

## 2. Context of Change

Over the next 20 years, the City of Snellville will face population growth alongside maturing infrastructure, an aging population, and a host of other challenges and opportunities. Planning adequately for this growth requires the adequate consideration of projected population growth, changes in employment patterns, household size trends, and transportation concerns.

### Population

Snellville’s location in a quickly growing and diversifying Gwinnett County has important implications for its past and projected population growth. Snellville’s growth rate has historically been lower than Gwinnett County overall, and until recently, accounted for an increasingly smaller percentage of the county’s overall population.

Between 2000 and 2005, a total of 3,423 residents were added to Snellville largely due to several annexations and new construction. These growth trends are projected to continue at a fairly constant rate over the next twenty years. The City’s projected 2030 population of 35,830 represents a net gain of 17,086 residents over the next two decades and a population increase of 91.2 percent. Based upon the Future Land Use Map, development and infrastructure will support growth and then a leveling of the population at 24,650 in 2030 (Figure 2-1). During this same period, Gwinnett County is projected to increase by only 54.2 percent (Figure 2-2). These differences in growth rates reflect the perceived opportunity for Snellville to redevelop existing underutilized sites and continue its annexation of surrounding land.

Population growth will not occur equally among all age groups and ethnic groups. In particular, the City is projected to experience an increasingly older and more diverse population. By 2030, approximately 30 percent of Snellville’s population will be 60 years old or over (Figure 2-3). This major demographic shift will have a considerable impact on community needs and services.

Figure 2-1

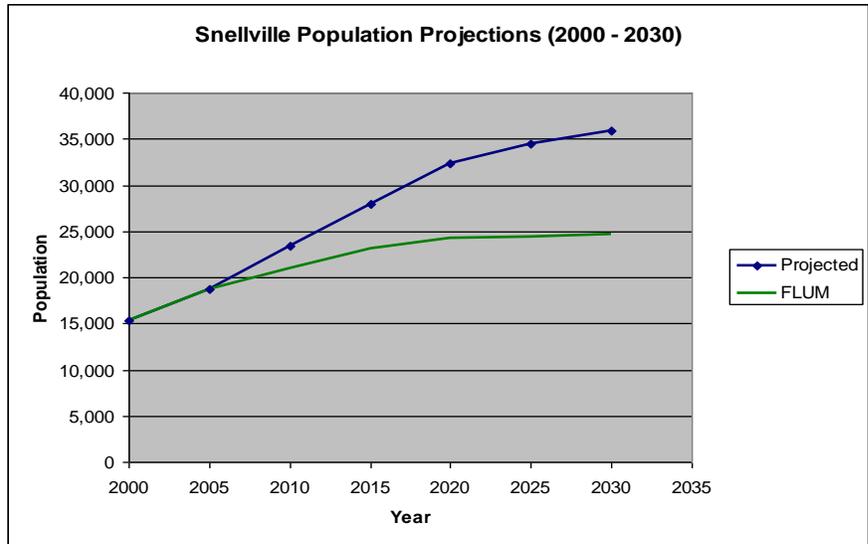


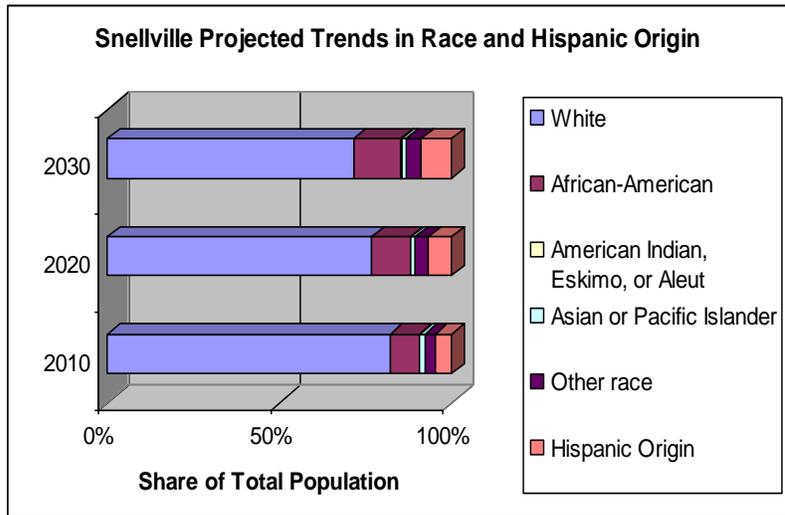
Figure 2-2: Snellville -Projected Share of Population by Age

Category	2000	2030
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%
<b>Under 10 Years Old</b>	14%	14%
<b>10 to 19 Years Old</b>	15%	13%
<b>20 to 29 Years Old</b>	9%	12%
<b>30 to 39 Years Old</b>	14%	11%
<b>40 to 49 Years Old</b>	17%	13%
<b>50 to 59 Years Old</b>	14%	8%
<b>60 to 69 Years Old</b>	7%	11%
<b>70 to 79 Years Old</b>	6%	11%
<b>80 and over</b>	3%	7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

In the past, Snellville has experienced a lower degree of diversification than Gwinnett County overall. Diversification is expected to catch up with Snellville over the next quarter century. By 2030, nearly one in six Snellville residents will likely be African-American. Additionally, the percentage of Snellville’s population of Hispanic origin will be nearly triple the rate observed in 2000, increasing from 3.5 percent of the population to approximately 10 percent of the population (Figure 2-4).

**Figure 2-3**



**Figure 2-4 Projected Trends in Race and Hispanic Origin - Snellville**

	2010	2020	2030
<b>White</b>	86.2%	82.3%	78.5%
<b>African-American</b>	9.0%	12.1%	15.0%
<b>American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut</b>	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%
<b>Other race</b>	3.2%	4.1%	5.0%
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	5.1%	7.2%	9.7%

Source: JJG

### **Employment**

Snellville will continue to benefit from the Atlanta region’s vibrant economy and related assets, including a plethora of job and training opportunities. As a member of a large metropolitan area, Snellville has a high degree of economic integration with the rest of its region. Over the next 20 years, the region’s economic strength as well as Snellville’s unique economic attributes,

**Figure 2-5 Labor Force by Place of Work, Snellville**

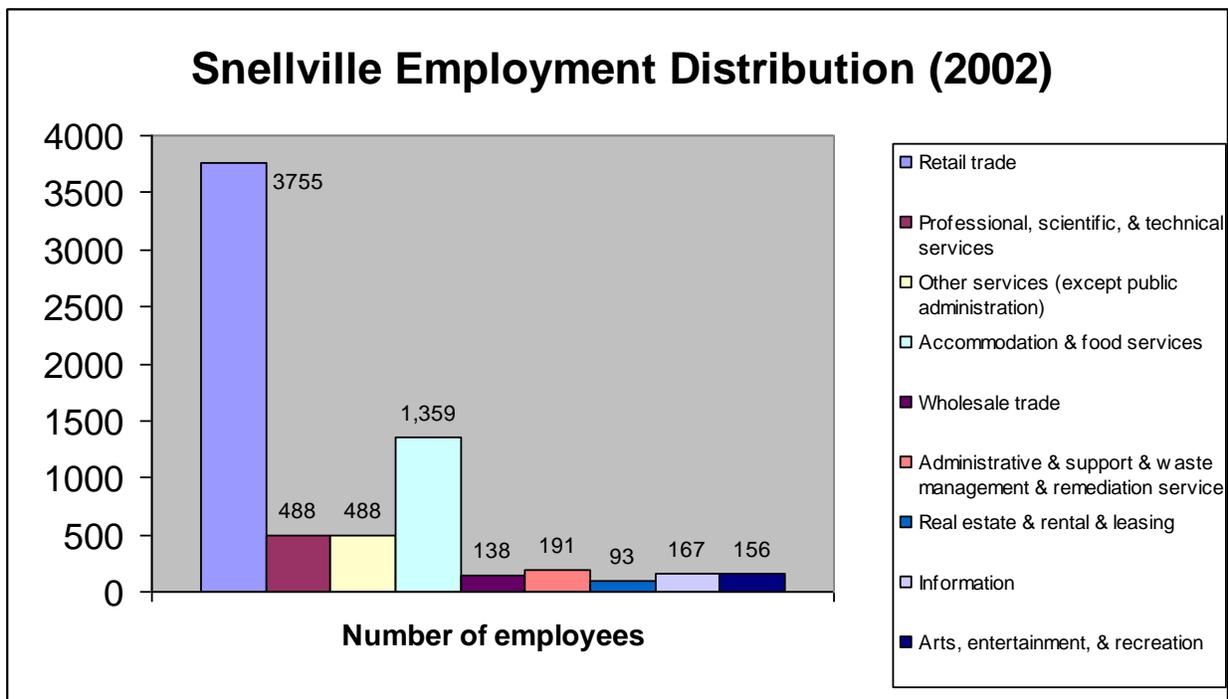
Category	1990		2000	
	Total	Share of Total Workers	Total	Share of Total
Worked in State of residence	6,182	100%	7,747	100%
Worked in place of residence	1,269	21%	1,390	18%
Worked outside of place of residence	4,913	79%	6,357	82%
Worked outside of state of residence	0	0%	0	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

including current and potential employment opportunities, must be carefully considered to ensure a healthy jobs-housing balance in Snellville. Recent City and County data reflect the overall strength of the local economy. Snellville’s unemployment rate, at 2.9 percent in 2002, remains consistently lower than surrounding counties and the overall State.

Currently, a majority of employers in Snellville belong to the services and retail industry sectors (Figure 2-6). In 2000, the County’s dominant sectors were Services (23 percent), Retail Trade (19 percent), Wholesale Trade (13 percent), Manufacturing (11 percent), Construction (8 percent), and State and Local Government (8 percent). While the trends in Gwinnett County do not necessarily reflect those within the City, according to the 2000 Census, 53 percent of city residents are employed within Gwinnett County and are thus directly affected by the County’s employment opportunities.

**Figure 2-6**



*NAICS Code, Health care & social assistance and educational data withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual companies.*

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002 Economic Census*

A significant number of Snellville employers are located on Scenic Highway, one of the largest agglomerations of retail space in Gwinnett County. Despite this agglomeration of employment options, approximately 82 percent of Snellville residents work outside of the City. This disparity reflects a mismatch between residents’ skills and current job opportunities. This situation also suggests that current housing supply does not meet the demands of people working in Snellville. Bringing industries to the area that better reflect the skills of workers will increase the quality of life for residents, contribute to shorter commute times, and increase the tax base. With an increasing elderly population, it is appropriate to consider ways of developing those industries that will meet the demands of this population group.

With the successful execution of existing plans, Snellville has a very positive economic outlook for the next 20 years. Some activities that will assure the City’s continued ability to provide quality jobs include redevelopment efforts on the Highway 78 Corridor, enhancing and further development of downtown Snellville, and continued maintenance and strategic development and redevelopment on Scenic Highway. Many of these activities highlight the need to address long-term transportation concerns. Snellville has developed into a highly car-dependent community with heavy congestion. The average commute time is 34 minutes.

## **Households**

Changes to average household size and household type will affect the types and quantity of services needed in Snellville over the coming decades. In particular, housing needs and educational resources will be affected. Snellville historically has had a higher average household size than Gwinnett County overall and the State of Georgia. This data largely reflects the high number of family households in the City. Over the next twenty years, the average household size will decrease slightly each year until 2025, when the average size increases again. These changes reflect life cycle changes within the population. As this average household size decreases in the City, the average household size in the County will increase slightly, reversing past trends.

**Figure 2-7 Household Size (Snellville, Gwinnett, GA)**

Year	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Snellville	3.35	3.03	2.87	2.83	2.80	2.79	2.79	2.82	2.85
Gwinnett	3.00	2.77	2.88	2.84	2.81	2.80	2.80	2.83	2.86
Georgia	2.84	2.66	2.65	2.61	2.59	2.57	2.58	2.60	2.63

Sources: *US Bureau of the Census, Woods & Poole Economics, and JJG*

In 2000, 70.3 percent of total households in Snellville were married couple families. Nearly 50 percent of those households had families. Another 22 percent were householders living alone, with 7 percent ages 65 and over. These numbers will likely change in the future. As the population ages and the share of middle aged people decreases, there will likely be a change in service needs and housing demand. A strategy to affordably house a growing elderly population is essential. An increase in the 20 to 29 year old age group will likely sustain a large presence of married family households with children. The competing needs of these two household groups will require proactive planning and implementation of new, creative policies. Family households will place the greatest tax on the system, requiring schools, parks, and related services.

Snellville’s jobs-housing balance is generally comparable to Gwinnett County’s at approximately 1.50 in both 1990 and 2000. This figure reflects a significantly higher availability of jobs in the City compared to the City’s residential population. This scenario eases the tax burden on residents due to the tax gains from local businesses, creating a favorable situation for meeting the service and resource needs of the community. Ideally, a community’s ratio should fall between 1.25 and 1.75.

**Figure 2-8 Distribution of Household Types, 2000**

	Snellville	Gwinnett Co	Georgia
Total Households	100%	100%	100%
Married couple families	70.3%	61.2%	51.5%
Married couple families with children	32.5%	34.1%	24.4%
Female householder, no husband present with children	4.5%	6.3%	8.6%
Householder living alone	15.0%	18.4%	23.6%
Householder living alone, 65 and over	7.2%	3.1%	7.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

**Figure 2-9 Jobs Housing Balance**

	Snellville		Gwinnett County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Population	12,084	15,351	352,910	588,448
Housing Units	4,185	5,251	137,608	209,682
Employment	6,271	7,821	203,387	314,471
Employment/Population ratio	0.52	0.51	0.58	0.53
Employment/Housing ratio	1.50	1.49	1.48	1.50

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## ***Transportation***

Although Snellville contains a highly developed roadway infrastructure, the limitations of its current design conflict with its quality of life attributes and long-term economic development goals. During the course of the comprehensive planning process, stakeholder and citizens overwhelmingly identified transportation congestion as the number one issue facing the City of Snellville.

Major transportation problems largely revolve around the functionality of US 78 and SR 124, both principal arterial roads. The intersection of these two major routes has the highest traffic volume in Snellville. These roads also have an alarmingly high crash rate and injury rate compared to the state average (Figure 2-10).

**Figure 2-10: 2004 Crash Rates Compared to State-wide**

	2004 Accident Rate per 100 MVM	
	US 78	State Average
Crash Rate	773	515
Injury Rate	300	203
Fatality Rate	0	1.21
	SR 124	State Average
Crash Rate	848	515
Injury Rate	259	203
Fatality Rate	0	1.21

Successful realization of planned improvements to Snellville's transportation infrastructure will largely affect the City. Currently three plans guide these improvements: the Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), the ARC's latest Regional Transportation Plan

(RTP), and projects funded from the SPLOST allocation. All plans focus on a variety of elements, with all three highlighting improvements to US 78 and SR 124 as a priority.

## ***Town Center Development***

As a relatively young city, Snellville developed in a suburban fashion, with an auto-centric, strip mall core. Growing transportation congestion along US 78 and SR 124 (discussed under transportation), along with other issues, has placed a new mixed-use city center proposal at the forefront of City discussions.

This Town Center plan will provide increased opportunities for partnership with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) created in 1982. With the powers afforded to it, the DDA will be a very important asset to the City during the redevelopment of the downtown district. The DDA has the authority to use tax revenues, appoint contractors, acquire real estate, initiate long-range plans, borrow money, and serve as the urban redevelopment agency, among other legislatively enabled powers.



The new municipal complex, completed in 2006, anchors the Town Center plan, serving as an essential stimulus for commercial growth and redevelopment into mixed-use development. Developing a mixed-use atmosphere along with an improved transportation infrastructure will influence future residential and employment patterns in the City. The Town Center Overlay Zoning District will guide these changes over the coming decades.

## ***Summary***

These projections and anticipated changes to the community are a best estimate of what is likely to come. They should not be construed as inevitable outcomes but instead should serve as a framework for successfully planning for the future of Snellville. The growth that Snellville sees over this 20 year period will largely be tied to the decisions of community leaders and other metropolitan agencies. By considering likely trends and desired outcomes in strategic decisions as Snellville moves forward, the City will work proactively and logically towards reaching its vision and goals.