

CHAPTER 4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The City of Flowery Branch provides facilities and services in the following areas: administration, police, municipal court, water, reuse water, sanitary sewer, community development (planning and zoning), historic preservation, and parks and recreation. The remainder of major public facilities and services, including fire protection, are provided by Hall County.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

A review of the city's FY 2011 operating and capital budgets reveals useful information for planning purposes.

General Revenues

In terms of revenues, the general fund annual budget in 2011 totaled approximately \$2.6 million. Major revenue sources for the city's operating and capital budget include real property taxes (\$731,500), court fines (\$455,000), local option sales taxes (\$347,000), various franchise fees (\$284,500), and excise taxes (\$232,000).

General Expenditures

Police Department expenses for FY 2011 total \$844,541. Administration expenses include those expenditures for the Mayor and City Council, City Clerk's office, the City Manager's office, and municipal elections (\$614,770). The public works department expenditures for FY 2011 total \$391,124, including street lighting and traffic signals. The planning and development department expenses for FY 2011 total \$291,495. The FY 2011 budgeted expenditures for municipal court are \$127,162. Other expenditures include risk management (insurance) (\$81,000), buildings and grounds (\$48,570), parks and community center (depot) (\$30,000) and economic development (\$15,000).

Enterprise and Grant Funds

The water and wastewater operating enterprise fund totaled approximately \$1.6 million in revenues and expenditures for FY 2011. Operating revenues for the enterprise fund were primarily from sewer charges (\$1,038,167) and water charges (\$471,401). Special local option sales taxes (SPLOST-VI) funds (\$262,000) are allocated to water and sewer capital projects in the FY 2011 budget.¹ Operating expenditures for the water and wastewater operating enterprise fund include sewer operations (\$650,712), water operations (\$457,516), debt service (\$358,390), and administration (\$83,675), among others.

The city's revenues are supplemented in the FY 2011 budget with federal grants from an energy efficiency conservation block grant (\$204,630 grant share excluding city match) a Transportation Enhancement Grant from the Department of Transportation (\$250,000), and a \$40,000 grant from the federal government to the police department. Other revenues include monies from the city's Tax Allocation District (TAD) (\$112,000), hotel-motel fund (\$20,000), and a multi-city grant (\$10,000).

¹ SPLOST VI covers the time period from 07/01/2009 (FY2010) thru 6/30/2015 (FY2015).

Capital Improvement Program

The FY 2011 budget includes a five-year capital improvement program, which consists of four funds (revenue sources): the general fund (including in the operating budget), SPLOST VI (which will be devoted to patrol vehicles and equipment during the short term), the Transportation Enhancement grant (for streetscapes), and the water and sewer enterprise fund.

Appended to the capital budget are worksheets describing other necessary capital projects; these are not included in the capital budget. These include 4,000 feet of sewer outfall upgrade in FY 2011 and FY 2012 at a total estimated cost of \$300,000, and 3,400 feet of water line upgrade and fire hydrants along Lights Ferry Road in FY 2011 (\$142,000). Other water system improvement projects in future years include water line upgrades along S. Atlanta Highway, Railroad Avenue, Chattahoochee Street, Debbie Lane, and Jones Road. Acquisition of a new well site in FY 2012 is also anticipated.

FACILITY NEEDS ANALYSIS

Functional Population

Estimates and projections of the functional population in Flowery Branch are provided in Table 4.1. These numbers are used to calculate existing levels of service and future level of service standards for certain facilities such as administrative space, police, and water and sewer.

Table 4.1
Functional Population Projections, 2010-2030
City of Flowery Branch

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	6,286	6,976	9,329	11,347	13,028
Employment	1,421	1,906	3,603	5,058	6,270
Functional Population	7,707	8,882	12,932	16,405	19,298

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. November 2010.

Level of Service Standards and Facility Needs

Level of service standards are hereby adopted for the following facilities: administration, police, water, and sewer (see Table 4.2). Total needs are projected for the short-term (five years, to 2015) and long-term (twenty years, to 2030). The level of service standards for water and sewer facilities may come into play in certain local contexts; however, given the need to plan such facilities on a regional basis by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, expansion plans are unlikely to be based solely on local considerations.

Table 4.2
Level of Service Standards and Facility Needs, 2015 and 2030
City of Flowery Branch

Facility Type	Level of Service Standard	2015 Needs	2030 Needs
Administration	0.7 square feet per functional population	6,217 square feet	13,509 square feet
Police	0.5 square feet per functional population	4,441 square feet	9,649 square feet
Water	300 gallons per day per functional resident	To be determined via master plan	To be determined via master plan
Sanitary Sewer	195 gallons per day per functional resident	To be determined via master plan	To be determined via master plan

Administrative (City Hall) and Police Space

Through the visioning process in 2005, it was recommended that Flowery Branch plan to construct a new administrative building (city hall) consisting of approximately 20,000 square feet to meet its long-term needs. The comprehensive plan also called for Flowery Branch to construct an 8,500 square foot police headquarters building adjacent to City Hall (location to be determined, serving needs through 2015) and a 5,500 square foot Police Annex on the eastside thereafter, in order to meet projected needs.

The city did not proceed with any plans to construct a new city hall during the last five years; instead, it occupied additional space in the downtown. No capital expansion plan for the police department was implemented during the last five years, so the police department is still operating out of its existing space which consists of only 1,608 square feet. However, the city has taken a very important step forward with regard to future administrative (city hall) and police facility provision by purchasing two tracts of land within Old Town which were strategically targeted in the comprehensive plan for that purpose in order to complement the city's aspirations for redevelopment in Old Town (see properties shown in green on the following map). Hence, the city has now acquired the land needed for future facility construction. The city has not embraced the idea of constructing a police annex on the eastside, and it now is considering consolidating all new police space needs in a single facility in conjunction with the provisions of general administrative space (city hall).

By 2015, Flowery Branch will need approximately 10,600 square feet of office space for administration and police, and that figure will jump to approximately 23,000 square feet in the year 2030, with anticipated population and employment growth.

This update of the Community Agenda suggests that Flowery Branch will plan for a new city hall building and police headquarters building on one or more sites in the Old Town area, on tracts it has recently purchased. Given the projections of space needs, it may be most appropriate for the city to plan for all of its total 23,000 square feet of building space needs but construct facilities in two phases: 11,500 square feet of city hall and police headquarters space by 2015 (or as soon as feasible thereafter), and another 11,500 square feet in a second phase by 2030.



Such a plan might best be accomplished by designing buildings to be two stories but building (or finishing) the second floor at a later time when needed. While adding a second floor at a later time period may help to defer major capital costs, it is recommended that the city hall building be constructed with two stories initially (and left unfinished until later), in order to give the new civic building the appropriate presence and visibility (through building height) in Old Town.

Capital funds to construct a new city hall and police headquarters are not currently available. The city has considered but elected not to collect public safety impact fees which might have provided some of the funds necessary for construction of a new police facility. Grant funds for municipal improvements are nonexistent. The city may be able to continue deferring these capital projects if it cannot find funding, by renting additional office space (particularly for the police department which has long since outgrown its existing space). The city should consider several financing options along with the sale of existing holdings within the redevelopment area to ensure these necessary improvements will get planned and constructed concurrent with anticipated demands.

Water

Flowery Branch is one of several water providers in Hall County, with the City of Gainesville being the largest water service provider. Flowery Branch's water service area is small and does not encompass the entire city limits. Existing water lines in Flowery Branch are shown in the Community Assessment and on the city's website.

Flowery Branch is in the process of and continues to propose to make significant improvements to the potable water system. The City added one well in 2009 for additional water supply at a cost of approximately \$267,000. With regard to storage, the City has two elevated tanks and added a new, 750,000 gallon prestressed concrete ground storage water tank and accessories at a cost of \$688,000. The City has a need of approximately \$100,000 annually for maintenance and replacement of water lines (including fire hydrants) on an as-needed basis.

To meet future needs for water, estimates of future consumption are needed. Many factors influence the amount of water used, including the price, leaks in the system, wasteful practices versus conservation measures, the sizes and types of commercial and industrial establishments, and the amount of annexation (or changes to water service area boundaries) and rezoning. If the estimates are too low, the community risks not having enough water to meet its needs. If the estimates are too high, it risks spending substantial sums of money for capacity it will not use. The 2010 addendum to the Community Assessment provides projections of water needs to 2030 based on the level of service standards adopted in this Chapter (see Table 4.2). However, as noted elsewhere, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has also projected water needs on a regional basis and those projections tend to supplant local ones. Projects that have been identified locally as needed in the short term are included in the capital project worksheets appended to the city's capital budget (part of the FY 2011 operating budget).

This update of the Community Agenda recommends that the city prepare a water master plan to guide future capital improvement programming for water facilities. That need is particularly evident because the Flowery Branch water service area does not encompass the entire City Limits and does not include much of the highest growth areas projected in the city limits. Furthermore, water master planning is mandated by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (see discussion in Chapter 5 and the following subsection).

Regional Water Supply and Water Conservation Plan

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District prepared and adopted a revised regional water supply and water conservation plan in 2009. Appendix B of that plan describes future water plant projects in the various counties (including Hall) projected to be needed in order to fill project demands. The regional plan calls for significant expansions of Gainesville's Lakeside Water Treatment Plant, starting as early as 2011 and reaching a total capacity of 46 PG-MGD by 2035. Gainesville's Riverside Water Treatment Plant, currently at a capacity of 25 PG-MGD, is not slated for expansion according to the regional water plan.

Required Components of the Local Water Master Plan

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's regional water supply and water conservation management plan articulates the requirements and expectations for local water master plans. The local water master plans should have a minimum planning horizon of 30 years, updated as necessary to address changing local conditions (or no less than every five years). This section includes a summary of the requirements and expectations for local water master plans.

- Community characteristics and demographics, including population, land use, physical and biological characteristics of the area including water quality, topography, wetlands, water resources and protected species.
- Inventory and evaluation of the existing water system. This includes mapping the water system and water system asset management.
- Future water demand projections.
- Future water source, distribution and treatment alternatives, and recommended courses of action.
- Sourcewater supply watershed protection (including wellhead protection), water reuse management, consumptive use targets, interbasin transfers, interconnection facilities, cross-connection programs, and drought and emergency contingency plans. This includes defining an interconnection reliability target.
- Water treatment technologies, residuals handling, and management issues, including leak detection, backflow prevention, storage tank maintenance, booster and other system pump maintenance, hydrant flushing, and valve maintenance.

Water Reuse System

Water reuse will become increasingly important in the coming years. The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's 2009 regional wastewater management plan describes the importance of water reuse and essentially requires that reuse become a part of the city's master planning for wastewater.

With assistance from the city's consulting water and sewer engineer, the city plans to bring on line its water reuse system. Anticipated projects (identified in 2005) include the following:

- Tie McEver Road to Atlanta Highway along Radford Road.
- Connect the Atlanta Falcons facility to the water reuse system.
- Extend a reuse water line along Spout Springs Road.
- Extend a reuse water line up Thurmond Tanner Pkwy to Atlanta Highway.

- Extend the system north to the Tanner's Creek development.

At \$20 per linear foot of reuse water line, the estimated cost of these improvements is \$1,500,000.

Sanitary Sewer

Flowery Branch provides sanitary sewer services through its Water and Sewer Department (with a staff of seven employees). Flowery Branch's Wastewater Treatment Plant is located on Atlanta Highway. Per the Hall County Service Delivery Strategy, Flowery Branch has its own service district for wastewater and shares sewer service districts with Oakwood and Hall County. Sewer service agreements describe the details.



Source: Hall County Service Delivery Strategy.

Sewer Service Areas

Legend: 4 = Flowery Branch Service District; 5 = Flowery Branch/Hall County Service District; 15 = Oakwood/Flowery Branch Service District (IGA amendment not included)

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division previously studied the need to discharge wasteloads into Lake Lanier and allocated a maximum of 3.8 million gallons per day (mgd) for Hall County and Flowery Branch in the Lake Lanier Basin. The private system serving Sterling on the Lake, referred to later as Spout Springs Land Application System (LAS), is not within the Flowery Branch sewer service area (Hog Mountain Road is a watershed boundary). Connection of that system to Flowery Branch's system is not contemplated in this plan.

Flowery Branch intends to expand the city's sewer plant (wastewater reclamation facility) to 2.0 mgd capacity at an estimated cost of \$12 million. The city's sprayfield on the north side of the city limits has a capacity of 0.6 mgd. Significant parts of the city's treatment capacity are reserved for Hall County and Oakwood per separate intergovernmental agreements, which are currently not well worded relative to allocation of sewer capacities.

As part of the long term plant expansion, Flowery Branch is preparing to construct 2 miles of sanitary sewer line extending from the Cinnamon Cove subdivision on Gaines Ferry Road to the city's sewer treatment plant on Atlanta Highway. This project will also decommission an existing treatment plant within the Cinnamon Cove development and transfer discharge rights to the city's treatment plant. These discharge rights will allow for future plant expansion. The project has an estimated construction cost, including decommission of the Cinnamon Cove treatment plant, of \$1.75 million.

The City added a laboratory building at the plant, which was completed at a cost of \$362,000 (bond) in February 2006. With regard to maintenance, replacement, and upgrade of existing

sewer lines, the city will need to budget approximately \$100,000 annually for miscellaneous project needs. The city has dealt effectively with Infiltration and Inflow (I & I) issues with the sanitary sewer lines.

Regional Sewer Plan

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District’s district-wide wastewater management plan provides a regional plan for the expansion of wastewater facilities and the construction of new plants. Appendix B of that plan describes projected needs for Hall County as a whole and also describes a phasing plan for the expansion of existing facilities including Flowery Branch’s wastewater treatment plant and the Spout Springs Land Application System (LAS). Table 4.3 summarizes those recommendations.

**Table 4.3
 Phasing Plan for Sewer Capacity Improvements, 2010-2035
 Flowery Branch and Spout Springs LAS**

Time Period	Flowery Branch WPCP			Spout Springs LAS		
	Project Type	Capacity (MMF-MGD)	Plant Capacity at End of Period (MMF-MGD)	Project Type	Capacity (MMF-MGD)	Plant Capacity at End of Period (MMF-MGD)
By 2010	Expand	1.14	2.05	No expansion	--	0.75
2011-2015	Expand	1.45	3.5	Expand	3.25	4.0
2016-2025	Expand	3.0	6.5	Expand*	4.0	8.0
2026-2035	Expand	2.5	9.0	Expand**	3.0	11.0

* split discharge to LAS, Mulberry Creek and/or Lake Lanier

** discharge to Lake Lanier

Source: Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. 2009. District-wide Wastewater Management Plan, Appendix B, data for Hall County.

Flowery Branch’s wastewater plant figures prominently in the regional plans; its capacity would incrementally expand in four phases to 9 million gallons per day of capacity by the year 2035. The Spout Springs Land Application System would be expanded under the plan starting as early as 2011 to an ultimate capacity of 11 million gallons per day. Also, the regional wastewater plan contemplates a discharge permit into Lake Lanier by the year 2035.

Required Components of a Local Wastewater Master Plan

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District’s regional wastewater management plan articulates the requirements and expectations for local wastewater management plans. The local wastewater master plans should have a minimum planning horizon of 30 years, updated as necessary to address changing local conditions (or no less than every five years). This section includes a summary of the requirements and expectations for local wastewater master plans.

- Identify the existing sewer service area.
- Analyze the local wastewater collection system, including hydraulic capacity, as well as wastewater treatment capabilities, analyze wastewater treatment processes, identify problems with treatment processes, and identify reuse opportunities.

- Identify areas to be sewerred in the short term (5 years) and long term (20 years), areas not planned for sewer service, and provisions for how to handle development in areas that will transition to sewer service (e.g., possible policy with regard to dry sewer). Septic system planning is required for areas that will remain unserved by sewer.
- The local land use plan must be coordinated with the local wastewater master plan. This may include possible zoning changes (e.g., downzoning) in areas not to be served with sewer.
- Project future wastewater flows based on demographic forecasts and the projected sewer service area boundary and future reuse needs.
- Recommend solutions for conveyance and treatment capacity needs, as well as effluent and biosolids management.
- Policies regarding whether private decentralized facilities will be allowed; a local ordinance regulating such facilities will be required.
- Policies for connecting to public sewer.

Watershed and Stormwater Management

The Watershed Management Plan adopted by the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District sets forth strategies and recommendations for effective watershed management and control of stormwater runoff throughout the planning district. The plan's major focus is to meet and maintain water quality standards and designated uses of streams and other water bodies within and in those areas downstream from the District. With the inclusion of Flowery Branch and Hall County within the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, Flowery Branch faces a number of increased responsibilities during the next several years in responding to mandates to improve the quality of storm water. The City has already engaged in one of the first mandates, adoption of model ordinances for stormwater management, floodplain management, and elimination of illicit discharges to the city's utility systems. A stormwater management work program was included in the Community Agenda when adopted in 2006. That program included planning for a stormwater collection system in Old Town, achieving the various mandates of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, exploring the feasibility of establishing a stormwater utility in conjunction with Hall County, and preparing watershed assessment and protection programs for substantially impacted watersheds.

Given changes to the watershed management plan adopted in 2009 by the water district, there are a number of significant new mandates for local governments. There is much more that Flowery Branch will need to do in upcoming years, as described in the short-term work program for watershed management which is included in this Community Agenda. Specifically there are numerous local government management measures that are required and/or strongly encouraged in the regional plans. Required local management measures are described in Section 5 of the regional watershed management plan, and optional measures are described in Section 6. Those requirements are summarized below:

- Post-development stormwater management ordinance, and stormwater management design criteria and standards (completed).
- Integrated development review process, stormwater system inspections, and stormwater maintenance programs (completed).
- Construction erosion and sediment control (completed; periodic updates required).
- Floodplain management/ flood damage prevention ordinance (completed).
- Future conditions flood plain delineation and management (completed).
- Stream buffer protection ordinance (completed).

- Illicit discharge and illegal connection ordinance (completed), and illicit discharge detection and elimination program (ongoing).
- Litter control ordinance (completed).
- Stormwater infrastructure inventory and mapping (completed).
- Extent and level of service policies (completed).
- Coordination of watershed management and land use planning (ongoing).
- Sanitary sewer and septic system coordination with watershed health challenges (ongoing).
- Greenspace and green infrastructure tools for watershed management (ongoing).
- Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for local operations (ongoing).
- Capital improvement programming for stormwater facilities and watershed improvement projects (ongoing).
- Long-term ambient trend monitoring (ongoing).
- Habitat and biological monitoring (ongoing).
- Local education and public awareness program (ongoing).
- Source water supply watershed protection (ongoing).
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) management (ongoing).
- Endangered species protection (ongoing).

In order for a local government to receive a permit for an increased water withdrawal, a new or increased discharge, or for a MS4 permit, that jurisdiction must be in compliance with the water district plans. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is responsible for auditing local governments to determine compliance with the plans. A checklist has been developed to ensure local governments plan and complete activities in accordance with those mandates. Items from the checklist have been incorporated into the city's short-term work program for watershed management.

Recreation and Parks

Through the visioning process in 2005, it was noted how the Hall County Parks and Recreation Department currently serves all of south Hall County, including Flowery Branch, with active public parks. Due to the expense associated with building and maintaining active recreational facilities, there is consensus in Flowery Branch to have Hall County continue providing active recreation facilities, and therefore, no active park plans are called for in this update of the Community Agenda.



Flowery Branch Depot



City Park on Lake Lanier

Nonetheless, Flowery Branch has the Historic Railroad Depot in Old Town which consists of 3,715 square feet, and it also has the 1,032 square foot City Park Pavilion on Lake Lanier. Furthermore, there are prospects for adding small park spaces in Old Town as part of the overall redevelopment strategy (see Chapter 10 of this Community Agenda). Therefore, Flowery Branch still has some responsibility to plan for parks and recreation even though Hall County remains the major provider of active parks in all of Hall County.

The Community Agenda (2006) previously called for construction of a 12,000 square foot new community/recreation center, sized to meet and exceed an adopted level of service standard for the year 2010. However, Flowery Branch has no dedicated funding source for construction of such a community center, and Hall County recently constructed a new community center to serve the southern portion of the county. Therefore, that prior recommendation for the city to construct its own, additional community center to supplement the Railroad Depot, is not carried forward in this update of the Community Agenda.

Based on suggestions received during the visioning forums in 2005, the Community Agenda included an aggressive program for constructing multi-use recreational trails. Specifically, two greenway projects, totaling 8,894 square feet, were called for in the short-term work program. Thereafter, some two miles (10,612 linear feet) of greenway recreational trails were proposed to be built by 2030. However, the city has not found sources of funding for these projects, and the City Council elected not to pursue impact fees as a possible funding source, particularly since the city already collects impact fees for Hall County parks.