

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Modern communities are more intertwined than at any time in history, with neighboring jurisdictions sharing environmental features, coordinated transportation systems and other socio-economic ties. In order to provide the efficient and effective delivery of governance, such relationships require coordinated planning between counties, cities and across all public sector organizations.

This chapter provides local governments an opportunity to inventory existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes with other local governments and governmental entities that can have profound impacts on the success of implementing the local government's comprehensive plan. The purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of the community and articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases, involve multiple governmental entities.

*\* Note: A number of the topics discussed in this chapter are also discussed in Community Facilities and Services chapter or the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter. For those topics, the focus in this chapter is the effectiveness of coordination between the entities involved and not the overall effectiveness of the provision of services.*

### **7.1 Coordination with Other Entities**

The intergovernmental coordination element requires an inventory and assessment of the relationships between the local government and the various entities assisting in the provision of public sector services and facilities. This can include other units of local government providing services but not having regulatory authority over the use of land, such as constitutional officers. The inventory of each item must address the nature of the entity's relationship to the local government comprehensive plan, the structure of existing coordination mechanisms or agreements, and the parties responsible for coordination.

#### **7.1.1 Adjacent local governments**

Hart County is bounded by several counties in two states and has three cities, in whole or in part, within the county.

The County seat is the City of Hartwell, which is governed by a mayor and six-person city council, all of whom serve on a part-time basis. The City government, under the supervision of the mayor and council, sets the millage rate each year, which provides funds for the operation of some of the city departments. The City also operates off of utility revenue. The City employs a city manager who supervises the city clerk and all city departments. The City of Bowersville, also located entirely within Hart County, is governed by a mayor and four-person city council. All city council members serve on a part-time basis. The mayor supervises the city clerk and all city departments. The City of Royston reaches into Hart County from Franklin County. Royston is governed by a mayor and six-person city council. All city council members serve on a part-

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time basis. The City employs a city manager who supervises the city clerk and all city departments.

Communication and cooperation with these communities is considered of good quality, with most cooperative agreements spelled out within the Service Delivery Strategy (discussed elsewhere in this chapter).

Local governments adjacent to Hart County include two counties each from Georgia and South Carolina. To the west and south are the two Georgia counties, Franklin County and Elbert County. To the east and north are two Counties in South Carolina, Anderson and Oconee. Hart County does participate in several regional programs/authorities discussed elsewhere in this chapter. The only other formal cooperative venture between Hart County and either of the neighboring counties involves a joint animal shelter and program: The Northeast Georgia Animal Shelter in Lavonia is a multi-jurisdictional effort by Franklin County, Hart County, and the Cities of Franklin Springs, Hartwell, Lavonia and Royston. All other levels of communication with these adjacent communities is considered satisfactory, though improvements could be needed as development pressures increase.

**7.1.2 School Boards**

The Hart County Board of Education serves the residents of Hart County and all cities. The school system currently operates five public schools and is the fiscal agent for the Hart County Head Start Program and the Pre-Kindergarten Program. The school system coordinates with Hart County in the use of its facilities for recreation and other public use and for other programs. Current levels of coordination with the Board of Education are considered satisfactory.

**7.1.3 Independent Special Districts/ Other Units of Government**

The Hart County Sheriff Department is responsible for the police protection, service and safety of Hart County citizens. The department operates a patrol, investigations, jail and public and school education division as well as participating in a drug task force. The sheriff department may assist the County in the enforcement of its local regulations. The county office responds in the municipalities when needed, typically under emergency circumstances and the municipalities likewise reciprocate. The City of Hartwell operates its own law enforcement services through their police departments.

The Hart County Marshall serves criminal and civil papers for the Magistrate Court. The County Marshall assists other county officers and Sheriff officers when requested upon.

The Clerk of Courts is responsible for all the civil and criminal filings made in the Hart County Superior Court. It also serves as the official recorder of real estate documents for the County maintaining records of deeds, plats, etc. The Clerk also provides the jury pool for Grand Jury and civil and criminal trials.

The Magistrate Judge is an elected official in Hart County. The Magistrate Court office processes various criminal and civil matters and small claims up to \$15,000. The criminal

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section issues warrants, hold bonds, committal, dispossessory and first appearance hearings for certain offenses. The civil section issues notices of foreclosure, garnishments and Fi-FA's. The Magistrate Judge also performs marriages.

The Judge of the Probate Court is an elected official. The office is the custodian of vital records that allows the issuance of certified copies of birth and death certificates. The office maintains marriage records and copies of the legal organ. The Probate Court is responsible for the probate and administration of estates along with guardianships of minors and incapacitated adults. The court also handles misdemeanor traffic violations for the county. The Probate Judge also performs marriages.

The Juvenile Court handles all cases involving delinquent, unruly, and deprived children, as well as cases involving custody, child abuse, abortion notification, and termination of parental rights, and provides probation supervision of children on probation. Juvenile court also handles all traffic cases involving children under the age of 17, regardless of the jurisdiction of the incident.

The Northern Judicial Circuit Court serves five counties that include Franklin, Elbert, Hart, Madison, and Oglethorpe Counties. There is a joint agreement among the counties to fund the court services along with state funding.

#### **7.1.4 Independent Authorities**

The Hart County Industrial Building Authority, created as a local Development Authority in accordance with Georgia state law, works to attract new industry and expand existing industry in the county and cities. Its seven members meet quarterly, or in called meetings as necessary, to report on projects, plan strategy, consider inducement resolutions for new industries, and to acquire and develop industrial buildings, industrial sites and industrial parks.

The Joint Development Authority of Franklin, Hart and Stephens County is a joint three county development authority, consisting of three members from each county, appointed by their County Commission, meets quarterly (no set meeting date) at alternating locations to plan and report on development activities in each county.

The Hart-Franklin Airport Authority is jointly funded and managed by Hart and Franklin Counties and is located near the City of Canon.

All levels of coordination with these authorities is considered satisfactory.

#### **7.1.5 Chambers of Commerce**

The Hart County Chamber of Commerce operates to promote and support business, civic, cultural and educational growth in the Hart County area. Staff includes an Executive Director and volunteers. The Chamber is governed by a volunteer President and a Board of Directors representing businesses in the community.

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**7.1.6 Utilities**

Electric power is distributed in Hart County by Hart Electric Membership Corporation with headquarters in Hartwell and Georgia Power. Natural gas is provided by the City of Hartwell. Current and projected levels of both utility services are considered satisfactory.

**7.1.7 Regional, State and Federal Entities**

Several Federal agencies and Georgia State Departments provide regular assistance and service to Hart County. Currently all levels of service are considered satisfactory, however the County is seeking to utilize the community development resources of these programs even more in the future.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides a great deal of assistance to the county and city through its numerous programs. These programs include assistance in the areas of planning, housing, quality growth, downtown development and community development.

The Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center provides land planning, transportation planning, historic preservation planning, water resource and water quality planning, economic development assistance, and grant assistance to the county and city. GMRDC has a regional plan and coordinates the review of local plans and Developments of Regional Impact. The Georgia Mountains Regional Economic Development Corporation provides economic development and loan assistance to the city and county.

The Georgia Department of Transportation operates a maintenance and engineering post for localized road maintenance and improvements. The department also does the local transportation planning for Hart County out of the District 1 Office located in Gainesville, Georgia.

The Georgia Forestry Commission operates a forestry county unit office outside Hartwell. The office provides a county ranger who provides leadership, service and education in protection, management, and wise use of local forest resources.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources owns several recreation facilities within Hart County, including Hart State Park, Tugalo State Park and other important historic and archeological resources. The Environmental Protection Division of DNR regulates permits for drinking water, waste water, stormwater management.

Agricultural extension services are provided county-wide by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. This program is funded jointly by Hart County and the State of Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Human Resources provides health services and mental health services through the Hart County Health Department and the Hart County Department of Mental Health. These two departments are funded by local, State and Federal funds and grants.

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The Georgia Department of Family and Children Services provides social and protective service assistance to needy families and children within the County. These services are funded by county, State and Federal funds and grants.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a federal division of the U.S Department of Defense. The USCOE owns and manages the Lake Hartwell Reservoir and Lake Hartwell Dam. The Lake Hartwell Reservoir lies in Hart County on the eastern edge of the county and is shared with Franklin County, Stephens County and the State of South Carolina. The reservoir serves a number of purposes other than recreation, including flood control and power generation. The generating capacity at Hartwell Dam is 422,000 kilowatts of electricity. Hart County has lease agreement with the COE for the development and management of recreation facilities on the reservoir.

Hart County is one of 35 counties in North Georgia eligible for assistance and programs activities from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). This is a federal-state partnership that works with the people of Appalachia to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life. The ARC program is administered at the state level by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Each year ARC provides funding for several hundred projects throughout the 13 Appalachian states in support of economic and human development. These efforts seek to augment ARC's highway development program and bring more of Appalachia's people into America's economic mainstream. The projects directly address ARC's five goal areas: education and workforce training, physical infrastructure, civic capacity and leadership, business development, and health care. In helping Appalachian states meet community needs in these five goal areas, ARC has supported a variety of innovative projects and initiatives. Each year throughout the Region ARC programs create thousands of new jobs, increase school readiness, improve local water and sewer systems, expand access to health care, assist local communities with strategic planning, and provide technical, managerial, and marketing assistance to emerging new businesses. The goals, policies and objectives found in each element of the Hart County plan are considered in compliance with ARC policies.

The U.S.D.A Natural Resource and Conservation Service provides technical assistance on natural resources issues and assist individuals, groups, and communities within the county to implement soil and water conservation practices to protect the privately owned land in Hart County and its cities. This program is jointly funded by county and federal funds.

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## **7.2 Coordination with Intergovernmental Programs**

In addition to evaluating the coordination with other entities, the local government must also inventory other applicable related state programs and activities that are interrelated with the provisions of the local government's comprehensive plan. The purpose of such an inventory is to identify existing agreements, policies, initiatives, etc. that may/will have an effect on the options a local government may want to exercise as part of its comprehensive plan.

### **7.2.1 Service Delivery Strategy**

The 1997 Georgia General Assembly enacted the Local Government Services Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). The intent of the Act is to provide a flexible framework for local governments and authorities to agree on a plan for delivering services, to minimize any duplication and competition in providing local services, and to provide a method to resolve disputes among service providers regarding service delivery, funding equity and land use. In summary, in each County the Service Delivery Strategy Act provides local governments and authorities with an opportunity to reach an agreement to deliver services in an effective and cost efficient manner.

Local governments must also maintain and adhere to their service delivery strategy and submit it to DCA for verification in order to remain eligible for state administered financial grants or state permits. No state administered financial assistance or state permits will be issued to any local government or authority that is not included in a DCA-verified service delivery strategy. In addition, no state administered financial assistance or state permits will be issued for any local project which is inconsistent with the agreed upon strategy.

#### *Summary of Local Agreement*

The current Service Delivery Agreement for Hart County was updated in 2004 and is considered up to date. The current SDA includes agreements for the following services within, or with partnership with, Hart County:

- Airport
- Animal Shelter
- Board of Equalization
- Cemetery
- Chamber of Commerce
- City Court
- Clean and Beautiful
- Clerk of Court
- Coroner
- Downtown Development Authority
- E-911
- Elections
- Emergency Management
- Emergency Medical Service

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- Extension Service
- Fire Protection
- Gas Service
- Industrial Development Authority
- Jail
- Jury
- Law Enforcement
- Library
- Magistrate Court
- Planning/Zoning
- Probate Court
- Public Defender (Indigent Defense)
- Public Health/Mental Health
- Public Housing
- Public Works
- Recreation
- Road Maintenance/Construction
- Senior Center
- Sewer Service
- Solid Waste Management
- Superior Court
- Tax Assessment/Collection
- Water Service.

Most of the agreements address only Hart County and the Cities of Hartwell, Bowersville and Royston, though some reference other governments involved in the cooperation of the service or facility (such as Franklin County with regards to the animal shelter). As required select services from this agreement are presented and discussed in other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

*Consistency between Comprehensive Plan and SDA*

The SDS will need to be amended from time to time to reflect any change in services and funding as growth takes place in Hart County and in its cities. As the SDS was recently updated all policies and projections for this planning process were based on existing conditions within the SDS. Should any objectives generated from this Comprehensive Plan process require the service conditions and/or boundaries of the SDS be amended, the County will begin coordination of discussions to consider and, where possible, implement those changes.

*Summary of land use dispute resolution process*

The SDA also includes an agreement between Hart County and its cities to implement a process for resolving land use disputes over annexations. Under the agreement between the Cities and the County prior notification of annexation activities will be given to the County by the City providing full information on the proposed land use or zoning classification and area to be annexed. The County will respond to the City within 15 working days of its agreement or

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objection to the proposal. In the event of disagreement between the City and County, the dispute will go through the agreed upon mediation process.

To ensure compatible and non-conflicting land use Hart County and its cities provide land and water planning through ordinances for the following: Subdivision Regulations, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, Wetlands Protection, Floodplain Regulation, and through comprehensive planning. Expansion of water and sewer services and land use modifications must comply with these resolutions, ordinances, and the comprehensive plan.

*Consistency of the land use plan with water and/or sewer extensions/improvements*

The current land use patterns for Hart County coincide with existing infrastructure and utility distribution. There are marginal calls for expansion of utilities beyond what is already proposed (See *Community Facilities and Services*). No expansive land development will be encouraged in areas not already appropriately served by utilities or designated for future expansions of service.

*Compatibility of adjoining land use plans*

Hart County's future development plans will be done in coordination with adjoining local governments. Franklin County is undergoing a similar Comprehensive Plan update process, and land use plans for both counties (and included cities) will be coordinated through the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center. Copies of the draft material will also be shared with other adjoining communities for comment and, as needed, mediation.

Preliminary projections suggest Hart County will retain its rural character on the periphery, suggesting minimal opportunity for land use conflicts with neighboring counties based on existing conditions. The only variation to this will be along the Franklin County boundary where the Cities of Lavonia, Royston, Canon and Bowersville are attracting some new development. To this end Hart County will regularly share development information with Franklin County to ensure all communities are aware of current trends and issues. Hart County will only support development in this area that is sustained by conditions outlined in the Service Delivery Strategy, and is not actively promoting new development above and beyond what the cities are able to attract.

**7.2.2 Other Programs**

In addition to the involvement with State and Regional programs and organizations mentioned above, local communities are often eligible or required to be involved with other programs for such purposes as transportation planning, natural resource planning, or economic development. Hart County is not currently participating in any special program or organization apart from the State and Federal programs previously discussed.



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**7.3 Articulation of the Community Vision, Goals and Implementation Measures**

The Vision for Hart County will be developed in full during the Community Agenda phase of the planning process. It will be based on citizen input through public workshops and in accordance with the issues and information identified in the development of the Community Assessment. As part of the planning process the Vision, Goals and resulting Work-Program will be checked for internal consistency.

Further, upon completion of this planning process, Hart County and the GMRDC will strive to promote the Comprehensive Plan as a whole, making it available for continued review and soliciting comments. Hart County will revisit the plan within 6 months upon it's adoption so as to ensure the document is an accurate reflection of the Vision and Goals for the community.

**7.4 Assessment**

*Issues arising from growth and development?*

Land use patterns and trends will likely be vastly different within 5-10 years. As such, the County and neighboring communities need to establish a process for formally reviewing and amending the land use element of this Plan prior to the regularly scheduled updates.

*Adequacy of existing coordination mechanisms? Needs that would benefit from further coordination?*

Current levels and methods of communication and cooperation are considered satisfactory except for the Animal Shelter and with regards to the adjoining counties in South Carolina. The animal shelter issue is currently being addressed as part of a study with the GMRDC and should be resolved by next year. Improved levels of communication with Oconee and Anderson County, SC, would serve to inform the County and it's partner organizations of possible changes in development trends and economic development opportunities. It would also aid in maintaining the health of the reservoir.

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## **7.5 Identified Issues and Opportunities**

### ***Issues:***

- *Cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers* – Hart County and the City of Hartwell should encourage the Corps to consider extended summer pool levels for Lake Hartwell to maximize the lake's use for recreation and tourism. The County should also work with the Corps to assist in efforts to protect water levels in times of drought.
- *Growth management* – The County should continue to work with neighboring communities to monitor and evaluate development trends so as to ensure Hart County is able to address new issues and maintain sustainable land use patterns. The County could improve its review of regional land use and development information.

### ***Opportunities:***

- *Existing intergovernmental cooperative actions* – Measures such as the Service Delivery Agreement and the Special Purpose Local Option Tax (SPLOST) provide an existing framework for expanding cooperation and communication between Hart County and adjoining governments. Hart County should work to make sure every multi-jurisdictional program is being utilized to support community development efforts.
- *Joint Development Authority* – The cooperation of Franklin, Hart and Stephens County has greatly assisted with the economic development of the I-85 corridor near Lavonia. This type of partnership has enabled all three counties to reap benefits from the Interstate access and maximize utility service. Hart County should continue to work with the other governments in expanding this effort and exploring additional opportunities for the Joint Development Authority to grow business within the region.