Atlanta and found effective for not only developing a greater knowledge about planning-related matters, but in encouraging greater civic participation in such matters.
- K-5 **Troup County should champion young adult excellence to help this demographic feel more welcomed and engaged in the community.** Progressive efforts should be made to identify young people, who are making great achievements within academia, entrepreneurship, the arts, civic life, etc., and to widely publicize and celebrate their achievements.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County is home to several organizations that address various aspects of workforce development and they are working in a coordinated fashion. However, a more cohesive organizational structure could enable them to leverage and integrate their collective assets even more.
STRATEGY:	Explore options for creating a more seamless approach to workforce development.
GOAL(S):	The Knowledge Driven Community The Quality Governance Community The Well Planned Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment

Troup County’s workforce development organizations collaborate effectively through existing networks such as the West Georgia Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), LaGrange Employers Committee, and the Workforce Investment Board, and through initiatives spearheaded by Troup County Schools. The region’s workforce development professionals praised such efforts but also noted the need to have a single unitary structure for sharing information and for maximizing opportunities for effectiveness in coordinating activities among the multiple organizations.

K-6 Troup County should establish a formal workforce development coordination body in partnership with existing groups. Ideally, this coordination body would be staffed by at least one full-time professional in a coordinator / director role. Program administrators representing education, workforce development, social services, and health services should foster regular meetings among these entities to share information, discuss needs, and develop solutions collaboratively. The coordination body could help to:

- a. Create a single and local repository for all workforce development information related to Troup County and surrounding areas and meet regularly (for example, quarterly) to discuss workforce development challenges and investigate options for addressing those challenges
- b. Provide greater opportunities to collaborate on providing career development and job counseling services.
- c. Identify potential job opportunities including those not advertised through traditional channels and those to address future needs identified by area employers, and coordinate efforts with the Georgia Department of Labor to disseminate information about those opportunities.
- d. Communicate regularly with educational institutions about area employment needs and provide advisement about curriculum development.

K-7 Troup County should foster greater coordination and connectivity among educational assets to address key workforce development needs by encouraging the development of faculty networks tied to specific areas of expertise. For example, science faculty from Troup County Schools (from K-12), LaGrange College, and West Georgia Tech could convene on a regular basis to share information and ideas, and provide cross mentorship. The same could be done in the areas of math and social studies.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County’s workforce has been largely described as not ready for the jobs of today or the future.
STRATEGY:	Align workforce development efforts to address the expected demands to arise due to the impact of Kia and its suppliers and the community’s strategy to promote the future development of high growth industries.
GOAL(S):	The Knowledge Driven Community The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	Business Development Assessment Workforce Development Assessment The VIEW from Community Stakeholders

When asked to identify the most serious issue affecting Troup County’s ability to prepare for the future, the quality of the workforce was mentioned by community stakeholders more frequently than any other. The stakeholders were asked to share their views on how “ready” the workforce is for industry. They were asked to provide a rating on a scale of one to five where one meant “not all ready” and five meant “very ready.” The stakeholders gave generally low marks for the readiness of the Troup County workforce to meet future needs and an average mark when considering today’s needs. Troup County’s workforce development professionals echoed the concerns of the stakeholders concerning the readiness of the current and future workforce.

K-8 Troup County should review the industries recommended for future consideration, according to where the economy is heading, and align program and curriculum plans accordingly. This should include an exploration into the occupations associated with those industries identified in the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Business Development Assessment* report and a review of local training programs available to prepare workers for those occupations to determine capacity needs.

K-9 Troup County’s workforce development institutions should continue to regularly review and adjust their curriculum and programs according to stakeholder concerns, employer needs, and projected occupational demand for the area. They should consider expanding programs for skills in current demand by area employers, especially for those occupations identified through Georgia Tech’s 2008 survey of employers as being in growth mode in the next five years. Particular attention should be paid to examining capacity to prepare workers for those occupations that have been identified by employers as difficult to fill. Expanding programs for skills for occupations in projected high-demand and in for the region, as reported by the Georgia Department of Labor should also be explored. Anticipated growth in “creative class” occupations, as denoted by both the GDOL projections as well as the Georgia Tech economic impact analysis conducted on Kia should be examined for further workforce development programming needs as these are typically higher wage jobs.⁷ Specifically, the following should be considered:

- o Working with LaGrange College to consider these recommendations as they explore options for growth in evening college and off-site programs, one of

⁷ See *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Business Development Assessment* report.

the selected priorities for 2008-2009 for the LaGrange College Leadership Council. Another one of this council's selected priorities - achieving enrollment goals - could be further supported by enhancing the applicability of degree programs and curriculums to area employer's needs as this may be an effective means of increasing high school seniors' interest in attending LaGrange College.

- o Working with West Georgia Technical College to consider these recommendations as they explore the expansion and creation of future programming.
- o Working with Troup County Schools Career Pathways Program to consider these recommendations as they continue to calibrate the program.

OBSERVATION:	There appears to be a significant lack of awareness among the general citizenry about where the economy is heading.
STRATEGY:	Launch a multi-tiered campaign to raise awareness about future economic trends and implications for future career options.
GOAL(S):	The Knowledge Driven Community The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment 2008 Survey of Youth

The need to "get the word out" to the general population about where the economy is headed and the need for lifelong learning and continued education was echoed by many workforce development professionals. It was shared how the "commitment to learn" is not high and some attributed this to the remnants of a mill culture. Parents were reported to lack awareness about economic trends and careers of the future. It was shared how the parents do not fully understand that anything less than a high school education will no longer be sufficient for being competitive for future jobs. While they continue to often be a lead source for children for attaining guidance on future career and educational pursuits, there are apparently no efforts underway to foster greater parent literacy on these subjects. More or better career guidance was the second most frequently mentioned area of assistance desired by youth.

K-10 Troup County should dramatically increase the community capacity devoted toward career mentoring and guidance for youth. The youth in Troup County have sounded the bell for more career guidance. The school system's development of "career pathways" is an excellent step toward this direction - however it is not supported by full-time personnel. At the same time, students desire more one-on-one guidance.

- o Troup County should consider having every student develop a career plan, every year beginning in second grade. (It was reported that some students start to mentally drop out as early as the age of 7. See further recommendations on addressing the dropout rate elsewhere in this report.)
- o Troup County Schools should explore opportunities for expanding staff capacity devoted to career connections and related counseling, including the hiring of full-time professional staffing.

- Volunteer mentors from the business and the retirement communities should be viewed as a potential resource for helping to develop or advise career plans. Regarding the latter, Troup County could consider creating a “SCORE-like” concept for linking retirees to youth to provide career mentoring.
 - Troup County should tap into LaGrange College’s service learning programs to connect college students with students in K-12.
- K-11 Troup County Schools should consider creating a partnership with the area’s human resource professionals and area guidance counseling professionals.** There are opportunities for these professionals to more proactively work with each other to share information and inform each other’s work. Members of the West Georgia Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and LaGrange Employer Committee could be an invaluable resource for providing additional counseling support, especially to high school students.
- K-12 Troup County should expand programs to raise student awareness about real life applications.** Troup County Schools’ new Career Pathways program is an excellent step in this regard and several potential activities could be aligned with it. Some examples for doing this include: field trips (within and outside Troup County) to sites that expose students to current and new technologies (e.g., technical college, universities, modern manufacturing facilities, high tech companies), coordination of “technology road shows” or “technology fairs” where representatives from industry and other organizations showcase their products in a organized fashion, and student internships and apprenticeships.
- Troup County should proceed with its plans to start a “12 for Life” program. Modeled after Carroll County’s program and created in partnership with Southwire Company, this program combines traditional classroom instruction with jobs inside a real manufacturing plant.
 - Troup County should consider mechanisms to foster greater student participation in internships or apprenticeships before graduation. One potential way to encourage greater participation would be to create a stipend fund, supported by local philanthropic sources, that provides a monetary stipend to students for participating in internship programs.
 - Troup County should create a speakers bureau program with business partners. The program should be a formal way to coordinate regular involvement by business professionals in the classroom.
 - Troup County should encourage its employers to have a “take child to work day.” The county could designate one day per year as the Take Child to Work Day so that this becomes a universal focus of the day.
- K-13 Troup County Schools should consider encouraging local employers and teachers to participate in a business internship programs.** The Georgia Internship for Teachers (GIFT) program is a statewide program that has had a very successful track in coordinating these internships for more than 10 years. Through this program, teachers are provided with exposure to the latest in technological breakthroughs and current applications for their lesson material. Whether through GIFT or through a locally organized mechanism, this has the potential to be of great value given teachers have been identified as a leading resource for career guidance to youth.

- K-14 Troup County should develop a career pathways program for adults.** Troup County should emphasize the importance of life-long learning for everyone. The county should explore the opportunity to do so with existing workforce development partners such as LaGrange College, West Georgia Technical College, the Georgia Department of Labor, West Georgia SHRM, and the LaGrange Employer Committee. Employers should be encouraged to develop a professional development plan with every employee. Several employers reported to foster training on-the-job or off-site, with a notable number indicating that leadership development was their aim. More employers should be encouraged to do so.
- K-15 Troup County’s economic development leadership should be engaged to raise community wide awareness regarding current and future economic trends.** Staff and membership of the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce and area development authorities could be engaged to provide talks on economic development through the local school system, civic clubs, and other venues. Outreach should be conducted to help explain to the general public where the regional economy is heading in layman’s terms. The LaGrange Daily News and other media outlets could also be vital in helping to disseminate information on trends and their implications for future careers.
- Troup County should continue to raise awareness about the value of a technical college degree. Efforts should be made to help parents and youth see the technical college degree as a viable pursuit to a meaningful career.
 - Troup County should engage its Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) to foster greater awareness among parents about the economy. The PTO should explore the feasibility for hosting parent workshops to help them become more aware of the opportunities. This is especially critical given the Troup County youth have indicated that their parents are the number one source for career guidance.
 - The feasibility of creating an economic development club for students through the school system should be explored. This could be designed as an optional extracurricular activity, supported by community volunteers, offered similarly as other clubs. The club could provide interactive options to help participants understand where the economy is heading, and the implications of such trends on the jobs of tomorrow.

OBSERVATION:	To be competitive in a global economy, today’s employers require workers who are creative, adept at problem-solving, show initiative, and have good work habits. Yet, Troup County’s youth and adult workforce were not rated highly in these areas by area employers.
STRATEGY:	Focus energies on developing the next generation worker who is flexible, agile, a continual learner, and has the traits desired by employers.
GOAL(S):	The Knowledge Driven Community The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment

While impressive efforts are underway to foster better work habits (showing up at work on time, dressing appropriately, etc.), workforce developers unanimously identified this as a key challenge that could benefit from greater effort, resources, and coordination. In terms of attributes, employers provided top marks to their employees for stability and low turnover, productivity, and work ethic. However, employees received the lowest mark for their level of creativity, followed by their absenteeism and show of initiative. Employers were less enthusiastic about the work place related attributes possessed by high school students. Students received the lowest marks for absenteeism, show of initiative, and work ethic.

- K-16** Troup County should continue to explore opportunities to expand its efforts in foster better work habits among its workforce. Several initiatives for doing so were shared with investigators conducting this assessment. These initiatives had a common challenge - lack of resources and capacity to be able to address the widespread need. The commitment to fostering better work habits needs to take on a more global approach involving workforce development, social service, and health organizations working in a cohesive partnership focused on the same goals.
- K-17** Troup County employers should be encouraged to develop tangible employee incentives for demonstration of desirable soft skills and work habits. Employers should provide training to their existing employees on appropriate soft skills and work habits and create measurable performance objectives in these areas to be reviewed for compensation and bonus adjustments. Another option is providing additional benefits (e.g., an extra vacation day off per quarter) to reward positive performance.
- K-18** Troup County Schools should incorporate a review of soft skills and work habits into their grading system, from Kindergarten through 12th grade. At the time of this assessment, the high schools are reported to be incorporating this to some extent through its career pathways program. However, it would be ideal to include a grade on the report cards for every student at every grade level on basic work habits. There are mixed opinions about having such a grade count toward an academic grade as many educational experts advise that academic grades should be based on content knowledge. However, this grade should at least be part of the "conduct" area of the report card at the earliest grade possible to provide parental awareness and reinforcement for work habits.⁸
- K-19** Troup County should explore mechanisms to help more at-risk youth tap into available programs for fostering soft skills and work habits. In addition to the Boys & Girls Club which is mostly utilized by at-risk youth, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, and Junior Achievement are just a few examples of programs that excel in this area, as well as in developing solid leadership skills. These outlets are valuable for providing youth real life applications to test and develop their soft skills and work habits but are often not utilized by youth of the lower socioeconomic rungs due to the financial costs (e.g., cost of uniforms and handbooks, transportation). Greater efforts should be made to overcome the barriers and link those youth who do not have positive role models with these opportunities.
- K-20** Troup County should expand programs that foster the development of skills in reading comprehension and in the interpretation and application of

⁸ West Georgia Technical College includes incorporates work habits into their grading system.

information. Whether through the daily curriculum or through extracurricular and civic opportunities, such skills are critical for fostering problem-solving abilities. Such programs should focus on building skills in the area of “reading for information.”

- K-21 Troup County should leverage its tremendous assets in arts and music to foster greater creativity among its workforce and youth.** Arts-related careers were the third highest area of occupational interest among youth surveyed by Georgia Tech. Efforts should be made to link arts, music, and cultural professionals with the local schools, for all grade levels. Full-time arts and music programs should be available at every elementary, middle, and high school. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to incorporate art-related practices in every day instruction as much as possible. For example, students could be asked to build dioramas depicting historic battles for social studies.
- K-22 Troup County should encourage and champion independent invention.** School-based programs such as inventor clubs, writing clubs, “Odyssey of the Mind” and other contests, science discovery camps, LEGO and VEX robotics programs, and other programs to foster “real-life” creativity should be sustained and expanded. Efforts should be made to reach children during the early years - for example, those in pre-school and Kindergarten could participate in organized “Play-Doh” clubs. Similar opportunities for creative outlets should also be expanded for the post-high school community.
- The county should consider working with area partners, including the arts and cultural organizations, to host an annual event that illustrates appreciation for independent inventor creativity and initiative of all ages.
- K-23 Troup County should encourage more employers and individuals to participate in the Certified Work Ready program.** Local companies who have participated in the program should be engaged as champions of the program. Efforts to publicize the value of the program through media, chamber, and civic channels should be expanded, with an emphasis on the bottom-line benefits for business.
- The county should explore options for incorporating the Certified Work Ready assessment process into the middle and high schools. The school system is now testing seniors based on “work ready” credentials. Efforts should be made to expand the assessment process to students as early as in the 6th grade.
- K-24 Troup County should foster greater awareness among area employers concerning state incentives associated with workforce development.** In addition to training programs offered through Georgia Quick Start and Georgia’s Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP) for new and expanding businesses, employers are eligible for tax credits. For example, the child care tax credit is available to those employers that provide or sponsor child care for their employees. The basic skills education tax credit is available to those employers who sponsor basic skills education for their employees through the Technical College of Georgia system.

OBSERVATION:	Though making strides, Troup County continues to have significant challenges in curbing its dropout rate and graduating students.
STRATEGY:	Continue and expand ongoing efforts to address the individual needs of K-12 students.
GOAL(S):	The Knowledge Driven Community The Neighborly Community The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment

Many of Troup County’s youth were described as having made life-altering choices for a variety of reasons such as lack of parental involvement, lack of positive role models, and lack of knowledge about the impact of such choices, to name a few. In other words, they either enter or are put in situations that require adult-level decision making and, absent the presence of an adult, they make what some might call chief executive decisions regarding their life when they’re clearly not equipped to do so. The relatively high incidence of teenage pregnancy in the county was cited as an example. It was shared that it is common for pregnant teens to have their parents “turn their back on them,” which ends up further exacerbating the challenges associated with a teen trying to learn how to become a parent. The reported incidence of drug use and juvenile delinquency among some youth was also linked to influences within the home environment and social network. While some of this may be attributable to single-parent households, it was also shared as affecting youth in dual parent households, often where both parents are in full-time employment situations. The county was reported to have its share of “latch key” children. Generally, the lack of parental involvement was viewed as affecting all students.

K-25 Troup County should consider launching a communitywide commitment campaign - e.g., “The Troup County Promise” - where parents, teachers, business leaders, and others commit to working together for identifying and saving at-risk children. Similar to the neighborhood watch concept for crime, this campaign would involve various actors in the adult community committing to keeping their eyes open for youth who are at-risk for making life-altering decisions that will have a lasting negative impact on their futures. A key partner in this initiative will be LaGrange College, as the Leadership Council has selected addressing high school dropout rates as one of their priorities for 2008-2009.

K-26 Troup County should develop innovative ways to reward teachers who are able to foster positive classroom experiences. Educators point out that it is the experience in the classroom that influences the degree to which a child will stay interested in school. The more exciting, engaging, and hands-on activity-based the environment, the greater the likelihood for stimulating student minds and interest - and those fostering such environments should be celebrated and championed.

K-27 Troup County School’s impressive efforts to identify “at-risk” high school students should be expanded into the earlier grades. School officials’ institution of a rigorous analysis process on test and other data to serve as an “early warning” beacon should begin as early as second grade. Troup County should explore the feasibility of conducting individualized needs assessments for every student on an annual basis, beginning in second grade. Every student

should be assigned an assessment team that includes their teacher, guidance counselor, parent, and a professional “advisor” from business and industry.

- K-28** Troup County should continue to sound the alarm on the “economics of education” at every opportunity through a locally crafted public relations campaign, building on the efforts of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. Through churches, PTOs, youth clubs, the media, and any other available outlet, efforts should be made to continually remind parents and children on the costs associated with dropping out of school. The video production capabilities at West Georgia Tech could be utilized to produce a PR video on the value of a technical college education and four-year college education with testimonials from members of the local business community and alumnae. Successful adults of all ages could be engaged to “tell their story” through various outlets including local television stations and media.
- K-29** Troup County should explore efforts to increase available tutoring services in the area. This was the third leading service area identified by youth to expand. It is clear that the youth desire more one-on-one help while the professionals serving them regularly pointing to such help as being the critical difference maker. Efforts should be made to engage LaGrange College’s service learning programs for connecting college students with K-12 students needing or desiring academic help. For example, students in LaGrange College’s popular business administration program could be linked with students needing help in mathematics. Other potential avenues (area Rotaries, Lions Clubs, etc.) to identify tutors and mentors should be explored.
- K-30** Troup County should encourage its employers to provide their workers with compensated time off to enable their involvement in the schools. For example, employers include in the benefits to their workers with up to 40 hours per year of time to use for involvement in the schools. This could be utilized by parents so they can attend parent-teacher meetings and participate in classroom and field trip activities. It could also be used by workers who wish to volunteer in the schools as mentors or in some other role.

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	Increase awareness and support for numerous early childhood development programs already in existence, and fill in any gaps that may arise.
GOAL(S):	The Knowledge Driven Community The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community
REFERENCE(S):	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 that 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.

The ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD Community

OBSERVATION:	Many community stakeholders expressed a desire for environmental stewardship that balances economic and social factors through a sustainable development approach.
STRATEGY:	Adopt a multi-faceted approach to sustainable development across all development types.
GOAL(S):	The Environmental Steward Community The Well Planned Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability Quality Growth Audit Redevelopment Assessment 2008 Survey of Youth The VIEW from Community Stakeholders Sustainable Development Report Card

Sustainable development is about protecting the natural environment while supporting the social and economic conditions in Troup County. For example, many efforts to protect the natural environment (e.g. energy efficient building practices and appliances or compact land development practices) have associated positive economic (e.g. lower operating and development costs) and social (e.g. improved indoor air quality for better health and a more walkable and socially connected community) impacts.

- ES-1 Troup County and the cities can showcase local examples of sustainable development, while simultaneously developing new policies and incentives to promote future examples.** Consider working across jurisdictions to develop print and online materials that describe examples of sustainable development in Troup County. This could be part of the Community Information System (Web portal) suggested in the Implementing the Strategic Plan set of recommendations. There are several outstanding examples; among them, the LaGrange landfill methane capture for energy production, Interface's facility and practices, Milliken's standard operating procedures, DASH's neighborhood revitalization efforts, Highland Park's conservation easements, and the LaGrange College Leadership Council's Sustainability initiative and the College's new library, the first LEED certified building in Troup County. Any one of these is worthy of note and combined they set the course for an overarching vision of sustainable development in the form of industrial and residential development, as well as institutional and public sector action. Sharing information about these examples can attract innovative developers and businesses who will recognize the benefits of working in communities with a willingness to adapt to new ideas that protect the natural environment and provide community benefits. Coordinated tours of examples of sustainable practices can be organized to illustrate first-hand the success of these projects.
- ES-2 Troup County and the cities should promote infill development and the adaptation of vacant and underutilized sites within urbanized areas.** This

practice makes use of existing infrastructure and reunites neighborhoods that have been severed by deteriorating or poorly performing areas. Conduct an inventory of these sites and provide this information to developers. For large sites and areas, work with the surrounding neighborhoods to develop a neighborhood plan, potentially with the development authority, to establish a local vision for future development. Amend comprehensive plans to support infill development.

- ES-3** Troup County and the cities should examine building codes to introduce incentives and requirements for the use of “green” materials, systems, and practices. Such approaches reduce water and energy consumption, waste creation, and make use of recycled and renewable materials for construction. As a side benefit, buildings constructed through this approach are less expensive to operate and can result in improved indoor air quality, which is especially important for children and older adults whose respiratory systems are more sensitive. (NOTE: This could be incorporated into the joint project review process recommended in Recommendation WP-7.)
- ES-4** Troup County and the cities should study the feasibility of using sustainable development and design practices for all new government buildings and the retrofitting of existing buildings. This presents an opportunity to model good practices and create local awareness and acceptance of such practices, including rainwater and grey water capture for use in landscape maintenance, green roofs, use of renewable and recyclable materials, and the use of native and adaptive plants that require less water and pesticides.
- ES-5** Troup County should expand its role as the steward of the area’s tremendous natural resources. The presence of West Point Lake and the Chattahoochee River gives Troup County a rather unique natural environment. Furthermore, the foremost item community stakeholders named for preservation was natural resources and among the first tier “betterment” activities they identified was protecting and restoring the environment. The Lake and River are vital to the health of humans, as well as flora and fauna. As such, new development in this area should be designed and constructed in such a way as to protect this important resource. The county and cities should consider encouraging the use of ecological principles of natural flows and processes combined with sustainable economic development strategies to conceptualize new, large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial projects. Such a strategy could apply conservation easements and conservation subdivision strategies, platting to reflect natural contours that enable natural system functions to remain relatively intact, storm water management approaches that create habitat for wildlife, and other techniques.
- ES-6** Troup County should tap into the interest among its youth in environmental preservation. The county should explore, in partnership with the school system and area civic organizations (e.g., Rotary) opportunities to engage youth in civic activities related to environmental stewardship like litter cleanup efforts along waterways, tree planting projects, or removal of invasive plants.
- ES-7** Troup County should encourage local companies to adopt environmental management standards. Companies should undertake energy and water conservation assessments, which often result in cost savings. In addition, companies should be encouraged to explore opportunities to further mitigate their environmental impacts by planting trees, using natural weed killers and pesticides, replace lawns with plant native or adaptive plants, all of which frame a comprehensive pollution prevention strategy. Efforts should be made

to widely praise and champion new adopters of environmental management standards. Local industry champions in this regard, such as Milliken and Interface, can play key roles in such an effort. (Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute is a potential resource to assist in this area.)

OBSERVATION:	Community stakeholders have expressed a desire for safe walking and biking access to key destinations and green space. At the same time, Troup County has approximately 6,000 acres of land that are highly unsuitable for development, and another 58,000 acres that is less suitable. Much of the unsuitable land is related to water features that create a natural network connecting the cities to the lake, and various residential areas to civic buildings and downtowns. Troup County presents a natural synergy between the protection of the natural environment while also creating opportunities to make social connections and create an active living community.
STRATEGY:	Protect environmentally sensitive lands, while simultaneously using the approach to connect people to schools, recreational and entertainment opportunities, and each other.
GOAL(S):	The Environmental Steward Community The Attractive Community The Entertaining Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability The VIEW from Community Stakeholders

As Troup County’s infrastructure—water systems, power lines, and roads—connects its people and businesses, so could green infrastructure connect its natural spaces: parks, forests, undeveloped lands and waterways. Green infrastructure is a strategically planned network of undeveloped land, parks, waterways, working lands, and other natural areas connected to community facilities and cultural sites. It is designed to improve quality of life, sense of place, habitat, and the environment. Unlike traditional conservation strategies that seek to restore environmentally important areas after development takes place, green infrastructure planning begins by identifying ecologically, socially, and economically important natural systems to guide future development patterns.

A well-developed network of green infrastructure provides many benefits such as increasing biodiversity; maintaining natural ecological processes; reducing flooding; improving air and water quality; increasing recreational and transportation opportunities; enriching wildlife habitat; linking people to natural places; and creating a sense of place. These benefits are provided through the use of “hubs” and “links.” Hubs are larger tracts of land that sustain a variety of natural processes and provide a home for wildlife. Hubs can also be recreational or educational destinations for people. Examples include reserves, working lands (farms and forests), parks, wetlands, and public lands. Links connect the hubs and facilitate the flow of ecological processes and transportation for both people and wildlife. Links can be formed by connected pieces of property used for farming, timber, park, or public facilities, or they may be rivers and streams protected with land buffers. Links can also be parks and streetscapes that

feature native trees and plants. This allows the green infrastructure system to connect to historical and cultural resources in urban areas.

ES-8 Troup County should explore opportunities associated with West Point Lake and the several riparian corridors that create a network throughout the county and connect to the surrounding region. These areas are especially sensitive to increased urbanization, but they are also attractive amenities that provide a unique identify for the communities. These “green ribbons” can be used to: (1) protect environmentally sensitive areas, (2) provide recreational opportunities, (3) offer alternative transportation solutions, (4) define urban and rural areas, and (5) preserve community identity. In particular the ribbons can create links between the three downtowns and West Point Lake and the Chattahoochee River, which offer excellent opportunities for entertainment and recreation, but are often only connected by auto-oriented networks. The concept of green ribbons can be extended beyond natural corridors to include landscaped parkways, well-treed downtown streetscapes, and other linear arrangements, while remaining focused on creating environmentally sensitive links that enhance multi-modal connectivity and the natural environment. It can become a tangible and enduring example of the community’s commitment to the natural environment and to each other. Troup County and the cities should consider:

- Developing a Green Ribbons Plan that identifies a network of environmentally, historically, and socially important areas (this may include rivers, wetlands, floodplains, forests, historic sites, schools, libraries, city and county buildings, major institutions). Begin by identifying areas that may serve as the foundation for the network then, working with a variety of partners and the development community, apply tools and strategies to identify and connect the ribbons, as discussed in the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability* report.

ES-9 Because environmental features function without regard to political boundaries, local governments in Troup County should explore partnerships amongst each other and beyond the County to protect and enhance the natural environment. For example, Coweta County has a greenway plan that naturally connects to Troup County, with the recently designated scenic byway in south Troup there is an opportunity to create meaningful and visible connections to Callaway Gardens in Harris County, and thinking more broadly, the Chattahoochee River connects LaGrange to the Atlanta, Gainesville, Columbus, and Auburn metropolitan areas and beyond. A regional and connected approach greatly benefits the natural environment and support wildlife, but it can be designed in such a way to provide ecotourism opportunities that can help maintain it.

OBSERVATION:	Water quality issues are a serious concern for Troup County.
STRATEGY:	Work to develop county and city collaborative policies and procedures to protect water quality throughout the county.
GOAL(S):	The Environmental Steward Community The Well Planned Community
REFERENCE(S):	A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability Quality Growth Audit

Water quality is a well-known challenge for the county and cities. Existing sewer infrastructure is in need of maintenance and improvement. With increased development come higher rates of sewer discharge, the likelihood of greater quantities of impervious surfaces and resulting non-point source pollution, and increased intrusion into wetlands and floodplains, all of which can further degrade water quality.

ES-10 Troup County and the cities should work together to address water quality challenges. The City of LaGrange has already developed a watershed protection plan, which is a strong starting point for a county-wide, and even a regional response. Troup County and the cities should consider working together to develop and implement watershed protection programs. This can include the introduction and expansion of storm water best management practices for construction, new development, and redevelopment; undertaking systematic sewer maintenance and upgrade programs; and a program for addressing the maintenance of existing septic systems throughout the county. There are also opportunities to use the provision of green infrastructure and other sustainable development practices to promote water quality in the county.

ES-11 Roadway and public space/facility design should apply the proven practices for reducing non-point source water pollution. There are many examples of exemplary programs to support water quality improvements. Among them, the Green Highways initiative, which focuses on roadway design, construction, operations, and maintenance practices that rely on recycled materials, wetlands preservation and restoration, natural systems for runoff cleansing, and forest preservation.

OBSERVATION:	Georgia is in a water crisis. Although the local watershed has been less impacted than others, many of the decisions made outside the region have a tremendous impact on Troup County's water quality and supply.
STRATEGY:	Continue to be involved in regional, state, and federal discussions about water resource management.
GOAL(S):	The Environmental Steward Community The Well Planned Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability Quality Growth Audit

The severe drought in Georgia over this past year has brought to light the importance of multiple scales of planning for our water resources. Effective planning must involve all entities in the watershed to ensure that both upstream and downstream concerns with water quality and quantity are addressed and that everyone's water needs are adequately met.

ES-12 Troup County and the cities should continue to actively engage in partnerships with key leaders in water policy in the region, the state, and the southeast. Staying engaged with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning district, the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to help address issues of water quality and quantity into West Point

Lake will be critical. Such relationships will help Troup County and the cities to be more informed about upstream planning and policy initiatives that can (negatively or positively) affect the water quality and quantity in the county, allowing them to take appropriate measures to address these effects.

Troup County and the cities should continue to work with the Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center and regional advocacy groups like West Point Lake Coalition to ensure that local and regional concerns about water resource management are being discussed.

The GOOD HABITAT Community

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	Work to maintain a range of quality, affordable housing stock to match the range in area income levels, and develop more mixed-income communities.
GOAL(S):	The Good Habitat Community
REFERENCE(S):	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” suggested 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 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.⁹ 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.

⁹ 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.

OBSERVATION:	While some of the more established neighborhoods have declined, much of the remaining housing stock and historic street patterns remain.
STRATEGY:	Continue to support existing older neighborhoods and explore using historically successful patterns of development to inform policies for future development, especially infill development and the potential for greater mixed-use development within these neighborhoods.
GOAL(S):	The Good Habitat Community The Well Planned Community The Navigable Community The Environmental Steward Community
REFERENCE(S):	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 diversity of architectural styles and some variation in home size and type. Such development is the inspiration for the New Urbanism (or neo-traditional) movement, which embraces the concept that well-connected places with walking and public space allow for causal interaction, creating 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 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 character of the neighborhood, particularly in scale, volume, height, 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 that would 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.

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	Advance awareness and availability of support services for the temporarily and longer-term homeless.
GOAL(S):	The Good Habitat Community
REFERENCE(S):	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 that 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.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County's instances of crime have increased in recent years, and have consistently been much higher than the state average.
STRATEGY:	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.
GOAL(S):	The Good Habitat Community
REFERENCE(S):	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 (69.05 per 1,000 population), substantially higher than the state's rate (43.72 per 1,000 population). Additionally, community stakeholders expressed the desire to address public safety concerns.

G-8 Troup County needs to 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 requires 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 will need to 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 and Fire Departments for each jurisdiction should identify means of enhancing communications and collaborative efforts. 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. Explore feasibility of having each department on the same communications frequency.

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

In the youth survey, 12.7 percent of respondents said that crime and public safety were the second-highest rated item in response to the question of what is the biggest challenge facing the community. 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 percent) 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.¹⁰

The NAVIGABLE Community

OBSERVATION:	Troup County lacks the mechanisms and tools to ensure desirable corridor development.
STRATEGY:	Develop land use and transportation policies that elevate design standards, manage traffic flows, and increase opportunities for alternative modes of travel.
GOAL(S):	The Navigable Community The Attractive Community
REFERENCE(S):	Transportation Assessment Quality Growth Audit

Several key transportation corridors and nodes (many of which are largely commercial in character) serve as gateways to Troup County and the cities. In many instances the corridors suffer from inconsistent development patterns and substandard materials and design. Due to the anticipated residential development throughout the county, these corridors are likely to attract new and unprecedented commercial development, and in some cases redevelopment, which can serve as a catalyst to create a more attractive and functional corridor.

- N-1** Troup County and the cities should adopt complementary land use, transportation, and design visions and policies to create quality, efficient corridors. Both function (efficient traffic flow) and form (quality and durable materials, flexible building design, appropriate landscaping) are important to ensure these corridors serve as a community asset. The county and cities should consider:
- Developing an Access Management Plan for corridors and nodes where higher intensity development is anticipated and desirable. Access management is the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway. The purpose is to integrate land use planning and transportation engineering practice to maintain high-performing corridors in accordance with the county’s preferred alignments.
 - Amending the comprehensive plans of the county and cities to include the Street Typology conducted as part of this Strategic Planning Process. The street typology provides a range of appropriate road design and land use

¹⁰ 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.

standards for each type of corridor, be it downtown, parkway, regional, inter city, or others. In some corridors a “Complete Streets” approach is given priority to encourage walking and biking, and future transit expansion. In other corridors the focus is on congestion reduction. After review and revision of the typology it can serve to create an explicit link between the design and operation of transportation system and their adjacent land uses, and can be used to encourage Georgia Department of Transportation funded projects to implement the community’s vision for the particular corridor.

- o Establishing consistent design and streetscape standards for key gateway corridors. Standards would address building materials, signage, setbacks, building orientation to street, landscaping, lighting, and signage. This may be best accomplished in a corridor overlay that is implemented across all jurisdictions, since many corridors traverse incorporated and unincorporated areas. See the street typology recommendations in the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Transportation Assessment* for details.

N-2 The City of LaGrange should continue to support Georgia Department of Transportation’s long-range plan to address south Hamilton Road (SR 27). As the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia: Transportation Assessment* shows, anticipated development southeast and south of LaGrange, including Kia and related suppliers, will continue to put traffic pressure on this area. With relatively dense population and lower vehicle access rates in this area, it is important that this corridor also serve pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation modes of travel.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County will experience increasing demand for a more robust public transportation system as the population increases.
STRATEGY:	Working in conjunction with human services and workforce development partners, develop an incremental exploration to expand public transportation services.
GOAL(S):	The Navigable Community The Good Habitat Community The Prosperous Community
REFERENCE(S):	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.¹¹ 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

¹¹ Or Housing Units, as described by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

education opportunities, to health care services, and to other basic human service needs. This is also critical for school-age children to access after-school and other enrichment activities. 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 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) and 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.¹²

¹² 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.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County's ability to ensure efficient transportation flows around industrial districts will be challenged by the significant ongoing and anticipated industrial growth.
STRATEGY:	Establish a long-range vision for industrial development and establish policies that protect important infrastructure and suitable land.
GOAL(S):	The Navigable Community The Well Planned Community The Good Habitat Community
REFERENCE(S):	Transportation Assessment A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability Quality Growth Audit

Troup County industry is currently well served by transportation systems and land that are available and suitable for industrial development. New non-industrial development has the potential to encroach on industrial areas and may create land use and transportation conflicts that reduce efficiency and create safety issues.

N-4 As a growing industrial center, Troup County and the cities should adopt policies and plans to secure land and systems that support the community's vision for future economic development. The county and cities should consider:

- o Developing an Industrial Districts Park Management Plan and address industrial land needs for the long-term future. Such a plan can establish policies and guidelines for design and locating of businesses, as well as set environmental guidelines that may be related to the Green Ribbons strategy outlined earlier.
- o Carefully evaluating residential and commercial development proposals near existing and future industrial areas to ensure that such development will not create traffic congestion that will inhibit freight movement, and the freight routes and noise and light pollution from industrial areas will not negatively impact residential areas. For a full examination of community impacts of freight see the Transportation Assessment.

OBSERVATION:	With the introduction of Kia and the associated businesses, Troup County is becoming a major industry center in the southeast. As such, broader regional questions about effective and efficient transport will become increasingly important to the county and cities.
STRATEGY:	Expand efforts to participate in regional, state, and multi-state discussions about highway and railroad infrastructure.
GOAL(S):	The Navigable Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	Transportation Assessment A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability

With the addition of Kia, associated suppliers, and the anticipated increase in large scale residential developments, it is expected that Troup County will have an increase in inter- as well as intra-county traffic. Troup County and the cities will need to plan, in the short- and long-term, for the expected local increases in traffic from expected residential, industrial, and commercial development. It is expected that increases will be seen in commercial (freight) as well as non-commercial traffic.

N-5 Troup County should regularly assess the potential local and countywide transportation impacts associated with anticipated developments. This should be expanded beyond just the potential effects of traffic congestion on freight movement, but should include the potential for traffic congestion from commercial development and large-scale residential or non-residential Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). This could be integrated into the planning and governance coordination suggested in Recommendations Q-1 through Q-3 and WP-7.

Additionally, there will be traffic impacts, both commercial (freight) and non-commercial from future development occurring in adjacent counties. In line with the suggestions in Recommendations P-14, P-26 and Q-3, Troup County and the cities should work with surrounding counties to communicate expected large scale commercial, residential, and industrial developments and potential infrastructure improvements that could have a cross-jurisdictional effect on traffic congestion.

OBSERVATION:	All of the downtown districts are traversed by active rail lines, some of which create automobile flow issues and create less desirable pedestrian and bicycle access from the residential neighborhoods to the downtown.
STRATEGY:	Improve railroad crossings within the cities in concert with the Federal Rail Authority at key locations.
GOAL(S):	The Navigable Community The Quality Governance Community
REFERENCE(S):	Transportation Assessment A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability

To become a multimodal community, any deterrence to walking and biking, especially to destinations like downtown districts, should be considered for improvements. Real and perceived safety issues can decrease the likelihood of people using alternative modes of travel. Railroad crossings that do not explicitly provide for pedestrian and bicycle safety or that create burdensome automobile backups can create challenges.

N-6 The cities should examine the origins and destinations of potential pedestrian and bicycle travel. Several methodologies are available to undertake this effort, including latent demand analysis, bike and pedestrian level of service, and community surveys. Once key routes are identified, engineering studies should be undertaken to improve key railroad crossings.

N-7 The cities should continue to advocate for the traffic signaling technology and timing improvements. Such improvements can have a dramatic impact on automobile cueing and can relieve congestion in the downtowns and around railroad crossing.

The ATTRACTIVE Community

OBSERVATION:	Given anticipated market demands, Troup County will be at risk for haphazardly placed and designed retail development.
STRATEGY:	Take extra care to avoid low quality retail development.
GOAL(S):	The Attractive Community The Entertaining Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders

While community stakeholders desire more retail, they want to avoid strip mall development and low quality retail. In addition, poor commercial site design can exacerbate traffic issues (also see The Navigable Community for additional recommendations for commercial corridors).

A-1 Troup County should take extra care to avoid the construction of low-quality retail development. The community should investigate other retail corridors that have adhered to high standards for development and quality growth and explore potential tools for safeguarding against haphazard strip development in Troup. Efforts should be made to consult with retail experts to assess how to position itself for higher quality retail. The Georgia Electric Membership Corporation offers expertise on site selection criteria. The University of Georgia offers expertise to analyze the supply and demand for retail in order to better understand best targets.

A-2 Troup County should create Community Design Guidelines for future retail development. The county is home to a number of architects and design experts. The guidelines could be developed through a committee (e.g., design review committee) of local and regional experts to be used by designers of new developments. This could be integrated into the recommendation for a community design guidebook for neighborhood development suggested in Recommendation G-6.

OBSERVATION:	With anticipated new development, additional signage, landscaping (or the lack thereof), and streetscaping have the ability to significantly change the attractiveness of the community.
STRATEGY:	Review, amend, or adopt ordinances to preserve and enhance community aesthetic appeal.
GOAL(S):	The Attractive Community The Environmental Steward Community
REFERENCE(S):	Quality Growth Audit

Streetscapes, landscaping, and signage are some of the most consistent elements that define communities. Together, they can support efforts to preserve and maximize the use of greenspace (see Recommendation ES-8) to tie together neighborhoods and cities. This can take the form of consistent streetscaping, landscaping, and signage standards. Local governments play an important role in shaping this public space and can encourage private entities to support a common vision for the community.

- A-3 Troup County and the cities should review and amend codes to provide appropriate landscape ordinances.** It is important to differentiate landscaping and buffers. Typically, buffers are intended to create a visual or environmental divide between land uses that are not entirely complimentary. Landscape ordinances do more than block undesirable views; they also aesthetically enhance areas, create shade for pedestrians and parked cars, and provide habitat for native flora and fauna. A landscaping ordinance can result in the screening of visually undesirable features from public view, protection of the privacy of residents, and promotion of the community as one that cares about its appearance. It can also improve the physical environment of a community through using plants best suited to the climate, improving drainage, and enhancing air quality. Working with a team of local landscape architects, planners, wildlife biologists, residents, and business owners, Troup County and the cities should study the creation of a landscape ordinance that sets standards for landscaping of commercial, industrial, and residential areas. The ordinance should also include lists of trees and shrubs that are recommended for the area. The recommended plants should either be native or adapted to the climate and environment of Troup County.
- A-4 Troup County and the cities should review signage regulations and develop wayfinding and promotional signage plan.** Wayfinding is the orderly presentation of information required to help people comfortably and successfully access and move about a community. Signage provides an effective method to communicate wayfinding information to specific audiences. Such signage can be thought of as both a practical necessity and a public relations tool. A wayfinding program can be used to identify, inform, advertise, direct, describe, and explain the environment. Wayfinding signage placed at key decision points (e.g. interchanges, major intersections, bridges) is extremely important to visitors unfamiliar with the area. Done properly, it can create a uniform identity that reinforces the unique sense of place of Troup County.

OBSERVATION:	Growth and development can negatively impact historic buildings and sites and scenic views.
STRATEGY:	Inventory and protect historic and scenic resources.
GOAL(S):	The Attractive Community The Environmental Steward Community
REFERENCE(S):	Redevelopment Assessment Quality Growth Audit

Historic buildings and sites and scenic views help make up Troup County's unique identity. They are reminders of its natural and manmade heritage and as such contribute significantly to its sense of place. Their preservation also provides environmental benefits, as the maintenance and reuse of historic buildings is less material intensive than new construction and the protection of scenic views is likely to conserve natural areas.

- A-5 Troup County and the cities should work with the Troup County Historical Society to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites.** In some cases, National Trust Status should be sought for exceptional examples that are not already identified. Less significant examples can be

identified in city and county publications and policies can be enhanced to support their preservation.

- A-6** Troup County and the cities should inventory important scenic views. The recently announced scenic byways in the southeast portion of the county begin to protect these areas and the draft Troup County Comprehensive Plan has policies for their preservation. Smaller areas and specific viewsheds may also be protected through transportation and land use plans that respect scenic view designations.

The NEIGHBORLY Community

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	Focus on retention and recruitment of physicians within the most in-need medical disciplines.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community
REFERENCE(S):	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 health care capacities in the local community. This issue was raised in interviews with community stakeholders, 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 health care services by developing a physician recruitment strategy. By partnering with West Georgia Medical Center and other area health care 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 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 suggested in The Prosperous Community set of recommendations.

Y-3 Troup County should launch a public relations campaign regarding the quality and availability of health care 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.

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

The Callaway Foundation is highly recognized for its efforts to provide scholarships to support the greater development 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 health care staff needs, is needed to maintain a strong local and regional health care system.

Y-4 Troup County should conduct a comprehensive analysis of existing and projected health care-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, determine if program capacity and 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. If there are capacity constraints, work with West Georgia Tech and LaGrange College to determine what strategies can reasonably be pursued to increase the number of teachers and amount of classroom space.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County's uninsured and working poor have difficulty affording both preventative and treatment/recovery health care 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.
STRATEGY:	Enhance the commitment to Troup County's existing preventive health care to improve the community's overall health and capacity for treatment and recovery care.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community
REFERENCE(S):	Human Services Assessment Sustainable Development Report Card

Many community stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the rising costs of health care 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 health care 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.¹³ 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 and explore further 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. The LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce advertises insurance discounts for its members. The Chamber and its community partners should continue to find innovative means of making area small businesses more aware of the value of these available discounts, and any additional discounts that may be able to pursue for those in the community without a Chamber membership.
- 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"

¹³ For more information, visit <http://www.district4health.org>.

program, which is a volunteer, team-based effort to promote employee fitness, should be considered a model to be replicated by other employers.

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	Raise awareness of existing resources, and include psychiatrists and psychologists in the physician retention and recruitment initiative.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community
REFERENCE(S):	Human Services Assessment Sustainable Development Report Card

Many human service providers expressed concerns regarding the availability of mental health care 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 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:

- Health care, 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 health care 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 health care providers can ascertain the potential of serving more inpatient mental health care 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.

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	Continue work to reduce the instances of teenage pregnancy and enhance support networks for teenage mothers.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community The Knowledge Driven Community
REFERENCE(S):	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 Human service organizations, faith-based organizations, and the school system should each include in their youth services programming 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 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.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County's youth are concerned about the reportedly high-rates of drug use in the community, a problem affecting communities everywhere.
STRATEGY:	Aggressively work to fight drug and alcohol use and addiction among youth and the adult population.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community The Good Habitat Community The Knowledge Driven Community
REFERENCE(S):	Human Services Assessment 2008 Survey of 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.¹⁴ Additionally, having youth, or "peer," guest speakers on the topics

¹⁴ For more information on these concepts, visit 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.

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.¹⁵

- 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.

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	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.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community The Well Planned Community
REFERENCE(S):	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 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. Incorporating youth-focused

¹⁵ For more information, visit <http://ondcp.gov/dfc/index.html>.

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.

OBSERVATION:	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.
STRATEGY:	Troup County should explore all opportunities to embrace and leverage its community diversity.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders Human Services Assessment Workforce Development Assessment

Further embracing and showcasing 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 community diversity. Stakeholders also called for better engagement of minorities in community decision-making and leadership roles. On a positive note, 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.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County's faith-based community is one of its greatest assets.
STRATEGY:	Take advantage of this asset as an opportunity to advance the community's goals.
GOAL(S):	The Neighborly Community The Well Planned Community
REFERENCE(S):	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.¹⁶

- 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.

¹⁶ Source: The Association of Religion Data Archives

- 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.

The ENTERTAINING Community

OBSERVATION:	The Troup County community feels that the Parks and Recreation Department has done a good job of strengthening its assets. West Point Lake is also an important recreational asset.
STRATEGY:	Continue the commitment to maintaining high-quality parks and recreational infrastructure and expand parks acres and facilities to address population growth and location.
GOAL(S):	The Entertaining Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders A Spatial Strategy for Sustainability

Community stakeholders provided significant praise for the recent work of the Troup County Parks and Recreational Department to build and upgrade area parks. There were references to a desire to ensure consistent maintenance and upgrades continue into the future, to continue the positive work the department has achieved.

Many cited West Point Lake as a key local asset. Hope is that the drought conditions will soon improve and restrictions lifted, so that West Point Lake can be again promoted as a center of recreational activity.

- E-1** Troup County should continue to be proactive about addressing maintenance and beautification needs of all county parks and recreational centers to ensure a high-quality experience for visitors. This will be a growing challenge as the County’s population and visitation increases. Ultimately, this speaks to the question of ensuring staff and funding levels remain consistent with need.
- E-2** As water level conditions allow, Troup County should continue to promote camping, fishing, and boating activities at West Point Lake. The lake should continue to be treated as a premier community asset, with that treatment involving a balance of environmental safeguarding and promoting recreational opportunities.
- E-3** Troup County should continue its proactive approach to park and recreational facilities planning to address the needs of an increasing, and potentially changing population. The county and cities should work together to set goals for the provision of parks and recreation facilities. Some communities set park acre per 1,000 people goals, others express it by parks as a percentage of total city land, and still others express goals in terms of

proximity, for example some communities have set a goal of 90 percent of residents living within one mile of a park. When identifying potential new park locations, consideration should be given to advancing accessibility to parks, and West Point Lake, via pedestrian and bicycle trails.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County has an extensive range of arts and cultural amenities.
STRATEGY:	Continue the commitment to maintaining high-quality arts and cultural amenities, and raising awareness about all that is available.
GOAL(S):	The Entertaining Community
REFERENCE(S):	The VIEW from Community Stakeholders

Many community stakeholders spoke very highly of the impressive number and range of arts and cultural activities in Troup County, particularly as it relates to the population size. Clearly, there is strong interest in maintaining and promoting these assets to ensure they are fully leveraged. These following set of recommendations would also support the strategy of creating a Creative Centers Corridor (see P-5).

- E-4 Troup County should raise the profile of the LaGrange Hydrangea Festival, Hogansville Hummingbird Festival, and West Point Depot Day to advance internal and external perceptions of Troup County as a center of arts and cultural activities. The festivals include arts and crafts vendors and live music, providing a great opportunity to profile the community’s assets in these areas.
- E-5 Potentially tied to one or more of these special events, Troup County could designate a week each year dedicated to the arts. This could include special performances of the organizations of the Lafayette Society for Performing Arts and the LaGrange Symphony Orchestra, and special events at Artists in Residence, LaGrange Art Museum, and Lamar Dodd Art Center at LaGrange College, and guided walking tours of West Point and Hogansville’s historic downtowns. An event of this kind would help raise the profile of the community’s many arts-related assets, thus generating renewed interest in them among residents, and visitors to the community. Additionally, the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber can continue to pursue internal and external awareness-raising initiatives as part of its tourism development role. Troup County School System could use the same week to feature art work by area students in partnership with local establishments. These activities could be conducted in support of the implementation of Recommendations P-4 through P-6.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County has a number of success stories for providing arts and recreational activities for area youth.
STRATEGY:	Continue the commitment to maintaining the success of these programs, and raising community awareness, particularly among youth, regarding their availability.
GOAL(S):	The Entertaining Community
REFERENCE(S):	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, receive a strong cultural education background, and support the strategy of promoting Creative Centers (see Recommendations P-4 through P-6). 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.

OBSERVATION:	In the online survey, Troup County’s youth expressed a need for more recreational activities
STRATEGY:	Work to respond to the youth’s specific requests for more non-school based recreational activities.
GOAL(S):	The Entertaining Community
REFERENCE(S):	2008 Survey of Youth

Almost 7 out of 10 students who participated in the youth survey said that they would like more recreational programs available to youth in Troup County. This was a higher percentage (68.6 percent) than any of the other service offering ideas in the survey. Indeed, in response to what the participating youth believed to be the biggest challenging facing the community, 9.0 percent said it was the lack of recreational activities. Some pointed to an interest in more non-competitive organized recreational programs for those of high school age. Additionally, 62.7 percent of the responders said that they would like an expansion of cultural programs for youth. While there are a number of existing opportunities, there is an opportunity here to look for ways to expand offerings, as well as to see where youth may have misperceptions about availability that can be addressed.

- E-9 Troup County should ascertain potential private sector support for reopening the bowling alley.** In the youth survey, a bowling alley was one of the highest rated activities youth said they would like to have in the community (10.3 percent of responses). To help its economic viability, the alley could have fewer lanes than a traditional one, and add additional activity choices in place of the extra lanes, such as pool tables and arcade games.
- E-10 Through the Troup County Parks and Recreation Center, Troup County should expand sports activities for area youth.** A significant 68.6 percent of youth survey respondents said they would like opportunities for recreation to expand, suggesting strong demand for additional activity. Particularly emphasis should be placed on creating a comprehensive athletics program at Griggs Recreation Center, where there are reportedly significantly less opportunities to participate. At both recreational centers, determine potential demand for high school level focused sports activities for those students unable to participate on a varsity or junior varsity team at their school.
- E-11 Potentially modeled after First Tee, opportunities for expanding recreational-based programs for at-risk youth in areas beyond golf should be pursued.** Efforts should be made to focus on skills and interests of potential volunteer support, and connect them with area assets; for example, camping and fishing activities at West Point Lake.
- E-12 Troup County should work with youth leaders in education and human services to help raise awareness among youth about what is available.** Part of the youth dissatisfaction with recreational opportunities may be due to a lack of awareness. Teachers and others who work with youth should use available opportunities to remind youth about the many arts, cultural, and recreational activities that are available to them, as well as new activities under development which the youth could potentially help make happen.

OBSERVATION:	Troup County middle and high school students have a limited number of club activities.
STRATEGY:	Garner volunteer support for creating additional club activities for area youth.
GOAL(S):	The Entertaining Community The Knowledge Driven Community
REFERENCE(S):	Workforce Development Assessment 2008 Survey of Youth

It was pointed out that Troup County's middle and high schools do not have the extensive array of club activities which one might think. Expanding these types of activities is an effective way of increasing the reality and perception among youth of the availability of things to do in the community. The desire for more things to do was chief among the feedback received through the youth survey.

- E-13 Troup County should link the interests of students with willing parent/teacher/administrator volunteers to create additional club activities for middle and high school students.** An easy means of creating after-school activities for area youth are through clubs, like a computer club, chess club, writing club, reading club, photography club, and similarly-focused activities. Implementation would require identifying what are the student's primary

interest areas to pursue for club ideas, then finding the resources necessary to keep schools open an extra hour or two after classes conclude for meeting space, and finally, having adult volunteers to support the club’s activities, as needed.

OBSERVATION:	In the youth survey and in community interviews, many stakeholders expressed the desire to have additional, more varied shopping opportunities in Troup County.
STRATEGY:	Identify the community’s retail priorities, and then determine the best means of presenting the community to potential opportunities.
GOAL(S):	The Entertaining Community
REFERENCE(S):	2008 Survey of Youth Sustainable Development Report Card The VIEW from Community Stakeholders

Troup County appears to be capturing more retail sales, rather than leaking, indicating that it is already serving as a retail destination for at least some of West Georgia. In addition, the anticipated economic impact of Kia is expected to bode positively for future retail development.

One of the prevailing comments in the youth survey was regarding the desire for more shopping choices, and many of the community stakeholders referenced this as well. They shared a range of ideas regarding retail opportunities, including everything from more nationally recognized chain stores to more niche-market type of stores. Particularly among youth, there was interest in having an alternative destination shopping location to LaGrange Mall. There is also strong support for pursuing retail development within the framework of mixed use development, which includes the county’s existing downtowns and new urbanism-style new developments.

Community stakeholders also identified retail as a leading preference for future business development, and were especially interested in higher quality offerings.

E-14 Troup County should develop a plan to position itself for its priority retail desires according to desired amenities and market potential. Troup County should first conduct a market assessment that more clearly defines what its primary retail needs and desires are. Next, Troup County should pursue the possibility of using the retail/commercial development services of the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation to put together a positioning plan to achieve the community’s identified retail priorities. In addition, the University of Georgia’s retail market analysis services should be considered. The retail development effort should incorporate into its approach and negotiations desired design and mixed-use standards for quality retail development (See also Recommendations A-1 and A-2.)

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Community stakeholders have great interest in strategically planning for the future and implementing key associated initiatives. When asked to identify the most important next step for Troup County and its cities to take, strategic planning and long-range planning topped the list among community stakeholders. Second to that was the need to work together to prepare for the future. Likewise, external partners believed that Troup County, as a whole, needed to focus its efforts on planning for growth. Therefore, the stakeholders and partners praised local leadership for their progressiveness in launching the planning efforts and for working together.

The Troup County Leadership Team has had their “eye on implementation” during all aspects of the strategic planning process in terms of providing advisement regarding the development of feasible solutions - and is interested in exploring how to create “implementation legs” to the effort. At the same time, sustainability of such efforts is always a challenge, no matter the community’s size.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a public-private organizational network steered by an expanded Leadership Team.

- I-1 Troup County should expand the Leadership Team for the strategic plan to include leaders representing each implementation area of the plan. Team members should identify champions for each of the 10 strategic goals that reflect the relevant area of expertise. Progressive efforts should be made to ensure that the diversity of the region in terms of age, culture, gender, race, and geographic locale is represented on the team. The Leadership Team should create term limits, develop leadership succession plans that include the early identification and engagement of emerging leadership, and establish commitment agreements with each member of the team. Given this is a multi-jurisdictional effort, the Leadership Team should examine the role the county and each city can play in implementation efforts.
- I-2 The Leadership Team should assign one of the 10 strategic goals to each member of its Leadership Team to provide oversight regarding the implementation of the strategic plan. The strategic plan includes three types of recommendations: (A) recommendations that naturally fall within local governments’ purview to consider for implementation, (B) recommendations that naturally fall within the purview of an existing Troup County organization to consider for implementation, and (C) recommendations that require action planning to chart out a path for implementation. It is the vision of the Leadership Team to serve as the launch pad for initiatives that fall under (C) - some of those initiatives will require work committees to implement action plans and additional volunteers. There should be an explicit and planned connection between future work committee membership and leadership succession plans for the Leadership Team.
- I-3 The Leadership Team should explore the potential for creating a coordinating non-profit organization with a local “director” to oversee implementation efforts for the strategic plan OR for creating or designating a local staff leadership position and function within an existing organization. For either route, consideration should be given toward creating at least one full-time professional position dedicated to serve as the “point person” to be the single source of knowledge for all efforts regarding the strategic plan and its implementation. Whether a staff position with an existing or new organization, efforts should be governed by the Leadership

Team. Given local governments already have some recent and successful experience in co-funding positions, they should explore the opportunity for doing so to meet this need and also examine the potential for partnerships from the non-profit and private sectors. The coordinator should be responsible for organizing, supporting, and tracking all activities associated with implementation of the strategic plan; for serving as the main point of contact for the Leadership Team and community stakeholders; and for serving as the main liaison to external partners who can be engaged to help with implementation efforts.

- I-4 Troup County should develop a communications strategy associated with the strategic plan.** The county should partner with local media and all organizations involved in the implementation efforts. The communications strategy should include showcasing examples of success by Troup County, the cities, and other organizations responsible for implementation on a periodic, regular basis. It should also include regular updates to internal community stakeholders and existing and potential external partners on implementation efforts and outcomes.
- I-5 Troup County should explore the potential for creating an online Community Information System related to the Troup County Regional Strategic Plan.** The system should include content areas for each of the 10 strategic goals and should be set up to enable an easy and efficient exchange of information and knowledge sharing regarding initiatives associated with those goals. Note, to fully implement such a system, it would require the active participation of every organization responsible for the strategic plan, engagement of extensive expertise in Web site development and architecture, and the dedication of at least one full-time staff member to maintain it.¹⁷

RECOMMENDATION: Explore options for creating greater capacities in areas of key planning expertise that would be ideal for helping local governments in future decision making with respect to sustainable development.

- I-6 Troup County and its cities should create a program for regularly engaging state and regional partners in advising on local planning decisions.** At a minimum, Troup County should consider engaging partners in a periodic updating and vetting process from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Division of Public Health, the Regional Development Centers etc.
- I-7 Troup County and its cities should explore the feasibility of developing a regular contractual relationship with a planning consultant with relevant expertise in the needed areas.** A growing trend is for such consultants to house one of their experts on the ground within a community on a regularly set part-time schedule. This is particularly relevant to provide planning expertise in needed areas where there is currently a void of local capacity.

¹⁷ In 2006, Troup County was chosen as a pilot community for Georgia Tech's TechSmartSM program. The Community Information System was a key recommendation out of that effort and appeared to be tied to two key areas - supporting Kia related needs and a health information exchange. Given the strategic planning effort was launched since this program's efforts; it is recommended that this recommendation be revisited in context with the strategic planning framework.

- I-8** Troup County and its cities should explore opportunities for building local planning capacity - incrementally and over the long term - in key areas of need as experienced by larger communities. Ideal for local governments to have expertise in key planning areas (building construction and design, economic development, environmental / ecological development, land use development, regional development, social development, transportation, etc.) as well in supportive technical areas (fiscal analysis, GIS, writing zoning ordinances, research, etc.). (This recommendation is offered as a long-term suggestion in conjunction with Recommendation Q-4.)
- I-9** Troup County, its cities and civic and institutional partners should explore the feasibility of creating a non-profit organization over the long term to be the regional knowledge expert on sustainable development practices for the unique situational context that is Troup County and its surrounding region. To leverage the vision and significant appetite for sustainable development, this organization could serve to help educate constituencies on sustainable development practices as well as provide added resources to support each local government. For example, this organization could be set up to educate, inform, advise, and help local government officials in their efforts to develop comprehensive plans, land use plans, land use and development ordinances, and in conducting development review. This organization could also be charged with the ongoing identifying and disseminating of best practices. (This recommendation provides a more formal structure for implementing the suggestion in Recommendation Q-5.)