

CRITICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF harris county

The counties included in the Community Assets and Critical Issues Assessment (“CACIA”) are Harris, Chattahoochee, Marion, Muscogee, Stewart, Talbot, and Taylor counties in Georgia and Russell County in Alabama. Qualitative information was collected using several different mechanisms during the Community Assets and Critical Issues Assessment. In Harris County, 47 people attended a town hall meeting in the community and 14 individual interviews (face to face, telephone, and e-survey) were conducted with people who actively came to an event and chose to participate. Conversely, a random dial telephone survey elicited responses from 1,913 people in the eight county area at their homes. All of the qualitative information (town hall meetings, personal interviews, and e-survey responses) was analyzed using a qualitative analysis tool called “N-6.” N-6 helps remove researcher bias through a process of coding and categorizing every sentence of text from these sources. Faculty and staff from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government’s Research and Policy division, who did not participate in the collection of the data, read and coded all transcripts, providing a means to determine those topics that were truly the most significant to participants. Additionally, 115 high school students at Harris County High School participated in classroom discussions of the area’s strengths and weaknesses.

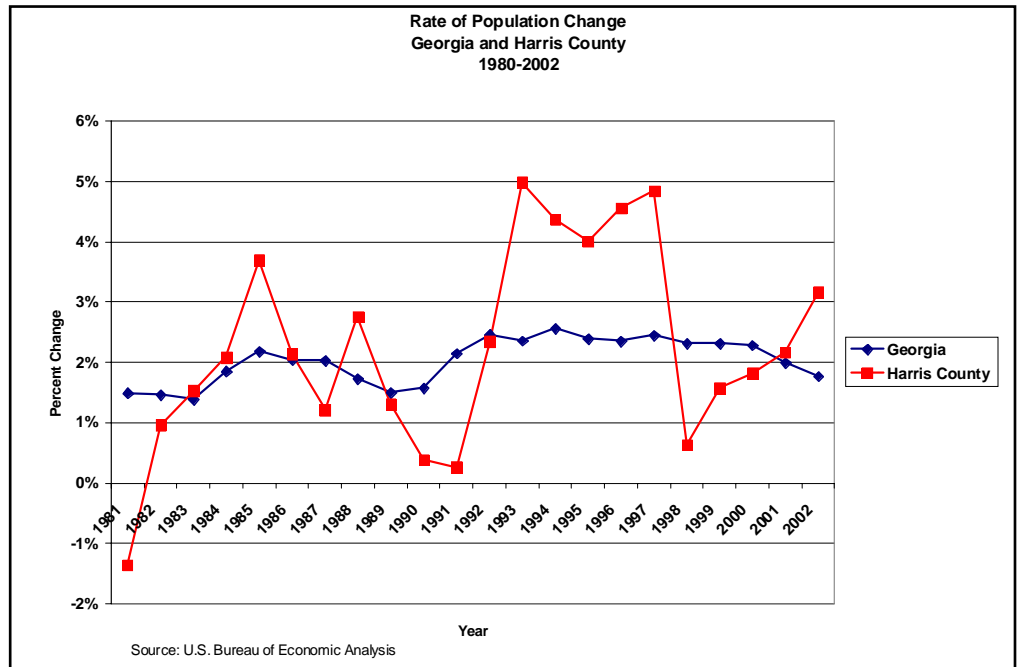
Demographic and economic data were collected from a variety of public and government sources and analyzed according to the County’s most significant issue areas. This county-level report contains the highlights of the Carl Vinson Institute’s findings for Harris County. It accompanies and is complementary to a separate county-level report for the other seven counties and a comprehensive regional report combining data and findings for the entire eight county Region. It also accompanies a lengthy CD data set with tables, graphs, and charts updating key demographic and economic measures for the entire Region.

Demographic & Economic Data

Several key demographic and economic measures provide a comprehensive overview of an area, particularly when viewed over time. These include poverty rates, per capita personal income, educational attainment levels and population growth rate, among others. The following charts provide an overall picture of Harris County and will be referred to later in the report as issues, strengths and challenges are discussed.

After experiencing a slight decline in population in 1981, Harris County recovered quickly and has experienced population growth in each successive year. Harris County had a total increase of 5,970 people from 1990 to 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau). As evidenced in the accompanying graph, the rate of population growth in Harris County slowed during the late 1990s but rebounded by 2002 with a 3.2% rate of growth. The rate of population growth in Harris County has often been higher than that experienced across the State of Georgia, particularly in the early to mid-1990s when Harris County's population growth rate was nearly double the state average.

According to 2003 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau (cited by the Georgia Department of Labor and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget), Harris County was projected to gain an additional 5,942 people between 2000 and 2010. This represents an overall growth rate for the 2000 to 2010 period of 20.1%, significantly higher than that projected for the State of Georgia (14.7%) and nearly double the projection for the United States (10.5%).

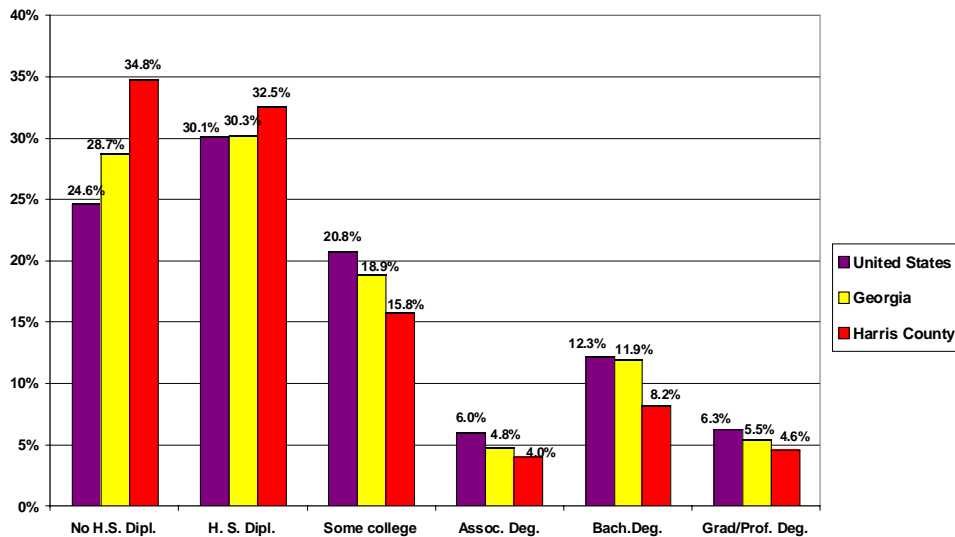


Educational attainment is a strong indicator of the overall health and prosperity of a community. The following charts illustrate the percentages of Harris County residents who have attained each educational milestone as their highest level of education. In this regard, Harris County made substantive improvement between 1990 and 2000, decreasing the number of adults without a high school diploma by 13.5 percentage points.

More Harris County residents are being exposed to college level courses, as well. In 1990, only 15.8% of Harris County residents reported that their highest level of educational attainment was "some college." By 2000, that percentage was 23.1%, which compares favorably to both state and national percentages and demonstrates the significant impact that area technical colleges, community colleges, colleges, and universities have had within the Region.

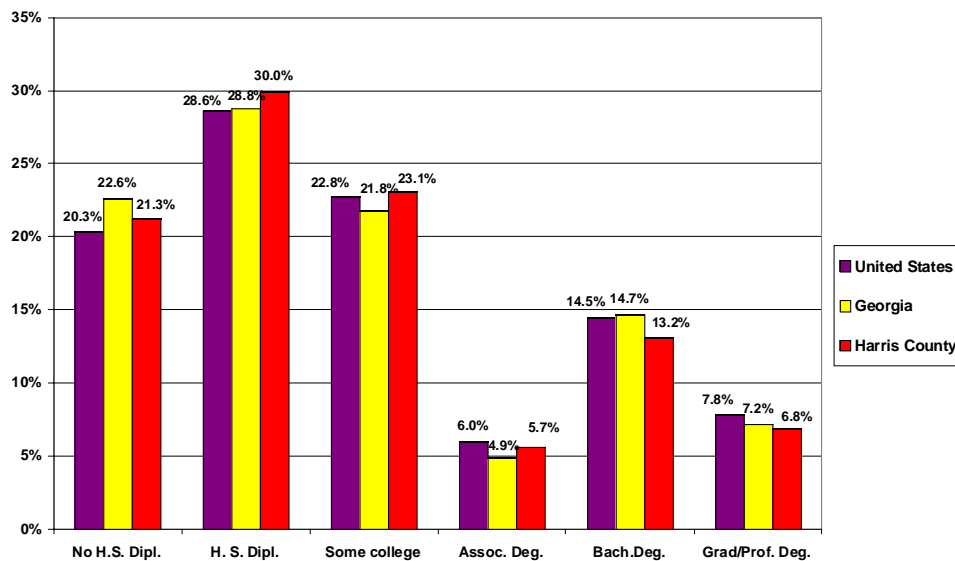
Harris County has also increased the percentages of residents that have completed college degrees. The percentage of residents having completed an associate's degree increased by 1.7 percentage points between 1990 and 2000 and is rapidly approaching the national average. The percentage of residents having completed a bachelor's degree increased by five percentage points during the same period and now approaches both the state and national averages. The percentage of residents possessing graduate and professional degrees also improved from 1990 to 2000, increasing by 2.2 percentage points. This places the County just under the state and national averages for this level of educational attainment. Poverty rates are directly linked to educational attainment and can help provide a broad indication of how a community is doing and whether it is moving in the right direction. Poverty rates are one measure of overall wealth in a community by expressing the relative wealth (or lack thereof) to federal program

Educational Attainment, 1990, 18 and Over



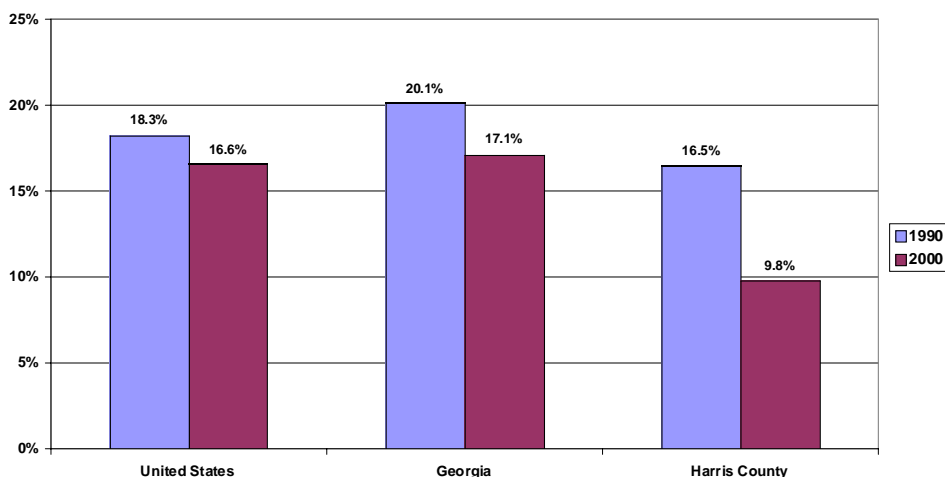
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Educational Attainment, 2000, 18 and Over



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Percent Living In Poverty
Children 17 and Under
U.S., Georgia and Harris County
1990 and 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

eligibility. As with any statistical measure, the rates have disadvantages. Poverty rates measure income according to a federal equation which varies based on the makeup and number of family members. It is used to determine eligibility for certain federal programs but in reality has little relation to how much money a family needs to survive - it does not necessarily depict a "living wage." However, it is a useful indicator when expressed over time to determine if an area's economy, programs and other efforts are having an effect and where the community falls in relation to other similarly-situated areas.

Child poverty rates are typically higher than overall poverty rates, and they provide a clearer picture on how well a community is responding to its most needy population. As the following graph illustrates, state, national and Harris County child poverty rates all improved significantly between 1990 (using 1989 income data) and 2000 (using 1999 income data). **The percentage of children 17 and under living in poverty in Harris County decreased substantially during this period, falling from 16.5% in 1990 to 9.8% in 2000, a decline of just under 7 percentage points.** In contrast, the State of Georgia average dropped three percentage points and the national average dropped just under two percentage points during the same period.

While child poverty numbers have improved significantly in Harris County, gauging the percentage of female heads of household (no husband living in the house) living in poverty is also critical, as many of these women have primary or sole custody of children living in the house. Similar to child poverty rates, the percentage of female

heads of household living in poverty also decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000, falling almost seven percentage points to 24.8%.

By 2000, the overall percentage of female heads of household living in poverty was lower in Harris County than in any other county in the CACIA Region, the State of Georgia and the United States.

Harris County's elderly (age 65 and older) poverty rate was significantly lower than other counties in the Region in 2000 at 13.6%. While the percentage of elderly persons living in poverty was similar to that of the State of Georgia average (13.5%) and Muscogee County (12.1%), it was lower than the average for the CACIA Region (14.8%) and substantially lower than that of Marion (25.1%) and Taylor (24.7%) counties.

A broad overview of the County's economy also provides some insight into strengths and challenges for the area. According to the Georgia Department of Labor, just over 78% of employment in Harris County came from private sector companies in 2002, with nearly 21.9% being

public sector employment. The service industry is the largest employer within the County, employing 46% of those working within the County and paying average weekly wages of \$348. The service industry is followed by the goods producing sector, which employs 33% of Harris County workers with average weekly wages of \$339. Local government is a significant employer in Harris County, employing 18.9% of those working within the County. This represented 1,000 of the 5,291 jobs in the County in 2002.

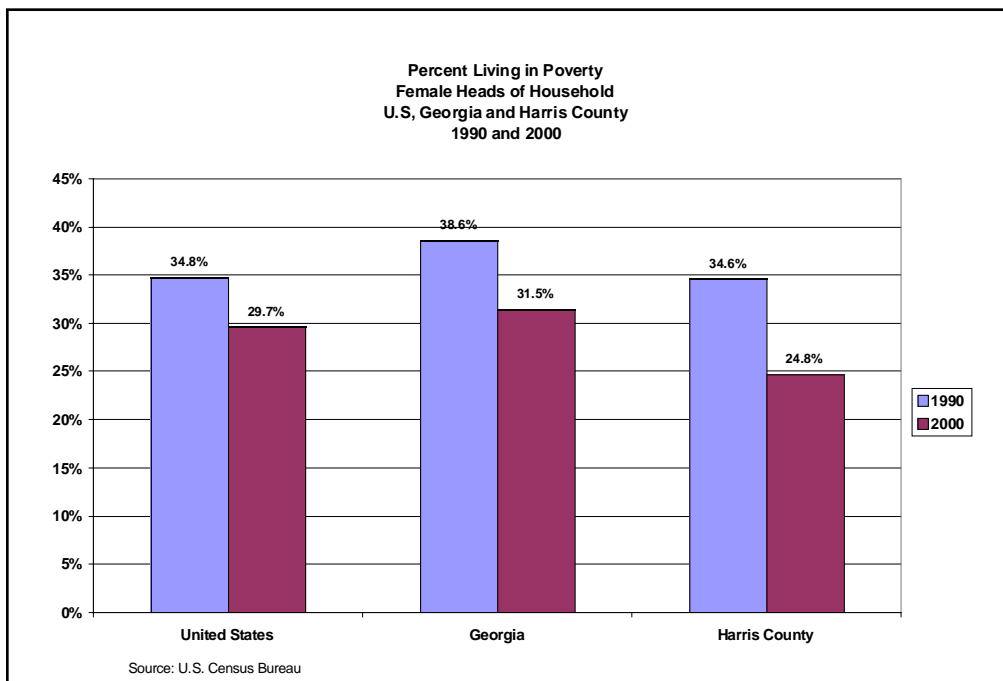
The highest average weekly wages were paid in the information services sector (\$961), which employed only 21 individuals in the County. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing cumulatively employed less than 1% of the population of Harris County, illustrating the shift that has occurred in employment in a County which continues to maintain many of its rural characteristics in the light of a rapidly-growing population. The five largest employers (excluding government agencies and public schools) in Harris County in the third quarter of 2003 were:

- :: *Cagle's, Inc.*
- :: *Callaway Gardens Resort, Inc*
- :: *Golden Age Oak View Home, LLC*
- :: *Ida Cason Callaway Foundation*
- :: *Valley Crating & Packing, Incorporated*

(Georgia Department of Labor, Area Labor Profile).

It would be inaccurate to portray Harris County's economy as independent of that of surrounding counties. Of the residents of Harris County who were employed in 2000, 24% worked in Harris County, while the remaining 76% commuted to jobs outside the County. Nearly 52% of employed workers in Harris County commuted to Muscogee County. The next three highest counties employing workers from Harris County were Troup (10%), Meriwether (3.5%) and Chattahoochee (2.6%) Counties. This was based on Harris County's total workforce of 11,811 employed individuals in 2000. (U.S. Census Bureau 2000 County-to-County Worker Flow Files).

In addition to the Harris County residents who work within Harris County, 1,123 people commuted into Harris County for work from Muscogee County, 373 from Troup County, 267 from Meriwether County, and 162 from Talbot County. In addition, 297 people commuted from Russell, Lee, and Chambers counties in Alabama to work in Harris County. While Harris County is not considered an employment center for the Region and exports far more workers than it brings in, workers coming into the County from other counties contribute greatly to the local economy. (U.S. Census Bureau 2000 County-to-County Worker Flow Files).



Strengths

While a primary objective of this assessment was to identify challenge areas for the communities involved, the assessment also sought to identify the perceived strengths of the County as expressed by residents participating in the town hall meeting, interviews, e-surveys and the random telephone survey. The telephone survey, in particular, provided an opportunity to test perceptions and issues gathered at the town hall meeting and during interviews.

As identified through qualitative analysis, the greatest strengths of Harris County are as follows:

- :: *The resources available*
- :: *The school system*
- :: *The people*
- :: *The quality of life*
- :: *The public services provided*

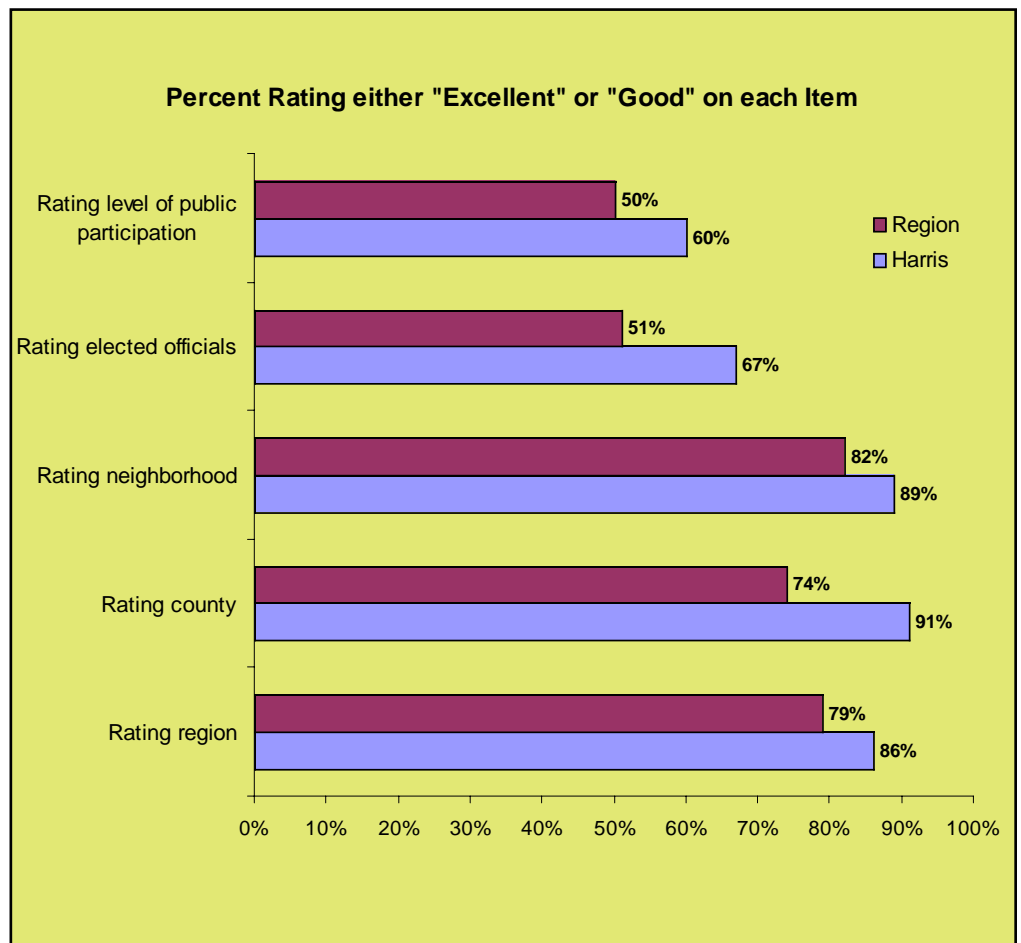
As part of the eight county CACIA project, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia conducted a random telephone survey in fall 2004 of 1,913 people in the eight county region, including approximately 230 from Harris County. Based on survey results, Harris County residents feel very positive about most aspects of their community and the CACIA Region. Nearly 86% of Harris County residents ranked the Chattahoochee Valley Region as an “Excellent” or “Good” place to live. This was the highest percentage response to this question of all the counties in the CACIA Region and was substantially higher than the 79% average response over all eight counties.

The accompanying graph illustrates the fact that Harris County residents feel even more strongly about their neighborhoods and their County, with over 90% of Harris County residents ranking their County as an “Excellent” or “Good” place to live and nearly 90% of respondents ranking their immediate neighborhood as either an “Excellent” or “Good” place to live.

Confidence in local officials expressed by Harris County telephone survey participants was the highest in the CACIA Region, with over 66% of residents rating elected officials in Harris County as either “Excellent” or “Good”. Likewise, residents felt that opportunities for public participation in the County were generally good, with 60.4% of

participants ranking opportunities to participate in the governance of the County as either “Excellent” or “Good.”

In assessing the strengths and assets of their community, Harris County residents in interviews, e-surveys and the town hall meeting reported that the County had numerous resources, including a willingness among the citizenry to provide the financial support necessary to ensure a strong community:



"One of the greatest strengths of Harris County is the citizens and their willingness to support the County by paying for the infrastructure they demand. Many of the citizens with whom I have spoken say over and over again that they do not mind increased taxes for quality schools and other quality services. They do, however, want a sound plan for getting there and an assurance that their money is not being wasted."
 [Harris County E-Survey].

Participants also frequently discussed the abundant natural and historical resources present in the County:

"Callaway Gardens is a tremendous asset. It provides revenue, is beautiful, and is considered a foundational element of our County."

[Harris County Town Hall Meeting Participant].

"We have scenic beauty and a rural atmosphere, yet have easy access to larger city amenities."

[Harris County Town Hall Meeting Participant].

"The greatest strengths of Harris County are Callaway Gardens, FDR State Park, and the mountain area; these are tremendous assets, and the community needs to retain scenic beauty as it continues its growth."

[Harris County Interview].

"We have the best of both worlds here - flatlands and mountainous areas, all in one County."

[Harris County Interview].

In discussing the strengths of the County, participants also referred to

the school system with considerable frequency:

"We do have a great school system. We do well with performance on standardized testing and have good facilities."
 [Harris County Interview].

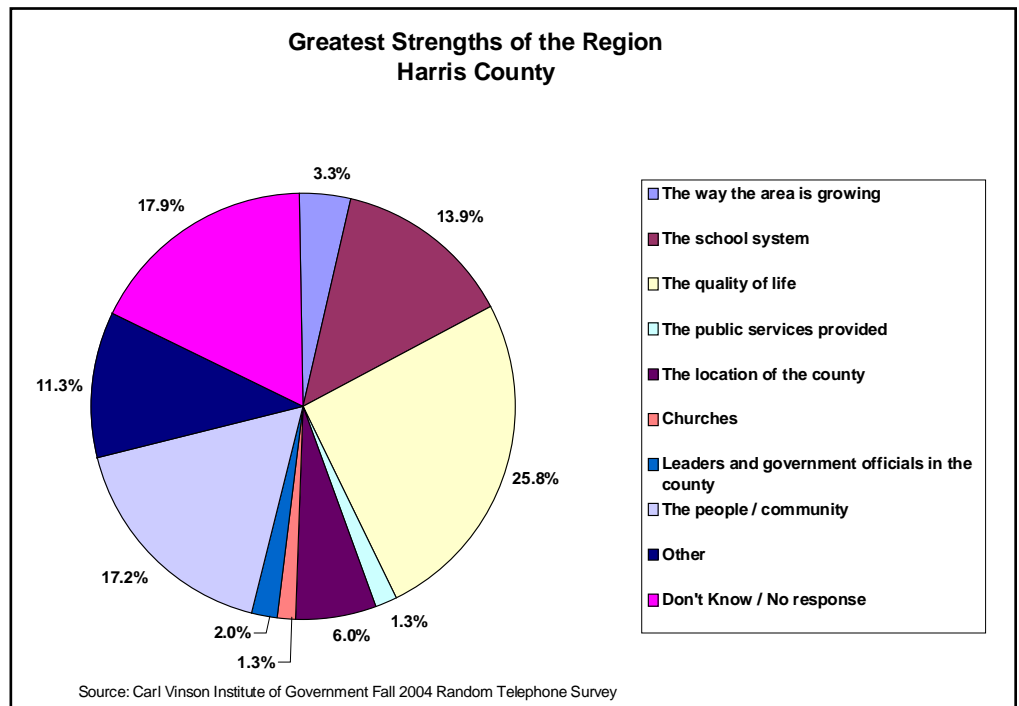
"We've got a great school system-it's certainly much better now that when I went through it."
 [Harris County Interview].

"We have a very good school system with a strong PTA, facilities that are not overcrowded and that are in good repair, and we have caring educators."
 [Harris County Town Hall Participant].

Harris County participants in the random telephone survey largely corroborated the findings of the qualitative portion of the assessment, with 25.8% of respondents identifying the quality of life as the greatest strength, while 17.2% indicated that the people and sense of community were the greatest strength of the area.

Not surprisingly, the Harris County school system also fared well, with 13.9% of telephone respondents identifying the school system as the greatest strength.

Clearly, in looking across the spectrum, Harris County residents take great pride in their community and their ability to work together. As one interviewee stated, *"This is a small, cohesive community where our schools, sheriff, and other services work together."*



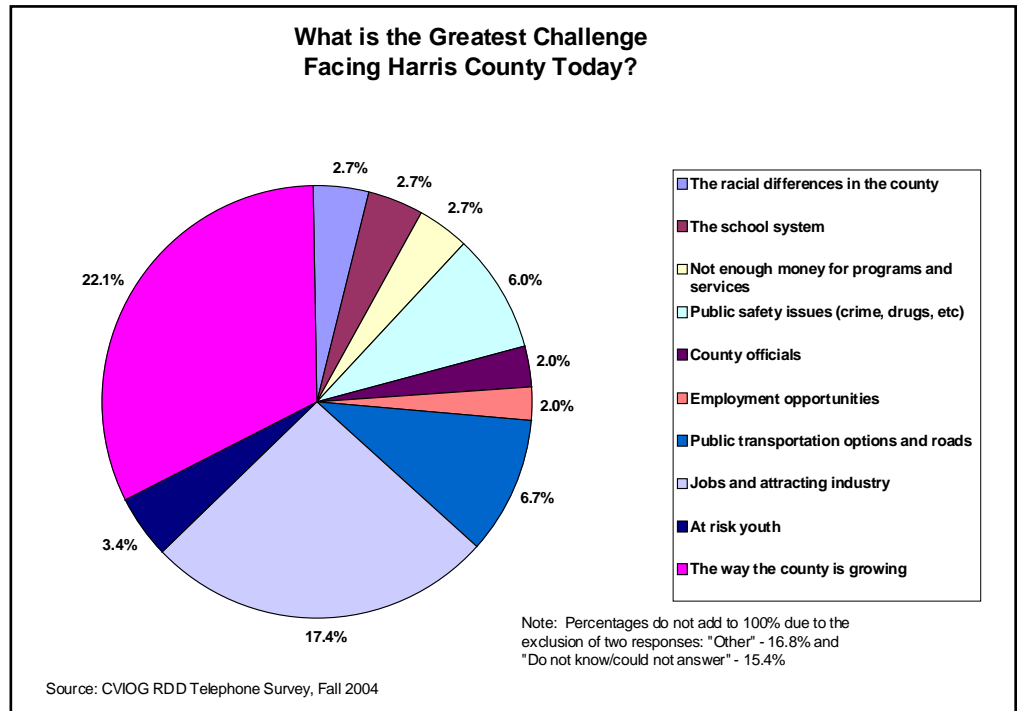
Challenges

The qualitative analysis for Harris County identified the following issues as broad themes for the most significant issues facing the County. In descending order of importance, these issues occupied the most discussion time in interviews, e-surveys and the town hall meeting in Harris County:

- :: *Drug use, police, safety issues*
- :: *At risk youth, youth programs, and parental involvement with youth*
- :: *Not enough money or programs to meet the needs of people*
- :: *Jobs and attracting industry*
- :: *How the county is growing*
- :: *The school system*

The random telephone survey was designed using these broad issue areas of concern, which varied from county to county. Responses to the telephone survey in Harris County added several additional issues, some in differing orders of importance than those above. This may partially reflect the difference between people who actively chose to attend a town hall meeting or participate in an interview or e-survey versus those who were randomly selected to participate in a brief telephone survey. It may also reflect current issues in the community at the time the response was given, recognizing that the assessment was conducted over a nine-month period.

Based on thorough analysis of residents' perceptions as expressed in individual interviews, e-survey, and at the town hall meeting as well as challenges identified through the random telephone survey and analysis of key demographic and economic information, the following issues are those that rose to the top in terms of challenges for Harris County.



GROWTH

Results from the telephone survey in Harris County showed that "the way the County is growing" was the single greatest area of concern for Harris County residents. When residents were asked the open-ended question "What is the greatest challenge facing Harris County today?", 22.1% of respondents perceived growth to be the most significant problem facing the County. Additionally, almost half (47.8%) of Harris County telephone respondents indicated that they believe their leaders needed to spend "more time" on growth and development plans for the County.

Issues related to growth and development also emerged as the most significant factors in the conversations during the Harris County town hall meeting and in e-surveys, and interviews, as well:

"Growth can be positive, but it needs to be planned. The County had a two minimum acre lot size requirement which was implemented in hopes of slowing the growth. It didn't really slow down growth, but it encouraged sprawl. The County has now implemented some polices that will provide for more dense housing development in certain types of situations."

[Harris County Interview].

"We are not Columbus and we do not want to be."

[Harris County Interview].

"Growth is an issue with many people - some are for it and some want to limit it."

[Harris County Interview].

"Our greatest challenge is the impact of the population explosion on our roads, schools, and services, without the tax base to pay for it."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].

"We must plan for 'good growth' which will allow us to remain a close-knit community while embracing new neighbors."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].

"In order to deal with growth issues, the County needs to hire an additional planner who has the experience and training necessary to deal with the issues of a rapidly developing County."

[Harris County Interview].

In considering the types of growth that have occurred within the County, participants frequently mentioned the lack of consideration being given to affordable housing:

"The greatest challenge facing Harris County is affordable housing for both new and existing residents. There is a lot of substandard housing and some of this housing is in need of renovation and some of it needs to be torn down."

[Harris County Interview].

"Affordable housing needs are greater than the supply, and the people do not understand the possibilities of having good affordable housing."

[Harris County Interview].

Regarding the lack of affordable housing in Harris County, residents expressed concern that many valued members of the community, including school teachers and public safety officials, currently have difficulty in

securing affordable housing within the County.

Looking across all of the responses and comments from Harris County participants, it was apparent that many residents continue to believe that there is insufficient planning for growth in the County. Participants expressed a clear sentiment that growth was inevitable. However, they believe growth must be controlled and planned in a manner that preserves the quality of life that residents of the County enjoy while bringing new assets and opportunities to the community.

JOBS & CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

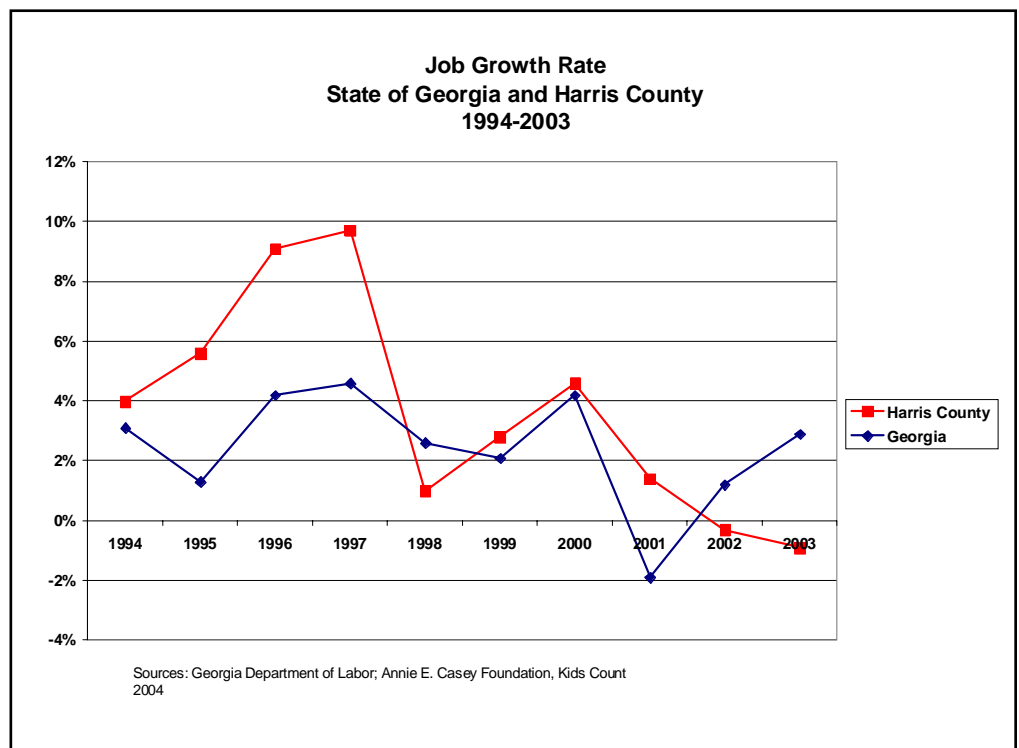
Results from the random telephone survey in Harris County showed that "jobs and attracting industry" was an area of concern for Harris County residents. In response to the open-ended question "What is the greatest challenge facing Harris County today?", 17.4% of residents perceived jobs and attracting industry to be the most significant problem fac-

ing the County. The level of response in regard to this issue area in Harris County was significantly higher than that experienced across the eight county CACIA Region (12.8%). Additionally, 2% of telephone survey respondents in Harris County gave the related category of "employment opportunities" as the County's greatest challenge. Cumulatively, nearly one in five participants indicated that the economy is the County's most significant challenge.

The economy and job creation also emerged as significant factors in the conversations during the Harris County town hall meeting and in e-surveys and interviews. Bringing jobs to Harris County and promoting business and industrial growth was identified as a critical priority for the County:

"We have to find and entice more industrial development. We don't have enough business and industry to support the residential development that is occurring within our County."

[Harris County Interview].



"There is a need to diversify our tax base. We do not have the industry or commercial and retail development to support the County."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].

Relevant statistics confirm that the County has experienced significant changes in its economy over the past decade. Harris County's job growth rate, while more robust than the Georgia average in the mid-1990s, fell rapidly in the economic downturn of 2001-2002, and the County lost jobs for the first time in recent history in 2002 and 2003.

Area youth are aware of the changes and concerns of their parents. The need for business and industrial growth was strongly echoed in the comments of the 115 high school participants in the CACIA process, who cited *"limited business," "resistance to industrial development,"* and *"lack of jobs"* among the greatest challenges facing Harris County.

Many of the concerns in this area focused on the current lack of infrastructure in the County and the need to develop it prior to bringing businesses to the County:

"The need for infrastructure development sufficient to build a commercial industrial base is our greatest challenge. We aren't looking for heavy industry, but we do need to have office parks, research facilities, and grocery stores. We MUST increase our tax base."

[Harris County Interview].

Additional questions in the telephone survey supported the fact that participants believe the area faces substantial challenges in relation to its economy. When asked to rate a

series of issues on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most serious, Harris County random telephone survey respondents rated the category "employment opportunities" as a 3.42, which was the highest response received in regard to this directed question.

In considering expansion of the County's business and industrial base, residents were hopeful that expansion could occur without sacrificing the quality of life that exists within the County:

"We need to form a plan that will allow the maintenance of our rural atmosphere while providing additional retail and business opportunities."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].

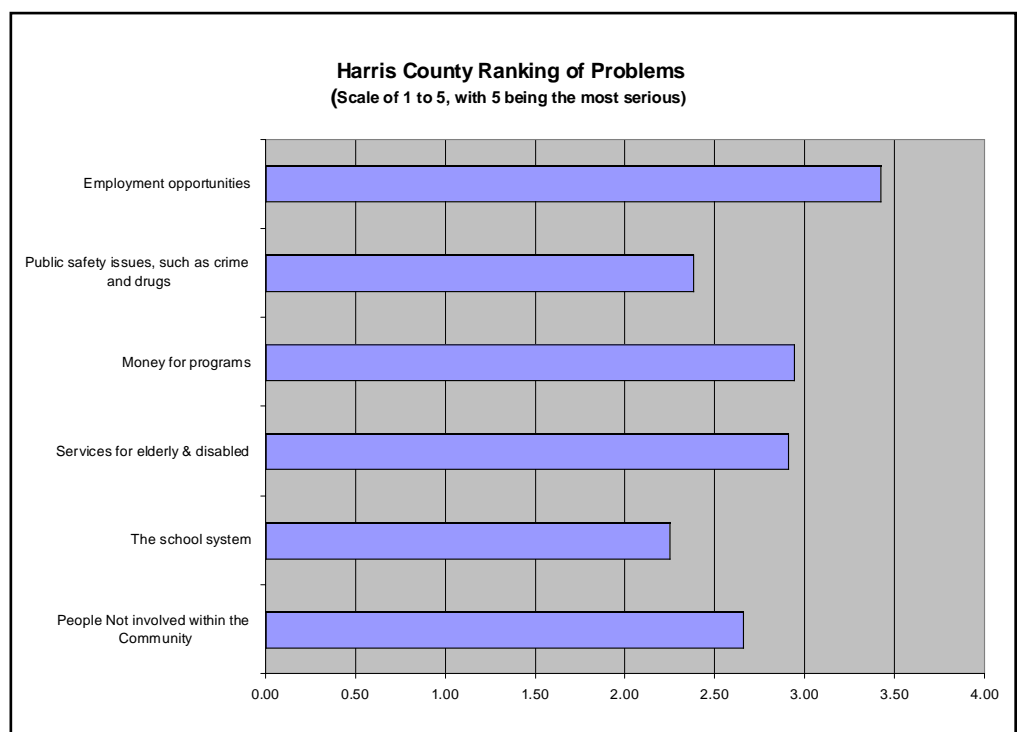
PUBLIC SAFETY

Based on discussions from the town hall meeting, interviews, and e-surveys, Public Safety emerged as one of the greatest challenges facing Harris County. Yet this issue was identified by only 6% of Harris County respondents in the random

telephone survey as the greatest challenge facing Harris County.

During the telephone survey, residents were also queried about a number of issues that emerged as priorities during the town hall meeting, personal interviews and e-surveys in Harris County. One of the questions they were asked was whether community leaders needed to spend more time, less time, or the same amount of time on particular issues. In response to preventing crime and illegal drug use, 40.4% of Harris County residents surveyed believe that community leaders need to spend **more time** preventing crime and illegal drug use.

Analysis of public safety data for Harris County reveals that arrest rates in 2003 were 235.6 per 100,000 individuals for all crimes. This is well below the average rate for the State of Georgia (538.8 incidents per 100,000 people) and places Harris County 125th among Georgia's 159 counties in terms of the highest arrest rate in the State. Similarly, the number of violent crimes reported per 100,000 people



for Harris County in 2003 was 65.7; placing Harris County 143rd out of Georgia's 159 counties on this indicator, again well below the average for the State (229.3). (*Georgia Statistics System, 2004 Georgia County Guide*).

The rate of reported property crimes in Harris County in 2003 was also relatively low at 838.2 per 100,000 people, placing Harris County 142nd among Georgia's 159 counties. Within the CACIA Region, only Chattahoochee County (with a rate of 212.1 per 100,000 people) had a lower rate of property crime. (Georgia Statistics System, 2004 Georgia County Guide).

The juvenile arrest rate in Harris County in 2003 was 4.6%. While this is only marginally higher than the average for the State of Georgia (4.5%), it is higher than some of the other counties in the CACIA region (i.e. Marion County with a juvenile crime rate less than half the state average). (Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Georgia Bureau of Investigation). In Harris County in 2003, the percentage of juvenile arrests in relation to total arrests was 24.6%, placing Harris County 49th of Georgia's 159 counties and indicating that almost one out of every four arrests in Harris County is of a juvenile offender. (Georgia Statistics System, 2004 Georgia County Guide).

Participants in interviews, the town hall meeting and e-surveys identified public safety issues as a challenge for the community with significant frequency:

"Our juvenile crime rate is on the rise due to lack of youth programs (after school)."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].



"We have drug-related problems that cause disproportionate law enforcement allocations to particular areas that have pockets of drug activity."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].

"Drugs are a HUGE issue in the County. There are methyl amphetamine labs within the County, and crack cocaine use is prevalent."

[Harris County Interview].

"The major concern that I have is that there has been a strong increase in the number of minor crimes committed by juvenile delinquents. These include property crimes, vandalism, and theft. The incidence of these crimes has increased as our County has increasingly become more of a bedroom community for the City of Columbus. The majority of these crimes are committed within the neighborhoods in which these children live, and the majority of the crimes are committed by 12-17 year olds. It would appear that a lack of parental supervision is a root cause."

[Harris County Interview].

"Many people in Harris County don't recognize the significance of illegal drug use within the County and its impacts on the local crime rate."

[Harris County Interview].

Clearly, there is a public perception that juvenile crime and drug use are on the rise in Harris County. While crime statistics indicate that juvenile crime rates were relatively flat from 2001-2003, data is not yet available to indicate whether or not an increase in juvenile crime was experienced in 2004 in Harris County. At the same time, significant data on drug use, particularly among teens, is not readily available on a local basis. One of the only available sources of information on drug use is the 2003 Georgia Student Health Survey Report (published by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health) which presents survey information collected across the State of Georgia. According to that report, 33.3% of Georgia high school students were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property during 2003, higher than the national average of 28.5%. While these numbers are statewide and do not necessarily reflect Harris County, it is an issue that community leaders may want to further pursue in terms of acquiring local data.

Comments regarding communication and coordination between public safety entities seemed to be centered largely on the need for enhanced telecommunications equipment. Medical emergency response time was identified as a strength for the community, although participants noted that there was not a hospital or emergency clinic physically located within the County. This fact was noted as a gap in services that exist within the community, and participants indicated that the distance to emergency medical facilities is a critical issue.

In addition to these needs, participants at the town hall meeting noted the need for increased enforcement of noise ordinances and for increased enforcement of curfews established for juveniles.

In related statistics, Harris County has seen a significant increase in the number of family violence incidents requiring law enforcement intervention as illustrated in the accompanying graph. (Georgia Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Family Violence Reports).

Whether the rise in family violence incidents is merely a reflection of increasing population or results from other issues is not known. It is known, however, that the rapidly increasing population will place continued pressure on public safety and human services professionals unless corresponding increases in staff and resources accompany this population growth.

In summarizing public safety discussions, an analysis of existing statistical databases failed to substantiate many of the concerns expressed by telephone survey respondents in Harris County. Likewise, participants in the town hall meeting (with the exceptions noted above) identified the low crime rate in the County and the quality of its volunteer fire departments as key strengths for the County. It appears that enhancing telecommunications equipment for improved emergency response could greatly improve public attitudes regarding public safety. Additionally, while public safety officials appear to be doing a good job within the County according to statistical data, they may need to make a concerted effort to commu-

nicate results more effectively to the public, particularly if the County continues to grow at its current rate.

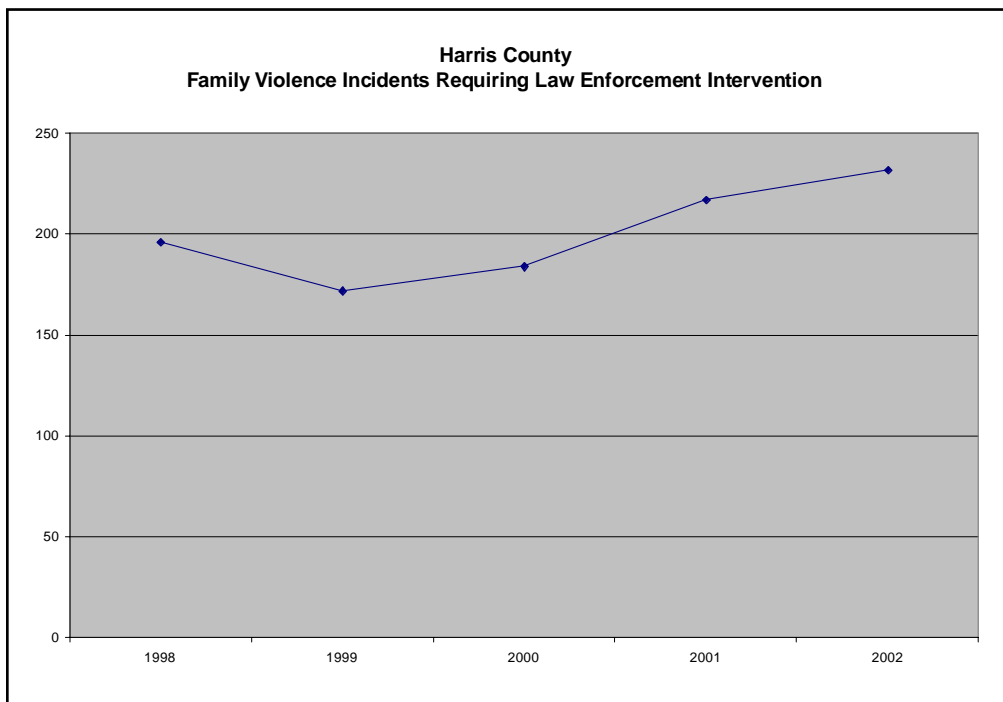
OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN

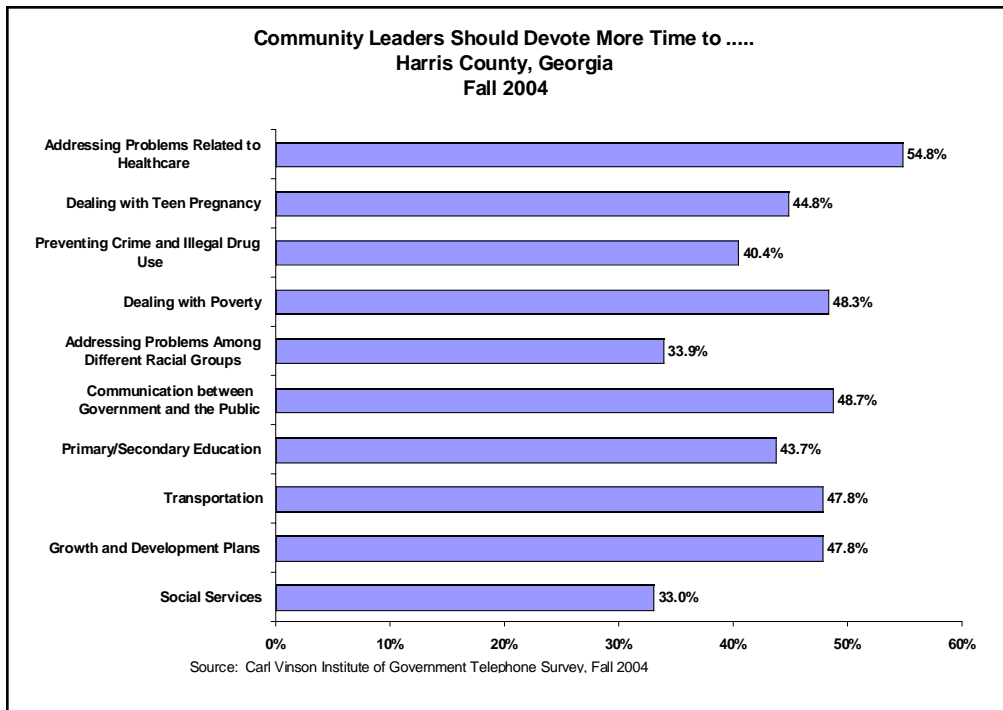
Other issues may not evoke the title of “greatest problem,” but residents want community leaders to continue to focus on them. This may mean that while survey respondents and town hall participants don't consider these to be the most significant problems, they continue to be critical issues and warrant ongoing time and attention.

Compared to the high percentages seen on similar graphs for other counties in the CACIA project, Harris County residents appear to be fairly satisfied with the amount of time community leaders are devoting to critical issues in the area. A notable exception is healthcare, where 54.8% of Harris County residents surveyed believe community leaders need to devote more time and attention.

In discussions related to healthcare, participants in the town hall meeting, interviews and e-surveys frequently discussed healthcare in terms of access to healthcare by the “working poor” and in terms of the need to provide healthcare to the elderly. Many of these discussions were related to insurance and medical cost issues.

Communication issues within the County were noted extensively during the town hall meeting, particularly as it relates to improving communication between government and the public. It was acknowledged that the County has a weekly newspaper, but many residents, particularly newer residents of the County, do not subscribe to the paper. As a





Hence, a vicious cycle to meet the education and service needs of the residents while maintaining the integrity of the green space is in place. However, with the increase in population, the roads, traffic, schools, water, and sewage issues must be addressed. The County will need strong leadership and strategic planning to address these issues."

[Harris County E-Survey].



result, it is increasingly difficult to disseminate information on government and community issues to a community that increasingly *"only sleeps and eats in Harris County."* Harris County town hall participants strongly suggested creating a community website where residents could find information.

"We are developing great parks and recreation facilities, but it is hard to stay ahead of the growth. We need more organized youth activities throughout the County to keep youth busy, active, and involved. There is a particular need to develop programs and activities that appeal to older youth."

[Harris County Interview].

Another prevailing theme in the town hall meeting, interviews and e-surveys was the lack of constructive activities for youth within the County outside of school attendance:

"A significant gap in services is the lack of after-school programs for middle school children."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].

"We need more youth services such as Girls and Boys Clubs."

[Harris County Town Hall Participant].

"There need to be more children's' services like Boys and Girls Club. Currently these programs are only available to Harris County in the summer. "

[Harris County Interview].

In summarizing the findings of the CACIA process for Harris County, it is difficult to find words that better articulate the findings than the words of the participants themselves. In this regard, the following statement of an e-survey participant does an extremely good job of summarizing the community assets and critical issues of the Harris County Community:

"The problems mentioned above are difficult because the addition of businesses and other tax contributing entities also bring a change in the socialization, culture and atmosphere of 'country-living' - the very reason that people are attracted to Harris County in the first place.

