

The Power of Us

Vision 2020 began in 1999 as a joint project between the Coweta County Board of Commissioners, Coweta School Board, the Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce, City of Newnan, the former Peachtree Regional Hospital, and the former 21st Century Coweta. To date, nearly 6,000 Coweta citizen volunteers have played a role in the Vision 2020 planning process.

VISION 2020 THE POWER OF US



PRESERVING COWETA'S QUALITY OF LIFE

There's a lot to love about living in Coweta County. But as one of the country's fastest-growing areas, how can we preserve what we love most while taking advantage of the opportunities that accompany growth? Coweta County citizens decided to take control of our community's future several years ago through an innovative project called **Vision 2020**. Together, we've shared what's most important to us, created a process to explore the issues, and brainstormed possible solutions. Now, it's time to find the ways to turn our vision into action — by using “**the Power of Us.**”

THE ROAD TO DISCOVERY

Who's to say what's best for Coweta County? Coweta citizens, of course! In 2005, more than 5,500 Coweta residents completed a comprehensive **Be Something Different** survey to share their opinions about what our county's goals should be as we experience our inevitable growth. The survey responses were full of good ideas and meaningful concerns. Dr. Joe Harless, a nationally known strategic planning consultant and 30-year Coweta resident, guided Coweta leaders and volunteers in interpreting the survey results and developing a strategy for addressing them.

Under the leadership of the Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce, more than 130 volunteers worked in 11 different committees to address each issue area that arose from the survey: arts and recreation, community safety, daily life conveniences, economic conditions, education, environment, health care, housing, infrastructure, land use and public services. These committee members consulted with experts and local service providers to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and create new ideas for addressing them.



TOP 10 COMMUNITY CONCERNS FROM BE SOMETHING DIFFERENT SURVEY

1. Traffic congestion during rush hour
2. Availability of biking and walking paths
3. Hospital facilities
4. SAT scores
5. Availability and location of parks
6. Sufficient urban and green space
7. Cleanliness of roads and streets
8. Quality of roads and streets
9. Emergency health care services
10. White collar job availability

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EARLY IMPROVEMENTS TO COWETA'S QUALITY OF LIFE

Even though the **Vision 2020** planning process is still underway, we've already seen positive results that are making our community a better place to live. The roots of **Vision 2020** run back to the late 1990s and have resulted in notable community improvements, the first of which was the development of the Central Educational Center in 2000. More recently, the impending merger between Newnan Hospital and Piedmont Healthcare will mean more doctors and services to Coweta patients while maintaining our "hometown" sense of compassion and care. To help Coweta students succeed, we've begun long-term initiatives to ensure early childhood development for all young children and have created special 9th grade campuses targeted specifically to giving older students the academic and social footing they need to be successful in high school. To preserve the all-important greenspace that makes for a healthier community and helps keep us connected to our roots as a rural area, we're now emphasizing the "village" concept in new development that combines work, play and living space all within walkable communities.

These are just a few of the kinds of innovations we'll develop together as **Vision 2020** moves forward. There's no better way to show the real "Power of Us."

Moving Forward

SETTING PRIORITIES, EXPLORING OPTIONS

For more than nine months, 11 committees met and examined every aspect of the concerns raised by Coweta citizens in the **Be Something Different** survey. From their hard work emerged a set of priorities and initial recommendations that will guide **Vision 2020** going forward.

CULTURE AND RECREATION

Priority

Installation of sidewalks and bike lanes/paths, so that every resident in the County can eventually ride or walk anywhere via a safe and timely route

Recommendations:

- Make sidewalks and bicycle lanes or paths part of all new development and charge county and municipal government with ensuring that sidewalks and bikeways between developments are connected
- Install sidewalks, crosswalks and bike lanes/paths in all future road development
- Retrofit existing developments with sidewalks and bike lanes/paths
- Develop safe walking/biking routes to all schools
- Install bike racks throughout the county
- Incorporate walking and bike routes into every park and recreation center
- Create an advocacy group to spearhead efforts to develop safe walking and biking routes throughout the county

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Priority

Work toward consolidation of city and county fire departments to ensure the fastest possible response times for all county residents

Recommendations:

- Adopt reciprocal response agreements to better use existing resources
- Form a "Blue Ribbon Committee" to explore pros and cons of consolidation
- Increase fire-fighters at each station
- Upgrade street and road infrastructure and enforce street identification ordinances

DAILY LIFE CONVENIENCES

Priority

Improve traffic flow in areas around I-85 exits 51 and 47

Recommendations:

- Create a new exit/entrance to I-85 at Poplar Road
- Publish alternate routes
- Attract more retail businesses into suburban residential areas
- Encourage "live, work, play" concept for all future development

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Priority

Create a shared vision for and understanding of economic development that will lead to more diverse and higher paying jobs

Recommendations:

- Use Intergovernmental Committee as a forum for continuing the work of bringing county to consensus and action on economic development issues
- Support "entrepreneur friendly" initiatives with a goal of being known as the best place in Metro Atlanta for small businesses
- Develop initiatives to engage elected officials
- Expand activity of Team Coweta
- Create an economic development roundtable

EDUCATION

Priority

Focus on early childhood development to ensure that every student begins school with basic knowledge and skills necessary for learning

Recommendations:

- Form a group of citizens to undertake a comprehensive, coordinated, detailed, and long-term initiative that targets early childhood development
- Expand/extend existing programs targeted to parents of pre-K children
- Promote attendance in formal pre-K programs
- Specify knowledge/skills that pre-K students are expected to have
- Study other programs that may be worthy of replication
- Lobby at state level for more local control over pre-K programs

ENVIRONMENT

Priority

Ensure ongoing water quality and adequate capacity

Recommendations:

- Review current resources to ensure that water supplies will keep pace with population projections
- Ensure water rate structure captures revenue for future water capacity projects
- Continue joint planning between County government and Newnan Utilities to plan for water production resources

HEALTH CARE

Priority

Technologically advanced, convenient healthcare facilities

Recommendations:

- Find sources of capital investment for local hospital
- Conduct a needs analysis for medical personnel and establish recruiting program

HOUSING

Priority

Pursue the village concept for all new housing

Recommendations:

- Ensure infrastructure exists to support clustered housing with supporting retail, etc.
- Ensure housing concentration is spread among County municipalities to equalize development density

INFRASTRUCTURE

Priority

Improve water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate growth

Recommendations:

- Convene a joint committee from all affected parties and industry regularly to review present and future needs and identify opportunities for collaboration
- Designate one organization to respond to questions about current and future capacity issues
- Conduct a survey of water/sewer customers to better understand future needs and create strategies
- Include conservation measures in all water strategies

PUBLIC SERVICES

Priority

Maintain roads for improved safety

Recommendations:

- Support passage of a Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to support maintenance funding
- Support funding from General Budget Fund
- Maintain relationships with DOT to receive assistance
- Improve intergovernmental cooperation to secure mutual funding for joint projects
- Improve planning process and increase citizen awareness and understanding

(Land Use Committee - Still under consideration)

WHAT'S NEXT?

No doubt about it — as residents of Coweta County, we've got a lot to do to preserve our quality of life as our community grows. In the next phase of **Vision 2020**, four "think tanks" will take the recommendations from the 11 committees and work directly with local elected officials, public service providers and community stakeholders to determine what's do-able right now, and what will require a longer-term effort. The four think-tank areas are: *Healthcare, Education, Community development and Economic Development*. Everyone in Coweta County is welcome and encouraged to share your experience and ideas about how we can best meet the recommendations that have emerged from the **Vision 2020** process. To participate, please contact The Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce at info@newnancowetachamber.org or find out more online at www.newnancowetachamber.org.



THANKS TO ALL THE VISION 2020 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

If you participated in the **Be Something Different** survey, served on a volunteer committee to explore quality of life issues, or even talked about Coweta's future with your friends and colleagues, then you are a big part of the **Power of Us**. Thank you!

Special thanks is due to the community leaders who volunteered countless hours reviewing survey results and developing recommendations in one of the 11 **Vision 2020** committees.

The following served on the steering committee and as committee chairs:

Steering Committee Chair, 2005-2006
Michael Whiteside, Coweta-Fayette EMC

Steering Committee Chair, 2004-2005
Dennis McEntire, Newnan Utilities

Dr. Joe Harless — Consultant
Leigh Sanders — Community Volunteer
Candace LaForge — Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Community Safety — Claude Vickers, Georgia Public Broadcasting - Retired
Culture & Recreation — Martha Ann Parks, Panoply Interior Design & Consulting
Daily-Life Convenience — Jennifer Trapp-Lingenfelter, Georgia Tech EDI
Economic Conditions — Bob Coggin, Cendant; John Thrasher, Josey, Young & Brady
Education — Dr. Joe Harless
Environment — Randall Duncan, Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia
Healthcare — Mark Whitlock, Central Educational Center
Housing & Facilities — Joe Crain, Sr., Crain Oil Company
Infrastructure — Bradley Down, Cargill Meat Solutions
Land Use & Aesthetics — Marvin McKoy, Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce
Public Service — Michael Whiteside, Coweta-Fayette EMC

VISION 2020 THINK TANKS CO-CHAIRS

Economic Development — Keith Brady, Mayor of Newnan; Larry Callahan, Pattillo Construction
Community Development — Theron Gay, Coweta County Administrator; Randy Cardoza, AGL Resources
Education — Blake Bass, Coweta County Schools; Dr. Joe Harless
Healthcare — Michael Bass, Newnan Hospital; Mark Whitlock, Central Educational Center

THANK YOU TO COWETA-FAYETTE EMC AND NEWNAN UTILITIES FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT IN PRODUCING THE VISION 2020 PRINTED MATERIALS.