

CHAPTER 1 POPULATION

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Past population growth in Flowery Branch has been modest, and the city has approximately 2,000 residents as of 2004. The City expects a population boom, to a total of 9,000 persons or more in the City, by 2010. That influx of population will quickly raise median incomes, raise educational attainment levels, lower the median age, and increase the diversity of occupations of the city's labor force. In short, this population influx will bring dramatic change to Flowery Branch.

Flowery Branch's population increase is attributed primarily to the annexation of a large planned residential development, Sterling on the Lake. In addition, the city has a new stock of townhouses and a 456-unit apartment complex has received development approval. All of the population is "household" population, meaning that there are no group quarters such as nursing homes in the City of Flowery Branch.

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

Flowery Branch's population change occurs within the context of a fast-growing county at the edge of (and part is now within) the Atlanta metropolitan area. Accordingly, it is appropriate to cite Hall County's population and household projections, as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1
Hall County (Countywide) Population Projections, 2005-2025
(Persons Except as Noted)

Projection	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Population (Demand-Based)	180,970	237,332	307,089	376,329	437,609
Households (Demand-Based)	62,714	83,514	108,541	132,550	152,943
Average Household Size (PPU)	2.84	2.80	2.79	2.84	2.82
Population (Policy-Influenced)	176,765	215,061	261,291	298,274	325,051

Note: PPU = Persons Per Unit. Source: Gainesville and Hall County Comprehensive Plan, Population Element, Adopted June 24, 2004. Projections by Ross + Associates. Household size projections by Ross + Associates and Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003. Demand-based means generally that market conditions prevail, and policy-influenced means that county land use policies will reduce market growth.

Flowery Branch's households and total population in the near-term future are projected in Table 1.2, and projections of households and population for five-year increments are provided in Table 1.3.

Table 1.2
Population Estimates and Short-term Projections
City of Flowery Branch, 2003-2010

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Households	753	878	1,003	1,478	1,953	2,428	2,903	3,378
Household Size	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Household Population	1,958	2,283	2,608	3,842	5,078	6,313	7,548	8,783
Group Quarters	0	0	0	0	0	30	60	95
Increment of Natural Increase ¹	--	8	25	36	48	60	72	84
Total Population	1,958	2,291	2,633	3,878	5,126	6,403	7,680	8,962

¹ 9.5 persons per 1,000 annually, considering birth and death rates for Hall County in the 1990s.

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, 2005, based on ten-year birth and death rates for Hall County as reported in *The Georgia County Guide 2002* and anticipated housing starts from City of Flowery Branch, May 2005.

The projections in Table 1.3 are based on a “buildout” of the vacant portions of land in the city not already projected to be developed by the year 2010. Household projections are based on the assumption that vacant residential acreage in Flowery Branch will build out at densities guided by the future land use plan, as well as some redevelopment (up to 150 units in Old Town).

Table 1.3
Population Projections
City of Flowery Branch, 2010-2030

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Households	3,378	4,002	4,446	4,890	5,334
Household Size ²	2.6	Varied by housing unit	Varied by housing unit	Varied by housing unit	Varied by housing unit
Household Population	8,783	10,476	11,655	12,834	14,013
Group Quarters	95	165	360	425	500
Increment of Natural Increase ¹	--	474	530	585	642
Total Population	8,962	11,115	12,545	13,844	15,155

¹ 9.5 persons per 1,000 annually, considering birth and death rates for Hall County in the 1990s.

² Assumptions: 2.2 persons per unit for apartment, 2.4 persons per unit for townhouse, and 2.8 persons for detached, single family.

³ Revised to Include Lafarge Annexion, a projected addition of 180 single-family housing units (and households), an addition of 504 new residents at 2.8 persons per unit for detached housing types.

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. October 2005. Revised August 1, 2006.

Between 2010 and 2030, Flowery Branch is forecast to add approximately 1,775 housing units (that excludes many projects under construction now but which are expected to be built fully by 2010). Of that housing stock added between 2010 and 2030, it is forecasted that approximately 325 units will be multi-family (18%), 150 will be townhouses (8.5%), and 1,300 will be detached, single-family homes (73%). That forecast does not take into account any additional annexations beyond November 2005. Any additional annexations would affect these projections and forecasts dramatically. For purposes of simplicity, the housing unit (household population) additions are assumed to occur evenly from 2010 to 2030. Faster buildout of Flowery Branch's residential acreage is highly likely, however, meaning that the 2030 projections may be reached more quickly than shown in Table 1.3. The projections should be adjusted annually based on annexations and building permit data.

The addition of 1,775 units between 2010 and 2030 will add 4,715 persons (household population) during that same time (assuming full occupancy). Group quarters populations are likely to increase in Flowery Branch due to an increasingly aging population. Some growth is attributed to natural increase (births minus deaths), based on trends of the 1990s in Hall County. Flowery Branch's population will grow steadily from about 9,000 persons in 2010 to nearly 15,000 in 2030. Again, annexation is not assumed and so that number could easily go much higher if additional residential lands are brought into the city during that time.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Underachievement of some of the city's population with regard to educational attainment. Flowery Branch had a significant percentage of its population (almost one-third) in 2000 that had not completed high school. That finding is more or less similar to Hall County and Buford, but significantly higher than the state as a whole. On the upper end of the educational spectrum, Flowery Branch had the lowest percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, and at 6.1 percent that number is substantially lower than the state as a whole (24.3 percent). Nearby Oakwood and Buford are also well below the comparable percentage for the state. This is somewhat surprising given the existence of a college in Oakwood, which usually results in a boosting of the educational attainment of residents in the college town and surroundings. Such is not the case in south Hall County. The educational attainment of Flowery Branch's citizenry is well below that of the state as a whole and therefore deserves further attention. Because of the larger percentage of adults without a high school education, many adults in Flowery Branch and nearby cities may find it difficult to find employment other than the most menial, minimum-wage positions.

On the other hand, feedback we received from the steering committee was that the seniors and many others with lower-than-average educational attainment in Flowery Branch were nearing retirement and that they would thus not make good use of any sponsored program to increase adult education. Additionally, it should be noted that the 2010 Census will show remarkable improvements in educational attainment of Flowery Branch's citizenry. Nonetheless, the city leaders should be open to considering how to use countywide adult education programs and leverage resources of colleges and universities in the county to assist with educational functions that will benefit Flowery Branch's residents.