

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FOR HARRIS COUNTY

COMMUNITY AGENDA

2009–2029

Prepared by  
RIVER VALLEY  
REGIONAL COMMISSION

# HARRIS COUNTY Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029 Community Agenda

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# Harris County Vision Statement

Given its unique location, untapped potential and dedicated leadership, Harris County will become a model of planned residential and business development that ensures sufficient managed economic growth to enhance the quality of life of its residents. Harris County will attract desired responsible new business, and to ensure a fiscally sound government that is responsive to the needs of its residents and businesses while maintaining tax rates at a responsible level. Preserving desired rural characteristics is a priority of Harris County. Attainment of this vision will be supported by the following planning principles:

1. Maintain the desired rural character of Harris County through open space preservation while providing sufficient designated growth areas to accommodate expected demand for business and residential growth.
2. Seek sufficient and desirable growth by attracting responsible businesses that will balance needs for jobs generated by residential development and provide retail and service offerings to meet the needs of residents.
3. Ensure that a balance is maintained between residential, commercial and industrial development and available public services and facilities to include schools, utilities, recreational areas and general governmental services needed to accommodate planned growth.
4. Encourage residential development that meets the housing needs of Harris County residents, and provide a range of home site areas and a variety of housing styles.
5. Ensure that development is done in a manner that serves to preserve environmentally sensitive features such as floodplains, wetland, groundwater recharge areas, streams, viewsheds, and natural topography.
6. Develop a well-planned, efficient, effective and safe transportation system that meets local, regional and interstate transportation needs.
7. Preserve Harris County's historic and cultural resources that provide valuable information about the proud history of Harris County and its residents.

# Character Area Vision Statements

## Conservation/Recreation

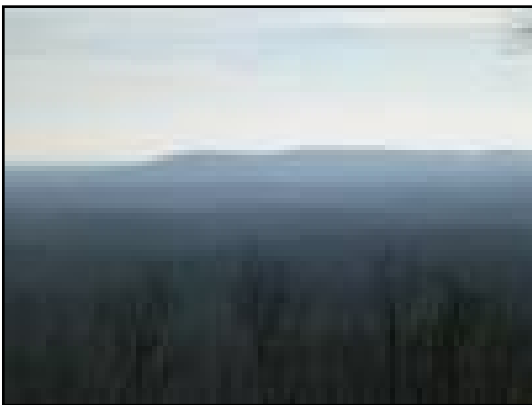
**Vision:** Harris County will protect its natural resources, to include State, Federal and local parks, conservation areas, protected open space (wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors) and other significant preserves. Harris County should give primary consideration to environmentally sensitive and culturally important areas during its planning and development process in order to provide adequate protection and create new opportunities for growth. The benefits of preserving and conserving these properties include increased tourism, growth in small businesses, and a sense of community and tradition. Our cities and county will work together to set standards for the use of these environmentally and culturally significant places to enhance the quality of life for our residents.



Chattahoochee River

1. Limited new development (only including agricultural use), public utilities (water/sewer lines), bike/ pedestrian paths. Promote use of conservation easements.
2. Promote areas as passive use tourism and recreational destinations.
3. Any construction or widening of roadways should only be done when absolutely necessary with careful design in an effort to reduce environmental impact.
4. Environmentally sensitive areas will be preserved by setting them aside as public parks, trails, or greenbelts.
5. Infrastructure availability will be used to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Pine Mountain



**Land Uses or Zoning Categories preferred:** Harris County prefers agriculture/ forestry, parks/ recreation/ conservation, and limited public/ institutional use i.e., utilities, and bike/ pedestrian trail and low impact recreation facilities. Preferred zoning categories include: Agricultural

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:** Open Space Preservation, Environmental Protection.

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Continue to develop, update, and map county resource inventory, where feasible, including environmental resources, historic resources and archeological sites.

2. Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic and cultural resources of Harris County
  - a. Encourage maximum use of the county's natural resources while maintaining sound environmental protection practices.
  - b. Encourage and promote land use and development that respects natural limitation of flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands and limiting soil types.
  - c. Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
  - d. Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads and other facilities to fit, rather than dominate, topography and other site conditions.
3. Conserve, maintain and promote the cultural, historic and natural resources to provide a variety of educational experiences.
  - a. Encourage local schools to use these facilities as an outdoor classroom.
  - b. Support the development of additional cultural resources that will aid in the understanding of local heritage.
  - c. Support regional tourism alliances with other counties and other facilities (such as Callaway Gardens) to promote existing and future natural, historic and cultural resources to increase the number of visitors. Support and expand upon regional event such as Wheels of Fire, Ossahatchee Indian Festival, Rodeo, and numerous Callaway Garden events.
  - d. Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources in order to keep Harris County an attractive place in which to live, work and play.
  - e. Discourage the obstruction of scenic views and sites in the county.
4. Promote and Enhance the Outdoor Recreation Industry.
  - a. Encourage the development of service facilities to meet the needs of this sector of the economy.
  - b. Establish natural habitats for a variety of wildlife.
  - c. Develop and promote additional competitions and festivals targeted to this market.

## ***Agriculture***

**Vision:** This area of the County's land is actively used for cattle farms and timber production or agri-tourism activities. Portions of this area are becoming increasingly threatened as new development continues to encroach further and further onto agriculture land. The vision for this area includes protecting agricultural properties from non-farm related activities by maintaining existing low density development patterns and agriculture and forestry practices that are a part of Harris County's development vision and economy. The goal is to promote the agricultural based economy while allowing limited residential development.



Whitesville Road Farm



Jones Cross Roads Home

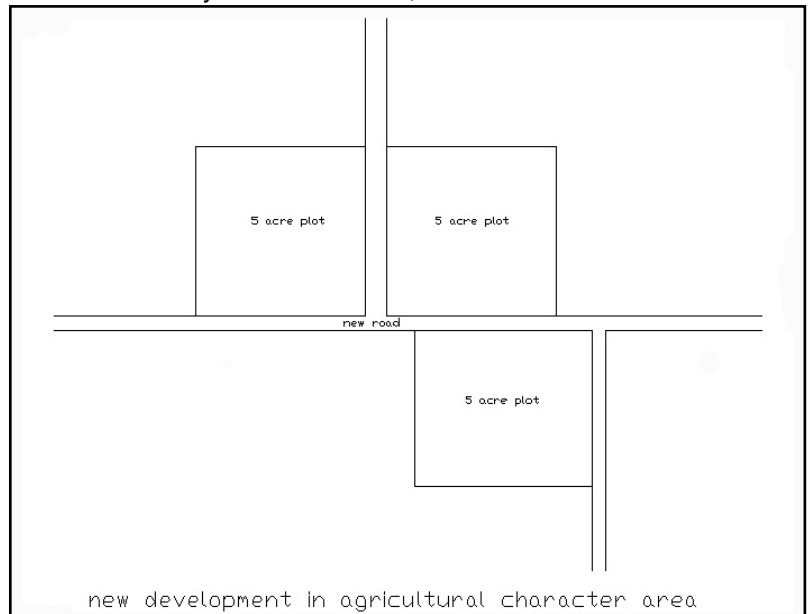
1. Limited new development.
2. Investigate the use of conservation subdivisions where appropriate infrastructure is available.
3. Protect farmland/ forest land and open space.
4. Maintain appropriate size lot. Any residential subdivision development should be done on 5+ acre tracts.
5. Promote use of conservation easements by land owners.
6. Limit the development of residential subdivision.
7. Require compatible architectural designs that maintain the rural character.
8. Any construction or widening of roadways should be done with careful designs to reduce environmental impact.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:** Land Uses preferred include agriculture/ forestry, low density single family detached residential, transportation/ communication/ utility and limited public institutional use. Preferred zoning categories include A-1 (Agricultural).

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:** Transportation Alternatives, Regional Identity, Traditional Character, Preservation of Open Space, Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and Resource Conservation

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Participate with the Harris County Chamber of Commerce and Harris County Extension Service in marketing the county's agricultural products. Assist local farmers in selling their products. This can include agri-tourism, farmer's markets and similar activities.
2. Develop strategies for keeping productive farmland in agricultural uses.
3. Consider hillside development standards for reasonable hillside use that complement natural and visual character of Harris County.
4. New residential development will be single-family detached units on 2-acre plus tracts.



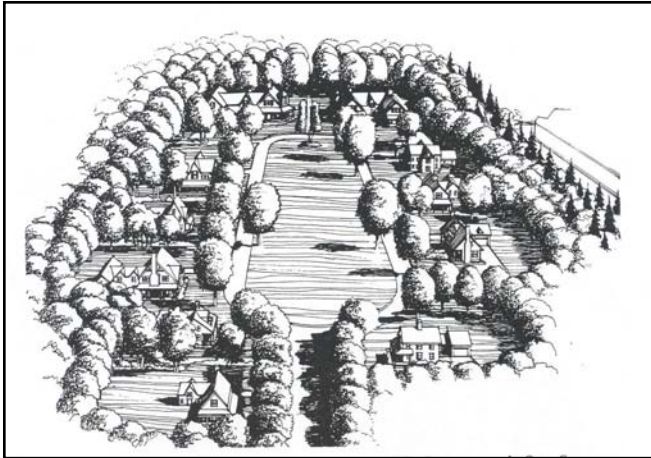
Timber Tract Northwest Harris County

- a. Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.
- b. Require compatible architecture designs that maintain the rural character.
- c. Require minimum lot sizes of 2 or more acres to limit development density and protect the rural character.
- d. Require site plans, building designs and landscaping that are sensitive to the natural features of the site, including topography and views.
- e. Wherever possible, connect to a local and regional bike/ pedestrian network.

- f. Encourage new developments (subdivisions) designed with more character, with attractive clustering of buildings (must have appropriate infrastructure) leaving open space, green space, trails available to pedestrians, and bicyclists as well as other recreational users.

## ***Suburban Area Built Out/Established Residential***

**Vision:** Maintain existing development pattern/density in platted subdivisions but look to improve existing and future subdivision/development. Harris County will promote new housing and other developments in



Medium Density Residential Infill Development  
Source: Dodson Associates

areas of the county that have infrastructure available. Established residential areas in Harris County will be maintained for the continuation of family-centered living. A balanced diversity of age groups and social and economic backgrounds among residents will continue to be encouraged for the good of Harris County and its people.

Development vision patterns include:

1. Encourage infill development on vacant sites in existing subdivisions with infrastructure in place are used for new development in lieu of more development on greenfield sites.
2. Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhoods/subdivisions by disguising its density with buffering and creative design.

**Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:** Preferred land use is single-family detached residential. Single-family attached will be allowed as part of a conservation subdivision or PRD, Preferred zoning categories are: R-1,

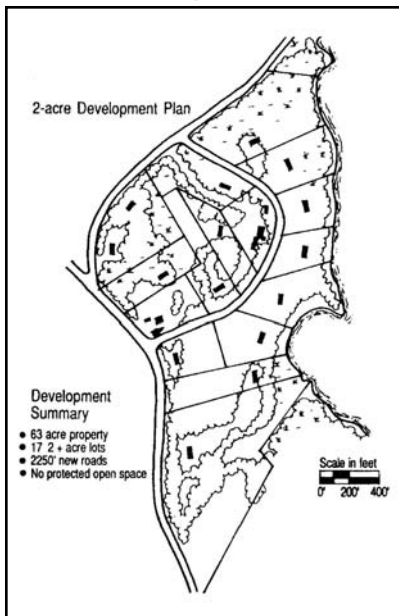
PRD (Planned Residential District)

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:** Infill Development, Transportation Alternatives, Resource Conservation, Open Space Preservation, Environmental Protection and Housing Choices.

### **Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Adopt design standards or guidelines to ensure that the physical appearance of new development or improvements to existing properties is compatible with neighborhood character.
2. Encourage protection of scenic views .
3. This includes creating neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.
4. Promote strong connectivity and continuity between developments.
5. Establish good vehicular and pedestrian/ bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity; connectivity to adjacent properties/ subdivisions, and multiple site access points.
6. Wherever possible, connect to region network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.
7. Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
8. Where feasible retrofit subdivisions to better conform to user sensitive design.

## Developing Suburban Area/Rural Residential



1. **Vision:** Harris County will maintain rural, undeveloped land and lower density, 2 acre plus tracts, residential development with typically large lots, open space and pastoral views in an effort to protect environmentally sensitive areas from development and to maintain family-centered living developments.

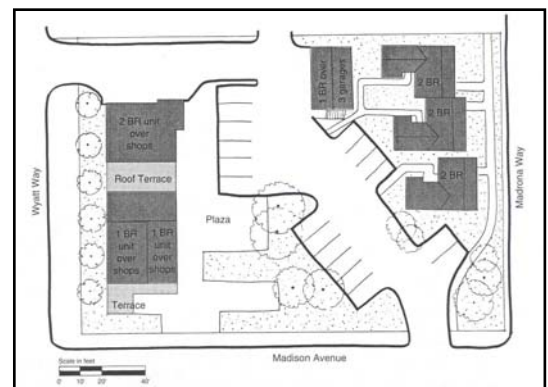
Planned Residential Development  
Source: Kopkowski, 1989

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:** Low density residential. Zoning classifications preferred include A-1 (Agricultural), RR (Rural Residential), R-1 (Low-density Residential District) and PRD (Planned Residential District)

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:** Regional Identity, Traditional Character, Preservation of Open Space, and Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas

### Implementation Measures/Strategies:

1. Consider design standards or guidelines to ensure that the physical appearance of new development or improvements to existing properties is compatible with neighborhood character.
2. Encourage the protection of scenic views.
3. Subdivision design incorporates a significant amount of open space.
4. Require minimum lot sizes of 2 or more acres to limit development density and protect the rural character.
5. Require site plans that are sensitive to the natural features of the site, including topography and views.
6. Wherever feasible, connect to a regional bike/ pedestrian network.

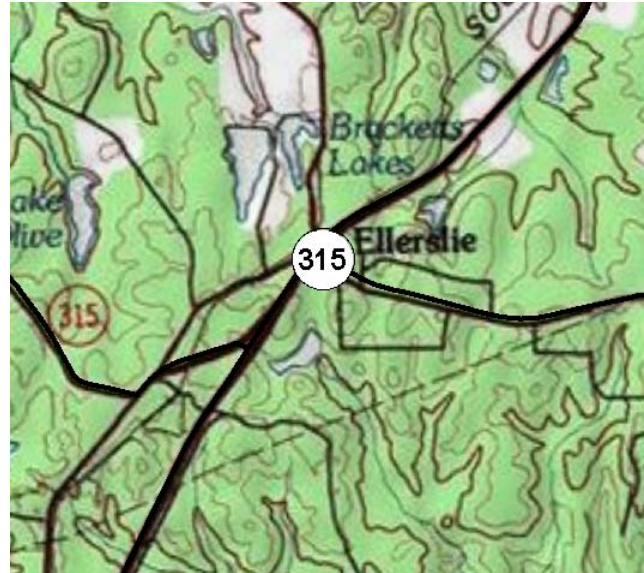
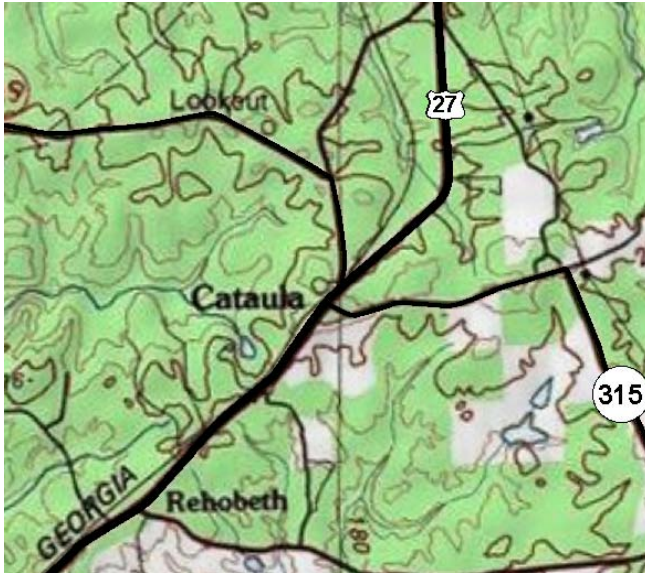


Town Center Concept Housing Above  
Retail and Office Shops  
Source: Robert Hobbie, AIA

## ***Rural Village (Cataula and Ellerslie)***

### **Vision:**

1. Maintain the uniqueness of both Cataula and Ellerslie as Harris County's commercial/activity center by maintaining a mixture of commercial uses to serve community residents highway/passers-by and neighboring residential developments



### **Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

Land uses preferred include agricultural/forestry, low to medium density single-family detached residential uses with commercial uses along US 27, SR 85 and around arterial intersections with SR 315 with limited curb cuts. Zoning preferred: A-1 (agricultural), RR (Rural Residential), R-1 (Low-Density Residential), C-3 (Neighborhood Commercial) and C-4 (Highway Commercial District).

### **Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

Sense of Place, Transportation Alternatives, and Employment Options

### **Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential development by:

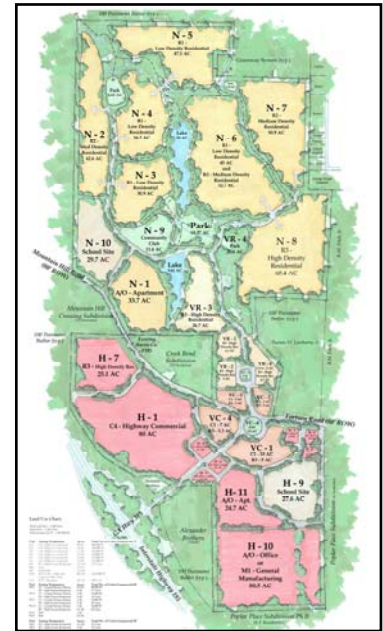
1. Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character. Custom design conditions guidelines/regulations may be applied to "franchise" or "corporate" architecture.
2. Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.
3. Can be designed for greater pedestrian orientation and access, more character with attractive clustering of buildings within the center, leaving open space surrounding the center.
4. Consider the development of corridor management plans for US 27 and SR 85. Overlay districts are used as tools to implement lighting, landscaping, parking, curbcuts, buffers, signs, and existing commercial areas.
5. Ensure that new residential and commercial infill development is compatible with its neighborhood.
6. Allow for development of accessory housing units, secondary housing units, located on the same lot with a single family residence.
7. Utilize the Planning Commission as an effective development review board.
8. Look at shared parking options for existing and new retail and commercial facilities.

## **CUPD Mixed Use**

### **Vision:**

Develop as a self-contained, traditional neighborhood type, community and a service center for surrounding neighborhoods. Development characteristics desired include:

1. Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways.
2. Enlisting significant site features (view corridors, water features, farmland, wetlands, etc.) as amenity that shapes identity and character of the development.
3. Promote moderate to high density, traditional neighborhood development style residential subdivisions. New development should be a master-planned with mixed uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision.
4. There should be strong connectivity and continuity between each master planned development.
5. There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points and to encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
6. Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes. Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



Mixed use development design concept

### **Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

Land uses or zoning categories preferred: mixed use medium to high density single family detached, single family attached, office space, retail space, public facilities, elementary or primary schools and post secondary schools, recreational space. Zoning preferred: CUPD

### **Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

Open Space, Traditional Neighborhood, Transportation Alternatives, Appropriate Businesses, Housing Choices, Educational Opportunities and Resource Conservation.

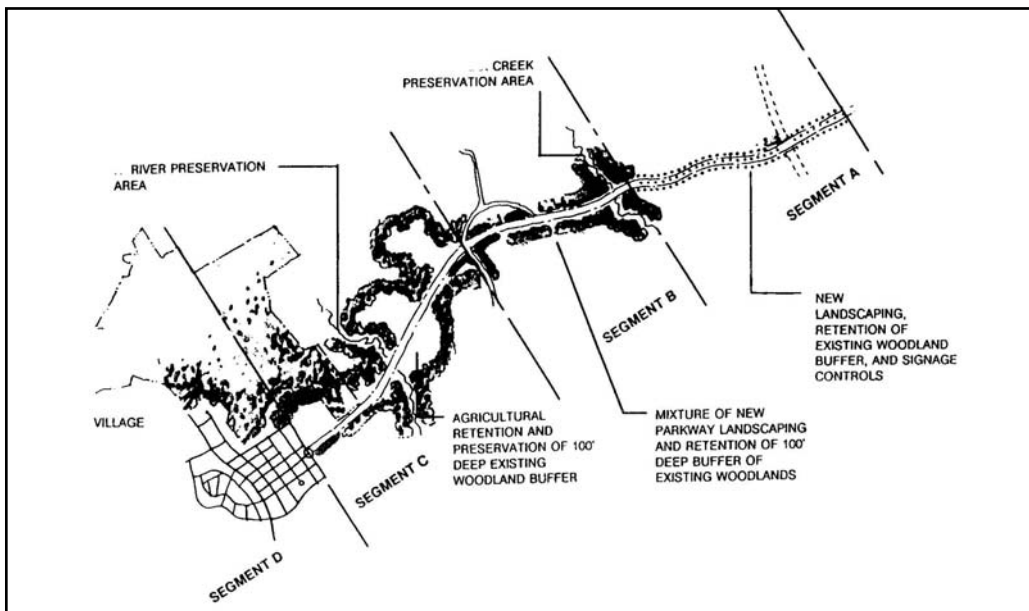
### **Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Practice low impact development measures and planning and design practices and technologies to conserve and protect natural resources systems and reduce infrastructure costs.
2. Incorporate sustainable/green design for developments creating environmentally sound and resource-efficient buildings by using an integrated approach to design promoting resource conservation energy efficiency and water conservation.
3. Use buffers to help existing neighborhood areas and surrounding agricultural tracts in an effort to provide visual and sound barriers between adjacent or incompatible uses.
4. Use the orderly expansion of water and sewer service to effectively manage growth and governmental expenditures through planned phased expansion of infrastructure guided by community vision.
5. Encourage developments to blend with the surrounding neighborhoods by masking the high-density aspects of the development through landscaping or architectural details.
6. Analyze CUPD's for walkability. Check the extent and size of the sidewalks network, its internal and external connectivity and the attractiveness and security of the sidewalks and street crossings.
7. Utilize flexible parking standards and street design in place of rigid parking and street requirements.
8. Should include a relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area.

9. Residential development should reinforce non-residential uses locating higher density housing options adjacent to commercial uses and development core area, including multi-family town homes and condominiums.
10. Development should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
11. Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear.
12. Include direct connections to the greenspace and trail networks.
13. Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.

## US Highway 27 Gateway Corridor

**Vision:** To develop land adjacent to US Highway 27 in a manner that is visually pleasing and safety conscious to motorist heading in and out of Harris County. Harris County will ensure proper management of developed and undeveloped land on both sides of U.S. Highway 27 by controlling land uses, points of ingress and egress, encouraging landscaping, minimizing impervious surfaces, encouraging frontage roads/ access roads, and land use connectivity. The vision includes:



Strategy for growth along gateway corridor includes landscaping for businesses and buffers between new subdivision development and highway.

Source: U & A Architects

1. Development of older strip commercial centers in lieu of new construction further down the strip.
2. Infill development on vacant sites closer in to the center of existing communities. These sites, with existing infrastructure in place, are used for new development, matching character of surrounding neighborhood in lieu of more development on Greenfield sites.
3. Street layouts that match those in older parts of community and connect to the existing street network at many points.
4. Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways.
5. Continue restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
6. Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.
7. Encouraging parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements.
8. Encouraging use of landscaped tree islands and medians to break up large expanses of paved parking.
9. Enlisting significant site features (view corridors, water features, farmland, wetlands, etc.) as amenity that shapes identity and character of the development.
10. Site plans, that are sensitive to natural features of the site, including topography and views.

11. Use infrastructure placement to control development along US Highway 27 and to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.
12. Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories**

**Preferred:**

See adjacent character areas.

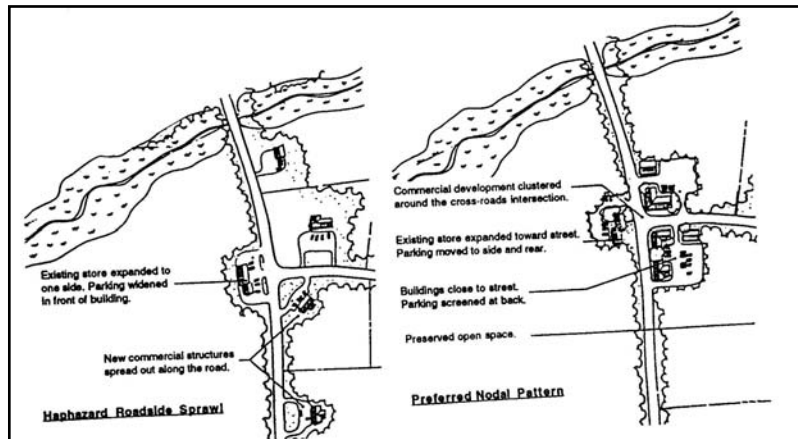
**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

Transportation Alternatives

**Implementation**

**Measures/Strategies:**

1. Focus on appearance with appropriate signage, landscaping and other beautification measures.
2. Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to clustered developments and limiting curb cuts.
3. Retrofit or mask existing strip development or other unsightly features as necessary.
4. Provide pedestrian/bike facilities.
5. Maintain a natural vegetation buffer along corridors at least 50 feet in width along the corridor.
6. Ensure all new developments are setback behind the buffer with access roads, shared driveways or inter-parcel road connections providing alternate access to these developments and reducing curb cuts and traffic on the main highways.
7. Encourage landscaping, raised medians to provide vehicular and pedestrian safety, and aesthetics.
8. Coordinate land uses and bike/ pedestrian facilities
9. Provide adequate shoulders for bicycles or emergency breakdown lanes.
10. Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to developments.
11. Unacceptable uses: new billboards.
12. Consider the development of corridor management plans for US Highway 27 and SR 85. Overlay districts are used as tools to implement lighting, landscaping, parking, curbcuts, buffers and signs.



Preferred nodal development versus strip development.

Source: Dodson Associates

***Industrial Area(s)***

**Vision:**

Given that industry is limited in Harris County, maintain existing industrially zoned and used areas in Harris County in order to keep existing job base and diversified economy. New industrial development encouraged to utilize existing infrastructure localized in the Northwest Harris Business Park located inside the city limits of West Point and in the Hamilton Business Park in the City of Hamilton. The vision for existing industry areas in Harris County include both sustainability and redevelopment opportunities. All industrial business parks must have covenants and restrictions approved by the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners.

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

Industrial Use. Preferred Zoning: M-1

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

Appropriate Business

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Encourage greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

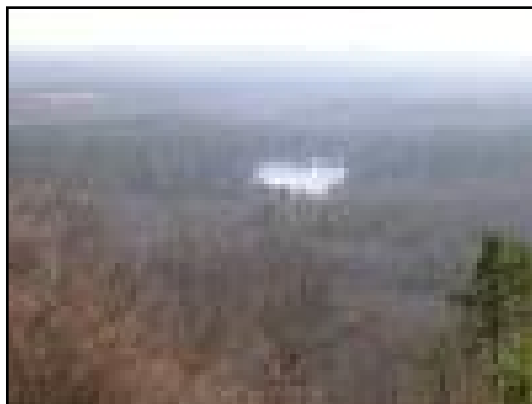
2. Encourage greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance use onsite.

## **Scenic Corridor SR 18 (from SR 219 to Hopewell Church Road), SR 190, Hamilton Pleasant Grove Road and I-185**

### **Vision:**

Protect the scenic qualities including significant natural, historic, or cultural features and scenic or pastoral views of these corridors. The vision also includes:

1. Continuing restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
2. Conservation easements may be encouraged.
3. Subdivision developments will incorporate a significant amount of open space.
4. Site plans that are sensitive to the natural features of the site, including topography and views will be used to protect viewsheds as identified on a case by case basis.
5. Protect agricultural use to maintain the unique character of viewsheds.



Viewshed from FDR State Park

### **Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

See adjacent Character Areas.

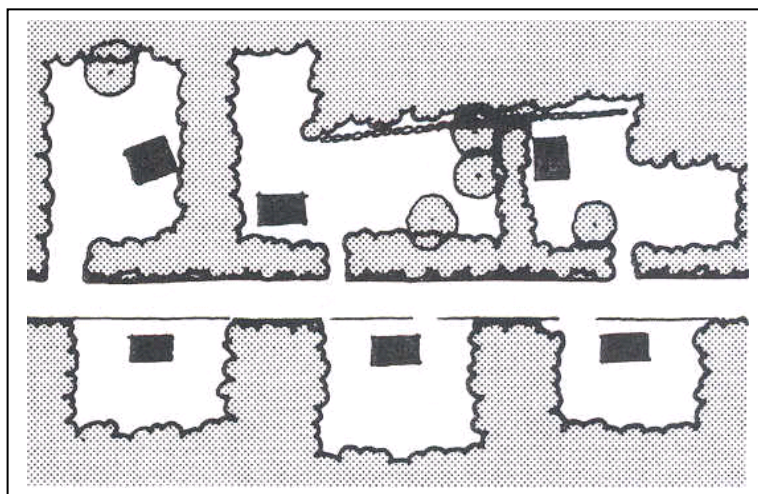
### **Quality Community Objectives for this**

#### **Area:**

Sense of Place, Regional Identity, Open Space Preservation.

### **Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

1. Establish guidelines on development to protect the characteristics deemed to have scenic value.
2. Enact guidelines for new development that enhances the scenic value of the corridor and addresses landscaping and architectural design.
3. Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to clustered developments.
4. Consider providing pedestrian linkages to adjacent and nearby residential or commercial districts.
5. Consider Scenic By way nominations for segments of SR 18, SR 190, and Hamilton Pleasant Grove Road.
6. Encourage protection of scenic views.



Maintain wooded buffer along road when shaping lots.

## **Linear Bike/Pedestrian Trail**

### **Vision:**

Develop abandoned Georgia Southwestern Rail Line as a bike/pedestrian trail and utility corridor. Once developed, link trail to ecological, cultural and recreational amenities and new residential, commercial and industrial development by utilizing existing greenways, roadways, easements, and bike trails in an effort to

provide safe, efficient pedestrian linkages and at the same time give users an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. The vision also includes:

1. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trails or greenbelts.
2. Use infrastructure improvements to control development along the linear bike and pedestrian trail.
3. Buffer the trail by either requiring larger lot sizes or open space/greenspace next to the trail.



Callaway Gardens Bike Trail

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories Preferred:**

None, see adjacent Character Areas.

**Quality Community Objectives for this Area:**

Open Space, Alternative Transportation

**Implementation Measures/Strategies:**

Create these linkages by:

1. Linking greenspaces into a pleasant network of greenways.
2. Set aside land for pedestrian and bicycle connections between schools, churches, recreation areas, city centers, residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.
3. Develop a Bikeway Plan providing connectivity to residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, community facilities, retail centers and ensuring that bicycling is a convenient, safe and practical means of transportation in the county.
4. Consider other trails and greenway networks to positively impact individuals and improve communities by providing recreation and transportation opportunities,
5. Ensure safe, adequate and well designed facilities are provided for bicycles, including pavement markings, signage and intersections crossings.
6. Identify areas of planning coordination with other governments, (Columbus, Hamilton, and Pine Mountain and Meriwether County) to coordinate and promote trail expansion.

## ***Other Special***

**Vision:**

Harris County will continue to have public schools, cemeteries, parks, and other public buildings and recreational facilities. These are public land uses not likely to change in use over the planning period. The vision includes:

1. Landscaped buffers between the roadways and pedestrian walkways may be constructed.
2. Addition of public buildings on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Parks and other recreational facilities will have facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc. will be added.
4. Parking areas will be landscaped to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.
5. Cemeteries will have fences and be landscaped.
6. New community facilities will be accommodated by the reuse of existing vacant or under-utilized structures (e.g. commercial centers, office space, and warehouse).

**Land Uses or Zoning Categories to be Allowed:**

Public/Institutional

Quality Community Objectives addressed:

Transportation Alternatives, Educational Opportunities, Growth Preparedness

**Implementation Measures and Strategies:**

1. Conserve, maintain and promote existing recreation areas.

2. Encourage maximum use of natural resources while maintaining sound environmental protection practices.
3. Encourage and promote land use and development that respects natural limitation of flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands and limiting soil types.
4. Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
5. Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads and other facilities to fit, rather than dominate, topography and other site conditions.
6. Improve and extend the public water systems to better serve the current and future population.
7. Encourage those water system extensions that would support or encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents and employees.
8. Coordinate between Columbus, Hamilton, Pine Mountain, West Point and Harris County for the possible expansion of the public sewer system. Any sewer system extensions would support new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents.
9. Improve and extend the street and highway system to promote safe, efficient and well-maintained access to property in the county and the cities and on through routes for local and regional travelers.
10. Provide for safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services in and around Harris County and the cities and towns of Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Shiloh, Waverly Hall and West Point.
11. Minimize conflicts between local and through traffic using available means.
12. Provide for timely maintenance and improvement of streets.
13. Support and encourage the addition of bicycle lanes whenever streets are repaved and it is economically feasible.
14. Encourage and support the provision of educational opportunities for residents of Harris County.
15. Encourage and support the expansion of Adult Education opportunities in Harris County.
16. Encourage and support the expansion of library services.
17. Encourage and support the activities of the Harris County School System to educate the children of Harris County.
18. Support and encourage the provision of recreational and fine arts opportunities for the residents of Harris County and the cities and towns of Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Shiloh, Waverly Hall and West Point.
19. Encourage collaboration between the Harris County Board of Education and the Harris County Board of Commissioners on the use of school system facilities for county recreation i.e. ball fields, gymnasiums, etc.
20. Encourage and support the development of a Harris County Recreational Program that will provide opportunities for Little League baseball, football, basketball and other sports.



Mulberry Creek Elementary School

# Final Issues and Opportunities

## ***Population***

### **Issues**

- 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***

### **Issues**

- No Business and Retention Plan.
- Lack of public transportation for the elderly, disabled and others without reliable transportation.
- 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***

### **Issues**

- 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 site 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***

### **Issues**

- 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***

### **Issues**

- 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***

### **Issues**

- 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***

### **Issues**

- 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**

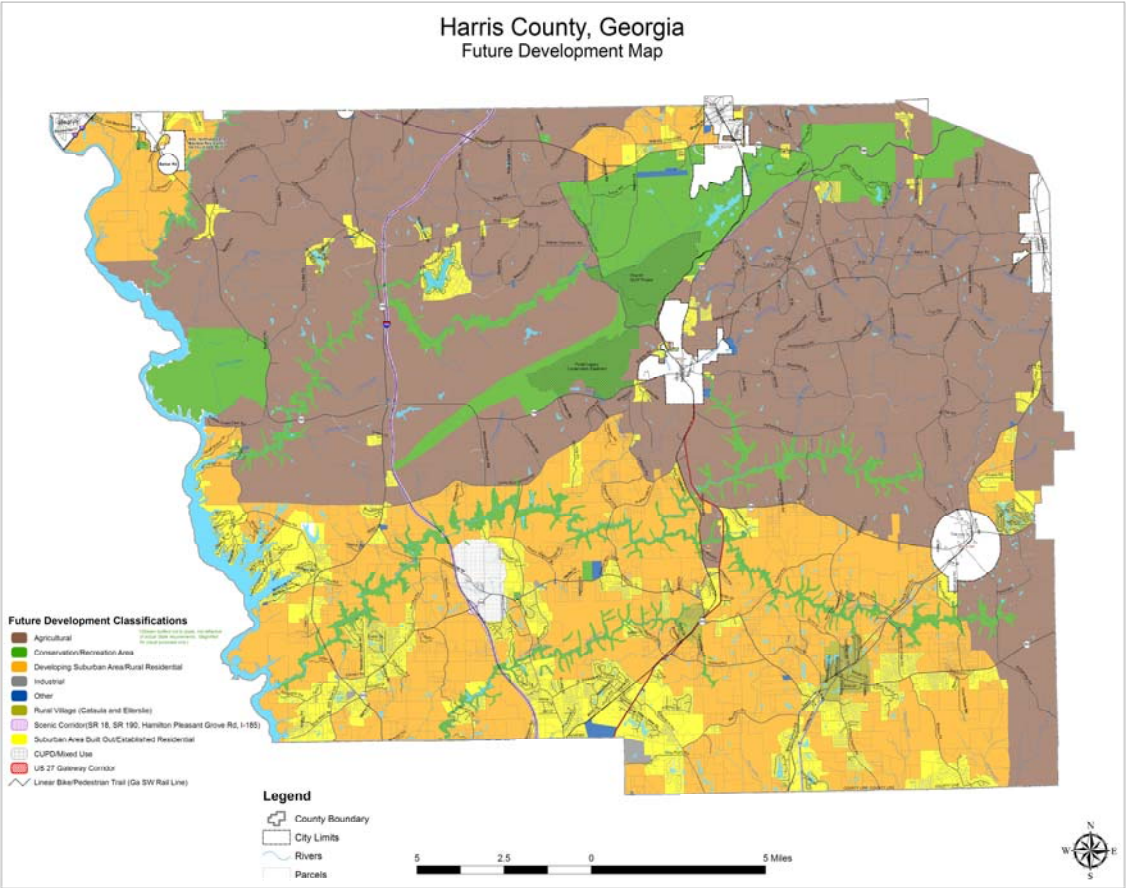
### **Issues**

- 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.

# Future Development Map



## **Harris County: Short Term Work Program Update**

<b>Community Facilities</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Working with state agencies to expand water capacity to meet service demands of aggressive population growth.	2009, 2010	Harris County	\$10,000,000	Harris County, State, Federal Grants
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.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$1,000 Annually	Harris County
Assess availability of public space and determine what needs expansion, renovation or closure.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$1,000 Annually	Harris County
Develop abandoned rail line as connector between Hamilton and Pine Mountain, county residential/commercial/ public and natural and cultural areas.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$500,000 Annually	Harris County, DOT TE Grant, DNR Trails Grant
Consider developing a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	2010, 2011	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County
Increase community and program knowledge, cooperation among local leaders and volunteers by utilizing county website, newspaper, civic organizations, health agencies, and neighborhood meetings.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$2,500	Harris County
Consider developing a sidewalk ordinance that requires all new development to provide user friendly walkways.	2010, 2011	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County
Consider creating a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade bearing trees appropriate to climate.	2011, 2012	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County

<b>Economic Development</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Continue expanding tax base and local opportunities with residential, commercial and industrial growth due to Kia and Fort Benning expansion.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County, Harris County Chamber	\$5,000	Harris County, State grants, Federal grants
Expand Entrepreneurial Friendly designation in an effort to create a business and retention program and entrepreneur support program.	2009, 2010	Harris County, West Point, Hamilton	\$500,000	Harris County, West Point, Hamilton
Increase local job opportunities which will require less access to transportation by infilling existing urban areas and creating job opportunities in those areas by continuing the development of northwest Harris Business Park and Hamilton Business Park.	2009, 2010	Harris County, West Point, Hamilton	\$500,000	Harris County, West Point, Hamilton
Develop a business and retention plan.	2010, 2011	Harris County, Harris County Chamber	\$5,000	Harris County, Harris County Chamber
Work with Columbus State University and other secondary education providers to develop Continuing Education Opportunities within the county. Residents must drive to	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$1,000 annually	Harris County

Columbus, West. Point or LaGrange for secondary education.				
Continue development of Hamilton and Northwest Harris Business Parks.	2009, 2010	Harris County	\$500,000	Harris County
Continue to support primary educational opportunities – excellent K-12 school system.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County, Harris County School Board	\$2,000 annually	Harris County School Board
Use ongoing educational opportunities to attract and enhance a diverse and educated workforce.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County, Harris County School Board	\$10,000	Harris County, Harris County School Board, State grants
Continue to work with Harris County Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism in Harris County	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County, Harris County Chamber	\$5,000	Harris County, Harris County Chamber

Housing				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Consider redevelopment options for small areas (pockets) of deteriorating structures.	2011, 2012	Harris County	\$500,000	Harris County, State Grants (CDBG, CHIP)
Decrease the jobs-housing imbalance by increasing job opportunities in Harris County and by balancing housing cost with housing quality.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County and cities	\$500,000	Harris County, cities and State grants
Utilize existing zoning and subdivision ordinances or develop new ordinances to create housing communities including diverse single-family, attached/detached housing mix in comparisons to housing developments and to retrofit existing housing areas when possible.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County
Continue to implement code enforcement program	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$100,000 a year	Harris County

Land Use				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Inventory potential brownfield sites; connect property owners to the Federal and State incentives for cleaning up brownfields. Educate public on brownfields and greyfields.	2013	Harris County	\$2,500	Harris County, EPD
Protect historic areas and structures from non-compatible land uses. Evaluate impact on said areas and structures during the zoning/subdivision review process.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$1,000 annually	Harris County
Consider developing ordinances such as overlay districts to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas such as but no limited to US 27, SR 80, I-185, etc.	2011	Harris County	\$2,500	Harris County, EPD
Consider developing traditional neighborhood development/conservation subdivision development ordinances. Use when developing adjacent to or within a historic district, cultural resources or areas with significant natural resources. Use conservation subdivisions or traditional neighborhood type developments to protect	2010, 2011	Harris County	\$2,000	Harris County, State grants

open space and create green way connections.				
Promote in-fill development opportunities in existing Harris County subdivisions. Develop a vacant land inventory to aide with infill development for industrial, residential and commercial properties. Expand and appropriately locate commercial land use in Harris County.	2011	Harris County	\$2,500	Harris County, Harris County Chamber of Commerce
Consider developing a guidebook that illustrates the type of new development wanted in Harris County.	2011, 2012	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County
Consider developing a plan to protect designated farmland.	2013	Harris County	\$15,000	Harris County
Consider developing a citizen education program to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our county.	2013	Harris County	\$10,000	Harris County
Pursue more effective water conservation and aqua-culture techniques, resource conservation and protection in the county. Look to develop landscaping measures that require drought resistant plants, or measures to promote water saving appliances or other water conservation techniques.	2011	Harris County	\$2,000	Harris County, DNR
Continue to enforce zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$50,000	Harris County

Natural and Historic Resources				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
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 natural and cultural resources is needed. Continue enforcement of existing state and local regulations. Consider developing a conservation sub. Ordinance to help protect valuable resources and guide development away from important resources.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$10,000	Harris Count, DNR (State grants)
Insure the public has adequate access to community resources. Try to increase the number of access points to Lake Harding. Work with state officials to make Blanton Creek WMA more accessible to the public.	2013	Harris County, Georgia Power	\$25,000	Georgia Power, Harris County
Harris County has identified historic resources but does not have a Historic Preservation ordinance or a Historic Preservation Commission. Consider adopting a Historic Preservation Ordinance and creating a Historic Preservation Commission.	2013	Harris County	\$2,500	Harris County
County should consider starting an organized tree-planting campaign in public	2011, 2012	Harris County	\$2,000	Harris County

areas.				
County should consider starting a tree preservation ordinance.	2012	Harris County	\$2,000	Harris County
Continue to enforce best management practices.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$30,000	Harris County
Encourage resource management planning in new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect/enhance/promote natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, historic areas, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating an ongoing and active education program about community resource conservation and protection for the public, local elected officials, developers, etc.</li> <li>2. Create a county guideline brochure that outlines development steps or procedures and identifies and promotes community natural and cultural resources. Make brochure available to the public by posting it in public places and on websites, newsletters, etc.</li> </ol>	2011	Harris County	\$5,000	Harris County
Identify potential water pollution problems and solutions	2013	Harris County	\$20,000	Harris County, DNR
Look at regulations and/or adopt appropriate site design guidelines that set aside, protect, or minimize environmentally sensitive areas such as stream-banks, steep slopes, wetlands, etc.	2012	Harris County	\$2,500	Harris County
Continue to enforce soil erosion, stormwater best management practices.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012	Harris County	\$10,000	Harris County, DNR
Develop a Greenspace Plan and actively work to preserve greenspace.	2012	Harris County	\$10,000	Harris County, DNR
Develop local land conservation program or work with state and national land programs to preserve environmentally important areas.	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$5,000	Harris County

Transportation				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Consider developing a corridor management plan and adopting overlay districts to create pedestrian and vehicular gateways by controlling development/signage and maintaining traffic flow along major arterials, such as US 27, SR 18, SR 85, etc.	2011	Harris County	\$1,500	Harris County
Look to realign key intersection along SR 315 and limit number of curb cuts/ driveways on all transportation routes.	2012	Harris County	\$5,000	Harris County, DOT
Consider creating an ordinance or modify existing ordinances to require new development to connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	2012	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County
Lack a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations. Consider adding to the existing sidewalks	2013	Harris County, Hamilton, Pine Mountain,	\$11,000	Harris County, Hamilton, Pine Mountain,

system in Cataula and the Cities of Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Shiloh and Waverly Hall.		Shiloh, Waverly Hall		Shiloh, Waverly Hall
County should consider a policy requiring that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.	2012	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County
Create a Walk/Bike First Community attitude by promoting waling and bicycling. Expand existing bike/pedestrian trail routes to create land use connectivity.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013	Harris County	\$1,000	Harris County
Develop a bicycle/pedestrian plan to compliment the redevelopment of the Georgia Southwestern bike/pedestrian/utility corridor and other Harris Bike Routes. Harris Bike Plan should compliment regional bike plan and connect local trails with State designated bike rails.	2011	Harris County	\$5,000	Harris County, GDOT, DCA

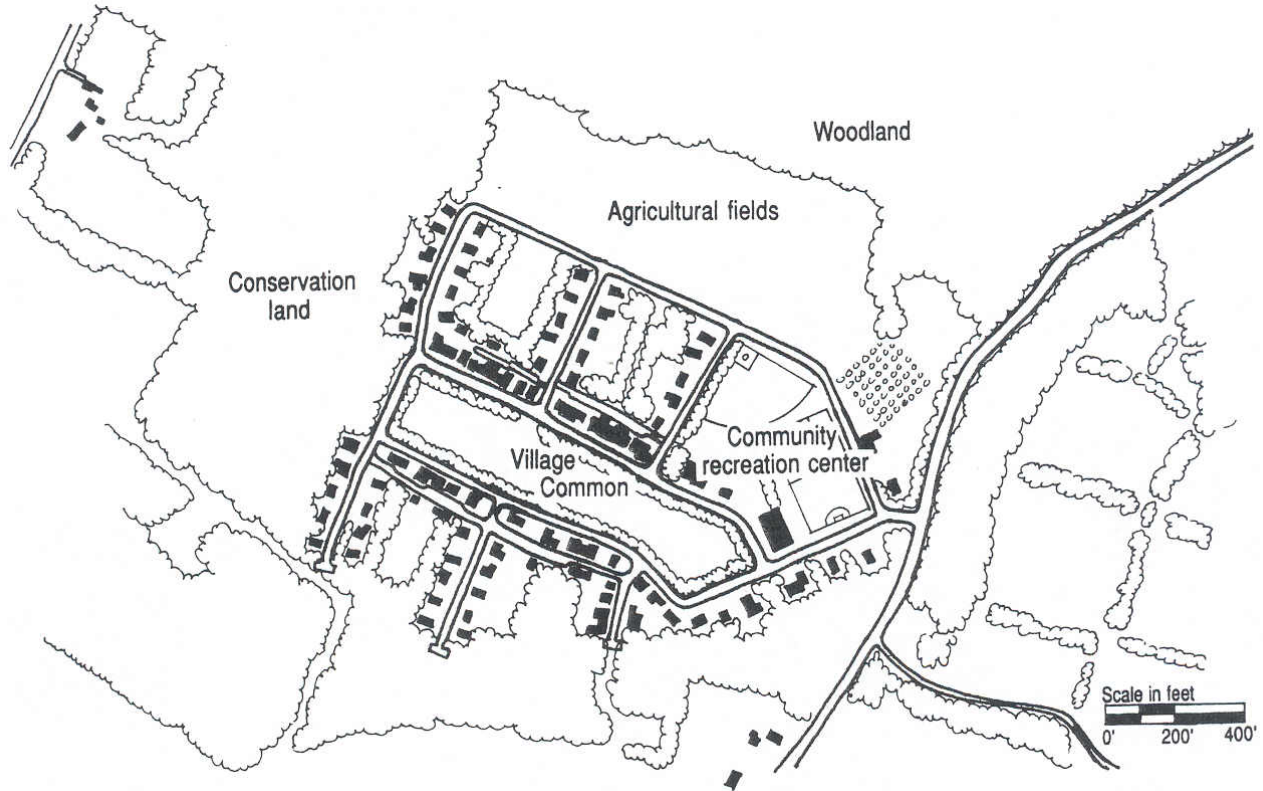
## **Harris County Report of Accomplishments 2002-2009**

<b>Community Facilities</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Finish implementing the Recreation Plan	Underway	Harris BOC addresses recreation as funds become available. Currently looking to build a community center.
Finish Pate Park in the Southern portion of the county	Underway, Estimated completion date 2010	Building baseball/softball fields
Complete the Water Improvement Plan revision and implement the Plan	Underway, No completion date	Implementing plan as budget allows. Plan is modified as needed to provide effective water service.
Finish paving Whitesville Road (including bridge replacement)	Completed	
Finish paving Winfree Road	Completed	
Finish paving James Road	Completed	
Implement a County Fire Department and construct at least two more fire stations/EMS facilities	Underway, Fire Department creation postponed; estimated completion date of Fire/EMS Station 2012	Did not develop a Harris County Fire Department. Still use a volunteer system. Building one more fire/EMS station.
Continue implementing the recycling program	Underway, estimated completion date 2013	Looking at updating equipment and adding an additional location
Develop a plan for a trail system	Postponed, will consider bike/pedestrian plan at later date.	Have not done a formal plan but have built bike/walking trails in the City of Hamilton. Have also purchased an abandoned rail line to convert into a bike/pedestrian trail.
Construct a new Boys and Girls Club and/or community center	Underway, Estimated completion date 2013.	Operate Boys and Girls club out of renovated middle school. Putting plans together to build a Community Center.
Finish implementing the 800 MH radio system to tie into Columbus' System	Completed	
Pave 10-12 miles of roads each year	Underway, No completion date annual activity.	The county paves approximately 5 miles of roads each year.
Construct at least one more gymnasium in the county	Underway, estimated completion date 2013	Once completed the new community center will have a gym
Construct at least one more district park	Not Accomplished.	Will do when and if funds are available
Expand areas served by fiber optic cables	Not Accomplished.	Private sector activity
<b>Economic Development</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to support the Harris County Development Authority and the Public Improvement Authority	Underway, no completion date.	Yearly activity
Continue to participate in the Valley Partnership	Underway, no completion date.	Yearly activity
Establish a business park and/or retail area	Underway, estimated completion date Northwest Harris Business Park 2010. Hamilton Business Park, 2013.	Finalizing construction activities for Northwest Harris and Hamilton Business Park, Development of business park is ongoing
<b>Housing</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue the code enforcement program	Underway, ongoing activity.	Yearly activity/program
Apply for CDBG Grant for targeted areas to help property owners fix	Not Accomplished	Applied for CDBG funds to pave dirt road in low income area and expand

their homes		Health Department
Expand the housing code enforcement program for dilapidated housing to allow condemnation	Completed	
<b>Land Use</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Develop a Regional Wireless Communication Ordinance	Not Accomplished	Private sector responsibility
Update the Future Land Use Map	Underway, Completion date 2009	Due date moved to 2009 from 2007
Update the County's Comprehensive Plan	Underway, Completion date 2009	Due date moved to 2009 from 2007
Finish parcel data on the GIS system	Completed	Parcel map completed,
Review Subdivision Regulations	Underway, Ongoing activity	Yearly activity, living document
Adopt criteria for the Natural Resource Conservation District	Not Accomplished	BOC decided not to adopt
Adopt and enforce buffer requirements along roadways	Completed	Do as part of zoning/subdivision review process.
Review development ordinances to determine the feasibility of writing and adopting a Unified Development Ordinance	Completed	Decided not to do a unified ordinance
<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Work with the region to implement the Regional Strategy dealing with TMDL/Water Quality issues	Completed	
Continue to pursue listings on the National Register of Historic Places	Underway, yearly activity	Done privately, with RDC assistance
Continue actively promoting Heritage Tourism in the area	Underway, ongoing activity	Yearly activity with Chamber of Commerce
<b>Other Considerations</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Implement a records retention system	Completed	
Plan for the County's long-term records storage needs	Completed.	

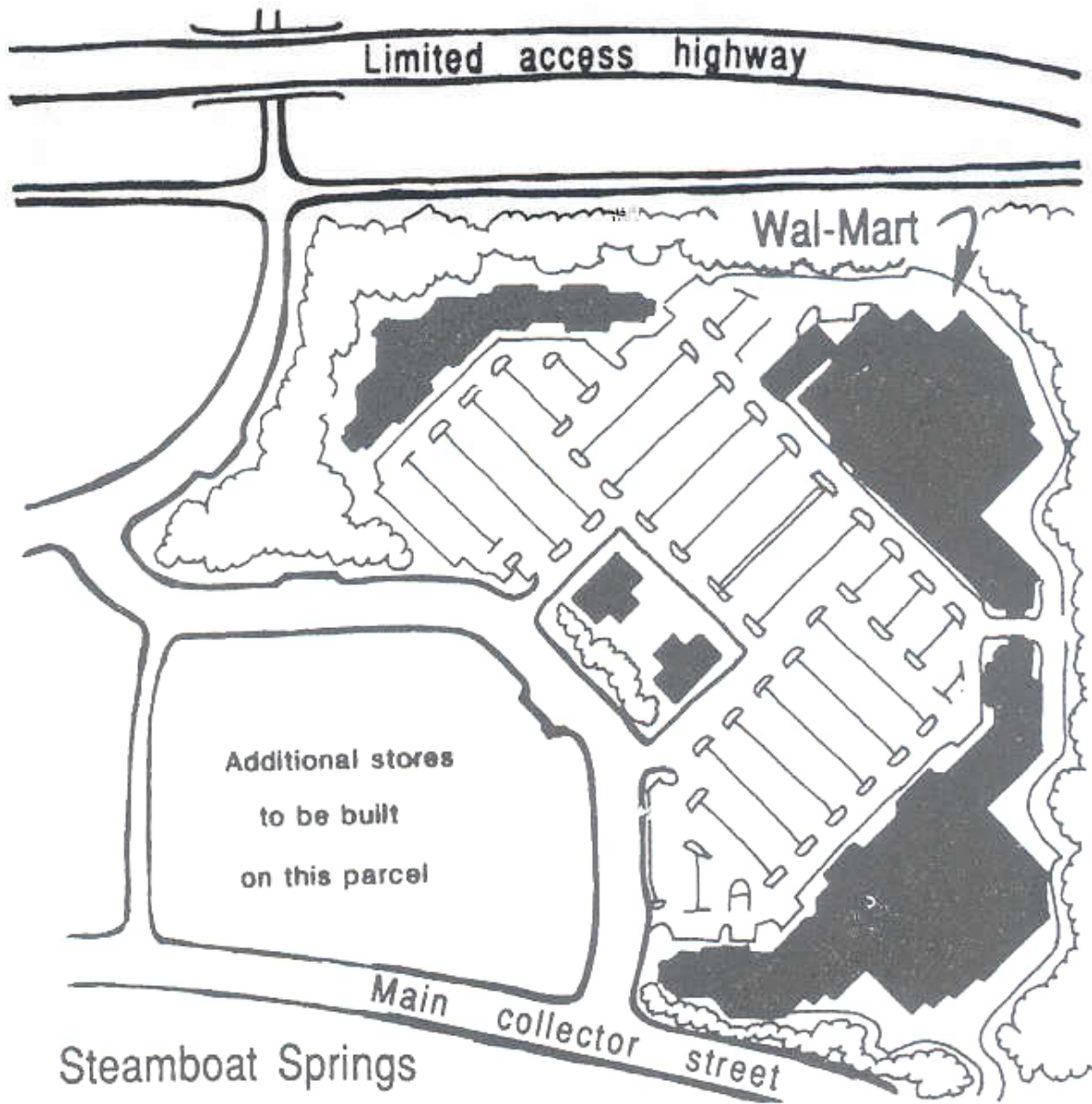
**Appendix 1**  
**Example Design Concepts**

**Traditional Neighborhood Development**

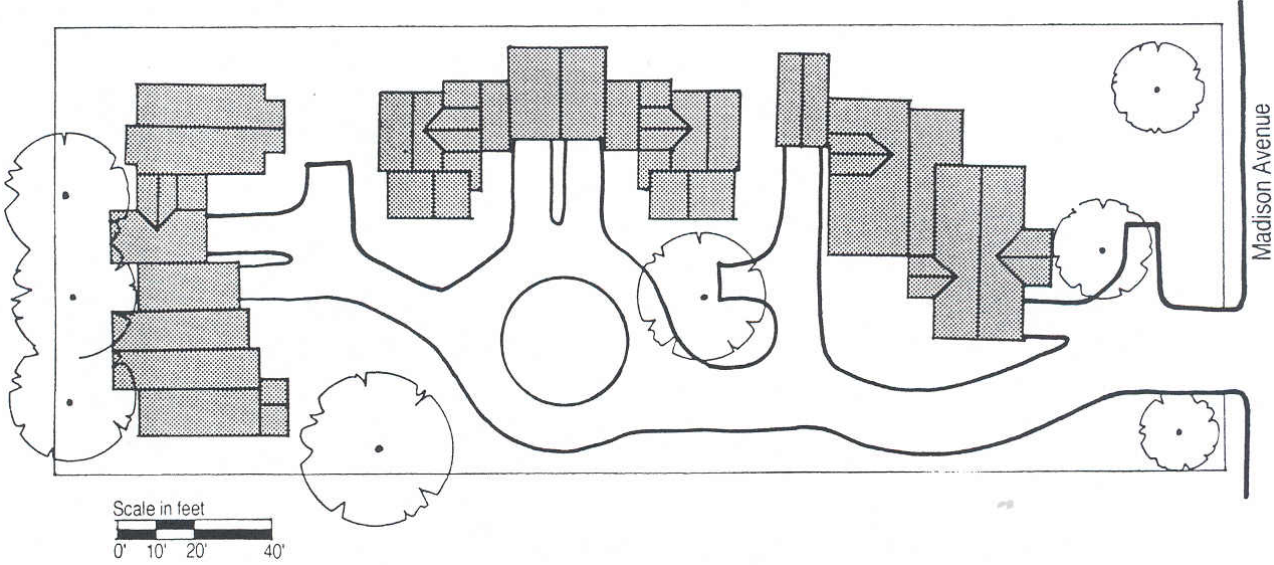


Design Concept incorporates common areas of open space and various residential densities.

**Creative Commercial Layout**



**High Density Residential**



**Single-Family Attached Residential**