

7.1. Inventory

What is intergovernmental coordination?

Intergovernmental coordination involves how the local governments of Murray County, Chatsworth, and Eton work with each other, with adjacent local governments, and with other quasi-public entities such as the Murray County School Board and the Chatsworth Water Works Commission. Adequate coordination is needed to plan for orderly growth in the community because plans and decisions made by a local government will have an impact upon other public agencies and independent organizations and vice versa.

7.1.1. Coordination with Governmental and Public Entities

Murray County and the Cities of Chatsworth and Eton

Comprehensive Planning. In 1995, Murray County and the Cities of Chatsworth and Eton prepared and adopted a joint comprehensive plan. The County and Cities have continued this tradition of cooperative planning by completing this comprehensive plan.

Annexation. Murray County and the City of Chatsworth adopted a land use dispute resolution agreement in 1998. This agreement contains the process for resolving disputes over annexation. Following is a summary of the dispute resolution process:

1. The City notifies the County government and affected property owners about the proposed annexation.
2. The County forwards a statement of (a) no objection or (b) bona fide objection.
3. If there is no objection, the City proceeds with the annexation.
4. If there is an objection, the City may respond in one of four ways: (a) agreeing to implement the County's stipulations, thereby resolving the County's objections, (b) agreeing with the County and stopping action on the proposed annexation, (c) initiating a mediation process, or (d) seeking a declaratory judgment in court.

Murray County and the City of Eton will adopt a similar land use dispute resolution agreement as part of the comprehensive planning process.

Service Delivery. Murray County, the City of Chatsworth, and the City of Eton adopted a Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) in 1999. The Service Delivery Strategy documents the coordination and delivery of services in Murray County and is being updated as part of the comprehensive plan update process. Following is a summary of the services included in the SDS:

Government Administration and Finance. Each entity maintains a separate and independent General Administration and Finance Department which oversees and monitors the operation of the government with which it is associated.

Public Buildings and Ground Maintenance. Excluding public buildings and grounds within Murray County which are owned by the US Government or the State of Georgia, the City of Chatsworth, the City of Eton, and Murray County independently or jointly own all public buildings and grounds located within Murray County. As such, each of the local governments is responsible for maintaining the public buildings and grounds which it owns, regardless of the geographical location of such buildings and grounds. Formal and informal agreements have been developed regarding maintenance of jointly-owned facilities.

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Court Services. Murray County provides and maintains a Superior Court, Magistrate Court, Probate Court, and Juvenile Court. The City of Chatsworth and the City of Eton maintain Municipal Courts. These municipal courts do not have jurisdiction over matters which arise out of the corporate limits of the City in which they are located.

Election Administration and Oversight Service. Murray County is the sole provider of voter registration and election oversight services within the county. It is also the sole provider of voting machines to all polling precincts within the County. The County and both Cities maintain polling precincts and provide poll workers.

Indigent Funeral Expenses. Murray County is the sole provider of indigent funeral expenses within Murray County and provides this service to qualifying individuals and families who are residents of Murray County.

Water and Sewerage Services. The Chatsworth Water Works Commission provides electric, water, and sewer services to the City of Chatsworth and to portions of the county outside its corporate limits. Some residents of the County are also provided with water services from the City of Calhoun, Dalton Utilities, and Coosa Utilities.

Law Enforcement. The City of Chatsworth and the City of Eton maintain separate police forces which operate solely within the respective corporate limits of those Cities. The Murray County Sheriff's Department has the jurisdiction to provide law enforcement services countywide; however, as a matter of practicality and efficiency, it focuses attention on providing such services to the unincorporated areas of Murray County.

Corrections Facilities. The Murray County Sheriff operates and manages the Murray County Correctional Center and is the sole provider of correctional facilities to house inmates in Murray County. The Cities of Eton and Chatsworth pay a fee to Murray County to house inmates and persons accused of crimes.

Fire Service Protection. The City of Chatsworth and the City of Eton maintain their own fire departments. The Murray County Fire Department serves the unincorporated areas of the county. An "Agreement for Automatic Aid" exists between the Eton Fire Department and the Murray County Fire Department.

Civil and Emergency Management. Murray County is the sole provider of civil emergency management services in Murray County. Such services include the coordination and management of the public response to emergency conditions such as natural or man-made disasters. Should the need arise during a civil emergency, the City of Chatsworth and the City of Eton are responsible for providing emergency shelters for members of the general public who are in close proximity to such shelters.

Building Inspection and Permitting. The City of Chatsworth provides building inspecting and permitting within the corporate limits of the city through the Building Inspectors Office. Murray County provides building inspecting and permitting services within the unincorporated areas of Murray county and within the corporate limits of the City of Eton.

Animal Control. Murray County, Chatsworth, and Eton each have animal control ordinances. Murray County has an Animal Control Officer who enforces the County's ordinance. The Cities have amended their ordinances to allow the County Animal Control Officer to enforce the County's ordinance within their city limits. The Murray County Animal Control Shelter accepts delivery of animals for housing and disposal from all residents of the County.

Recreation Facilities and Programs. Murray County and the City of Chatsworth are the sole providers of recreational facilities and programs within Murray County. The City of Chatsworth contributes

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funding to be used by Murray County for the maintenance of recreational facilities and programs. Recreational facilities and programs are open to all residents and citizens of the county and both cities.

Road and Bridge Construction. The City of Chatsworth is responsible for the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges within the corporate limits of Chatsworth which are not directly constructed and/or maintained by the US Government or State of Georgia. Similarly, Murray County is responsible non-Federal and non-State for roads and bridges in the unincorporated areas and in Eton. The City of Chatsworth Public Works Department and Murray County's Public Works Department maintain a productive working relationship in trading off responsibilities for particular roads and bridges so as to achieve the greatest efficiency in the application of resources.

Street Light Services. The City of Chatsworth and the City of Eton provide street light services only within their respective corporate limits. The only publicly funded, constructed, and/or maintained street lights within unincorporated Murray County are street lights that the US Government or the State of Georgia have for the purpose of illuminating Federal or State roads.

Traffic Engineering. Traffic engineering services include the location, placement, and maintenance of traffic lights, stop signs, and other traffic control devices; the location, placement, and maintenance of other appropriate motorist and pedestrian safety aids; the oversight of road, street, and bridge design; the painting of appropriate lines and other marks on streets and curbs; and other activities with manage and ease the flow of traffic in the County. The Cities of Chatsworth and Eton provide such services within their corporate limits, while Murray County provides these services to the unincorporated areas.

Public Transportation. Murray County is the sole provider of public transportation services with in the County and provides such services through the Murray County Transportation Service.

Solid Waste Disposal. Murray County is currently the sole provider of solid waste disposal services to the population of Murray County.

Soil Erosion Permitting and Enforcement. Murray County provides soil erosion permitting and enforcement services in the unincorporated areas of Murray County and in the City of Eton, while the City of Chatsworth provides these services within its corporate limits.

Surrounding Counties

Developments of Regional Impact. Development in counties which are adjacent to Murray County or developments of regional impact (DRI) which occur in a nearby county have the potential to impact Murray County and the Cities of Chatsworth and Eton.

Developments of regional impact are

“large-scale developments that are likely to have effects outside of the local government jurisdiction in which they are located. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorized the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish procedures for intergovernmental review of these large-scale projects. These are designed to improve communication between affected governments and to provide a means of revealing and assessing potential impacts of large-scale developments before conflicts relating to them arise. At the same time, local government autonomy is preserved since the host government maintains the authority to make the final decision on whether a proposed development will or will not go forward.”

(source: www.dca.state.ga.us/planning/regionalimpact.html)

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All developments of regional impact are reviewed by their respective Regional Development Centers (RDCs). The RDC evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed development and determines whether it is consistent with the regional plan and the plans of affected local governments. The RDC's evaluation is advisory in nature and is designed to help a local government anticipate possible impacts of a proposed development. The local government is encouraged to take this information into account in deciding whether to approve, deny, or require modifications to the development in order to mitigate any undesirable impacts which were uncovered during the RDC's evaluation.

Other coordination mechanisms which exist or are planned between the surrounding counties and the governments of Murray County, Chatsworth, and Eton include mutual aid agreements for law enforcement and fire protection.

Murray County School Board

Informal coordination occurs between the School Board, the local governments, and various other agencies in the community, but there is not a formal process for coordinating such activities.

The school district coordinated with Chatsworth Water Works to obtain water and sewer for the new middle school at the GA 225/GA 286 crossroads. The school district also coordinates with the Murray County Road Department for various paving projects at the schools: the school district provides the materials while the Road Department does the paving.

Constitutional Officers

Sheriff and Police Chiefs. Both the Eton and Chatsworth Police Departments make presentations to their respective Councils regarding the number of calls, fines, and miles patrolled. The Police and Sheriff's Departments coordinate with each other on various law enforcement matters.

Tax Assessor. No formal coordination occurs between the Tax Assessor and the local governments. The cities are responsible for collecting their own taxes.

Courts. Murray County is part of the Conasauga Judicial Circuit which also includes Whitfield County. A District Attorney and several Assistant DAs serve the Circuit. Murray County also has a Probate Court, a Juvenile Court, and a Magistrate Court. Chatsworth and Eton have their own municipal courts.

Independent Special Districts and Development Authorities

Development Authority. The board of the Development Authority is comprised of five members appointed by the County Commissioner. Several members of the Development Authority board are also on the board of the Chamber of Commerce.

Chatsworth Housing Authority. The 5-member board of the Chatsworth Housing Authority is appointed by the Chatsworth Mayor and City Council. The director of the Housing Authority is appointed by the board and is an employee of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Housing Authority property is tax exempt; however, the Authority provides 10% of its rental receipts to the City to pay for City services.

Utilities

The Chatsworth Water Works is the primary provider of public water and the sole provider of public wastewater treatment in Murray County.

Electricity is provided by Georgia Power Company and North Georgia Electric Membership Corporation. Although informal coordination occurs between the local governments and these companies, no formal coordination mechanisms have been established.

The community's power liability plan needs to be updated. This plan establishes priorities for reestablishing electrical service in the event of a power loss in the community. For example, facilities such as the hospital, 911 center, police stations, and sewerage lift stations would be high priorities for power.

Georgia Power Community and Economic Development organization is an excellent resource for helping a community develop realistic, informed, workable strategies for community and economic development. The Community Development staff, who works mainly outside of metro Atlanta, can assist a community with strategic planning, as well as research and information gathering. Georgia Power regional economic development managers are in place in each region of the state to promote, coordinate and maximize marketability and economic potential. These Georgia Power representatives work with communities to recruit new industries, promote the expansion of existing businesses, develop tourism and provide on-site, readily available economic development expertise. (website: www.georgiapower.com/grc)

Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce sends regular reports to the local governments. It also directs the Leadership Murray program, the goal of which is to develop informed leaders and channel their ideas and experiences toward community resources, issues, and concerns. This goal is achieved through programs, informal discussions, and participatory experiences.

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7.1.2. Coordination with State Programs and Activities

Service Delivery Strategy

As discussed in Section 7.1.1., Murray County and the City of Chatsworth adopted a Service Delivery Strategy in 1999. The Strategy is being updated as part of the comprehensive planning process.

Governor's Greenspace Program

Murray County participates in the Governor's Greenspace Program. The Cities of Chatsworth and Eton have elected not to participate directly in the program, but to support Murray County's efforts in the program which will accomplish goals that will benefit both the County and Cities.

Murray County proposes to protect 4,423 acres of land. This is in addition to the 54,880 acres which are already in permanent greenspace. The land type, estimated acreage, and tools for protection which are proposed in the County's Greenspace Program are shown below in Table 4-H.

Table 4-H. Governor's Greenspace Program Proposal

Land Type	Estimated Acreage	Tools for Protection	
		Permanent	Temporary
Flood Plain	3,760	conservation easements restrictive covenants	Part V Minimum Environmental Standards
Archaeological Sites	44	fee simple acquisition conservation easements	archaeological/conservation overlay zones
Historic and Prime Farmland	442	conservation easements	historic preservation conservation overlay zones
Parkland	177	restrictive covenants conservation easements	--

The estimated cost of protecting the acreage listed above is \$5,097,781. The Greenspace Program Vision Map is shown in Figure 4-R.

Appalachian Regional Commission Program

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a federal-state partnership that awards program grants for projects which address the ARC's five goal areas:

1. education and workforce training,
2. physical infrastructure,
3. civic capacity and leadership,
4. business development, and
5. health care.

Murray County is eligible to participate in ARC programs. The County's liaison with the ARC is the North Georgia Regional Development Center.

Regional Water Supply/Water Quality Protection Plans

Every year the State of Georgia is required to make a list of lakes, rivers, and streams which do not meet Federal and State water quality standards. This list is based on results of annual water quality testing done by the State's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the US Geological Survey. In Murray County, all of the lakes, rivers, and streams meet the standards for most pollutants except for fecal coliform bacteria. More information on this subject can be found in the Natural Resources Element.

7.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

The following assessment involves an analysis of the data provided in Section 7.1. to determine if existing coordination mechanisms and agreements are adequate to serve the community's current and future needs and if there are any issues or problems which can be addressed by the local governments.

This assessment can be completed by answering the following questions which were derived from Section 110-12-1-.0 4(12)(g)2.(ii) of Georgia's Minimum Local Planning Standards.

- ③ What issues are arising or have arisen from growth and development proposed in comprehensive plans of nearby local governments or other governmental entities that indicate a need for additional planning coordination between local governments?
- ③ What specific problems and needs in the community would benefit from improved or additional intergovernmental coordination and how could this coordination be achieved?
- ③ Are existing coordination mechanisms or agreements adequate in achieving predictable positive results for ensuring efficient and effective delivery of local services, coordinated land use and growth management, and protection or conservation of natural resources?

These questions are in Sections 7.2.1. through 7.2.3.

7.2.1. What issues are arising or have arisen from growth and development proposed in comprehensive plans of nearby local governments or other governmental entities that indicate a need for additional planning coordination between local governments?

No conflicts have been identified with any adjacent counties or other governmental entities.

7.2.2. What specific problems and needs in the community would benefit from improved or additional intergovernmental coordination and how could this coordination be achieved?

Two primary needs in the community would benefit most from improved coordination: economic development and the provision of water and sewerage service.

All three local governments, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, have begun working with Georgia Power's resource center staff to investigate economic development opportunities. It would be advantageous to implement a program for continued coordination along these lines, possibly through quarterly strategic planning sessions. In addition, if an Economic Development Administrator were hired as recommended in previous sections, this person would be responsible for spearheading the coordinated effort.

A water and sewerage facilities master plan for the county and cities needs to be prepared. This plan must include alternative solutions to providing water and sewer service to targeted areas of the community. This should be a joint effort of the three local governments, Chatsworth Water Works, Dalton Utilities, and other service providers.

7.2.3. Are existing coordination mechanisms or agreements adequate in achieving predictable positive results for ensuring efficient and effective delivery of local services, coordinated land use, growth management, and the protection or conservation of natural resources?

The Service Delivery Strategy that was adopted by Murray County and the Cities of Chatsworth and Eton is in the process of being updated as part of the comprehensive planning process. This strategy documents the coordination and delivery of services in Murray County and should be updated in the future as needed.

Murray County and the City of Chatsworth adopted a land use dispute resolution agreement in 1998. This agreement contains the process for resolving disputes over annexation. Murray County and the City of Eton will be adopting a similar agreement this year in conjunction with the preparation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

Through the joint comprehensive planning process, a future land use plan and map will be adopted. The result will be future land use plans for the Cities and County that are coordinated and use the same land use definitions. This joint planning effort will reduce land use conflicts at jurisdictional borders.

Additionally, the Land Use Element contains policies and action items related directly to coordinated land use, growth management, and the protection of natural resources. The Community Facilities and Services Element contains policies and action items related directly to the need for coordination between the provision of public infrastructure and land use.

7.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program

To support and achieve the community's joint vision statement, Murray County and the Cities of Chatsworth and Eton have developed the following intergovernmental coordination goal and associated policies and action items:

Goal: Positive, cooperative, and effective relationships between Murray County, the City of Chatsworth, the City of Eton, and other public agencies and organizations.	
Policy 1: Local Coordination. Promote effective coordination between the County and City governments and the County School Board, the Water Works Commission, and the Chamber of Commerce.	Action Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider quarterly strategic planning meetings of the local governments, authorities, boards, and agencies to improve communication and coordination. b. Seek funding for a full-time, paid staff position of "Economic Development Director" through a cities/county partnership. c. Update the Service Delivery Strategy as needed. d. Develop a water and sewer master plan.
Policy 2: Joint Planning. Continue the joint comprehensive planning approach to ensure collaborative planning and decision-making.	Action Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop, adopt, and maintain a Joint Comprehensive Plan and associated implementation programs which are acceptable to all governments. b. Update, adopt, and maintain the Joint Solid Waste Management Plan.
Policy 3: Consistency with the Future Land Use Plan. Use the adopted Joint Comprehensive Plan as a guide for decision-making.	Action Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Require that rezoning actions be consistent with the Future Land Use Maps in the Comprehensive Plan. b. Discourage making capital investments in rural areas that are not slated for urban/suburban intensity growth in the Future Land Use Plan.
Policy 4: State Coordination. Pursue effective relationships with key State agencies and departments.	Action Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with state level economic development agencies to attract new businesses to the area. b. Jointly approach the Department of Transportation regarding needed road improvements.

* A DCA "Quality Communities" Objective (required by the State Minimum Planning Standards)