

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

Introduction

Over time, change affects communities in various ways. Planning does not mean change for the sake of change. But it does mean that when change is about to occur, we will guide and direct this change in the best interest of our citizens and this community as a whole.

This plan is a compilation of policy statements, standards, and goals for guiding the economic and physical development, both public and private of our Town, for the betterment of the community. Creating this plan gave our Township an opportunity to identify issues and problems that affect our Town as well as our way of life and to examine potential solutions to those issues and problems. It will inventory our community assets and become a guide for making decisions in the future.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Town of Signal Mountain is to be a community that preserves its small town atmosphere by managing growth and requiring development to be orderly and consistent; provides services that are necessary for the well-being and general welfare of its citizens; and endeavors to be a desirable and safe place in which families may live and grow.

Purpose of the Plan

Over the years, our mountain township has given those who live here an important quality and "way of life." People who live in the Town of Signal Mountain believe their community to be unique. We truly value our small town atmosphere, natural environment, schools, parks, playgrounds, residential family character, and government services which provide for our safety and well-being.

During recent years, our Town has experienced fairly rapid population growth and an increase in the number of businesses along Taft Highway as a result of this population growth. There is no reason to believe that either type of expansion will abate. Citizens began voicing concern several years ago that the Town was in danger of losing those values which make it unique. Citizen task forces and advisory committees urged the Town's government to develop a philosophic vision along with a practical range of policies which protect that vision and manage the pace of growth in the Town.

The Town's elected officials realized that the Town had an opportunity to design a plan to endeavor to protect those values irrespective of the Town's future physical changes and that

creating such a plan could represent an attempt to identify problems and issues as well as establish directions and solutions.

Various surveys, workshop and advisory groups, as well as the Town Council, identified the following concerns and issues that need to be addressed: management of growth, development of a Town plan, sewer expansion and septic system issues, and road improvements.

To help formulate and assist in creating the plan, Town officials selected Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon, Inc., an engineering, planning and architectural firm from Nashville, Tennessee (the "consultants"). Working with an advisory committee selected by the Town Council, the consultants prepared a draft of this plan which was presented at two public meetings. The consultant's draft plan included a transportation and infrastructure master plan, urban design and site development guidelines, and recommends strategies for implementing the plan. The Local Planning Assistance section of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development was asked to revise the consultant's draft land use plan in accordance with policy recommendations from the Town Council and the Planning Commission.

In the strategic plan that follows, Town residents have the opportunity to get a clearer understanding of Signal Mountain's development history, demographics, land use plan, potential solutions to current problems, and recommendations concerning future development. This plan is intended to enable the Town to remain true to its heritage by endeavoring to preserve its predominantly small town, family residential character for the benefit of its citizens, now and in the future.

History of the Town of Signal Mountain

It is believed that the Creek, Cherokee, and other Native American tribes used Signal Point and nearby promontories to send fire and smoke signals for centuries prior to the Civil War. During the fall of 1863, the Union Army used Signal Point as a communications station to signal various locations in the Chattanooga area. These activities clearly indicate a principal and appropriate reason why the present Town should be called Signal Mountain.

The Town of Signal Mountain originated with the purchase of 4,400 acres of land in the Signal Point area by Charles E. James. Mr. James' first contact with Walden's Ridge was during the 1878 yellow fever epidemic. Mr. James led a group of people to the Signal Point area to escape the epidemic and with his purchase began plans for a residential community.

Mr. James brought the modern world to the mountain. In the eyes of many Town residents, he was a prophet of progress. Mr. James was a visionary who dreamed of railroads, dams, towns, and a fine hotel surrounded by modern homes on a remote mountaintop. He found beauty and satisfaction in bricks, mortar, blueprints and machinery. He made those dreams come true.

Thirty years elapsed before Mr. James began developing the Signal Point area. In 1913, construction of twelve miles of streetcar track was completed. The streetcar track connected Chattanooga to Signal Mountain. Signal Mountain Inn opened in 1913 and catered to those on

their way to winter in Florida. Mr. James knew the hotel needed recreation beyond that of hiking trails and the mineral waters of Burnt Springs, so he constructed a casino complete with dance floor across from the hotel. Soon he added two hundred rooms to the Inn. Many of these rooms were later occupied by friends and families of soldiers stationed at Fort Ogelthorpe during World War I. For the next six to eight years, Mr. James' principal interest was developing the area surrounding the hotel.

In 1918, the Signal Mountain Golf Course was completed. All of Walden's Ridge was open range for cattle, and farmers from Red Bank, Mountain Creek, and the surrounding areas drove their cattle up to Walden's Ridge in the spring and left them to forage until fall. Attracted to the golf course greens, the animals collected there in large numbers. When the Town was incorporated, its first ordinance prohibited running livestock within the Town limits.

On April 4, 1919, the Tennessee Legislature passed the bill that chartered the Town. The Charter required the Town to be governed by three commissioners to be elected by the Town's registered voters. The first Mayor was C. E. James. He served as Mayor from 1919-1921.

When Mr. James died in 1925, two hundred houses had been built with their primary location being within a few blocks of the Signal Mountain Inn. Many of these were summer residences. The Palisades section would remain forest for another ten years. Mr. James was instrumental in building Signal Mountain Grammar School which opened in 1927. A fire hall was built. In 1927, a Town Hall and temporary jail were added.

The Alexian Order purchased the Signal Mountain Hotel in 1936, built a monastery, and converted the hotel into a home for elderly men by 1938. In 1950 the Generalate of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers moved the headquarters to the Town. The Order opened Alexian Village of Tennessee in September, 1983, which is a total life care community for the elderly. They opened the Alexian Inn, a thirty-three unit assisted living facility, in the old hotel building in August, 1992.

In 1939 the swimming pool near the Signal Mountain Golf Course was constructed for \$8,000. Wilkes T. Thrasher Elementary School opened in 1961. By 1971, 1,294 students were enrolled in the two elementary schools and Signal Mountain Junior High. Kindergartens were in operation at both schools by 1975.

The 1970's brought many changes to the Town. Its population had grown to 4,839 residents by 1970. A library was established in 1970. A new fire hall was built. A sewer system was approved for the oldest part of the community as well as part of the Palisades Drive area, additional recreational facilities and a new Town Hall, including the Town's Administrative Offices, were built in 1979.

During the last twenty years, the Town has continued to change, grow and improve. Recreational facilities built during this period were a municipal playground, tennis courts, baseball, softball and soccer fields, and the Paul Mathes Family Center at the corner of Ridgeway and Rolling Way. Our new library facility opened in 1988.

The Tennessee Legislature amended the Town's Charter to convert the Town's government to a Council/Manager form of government in May, 1990.

Crucial portions of this section of the plan were paraphrased from Signal Mountain and Walden's Ridge by Z. Carter Patten and various other sources. The following is a chronological listing of the dates when sections/major subdivisions were constructed or added to the Town by annexation. An asterisk indicates that the area was added in the Town by annexation.

1919	Town established
1926	Old Towne (section); Palisades (section)
1957	Timberlinks; Birnam Wood (lots)
1964	*Applewood
1966	Birnam Wood (first house)
1967	Shepherd Forest; Applewood
1968	Carriage Hill
1974	Hidden Brook
1975	*Shopping Center, the area north of Cauthen Way, Skyline Park, and Murrell Road
1976	Shoal Creek Falls
1982	Skyline Park
1984	*Autumn Way Lane
1985	*St. Ives
1987	Chestnut Oaks
1990	*Creekshire
1991	*Cool Springs
1993	Westfield; St. Ives
1994	The Orchard
1995	*Shackleford Ridge Road area
1996	Rainbow Lake; Brow View

POPULATION

Introduction

This section presents population trends from 1950 to 1990 for the Town of Signal Mountain. The section will also briefly discuss some factors which are expected to affect how the Town's population will grow in the future. Finally, projections of the Town's population through 2010 are presented.

The Town of Signal Mountain is on the southern tip of Walden's Ridge. Its elevation is approximately 1,200 feet above the City of Chattanooga. Because of the topography, there are a limited number of access roads to Signal Mountain. One, Signal Mountain Road (U.S. Highway

127), accesses the Town of Signal Mountain, while the other access road from Chattanooga, the "W Road," goes through the Town of Walden.

The Town is located within Hamilton County. Due to the limited access and other factors, there are virtually no industrial uses and limited commercial activity within the Town. Therefore, Signal Mountain may be classified as a suburb of Chattanooga, and is dependent on Hamilton County for employment and most shopping. Thus, regional events will affect the Town.

Trends

As shown in Table 1. 1, Signal Mountain had a high rate of population growth between 1950 and 1990, from under 2,000 persons to 7,034. In 1950 Signal Mountain's population was 1,786. Between 1950 and 1960 the population of the Town increased by 1,627 persons (a 91.1 percent increase). Growth of this nature is based on net in-migration of persons from outside the Town. This growth also changed the nature of the population. The median age dropped from 33.6 years of age in 1950 to 31.5 years in 1960. The Town's share of Hamilton County's population went from 0.85 percent to 1.4 percent. Hamilton County also grew by 14.24 percent during this period. Signal Mountain attracted some of this population growth.

Table 1. 1 Signal Mountain Population

Place	1950	% Chg	1960	% Chg	1970	% Chg	1980	% Chg	1990	% Chg	1995
Signal Mtn.	1,786	91.1	3,414	41.8	4,839	20.2	5,818	20.9	7,034	5.8	7,446
Ham. Co	208,253	14.2	237,905	7.22	255,077	12.77	287,643	-0.73	285,536	3.0	293,960
State of TN	3,291,718	8.37	3,567,089	10.06	3,926,018	16.94	4,591,023	6.23	4,877,185	7.6	5,246,723

Between 1960 and 1970 the Town continued to grow, although not at the same pace. The population increased by 1,426 persons, which was a 41.8 percent increase over 1960. Hamilton County's population increased by 7.2 percent during the same period.

The decade between 1970 and 1980 was a very good period for the State of Tennessee: the population of the State increased by almost 17 percent. Hamilton County's population increased by 12.77 percent. Signal Mountain's population increased by 979 people, which represented a 20.2 percent increase in the Town's population.

Between 1980 and 1990 the overall growth rate for the State was 6.23 percent, while Hamilton County had a small 0.73% population loss. The Town's population increased by 1,216 persons, a 20.9 percent increase. The Town's certified population in 1995 was 7,446, which was a 5.8 percent increase over 1990. This was 1.5 percent of Hamilton County's estimated population in 1995.

The Town has proved attractive to persons in the Chattanooga and Hamilton County area, with a growth rate which appears to be relatively independent from the County's. See Tables 1.2 and 1.3 for Signal Mountain's Population by Age.

Table 1.2 Town of Signal Mountain Population by Age 1950 - 1990*

Age	1950	Percent
Under4	211	11.8
&14	289	16.2
15-24	183	10.2
25-34	244	13.7
35-44	315	17.6
45-54	237	13.3
55-64	146	8.2
Over 65	161	9.0
Total	1,786	100.0
Median Age	33.6	-

Table 1.3 Town of Signal Mountain Population by Age 1960 - 1990*

Age	1960	Percent	1970	Percent	1980	Percent	1990	Percent
Under4	391	11.5	320	6.8	386	6.6	486	6.9
5-9	443	13.0	557	11.5	451	7.8	578	8.2
10-14	354	10.4	605	12.5	509	8.7	584	8.3
15-19	202	5.9	447	9.2	523	9.0	427	6.1
20-24	85	2.5	169	3.5	223	3.8	212	3.0
25-29	152	4.5	224	4.6	306	5.3	234	3.3
30-34	272	7.9	293	6.1	514	8.8	461	6.6
35-39	263	7.7	340	7.0	472	8.1	708	10.1
40-44	253	7.4	361	7.4	412	7.1	685	9.7
45-49	232	6.8	338	7.0	370	6.4	490	7.0
50-54	201	5.9	304	6.3	385	-6.6	367	5.2
55-59	164	4.8	241	5.0	339	5.8	312	-4.5
60-64	111	3.3	212	4.4	265	4.6	325	4.6
65-69	77	2.2	146	3.0	198	3.4	321	4.6
70-74	92	2.7	119	2.5	181	3.1	273	3.9
Over 75	121	.35	163	3.4	284	4.9	571	8.1
Total	3,413	100.0	4,839	100.0	5,818	100.0	7,034	100.0
Median Age	31.5	N/A	31.7	N/A	35.0	N/A	39.0	N/A

Division of Table is the result of age bracket differences in reported census data.

Density

"Population Density" (see Table 1.4) is the average number of persons per square mile of land area. Population density is a method for comparing the relative population distribution within a common geographical area.

Table 1.4 Population Density

Place	LAND AREA SQ. MILES				POPULATION DENSITY SQ. MILES				
	1970	1980	1995	1999	1970	1980	1990	1995	1999
Signal Mtn.	4.5	N/A	7.0	7.06	1,075	N/A	1,379	1,063.7	1,061.4
Ham. Co.	542.5	542.5	542.5	542.5	470.2	5,30.2	526.3	541.9	541.9
State of TN	41219.2	41219.2	41219.2	41219.2	95.2	110.6	118.3	127.3	127.3

In the period between 1970 and 1990 the area of Signal Mountain increased from 4.5 miles to 5.1 square miles. A 1995 annexation added 1,206 acres to the Town. (Note: 259 acres is owned by the Hamilton County School Board for use as a school and recreation site.) In the same period, the population increased by 2,195 persons. Between 1990 and 1995 the estimated population increased by 412 persons.

The population density increased from 1,075 persons per square mile in 1970 to 1,379 persons per square mile by 1990. The 1990 population density approaches that for the City of Chattanooga. Signal Mountain's population density more closely approaches the City of Red Bank's population density, 1,895, than it does Walden's population density of 476. The 0.6 square mile increase in area over 20 years would indicate that most of Signal Mountain's growth has come from in-fill within the Town rather than annexation. The 1995 annexation reduced the population density to 1,063.7 per square mile, while providing new area for development.

Components of Population Change

There are a number of factors which affect the population. However, the two most important components are natural increase and migration. Natural increase is the net difference between the number of births and deaths occurring among the resident population during a decade. Migration is based on persons moving into or out of the place in question. Taken together, these two factors account for population increase.

Natural increase is calculated by subtracting deaths from births over a decade. Yearly reports of resident births and deaths are published in the Tennessee Vital Statistics at the County level. Natural increase for Hamilton County is shown in Table 1.5 below.

Table 1.5 Natural Increase

Place	1950/59	Percent	1960/69	Percent	1970/79	Percent	1980/89	Percent
Ham. Co.	37,242	17.9	25,297	10.6	18,315	7.2	14,751	5.1
St. of TN	533,358	16.2	399,130	11.2	275,724	7.0	249,707	5.4

One factor in natural increase is the age distribution of the resident population. This is reflected below in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6 Median Age (years)

Place	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Signal Mtn.	33.6	31.5	31.7	35.0	39.0
Ham. Co.	28.9	29.0	29.2	-30.5	34.7
St. of TN	27.3	28.0	28.1	30.1	33.5
U.S.A.	N/A	29.5	28.1	30.0	31.7

Signal Mountain has always had a median age level higher than that for Hamilton County.

However, in 1990 it was 4 to 6 years above the median age for Hamilton County and the State. Almost half of the Town's population is older than the child bearing age. This high median age means that population growth in Signal Mountain will be more from in-migration than natural increase.

Migration may cause population growth or loss; it is the movement of persons that is critical. Net migration is the difference between the number of persons moving into the Town and the number of persons moving out. Negative net migration indicates more persons are moving out of the Town that are moving in, resulting in a loss of population.

Without knowing the natural increase, net migration cannot be computed for the Town. However, data is available for Hamilton County and the State as shown in Table 1.7 below.

Table 1.7 Net Migration

Place	1950/59	Percent	1960/69	Percent	1970/79	Percent	1980/89	Percent
Ham. Co.	-7,592	-3.65	-8,125	-3.42	14,251	5.6	-16,858	-5.9
St. of TN	-257,987	-7.84	-40,201	-1.13	389,281	9.9	36,455	0.8

This table indicates that Hamilton County is exporting population. There is some census data which indirectly indicates migration for the Town. This is shown in Table 1.8 below.

Table 1.8 Place of Residence

	1970	1980	1990
Population	4,520	5,443	6,548
Residence in Same House	2,443	2,960	3,434
Same Co., different house	735	1,230	1,629
Same State, different house	266	225	312
Different State	802	913	1123
From Northeast	78	100	N/A
From North Central	176	162	N/A
From South		606	N/A
From West	37	45	N/A
From Abroad		115	50

In 1990, almost 25 percent of the Town's population had moved to Signal Mountain in the last five years from another part of Hamilton County. Just under five percent had moved to Signal Mountain from elsewhere in the State and 17 percent moved to the Town from an out of State location. Almost half of the Town's population moved to the Town from elsewhere between 1985 and 1990.

Population Projections

The population of the Town depends on a number of factors: natural increase, in-migration (which is a function of the regional economy) annexation, amount of land available for development, and others. Therefore, the population projections shown in Table 1.9 are based on different methods. First is a "step down" projection based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates for Hamilton County, with Signal Mountain as 2.5 percent of Hamilton County's population. The second uses the average population increase for Signal Mountain over the past five censuses. The 1999 certified population and one of the 2010 projections were compiled by the University of Tennessee Department of Business and Economic Research in March 1999 to be used in conjunction with "Public Chapter 1101."

Table 1.9 Population Projection to 2010

	1990 Census	1995 Certified	1999 Certified	2010
Step Down - Census Bureau Projection	7,034	7,446	7,494	7,971
Average Annual Increase	7,034	7,446	7,494	9,324
University of Tennessee, Center for Business and Economic Research				7,700

TOWN GOVERNMENT/COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Municipal Overview

The Town of Signal Mountain is a full-service community of approximately 7,500 citizens sitting atop the Signal Mountain section of Walden's Ridge, 1,200 feet above Red Bank and Chattanooga. The Town is a bedroom suburb of Chattanooga with virtually all employment being off the mountain.

The Town was incorporated in 1919. It operated for many decades with the Commission form of government. In 1988, a Charter Study Committee was appointed by the Town Commission to study alternative forms of governmental structures. With the assistance of the Municipal Technical Advisory Service, the Charter Study Committee recommended to the Town Commission that the Council/Manager form of government be pursued. The Town Commission voted on February 12, 1990, to adopt the Private Act approved on January 29, 1990, by the Tennessee Legislature which amended the Town Charter to convert the Town's government from the Commission form of government to the Council/Manager form. On May 21, 1990, the Commission appointed its first Town Manager, Mr. Rick Sonnenburg, and with his swearing-in ceremony, the Commission became a Council. During the year 2000, Mr. Sonnenburg left the Town and the Council appointed Mr. Hershel Dick to be the Town Manager. During the year 2000, Ms. Diana Campbell was appointed to be the Town Recorder.

The Council is comprised of five members elected at-large by the voters with three of the five members running every two years on even-numbered years matching the national elections. Of the three candidates that receive the largest number of votes in each election, two receive four-year terms and one (the third place finisher) receives a two-year term. This ensures that three members of the Council will be up for election every two years.

The Council sets all policies, including ordinances, resolutions, contracts, personnel policies, personnel staffing levels, purchasing policies, the budget, tax rate, and other municipal policies. The Mayor and Vice-Mayor are selected by and from among the Councilmembers. The Mayor presides at Council meetings and otherwise provides leadership for the Council and the Town. The Vice-Mayor acts as Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

The Council appoints the Town Manager, who serves at the will of the Council. The Charter provides the Manager with powers to be the chief administrative officer, to supervise all employees (except the Town Attorney and Judge), enforce all laws and ordinances of the Council, draft a budget for Council review, prepare an annual financial statement, supervise all purchasing using the Council's purchasing policy, and make recommendations to the Council through the agenda for Council meetings. The Council meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall and occasionally at special sessions at other times of the month. All meetings are open to the public.

The Town has a number of boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission, Recreation Advisory Board, Library Board, Parks Board, Design Review Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Condemnation Board, composed of citizen volunteers who are interested in serving their community. Volunteers are also encouraged to assist at the Library, Recycle Center and in the recreation leagues.

Description of Existing Buildings/Facilities

- A. Town Hall - 1111 Ridgeway Avenue - This facility was built in 1979. The Finance and Administrative offices are located in Town Hall, along with the Building Inspector and Court Clerk. The Town Hall also houses the Courtroom and Town Council meeting room.
- B. Gymnasium - 1111 Ridgeway Avenue - This facility was built in 1979. The Town's one all-purpose gymnasium is located adjacent to Town Hall. It is used for basketball, private parties, exercise classes, an occasional large community meeting, voting, arts and crafts shows, and housing Electric Power Board workers stationed on the mountain during and in anticipation of weather causing power line damage. It is open year round.
- C. Public Safety Building - 1111 Ridgeway Avenue - This facility was built in 1979 and houses the Police, Fire, and dispatching operations of the Town, along with the Town's Police and Fire Department vehicles and support equipment.
- D. Water/Sewer Maintenance Shop - 1111 Ridgeway Ave - This facility was built in 1979 and houses the Water and Sewer Department crews and much of their vehicles and equipment. It is located behind Town Hall.

- E. New Pool - 1111 Ridgeway Avenue - Built in 1974, this public Olympic-sized pool contains 400,000 gallons of water and is open for use from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. The pool serves as the home of the Signal Mountain "Green Giant" swim team. Open to the public daily and on Monday and Friday nights for family swim, the pool staff offers swim lessons, pool parties, day camp swimming lifeguard certification, rescue training, Boy Scout lifesaving certification plus water aerobic exercise. A wading pool for children 5 and under is also available. A concession stand is open daily.
- F. Old Pool - 809 James Boulevard - The "old pool" was built in 1939. In the early 60's, the pool was changed to its current T-shape which increased its capacity to 80,000 gallons. The old pool was used for swimming lessons, day camp swimming and pool parties. The old pool was closed for the summer of 2000.
- G. Recycle Center - 1151 Ridgeway Avenue - This site was established in September, 1990, by the Town Council with the encouragement of the Recycle Signal Committee. It recycles newspaper, mixed paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, and other materials.
- H. Street and Sanitation Complex - 714 Mississippi Avenue - This facility houses the Street and Sanitation Department employees, vehicles, and equipment, along with the vehicle/equipment maintenance shop and the garbage compactor.
- I. Outdoor Playhouse - 1110 James Boulevard - The Signal Mountain Playhouse has produced summer plays at the Town's outdoor theater since the early 1970's.
- J. Tennis - The Town of Signal Mountain owns and maintains ten tennis courts for the use of all Town residents. Six courts are available for reservation play during the five peak months. A tennis pro is available for private or group lessons.
- K. Baseball/Softball Fields - Six baseball/softball fields are used by (1) the boys baseball league, comprised of approximately 600 boys ages 5-14, (2) the girls softball league, comprised of 300 girls ages 5-17, and (3) the adult slow pitch softball league.
- L. Soccer Fields - Five soccer fields are used by approximately 700 young soccer players.
- M. Library - 1114 James Boulevard - This facility was built in 1988 and contains 20,000 volumes, consisting of print and non-print materials for children and adults. Reference service is provided as well as book delivery for the home-bound.
- N. Water Pumping Station - Signal Mountain Road at Suck Creek Road - This facility was built in 1947. Additions were made in 1983, 1990, and 1997. The station has five pumps with a combined capacity of 2,340 gallons per minute or 3,370,000 gallons per day.

0. Sewage Treatment Plant - Suck Creek Road - This facility was built in 1971 on the banks of the Tennessee River. When originally built, it had a capacity of 400,000 gallons per day. It was expanded in 1988 to its current capacity of 1,500,000 gallons per day.

Water System

The Town has had a water system since 1947. The Town buys treated water from Tennessee-American Water Company, pumps the water up the mountain to elevated storage tanks and serves the Town's water customers (and several out-of-town customers in the Lower Brow area) by a pressure system. The Town reads water meters and bills on a quarterly basis, but offers an optional estimated monthly billing service for a nominal charge of \$.50 for each of the two extra bills per quarter.

There are approximately 56 miles of water mains in the Town's system, most of them 6-inch and 8-inch mains. At the pump station at the bottom of the mountain, two storage tanks with the combined capacity of 750,000 gallons receive the water from a Tennessee -American water main and store it until it is pumped up the mountain via a 12-inch main up the front of the mountain. The pump station has 3,370,000 gallons per day pumping capacity.

At the top of the mountain, three storage tanks give the system 2,000,000 gallons of storage, enough for 48 hours supply at normal use if no additional water is pumped.

The Town serves most of the area within its corporate limits, except the St. Ives Subdivision and a large portion of the Shackleford Ridge Road area, which are served by the Walden's Ridge Utility District. The Town also serves the Lower Brow/Balmoral area halfway down the front of the mountain.

Sewer System

The existing gravity sewer system is operated by the Town. Approximately 1,088 of approximately 2,996 homes (36%) are on the gravity sewer system. Most other homes have septic systems or other private on-site treatment systems. Septic Tank Effluent Pump ("S.T.E.P.") systems have been installed in the St. Ives subdivision and on Close Family Road off of Brady Point. The Town is studying and monitoring the operation of those two S.T.E.P. systems to determine whether the S.T.E.P. system will work well enough that the Town should consider permitting the S.T.E.P. system to be used elsewhere in the Town.

Sewer charges to sewer system customers are 80% of the customer's water bill based upon the concept that a certain portion of the average home's water will be used for lawn watering, car washing, and other uses where the wastewater does not go into the sewer system. Sewer bills are sent only to customers connected to the Town's sewer system.

The gravity sewers go down the mountain to the Town's sewage treatment plant on Suck Creek Road where it is filtered, treated and chlorinated. The cleansed water is released into the Tennessee River. This treatment plant has a capacity of 1,500,000 gallons per day.

The existing sewer system operates from a self-sustaining Sewer Fund, which functions wholly from the revenues generated from sewer fee charges to sewer customers.

Police Department

The Signal Mountain Police Department reports to the Public Safety Director and currently has a staff of sixteen (16) full-time employees, consisting of the Public Safety Director, three lieutenants, ten patrol officers, a dispatcher and a clerk. In addition, the Department also has a well-trained fifteen (15) officer reserve force. All officers must attend a minimum of 40 hours P.O.S.T. (Peace Officer Standards and Training) approved training annually as required by the State of Tennessee.

Each regular officer is encouraged to attend other specialized training schools of their choice. All the full-time officers are required to have graduated from a P.O.S.T. approved academy and hold a current Tennessee Police Officer certification. In addition, all officers are trained in CPR and first aid. Several officers have specialized training in various other areas such as criminal investigation. The Department has one State Certified Training Officer, two officers that are FBI/NRA certified firearms instructors and one officer that is a trained child abuse investigator. The Department also has a certified drug detection team consisting of one officer and one dog (K-9). One officer is a State of Tennessee certified D.A.R.E. officer (Drug Abuse Resistance Education).

D.A.R.E. is a substance use prevention program designed to give young people the facts about drugs and alcohol. It also teaches them self-management skills and resistance skills. Our D.A.R.E. officer is currently teaching the program in Signal Mountain elementary schools.

The Department has a mutual aid agreement with other local law enforcement agencies through the Local Government Emergency Assistance Act of 1987.

The Police Department patrols all areas of the Town on a regular basis 24 hours a day. Response time to police calls is usually less than five minutes. Normally, three officers are on patrol at all times.

Fire Department

The Fire Department also reports to the Public Safety Director. There are thirteen (13) full-time personnel in the Fire Department. This includes ten firefighters, two lieutenants and the Public Safety Director. The Town has a Class "5" fire rating from the Insurance Service Office. The Town's Department is a member of the Tri-State Mutual Aid Association, which allows the Town to call on departments from other towns and cities to help on large fires or multiple fires.

The Fire Department runs a First Responder program, which means the personnel are trained in certain first-aid and other medical procedures and assist the County ambulance crew during medical calls. And, on occasion, the Fire Department will respond to medical calls without the county ambulance when the ambulance is not available.

The Fire Department conducts fire prevention programs for elementary and secondary school children. Free home inspections are available upon request.

The Department conducts CPR classes on a regular basis. These classes are available to all interested parties for a nominal fee.

Hamilton County Ambulance

Hamilton County Emergency Medical Service Station #8 (located at the Town of Signal Mountain Police and Fire complex) is a fully-equipped Advanced Life Support Ambulance staffed 24 hours a day by certified paramedics. It is part of a County-wide system providing pre-hospital care, such as cardiac monitoring, drug therapy and trauma care. The ambulance and crew are available through the "911 " Center and respond to motor vehicle accidents, heart attacks, sick calls and any other medical emergency requests.

Walden's Ridge Emergency Services

Walden's Ridge Emergency Services provides emergency rescue service to the citizens of Signal Mountain. W.R.E.S. can be reached by calling "911 " for rescuing injured citizens who fall over the brow, injure themselves in other remote areas, or for extracting people from severe auto accidents where they are pinned within the vehicle. The Town and W.R.E.S. provide support to each other for large fires.

Garbage Collection

The Town offers curbside garbage collection (without a fee) twice a week. Backdoor garbage collection is available on an optional basis with a monthly fee. The Town also offers a free pickup of bulky items, such as discarded furniture, appliances and moving boxes on the first Wednesday of each month by appointment. Pickup of bulky items other than the first Wednesday is available, but on a fee basis. The Town's garbage compactor is available to the citizens of the Town six days a week for their direct disposal of trash and garbage if they choose to bring it to the compactor.

Brush Collection

This service is offered on a continuous basis year round. Any brush less than six inches in diameter and less than six feet long placed near the curb will be collected by Town crews.

Leaf Collection

Curbside leaf collection is offered periodically from mid-October through mid-January each year. Also, loose leaves are picked up during the first weeks of March, April, and May - one time

through Town each month. Leaf collection is also offered with garbage collection if in containers. Non-season loose leaf pickup is offered by appointment with a fee.

Street Maintenance

The street crew fills potholes, rebuilds streets and large patches, removes snow and ice, rebuilds and repairs drainage structures, and maintains drainage ditches. Contracted paving is supervised by the Street Department.

Library

The Signal Mountain Public Library is located at 1114 James Boulevard. Any resident of the Town of Signal Mountain may apply for a free library card. Children may apply for their own library card if they are in the fourth grade or above. Signal Mountain Public Library houses 20,000 books. The collection includes a children's and juvenile section, reference and periodical section, as well as an adult fiction and non-fiction section. The Library also has books on tape available for check out. The Library is staffed by one full-time paid librarian, four part-time paid staff people and a large group of citizen volunteers. Reference questions may be phoned into the Library beginning at 9:00 a.m. The Library staff will reserve books or look up information you may need and have the information waiting for you to pick up when the Library opens. A photocopier is available for public use at the Library for a small charge. The Friends of the Library supports the Library through volunteers, fund-raising, and the scheduling of Library-related programs. Anyone interested in an individual/family membership to the Friends of the Library may call the Library for more information.

Recreational Programs

- A. Boys Baseball - The Town of Signal Mountain maintains four baseball fields for the use of approximately 600 Signal Mountain youths ages 5-14 years. Games are played from mid-April through June with approximately 20 games played per youngster. An informal fall baseball league is played in September and October involving 20-30 young boys.
- B. Girls Softball - Approximately 300 girls ages 5-17 play softball on three ball fields owned and operated by the Town of Signal Mountain. The softball season operates from mid-April to early June with each girl playing approximately 12 games.
- C. Adult Softball - Men and women ages 17 years and older enjoy playing slow-pitch softball on Driver and Marion Fields. Each team plays an average of 20 games per season.
- D. Day Camp - The Town of Signal Mountain operates two day camps for children grades K-5. Day camps operate for three weeks. The old playground area along with the Paul Mathes Community Center is utilized.

- E. Soccer - The largest youth soccer leagues in Tennessee can be found within the Signal Mountain Youth Soccer League. Five soccer fields help to provide play and practice areas for over 700 youngsters. A fall soccer league allows for children ages 4-15 to play approximately two games per week during September-November of each year.
- F. Flag Football - 92 young boys grades 1-5 play flag football for approximately two months during the fall of each year. One practice and one game is played each week.
- G. Youth Basketball - The Town of Signal Mountain provides the use of the Community Center for basketball for boys and girls ages 6-13 during the months of December, January, February, and March. Approximately 300 youngsters play or practice twice each week.
- H. Swimming Lessons - Adults and youngsters are offered an opportunity for beginning or advanced swim lessons at the new pool. Each summer, lessons are provided for 75-100 Signal Mountain residents. Instruction is provided by a certified water safety instructor. A minimal fee is charged.
- I. Basketball Clinic - During August, a two-week basketball clinic is taught by a local high school basketball coach. 30-40 boys and girls participate in the clinic.
- J. Evening Pool Parties - Pool parties are available by renting the old and new pools when available. Supervision is provided by the Town Pool Staff.
- K. Recreational Swimming
- L. Recreational Tennis
- M. Shackleford Ridge Park - Hamilton County is constructing a County park on a 282-acre site on Shackleford Ridge Road to eventually contain six soccer fields, seven baseball fields, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, and picnic areas.

Building Inspection

The Town employs a Building Inspector who inspects all new construction and additions to existing structures. All new residential and non-residential construction, as well as renovations and repairs, require building permits issued by the Building Inspector. Also, construction of all fences, storage buildings, decks and swimming pools requires building permits from this office.

All required permits must be applied for and approved prior to the start of any construction. Work will be inspected at various phases of completion.

The Building Inspector also enforces the Sign Ordinance, which requires permits for signs before they are installed.

Animal Control

The Town has a leash law for dogs. All dogs off their owner's property must be on a leash (or other form of tangible control) with the owner or owner's representative. Dogs on their owner's property do not have to be leashed or otherwise physically restrained. Dogs off the owner's property without being leashed (or otherwise physically restrained) and dogs which bark, bite, and cause property damage to others, with a written complaint from a citizen or witnessed by a Police Officer, may be cause for the owner to be cited to court for an Ordinance violation. Also, dogs are not allowed, leashed or unleashed, in public parks, swimming pools, on school grounds, other public grounds, or in major commercial areas unless in a vehicle.

All dogs and cats must be registered. Pit bulldogs must have a second, special registration at Town Hall with proof of insurance on the dog, extra caging, muzzling, and control procedures.

The Town contracts with the Humane Educational Society of Chattanooga to patrol for and capture unleashed dogs roaming the streets. The Humane Society patrols on a randomly-rotating basis--day or night--weekdays and weekends. The Humane Society officers, as well as Town Police Officers, are empowered to write citations to owners who allow their dogs to violate the Town's Ordinance.

Cats are not subject to the leash law, but are subject to an Ordinance which provides enforcement for cats creating a nuisance, which may include damaging property, biting, creating loud noises, and/or being on someone's property against their wishes. A summary of the Town's Ordinance is available at Town Hall or the Police Department.

The Town is a bird sanctuary.

Planning and Zoning

The Town has its own Planning Commission with nine volunteer members, including the Mayor and a Councilmember, and staff support supplied by the Chattanooga/Hamilton County Planning Staff, the State of Tennessee Southeast Tennessee Local Planning Assistance Office and the Town Manager. The Planning Commission is responsible for three major areas:

1. Review of subdivision plats (preliminary and final)
2. Rezoning recommendations to the Council
3. Long-range planning

The Planning Commission meets on the first Thursday of each month at the Town Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

Board of Zoning Appeals

This Board, comprised of five volunteer members, meets on an "as needed" basis to consider variance requests from the Zoning Ordinance. Most requests are to construct a garage addition, patio, or swimming pool in the side or rear setbacks where no structures are to be placed without a variance.

Design Review Commission (the "DRC")

This Commission, comprised of seven volunteer members, is charged with the responsibility of ensuring certain visual appearance standards for non-residential development, including signage, whether new or remodeled. The DRC meets monthly at the Town Hall.

Schools (owned and operated by Hamilton County Board of Education)

- A. Thrasher Elementary School has nearly 600 K-5 students.
- B. Signal Mountain Middle School has over 400 sixth through eighth grade students.
- C. Nolan Elementary has a capacity of 700 K-5 children on Shackleford Ridge Road adjacent to the County park.

Other Utilities

The Town is served by the Electric Power Board for electricity, BellSouth for telephone, Chattanooga Gas Company and Chattanooga Cable Television (Comcast).

Prentice Cooper State Forest

This State Forest on the southwest edge of Town contains 26,000 acres of raw forest with no park or playground-type facilities. It is supervised by the area State Forester.

Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts

- A. Boy Scouts - There are three Boy Scout Troops on the mountain offering a very high quality year-round scouting program to boys 11 through 17 years of age. The troops meet weekly and conduct monthly camping trips, plus at least one long-term camping experience in summer. A Signal Mountain Area Boy Scout Court of Honor is conducted four times a year to recognize those scouts who have earned advancements. There is an aquatic program.

- B. Girl Scouts - The Signal Mountain Service Unit of the Moccasin Bend Girl Scout Council is open to girls from kindergarten Daisy Girl Scouts through Cadets/Senior Girl Scouts. Adults are welcome in the program as well. Registration is open all year. Contact the Moccasin Bend Girl Scout Council for information.

Civic Clubs

- A. Lions Club - This club, having a membership of 60-70 members, has various fundraising projects so the club can make donations to the disadvantaged, churches, the Library, and those needing help with their eyesight.
- B. Community Guild - The members of the Community Guild volunteer services to community enrichment and preservation of human and natural resources in cooperation with other civic, cultural, educational and social organizations.
- C. Welfare Council - The Welfare Council is a consortium of churches and community groups that provides emergency assistance to families in need, including food, minor house repair, payment of utilities and counseling.
- D. Civic Council - The Civic Council coordinates the interest and efforts of the civic organizations of the Town of Signal Mountain and helps beautify public parks and buildings.
- E. Signal Mountain Golf and Country Club - This club is a private 18-hole golf course with dining facilities open year round. Memberships are available.
- F. Mountain Art Guild, Inc. - The Mountain Art Guild provides opportunities for local artists to show their work, holds educational seminars for members and the community, and encourages participation in the visual arts by the public.
- G. Kiwanis Club - The Kiwanis Club is a service club which helps under-privileged children in Signal Mountain and Walden. Their primary fund-raising project is the Highway 127 "giant" yard sale each year. The club meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Walden Town Hall.

The Arts

The Mountain Arts Community Center is located in the former Signal Mountain Elementary School and opened in late 1999.

Churches

The following eight churches located in the Town serve the spiritual needs of Town residents and others:

- A. Signal Crest United Methodist Church
1005 Ridgeway Ave., P. O. Box 124
- B. Signal Mountain Baptist Church
939 Ridgeway Ave.
- C. Signal Mountain Bible Church
611 Timberlinks Drive
- D. Signal Mountain Church of Christ
960 Ridgeway Ave.
- E. Signal Mountain Church of God
521 Timberlinks Drive
- F. Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church
612 James Blvd.
- G. St. Timothy's Episcopal Church
630 Mississippi Ave.
- H. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
1160 Ridgeway Ave.