



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TROUP COUNTY, GEORGIA

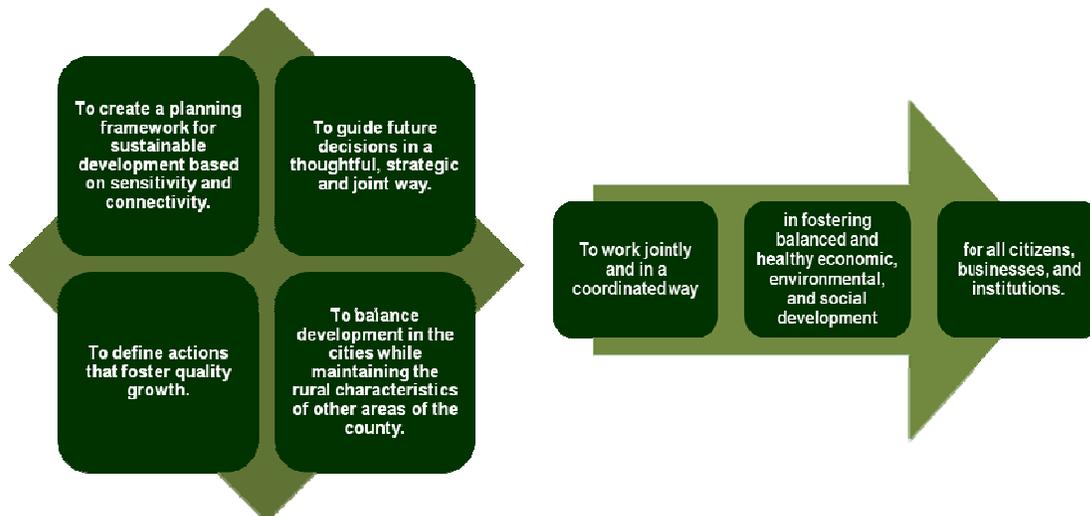
Troup County is located in West Georgia on the Georgia-Alabama border and is easily accessible via Interstates 85 and 185. The county is within an hour of Auburn, Columbus, and Atlanta. The county seat, centrally located **LaGrange**, is also Troup's largest city. **Hogansville** is the gateway to Troup County from the north and **West Point** is the gateway to both the county and Georgia from the south. Troup County is home to nearly 65,000 residents.



The *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in Troup County, Georgia* is based on the mutual desire by leadership in Troup County and the Cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville to preserve and enhance places for area residents and businesses by proactively, progressively and creatively directing the community's growth and development to shape its future. This plan is based on strategy development conducted via the Leadership Team for these communities from June 2007 to June 2008.

The Leadership Team has established a three-year timeframe for implementation of the plan and will revisit the plan on no less than an annual basis to determine future calibration. Implementation of the initiatives in this plan will rest with a number of organizations within Troup County. During the first year of implementation, priority emphasis will be given to initiatives as determined by the Leadership Team or by those organizations with responsibility for implementation of particular initiatives.

MISSION VISION





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GOALS

The Leadership Team adopted 10 strategic goals to serve as guiding principles and 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 appear in this plan 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.



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THE WELL PLANNED COMMUNITY

Strategy 1: Utilize an adaptive planning approach to accurately predict and respond to changing needs and conditions.

Annually review strategic plan, as well as all other plans affecting development, to address unexpected trends and make necessary adaptations.

Identify and track appropriate indicators to annually review community progress toward sustainable development.

Collaborate to conduct annual population estimates.

Strategy 2: 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.

Use comprehensive planning processes to formally adopt the vision of concentrated cities.

Amend plans and policies to permit and as appropriate incentivize redevelopment of vacant, greyfield, and brownfield sites in already developed areas, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

Develop processes for making development decisions in a joint way, including adopting minimum planning standards to conduct project review. For example, Development Scorecard and joint review of large scale developments.

Amend zoning and subdivision regulations according to shared vision for smart growth and quality development.

Adopt spatial planning policies to encourage future development where desired. For example, Transfer of Development Rights.



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THE PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY

Strategy 3: Explore the potential for economically beneficial relationships that can be developed with nearby colleges and universities.

Garner college and university support of Troup County's Career Pathways high school program.

Promote and encourage greater participation in the cross-matriculation programs available among area institutions.

Explore creation of technical-problem solving program for industry, leveraging West Georgia Tech and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program.

Explore options regarding future use of Kia Georgia Training Center.

Strategy 4: Focus on industries that are most suitable and offer the greatest opportunity for economic prosperity and lowest risk for community degradation.

Review the industries suggested in the Business Development Assessment to determine the focus of future economic development efforts.

Customize marketing materials for the industries of focus.

Frame incentive policies to encourage industries of focus.

Further support companies in industries of focus. For example, create business networking groups for each sector.

Strategy 5: Explore the potential for strengthening and leveraging the creative centers of Troup County.

Launch a marketing and branding campaign associated with the creative economy concept.

Create a Creative Centers Coalition among the creative centers of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville and Troup County.

Protect, sustain, and expand arts and cultural assets.



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Strategy 6: Market area for ‘gloibility.’ Capitalize on the apparent international destination it has become and foster greater connectivity for foreign-based companies and residents alike.

Build upon the excellent economic development program in LaGrange to expand efforts geared toward international markets.

Strive to be “internationally friendly.”

Employ efforts to help foster multicultural awareness.

Strategy 7: Create a formal initiative to examine the potential expansion of this industry, building upon the Advanced Automotive Manufacturing group created for workforce development purposes.

Inventory assets related to automotive along the I-85 corridor that runs through Alabama and Georgia.

Proactively seek automotive companies that demonstrate values concerning sustainability in their industrial operations.

Explore the opportunities for regional partnerships with other communities in West Georgia and the Columbus, Georgia and Auburn-Opelika, Alabama areas.

Strategy 8: 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.

Expand capacity of existing youth development organizations to serve youth.

Foster awareness among citizens about available assistance through government and other service providers.

Devise a means to more systematically address the needs of the local population.

Coordinate a “prosperity campaign” focused on improving the human condition.



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Strategy 9: Expand efforts to support entrepreneurship and small business development.

Explore relationships with area universities and colleges to help connect innovators and entrepreneurs with their resources.

Encourage mixed-use development that incorporates small business clusters in live-work-play type environments.

Focus entrepreneur and small business development efforts on those business and consumer sectors expected to grow substantially in the West Georgia region.

THE QUALITY GOVERNANCE COMMUNITY

Strategy 10: Pursue opportunities to cooperate in ways that benefit all jurisdictions in the areas of land use, and natural resource planning.

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.

Consider a multi-jurisdictional approach to track the achievement in quality governance.

Host 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.

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.



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Strategy 11: Leverage and build upon the LaGrange “brand equity” and economic development capabilities.

Tap into LaGrange’s marketing capacity and leverage the city’s brand equity.

Leverage 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.

Strategy 12: 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.

Strengthen community engagement framework. For example, Citizen Participation Advocates / Neighborhood Planning Units, expanded public relations efforts, etc.

Strategy 13: Continue to build upon improved relationships by working on developing internal collaborative partnerships, and external regional partnerships to find solutions where problems present themselves.

Create a Municipal-County Leadership Council.

Form a joint planning staff committee among jurisdictions.

Strategy 14: Engage in planning and initiatives that enable ongoing leadership succession in local governance at the elected and staff capacities.

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.



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THE KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN COMMUNITY

***Strategy 15:** 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.*

Work to better connect the existing and emerging workforce with the employment opportunities associated with Kia, its suppliers, and existing industry. This will include special efforts focused on raising awareness among the residents at-risk for not realizing the benefits associated with this economic growth about where the economy is heading, associated job openings and relevant training opportunities to develop the skills desired.

Regularly review and adjust educational and workforce training curriculum and programs according to stakeholder concerns, employer needs, and projected occupational demand for the area.

Review the industries recommended for future consideration, according to where the economy is heading, and align program and curriculum plans accordingly.

***Strategy 16:** Continue and expand ongoing efforts to address the individual needs of K-12 students.*

Expand efforts to identify "at-risk" students in elementary and middle school grades.

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.

Launch a communitywide commitment campaign – e.g., "The Troup County Promise" – an effort where parents, teachers, business leaders, and others commit to working together for identifying and saving at-risk children.

Develop innovative ways to reward teachers who are able to foster positive classroom experiences.

Increase available tutoring services.



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***Strategy 17:** Increase awareness and support for numerous early childhood development programs already in existence, and fill in any gaps that may arise.*

Expand and strengthen the child care and educational options for children under the age of 6.

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.

***Strategy 18:** Focus energies on developing the next generation worker who is flexible, agile, a continual learner, and has the traits desired by employers.*

Expand programs that foster reading comprehension, interpretation, and application skills.

Encourage more employers and individuals to participate in the Certified Work Ready program.

Explore mechanisms to help more at-risk youth tap into available programs for fostering soft skills and work habits. For example, Boys Scouts, Girl Scouts.

Foster greater awareness among area employers concerning state incentives associated with workforce development.

Incorporate a review of soft skills and work habits into the Troup County K-12 grading system, from Kindergarten through 12th grade.



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***Strategy 19:** Launch a multi-tiered campaign to raise awareness about future economic trends and implications for future career options.*

Create a partnership with the area's human resource professionals and area guidance counseling professionals.

Dramatically increase the community capacity that is devoted toward career mentoring and guidance for youth.

Expand programs to raise student awareness about real life applications.

Develop a career pathways program for adults.

Encourage local employers and teachers to participate in business internship programs.

Engage economic development leadership to raise community wide awareness regarding current and future economic trends.

***Strategy 20:** Explore initiatives to best leverage the realities associated with internal and external migration.*

Develop a series of young professional networking groups that are both informational and social.

Champion young adult excellence to help this demographic feel more welcomed and engaged in the community.

Create expanded opportunities for civic involvement for youth.

Launch a campaign to attract 20-somethings from outside Troup County.

***Strategy 21:** Explore options for creating a more seamless approach to workforce development.*

Establish a formal workforce development coordination body in partnership with existing groups.

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.



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THE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD COMMUNITY

Strategy 22: Work to develop county and city-collaborative policies and procedures to protect water quality throughout the county.

Address community water quality challenges jointly.

Apply reduction of non-point source water pollution practices when conducting roadway and public space/facility design work.

Strategy 23: Continue to involve county and city leaders in regional, state, and federal discussions about water resource management.

Stay engaged with regional, state, and southeast leadership organizations focused on water quality and quantity matters.

Strategy 24: Adopt a multi-faceted approach to sustainable development across all development types.

Showcase local examples of sustainable development, while simultaneously developing new policies and incentives to promote future examples.

Promote infill development and the adaptation of vacant and underutilized sites within urbanized areas.

Expand the role as steward of the area's tremendous natural resources.

Encourage local companies to adopt environmental management standards.

Examine building codes to identify means of introducing incentives and requirements for the use of "green" materials, systems, and practices.

Strategy 25: Protect and connect environmentally sensitive lands, while simultaneously using the approach to connect people to schools, recreational and entertainment opportunities, and each other.

Explore opportunities associated with West Point Lake, the network of riparian corridors, and means of connecting these to the surrounding region.

Explore regional-level partnerships to protect and enhance the natural environment, without being tied to political boundaries.



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THE GOOD HABITAT COMMUNITY

Strategy 26: Work to maintain a range of quality, affordable housing stock to match the range in area income levels, and develop more mixed-income communities.

Proceed with plans to conduct a housing assessment in West Point, Hogansville, and Troup County to facilitate the resolution of substandard housing concerns.

Continue to provide strong support for the communities' agencies focused on affordable housing development.

Strategy 27: 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.

Maintain commitment to the ongoing work of the Sheriff's Office and three Police Departments.

Identify means of enhancing communications and collaborative efforts among the Sheriff's Office and three Police Departments.

Invest in additional law enforcement personnel as population growth necessitates.

Strategy 28: Reduce the instances of juvenile crime by maintaining the community's commitment to existing, and future, support services for at-risk youth.

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.

Devise a support network for juveniles released from detention which focuses on counseling, tutoring and community involvement.

Incorporate conflict resolution education into middle and high school curriculums, and human services and faith-based youth programming.



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Strategy 29: 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.

Look to the character of successful older neighborhoods and areas as inspiration for policies (e.g., Community Design Guidebook) and incentives (e.g., density bonuses) for new development.

Continue to preserve the historic downtowns and neighborhoods.

THE NAVIGABLE COMMUNITY

Strategy 30: Continue to expand County and cities' role in regional, state, and multi-state discussions about highway and railroad infrastructure.

Regularly assess the potential local and countywide transportation impacts associated with anticipated developments.

Strategy 31: Seek to improve railroad crossings at key locations, in concert with the Federal Rail Authority.

Continue to advocate for the traffic signaling technology and timing improvements.

Examine the origins and destinations of potential pedestrian and bicycle travel to inform railroad crossing improvement decisions.

Strategy 32: Establish a long-range vision for industrial development and establish policies that protect the infrastructure and suitable land necessary for that industry.

Adopt policies and plans to secure land and systems that support the community's vision for future economic development. For example, Industrial Districts Park Management Plan.

Strategy 33: Develop land use and transportation policies that elevate design standards, manage traffic flows, and increase opportunities for alternative modes of travel.

Adopt complementary land use, transportation, and design visions and policies to create quality, efficient corridors. For example, an Access Management Plan.

Continue to support Georgia Department of Transportation's long-range plan to address south Hamilton Road (SR 27).



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Strategy 34: Working in conjunction with human services and workforce development partners, develop an incremental exploration to expand public transportation services.

Assess 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 ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY

Strategy 35: Take extra care to avoid low quality retail development.

Avoid the construction of low-quality retail development – investigate retail corridors known for high standards for development.

Create Community Design Guidelines and Design Review Committee for future retail development.

Strategy 36: Review, amend, or adopt ordinances to preserve and enhance community aesthetic appeal.

Review and amend codes to provide appropriate landscape ordinances.

Review signage regulations and develop way-finding and promotional signage plan.

Strategy 37: Inventory and protect historic and scenic resources.

Inventory important scenic views to be protected.

Work with the Troup County Historical Society to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites to be protected.

THE NEIGHORLY COMMUNITY

Strategy 38: Focus on retention and recruitment of physicians within the most in-need medical disciplines.

Launch a public relations campaign regarding the quality and availability of health care services.

Maintain awareness of the needs of existing physicians, particularly as it can impact retention.



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Strategy 39: Aggressively work to fight drug and alcohol use and addiction among youth and the adult population.

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.

Continue to make cracking down on drug-related criminal activity a top priority.

Determine if there are any gaps in drug addiction recovery services and consider filling such gaps a high priority.

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.

Strategy 40: Continue work to reduce the instances of teenage pregnancy and enhance support networks for teenage mothers.

Commit to existing and renewed efforts to provide mentoring and career guidance to area youth, as a recognized means of preventing teen pregnancy.

Continue to include programming and educational information that speaks to birth control and abstinence in the work of human service organizations, faith-based organizations, and the school system.

Raise awareness regarding current programs and services related to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers, and explore opportunities to expand as warranted by demand for such services.

Strategy 41: Explore all opportunities to embrace and leverage community diversity.

Encourage more emerging community leaders of minority race or ethnic backgrounds to participate in leadership development programs.

Ensure that there is effective representation from various constituencies in approximately proportional numbers to the population when formulating community leadership committees.



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Strategy 42: Take advantage of local faith-based assets as an opportunity to advance the community's goals.

Form an Interdenominational Council of faith-based leaders.

Reach out to the community's religious leaders to educate them about the strategic planning process and how they can help implement its goals.

Strategy 43: 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.

Encourage area employers to promote and incentivize employee fitness.

Continue to support and explore further opportunities to help area businesses afford health insurance coverage for their employees.

Support the work of local health care institutions and agencies to raise awareness about disease prevention and treatment services.

Strategy 44: Continue to expand the community's commitment (measured in volunteer hours and financial contributions) to the organizations focused on improving the provision of human services in Troup County.

Consider making volunteer activities a high school graduation requirement.

Work with local media to raise awareness about the significant charitable spirit which has guided so much of the community's history.

Host an annual community-wide volunteer day.

Strategy 45: 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.

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.



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THE ENTERTAINING COMMUNITY

***Strategy 46:** Continue the commitment to maintaining the success of local arts and recreational programs, and raising community awareness, particularly among youth, regarding their availability.*

Continue to support all of the local entities that make a positive contribution to after-school, weekend, and summer arts and recreational activities for local youth.

Continue to support and help raise awareness among youth about the First Tee program.

Support the Elijah Kelley Foundation and its plans to create the Elijah Kelley Center for Performing Arts to provide music, dance and drama training.

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.

Consider sponsoring a week dedicated to the arts.

***Strategy 47:** Continue the commitment to maintaining high-quality parks and recreational infrastructure and expand parks acres and facilities to address population growth and location.*

Continue proactive approach to park and recreational facilities planning to address the needs of an increasing, and potentially changing population.

Continue to be proactive about addressing maintenance and beautification needs of all the county's parks and recreational centers to ensure a high-quality experience for visitors.

Continue to promote camping, fishing, and boating activities at West Point Lake, once drought conditions allow.

***Strategy 48:** Garner volunteer support for creating additional club activities for area youth.*

Link the interests of students with willing parent/teacher/administrator volunteers to create additional club activities for middle and high school students.



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Strategy 49: Work to respond to the youth's specific requests for more non-school based recreational activities.

Work with youth leaders in education and human services to help raise awareness among youth about what is available.

Expand recreational-based programs for at-risk youth, potentially modeled after First Tee.

Expand sports activities available to youth, through the Troup County Parks and Recreation Center.

Ascertain potential private sector support to reopen the bowling alley.

Strategy 50: Identify the community's retail priorities, and then determine the best means of presenting the community to potential opportunities.

Develop a plan to position the community for its priority retail desires.

ABOUT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

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 creatively 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 – to inform the design of this plan.

More detailed information on the strategic goals and initiatives in this plan and the supportive research, assessments, and strategy development can be found in the *Preparing for the Future in Troup County, Georgia* series of reports produced by Georgia Tech. These reports include: *Recommendations for a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development, 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, and Workforce Development Assessment.*