

TRANSPORTATION

STRENGTHS

Connectivity to the Interstate is critical for workforce access from across the region (1 Dot)

WEAKNESSES

- US 411 and East/West Connections to I-75 must be improved (5 Dots)
- Connectivity to the Interstates (1 Dot)
- Connections to and from interstates, Appalachian Regional Port, suppliers and employment centers (3 Dots)
- Other East/West Connections must be developed or improved (1 Dot)
- Better identification and signage of existing truck routes (1 Dot)
- Industrial grade roads in rural areas

OPPORTUNITIES

Legislative Issues: (5 Dots)

- Additional funding for impact of greater truck weights on roads
- Additional funds for maintenance and repair for roads and bridges
- Establish additional truck routes to Inland Port (2 Dots)

Alternative transportation options:

- High speed rail (cost/benefit) (1 Dot)
- Expanded coordination of transit and/or regional transit routes (3 Dots)
- Additional bike and pedestrian options and connections (4 Dots)
- Additional funding for expansion of local and regional airports
- Design and construction of Local Access Roads for industry

THREATS

Additional planning for Local Transit (rural 5311) as areas grow and become urbanized (1 Dot)

Union Grove Rd- Interstate interchange improved but connecting routes including Union Grove Rd, Belmont Rd and other feeder roads are not maintained in good condition to support industry in this developing area. Condition of local roads deteriorating
Must maintain connectivity in this area for industrial access to Union Grove Rd Interchange

NATURAL RESOURCES

STRENGTHS

- Blueway Connectivity (2 Dots)
- Conservation subdivisions and ordinances
- Natural Resources in the Region (1 Dot):
 - State and federal parks, forests need investments for existing facilities
 - Better advertising for natural assets
 - Vast natural resources underutilized (1 Dot)

WEAKNESSES

- Need a better asset list for both the Regionally Important Resources plan and Regional Plan.
- Need greenway connectivity between resources (2 Dot)
- Need new kayaking and canoeing trails (3 Dots)
- Need more access points on known routes such as the Etowah River (2 Dots)
- Citizen engagement for historic resource preservation should be increased (1 Dot)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Additional trail connectivity to towns with rooms and food, especially for visitors from outside the region (3 Dots)
- Increased education on the importance of resource conservation.
- Better funding and higher prioritization for natural resource preservation (2 Dots):
 - 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
- Multi-County Efforts for Economic Development
- Ability to quickly band together against inappropriate proposed developments of a regional nature (example: Large landfill)

WEAKNESSES

Lack of coordination between MPO's in region (Chattanooga-North Georgia, Greater Dalton, Bartow, Rome-Floyd, Atlanta Regional Commission) (1 Dot)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Regional and multi-county coordinated planning for the Appalachian Regional Port and related infrastructure and development (2 Dots)
- Greater regional legislative collaborative lobbying for regional highway planning/ improvement (3 Dots)
- Always have ability to listen and communicate more to help break down barriers
- State, legislative priorities and regional coordination

THREATS

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHS

- Models of partnership between industry and education:
- College and Career Academies (4 Dots)
- Southwire (1 Dot)
- Great Promise Partnership
- HON Company (training and apprenticeships)
- NWGA CCA (Whitfield) uses European apprenticeship model

Expand FutureFest to include regional school systems (1 Dot)

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of connection as a region between education and workforce development providers and industry (5 Dots)
- Need greater support from leadership- community and industry involvement in school leadership and boards to guide development of needed curriculum and skills (1Dot)

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 (5 Dots)
- Development of skills for Northwest Georgia jobs (need training and skill development for the jobs and industries in our region) (2 Dots)
- Development of skills for jobs we hope to recruit ie tech jobs

THREATS

Loss of business and industry to other regions due to lack of workforce

Finding the balance between College and Career Academies and traditional High Schools

- Putting students in the best environment for them

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHS

- Available water resources and land resources (1 Dot)
- Several Class A Rail tracks provided by CSX, Norfolk Southern.
- The Appalachian Regional Port (1 Dot)
- Downtown development and redevelopment
- Mountains and foothills as tourism and quality of life draw
- Significant beautiful rivers as corridors for economic development/ outdoor recreation opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- Region- wide skilled workforce to supply regional employers (4 Dots)
- Transit options for workforce and employee transportation (2 Dots)
- Lack of soft skills in the workforce- Dependability, Being on time, Strong communication skills. (1 Dot)
- Additional water/ sewer/ broadband fiber infrastructure
- Downtowns need a flexible and workable alcohol ordinance. (1 Dot)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand College/ Career Academies and integrated Career Pathways (1 Dot)
- improving access to I-75 or other interstates is key, as is connectivity through Highway 411, US 27, major routes to move truck traffic (1 Dot)
- Partner schools with businesses (4 Dots)
- Encourage flexibility in city and county codes for emerging/ growing/resurging businesses

THREATS

E-commerce

Wages

LAND USE and DEVELOPMENT/ CONSERVATION

STRENGTHS

- Keep industry located, sited near interstate.
- Separate industry from residential areas to avoid conflicts (1 Dot)

WEAKNESSES

- Keep industry located, sited near interstate.
- Lack of large enough parcels in close proximity to highways and rail (2 Dots)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Industry is now more interested in use of rail in addition to trucking. (1 Dot)
- Appalachian Regional Port- Use Multi-County Area (7 Dots)
- Consider smaller lot SF lots depending on location for ability to have larger range of SF housing stock and lots

THREATS

Development Pressure

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 (3 Dots)
- 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 (2 Dots)
- Rural areas may have greater needs (1 Dot)

OPPORTUNITIES

State, federal funding for additional deployment of broadband (4 Dots)
+ Alternative Energy Sources (2 Dots)
+ New Energy Efficient Devices/Upgrades

THREATS

Additional and existing infrastructure has high costs to local governments if not recouped from taxes/ fees or subsidized in grants (2 Dots)

HOUSING

STRENGTHS

- Availability
- Available land for continued development
- Many NW Georgia counties have both rural areas for those who desire traditional large-lot SF w/some AG-light on land within a few miles of cities having apartments, condos, duplexes, and small lot SF residential

WEAKNESSES

- Senior housing and greater housing diversity for all wages, ages and stages of life (8 Dots)
- Greater funding for handicap & senior home improvements to allow for independent living
- Too much new construction and price points too high for blue collar or entry level employees

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop and implement a sewer strategy for sprawl control.
- Encourage in-town residential for greater access to Live, Work, Play (1 Dot)
- Incentivize the redevelopment of blighted or vacant industrial areas for residential use near downtowns. (6 Dots)
- For blighted historic neighborhoods (2 Dots)
 - Tax incentives for restoration via National Register
 - Stricter code enforcement to address blight and prevent additional deterioration of blight-prone areas.
 - Redevelopment incentive- smaller lots for infill in exchange for masonry exterior standards
- Telecommuting no longer requires living in urban 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.
- Lending institutions refusing mortgages unless zoning is strictly residential → need for more flexibility

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

STRENGTHS

- Silver Comet Trail
- Rivers to Ridges Gordon Trails system (1 Dot)
- Northwest Georgia Healthy Communities Partnership
- Healthy thriving hospitals (2 Dots)

WEAKNESSES

- Need more parks and connectivity of trails to parks, downtowns, residential areas (1 Dot)
- Need more trauma centers (Paulding is adding a Level 4 Trauma Center)
- Lack of mental health treatment (7 Dots)
- The lack of grief counseling (1 Dots)
- Lack of access to healthy food options (2 Dots)
- Mental Health Services (1 Dot)
- Some mental health available but they cannot find static office space

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide more opportunities for physical activity & walking/ biking opportunities/ connectivity to destinations including (2 Dots)
 - Outside recreation
 - Financing
- Continue sidewalk and trail connectivity (subdivisions, rural areas) especially if required in development ordinances (3 Dots)
- 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) (1 Dot)
- Abuse of ER and EMS Service
- Drug- Opioids (2 Dots)

