

CLAY COUNTY • TOWN OF BLUFFTON CITY OF FORT GAINES



2019 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

CLAY COUNTY, BLUFFTON, AND FORT GAINES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2024

WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly did enact the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 to institute local comprehensive planning by city and county governments throughout the state, and

WHEREAS, said Act requires local governments to prepare, maintain and periodically update a state-approved, local comprehensive plan to maintain eligibility for certain state-issued grants, loans and permits, and

WHEREAS, Clay County, working jointly with the Town of Bluffton and City of Fort Gaines, has updated the Joint Comprehensive Plan for the planning period 2019-2024, and

WHEREAS, Clay County has been notified by appropriate authority that the most recent effort updating the local comprehensive plan adequately addresses the minimum standards and procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to facilitate compliance with said Act.

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, and it is hereby resolved by the Clay County Board of Commissioners that the Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines Joint Comprehensive Plan 2019-2024 be adopted.

SO RESOLVED, this 17th day of June, 2019.

CLAY COUNTY

BY:


Ernest Jenkins, Chairman

ATTEST:


Adria Williams, County Clerk

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

CLAY COUNTY, BLUFFTON, AND FORT GAINES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2024

WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly did enact the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 to institute local comprehensive planning by city and county governments throughout the state, and

WHEREAS, said Act requires local governments to prepare, maintain and periodically update a state-approved, local comprehensive plan to maintain eligibility for certain state-issued grants, loans and permits, and


WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton, working jointly with Clay County and the City of Fort Gaines, has updated the Joint Comprehensive Plan for the planning period 2019-2024, and


WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton has been notified by appropriate authority that the most recent effort updating the local comprehensive plan adequately addresses the minimum standards and procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to facilitate compliance with said Act.

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, and it is hereby resolved by the Bluffton Council that the Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines Joint Comprehensive Plan 2019-2024 be adopted.

SO RESOLVED, this 11th day of June, 2019.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON

BY: 
Freddie Odom, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Gail Hubbard, Town Clerk

RESOLUTION 2019-02

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF FORT GAINES A RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION OF THE CITY OF FORT GAINES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2024

WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly did enact the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 to institute local comprehensive planning by city and county governments throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, said Act requires local governments to prepare, maintain and periodically update a state-approved, local comprehensive plan to maintain eligibility for certain state-issued grants, loans and permits; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Gaines, working jointly with Clay County and the Town of Bluffton, has updated the Joint Comprehensive Plan for the planning period 2019-2024; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Gaines has been notified by appropriate authority that the most recent effort updating the local comprehensive plan adequately addresses the minimum standards and procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to facilitate compliance with said Act.

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, and it is hereby resolved by the Fort Gaines City Council that the City of Fort Gaines Joint Comprehensive Plan 2019-2024 be adopted.

FIRST READING, this 19th day of June, 2019.

SECOND READING, this 25th day of June, 2019.

SO RESOLVED, this 25th day of June, 2019.



CITY OF FORT GAINES GEORGIA

By

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barry P. Waters", written over a horizontal line.

Barry P. Waters, Mayor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlotte Shivers", written over a horizontal line.

Charlotte Shivers, City Clerk

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Ernest Jenkins, Chairman

James Davenport, Vice Chair

Lola Spann · Gail Hubbard · Christopher Clifton

Ronnie Crozier, County Administrator

BLUFFTON TOWN COUNCIL

Freddie Odom, Mayor

Brian Sapp · Aldene Lee

Justin Wiley · Randy Morris

Gail Hubbard, Town Clerk

FORT GAINES CITY COUNCIL

Barry Waters, Mayor

Daisy Jackson, Mayor Pro Tem

Tammy Pope · Kenneth Sumpter

Mia Lee Wallace · Kimberly Johnson

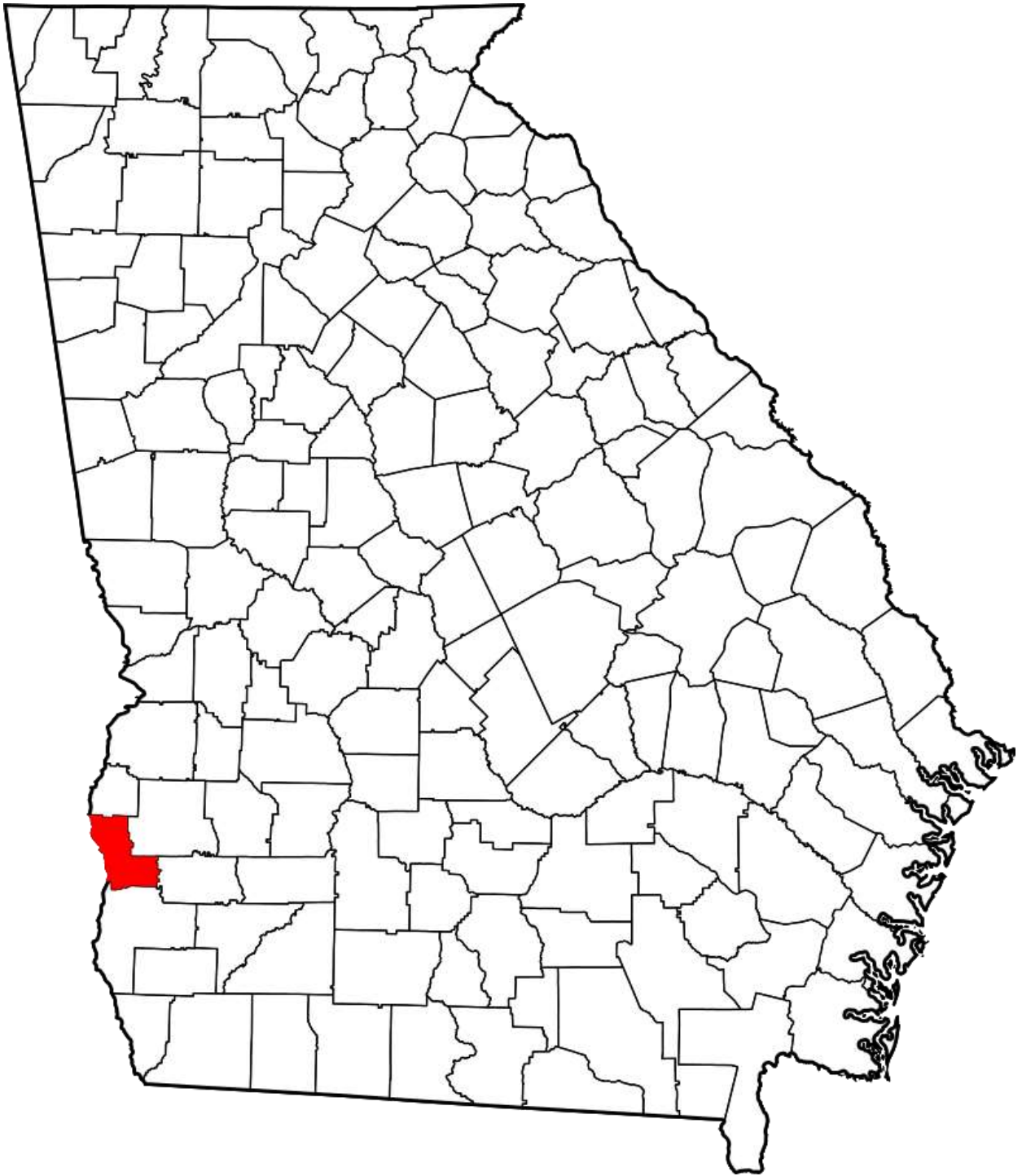
Charlotte Shivers, City Clerk

Assisted by the River Valley Regional Commission

228 West Lamar St.
Americus, GA 31709

710 Front Ave, Suite A
Columbus, GA 31901

LOCATION MAP



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Introduction

Organization of the Comprehensive Plan Update

The State of Georgia updated the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning in 2018 (O.C.G.A. 110-12-1). These updates included a list of required elements and optional elements each community was encouraged to use to supplement their comprehensive planning efforts.

Elements required by the state for each community include:

- Community Involvement--An initial and final public hearing;
- Community Goals—A review of the community’s vision and goals;
- Needs and Opportunities--A list of potential community needs and opportunities;
- Land Use—An analysis of the community’s existing development patterns; and
- Community Work Program--the community’s action plan for the next five years.
- Broadband Element—an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services by broadband service providers into unserved areas within its jurisdiction.

While not included in the Comprehensive Plan Update document, renegotiation of the community’s Service Delivery Strategy is also required as part of the process.

Other elements encouraged by the state to supplement the community’s comprehensive planning efforts include:

- Economic Development—Encouraged for communities seeking to improve economic opportunities for their citizens;
- Capital Improvements—Only required for governments that charge impact fees;
- Transportation—Recommended for communities with automobile congestion problems, parking problems, or that are interested in adding alternative transportation facilities (Only required for governments that have a portion of their jurisdiction included in a Metropolitan Planning Organization); and
- Housing—Encouraged for communities with concentrations of substandard housing or a jobs-housing imbalance (Only required for HUD CDBG Entitlement Communities).

The Clay County, Town of Bluffton, and City of Fort Gaines Comprehensive Plan Update consists of the five state-required elements: Community Vision and Goals, Community Needs and Opportunities, Community Land Use, Community Work Program, and Broadband Element.

Community Involvement

Purpose

The comprehensive planning process, at its inception and culmination, is a vision for the future. The ultimate aim of the process is to develop a strong community. In order to achieve that objective, a meaningful comprehensive planning process must solicit and integrate the input of community citizens, government officials, and staff. The result will be a well-balanced comprehensive plan addressing the issues of today, the opportunities of tomorrow, and outlining the steps necessary to bring about positive change over the next twenty (20) years. The intent of the Comprehensive Plan Update process is to encourage as much public participation, open dialogue and communication as possible; seeking to build consensus among residents that will result in better government decisions and greater community agreement with those decisions.

Identification of Stakeholders

The Clay County Commission, Bluffton Council, and Fort Gaines Council selected steering committees at the beginning of the process. These groups consisted of a combination of elected officials and local citizens. The steering committees developed a list of stakeholders from whom to solicit input regarding the comprehensive plan update.

Participation Techniques

Citizen Notification and Public Meetings

Various media will be used to get citizens involved in the planning process. Civic leaders and civic groups will be contacted to assist in citizen involvement opportunities. Staff addressed economic development practitioners, healthcare development practitioners, and local residents of Clay County at numerous public meetings to gain input on all elements of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Public Hearings

The State of Georgia Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning in 2018 (O.C.G.A. 110-12-1) require that two (2) public hearings be held in association with the development of a community's Comprehensive Plan Update. The initial public hearings were held June 4, 2018 (Bluffton) and July 24, 2018 (Clay County and Fort Gaines) to inform the public that the planning process was underway, to go over the plan's timeline, and how they can help the planning process. Attendees were also given an opportunity to comment on potential Needs and Opportunities.

A joint final public hearing for all communities is scheduled for April 12, 2019 at the Clay County Commission. The purpose of the meeting will be to allow citizens to review and comment on the

Comprehensive Plan Update. All draft documents and maps will be available for review. Staff will be available to take comments. Formal written comments, collected at the conclusion of the meeting, will be summarized and responded to in a timely manner.

Plan Development Time Frame

Plan Element	Work Session Agenda	Date
1 st Public Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Update Process/Meeting Schedule 	June-July 2018
Community Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • List Community Goals • Community Policies 	June-July 2018
Needs and Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop list using SWOT Analysis • Provide supplemental planning recommendations • Analysis of data and information • Analysis of consistency with Quality Community Objectives 	July-October 2018
Land Use Element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Land Use Map and Narrative 	November-January 2019
Community Work Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define activities that each government plans to undertake during then ext 5 years to address priority Needs and Opportunities 	February-March 2019
2 nd Public Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final plan review and comments 	April 2019
DCA Submission	N/A	April 2019
Plan Revisions	N/A	April-May 2019
Plan Adoption	N/A	May-June 2019

Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines Demographics and Data

	2000 Population	2010 Population	2016 Population Estimate	2040 Projected Population
Bluffton	118	103	99	79
Fort Gaines	1,110	1,107	1,046	839
Unincorporated	2,129	1,973	1,923	1,543
Clay County Total	3,357	3,183	3,068	2,462

2000, 2010, and 2016 figures based on Census counts and estimates; 2040 Clay County Projection provided by Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. 2040 City projections based on current population proportions.

With the singular exception of an increase of 120 residents during the 1930s, Clay County has been in population decline for a century. During the first half of the period resident population declined by half. Over the last half century (1960-2010) the community recorded an additional 30% decline. Fort Gaines, Bluffton and the unincorporated area have all been regular contributors to the long-time trend.

Population Clay County, Bluffton, Fort Gaines, and Adjoining Counties							
Jurisdiction	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2016 ¹
Clay County	4,551	3,636	3,553	3,364	3,357	3,183	3,068
Bluffton	176	105	132	138	118	103	99
Fort Gaines	1,320	1,255	1,260	1,248	1,110	1,107	1,046
Calhoun County	7,341	6,606	5,717	5,013	6,320	6,694	6,324
Early County	13,151	12,682	13,158	11,854	12,354	11,008	10,339
Quitman County	2,432	2,180	2,357	2,209	2,598	2,513	2,335
Randolph County	11,078	8,734	9,599	8,023	7,791	7,719	7,177
Barbour County (AL)	24,700	22,543	24,756	25,417	29,038	27,457	25,270
Henry County (AL)	15,286	13,254	15,302	15,374	16,310	17,302	17,147

1. 2016 data is from US Census ACS Estimates; all others are decennial census data.

This demographic trend has not been confined to the community, however. Over the past five decades only one adjoining county was credited with a net increase, 80 residents/+3%, while aggregate population decline among all four neighboring counties was 6,100 residents/-18%. And, the state projects the lengthy, negative trend is far from ending.

Population Projections Clay County, Bluffton, Fort Gaines, and Adjoining Georgia Counties						
Jurisdiction	2016	2020	2025	2030	2040	2050
Clay County	3,068	2,928	2,833	2,723	2,462	2,243
Bluffton	99	94	91	88	79	72
Fort Gaines	1,046	998	965	928	839	765
Calhoun County	6,324	6,462	6,444	6,428	6,394	6,507
Early County	10,339	10,325	10,086	9,772	9,051	8,327
Quitman County	2,335	2,317	2,281	2,229	2,154	2,229
Randolph County	7,177	6,755	6,388	5,980	5,090	4,263
Georgia	10,099,320	10,895,213	11,538,707	12,173,406	13,413,400	14,709,321

Source: Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. 2020-2040 City projections based on current population proportions.

Twenty-five year projections by the Georgia Office of Planning and Budget suggest the community may decline by almost 600 additional residents (-18%) by 2035, and almost 950 (-30%) by mid-century. The decline is projected to be common among the neighboring counties; by 2035, -16% and by 2050, -24%. In fact, the state projects two-thirds of counties in the southwest quadrant of Georgia will also lose population during the 2035 and 2050 timelines.

Age - 2016			
Range	Clay County	Bluffton	Fort Gaines
Under 5 years	7.1%	4.4%	12.4%
5 to 9 years	6.5%	4.4%	10.1%
10 to 14 years	5.9%	2.2%	6.2%
15 to 19 years	6.1%	3.3%	5.4%
20 to 24 years	6.6%	0.0%	5.1%
25 to 29 years	5.0%	3.3%	3.8%
30 to 34 years	5.2%	14.4%	8.1%
35 to 39 years	4.9%	2.2%	5.1%
40 to 44 years	4.1%	1.1%	4.9%
45 to 49 years	6.2%	17.8%	3.4%
50 to 54 years	3.5%	2.2%	2.3%
55 to 59 years	7.1%	8.9%	5.5%
60 to 64 years	8.1%	14.4%	8.6%
65 to 69 years	7.7%	6.7%	7.7%
70 to 74 years	6.0%	11.1%	5.2%
75 to 79 years	3.8%	1.1%	2.2%
80 to 84 years	3.8%	2.2%	1.8%
85 years and over	2.5%	0.0%	2.4%

Source: US Census American Community Survey

There are strong similarities, and differences, between local and state age distributions. Clay's school age population (≤ 19 yrs.) was less than two percentage points (1.9%) below the state rate; equivalent to sixty fewer local residents in the 2016 data. In the older worker cohort (45-64 yrs.) Clay is less than one percentage point (.7%) below the state level; equivalent to 215 fewer local residents. Major differences between the two populations show up in younger worker (20-44 yrs.) and senior (≥ 65) cohorts. According to 2016 Census estimates the proportion of younger workers lags the state rate by 8.8 percentage points. Clay would have needed an additional 270 residents in this age group to be on equal footing with the statewide distribution. Conversely, the local senior rate was double the state. To have an equivalent proportion in this age category as the state the community would have had 355 fewer senior citizens.

Strong discrepancies between state and local proportions in these two latter categories drive Clay's significantly higher median age, which was 44.1 in 2016. Since 2000 the age gap reportedly closed by half a year, but across the 2000-2016 timeframe Clay's median averaged eight years higher.

Race/Ethnicity - 2016			
Race/Ethnicity	Clay County	Bluffton	Fort Gaines
White	29.3%	78.9%	18.7%
Black	62.3%	21.1%	71.7%
Asian	0%	0%	0%
American Indian	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
Some other Race	0.4%	0%	1.2%
Two or more Races	8.0%	0%	8.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5.1%	0%	0%

Source: US Census American Community Survey

Clay County is primarily African-American or Black, with this group making up 62.3% of the population. White people make up 29.3% of the population, and 8% of the population is multiracial. 5.1% of the population is Hispanic or Latino, though this ethnicity can be applied to any race. Fort Gaines closely mimics the county's racial and ethnic makeup with a large Black population (71.7%), considerably smaller White population (18.7%), and a small contingency of multiracial residents (8.5%). However, it lacks the small Latino population that the county has. Bluffton's population distribution is different; 78.9% of residents are white, and the remaining 21.1% are black. There are no Asian, American Indian, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents in Clay County according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates.

Changes in Income						
Clay County, Bluffton, Fort Gaines						
Income Measure		¹ 2000	² 2010	³ 2016	% Change 2000-2016	% Inflation ⁴ 2000-2016
Median Family	Clay County	\$27,837	\$31,354	\$35,430	27%	42%
	Bluffton	\$45,000	\$36,875	\$61,250	36%	
	Fort Gaines	\$20,909	\$32,875	\$26,667	28%	
Median Household	Clay County	\$21,448	\$26,250	\$22,110	3%	
	Bluffton	\$43,125	\$29,500	\$53,750	25%	
	Fort Gaines	\$18,304	\$26,277	\$19,787	8%	
Per Capita	Clay County	\$16,819	\$13,353	\$13,533	-20%	
	Bluffton	\$16,550	\$17,962	\$27,043	63%	
	Fort Gaines	\$12,481	\$11,729	\$11,237	-10%	

1. 2000 US Census Data; 2. 2010 US Census Data; 3. 2016 US Census ACS Estimates; 4. Inflation calculator (<https://westegg.com/inflation>)

US Census data shows an overall gain in Median Family and Median Household incomes in Clay County and its communities between 2000 and 2016, though none of these exceed the rate of inflation over the same time period. On a per capita basis, both Clay County and Fort Gaines have shown decreases in income. Bluffton has shown wild fluctuations in all income measures, though this can be attributed to its very low population and the resulting high margin of error in the data set. Nonetheless, it is the only community that shows a per capita income change that is both positive and exceeds the rate of inflation.

Percent in Poverty				
Category		¹ 2000	² 2010	³ 2016
Families	Clay County	28.1%	25.5%	28.7%
	Bluffton	13.3%	0%	14.8%
	Fort Gaines	52%	22%	41%
Individuals	Clay County	31.3%	34.2%	39.8%
	Bluffton	16.3%	0%	12.2%
	Fort Gaines	40.5%	32.2%	48.9%

1, 2. US Census Bureau Decennial Census; 3. Census ACS Estimates

Clay County maintains the highest poverty rates for families and individuals among the four neighboring counties. For the dates presented in the accompanying table the rates usually ranged from one to five points higher than the second highest rate, sometimes double digits above the other counties. Relative to the state, county rates for families have been averaging ± 14 points

higher and ±20 points higher for individuals.

Housing - 2016			
	Clay County	Bluffton	Fort Gaines
Total Housing Units	1,903	52	510
-Occupied	61.0%	82.7%	72.4%
-Vacant	39.0%	17.3%	27.6%
Owner-occupied	64.1%	69.8%	49.6%
Renter-occupied	35.9%	30.2%	50.4%
Traditional House/ Townhouse/Duplex/ Apartment	65.1%	65.4%	90.4%
Mobile Homes	34.6%	34.6%	9.6%
Other (RV, Van, Boat, etc.)	0.3%	0%	0%

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey

The census has credited Clay County with a very gradual decrease in housing inventory since the turn of the century; 1,925 (2000), 1,917 (2010) and 1,903 (2016). The downward trend in housing units has not been as sharp as population loss, so increased numbers of vacant housing has accounted for the difference. Since 2000, Clay has maintained a high vacancy rate relative to neighboring counties, with only one recording higher rates. The community has historically maintained a high owner-occupancy rate, but the recent decrease; 75% (2000), 72% (2010) and 64% (2016), follows state and national trends. The community has also maintained a relatively high mobile home/manufactured housing presence, and census data suggesting 150 fewer units over the 2000-2016 timeline raised questions about accuracy of the data. However, review of the statistics in neighboring counties shows the same general trend.

Employment Status (Ages 16+) - 2016			
	Clay County	Bluffton	Fort Gaines
In labor force	42.3%	73.8%	40.9%
-Employed	34.3%	70.0%	29.2%
-Unemployed	8.0%	3.8%	11.7%
-Armed forces	0%	0%	0%
Not in labor force	57.7%	26.3%	59.1%
Total civilian labor force	1,019	59	300
Unemployment Rate	18.9%	5.1%	28.7%

Source: US Census American Community Survey

In Clay County, 42.3% of residents 16 and older are in the labor force. 34.3% of residents are employed, and 8% are unemployed and seeking work. The remaining 57.7% of the population is not in the labor force (this includes high school and college students that do not work, disabled people, retirees, and any other residents unemployed and not seeking work). Of the 1,019 Clay County residents in the labor force, 18.9% of them are unemployed. Bluffton boasts a lower unemployment rate of just 5.1%, while Fort Gaines has a very high unemployment rate of 28.7%. Pursuit of various economic development opportunities to attract industries and investment in education and workforce training could help reverse the overall high unemployment rate of Clay County.

	Clay County	Bluffton	Fort Gaines
Less than 9 th grade	5.7%	5.2%	6.2%
9 th -12 th grade (no diploma)	12.0%	36.4%	16.1%
High School graduate (includes GED)	46.0%	20.8%	39.8%
Some college, no degree	21.8%	18.2%	18.5%
Associate's	7.1%	5.2%	8.8%
Bachelor's	1.7%	5.2%	1.6%
Graduate/ Professional Degree	5.8%	9.1%	9.0%

Source: US Census American Community Survey

Jurisdiction	2015	2016	2017
Randolph-Clay	76.4%	80%	85%
Calhoun	82.9%	94.6%	89.1%
Early	89.4%	87%	90.4%
Quitman	66.7%	86.7%	80%

Source: Georgia DOE Data Reporting

82.4% of Clay County's residents are high school graduates. Bluffton has the lowest rate of high school completion, with over 40% of the residents lacking a high school diploma, but it has the highest percentage of residents who hold graduate and professional degrees. Fort Gaines falls more in line with the county's trends as a whole, though it also has a comparatively high percentage of people with graduate and professional degrees.

Four-year cohort graduation rates in the area have shown improvement in the past 3 years, with Randolph-Clay High School improving from a 76% graduation rate to 85%. With the exception of Quitman County, which has fluctuated considerably, neighboring counties have had higher graduation rates. Nonetheless, the Randolph-Clay district bridged the gap considerably in 2017, and it is the only district to show a consistent annual increase in graduation rate during this time frame.

Employment by Industry - 2016			
	Clay County	Bluffton	Fort Gaines
Employed Population	865	56	214
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/ Hunting, Mining	5.4%	0%	3.8%
Construction	10.9%	0%	0%
Manufacturing	20.9%	12.5%	24.3%
Wholesale Trade	0%	0%	0%
Retail Trade	7.3%	8.9%	10.3%
Transportation, Warehousing, or Utilities	8.7%	23.2%	6.5%
Information	0%	0%	0%
Finance/Insurance, Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	4.2%	0%	6.1%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, Waste Management Services	5.0%	7.1%	5.1%
Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	18.2%	21.4%	22.9%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	9.8%	0%	21.5%
Other Services except Public Administration	5.9%	23.2%	0%
Public Administration	3.6%	3.6%	0%

The 2016 American Community Survey estimates show that the residents of Clay County rely heavily on manufacturing jobs for employment. This category is the highest for both the county and Fort Gaines, accounting for over 20% of employment for each of them. Bluffton shows 46.4% of its working population being split evenly between transportation, warehousing, and utilities and non-public administration services. While it is not the largest sector of employment in any community, educational services, healthcare, and social assistance all have a considerable amount of each community's working population. Oddly, in Bluffton, there are zero reported

employees in agriculture despite the huge presence of White Oak Pastures in town. This may be attributed to a high margin of error, an unfortunate commonality when dealing with ACS data in very small communities. Overall, employment is fairly diverse in Clay County and its cities, but further pushes for improvements in education and broadband expansion could lead to further diversification by making information and professional/scientific/management sectors more viable.

Clay County Places of Work and Commuter Flows, 2011-2015			
Number of People Commuting from Clay County...	...to this County	Workers Commuting to Clay County...	...from this County
307	Clay County, GA	307	Clay County, GA
141	Barbour County, AL	76	Early County, GA
89	Early County, GA	42	Barbour County, AL
78	Randolph County, GA	31	Calhoun County, GA
63	Calhoun County, GA	23	Chatham County, GA
57	Houston County, AL	66	Other counties
38	Dougherty County, GA		
31	Henry County, AL		
36	Other counties		

Commuting trends show that the highest number of commuters in Clay County do not leave the county for work. Of those Clay County residents that do commute out of county, most commute to Barbour County, Alabama. This is unsurprising as Barbour County’s seat, Eufaula, is the largest population center along Lake Walter F. George. Early County, Randolph County, and Calhoun County trailing close behind is also expected simply because of their close proximity.

Workers commuting into Clay County from other counties show a similar trend, with the peculiar exception of more commuters coming from the Atlantic coast in Chatham County, Georgia than some counties that border Clay County (Randolph and Quitman Counties, GA and Henry County AL). Quitman County’s low rank on both the out-commuter and in-commuter list can be attributed to how few residents it has (of the 159 counties in Georgia, it ranks 158th in population).

Clay County



Community Goals

Clay County Vision Statement

We aspire to become a place of unity and total citizen involvement. We want a safe, healthy, drug-free community to achieve academic success. We desire to maintain a community with rural character and a clean, healthy living environment through quality growth planning principals. We look for better communication within the community through a local media outlet. We want adequate housing, job opportunities, recreational facilities, and cultural events for all residents. We want local healthcare facilities treating citizen's medical needs. We want environmentally friendly businesses that support the population and facilities, events, and activities that take advantage of the natural and historic resources to boost tourism.

Community Goals and Policies

Clay County has adopted the following policies to provide ongoing guidance and direction to officials for making decisions consistent with achieving Clay County's Vision and addressing identified Needs and Opportunities. These policies will guide Clay County in future development decisions. The framework for decisions to be made about the future development of Clay County by investors and public officials will be provided by these policies. This section is organized with a broad community goal statement followed by policies for guidance.

Planning

- Operate and maintain a sound and efficient planning system which guides and assists in continued development.
 - Pursue, promote and encourage a close relationship between Clay County and the Cities of Bluffton and Fort Gaines and other agencies and authorities regarding mutual growth and development concerns including, but not limited to: comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivision regulations, extension of public water and sanitary sewer services, storm drainage, annexation, water management, environmental issues, cultural resources, and other related matters.
 - Pursue, promote and encourage coordination of the plans of several public boards, agencies, commissions, and other authorities in accordance with Clay County and its municipalities' policies and programs, to enhance mutual understanding and improve decision-making.
 - In Clay County, development plans (i.e. subdivisions, PUDs, etc.) should have architectural and site plans reviewed and approved by the planning and zoning commission prior to the granting of final approval.

Land Use

- Make balanced and efficient use of land appropriate with the resource base and the health, safety and welfare of the residents.
 - Discourage incompatible land uses, adjacent or within residential areas.

- Encourage safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing residential developments.
 - Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
 - Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.
 - Prohibit the disposal of hazardous waste within Clay County and the Cities of Bluffton and Fort Gaines.
- Protect residential areas and their residents from incompatible land uses and their associated activities.
 - Encourage and support the review of all development ordinances such as zoning, subdivision regulations, historic preservation ordinances, building codes, etc. to ensure that there is no conflict in any of the ordinances.
 - Encourage safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing residential developments.
 - Prohibit the disposal of hazardous waste within Clay County and the Cities of Bluffton and Fort Gaines.

Community Facilities

- Improve and extend the public water systems to better serve the current and future population.
 - Encourage those water system extensions that would support or encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents and employees.
 - Develop and maintain a water system maintenance program for each public water system to increase efficiency and operational longevity.

- Encourage coordination between Clay County and Fort Gaines for the expansion of the public sewer system.

Housing

- Protect residents from significant hazards to life, health and property.
 - Prohibit structural uses in areas where significant hazards to health, safety, life and property exist.
 - Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage infill residential development within established neighborhoods that is architecturally compatible with existing housing.
 - Encourage owners of substandard housing units to improve their properties through use of every available means, including adopting and enforcing codes and ordinances, providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.
 - Encourage and support the development of an ordinance that will require owners of deteriorating unoccupied structures to either demolish or remove the structure or pay a

fine sufficient to cover the cost of demolishing/removing the structure.

Encourage and support the removal of deteriorating unoccupied structures that serve as a fire hazard and a magnet for crime and drugs.

■ Encourage and support construction of new housing countywide to meet local housing demand

Promote affordable housing.

Develop and support more housing opportunities to help the county become more desirable as a place of residence.

Encourage innovative housing that is compatible with the county's policies.

Encourage and promote development and construction of desirable infill housing, such as duplexes and cottages, designed to fit the context of existing neighborhoods, so long as all other basic development criteria may be met.

■ Improve and expand the existing housing stock for all income levels.

Strive for the elimination of housing discrimination and promote fair housing practices.

Promote and encourage more affordable housing opportunities.

Support continued improvement of existing housing conditions through all available public and private means.

Encourage owners of substandard units to improve their properties through the use of every available means including adopting and enforcing codes and ordinances, providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.

Conserve existing housing stock insofar as practical through rehabilitation and improvement of substandard housing units that are suitable for repair.

Support enforcement of existing building codes and nuisance ordinances.

Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.

Strive to improve the quality of development along the Chattahoochee River as recreational second homes.

Natural and Cultural Resources

■ Conserve and maintain shared green spaces for recreation and natural resources preservation in expanding residential neighborhoods.

Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.

Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.

Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.

■ Promote and preserve the existing sense of place in the county through the promotion of historic resources.

Support economic development that is compatible with existing businesses and the

tourist industry.

- Promote and encourage recruitment of a diversity of businesses to provide a broad economic base.
- Encourage the rehabilitation of storefronts in the Fort Gaines Central Business District.

■ Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources in order to make Clay County an attractive place in which to live, work and enjoy.

- Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic and cultural resources of Clay County.
- Encourage maximum use of the county's natural resources while maintaining sound environmental protection practices.
- Encourage and promote land use and development that respects natural limitation of flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands and limiting soil types.
- Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
- Discourage the obstruction of scenic views and sites in the county.
- Promote and Enhance the Outdoor Recreation Industry through the development of additional campsites and boat ramps.
- Encourage the development of Private Hunting Lodges.
- Encourage large property owners to lease their land to hunters.
- Encourage the development of service facilities to meet the needs of this sector of the economy.
- Establish natural habitats for a variety of wildlife.
- Encourage the safe, wise and legal use of firearms and other hunting techniques.
- Develop and promote additional competitions and festivals targeted to this market.
- Encourage the development of the Clay/Quitman/Stewart County's Scenic Byways Designation.
- Prohibit the systematic neglect of structures that lead to the blight and decay of the countryside.

■ Conserve, maintain and promote the cultural, historic and natural resources to provide a variety of educational experiences.

- Support the development of additional cultural resources that will aid in the understanding of local heritage.
- Encourage the further development of Frontier Village, Coleman's Opera House Museum and Sutton's Corners Museum.
- Support regional tourism alliances with other counties and facilities (such as Bagby State Park or Kolomoki Mounds State Park) to promote existing and future natural, historic and cultural resources to increase the number of visitors.
- Encourage local schools to use these facilities as outdoor classrooms.

■ Encourage and Support the provision of educational and recreational opportunities for residents of Clay County.

- Encourage and support the expansion of Adult Education opportunities in Clay County.
- Encourage and support the expansion of services at the library in Fort Gaines.
- Encourage and support the activities of the Clay County School System to educate the children of Clay County.
- Support and encourage the provision of recreational and fine arts opportunities for the residents of Clay County.
- Encourage the collaboration between the Clay County Board of Education and the Clay County Board of Commissioners on the use of School System facilities for County Recreation i.e. ball fields, gymnasiums, etc.
- Encourage and support the expansion of the Clay County Recreational Program to provide additional sports opportunities.
- Encourage and support the development of opportunities to share the fine arts with the community, i.e. art shows, theatrical presentations, musicals, etc.
- Encourage and support the efforts of the healthcare community in Clay County.

Transportation

- Improve and extend the street and highway system to promote safe, efficient and well-maintained access to property in Clay County and on through routes for local and regional travelers.
 - Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads to fit, rather than dominate, topography and other site conditions. Encourage the development of bike paths and sidewalks throughout the neighborhoods.
 - Provide for safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services in and around Clay County.
 - Minimize conflicts between local and through traffic using every available means.
 - Provide for timely maintenance and improvement of roads.
- Promote and enhance the highway and commercial corridors in Clay County.
 - Encourage landscaping of parking areas and incorporation of on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements.
 - Encourage and support the development of a Sign Ordinance for Clay County.
 - Encourage and support the review of all development ordinances such as zoning, subdivision regulations, Historic Preservation Ordinances, etc. to ensure that there is no conflict in any of the ordinances.
 - Encourage and support the development of a uniform building permit process including application forms and review criteria.

Economic Development

- Support economic development that is compatible with the highway service industry.
 - Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods at the main intersections along GA 39 and US Hwy 27.
 - Encourage development on sites that are served by water and sewer.

- Promote the Central Business District in the Fort Gaines as the primary commercial and cultural center of Clay County.
 - Encourage and support the efforts of the Cities of Bluffton and Fort Gaines to make improvements to their downtowns including streetscapes, addition of bicycle lanes and racks, and renovation/restoration of public buildings.
 - Support the location and maintenance of desirable and suitable entertainment facilities downtown.
 - Encourage cultural events, i.e. art shows, fairs, and other attractions in the Central Business Districts.
 - Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures.
 - Preserve historic and cultural buildings and monuments.
 - Provide daily clean-up services in the downtown areas.
 - Encourage Citizens to Shop Locally.
 - Make business hours more compatible to fit the needs of local shoppers.
 - Encourage merchants to sell items that are bought most frequently.
 - Encourage merchants to sell items unique to Clay County and/or the State of Georgia.

- Improve the existing built environment.
 - Encourage and promote development and construction of desirable infill development designed to fit the context of existing neighborhoods, so long as all other basic development criteria may be met.
 - Encourage landscaping of new parking lots to minimize visual impact.
 - Encourage revitalization of vacant or under-utilized buildings using public and/or private resources.

Community Needs and Opportunities

Quality Community Objectives

Clay County has reviewed the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Quality Community Objectives. These objectives were adopted to guide this Comprehensive Plan Update and the future growth, development and redevelopment of Clay County. These objectives will assist community leaders in making local government decisions that affect the county's future land use patterns, environmental and historical resources, and economic development. These objectives will provide the framework needed in order to make well-informed decisions.

Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use

development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; instituting programs to provide housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

Transportation Options

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

Educational Opportunities

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

Community Health

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents; instituting programs to foster better health and fitness; or providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

Identified Needs and Opportunities

Strengths

- Lots of developable land
- Lake Walter F. George
- Historically active community
- Talented craftspeople in the county

Weaknesses

- Lack of advertising and publicity
- People know the lake as “Lake Eufaula” rather than its official name, Walter F. George Lake—this lends itself to the City of Eufaula getting more economic benefit from the reservoir than the Georgia cities on the lake.
- Marina not open frequently
- Lack of downtown development
- Conflict with health department and food trucks being allowed at events in Clay County
- Lack of high-speed internet availability—even the EMA director has no home internet!
- Only 1 physician in the county
- Need more businesses along Highway 39 on former ACOE property (ongoing efforts to remove development restrictions)
- Road maintenance issues—paving and resurfacing needed in many places throughout the county
- Law enforcement vehicles needed; 4WD trucks required for some roads. Huge budgetary expense.
- Need a brush truck for the fire department
- Water system issues; hydrant replacement needed
- Need utility mapping

Opportunities

- Lots of interested solar farm businesses
- Tourism opportunities
- Undeveloped land on the lake
- Lake recreation
- Artifacts from former Indian village (Oketeyeconne) that was flooded by dam construction currently stored in Columbus; could be put on display in Clay County as a tourist attraction
- Additional cabins and campsites at Bagby State Park
- Future events at Phenomenon Trail (5k race, etc).

- Canoeing and kayaking opportunities
- Rural internet legislation (Broadband Ready Communities)
- Legislative award of \$750k to build medical/dental clinic
- Event spaces (barns for events)

Threats

- Invasive species in Walter F. George Lake
- Regulatory conflicts, esp. with health department regarding food services and septic tanks
- Healthcare availability – 1 doctor in county, no pharmacy

Land Use

Existing Land Use

Maximizing land development opportunities while protecting natural resources is an important goal for Clay County. Key challenges for county officials include protecting natural resources while encouraging development and establishing an effective mix of appropriate land uses. Agriculture dominates the county’s existing land use. Second to agricultural is residential land use in the county. While single-family detached housing is the predominant residential use, manufactured housing is the second most frequently used residential type. Commercial uses are predominantly located in the Town Center and along Federal and State Routes and make up less than one percent of total land use.

The following figure illustrates the acreage and percent of total land in the counties and cities dedicated to existing land uses. Acreage totals do not include roads.

Clay County Existing Land Use		
	Acres	% of Total
Residential (low density)	1,368.87	45.16%
Residential (high density)	88.09	2.91%
Agriculture/Forestry	86.56	2.86%
Transportation Communication Utilities	284.57	9.39%
Parks Recreation Conservation	38.23	1.26%
Public/Institutional	276.66	9.13%
Industrial	698.34	23.04%
Commercial	189.85	6.26%
Total	3,031.15	100.00%

Source: RVRC Regional Plan 2013

Development Patterns

An analysis of existing development patterns provides an understanding of how land is used at a specific point in time. Identifying existing land use is the first step in gaining an understanding of not only what land uses exist and where they are but how they interact.

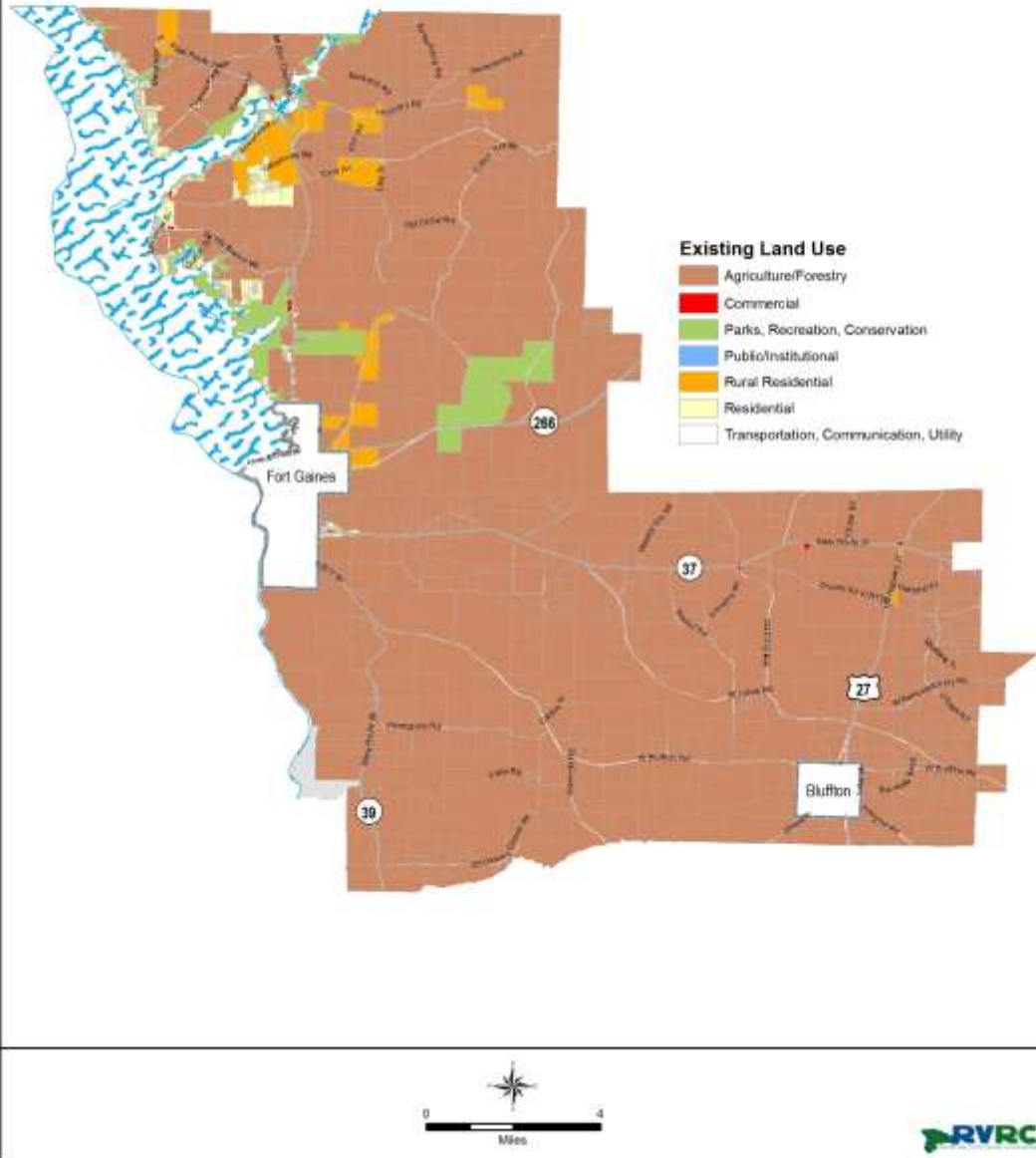
A major development trend in Clay County is the continued growth around Lake Walter F. George. In this area, the county faces many development issues related to growth including lot

size, housing construction methods, availability of public utilities (water/sewer), and adequate road capacity and condition (paved roads/dirt roads). The local elected officials also need to consider the effects of development on water quality, since most of the county is located in a ground water recharge area for an important aquifer. Other considerations include the effect of housing type and construction methods in this area on the county's tax base.

Another trend is the expansion of U.S. Hwy. 27 to a four-lane highway. Better access along this US Highway will increase pressure to develop the primarily agricultural land adjacent to the road with commercial properties. In this area, the county will need to balance the loss of prime agricultural land with the lack of existing commercial businesses to serve the resident population. Targeting commercial development first to major intersections with the use of buffers and landscaping around paved areas will help balance these needs.

The popularity of the local-grown/organic food movement is also a development trend in Clay County. This movement has spurred the growth of many agri-businesses. White Oak Pastures in southern Clay County is one such business that has grown exponentially in the last few years. With immediate access to U.S. Hwy. 27 and strategic planning done by this farm owner, White Oak Pastures is poised for continued economic progress. Issues facing the county regarding the development of more such agri-businesses include the need for workforce housing and infrastructure that will allow visitors' safe-enjoyment of agri-tourism endeavors.

Clay County, Georgia Existing Land Use



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Future Land Use

Areas Requiring Special Attention

Areas Where Development is Likely to Occur

The major growth area in Clay County is the northwestern section of the county along the shore of Lake Walter F. George. Clay County has extended water lines into this area to increase the density of future development while reducing potential contamination of underground aquifers.

Significant Natural Resources

The natural environment places certain opportunities and constraints on the way land is used. Soil conditions, slopes, flood frequency and wetlands all affect where development can safely and feasibly occur. In Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines, development of areas adjacent to and affecting the Chattahoochee River and important underground aquifers should be reviewed for compliance with state and local ordinances and regulations.

Acreeage of Parks, Recreation, Conservation Lands in Clay County			
	Total Park, Recreation, Conservation Land Use (Acres)	Designated Wildlife Management Areas, State Parks, Natural Areas (Acres)	Local Parks and Conservation Areas (Acres)
Clay	1,824.60	1,066.56	758.04

Source: RVRC Regional Plan 2013

Water Supply Watersheds

Overall, Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines fall within the Lower Middle Chattahoochee Watershed. Within the county itself, there are seven (7) watersheds of moderate size. The Town of Bluffton is within the Spring Creek-Perry Creek Watershed and the Chattahoochee River-Kolomoki Creek Watershed. The City of Fort Gaines lies within the Chattahoochee River-Cemochechobee Creek Watershed. Unincorporated Clay County falls within these watersheds, but also includes the Chattahoochee River-Walter F. George Reservoir Watershed, Chattahoochee River-Barbour Creek Watershed, Pachitla Creek-Little Pachitla Creek Watershed, and the Pataula Creek Watershed. See Appendix for Map.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Clay County is located in the Southern Coastal Plain Province. This is a very important groundwater recharge area. There are seven major aquifer systems in the Coastal Plain Province. Clay County is located over the Cretaceous-Tertiary aquifer system. The Cretaceous-Tertiary aquifer system, which includes the Providence and Clayton aquifer systems, is an interconnected group of sub-systems that developed in the Late Cretaceous

sands of the Coastal Plain Province. (Donahue, Groundwater Quality in Georgia for 2002). See Appendix for Map.

Wetlands

Wetlands can be broken into four distinct categories: Open Water Wetlands, Scrub/Shrub Wetlands, Forested Wetlands, and Non-Forested Emergent Wetlands. In Clay County, there are 4,535.11 acres of Forested Wetlands, 392.69 acres of Non-forested Emergent Wetlands, 1,102.05 acres of Scrub/Shrub Wetlands, and 14,439.96 acres of Open Water Wetlands. See Appendix for Map.

Soil Types

Clay County is within the Southern Coastal Plain Major Land Resource Area (MLRA–133A). The surface relief ranges from almost level and gently sloping to steep. Slopes range from 0 to 5 percent in the more nearly level areas and from 15 to 45 percent in the hilly and steep areas. Good surface drainage prevails, except for in the lower-lying depressions and in areas along streams. Most of the soils are located on uplands, are well drained, and have a sandy or loamy surface layer and a loamy or clayey subsoil. Other soils on uplands are nearly level and less well drained and have a sandy surface layer and loamy subsoil or a loamy surface layer and clayey subsoil. Nearly level, poorly drained soils are in depressions or on flood plains near streams. The soils on flood plains are loamy or clayey throughout. See Appendix for Map.

Steep Slopes

The topography of Clay County also places constraints and limitations on placement of development. Much of the county has slopes exceeding 25%. Areas of 3% and less are found along the Chattahoochee River in the western part of the county and in patches in the southeastern section of the county. See Appendix for Map.

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. There are 138,880 acres of land in Clay County. In the county, 44,566 acres are identified as farmland with 21,347 acres in harvest crops. The main crops in Clay County are cotton and peanuts. Corn, rye, grain sorghum, wheat, and some oats and millet are also grown in Clay County.

Significant Cultural Resources

A county-wide historic resources survey has been completed. There are two individually listed National Register Historic Properties in unincorporated Clay County: Sutton – Warren House (U.S. Hwy. 27) and the Toney – Standley House (Days Cross Road Community). There are no National Register Historic Districts in unincorporated Clay County. There are also no archaeological National Register Historic Sites in unincorporated Clay County.

Clay County has not enacted a historic preservation ordinance or appointed a historic

preservation commission; therefore, they are not eligible for the Certified Local Government program administered by the National Park Service nor are they eligible for the Historic Preservation Fund grant program offered through the State Historic Preservation Office. While an inventory of the historic sites, structures, and objects within the county's borders was completed in 1998, there is no county-wide government entity to sponsor National Register listings, oversee the application for survey funds, maintain an inventory of local historic resources, and attempt to preserve endangered resources. At present, the Fort Gaines Historic Society (a county-wide not-for-profit) and individual, private citizens carry out these goals.

Areas Where Development May Outpace Availability of Facilities & Services

Clay County has extended water lines into the northern section of the county along the shore of Lake Walter F. George to encourage development and mitigate the presence of non-conforming lots. To further encourage development and bring existing non-conforming lots into compliance with Clay County land use planning documents, Clay County will soon need to provide sewer in this area as well as water.

Areas with Significant In-fill Development Opportunities

In-fill opportunities exist in and around Fort Gaines. Overall, in-fill opportunities within the city limits are good, because of available public water and public sewer. However, some existing vacant lots should be kept for park and open space.

Brownfields

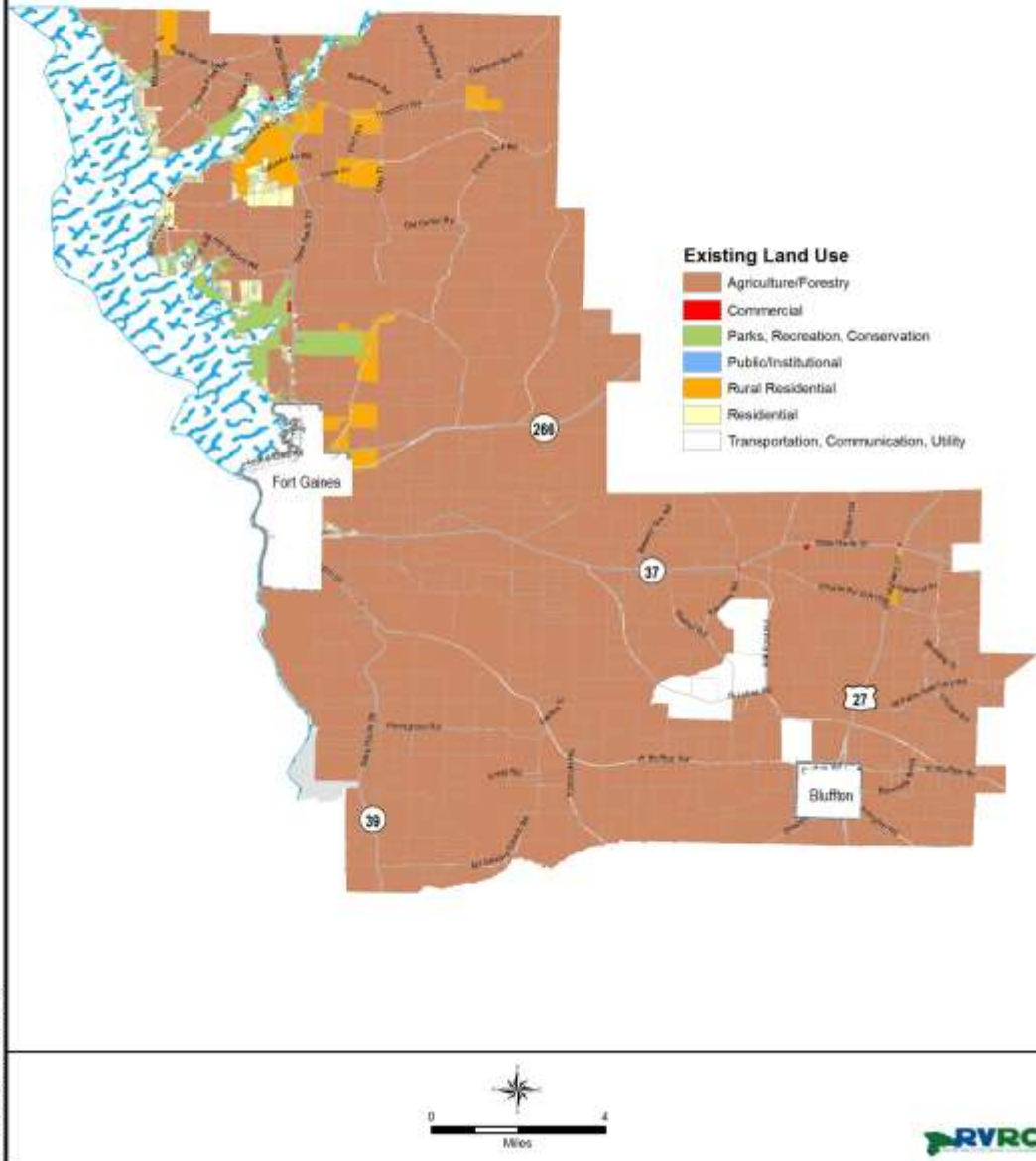
In general terms, Brownfield's are abandoned or underused industrial or commercial properties where redevelopment is complicated by actual or perceived environmental contamination. There is no requirement on size, location, age or past use for Brownfield's. Some issues involving Brownfield's are the potential to cause harm to the population and the environment, the reduction in employment opportunities and tax revenue, the increase in illegal dumping, and the reduction in the property value for the surrounding area. Redeveloping Brownfield's can restore property to productive use, increase property values, improve public health and the environment, and utilize existing public infrastructure and increasing job opportunities and local tax revenues.

Potential Brownfield's in Clay County, Bluffton and Fort Gaines consist of mostly junk yards, old gas stations, and property with abandoned vehicles and equipment.

Areas of Disinvestment

All communities have areas of disinvestment or areas in need of improvement; Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines are no different. Market forces over time will stabilize or improve most of the areas in need of revitalization. However in some cases a public/private partnership will be needed to make improvements happen.

Clay County, Georgia Future Land Use



Community Work Program

Clay County Report of Accomplishments 2014 - 2018		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue maintenance program for government buildings to include a new roof for the historic courthouse and a new county government center.	Underway	Some work has been done on the courthouse roof, but it has not been replaced. The new county government center has not been built due to lack of funds.
Work with the City of Fort Gaines and Bagby Park to construct the Phenomenon Trail.	Underway	Much of the trail complete, but some construction remains.
Encourage and support the expansion of services at the library in Fort Gaines.	Completed	This was accomplished, but it will remain a priority.
Recruit appropriate businesses for the county, especially along major highway corridors.	Underway	Solar farm in development. This activity is ongoing and will carry over to the next work program.
Apply for a Scenic Byway Designation for Hwy. 39.	Postponed	Lack of funds. This will carry over to the next work program.
Adopt highway corridor/overlay district to regulate parking, signage, landscaping, buffers, and points of ingress and egress.	Postponed	Lack of funds/personnel. This will carry over to the next work program.
Pursue housing redevelopment programs to renovate/rebuild substandard housing throughout the county.	Postponed	Lack of funds; County has focused more on infrastructure recently. This will carry over to the next work program.
Adopt Part V Planning Criteria for wetlands and groundwater recharge areas.	Postponed	Lack of funds. This will carry over to the next work program.
Adopt Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limits for Drag Nasty, Hog, Pataula, and Roaring Branch Creeks and the Chattahoochee River.	Postponed	Lack of funds. This will carry over to the next work program.
Promote appropriate development along and enhance aesthetics of US Highway 27.	Postponed	Lack of funds. This will carry over to the next work program.
Encourage local schools to use the cultural, historic, and natural resources of Clay County for educational purposes.	Completed	Andrew College in Cuthbert has established a partnership with White Oak Pastures.

Activity	Status	Explanation
Support regional/state tourism alliances to increase the number of visitors.	Underway	This is an ongoing item that will carry over to the next work program.
Purchase necessary equipment and vehicles for public safety and public service departments including laptops in all sheriff's and EMS vehicles and a hydraulic-lift stretcher for the ambulance.	Underway	Sheriff's department has made some upgrades. Clay County no longer operates an EMS and now contracts this service out, so the EMS portion of this will not carry over to the new work program.
Construct and maintain public water and sewer systems in growing areas of the county.	Underway	Completed FY14 CDBG water project. This item will carry over to the next work program.
Support the efforts of the Clay County Development Authority in developing a lakefront retirement community.	Underway	Project delayed due to legal and legislative issues. This will carry over to the next work program.
Review and update zoning code and all development ordinances to reflect current state law and best development practices.	Underway	This is currently underway and will be an ongoing activity through the next 5 years in the new work program.
Form a committee of the County Tax Assessor, Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners to investigate ways to optimize tax revenues through development choices.	Underway	This is currently underway and will be an ongoing activity through the next 5 years in the new work program.
Upgrade Cottonhill Campground and Sandy Branch Park.	Underway (with changes in scope)	Cottonhill Campground upgrades were partially completed and ongoing. Sandy Branch Park suffered extensive hurricane damage; its upgrades will not carry over to the new work program as the cleanup costs are currently prohibitive.
Develop a county newsletter to provide information to citizens.	Completed	Activity is complete.
Partner with the School Board and Family Connections to offer/enhance after-school and tutoring programs for children.	Underway	Activity is underway and will carry over to next work program.
Partner with prospective industries to insure that local citizens have workforce training and job skills to	Underway	This is an ongoing activity that will carry over to the next work program.

gain employment. Activity	Status	Explanation
Request Area Agency on Aging to offer training for caregivers and for chronic disease management.	Underway	Clay County and RVRC AAA have held Tai Chi classes to improve health of aging citizens; chronic disease management training will carry over to new work program.
Partner with Bagby State Park to develop golfing and fishing tournaments and eco-tourism events.	Completed	A bass fishing tournament has been organized, and concerts are held at the park as well. Future events such as these will carry over to the new work program.
Improve and expand the county's recreation program to include wider variety of events and activities.	Postponed	Recreation department disbanded and will reorganize; this will carry over to the new work program.
Partner with Fort Gaines and the Fort Gaines 200 organization on the celebration of the city's bicentennial.	Completed	This was accomplished in 2016.
Partner with Fort Gaines and the Downtown Development Authority to create a Farmer's Market.	Completed	This was accomplished in 2018.
Partner with White Oak Pastures on developing agritourism events and activities that complement existing offerings.	Completed	This has been accomplished and will also carry over to the next work program for future event and activity partnerships.
Develop a maintenance schedule for paving and upkeep of county roads.	Completed	This was accomplished in 2014, and the schedule is updated annually.
Review alternative paving types or systems to maximize transportation dollars.	Completed	This was accomplished in 2016 and 2017 through various road department training events.
Review "Better Backroads" Manual for cost-effective ways to manage rural county roads.	Completed	This was accomplished in 2014 and 2015.

Clay County - Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Continue maintenance program for government buildings to include a new roof for the historic courthouse and a new county government center.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County	\$10,000	County funds DCA
Work with the City of Fort Gaines and Bagby Park to construct the Phenomenon Trail.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Fort Gaines, Bagby State Park	\$1,000,000	City Funds, County Funds, Private Funds
Encourage and support the expansion of services at the library in Fort Gaines.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Fort Gaines, Bluffton, BOE	\$20,000	County funds, City funds, BOE funds
Recruit appropriate businesses for the county, especially along major highway corridors.	X					Clay County, Development Authority, Economic Development Council	\$50,000	DCA, USDA, OneGeorgia, County Funds

Clay County - Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Apply for Scenic Byway designation for US Highway 39	X	X	X			Ft. Gaines City Council, Clay County BOC, Clay County EDC, GDOT	\$10,000	BOC, City Council, GDOT
Adopt highway corridor/overlay district to regulate parking, signage, landscaping, buffers, and points of ingress and egress			X	X		Ft. Gaines Council, Clay County BOC, GDOT	\$10,000	BOC, City Council,
Pursue housing redevelopment programs to renovate/rebuild substandard housing throughout the county.		X		X		Clay County BOC SWGA Regional Housing Authority	\$750,000	BOC, CDBG, DCA, Housing Authority
Adopt Part V Planning Criteria for wetlands and groundwater recharge areas.		X				Clay County BOC	\$3,000	BOC, DCA, EPD

Clay County - Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Adopt Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limits for Drag Nasty, Hog, Pataula, and Roaring Branch Creeks and Lake Walter F. George/Chattahoochee River				X		Clay County BOC	\$10,000	County funds DCA, EPD
Promote appropriate development along and enhance aesthetics of US Hwy. 27	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Bluffton	\$5,000	City Funds, County Funds,
Encourage local schools to use cultural, historic and natural resources of Clay County for educational purposes.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Fort Gaines, Bluffton, BOE	\$5,000	County funds, City funds, BOE funds
Support regional/state tourism alliances to increase the number of visitors.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Development Authority, Economic Development Council, RVRC	\$5,000	County Funds, GDEcD

Clay County - Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Purchase necessary equipment and vehicles for sheriff's department.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County BOC	\$500,000	County funds USDA, Local Assistance Grants
Construct and maintain public water and sewer systems in growing areas of the county.		X		X		Clay County	\$750,000	County Funds, CDBG
Support the efforts of the Clay County Development Authority in developing lakefront retirement community.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Development Authority	\$1,000,000	County funds, Private funds

Clay County - Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Review and update zoning code and all development ordinances to reflect current state law and best development practices.	x	x	x	x	x	Clay County	\$10,000	County funds DCA
Maintain and continue offering county newsletter to provide information to citizens.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Two Georgias Initiative, Clay County Health Partnership	\$5,000	Health Partnership Grant Funds
Partner with School Board and Family Connections to offer/enhance after-school and tutoring programs for children.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Board of Education, Family Connections, 4H	\$50,000	County funds, BOE funds
Request Area Agency on Aging to offer training for caregivers and for chronic disease management.	X					Clay County RVRCAAA	\$500	County Funds RVRCAAA

Clay County - Community Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Improve and expand the county's recreation program to include a wider variety of events and activities after reorganizing recreation department.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Family Connections, BOE	\$50,000	County funds, Private funds, Event fees
Review best practices in dirt/gravel road maintenance	X	X				Clay County, Golden Triangle RC&D	\$10,000	County funds, Golden Triangle RC&D
Construct new Clay County Health Clinic	X					Clay County, Clay County Health Partnership	\$750,000	OneGeorgia, County funds
Replace signs and re-stripe 85 miles of paved roads			X	X		Clay County, GDOT	\$500,000	GDOT, County Funds, LMIG

Clay County - Community Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Relocate County Administration and Health Department Offices	X	X				Clay County Clay County Health Dept	\$100,000	County Funds
Improve drainage facilities in Hidden Lagoon subdivision		X	X	X		Clay County, RVRC, DCA	\$750,000	CDBG County Funds
Improve drainage facilities on Days Avenue	X					Clay County	\$50k	County Funds
Expand water service to Pataula Shores Subdivision	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County	\$500,000	County Funds

Clay County – Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Form a committee of the County Tax Assessor, Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners to investigate ways to optimize tax revenues through development choices.		X				Clay County, Development Authority, Clay County Economic Development Council	\$2,000	County Funds
Continue upgrading Cottonhill Campground	X	X	X	X		Clay County Department of Natural Resources Army COE Nat'l Wild Turkey Federation	\$20,000	County Funds DNR Nat'l Wild Turkey Federation Army COE
Partner with prospective industries to insure that local citizens have workforce training and job skills to gain employment	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Various Private Industries, WIOA, Technical Colleges	\$50,000	County funds, Private funds
Partner with Bagby State Park to expand on present event offerings; begin offering concerts	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County, Bagby State Park, Friends of Bagby	\$50,000	County funds, Private funds, GDEcD

Clay County – Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Partner with the Clay County Health Partnership and Fort Gaines to implement community gardens (raised beds and greenhouses) throughout the county	X	X				Clay County Fort Gaines Clay County Health Partnership UGA Extension	\$50,000	Grant funds
Continue partnering with White Oak Pastures on developing agritourism events and activities that complement existing offerings.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County White Oak Pastures GA Dept. of Ag. Georgia Organics	\$5,000	County funds Private funds Event fees GDEcD
Implement geocaching at various attractions in Clay County	X	X				Clay County, City of Ft. Gaines, Clay County Health Partnership	\$1,000	County volunteer efforts, Grant funds
Add nature trails and wildlife viewing amenities to Pataula Creek Public Use Area	X	X	X	X	X	Army COE, DNR, Clay County, Nat'l Wild Turkey Federation	\$100,000	Army COE, County funds, DNR, Nat'l Wild Turkey Federation, Donors

Clay County – Work Program 2019-2023

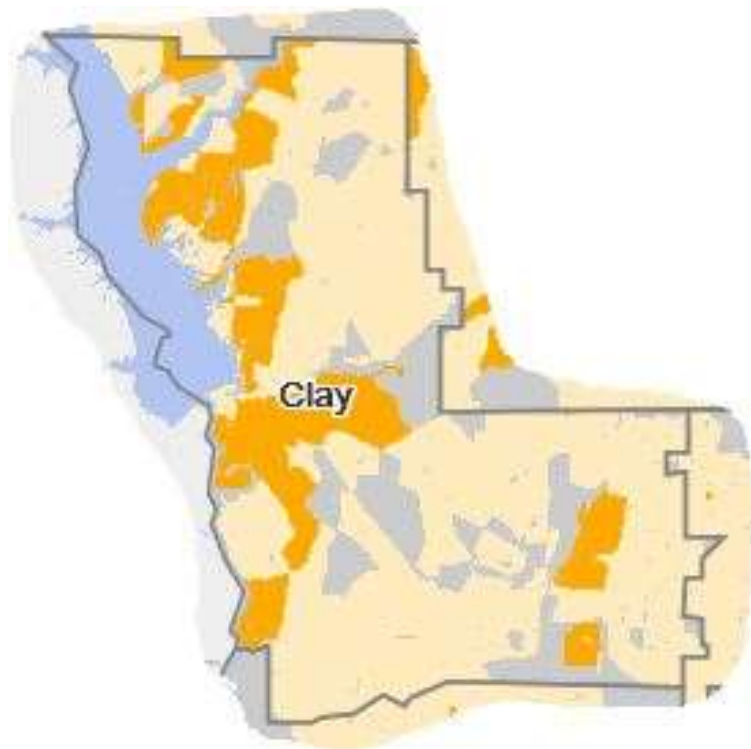
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Apply for any available incentives to facilitate broadband expansion, especially in underserved areas of the county.	X	X	X	X	X	Clay County	\$50,000	County funds, Private funds, Grant funds

Broadband Internet Service Element

Broadband, or high-speed internet, has become essential to business, education, healthcare, agriculture, and overall quality of life for Georgians. The state of Georgia estimates approximately 16% of the resident population, mostly in rural communities, does not have access to broadband service.¹ Recognizing the importance of broadband availability, the General Assembly passed the Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act (SB 402) in 2018 to extend broadband service to unserved areas, to hopefully enable residents of those areas to participate fully in today's society and enjoy the economic, educational, cultural, and other benefits technology makes possible. The Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative focuses on partnerships and collaboration among government at all levels and the private sector to deploy broadband services with minimum speeds of at least 25 Mbps for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads. The initiative will also assist communities apply for anticipated federal funding in support of broadband deployment.

Accurate mapping of broadband availability is critical to identifying unserved locations and developing the initiative. The accompanying map is an attempt to identify areas of Clay County not currently served. Statistics (June, 2017 Federal Communications Commission) incorporated into the graphic are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. Populated census blocks that did not meet this definition (25 Mbps/3 Mbps) are delineated as 'unserved'. Population and location data are from the 2010 Census and commercially available business listings (2014) with at least 3 employees and \$150,000 annual sales.

Data used to create the accompanying map depict where broadband service is available to at least ONE consumer (residential and business) in a census block. Thus, the map presents every location in the census block as having service even if there is only one internet consumer in that census block. By this standard the graphic may very well over-estimate broadband coverage, particularly in large census blocks.

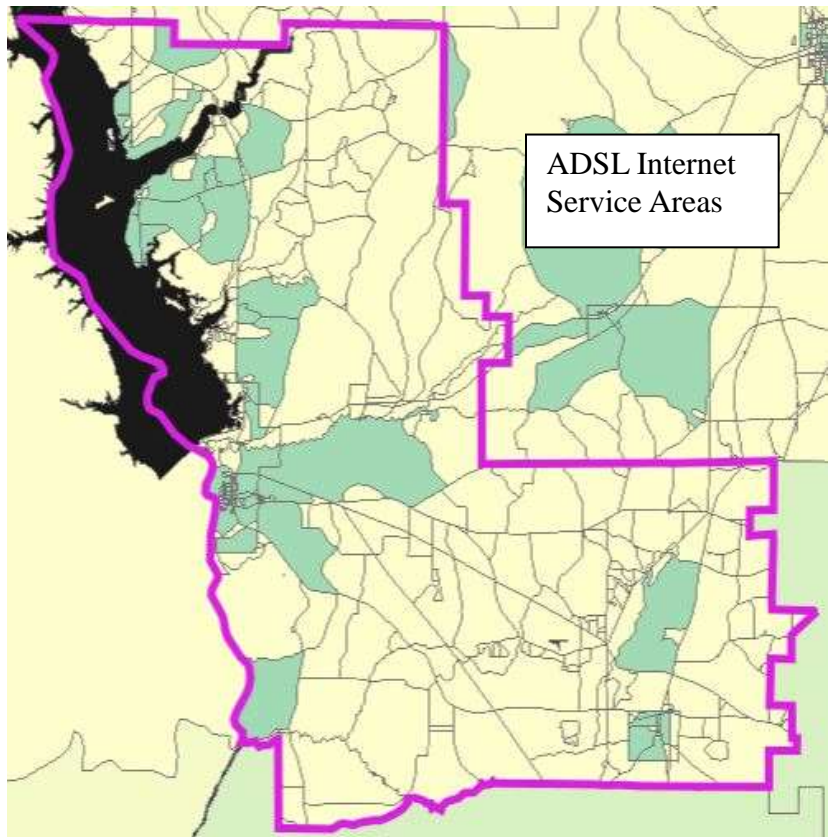


Map Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

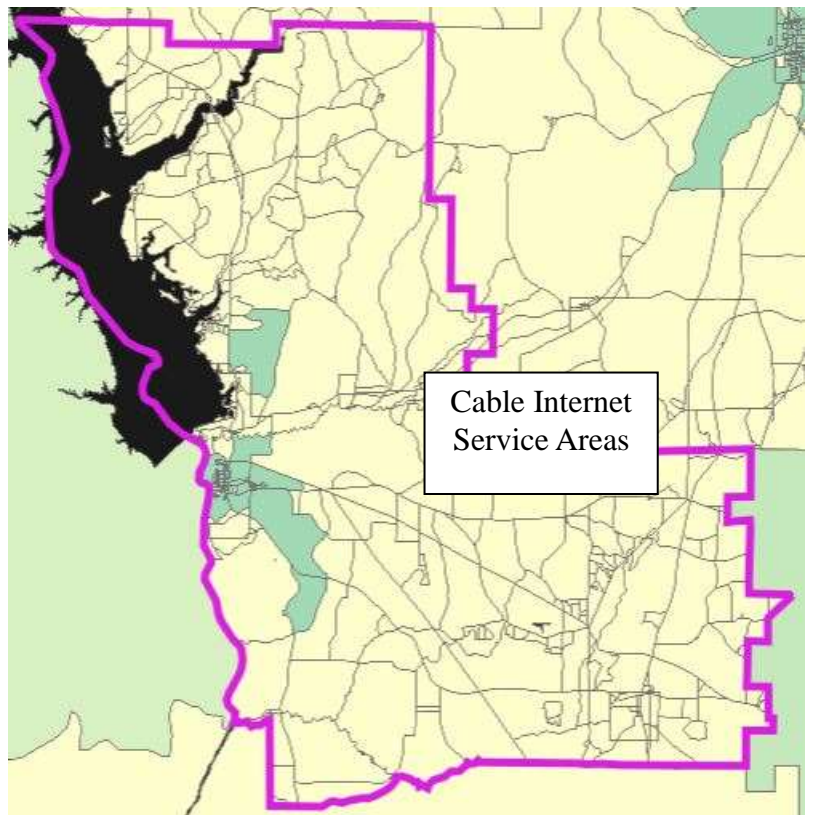
Legend: Served Unserved Unpopulated

¹ 2014 data from the Georgia Broadband Initiative; as cited in 2018 Annual State IT Report, Georgia Technology Authority. Parenthesis added

Based on report filings to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) by internet service providers (June, 2017, latest public release available at this writing), there is one provider of internet service via Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Lines within several census blocks across the county. ADSL is the transmission of data over copper telephone lines.



Latest data available from the FCC indicates there is also only one provider of cable internet, and the service is limited to the census blocks with the greatest population, in west-central Clay. This provider is using cable television infrastructure to provide internet service.



While not mapped here, the FCC reports there is one provider of blanket internet service via communications satellites.

The 2017 FCC data does not report the presence of any fiber optic cable or fixed wireless internet services in the community. Fiber-optic communication is the transmission of voice and data via pulses of light through an optical fiber. Fixed wireless is internet communication between two sites or buildings without satellite or telephone infrastructure, usually powered by electrical public utility mains.

Town of Bluffton



Community Vision

Bluffton Vision Statement

The Town of Bluffton is dedicated to increasing the quality of life for all citizens while maintaining our friendly, small town, rural lifestyle. The Town aims to accomplish the following:

- Protect the agricultural community.
- Encourage the construction of warehouses to take advantage of trucking on U.S. 27 as well as other general, commercial and business activities.
- Protect the Bluff and develop a walking trail and picnic area at that location.
- Utilize the existing horse arena more with the development of a rodeo.
- Maintain existing single-family housing and encourage new single-family development.
- Construct sidewalks and install decorative street lights.
- Clean up abandoned lots and junk cars.
- Encourage small businesses such as antique shops and convenience stores.
- Encourage tourism in the county taking advantage of the lake and other natural resources.
- Install markers for historic buildings such as the Clubhouse, Courthouse, Old Jail, Bluff, and historic houses and churches.

Community Goals and Policies

The Town of Bluffton has adopted the following policies to provide ongoing guidance and direction to officials for making decisions consistent with achieving Bluffton's Vision and addressing identified Needs and Opportunities. These policies will guide the Bluffton Council in future development decisions. The framework for decisions to be made about the future development of Bluffton by investors and public officials will be provided by these policies. This section is organized with a broad community goal statement followed by policies for guidance.

Planning

- Operate and maintain a sound and efficient planning system which guides and assists in continued development.
 - Pursue, promote and encourage a close relationship between Clay County and the Cities of Bluffton and Fort Gaines and other agencies and authorities regarding mutual growth and development concerns including, but not limited to: comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivision regulations, extension of public water and sanitary sewer services, storm drainage, annexation, water management, environmental issues, cultural resources, and other related matters.

Land Use

- Make balanced and efficient use of land appropriate with the resource base and the health, safety and welfare of the residents.
 - Discourage incompatible land uses, adjacent or within residential areas.
 - Encourage safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing residential developments.

- Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
 - Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.
 - Prohibit the disposal of hazardous waste within the City of Bluffton.
- Protect residential areas and their residents from incompatible land uses and their associated activities.
 - Encourage and support the review of all ordinances to insure that there is no conflict in any of them.
 - Encourage safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing residential developments.
 - Prohibit the disposal of hazardous waste within the City of Bluffton.

Community Facilities

- Improve and extend the public water system to better serve the current and future population.
 - Encourage those water system extensions that would support or encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents and employees.
 - Develop and maintain a water system maintenance program for the public water system to increase efficiency and operational longevity.

Housing

- Protect residents from significant hazards to life, health and property.
 - Prohibit structural uses in areas where significant hazards to health, safety, life and property exist.
 - Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage infill residential development within established neighborhoods that is architecturally compatible with existing housing.
 - Encourage owners of substandard housing units to improve their properties through use of every available means, including adopting and enforcing codes and ordinances, providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.
 - Encourage and support the development of an ordinance that will require owners of deteriorating unoccupied structures to either demolish or remove the structure or pay a fine sufficient to cover the cost of demolishing/removing the structure.
 - Encourage and support the removal of deteriorating unoccupied structures that serve as a fire hazard and a magnet for crime and drugs.
- Encourage and support construction of new housing citywide to meet local housing demand
 - Promote affordable housing.
 - Develop and support more housing opportunities citywide to help the city become more desirable as a place of residence.
 - Encourage innovative housing citywide that is compatible with city policies.
 - Encourage and promote development and construction of desirable infill housing, such as

duplexes and cottages, designed to fit the context of the existing neighborhood, so long as all other basic development criteria may be met.

- Improve and expand the existing housing stock for all income levels.
 - Strive for the elimination of housing discrimination and promote fair housing practices.
 - Promote and encourage more affordable housing opportunities.
 - Support continued improvement of existing housing conditions through all available public and private means.
 - Encourage owners of substandard housing units to improve their properties through use of every available means, including adopting and enforcing codes and ordinances, providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.
 - Conserve existing housing stock insofar as practical through rehabilitation and improvement of substandard housing units that are suitable for repair.
 - Encourage and support the development of a Joint Code Enforcement Program between Clay County and the City of Bluffton which will provide for a Building Inspector/ Code Enforcement program.
 - Support enforcement of existing building codes and nuisance ordinances.
 - Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Conserve and maintain shared green spaces for recreation and natural resources preservation in expanding residential neighborhoods.
 - Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
 - Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.

- Promote and preserve the existing sense of place in the city through the promotion of historic resources.
 - Support economic development that is compatible with existing businesses and the tourist industry.
 - Promote and encourage recruitment of a diversity of businesses to provide a broad economic base.
 - Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods and services in the Central Business District.
 - Encourage the rehabilitation of storefronts in the Central Business District.

- Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources in order to make Bluffton an attractive place in which to live, work and enjoy.
 - Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic and cultural resources of Bluffton.
 - Encourage maximum use of the city's natural resources while maintaining sound environmental protection practices.
 - Encourage and promote land use and development that respects natural limitation of flood

plains, steep slopes, wetlands and limiting soil types.

- Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
- Discourage the obstruction of scenic views and sites in the city.
- Encourage the development of service facilities to meet the needs of the hunting, fishing and equestrian sector of the economy.
- Establish natural habitats for a variety of wildlife.
- Develop and promote additional competitions and festivals targeted to this market.
- Prohibit the systematic neglect of structures that lead to the blight and decay of the countryside.

- Conserve, maintain and promote the cultural, historic and natural resources to provide a variety of educational experiences.
 - Support the development of additional cultural resources that will aid in the understanding of local heritage.
 - Support regional tourism alliances with other counties and facilities (such as Bagby State Park or Kolomoki Mounds State Park) to promote existing and future natural, historic and cultural resources to increase the number of visitors.
 - Encourage local schools to use these facilities as outdoor classrooms.

- Encourage and Support the provision of educational and recreational opportunities for residents of the City of Bluffton.
 - Encourage and support the expansion of Adult Education opportunities in Clay County.
 - Encourage and support the expansion of services at the Clay County Library.
 - Encourage and support the activities of the Clay County School System to educate the children of Clay County.
 - Support and encourage the provision of recreational and fine arts opportunities for the residents of Bluffton.
 - Encourage and support the expansion of the Clay County Recreational Program to provide additional sports opportunities.
 - Encourage and support the development of opportunities to share the fine arts with the community, i.e. art shows, theatrical presentations, musicals, etc.
 - Encourage and support the efforts of the healthcare community in Bluffton.

Transportation

- Improve and extend the street and highway system to promote safe, efficient and well-maintained access to property in Bluffton and on through routes for local and regional travelers.
 - Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads to fit, rather than dominate, topography and other site conditions. Encourage the development of bike paths and sidewalks throughout the neighborhoods.
 - Provide for safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services in and around the City of Bluffton.
 - Minimize conflicts between local and through traffic using every available means.
 - Provide for timely maintenance and improvement of streets.

- Promote and enhance the highway and commercial corridors in Bluffton.

- Encourage the implementation of a Gateways Program in Bluffton.
- Encourage landscaping of parking areas and incorporation of on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements.
- Encourage and support the review of all ordinances to ensure that there is no conflict in any of them.
- Encourage and support the development of a Joint Code Enforcement Program between Clay County and the City of Bluffton which will provide for a Building Inspector/ Code Enforcement program.

Economic Development

- Support economic development that is compatible with the highway service industry.
 - Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods at the main intersections along US Hwy 27.
 - Encourage development on sites that are served by water.

- Promote the Central Business District in Bluffton as the primary commercial and cultural center of the city.
 - Encourage and support the efforts of the Cities of Bluffton to make improvements to the downtown including streetscapes, addition of bicycle lanes and racks, and renovation/restoration of public buildings.
 - Support the location and maintenance of desirable and suitable entertainment facilities downtown.
 - Encourage cultural events, i.e. art shows, fairs, and other attractions in the Central Business Districts.
 - Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures.
 - Preserve historic and cultural buildings and monuments.
 - Provide daily clean-up services in the downtown areas.
 - Encourage Citizens to Shop Locally.

Make business hours more compatible to fit the needs of local shoppers.

 - Encourage merchants to sell items that are bought most frequently.
 - Encourage merchants to sell items unique to Clay County and/or the State of Georgia.

- Improve the existing built environment.
 - Encourage and promote development and construction of desirable infill development designed to fit the context of the existing neighborhoods, so long as all other basic development criteria may be met.
 - Encourage landscaping of new parking lots to minimize visual impact.
 - Encourage revitalization of vacant or under-utilized buildings using public and/or private resources.

Community Needs and Opportunities

Quality Community Objectives

The Town of Bluffton has reviewed the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Quality Community Objectives. These objectives were adopted to guide this Comprehensive Plan Update and the future growth, development and redevelopment of Bluffton. The City of Bluffton will use these to evaluate land use decisions. These objectives will assist community leaders in making local government decisions that affect the city's future land use patterns, environmental and historical resources, and economic development. The objectives will provide the framework needed in order to make well-informed decisions.

Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; instituting programs to provide housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

Transportation Options

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

Educational Opportunities

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

Community Health

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents; instituting programs to foster better health and fitness; or providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

Bluffton Identified Needs and Opportunities

Strengths

- White Oak Pastures.
- Tourism with Kolomoki Mounds State Park nearby.
- New park.
- Friendly, small town atmosphere.
- More young people stay in town than a lot of rural Georgian communities.
- Good internet service (DSL).
- Flat water rates.
- Cemetery mapping
- Open store; bicentennial celebration*

Opportunities

- Future museum planned.
- Preservation of historic items.
- Book exchange in park.
- Time capsule.
- Future opportunities with White Oak Pastures in tourism and employment; other possible public/private partnerships.
- Revitalization of the Bluff.
- High-speed internet is a good economic development tool (small businesses, telecommuters, etc.).

Weaknesses

- More housing while working within the constraints of minimum lot sizes.
- No sewer (creates the aforementioned need for large minimum lot sizes).
- Travel distance for healthcare is high.
- Travel distance for childcare/preschool is high.
- Drainage issues on South Pine Street.
- Small population and city limits leads to a small tax base.
- While flat water rates benefit the consumer, they can also contribute to lack of competitiveness for funding opportunities like CDBG.
- Not a great variety of restaurants, grocery stores, and shopping.
- No gas station—Edison and Blakely are the nearest options, and station hours are limited.
- Nearest hospital is in Blakely.
- No dentists in the county.
- No school in Bluffton.

Threats

- Cell service can make EMS access challenging for people with no landlines.
- Hurricanes and tornadoes.
- Drought.
- Truck spill on US 27*
- No backup well for water.
- Ongoing maintenance issues with water system (\$20,000 spent on pump failure; surge protection issues).
- Low funds for future maintenance of water system.
- Small crime increase (petty crime, theft).

Existing Land Use

Maximizing land development opportunities while protecting natural resources is an important goal for Bluffton. Key challenges for city officials include protecting natural resources while encouraging development and establishing an effective mix of appropriate land uses. Residences dominate Bluffton’s existing land use. Second to that is commercial with agricultural use being third. While single-family detached housing is the predominant residential use, manufactured housing is the second most frequently used residential type. Agricultural uses are mostly located along the edges of the community.

The following figure illustrates the acreage and percent of total land in the counties and cities dedicated to existing land uses. Acreage totals do not include roads.

Bluffton Existing Land Use		
	Acres	% of Total
Residential	989.59	91.60%
Agriculture/Forestry	15.06	1.39%
Parks Recreation Conservation	3.25	0.30%
Public/Institutional	3.84	0.36%
Industrial	7.35	0.68%
Commercial	61.23	5.67%
Total	1,080.33	100.00%

Source: RVRC Regional Plan 2013

Development Patterns

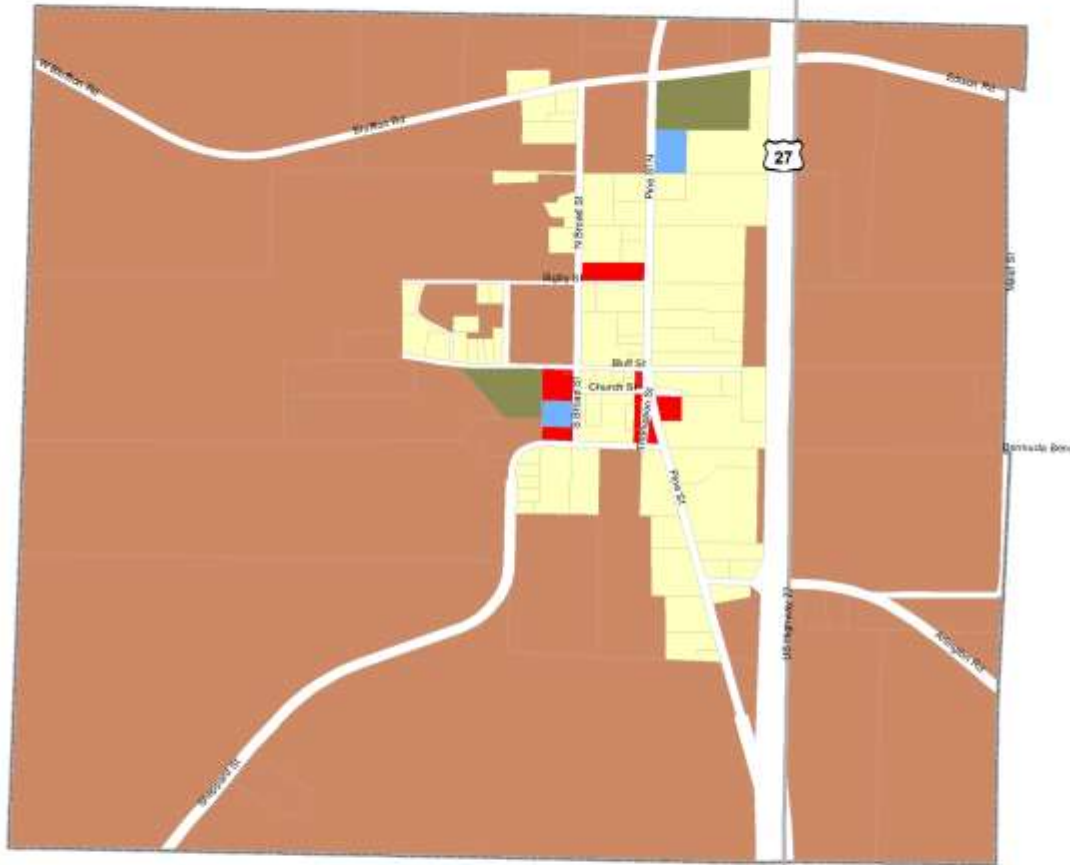
An analysis of existing development patterns provides an understanding of how land is used at a specific point in time. Identifying existing land use is the first step in gaining an understanding of not only what land uses exist and where they are but how they interact.

One challenge facing Bluffton is the expansion of U.S. Hwy. 27 to a four-lane highway. Better access along this US Highway will increase pressure to develop the primarily agricultural land adjacent to the road with commercial properties. In this area, the city will need to balance the loss of prime agricultural land with the lack of existing commercial businesses to serve the resident population. Targeting commercial development first to major intersections with the use of buffers and landscaping around paved areas will help balance these needs.

The popularity of the local-grown/organic food movement is also a development trend in Bluffton. This movement has spurred the growth of many agri-businesses. White Oak Pastures in the southern part of the city is one such business that has grown exponentially in the last few years. With immediate access to U.S. Hwy. 27 and strategic planning done by this farm owner, White Oak Pastures is poised for continued economic progress. Issues facing Bluffton regarding the development of more such agri-businesses is primarily the need for workforce housing and, secondly, infrastructure that will allow visitors' safe-enjoyment of agri-tourism endeavors.

Another agri-tourism endeavor in Bluffton is the horse arena at the local park. Horse shows and team penning are some of the events held at the arena in Bluffton. As with White Oak Pastures, the city needs to develop infrastructure to protect visitors and enhance their experience. By doing so, Bluffton can foster new businesses targeted to the event participants.

Bluffton, Georgia Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Parks, Recreation, Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation, Communication, Utility



©: ClayCo\Fig\airm\EL\2019.mxd

Future Land Use

Areas Requiring Special Attention

Areas Where Development is Likely to Occur

The major growth area in Bluffton is along U.S. Hwy. 27 and in the southern part of the city around White Oak Pastures.

Significant Natural Resources

The natural environment places certain opportunities and constraints on the way land is used. Soil conditions, slopes, flood frequency and wetlands all affect where development can safely and feasibly occur. In Bluffton, development of areas adjacent to and affecting important underground aquifers should be reviewed for compliance with state and local ordinances and regulations.

Acreeage of Parks, Recreation, Conservation Lands in Clay County			
	Total Park, Recreation, Conservation Land Use (Acres)	Designated Wildlife Management Areas, State Parks, Natural Areas (Acres)	Local Parks and Conservation Areas (Acres)
Clay	1,824.60	1,066.56	758.04

Source: RVRC Regional Plan 2013

Water Supply Watersheds

Overall, Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines fall within the Lower Middle Chattahoochee Watershed. Within the county itself, there are seven (7) watersheds of moderate size. The Town of Bluffton is within the Spring Creek-Perry Creek Watershed and the Chattahoochee River-Kolomoki Creek Watershed. The City of Fort Gaines lies within the Chattahoochee River-Cemochechobee Creek Watershed. Unincorporated Clay County falls within these watersheds, but also includes the Chattahoochee River-Walter F. George Reservoir Watershed, Chattahoochee River-Barbour Creek Watershed, Pachitla Creek-Little Pachitla Creek Watershed, and the Pataula Creek Watershed.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Clay County is located in the Southern Coastal Plain Province. This is a very important groundwater recharge area. There are seven major aquifer systems in the Coastal Plain Province. Clay County is located over the Cretaceous-Tertiary aquifer system. The Cretaceous-Tertiary aquifer system, which includes the Providence and Clayton aquifer systems, is an interconnected group of sub-systems that developed in the Late Cretaceous sands of the Coastal Plain Province. (Donahue, Groundwater Quality in Georgia for 2002).

Wetlands

Wetlands can be broken into four distinct categories: Open Water Wetlands, Scrub/Shrub Wetlands, Forested Wetlands, and Non-Forested Emergent Wetlands. In Clay County, there are 4,535.11 acres of Forested Wetlands, 392.69 acres of Non-forested Emergent Wetlands, 1,102.05 acres of Scrub/Shrub Wetlands, and 14,439.96 acres of Open Water Wetlands.

Soil Types

Clay County is within the Southern Coastal Plain Major Land Resource Area (MLRA-133A). The surface relief ranges from almost level and gently sloping to steep. Slopes range from 0 to 5 percent in the more nearly level areas and from 15 to 45 percent in the hilly and steep areas. Good surface drainage prevails, except for in the lower-lying depressions and in areas along streams. Most of the soils are located on uplands, are well drained, and have a sandy or loamy surface layer and a loamy or clayey subsoil. Other soils on uplands are nearly level and less well drained and have a sandy surface layer and loamy subsoil or a loamy surface layer and clayey subsoil. Nearly level, poorly drained soils are in depressions or on flood plains near streams. The soils on flood plains are loamy or clayey throughout.

Steep Slopes

The topography of Clay County also places constraints and limitations on placement of development. Much of the county has slopes exceeding 25%. Areas of 3% and less are found along the Chattahoochee River in the western part of the county and in patches in the southeastern section of the county.

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. There are 138,880 acres of land in Clay County. In the county, 44,566 acres are identified as farmland with 21,347 acres in harvest crops. The main crops in Clay County are cotton and peanuts. Corn, rye, grain sorghum, wheat, and some oats and millet are also grown in Clay County.

Significant Cultural Resources

A county-wide historic resources survey has been completed. There are no individually listed National Register Historic Properties in the City of Bluffton. There are also no National Register Historic Districts or archaeological National Register Historic Sites in the City of Bluffton.

Bluffton has not enacted a historic preservation ordinance or appointed a historic preservation commission; therefore, they are not eligible for the Certified Local Government program administered by the National Park Service nor are they eligible for the Historic Preservation Fund grant program offered through the State Historic Preservation Office. While an inventory of the historic sites, structures, and objects within the county's borders was completed in 1998, there is no county-wide government entity to sponsor National Register listings, oversee the application for survey funds, maintain an inventory of local historic resources, and attempt to preserve endangered resources. At present, the Fort Gaines Historic Society (a county-wide not-for-profit) and individual, private citizens carry out these goals.

Areas Where Development May Outpace Availability of Facilities & Services

The U.S. Hwy. 27 Corridor presents a challenge for Bluffton. Better access along this U.S. Highway will increase pressure to develop the primarily agricultural land adjacent to the road with commercial properties. While the city has public water, it does not have public sewer, nor any development codes to guide growth in this area.

Areas with Significant In-fill Development Opportunities

In-fill opportunities exist in and around Bluffton. Overall, in-fill opportunities within the city limits are good, because of available public water. However, some existing vacant lots should be kept for park and open space.

Brownfields

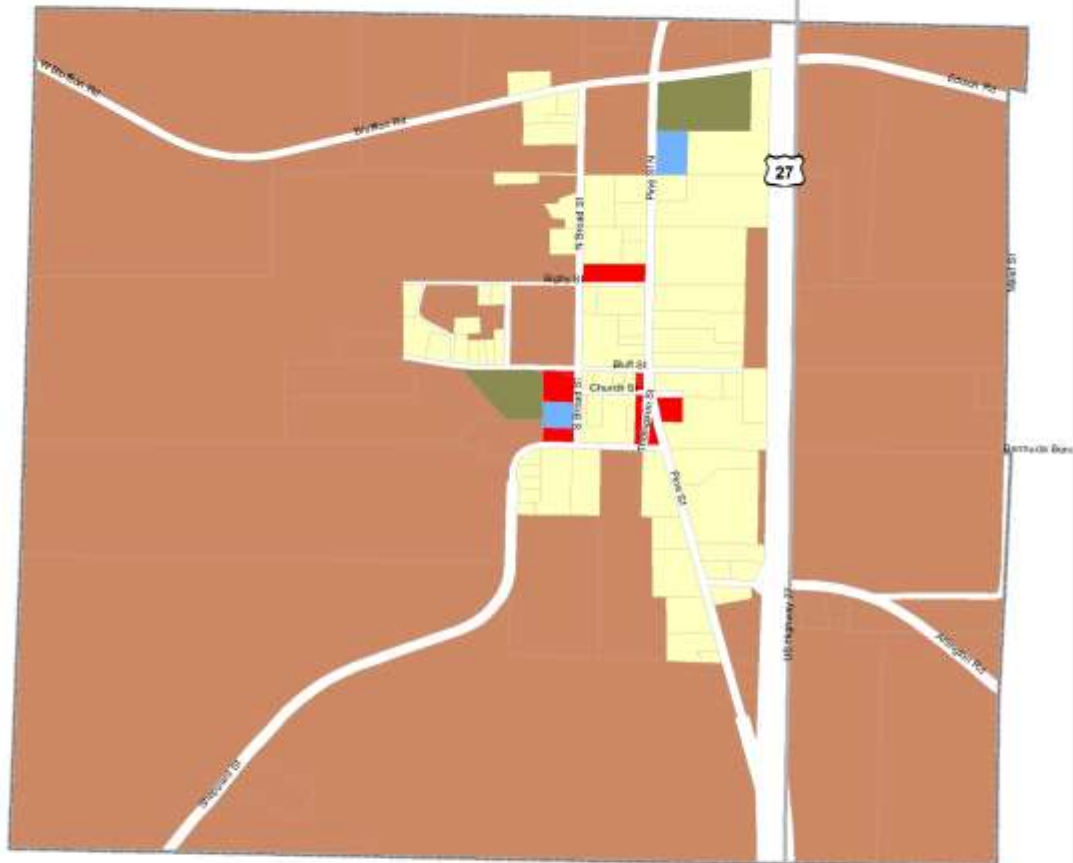
In general terms, Brownfield's are abandoned or underused industrial or commercial properties where redevelopment is complicated by actual or perceived environmental contamination. There is no requirement on size, location, age or past use for Brownfield's. Some issues involving Brownfield's are the potential to cause harm to the population and the environment, the reduction in employment opportunities and tax revenue, the increase in illegal dumping, and the reduction in the property value for the surrounding area. Redeveloping Brownfield's can restore property to productive use, increase property values, improve public health and the environment, and utilize existing public infrastructure and increasing job opportunities and local tax revenues.

Potential Brownfield's in Bluffton consist of mostly junk yards, old gas stations, and property with abandoned vehicles and equipment.

Areas of Disinvestment

All communities have areas of disinvestment or areas in need of improvement; Bluffton is no different. Market forces should stabilize or improve most of the areas in need of revitalization. However in some cases a public/private partnership will be needed to make improvements happen.

Bluffton, Georgia Future Land Use



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Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria

The first Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan was adopted by the Georgia General Assembly in January 2008. The State Water Plan included a provision to create ten water planning regions across the state, each guided by a regional water planning council. The intent of the State Water Plan was to prepare a regional water development and conservation plan to manage water resources in a sustainable manner through 2050 incorporating input from state agencies, other regional water planning councils, local governments, watershed stakeholders and the public. Clay County along with ten other counties and thirty-four incorporated municipalities comprised the Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Planning Council. Clay County touches the Chattahoochee River and is part of the Appalachian-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin.

During the planning process, the Council identified and recommended twenty-one management practices that would insure compliance with state law and progress toward a sustainable future. The practices considered of the highest priority are included in the table below.

Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Plan
High Priority Management Practices
○ Support implementation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 conservation activities.
○ Encourage use of point source discharges for wastewater treatment effluent disposal for major facilities (greater than one million gallons per day).
○ Study the development of new and/or enhancement of existing surface water storage reservoirs.
○ Implement new and/or enhance existing surface water storage as necessary.
○ Utilize and improve upon reservoir release quantity and timing in the Chattahoochee River to maintain and/or improve water quality in the Chattahoochee River below the Columbus planning node.
○ Advocate for changes to the US Army COE Water Control Manual for the ACF basin.
○ Improved water quality monitoring to provide the data for water quality improvements in the future (increased number of collection sites, increased monitoring frequency and parameters sampled).

Source: Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Plan

Community Work Program

Town of Bluffton Report of Accomplishments 2014 – 2018		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Partner with White Oak Pastures to clean vacant lots and provide workforce housing.	Underway	Some properties acquired and cleaned up, but work is ongoing. This will carry over to the new work program.
Contract with Smith Big Hat Productions to lease and maintain the Bluffton Arena.	Completed/ongoing	This was accomplished, and continuing this activity will carry over to the next work program.
Partner with White Oak Pastures on agritourism events and initiatives.	Completed/ongoing	This was accomplished, and the Town of Bluffton will continue this activity on the next work program.
Apply for grant funds to renovate the historic Bluffton store into a museum.	Modified/completed	The store was renovated and now functions as part of White Oak Pastures' operations.
Apply for grant funds to restore the Old Bluffton Jail.	Postponed	Project delayed due to lack of funds. This will carry over to the next work program.
Install four historic signs in Bluffton.	Underway	Sign installation has begun, but not complete due to lack of funds.
Update and maintain a community Facebook page and notice board at the post office.	Completed	Both items accomplished; maintaining them will carry over to the next work program.
Develop passive recreation opportunities at the Bluff.	Underway	Some progress has been made, but it has been temporarily halted since Hurricane Michael struck Bluffton in 2018.
Maintain and upgrade equipment and amenities at the City Park.	Completed	This activity is complete and will not carry over to the next work program.
Maintain and upgrade city water system.	Underway	Bluffton has applied for funding for water system improvements. They intend to continue doing so on the next work program.
Purchase back-up generators for the water system and other critical facilities in the city limits.	Underway	Bluffton has applied for a GEMA grant for a generator for the water system. They also plan to pursue other funding sources for critical facilities in the next work program.
Install new street signs.	Completed	Bluffton has installed several new street signs. This will not carry over to the next work program.

Activity	Status	Explanation
Make street improvements, sidewalk improvements, and beautify Broad St., Pine St., and downtown Bluffton with landscaping, pedestrian-bicycle amenities, and streetlights.	Postponed	Lack of funding. This item will carry over to the next work program.
Promote appropriate development and enhance aesthetics along US Highway 27.	Underway	US 27 received a Purple Heart Highway designation. Other development and aesthetic improvements will carry over to the new work program.
Nominate Bluffton to the National Register of Historic Places.	Postponed	The personnel spearheading this project relocated, and there is currently no replacement for them. This item will carry over to the next work program.
Discourage incompatible land uses and signage within the historic area.	Underway	This is an ongoing activity that will carry over to the next work program.
Encourage infill residential development within established neighborhoods that is architecturally compatible with existing housing.	Underway	White Oak Pastures has purchased housing for their workforce and kept it compatible with existing housing; this is otherwise an ongoing activity that will carry over to the next work program.
Encourage safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing housing for all residents	Underway	Bluffton continues to encourage safe, aesthetically pleasing housing throughout the community. This will carry over to the next work program.
Encourage local schools to use the cultural, historic and natural resources of Bluffton for educational purposes.	Completed	Andrew College in Cuthbert has established an educational partnership with White Oak Pastures.
Promote an adequate, efficient, and appropriate mix of goods at the main intersections along US Highway 27	Underway	Not much development has occurred, but Bluffton continues to encourage this sort of development along US 27. This item will carry over to the next work program.
Support regional/state tourism alliances to increase the number of visitors.	Underway	Bluffton continues to support tourism alliances to attract more visitors to town. This will carry over to the next work program.

Activity	Status	Explanation
Adopt and enforce a protection plan for wetlands.	Completed.	This has been accomplished and will not be carried over to the next work program.

Bluffton - Community Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Apply for grant funds to restore old Bluffton Jail					X	Bluffton Council	\$200,000	City funds Private funds USDA GDEcD DNR
Maintain an online presence for Bluffton by continuing to update and utilize Facebook and the notice board in the post office	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council; local citizens; local churches	\$0	City funds, volunteer citizens
Develop passive recreation opportunities at the Bluff.		X	X	X		Bluffton Council, White Oak Pastures, Local Citizens	\$50,000	City funds, Private funds, DNR, USDA
Maintain and upgrade city water system.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council GA Rural Water	\$750,000	City Funds, CDBG, USDA

Bluffton - Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Repair sidewalks.		X	X			Bluffton Council GDOT	\$50,000	City funds, LMIG, TSPLOST
Purchase back-up generators for the water system and other critical facilities in the city limits.	X	X	X			Bluffton Council VFD Clay County EMA Clay County BOC	\$10,000	City funds, County funds, USDA, GEMA
Nominate Bluffton to the National Register of Historic Places.			X			Bluffton Council, Volunteers	\$20,000	City funds
Discourage incompatible land uses and signage within the historic area.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council RVRC	\$25,000	City funds

Bluffton – Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Encourage infill residential development within established neighborhoods that is architecturally compatible with existing housing.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council RVRC	\$25,000	City funds, CDBG, USDA
Encourage safe, effective, aesthetically pleasing housing for all residents.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council	\$30,000	City funds, private funds, CDBG, USDA
Replace water meters.		X		X		Bluffton Council GA Rural Water	\$200,000	City funds, CDBG, GEFA
Map the town water system.			X			Bluffton Council	\$50,000	City funds, USDA

Bluffton – Community Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Replace fire hydrants throughout Bluffton and install additional hydrants.		X		X		Bluffton Council GA Rural Water	\$200,000	City funds, CDBG, USDA, GEFA
Replace water lines throughout Bluffton, and install larger mains where demand is higher.		X		X		Bluffton Council GA Rural Water	\$500,000	City funds, CDBG, GEFA
Maintain water storage tanks.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council	\$50,000	City funds
Drill a new well.		X		X		Bluffton Council, GA Rural Water	\$200,000	City funds, CDBG, GEFA

Bluffton – Community Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Continue disaster cleanup efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael.	X					Bluffton Council Clay County GEMA Volunteers	\$250,000	FEMA/GEMA
Make improvements to Bluffton Town Hall			X			Bluffton Council	\$25,000	City Funds
Improve fire station, purchase new breathing apparatuses, and purchase thermal imaging camera		X	X	X		Bluffton Council, Clay County, VFD	\$60,000	City funds, county funds, USDA, other grants

Bluffton – Community Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Partner with White Oak Pastures to clean vacant lots and provide workforce housing.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council White Oak Pastures Clay County BOC	\$500,000	City funds County funds USDA/CDBG Private funds
Continue contracting with Smith Big Hat Productions to lease and maintain the Bluffton Arena	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council, Smith Big Hat Productions, Clay County	\$5,000	City funds Private funds Event proceeds
Continue partnership with White Oak Pastures on agritourism initiatives	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council, White Oak Pastures	\$5,000	City funds Private funds GDEcD
Install four historic signs in Bluffton.			X			Bluffton Council, Citizens, Churches	\$16,000	City funds, Private funds, GHS, HCC, GDNR

Bluffton – Community Work Program 2019-2023								
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Make street improvements, sidewalk improvements, and beautify Broad St., Pine St., and downtown Bluffton with landscaping, bicycle/pedestrian amenities, and street lights.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council	\$250,000	City funds, TSPLOST
Continue to promote appropriate development and enhance aesthetics along US Highway 27.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council Clay County EDC	Staff Time	City funds, TSPLOST
Begin offering evening GED classes at Bluffton Town Hall with Albany Technical College.		X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council Albany Technical College WIOA	\$50,000	City funds, Albany Tech, WIOA
Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods and services at the main intersections along US Highway 27	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council Clay County EDC	\$50,000	City funds, private funds, USDA

Bluffton – Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Support regional/state tourism alliances to increase the number of visitors to Bluffton.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council Clay County EDC RVRC	\$5,000	City Funds, GDEcD
Apply for any available incentives to facilitate improvements to current broadband infrastructure.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council	\$50,000	City funds, Private funds, Grant funds
Contract with Smith Big Hat Productions to lease and maintain the Bluffton Arena.	X	X	X	X	X	Bluffton Council Smith Big Hat Productions	\$5,000	City Funds, Private funds, Event Proceeds

City of Fort Gaines



Community Vision

Fort Gaines Vision Statement

The City of Fort Gaines is dedicated to increasing the quality of life for all citizens while maintaining our friendly, small-town, rural lifestyle. Downtown Fort Gaines will evolve into a vital pedestrian, bicycle, and golf cart friendly community with a healthy mix of retail, services, restaurants, and residences. We are committed to fostering a spirit of communication and cooperation between the governing bodies to achieve our goals: broadening the tax base with environmentally friendly business and industry; providing more employment options to allow citizens to both live and work within the community; and increase the educated workforce. We aspire to become a place of unity and total community involvement where all citizens are actively engaged in shaping the community's future.

Community Goals and Policies

Fort Gaines has adopted the following policies to provide ongoing guidance and direction to officials for making decisions consistent with achieving their Community Vision and addressing identified Needs and Opportunities. These policies will guide the City of Fort Gaines in future development decisions. The framework for decisions to be made about the future development of Fort Gaines by investors and public officials will be provided by these policies. This section is organized with a broad community goal statement followed by policies for guidance.

Planning

- Operate and maintain a sound and efficient planning system which guides and assists in continued development.
 - Pursue, promote and encourage a close relationship between Clay County and the Cities of Bluffton and Fort Gaines and other agencies and authorities regarding mutual growth and development concerns including, but not limited to: comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivision regulations, extension of public water and sanitary sewer services, storm drainage, annexation, water management, environmental issues, cultural resources, and other related matters.
 - Pursue, promote and encourage coordination of the plans of several public boards, agencies, commissions, and other authorities in accordance with Fort Gaines policies and programs, to enhance mutual understanding and improve decision-making.
 - In Fort Gaines, development plans (i.e. subdivisions, PUDs, etc.) should have architectural and site plans reviewed and approved by the planning and zoning commission prior to the granting of final approval.

Land Use

- Make balanced and efficient use of land appropriate with the resource base and the health, safety and welfare of the residents.
 - Discourage incompatible land uses, adjacent or within residential areas.
 - Encourage safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing residential developments.
 - Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
 - Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.
 - Prohibit the disposal of hazardous waste within Fort Gaines.

- Protect residential areas and their residents from incompatible land uses and their associated activities.
 - Encourage and support the review of all development ordinances such as zoning, subdivision regulations, historic preservation ordinances, building codes, etc. to ensure that there is no conflict in any of the ordinances.
 - Discourage incompatible land uses, adjacent or within residential areas.
 - Encourage safe, effective and aesthetically pleasing residential developments.



Example: Land Use Map

Community Facilities

- Improve and extend the public water system to better serve the current and future population.
 - Encourage those water system extensions that would support or encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents and employees.



Example: Water Pipes

- Develop and maintain a water system maintenance program for each public water system to increase efficiency and operational longevity.
- Maintain existing sewerage system to serve all adjacent development areas.
 - Develop and maintain public sewer system maintenance programs to increase the efficiency and operational longevity.
 - Encourage those sanitary sewer system extensions that would support or encourage new development in areas appropriate for such activities by reason of policy and the health, safety and welfare of residents and employees.
 - Encourage coordination between Clay County and Fort Gaines for the expansion of the public sewer system.

Housing

- Protect residents from significant hazards to life, health and property.
 - Prohibit structural uses in areas where significant hazards to health, safety, life and property exist.
 - Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage infill residential development within established neighborhoods that is architecturally compatible with existing housing.
 - Encourage owners of substandard housing units to improve their properties through use of every available means, including adopting and enforcing codes and ordinances, providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.



Example: Historically Appropriate Infill Housing

- Encourage and support the development of an ordinance that will require owners of deteriorating unoccupied structures to either demolish or remove the structure or pay a fine sufficient to cover the cost of demolishing/removing the structure.
- Encourage and support the removal of deteriorating unoccupied structures that serve as a fire hazard and a magnet for crime and drugs.

- Encourage and support construction of new housing citywide to meet local housing demand
 - Promote affordable housing.
 - Develop and support more housing opportunities citywide to help the city become more desirable as a place of residence.
 - Encourage innovative housing citywide compatible with the city’s policies.
 - Encourage and promote development and construction of desirable infill housing, such as duplexes and cottages, designed to fit the context of the existing neighborhood, so long as all other basic development criteria may be met.
 - Encourage mixed use developments in Downtown Fort Gaines.

- Improve and expand the existing housing stock for all income levels.
 - Strive for the elimination of housing discrimination and promote fair housing practices.
 - Promote and encourage more affordable housing opportunities.
 - Support continued improvement of existing housing conditions through all available public and private means.
 - Encourage owners of substandard units to improve their properties through the use of every available means including adopting and enforcing codes and ordinances, providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.
 - Conserve existing housing stock insofar as practical through rehabilitation and improvement of substandard housing units that are suitable for repair.
 - Encourage and support the development of a Joint Code Enforcement Program between Clay County and Fort Gaines which will provide for a Building Inspector/ Code Enforcement program.
 - Support enforcement of existing building codes and nuisance ordinances.
 - Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.
 - Strive to improve the quality of development along the Chattahoochee River. █



Code Enforcement Officer

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Conserve and maintain shared green spaces for recreation and natural resources preservation in expanding residential neighborhoods.
 - Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.
 - Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.

- Discourage residential development in areas designated as having critical environmental hazards such as floodplain and severe slopes.



Example: Conservation Subdivision

- Promote and preserve the existing sense of place in Fort Gaines through the promotion of historic resources.
 - Support economic development that is compatible with existing businesses and the tourist industry.
 - Promote and encourage recruitment of a diversity of businesses to provide a broad economic base.
 - Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods and services in the Central Business District.
 - Encourage the rehabilitation of storefronts in the Central Business District.
- Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources in order to make Fort Gaines an attractive place in which to live, work and enjoy.
 - Conserve, maintain and promote the natural, historic and cultural resources of Fort Gaines.
 - Encourage maximum use of the city's natural resources while maintaining sound environmental protection practices.
 - Encourage and promote land use and development that respects natural limitation of flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands and limiting soil types.
 - Encourage the use of flood prone areas for passive recreation and other appropriate open space uses.
 - Discourage the obstruction of scenic views and sites in the city.
 - Encourage the development of service facilities to meet the needs of the hunting/fishing sector of the economy.
 - Establish natural habitats for a variety of wildlife.
 - Develop and promote additional competitions and festivals targeted to the hunting/fishing market.
 - Encourage the development of the Clay/Quitman/Stewart County's Scenic Byways Designation.

- Prohibit the systematic neglect of structures that lead to the blight and decay of the countryside.

■ Conserve, maintain and promote the cultural, historic and natural resources to provide a variety of educational experiences.

- Support the development of additional cultural resources that will aid in the understanding of local heritage.
- Encourage the further development of Frontier Village, Coleman’s Opera House Museum and Sutton’s Corners Museum.



Lodge at George T. Bagby State Park

- Support regional tourism alliances with other counties and other facilities (such as Bagby State Park or Kolomoki Mounds State Park) to promote existing and future natural, historic and cultural resources to increase the number of visitors.
- Encourage local schools to use these facilities as outdoor classrooms.

■ Encourage and Support the provision of educational and recreational opportunities for residents of Fort Gaines.

- Encourage and support the expansion of Adult Education opportunities in Fort Gaines.
- Encourage and support the expansion of services at the library in Fort Gaines.
- Encourage and support the activities of the Clay County School System to educate the children of Fort Gaines.



Kolomoki Indian Mounds State Park

- Support and encourage the provision of recreational and fine arts opportunities for the residents of Fort Gaines.
- Encourage the collaboration between the Clay County Board of Education and the Fort Gaines City Council on the use of School System facilities for County/City Recreation i.e. ball fields, gymnasiums, etc.
- Encourage and support the development of opportunities to share the fine arts with the community, i.e. art shows, theatrical presentations, musicals, etc.
- Encourage and support the efforts of the healthcare community in Fort Gaines.

Transportation

■ Improve and extend the street and highway system to promote safe, efficient and well-maintained access to property in the City of Fort Gaines and on through routes for local and regional travelers.

- Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads to fit, rather than dominate, topography and other site conditions. Encourage the development of bike paths and sidewalks throughout the neighborhoods.

- Provide for safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services in and around Fort Gaines.
- Minimize conflicts between local and through traffic using every available means.
- Provide for timely maintenance and improvement of streets.
- Promote and enhance the highway and commercial corridors in Fort Gaines.
 - Encourage the implementation of a Gateways Program in Fort Gaines.
 - Encourage landscaping of parking areas and incorporation of on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements.
 - Encourage and support the development of a Sign Ordinance for the City of Fort Gaines.
 - Encourage and support the review of all development ordinances such as zoning, subdivision regulations, Historic Preservation Ordinances, etc. to ensure that there is no conflict in any of the ordinances.
 - Encourage and support the development of a Joint Code Enforcement Program between Clay County and Fort Gaines which will provide for a Building Inspector/ Code Enforcement program.
 - Encourage and support the development of a uniform building permit process including application forms and review criteria.



Example: Downtown Landscape Concept Design

Economic Development

- Support economic development that is compatible with the highway service industry.
 - Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods at the main intersections along GA 39.
 - Encourage development on sites that are served by water and sewer.

 - Promote the Central Business District in the Fort Gaines as the primary commercial and cultural center of Clay County.
 - Encourage and support the efforts of Fort Gaines to make improvements to the downtown including streetscapes, addition of bicycle lanes and racks, and renovation/restoration of public buildings.
 - Support the location and maintenance of desirable and suitable entertainment facilities downtown.
 - Encourage cultural events, i.e. art shows, fairs, and other attractions in the Central Business District.
 - Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures.
 - Preserve historic and cultural buildings and monuments.
 - Provide daily clean-up services in the downtown areas.
 - Encourage Citizens to Shop Locally.
- Make business hours more compatible to fit the needs of local shoppers.
- Encourage merchants to sell items that are bought most frequently.
 - Encourage merchants to sell items unique to Clay County and/or the State of Georgia.
-
- Improve the existing built environment.
 - Encourage and promote development and construction of desirable infill development designed to fit the context of the existing neighborhoods, so long as all other basic development criteria may be met.
 - Encourage landscaping of new parking lots to minimize visual impact.
 - Encourage revitalization of vacant or under-utilized buildings using public and/or private resources.



Building Rehab Before



Building Rehab After

Community Needs and Opportunities

Quality Community Objectives

Fort Gaines has reviewed the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Quality Community Objectives. These objectives were adopted to guide this Comprehensive Plan Update and the future growth, development and redevelopment of Fort Gaines. These objectives will assist community leaders in making local government decisions that affect the county's future land use patterns, environmental and historical resources, and economic development. These objectives will provide the framework needed in order to make well-informed decisions.

Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; instituting programs to provide housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

Transportation Options

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

Educational Opportunities

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

Community Health

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents; instituting programs to foster better health and fitness; or providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

Identified Needs and Opportunities

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSL in City • Bagby State Park • Golf course • Inexpensive real estate • The citizens • Rich history • Tourism • Cotton Hill Campground • School (good facility and teachers) • Mound artifacts currently stored in Columbus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food bank • Lack of employment opportunities • Need a good multi-purpose recreational facility • Need more/better playgrounds for children • Better communication for public involvement (local announcements via social media, website, etc.) • Need for housing redevelopment/removal of abandoned/dilapidated homes • Need for rehab/removal of dilapidated commercial structures • More transit options needed in the community • No entertainment amenities • Infrastructure needs (sidewalk repair, water pipes, water tanks, sewage treatment) • No broadband internet access in the county • Code enforcement handled by police • No animal control/shelter (possible partnership with Blakely?) • Lack of initiative in population to pursue training/educational opportunities • Few activities for children in the community • Need an event center (school is currently used, but events are taxing on the facilities/staff)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better utilization of Bagby lodge, golf course, etc. • Business development strategies • Development of a website • Possible citywide WiFi • Opportunities for new tradespeople as some in town age and retire • Co-op/business incubator • Large piece of land by lake for future retirement home • Night classes/adult education at high school • Exploration of how Fort Gaines can benefit from hydroelectric installation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax base decreased significantly • Medical/healthcare services need help—1 doctor in the county, and the only pharmacy is closing

Land Use

Existing Land Use

Maximizing land development opportunities while protecting natural resources is an important goal for Fort Gaines. Key challenges for county officials include protecting natural resources while encouraging development and establishing an effective mix of appropriate land uses. Housing is the primary land use in Fort Gaines. Both single-family detached housing and multi-family options are available for city residents. Industrial land use comes in second at 23.04% of land in Fort Gaines. Industrial uses are located predominantly along the state highway corridors.

The following figure illustrates the acreage and percent of total land in the city’s dedicated to existing land uses. Acreage totals do not include roads.

Fort Gaines Existing Land Use		
	Acres	Percent of Total
Residential (low density)	1,368.87	45.16%
Residential (high density)	88.09	2.91%
Agriculture/Forestry	86.56	2.86%
Transportation	284.57	9.39%
Communication		
Utilities		
Parks	38.23	1.26%
Recreation		
Conservation		
Public/Institutional	276.66	9.13%
Industrial	698.34	23.04%
Commercial	189.85	6.26%
Total	3,031.15	100.00%
Source: RVRC Regional Plan		

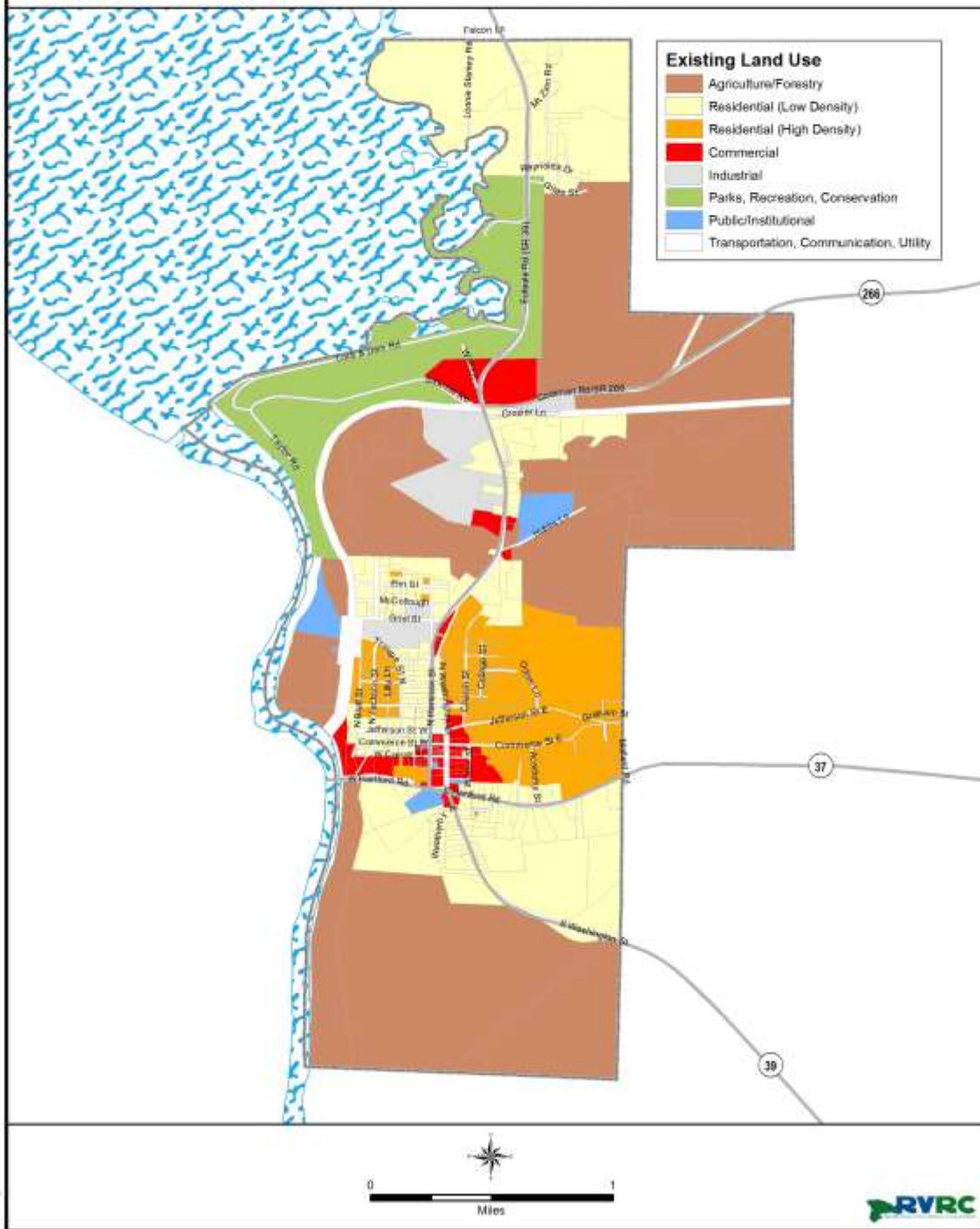
Development Patterns

An analysis of existing development patterns provides an understanding of how land is used at a specific point in time. Identifying existing land use is the first step in gaining an understanding of not only what land uses exist and where they are but how they interact.

A major development trend in Fort Gaines is the potential growth around George Bagby State Park and

Lake Walter F. George. In this area, the city faces many development issues related to growth, including availability of public utilities (water/sewer) and adequate road capacity and condition (paved roads/dirt roads). The Fort Gaines City Council will need to balance desired growth with its effects on the natural beauty that makes this part of Fort Gaines desirable and potential negative impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.

Fort Gaines, Georgia Existing Land Use



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Future Land Use

Areas Requiring Special Attention

Areas Where Development is Likely to Occur

The major growth area in Fort Gaines is in the north section of the city toward George Bagby State Park. Fort Gaines has extended water and sewer lines to the park and increased capacity for new services in that area.

Significant Natural Resources

The natural environment places certain opportunities and constraints on the way land is used. Soil conditions, slopes, flood frequency and wetlands all affect where development can safely and feasibly occur. In Fort Gaines, development of areas adjacent to and affecting the Chattahoochee River should be reviewed for compliance with state and local ordinances and regulations.

Acreeage of Parks, Recreation, Conservation Lands in Clay County			
	Total Park, Recreation, Conservation Land Use (Acres)	Designated Wildlife Management Areas, State Parks, Natural Areas (Acres)	Local Parks and Conservation Areas (Acres)
Clay	1,824.60	1,066.56	758.04

Source: RVRC Regional Plan 2013

Water Supply Watersheds

Overall, Clay County, Bluffton, and Fort Gaines fall within the Lower Middle Chattahoochee Watershed. Within the county itself, there are seven (7) watersheds of moderate size. The Town of Bluffton is within the Spring Creek-Perry Creek Watershed and the Chattahoochee River-Kolomoki Creek Watershed. The City of Fort Gaines lies within the Chattahoochee River-Cemochechobee Creek Watershed. Unincorporated Clay County falls within these watersheds, but also includes the Chattahoochee River-Walter F. George Reservoir Watershed, Chattahoochee River-Barbour Creek Watershed, Pachitla Creek-Little Pachitla Creek Watershed, and the Pataula Creek Watershed. See Fort Gaines Water Supply Watersheds Map in the Appendix for specifics.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Clay County is located in the Southern Coastal Plain Province. This is a very important groundwater recharge area. There are seven major aquifer systems in the Coastal Plain Province. While the southern portion of Clay County is located over the Cretaceous-Tertiary aquifer system; Fort Gaines is not within that groundwater recharge area. See Fort Gaines Groundwater Recharge Areas Map in the Appendix for specifics.

Wetlands

Wetlands can be broken into four distinct categories: Open Water Wetlands, Scrub/Shrub Wetlands,

Forested Wetlands, and Non-Forested Emergent Wetlands. In Clay County, there are 4,535.11 acres of Forested Wetlands, 392.69 acres of Non-forested Emergent Wetlands, 1,102.05 acres of Scrub/Shrub Wetlands, and 14,439.96 acres of Open Water Wetlands. See Fort Gaines Wetlands Map in the Appendix for specifics.

Soil Types

Clay County is within the Southern Coastal Plain Major Land Resource Area (MLRA-133A). The surface relief ranges from almost level and gently sloping to steep. Slopes range from 0 to 5 percent in the more nearly level areas and from 15 to 45 percent in the hilly and steep areas. Good surface drainage prevails, except for in the lower-lying depressions and in areas along streams. Most of the soils are located on uplands, are well drained, and have a sandy or loamy surface layer and a loamy or clayey subsoil. Other soils on uplands are nearly level and less well drained and have a sandy surface layer and loamy subsoil or a loamy surface layer and clayey subsoil. Nearly level, poorly drained soils are in depressions or on flood plains near streams. The soils on flood plains are loamy or clayey throughout. See Fort Gaines Soils Map in the Appendix for specifics.

Steep Slopes

The topography of Clay County also places constraints and limitations on placement of development. Much of the county has slopes exceeding 25%. Areas of 3% and less are found along the Chattahoochee River in the western part of the county and in patches in the southeastern section of the county. See Fort Gaines Slopes Map in the Appendix for specifics.

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. There are 138,880 acres of land in Clay County. In the county, 44,566 acres are identified as farmland with 21,347 acres in harvest crops. The main crops in Clay County are cotton and peanuts. Corn, rye, grain sorghum, wheat, and some oats and millet are also grown in Clay County.

Significant Cultural Resources

A county-wide historic resources survey has been completed. There is one individually listed National Register Historic Property in the City of Fort Gaines: The Dill House (102 S. Washington Street). The Clay County Courthouse is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of a Multiple Resource Nomination for all the Courthouses in the State of Georgia. The Fort Gaines National Register Historic District, the only district, is bounded by the Chattahoochee River, GA Hwy 37, GA Hwy 39, College, Commerce, and Jefferson Streets. Fort Gaines also has one archaeological National Register Historic Site: the Fort Gaines Cemetery or Pioneer Cemetery.

The City of Fort Gaines completed a revitalization study of its downtown area in 2006. Fort Gaines has not enacted a historic preservation ordinance or appointed a historic preservation commission; therefore, they are not eligible for the Certified Local Government program administered by the National Park Service nor are they eligible for the Historic Preservation Fund grant program offered through the State Historic Preservation Office. While an inventory of the historic sites, structures, and objects within the county's borders was completed in 1998, there is no county-wide government entity to sponsor National Register listings, oversee the application for survey funds, maintain an inventory of local historic resources, and attempt to preserve endangered resources. At present, the Fort Gaines

Historic Society (a county-wide not-for-profit) and individual, private citizens carry out these goals.

Areas Where Development May Outpace Availability of Facilities & Services

The City of Fort Gaines ran water and sewer lines to the northern section of the city around George Bagby State Park. Fort Gaines has also increased their capacity to provide service to this area in expectation of future growth.

Areas with Significant In-fill Development Opportunities

In-fill opportunities exist in and around Fort Gaines. Overall, in-fill opportunities within the city limits are good, because of available public water and public sewer. However, some existing vacant lots should be kept for park and open space.

Brownfields

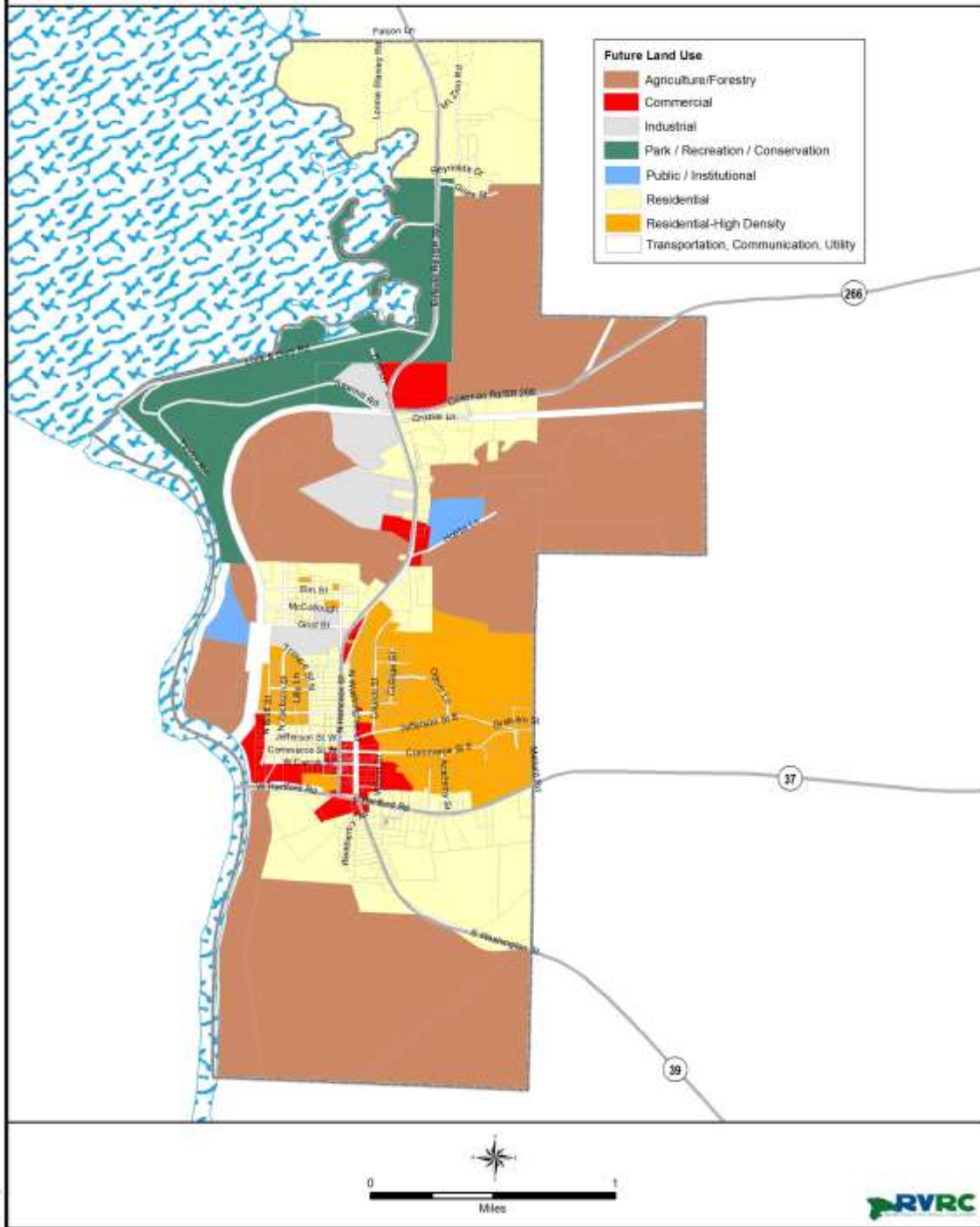
In general terms, Brownfields are abandoned or underused industrial or commercial properties where redevelopment is complicated by actual or perceived environmental contamination. There is no requirement on size, location, age or past use for Brownfields. Some issues involving Brownfields are the potential to cause harm to the population and the environment, the reduction in employment opportunities and tax revenue, the increase in illegal dumping, and the reduction in the property value for the surrounding area. Redeveloping Brownfields can restore property to productive use, increase property values, improve public health and the environment, and utilize existing public infrastructure and increasing job opportunities and local tax revenues.

Potential Brownfields in Fort Gaines consist of mostly junk yards, old gas stations, and property with abandoned vehicles and equipment.

Areas of Disinvestment

All communities have areas of disinvestment or areas in need of improvement Fort Gaines is no different. Market forces over time will stabilize or improve most of the areas in need of revitalization. However in some cases a public/private partnership will be needed to make improvements happen.

Fort Gaines, Georgia Future Land Use



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Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria

The first Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan was adopted by the Georgia General Assembly in January 2008. The State Water Plan included a provision to create ten water planning regions across the state, each guided by a regional water planning council. The intent of the State Water Plan was to prepare a regional water development and conservation plan to manage water resources in a sustainable manner through 2050 incorporating input from state agencies, other regional water planning councils, local governments, watershed stakeholders and the public. Clay County along with ten other counties and thirty-four incorporated municipalities comprised the Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Planning Council. Clay County touches the Chattahoochee River and is part of the Appalachian-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin.

During the planning process, the Council identified and recommended twenty-one management practices that would insure compliance with state law and progress toward a sustainable future. The practices considered of the highest priority are included in the table below.

Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Plan
High Priority Management Practices
○ Support implementation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 conservation activities.
○ Encourage use of point source discharges for wastewater treatment effluent disposal for major facilities (greater than one million gallons per day).
○ Study the development of new and/or enhancement of existing surface water storage reservoirs.
○ Implement new and/or enhance existing surface water storage as necessary.
○ Utilize and improve upon reservoir release quantity and timing in the Chattahoochee River to maintain and/or improve water quality in the Chattahoochee River below the Columbus planning node.
○ Advocate for changes to the US Army COE Water Control Manual for the ACF basin.
○ Improved water quality monitoring to provide the data for water quality improvements in the future (increased number of collection sites, increased monitoring frequency and parameters sampled).

Source: Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Plan

Community Work Program

City of Fort Gaines Report of Accomplishments 2014 – 2018		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Hold an annual town clean-up day.	Completed	The City now holds an annual clean-up and will continue this activity on the next work program.
Apply for grant funds to complete streetscape improvements in the downtown.	Completed	This was accomplished in 2016.
Construct a sign to show community announcements and publicize community events.	Postponed	Lack of funds. This item will carry over to the new work program.
Expand Frontier Village and construct an amphitheatre in conjunction	Postponed	Lack of funds. This item will carry over to the new work program.
Work with Downtown Development Authority to improve downtown building facades.	Underway	A mural has been painted and some facades downtown have been improved, but improvements are not complete. This item will carry over to the new work program.
Work with Clay County Board of Education to relocate Clay County High School.	Postponed	There were some efforts, but none yet successful—this item will carry over to the new work program.
Work with power plant and technical college to provide job training for local workforce for employment at the power plant.	Postponed	City seeks broader scale job training options. This item will not be carried over to the new work program.
Prepare to host the Fort Gaines Bicentennial Celebration	Completed	This was accomplished in 2016.
Apply for grant funding to upgrade water and sewer lines and service.	Completed	This was accomplished in 2015. This item will carry over to the new work program so that the city can pursue future grant opportunities for infrastructure.
Recruit a bank to locate a branch in town.	Underway	The City and Clay EDC are currently in talks with a bank to open a branch. This will carry over to the new work program.
Create a park at the corner of Jefferson and Hancock Streets.	Completed	This project was completed, and Morris Park opened in 2017.

Activity	Status	Explanation
Partner with the School Board to provide/improve after-school programs for youth.	Completed	This activity has been accomplished, but its continuation will be in the new work program.
Continue to work with the County and Bagby Park in the development of a nature and biking trail known as the Phenomenon Trail.	Underway	Much of the trail is built, though construction is not entirely complete. This will carry over to the next work program.
Work with the Clay County-Fort Gaines Recreation Committee on gymnasium improvements and other needed recreation improvements.	Underway	Some progress has been made, but the recreation committee was disbanded and re-organized. This change will be reflected as the item is carried over to the new work program.
Continue to make street improvements, sidewalk improvements, and beautify Fort Gaines with landscaping, bicycle/pedestrian amenities, and street lights.	Underway	Some improvements have been made, but this project is ongoing and will be carried over to the new work program.
Support the county's application for a Scenic Byway designation for Highway 39.	Postponed	Lack of resources; this item will be carried over to the next work program.
Adopt highway corridor/overlay district to regulate parking, signage, landscaping, buffers, and points of ingress and egress	Postponed	Lack of resources; this item will carry over to the next work program.
Review and update development ordinances with illustrative examples to promote appropriate infill development, roadway buffers, environmentally friendly development with proper infrastructure, and greenspace	Underway	Development ordinances have undergone change, but changes will continue to be made in the upcoming years. This item will carry over to the next work program.
Continue to implement housing rehabilitation programs in the city.	Postponed	Lack of funding. This will carry over to the next work program.
Improve and expand existing housing stock for all income levels.	Postponed	Lack of funding. This will carry over to the next work program.
Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods and services in the Central Business District and Highway Corridors.	Completed	Completed, but an ongoing priority of Fort Gaines and will be carried over to the next work program.
Provide weekly clean-up services along GA Highway 39 in downtown Fort Gaines	Postponed	Lack of resources. This item will be carried over to the next work program.

Activity	Status	Explanation
Encourage and support the expansion of services at the library in Fort Gaines.	Completed	This was accomplished, but it will remain an ongoing priority in the next work program.
Update and expand on historic walking/driving/biking tours of Fort Gaines.	Postponed	Lack of resources. This item will be carried over to the next work program.
Adopt Part V Planning Criteria for river corridors and groundwater recharge areas.	Postponed	Was not a high priority; will be carried over to the next work program.

City of Fort Gaines Community Work Program 2019 - 2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Hold an annual town clean-up day.	X	X	X	X	X	Ft Gaines City Council Ft Gaines Garden Club Ft Gaines Women's Club Ft Gaines Lions Club	\$5,000	City Funds Private Funds
Construct a sign to show community announcements and publicize community events.		X				Ft Gaines City Council Ft Gaines Garden Club Ft Gaines Women's Club	\$20,000	City Funds Private Funds GDEcD
Work with Clay County Board of Education to relocate Clay County High School				X		Fort Gaines City Council, Clay County Board of Commissioners, Clay County Board of Education	\$2,500,000	City Funds, County Funds, BOE Funds, GDOE
Apply for grant funding to upgrade water and sewer lines and service.		X		X		Fort Gaines City Council	\$750,000	City funds CDBG
Partner with the School Board to provide/improve after-school programs for youth.	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council Clay County Board of Education	\$10,000	City funds, BOE funds, Private funds

City of Fort Gaines Community Work Program 2019 – 2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Continue to work with the County and Bagby Park in the development of the Phenomenon Trail, a nature and biking trail	X	X	X	X	X	Ft Gaines City Council Clay county Board of Commissioners Bagby State Park	\$1,000,000	City Funds BOC Funds Private Funds
Work with the Arts and Recreation Council on gymnasium improvements and other needed recreation improvements	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council Clay County Board of Commissioners Clay County Board of Education	\$150,000	City Funds BOC Funds BOE Funds Private Funds
Adopt highway corridor/overlay district to regulate parking, signage, landscaping, buffers and points of ingress and egress			X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council, Clay County BOC	\$10,000	City Funds, BOC Funds, GDOT
Review and update development ordinances with illustrative examples to promote appropriate infill development, roadway buffers, environmentally friendly development with proper infrastructure, and greenspace.	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council RVRC	\$10,000	City Funds

City of Fort Gaines Community Work Program 2019- 2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Continue to implement housing rehabilitation programs in the city.	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council Southwest GA Housing Authority	\$250,000	City Funds USDA DCA
Improve and expand the existing housing stock for all income levels.	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council Southwest GA Housing Authority	\$250,000	City Funds USDA DCA
Provide weekly clean-up services along GA Highway 39 in Fort Gaines	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council, Clay County EDC	\$5,000	City Funds
Acquire generator for City Hall and police station.		X				Fort Gaines City Council	\$10,000	City funds, Grant funds
Complete assessment of solid waste disposal facilities and capacity and explore future options			X			Fort Gaines City Council, Clay County BOC	\$10,000	City/County funds

City of Fort Gaines Community Work Program 2019 - 2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Purchase police cars and other protective equipment	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council	\$50,000	City Funds, USDA
Provide holding facility for police department.	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council	\$1,000,000	City Funds
Open food bank.			X			Fort Gaines City Council, Clay County Health Partnership	\$100,000	City Funds, Nonprofit funds, Health Partnership, Grants
Offer additional recreational activities; purchase new and maintain existing facilities	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council, Arts and Recreation Council	\$500,000	City Funds, Grant Funds, Arts and Rec Council
Open a City Community Center	X					Fort Gaines City Council	\$100,000	City Funds, Private funds, fundraising

City of Fort Gaines Community Work Program 2019 - 2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Annex county properties that currently receive city utilities.	X	X	X			Fort Gaines City Council Clay County Board of Commissioners	\$25,000	City Funds
Adopt Part V Planning Criteria for river corridors and groundwater recharge areas.		X	X			Fort Gaines City Council, EPD	\$5,000	City Funds
Sandblast/paint water towers, replace structures as needed	X	X				Fort Gaines City Council	\$1,000,000	City Funds, USDA, CDBG
Relocate water mains from the center of state roads to the sides.	X	X				Fort Gaines City Council, GDOT	\$750,000	City Funds, County Funds, TIA, DOT, LMIG, CDBG, USDA
Resurface the following streets: Wilson, Bluff, McCullough, Jackson Ext, Elm, Troupe Ext, Grist	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council	\$1,000,000	City Funds, LMIG, TIA, CDBG

City of Fort Gaines Community Work Program 2019- 2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Achieve ADA compliance at County Courthouse	X	X				Fort Gaines City Council, Clay County Board of Commissioners	\$500k-\$1M	City Funds, County Funds
Replace aging lift stations and sewer lines; upgrade or replace sewage treatment plant		X		X		Fort Gaines City Council	\$1,000,000+	City Funds, CDBG
Upgrade water communications system		X		X		Fort Gaines City Council	\$750,000	City Funds, CDBG
Acquire emergency generator and support system for power outages	X	X				Fort Gaines City Council	\$50,000	City Funds, FEMA/GEMA

Fort Gaines – Community Work Program 2019-2023

Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Expand Frontier Village and construct an amphitheater in conjunction with it to promote events.				X	X	Ft Gaines City Council Ft Gaines Garden Club Ft Gaines Women's Club Ft Gaines Lions Club	\$50,000	City Funds Private Funds GDEcD USDA
Work with Downtown Development Authority to improve downtown building facades.	X		X		X	Fort Gaines City Council Fort Gaines DDA	\$100,000	City funds, DCA, USDA
Work with Albany Technical College to provide job training for local workforce employment	X	X	X			Fort Gaines City Council Albany Tech	\$100,000	City Funds, Private funds, GDOE
Recruit a bank to locate a branch in town.	X	X				Fort Gaines City Council Clay County EDC	\$500,000	City funds

Fort Gaines – Community Work Program 2019-2023

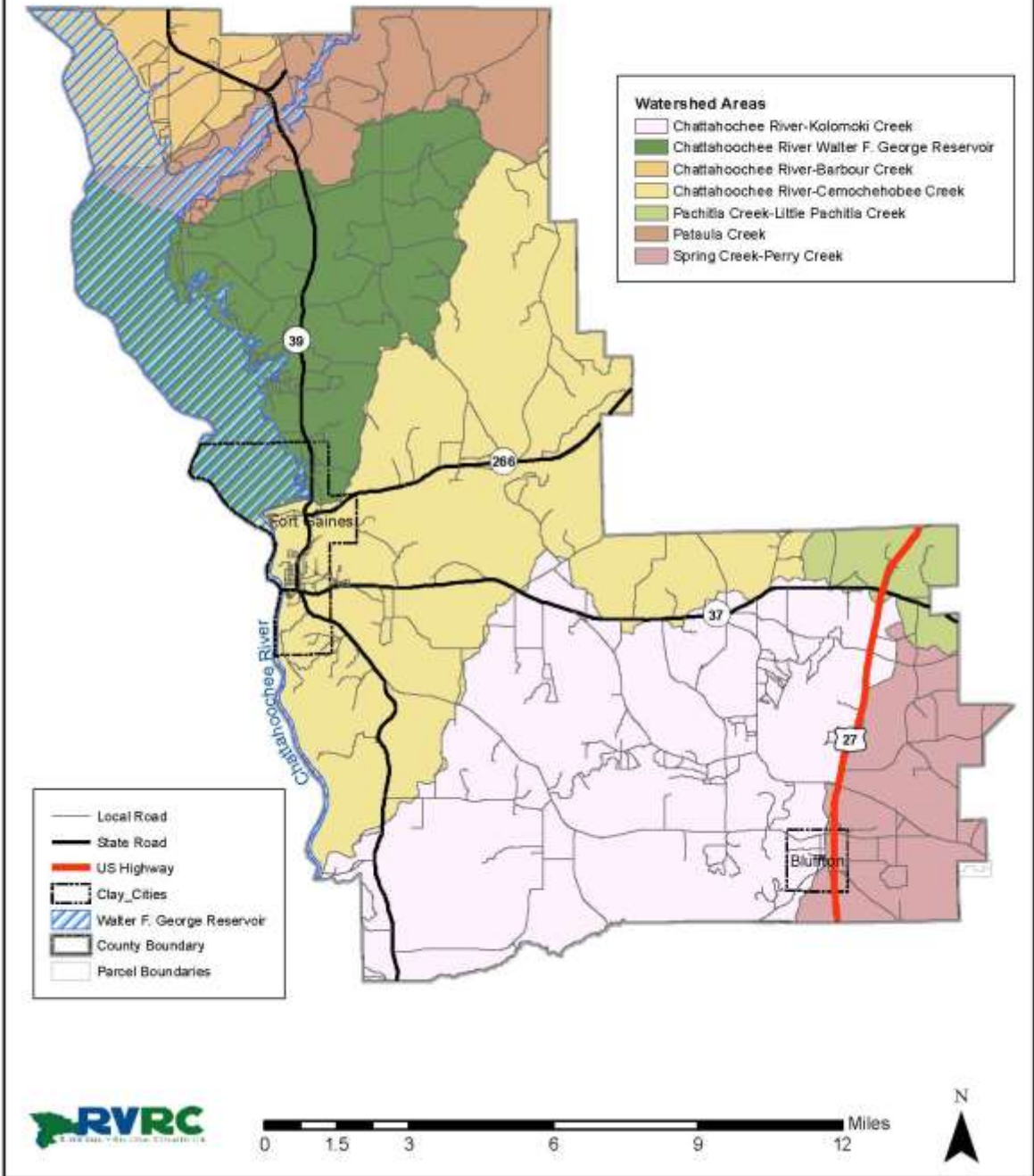
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Continue to make street improvements, sidewalk improvements, and beautify Ft. Gaines with landscaping, bicycle/pedestrian amenities, and street lights.	X	X	X	X	X	Ft. Gaines City Council Ft. Gaines DDA	\$200,000	City funds, Private funds, TIA
Support the county’s application for a Scenic Byway Designation for Highway 39.	X	X	X			Ft. Gaines City Council, Clay County BOC, Clay County EDC, GDOT	\$10,000	City Funds, BOC Funds, GDOT
Promote an adequate, efficient and appropriate mix of goods and services in the Central Business District and highway corridors.	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council Clay County EDC	\$10,000	City Funds, Private funds, USDA
Update and expand on historic walking/driving/biking tours of Fort Gaines.			X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council, Fort Gaines Historic Society	\$10,000	City Funds, Private Funds

Fort Gaines – Community Work Program 2019-2023

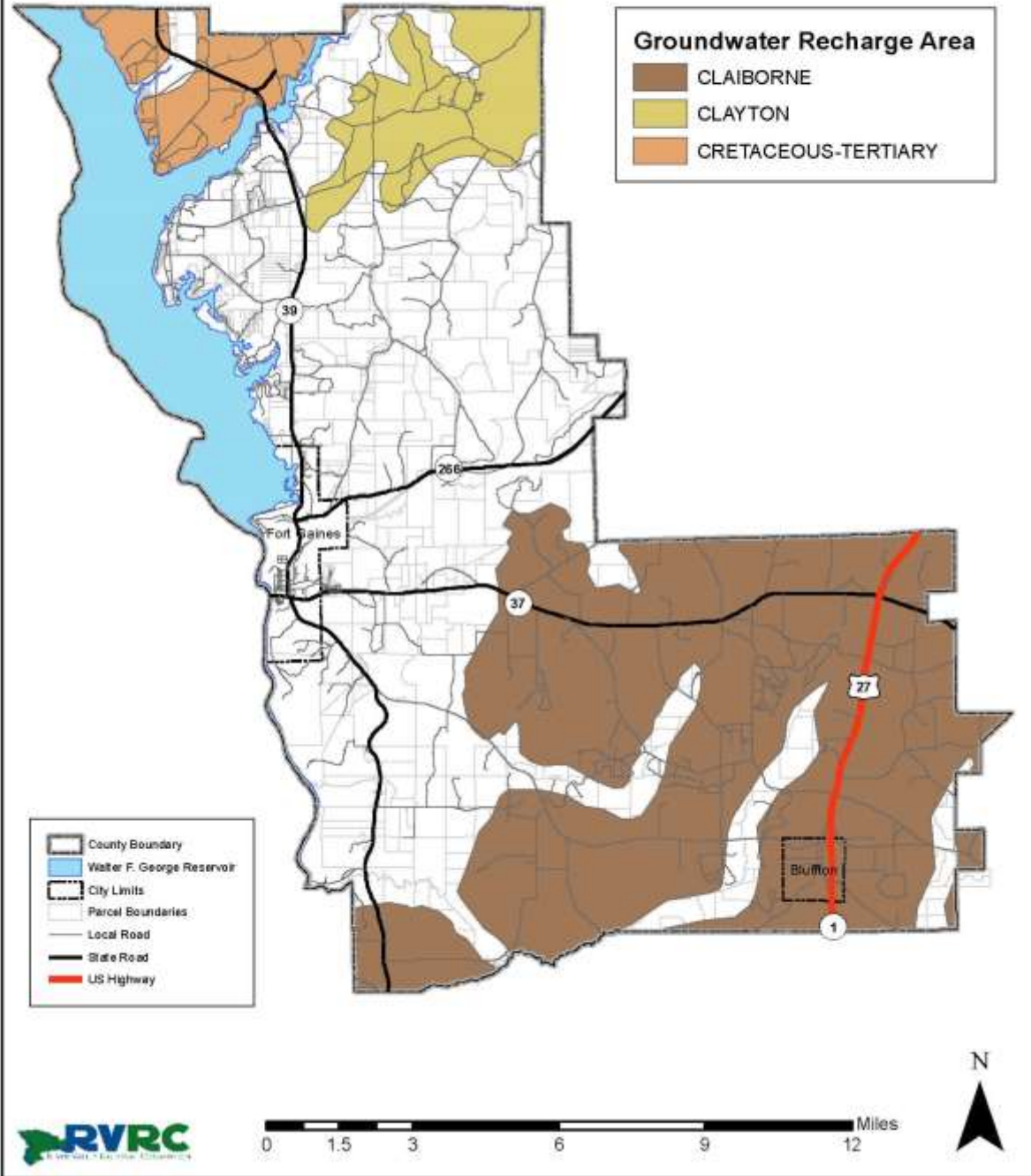
Activity	Time Frame					Responsible Party/Partners	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
Bring Native American artifacts from the area (currently in storage at the Naval Infantry Museum in Columbus) back to Fort Gaines and create an exhibit in the city	X	X				Fort Gaines Historic Society, Naval Infantry Museum	\$10,000	City funds, Private funds
Attract a new pharmacy.	X	X				Fort Gaines, Clay County, Clay County Health Partnership	\$200,000	City funds, Grant funds, Private funds
Replace totem at the bluff in Frontier Village	X	X	X			Fort Gaines City Council, Arts and Recreation Council, Historic Society Clay County EDC	\$25,000	City Funds, Arts and Recreation Council
Apply for any available incentives to facilitate improvements to current broadband infrastructure.	X	X	X	X	X	Fort Gaines City Council	\$50,000	City funds, Private funds, Grant funds

Appendix: Maps

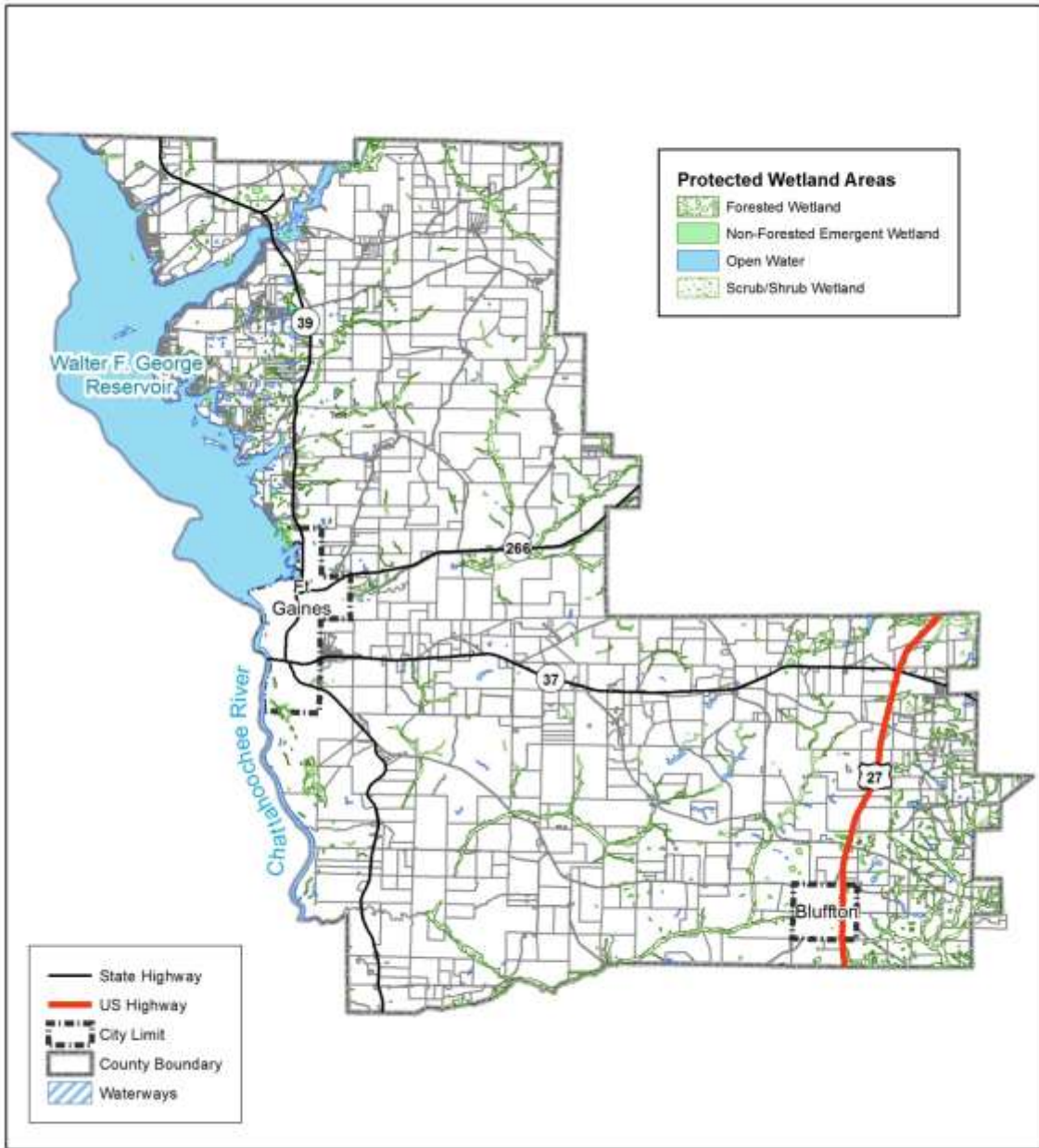
Clay County, Georgia Watershed Areas



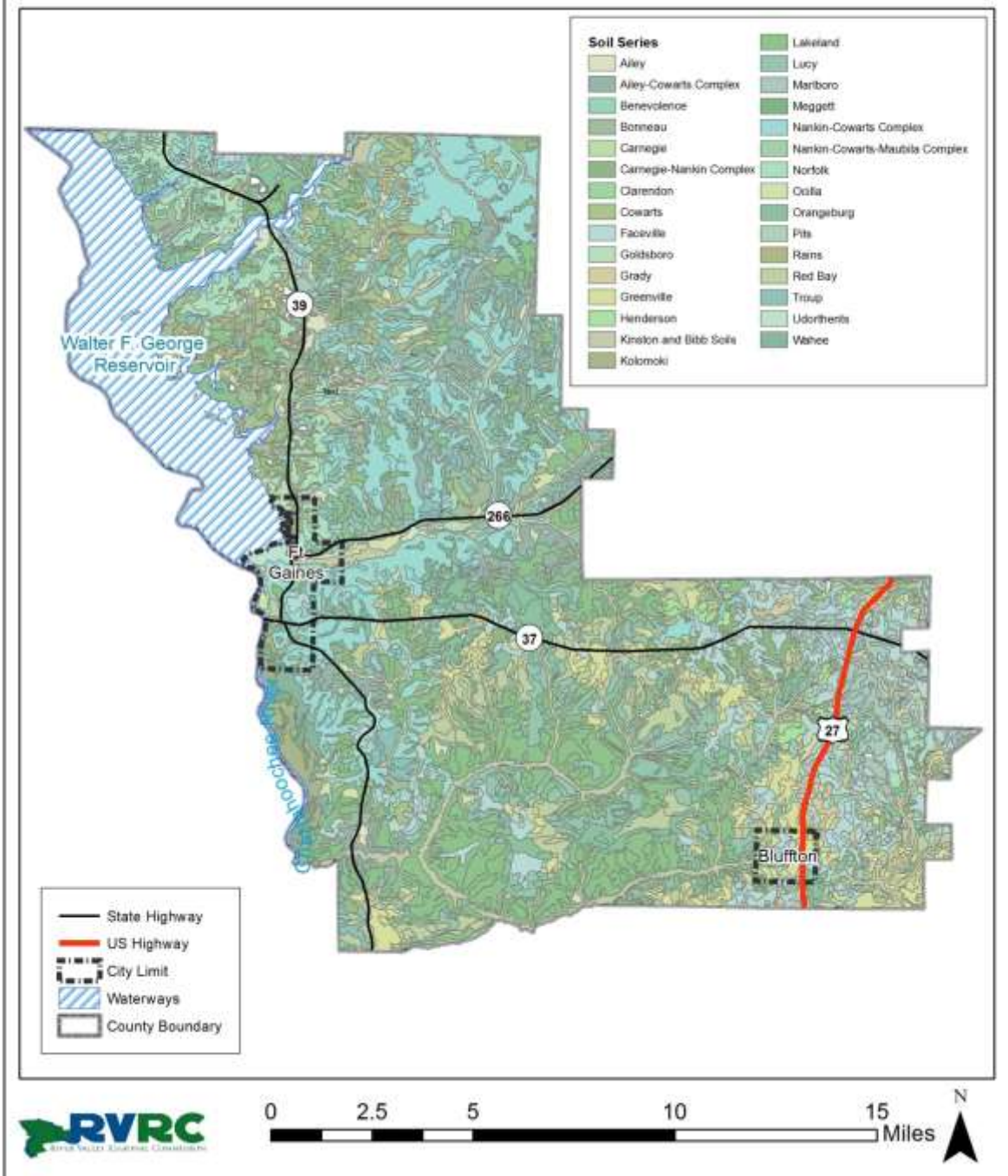
Clay County, Georgia Groundwater Recharge Area



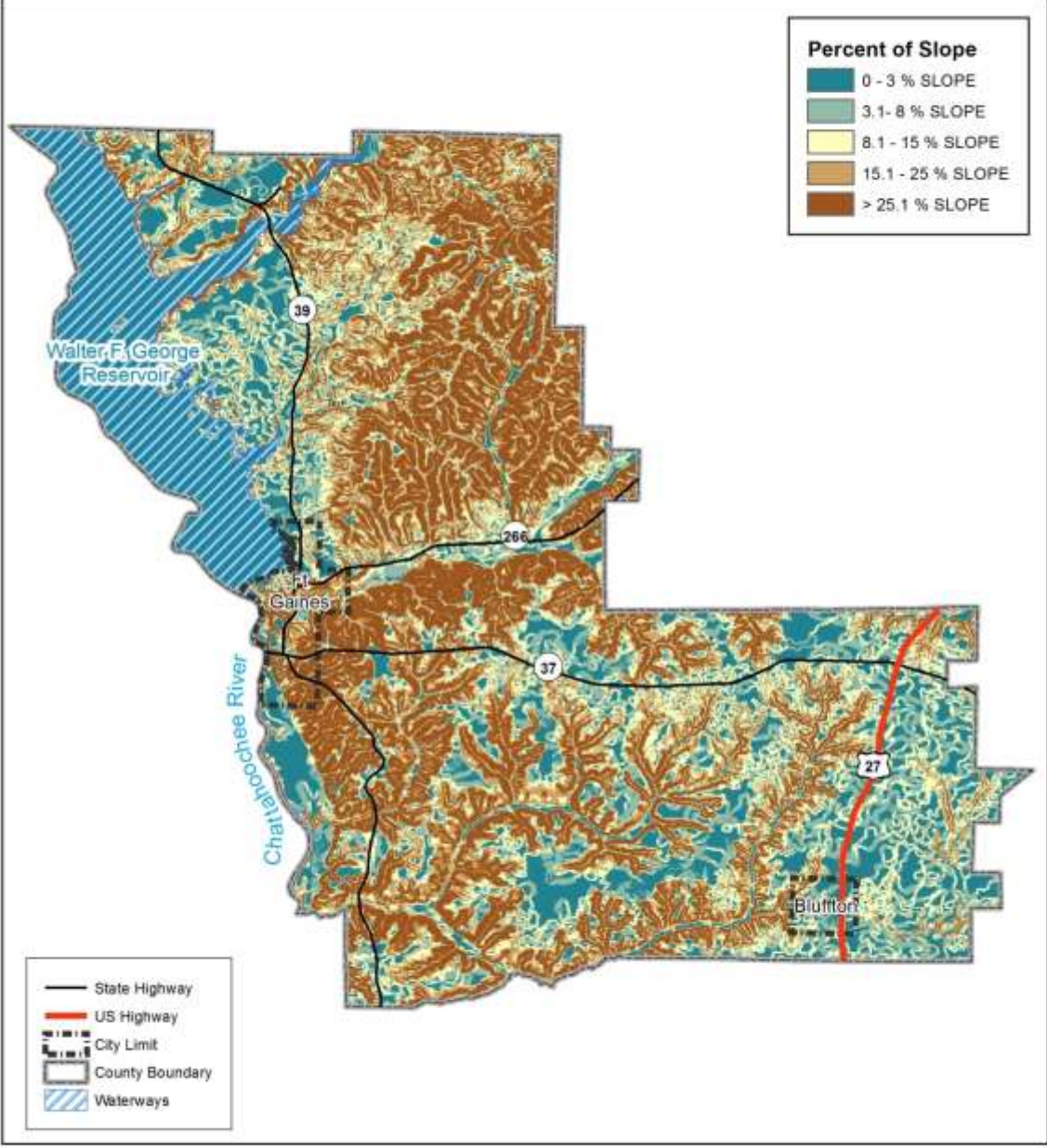
Clay County, Georgia Protected Wetlands



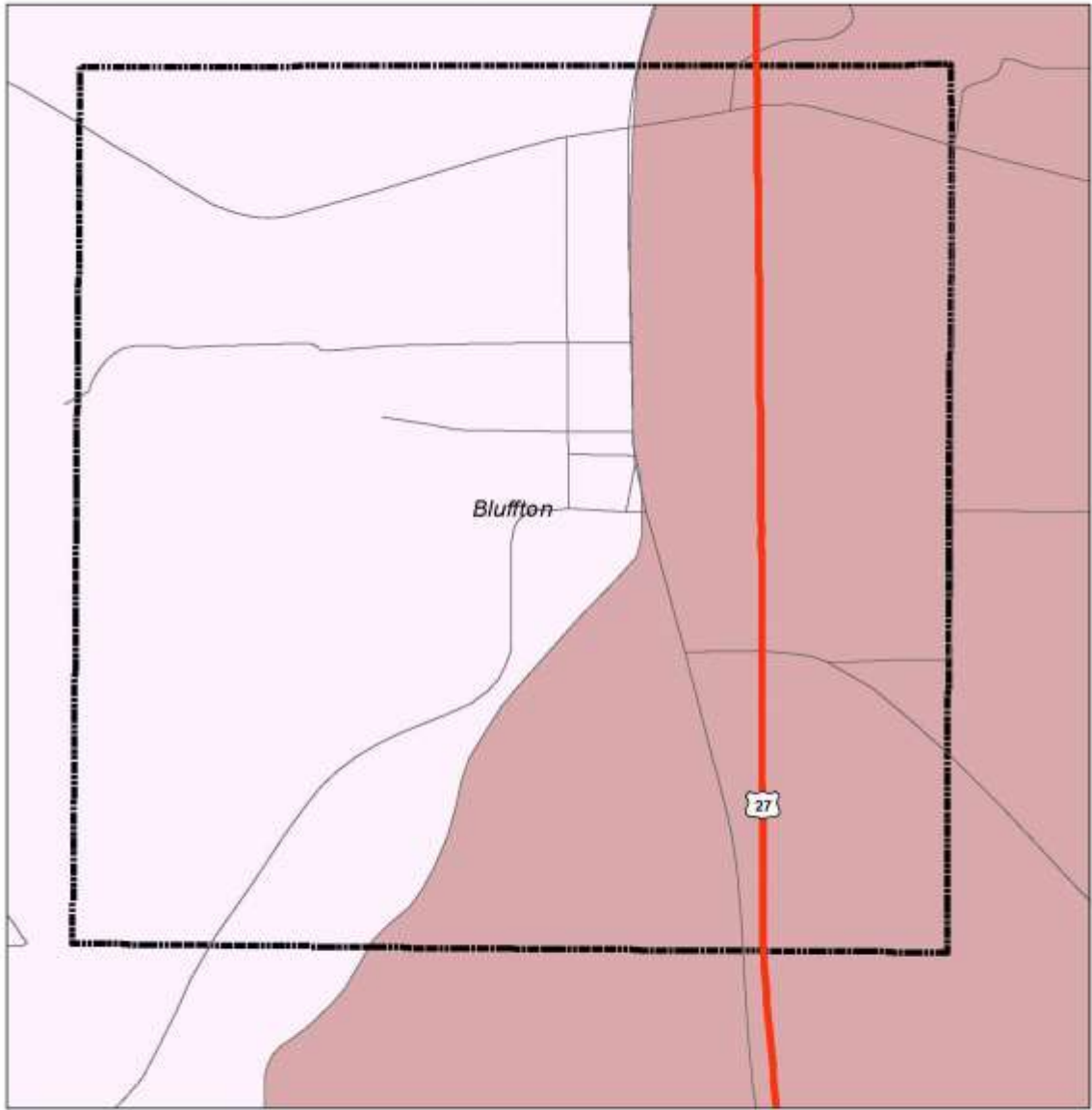
Clay County, Georgia Soils



Clay County, Georgia Ground Slope



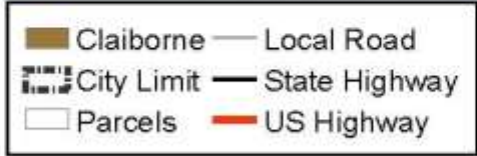
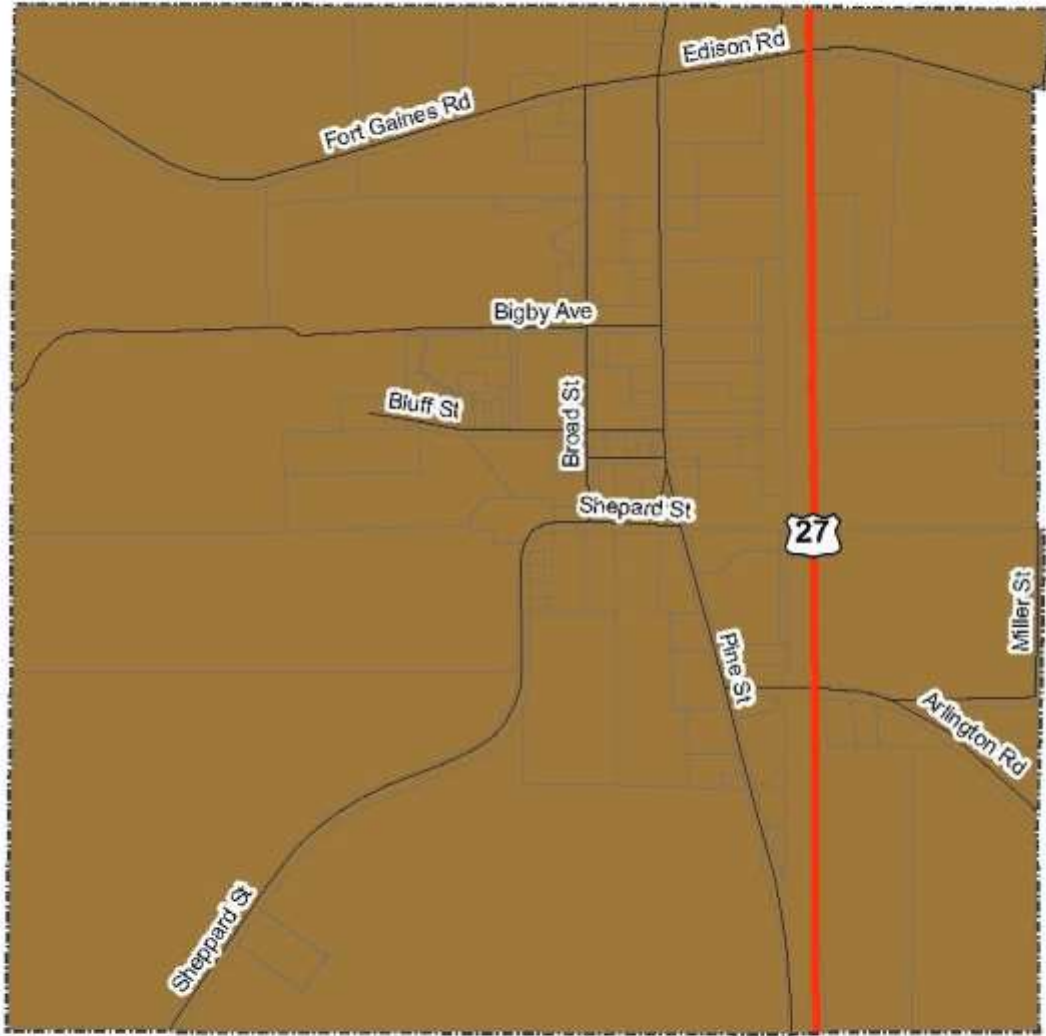
Clay County, Georgia Watershed Areas



- Local Road
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- State Road
- Walter F. George Reservoir
- Parcel Boundaries
- US Highway
- Watershed Areas**
- Chattahoochee River-Kolomoki Creek
- Spring Creek-Perry Creek



Bluffton, Georgia
Groundwater Recharge Area



Bluffton, Georgia Protected Wetlands

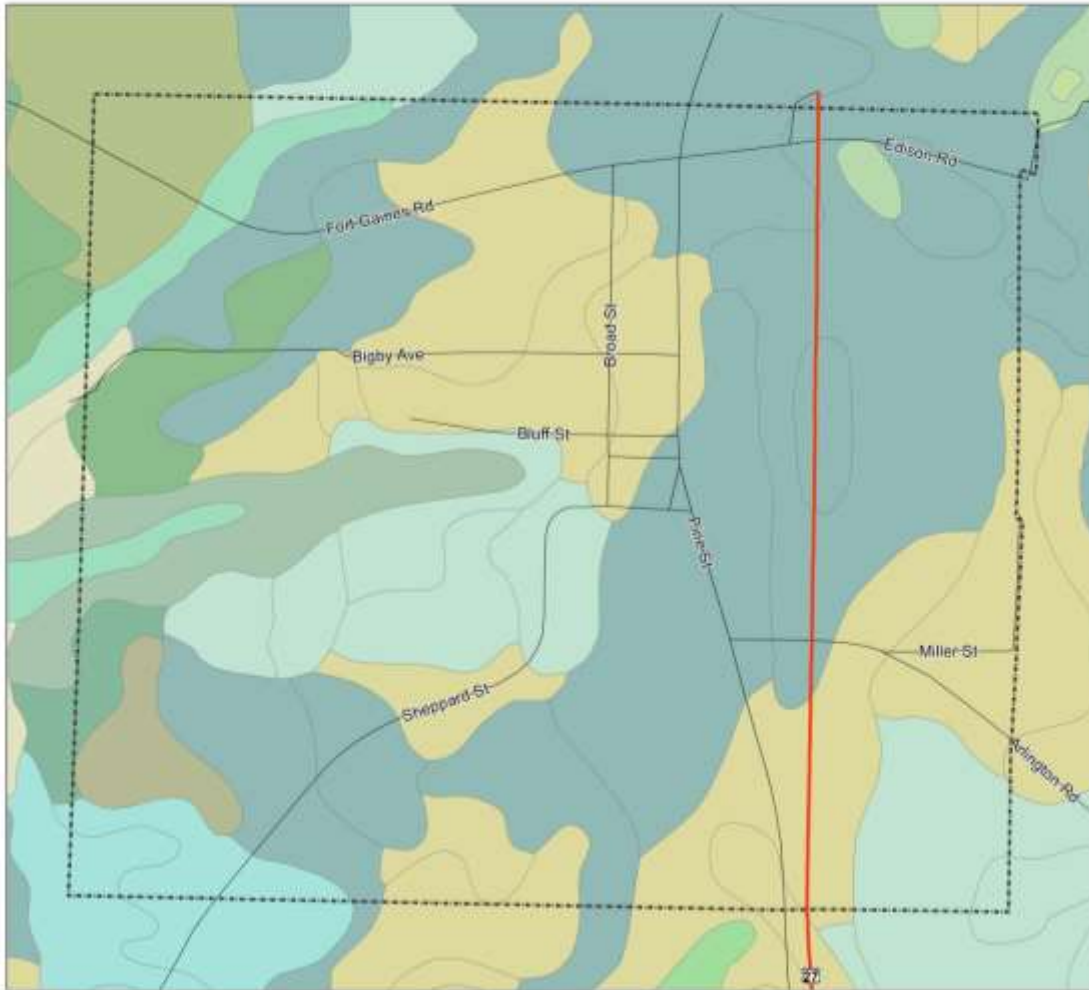


Protected Wetland Areas	
	Forested Wetland
	Non-Forested Emergent Wetland
	Open Water
	Scrub/Shrub Wetland

	Local Road
	State Highway
	US Highway
	City Limit
	Parcels



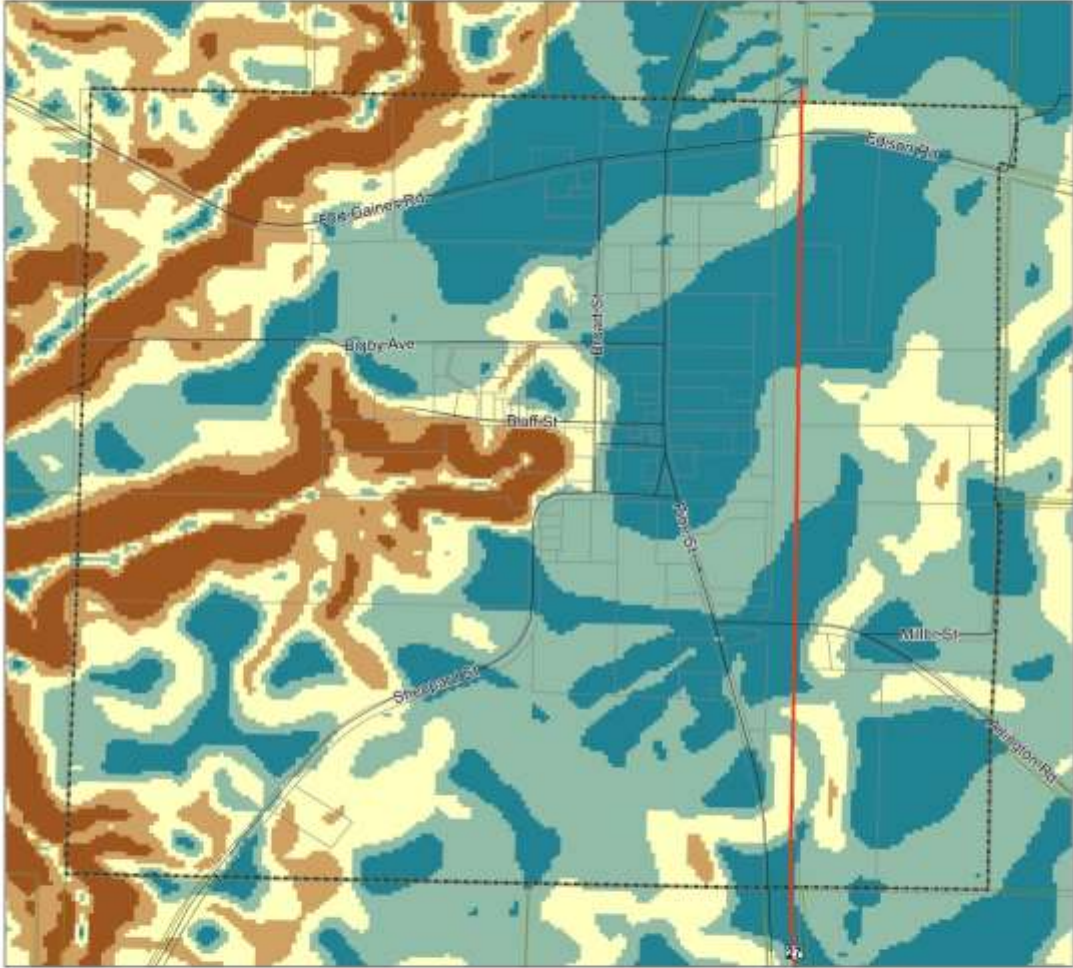
Bluffton, Georgia Soils



Soil Series		
	Faceville	
	Grady	
	Greenville	
	Kinston and Bibb Soils	
	Lakeland	

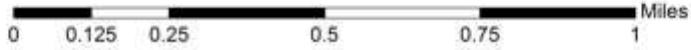


Bluffton, Georgia Ground Slope

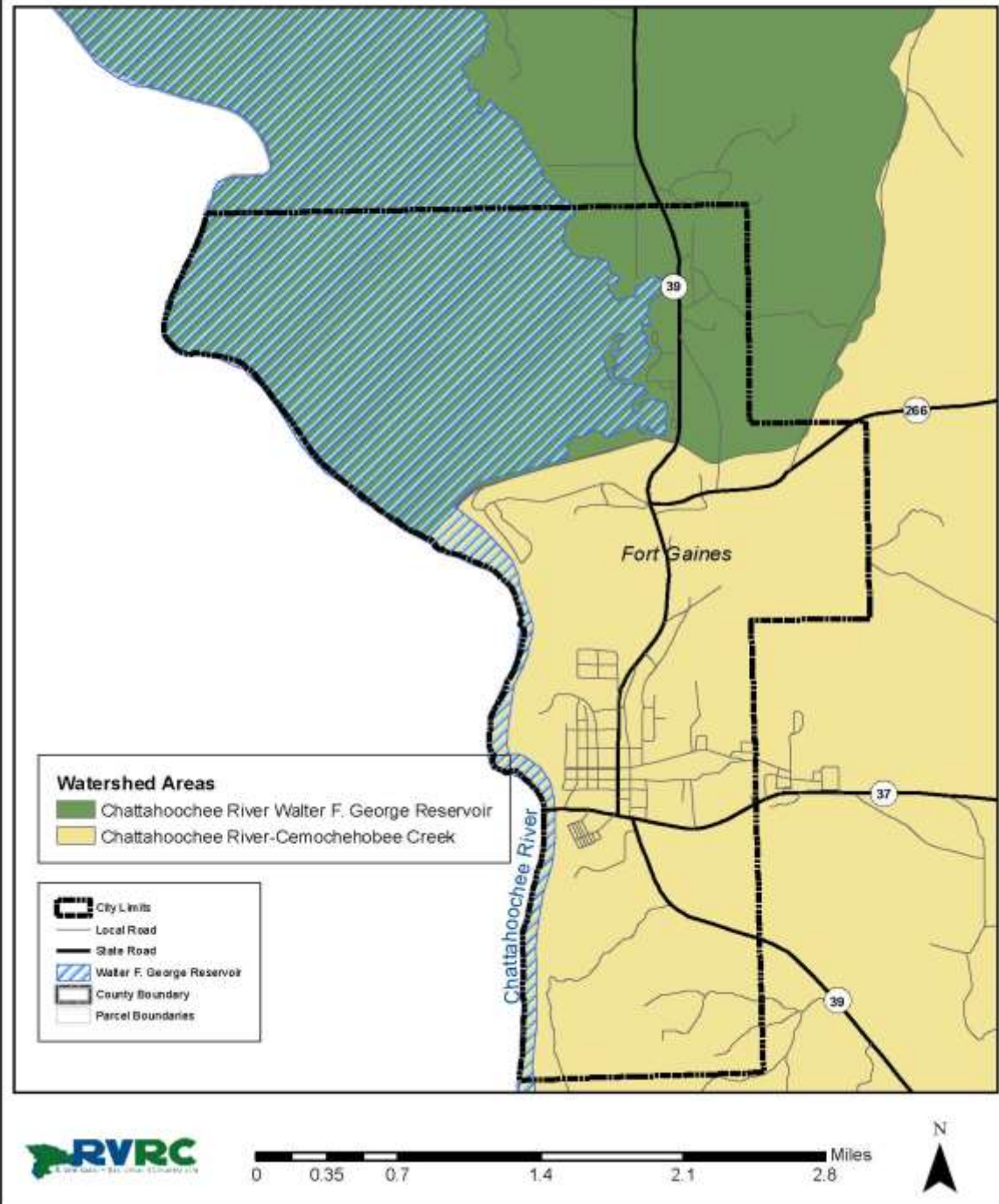


Percent of Slope	
 0 - 3 % SLOPE	 8.1 - 15 % SLOPE
 3.1- 8 % SLOPE	 15.1 - 25 % SLOPE
	 > 25.1 % SLOPE

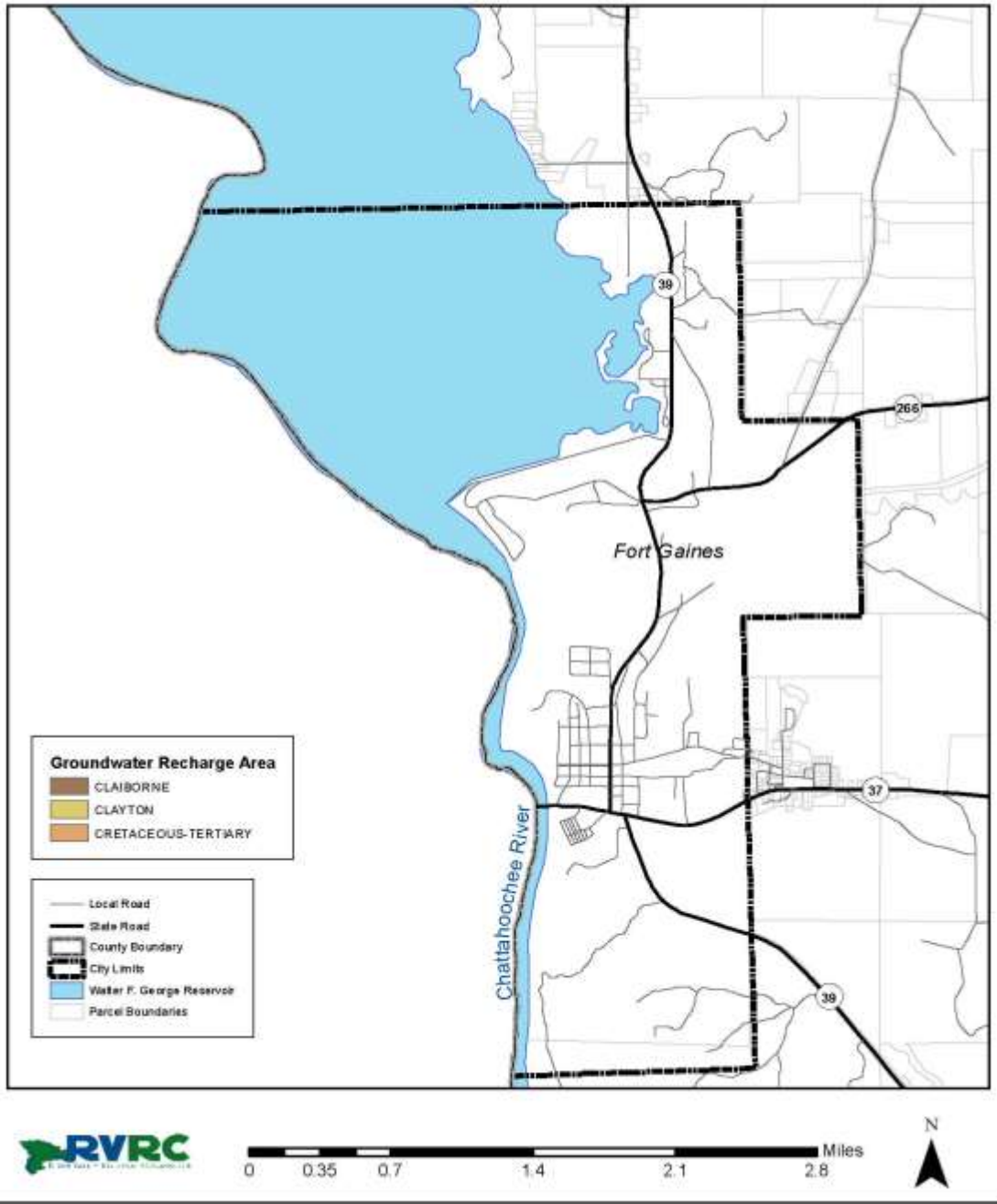
Legend	
 City Limit	 State Highway
 Local Road	 US Highway



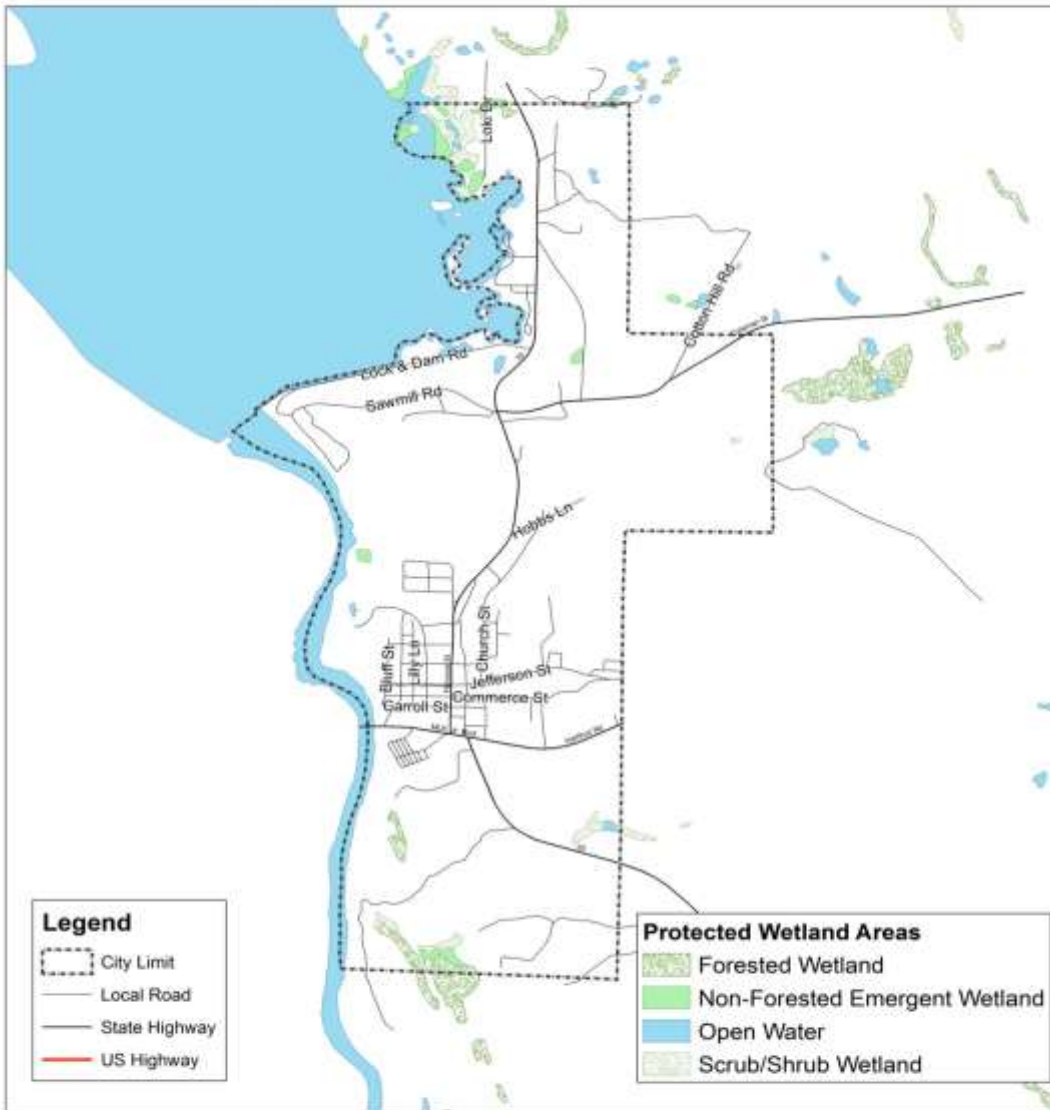
Ft. Gaines, Georgia Watershed Areas



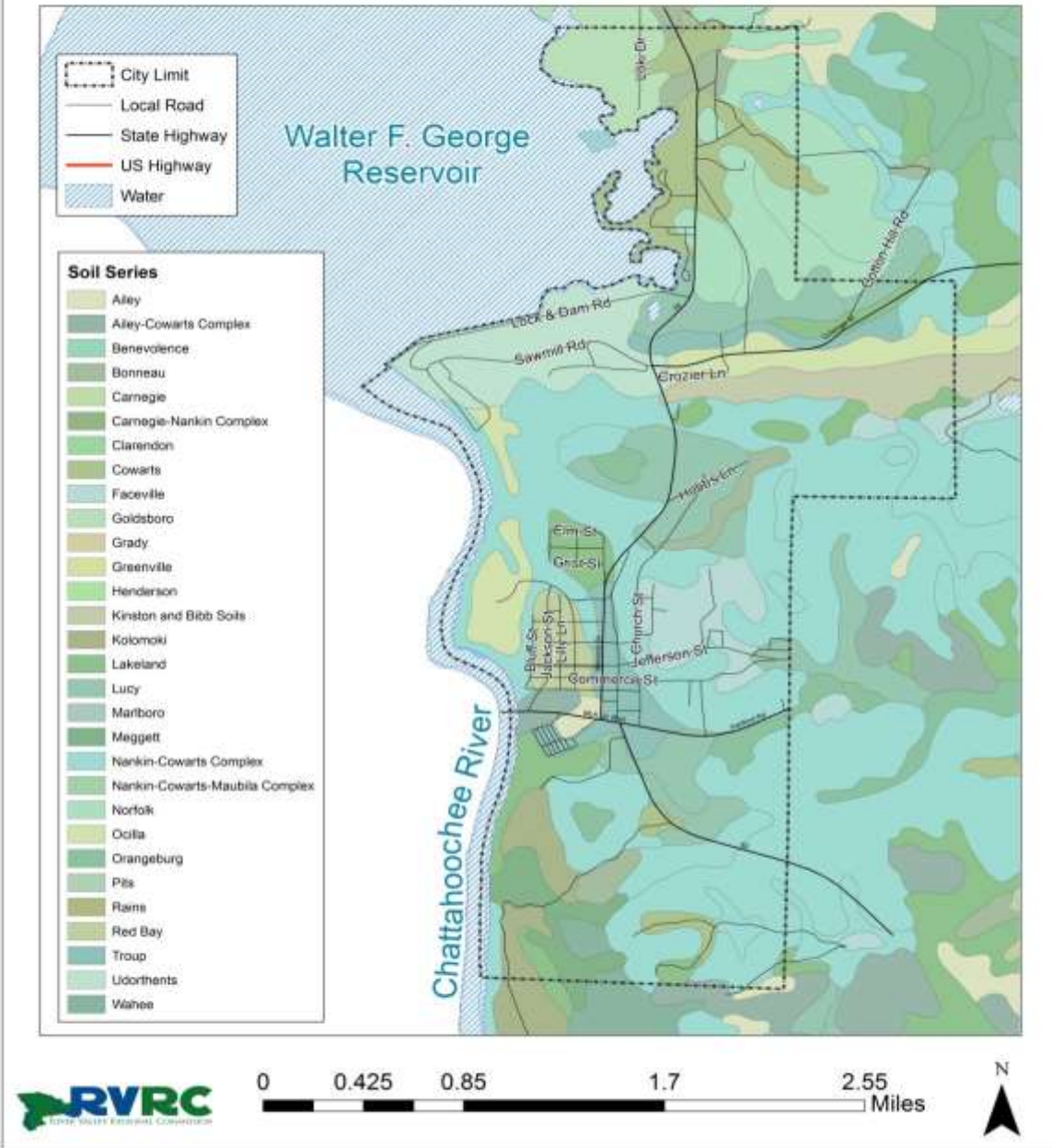
Ft. Gaines, Georgia Groundwater Recharge Area



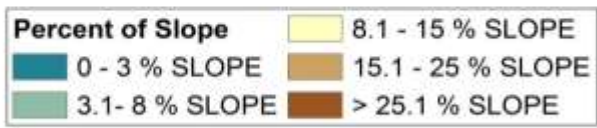
Ft. Gaines, Georgia Protected Wetlands



Ft. Gaines, Georgia Soils



Ft. Gaines, Georgia Ground Slope



Appendix: Required Public Hearing and Additional Meeting/Work Session Documentation

#954

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Bluffton is initiating an update to its comprehensive plan. This effort is an attempt to identify needs and opportunities, establish community goals, identify preferred land uses and develop a five-year community work program. Local elected officials will use the finished document to guide policy and management decisions directed toward implementing important economic development and revitalization initiatives. A public hearing has been scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Monday June 4, 2018 in the Bluffton Town Hall, 109 South Broad Street, Bluffton, to brief the public, and solicit input, on the planning process, explain opportunities for public participation and solicit input on plan development. For additional information, contact the Town at 229-641-2675 or Joel Hanif at the River Valley Regional Commission at 706-660-5366.



SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Bluffton Comprehensive Plan – 1st Public Hearing

Meeting Date: 6/4/18 – 7:00 PM

Facilitator: Joel Hanif, RVRC

Place/Room: Bluffton Town Hall

Name	Representing	E-Mail/Phone Number
Freddie Odom	City of Bluffton	blufftonga@gmail.com
Michael Williams	City of Bluffton	229 641 2005
Gail Hubbard	City of Bluffton	gailhubbard@windstream.net
Alolene Lee	City of Bluffton	lee_w@windstream.net

#959

East limits of the City of Cuthbert, known and designated as Lot No. 3 of a plat of the property of Arthur Nichols as shown by record of the same in Plat Book 2 at page 31, Randolph County Public Deed Records, and described more particularly as follows:

BEGINNING at a point on the South margin of the right of way of U.S. Highway No. 82 at the point of intersection of said highway with the East limits of the City of Cuthbert; thence, East a distance of 102 feet along said right of way to the property of E.T. Barbaee; thence, South along the Barbaee property 195 feet; thence, west parallel to High-

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City of Fort Gaines and Clay County are initiating updates to their comprehensive plan to identify needs and opportunities, establish community goals, identify preferred land community work program. Local elected officials will use the finished document to guide decisions directed toward implementing important economic development and revitalization hearing has been scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 24, 2018 in the Clay County Board North Washington Street, Suite 1, Fort Gaines, GA, to brief the public on the planning process, public participation, and solicit input on plan development. For additional information, contact Valley Regional Commission at 706-660-5366 or jhanif@rivervalleyrc.org, the City of Fort Gaines at 229-768-3238.

HERD WALTER

Clay County / City of Fort Gaines
 Comprehensive Plan
 1st Public Hearing

7/24/18
 6:00 PM
 Clay County Board
 of Commissioners

<u>Name</u>	<u>County/City/Organization</u>	<u>email/phone</u>
Joel Hanif	RVRC	jhanif@rivervalley.edu
James Davenport	Clay County	
Ronan Crozier	CLAY COUNTY	Ronan.CROZIER@claycountyga.net
David Shivers	CLAY COUNTY	dshivers@windstream.net
Ernest Jenkins	Clay County	ernestjenkins@windstream.net
Tammy Pope	Councilmen - City	tammywpope@gmail.com
Adria Williams	Clay County Clerk	adria.williams@claycountyga.net

#1044

Final Public Hearing

Clay County, the Town of Bluffton, and the City of Fort Gaines will hold a joint public hearing on Friday, April 12, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at the Clay County Commission, located at 105 Washington Street N, Suite 1, Fort Gaines, GA 39851 to review a draft Comprehensive Plan Update.

The public is invited to attend this hearing. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the contents of the plan and provide opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions or revisions to the draft Comprehensive Plan Update. We will receive community comments on the contents of the Comprehensive Plan, which includes the Future Land Use/Development Map, Community Work Program Report of Accomplishments, a new Community Work Program and a final list of Needs and Opportunities and Goals and Objectives as well as any other portion of the plan to be submitted to the Regional Commission and the state.

Formal written comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan Update will be accepted until April 16, 2019 at the following address:

River Valley Regional Commission
ATTN: Clay County/Bluffton/Fort Gaines Comprehensive Plan
228 West Lamar St
Americus, GA 31709

Clay County, the Town of Bluffton, and the City of Fort Gaines are committed to providing all persons with equal access to its services, programs, activities, education and employment regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability or age. Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language shall contact the Clay County Clerk. The County Clerk, Adria Williams, can be reached at 229-768-3238 ext. 205. For more information about the public hearing, please contact Joel Hanif with the River Valley Regional Commission at 706-256-2910.



SIGN-IN SHEET		
Project:	Clay County, Bluffton, Fort Gaines – Final Public Hearing	Meeting Date: 4/12/19 – 11:00 AM
Facilitator:	Joel Hanif, RVRC	Place/Room: Clay County Commission Chambers

Name	Representing	E-Mail/Phone Number
Joel Hanif	RVRC	Jha.
Ronald Crozier	CLAY COUNTY BOC	
BARRY WATERS	Mayor, Ft. Gaines	on file
Sammy Pope	City of Ft. Gaines	tpope@fortgainesga.org
Tammy Willingham	Clay Co Chamber of Commerce	info@claychamberofcommerce.com or twillingham@utshome.com *
John L. L.	City Council	



CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commission Chambers, Fort Gaines, Georgia
Agenda

May 1, 2018
Regular Meeting
7:00 p.m.

- 1) **Call to Order and Opening Prayer**
- 2) **Agenda Approval**
- 3) **Annual Appointments**
- 4) **Minutes**
 - a. April 3, 2018 Regular Meeting
- 5) **Presentations before the Board**
 - a. Joel Hanif, RVRC Planner – Discussion on the Process, Rules, and Regs for Completing the Comp Plan
 - b. Jason Brady & Tammi Fraser, Northwestern Benefits – Employee Benefits
- 6) **Correspondence Requiring Action**
 - a. Clay County Board of Health Member Reappointment: Lavern Chaffin and Karen Kinsell, MD
- 7) **Unfinished Business**
 - a. Approval of Resolution 18-001 Providing for the Uniform and Comprehensive Emergency Management Ordinance
- 8) **New Business**
 - a. Discussion on Combining Magistrate and Probate Judgeship
 - b. Discussion / Approval Lower Chattahoochee Regional E-911 Bylaws
- 9) **Comments from the Public**
- 10) **Comments from Department Heads & Constitutional Officers**
 - a. Bobby Dupree, Public Works Director- Status Report for April 2018
- 11) **Administrator Comments, Reports & Recommendations**
- 12) **Attorney Status Report**
- 13) **Comments from the Board**
- 14) **Invoices to Be Approved**
- 15) **Signing of Checks**
- 16) **Consent Agenda**
- 17) **Executive Session (If Needed)**
- 18) **Continuing Business as a result of Executive Session (if needed)**
- 19) **Adjourn**



SIGN-IN SHEET			
Project:	Clay County Comprehensive Plan Meeting	Meeting Date:	5/1/2018, 7:00 PM
Facilitator:	Joel Hanif (RVRC)	Place/Room:	County Commission

Name	Phone	E-Mail
James Fryder	229 444-2110	
Ernest Jenkins	229-881-2635	
David Shivers	229-254-2568	drshivers@windstream.net
RONALD CROZIER	229-366-3606	RONNIE.CROZIER@CLAYCOUNTYGA.NET
Wm H. Mills	229-723-3428	
Lu Hubbard	229-641-2675	
James Davenport	229-308-2660	
Tammi Fraser	404-735-9922	
JASON BRANT	404-932-4564	
Adria Williams	229-768-3238 x.205	adria.williams@claycountyga.net
Phillip B. Wilb	229-768-2476	p.wilb24@hotmail.com
Locke Shivers	229-768-2507	claysheri@claycountyga.net



CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Commission Chambers, Fort Gaines, Georgia
Agenda

November 6, 2018
Regular Meeting
7:00 p.m.

- 1) **Call to Order and Opening Prayer**
- 2) **Agenda Approval**
- 3) **Annual Appointments**
- 4) **Minutes**
 - a. October 2, 2018 Regular Meeting
- 5) **Presentations before the Board**
 - a. Joel Hanif, RVRC Regional Planner – Comprehensive Plan Status Update
- 6) **Correspondence Requiring Action**
- 7) **Unfinished Business**
 - a. Discussion / Approval of Lower Chattahoochee Regional E-911 Bylaws
 - b. Approval Authorization for Chairman to sign Local Government Affidavit and Certification for FY-19 LMIG
- 8) **New Business**
 - a. Discussion / Approval of FY2020 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program Application
 - c. Approval of Methane Monitoring Well Installation by Innovative Engineering Strategies, LLC (IES)
 - b. Approval of Proposal for Landfill Environmental Monitoring Services by IES, LLC
 - d. Approval of General Consulting & Groundwater Monitoring by IES, LLC
 - e. Approval of GPCO Easement for Powerline to Landfill Solar Farm
- 9) **Comments from the Public**
- 10) **Comments from Department Heads & Constitutional Officers**
 - a. Bobby Dupree, Public Works Director- Status Report for October 2018
- 11) **Administrator Comments, Reports & Recommendations**
- 12) **Attorney Status Report**
- 13) **Comments from the Board**
- 14) **Invoices to Be Approved**
- 15) **Signing of Checks**
- 16) **Consent Agenda**
- 17) **Executive Session (If Needed)**
- 18) **Continuing Business as a result of Executive Session (If needed)**
- 19) **Adjourn**



SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Clay County Comprehensive Plan	Meeting Date: 11/6/18 - 7:00 PM
Facilitator: Joel Hanif, RVRC	Place/Room: Clay County Board of Commissioners

Name	Representing	E-Mail/Phone Number
James Davenport	Commissioner	
Lee Hubbard	com	
Ronald Coker	CLAY COUNTY	Ronald.Coker@claycountyga.net
David Shivers	COMMISSIONER CLAY	dshivers@windstream.net
Ernest Jenkins	COMMISSIONER	ernestjenkins@windstream.net
[Signature]	Commissioner	fortgainesupplyco@gmail.com
Hannah Anderson	Clay Co. Health Partnership	HAnderson97@gmail
Cynthia Wadsworth	citizen	thewadsworth@gmail.com
Joseph Thomas	citizen	oseph1978@gmail.com
Phillip B. Willis	CITIZEN	pwillis24@hotmail.com
Kae Kinell MD	Clay County Health Center	kae@claycountyche@gmail.com
Bobbie G. Brown	Tax Commissioner - Clay County	tbclay@windstream.net
Tracy Walker	Citizen (Business Owner)	TouchOfBlossoms@ameri1.com
Adria Williams	Clay County (Clerk)	adria.williams@claycountyga.net



SIGN-IN SHEET		
Project:	Clay County Comprehensive Plan Meeting	Meeting Date: 1/8/2019, 7:00 PM
Facilitator:	Joel Hanif (RVRC)	Place/Room: Clay County Board of Commissioners

Name	Phone	E-Mail
CHRIS CLIFTON	229 768 2373	Chris.Clifton@claycountyga.net
JAMES DAVENPORT	229 309-2946	james.davenport5554@yahoo.com
RONALD CROZIER	229-366-3606	Ronald.Crozier@claycountyga.net
Ernest Jenkins	229-881-2635	Ernest.Jenkins@windstream.net
Gail Hubbard	229-641-2675	gail.hubbard@claycountyga.net
Lola Spann	229-942-0289	lola.spann@claycountyga.net
Adria Williams	768-3238	adria.williams@claycountyga.net
Jayne Sanders	229 852 0484 768-2085	jayne.sanders@yahoo.com

Bluffton City Council Meeting

May 7, 2018

Agenda

1. Invocation- Rev. Michael Williams or guest
2. Recognition of Visitors/Procedures for Addressing the Council
3. Minutes from Prior Meeting(s)
4. Reports (Cemetery, Fire, Public Safety, Water, etc.)
5. Consumption license- Jodi Benoit
6. Comprehensive Plan- Joel Hanif, River Valley Regional Commission
7. Emergency management ordinances- Sheriff Shivers
8. Speed limit

Upcoming Dates:

Next Meeting: June 4



SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Meeting	Meeting Date: 5/7/2018, 7:00 PM
Facilitator: Joel Hanif (RVRC)	Place/Room: Bluffton City Hall

Name	Phone	E-Mail
Gail Hubbard	229-641-2675	gailhubbard@windstream.net
Justin Wiley	229-641-3029	justin.wiley@whiteoakposters.com
Freddie Odom	(229) 641-3087	blufftonga@gmail.com
Michael Williams	(229) 641-2005	
Brian Sapp	229-641-2081	msapp1@gmail.com
Aldene Lee	229-641-2540	leew@windstream.net
Zett Hubbard	229-641-2675	
Jacke Sivero	229-768-2507	

Bluffton City Council Meeting

June 4, 2018

Agenda

1. Invocation- Rev. Michael Williams or guest
2. Recognition of Visitors/Procedures for Addressing the Council
3. Minutes from Prior Meeting(s)
4. Reports (Cemetery, Fire, Public Safety, Water, etc.)
5. Comprehensive Plan (Public Hearing) - Joel Hanif, River Valley Regional Commission

Upcoming Dates:

Next Meeting: July 2



SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Bluffton Comprehensive Plan	Meeting Date: 11/5/18 - 7:00 PM
Facilitator: Joel Hanif, RVRC	Place/Room: Bluffton Town Hall

Name	Representing	E-Mail/Phone Number
Joel Hanif	RVRC	jhanif@rivervalleyrc.org
Brian Sapp	City of Bluffton Council	brian.sapp@ga.gov
Freddie Adm	Bluffton (Mayor)	blufftonga@gmail.com
Jodi Benoit		jodi.benoit@whiteoakpastors.com
Gail Hubbard	Bluffton	gailhubberd@windstream.net
Aldene Lee	Bluffton City C.	lee_w@d@windstream.net

Bluffton City Council Meeting

January 7, 2019

Agenda

1. Recognition of Visitors/Procedures for Addressing the Council
2. Swearing in of New Councilmembers:

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully perform the duties of (mayor) (councilmember) of this city and that I will support and defend the charter thereof as well as the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia and of the United States of America."

3. Election of Mayor Pro-Tem
4. Minutes from Prior Meeting(s)
5. Reports (Cemetery, Fire, Public Safety, Water, etc.)
6. Comprehensive plan- Joel Hanif, River Valley Regional Commission

Upcoming Dates:

Next meeting- February 4th.

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
April 10, 2018

1. Call to Order-Invocation:

2. Approval of Agenda:

3. Approval of Minutes:

MOTION NEEDED: Approval of, March 13, 2018, Meeting Minutes

4. Presentation(s) Before the City Council:

Mr. Chris Clifton – City of Fort Gaines; Sponsorship of Car Show
Mr. Joel Hanif - RVRC Comprehensive Plan

5. Correspondence Requiring Action

6. Old Business:

MOTION NEEDED: Cancel Sale of City Gas System to Liberty Utilities and refer to City Attorney

- No Infrastructure leaks detected from yearly checking
- Current Account very profitable
- City Charter Section 6.30, Contracting Procedures (on reverse side)

MOTION NEEDED: Ordinance 2018-01 Mayor and City Council Change in Compensation

MOTION NEEDED: Approve future resolution to amend Personnel Policies on hiring

MOTION NEEDED: Determine employee compensation to offset loss of flat water bill

MOTION NEEDED: Security cameras in City Hall

MOTION NEEDED: Approval of changes to Public Works Descriptions, by Councilor Sumpter

MOTION NEEDED: Approval of contract with Tax Delinquent Services

7. New Business:

MOTION NEEDED: First reading Resolution 2018-02, Amending Personnel Policies

MOTION NEEDED: First reading Resolution 2018-03, Appointing Chief Registrar; City of Fort Gaines

MOTION-NEEDED: Approve/Deny Spatial Proposal

MOTION NEEDED: Change Sect. 70-3(5) to Allow Pickup of Furniture and Appliances w/Fee

- Charter, Section 1.13 – Specific Powers

MOTION NEEDED: Approve City Attorney to review the Intergovernmental Agreement between Board of Education and City of Fort Gaines and advise Council at next meeting.

8. Comments From the Public

9. Comments from Department Heads and Constitutional Officers:

10. City Clerk Comments, Reports & Recommendations:

11. Comments from the Council Members

12. Invoices to be Approved

13. Executive Session (If Needed)

14. Continuing Business as a result of Executive Session (If Needed):

15. Adjourn



SIGN-IN SHEET			
Project:	City of Fort Gaines Comprehensive Plan Meeting	Meeting Date:	4/10/18, 5:30 pm
Facilitator:	Joel Hanif (RVRC)	Place/Room:	Fort Gaines City Hall

Name	Phone	E-Mail
Kenneth Sumpter	229-308-7743	enpksumpter@gmail.com
Tim Keable	305-801-1919	tkeable@karnevalmusic.com
Amos Sheffield	229-724-4471	amos@pataula.law.com
Tammy Pope	229-308-0185	tammypope@gmail.com
Daisy Jackson	229-308-9162	jacksons50@windstream.net
JUDY JOHNSON	(229) 768-2094	- Fax Only - (Call 41280)
Mia Wallace	229-308-9239	fortgainesgal@yahoo.com
Charleette Rhew	229-768-2443	cityofftgaimesgal@windstream.net
BARRY WATERS	229-768-2443	meyrberwaters@msn.com
WILLIE REYNOLDS	229-308-9079	
Chief. Sam Starling	(229) 869-8103	samstarling97@yahoo.com

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
August 14, 2018
Immediately Following Zoning Public Hearing

1. **Call to Order-Invocation:**
2. **Approval of Agenda:**
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - a. Approval of, June 12, 2018, Meeting Minutes
 - b. Approval of July 16, 2018 Special Called Meeting Minutes
 - c. Approval of August 06, 2018 Special Called Meeting Minutes
4. **Presentation(s) Before the City Council:**
 - a. Candidates for Appointment to Fill Council Seat Vacancy
 - i. Ms Ella Cannon
 - ii. Ms Tammy Willingham
 - iii. Ms Kimberly Johnson
 - b. Joel Hanif, RVRC, Comprehensive Plan
5. **Correspondence Requiring Action**
 - a. 07/03/2018 Housing Authority Appointment Letter
 - b. 06/15/2018, LMIG Grant Application 2019
 - c. Request for Letter of Support USDA Community Dev. Initiative Funds (Copy of written letter)
6. **Unfinished Business:**
 - a. Website Development (wix.com)
 - b. Approval of Regions Bank as City's Financial Institution
 - c. Set, 08/28/2018, date for Mr. Keith Yonce, Spatial Engineering, GIS Mapping Presentation
 - d. Council Member Keable: Update on Gulbrandson Park Sign Repair
 - e. IGA between City and School for maintenance on Gulbrandson Park
7. **New Business:**
 - a. FIRST READING, Ordinance 2018-03 Amending Ordinance 70-2 to Allow for Collection of Furniture
 - b. Approval of H&K Foods "Off-Premise Consumption" License
 - c. Rescind motions from 07/16/2018 Special Called Meeting
 - d. Approve Employee 3% Cost of Living Increase (COLI)
 - e. Approve retroactive compensation for Mayor and City Council, January-May
 - f. Continue/Discontinue ASCAP License
 - g. Municode Proposal for Republication and Recodification of Ordinances for the City's consideration
 - h. Approve Initiation of Teleconferencing City Council Meetings
 - i. City Council to Develop Ordinance Related to Partial Payments of Property Tax
8. **Comments From the Public**
9. **Comments from Department Heads and Constitutional Officers:**
10. **Comments from the City Attorney**
11. **City Clerk Comments, Reports & Recommendations:**
12. **Comments from the Mayor and Council Members**
13. **Invoices to be Approved**
14. **Executive Session (If Needed)**
 - a. Determine Replacement for Council Vacancy
15. **Continuing Business as a result of Executive Session (If Needed):**
16. **Adjourn**



SIGN-IN SHEET

Project:	Follow-Up to Public Hearing #1 for Fort Gaines Comprehensive Plan	Meeting Date:	8/14/18
Facilitator:	Joel Hanif (RVRC)	Place/Room:	Fort Gaines City Hall

Name	Phone	E-Mail
Daisy Jackson	(229) 308-9162	jacksons5@windstream.net
Kimberly Jackson	229-768-2443	Kimjackson1977@gmail.com
Kenneth Sumpter	229. 308-7743	crpksumpter@gmail.com
Charlotte Shivers	229-768-2443	cityofftgainesgov@windstream.net
Barry Waters Chief	229-768-2443	mayorbarrywaters@nca.com
Sam Stirling	229-768-2632	samstirling97@yahoo.com
Willie Reynolds	229 308 9079	
Tim Keable	305. 801. 1919	tkeable@kareemmasque.com
Tammy Pope	229-308-0185	tammywpope@gmail.com
Mia Wallace	229-308-9239	fortgainesgal@yahoo.com
Tara Gardner Clay County Health Partnership	229-881-2675	claycountyhealthpartnership@gmail.com
Edda Cannon	229 308 3098	ecannon1977@gmail.com
Kim Johnson	229 308 9078	Kimbingram@hotmail.com
Gary Day	229-768-3476	lostfinswga@gmail.com



SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Fort Gaines Comprehensive Plan	Meeting Date: 12/20/18 - 5:30 PM
Facilitator: Joel Hanif, RVRC	Place/Room: Fort Gaines City Hall

Name	Representing	E-Mail/Phone Number
Joel Hanif	RVRC	jhanif@rivervalleyrc.org
Tammy Pope	Fort Gaines City Council	tammyupope@gmail.com
Barry Waters	MAYOR, FORT GAINES	mayor-barrywaters@msn.com
Rhiannon Scott	Citizen's Times	Citizenstimes@gmail.com
Jessica Manning-Prince	Citizen's Times	yourspace.manning-prince@hotmail.com
Erin Sumpter	Fort Gaines City Council	erksumpster@gmail.com