

# **Business Development Strategic Plan**

**For the City of  
McDonough Georgia**



**December 2014**

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## History

The city of McDonough, located approximately thirty miles southeast of Atlanta, is the county seat for Henry County. Incorporated in 1823, the city was named for Commodore Thomas MacDonough, the hero of the Battle of Lake Champlain in the War of 1812. The county was named for Patrick Henry and had been created in 1821. The town was laid out in blocks, with the Henry County Courthouse in the center.

From the beginning, the catalyst for growth in McDonough and Henry County has been transportation arteries: first, stagecoaches, followed by railroads and then, interstate highways. The building of the Monroe Railroad in 1843 brought many settlers into the county, and while Sherman's "March to the Sea" during the Civil War virtually destroyed the community, construction of the Georgia Midland and Gulf Railroad (the forerunner of Norfolk Southern Railroad) in 1886 helped make Henry County the "Cotton Kingdom."

As McDonough developed, all farm roads led to town, directly to the town square, resulting in a radial road system. The town was small so the street grid system was not expanded very far from the square. In 1969, I-75 was built with the corridor traversing across the county seat, McDonough, bringing new growth and economic prosperity.

Close proximity to Atlanta and the expanding Hartsfield-Jackson Airport combined with interstate access and rail service from Norfolk Southern Railroad makes it the perfect location from which to serve the state of Georgia, the southeastern U.S. and the entire nation. Since the 1990s, the City and County continue to add new industry and distribution as properties and infrastructure became available. The prospective deepening of the port at Savannah promises more transport.

McDonough experienced tremendous population growth in recent decades, booming from an exurban community of 3000 that was largely residential and undeveloped in 1990 to a population of 8500 by 2000 and of more than 22,000 residents by 2010.

McDonough's long-range land-use plans account for still more additional population growth. During the same period, Henry County went from 60,000 population in 1990 to 120,000 by 2000 and 200,000 by 2010.

Population growth has been accompanied by growing household incomes. Growth is expected to continue. The combination of access, desirability, growing population, and growing buying power makes McDonough an attractive market for developers and business.

The skilled and educated workforce along with the proximity to Atlanta and to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport makes McDonough an ideal business location. The resultant strong office and industrial presence means a significant day-time population, as well. I-75 and other infrastructure make McDonough a regional market center, supporting a trade area with a regional draw into several counties – as far as Macon.

<b>2010 Market</b>	<b>5-mile</b>	<b>10-mile</b>	<b>15-mile</b>
Population	60,284	206,658	479,763
Households	20,770	71,159	165,907
Avg. Household Income	\$83,743	\$82,584	\$74,247

<b>Projected 2015 Profile</b>	<b>5-mile</b>	<b>10-mile</b>	<b>15-mile</b>
Population	75,795	251,318	547,974
Households	26,185	86,709	189,546
Avg. Household Income	\$86,529	\$85,333	\$77,208

Within the last decade, Georgia's population has significantly diversified

*Since 1990, Georgia has gained more than 1.2 million African-American residents and has served, according to The Wall Street Journal, as a "magnet for black professionals" from other parts of the country.*

*...Georgia's Hispanic population grew by 96 percent over the last decade -- now totaling 9.1 percent of the state's population. Additionally,*

*Georgia's Asian-American community grew by 81 percent from 2000-2010."*  
*HuffPost*

### **Tapestry Segmentation by ESRI**

McDonough and Henry County are experiencing significant demographic shifts. Changes in demographics are sometimes difficult to comprehend by the numbers and percentages. The field of psychographics, using tools like ESRI's Tapestry, helps one understand demographics through lifestyle choices, what people buy, and how people spend their free time. Tapestry classifies residential neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. ESRI identifies the following four segments as making up the major portions of the population of McDonough:

**Up and Coming Families:** A market in transition—residents are younger and more mobile and ethnically diverse than the previous generation. They are ambitious, working hard to get ahead, and willing to take some risks to achieve their goals. The recession has impacted their financial well-being, but they are optimistic. Their homes are new; their families are young. And this is one of the fastest-growing markets in the country. New suburban periphery: new families in new housing subdivisions. Building began in the housing boom of the 2000s and continues in this fast-growing market. Education: 66% have some college education or degree(s). Careful shoppers, aware of prices, willing to shop around for the best deals and open to influence by others' opinions. Seek the latest and best in technology. Young families still feathering the nest and establishing their style. *ESRI*

**Soccer Moms:** An affluent, family-oriented market with a country flavor. Residents are partial to new housing away from the bustle of the city but close enough to commute to professional job centers. Life in this suburban wilderness offsets the hectic pace of two working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices, like banking online or housekeeping services, and family-oriented pursuits. Soccer Moms residents prefer the suburban periphery of metropolitan areas. Predominantly single family, homes are in newer neighborhoods. Education: 37.7% college graduates; more than 70% with some college education. Connected, with a host of wireless devices from iPods to tablets—anything that enables convenience, like banking, paying bills, or even shopping online. *ESRI*

**The Green Acres:** Country living and self-reliance. They are avid do-it-yourselfers, maintaining and remodeling their homes, with all the necessary power tools to accomplish the jobs. Gardening, especially growing vegetables, is also a priority, again with the right tools; tillers, tractors, and riding mowers. Outdoor living also features a variety of sports: hunting and fishing, motorcycling, hiking and camping, and even golf. Self-described conservatives, residents of Green Acres remain pessimistic about the near future yet are heavily invested in it. Rural enclaves in metropolitan areas, primarily (not exclusively) older homes with acreage; new housing growth in the past ten years. An older market, primarily married couples, most with no children. Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment, investments, and increasingly, from retirement. They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability. Comfortable with technology, more as a tool than a trend: banking or paying bills online is convenient; but the Internet is not viewed as entertainment. Economic outlook is professed as pessimistic, but consumers are comfortable with debt, primarily as home and auto loans, and investment. *ESRI*

**Middleburg:** Neighborhoods transformed from the easy pace of country living to semirural subdivisions in the last decade, when the housing boom reached out. Residents are conservative, family-oriented consumers. Still more country than rock and roll, they are thrifty but willing to carry some debt and are already investing in their futures. They rely on their smartphones and mobile devices to stay in touch and pride themselves on their expertise. They prefer to buy American and travel in the US. This market is younger but growing in size and assets. Semirural locales within metropolitan areas. Neighborhoods changed rapidly in the previous decade with the addition of new single-family homes. Education: 66% with a high school diploma or some college. Traditional values are the norm here—faith, country, and family. Prefer to buy American and for a good price. Comfortable with the latest in technology, for convenience (online banking or saving money on landlines) and entertainment. *ESRI*

## **Situation**

Growth has put stress in infrastructure, systems, leadership and staff. Growth in revenue, growth in need for services, growth in infrastructure and growth in service delivery ebb and flow, and seldom at the same rate.

Though farmland, open space, country roads, historic homes, courthouse squares, traditional churches festivals, heritage, affordable housing, etc. attract those who avoid the urban lifestyle, the collective impact of the newcomers can put stresses on the qualities that attracted them.

For almost 60 years, organizations have been starting their strategic plans with analyses of their perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – SWOT Analysis. This is a useful format for capturing status quo and the operating environment. So as not to end with the negative, threats are combined with weaknesses. Trends are added to complete the acronym – SWOT.

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Trends

## **Strengths**

In summary, the city and county have many amenities while maintaining small southern town and rural comforts along with easy access to Metro Atlanta.

Temperate climate, exemplary educational and recreational programs, family-friendly neighborhoods, and abundant worship opportunities make it a great place to live and raise a family. Its strategic location, access to transportation, well-educated workforce, and pro-business attitude make it ideal for establishing and successfully operating a business.

The beautiful and historic Square is surrounded by a thriving business district offering unique shops, antiques and both casual and fine dining. McDonough has an ongoing tourism and Main Street program and hosts many annual events, including the Henry County Fair each fall and the Geranium Festival in May. McDonough also hosts the Roberto Clemente World Series in mid-July at Richard Craig Park and added the Miss Georgia USA and Miss Georgia Teen USA Pageant in 2014. McDonough is designated as a “City of Character” and a “City of Ethics” by the Georgia Municipal Association.

Mercer University offers programs on three major campuses in Macon, Atlanta and Savannah, and at four Regional Academic Centers in suburban Atlanta and in Eastman, Georgia. In addition, the university operates the Mercer Engineering Research Center in Warner Robins. The Regional Academic Centers in McDonough opened in 2003, offers programs in Continuing and Professional Studies and Mercer's Tift College of Education. More than 700 working adults pursue graduate degrees through the Stetson School of Business and Economics and undergraduate and graduate degrees through the Tift College of Education, and undergraduate degrees through Penfield College.

Henry County's Academy for Advanced Studies is the clearinghouse of educational offerings for south Atlanta's post-secondary institutions – Clayton State University, Gordon College and Southern Crescent Technical College

DeVry University offers technical certificates as well as undergraduate and graduate degrees at its Henry County location. Georgia State University has recently begun offering a Professional MBA in McDonough. Clayton State University, an institution of the University System of Georgia, is located in neighboring Clayton County, but is steadily expanding its offering of undergraduate programs of study in Henry County. Southern Crescent Technical College, located in neighboring Spalding County, is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia and offers a wide range of technical certificates, diplomas and associates degrees. Southern Crescent will soon have a satellite campus located in Henry County. Currently 90% of the population has high school diplomas and 25% have completed four years of college.

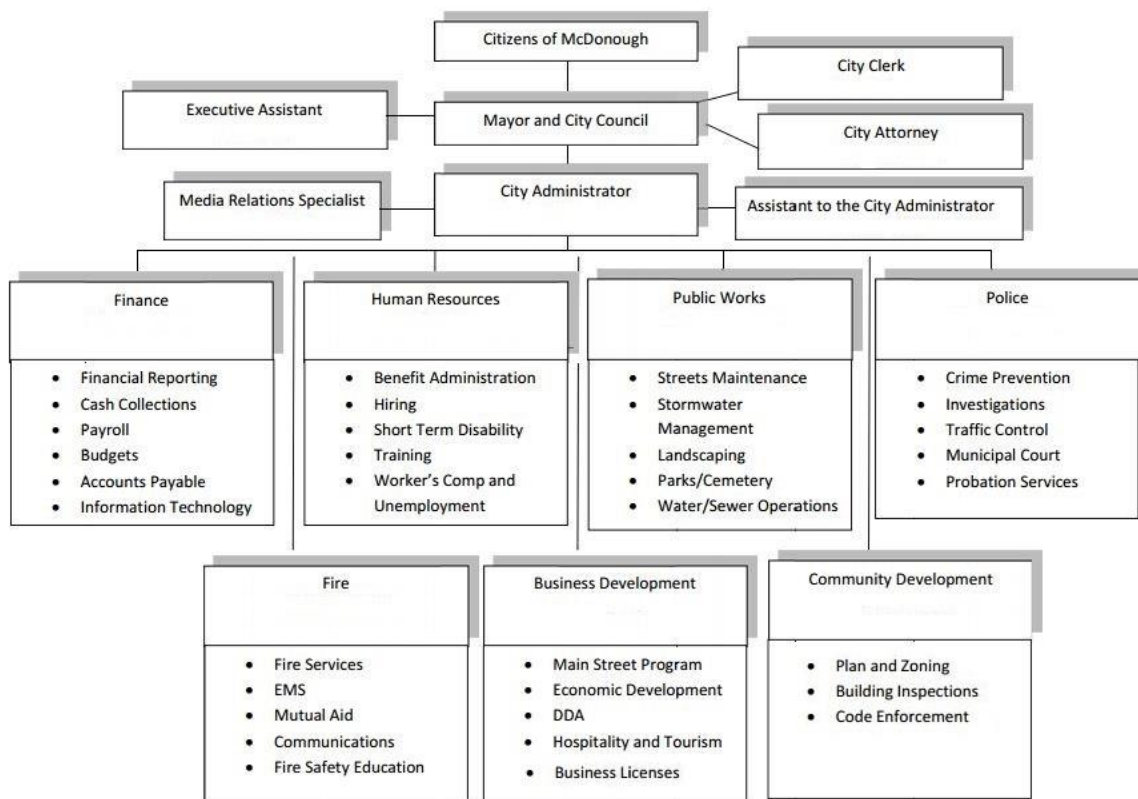
The Mayor and Council are elected by the voters to provide the vision, leadership, and policies necessary to meet the needs of the citizens and community. The governing body consists of seven elected officials who serve four-year terms. The power of this governing body is defined within the Charter of the City of McDonough.

The City Administrator and staff serve the citizens of McDonough by carrying out the policies and directives of the Mayor and City Council, running the day-to-day operations of City government, developing and managing the McDonough's annual budget, and overseeing all missions and employees. The City Administration ensures that the local government is operating effectively and efficiently to best serve its citizens, and providing professional leadership and execution of policies and objectives established by the City Council.

Responding to its growth, the City has staffed the following:

- Administrator
- Business Development
- City Clerk
- Community Development
- Finance
- Fire
- Human Resources
- Municipal Court
- Police
- Public Works

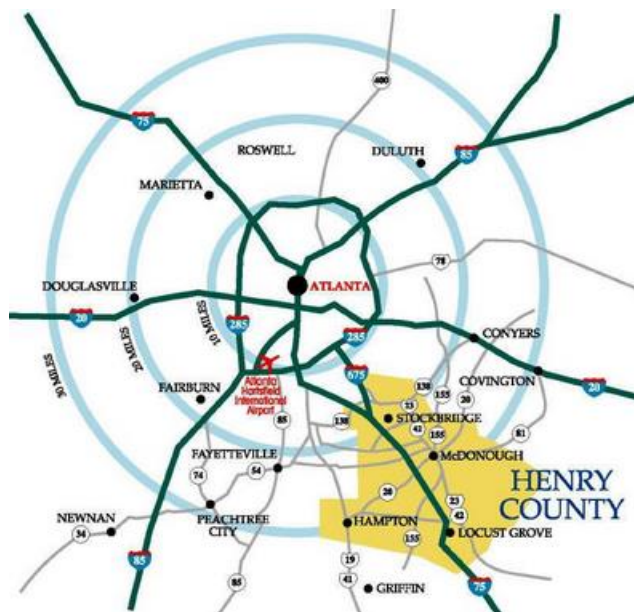
One of the most important factors of community attractiveness for existing and prospective residents is public safety. Residents believe that McDonough is a very safe place to live due to the collaborative efforts of local police and fire departments.



City of McDonough



The ***Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA Metropolitan Statistical Area***, is the most populous metro area in the state of Georgia and the ninth-largest metropolitan statistical area (MSA) in the United States. It is the core of the broader Atlanta--Athens-Clarke--Sandy Springs Combined Statistical Area. Its economic, cultural, and demographic center is Atlanta, Georgia's capital and largest city. The Atlanta Combined Statistical area spans up to 39 counties in north Georgia and has an estimated population of 6.1 million people. Atlanta is the second largest metropolitan region in the Southeast behind South Florida.



12/13/14



Atlanta has become a major center of television production and is the hub of the nation's fourth-largest film industry. Filming and film crews are regular features of life in McDonough.

Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport is located seven miles south of the central business district of Atlanta and 30 miles northwest of McDonough. It has been the world's busiest airport by passenger traffic since 1998, and by number of landings and take-offs since 2005, accommodating 95 million passengers (more than 260,000 passengers daily) and 950,119 flights. Atlanta serves as a major hub for travel throughout the Southeastern United States. The airport has 207 domestic and international gates. As an international gateway to the United States, Hartsfield–Jackson ranks sixth.

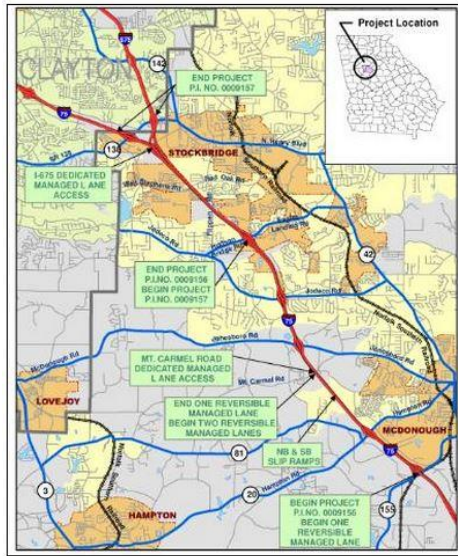
Residents within a 15-mile trade area possess buying power of over \$6 billion. Baker & Lassiter, an Atlanta developer has owned property in and near McDonough for decades and is now responding to the demographic and market opportunities with the development of **South Point**, a retail power center positioned to be south of the metro core, halfway to Macon.

In 2006, construction began with JCPenney and Kohl's as anchor stores. Other national brands such as ULTA Cosmetics, Academy Sports + Outdoors, Five Below, Hilton Garden Inn, T.J. Maxx, Toys "R" Us/Babies "R" Us, Hobby Lobby, Haverty's Furniture, AT&T, Sleep Number, Party City Superstore, Rooms To Go and Vitamin Shoppe followed. Restaurants are now being added. Retail growth is feeding other growth in a symbiotic fashion.

McDonough's quality of place has been a key factor in the city's residential and economic growth. Attractive housing in safe neighborhoods with nearby historic small town features still surrounded by farms and open space, with easy access to the rest of Metro attracts families and businesses.

While the Great Recession put downward pressure on an otherwise mobile workforce and business community, the long-term opportunity remains to preserve the sense of place while attracting quality growth.

## Interstate 75



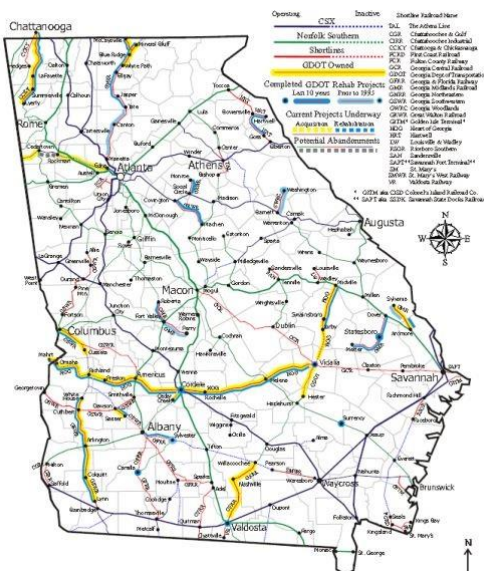
Interstate 75 comes up through Florida, entering Georgia near Valdosta, and continues until it reaches Macon where it intersects with Interstate 16 eastbound towards Savannah. After Macon, there are no major junctions until in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The first metropolitan freeway met is Interstate 675, followed by the Atlanta "Perimeter" bypass, Interstate 285. I-75 is duplexed with Interstate 85 over the Downtown Connector through the central business district of Atlanta. After the two Interstates split, Interstate 75 makes a beeline northwest, crossing outside the Interstate 285 Perimeter. The section of Interstate 75 just north of Interstate 285 has 15 through lanes, making it the widest roadway anywhere in the Interstate Highway System. North of Marietta, the final major junction in the Atlanta

metropolitan area is the Interstate 575 spur. Interstate 75 then traverses the hilly northern Georgia terrain as it travels towards Chattanooga, Tennessee.

There are seven exits from I-75 in Henry County, two presently within the City limits of McDonough.

## Ports and Rail

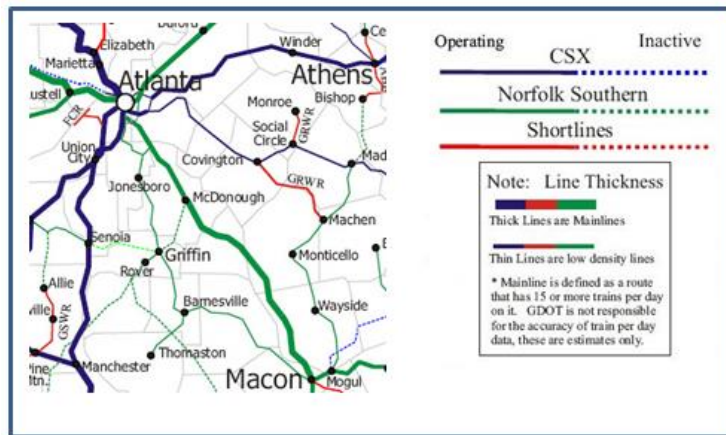
### GEORGIA RAIL SYSTEM



The Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) owns and operates gateways serving the U.S. Southeast. As one of the state's largest job generators, GPA is responsible for more than 350,000 jobs, \$66 billion in revenue, and income exceeding \$18 billion annually. GPA manages the second busiest port on the east coast - fourth in the country. The port has been the fastest growing in the country for the past 10 years and the largest single container terminal in North America. Nearly 220,000 are employed in the production, transportation and material moving in the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area and GPA is an important conduit for materials and products. The Georgia Ports Authority is currently setting records for cargo handling in Savannah and Brunswick.

The \$706 million Savannah Harbor Expansion Project cleared its last major hurdle in October 2014. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates the harbor deepening project will bring \$174 million in annual net benefits to the U.S. and for the larger ships expected to be in extensive use after the expanded Panama Canal opens.

Freight rail is here, and it's huge. The two major players, CSX and Norfolk Southern, own more than 4,600 miles of track in Georgia on which they move nearly 190 million tons of freight a year - forecast to increase to 217 million tons by 2040.



Those main lines are complemented by 29 short line railroads that, for the most part, serve businesses and industries in smaller Georgia communities. These are regional lines that operate on another 1,000-plus miles of track, 540 of which they lease from GDOT.

Freight rail helps sustain more than 600,000 Georgia jobs and adds more than \$54 billion to the

state's economy. It links our ports and distribution centers to virtually every community in the state and thousands more across the South, East and Midwest.

## Economic Base

These are major employers in Henry County:

Company Name	Products/Services	Number of Employees
Alpla, Inc.	Plastic Bottles	159
Americold	Frozen/Refrigerated Whse	75
Atlas Roofing Corporation	Asphalt Roofing	99
AT&T	Surplus Parts	---
Behr Process Corporation	Paints	110
Bennett International Group, Inc.	Trucking	250
Briggs & Stratton Corporation	Lawn Mowers	483
Carlisle Tire & Wheel Company	Tire & Wheel Distribution	55
Carter's Inc.	Children's Apparel	213
Clark Dietrich Metal Framing, Inc.	Structural Steel Products	65
De Wafelbakkers	Food Products	105
Ecolab	Detergents	110
Encompass Group, LLC	Hospital Apparel	150
Exel/Kimberly Clark	Personal Care Products	153
Federal Aviation Administration	Air Traffic Control Center	800
Ford Parts & Distribution	Motorcraft Auto Parts	92
GENCO Logistics/Sears	Customer Returns	89
Georgia Crown Distributing Company	Beverages	275
Georgia Power Customer Care Center	Customer Care Center	600

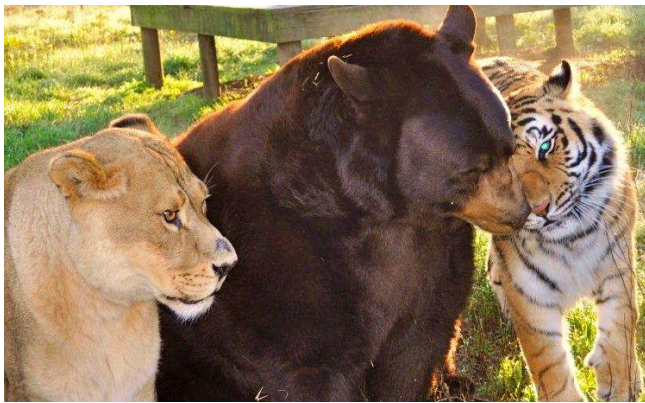
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company	Retread Aviation Tires	54
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company	Tires	190
Henry County Government	County Government	1,595
Henry County Schools	County School System	4,800
Home Depot Distribution Center	Household Products	204
Home Depot Online Fulfillment Center	Household Products	
Home Depot Repair Logistics Center	Household Products	115
IFCO Systems North America	Plastic Containers	150
Inline Plastics Corporation	Plastic Food Containers	99
John Deere Regional Parts Distribution Center	Lawn Mowers	104
Ken's Foods, Inc.	Salad Dressing	323
Kuehne & Nagel/Pirelli	Tires	53
Kuehne & Nagel/DirectTV	Satellite TV Equipment	60
Kumho Tire USA, Inc.	Tires	50
Luxottica Retail Group	Eyewear	302
Maurice Sporting Goods	Sports Equipment	95
Millard Refrigerated Services	Frozen/Refrigerated Whse.	162
Nestle USA Inc.	Dairy, Food Products	153
Piedmont Henry Hospital	Community Hospital	1,115
Pep Boys Distribution Center	Exporters (Whls)	121
PVH Corp	Apparel	500
Simmons Manufacturing Company, Inc.	Valves for Water Systems	100
Smead Manufacturing Company	Filing Supplies	179
Southern States, LLC	High Voltage Disconnects	380
Sports Authority	Sports Equipment	118
Summit Racing Equipment	High Performance Auto Parts	100
Toppan Interamerica, Inc.	Rotogravure Decorative Paper	159
Toys "R" Us	Toys	220
Whirlpool	Appliances	154
Xerox	Bank Operations	249



## Amenities



**Atlanta Motor Speedway** has become a top sports, corporate, family and entertainment facility, located on 887 acres just west of the City of McDonough. Since holding its first race in 1960, Atlanta Motor Speedway has become a premiere facility for multiple forms of racing in addition to a wide range of other events including concerts, family gatherings, business conventions and the Georgia State Fair.



**Noah's Ark** is a 250-acre Animal Sanctuary with over 1,500 animals of 100 species that were abused, unwanted and neglected. A beautiful park-like setting with paved pathways, picnic area and playground as well as the animal rehabilitation center, training and administration building, and natural habitats.



**Southern Belle Farm** is a 330-acre working farm that features pick-your-own strawberries, pumpkins, and, in the fall, a corn maze, pumpkin patch, pig races, cow train, field trips, farm tours, picnics, parties and group events.



**Nash Farm Battlefield** is a 204-acre park, is just outside of McDonough. The Civil War battle called Lovejoy's Station occurred near here. The Nash Farm was the scene of considerable military activity near the end of the Atlanta Campaign. The Nash Farm Battlefield Museum is open most Fridays and Saturdays 9am to 5pm, except holidays. The museum houses a large artifact collection, period clothing exhibits, and history of the Nash farm and family. Re-enactments are held annually.



**McDonough Square** features the county courthouse, historic jail building and old Post Office. There's also a Welcome Center/Main Street Office in a historic 1920s Standard Oil service station. In the center of the square is a monument to Henry County's Confederate dead. One block east of the square is the Henry County Judicial Center. There are numerous other historic buildings dating back to the mid-1820s.



## **Weaknesses (and Threats)**

The conditions and characteristics that can be considered weaknesses and threats for McDonough relate to externally imposed conditions and to the ability to adjust and manage resources, infrastructure, systems, leadership and staff to meet those conditions.

Some of the external factors are: the general economy, the future of our metropolis, I-75, Norfolk Southern, demographics, perceptions of the community.

All of these elements drive positive growth and provide challenges in preparing for and/or reacting to their impacts.

Revenue, need for services, infrastructure projects and service delivery ebb and flow - seldom at the same rate.

### **Economy**

The response to the great recession in the national and regional economy is still mixed, with bright spots emerging in some aspects and some problems lingering.

It is challenging to allocate scarce resources to investing in human capital, infrastructure and marketing so that opportunities can be seized as they emerge.

Much of the data used by developers, industries, investors and lending institutions is based on lagging indicators. That can be a problem in making site decisions, especially in areas experiencing change. We need to work with them, keep data up to date, and market the future.

## Transportation

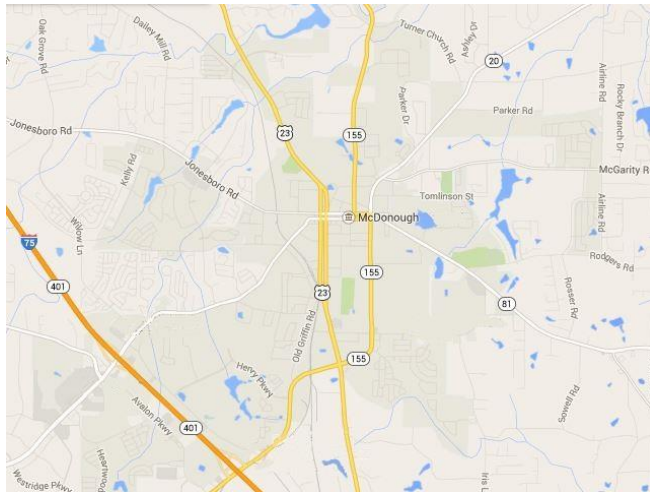
### I-75



The upgrades to I-75 will cause short-term inconvenience eventually tying the city more firmly into the Metro area. Changes in traffic patterns may require attention to signage to avoid inconvenience and disruption to businesses and neighborhoods.

There are significant needs to upgrade local roadways to handle the residential and business traffic once it exits the interstate. Many city and county roads have rural, two lane

geometries and there are significant points of congestion – particularly in and around downtown McDonough.

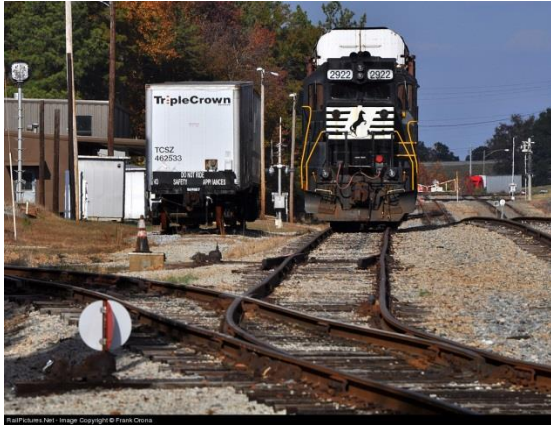


The historic radial roadway system requires through traffic to travel through the town square. As the city and county are developed, through traffic is disrupting traffic to the city center and inconveniencing pedestrian traffic around the square.

The completion of the one-way pairs schema for the Courthouse square will increase efficiency, but is not a substitute for other bypasses.

Long-term, traffic congestion at the McDonough Square will adversely impact the attractiveness and economic viability of the Square, its activities and its businesses. And growth in other parts of the city and county will require alternative/expanded corridors.

## Norfolk Southern



Norfolk Southern is important as a resident business and as a rail link from ports and factories to markets.

Economic growth and changes to ports and maritime shipping patterns will put more traffic on the mainline that goes through the community. Rail changes may affect land use changes and as well as road traffic.

We may need to evaluate opportunities for manufacturing and distribution centers with rail access, possible changes to rail use, traffic, rights-of-way, geometry and alignment, as well as plans for at-grade crossings.

The bypass issues will also have to consider at-grade crossings and possible grade separation.

These traffic issues will require GDOT and NS participation – and will take long-range planning and demonstrated political will.

## Growth

Economic growth and residential growth are causes and effects. They are goals for local government and they drive what is possible. Once again, the challenge is finding resources, prioritizing projects and, often, playing catch-up.

Changes to Comprehensive Plans, land use and building codes, annexations, capital improvement plans, road work, the extension of utilities and the provision of other city services can be leading indicators and trailing indicators of growth – attracting and directing growth.

Long range goals, values and the desired vision for the community can drive all of those things or they can be purely reactive. In times of rapid growth, it can be difficult to be at the forefront of implementing strategic program .

Part of strategic planning and dealing with long-range goals, values and desired visions involves protecting those aspects of community character and heritage that are unique, authentic and worth protecting.

There are examples of communities that preserve historical, cultural and natural resources that add to their competitive market advantages and increase their

attractiveness and competitiveness for positive economic and residential growth, and there are examples of communities that accept any growth offered and lose the open space, agricultural heritage, open space, historic resources and cultural amenities that set them apart in the first place.

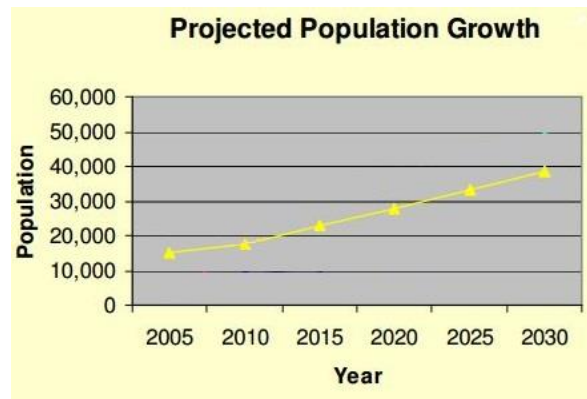
When those communities in the second group are built-out, they no longer have their original, unique and authentic features and become indistinguishable sprawl. Tax base, which initially rose in value, can be lost due to functional obsolescence due to lack of a strong and lasting quality of development and positive identity.

### **Resources and their Management**

Once again, growth in revenue, growth in need for services, growth in infrastructure and growth in service delivery ebb and flow, seldom at the same rate.

## Opportunities

McDonough can successfully:



- Manage growth
- Capitalize on I-75, rail and proximity to Airport
- Solve transportation conflicts to facilitate access to and through the community for residential, business, industrial and visitor travelers – into the future
- Match land use and business development to evolving rail services
- Represent where Atlanta Metro meets Central Georgia heritage and open space.
- Maintain and expand walkable, small town living for multiple markets, multiple age groups and housing products – around downtown and in other clusters.
- Reach the critical mass of retail and services with easy access and attractive design so that it becomes, and stays, the retail center of gravity for the Southeast quadrant of Greater Atlanta and along the I-75 corridor
- Be the entry point for accessing the destinations of Henry County and beyond with first class destination management, destination marketing and visitor services
- Build on the world class asset of the Atlanta Motor Speedway to become even more of a regional destination for motorsports and other events requiring such a spectacular venue
- Build on farm, wildlife and natural resource assets as close-in refuge from Metro urbanism
- Provide and update the Downtown Square for its recognition as the government, cultural, recreational, shopping and dining destination for the community
- Use its downtown development authority in concert with Main Street and with updated land use and building codes to maximize close-in development that builds on and strengthens economic vitality, quality of life, traditional design and scale and community identity and pride



- Expand its Main Street Program and achieve additional awards for community initiatives
  - Provide other venues for public and private events that reflect heritage and traditional open space
  - Embrace Internet and offer first class service for business and personal use
- 
- Become a recognized center for education, workforce development and entrepreneurship
  - Continue to court media location shoots
  - Enhance and strengthen the strong brand identity built on the unique and authentic cultural assets of the city
  - Support relocations and expansions supported by removal of barriers to development, development of incentives and friendly service
  - Provide unique and welcoming corridors into the City and into downtown
  - Enhance and expand its "Green Infrastructure" of parks and trails throughout the city



## Trends

*“The Atlanta region has always been defined by its thriving economy. For more than 40 years, one of the fastest growing metros in the nation as people moved here for job opportunities and quality of life...*



*Businesses and entrepreneurs are bringing creative, innovative growth industries to the Southside of the region. Attracted by Georgia's tax incentives, global companies like Pinewood Studios, Screen Gems and others have made huge investments in metro Atlanta, turning Georgia into the third largest state for film production.*

*According to the Georgia Department of Economic Development, in FY2012, the film, music and entertainment industries represented a \$3.1 billion economic impact in Georgia, a 29 percent increase over the previous year.*

*On another front, exciting things are taking off at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the busiest airport in the world, and a major asset on the Southside. Hartsfield moves more than 250,000 passengers and almost 2,000 metric tons of freight each day and directly provides some 50,000 jobs. And, with the new international terminal, it is now the gateway to even more of the world than before. While this makes the airport one of Georgia's primary economic engines, it also makes it a prime place to spur more economic growth.*

*The Home Depot has looked to the Southside as well. The company opened a direct fulfillment center in Locust Grove in Henry County last month. The 1.1 million square foot facility is expected to employ almost 400 Home Depot associates. It's one of only three direct fulfillment centers in the country.*

*As metro Atlanta's economy rebounds from the recession, the Southside is not being left behind. It is starting to create a jobs magnet around the world's busiest airport and finding ways to grow and further diversify its workforce. These efforts on the Southside will help ensure the future success of the entire region.”* ARC

*“Market areas across PNC's Southeast regional footprint will continue to power forward through the remainder of 2014. Employment growth is substantially above the U.S. average in the major markets, picking up where the region's pre-recession dynamics left off. Severe damage to housing markets continues to be repaired. Home values are rising at 10 to 20 percent year-over-year growth paces, lending ample confidence to the notion that even if not fully recovered yet, housing markets are re-establishing themselves as a growth driver of Southeast region economies. Tourism, and leisure and hospitality spending in general, will remain healthy in the coming year.*

*Consumer spending has had little trouble maintaining its strength since the national recovery began in 2009 and this year poses little threat to that pattern. And the business expansion efforts that drove economic growth in market areas such as Atlanta, Charlotte, and Raleigh in the years leading up to the recession, show signs of readily resuming this year (Chart 5) as businesses find value in deploying their cash stockpiles and taking advantage of a low interest rate environment that has little more than a year's shelf life left.*

*Atlanta and Southeast Florida (Miami) are again at the fore of the Southeast region's economic charge. Both market areas will eclipse their pre-recession peaks in terms of total employment by the second half of 2014, and will be doing so on the strength of broad labor force growth. Businesses searching for access to large business networks, international markets, technology centers, and vast local and tourism-oriented consumer bases will continue to identify these two market areas as prime targets for their expansion plans."*

[www.pnc.com/regionaleconomics](http://www.pnc.com/regionaleconomics)

*"As our housing market emerges from the great recession, here are some trends to look for as the market gains traction.*

- The reports of the death of our suburban single-family housing markets have been greatly exaggerated.*
- Over time, new single-family housing will get more "green", lot sizes will continue to shrink and subdivisions will look more like traditional neighborhood developments with houses pulled closer to the street, sidewalks, front porches and fewer cul-de-sacs.*
- Gentrification in older Atlanta neighborhoods will accelerate.*
- In-town living will increasingly be dominated by multi-family housing and mixed-use developments.*
- Look for older suburban city centers to become more dense.*
- Our growing diversity and changing demographics will continue to strengthen our housing markets.*
- In particular, expect to see more over-55 developments."*

Seth Weissman, Partner, Weissman, Nowack, Curry & Wilco P.C.

*"The I-75 South Corridor is one of the busiest and most vital transportation corridors within Georgia, serving as a key connection within the State. This corridor is the direct connection between the growing Metro Atlanta region and the Macon region in central Georgia and also serves as a key connection to the coastal region and the port of Savannah. Ensuring the continued future safe and efficient travel within this corridor is critical. For this reason, the Georgia Department of Transportation has recently begun developing the I-75 South Corridor and Subarea Master Plan which will focus on current and future travel conditions between the southern end of the Atlanta Metro area and Macon/Bibb County. "*

GDOT

*“We’re going to continue to be an attractive location, whether it be for individuals or companies,” says Henry County’s Bob White. “We still have that superior transportation and location access. We have a very good quality of life. We have an outstanding value for the dollar, and we have a good school system that will continue to improve. So we see all those factors continuing to work in our favor.”*

Georgia Trend

*“Georgia is positioned to begin the long-awaited Port of Savannah expansion project by the end of the year in a move to bolster state’s position in cargo shipping and commerce, Gov. Nathan Deal announced Wednesday.*

*“This may go down as one of the most historic days in the history of our state,” said Deal. “The deepening of the Port of Savannah is going to continue to be one of those things that attracts businesses to our state, provide jobs for our citizens and gives us the capacity to continue to grow as the leader of the southeast and very soon, I believe, the leader of the entire East Coast.”*

*While deepening and expanding the Port of Savannah will have an immediate impact in that city, its impact will also be felt across the state through its interstate system and rail and freight lines.”*

Clayton News Daily

## Recommendation Categories

### Governance

1. Vision and Comprehensive Plan  
Basis for all plans and regulations

*"A city is not an accident but the result of coherent visions and aims."* Leon Krier

2. Unified Development Code  
Pulls together, streamlines and makes rules accessible for both staff, community and developers.

*"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work."* Daniel Burnham

3. Infrastructure  
Well-executed capital Improvement plans are not expenses – they are investments with good returns on investments

*"... lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves."* Jane Jacobs

4. Incentive Policy for the City of McDonough City  
The removal of disincentives is the best incentive; incentives encourage desired behaviors and are good, sensible tools.

5. Partnering  
There are many local, state and national governmental entities; educational institutions; and private businesses that want what's best for the economic vitality, quality of life and community identity of McDonough. Communicating, collaborating and coordinating their efforts are our greatest force multipliers.

## Business Development



6. Maintain a healthy retail environment that draws from regional markets.

While capital goods spending, technology, entrepreneurship, and productivity build the economy and produce our standard of living, retail represents 70 percent of gross domestic product.

7. Recruitment, retention, expansion, entrepreneurship

Show existing firms that they are appreciated; encourage expansion; help in problem solving; communicate and collaborate; embrace emerging trends.

8. Education

No jurisdiction can achieve sustainable economic development without investing in human capital. Education provides quality of life benefits to individuals and the community. It raises productivity, enhances creativity and promotes both entrepreneurship and technological advances. Many resources are devoted to it but results are often mixed. The community leader, the business leader and the community development planner need to join the academics in seeing that education resources are applied to community goals.

9. Use local, regional, statewide and national public, private and public/private partnerships that support economic development, downtown development, tourism development and inter-governmental programs

Again, there are many entities; institutions; and businesses that want what's best for the economic vitality, quality of life and community identity of McDonough. Communicating, collaborating and coordinating their efforts are our greatest force multipliers.

## Branding, Marketing and PR



### Branding and Marketing

A strong community brand can attract new residents, business investors, shoppers, tourists, and other consumers. Branding can also be used to shape existing consumers' perceptions of their community. You don't just make up a brand, an image or catch phrase: they must be, at the same time, unique, authentic and compelling.

There is no better marketing strategy than a successful and thriving community.

## Redevelopment and Enhancements

### 10. Enhancements

Community development and infrastructure development are not just about efficiency and safety. We can great public spaces: landscape and connections to surrounding activities. Great spaces makes happier people, happier people are more productive and attract others – making better and more viable cities.

### 11. Redevelopment

"When you're alone and life is making you lonely, you can always go downtown. When you've got worries, all the noise and the hurry seems to help, I know, downtown.

So go downtown. Things will be great when you're downtown. Don't wait a minute more, downtown. Everything is waiting for you, downtown." Petula Clark



## **Recommendations**

### **Governance**

#### **1. Vision and Comprehensive Plan**

It is important for the City to express its vision and to preserve the character that has supported growth over the past generations.

It is important to note that developers and other business prospects appreciate clarity, accessibility and friendliness in vision, goals, policies and regulations.

Comprehensive planning addresses:

- Vision, Goals and Policies for Community and for special character areas
- Needs and Opportunities
- Work Programs
- Capital Improvement Plans: Roads, water, sewer, sidewalks, facilities, etc.
- Economic Development Plans
- Land Use Plans
- Transportation Plans
- Housing Plans
- Community Participation
- Regional Water and Environmental Plans

Management and land use studies have been initiated. There is a commitment to diverse, high quality housing through the use of building codes, design standards, and vigilant code enforcement while protecting farmland, agricultural areas and trees in manners that also protect private property rights while also protecting natural green spaces and creating additional nature parks and other recreational opportunities.

In order to preserve the unique and authentic special character in historical, cultural and natural resources that add to competitive market advantages and to increase attractiveness and competitiveness for directed, positive economic and residential growth, the existing commitment to planning and management need to continue and be enhanced. The 2030 Henry County-Cities Joint Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2009, should be updated.

## 2. Unified Development Code

The City of McDonough intends to better integrate and modernize its regulatory framework for zoning, development, signage, downtown redevelopment, corridors, landscaping requirements for new developments, etc. through a Unified Development Code. Clarity and access in regulations can be as valuable as financial incentives. The City of McDonough issued an RFQ (Bid # 2014-001) for a Unified Development Code and selected Pond & Company to complete the work.

Fast-track permitting can be very valuable to developers and prospects. The ability of a community to fast-track specific projects can help to attract and expedite development. The City might consider a formal policy that allows for fast-track permitting of time-sensitive projects, perhaps allowing for the contracting of outside professional planning support.

Streamline the permit review process such that applicants receive coordinated documentation from all inspectors and reviewers in various City departments.

Consider Web-based permit-tracking tools.

Review City ordinances, permitting, and design review processes, soliciting the feedback of developers and small business owners. Capture, list and consider complaints and suggestions for revising City code and policy

## 3. Transportation and Infrastructure



The City of McDonough works with partners at the County, Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Transportation to discuss local infrastructure priorities, including but not limited to road infrastructure; water and wastewater; public transit; pedestrian and bicycle solutions; waste management; and energy infrastructure. One goal is to develop and convey a unified

front in advocating for and advancing legislation and infrastructure projects that benefit Henry County and the City.

Comprehensive Plans address capital improvements, transportation and water. McDonough benefits from access to interstate and rail and proximity to the airport, and has recently expanded its water treatment from the Fargason (Walnut Creek) Reservoir,

it may need to strengthen physical infrastructure to encourage and accommodate future growth.

The completion of the one-way pairs schema for the Courthouse Square will increase efficiency by a noticeable percentage and should be expedited, but alternative routes will most likely be needed and planning requires long lead times.

Expedite McDonough Boulevard and more alternative and/or expanded routes.

Review existing truck routes for any warranted modifications and build out grid for additional options for local trips.

Establish periodic reviews and updates of the long-term transportation plan for the City, coordinated with County and GDOT. Establish policies for participation in land acquisition or other actions that might accelerate the programs and projects of the other entities - for City benefit. Work with partners to develop annual agenda of short-term and long-term transportation infrastructure priorities

Review and update existing policies and fees related to partnering with developers on infrastructure. Evaluate possible needs on corridors and along utilities lines in anticipation of developers.

Develop a long-range plan for enhancing the City's fiber optic and wireless networks so as to develop a reputation as one of the most attractive locations for technological companies.

Continue to implement the recommendations of the Livable Centers Initiatives (LCI) and other studies and reports

The City of McDonough continues to pursue the organizational and infrastructural improvements and recommendations detailed in existing reports. The City should review of progress towards the achievement of LCI Recommendations and identify priorities for each year to advance specific investments that support the transformations.

Coordinate land use around additional nodes of development, in which residential uses relate to retail and other services, considering trip generation and trip length

#### **4. Incentive Policy for the City of McDonough**

Planning and infrastructure are the foundation for incentivizing growth. Well-designed efforts achieve the removal of disincentives – which are often the best incentives.

Developers and business/industry leaders require clear and accessible information about:

- Available land
- Land use regulations
- Availability and cost of access and infrastructure
- Building codes
- Future transportation, infrastructure and development projects
- Market analyses
- Fees and costs
- Work force
- Quality of life

The ease of availability of this information will help to build confidence and commitment by site location folks. Policies, procedures and tools that are state-of-the-art and user-friendly are major incentive in themselves.

The proximate cause for much business relocation is that the decision-maker wants to live in the new community. That is all the more reason to pursue quality of life and marketing efforts as well as business development.

Programs are available to further enhance an environment that is conducive to attracting and expediting compatible development, redevelopment and business/industrial recruitment, retention and expansion.

Work with county, regional and state agencies to evaluate the utility and value of existing and potential incentives to develop an Incentive Policy.

Present a set of recommendations to the City Council for their review, revision and approval.

These might include:

- Property tax abatements. Eligibility can be tied to a number of factors such as investments in targeted businesses or targeted districts, like DDA or Main Street can be phased-in and linked to job creation or investment.
- Impact fee reductions or waivers can help some projects become viable or move forward with greater ease and speed. Waivers and reductions could be targeted on specific districts. (State law requires that revenues lost as a result of impact fee waivers must be made up with funds from other sources - to maintain the standard levels of service.)
- Flexibility in the permitting and development review process
- Density bonuses for desired types of development
- Variances/waivers in design standards
- Alternative financing sources, including revolving loans
- Subsidized rent for targeted vacant space
- Provide or subsidize infrastructure or land

- Assistance with site planning, surveying, etc.
- Façade grants
- Tax credits for energy efficiency, preservation, etc.
- Develop revolving loan fund (RLF) to support economic development.

Incentive program should include specific eligibility requirements, acceptable uses and review standards for each incentive as well as conditions that must be maintained to avoid the requirement for clawback (repayment/reimbursement). All incentives should require an economic impact analysis and a “but-for” assessment. There are economic impact software packages.

## 5. **Annexation**

Continuing strategic annexation is crucial to meeting vision and comprehensive plan objectives.

## 6. **Partner**

Relationships with local, regional, state and national groups and associations in the economic, downtown and tourism development fields can help in developing local programs. Sometimes prospects may come to us through those groups - state agencies, the local or regional associations, utilities, etc. Collaborative relationships between economic development practitioners can present a unified front to prospects and keep us current on high-value programs and services. Further, their knowledge of more macro challenges and can be very helpful.

City staff should regularly communicate with county-wide economic development staff to coordinate actions, including assigning responsibilities and identifying issues that are broader in geographic scope than the City (regional transportation, workforce development, etc.).

Have regular meetings, on a monthly or quarterly basis, with economic development staff at the County, Chamber and industrial development offices.

Maintain frequent and effective communication between City staff and major utilities and transportation entities. Utilities, Norfolk Southern, ARC and GDOT play a critical role in economic development. Their community, economic, and business development teams are involved in a number of activities to support existing and prospective new businesses. City staff should maintain frequent contact with these regional entities.

The City should develop an internal plan to ensure that effective relationships are developed and maintained with officials from other potential partners that can help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of community, economic, and workforce development efforts in the City of McDonough. This plan should include the

identification of key services provided by each partner, identification contacts, identification of existing or planned investments, etc. These potential partners include but are not limited to: higher education institutions, state agencies, regional planning entities, offices of elected officials, and other relevant local, state, and federal agencies and organizations.

The City should also evaluate the benefit and cost-effectiveness of City staff attending or providing resource support for meetings, conventions, trade shows and missions and other events that provide the City and County with opportunities to market McDonough and its various assets to targeted audiences that align with the community's targeted clusters. Preference should be given to events that are currently attended by these partners in order to share costs and maximize impact. The City should also consider partnership opportunities with major employers exhibiting at relevant events. Attending such events shows that the City is committed to being a valuable partner.

## **Business Development**

### **7. Maintain a healthy, regional retail environment.**

Continue to work with the developers of South Point Regional Retail Development Area and others to develop a long-term economic sustainability plan for the retail and entertainment development that consolidates access and parking and opens up space for compatible uses.

Regional developers have decades of acquired expertise in analyzing the retail environment and attracting tenants. They may help with the identification of specific retailers that may be a strong fit for other, non-competing properties.

Identify all vacant and distressed retail properties inside the city limits, using city, county and commercial records and real estate databases. Work with property owners on improvements, marketing plans and ways in which the City can support revitalization and re-use.

Research and help property owners improve prospective tenancies, marketing and product mix. Retail Leakage and Surplus Assessment can be used by developers and property owners to identify specific prospective tenants that they can use in their own recruitment efforts.

Further develop downtown as a regional "eatertainment" district; a unique destination.



## 8. Recruitment, retention, expansion, entrepreneurship

The City should research existing efforts that help existing businesses, support expansion plans, alleviate burdens and barriers to competitiveness, and discourage them from relocating elsewhere. This assessment should examine a number of items including:

- Specific businesses engaged in outreach efforts
- The frequency of contact with existing businesses
- The type of outreach employed (phone, survey, on-site visits, etc.)
- Types of software used for tracking
- Status of pre-existing databases

Studies have shown that existing businesses can be responsible for up to 80 percent of all new job creation. While ribbon-cutting ceremonies and corporate relocations often make headlines, existing businesses are typically fueling economic growth at a much higher pace than relocations. Communities that lack BRE programs often find that they could have helped an employer stay in business or remain competitive at its current location after the business has already decided to close or relocate.

BRE programs typically include site visits and interviews with executive leadership, telephone interviews, Web-based surveys, and mail surveys to identify business and tax climate concerns; labor or training needs; regulatory concerns; financial needs; issues with permits, licenses, and local ordinances; physical infrastructure concerns and needs; and other points of concern.

They also can develop early warning systems to identify firms that may be at at-risk and can:

- Mitigate reductions in force or closures before they happen
- Identify barriers to expansion and adjust government policies and regulations
- Improve communication with local government
- Facilitate growth from within

Work with Chamber on Henry4Biz.org to expand into a Virtual Business Assistance Center. This virtual center might include:

- directory of all forms and documents relevant to business licensing and permitting
- frequently asked questions about business startup in the City
- forms to request an appointment with City staff and others
- directory of all federal, state, and regional support services and assistance programs for small businesses
- calendar of events related to small business networking opportunities

Work with the Chamber, Henry4Biz.org and others to develop a Business Assistance program to provide hands-on assistance to existing business on a set day of every month. The program would be designed to provide business owners with the opportunity to meet with pertinent individuals at regularly-scheduled times to discuss

needs and concerns. Staff would coordinate requests, schedule appointments, and ensure that representatives from relevant entities are able to provide assistance.

Ultimately, the program should not replace but rather direct users to existing services. Long-term opportunities potentially include the development of a physical Business Assistance Center that could provide existing and prospective small business owners with a wide variety of services depending on the level of commitment

Sponsor technology-oriented networking and educational events at various locations, including at technological employers in McDonough and the County.

Develop a competitive grant program to support the attraction of innovative early-stage companies to McDonough. In addition, the City and others might consider developing other non-traditional incentives to help attract early-stage companies.

The City and others might explore the creation of sponsored acceleration awards, which might provide the sponsors with an ownership stake in the companies receiving awards. These awards could include continuing support, including subsidized office, laboratory or production space, and access to technology and infrastructure provided by the sponsors.

## **9. Education**

Invest in education initiatives that elevate McDonough's competitive advantage.

Evaluate the viability of increasing private sector involvement in K-12 and higher education throughout the County by key private sector leadership from major employers. Those partnerships could be tasked with developing new ways to help advance key education and workforce development initiatives in the county and city.

Attract more and bigger two-year and four-year branch campuses and programs that help meet training needs of local firms.

Evaluate the viability of establishing a need-based scholarship that bridges gaps in education funding for deserving students.

Create youth activity centers.

Expand entrepreneurship education initiatives that include a business plan competition and summer fellowship opportunities for high school students. Entrepreneurship education is increasingly becoming an integrated component of curricula. School systems are finding new ways to teach students about business.

## Branding, Marketing and PR

### 10. Branding and Marketing

Whether marketing for new industries, marketing for tourism or marketing Main Street, every dollar spent on any one should support dollars spent on the others. They are all part of developing economic vitality, quality of life and community identity and pride. It should be clear that McDonough Georgia is within Henry County; is within the Southern Crescent of the Metro Atlanta Region: State of Georgia; Southeastern US.

Whether marketing a downtown event, promoting a destination in the County or recruiting a major industrial facility, it should be clear that there are relationships among the various entities, destinations and activities.

That does not mean that branding, Web presences and messages need be centralized or have the same look. But, it does mean that there should be coordination and linkages. It also means that the mission, goals and objectives for each media platform should be clear and discrete, avoiding any confusing overlaps and gaps in images, messaging, announcements and calendars.

City government is discrete; county government is discrete. Economic development crosses those boundaries, but has components that are discrete to each and beyond. Visitors don't care if a destination is in one jurisdiction or another, but they do care about distances and open times. Visitors interested in events want up-to-date information. It is confusing when there are multiple Web sites and Facebook pages with conflicting information.

There are many sub-branded versions of Coca Cola, with and without that, but it is very clear that they are products of the Coca Cola Company. There are many other items in the Coca Cola Company's product line, with varying degrees of identification with the flagship, but those degrees of separation are not left to chance. Branding and sub-branding decisions can make huge differences in identity, sales and profits.



City and County seals, Chamber logo, CVB branding, Main Street presence, etc., colors, fonts, pictographs, formatting, etc. and impacts on each other should be clearly and fully planned.

Evaluate branding/sub-branding across all media and across:

- Local government operations
- Main Street
- Tourism
- Economic Development

The City-affiliated Web presences should be evaluated starting with hardware, software, hosting, access, ease of update, as well as the mission, goals and objectives of each presence.

Develop a branding policy for the city that covers all aspects of communications. Leverage collective assets of all relevant partners in the development of a brand and associated messaging for the betterment of the community.

A branding manual should cover all aspects of municipal branding and visual communications:

Reason for standards

- Brand
- Graphic identities
- Properties
- City Seal
- Logos & taglines
- Permitted uses
- Clear space, alignment & sizes
- Colors
- Typography and fonts
- Stationery, business cards, forms, signs, etc.
- Brand management

According to the International Economic Development Council, 80 percent of searches for company relocations are done via the Internet. Corporate site selectors need the ability to quickly and easily obtain current, reliable, detailed and relevant information about the community.

Working with county partners, develop economic development, downtown development and tourism development Web sites and social media presences that are informative, compelling, targeted flexible, user-friendly, and interactive to their specific external audiences and linked. We need informative economic development websites that are competitive with best practice Web sites from competing cities. The process should utilize search engine optimization (SEO) and analytics.

It should be clear that there are relationships among city and county partners. Web presences should present compatible (not the same) brand images. There should be linkages and clarity. Someone looking for information about the community, for whatever reason should be able to navigate among partners, among technical data, among lifestyle information and among calendars, without confusion.

Economic development Web presences should include information in both web-based and PDF formats covering:

- Economic trends
- Demographic profiles
- Workforce and higher education information
- K-12 information and statistics
- Key business costs
- Tax profiles
- Utilities and rates information
- Available sites and properties
- Available financial and non-financial incentives
- Retail surplus and leakage information
- Physical and infrastructural assets
- Quality of life features and assets (with links)
- Regulatory information (with links)
- Downloadable profiles of target clusters
- Searchable directories and data-retrieval tools (Select Georgia, Georgia SBDC)
- User-generated content such as testimonials
- Links to relevant partners in the community, economic, and workforce development fields

Develop media directed at target clusters. In addition to an attractive and informative Web site, the City needs to develop targeted print and electronic collateral that used in responding to requests for information from prospects of all types. The material needs to be specific to each target cluster in describing relevant regional assets as they relate to that cluster.

Identify specific print and Web-based publications that present opportunities to market the City of McDonough to audiences that align with the city's target clusters and evaluate the cost effectiveness of targeted marketing through advertising.

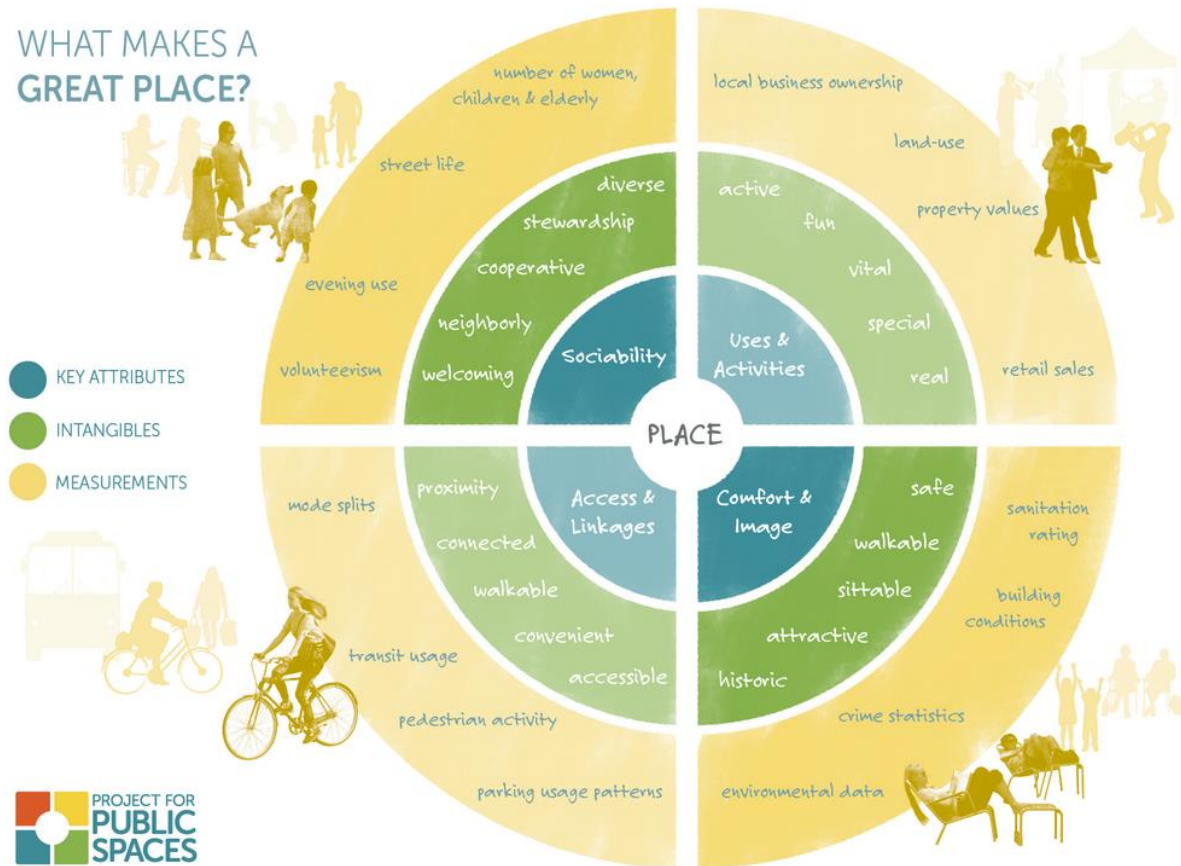
McDonough is growing in name recognition throughout the country, but in many cases it only known as a distant suburb of Atlanta. Many outsiders are surprised to learn of the city's high quality of life and business presence. Efforts should be made to promote the community character and assets of the City of McDonough to specific external audiences and key corporate decision makers.

The city should evaluate the cost effectiveness of placing advertisements in Web-based and social-media-based and select print publications that reach a specific audience that aligns with City's target clusters. Advertisements should be limited to outlets that demonstrate ROI.

Continue aggressive public relations campaign seeding stories of McDonough in regional national and international media outlets. The campaign should spread awareness of the City's various assets and success stories.

## Redevelopment and Enhancements

### 11. Enhancements



Continue to invest in the aesthetic, environmental, and cultural attractiveness of the City of McDonough.

Increase the number of community gathering places such as parks, trails, community centers, etc.

Expand the city's "Green Infrastructure" through the inventory and protection of sites and natural resources.

Develop new permanent facilities for events that would bring visitors and utilize nearby parts of the City, potentially spending additional money at retail or dining establishments in the Downtown and beyond. Big Springs, County Parking Deck and Old Train Depot are candidates.

Develop a public art sponsorship program that supports local artists and enhances the aesthetic character of the City of McDonough. A corporate-sponsored public art



program could solicit corporate donations to fund public art: sculptures, creative landscape architecture, downtown murals, and other forms of physical public art at gateways, focal points and blank spaces. Sponsors should be honored as well as the artists.

Encourage property owners and landlords of vacant retail space to allow local artists to showcase their work in vacant storefronts both in Downtown McDonough and outlying retail centers. Property owners, landlords and local artists should be informed of the program.

Develop neighborhood- and corridor-specific beautification plans with matching grants for implementation. The City of McDonough has invested heavily in efforts to make McDonough an aesthetically attractive place to live, work, and visit. This is exemplified by City policies that emphasize the preservation of trees and the maintenance of specific design standards as well as considerable public investments in landscaping and streetscaping. In addition to its own efforts, the City can facilitate volunteer-driven, collaborative approaches to community beautification that empower residents and businesses to make investments that elevate the attractiveness and value of their own property, as well as the entire community.

Conduct a large-scale, community-wide outreach plan to inform residents and businesses of the community beautification initiatives and to solicit volunteer commitments for a first annual Community Beautification Day. Homeowners associations, private businesses, parent-teacher associations, religious institutions, and other relevant partners should be engaged to lead volunteer recruitment efforts, organize volunteer teams, and assist in the implementation of targeted projects consistent with the neighborhood and corridor beautification plans. Keep McDonough Beautiful should be leveraged as a key resource in coordinating volunteer action teams that are not affiliated with any of the aforementioned entities. Local and regional media should be leveraged to publicize efforts.

Develop a community-wide challenge that encourages all City residents and business to make at least one investment in “green” or sustainable practices. There are numerous potential investments, including but limited to weather-stripping, window replacement, the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs, and other such investments. The City should partner with relevant utilities to create and implement an educational campaign that will fully inform all residents and businesses of the challenge, while also providing information and tips on maximizing energy efficiency and reducing their utility bills. The City and its partners should also ensure that these educational materials include any and all relevant incentives at the state and local level that are available to businesses making certain investments in energy efficiency or green building.

## 12. Redevelopment



Much of the recent corporate development in the City of McDonough has occurred in areas of the City that are distant and detached from the historic central business district. The City has made commitments to Main Street and the Downtown Development Authority with plans to redevelop its City Center in the last decade but a number of obstacles have prevented this vision from being realized. Efforts to incentivize redevelopment, support occupancy of existing vacant space, and steer developments to targeted areas can help to bring new life to central McDonough.



Fully Implement the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and its ability to support development through its powers. Continuing to support professional education in economic development and redevelopment finance for DDA members and interested others. The DDA should work with City staff to provide developers and prospective companies with all available assistance. Develop a Web site presence that is co-branded with the City and with Main Street



Maintain McDonough Main Street with annual work plans to guide downtown revitalization utilizing the Main Street Approach. Downtown is an economic activity center and serves as the historic cultural, recreational, and governmental center of the community. It is also the face, and brand, of the community

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has supported the advancement of the Main Street Approach to downtown revitalization for a generation. The Approach is a four-point, preservation-based program that is customized by the collaborative partners working to implement the program.

These four points are:

- Organization: building a collaborative and inclusive framework to support implementation
- Promotion: creating and aggressively marketing an exciting downtown product
- Design: enhancing the aesthetic character of the downtown
- Economic Restructuring: supporting new business development in the downtown

Main Street should coordinate design and economic restructuring with the DDA and promotion with the City's tourism effort; and develop a comprehensive neighborhood engagement program to increase awareness and patronage of downtown merchants in neighboring residential areas and all downtown merchants to engage households in residential areas surrounding downtown in a pride and patronage development effort.

The Main Street and DDA should consider a wide variety of programs and incentives:

- Coordination among: city, Main Street, DDA, Merchants Association and others
- Expand boundaries
- Coordinate event calendar development (fill gaps, piggy-back, avoid conflicts)
- Coordinate branding, Web presences and other media
- Inventory of space available
- Encourage events, not necessarily "own" events
- Downtown district overlay- zoning, building code, signage, etc.
- Parking management by DDA
- Wayfinding (vehicular and pedestrian)
- Façade grants
- Window fill displays
- Cluster plan
- Film and TV

Extend the connection between residents surrounding downtown and businesses within downtown. Options include:

- Specific "neighborhood appreciation" events hosted downtown
- Special promotions available to residents within a specified radius of downtown
- Extension of downtown boundaries
- Development of volunteer opportunities that build community



Residential neighborhoods directly surrounding downtown should feel that they are in fact part of downtown. Programs should be designed to help instill a mentality that downtown businesses are a part of their neighborhood community, and that their neighborhood community is part of downtown.

Continue buy local/frequent patron campaigns.

Develop a regular, annual regional and local calendar of events and promotions.

Maintain efforts to engage developers to advance the DDA plan. There are several proposals for the DDA district. The City should consider transferring to the DDA city-owned developable and redevelopable properties in the DDA district. Engage potential private sector partners and explore various public/private funding options. Every effort should be made to tie in relevant incentives that could help expedite the redevelopment process.

Host an annual “Developer’s Day in Downtown” to showcase available properties, discuss opportunities for redevelopment, and keep developers informed of Downtown McDonough investment and revitalization efforts, including efforts tied to Main Street programming. The event should be housed in a central location in Downtown McDonough with programming that includes discussion forums, a downtown site tour, and keynote speaker(s) that will help attract interest.

Develop a residential growth strategy that encourages higher-density residential development around Downtown McDonough and other neighborhood nodes. Create neighborhood-scale, mixed-use centers close to existing neighborhoods.

Downtown McDonough’s long-term vibrancy will be greatly supported by additional residential density within walking distance of downtown. The City should develop a plan to identify high-value parcels for high-density residential development and development within the entire city. This includes but is not limited to distressed and unoccupied retail centers/establishments as well as existing residentially-zoned properties with stalled developments. This strategy should also consider compatible residential infill and other relevant efforts. Work with developers to identify key barriers to higher-density residential infill, extending assistance and incentives.

For a community to be economically competitive, it must have housing that is both affordable and attractive to its workforce. Because communities have workers of all pay scales, it is important to have housing options to suit the needs of all types of workers, families, and individuals

Reprogram several downtown sites for prospective highest and best uses.

Create flexible high-value multi-use facilities at

- Big Springs (adjacent to park)
- Briggs and Stratton sites
- East/West one way pair corridor west of Town Square
- Highland Avenue/Depot and Harkins Street sites
- Parking Deck

Develop local historic districts, historic buildings, historic sites and genealogy research, documentation and marking so that they are managed and marketed as local assets.

## **Conclusion**

The City of McDonough is positioned to support and sustain a vibrant and culturally diverse community and economy.

The community is blessed with a number of significant assets to create a unique marketing strategy that will appeal to diverse population segments. Economic development is more competitive today than ever before, and communities are investing more, with the realistic expectation of returns on those investments.

There is no doubt that the Mayor and Council have made their commitments. The City departments are equipped to provide municipal services, as needed.

**Through this document, we attempt to provide a framework for planning within a business development context.**

With commitment to a vision, to protection of the unique and authentic assets, strategic planning, infrastructure investment, and utilization of management and funding tools, McDonough can successfully advance ahead of its challenges and become an even stronger community; one that is recognized for its unique identity and selected for investments related to: industry, business, lifestyle and recreation.

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