



Slow Pace, Rural Charm.

August, 2024

A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Wheeler County,
Alamo, and Glenwood, Georgia

Slow Pace, Rural Charm.

A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Wheeler County,
Alamo, and Glenwood, Georgia in accordance with
the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures
established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs
with an effective date of October 1, 2018

Prepared By:

The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee
The Wheeler County Local Governments
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

August, 2024

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Introduction & Executive Summary



Slow Pace, Rural Charm -- The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan is a comprehensive plan prepared in compliance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The current Minimum Standards became effective on October 1, 2018. It is a joint plan for Wheeler County and its municipalities – the City of Alamo and the City of Glenwood.

Wheeler County is a small, rural county in south central Georgia with a 2023 Census estimated population of 7,081. This is roughly a 5.2% population decrease from the 2020 Census population of 7,471. The county's size of 295.5 square miles ranks 99th in Georgia (out of 159 counties) giving it a population density of only 25.3 people per square mile, much less than the Georgia total of 185.6/sq. mile. The county's population growth from 2010 to 2020

was 0.7%, according to the Census Bureau. While this population growth rate much lower than that of the State of Georgia (10.6%), and the U.S. average (7.4%). Around one-third of Wheeler’s estimated 2023 population were prisoners. Wheeler County is one of Georgia’s counties described as having persistent poverty, currently measured around 31.1% of its population, compared to 12.7% in Georgia overall. This poverty rate is in the top 25 worst in the state. The unemployment rate in Wheeler County was 6.4% in 2022, compared to Georgia’s 4.2%. Measured from 2018-2022, Wheeler County’s per capita income is \$17,980, slightly less than half of Georgia’s total. About 70.1% of employed Wheeler County residents worked outside Wheeler County in 2022.



L Wheeler County School **R** Kayaking on the Ocmulgee River

Wheeler County considers itself a hidden gem of Old South charm and hospitality located in an environmental tapestry of endless green pine forests, pastoral farm landscapes, and scenic blackwater rivers. This picturesque rural charm offers quiet living and a slow-paced, low-crime lifestyle perfect for raising a family, enjoying retirement, or residing in the countryside and outdoors while working elsewhere. The community enjoys excellent access to the larger communities of Dublin and Vidalia, and even beyond due to U.S. 280, U.S. 441, and Georgia 19 and the relative closeness of U.S. 341 and I-16. Other advantages of the county include the location of Wheeler Correctional Facility in Alamo, the Sweetwater Horse Event Park near Glenwood, the Little Ocmulgee State Park, the Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area. The community has a history of progressive leadership which continues today. There are continuing efforts to upgrade infrastructure and services to make the community even more attractive to residents and visitors, to better serve existing residents, and to prepare for and facilitate future growth and development. The Wheeler Correctional Facility, a private state prison operated by CoreCivic, has allowed Wheeler County to provide services for its citizens it may not otherwise have been able to afford.

Previous Plans. This comprehensive plan is the fifth within the County prepared under the auspices of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The first was adopted in 1994, while the second comprehensive plan was adopted in 2004. A partial update of the second plan was also adopted in 2009 in accordance with state requirements. These first two adopted plans were intensively data and state requirement driven, although local objectives can be discerned. The second plan contains much local information which may not easily be found elsewhere and may remain of use. In 2014, the third joint comprehensive plan, *Correcting Course, Moving Forward*, was adopted in accordance with the then new state requirements and set in motion a locally driven planning process that produced a more user-friendly document. The fourth plan, *History, Hospitality and Wide-Open Spaces*, adopted in 2019, added additional sections such as the new Broadband Services element and individual municipal visions. The fifth plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, and each of the previous plans should remain, at least in hard copy, available from the Wheeler County local governments and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission. All plans since 2004 are updated and posted to www.dca.ga.gov and www.hogarc.org websites.



Rural Scene, Wheeler County

Data. Today, the world wide web provides vast data repositories accessible through free search engines and allows anyone easy access to significant amounts of data, and profiles of any jurisdiction, including Wheeler County and its municipalities. For this reason, this comprehensive plan includes only limited data to depict or illustrate points. The current DCA planning standards encourage such non-inclusion of data. Almost any data depicted at a moment in time quickly becomes dated, and maybe irrelevant. The world wide web offers the opportunity of more relevant and up-to- date data at the time of access. There are a variety of reliable public and private sources of data. Of course, the traditional source of official community data is the U.S. Census Bureau. Data on Wheeler County, its municipalities, or any other jurisdiction is quickly accessed at quickfacts.census.gov which will provide a summary community profile

on many popular data items, and links to even more data. Another quality source of data is the website, www.statsamerica.org, which provides a compilation of primarily government data on many items for any county in any state of the U.S. The site is maintained by Indiana University in partnership with the federal Economic Development Administration. The University of Georgia maintains a website where county level data for nearly 1,300 variables related to a wide variety of subjects on population, labor, natural resources, government, health, education, and crime can be accessed. The data can be compared to other counties and the state as well as on a historical change basis, among various user options. The data is compiled from The Georgia County Guide and the Farmgate Value Report prepared by UGA's Extension Service. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has available data for cities and counties under "Community Planning Resources," and will also prepare community data reports when requested under "Other Resources." The State of Georgia has official labor and economic data in its Georgia Labor Market Explorer as organized by the Georgia Department of Labor at explorer.gdol.ga.gov. Additional state sponsored economic data is available at www.georgia.org.



Wheeler County Recreation Department

Population Projections. As noted earlier, the official 2020 Census population of Wheeler County was 7,471, up 0.7% from 2010's 7,421. This growth was nominal compared that of Georgia's 10.6% as well as to that of the U.S. rate of 7.4%. The U.S. Census Bureau 2023 estimate for Wheeler County's population is 7,081, a decrease of 390 persons, or -5.2% since 2020. Wheeler County's location, its natural and cultural resources, quality of life, the prison, and easy access to larger surrounding growth centers are positive factors and influences for future growth and development. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) is responsible for generating official state population projections for Georgia counties. Current OPB projections for Wheeler County from 2020-2050 are listed below.

Population Projections, Wheeler County

	2020	2030	2040	2050
OPB Long-Term Population Projections, 2024	7,447	6,993	6,675	6,390
HOGARC Staff Projection	7,471	7,028	7,630	7,782

Source: Governor’s Office of Planning and Budgeting, Series 2024 Long-Term Population Projections; U.S. Decennial Census; HOGARC staff projections

Coordination with Other Plans. Wheeler County has an approved and adopted hazard mitigation plan prepared for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to remain eligible for federal disaster assistance. This Hazard Mitigation Plan’s preparation was coordinated with past comprehensive plan preparation. It is clear that the two most prominent hazards facing Wheeler County that can be influenced by the comprehensive plan are the hazard mitigation plan goals to reduce damage from flood hazards and wildfire, and thereby protect life and health. The comprehensive plan objectives to conserve the county’s river and stream corridors, to maintain healthy working forests and fields (including employing proper management techniques), to improve fire/emergency management and other public safety services, and to enhance growth management/code enforcement regulation are generally consistent with, and offer implementation to, the hazard mitigation plan. The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan is also consistent with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy’s goals and objectives to develop industrial parks; develop/improve local infrastructure; enhance telecommunications infrastructure; retain existing businesses/industry; attract new industry; and spur non-traditional economic development, like tourism and downtown development, are repeated as principal goals in the Wheeler County Comprehensive Plan. The local plan is similarly supportive of espoused state economic goals.

Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria Consideration. Wheeler County is part of the Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council. The adopted regional water plan, Altamaha Regional Water Plan (2023), were considered by the Wheeler County Local Plan Coordination Committee and the local governments in preparation of this plan. This local comprehensive plan’s objectives to maintain viable agriculture/forestry uses, protect/conserve natural resources, to enhance intergovernmental coordination and government/efficiencies, and upgrade local infrastructure all help implement, and maintain consistency with, the regional water plan. Similarly, the Environmental Planning Criteria were also considered in the development of this comprehensive plan. The local governments of Wheeler County, including Wheeler County, the City of Alamo, and the City of Glenwood, have long been in compliance with the Environmental Planning Criteria, having adopted an implementing, consistent “Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit” Ordinance in 2000.

Consistency with Quality Community Objectives. In 2011, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs changed its Quality Community Objectives to a more general listing and summary of the 10 objectives. These include: Economic Prosperity, Resource Management, Efficient Land Use, Local Preparedness, Sense of Place, Regional Cooperation, Housing Options, Transportation Options, Educational Opportunities, and Community Health. The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan directly espouses (many of) these objectives and therefore, is very consistent with, and supportive of them. This comprehensive plan

has goals to achieve a brighter future and better community for Wheeler County, which is consistent with a quality community and the DCA Quality Community Objectives.

Community Involvement. Throughout the planning process, Wheeler County, and its municipalities, actively collected and incorporated input from community members. Creating civic engagement was an essential and central component to developing the comprehensive plan. Several opportunities, including stakeholder meetings, an online community survey, and community drop-in sessions, were provided to the community to gain as much input as possible. The first step that was taken in the civic engagement process was to identify a list of stakeholders. Each stakeholder was invited to participate as a member of the Plan Coordination Committee. The committee met regularly over a period of several months and was responsible for guiding the development of the comprehensive plan. In addition to holding regular stakeholder meetings, several other opportunities were also given to the community to participate in the planning process. An initial public hearing was held on February 27, 2024, and was advertised in the newspaper to make citizens aware of the plan update and the planning process. On March 25, 2024, a community drop-in session was held at the Wheeler County Community Center to provide citizens with another opportunity to discuss their opinions on what changes they would like to see with the plan and with their community. In addition, a final public hearing was held on August 28th, 2024, to provide the public with the opportunity to review the updated final comprehensive plan draft.



The Glennville Sweet Onion Festival

1. Interactive Website

In order to provide the community with a clear understanding of how the planning process would work and to keep residents updated throughout the process, an interactive website was developed. Through the website, citizens could access documents and notes from each stakeholder meeting and could submit responses to the survey questions at any time throughout the planning process. In addition, a planning timeline was made available on the website so that community members were always aware of when different meetings and planning sessions were occurring.

2. SWOT Analysis

An initial steering committee meeting was held on January 23, 2024. During this meeting, members of the steering committee participated in a SWOT analysis where they identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Wheeler County. Figure 1 shows the results of the SWOT analysis. This activity provided a starting point in identifying the overall Needs and Opportunities of Wheeler County, which are addressed in "Needs and Opportunities". The identified strengths of Wheeler County include the employment opportunities provided by the Wheeler Correctional Facility, a robust agricultural and forestry sector, the county's tranquil rural character ideal for raising a family or enjoying retirement, improved high-speed broadband connectivity, and its strategic location near both Dublin and Vidalia. During the SWOT analysis, several weaknesses of Wheeler County were discussed. A significant concern is the limited availability of amenities and grocery stores, which requires local residents to travel elsewhere for their shopping needs. Other identified weaknesses include a shortage of daycare options, the need for expanded broadband coverage, and outdated housing stock. The next portion of the SWOT analysis pertained to identifying opportunities in Wheeler County. The latest nationwide growing trend of remote jobs would encourage more people to reside in Wheeler County, enjoy the community's rural character and good quality of life while working remotely. Additional opportunities include various housing programs and grants, such as the One Georgia Workforce Housing Program, which can help enhance the community's housing stock. The final section of the SWOT analysis examined potential threats to Wheeler County, including landowners' reluctance to sell or develop their property for more productive purposes, and the challenges in retaining younger generations within the community.

3. Community Survey

A community survey was developed with the help of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, Wheeler County, and its municipalities, to distribute to community members. The survey consisted of 11 questions and the goal of the survey was to gain additional public input on the needs and opportunities of the community. The survey was distributed to community members through email, paper copies, and a link was made available on the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update webpage. The results of the survey were discussed at a later stakeholder meeting where the needs and opportunities of the community were addressed. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Slow Pace, Rural Charm is truly a locally developed guide to, and framework for, future growth and development of Wheeler County designed to generate local pride and enthusiasm, to accentuate assets and improve weaknesses, and ultimately bring about a desired future which makes the Wheeler County community an improved place to live and work with an outstanding and enhanced quality of life. It is realized that to overcome challenges and to make a difference will take time and much effort, but it is felt this plan is pragmatic and practical in outlining a course and roadmap for steps and actions which can be achieved and which will continue to move the community forward. The plan continues with delineation of the Community Goals element and an outstanding Community Vision which essentially and succinctly summarizes the community's aspirations and plan's objective.

S

STRENGTHS

1. Rural character – quiet, peaceful place to live
2. Strong agricultural /Forestry sector
3. leadership program through Chamber of Commerce
4. Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area
5. Little Ocmulgee State Park/ Sweet Horse Event Park
6. Good public school system
7. Wheeler County library
8. Glenwood telephone company/ Little Ocmulgee EMC
9. Senior Citizens Center/ Daycare Center/ Renovated Nursing Home
10. Ample Land available
11. Oconee Fall Line Technical College Adult Education Center
12. UGA Extension

W

WEAKNESSES

1. Lack skilled workforce
2. Need to create more work/career training programs
3. Need to attract more businesses/industries
4. Lack of daycare facilities
5. downtowns revitalization
6. Continued streets improvements, infrastructure upgrades, expansion
7. Need improved broadband connections countywide
8. Need more shopping opportunities in the county
9. Old housing stock

O

OPPORTUNITIES

1. New Family Dollar/ Dollar Tree
2. One Georgia Program
3. Infill development – buildings available
4. Fast development coming from the coast
5. Private sections willing to invest in the community
6. SPLOST
7. Broadband grants available for broadband expansion
8. Growing trend of remote jobs

T

THREATS

1. Residents leave the county to shop
2. Competition from larger municipalities
3. Land owners unwilling to sell land
4. Aging population
5. Inflation
6. Difficulty retaining younger population

Figure 1. SWOT Analysis Results

Community Goals



The Community Goals Element is described in the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive planning as the most important part of the comprehensive plan. It is a concise summary of future community desires and wishes. It provides a clearly referenced roadmap for community leaders and all concerned with growth and development of the community and its future. The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes three of the four possible components detailed in the Minimum Standards for the required element. These include: a general Community Vision, separate municipal descriptions/visions, listing of Community Goals, and a description of Long-Term Community Policies. These components seek to paint a picture of the desired future community, and answer the planning question, ***“Where does the community wish to go?”*** To some degree, the Long-Term Community Policies also outline guidance strategy of, ***“How are we going to get where we desire to go, and also, what do we desire for other development parties to pursue?”***

Community Vision

Wheeler County is a community focused on the promising road ahead. We aim to foster a vibrant, prosperous future for our citizens by promoting our strategic location, the abundance of natural resources, and our hometown charm. We will strive to make our historic city centers destinations by offering year-around events and amenities for all ages; and we will seek to diversify our economic base through the stepped-up marketing and utilization of our natural resources, through renewed business and industry recruitment, and through committed support of existing commerce.

Situated in the rolling hills of South-Central Georgia, Wheeler County is a 300-square-mile area graced by pastoral farm settings and forested with thousands of acres of pine and hardwood trees. Bordered on the west by the black water Little Ocmulgee River, on the south by the historic Ocmulgee River, and on the east by the mighty Oconee River, the area is a sports enthusiast's paradise whether the activity is fishing, hunting, boating, kayaking, canoeing or hiking. The 3,086-acre Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area in the county's southern region, along with Little Ocmulgee State Park on the county's western edge, enhances outdoor recreational opportunities.

Trees have formed the bedrock of Wheeler County's economy from its earliest days when rafts carried hand-hewn logs down river to the coast; when pines were tapped for turpentine; and in the 21st century, as lumber is harvested and hauled to Georgia mills and as far away as China. Wheeler County is now one of the state's top 10 producers of timber products, and Georgia is consistently ranked as the top forestry state in the nation.

Wheeler County's two incorporated cities of Alamo, the county seat, and Glenwood, near the Oconee River, retain their rural charm with a slower pace, lower crime, and a high quality of life conducive for growing a family, retirement, and outdoor enjoyment.

To fulfill our vision of the community we desire, we will consider the following goals when promoting our community:

- 1. Utilize our strategic location to help recruit diverse business and industry**
- 2. Increase marketing and compatible use of abundant natural and cultural resources to enhance tourism and other economic opportunities**
- 3. Seek promotion of our agricultural base and hobby farm possibilities**
- 4. Maintain Wheeler County's sense of place and small-town character, including revitalization of its historic downtowns**
- 5. Support of modern technologies, such as broadband connectivity and Broadband Ready Community designation**
- 6. Attract new residents, including retirees, seeking an excellent climate and affordable living costs**
- 7. Increase qualified, local workforce**
- 8. Promote a healthy, transparent citizen/government relationship**

Wheeler County has many celebrated natural and cultural resources including quaint, historic homes constructed in farm related folk styles, rural churches, and three National Register of Historic Places-listed structures, (Wheeler County Courthouse, Woodland, and the Glenwood High School). Wheeler County is home to a celebrated historic site, the Milly Troup Tomb and the Big Oak Tree, reputed to be the tomb of a young slave buried near her master. The adjacent oak now measures 30 feet in circumference with a canopy spreading over 140 feet. Wheeler County is also home to Little Ocmulgee State Park, a 1,360 acre state-owned recreational facility including a 256 acre lake. Although originally dating from the 1930s and developed with assistance from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the park has an updated 60 room lodge and conference center, and other amenities, including the popular 18-hole Wallace Adams Golf Course. Its natural landscape includes towering pines, moss-draped live oaks, cypress and oak swamps, and scrub oaks all accessible through well marked and maintained nature trails. The Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area in southern Wheeler County provides public access to nature lovers engaged in bird watching, hunting, and other outdoor activities. Georgia travelers often take Georgia Highway 19 through Wheeler County between Lumber City and Dublin not only as a less-traveled motoring shortcut, but also because of its picturesque rural charm and pastoral beauty. The scenic route of the two-lane state highway meanders past old-fashioned farmhouses; country stores; charming frame churches; the historic community of Jordan; the City of Glenwood; and the nationally recognized Woodland with its history of farming and forestry transition, known for its eclectic 19-room Queen Anne Victorian residence dating from 1877.



L Little Ocmulgee State Park **R** Wheeler County Public School

Not only does the Wheeler County community enjoy such peaceful and relaxing natural and scenic beauty, but it also has always been noted for involved and progressive community leadership. The community's current two incorporated towns, Alamo and Glenwood, are the result of local leaders taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the location of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad's extension from Abbeville to Lyons in the late 19th Century. The County's formal establishment in 1912 was led by Rep. William B. Kent with the urging and backing of residents and businessmen located west of the Oconee River in Montgomery County. The courage and leadership of Rep. Kent, who represen-

ted Montgomery County and was a judge in Mount Vernon, prevailed even though it led to his political defeat in the next election from upset Montgomery Countians. Rep. Kent, who had been a celebrated football player and hero at the University of Georgia, had also been instrumental with his leadership in saving football at UGA after the tragic on-the-field death of Georgia back Richard Von Gammon. Wheeler Countians were further instrumental in United Methodist Church and educational history of south Georgia. The Spring Hill area of the County was settled in the early 1800s, and was an early preaching place of Methodists. In the mid-1800s, this involvement and leadership led to establishment of a church campground, then local schools, then the establishment of the Clements Institute, the first Methodist District High School. These same local leaders helped establish South Georgia College in McRae in 1891. The Little Ocmulgee State Park, one of Georgia's oldest state parks, was established in part, because of local business and community support with a desire for improvement, which enlisted political and Civilian Conservation Corps assistance.



Wheeler County School

Despite the best efforts of local leaders, circumstances, including the advent of the automobile, the mechanization of agriculture, the decline of the railroads and naval stores, and the growth of larger nearby regional economic centers in Dublin and Vidalia, worked against Wheeler County's growth and development from its formal beginnings. Wheeler County's population actually suffered declines from its inception in 1912 all the way to 1970. County population then remained basically stagnant until the 1998 establishment of the Wheeler Correctional Facility in Alamo currently operated by CoreCivic. This facility has become the principal business engine of the County, expanding twice from its initial 1,700 prison beds to house 2,680 inmates with a capacity of 3,106 beds in 2024. Even so, the 7,751 persons estimated in the 2020 Decennial Census population of the County remains about 20 percent less than the County's 1920 population of 9,817 at its first official Census.

The community's desire to improve itself, led by progressive leadership, remains unabated. With the financial and economic push fueled by Wheeler County Correctional facility, the community is moving forward. Both Alamo and Glenwood, with state assistance, have completed major expansions of their

water and wastewater systems. The Wheeler County Library, a branch of the Ocmulgee Regional Library System, was opened in 2004 in Alamo. The community has upgraded its general aviation airport and extended its runway to 5,000 feet and added aviation gas and jet fuel facilities to better accommodate economic development. Local health care is provided through the Wheeler County Health Department and the non-profit CareConnect Family Practice, both located in Alamo. The community has also supported state employment of a private management company to operate the Little Ocmulgee State Park, and this in turn, has led to facility upgrades and improvements making the state park even more attractive to visitors. The school system has enlisted the involvement of parents and the wider community to establish some innovative programs to reduce drop-out rates and improve graduation rates. The system's vision is "Destination: Graduation!" The community has attracted continued operation of the Sweetwater Horse Event Park just east of Glenwood which has brought horse racing, concerts, trail riding, and other new outdoor adventures to the County.



L Christmas Parade, Alamo **R** Wallace Adams Golf Course

Wheeler County envisions continued improvement to its infrastructure and services to facilitate even more compatible economic and residential development which further enhances its attraction as a superb, rural location in which to live and work. The future of Wheeler County is a larger community of new residents, workers, and retirees enjoying a continuing high quality of life as the community maintains its rural character and preserves its natural beauty and resources, while utilizing them in a complementary manner to attract more nature-based and other tourism. The agricultural base and farming uses would be maintained and utilized for further economic development while compatible new facilities, shops, and industries would be developed to meet the growing needs of residents. Continued use of signature community events, and perhaps the creation of new events centered on the local youth, will be pleasant reminders of the unique charm present in the community. The historic downtowns of Alamo and Glenwood would be revitalized, teeming commercial areas utilizing beautiful, rehabilitated historic buildings with charm and character. Both towns would be almost idyllic small-town places to live and desired residential addresses. Wheeler County considers itself a hidden gem of natural beauty and a simple, but high quality of life. It wishes to utilize and exploit these advantages, to continue moving forward, but without loss of its unique and outstanding charm and character.

City of Alamo

Description

The City of Alamo is located at the intersection of Georgia Highway 126 and U.S. 280 near the county's western border. This intersection has the town's only traffic light. The community is the county seat, and is home to the county's schools, library, a new health clinic, and the Wheeler Correctional Facility operated by CoreCivic. The community is a microcosm, in many respects, of Wheeler County with its blend of natural and historic resources, and its family atmosphere where home, schools, and community work together. The town has a picturesque, historic downtown; the National Register-listed, columned on-all-sides 1917 Courthouse; a war memorial next to the centrally traversing railroad; and charming historic residences. In many aspects, the town exhibits a rural residential setting. Family, patriotism, and old-fashioned values extend to the town's name. It was named by the daughter of the town's founder, Judge John McRae, for the famous mission in San Antonio. The town development dates to the establishment of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad (later Seaboard Air Line) in 1890, although it was not formally incorporated until 1909. The 2022 Census population estimate for Alamo is 2,995; however, this would include the current 2,680 prisoners in the Wheeler Correctional Facility. The population of Alamo in 1990 was 855, but swelled after the prison opened in 1998 to 1,944 in 2000 and 2,797 in 2010.

Vision

The City of Alamo wants to remain a QUIET SMALL TOWN, and the governmental, educational, and social center of Wheeler County. The rural RESIDENTIAL AMBIENCE and HISTORIC CHARACTER, would be retained as well as the family and community spirit of homes, schools, businesses, and community working together for NEIGHBORLY ASSISTANCE and COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT. The large, family oriented Fourth of July celebration held in the community is a symbol of such cohesion, and would be continued. The downtown and U.S. 280 corridor would house additional RETAIL SERVICE and JOB OPPORTUNITIES.



L Local Restaurant Lori's Dive In, Alamo **R** Alamo City Hall & Police Department **BL** Grocery Store **BR** Senior's Parade, Alamo

Issues:

Infrastructure upgrades and maintenance, particularly for enhanced fire protection; Street improvements, sidewalks, and landscaping; Recreational facility improvements; Further downtown revitalization; Development of Long Leaf Legacy and Interpretive Center

Opportunities:

U.S. 280 and its future widening; Heart of Georgia Railroad; Historic fabric; New Care Connection Family Practice health clinic; New City Hall; Wheeler Correctional Facility; 4th of July Festival ; Christmas Parade; Family Dollar/Dollar Tree grocery store; Code enforcement Officer hired

City of Glenwood

Description

The City of Glenwood is located at the intersection of Georgia Highway 19 and U.S. 280 (home to the city's only traffic light), about five miles west of the county's eastern boundary, the scenic Oconee River. The community is a typical small town of less than 1,000 persons with an intact historic downtown commercial block adjacent to the centrally traversing railroad, although most active commercial activity is adjacent to the parallel U.S. 280. The community is home to the National Register-listed 1920/30 Glenwood High School, which remained in use as a regional alternative school until recent years. The community had been central to healthcare within Wheeler County with the location of one skilled care nursing home and the former 25-bed Lower Oconee Community Hospital, which closed in 2014. The smallest, still independent telephone company in Georgia, Glenwood Telephone Company dates from 1898. Glenwood was established as a stop on the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad (later Seaboard Air Line) in 1890 because geographically it provided a low place with water for easily stopping and starting trains. The community name is believed to reflect this geography, and to refer to a small valley or glen. The City of Glenwood was formally incorporated in 1908. The 2020 Decennial Census estimated population for Glenwood is 839, up from 747 in 2010 and down from nearly 900 in 1990 and 2000. The newly revitalized Sweetwater Horse Event Park facility is located only about a mile east of the community.

Vision

The City of Glenwood wants to remain a QUIET, but BUSTLING SMALL TOWN attractive to existing and future Wheeler County residents. The community would essentially remain a MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOOD filled with FRIENDLY, HELPING folks and with RETAIL SERVICE, HEALTHCARE, and RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. The community's historic resources and downtown area would be preserved and adapted with appropriate uses.



L Sweetwater Horse Event Park R Sweetwater Horse Event Park BL Glenwood City Hall BR Daycare Center, Glenwood

Issues:

Infrastructure upgrades and maintenance, particularly for enhanced fire protection; Street improvements, sidewalks, and landscaping; Recreational facility improvements; Further downtown revitalization; Development of Long Leaf Legacy and Interpretive Center

Opportunities:

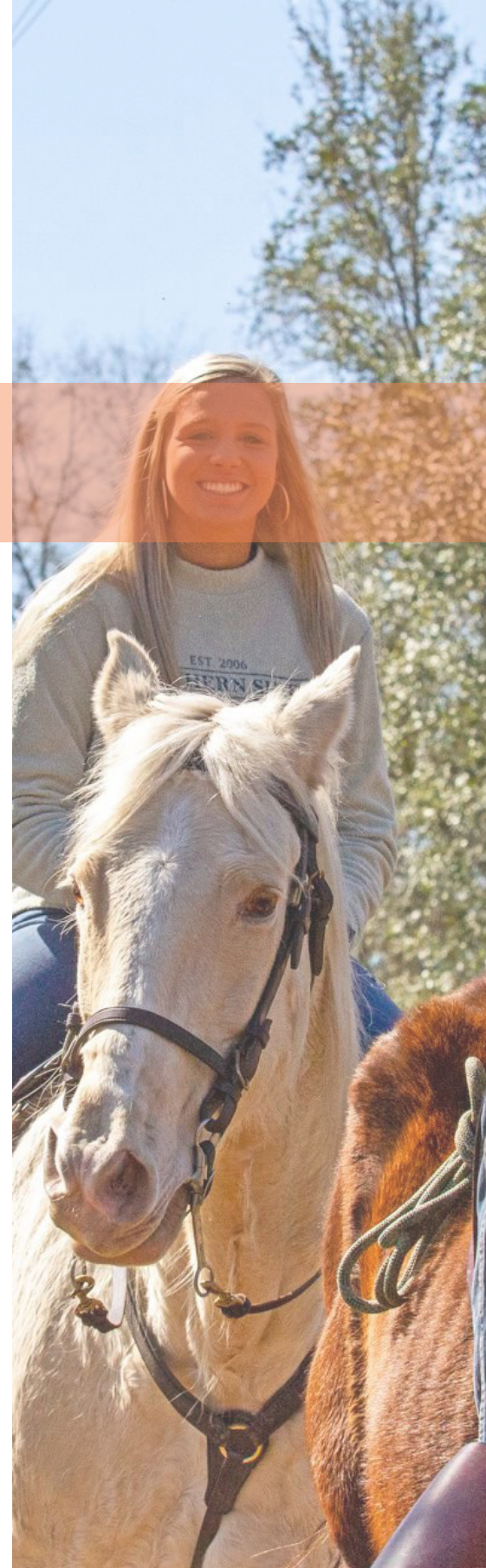
U.S. 280 and its future widening; Georgia 19 and tourism; Heart of Georgia Railroad; Historic fabric; Private industrial Site; Glenwood Telephone Company; Sweetwater Horse Event Park and nearby natural resources

Community Goals

Economic Development



1. Enhance intergovernmental cooperation
2. Retain local graduates
3. Improve education levels
4. Address continuing education/job skills improvements
5. Nurture existing businesses/industries/entrepreneurs
6. Attract new businesses/industry/jobs
7. Address/improve infrastructure needs
8. Improve transportation access/quality
9. Develop/enhance tourism
10. Support improvements at Little Ocmulgee State Park
11. Enhance economic development marketing
12. Upgrade community appearance/aesthetics
13. Revitalize downtown Alamo and Glenwood
14. Rural character preservation
15. Assure viability/support/enhance agricultural/forestry uses
16. Address growth management issues
17. Support continued viability of Wheeler Correctional Facility at Alamo
18. Promote quality of life/livability/location





Natural & Cultural Resources

1. Protect significant natural resources of Wheeler County
2. Seek compatible development/utilization
3. Continue support for improvements at Little Ocmulgee State Park
4. Utilize/preserve/adaptively use historic resources/heritage of Wheeler Co.
5. Address growth management/natural and cultural resources protection
6. Improve community appearance/aesthetics
7. Maintain open spaces/agricultural/forestry uses
8. Increase GA Hwy. 19 tourism usage





Housing



1. Improve quality of existing and new housing
2. Encourage diverse housing mix, including additional affordable housing
3. Market available housing
4. Utilize state/federal programs
5. Guide/plan residential development
6. Upgrade community appearance
7. Improve subdivision/manufactured housing/land use regulation

1. Address growth management/compatible development
2. Improve subdivision/manufactured housing/land use regulation
3. Protect rural character/quality of life
4. Maintain open spaces/agricultural/forestry uses
5. Develop/improve recreation/leisure use facilities
6. Encourage infill development
7. Maintain/improve community appearance/aesthetics
8. Seek compatible development/utilization
9. Conserve/protect flood zones countywide



Land Use



WHEELER COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT. & JAIL FACILITY

Community Facilities and Services



1. Address/improve infrastructure needs
2. Utilize infrastructure expansion/upgrades to guide growth
3. Improve/promote transportation access/quality
4. Maintain modern airport with Telfair County
5. Maintain quality educational facilities/services
6. Maintain/enhance solid waste management/recycling facilities/programs/initiatives
7. Maintain health care access/facilities/services within the community
8. Encourage utilization/enhancement/promotion of cultural facilities/activities
9. Continue to upgrade public safety/emergency medical facilities/services
10. Improve fire service countywide
11. Develop/improve/promote recreation facilities and programs
12. Enhance passive park infrastructure and variety of offerings
13. Expand senior services

Intergovernmental Coordination



1. Maintain/enhance local, regional, state cooperation
2. Seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in service delivery
3. Address/continue coordinated planning/growth management

Long Term Community Policies



Economic Development

1. The community will seek improvements to internet/broadband access/service/facilities supportive of state-of-the-art technology
2. The community will work together to improve education and skill levels to ensure a better qualified workforce for existing and future employers
3. The community will continue to support and seek the enhancement of educational opportunities provided to the community by Oconee Fall Line Technical College
4. The community will collaboratively support the local school system and cooperative efforts to engage students to remain in school, thus continuing to reduce the local dropout rate and improving graduation and literacy rates
5. The community will support and promote programs for the retention of existing local businesses/industries and entrepreneurs in its support and quest of business/industry retention and additional job opportunities for local residents
6. The community will actively recruit new industry, small business, and commercial/retail development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing economy, and the natural environments of the community
7. The community will work to attract a diverse mix of jobs appropriate to the educational/skills levels of the local workforce
8. The community will work together to develop, support, and promote programs that will enhance opportunities for local graduates to both live and work in the community upon graduation
9. The community will work to develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure, including broadband telecommunications to facilitate and accommodate desired commercial and industrial growth
10. The community will maintain adequate water/sewer service provision and pursue further facility/service upgrades and expansion as needed
11. The community will continue to seek transportation improvements (highway, roads/streets, airport, rail, transit, bicycle and pedestrian) to enhance and support economic development efforts
12. The community will continue to work together with Telfair County to maintain a modern airport through continued necessary infrastructure/equipment upgrades and maintenance
13. The community will seek to enhance and grow tourism as an important component of the local economy through existing and new festivals/celebrations, recreation and leisure facilities/activities, bicycling, agri-tourism, nature based tourism, horse event park and facilities promotion, museum development, and recognition/promotion of its historic districts/cultural sites
14. The community will continue to seek retail trade/service sector and hospitality business development to further enhance the local economy and support increased tourism
15. The community will work cooperatively to increase awareness of existing tourism attractions and create new events/attractions along U.S. 441 (Heritage Highway), U.S. 280, and GA Hwy. 19 and promote

use of these routes

16. The community will continue to support, utilize, and promote Little Ocmulgee State Park, and will encourage the development of additional amenities to further support/cultivate tourism
17. The community will work to enhance economic development marketing efforts, including promotion of its proximity to retail markets, through an active Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, regional cooperation, and other regional/state agencies
18. The community will cooperate and coordinate with existing local, regional, and state agencies to improve all of Wheeler County
19. The community will cooperate to redevelop declining areas, upgrade commercial areas and substandard housing, and otherwise improve the appearance and aesthetics of the county and its municipalities
20. The community will support and target downtown revitalization and investment efforts in Alamo and Glenwood to maintain them as important, functioning economic, social, and governmental centers
21. The community will preserve its unique landscapes and natural beauty and foster development compatible with its existing rural character and quality of life
22. The community will maintain agriculture/forestry as viable economic uses through traditional and alternative enterprises, such as agri-tourism and nature based tourism
23. The community will proactively manage and guide its future growth and development through community investment and appropriate regulation
24. The community will work to support Wheeler Correctional Facility at Alamo and its future growth, as needed, through infrastructure/equipment upgrades and maintenance
25. The community will actively strive to attract new residents, including retirees, who seek a slower paced, excellent quality of life in a small town/rural setting



Natural and Cultural Resources

1. The community will seek to conserve and protect the Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers, the county's significant groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, floodplains, other important natural resources, and the open spaces and landscapes of the county
2. The community will seek and promote development that is respectful of, compatible with, and maintains and supports the existing rural character, open spaces, and landscapes of Wheeler County
3. The community will capitalize on its economic opportunities associated with its open spaces and natural and cultural resources, and will seek to promote, develop, and cultivate additional compatible uses of these resources
4. The community will seek to conserve and protect Little Ocmulgee State Park and Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area and will work to improve and promote other outdoor recreation or nature venues

5. The community will maintain, utilize, promote and preserve its heritage through county museum development and other means, and will seek to encourage public and private adaptive use/reuse of its historic buildings, historic districts, and landmark structures
6. The community will proactively manage and guide its growth and development, and protect and conserve its important natural and cultural resources through community investment and appropriate regulation
7. The community will work to improve its appearance and aesthetics through code enforcement and other means
8. The community will seek development compatible with its existing rural/agricultural character and quality of life
9. The community will encourage tourism use, including possible Georgia Scenic Byway designation of GA Hwy. 19, for increased nature-based, heritage, and agri-tourism along the route



Housing

1. The community will work toward both improving the quality of existing housing and promoting quality new development, including manufactured homes
2. The community will address substandard housing and concentrations of blight, including manufactured housing developments, and will cooperatively upgrade their quality and appearance through rehabilitation, removal, code enforcement and regulation
3. The community will seek to encourage a diverse mix of safe, quality housing, including affordable, rental, workforce housing, and manufactured homes
4. The community will work to market available housing throughout the region to attract new residents, including retirees, seeking small town/rural character and quality of life
5. The community will encourage the use of state and federal programs to improve availability of affordable/quality housing, and to encourage homeownership
6. The community will provide guidance to, and for location of, compatible housing development through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation
7. The community will upgrade its appearance and the quality of its housing developments through the adoption and use of updated coordinated land use/manufactured housing regulations, code enforcement, and volunteer programs
8. The community will cooperate to implement and enforce the need for updated, coordinated and comprehensive land use planning, subdivision/manufactured housing/land use regulations, and code enforcement



Land Use

1. The community will plan, manage, and guide its future growth and development, and encourage growth compatible with its existing character
2. The community will cooperate to implement and enforce the need for updated, coordinated and comprehensive land use planning, manufactured housing/land use regulations, and construction code enforcement
3. The community will encourage growth which preserves and protects its rural character and quality of life
4. The community will encourage growth that preserves and maintains forestry and agriculture as viable, functioning land uses
5. The community will enhance existing recreation facilities and develop new facilities/uses, which will complement/promote tourism and the community's character
6. The community will work to encourage appropriate infill development through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation
7. The community will continue to maintain and improve its appearance and aesthetics through ongoing landscaping/beautification efforts, code enforcement, and other means
8. The community will seek and promote development that is compatible with existing infrastructure location to guide future growth
9. The community will seek to conserve and protect its flood zones countywide



Community Facilities and Services

1. The community will provide and maintain adequate government facilities, including city administrative facilities
2. The community will maintain, upgrade, and expand its existing infrastructure and services to enhance the quality of life, and to attract desired, compatible growth and development
3. The community will guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and will plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired patterns of growth
4. The community will maintain adequate water/sewer service provision, including larger line sizes for fire protection, and pursue further development of additional facilities and areas of service as needed

5. The community will seek and support availability of appropriate local broadband telecommunications service, and will pursue Broadband Ready designation
6. The community will pursue, develop, and promote transportation improvements of all types (road/highway, rail, airport, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) that are compatible with, and supportive of, the community's desired economic development, future growth, and quality of life
7. The community will continue to work together with Telfair County to maintain a modern airport through further infrastructure/equipment upgrades, as necessary, and ongoing maintenance
8. The community will continue to develop and maintain infrastructure to facilitate and accommodate desired commercial and industrial growth
9. The community will seek to continue to enhance educational and technological opportunities by continuing to maintain and upgrade its educational facilities and programs
10. The community will enhance Wheeler County's solid waste/recycling facilities, programs, and initiatives in conjunction with other efforts to improve community appearance
11. The community will work together to maintain local healthcare facilities and services conducive to economic development and a high quality of life
12. The community will encourage and support the maintenance, enhancement, and promotion of existing cultural facilities, events, and opportunities, such as the public library, and will further develop cultural facilities and assets to pursue and promote additional venues/activities
13. The community will continue to improve public safety and emergency medical services, equipment, and facilities to improve quality of service and better coordinate in times of emergency and disasters, including improved communications links
14. The community will work to improve fire service county-wide, including adequate training of personnel
15. The community will seek to enhance and promote existing parks, including the Wheeler County Recreation Complex, and establish new parks/recreational facilities and activities to serve existing and future populations and to further cultivate/support tourism
16. The community will continue to seek expansion of senior services as funds are available



Intergovernmental Coordination

1. The community will continue to cooperate locally, regionally and on the state level to improve, develop, and plan for the desired future of Wheeler County
2. The community will continue to seek ways to cooperate and coordinate efforts in the delivery of services, and will investigate the possibility of shared and consolidated services where appropriate and feasible
3. The community will cooperate in facilities investment, coordinated land use planning and regulation and code enforcement to manage and guide its future growth and development

Needs & Opportunities



The Needs and Opportunities Element is required of all local governments by the Minimum Standards and Procedures. The community needs are those weaknesses or liabilities which have to be addressed, changed, or mitigated to help achieve the desired community future. The community opportunities are strengths and assets which can be utilized as starting points and foundations to easily accentuate or capitalize on to move the community forward on its desired future path.

The Needs and Opportunities Element generally answers the planning question, “*Where are we currently?*” The answers can provide the compass point guidance necessary to begin and advance along the improvement journey. The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan identifies each community goal as an issue for improvement, and further identifies local needs and opportunities, as appropriate.



Economic Development

Opportunities:

1. Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Programs
2. Post-secondary education access locally at Oconee Fall Line Technical College's Wheeler Learning Center in Alamo, and other nearby institutions
3. Proximity to I-16, U.S. 280, Savannah Port, Dublin, Macon, and Inland Port at Cordele
4. Excellent local schools
5. Wheeler County Chamber of Commerce/Development Authority
6. Existing businesses/industries
7. Local employment and vocational training at Wheeler Correctional Facility
8. Low unemployment/local workforce
9. Existing agricultural/forestry uses, such as timber, pine straw, wheat and oat straw, catfish farming, honeybees, pork finishing, and watermelon production
10. SPLOST funding
11. Low property taxes
12. Lower cost of living and housing
13. Adult leadership program and youth leadership program established through the Wheeler County Chamber of Commerce
14. Façade grants available

Needs:

1. Promotion/development of greater compatible economic use/tourism of parks, rivers, other natural/cultural resources
2. Improvements to Internet/broadband access/service/facilities supportive of state-of-the-art technology, community facilities and services, intergovernmental coordination
3. Continuing education/job skills improvements
4. Support for increased local post-secondary education resources through nearby technical colleges, such as Oconee Fall Line
5. Continuing support for the local school system and increasing high school graduation rate/improving literacy rate
6. Retention of local graduates
7. Existing business/industry/entrepreneur support and retention
8. Retail trade/service sector and hospitality business development, including local grocery store
9. New business/industry/jobs attraction/creation
10. Small business incubator development
11. Diverse mix of jobs to fit local workforce
12. Maintenance of agriculture/forestry as viable economic land uses through traditional and alternative means, such as agritourism and nature-based tourism
13. Need to create more hands-on job training programs
14. Need more retail options



Housing

Opportunities:

1. Ample undeveloped land
2. Availability of good water
3. County’s subdivision ordinance
4. Low property tax
5. Plans are in place to address residential blight
6. One Georgia Workforce Housing Program
7. Availability of CDBG/other public/private programs to rehabilitate low- and moderate-income housing

Needs:

1. Coordination/enhancement of economic development marketing through active Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, regional cooperation, and regional/state agencies
2. Community appearance improvements/redevelopment of declining areas/upgrade commercial areas and substandard housing
3. Continued downtown revitalization of Ala-

mo and Glenwood

4. Proactive growth management of future compatible development through community investment/appropriate regulation
5. Continued maintenance and provision of adequate local governmental facilities/services, including city administrative facilities
6. Lack of new residential development
7. Marketing of available housing for residential attraction, including retirees
8. Existing and new housing quality/appearance improvements through rehabilitation, removal, code enforcement, and regulation
9. Continue efforts to create more affordable, diverse housing options
10. Diverse mix of safe, quality housing (affordable, rental, workforce, and manufactured)
11. Additional affordable housing
12. Substandard housing/concentrations of blight elimination
13. Development of housing revitalization strategies



Natural & Cultural Resources

Opportunities:

1. Community’s rural character/small town quality of life
2. Significant natural resources, including Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers and their corridors, and other natural waterways

3. Local/regional tourism events/venues, such as Alamo’s July 4th celebration
4. Nature-based, agri-tourism, recreation, heritage, and other tourism venues, including the Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers; Little Ocmulgee State Park, Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area, U.S. 441 Heritage Trail,

(Natural & Cultural Resources "Opportunities" Continued)

- and scenic GA Highway 19, Highway 46, Mt. Vernon Bridge in Wheeler County
- 5. Historic downtowns in Alamo and Glenwood with rehabilitation opportunities
- 6. Ocmulgee River eco-tourism/Ocmulgee River Water Trail/Ocmulgee Water Trail Partnership/Oconee River Greenway Authority
- 7. Georgia Forestry Conservation Easement along Oconee River
- 8. Local cultural/historic resources, such as Wheeler County Courthouse, Woodland Plantation, Milly Troup Tomb and the Big Oak Tree, Alamo calaboose, Glenwood School, and opportunities for increased heritage tourism
- 9. Continued use of historic Wheeler County Courthouse
- 10. Lots of hunting/fishing opportunities
- 11. Multiple recreational areas to appeal to people within and outside the county
- 12. July 4th Festival
- 13. Christmas Events in Alamo
- 14. Senior Parade in downtown Alamo
- 15. First Saturday of the month free to the public yard sale in downtown Alamo
- 4. Continuing protection of Wheeler County's significant natural and cultural resources through community investment and appropriate regulation
- 5. Continued stewardship and local government use of National Register-listed historic Wheeler County Courthouse
- 6. Increased awareness of existing and promotion of new tourism attractions/events along U.S. 441 (Heritage Highway), U.S. 280, and GA Highway 19 through driving tour development, increased signage at historic and natural landmarks, and other means
- 7. Complete renovation of historic caboose in downtown Alamo
- 8. Compatible development supportive of community's unique landscapes, natural beauty, and rural character/quality of life
- 9. Historic resources preservation/reuse/promotion, such as rehabilitation of downtown commercial structures in Alamo and Glenwood
- 10. Appearance/aesthetics improvements through landscaping, beautification efforts, codes enforcement, and other means
- 11. Conservation/protection of Little Ocmulgee State Park and Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area
- 12. Development of bike route linking Little Ocmulgee with Region's other state parks (Gorgonia Altamaha and George L. Smith)
- 13. Attraction/maintenance of residential growth, including retirees, through quality of life and small town/rural promotion
- 14. Continued support/promotion/maintenance/enhancement of existing cultural facilities/programs/events and development of additional ones
- 15. Conservation/protection of Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers, significant natural resources

Needs:

- 1. Enhancement/growth of local/regional tourism through existing and new signature community festivals/events, recreation/leisure, bicycling, agri-tourism, nature-based tourism, horse event park, museum development, and historic and cultural sites
- 2. Support continuing operation of Wheeler Correctional Facility in Wheeler County, including any future expansions
- 3. Encourage tourism use of GA Highway 19, including possible Georgia Scenic Byway designation



Land Use

Opportunities:

1. Continued efforts to seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in delivery of services
2. Seek new ideas, and become more competitive compared with adjacent counties for new developments
3. Participation in local or multi-county leadership program to groom future community leaders
4. Continuing local, regional, and state agency cooperation/coordination

Needs:

1. Maintenance/extension/development of infrastructure necessary for desired growth/quality of life, including transportation, water/sewer, and broadband high-speed connectivity
2. Cooperative implementation and enforcement of updated/coordinated/comprehensive land use planning, manufactured housing/land use regulations, and code enforcement
3. Encouragement of appropriate infill and in-

- tense development/land uses through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation
4. Enforcement of model ordinance based on Georgia DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria for significant wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and protected river corridors
5. State/federal housing programs utilization, such as CDBG/CHIP grants and others
6. Utilization of existing and new infrastructure location/planning/regulation to guide desired/compatible residential growth/development supportive of community's vision/rural character
7. Updated, coordinated land use planning/subdivision/manufactured housing regulations/increased code enforcement/nuisance ordinances/growth management implementation and enforcement to improve appearance/quality of housing developments
8. There is a need for people to sell land for new development opportunities
9. Control measures on solar farm development to protect land use such as farming and other developments



Intergovernmental Coordination

Opportunities:

1. County collaborative meetings with its municipalities, and other agencies
2. Existing local, regional, and state partnerships, including public safety/fire service cooperation, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, and others
3. Continuing existing local, regional, and state agency cooperation/coordination

Needs:

1. Continued efforts to seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in delivery of services
2. Seek new ideas, and become more competitive compared with adjacent counties for new developments
3. Participation in local or multi-county leadership program to groom future community leaders
4. Continuing local, regional, and state agency cooperation/coordination



Community Facilities and Services

Opportunities:

1. Wheeler transit program
2. Heart of Georgia Railroad access
3. New facility/maintenance staff will be added for the new public school building
4. EV charging station grant opportunities
5. Funding available for further broadband improvement
6. Lower property values/lower property taxes
7. New Alamo City Hall
8. Wheeler County Senior Center
9. Wheeler County Recreation Complex
10. Wheeler County Library with Wi-Fi available
11. Available water/sewer capacity in Alamo and Glenwood
12. Transportation improvements, including TIA funded resurfacing and paving projects
13. Telfair-Wheeler Airport improvements
14. Recreation Department has many opportunities for the public
15. County Roads Department
16. Health Department
17. Funding secured for further broadband connectivity expansion
18. Alamo Parks and Recreation
19. Wheeler County Recreational department
20. Existing Code enforcement in Alamo
21. Existing property maintenance ordinance in Alamo
22. Glenwood Telephone Company gets grant for significant broadband expansion county-wide
23. Little Ocmulgee EMC
24. New Care Connection Family Practice health clinic and Wheeler County Health Department services
25. Part-time building code officer hired

Needs:

1. Continued support for local Wheeler County Public Library through facility, equipment, staffing, program, and other improvements/expansions
2. Continued improvements to local public safety/fire/emergency medical services, equipment, and facilities, as needed
3. Continued conservation/protection of flood zones countywide
4. Continued maintenance/upgrades of local healthcare facility/services/equipment, as needed
5. Continuing street and road improvements, including paving and resurfacing projects utilizing TIA and other funding
6. Development compatible with existing infrastructure location to guide future growth
7. Continue to work on expanding healthcare options in the area
8. Continued maintenance/enhancement of local educational facilities/services/technology
9. Continued improvements/promotion of all kinds of transportation access/quality, including highway, roads/streets, airport, rail, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal/Complete Streets
10. Improved local daycare options
11. Continued maintenance, upgrades, and expansion of existing public infrastructure/services, as needed
12. Maintain/upgrade/expand water/sewer service provision as needed, including larger line sizes for fire protection
13. Parks/recreation facilities/activities maintenance/improvements/promotion/new development
14. Strong local public safety/enforcement and low crime rate
15. Seek to improve Broadband Infrastructure throughout the county
16. Seek grants to build EV charging stations in the county
17. Continue efforts to get funding to maintain dirt roads
18. Continue to find new incentives to establish more childcare establishments
19. Need to seek funding to establish a farmers' market in downtown Alamo
20. There is a need for more public safety personnel
21. Lack of broadband availability
22. Expansion of senior services

Broadband Services



The Broadband Services Element is a descriptive snapshot of the areas of the community served by broadband technology. The deployment of broadband technologies has become a major selling point for those communities which offer high speed connectivity, and conversely, a detriment to economic development for those areas lacking the infrastructure. The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes this element to outline a strategy for attracting an increased level of broadband deployment by the private sector and to preemptively meet anticipated changes to the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

Broadband is defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a minimum of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. It should be noted that the broadband definition has changed twice since its inception in 1996 due to technological advancements. Broadband delivery methods include, but are not limited

to, digital subscriber lines, cable modems, fiber, wireless, broadband over power lines, and satellites. Nationally, 99.4 percent of the population have access to either fixed terrestrial service at 25 Mbps/3 Mbps or mobile LTE at 10 Mbps/3 Mbps. This percentage drops to 97.0% in rural areas. In the FCC's 2021 Broadband Deployment Report, it was estimated that 55.7 percent of the population in Wheeler County have access to fixed broadband technology. An industry desiring an improved communications network will seek a fixed connection service provider and will need at minimum 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds.



L Firefighter Training **R** Glenwood Telephone Company

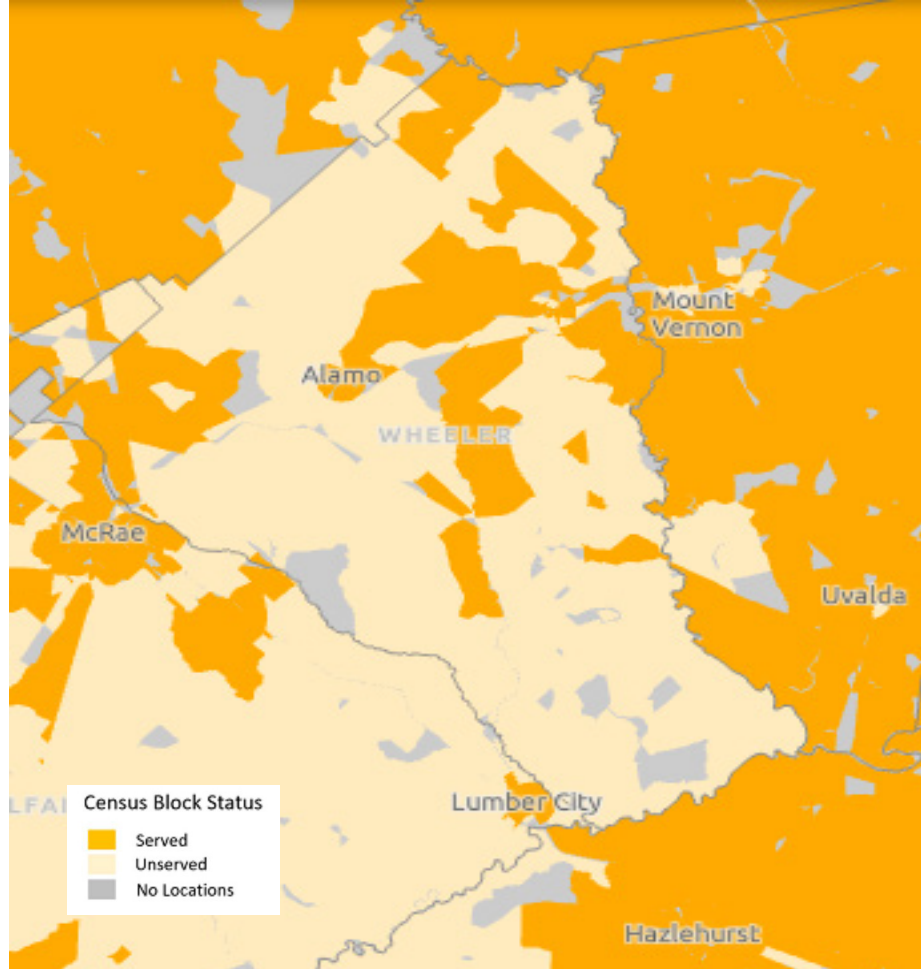
Other avenues of broadband service technologies available in the community are either satellite or wireless 4G LTE service. Satellite service speeds are generally slower download speeds compared to wired infrastructure and are prone to weather related outages. Wireless 4G LTE technology is widely available throughout the State of Georgia and is used by smartphones and tablets to download content reliably, although speed is determined by proximity to a communications tower and the speed at which the tower is capable. Wheeler County has a reported 4G LTE coverage area over the entire county. This avenue of service is generally sufficient for a homeowner or cell service subscriber. 5G LTE is now available with some carriers in certain areas of the county. The 5G LTE allows faster download and uploads for mobile users.

Over the last couple of decades, the internet has evolved into an essential part of our everyday life. Research, social media, banking, business operations, communication, and many other enabling tasks provided by the internet, have elevated this resource into one of the most important infrastructures in the world today. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the need for faster and more reliable internet services became a critical asset to everyday life around the world. The pandemic resulted in much of the population remaining at home and conducting business remotely. Schools, work, communications, religion services, and many others all relied heavily on the internet to function. As a result, the need for broadband services was recognized as a priority for the country. Since 2019, Cities of Alamo, Glenwood,

and Wheeler County have made notable strides in expanding high-speed broadband access. The 2024 Georgia Broadband Availability Map shows that the cities are mostly served by broadband connectivity. While the entire county has not yet reached full broadband coverage, ongoing efforts at the county and municipal levels continue to enhance connectivity. Glenwood Telephone Company recently received the Capital Projects Fund grant to build out 146 route miles of buried fiber optic construction in the community. Wheeler County is on track to achieve full high-speed broadband coverage in the near future.

Broadband Availability within Wheeler County

Source: Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative 2023



The Wheeler County community has chosen a multi-faceted approach and strategy to improve the availability of broadband and broadband deployment. The following items are actions steps the community will take to increase economic, educational, and social opportunities for citizens and businesses through the deployment of universal broadband and other communications technologies.

1. Develop and maintain an inventory of Community Anchor Institutions (schools, library, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, and higher education facilities) within the community to determine areas of greatest broadband need.
2. Continue to partner with state agencies (Georgia Technology Authority, Department of Community Affairs, and Department of Economic Development) and area local governments to promote broadband deployment in the community, region, and state.
3. Identify broadband deployment projects eligible for OneGeorgia Authority funding and/or other state and federal grant or loan opportunities.

Economic Development



Economic prosperity is a key to community improvement. A community's comprehensive plan seeks at its core to make the community a better place to live, work, and recreate. To improve quality of life, there is a need for income and an increased tax base to help enhance the ability to afford needed and desired improvements, and afford better housing and a higher standard of living. Commerce and economic development have a major influence on overall population growth and development. The relationship is quite evident in Wheeler County. Wheeler County's heyday came from entrepreneurship and railroad establishment, resulting also in a population boom in the late 1800s. Leadership, attracting the Wheeler Correctional Facility and other job diversity, and keeping agriculture relevant and vital, along with highways and location, have stabilized growth in the county, despite suffering major setbacks and a long period of population loss with the decline of turpentine and the railroads, and the growth of larger nearby urban centers.

Wheeler County is an early frontier area of Georgia, settled in the late 1790s and early 1800s, but not formally separated as a county until 1912. Its longleaf pine forests were at first considered less than desirable lands, but were still the source of commerce -- questionable and deceptive

land speculation. The abundant natural resources were soon realized to be another opportunity, and a profitable lumber and naval stores industry resulted. Transportation and access to markets were always important, first through the Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers and later the advent of railroads. The development of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad through the county stimulated the heyday of Wheeler County development. Farming interests developed as the forests were cut, but forestry remains the mainstay. The local economy received further boosts from transportation with the coming of major highways, most notably U.S. 280, U.S. 441 and Georgia 19. A major transformation of the local economy began in the 1930s with the development of the Little Ocmulgee State Park. The economy truly stabilized with the opening of Wheeler Correctional Facility in 1998. Quality of life, small-town charm, and outdoor scenic beauty are local economic strengths and opportunities available today for supporting and developing additional economic development opportunities.



Wheeler Correctional Facility

Wheeler Correctional Facility (WCF), owned and operated by CoreCivic, has become a principal economic engine in the county. The facility expanded from its initial 1,700 beds to the contract level of 3,106 beds in 2024. Named CoreCivic's top facility in 2018, Wheeler Correctional Facility is one of the two largest correctional facilities operated in Georgia by CoreCivic. The facility opened in 1998 and currently houses 2,680 medium security adult male offenders. Its government partner is the state of Georgia. The facility is a valuable contributor to the local economy and a vital revenue source for local government. WCF employs approximately 400 people and has an annual payroll about \$20 million. It contributes about \$2 million in annual utilities and \$2.4 million in annual property taxes to the local economy.

Several utility companies are headquartered in Wheeler County, including Little Ocmulgee EMC, and Glenwood Telephone Company. Little Ocmulgee EMC was organized by farmers and rural residents from this area in 1938 with support from the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA). At that time, investor-owned utilities contended there was not enough profit to be made to warrant the expense of building power lines into the countryside. REA offered low-cost loans for bringing electricity to un-served homes and farms so residents began forming electric cooperatives to meet the need. A fee of \$5 was collected from each member – making them co-op members and owners – to generate capital for borrowing. In 2024, Little Ocmulgee EMC marked its 87th year and today serves Telfair and Wheeler

counties as well as parts of Laurens, Dodge, and Montgomery counties from their headquarters in Alamo. In the 21st century, Little Ocmulgee EMC continues to provide electricity to over 7,725 members with 11,433 meters and maintains over 2,000 miles of energized lines, covering over 1,000 square miles of service territory. Glenwood Telephone Company, the smallest privately owned telephone company in Georgia, was originally founded in 1898 by W.R. Stanford. Today its service area encompasses approximately 13 square miles along the bluff side of the Oconee River in Wheeler and Laurens counties. Building on the success of the Fiber to the Home (FTTH) project, Glenwood Telephone Company (GTC) was awarded a \$4.8 million grant in 2023 through the Capital Projects Fund Grant program to further expand broadband in Wheeler County. Glenwood Telephone is making this large financial investment with the hope of attracting new businesses to the area that require state-of-the-art technology and high-speed internet, as well as to enhance opportunities for telephone customers to telecommute, access distance learning and telemedicine, and utilize other available services and resources. In addition to Little Ocmulgee EMC and Glenwood Telephone Company, Kinetic by Windstream has also launched its fiber internet services in Wheeler County since 2021.



Little Ocmulgee EMC

Wheeler County State Bank (WCSB), chartered in 1934, has its headquarters in Alamo. The bank has approximately 12 employees, who work at the main facility and at Atlantic South Bank, a division of WCSB located in Dublin. Wheeler County State Bank has consistently earned a five-star rating from Bauer Financial, which reports on and analyzes the performance of U.S. banks and credit unions. The bank is well capitalized and continues to report strong earnings.

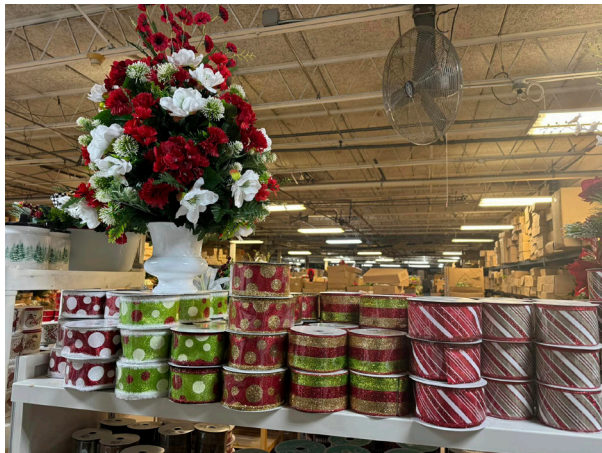
Since the departure of EP American Footwear in 2021, J & K Creations Wholesale, LLC established itself in Alamo and rapidly grew into a thriving business. With a team of approximately 15 employees, the company specializes in the manufacturing and sale of artificial flowers and festival decorations. Their products have gained popularity for their quality and appeal. Building on its success, the company is planning to expand further by opening a retail shop in Alamo as well.

The timber industry remains crucial to Wheeler County's economic landscape. It accounts for millions of dollars a year, including pine straw, a byproduct of growing timber. In 2022, the timber industry contributed approximately \$8.9 million, while the pine straw industry added around \$3.6 million to the county's

economic vitality. In 2021, the Georgia Public Service Commission approved a \$2.65 million grant to extend a gas line to T.C. Logging, Inc. in Wheeler County. This funding will support increased wood production at the large logging and sawmill operation near Alamo, with the expansion expected to create 50 new jobs.

Farming continues to be big business in Wheeler County:

- The county ranks first (1) in the state in straw production from wheat and oats, with 4,500 acres involved, and contributed 28% of the state’s total production for a value of \$4.7 million in 2022.
- Wheeler county ranks number three (3) in the state in the production of Okra, with 25 acres in cultivation in 2022 for a contribution of 10% to the state’s production total.
- Wheeler ranks in the top 10 counties in the state for catfish farming. The 2017 Farm Gate report notes that the county boasts 20 ponds with 2,200 pounds per acre of catfish for a total income of \$132,000.
- Watermelon production is also growing big in Wheeler County with 620 acres involved. In 2022, this crop brought in \$6 million.



L J & K Creations **R** T.C. Logging



There are continuing needs for Wheeler County’s economic development. Incomes in Wheeler County remain very low, with some sources saying the county’s per capita income is the lowest in the state. The per capita money income in Wheeler County as reported by the Census Bureau for 2018-2022 is \$17,982, only about 48% that of Georgia as a whole. The reader should note the per capita figure is skewed lower due to the high percentage of prison inmates figured in the totals. Median household income is \$36,354, about 51% that of Georgia. 31 percent of Wheeler County citizens are in poverty, compared to only 12.7% in Georgia as a whole. 25.1% of county children remain in poverty. There are needs for more jobs. Unemployment in the county was 5.1% in 2024, compared to 3.5% in the Region and 3.1% in the State. 70% of county workers work outside Wheeler County. Job skills of local residents are also a concern; about 19% of local residents are without a high school diploma compared to 11.3% statewide. These types of statistics do create opportunity for businesses to receive Georgia’s largest tax credits for job creation as they place Wheeler County in Georgia’s Job Tax Credit Tier 1 (lowest 40 percent or so of counties).

There are opportunities and causes for optimism for economic development in Wheeler County as well. Employment within the county remains concentrated within goods-producing in general (20.2%), government (25.1%), and agricultural, forestry, fishing (9.4%) sectors. This reflects the stability and importance of agriculture and forestry and the prison within the county, as well as the local schools. There remain unrealized opportunities related to the abundant fields and forests and outstanding natural resources of the county. The cost of living in Wheeler County is relatively very low, and the crime rate is low making it even more attractive as a place to live for families and new residents and retirees, especially in the context of attractive open spaces, and a verdant landscape punctuated by outstanding natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Wheeler County community has chosen a multi-faceted approach and strategy to improve its economic status and further economic development in the county. The following goals and objectives were chosen to address identified economic development issues in Wheeler County.

Improve Educational Levels/Improve Jobs Skills

Wheeler County will continue to support its school system, its local adult literacy center and other Oconee Fall Line Technical College programs, local school system, and regional Workforce Investment Act programs. The county will continue to develop public/private partnerships through its Chamber of Commerce, CoreCivic, civic groups, and continuing intergovernmental cooperation. The “Destination: Graduation” motto of the school system will be vigorously implemented. The community will work together to create more job training opportunities, particularly those that focus on hands-on occupations that are essential for equipping younger generations with practical skills that align with the demands of local industries.

Retain Local Graduates

This is best accomplished by the development of increased job opportunities and enhancing local educational levels/job skills. Wheeler County will continue cooperative efforts through local schools, Oconee Fall Line Technical College, the Chamber of Commerce, CoreCivic, and state and regional agencies.

Support/Enhance/Maintain Viability of Agriculture/Forestry Uses

The community will support efforts to create additional markets, explore alternative crops, and seek value-added businesses which keep such uses viable and profitable. The marketing and development of agri-tourism and nature-based tourism are other means.

Continue to Address/Improve Infrastructure Needs

The Wheeler County community will jointly work to solve any infrastructure deficiencies, including roads,

highways, power, water, sewer, natural gas and other needs. Broadband services in the county have seen significant improvements in the past 5 years, thanks to recent investments and upgrades. The community will persist in pursuing further expansion of broadband services.

Nurture Existing Businesses/Entrepreneurs

The Wheeler County community will work through its Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce, and in cooperation with Oconee Fall Line Technical College and state agencies, to meet local needs and encourage expansions and new local business development. Special efforts will be made for CoreCivic and agricultural/forest interests.



L Oconee Fall Line Technical College **R** AG Preserve, Glenwood

Attract New Businesses

The Wheeler County community, through its Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and inter-governmental cooperation, will seek compatible business and industrial development. The community will participate in state designation programs, and will continue to explore the feasibility of working jointly with neighboring counties to increase the number of available jobs. State tax credits and local tax incentives for job creation will be marketed.

Develop/Enhance Tourism

Wheeler County's rivers and outdoor amenities; the state park; the horse event park; many historic structures; existing and potential festivals; its location along U.S. 441 (the Heritage Highway), scenic GA Highway 19, and U.S. 280 as well as its farms and scenic countryside offer much more potential to increase visitors. The new Long Leaf Legacy and Interpretive Center in Alamo will be an important asset. There is potential for a U.S. 280 cooperative yard sale.

Improve Transportation Access/Quality

The Regional T-SPLIST has delivered many needed local resurfacing and other road improvements which

have enhanced the community as a place to live and work. The 2nd round Regional TSPLOST will start in 2024. The completion of widening of U.S. 280 under Georgia’s GRIP program brought more usage and travelers to the county. These and other improvements could enhance local travel and make business markets more accessible. It would also make it easier to live in Wheeler, but work in nearby urban growth centers. Promotion of trails and bicycling and other tourism would also help quality of life and economic development. The inland port at Cordele brings impetus for U.S. 280 and Heart of Georgia Railroad improvements. The joint Telfair-Wheeler airport and its continued improvement is also important.

Revitalize Downtowns

The historic fabric and available buildings in Alamo and Glenwood allow for much opportunity. Their historic nature allows for development incentives, preservation of unique character, and enhanced quality of life. Community projects in historic structures create civic pride and community cooperation. They also can stimulate private investment.



L Downtown Alamo **R** Downtown Glenwood

Develop/Improve Local Industrial Park/Site

The private Stevens-McRae industrial site in Glenwood needs further improvement and marketing. The potential site is currently comprised of multiple parcels with various landowners. Located just east of Glenwood, this site borders the Oconee River to the east and has short line rail along the southern boundary.

Promote Quality of Life/Civic and Community Pride/Location

Wheeler County has an opportunity to promote its small town and rural character and quality of life through its Chamber and other means. The welcoming, family atmosphere; low crime rate; low cost of living; the state park; the horse event park; CoreCivic; the many, active civic clubs; and the landscape and outdoor amenities are all easy selling cards. The overall county location and ease of access to larger urban areas further contribute to ease of promotion of the county as an excellent place to live, visit, or do business.

Enhance Intergovernmental Cooperation

Community efforts working together both within the county, and through neighbors, the region, and state agencies can only facilitate success and scope of effort. An active chamber of commerce and many civic groups can only make public/private partnerships easier to achieve and more successful. Active participation in regional economic, tourism, and natural resource partnerships offers much potential and benefit. The City of Alamo will facilitate meetings among cities, the county and other public agencies.

Address Growth Management/Community Aesthetics

A well-planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. The community has developed limited individual land use regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but stronger, more general, and coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location and civic organizations and programs to assist.



L UGA Extension at Wheeler County **R** Wheeler County Chamber of Commerce

Enhance Economic Development Marketing

Wheeler County has been noted in the past for its local leadership and community cooperation. Reenergized efforts supported by the local governments, local chamber and local civic groups, and CoreCivic can accomplish much to help the community cooperate and advance in economic development. Participation in regional and state partnerships and utilizing state designation programs can help. State job tax credits and recently developed local tax incentives can be highlighted.

Support CoreCivic/Little Ocmulgee State Park

The Little Ocmulgee State Park and CoreCivic's Wheeler Correctional Facility have been principal contributors to a stabilized local economic base. The community needs to be vigilant to support and ensure these pillars and foundations for other growth remain strong and vibrant.

Land Use



The landscape and the way land is used is often visible and tangible evidence of planning or the lack thereof. It reveals the pattern of growth and development, and how we relate to the natural environment. It often defines what we view as the character of our community, and is a major component in our determination of quality of life. As science evolves, we realize with greater certainty that the way our land is used and managed has definite implications for air and water quality, and the diversity and health of our ecosystems.

The awareness of the impacts and consequences of the way land is used illustrate the need for wise use of our finite supply of land, and the necessity of sound decisions in its development or protection. The need for sustainable growth and development, which accommodates our development needs while maintaining balance and control, and limiting impacts on the natural and built environment, is recognized in the state quality community objectives.

Sound, quality growth and development results from effective and balanced land use planning that anticipates, prepares, and exercises control over development decisions. It guides and directs growth and development into a desirable and efficient pattern of land use to achieve compatibilities in use, proper return and effective use of public investments in infrastructure and services, and minimal impacts to environmentally or aesthetically important natural and cultural resources.

The lack of planning, on the other hand, can result in uncontrolled and unmanaged growth which can wreak havoc on community desires and plans, negatively impact property values, degrade the environment and landscape, and foster other detrimental effects or burdens in a short period of time. It can destroy important natural functions and treasured views or other parts of the landscape. It can cause new public tax or service burdens while lowering return or lessening use of public infrastructure already paid for or invested in. Public desires or future plans or options can be precluded or prevented by such uncontrolled growth, while other ill-advised consequences or burdens upon the general public can result.



L *Wheeler County Public School* **R** *Church in Glenwood*

A community's land use planning efforts are an attempt to provide a policy guide and framework or blueprint for desired growth and development. Sound planning provides for managed growth and development, allowing for necessary land use and development, but guiding it in such a manner that balances and protects resources, systems, and other aspects of the landscape important to the community. Such planning tries to lessen, mitigate, or avoid inconsistencies, inefficiencies, or conflicting land use efforts. Existing patterns and trends of land uses, community investment in and location of facilities and services, important natural and cultural constraints, and overriding community desires are considered and accommodated in developing and delineating the desired pattern of growth and development.

Wheeler County and its municipalities are united in their vision and desires for growth. It is a rural county with abundant natural resources, great natural beauty, and many assets for growth. The community's vision for its growth and development is one that protects and utilizes its natural resources and landscape to continue growth and development conducive and compatible with such natural beauty. Land uses would continue to look similar to those existing, and the rural character would be maintained. Infrastructure and amenities would be expanded and developed to support and attract both population and business growth, primarily in or adjacent to the existing municipalities and developed areas. Agricultural and forestry uses would be kept viable and remain the principal land uses of the county. They would be an integral component of the economy of the county, and the preservation of rural character supportive of open space and natural resource protection. Commercial and industrial growth would be compatible and supportive of continued agricultural/forestry uses, and would maintain the high quality of life and rural character while providing additional jobs and economic opportunity.

While technically only the City of Alamo is required, because of its zoning ordinance, to have a Land Use element in its comprehensive plan under the DCA planning standards, all local governments in the county have chosen to participate and include the element in this joint comprehensive plan. Existing land use maps visually convey to all concerned the current landscape and correlation of extant development. Future land use maps illustrate to all concerned the community's vision and desires for additional growth and development. Such depictions also lend credence and supporting background information important to understanding and illustrating official local government policy in designating lands unsuitable for solid waste handling facilities in local solid waste management plans. Land use maps do provide official display of community desires and goals for compatible future growth and development.



L City Park, Glenwood **R** Little Ocmulgee State Park Golf Course **B** Downtown Alamo

The community's land use maps are, however, a general policy guide and framework, not necessarily a rigid or unchangeable picture of future growth and development. Not all growth or developments can be foreseen, and other events could necessitate a change in community vision or desires. The depicted pattern of desired future growth and development displayed on future land use maps is a current statement and reflection of community expectations and desires. It provides a context, framework and background for the public and private sector to utilize to plan, evaluate, shape, guide, and evaluate proposed developments and other decisions affecting the use of the land and community growth and development. The plan provides a context for forethought, examination of impacts and consequences, and mitigation of land use decisions on the community's growth and development and desired future patterns and community vision.

Land Use Categories and Descriptions

Land use categories utilized in the development of this plan and in the land use maps are the standard categories established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and defined in the planning standards as below.

Residential. The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units.

Commercial. This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

Industrial. This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses. This category doesn't apply to the City of Glenwood's Land Use Maps.

Public/Institutional. This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities. This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

Park/Recreation/Conservation. This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational and conservation uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, other wild lands, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.

Agriculture. This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or similar rural uses.

Forestry. This category is for land dedicated to commercial timber, pulpwood production, or other woodland use. This category doesn't apply to the City of Alamo's future land use map.

Existing Land Uses

Existing land use patterns for Wheeler County and its municipalities are depicted on the following maps. A table depicting the existing distribution of land use acreages is shown below.

Existing Land Use Distribution, Wheeler County, 2024 (Acres)

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent of Total
Industrial	169	0.09
Public/Institutional	171	0.09
Commercial	182	0.09
Residential	2,870	1.49
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	3,972	2.07
Park/Recreation/Conservation	4,355	2.27
Agriculture	66,857	34.79
Forestry	113,597	59.11
Total	192,173	100.00%

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Geographic Information System, 2024.

Land Use Goals

Wheeler County and its municipalities seek future growth and development respective of its rural character, abundant natural resources and agricultural/forestry uses, and the existing quality of life. It desires growth patterns which maintain and keep viable existing agricultural and forestry uses, which sustain its heritage, abundant natural and cultural resources, and which are otherwise compatible and complementary of existing uses and scale of development. The community has chosen the following land use goals to help bring about its desired future and delineated community vision.

Address Growth Management/Community Aesthetics

A well planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. The community has developed only limited individual land use regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but more general and coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location; improvement of facilities and services; support of agricultural, forestry, and conservation uses; downtown revitalization; and involvement of its citizenry to assist.

Improve Subdivision/Manufactured Housing/Land Use Regulation/Code Enforcement

As noted above, Wheeler County has only limited, rudimentary land use regulations, road acceptance/subdivision ordinances, a manufactured home ordinance, and others to address specific issues or nuisances. Only Alamo has a zoning ordinance and has hired a part time building code enforcement officer. These ordinances need update, expansion, coordination, and joint collaboration/code enforcement to initiate a more comprehensive approach.

Maintain Open Spaces/Agricultural/Forestry Uses/Rural Character/Quality of Life

Development of new markets, supporting creation of alternative crops and uses, celebrating the heritage of these uses, providing professional support, and attracting compatible agribusiness or other supportive economic development ventures all can help achieve this. Developing and supporting outdoor events/facilities, making the county's rivers more accessible, and encouraging tourism will also help.

Develop/Improve Recreational/Leisure Use Facilities and Encourage Utilization/Access/Tourism for Natural/Cultural Resources

The Oconee, Ocmulgee, and Little Ocmulgee rivers, the Little Ocmulgee State Park, the Alligator Creek Wildlife Management Area, and Georgia Highway 19 all have much history for recreation, tourism, and motoring within the county. Increased recreational and outdoor usage through continued park development, promotion, and growth of tourism of many kinds offers much unrealized potential to both enhanced economic utilization and conservation of the County's significant natural and cultural resources. It can also attract more visitors, and more residents, and build a larger audience of citizen support for protection and enhancement of these resources. Improvement and promotion of U.S. 280, U.S. 441, and Georgia 19 also hold promise. Improvement of local recreational facilities; enhancement of events or festivals, like Alamo's Fourth of July Celebration and promotion of the Sweetwater Horse Event Park, could also reap benefits.

Encourage Infill Development

It only makes sense to utilize lands and buildings where taxpayers and private interests have invested in providing costly infrastructure and construction in the past before extending additional infrastructure or incurring completely new construction costs. There are an abundance of available vacant commercial, industrial and residential structures within the community, as well as areas with readily available infrastructure. Available historic buildings in both downtowns are avenues for preservation of character and heritage and opportunities for economic and community development utilizing existing served areas.

Improve Community Appearance

Wheeler County and its municipalities have much intrinsic natural and cultural beauty and Old South charm attractive to residential location and tourism. Landscaping/beautification efforts, general clean-up, and rehabilitation/upgrade of existing structures/areas will serve to accent and highlight this.

Seek Compatible Development/Utilization

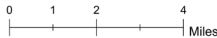
Growth supportive, not disruptive through use, scale, or intensity, of the community's existing rural character, small-town atmosphere, extant heritage, abundant natural and cultural resources, and current agricultural/forestry uses is desired.

Protect Flood Zones/Local Rivers

The community is known for its "three rivers." Protection from degradation or inappropriate development is to everyone's advantage. Pristine natural and scenic beauty is a cornerstone advantage for quality of life and economic development within the county.

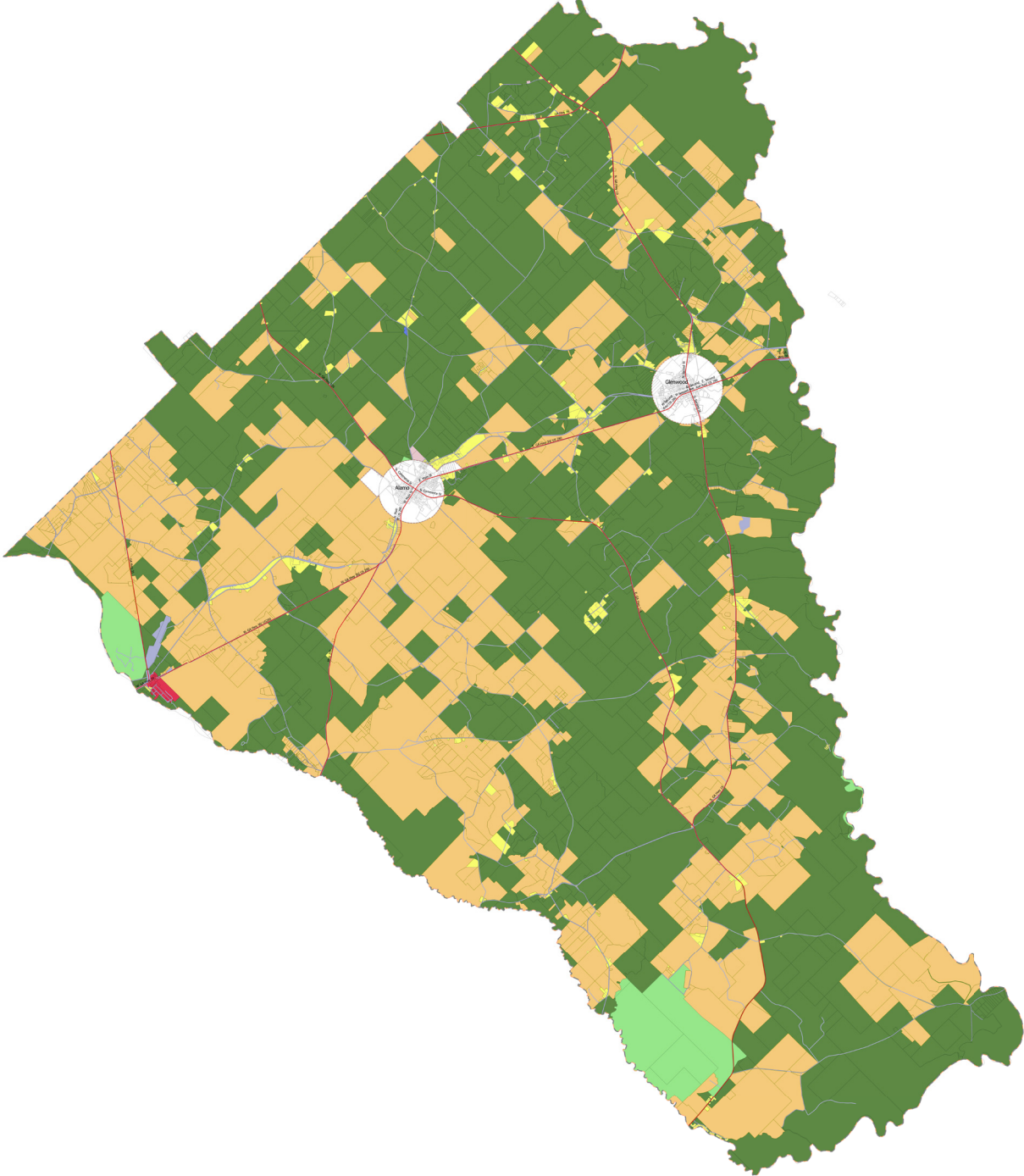
Wheeler County

Existing Land Use

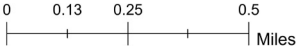


Existing Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Forestry
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Tax Parcels
- City Limits
- County Boundary

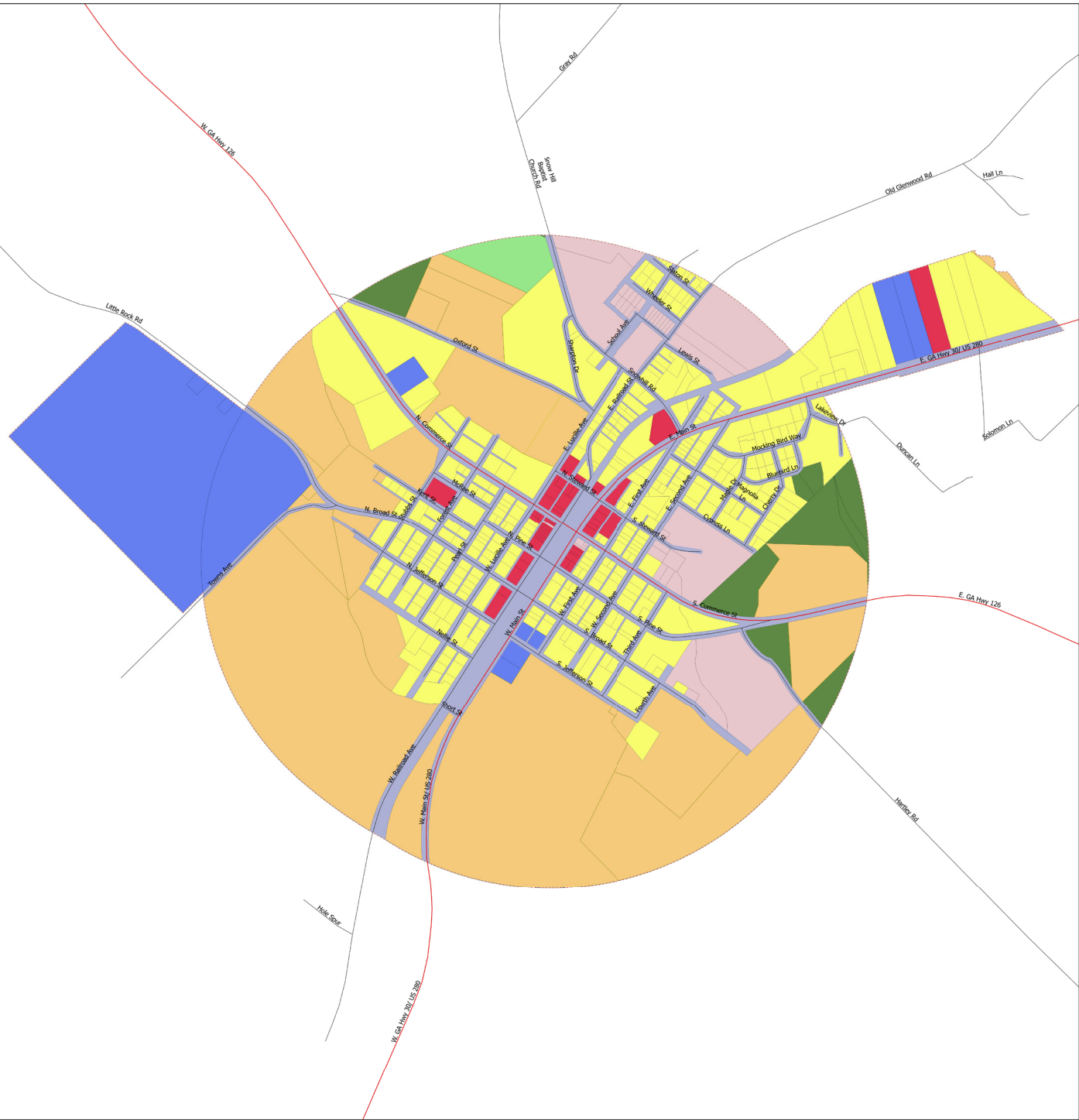


City of Alamo Existing Land Use

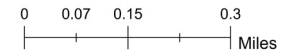


Existing Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Forestry
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Tax Parcels
- City Limits

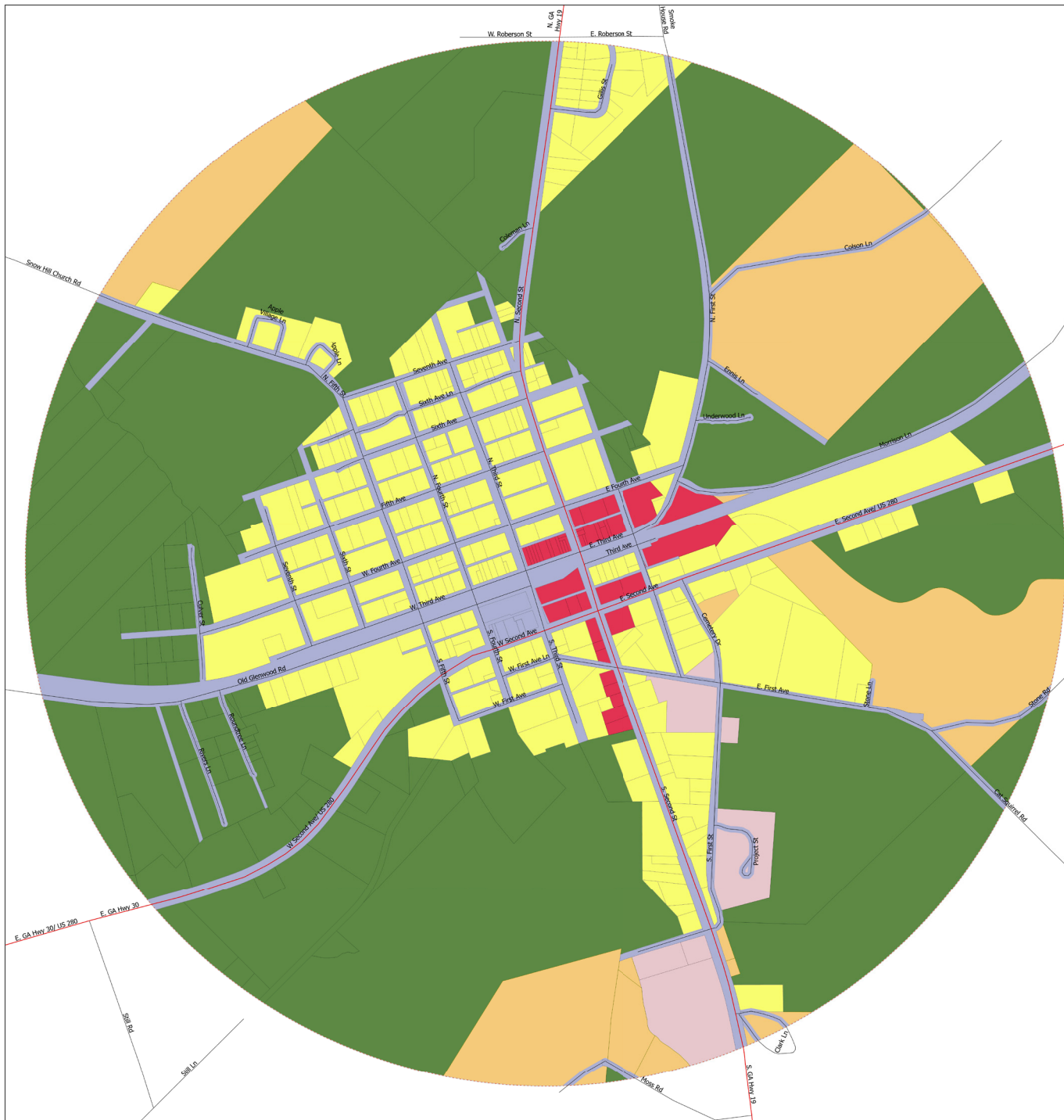


City of Glenwood Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Forestry
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Tax Parcels
- City Limits



Future Land Uses

Wheeler County's history of development traces to its fields, forests, transportation and leadership. The county was a frontier area originally part of Washington and then Montgomery County. It was initially settled primarily after the Revolutionary War, but was not formally established as a separate county until 1912. Its initial settlement and development centered on the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers and the county's longleaf pine forests. The county's heyday of growth from the late 1800s to 1900 was related to railroad development, which was the impetus for development of both of the county's current municipalities. The county's population began a long history of population decline from its inception which lasted until 1970. The county high point in population remains 1920's 9,817, and the low point 1970's 4,596.



L Little Ocmulgee State Park **R** Sweetwater Horse Event Park

The location of U.S. highways 280 and 441 through the county, and local leadership which helped develop Little Ocmulgee State Park in the 1930s/1940s helped create an environment of economic stability. However, county population was only truly stabilized with the location of the Wheeler Correctional Facility by Corrections Corporation of America in 1998. Meanwhile agriculture, and specifically forestry, has continued to remain key to the county's economy. The natural resources of the county, including its fields, forests, and scenic rivers/open spaces; its highway location along U.S. 280, U.S. 441, and Georgia Highway 19; location near growth centers like Dublin and Vidalia; Little Ocmulgee State Park and the Sweetwater Horse Event Park; and the scenic landscapes of the county, as well as the family oriented Old South charm, continue to be assets which portend well for future growth and development within Wheeler County.

Most of the county's more recent growth has been near Alamo and Glenwood, both residential, commercial, and industrial. Commercial developments have primarily occurred within these two cities along U.S. 280. The largest development has been the expansion of the Wheeler Correctional Facility in northwest Alamo. Industrial growth will likely occur near Alamo or Glenwood due to the municipal infrastructure; however, currently only one site near Glenwood is marketed for industrial use. Without land use protec-

tions in the unincorporated county, large scale industrial land uses are difficult to predict outside of the need for municipal water and sewer services. The Sweetwater Horse Event Park along U.S. 280 East of Glenwood could stimulate additional development.

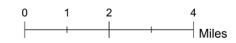


L 4th of July Celebration, Alamo
R AG Preserve
B Little Ocmulgee State Park Bath House

Recent residential growth has also primarily occurred in or near Alamo and Glenwood, particularly in north and east Alamo, near Snowhill Road and south of U.S. 280. Residential growth in Glenwood has been more piecemeal, but primarily concentrated near Culver Street north of U.S. 280 and east of Cemetery Street near U.S. 280 East. There has also been some scattered residential growth in unincorporated Wheeler County, primarily in the southern part of the county and east of the municipalities along or near U.S. 280. These development trends and growth patterns are expected to continue. The county's future land uses will closely resemble existing land uses. Agricultural, forestry, and conservation practices will remain the dominant land uses, preserving the rural character, particularly in the unincorporated areas.

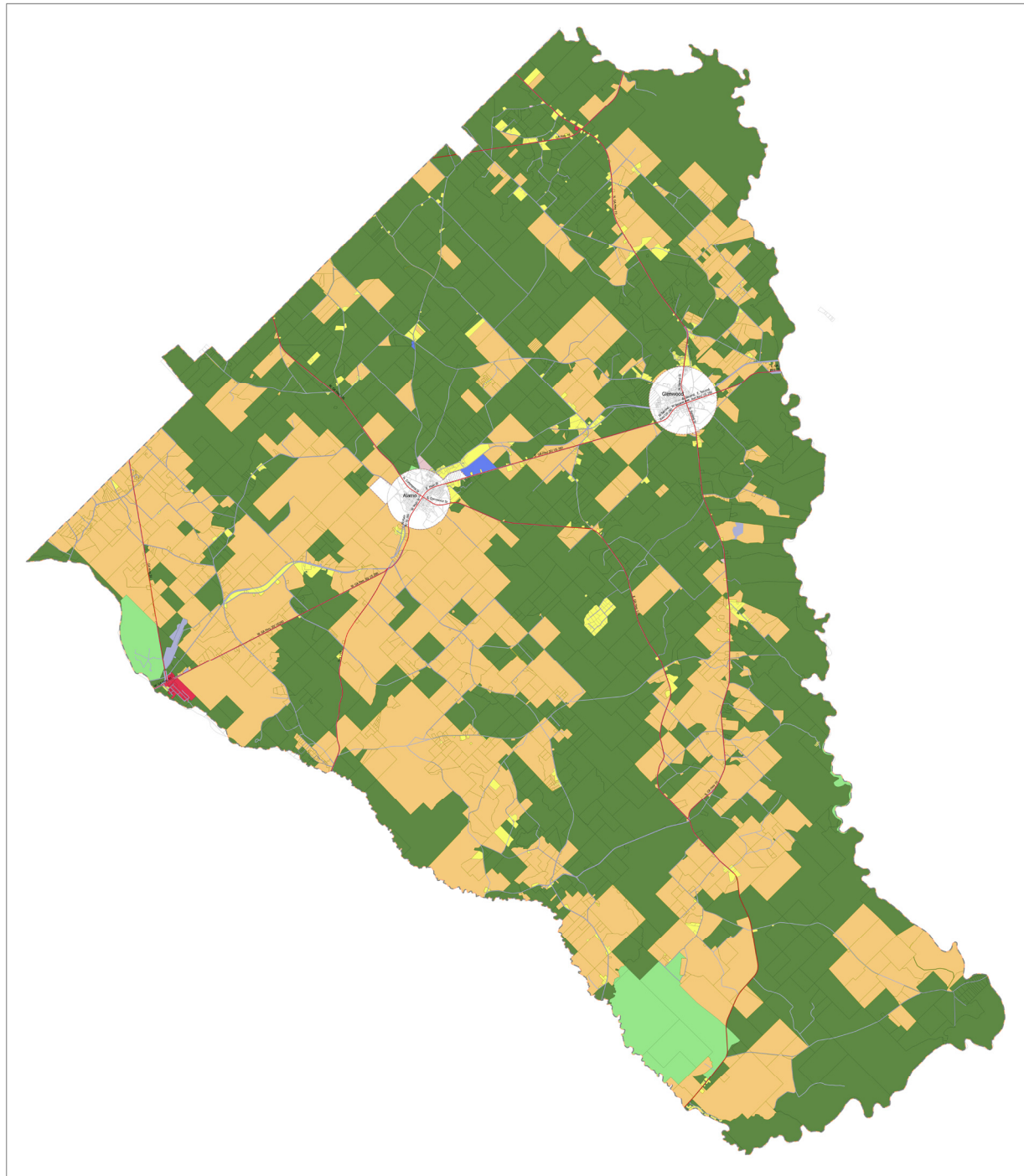
Future land use maps for Wheeler County, Alamo, and Glenwood are included following this description.

Wheeler County Future Land Use

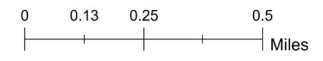


Future Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Forestry
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Tax Parcels
- City Limits
- County Boundary

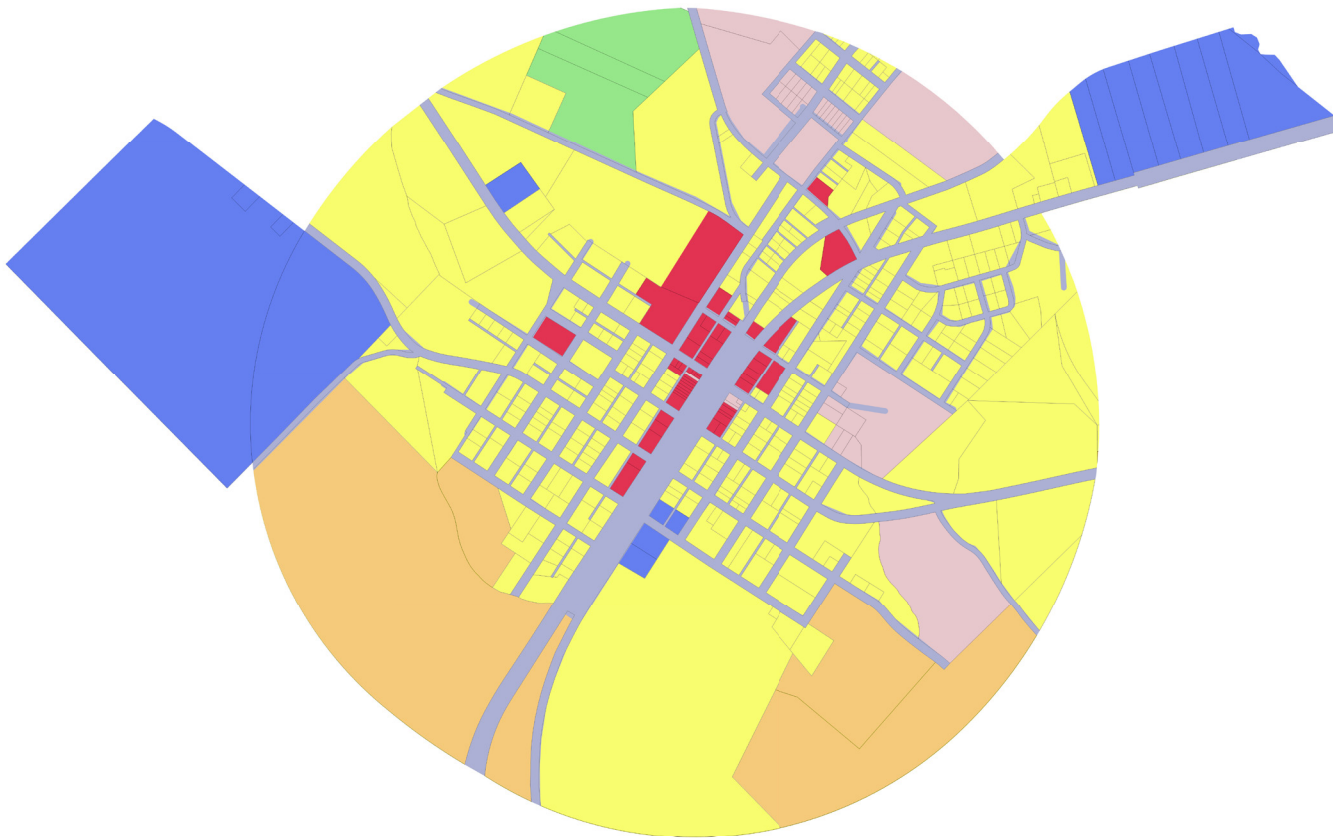


City of Alamo Future Land Use

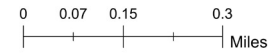


Future Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Tax Parcels

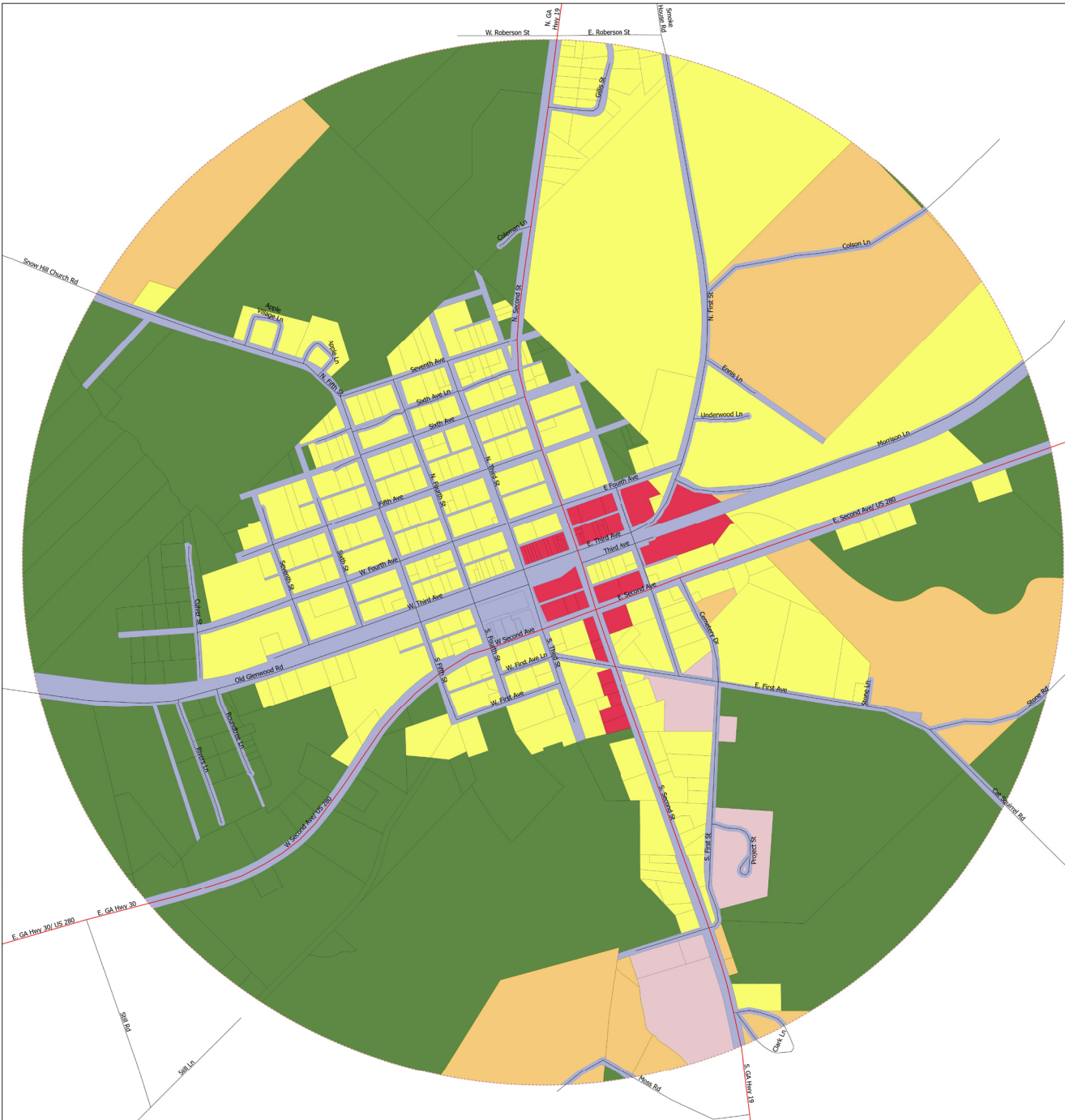


City of Glenwood Future Land Use



Future Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Forestry
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Tax Parcels
- City Limits



Community Work Programs



The Community Work Program Element is the chosen implementation strategy which the community has identified to begin its path toward improvement and its desired future growth and development. These are the immediate steps the community has chosen to address identified community issues, needs, and opportunities, and begin the journey to achieve the desired community vision.

This plan element answers the questions, **“How are we, as a community, going to get where we desire, given where we are?”** The Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes a separate community work program for each local government involved, as well as a report of accomplishments on their previous work program. The Long Term Policies identified under the Community Goals element identifies implementation activities and ideals which may take longer than five years, or because of circumstances involved, including finances, are not envisioned to begin in the near future.

WHEELER COUNTY

Community Work Programs

Wheeler County Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
2020	Extend taxiway parallel to runway at the airport			Y	2026				Action item is underway and is expected to be completed in 2026
2020	Construct new hangars at the airport			Y	2026				Action item is underway and is expected to be completed in 2026
2020	Construct multi-purpose building for EMS headquarters, Sheriffs Department offices, and County records storage			Y	2025				Action item is underway and is expected to be completed in 2025
2020	Replace bridge on Mt. Olive Church Road (TIA Band 3)	Y	2023						Action item was completed in 2021.
2020	Upgrade AC at Wheeler County Library (replace all 5 units)					Y	2028		Action item has been postponed due to lack of funding
2020	Upgrade Clarks Bluff Landing on Oconee River, including possible relocation due to shifting sandbar blocking boat ramp/river							Y	Action item was dropped. The county decided it is no longer a priority.
2020	Adopt DCA's model Broadband Services ordinance							Y	Action item was dropped. The county decided it is no longer a priority.

Wheeler County Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2025 - 2029

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Each Year	Beyond 2029	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Extend taxiway parallel to runway at the airport	X	X						X		Telfair County; Airport Authority; FAA; GDOT	\$5,000		X		
Construct new hangars at the airport	X	X						X		Telfair County; Airport Authority; FAA; GDOT	\$75,000	X	X		
Construct multi-purpose building for EMS headquarters, Sheriffs Department offices, and County records storage	X							X		SPLOST	\$25,000	X			
Upgrade AC at Wheeler County Library (replace all 5 units)				X				X			\$20,000	X			
Purchase 3 Class A pumper firetrucks				X	X			X		FEMA, GEMA, SPLOST	\$600,000	X	X	X	
Purchase turnout gear for 20 volunteer firefighters					X			X		GEMA, FEMA, SPLOST	\$120,000	X	X	X	
Purchase SCBA (breathing apparatus) for 20 volunteers (20 BAs and 40 oxygen tanks)					X			X		GEMA, FEMA, SPLOST	\$140,000	X	X	X	

CITY OF ALAMO

Community Work Programs

City of Alamo Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
2021	Construct new City Hall	Y	2024						Action item was completed in 2024
2022	Replace all water lines with a diameter less than 6 inches					Y	2029		Action item has been postponed due to lack of funding
2020	Complete resurfacing along portions of 1st and 2nd avenues and Steward Street (TIA Band 2)	Y	2023						Action item was completed in 2023.
2020	Repair/replace sidewalk along West Railroad Street (approx. 500')	Y	2024						Action item was completed in 2024
2024	Purchase dump truck for yard waste							Y	Action item was dropped. The city decided this is no longer a priority.
2020	Hire part-time building codes enforcement officer to serve Alamo	Y	2023						Action item was completed in 2023.
2024	Purchase new Police car	Y	2023						Action item was completed in 2023.
2021	Obtain computers for use in Police cars	Y	2023						Action item was completed in 2023.
2024	Upgrade technology at Police Department	Y	2024						Action item was completed in 2024
2020	Repair Heart of GA Railroad crossing in Alamo	Y	2021						Action item was completed in 2021

City of Alamo Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
2021	Seek funds for Downtown beautification, including tree planting along West Railroad Street	Y	2024						Action item was completed in 2024
2020	Long Leaf Legacy and Interpretive Center development and expansion of exhibits/educational offerings					Y	2025		Action item has been postponed due to lack of funding
2020	Complete historic calaboose renovations (sanding/interior painting)							Y	Action item was dropped. The city decided this is no longer a priority.
2020	Adopt DCA's model Broadband Services ordinance	Y	2020						Action item was completed in 2020
2020	Obtain Broadband Ready Community certification							Y	Action item was dropped. The city decided this is no longer a priority.
2020	Obtain grocery store in Wheeler County	Y	2022						Action item was completed in 2022

City of Alamo Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2025 - 2029

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Each Year	Beyond 2029	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Replace all water lines with a diameter less than 6 inches					X					CDBG	\$750,000		X		
Long Leaf Legacy and Interpretive Center development and expansion of exhibits/educational offerings	X	X								Chamber of Commerce	\$50,000	X	X		
Complete TIA Band 1 Projects	X								X	GDOT TIA	\$525,000		X		
Lead Service Line Replacement	X	X							X	GEFA	\$250,000		X		
East Side Park Renovations	X	X							X	SPLOST	\$2.2 M.		X	X	
Easbalish a Farmer’s Market at the City of Alamo		X							X	USDA	\$7,500	X	X		
Revitalize downtown flower garden area , add lighting, redo concrete coping	X	X	X						X	Chamber of Commerce	\$10,000	X	X		
Upgrade a city park that used to be maintained by GDOT		X							X	Chamber of Commerce	\$120,000	X	X		
Upgrade the City walking track in the pavilion and seating area			X						X	Chamber of Commerce	\$200,000		X		
Upgrades to Lift Stations 1,3,4	X	X							X	SPLOST	\$1 Million		X	X	
Future Resurfacing Streets (Stubbs Ave., McRae St., 1st Ave., 2nd Ave, 3rd. Ave , Broad St., Jefferson St., Pine St.)	X	X	X	X	X				X	GDOT TIA	\$500,000		X		
Purchase a Generator For Bank Well	X								X	SPLOST	\$75,000		X	X	

CITY OF GLENWOOD

Community Work Programs

City of Glenwood Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Element	Activity	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
2020	Install additional 6-inch water lines along U.S. 280	Y	2024						Action item was completed in 2024
2020	Install additional fire hydrants along U.S. 280	Y	2024						Action item was completed in 2024
2022	Purchase a new utility truck for the Fire Department					Y	2026		Action item has been postponed due to lack of funding
2020	Purchase new turnout gear and/or other equipment for Fire Department	Y	2023						Action item was completed in 2023
2020	Purchase new generator for Well #5					Y	2026		Action item has been postponed due to lack of funding
2021	Install Additional 6-inch water lines and fire hydrants along East U.S. 280	Y	2024						Action item was completed in 2024
2023	Install sidewalks along 5th Street (total approx. 0.6 mile)					Y	2029		Action item has been postponed due to lack of funding
2020	Resurface roads listed on TIA Band 3 (N. & S. 4th Street; E, Roberson and E. Gillis streets; W. 6th and 5th avenues)	Y	2022						Action item was completed in 2022
2020	Adopt DCA's model Broadband Services ordinance							Y	Action item is dropped. The city decided this is no longer a priority
2020	Obtain Broadband Ready Community certification							Y	Action item is dropped. The city decided this is no longer a priority
2023	Install new sidewalks along S.R. 19 North (approx. 0.4 mile)							Y	Action item is dropped. The state disapproved of sidewalks along State Routes.
2020	Obtain grocery store in Wheeler County	Y	2022						Action item was completed in 2022

City of Glenwood Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2025 - 2029

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Each Year	Beyond 2029	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Purchase a new utility truck for the Fire Department		X							X	FEMA	\$50,000	X	X	X	
Purchase new generator for Well #5		X							X	FEMA	\$75,000	X	X	X	
Install sidewalks along 5th Street (total approx. 0.6 mile)					X				X	GDOT TIA	\$125,000	X	X		

APPENDIX

- **Public Hearing Notice 1**
 - **News Release**
- **Comprehensive Plan Website**
- **Community Vision Survey**
 - **Public Hearing Notice 2**
 - **Meeting Agendas**
- **Stakeholders Invited to Participate**
 - **Active Participants**

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan “History, Hospitality, and Wide-Open Spaces”

Want an improved place to live, work, recreate, and do business in Wheeler County?

The local governments of Wheeler County and the cities of Alamo and Glenwood are in the initial stages of a process to develop a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law.

The joint comprehensive plan is a guide to making Wheeler County and its municipalities improved places to live, work, recreate, and do business for all concerned. It outlines a community vision, identifies needs and opportunities, defines long term policies, and includes a community work program to provide a guide and blueprint for future growth and development within the community jurisdictions. It is desired that this plan not only meets state requirements, but also truly expresses the community’s wishes for future growth and development.

An initial public hearing is scheduled to provide an opportunity for citizens to express their thoughts regarding vision for the Community’s future, to receive input on the issues and opportunities facing the Community, and to identify solutions, strategies, and actionable efforts that could be employed to make Wheeler County and the cities of Alamo and Glenwood better places to live and work.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME:

Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING:

Wheeler County Community Center, 16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo, GA

Please plan to attend, voice your opinions, and be involved. Help your community thrive, grow, and prepare a better future. If you would like more information, please contact the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 912-367-3648 or aweaver@hogarc.org. All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact the Wheeler County Commissioner’s Office, 20 West Forest Avenue, Alamo, GA, 30411, or call 912-568-1909.

You May Also Take the Online Survey to Share Your Input: bit.ly/491LqPu

All comments submitted through the online survey will be anonymous, confidential, and will factor into the shaping of priorities.





HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA REGIONAL COMMISSION

331 West Parker Street, Baxley, Georgia 31513
Phone: (912) 367-3648
Fax: (912) 367-3640

5405 Oak Street, Eastman, Georgia 31023
Phone: (478) 374-4771
Fax: (478) 374-0703

NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN DROP-IN SESSION ON WHEELER COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DATE: Monday, March 25, 2024 5:00 – 6:00 PM

LOCATION: Wheeler County Community Center, 16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo

Are you concerned about the future of Wheeler County, Alamo, and Glenwood? Do you have thoughtful ideas on what needs to be done to make the community a better place? What do you consider to be pressing needs and issues in the community?

The local governments of Wheeler County, the Wheeler County Board of Commissioners, and the municipalities of Alamo, and Glenwood, are in the process of updating their comprehensive plan required by state law. The current joint comprehensive plan dates from 2019 and is the principal guide to the long-term growth and development of Wheeler County and its municipalities. The new update will focus on achieving a vision set by the community on what it wants to be and addressing identified needs and opportunities.

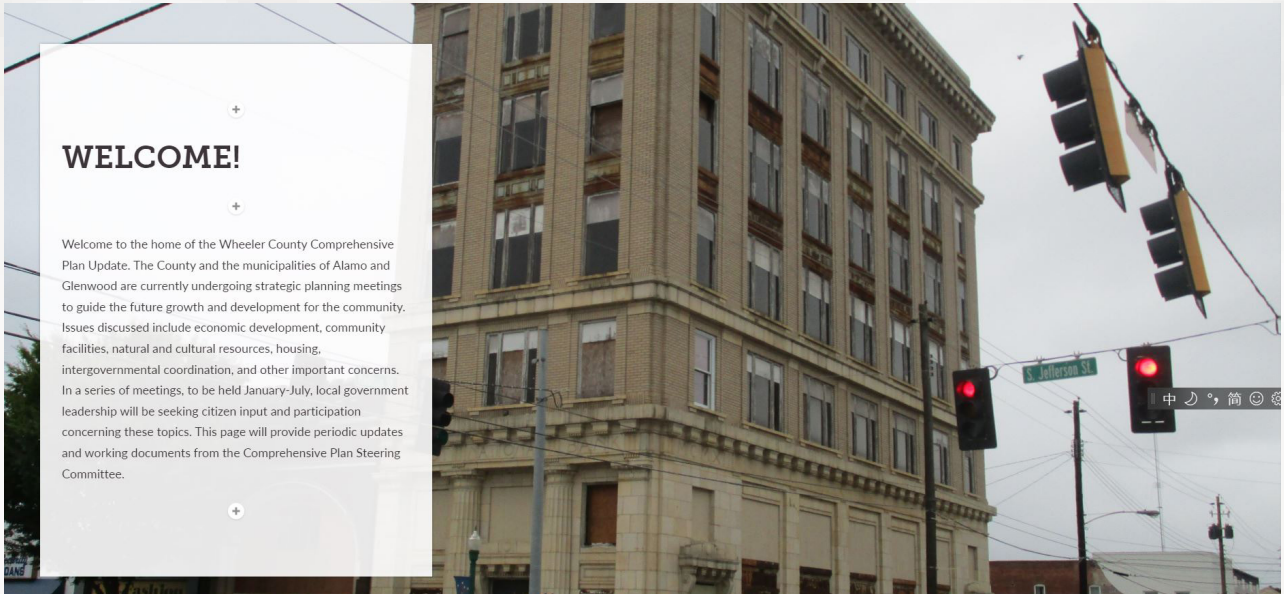
You are cordially invited to get involved and to participate in this plan update process. You may do so by attending a public drop-in session concerning the comprehensive plan update to be held at Wheeler County Community Center at 16 W Forest Avenue in the City of Alamo from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Monday, March 25, 2024. The session is designed to be informal, to answer any questions you may have, and to allow for one-on-one input at your convenience. Planning staff from the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission will be on hand to discuss the plan and its process, and to receive your input and ideas. There will be no formal presentation. The event is designed as a drop-in at whatever time is convenient for those wishing to participate or learn more.

Please attend and voice your ideas. We want to hear them. Let us know what you think about community. Do your part in making Wheeler County a better place to live, work, and play.



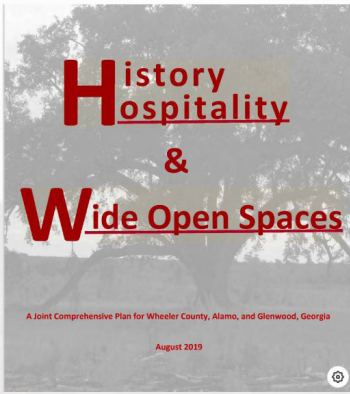
WHEELER COUNTY

JOINT Comprehensive Plan Update 2024 - Alamo and Glenwood



WELCOME!

Welcome to the home of the Wheeler County Comprehensive Plan Update. The County and the municipalities of Alamo and Glenwood are currently undergoing strategic planning meetings to guide the future growth and development for the community. Issues discussed include economic development, community facilities, natural and cultural resources, housing, intergovernmental coordination, and other important concerns. In a series of meetings, to be held January-July, local government leadership will be seeking citizen input and participation concerning these topics. This page will provide periodic updates and working documents from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.



Add a caption



[Download a Copy of the 2019 Plan Here!](#)



SURVEY LINK:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HJFLGYV>



Add a caption



WHEELER COUNTY 2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TIMETABLE



Date/Time	Subject	Location
Tuesday, 01/23/24, 2:00 PM	Act-2-CF Meeting Introduction and 2024 Vision Eggleston	Alamo City Hall, 7 W Main St., Alamo, GA 30421
Tuesday, 02/27/24, 2:00 PM	3 rd Steering Committee Meeting Continue 2024 Vision Review/ Needs and Opportunities, Goals, Initial Public Hearing	Wheeler County Community Center 16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo
Tuesday, 03/27/24, 1:00 PM	3 rd Steering Committee Meeting Review Goals, Policies, Economic Development	Wheeler County Community Center, 16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo
Tuesday, 03/28/2024, 2:00 PM	Community Drop-In Session	Wheeler County Community Center, 16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo
Tuesday, 04/16/24, 2:00 PM	4 th Steering Committee Meeting Broadband & Land-use	Wheeler County Community Center 16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo
TBD	Community Work Program Updates with Individual Jurisdictions	(Local jurisdictions will be contacted for meetings)
April-July	Drafting Phase	TBD
TBD	Final Committee Meeting	Wheeler County Community Center 16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo
TBD	Final Public Hearing	TBD



OUR VISION



"A community focused on the promising road ahead. We aim to foster a vibrant, prosperous future for our citizens by promoting our strategic location, the abundance of natural resources, and our home town charm. We will strive to make our historic city centers destinations by offering year-around events and amenities for all ages; and we will seek to diversify our economic base through the stepped-up marketing and utilization of our natural resources, through renewed business and industry recruitment, and through committed support of existing commerce."

Add a caption



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?



Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan

Welcome to the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan Survey!

Wheeler County and its municipalities are seeking your input on how we can build a better future for our community. Your feedback will be used to shape this plan. All comments will be anonymous.

Please share this survey and website with others to help us create a plan that truly represents our community's goals. To learn more and see the input we have gathered so far, visit: <https://adobe.ly/3SlgQuy> Thank you for your participation!!!

1. How would you rate the overall quality of life in Wheeler County?

2. If you live in or moved to Wheeler County from somewhere else, what was the main reason for your choice?

- Employment opportunity
- Family connections
- I grew up here
- Affordability
- Rural character
- Quality of local amenities
- Local educational systems
- Access to area attractions
- Local amenities

Other (please specify)

3. Do you think your community has enough... ?

	Not Enough	An Adequate Amount	Too Much	Not Sure
Downtown Renovations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertainment Options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal Services (salon, barber shop, pet sitting, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supermarkets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grocery Stores/Retail Stores/Boutiques	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restaurants/Coffee Shops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hotels/Motels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biking/Walking Trails/Greenways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor Activity Facilities (fishing, boating, hunting, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports Facilities (playground, swimming pool, athletic facilities, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Transit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Programs/Activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior Programs/Activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Engagement in Community Decision Making Efforts/Open Government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any additional comments regarding the issues listed above?

4. What types of housing does your community need more of?

- Multifamily Housing/Apartments/Townhouse
- Single-family Housing
- Duplexes
- Tiny Houses
- Rental Units
- Senior Housing/Assisted Facilities
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Mobile Homes/Manufactured Homes
- Affordable Housing in General, Density Doesn't Matter
- High-end Housing
- Address Blighted Housing

Any other housing related issues you want to talk about?

5. Do you have internet access at home?

▼

6. How much new growth should the County encourage?

▼

Where should any new growth be primarily concentrated? What kind of growth and development would it be? Any additional comments on economic development?

7. Please rank the following economic development priorities for Wheeler County

- ☰ Grow commercial businesses (dining, retail, services, etc.)
- ☰ Grow manufacturing, technology, industrial businesses (goods production, warehousing, etc.)
- ☰ Grow agricultural industries (farming, forestry, etc.)
- ☰ Skill training of local labor force
- ☰ Add affordable workforce housing and amenities to attract employers and employees
- ☰ Improve community facilities (water/sewer, roads, etc.) to attract employers and employees

8. Please rate your satisfaction level with the following services

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Water Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sewer Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Road Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Road Drainage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of Public Service Building (Courthouses, Senior Centers, Health Departments, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law Enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire Protection/Emergency Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schools/Educational System	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parks and Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any additional comments you want to make about community services and facilities?

9. Please tell us your favorite things, and least favorite things about your community, and any other thoughts you may want to share with us:

Your favorite things about your community/Strengths or assets of your community

Your least favorite things about your community/weaknesses or greatest needs of your community

Any other comments?

10. What is your age range?

11. I am submitting comments primarily as a:

Other (please specify)

FINAL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan

The local governments of Wheeler County including the Cities of Alamo, and Glenwood are in the final stages of a process to develop a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law.

The comprehensive plan outlines a community vision, identifies needs and opportunities, and delineates long term policies and a community work program to provide a guide and blueprint for future growth and development within community jurisdictions. The plan is in draft finalization before submittal to the state for review.

The purpose of the hearing is to brief the community on the content and strategies outlined in the draft comprehensive plan; to address the issues and opportunities facing Wheeler County and the Cities of Alamo, and Glenwood; obtain any final citizen input; and notify the community of the pending submittal of the comprehensive plan for state and regional review.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, August 28, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

**LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING: Alamo City Hall,
5 W Main St., Alamo, GA 30411**

All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact the Wheeler County Commissioner's Office, 20 West Forest Avenue, Alamo, GA, 30411, or call 912-568-1909.

All persons are invited to attend the public hearing and voice your opinion to help your community achieve a better future. If you would like more information, please contact the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 912-367-3648 or aweaver@hogarc.org.

**WHEELER COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

ALAMO CITY HALL

7 WEST MAIN STREET, ALAMO, GEORGIA

January 23, 2024

2:00PM

AGENDA

1. Introduction

- **Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan**
- **Role of the Steering Committee**
- **Proposed Timetable for Plan Development**
- **Agreements Needed**

2. SWOT & Vision Exercise

- **Economic Development**
- **Housing**
- **Community Facilities and Services**
- **Land Use**
- **Natural and Cultural Resources**
- **Public Services/Intergovernmental Coordination**

Adjourn

Next Meeting:

- **Draft Community Vision/SWOT Analysis Review**
- **Plan Title Input**
- **Needs and Opportunities Input**
- **Goals/Policies Input**

WHEELER COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2ND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wheeler County Community Center

16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

AGENDA

1. **Brief Review of Previous Meeting**
2. **Survey Results Report**
3. **Continue SWOT & VISION Exercise**
4. **Input on Needs and Opportunities**
5. **Plan Title Discussion**

Adjourn

Upcoming Events:

Initial Public Hearing

Tuesday, February 27, 2024, 5:00PM

Wheeler County Community Center,
16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo, GA

Next Steering Committee Meeting

Monday, March 25, 2024, 2:00PM

Wheeler County Community Center,
16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo, GA

- Input on Goals/Policies
- Economic Development

Community Drop-In Session

Monday, March 25, 2024, 5:00PM

Wheeler County Community Center,
16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo, GA

WHEELER COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

3rd STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wheeler County Community Center,

16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo

Monday, March 25, 2024

AGENDA

1. **Brief Review of Previous Meeting**
2. **Survey Results Report**
3. **Input on Needs and Opportunities**
4. **Input on Community Vision**
5. **Input on Community Goals and Long-Term Policies**
6. **Economic Development Discussion/Update**

Adjourn

Upcoming Events:

Community Drop-in Session

Monday, March 25, 2024, 5:00PM

Wheeler County Community Center,

16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo

Next Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 2:00PM

Wheeler County Community Center,

16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo

- Input on Land Use
- Input on Broadband

Community Work Programs Update

We'll reach out to each jurisdiction to set up time, date and location

Plan Drafting Phase

May to July

Final Steering Committee Meeting, Final Public Hearing -- TBD

WHEELER COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

4th STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wheeler County Community Center,

16 W Forest Avenue, Alamo

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

AGENDA

1. **Plan Title**
2. **Revised Economic Development Section Update**
3. **Input on Broadband**
4. **Input on Land Use**
 - **Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria**
 - **Altamaha Regional Water Plan**
 - **Input on Land Use Maps**

Adjourn

Upcoming Events:

Community Work Programs Update

We'll reach out to each jurisdiction to set up time, date and location

Plan Drafting Phase

May to July

Final Steering Committee Meeting, Final Public Hearing -- TBD

Stakeholders Invited to Participate in Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan Preparation Process

- Wheeler County Board of Commissioners
- City of Alamo
- City of Glenwood
- Wheeler County Board of Education
- Wheeler County Development Authority
- Wheeler County Chamber of Commerce
- Janice Mock-Executive President
- Wheeler County Cooperative Extensive
- Wheeler County Health Department
- Wheeler County Board of Registrars
- Wheeler County Probate/Magistrate
- Wheeler County Fire/Emergency Management
- Wheeler County Sheriff's Department
- Wheeler County Tax Commissioner
- Wheeler County Superior Court
- Little Ocmulgee EMC
- Wheeler Correctional Facility
- The Vidalia Advance
- Glenwood Telephone Company
- Alamo Police Department
- Wheeler County Sheriff's Department
- Wheeler County Board of Commissioners
- Wheeler County Extension
- Wheeler County EMS

Active Participants in Wheeler County Local Plan Coordination Committee Meeting and Plan Preparation

***Wheeler County Board of Commissioners
City of Alamo***

City of Glenwood

***Wheeler County Board of Education
Wheeler County Development Authority
Wheeler County Chamber of Commerce***

***Wheeler County Health Department
Wheeler County Probate/Magistrate
Wheeler County Fire/Emergency Management
Wheeler County Sheriff's Department
Wheeler County Tax Commissioner
Wheeler County Superior Court
Little Ocmulgee EMC
Wheeler Correctional Facility
Glenwood Telephone Company
Alamo Police Department
Wheeler County Sheriff's Department
Wheeler County Board of Commissioners***

***Wheeler County Extension
Wheeler County EMS***

Keith McNeal-Chair
Jeff Floyd- City Manager
Marie Carrillo-City Clerk
Bobby Cox- Council Member
GM Joiner-Mayor
Brenda Cornett-City Clerk
Dr. Suzanne Couey-Superintendent
GM Joiner-Director
Tommy Spell-President
Janice Mock-Executive President
Sarah Selph- Nurse Manager
Jolinda Harrelson-Probate Judge
Steve Adams-Director
Randy Rigdon-Sheriff
Kim Clark-Tax Commissioner
Carol Bragg-Clerk of Courts
Lewis Sheffield-Manager
Shawn Gillis-Warden
Jim O'Brien-President/General Manager
Karen Wilcox-Police Chief
Lee Smith-Deputy Sheriff
Keith McNeal-Chair
Rochelle Culver- Vice Chair
Danny Clark-Commissioner
Elaine Clark-County Clerk/Financial Officer
Nicole Thornton-4-H Coordinator
Selena Howell-EMS Director

*Slow Pace,
Rural Charm.*

WHEELER COUNTY

Joint Comprehensive Plan

August, 2024

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires all local governments in Georgia to prepare a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective October 1, 2018, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

WHEREAS, Wheeler County, Georgia has participated with the municipalities of Alamo and Glenwood, in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning through the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

WHEREAS, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, for Wheeler County and its municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the new joint comprehensive plan has been previously submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and

WHEREAS, the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

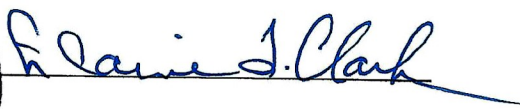
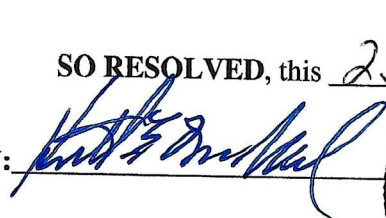
WHEREAS, Wheeler County is now desirous of adopting *Slow Pace, Rural Charm* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Wheeler County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, as Wheeler County's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wheeler County Board of Commissioners hereby instructs and directs that formal notification of said adoption be forwarded to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and to other agencies, as appropriate.

SO RESOLVED, this 23rd day of October, 2024.

BY:



RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires all local governments in Georgia to prepare a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective October 1, 2018, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

WHEREAS, the City of Alamo, Georgia has participated with Wheeler County and the City of Glenwood in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning through the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

WHEREAS, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, for Wheeler County and its municipalities; including the City of Alamo; and

WHEREAS, the new joint comprehensive plan has been previously submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and

WHEREAS, the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, the City of Alamo is now desirous of adopting *Slow Pace, Rural Charm* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Alamo hereby approve and adopt the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, as the City of Alamo's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Alamo hereby instruct and direct that formal notification of said adoption be forwarded to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and to other agencies, as appropriate.

SO RESOLVED, this 28 day of October, 2024.

BY: Pamela B. Lee

ATTEST: Dana Burkhalter

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires all local governments in Georgia to prepare a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective October 1, 2018, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

WHEREAS, the City of Glenwood, Georgia has participated with Wheeler County and the City of Alamo in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning through the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

WHEREAS, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, for Wheeler County and its municipalities; including the City of Glenwood; and

WHEREAS, the new joint comprehensive plan has been previously submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and

WHEREAS, the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, the City of Glenwood is now desirous of adopting *Slow Pace, Rural Charm* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Glenwood hereby approve and adopt the Wheeler County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Slow Pace, Rural Charm*, as the City of Glenwood's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Glenwood hereby instruct and direct that formal notification of said adoption be forwarded to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and to other agencies, as appropriate.

SO RESOLVED, this 28th day of OCTOBER, 2024.

BY:

Am Jemur Jr
Mayor

ATTEST:

Caryn N. EG

