

Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia

● Supportive Research Report 2008



The VIEW from Community Stakeholders

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

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE IN TROUP COUNTY, GEORGIA

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

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

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

OVERVIEW¹

In June 2007, leaders from **Troup County** and the cities of **LaGrange**, **West Point** and **Hogansville** launched 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, and protecting Troup County's sense of place and community. Not only does the Troup County leadership want to further enhance the region's great places for area residents and businesses, but there is great interest in being proactive and progressive about directing the community's growth and development to shape its future.

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. These stakeholders shared diverse perspectives regarding Troup County's growth and development potential, expectations, and overall goals.

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. Troup County stakeholders had many insights to impart - together, they provided more than 17,000 responses to the questions asked - and displayed significant enthusiasm in sharing their views.

The interview team would like to thank all stakeholders for taking the time to share their thoughts, insights, and ideas relating to the future potential of Troup County.

The participating Troup County stakeholders were identified by members of the Leadership Team for the Troup County Regional Strategic Plan initiative.

- Stakeholders represented several key organizations and interests in Troup County. More than one-fourth (27.9 percent) represented business. Citizens and volunteers accounted for nearly one-fifth (18.2 percent) of the stakeholders. Elected officials represented the third largest affiliation (12.3 percent) of the stakeholders interviewed.

Affiliation of Troup County Stakeholders

	NUMBER	PERCENT
Business	43	27.9%
Citizen / Volunteer	28	18.2%
Elected Official	19	12.3%
Education	15	9.7%
Government (Staff)	13	8.4%
Nonprofit / Service	11	7.1%
Faith-Based Organization	7	4.5%
Health Care	6	3.9%
Banking	5	3.2%
Judicial	4	2.6%
Media	2	1.3%
Utilities	1	0.6%

The following report summarizes the stakeholders input. This input should be viewed as the perceptions or opinions of the stakeholders.

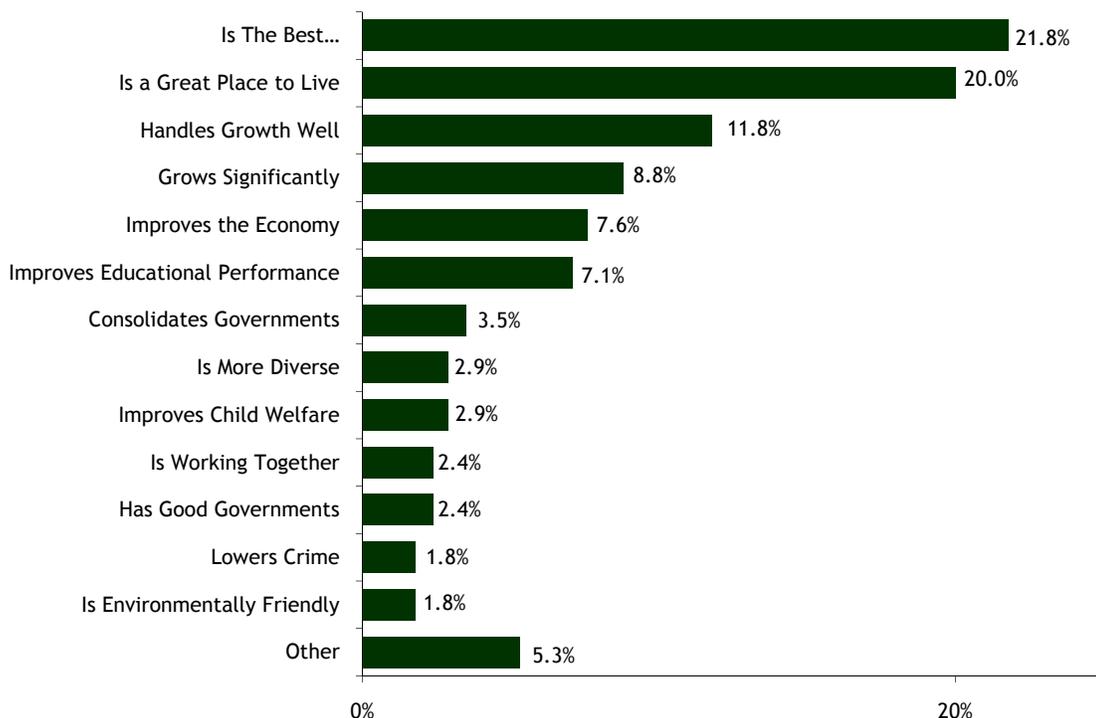
¹ The interview team included 15 representatives from Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute and Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD).

COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

Stakeholders were asked to share their desired newspaper headline for Troup County over the next five to 10 years. A total of 170 vision statements were provided by the stakeholders.

- Over one-fifth (21.8 percent) of the stakeholders' vision statements desired to see Troup County strive "to be the best" at whatever it endeavors to do.
- Almost as frequent were vision statements stating the desire for Troup County to continue to be a great place to live.
- Growth and the economy accounted for the next three most common vision statements provided by stakeholders. They would like to see Troup County handle growth well (11.8 percent of responses), be known for growing significantly (8.8 percent of responses), and have a strong economy (7.6 percent of responses).
- A desire to improve educational performance in the county represented the next largest set of responses, or 7.1 percent of the total.
- Some less frequent, but still common, vision statements received between three and nine responses, or roughly 5 percent or less of the total. Some of these visions included consolidated government, more diversity, improved welfare of children, increased cooperation, good governance, lower crime, and environmental friendliness.
- Stakeholders also mentioned some vision statements that did not lend themselves to broad categorization. Some of these visions included improved public transportation, a prospering downtown arts community, a penal system with low recidivism, and improved medical insurance rates.

Stakeholders' DESIRED Headline for Troup County
in 5 to 10 Years

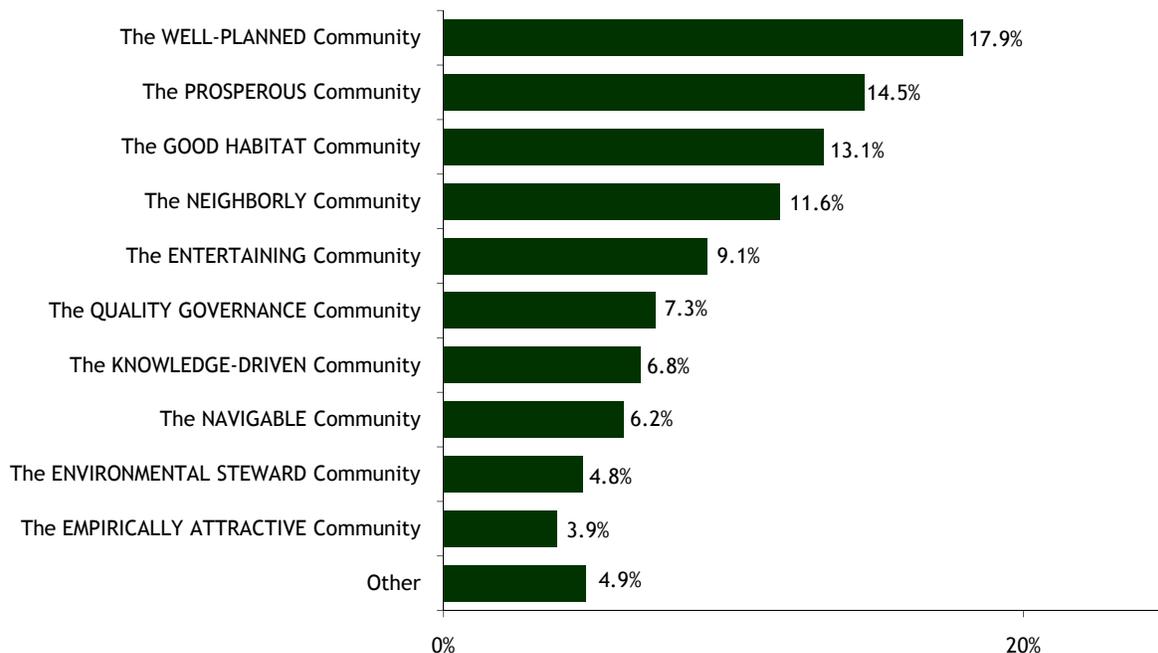


The Desirable Community

Troup County stakeholders were asked to share what they desired for community development and they provided a total of 350 responses. These were varied but revealed some key and significant themes. Together, they provide guiding principles for consideration as Troup County moves forward in its strategic planning process. Responses provided here are in the order of frequency mentioned and indicate what was foremost in the stakeholders' minds.

- Having a well-planned community was the top response provided by stakeholders, accounting for 17.9 percent of the total.
- Building a prosperous community received the next highest share of responses, or 14 percent.
- The next three highest categories of statements related to community livability ideals. Leading the pack on this set was providing a good habitat community, the third highest category of responses (13.1 percent). Rounding out the top five were fostering a neighborly community (11.6 percent) and an entertaining community (9.1 percent).
- Other prevalent responses included having a community that has quality governance and is knowledge-driven, navigable, environmentally friendly, and empirically attractive. Each of these categories - accounted for from between 3.9 and 7.3 percent of the responses by stakeholders.
- Some stakeholders also mentioned views on what it means to be a desirable community that did not lend themselves to broad categorization. Some of these included having available land, having paved roads throughout the county, providing an entrepreneur-friendly environment, having community pride, providing excellent health care, and reducing the teenage pregnancy rate.

What Is the Desirable Community?



Taken together, the preferences expressed by the stakeholders regarding their newspaper headlines and their views on what constitutes a desirable community provide the vision and planning framework

for the Troup County region. It is evident that Troup County's leadership is focused on developing a well-balanced community that fosters the optimum blend of educational, commercial, residential, industrial, cultural, recreational, and service options. It also wants to address economic, social, and environmental needs to foster a healthy, well-rounded community. In other words, Troup County has an appetite for *sustainable development*.

Following is some further description of each of the guiding principles drawn from the stakeholder input. These principles can translate well into strategic goals to form the region's planning framework, and will be referred to as the "proposed strategic goals" for the remainder of this report.

- **The EMPIRICALLY ATTRACTIVE Community:** Fostering appealing gateways into the community; retaining the "small town" charm; encouraging aesthetically pleasing development; promoting ongoing beautification.
- **The ENTERTAINING Community:** Providing a diverse menu of recreational, cultural, dining, shopping, and other amenities for individuals of all ages.
- **The ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD Community:** Preserving green space and the natural environs; protecting natural resources (e.g., West Point Lake); promoting clean development.
- **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.
- **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.
- **The NAVIGABLE Community:** Fostering ease of mobility throughout the community; gearing transportation infrastructure to future growth plans; providing alternative and viable solutions beyond the automobile.
- **The NEIGHBORLY Community:** Meeting the individual needs (housing, health care, jobs, etc.) 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.
- **The PROSPEROUS Community:** Raising the standard and quality of living for citizens through higher-performance economic development that provides a diverse mixture of opportunities.
- **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.
- **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.

COMMUNITIES THAT “DID IT RIGHT”

Troup County stakeholders were asked to identify communities they’ve encountered that “did it right” when it comes to generating desirable community development. A total of 199 responses were provided by the stakeholders. When identifying communities, they honed in on specific features of the community they found particularly desirable.

- **Peachtree City and Fayette County, Georgia**, received the most mentions, accounting for 17.6 percent of the responses. Thirty-five stakeholders named this community. In terms of what Peachtree City did that the stakeholders find desirable, most comments related to Peachtree City being a well-planned community.
 - Controlled growth
 - Environmentally conscious
 - Enforce ordinances and regulations about how they want their town to look
 - Land use that is sensitive to people’s needs
 - Looks good on the surface
 - Navigable with trails (walking, biking), sidewalks, and ways where people can travel without getting on the major highways
 - Quality of life with things to do
 - Safe housing
 - Stuck to the plan

- While inside Troup County, the **City of LaGrange** received the second top mention (10.1 percent) and was referred to by 20 stakeholders. Regarding why LaGrange is desirable, stakeholders pointed to its leadership, planning, and development efforts as well as some key assets.
 - Economic growth
 - Financial base with Callaway Foundation
 - Historic preservation
 - Planning and zoning
 - Quality of life with the opera, lake, college, and things to do
 - Strong downtown development and redevelopment
 - Strong leadership
 - Successful in recruiting senior management

- The **City of Newnan and Coweta County, Georgia**, received the third highest mention (7 percent) as 14 stakeholders named this community. Among the features stakeholders identified as desirable about Newnan were:
 - Able to maintain higher-end residential community
 - Downtown development
 - Economic growth
 - Family-friendly environment
 - Redevelopment and updating of infrastructure

When discussing Newnan, the stakeholders also noted there were lessons to be learned from their experiences. “Coweta was good but then got to the tail end and didn’t have proper regulations in place,” said one stakeholder. Others pointed to Bullsboro Road as an example of “what not to do.”

Communities That “Did It Right” and Relevance to Troup County’s Proposed Strategic Goals

Community	Strategic Goal Relevance	Responses	Percent
Peachtree City or Fayette County, GA	The Empirically Attractive Community The Environmental Steward Community The Entertaining Community The Good Habitat Community The Navigable Community The Quality Governance Community The Well-Planned Community	35	17.3%
LaGrange, GA	The Empirically Attractive Community The Entertaining Community The Prosperous Community The Quality Governance Community The Well-Planned Community	20	9.9%
City of Newnan or Coweta County, GA	The Entertaining Community The Good Habitat Community The Neighborly Community The Prosperous Community	14	6.9%
Auburn-Opelika Area, AL	The Knowledge-Driven Community The Well-Planned Community	9	4.5%
Columbus-Muscogee County, GA	The Prosperous Community The Quality Governance Community	7	3.5%
City of Madison or Morgan County, GA	The Empirically Attractive Community The Navigable Community The Well-Planned Community	5	2.5%
Chattanooga, TN	The Entertaining Community The Empirically Attractive Community The Navigable Community The Well-Planned Community	5	2.5%
Greenville-Spartansburg, SC	The Empirically Attractive Community The Entertaining Community The Prosperous Community	5	2.5%
North Fulton, GA	The Prosperous Community The Good Habitat Community	4	2.0%
Rome, GA	The Well-Planned Community	4	2.0%
Chicago, IL	The Well-Planned Community	4	2.0%
Carroll County, GA	The Navigable Community The Well-Planned Community	3	1.5%
Gainesville, GA	The Quality Governance Community	3	1.5%
Gaithersberg, MD	The Well-Planned Community	3	1.5%
City of Marietta or Cobb County, GA	The Empirically Attractive Community	3	1.5%
Portland, Ore.	The Well-Planned Community	3	1.5%
Other Georgia Communities		22	10.9%
Other United States Communities		53	26.2%
TOTAL		202	100.0%

- Several other communities were mentioned by fewer than three stakeholders and were grouped in one of the “Other” categories. A review of these communities provides further insights into the type of community features the stakeholders consider desirable.
 - Most stakeholders pointed to the empirically attractive features of many of these places, such as their downtowns.
 - Some discussed the ability of some of these communities to create a neighborly feel.
 - Others discussed the ability of some of these communities to be entertaining to those who live, work, and visit them.
 - Progressive economic development efforts were cited for some of these communities as well.

Communities Receiving Honorable Mention for “Doing It Right”

Inside Georgia	Outside Georgia	
Americus City Athens City Atlanta City Colquitt City Dalton City Decatur City Dublin City Dunwoody Community Grantville City Harris County Macon City Oconee County Savannah City Warner Robins South Fulton Area Thomasville City	Asheville, NC Austin, TX Baltimore, MD Boston, MA. Brentwood, TTN Brevard, NC Charleston, SC Charlotte, NC Charlottesville, VA Clayton, MO Columbia, MD Columbia, MO Columbus, OH Cooperstown, NY Darien, OH Denver, CO Princeton, NJ Nashville, TN Fernandino Beach, FL Golden Triangle, NC & SC Greenwood, SC Highland Park, IL Hudson Valley, NY Huntsville, AL	Jacksonville, FL Manteo, NC Martha's Vineyard, MA Metechuen, NJ Milatoni, HI Mobile, AL Mountain View, CA Newbern, NC Phoenix City, AL Portland, MN Raleigh, NC Reston, VA Roanoke, AL Salisbury, NC San Francisco, CA Scottsdale, AZ Seaside, FL Seattle, WA Silicon Valley, CA St. Augustine, FL Stamford, CT Summit, NJ Tallahassee, FL Winston-Salem, NC

KEY STRENGTHS

Stakeholders were asked to identify key strengths - that is, current characteristics or attributes that provide a competitive advantage or improve the quality of life within Troup County for desirable community development.

Together, the stakeholders provided a total of 714 responses to this question, far exceeding the level of responses for any other questions. This reflects a significantly positive orientation and outlook among the stakeholders when considering Troup County's future. The average number of strengths identified per stakeholder was in the four-to-five range. The stakeholders identified such a high volume of community assets that they lent themselves to grouping within 32 specific categories.

- Leadership, leadership, leadership. This topped the list of strengths identified by stakeholders, receiving 66 mentions and accounting for 9.2 percent of the total responses provided. The stakeholders believed Troup County to have public and private leadership capital, at every level and within virtually every major institution. They discussed strengths relating to a political, civic, and business leadership.
- Receiving second highest mention was having local colleges to serve Troup County namely, LaGrange College and West Georgia Technical College. Combined, these institutions received 49 mentions and accounted for 6.9 percent of the strengths identified.
- West Point Lake was the third most cited strength for Troup County, receiving 41 mentions. All those mentioning the lake discussed how it was a major asset for all of Troup County that could be better leveraged in the future. Some stakeholders pointed to the need to preserve the lake; others discussed the desire to restore it to its recreational use.
- The important and catalytic role that the Callaway Foundation has played was widely recognized. The foundation received 36 mentions, with stakeholders citing its work in the development and redevelopment of downtown LaGrange, the contributions it makes to various nonprofit and social service organizations, and the leadership role it plays in helping to shape the community vision for diverse initiatives.
- Stakeholders cited Troup County as having a strong citizenry where individuals are connected to each other and feel a strong sense of community and personal accountability for helping their neighbors. The citizens were characterized as friendly, caring, and as possessing a positive "can do" attitude. They were also described as being supportive of community betterment efforts and very willing to play a role in them. Troup's citizens received 34 mentions.
- Tying for the fifth most cited strength was Troup County's parks and recreation. Here, stakeholders applauded efforts in developing attractive green spaces throughout the county and for the parks being both functional and well maintained.
- Troup County's K-12 education system received a fair degree of mention, too, accounting for 33 responses. Stakeholders often described the school system as being "good" and "strong." The system was described as having forward-thinking leadership at the school board and administrative levels, dedicated teachers, financial support, quality facilities, and corporate and parental involvement at the elementary school level. Some stakeholders praised the decision to consolidate the system.
- Rounding out the top 10 strengths were the proximity to interstates, proximity to Atlanta, future development potential, and the observation that Troup County is a "good place to live."

Strengths (In Rank Order)

Strength	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Leadership	66	9.2%	1
Colleges	49	6.9%	2
West Point Lake	41	5.7%	3
Callaway Foundation	36	5.0%	4
Strong Citizenry	34	4.8%	5
Parks and Recreation	34	4.8%	5
K-12 Education System	33	4.6%	6
Proximity to Interstates	32	4.5%	7
Proximity to Atlanta	30	4.2%	8
Development Potential	26	3.6%	9
Good Place to Live (Small Town / Rural Setting)	25	3.5%	10
Natural Resources (non-water-related)	24	3.4%	11
Redevelopment of Downtown LaGrange	20	2.8%	12
Medical Facilities	19	2.7%	13
Arts & Cultural Amenities	18	2.5%	14
Economic Development Organizations	17	2.4%	15
Progressive Mindset	17	2.4%	15
Proximity to Columbus	16	2.2%	16
Infrastructure	16	2.2%	16
Faith-Based Community	16	2.2%	16
Proximity to Airport	16	2.2%	16
Existing Industry Base	15	2.1%	17
Housing Choice	14	2.0%	18
Volunteer Culture	13	1.8%	19
Transportation System	13	1.8%	19
Kia	11	1.5%	20
Fiscal Structure	11	1.5%	20
Chattahoochee River	8	1.1%	21
Sense of History	8	1.1%	21
Public Safety	7	1.0%	22
Proximity to Alabama	6	0.8%	23
Things for Youth	6	0.8%	23
Other	17	2.4%	
TOTAL	714	100.0%	

- Regarding the “Other” category, stakeholders cited several particular assets that did not lend themselves to broad categorization. Some of these concerned available child care, senior citizens facilities, civic organizations, the newspaper, the library, climate conditions, available restaurants, proximity to Pine Mountain, the mix of old and new wealth in the community availability of rural and developed properties, and no sprawl issues to deal with yet.
- Community stakeholders provided 589 statements about strengths relating to the proposed strategic goals. Troup County is recognized by stakeholders for having the highest level of strengths concerning quality governance, being knowledge-driven, and being neighborly. The community is also seen as having some advantages for being entertaining and a steward of the environment.

Strengths Relevant To Proposed Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal	Percent of Strengths
Quality Governance Community	22.1%
Knowledge-Driven Community	13.9%
Neighborly Community	13.9%
Entertaining Community	13.2%
Environmental Steward Community	12.4%
Prosperous Community	11.7%
Empirically Attractive Community	4.2%
Good Habitat Community	3.6%
Well-Planned Community	2.7%
Navigable Community	2.2%

KEY CHALLENGES

Stakeholders were asked to name key weaknesses - that is, current characteristics or attributes that deter or prevent a competitive advantage and/or diminish the quality of life.

The stakeholders provided 526 responses when asked to identify such weaknesses. This, when compared to strengths, coincides with the observation that the stakeholders have a positive orientation in their views. With that said, they identified a number of weaknesses that are critical challenges to moving forward.

- The top weakness identified by stakeholders was the lack of planning and growth management. Stakeholders discussed the lack of vision and forethought regarding where to go and long-range planning, ineffective preparation for growth needs, the need for land use and redevelopment plans, and weak zoning and other ordinances. Several discussed the lack of coordination and uniformity among local governments in their planning efforts and called for joint or regional planning. Planning and growth management concerns accounted for 45 mentions by the stakeholders.
- The second most frequently mentioned weak area related to Troup County's transportation system. The lack of public transportation in particular was top of minds. Stakeholders also pointed to problems in traffic flow and mobility. Beyond this, some pointed to the lack of east-west connectivity, the need for corridor planning, and an ineffectiveness of key intersections.
- The third greatest weakness identified was K-12 education, accounting for 39 mentions. Several stakeholders pointed to the high school dropout rate and to the need to improve graduation rates. Many cited the need to provide better help for kids lagging behind. While some talked about how the school system was effective at addressing the needs of the top 5 percent and not the remaining student body, others expressed concerns about efforts that would lead to a reduction in advanced placement or other similar programs. Some stakeholders also discussed how the school system needs to improve in helping young people develop a greater interest in learning and a stronger work ethic. Beyond this, stakeholders discussed the need to improve the handling of discipline matters, the need to increase the diversity of teachers, and the challenges associated with recruiting young teaching professionals to live and work in Troup County. The lack of a public high school in West Point was cited as a problem.
- Water and sewer infrastructure concerns were also at the top of stakeholders' minds, ranking fourth in terms of mentions (37). Several voiced questions about whether the current infrastructure was adequate to meet future growth needs. Others discussed the lack of sewer in locations outside the county and the resulting incidence of septic tank development. Some discussed the need for a more centralized water system. Lack of water was discussed both in terms of not having the infrastructure in place to distribute the water to certain places in the county and of risks to the supply of future water given the Georgia-Alabama-Florida water basin issues. Stakeholders also noted that existing infrastructure in certain parts of the county need improvement from a maintenance perspective.
- Helping the at-risk population ranked fifth among weaknesses identified, receiving 35 mentions. Stakeholders observed that Troup County could do better in assisting low-income residents, the elderly, unwed mothers, those at risk for dropping out of high school or having a teen pregnancy, and others in disadvantaged situations.
- Also included in the top 10 were challenges related to local governance. Specifically, concerns regarding maintaining a sufficient fiscal tax base received 33 mentions, with stakeholders voicing concern about generating enough revenue to support the current and future demand for services. Problems associated with intergovernmental relationships among the county and cities were also mentioned frequently, accounting for 32 mentions. Several stakeholders

discussed weaknesses associated with how local government is run from an operational standpoint, with some pointing to the need for a consolidation of governments or services.

- Dealing with diversity was also identified as a top 10 weakness for Troup County, receiving 31 mentions. Stakeholders discussed the need to be more inclusive, to improve race relations overall, and to do a better job promoting advancement among minority populations. The need for both greater diversity in leadership and for better engaging the current minority leadership in community decision-making was discussed. Some described the community as “still segregated” in a social sense. Others discussed the need to improve the handling of cultural diversity.
- Rounding out the top 10 was the lack of entertainment and shopping options available in Troup County. Stakeholders shared their sense that residents go to Columbus, Newnan, and communities in Alabama for their shopping and entertainment.

Weaknesses (In Rank Order)

Weaknesses	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Planning & Growth Management	45	8.6%	1
Transportation System	41	7.8%	2
K-12 Education	39	7.4%	3
Water & Sewer Infrastructure	37	7.0%	4
Helping At-Risk Population	35	6.7%	5
Fiscal / Tax Base	33	6.3%	6
Intergovernmental Relationships	32	6.1%	7
Dealing with Diversity	31	5.9%	8
Local Governance	25	4.8%	9
Entertainment / Shopping Options	22	4.2%	10
Delivery of Public Services	21	4.0%	11
Citizen Support	21	4.0%	11
Leadership	20	3.8%	12
Housing Choice	17	3.2%	13
Economic Base	15	2.9%	14
Available Workforce	15	2.9%	14
Drugs / Alcohol / Crime	13	2.5%	15
Health care Services	12	2.3%	16
Textile Culture Mindset	10	1.9%	17
Moral / Social Guidance	9	1.7%	18
Preservation of Green space	5	1.0%	19
Connection with Faith-Based Community	5	1.0%	19
Other	23	4.4%	
TOTAL	526	100.0%	

- Regarding the “Other” category, the stakeholders cited a number of challenges that did not lend themselves toward grouping within their own category. Some of these included empty buildings in downtown areas, being land-bound in West Point, Kia, lack of communication, escalating land prices, and making sure developers finished what they started.
- Community stakeholders provided 503 statements about weaknesses that relate to the proposed strategic goals. Troup County is seen by stakeholders as having the greatest challenges relating to being a neighborly community, being well-planned, and for maintaining quality governance. Note that two of the top strategic goal areas of challenge are also top

areas of strength. Troup County is also seen as having challenges relating to being knowledge-driven and navigable.

Weaknesses Relevant To Proposed Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal	Percent of Weaknesses
Neighborly Community	27.0%
Well-Planned Community	22.9%
Quality Governance Community	19.5%
Knowledge Driven Community	10.7%
Navigable Community	8.2%
Environmental Steward Community	4.4%
Good Habitat Community	3.4%
Prosperous Community	3.0%
Entertaining Community	1.0%
Empirically Attractive Community	0.0%

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholders were asked to identify key opportunities or future chances for advancement potentially available to Troup County. Together, they provided a total of 447 responses. The top seven opportunities accounted for the largest share of input.

- The top three opportunities on the list relate directly to future economic development efforts. The number one identified opportunity involved diversifying and growing the economic base, which accounted for 61 mentions. Here, stakeholders voiced concerns about being too dependent upon one industry, such as auto manufacturing. The second most cited opportunity (46 mentions) related to leveraging Kia to experience related development. Improving the workforce development system rounded out the top three with 43 mentions. Stakeholders identified several opportunities related to fostering a better prepared workforce such as expanding current capabilities at West Georgia Technical College and LaGrange College, bringing in new higher education resources, better linking K-12 students with 21st century skill development opportunities, and focusing on improving the high school graduation rate.
- The opportunity to plan and manage growth and reap the associated benefits was another frequently mentioned opportunity, accounting for 40 mentions. Relating to future growth and development, stakeholders saw opportunities for both expanding residential development (33 mentions) and increasing commercial and retail options (32 mentions).
- Leveraging West Point Lake rounded out the top seven with 30 mentions. Here, stakeholders pointed to opportunities for higher level recreational options, called for better management and protection of the lake, and saw it as a potential vehicle for tourism development.

Opportunities (In Rank Order)

Opportunities	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Diversify and Grow Economic Base	61	13.6%	1
Experience Kia-Related Development	46	10.3%	2
Improve Workforce Development System	43	9.6%	3
Plan and Manage Growth	40	8.9%	4
Expand Residential Development	33	7.4%	5
Increase Commercial / Retail Options	32	7.2%	6
Leverage West Point Lake	30	6.7%	7
Promote Youth and Family Development	20	4.5%	8
Work Together	16	3.6%	9
Improve Transportation System	15	3.4%	10
Improve Water & Sewer Infrastructure	13	2.9%	11
Expand Arts, Cultural and Recreational Venues	13	2.9%	11
Improve Local Governance	10	2.2%	12
Embrace Diversity	10	2.2%	12
Continue Downtown Redevelopment	10	2.2%	12
Leverage Leadership	9	2.0%	13
Leverage Location to Atlanta and Columbus	9	2.0%	13
Promote Growth of Cities	7	1.6%	14
Leverage Faith-Based Community	6	1.3%	15
Improve Tax Base	6	1.3%	15
Be Better Environmental Stewards	5	1.1%	16
Other	13	2.9%	
TOTAL	447	100.0%	

- Several opportunities related to providing better amenities for citizens such as expanding commercial / retail options, promoting youth and family development, and expanding arts, cultural, and recreational venues.
- Regarding the “Other” category, the stakeholders cited a number of opportunities that did not lend themselves to broad categorization. Some of these included: expanding health care, increasing public-private partnerships, focusing on retiree development, rehabilitating older neighborhoods, and leveraging equestrian assets.
- Community stakeholders provided 434 statements about opportunities that relate to the proposed strategic goals. Troup County is seen by stakeholders as having the greatest opportunities relating to being a prosperous community. The stakeholders also see a high level of opportunities relating to being well-planned and for being an entertaining community.

Opportunities Relevant To Proposed Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal	Percent of Opportunities
Prosperous Community	26.7%
Well-Planned Community	15.2%
Entertaining Community	10.4%
Knowledge Driven Community	9.9%
Environmental Steward Community	8.1%
Quality Governance Community	8.1%
Good Habitat Community	7.6%
Neighborly Community	5.8%
Empirically Attractive Community	4.8%
Navigable Community	3.5%

MOST SERIOUS ISSUES

Stakeholders were asked to identify the top three most serious issues affecting Troup County’s ability to prepare for the future and reach its goals for desirable community development. They provided a total of 412 responses.

- The quality of the workforce received top mention, accounting for 18 percent of the responses. Stakeholders pointed to the need to improve K-12 education as well as to expand adult training and retraining options.
- The need to focus on planning and growth management to improve the tools and capacity for doing so and to approach it in a regional or joint way was the second most serious issue, receiving 68 mentions.
- Rounding out the top three was the need to improve the transportation and the roadway navigation system, specifically, to develop solutions for removing the bottlenecks, to develop a plan for linking transportation to future needs, and to explore the options for providing public transportation.
- Other frequently mentioned issues related to water and sewer infrastructure, engaging the citizenry, economic development and protecting water and environmental resources.

Most Serious Issues (In Rank Order)

Issue	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Quality of the Workforce	74	18.0%	1
Planning and Growth Management	68	16.5%	2
Transportation & Navigation System	40	9.7%	3
Water & Sewer Infrastructure	29	7.0%	4
Engaging the Citizenry	27	6.6%	5
Economic Development	26	6.3%	6
Protecting Water / Environmental Resources	26	6.3%	6
Intergovernmental Cooperation	20	4.9%	7
Housing Choice	19	4.6%	8
Public Safety	14	3.4%	9
Preservation of Community Livability	13	3.2%	10
Addressing Health Care Needs	12	2.9%	11
Maintaining Good Leadership	10	2.4%	12
Dealing with Diversity	8	1.9%	13
Lack of Amenities	8	1.9%	13
Financial Challenges	6	1.5%	14
Other	12	2.9%	
TOTAL	412	100.0%	

- Regarding the “Other” category, the stakeholders cited a number of issues that did not lend themselves to broad categorization, such as: the “cash-in” mentality of developers, saving historic structures, and the need for greater chamber of commerce capacity.
- Community stakeholders provided 400 statements about issues that relate to the proposed strategic goals. Troup County is seen by stakeholders as having the greatest issues relating to reaching its goal for being a well-planned community. The stakeholders also see a high level of issues affecting the region’s future ability to be knowledge-driven and neighborly.

Issues Relevant To Proposed Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal	Percent of Issues
Well-Planned Community	29.0%
Knowledge Driven Community	18.5%
Neighborly Community	11.8%
Navigable Community	10.0%
Good Habitat Community	8.3%
Quality Governance Community	7.5%
Environmental Steward Community	6.5%
Prosperous Community	6.5%
Entertaining Community	2.0%
Empirically Attractive Community	0.0%

ABOUT KIA

The stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on the advantages and disadvantages associated with having Kia locate in Troup County.

Advantages

When asked to name key advantages associated with Kia, Troup County stakeholders provided 395 responses.

- New and better jobs topped the list of advantages cited by the stakeholders, which accounted for 99 mentions and 25.1 percent of the total. Related to this, several stakeholders discussed the wider economic impact of Kia in terms of its ripple effect on jobs, population, and income for the region. This accounted for 37 mentions.
- Increased community recognition has already been observed due to Kia, according to the stakeholders. They discussed how Kia has put Troup County and its cities on the map at the state, national, and international levels. It was shared how the successful landing of Kia helps to demonstrate to other major multinational corporations that Troup County can handle such major investments. Accounting for 34 mentions, the advantage of having heightened recognition tied with three other advantages for being the third most identified.
- Another advantage tying for third most mentioned was the expected increased local government revenues associated with Kia, its suppliers, and economic impact.
- The stakeholders saw Kia and related developments as key to raising the standard of living and overall prosperity of the citizens within Troup County. As part of this, several discussed the impact of higher-paying jobs on improving the self-sufficiency of the citizenry.
- Development of a more qualified workforce tied with the above three advantages for third place in terms of mentions. The stakeholders saw Kia as driving up expectations on the local workforce and therefore fostering improvements and expansions in the educational system, from K-12 and beyond.
- Increased commercial and retail options and overall community growth were also cited as advantages, accounting for 31 and 26 mentions, respectively. The stakeholders generally saw these as going hand-in-hand, with community growth (in terms of population) driving the demand for and development of greater commercial amenities.

Advantages to Kia (In Rank Order)

Advantages	Mentions	Percent	Rank
New and Better Jobs	99	25.1%	1
General Economic Boom	37	9.4%	2
Increased Community Recognition	34	8.6%	3
Increased Local Government Revenues	34	8.6%	3
Higher Standard of Living	34	8.6%	3
Development of A More Qualified Workforce	34	8.6%	3
Growth of Commercial / Retail Options	31	7.8%	4
Community Growth	26	6.6%	5
Supportive Industrial Growth	23	5.8%	6
Increased Cultural Diversity	22	5.6%	7
Stronger Housing Market	10	2.5%	8
Other	11	2.8%	
TOTAL	395	100.0%	

- Additional advantages mentioned to by multiple stakeholders included supportive industrial growth, increased cultural diversity, and a stronger housing market.
- Some items in the “Other” category included: the infusion of new energy and interest into the community, the future community involvement and corporate citizenship of Kia, and community development benefits such as greater opportunities for youth.

Challenges

When asked to identify the challenges associated with Kia’s arrival, the stakeholders provided 321 responses, notably lower than the number of advantages they provided and reflecting a level of enthusiasm for Kia.

- Topping the list in terms of mentions was the challenge of improving navigability in the face of growth and the lack of a transportation system that can enable multimodal mobility, more efficient traffic flows, etc. These type challenges received 45 mentions.
- Developing the workforce for Kia and its suppliers was the second most frequently mentioned, accounting for 41 mentions.
- Managing the Kia-related growth was identified as the third leading challenge with 38 mentions. And, corresponding to this, managing the infrastructure needs was the second most identified challenge, accounting for 37 mentions. This mainly referred to water and sewer, but some stakeholders also discussed roads, gas, and electricity.
- The stakeholders identified the challenges associated with dealing with cultural diversity - namely, those associated with the influx of new residents of different cultures - fifth in frequency among mentions.
- Preserving existing industry was also cited as a key challenge, accounting for 20 mentions. Stakeholders voiced concerns over whether Kia would draw workers away from local employers and the impact the company might have on area wages.
- Several stakeholders questioned the ability of local governments to deal with the costs associated with the rising demand for public services, and the resulting impact on tax payers. These questions accounted for 17 mentions.
- A perception among some stakeholders was that accompanying the pending growth would be greater crime and threats to public safety. Mention of these concerns ranked eighth among the challenges.
- The stakeholders voiced concerns about providing workforce housing (12 mentions) and, more broadly of a similar note, about the ability of Troup County and its cities to effectively address the housing needs of workers employed at Kia and its suppliers.
- Challenges associated with preserving community livability received 11 mentions and ranked 10th among the challenges cited.
- Additional challenges receiving mention by multiple stakeholders included those associated with maintaining community unity, dealing with inflation, becoming overly dependent on one employer (culturally and economically), and preserving the environment in the face of growth.

Challenges to Kia (in Rank Order)

Challenges	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Improving Navigability	45	14.0%	1
Developing the Workforce	41	12.8%	2
Managing Growth	38	11.8%	3
Managing Infrastructure	37	11.5%	4
Dealing with Cultural Diversity	27	8.4%	5
Preserving Existing Industry	20	6.2%	6
Dealing with Rising Local Government Costs	17	5.3%	7
Ensuring Public Safety	15	4.7%	8
Providing Workforce Housing	12	3.7%	9
Responding to Kia & Supplier Needs	12	3.7%	9
Preserving Community Livability	11	3.4%	10
Maintaining Community Unity	10	3.1%	11
Dealing with Inflation	10	3.1%	11
Overly Depending on Kia	8	2.5%	12
Preserving the Environment	7	2.2%	13
Other	11	3.4%	
TOTAL	321	100.0%	

- Regarding the “Other” category, some of these challenges included: addressing health care needs, trying to deal with the unexpected, and attracting people and businesses to the north end of the county.

Future Collaboration

The stakeholders were asked their opinion on how important future collaboration among various entities would be to addressing the needs of Kia and related developments. They were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant “not at all important” and 5 meant “very important.” They were asked to consider four types of collaboration: (1) collaboration within Troup County, (2) collaboration within West Georgia, (3) participation in The Valley Partnership, and (4) participation in the Greater Valley Area.

- Generally, the stakeholders appeared to see all four types of collaboration as important as each one received a score near 4 or above.
- The stakeholders appeared to see collaboration within Troup County and its cities to be most important as this type of collaboration received the highest rating among the four types.

Importance Rating (In Rank Order)

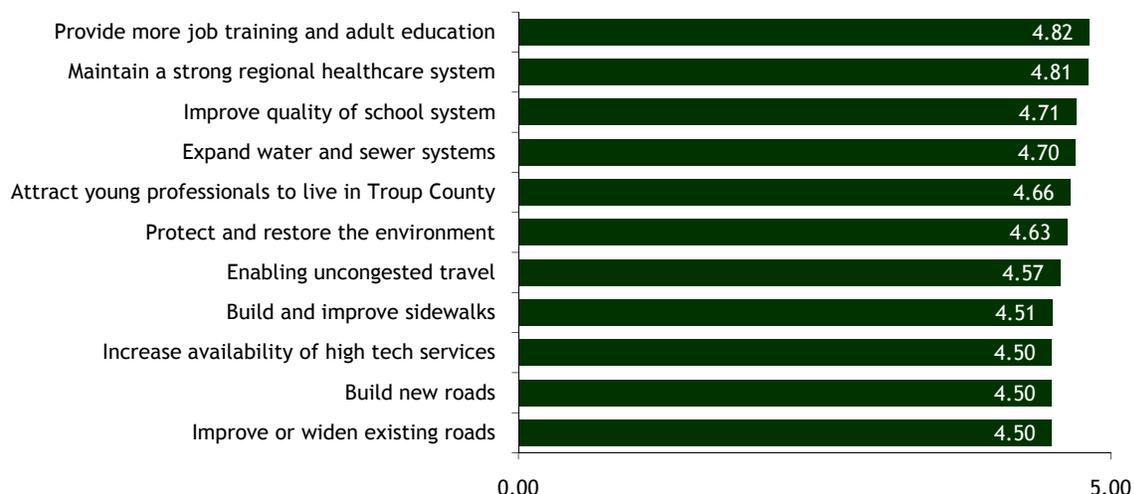
Type of Collaboration	Average Rating
Collaboration within Troup among cities and county	4.8
Collaboration with other counties in W. GA	4.1
Participation in the Greater Valley area	4.1
Participation in the Valley Partnership	3.9

FUTURE GROWTH AND CHANGE

Troup County stakeholders were asked to indicate how important they saw 35 specific community betterment activities to future growth and change. They were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant “not at all important” and 5 meant “very important.” Anything over a 4.0 was considered fairly important. The activities are divided into three tiers of importance based on the average ratings, with the first tier being most important, the second tier second most important, and so on. Of note, each of these activities relate to one or more of the proposed strategic goals. The first-tier meter includes those activities that received an average rating of 4.5 or above.

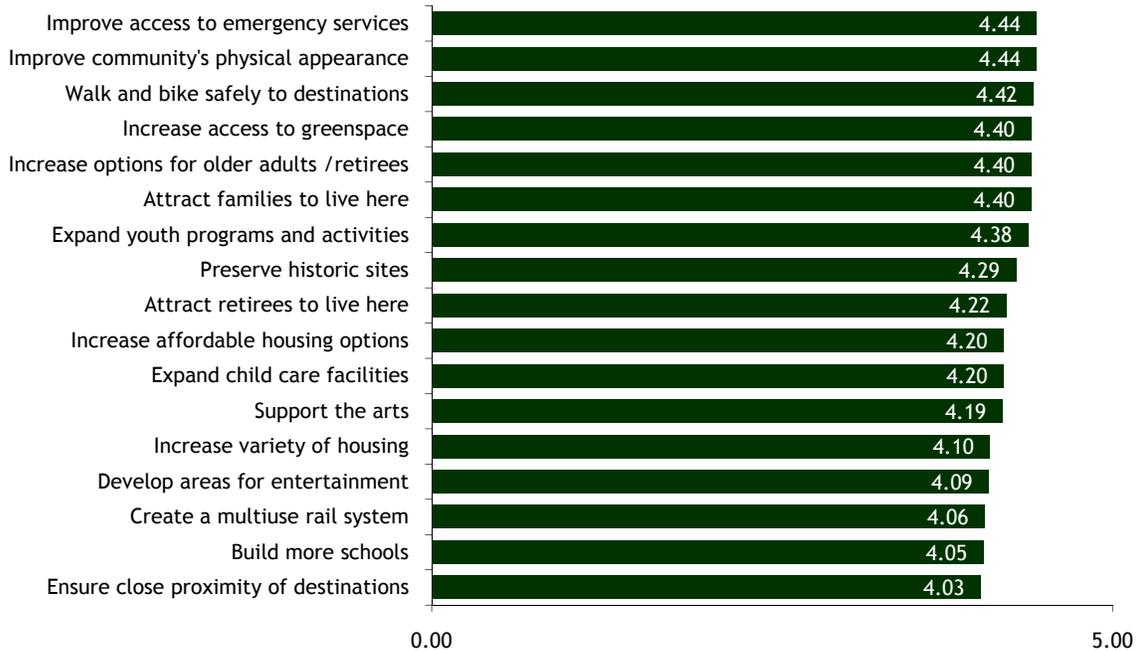
- Providing more job training and adult education received the highest rating on the importance meter, with an average score of 4.82. This activity will be paramount to the Troup County region’s efforts to pursue its goal of being a knowledge-driven community. Also related to this goal, the third most important activity, according to this meter, was identified as improving the quality of the school system, with an average score of 4.71.
- Receiving second billing was the need to maintain a strong regional health care system as this received an average rating of 4.81. Healthcare is an essential ingredient of fostering the good habitat community desired in Troup County.
- Expanding water and sewer systems was the fourth highest rated activity, with a score of 4.7, and related to the Troup County region’s goal of being a well-planned community.
- Rounding out the top five was working to attract young professionals to live in Troup County, an activity that could be incorporated into efforts to reach goals associated with being an entertaining and neighborly community.
- Relating to the proposed strategic goal to be the environmental steward community, protecting and restoring the environment received a relative high rating of 4.63 and ranked sixth.
- Four of the remaining activities on the first-tier meter enabling uncongested travel, building and improving sidewalks, building new roads, and improving or widening existing roads -each relate to pursuing the proposed strategic goal of being the navigable community.
- The remaining item on the first-tier meter increasing the availability of high tech services can be seen as a supportive activity for virtually all the proposed strategic goals.

**Importance Meter: First Tier
Community Betterment Activities**



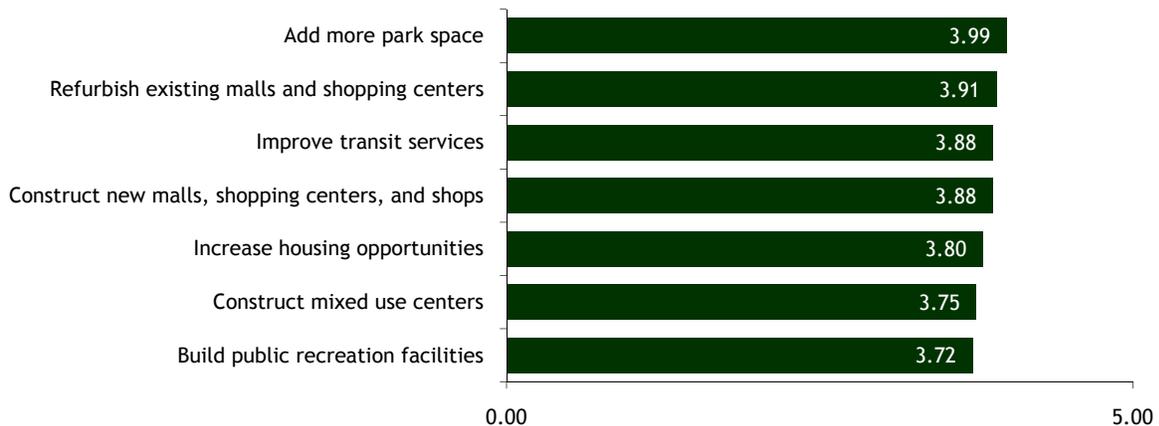
Community betterment activities on the second tier are those that received an average rating ranging from 4.0 to 4.49. Each of these activities are deemed relatively important as well, although not as important as the first-tier activities. Several of them tie directly into one or more of the proposed strategic goals.

**Importance Meter: Second Tier
Community Betterment Activities**



The third-tier meter includes those activities that received an average rating below 4.0 and are therefore deemed less important for the Troup County region to focus on at this time. These ratings do not mean that the actual activities are not important in and of themselves, rather, they reflect what is important to focus on given current needs and the recent level of attention provided to each. For example, Troup County has made significant investment in building public recreation facilities in recent years. Several of the stakeholders noted this when providing their rating, indicating they didn't want to see community leaders put priority on a need that has already been handled well.

**Importance Meter: Third Tier
Community Betterment Activities**



What to Preserve?

The stakeholders were asked to indicate what they wished to preserve in the face of growth and change. They provided a total of 311 responses.

- Topping the list was natural resources (scenic rural areas, natural beauty, pasture, forest, green space, West Point Lake, water supply, etc.), accounting for nearly one-fourth (24.4 percent) of the responses given. Natural resources received 76 mentions.
- The stakeholders voiced the need to preserve the area’s historical character (old houses, old mills, and other older buildings, structures of cultural and historic significance, etc.) second most frequently, as such preferences received 45 mentions.
- Tying for third, and not unrelated to each other, was the interest in preserving the downtowns and sense of community, each receiving 29 mentions. Related to both, the stakeholders also mentioned the desire to preserve the small-town sense of place and the way of life, with each accounting for 27 and 16 mentions, respectively.
- Preserving the area’s assets in arts, culture, and recreation also was identified as a need, accounting for 15 mentions and rounding out the top five.
- Additional interests in preservation mentioned by multiple stakeholders related to educational facilities, the rural atmosphere, churches, a safe environment, navigability, and health care.

Preferences for Preservation (In Rank Order)

What to Preserve?	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Natural Resources	76	24.4%	1
Historical Character	45	14.5%	2
Downtowns	29	9.3%	3
Sense of Community	29	9.3%	3
Small-town Sense of Place	27	8.7%	4
Way of Life	16	5.1%	5
Arts, Culture & Recreation	16	5.1%	5
Educational Facilities	14	4.5%	6
Rural Atmosphere	10	3.2%	7
Churches	9	2.9%	8
Safe Environment	7	2.3%	9
Navigability	6	1.9%	10
Health Care	4	1.3%	11
Other	23	7.4%	
TOTAL	311	100.0%	

- Some aspects in the “Other” category included: affordable housing, airport, forward- thinking leadership, the human scale of buildings, libraries, the newspaper, human resource associations, and the senior citizens center.

What to Improve?

Stakeholders were also asked to identify anything they'd like to have improved in their community. Here, they provided 253 responses.

- Navigability topped the list, accounting for nearly one-fifth (19.4 percent) of the responses with 49 mentions. While the stakeholders touched on their concerns concerning navigability during different points of the discussion thus resulting in The Navigable Community being among the 10 proposed strategic goals the topic did not come to the fore until they were asked to hone in on those things they'd like to see improved. Stakeholders were especially interested in improving the current traffic conditions, let alone future conditions. They discussed the need for enabling better traffic flows at specific intersections and along key corridors. The desire to examine alternative solutions such as pedestrian, bike-based, or other modes was also mentioned.
- The second most mentioned area of improvement was workforce development (which coincides with the “most serious issue” identified by stakeholders) and relates to the proposed strategic goal of being The Knowledgeable Community. Suggestions for improvements accounted for 32 mentions. Here, stakeholders focused on addressing the literacy rate and improving school facilities.
- Fostering more effective intergovernmental relationships was the third top preference for improvement identified by the stakeholders. While these relationships surfaced in discussions with the stakeholders when asked about challenges and serious issues, they appeared to be more often discussed within the context of “what to improve.”

Preferences for Improvement (in Rank Order)

What to Improve?	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Navigability	49	19.4%	1
Workforce Development	32	12.6%	2
Intergovernmental Relationships	18	7.1%	3
Consumer Market	17	6.7%	4
Community Aesthetics	14	5.5%	5
Civic Involvement / Cooperation	12	4.7%	6
Water & Sewer Infrastructure	12	4.7%	6
Standard of Living	11	4.3%	7
Local Governance	11	4.3%	7
Health Care	9	3.6%	8
Community Diversity	9	3.6%	8
Growth Management	9	3.6%	8
Youth Programs	9	3.6%	8
Housing Choice	8	3.2%	9
Job Opportunities	6	2.4%	10
Public Safety	5	2.0%	11
Downtown Business Districts	5	2.0%	11
Natural Resources	4	1.6%	12
Other	13	5.1%	
TOTAL	253	100.0%	

- The stakeholders cited the consumer market as a preference for improvement, with many expecting this to occur naturally given the growth expected for the region. They saw this as being key to expanding the commercial, retail, and other amenities desired by the region's residents. The consumer market accounted for 17 mentions and ranked fourth among the areas mentioned.

- Rounding out the top five, community aesthetics was identified by several stakeholders as an aspect they would like to see improved. Focusing on keeping the region “clean and beautiful” was mentioned by several stakeholders who recognized that Troup County already has some aesthetic qualities but saw challenges such as litter control. Many also pointed to the need to improve the look and feel of gateways and entrances into both Troup County and the three downtowns.
- Additional preferences for improvement that received multiple mentions by the stakeholders included civic involvement and cooperation, water and sewer infrastructure, the standard of living, local governance, health care, community diversity, growth management, youth programs, housing choice, job opportunities, public safety, the downtown business districts, and natural resources.
- Regarding the “Other” category, some preferences included making the airport more accessible to larger planes, better maintenance of older recreational parks, developing more neighborhood associations, and improving access to resources by individuals in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

What to Replace?

When asked what within the Troup County region they'd like to see replaced, stakeholders offered far fewer suggestions than when they were asked about what to preserve and improve. Several stakeholders appeared hard-pressed to identify something that they would like to see eradicated. For those who did offer suggestions, there were a few common themes. A total of 105 responses were provided.

- Substandard housing topped the list, accounting for 31 mentions or 29.5 percent of the total. Here, stakeholders identified areas with blighted and poor housing conditions throughout Troup County within each of the three cities.
- The second most frequently mentioned preference for replacement was the dilapidated commercial and industrial structures, which accounted for 14 mentions. The stakeholders identified specific structures such as old mills, buildings on Hamilton Road and Commerce Avenue in LaGrange, and some of the storefronts in West Point.
- Relating to their interest in improved navigability, the stakeholders pointed to specific transportation faults in Troup County they'd like to see solved such as 10th Street and the bridge in West Point as well as the area from downtown to Lafayette Parkway and Vernon Road in LaGrange.
- Local governance challenges tied with transportation challenges as the third most frequently mentioned preference for replacement. Here, some stakeholders called for consolidation and for better cooperation.
- Social problems, such as racial divisiveness, the incidence of drug usage and crime, and poverty received nine mentions by stakeholders as preferences to replace.
- Rounding out the top five mentions were the water and sewer infrastructure and the LaGrange Mall.

Preferences for Replacement (In Rank Order)

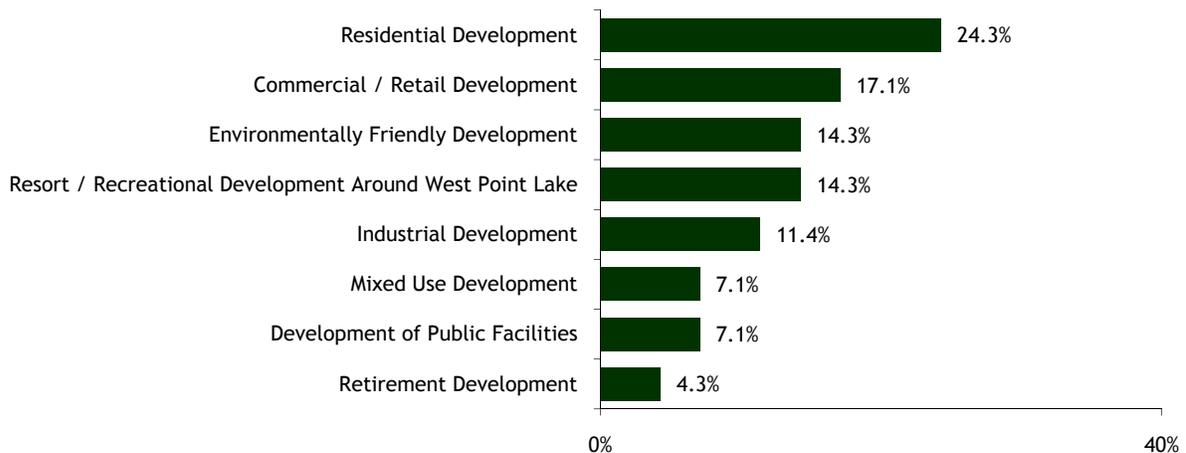
What to Replace?	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Substandard Housing	31	29.5%	1
Dilapidated Commercial and Industrial Structures	15	14.3%	2
Transportation Faults	11	10.5%	3
Local Governance Challenges	11	10.5%	3
Social Problems	9	8.6%	4
Water & Sewer Infrastructure	4	3.8%	5
The Mall	4	3.8%	5
Other	20	19.0%	
TOTAL	105	100.0%	

- Some things in the “Other” category included: billboards and illegal signs, telecommunications services, health care services, unsightly entrances into county and cities, liquor stores, and facilities and equipment at city parks.

Type of Development Preferred

The stakeholders were asked to identify the type of development they preferred to see in Troup County.

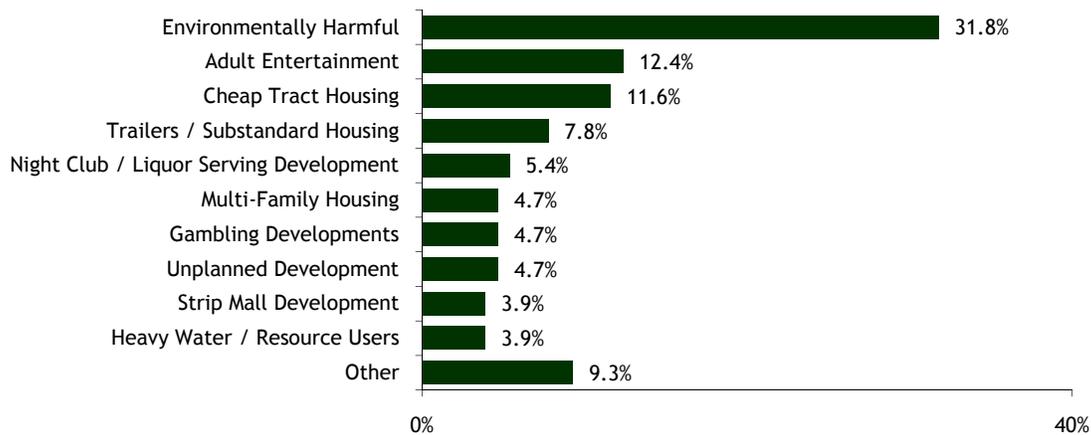
What Type of Development IS Preferred?



The stakeholders were also asked to identify what type of development they did not prefer in the face of future growth and change. A total of 129 responses were provided.

- Topping the list was development that is considered environmentally harmful, accounting for 41 mentions or 31.8 percent.
- The next three frequently mentioned types of development the stakeholders would like Troup County to avoid are adult entertainment (16 mentions), cheap tract housing (15 mentions), and substandard housing (10 mentions).

What Type of Development IS NOT Preferred?



New Business Development

The stakeholders were asked to identify the types of businesses they'd like to see develop in the future within Troup County, and provided a total of 272 suggestions.

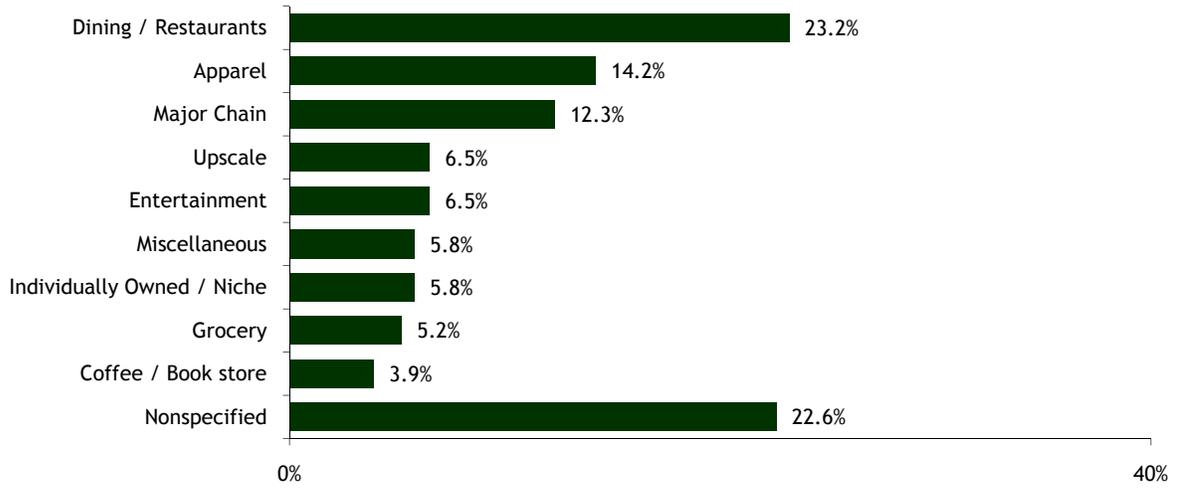
- Retail accounted for more than half (57 percent) of the mentions.
- Other top suggestions related to high tech (10.7 percent) and manufacturing (8.8 percent). Professional services and recreational / tourism businesses rounded out the top five.

Preferences for New Business (In Rank Order)

Type of Business	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Retail	155	57.0%	1
High Tech	29	10.7%	2
Manufacturing	24	8.8%	3
Professional Services	18	6.6%	4
Recreational / Tourism Business	13	4.8%	5
Medical Services	8	2.9%	6
Personal Services	6	2.2%	7
Auto-Related Industry	6	2.2%	7
Construction / Landscaping	5	1.8%	8
Small Business	4	1.5%	9
Other	4	1.5%	9
TOTAL	272	100.0%	

In terms of retail, the stakeholders zeroed in on very specific preferences.

Type of Retail Desired

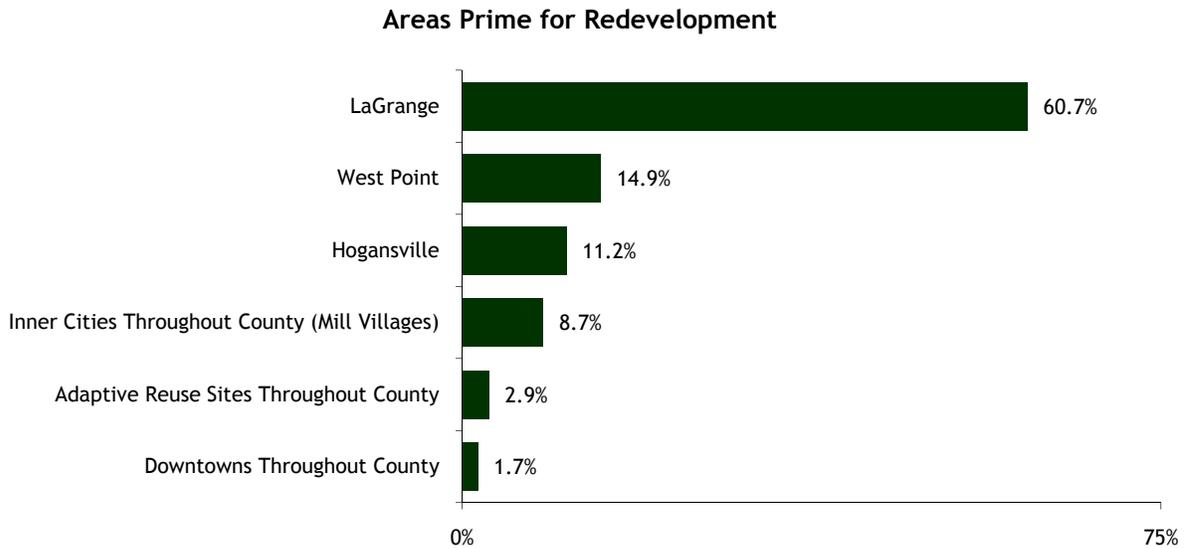


FUTURE LAND USE

The stakeholders were asked to consider each city and the rural lands of Troup County and to identify what areas they saw prime for *redevelopment* of areas already developed and for the *development* of areas now largely green space.

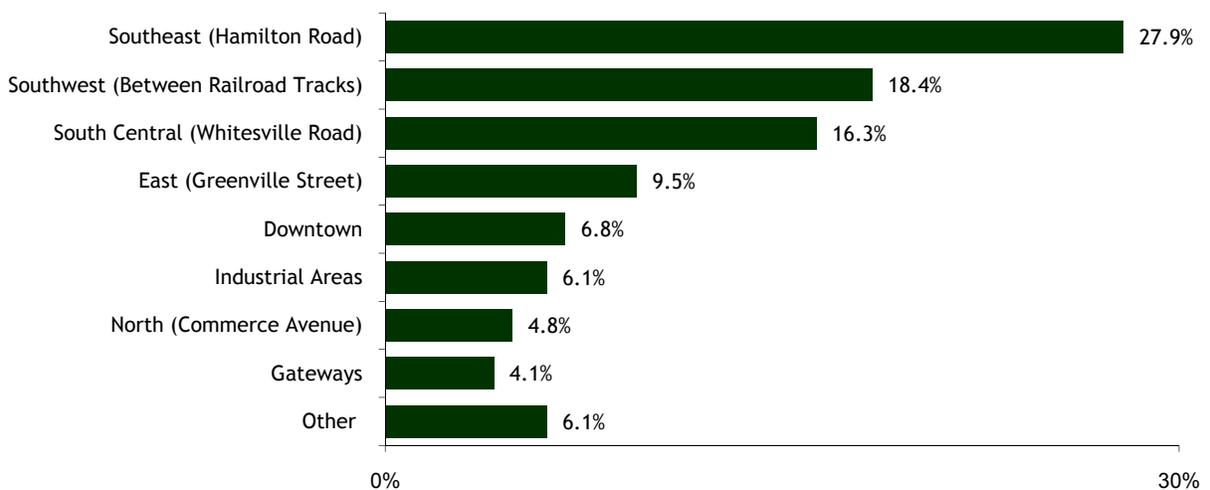
Areas Prime for Redevelopment

When asked to identify areas prime for redevelopment, the stakeholders provided a total of 242 responses. Their responses largely coincide with the areas that are most developed today, leading with LaGrange (60.7 percent).



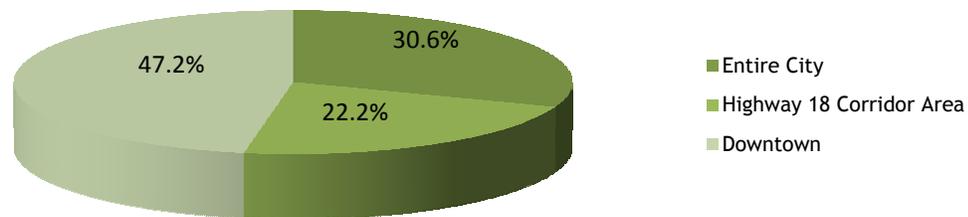
In terms of LaGrange, specifically, the stakeholders largely pointed to the south side of the city.

LaGrange: Areas Prime for Redevelopment



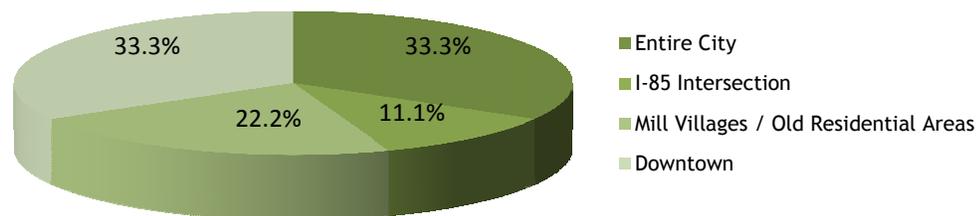
In terms of West Point, the stakeholders largely pointed to the downtown, and many also mentioned the Highway 18 corridor area that serves as the gateway into West Point from I-85, including old residential neighborhoods that have substandard housing, old dilapidated commercial structures, and industrial areas in the technology park.

West Point: Areas Prime for Redevelopment



Concerning Hogansville, stakeholders pointed to the downtown most frequently. Second to this was the identification of mill villages that were described to have substandard and dilapidated housing structures.

Hogansville: Areas Prime for Redevelopment



Areas Prime for Development

When asked to identify areas prime for development, the stakeholders provided a total of 438 responses. The views shared by stakeholders largely pointed to encouraging development around already developed areas (e.g., the cities) or along key transportation corridors and arteries.

- Topping the list was LaGrange, accounting for 80 mentions or 18.3 percent. Specific areas receiving multiple mentions by stakeholders included the Davis Road Corridor (24 mentions), the industrial park areas in southwest LaGrange (20 mentions), Lafayette Parkway in east LaGrange (12 mentions), Roanoke Road in west LaGrange (5 mentions), and Mooty Bridge Road in northwest LaGrange (4 mentions).
- The I-85 Corridor that runs throughout Troup County received the second most overall mentions (12.3 percent), with several stakeholders pinpointing the various interchanges as ideal for development from Hogansville to LaGrange to West Point. The stakeholders largely saw these areas as opportunities for commercial / retail (34.9 percent), residential (30.2 percent) and industrial (20.9 percent) development.
- The third most frequently identified area was around West Point Lake, which also connects all

three cities and received 51 mentions. Here, stakeholders largely saw the area as ideal for high end residential (55.7 percent), recreational and nature-based development (17.1 percent), and commercial / retail (14.3 percent) development.

- The stakeholders largely pointed to a specific corridor that runs throughout Troup County connecting the three cities Highway 29 which accounted for 60 mentions when considering the northeast and southwest sections together.

Preferences for Development Areas (In Rank Order)

Area Prime for Development	Mentions	Percent	Rank
LaGrange	80	18.3%	1
I-85 Corridor	54	12.3%	2
Around West Point Lake	51	11.6%	3
Highway 29 (Northeast): Hogansville Road Area	35	8.0%	4
Kia Plant Area	33	7.5%	5
Hogansville	32	7.3%	6
West Point	26	5.9%	7
Highway 29 (Southwest): West Point Road Area	25	5.7%	8
Highway 27 (Southeast): Hamilton Road	21	4.8%	9
Near Mountville and Big Springs (East)	19	4.3%	10
I-185 Corridor	17	3.9%	11
Moody Bridge Road (Northwest)	14	3.2%	12
Highway 219 (South Central): Whitesville Road	13	3.0%	13
Roanoke Road (West)	6	1.4%	14
Highway 18 (South)	6	1.4%	14
Within and Around Cities	6	1.4%	
TOTAL	438	100.0%	

FUTURE PROSPERITY

The stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on key questions relating to the future economic prosperity of the Troup County region.

Economic Development Strategies

The stakeholders were asked to consider some key economic development strategies and to rate them in terms of how important they saw each to the future prosperity of Troup County. They were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant “not at all important” and 5 meant “very important.” What is interesting to note overall is that the business-focused strategies did not receive as high a priority as did the people-focused strategies.

- Receiving the highest average rating of a near perfect score (4.9) was enhancing and protecting Troup County’s quality of life, which reflected the great importance stakeholders placed on the people-focused (human capital) part of an economic development strategy.
- Also denoting a human capital approach, the stakeholders provided the next highest billing to developing a quality workforce (4.8).
- Rounding out the top three and, in line with the focus on making Troup County attractive to people was maintaining vibrant downtowns and community centers.

Importance of Economic Development Strategies



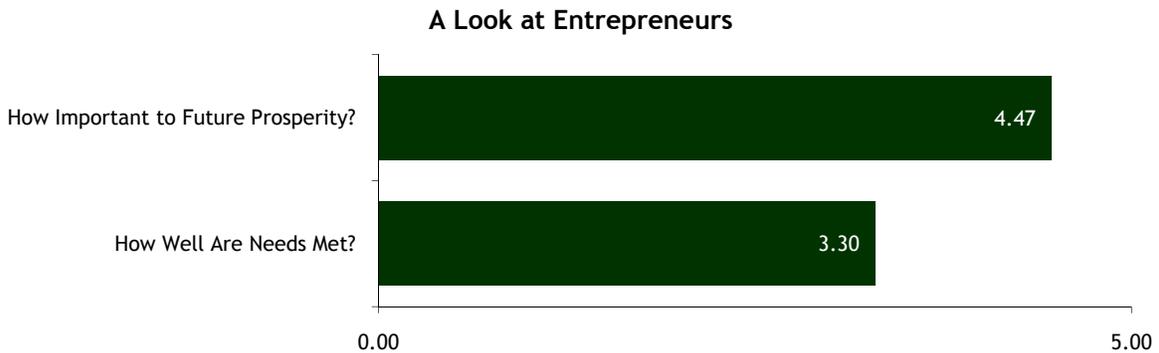
Business Needs

The stakeholders were asked to indicate how well they considered the needs of the business community were met in Troup County. They were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant “not at all well” and 5 meant “very well.” The stakeholders provided highest marks to manufacturers and lowest marks to entrepreneurs.

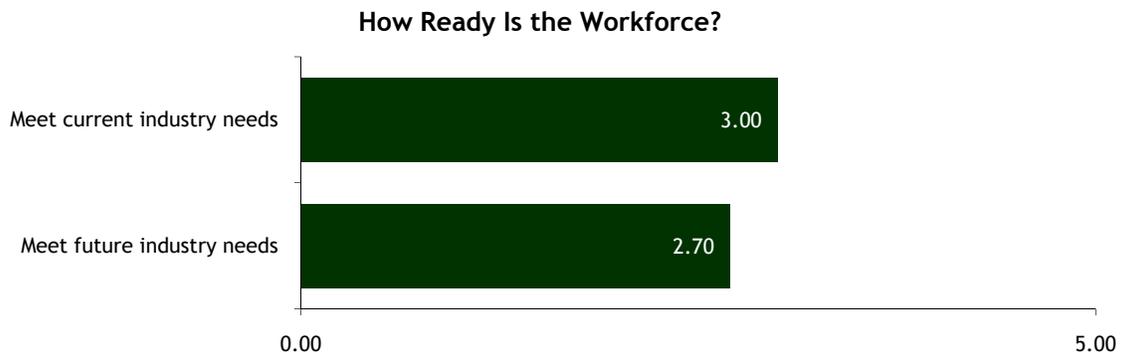
How Well Are the Needs of Business Met?



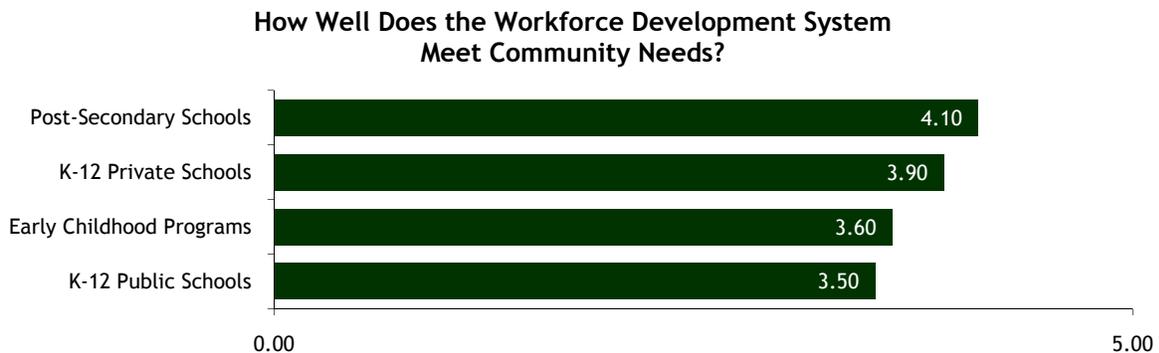
When reviewing the views concerning entrepreneurs specifically, stakeholders provided a higher rating when asked to consider the importance of supporting them but a lower rating when asked to consider the actual support available.



The stakeholders were asked to share their views on how “ready” the workforce is for industry by providing a rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where one meant “not all ready” and 5 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.



To assess their views on the workforce development system, the research team requested stakeholders to share their opinions on how well the system meets the community’s needs. They were asked to provide a rating on types of institutions, serving the needs of those from infancy through adulthood, via a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 meant “not all well” and 5 meant “very well.” 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. Top billing was provided to the post-secondary institutions, with West Georgia Technical College and LaGrange College receiving considerable mention. Of note, K-12 public schools received an above-average rating, but one not as high as the other institutional support resources.

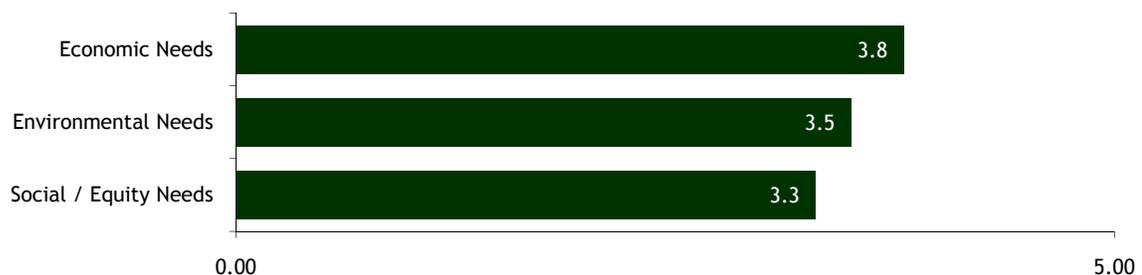


Community Needs

The stakeholders were asked to consider how well the needs of the citizenry are being met through various community program areas. They were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant “not at all well” and 5 meant “very well” specifically regarding economic, social, and environmental needs. None of these received exceptionally high ratings, signaling the perspectives among many stakeholders that a fair degree of opportunity for improvement exists.

- In terms of economic needs, they were asked to share their views on how well economic development is handled within Troup County. Here, they gave relatively high ratings, when compared to other ratings they provided when considering social and environmental needs, resulting in an average of 3.8.
- Stakeholders gave second billing (3.5) to how well the community is addressing environmental needs.
- Regarding the social needs of Troup County, the stakeholders were asked to share their views on two key questions. When asked how well the needs of all citizens are addressed, they provided an average rating of 3.4. However, when asked about how well the community deals with diversity, they provided a slightly lower average rating of 3.2. Together, these ratings average to 3.3.

How Well Are Community Needs Met?



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Toward the end of the discussions, the stakeholders were asked to share their views on the level of community support to address the challenges and opportunities they identified. They were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 meant “not at all supportive” and 5 meant “very supportive.”

The stakeholders were asked to indicate how supportive Community Leadership is in promoting quality growth. They provided highest marks to the leadership for economic development.

How Supportive Is Community Leadership?



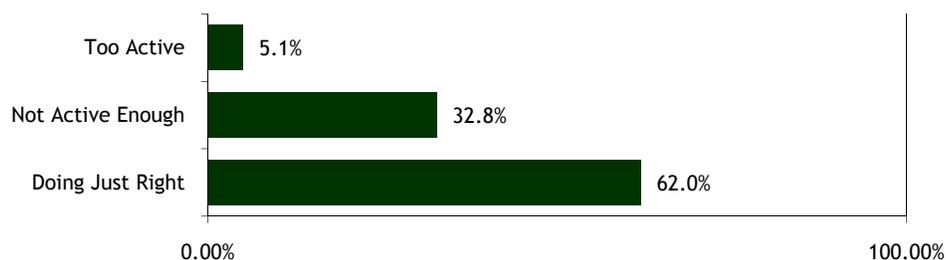
The stakeholders were also asked to indicate how supportive Community Citizenry is in promoting quality growth. Their ratings for the citizens were not as high generally but are in line with the leadership in terms of providing higher marks for economic development.

How Supportive Is Community Citizenry?



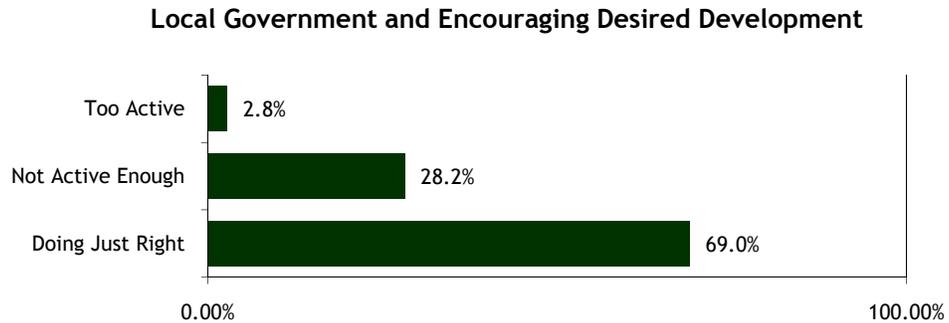
The stakeholders were asked to consider whether local government is “too active,” “not active enough,” or “doing just right” in terms of restricting unwanted development. Very few considered local government to be “too active.” More than half (62 percent) viewed local government to be “doing just right.” Another one-third (32.8 percent) saw government as not doing enough.

Local Government and Restricting Unwanted Development



Regarding local governments' efforts to encourage desired development, an even greater share of stakeholders (69 percent) provided even higher compliments to the local governments for "doing just right." Very few stakeholders considered local government to be "too active." Just over one-fourth (28.2 percent) saw government as not doing enough.

What is important to note here is that the timing of these interviews occurred shortly after Troup County passed a moratorium on new residential subdivisions while it launched its process to develop a new comprehensive plan.



MOST IMPORTANT NEXT STEP

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. Second to that was the need to work together to prepare for the future. Rounding out the top three was addressing infrastructure needs.

The Most Important Next Step (In Rank Order)

Next Step	Mentions	Percent	Rank
Strategic Planning / Long Range Planning	78	48.4%	1
Working Together to Prepare for the Future	17	10.6%	2
Addressing Infrastructure Needs	16	9.9%	3
Improving Workplace Skills	11	6.8%	4
Dealing with Kia-related Challenges & Opportunities	9	5.6%	5
Consolidating Local Governments	8	5.0%	6
Focusing on Economic Development	6	3.7%	7
Other	16	9.9%	8
TOTAL	161	100.0%	