

TRANSPORTATION

STRENGTHS

Connectivity to the Interstate is critical for workforce access from across the region

WEAKNESSES

- Connectivity to the Interstates
- US 411 and East/West Connections to I-75 must be improved
- Other East/West Connections must be developed or improved
- Better identification and signage of existing truck routes
- Connections to and from interstates, Appalachian Regional Port, suppliers and employment centers

OPPORTUNITIES

Legislative Issues:

- Additional funding for impact of greater truck weights on roads
- Additional funds for maintenance and repair for roads and bridges
- Additional funding for expansion of local and regional airports
- Design and construction of Local Access Roads for industry
- Establish additional truck routes

Alternative transportation options:

- High speed rail (cost/benefit)
- Expanded coordination of transit and/or regional transit routes
- Additional bike and pedestrian options and connections

THREATS

Additional planning for Local Transit (rural 5311) as areas grow and become urbanized

NATURAL RESOURCES

STRENGTHS

- Blueway Connectivity
- Conservation subdivisions and ordinances
- Natural Resources in the Region:
 - State and federal parks, forests need investments for existing facilities
 - Better advertising for natural assets
 - Vast natural resources underutilized

WEAKNESSES

- Need a better asset list for both the Regionally Important Resources plan and Regional Plan.
- Need greenway connectivity between resources
- Need new kayaking and canoeing trails
- Need more access points on known routes such as the Etowah River
- Citizen engagement for historic resource preservation should be increased

OPPORTUNITIES

- Additional trail connectivity to towns with rooms and food, especially for visitors from outside the region.
- Increased education on the importance of resource conservation.
- Better funding and higher prioritization for natural resource preservation:
 - LWCF Funding exists, also GEFA
 - Increase representation of resources in Regionally Important Resources plan
 - Identify private funding sources

THREATS

REGIONAL COOPERATION

STRENGTHS

- North Georgia Regional Water Partnership
- Coosa-North Georgia Water Planning Council

WEAKNESSES

Lack of coordination between MPO's in region (Chattanooga-North Georgia, Greater Dalton, Bartow, Rome-Floyd, Atlanta Regional Commission)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Regional and multi-county coordinated planning for the Appalachian Regional Port and related infrastructure and development
- Greater regional legislative collaborative lobbying for regional highway planning/ improvement

THREATS

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHS

- Models of partnership between industry and education:
- College and Career Academies
- Southwire
- Great Promise Partnership
- HON Company (training and apprenticeships)
- NWGA CCA (Whitfield) uses European apprenticeship model

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of connection as a region between education and workforce development providers and industry
- Need greater support from leadership- community and industry involvement in school leadership and boards to guide development of needed curriculum and skills.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Partner with business and industry, Chamber of Commerce and other community leadership organizations, to show the impact of the College and Career Academy model
- Development of skills for Northwest Georgia jobs (need training and skill development for the jobs and industries in our region)

THREATS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHS

- Available water resources and land resources
- Several Class A Rail tracks provided by CSX, Norfolk Southern.
- The Appalachian Regional Port
- Downtown development and redevelopment

WEAKNESSES

- Region- wide skilled workforce to supply regional employers
- Transit options for workforce and employee transportation
- Lack of soft skills in the workforce- Dependability, Being on time, Strong communication skills.
- Additional water/ sewer/ broadband fiber infrastructure
- Downtowns need a flexible and workable alcohol ordinance.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand College/ Career Academies and integrated Career Pathways
- improving access to I-75 or other interstates is key, as is connectivity through Highway 411, US 27, major routes to move truck traffic
- Partner schools with businesses

THREATS

LAND USE and DEVELOPMENT/ CONSERVATION

STRENGTHS

- Keep industry located, sited near interstate.
- Separate industry from residential areas to avoid conflicts.

WEAKNESSES

- Keep industry located, sited near interstate.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Industry is now more interested in use of rail in addition to trucking.

THREATS

INFRASTRUCTURE

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

- Additional deployment of broadband in rural or unserved areas where population is not dense enough for the market to directly supply broadband.
- Greater funding and public and employer support for recycling programs
- Greater funding and public and employer support for Keep Georgia Beautiful affiliates, litter pickup and public education

OPPORTUNITIES

State, federal funding for additional deployment of broadband

THREATS

Additional and existing infrastructure has high costs to local governments if not recouped from taxes/ fees or subsidized in grants

HOUSING

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

- Senior housing and greater housing diversity for all wages, ages and stages of life
- Greater funding for handicap & senior home improvements to allow for independent living

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop and implement a sewer strategy for sprawl control.
- Encourage in-town residential for greater access to Live, Work, Play.
- Incentivize the redevelopment of blighted or vacant industrial areas for residential use near downtowns.
- For blighted historic neighborhoods:
 - Tax incentives for restoration via National Register
 - Stricter code enforcement to address blight and prevent additional deterioration of blight-prone areas.

THREATS

- Short-Term rentals provide tourist housing but also takes up the available housing supply creating greater demand for affordable workforce housing for those working in service, retail and related jobs in tourist areas.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

STRENGTHS

- Silver Comet Trail
- Rivers to Ridges Gordon Trails system
- Northwest Georgia Healthy Communities Partnership
- Healthy thriving hospitals

WEAKNESSES

- Need more parks and connectivity of trails to parks, downtowns, residential areas
- Need more trauma centers (Paulding is adding a Level 4 Trauma Center)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide more opportunities for physical activity & walking/ biking opportunities/ connectivity to destinations including
 - Outside recreation
 - Financing
- Continue sidewalk and trail connectivity (subdivisions, rural areas) especially if required in development ordinances.
- Market the highly skilled, innovative technology and procedures available in this region
- Highlight the healthcare network as an incentive to attract and retain employers.

THREATS

- Rural health care is still a problem (limited availability of care, access, poverty, insurance).