

Demographic Profile

The adage “Timing is Everything” is very appropriate as applied to Cherokee County’s current growth projection and, similarly, the planning status for recreation delivery in the county. Atlanta’s growth overflow has been so rapid in both Cobb and Gwinnett Counties that both counties have been in a catch-up race to provide adequate recreational facilities, greenways and open space to their exploding populations. There is much to learn from studying their growth patterns. It is clear from studying Cherokee County’s recent growth that the county is poised for a dynamic next decade.

It is difficult to plan for a community’s future needs without a clear understanding of the population characteristics that currently exist and the projections for growth trends over the life of the master plan. The demographic analysis provides a barometer for gauging where the population growth will occur in the next decade and the composite nature of that growth.

Cherokee Demographics in 2000

Cherokee County encompasses a total of 424 square miles. The 2000 U. S. Census records a total county population of 141,903, and a population density of 334.9 persons per square mile. This density may need to be adjusted if comparisons are to be made with other counties of similar size due to the significant acreage in the north of the county that is part of the Georgia Mountain Range and unavailable for residential development.

Growth Rate Projections

A look at the big picture of the Atlanta area is helpful in evaluating the data and projections for Cherokee County. In recent years, Atlanta has been one of the most dynamic centers in the country, exceeding national population and economic growth by almost three times. In fact, in the one decade of 1990 to 2000, employment increased by over 40% in the area with the increase of over 640,000 jobs. Gains in job and population have occurred disproportionately in the north and northeast area of Atlanta proper. This is evidenced by the median household income (1999) in Cherokee County of \$60,896, the greatest of any of the counties in the study except Forsyth, including Cobb and Gwinnett! The median value of owner/occupied homes in Cherokee County is \$139,000, lower than Forsyth but very close to Gwinnett at \$142,100.

The nature of job growth in the region has been highly decentralized. There remains a high job density per square mile in the core area, but the actual growth percentage has been low. “A snapshot of job density in the region in 2000 shows a clustering of jobs around major highways and reveals the extent to which transportation choices impact the distributions of jobs in the region...Job growth was greatest in outer areas, especially in the suburbs to the north of I-20. During the 1990s employment more that doubled in...Cherokee (132 percent) county.” (Atlanta Metro Patterns, a Regional Agenda for Community and Stability, published by the Metropolitan Area Research Corporation,

October 2003.) This type of growth, if not carefully projected and understood by parks and recreation departments, can be disastrous. Available open land and green space can be available and affordable at one point in time, and as availability diminishes, the affordability can become out of reach of the Parks and Recreation department's capital budget, thus reducing the quality of life for residents.

Generally, in calculating growth rates we look at the U.S. Census data from 1990 and 2000 and study the change during that decade. The Census also provides a 2003 estimate and a 2008 projection. We apply a formula to these numbers and arrive at a relatively accurate growth rate projection for the years 2004 through 2014, the duration of this study. So, how can we accurately use this method to project growth rates in Cherokee County? As stated earlier, the unprecedented economic, and resulting population, growth in the region make the normal projection calculations more difficult.

For Cherokee County, we have taken a more diverse approach to growth projections for several reasons: 1) The anticipated rate of growth is faster than a steady-growth community; 2) We have access to the projections compiled by the Atlanta Regional Commission; and 3) We have explored more deeply the growth patterns of Gwinnett County and Cobb County and compared them to Cherokee County. We then charted all three and produced an average. For the end users of this information, we encourage you to study each projection; if the average does not seem the most realistic or applicable, one of the others may be used. **Figure 2.1** below details the comparisons using the three different methods and compares Cherokee County with the United States and the State of Georgia growth rates.

Figure 2.1

Population Growth Rate Comparisons

	1990 Total Population	2000 total Population	Percent Change	2004 Estimate	2000-2004 % Change	2014 Projection	2004-2014 % Change
United States	248,710,012	281,421,906	13.15%	294,800,913	4.75%	323,565,799	9.76%
Georgia	6,478,221	8,186,453	26.37%	8,906,472	8.80%	10,009,693	12.39%
Cherokee - DN*	90,204	141,903	57.31%	175,398	23.60%	227,401	29.65%
Cherokee - ARC**	91,000	141,903	55.94%	171,499	20.86%	245,490	43.14%
Cherokee - COMP***	90,204	141,903	57.31%	178,799	26.00%	271,039	51.59%
Cherokee - Average	90,204	141,903	57.31%	175,232	23.49%	247,977	41.51%

* Source: Actuals and projections based upon Demographics Now

**Source: Actuals and projections based upon Atlanta Regional Commission

***Source: Actuals and projections based upon Growth Comparisons with Cobb and Gwinnett Counties, U.S. Census Bureau

The U. S. Census Bureau provides population data for each decade from 1940 through 2000. It is interesting to look at the patterns of growth in both Cobb and Gwinnett counties and the similarities to those in Cherokee County.

There are many variables that impact population projections, particularly when comparing different decades. Overall economic factors, along with an individual county's indus-

trial and commercial development, make the comparisons in the chart below somewhat hypothetical, but they do have a sound theoretical basis. There is a historical pattern that is interesting to study when examining Cherokee County’s potential growth in the next ten years.

To arrive at the comparisons with Cobb and Gwinnett Counties, we reviewed the Census data starting in 1940. The population of Cobb County at that time was 38,272. For Gwinnett County, we started with the Census figures of 1950 when the population of the county was 32,320. And for Cherokee County we started with the year 1970 when the population was 31,059. In other words, we started studying their growth patterns when each county had relatively the same population. **Figure 2.2** will illustrate the growth patterns over a three-decade period for each beginning at their 30,000+ population.

Figure 2.2

General Growth Comparisons with Cobb and Gwinnett Counties

Cherokee County	1970	1980	% Increase	1990	% Increase	2000	% Increase	30 Year
	31,059	51,699	66.45%	90,204	74.48%	141,903	57.31%	356.88%
Gwinnett County Population 2000 - 588,448	1950	1960	% Increase	1970	% Increase	1980	% Increase	30 Year
	32,320	43,541	34.72%	72,349	66.16%	166,808	130.56%	416.11%
Cobb County Population 2000 - 607,751	1940	1950	% Increase	1960	% Increase	1970	% Increase	30 Year
	38,272	61,830	61.55%	114,174	84.66%	196,793	72.36%	414.20%

From this chart we see that both Cobb and Cherokee had similar percentage increases (60%+) in the first decade of rapid growth while Gwinnett had a slower rate of 34.72%. The second decade shows Cobb making a substantial increase of 84.66%, Cherokee also with a substantial 74.48% increase and Gwinnett with a 66.16%. The third decade shows Cherokee slowing down with a 57.31% increase, Cobb with a reduced but fairly consistent 72.36% and Gwinnett shooting up to a 130.56% increase. More important are the 30-year average similarities: Cobb - 414.20%, Gwinnett - 416.11% and Cherokee with a somewhat lower 356.88%. “Somewhat lower” is still a phenomenal growth rate compared to most other communities in the country. **Figure 2.3** illustrates this growth clearly.

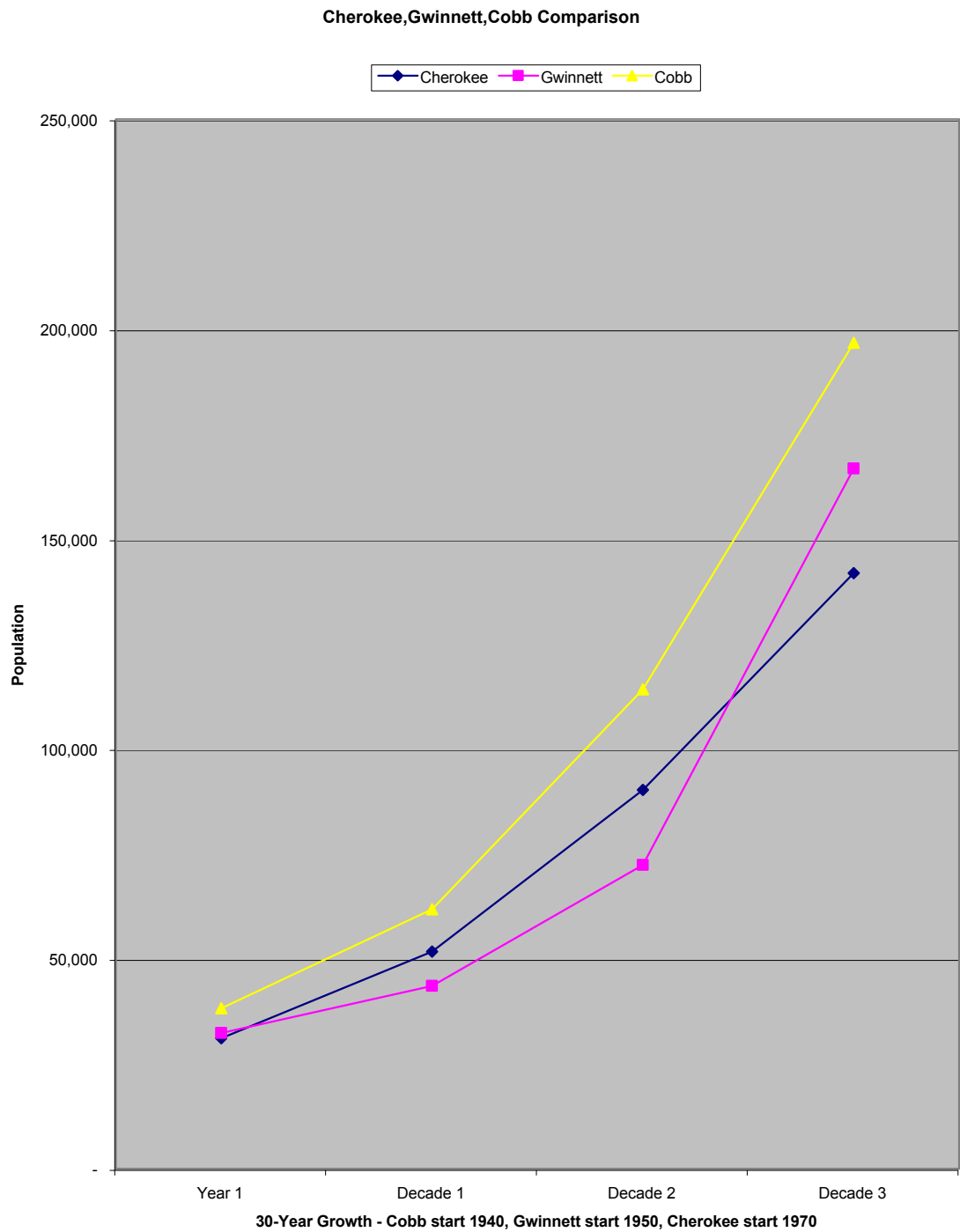


Figure 2.3

At the end of Decade Three is when the graph becomes interesting. That was the take-off point for both Cobb and Gwinnett Counties. While there is no assurance that Cherokee will take a similar path, all the indicators are that it will be similar if not quite

so dramatic. The end markers in **Figure 2.4** for each county are for the year 2000. Cobb is the only county on the graph with a 6-decade history. Gwinnett has virtually caught up with Cobb's population at the end of the 5-decade growth. Now Cherokee is beginning its growth spurt. We have chosen not to chart any projections for Cherokee on this graph.

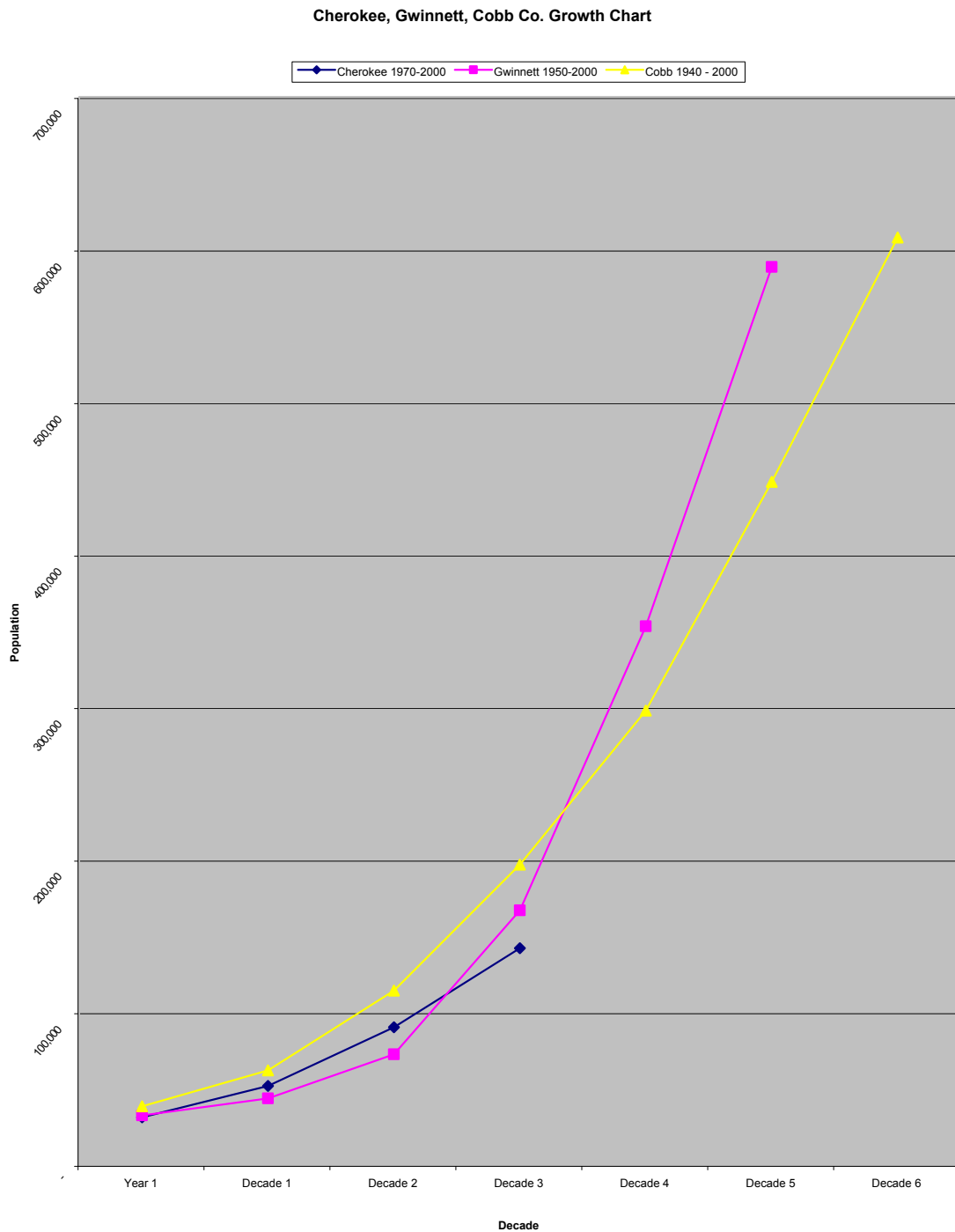


Figure 2.4

The City of Atlanta’s prolific growth has been the obvious propellant of families moving to surrounding counties. It is also obvious that this growth in the Atlanta bedroom communities occurs along the major interstate connector corridors: I-20 into Henry County; I-985 through Gwinnett and into Hall County; U.S. Hwy 19 into Forsyth County; I-75 through Bartow County and Cobb County; and I-575 into Cherokee from I-75. The importance of the I-575 spur in Cherokee County joining I-75 into Atlanta is obvious as the three major cities in the county, Canton, Holly Springs and Woodstock, all fall along this route.

Figure 2.5 illustrates the growth in each of these counties and includes the per capita spending for parks and recreation for each.

	STATE OF GEORGIA	CHEROKEE COUNTY	HALL COUNTY	HENRY COUNTY	FORSYTH COUNTY	BARTOW COUNTY	COBB COUNTY	GWINNETT COUNTY
POPULATION								
Population 1990	6,478,211	90,206	95,428	58,741	44,083	55,911	447,745	352,910
Population 2000	8,186,453	141,903	139,277	119,341	98,407	76,019	607,751	588,448
% Change 1990 to 2000	26.4%	57.3%	45.9%	103.2%	123.5%	36.0%	35.7%	66.7%
% Change 4-1-2000 to 7-1-2002	4.6%	12.3%	9.3%	17.1%	18.8%	8.7%	7.2%	10.6%
Per capita parks and rec expenditure*		\$14.16	\$13.54	\$9.37	***153.33	\$27.35	\$23.43	**99.04
Median expenditure for similar size*		\$48.50	\$48.50	\$48.50	\$27.35	\$27.35	\$48.50	\$48.50
GEOGRAPHY QUICK FACTS								
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	57,906	424	394	323	226	459	340	433
Persons per square mile, 2000	141.4	334.9	353.8	369.8	435.8	165.5	1,786.7	1,359.9
Metropolitan area		Atlanta MSA	None	Atlanta MSA	Atlanta MSA	Atlanta MSA	Atlanta MSA	Atlanta MSA

All data from 2000 U.S. Census Bureau except *data from Georgia City and County Recreation Services Study, December 2001

** Includes Capital Budget of \$40,705,000, operating budget \$29.10 per capita

*** Includes Capital Budget of \$12,817,000, operating budget \$22.99 per capita

Figure 2.5

Cherokee and Hall Counties have similar populations, yet Cherokee is growing at a more rapid pace than Hall County. It is interesting to note that in 1990, Hall County had a population of 95,428 and Cherokee County had a population of 90,206—5,222 less residents. However, by 2000 Cherokee County has surpassed Hall County by 2,626 residents, experiencing a growth rate of 57.3%. Only Henry and Forsyth counties experienced larger growth percentages, yet each started with significantly lower populations—58,741 and 44,803 respectively. Both Cherokee and Hall County have fallen far behind the average per capita spending for parks and recreation for counties of over 100,000. (Georgia City and County Recreation Services Study, December 2001.) Gwinnett County has only recently aggressively addressed its parks and recreation future planning both in

identifying and purchasing available land and in financial revenue resources. The rapid growth of Gwinnett County, coupled with a spending plan that did not keep pace with growth in years past has resulted in land acquisition and park development at a much higher cost. Today Cherokee County has the opportunity to learn from Gwinnett’s history and begin an aggressive and well-defined plan to purchase the land that will be needed to provide adequate recreation facilities to residents in the future.

Growth Within Age Segments

In forecasting and planning recreation development, it is important to look at the demographic age segments and projections. The “Population by Age” chart below, **Figure 2.6**, indicates that special consideration should be given to the large baby-boom population segment as it moves from the 45+ age group into the 65+ age group. Whereas the percentage of persons age 0 – 17 and age 18 - 44 reflects a decline in percentage of the overall population from 2000 to 2014, the baby boomer ages 45 – 64 and the 65+ age group both show a growth in percentage of population. The 0 – 17 age group is predicted to increase from 2000 to 2014 by 53% and the 18-44 age group by 39%, the age 45-64 and 65+ groups are expected to increase by almost identical percentages of 162% and 163%. The cities of Woodstock, Canton and Holly Springs all show fairly proportionate percentage changes, consistent with the county as a whole.

Population by Age

	Age 0-17	%	Age 18-44	%	Age 45-64	%	Age 65+	%
Cherokee Co. 2000	40,110	28.20%	61,645	43.35%	30,795	21.65%	9,659	6.79%
Cherokee Co. 2004 est.	47,597	27.22%	69,634	39.82%	44,883	25.66%	12,774	7.30%
Cherokee Co. 2014 proj.	61,287	24.25%	85,488	33.82%	80,571	31.87%	25,426	10.06%
Percent Change	53%		39%		162%		163%	
City of Woodstock 2000	2,884	28.61%	4,410	43.75%	2,063	20.46%	724	7.18%
City of Woodstock 2004 est.	3,405	27.58%	5,001	40.51%	3,019	24.46%	920	7.45%
City of Woodstock 2014 proj.	4,379	24.57%	6,183	34.69%	5,435	30.49%	1,826	10.25%
Percent Change	51.84%		40.20%		163.45%		152.21%	
City of Canton 2000	1,850	23.79%	3,407	43.82%	1,435	18.46%	1,083	13.93%
City of Canton 2004 est.	2,425	23.53%	4,196	40.71%	2,303	22.35%	1,382	13.41%
City of Canton 2014 proj.	3,401	20.01%	6,114	35.97%	4,603	27.08%	2,878	16.93%
Percent Change	83.84%		79.45%		220.77%		165.74%	
City of Holly Springs 2000	935	29.20%	1,436	44.85%	651	20.33%	180	5.62%
City of Holly Springs 2004 est.	1,052	28.21%	1,560	41.83%	888	23.81%	229	6.14%
City of Holly Springs 2014 proj.	1,262	25.35%	1,756	35.27%	1,516	30.45%	445	8.94%
Percent Change	34.97%		22.28%		132.87%		147.22%	

Figure 2.6

Planning and forecasting the recreation needs of this 45 – 64 age group will require a new vision with more creative programming than past programs have offered. This is an energetic and generally participatory group in park and recreation activities as they

tend to be empty-nesters with more time to spend than when they were raising families. Attention should be given to some of the activities most often utilized by this age group: tennis, swimming, golf, walking, hiking and running. The 65 – 75 age group may also participate in these activities. Examining results of the steering committee meeting April 30, 2004, this hypothesis was borne out by the number of respondents indicating current activity in these areas. Three out of the four most requested new facilities needed in Cherokee County were: Indoor Multi-purpose Center, Indoor Aquatic Leisure Pool and Multi-use Senior Center. Five of the six most requested programs were: Swimming, Fitness, Senior Programs, Nature Program and Older Adult Programs.

As stated earlier, the 65+ age group is predicted to experience a major percentage increase of persons in the county. In the past, this age group was viewed as senior citizens with sedentary activity levels and interests. Today’s 70-year-old is generally far from that description. Many are retired with both disposable income and flexible time. With a unique awareness of the benefits of healthy exercise to the quality of their lives, many remain active in sports longer than prior generations. This group participates in the same activities as the 45 – 64 age group. Additionally, indications from the survey are that local concerts at parks would be highly attended as well as special events. Aquatic activity is especially beneficial to the older segment of seniors while also appealing to all ages. This 65+ age group is generally interested in daytime activity whereas the younger, working adults with families have nights and weekends free to participate in programs. This age group is also a wealthy pool of potential volunteers.

The focus discussed above need not detract from the focus on traditional activity for the youth and young adult leagues—soccer, baseball, softball, etc. It is intended as a forecasting tool in the overall recreation delivery planning.

Households by Income

The average income of households in Cherokee County in 2000 was \$70,995 compared to the national average of \$56,675 and the State of Georgia’s average of \$56,637. Projections for 2008 are that the average household income will be \$84,997 in Cherokee County compared to the U.S. average of \$68,062 and Georgia’s \$67,919. **Figure 2.7** will show how the average household income will grow as a percentage of the total population through the year 2008.

Households by Income 2000 to 2008 Census Projections

	Cherokee County 2000 Census	% of Total	Cherokee County 2003 Estimate	% of Total	Cherokee County 2008 Projection	% of Total
\$0 to \$24,999	6,955	14.0%	7,695	13.1%	8,465	11.7%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	12,161	24.6%	13,262	22.7%	14,143	19.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	20,528	51.5%	23,747	40.6%	27,738	38.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	6,672	13.5%	9,190	15.7%	14,038	19.4%
\$150,000 +	3,179	6.4%	4,579	7.8%	7,999	11.1%

Figure 2.7

This graphic representation helps to visualize the growth of wealth in the county. Of particular note is the \$50,000 to \$99,999 average household income level, which represented 51.5% of the households in 2000. By 2008 that income level will be only 38.3% whereas the \$100,000 to \$149,999 will increase in percentage from 13.5% to 19.4% and the \$150,000+ will go from 6.4% to an almost-double 11.1%.

Household Profiles and Households With Children

In the 2000 census Cherokee County had 49,495 total households, a 58.1%(!) increase from the 1990 census of 31,309. *Demographics Now* projections to 2008 are 72,383, a 46.2% increase from 2000. The census also measures stability – households where the residents have lived for five or more years. In 1990 that figure was 46.0%, in 2000 42.0% and in 2003 35.8%. These numbers are consistent with the growth of the population and number of households and do not in themselves reflect a large turnover in ownership. The just reflect many new residential households.

In 1990 there were 14,594 households with children (47%); in 2000 there were 21,943 (44%) and 2008 is projected to have 30,846 (43%). While there will be an increase in the number of households with children, the percentages will drop somewhat, which is consistent with the aging of the baby-boomers. The average household size is predicted to remain relatively constant at 2.84. In planning for recreational opportunities, the ages of children are important—**Figure 2.8** illustrates the projections through 2014:

Children and Youth Numbers 1990 through 2014

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2004 Estimate	2014 Estimate
Children Ages 0 - 4	8,241	11,670	12,521	14,257
Children Ages 5 - 13	12,371	20,713	24,229	30,935
Children Ages 14 - 17	4,729	7,727	8,405	13,649

Figure 2.8

These numbers indicate that new residents of Cherokee County for the next decade will most likely be young families with children as all of the age categories show substantial increases—22% for children 0 – 4; 49% for 5 – 13; and 77% for 14-17 between 2000 and 2014.

Growth Rates of Incorporated Areas

Figure 2.9

Growth Rates of Incorporated Areas within Cherokee County

City/Town	1990 Census	2000 Census	Percentage Increase 1990-2000	2003 Estimate	2008 Projection	Percentage Increase Anticipated 2000-2008
Ball Ground	735	730	-0.68%	812	924	26.58%
Canton	5,830	7,709	32.23%	9,740	13,018	68.87%
Holly Springs	2,708	3,195	17.98%	3,626	4,244	32.83%
Waleska	486	616	26.75%	689	795	29.06%
Woodstock	5,721	10,050	75.67%	11,811	14,519	44.47%
Total Incorporated Areas	14,745	21,570	46.29%	25,866	32,576	51.02%
Total Cherokee Co.	90,206	141,903	57.31%	167,024	205,658	44.93%
Unincorporated Areas	75,461	120,333	59.46%	141,158	173,082	43.84%

Source: Demographics Now

Note: These figures are taken directly from the Demographics Now figures (using U.S. Census numbers) with no accelerated projections.

Figure 2.9 indicates that the city of Woodstock, closest to the Cobb County border, experienced a phenomenal growth of over 75% in the decade 1990 to 2000. The projected growth to 2008 indicates an increase of approximately 4,500 people but a slower growth rate of 44.47%. Holly Springs, the next incorporated city northward had a normal, steady growth from 1990 to 2000 and is projected to continue with a somewhat more aggressive growth rate of 32.83% to 2008. Conversely, Canton, the farthest city from downtown Atlanta, experienced a respectable 32.23% growth in the 1990s but is projected to have a 68.87% growth rate from 2000 to 2008. The smaller cities of Waleska and Ball Ground have much slower growth rates, comparable to small towns in the Southeast not on main thoroughfares.

Canton has put into place a visionary plan for the city's future development, both for economic growth as well as quality-of-life amenities for its citizens. Amenities include a downtown streetscape redesign, free bus rides for seniors, a performing arts center, a renovated movie theatre. The city received "Visionary Magazine's" "City of Excellence" award. They have aggressively sought and received ARC monies for the Downtown Development Authority. Atlanta Technology is constructing a large technology park that will, at build-out, employ from 10,000 to 15,000. The very upscale "Great Sky" development features homes from the \$300,000-up range with breathtaking viewsheds. They have dedicated their impact fee to parks and recreation and to public safety.

Woodstock, as the closest city to Atlanta, has experienced the most rapid growth as the Atlanta Region bulges outward. It was already a town of considerable wealth from the old Kellogg mine and other mineral resources. It is the site of one of the largest residential developments in the state, Towne Lake.

Racial/Ethnic Demographics

The racial/ethnic make-up of a county, along with projected changes over the term of the master plan will help the county decide on specific programs that will most likely appeal to the citizens, where parks might experience additional activity by geographical location and where new facilities may be needed.

In **Figure 2.10** we have included figures for both the United States and the State of Georgia to be able to compare Cherokee County and its three major cities with them.

A first review of the chart indicates that Cherokee County is and has been a traditionally white market. Holly Springs has the least ethnic diversity of the cities while Canton has the greatest diversity. However, the projections for Canton in 2008 still reflect a 77.6% white majority compared to 65.1% for the State of Georgia. The projected increase in all three defined racial/ethnic categories from 1990 to 2008 (the latest figures available) reflect growth rates that far exceed that of Georgia or the country as a whole.

Population by Race/Ethnicity*

	White	%	Black	%	Hispanic	%
United States 1990	199,686,676	80.30%	29,986,018	12.10%	22,353,238	9.00%
United States 2000	211,460,626	75.10%	34,658,190	12.30%	35,305,818	12.50%
United States 2008 est	229,984,887	74.90%	37,673,097	12.30%	48,300,328	13.80%
Percent Change	15.2%		25.6%		116.1%	
Georgia 1990	4,300,132	71.00%	1,746,561	27.00%	108,919	1.70%
Georgia 2000	5,327,281	65.10%	2,349,542	28.70%	435,227	5.30%
Georgia 2008 est	6,219,316	65.10%	2,742,964	28.70%	794,729	8.30%
Percent Change	44.6%		57.0%		629.7%	
Cherokee Co. 1990	87,690	97.20%	1,693	1.90%	1,059	1.20%
Cherokee Co. 2000	131,128	92.40%	3,525	2.50%	7,695	5.40%
Cherokee Co. 2008 est	186,079	90.50%	8,880	4.30%	17,859	8.70%
Percent Change	112.2%		424.5%		1586.4%	
	White	%	Black	%	Hispanic	%
Woodstock 1990	5,419	94.70%	231	4.00%	65	1.10%
Woodstock 2000	9,050	90.00%	464	4.60%	498	5.00%
Woodstock 2008	12,661	87.20%	1,090	7.50%	1,117	7.70%
Percent Change	133.6%		371.9%		1618.5%	
Canton 1990	5,097	87.40%	654	11.20%	88	1.50%
Canton 2000	6,093	79.00%	504	6.50%	1,549	20.10%
Canton 2008	9,866	77.60%	824	8.50%	2,393	24.60%
Percent Change	93.6%		26.0%		2619.3%	
Holly Springs 1990	2,665	98.40%	13	0.50%	35	1.30%
Holly Springs 2000	3,032	94.90%	46	1.40%	135	4.20%
Holly Springs 2008	3,971	93.60%	111	2.60%	277	6.50%
Percent Change	49.0%		753.8%		691.4%	

Source: Demographics Now

Figure 2.10

Cherokee County and the city of Canton can expect a significant increase in the Hispanic populations whereas the cities of Woodstock and Holly Springs are projected to have Hispanic growth, but not to the extent of Canton and the county as a whole. This will help guide programming and facilities in the areas served by the City of Canton and other areas in the county.

Interestingly, the Black population will have growth in all areas of the cities and county. The 8,880 Black population projected for the county by 2008, even though it represents a low 4.3% of the population, is a significant number and needs to be addressed in a similar planning process as that for the Hispanic population.

Education, Income and Employment Demographics

Figure 2.11

Average Household Income, Employment Profile and Education Attainment

	Average Household Income	Employed Blue Collar	Employed White Collar	High School Graduates	Education Beyond High School
United States 2000	\$56,675	39.30%	60.70%	29.20%	52.60%
Georgia 2000	\$56,637	40.40%	59.60%	29.20%	49.93%
Canton 2000	\$47,399	47.40%	52.60%	25.80%	40.90%
Woodstock 2000	\$70,978	30.70%	69.30%	26.70%	62.70%
Holly Springs 2000	\$60,232	38.40%	61.60%	36.70%	45.90%
Cherokee Co. 2000	\$70,995	34.20%	65.80%	27.70%	57.80%

Education, income and employment categories are all important indicators of the type of recreation opportunities a community should plan for in a parks and recreation master plan. **Figure 2.11** above, under the average household income column, indicates that the City of Woodstock (\$70,978) and Holly Springs (\$60,232) residents have an average household income considerably higher than the state average of \$56,637 or the national average of \$56,675. Canton's average household income is quite a bit lower at \$47,399, perhaps because of the greater number of people employed in blue-collar jobs than the other two cities or the county as a whole. However, the average household income of the county is an enviable \$70,995, putting the county as a whole far above the state and country averages.

The education statistics represent those residents that only attained a high school diploma in the "High School Graduates" column. The percentages in the last column represent the citizens who went beyond high school. Almost 60% of the residents of Cherokee County in 2000 had an education level beyond high school. Residents of the county as a whole, plus residents of Holly Springs and Woodstock are employed in predominantly white-collar jobs. The city of Canton is split almost equally between white- and blue-collar jobs.

This data may be interpreted as defining a community that will value the benefits of recreational opportunities in their community and eagerly support them. They will most likely place a high value on the programs offered as increasing the quality of their lifestyles.

Building Permits

Another method of predicting growth patterns in an area is to look at the recent year's residential building permits issued. This figure generally indicates increase in families moving into the area. The latest figures available for the county indicate 3,795 permits issued in 2002. With the median value of owner/occupied homes in Cherokee County (\$139,900) being just under the median value of homes in Gwinnett County (\$142,100), the indication is strong that solid growth is occurring in the up-scale family segment.

In Conclusion

Cherokee County and its incorporated cities are poised for a decade of rapid growth that will require immediate and visionary planning for the Department of Parks and Recreation. Residents of the county have a standard of living/income level that dictates they will value highly the quality of recreational opportunities for themselves and their families. The county will continue to have young families moving in so that the population of children under the age of 18 will continue to rise. The over-45 boomers will also continue to increase in numbers. The county will have the challenge of providing new programming and facilities that provide opportunities for both population segments. Whereas the county has a much higher percentage white population than the state or country, the Hispanic population is increasing as more and more service industry jobs become available. Consideration should be given to both Hispanic and Black proclivities and preferences in sports and recreational activity.

Above all, a detailed plan of acquisition and future programming and facilities is essential to staying ahead of the cost-escalation pitfall. A compilation of funding resources and recommendations is found elsewhere in this report to aid in planning for the future of Cherokee County Parks and Recreation.