

# VIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

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## A. Introduction

The purpose of this element is to identify areas where intergovernmental cooperation could be enhanced and to facilitate coordination. A three-part planning process was undertaken in developing this element:

1. Inventory of existing conditions.
2. Assessment for future needs.
3. Articulation of a plan.

The inventory portion of this element describes the relationships that exist between Spalding County and government entities, including the City of Griffin. This inventory also reviews the county's relationship to independent organizations that have a role to play in planning the county's future, such as the local School Board. It inventories their relationship to Spalding County and the Comprehensive Plan, and the current mechanisms for coordination.

The second part of this element is an assessment of current and future needs. It determines whether existing coordination mechanisms are adequate to serve the community's current and future needs, and if not what might be done to improve the situation over the next twenty years.

The last part of this element includes an articulation of intergovernmental coordination goals. An associated implementation program to address those identified coordination needs can be found the Implementation Plan. As this element points out there are a wide variety of organizations besides the county government that influence the future of Spalding County. Only through active and meaningful coordination efforts with these

many groups can the county government realize its vision for the future.

## B. Existing Coordination Mechanisms

This inventory of existing conditions describes the relationships between Spalding County government and the following entities:

- Adjacent local governments
- School boards
- Independent special districts
- Independent development authorities
- Constitutional officers; and
- Utility companies.

In particular, it focuses on the formal coordination mechanisms that are in place, such as intergovernmental agreements, special legislation, joint meetings or work groups for the purpose of coordination. It also identifies the party(ies) or offices within the local government with primary responsibility for coordination.

### 1. Adjacent Local Governments

Spalding County is adjacent to a number of local governments, including three local municipal governments and eight surrounding counties. One of the most critical relationships among these various governments that will influence the future growth of the county is that between the County and the City of Griffin. Not only is Griffin the largest municipality within the county's boundaries, but it also provides a variety of public services to the residents of the unincorporated areas.

## **a. City of Griffin**

The Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) between Spalding County and the City of Griffin documents the coordination and delivery of services within the county. The SDS was first approved in 1999 and since that time has been amended several times. The SDS was updated in conjunction with the update of this plan, in accordance with section 36-70-28 of the Service Delivery Strategy Law. This section summarizes the portions of that document relative to the planning process.

### **i. Recreation**

Through a cooperative arrangement, the County Recreation Department maintains most of the county's recreational facilities and operates its programs. The city still operates City Park, the public golf course, and three passive pocket parks within residential areas.

### **ii. Airport**

The county and City of Griffin jointly own the airport. It is maintained by user fees and charges. The city and county fund capital improvements on a 50/50 basis.

### **iii. Solid Waste**

The county and city provide separate solid waste collection services due to differential level of service demands of their residents. The county provides five collection stations throughout the county while the city provides curbside pickup of trash and yard debris.

### **iv. Planning, Zoning, Building Inspections and Code Enforcement**

Both the city and county have separate planning staffs, zoning regulations, comprehensive plans and permitting processes. Both the city and county enforce statewide minimum construction codes and currently share services provided by the County Board of Health. While the comprehensive planning process is designed

to induce consideration of adjacent jurisdictions, the SDS recommends establishing a joint City-County Planning and Zoning Commission.

### **v. Tax Billing and Collection**

The County Tax Commissioner bills and collects taxes owed the county. By law, the Commissioner also collects taxes for the school district. The SDS recommends the County Commissioner also collect city taxes to eliminate redundant computerized billing systems.

### **vi. Sewer Expansion**

An intergovernmental agreement on sewer expansion into the unincorporated county has been under discussion since 1995. In 1998, the parties agreed to sewer service districts. Several key components, however, remain outstanding including:

- Formal approval of the Wastewater Management Plan;
- Formal recognition on the sewer districts;
- Establishment of a method of funding sewer expansions; and
- Creation of a timetable for extensions into the respective service areas in compatibility with the county's Comprehensive Plan.

Resolving these issues is vital for environmentally responsible growth and development in the unincorporated county. The draft Wastewater Management Plan does not take into consideration the Future Land Use Plan presented in this Comprehensive Plan, and should be re-evaluated and updated.

### **vii. Fire Departments**

The city and county have separate fire departments. There has been discussion of consolidation and the SDS recommends a study to assess the feasibility and cost effectiveness.

### **viii. Stormwater Management**

The city began operation of a stormwater management utility in 1998. The county enforces a stormwater management ordinance in compliance with the minimum state requirements. The two governments do have an agreement to work together on stormwater management where they share a common watershed. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has identified both urban and rural stormwater as major pollutants to several streams and rivers within Spalding County.

### **ix. Roads and Bridges**

The city and county separately maintain the roads and bridges within their jurisdictions.

### **b. Cities of SunnySide and Orchard Hill**

Currently, the Cities of SunnySide and Orchard Hill do not meet the population thresholds set forth in HB 489 to require a Service Delivery Strategy. However, during the development of the Service Delivery Strategy for Griffin and Spalding County, both cities provided input.

### **c. Pike County**

Pike County is the site for a multi-jurisdictional water supply reservoir. The City of Griffin is financing and constructing the reservoir along with a treatment facility. In turn, Spalding County has agreed to purchase all its water from Griffin under a cost-plus formula. In 1996, similar agreements were signed between Griffin and the cities of Williamson and Zebulon. Resolutions of participation were signed with the Meriwether County government, the Pike County government and the cities of Concord, Meansville and Molena. As a result, the service area for the proposed water supply project is all of Spalding County, all of Pike County and the eastern portion of Meriwether County.

### **d. Henry County**

As discussed in the Community Facilities and Services element, mutual aid agreements for fire protection exist with all of the counties surrounding Spalding County and with the City of Griffin. However, in addition an automatic aid agreement exists with Henry County. Automatic aid is preferred over mutual aid because it means responses to calls are automatic as opposed to requested.

Henry County includes the upper reaches of the Flint and Towaliga Rivers, the two rivers that flow through Spalding County. Spalding and Henry counties should coordinate watershed protection efforts to protect the recreational reliability of these rivers for Spalding County residents. Impervious surface limits, flexible open space zoning codes, stream buffer ordinances, stormwater detention requirements and use limitations make up a partial list of potential tools for protecting water quality that could be implemented.

The Henry County Water and Sewerage Authority (HCWSA) provides water and sewer to the new Heron Bay subdivision which is in both Henry and Spalding counties. Excess capacity is also available to additional customers in the northeastern Spalding County.

### **e. Clayton and Fayette Counties**

As discussed in the Community Facilities and Services element, mutual aid agreements for fire protection exist with all of the counties surrounding Spalding County and with the City of Griffin. However, an automatic aid agreement exists with Fayette County. Automatic aid is preferred over mutual aid because it means responses to calls are automatic as opposed to requested.

Clayton and Fayette counties include the upper reaches of the Flint and Towaliga Rivers, the two rivers that flow through Spalding County. Spalding county should coordinate watershed protection efforts with these two counties to protect the recreational reliability of these rivers for Spalding County residents. Impervious surface limits, flexible open space zoning codes, stream buffer ordinances, stormwater detention requirements and use limitations make up a partial list of potential tools for protecting water quality that could be implemented.

## **2. School Boards**

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners and County Board of Education are currently working closely in the area of land use planning. In September 2003, a BOE representative will be added to the Planning Commission. The new post should allow greater consideration of land use impacts on school capacity and location, as well as provide greater opportunity for the planning of community centers and other government activities around school locations.

## **3. Independent Special Districts**

As discussed earlier in the Sewer Expansion section of this element, the city and county have previously reached an agreement on sewer service districts. However, no formal document has been executed that recognizes these sewer districts.

## **4. Development Authorities**

A local constitutional amendment formed the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority. The Authority serves as a joint city/county industrial development authority, whose mission is to attract industry and create employment opportunities in Spalding County. The city and county have an Intergovernmental Contract with the Authority

to levy taxes to cover debt obligations on the Authority's Series 1991 bonds.

According to the Service Delivery Strategy, "The county alone should levy and pay over to the Authority up to 1.0 mil of county-wide ad valorem tax annually, pursuant to O.C.G.A. 48-5-220 (20), to fund its operations, including all repayment of any future debt obligations issued. This does not require any legislative change to the Authority's organizational documents."

Another development authority that exists in Spalding County is the City of Griffin Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The mission of the Griffin DDA is to promote commerce within the downtown area of Griffin. The Authority receives funding from a 1.0 mil tax that is levied citywide.

## **5. Constitutional Officers**

During the development of the SDS, it was recognized that certain duties performed by Constitutional County officers could not be changed in the SDS development process. Certain services are completed by the county on behalf of its cities that cannot be modified. The SDS also states that several County services are provided by a number of County Officers/Departments and shall remain unchanged. These include:

- Tax Assessor
- Coroner
- Clerk of Court
- Probate Court
- District Attorney
- Superior Court
- State Court and Solicitor
- Adult and Juvenile Probation
- Health and Human Services
- Cooperative Extension

- Emergency Management
- Sheriff
- County Administration
- County Information Management Services
- County Janitorial Services
- Garage
- Board of Election and Voter Registration

## 6. Utility Companies

The City of Griffin/MEAG Power is the predominant electric power supplier for Griffin and Spalding County. Griffin Power is a member of the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG), which is a unique wholesale power supplier that co-owns four generating facilities and Georgia's Integrated Transmission System (ITS). According to the SDS, Griffin Power is not affected by the SDS process.

- A stormwater management agreement to work together on management issues within common watersheds

Spalding County currently has good working relationships with its surrounding county governments. One area where additional coordination may be needed is in the area of watershed protection. In particular, as it was mentioned earlier, Spalding County should coordinate watershed protection efforts with Henry, Clayton and Fayette to protect the water quality of the Flint and Towaliga Rivers through land use controls.

The county government and School Board should be complimented on recent efforts to coordinate planning efforts. There is a real opportunity for both parties to help in the planning of village nodes or community centers where schools plan help to serve as a focal point for community activities.

## C. Needs Assessment

Better coordination on a number of issues between the City of Griffin and the county would benefit both parties and help to further the implementation of both their long range goals. In particular, the city and county need to address the following issues:

- Expansion of the airport
- Establishment of a joint City-County Planning and Zoning Commission
- Allowing the County Tax Commissioner to also collect city taxes to eliminate redundancy
- An intergovernmental agreement on sewer expansion into the unincorporated county
- Undertake a study to assess the feasibility and cost of consolidating fire service

## **D. Intergovernmental Coordination Goals**

1. Work closely with other local governments to develop a shared vision for the community's future and to implement that vision through mutually beneficial agreements.
2. Follow the county land use plan in making capital investment decisions.
3. Improve the efficiency of local services delivery through close coordination with the Cities of Griffin, Orchard Hill and SunnySide.

## E. Implementation Program

**Goal #1:** Work closely with other local governments to develop a shared vision for the community's future and to implement that vision through mutually beneficial agreements

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Coordination with public schools – Explore ways to improve community services by cooperative efforts between school and county government, such as joint use of recreation facilities.	County Manager's Office.	On-going
Work with the City of Griffin and the Water and Sewer Authority on updating the Water Supply Study and the Wastewater Management Master Plan to be consistent with the new Land Use Plan	City of Griffin, Water and Sewer Authority, Spalding County Public Works Dept. and the County Manager's Office	2004

**Goal #2:** Follow the county Land Use Plan in making capital investment decisions.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
<b>Consistency of land use planning and zoning -</b> Strengthen the role of the Comprehensive Plan by requiring that all rezoning actions be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and allow amendments to the Future Land Use Plan Map no more often than twice per year.	Spalding County Community Development Dept.	On-going
<b>Implement Impact Fees</b> – Prepare a Capital Improvement Element and adopt an Impact Fee Ordinance.	Spalding County Community Development Dept.	On-going
<b>Consistency of land use planning and capital investment decisions</b> – As part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, coordinate revisions to the Capital Improvements Element with the Future Land Use Plan Map and the provisions of the Land Use Element	Spalding County Community Development Dept.	2004-2009

**Goal #3:** Improve the efficiency of local services delivery through close coordination with the Cities of Griffin, SunnySide and Orchard Hill

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Cooperative city-county agreements – Identify more opportunities for joint service and funding agreements between Spalding County and the cities that will spread the cost and improve the efficiencies of public facilities and services such as garbage collection, parks and recreation, libraries, emergency services, and other facilities and services that are now funded and provided separately.	County Manager’s Office, Cities of Griffin, Orchard Hill, and SunnySide.	2004
Stormwater utility district – Join city in collecting a regular fee (added to the water bill) on all residential and commercial property in proportion to impervious surface in order to finance stormwater improvements	County Manager’s Office and Spalding County Public Works Dept.	2008
Enter into intergovernmental agreements concerning the passage and usage of impact fees.	County Manager’s Office, Cities of Griffin, Orchard Hill, and SunnySide.	2005