

## **Needs and Opportunities**

### ***Population***

#### Needs

- Providing Infrastructure for a growing population (water, sewer, schools, transportation, etc.).
- Providing additional classrooms and school facilities for a growing population.
- Paying for growth.

#### Opportunities

- Diversifying population.
- Expanding tax base from new residential, commercial and industrial growth.
- Expanding local job opportunities.
- Expanding community investment.
- Increase in civilian and military populations.

### ***Economic Development***

#### Needs

- No Business and Retention Plan.
- Lack of continuing education opportunities within the County. Residents must drive to Columbus, West. Point or LaGrange for post-secondary education.

#### Opportunities

- Hamilton and Northwest Harris Business Parks.
- Capitalize on expanding public facilities and services to attract commercial development.
- Expand upon Entrepreneurial Friendly designation.
- Harris County Tourism.
- Educational Opportunities – excellent K-12 school system.
- Retail/commercial opportunities due to Kia and supplier locations.
- A diverse and educated workforce.
- Many natural resources/Callaway Gardens.

### ***Housing***

#### Needs

- Availability of affordable and adequate housing for future residents.
- Small Areas (pockets) of deteriorating structures.
- Balancing housing cost with housing quality.
- Jobs-Housing balance.

#### Opportunities

- Construction of additional affordable and adequate housing.
- Diversify housing mix from predominantly single family stick built detached to quality single family attached (townhouse, condominiums).
- Well-trained code enforcement staff.
- Create housing communities in comparisons to housing developments, retrofit existing housing areas.
- Maintain high level of home ownership in Harris County.

### ***Natural and Cultural Resources***

#### Needs

- Harris County has numerous waterways and wetlands. Waterways of importance and their associated wetlands include the Chattahoochee River, Mulberry Creek, Oak Mountain, Flat Shoals, Ossahatchee Creek and Standing Boy Creek. Waterway and wetland integrity needs to be maintained by limiting development in these areas and maintaining appropriate buffers.
- Management planning for significant community resources is needed.

- There is no on-going and active education about resource conservation and protection for the public, local elected officials, developers, economic developers, etc.
- Ensuring the public has adequate access to community resources.
- Identifying potential brownfield/greyfield areas.

#### Opportunities

- Harris County should develop more means of protecting significant natural and cultural resources.
- Actively educate the public, local elected officials, developers, economic developers, about resource conservation and protection.
- Improve, enhance, and promote the County's natural and cultural resources.
- Guide new development away from important resources to conserve resources and minimize waste.
- Strengthen and enforce resource protection regulations.
- Set aside environmentally sensitive areas of the County, such as stream banks, floodplains, or steep hillsides from development.
- Best management practices are required as part of the development process.
- Adopt appropriate site design guidelines for development of sensitive areas (e.g. steep slopes, wetlands).
- Link local trail systems with state designated bike routes and existing trails in neighboring communities.
- Develop programs that encourage infill development or brownfield/greyfield redevelopment.
- Consider developing a greenspace plan.
- Consider developing a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.

## **Community Facilities**

#### Needs

- Meeting the service demands of aggressive population growth. With expected growth the demand for public services will increase. Careful planning will be required to ensure adequate services are available over the next twenty (20) years.
- Increasing school age population.
- Expanding water capacity to meet projected need.

#### Opportunities

- Growth provides an opportunity to look at various fees (Impact fees, Subdivision Review fees, Service Tax Districts and Capital Recovery fees) to compensate for new growth.
- Availability of public space and determine what needs expansion, renovation or closure.
- Adequate highway system.
- Consider developing a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.
- Develop abandoned rail line as a north/south bike/pedestrian connector and utility corridor between residential, commercial areas and public uses.

## **Intergovernmental**

#### Needs

- Water availability and impact of development on local and regional infrastructure systems and natural and cultural resources.

#### Opportunities

- Projected growth for area counties and municipalities, an opportunity exists for communities to develop stronger working relationships and to share resources when necessary.
- Service Delivery Strategy will need to be updated as part of the Comprehensive Plan process.

## **Transportation**

#### Needs

- Financing road improvement projects.
- Cost of transportation improvements associated with large developments.
- Controlling development/signage and maintaining traffic flow along major arterials, such as US 27, SR 18, SR 85, etc.
- Alignment and number of curb cuts/driveways along SR 315: Limit curbcuts along all County transportation routes.
- Do not require new development to connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit..

### Opportunities

- Create a Walk/Bike First Community by expanding existing bike/pedestrian trail routes to create land use connectivity.
- Create pedestrian and vehicular Gateways into Harris County.
- Develop a bicycle/pedestrian plan to compliment the redevelopment of the Georgia Southwestern bike/pedestrian/utility corridor.

## **Land Use**

### Needs

- Protecting natural and cultural resources.
- Renovating or removing dilapidated structures.
- Lack of commercial uses.
- Protecting existing open space and creating open space in new developments.
- Harris County does not have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.

### Opportunities

- Expand and appropriately locate commercial land use in Harris County
- Encourage traditional neighborhood conservation/subdivision development. Traditional neighborhood/ conservation/ subdivision design should be required when developing adjacent to or within a historic district or areas with significant natural resources.
- Protect natural resources within developments. Promote the use of the conservation subdivision ordinance. Provide an incentive to create greenway connections.
- Develop abandoned rail line as connector between land uses.
- Promote in-fill development opportunities in existing Harris County subdivisions.
- Consider developing a guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our county.
- Consider developing a plan to protect designated farmland.
- Consider developing a citizen education program to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our county.