

## **CHAPTER 5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Residents and businesses in Flowery Branch are a part of a larger community – Hall County, the Lake Lanier community, and the Georgia Mountain region. Increasingly, Flowery Branch’s residents, business owners, and community leaders recognize that the city is becoming an extension of the Atlanta metropolitan region, as well. A framework is needed to ensure that the various service and facility providers work together toward desired ends without duplication or conflict.

The Intergovernmental Element of the Community Assessment (2006) identifies government agencies with which the City is required to cooperate in the delivery of services and the coordination of plans and land use programs. Hall County Government is the most important in terms of providing facilities and services in Flowery Branch. Other important entities include the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Flowery Branch has various agreements with Hall County, most notably with regard to sanitary sewer services (see also Community Facilities in Chapter 4 of this Community Agenda).

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The range of potential intergovernmental issues and opportunities is potentially as vast as the topics in this comprehensive plan – housing, economic development, natural resource protection, land use coordination, and the provision of community facilities and services. The various issues and opportunities are described by substantive area in the remaining sections of this chapter.

### **HALL COUNTY SERVICE DELIVERY, FACILITIES, AND COORDINATION**

#### **Service Delivery Strategy**

The Hall County Service Delivery Strategy provides the overall framework for the delivery of public facilities and services to Hall County’s residents, including those of Flowery Branch. The Community Assessment (2005) portion of this comprehensive plan summarizes the facilities and services that are provided to Flowery Branch by Hall County. Attached to the strategy, or incorporated by reference therein, are a number of intergovernmental agreements between Hall County and Flowery Branch for the delivery of facilities and services. The strategy was adopted during the period of May 27 to June 1, 2004, and it has not since been comprehensively updated. Local planning requirements specify that the service delivery strategy must be amended to take into account changes and updates to local comprehensive plans.

#### **Gainesville-Hall County Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Flowery Branch is represented on the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO), which is the intergovernmental transportation planning body for Hall County. The GHMPO conducts the Gainesville-Hall Transportation Study (GHTS), which is the federally mandated transportation planning process for the Gainesville Urbanized Area as identified in the 2000 U.S. Census. On February 25, 2003, Georgia’s Governor designated the Hall County Planning Department as the MPO for the Gainesville-Hall County Transportation Study.

### **Hall County Joint Municipal Association (JMA)**

The municipalities in Hall County have formed a municipal association which meets regularly. Flowery Branch participates in those regular meetings which are held to discuss issues and coordinate activities that cross municipal boundaries in Hall County.

### **Economic Development Council (EDC)**

The Gainesville and Hall County Economic Development Council (EDC) was created in 1994 as a partnership between the business community and the governments of Gainesville and Hall County. Flowery Branch and Oakwood have both joined the EDC. The city joined the council and pays annually to market economic development prospects in Flowery Branch. However, the EDC has not significantly influenced new businesses to locate in the city and has not facilitated the expansion of existing businesses in Flowery Branch since its inception (2005). The Economic Development Council's website is no longer functional – it is (or was) located on the Greater Hall County Chamber of Commerce's home page. This has led Flowery Branch's officials to increasingly question whether continued participation and financial contributions to the council are cost effective.

### **Development Impact Fees**

Flowery Branch collects a number of impact fees on behalf of Hall County, per inter-governmental agreement. The city has elected not to have its own development impact fee program, in part because it already collects substantial impact fees for Hall County facilities.

### **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

Hall County supplies basic GIS services to Flowery Branch and also manages permit information for the city. These services are spelled out in an intergovernmental agreement and will be referenced in the service delivery strategy upon its revision.

## **ANNEXATION AND LAND USE COORDINATION**

The 1997 Service Delivery Strategy Act specified requirements for cities and counties to prepare and adopt processes for the mediation of disputes about annexations and land use decisions. The law's requirements also include provisions to coordinate local land use plans so that they are compatible with one another.

### **Annexation Planning**

Annexation is an area that can become contentious. Sometimes a formal plan for future boundaries, negotiated between the City and other cities along with the county, can help all governments plan for future facilities and services with more certainty. The Community Agenda (2006) did not provide a plan for annexation of additional territory. During the visioning workshops, most respondents to a questionnaire favored only modest annexation in the future. This Community Agenda calls for limited annexation in the future.

### **Special Area and Corridor Planning**

This 2010 update of the community agenda recommends that Flowery Branch prepare and adopt special area plans. In some instances, the geographic area included in those special

area plans may extend into unincorporated areas. In such instances, the city will need to coordinate planning with the Hall County Planning staff. Similarly, the need has arisen during the last five years to participate in corridor planning and joint regulatory efforts, such as for the Atlanta Highway (SR 13) corridor and the Thurmon Tanner Parkway corridor.

### **GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION**

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission prepares and maintains a regional comprehensive plan. The current Georgia Mountains Regional Plan was developed in 2000 and features a work program that is updated annually. The GMRC is presently working on a full update of the regional plan. The regional plan is not currently available on the commission's web site for review, but it is important that the city's plan embrace regional goals, objectives, priorities and work programs. An update of this Community Agenda to include reference to such regional goals and programs was not required; however, during the course of review of this update of this Community Agenda, the regional commission may suggest changes and refinements to more thoroughly embrace regional strategies.

### **METROPOLITAN NORTH GEORGIA WATER PLANNING DISTRICT**

As noted in the initial community agenda and community assessment, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District was formed in 2001 and adopted comprehensive plans for stormwater, wastewater and water supply and water conservation in 2003. In 2007 the Metro Water District began the process of updating the plans, and in May 2009 the Metro Water District adopted new plans which replace the 2003 plans as amended.

An initial step toward implementation of the 2003 regional plans was adoption of five model ordinances mandated by the District. Flowery Branch complied with those mandates by adopting the model ordinances as part of the zoning and subdivision and land development regulations in 2006. As summarized here and as described more fully in the other parts of this Community Agenda, Flowery Branch has an extensive amount of work to do in the upcoming decade to comply with the specific mandates (required local government management measures) of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.

### **Regional Wastewater Management Plan**

The Metro Water District's Wastewater Management Plan is a regional planning document that must be implemented by the local governments and local wastewater providers. To be compliant with mandates of the water district, Flowery Branch needs to prepare and periodically update a local wastewater master plan (also called wastewater management plan). Local wastewater master plans need to be integrated with the Metro Water District's Wastewater Management Plan as well as other state and regional plans. For more information about regional wastewater plan recommendations as they pertain to Flowery Branch, see "Regional Sewer Plan" in Chapter 4 of this Community Agenda. See also the implementation sections of this Community Agenda which articulate in detail the specific mandates of the water district (required local government management measures) as they relate to wastewater management in Flowery Branch. It is essential that Flowery Branch coordinate wastewater master planning not only with the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District but also with Hall County Environmental Health officials.

### **Regional Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan**

The Metro Water District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan is a regional planning document that must be implemented by the local governments and local water providers. To be compliant with mandates of the water district, Flowery Branch needs to prepare and periodically update a local water supply and water conservation master plan. Local water master plans need to be integrated with the Metro Water District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan as well as other state and regional plans, including the Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan. For more information, see Chapter 4 of this Community Agenda. Coordination on source water protection issues is required in the Metro Water District's Watershed Management Plan (described further below).

### **Regional Watershed Management Plan**

Watersheds do not adhere to political boundaries of counties and cities. It is not uncommon for watersheds to cross over several cities and counties. Therefore, protection of watersheds and (by extension) stormwater management programs must also be treated as intergovernmental issues. Cities are generally too small to take on many of the important watershed protection and stormwater management functions that are likely to be needed during the planning horizon, and there are important economies of scale in terms of performing watershed assessments and providing for regionwide stormwater facilities. In addition, as noted elsewhere, there are mandates that Flowery Branch comply with certain local planning requirements and local management measures for watershed management (see chapter 4 and the short-term work program for watershed management in this Community Agenda).