

Hancock County

Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026



HANCOCK COUNTY
| **GEORGIA** |



Prepared for:

The Chairman and County Board of Commissioners
Hancock County, Georgia | **Adopted: 11/10/2021**

The Mayor and City Council
City of Sparta, Georgia | **Adopted: 11/09/2021**

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*The Chairman, Mayor, County Commissioners, and City Council
acknowledge the input and efforts of all individuals who contributed to the
creation of this joint comprehensive plan document.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Hancock County and the City of Sparta have prepared a new, joint comprehensive plan document for the purpose of providing a framework for the growth of their communities that reflects shifting changes in local priorities in the context of broader social and economic conditions. The Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026 will serve to guide elected and appointed officials in development and growth decisions over the next five years and beyond.

This joint comprehensive plan also serves as a general statement of intent regarding the policies the communities involved will observe and actions they will take in their efforts to achieve locally-generated and desired growth objectives. This document operates in concert with a number of other community plans and does not reflect all potential areas of community concern and action.

INTRODUCTION

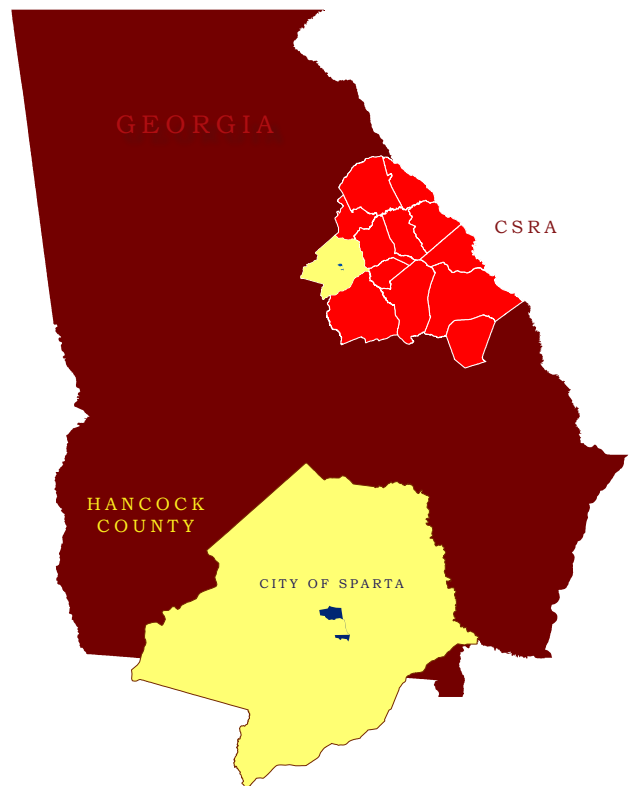
A BIT OF COMMUNITY BACKGROUND...

Hancock County is one of the most historic counties in Georgia, with over 600 historic sites and structures. Native Americans lived in what is now Hancock County long before the first white men, led by Fernando de Soto, came through in search of gold and other treasures. The mounds near Shoulderbone Creek mark a center of Native American settlement and culture that survived until well into the sixteenth century. Archaeologists who have studied the area have concluded that Shoulderbone may have been the capital of a prehistoric province stretching north and south along the Oconee from Scull Shoals (twelve miles north of Greensboro), to Shinholser (approx. the same distance south of Milledgeville). The five distinguishable mounds at Shoulderbone are the greatest concentration of structures on the middle Oconee. The land of Hancock County was the hunting grounds of the Creek Nation. Hancock County also contained numerous Native American trading paths, some of which were developed into the first roads when Georgia gained control over the area.

Hancock County was created in 1793 as Georgia's 15th County, and the City of Sparta was chartered in 1805. Hancock County was originally part of Greene and Washington Counties, and was named for John Hancock, the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. Major Charles Abercrombie, a Revolutionary War soldier was granted extensive land grants and from his land grant in Hancock County, he "laid out the lots" for the City of Sparta, including the "public lots" for the courthouse and the square. Four Georgia governors have hailed from Hancock County: William Rabun, James McDonald, Nathaniel Harris, and William Northern.

According to the census of 1800, the county population consisted of: 9,605 whites, 16 free blacks and 4,835 slaves for a total of 14,456, making it the most populous county in GA. By 1810, the shifted to 6,849 whites, 25 free blacks and 6,546 slaves. Although the county lost population overall, there were more slave owners, more slaves, and a larger concentration of slaves on single plantations. The increasing importance of slavers reflected the growth of the plantation system that became dominant in the county as cotton became the principal crop (preceded by tobacco). By 1830, Middle Georgia was firmly established as a cotton growing area and had taken the lead from South Carolina.

Although great strides were made by the African American community after the Civil War, it was still difficult to be a Black person in Georgia at that time. Education was important to the community, and in 1910 there were 34 colored schools in the county with an enrollment of 3,134 students. Among them was the Sparta Agricultural and Industrial School, organized by Linton Stephens Ingraham. Teachers at A & I included Jean Toomer, who later used the experience as the basis for his novel, Cane. Other

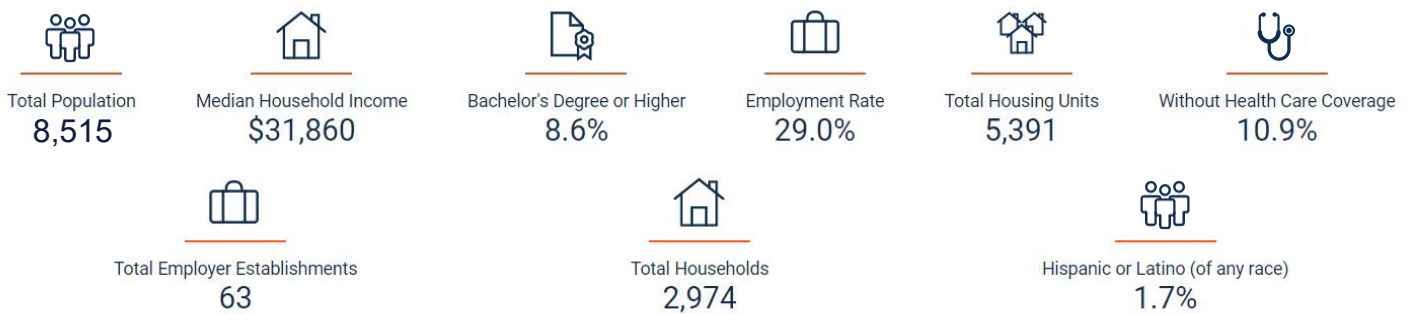


community residents also contributed to education. These include Zach & Camilla Hubert, who helped establish the Springfield technical school and Bishop Lucius H. Holsey, who was instrumental in the founding of Paine College in Augusta.

As of 2019, Hancock County’s population (8,515 total) is 73% African-American. The community is committed to embracing all of its history, including architecture and culture. Efforts include the creation of a county museum and the DREAM Streets Sparta program - formed by the Historic Preservation Commission to revitalize, preserve, and grow the city of Sparta.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT - Hancock County

Data sources: 2015-2019 American Community Survey (2019 ACS) 5-year estimates; 2019 Economic Surveys - Business Patterns | More information is available in the appendix.



Median Home Value: \$85,000 | Median Gross Rent: \$678 | Median Age: 45.6
 Homeownership Rate: 70.6% | Number of National Register of Historic Places Properties: 10
 Poverty Rate: 22.2%

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT - Sparta

Data sources: 2015-2019 American Community Survey (2019 ACS) 5-year estimates
 More information is available in the appendix.



Median Gross Rent: \$560 | Median Age: 44.6 | Number of National Register Properties: 2
 Homeownership Rate: 54.7% | Poverty Rate: 36.2%

Like many rural counties in the CSRA region, Hancock County as a whole has experienced population decline over the last 20+ years. However, the City of Sparta has experienced some population increase.

Both communities are interested in and working to expand local employment and economic development opportunities (including entrepreneurship and tourism), improving community aesthetics, and increasing other quality of life areas such as access to parks/recreation.



INTRODUCTION

Georgia's Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning are regulated by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and are intended to help local governments address immediate needs and opportunities while moving toward realization of long-term goals. The comprehensive plan should be referenced by local elected and appointed officials in the decision-making process.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that guides the future growth of Sparta and Hancock County. It is designed to facilitate a coordinated planning program that ultimately leads to desired future social and economic outcomes for both jurisdictions. It serves as a guide to both the public and private sector, providing guidance on items such as land development, housing improvements, economic development, cultural/environmental asset protection, and provision of community services and facilities. In short, the comprehensive plan is a unified document encouraging overarching consistency and coherence in county and municipal policies.

The comprehensive plan is structured as a dynamic document that should be amended when local priorities or conditions change. Periodic updates are necessary to ensure that the document's stated policies align with the needs and aspirations of residents. Over time, local and external conditions have changed. Some objectives have been met, and others have changed or been overtaken by competing priorities. The current comprehensive planning effort addresses these changes and integrates new or evolving priorities among residents and community leaders. This includes combining the previously separate 2016 (Hancock County) and 2018 (Sparta) plan updates into a single document for this plan update.

HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This comprehensive plan is a guide for action and is intended to serve as a reference for potential users. A member of the City Council, Board of Commissioners or government staff should refer to this plan's policies when deciding on the approval of a rezoning or location of new development. Companion planning documents should be used in conjunction with the comprehensive plan. These include but are not limited to the CSRA Regional Plan, the Hancock County Solid Waste Management Plan, the comprehensive and solid waste plans of other nearby jurisdictions, the Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan, the CSRA Regionally Important Resource Plan, Hancock County Community Health Improvement Plan, and other local and state regulatory documents (e.g. zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations).

Unlike sector or single issue planning documents, which generally refer to issues such as transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, annexation and community services, the comprehensive plan addresses these issues in a coordinated manner. Decisions should follow the comprehensive plan. If at some point the comprehensive plan no longer reflects a consensus regarding the path the City of Sparta or Hancock County wishes to take, it should be amended.

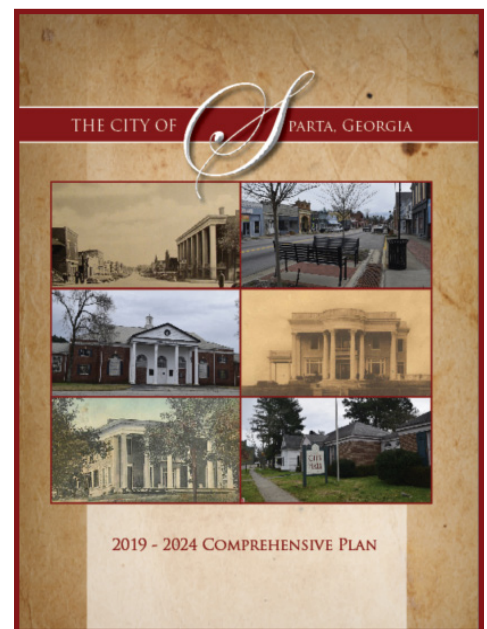
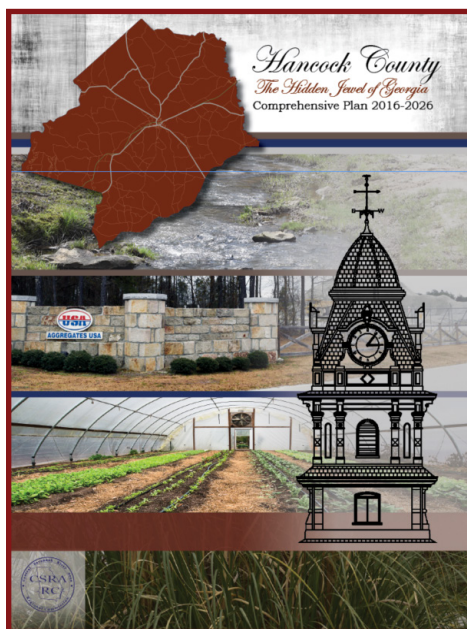
Comprehensive plans prepared in Georgia that are consistent with the DCA standards include a strategic planning component called the "community work program" (CWP). The five-year CWP lists measurable projects that will be undertaken, consistent with their stated comprehensive plan goals.



PRIOR PLANS

The first plan, titled “Hancock County/Sparta Comprehensive Plan 1993-2013” was completed by Precision Planning. The format of the document was consistent with the standards established by the DCA prior to 2005. This document outlined county and municipal conditions of significance to each community and created goals in the areas of economic development, natural and cultural resources, land uses, housing, and community facilities. The comprehensive plan was to be used by community leaders to make coordinated decisions regarding public expenditures and land uses. The ten-year update was deferred, and the subsequent comprehensive plan updates were created by the CSRA Regional Commission (CSRA-RC). These documents included updates to needs, goals, and future development (land uses and/or character areas) maps.

The DCA now requires five-year updates of the plan rather than ten-year, but the plan can also be amended at any time before that as local conditions and activities change.



SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Georgia Service Delivery Strategy Act (O.C.G.A. 36-70) was adopted by the Georgia General Assembly to require all Georgia counties and incorporated municipalities to adopt a joint “service delivery strategy” document. The purpose of this law and the service delivery strategy document is multi-fold:

- To provide local governments the opportunity to examine public services;
- Identify overlap or gaps in provided services; and
- Develop a better approach to allocating delivery and funding of these services among local governments and other authorities within each county.

The service delivery strategy is an action plan (supported by appropriate ordinances and intergovernmental agreements) for providing local government services and resolving land use conflicts within the county.



INTRODUCTION

PLAN COMPONENTS

The CSRA-RC is the county's selected planning coordinator for the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026. This document has been prepared to exceed the minimum requirements of Georgia DCA's 2018 Minimum Standards and Procedures For Local Comprehensive Planning (effective October 2018).

The Comprehensive Plan includes the following state-required and elective components:

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Report of Accomplishments
- Community Work Program
- Public Involvement Overview
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Housing
- Broadband Services
- Natural & Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities & Services

All state-required comprehensive planning components and additional elective elements listed are distributed throughout the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan in various chapters and appendices.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

First Required Public Hearing: Briefs the public on the process and describes opportunities to participate

Plan Development: Includes data collection and analysis; includes opportunities for involvement from stakeholders and community members

Second Public Hearing: Provides an opportunity for comment on the publicly available draft plan and notifies the public of plan submittal for official review

Submittal of Draft Plan for Review: Requires a formal letter from the highest elected official to the CSRA-RC; CSRA-RC submits the plan to DCA

Notification of Interested Parties: Provides all interested parties (other governments, state agencies, etc.) the opportunity for plan for review and comment

Regional Commission & DCA Review: Includes CSRA-RC review for potential conflicts and DCA review for statute compliance

Report of Findings and Recommendations: Is transmitted within 40 days after submittal

Plan Revisions: May be made to the plan to meet state requirements or address comments from interested parties

Plan Adoption: Occurs after official DCA approval of the plan

Notification of Local Adoption: Requires the submittal of a signed resolution and adopted plan to the CSRA-RC within 7 days; CSRA-RC forwards this to DCA

Qualified Local Government status (QLG): Includes a written notification from DCA that the jurisdiction's QLG status has been extended

Publicizing the Plan: Occurs after plan adoption and informs citizens of final plan availability



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OVERVIEW

A comprehensive plan should be composed to reflect the shared vision, goals and objectives for all communities involved in the process. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires the planning process for comprehensive plans to follow a set of minimum procedures to ensure the public has the opportunity to provide input and review the comprehensive plan document as it is created.

Consistent public input is a necessary component for the creation and completion of the comprehensive plan document. One significant part of the process is forming a stakeholder committee of community members. This group of people is critical to the plan creation and informs the decision-making process. The stakeholder committee for this process was comprised of community leaders from a cross-section of the county. A primary purpose of the stakeholder committee was ensuring that CSRA-RC staff adequately presented the aforementioned shared vision, goals, and objectives of the community.

The members of the Hancock County stakeholder committee for this planning process were:

- Sistie Hudson, Hancock County Board of Commissioners (Chairman)
- Allen Haywood, City of Sparta (Mayor); Development Authority
- Regina Butts, Family Connection
- Griffith Polatty, Resident; Historic Preservation Commission
- Makesha Brown, Resident; Business Owner
- Beth Webster, Business Owner
- Faye Sherrod, Resident

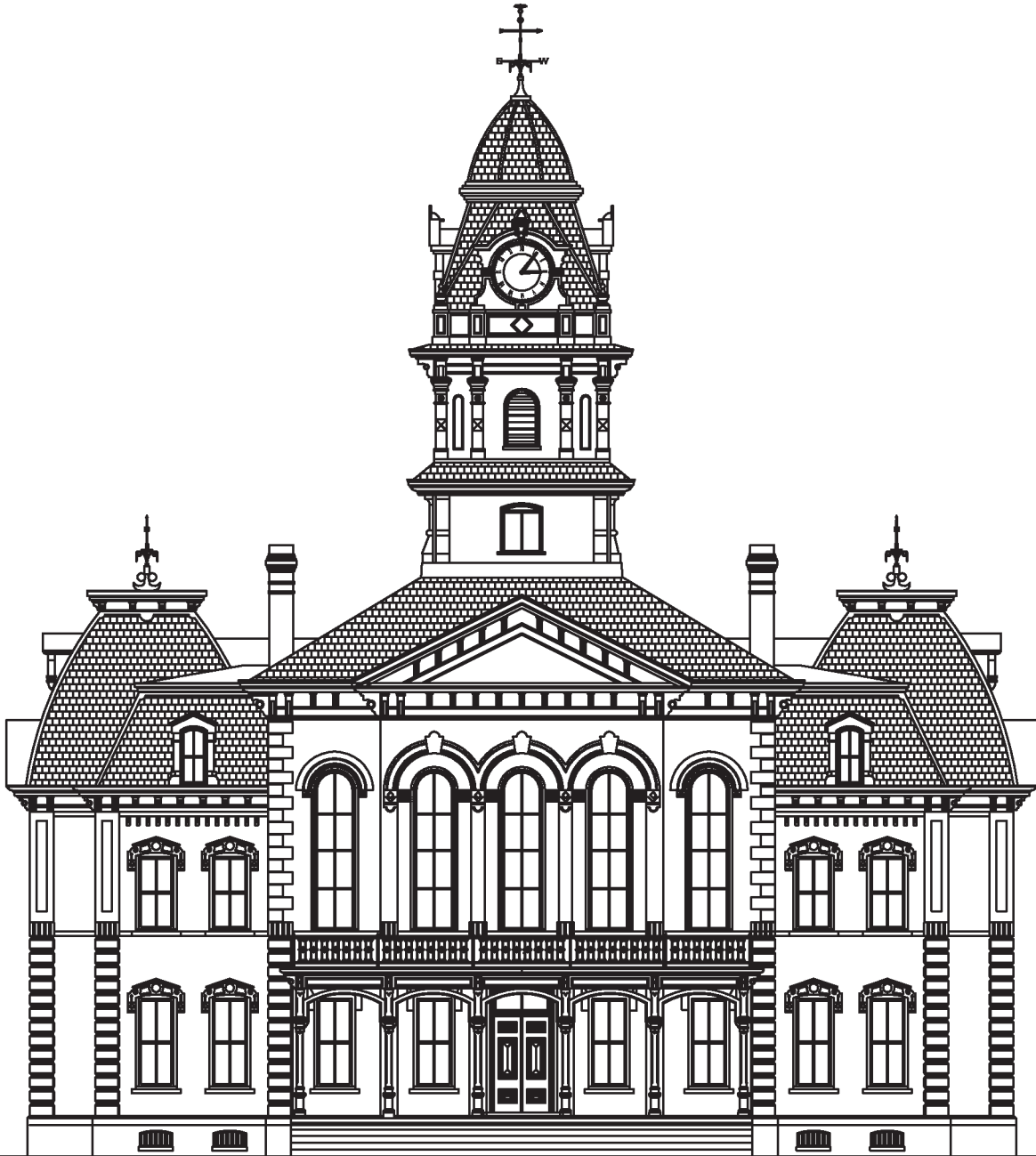
Stakeholder meetings were held on the following dates to provide information, review data, and gain community perspective:

- June 3, 2021
- July 25, 2021
- August 5, 2021
- September 20, 2021

Two public hearings were also held as a part of this process on June 3rd and September 30, 2021.

New to the community planning process this iteration was an electronic survey that garnered over 270 responses. The survey responses were reviewed and used to generate new ideas and provide community confirmation of priorities created by the stakeholder committee. Staff compared what the stakeholder committee developed with what survey results revealed when crafting the plan to ensure that voices were being heard. Local officials also retained survey results, including open-ended responses for future consultation.





Chapter 2:

Community Vision

This portion of the comprehensive plan contains the following:

- SWOT analysis results
- Community needs and opportunities
- Community goals and policies
- Future development narrative and maps

Within the future development section, Hancock County elected to create character areas rather than a future land use map (as in the previous plan), and the City of Sparta elected to retain its character area map from its previous plan. These communities are presented in two separate map and narrative series.

SWOT Analysis

As mentioned previously, the stakeholder committee met several times over the course of the plan creation process and actively participated in facilitated discussions and group exercises to define community needs, review community goals, and create community work program activities. One key exercise was the SWOT analysis (strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats). Combined with data collected by Regional Commission staff and county staff, the SWOT analysis directly informed the crafting of the county needs and opportunities and provided support for long-term goals and policies. Additionally, the community survey contained a SWOT component, and responses from that survey were included in the SWOT summary below.

STRENGTHS

- History (structures and sites, African-American, Native American)
- Small town feel
- Low crime
- Rail is still in use (freight)
- City/County administrations work well together
- Popular hunting and fishing destination
- Good city/county leadership and staff, including certified volunteer firefighters, new city treasurer and records management
- Faith-based community
- Little traffic
- Cost of living
- Lake Sinclair and other natural areas
- The residents
- Friendly and family-oriented community
- Minimal air and water pollution
- Available land for development (commercial, residential, recreational)
- Currently updating the historic resource survey
- Popular Pews and Pulpits tour; growing heritage tourism sector
- Jewell wedding venue
- Proximity to Augusta, Macon and Atlanta
- Moderate pedestrian traffic downtown Sparta
- Local organizations working toward improving education and health
- Sparta is a designated Opportunity Zone
- DREAM Streets Sparta program
- Active city and county online presence



WEAKNESSES

- Lack of jobs and businesses
- Few healthcare options/no hospital
- Inadequate housing (type & price variety; repairs needed on owner-occupied structures)
- Infrastructure needs improvements (roads, water, sewer, broadband, sidewalks)
- Lower-performing school system
- Internet access
- Limited retail and commercial options
- Insufficient communication between residents
- Insufficient community engagement from government
- Small industrial park with limited usable land
- Dilapidated structures and blighted areas
- Difficult to get volunteers for committees and firefighting duties
- Food deserts and resident food insecurity
- Limited daycare options
- No office for the active Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
- Some structures available for development have ground/building contamination
- Understaffed code enforcement
- Unattractive highway entrances (trash, dilapidated properties)
- Lack of lodging for hunters and other visitors
- Outdated land use ordinances
- Lack of cooperation/coordination between government and school board
- Poverty
- Lack of youth activities
- Low community health rankings
- Not located close to the interstate
- No parking at the courthouse on court days



COMMUNITY VISION

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expanding historic/heritage and agri-tourism
- Attracting businesses to the lake area
- Developing additional infrastructure
- Increasing investment in community youth
- Revitalizing downtown Sparta via the DREAM Streets program, individual property improvements, and other growth/development initiatives
- Constructing community gardens
- Building a new fire station to help lower ISO ratings
- Expanding the Pews and Pulpits tour
- Annexing existing water customers into the city
- Assembling land for a new industrial park
- Consolidating city/county resources
- Allowing commercial development along the TSPLOST truck route off Hwy 15
- Expanding and increasing parks and recreational facilities
- Developing historic homes into bed and breakfasts
- Expanding online county services/offerings

THREATS

- Competition from other areas
- Inability to secure a new healthcare facility (hospital, urgent care)
- Potential increases in crime
- Community disinvestment
- Lack of resources to implement ideas
- Ineffective/insufficient community leadership
- Continued population decline and shrinking tax base
- Aging population
- Citizen and community not being job ready for new or larger industries
- Low participation in the 2020 Census count
- Incompatible development in certain areas
- Low COVID-19 vaccination rate
- Community apathy and/or division
- Difficulty working with GDOT, particularly around projects on state routes
- Demolition by neglect (buildings)
- Limited offerings and support from Oconee Fall Line Technical College



Community Needs and Opportunities

The needs and opportunities included in this section of the plan present issues to address and possibilities to pursue across both jurisdictions. These items were generated during the 2021 comprehensive planning process utilizing: input from the stakeholder committee, the previous plan, community survey, and SWOT analysis. This plan section also informed other parts of the plan, including goals and work program activities. As a reminder, these aren't the only possible needs and opportunities, and this document is flexible to change as the community does.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Needs	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More lodging for visitors and tourists • Improved food access to reduce the number and size of food deserts • Better equipped workforce to attract companies and service local demand for jobs • More marketing and planning for existing and future economic development efforts • More employment opportunities for residents • Larger, more usable area for industrial park • More options to grow small businesses (a business incubator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop natural resources and innovative agricultural sites into agri-tourism products and sites • Expand the hunting industry • Utilize the Hwy 15 Coalition to promote local businesses • Expand the historic tourism sector and feature historic homes • Increase the number of occupied buildings downtown (new businesses) • Create a city organization to house both the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Development Authority • Capitalize on moderate pedestrian activity in downtown Sparta • Approve commercial development along the new SR 15 truck route • Work with internet service providers and other communities to improve broadband access
HOUSING	
Needs	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove dilapidated housing • Review code enforcement capacity for this area • Additional low-income housing • Access to broadband in homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize state and federal funding for housing rehabilitation • Explore opportunities for mixed-use buildings in downtown • Expand housing options around Lake Sinclair • Become a GICH community



COMMUNITY VISION

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES	
Needs	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure repairs and upgrades on existing city/county water and sewer systems • A stronger school system and more cooperative school board • Greater availability of daycares and community/learning centers • More recreational and community event areas and social opportunities for residents • Improve residential water quality in targeted areas • Increased roadway maintenance • Electronic payment options for county services such as county taxes • More parking at the county courthouse • Improved food access • Additional fire station to help lower ISO ratings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing rail uses could be expanded with railroad cooperation • Expansion opportunities exist for areas currently not served by city/county water or city sewer • Although options are limited, potential buildings/sites are available to create a much-desired community center, boys and girls club, and/or recreation facilities • Increase or upgrade bicycle/pedestrian facilities along major roads • Acquire property to host a farmer’s market and other local outdoor events downtown
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	
Needs	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect Lake Sinclair from inappropriate development • Preserve and protect existing historic and natural resources • Public parks and greenspaces • Physical office space for the Historic Preservation Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize residents who are available and willing to share knowledge of historic preservation tax credits to help others learn how to use them • Feature historic resources as a part of larger heritage tourism efforts • Update and enforce ordinances and codes to properly address development concerns • Growing the DREAM Streets Sparta efforts and becoming a GA Main Street community
LAND USE	
Needs	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill development in the city • Updated land use controls (zoning) in the city and county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market undeveloped land • HPC enforcement of design standards and compatible development in the historic district • Expand the Sparta historic district • Improve ordinances and enforcement to better address dilapidated structures



Community Goals & Policies

This section of the plan, like those before it, represent both Hancock County and the City of Sparta.

Goals

The goals presented herein represent broad statements of understanding and intent regarding the communities' long-term growth and development vision. In addition to the list of needs and opportunities, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Quality Community Objectives" were reviewed in order to form these topic-specific goals which guide the implementation strategies contained in the community work program.

Policies

To accompany the goals, a list of supporting policies was developed, some as ongoing initiatives, maintenance, and general best practices for local action. When the opportunity presents itself, potential actions derived from the goal, policy and objective statements contained in this section of the comprehensive plan may be incorporated as amendments into the community work program at a future date.



COMMUNITY VISION



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Provide an economic development program that continues the development of a balanced and self-sufficient local economy that benefits all citizens.
- Increase the number of cottage industry and small businesses throughout the county.
- Have an industrial park at 100% capacity.
- Expand hunting and game-related activities for residents and seasonal visitors.
- Utilize natural and cultural resources to create heritage and agri-tourism programs.
- Encourage and facilitate new businesses and restaurants within downtown Sparta.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES GOALS

- Expand water service to under-served areas of the county.
- Lower county ISO ratings in order to reduce insurance costs for all customer sectors.
- Provide sufficient parks, trails, and recreational opportunities and facilities for residents and visitors of all ages and sports leagues from other counties.
- Expand agricultural education for residents of all ages to promote local, healthy food.
- Create a community-wide wellness program, including improved food access through a downtown market and community gardens.



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS

- Preserve and protect historic resources.
- Operate a successful museum and recreation complex.

LAND USE GOAL

- Promote appropriate development and protect resources through land use controls.





HOUSING GOALS

- Provide safe, livable, affordable housing options for all ages.
- Present attractive housing and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods that encourage community investment and upkeep.

BROADBAND SERVICES GOAL

- Increase access to high-speed Internet throughout the county for residents, businesses, and institutions of various sizes.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Work with the Hwy 15 coalition to promote businesses along that corridor.
- Utilize the plan when proposing new locations for commercial and industrial activity.
- Actively support efforts to reduce unemployment and increase academic achievement through partnerships with community organizations.
- Maintain a list of available industrial sites and vacant commercial buildings in the city/county.
- Encourage and support redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Sparta, including commercial and residential development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Support programs for the retention, expansion, and creation of businesses.
- Target reinvestment in declining, existing neighborhoods to further encourage private sector redevelopment.
- Promote the establishment and maintenance of public gathering sites in the downtown Sparta area to serve as focal points for the city.
- Invest in new festivals to be held within the city/county to attract people to the area.
- Actively promote existing annual events, and seek cross-promotion of events in nearby counties.
- Encourage evaluation, cleanup and reuse of brownfield sites.

LAND USE

- Actively enforce established ordinances, zoning and nuisance codes.
- Require planning/code enforcement staff and planning commissioners to attend regular training.
- Keep the zoning ordinance and other development regulations up-to-date and codify them.
- Coordinate land use decisions with transportation decisions.
- Encourage traditional neighborhood development where appropriate.
- Promote efficient use of land by encouraging well-designed, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use areas for new development.
- Use the comprehensive plan in the review of rezoning applications and other development proposals.
- Allow commercial uses in formerly residential structures as a means of building preservation, character retention and economic development.
- Support the redevelopment and revitalization of vacant and/or underutilized commercial and industrial areas in and near downtown Sparta.



COMMUNITY VISION

- Support opportunities for residential and non-residential development that enhances the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Employ innovative planning concepts to community priorities of : well-designed neighborhoods, environmental protection, open space preservation, and improved traffic flow for enhanced quality of life.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Promote local historic preservation activities and regularly publicize information about available tax credits.
- Encourage and support redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Sparta.
- Prepare and adopt DNR “Part V” environmental ordinances as applicable.
- Encourage new development in suitable locations in order to protect natural and cultural resources, and environmentally-sensitive areas.
- Periodically update historic resource surveys.
- Preserve corridors suitable for the development of multi-use trails.
- Utilize form-based codes or design guidelines to protect the design and character of historic structures while exercising flexibility in their use.
- Consider natural/cultural resources impacts when making land use or other planning decisions.
- Seek for opportunities to link natural, agricultural, and/or cultural sites together to create tourist and resident experiences.
- Identify programs, projects, and educational messages to reduce non-point source pollution to protect water quality in lakes and streams.
- Educate stakeholders in the region on the importance of water quality and managing water as a resource including practices such as water conservation and increased water efficiency.
- Encourage all new car wash establishments, regardless of size and scale, to recycle wash water to minimize the amount of potable water used during their processes and to capture and treat storm water properly.
- Allow commercial uses in formerly residential structures as a means of building preservation, character retention and economic development.
- Nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

- Enhance and upgrade recreational facilities and leisure opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Pursue grants and other opportunities to assist in funding infrastructure improvements.
- Make efficient use of existing infrastructure as well as future investments and expenditures for capital improvements and long-term operation and maintenance costs.
- Coordinate public facilities and services with land use planning to promote more compact development.
- Protect existing infrastructure improvements by encouraging infill, redevelopment and compact development.
- Hire or partner with a certified dog rescuer to assist with animal control.
- Review GDOT “Complete Streets” guidance and opportunities to improve pedestrian/bicycle connections to neighborhoods in road projects.
- Create opportunities for food access in public spaces (space for farmers markets, edible plants with labeling in parks, etc.).
- Examine street networks around targeted senior centers for connectivity/walkability between the center and the surrounding area.



- Maximize infrastructure investments by promoting infill development where possible and appropriate.
- Support farmers markets, pocket parks and community gardens.
- Improve accessibility to library services and educational programs.

HOUSING

- Acquire and demolish vacant and dangerous buildings that do not conform to requirements.
- Exercise code enforcement for substandard and dilapidated properties.
- Utilize the Land Bank Authority for future development, including acceptance of property donation in lieu of taxes and other efforts.
- Actively seek appropriate state and federal grants for housing improvements.
- Encourage infill housing in existing, viable neighborhoods.
- Promote walkable, safe neighborhoods.
- Participate in housing rehab programs: Community Home Investment Partnership (CHIP), GA Initiative for Community Housing (GICH), and Community Development Block Grants.
- Provide homeowners with information on state and federal rehab programs.
- Evaluate existing vacant structures, including historic or former industrial, as opportunities for adaptive reuse as housing or mixed developments.
- Periodically examine and inventory existing housing stock.
- Encourage housing in the upper floors of downtown commercial buildings.



HANCOCK COUNTY — GEORGIA —

Future Development

Changing conditions sometimes lead to or require changes in land use. The understanding of established and potential future uses of land in Hancock County should be a priority to address changing conditions.

The vast majority of land in Hancock County has been and continues to be designated for agricultural and low density residential uses. Residential land use includes single and multi-family developments. Single-family dwellings are the predominant housing type. There is little duplex and multifamily development in the County. Very little land in Hancock County is designated for commercial uses. Small businesses operate in scattered locations throughout the county, with no centralized area. The majority of commercial buildings in the county are in incorporated Sparta. Industrial land in Hancock County includes several quarry and mining sites and the industrial park. One industrial tenant is a small solar farm, an industry the county wants to expand.

In contrast to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, this plan incorporates a character area map for Hancock County instead of a future land use map. When interpreting how best to use the Comprehensive Plan's character area map and supporting narratives, the reader should be mindful of the following two (2) parameters:

Character Area Boundaries. Unlike a parcel-specific future land use map, character area boundaries are conceptual and may cross parcel lines. The character area boundaries in this document represent “approximate” character area location. This flexibility allows the county government to make decisions based on changing conditions while reducing the need to continually amend the comprehensive plan. As a result, it is possible to assume that small parcels located directly adjacent to one (1) or more character areas may be permitted by the local government to develop according to the parameters of the adjacent area rather than the area in which it is located. Such an action should be taken sparingly and the decision should only be made if the local government can show that it is consistent with the recommendations provided in other sections of the comprehensive plan or other local policy document. For the most part however, tracts should develop according to the parameters established in the specific character area in which they're located.

Character Area Narratives. The narratives that correspond to the character area map should be viewed as general policy statements - as statements of intent. Their use and applicability is similar to those other goals and policy statements found in the Community Goals section. They should inform future development decisions and perhaps form the basis for more detailed topic-specific studies in the future.

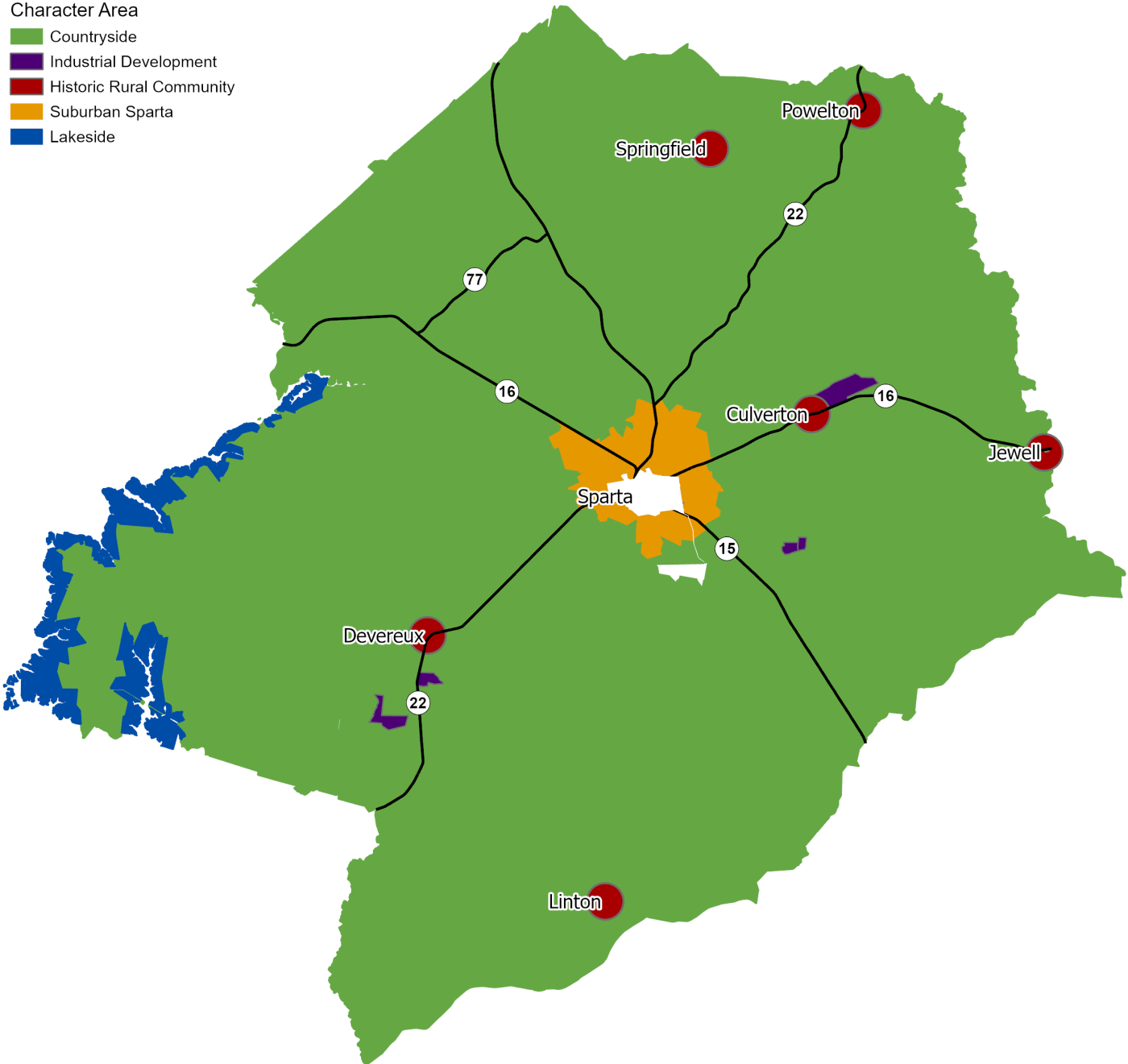


HANCOCK COUNTY CHARACTER AREAS

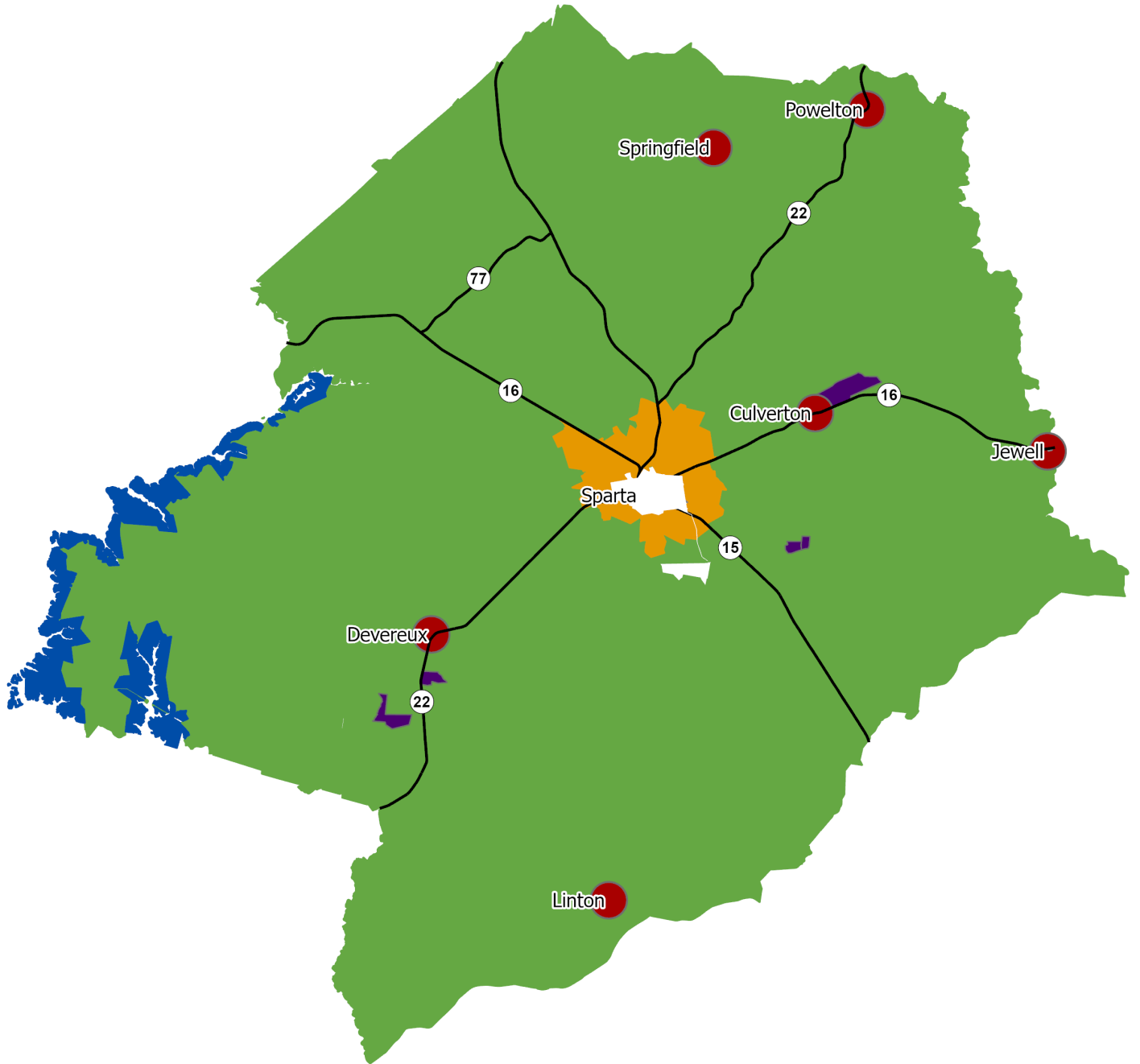
The 2021 Comprehensive Plan Character Area Map includes a total of five (5) character areas:

COUNTRYSIDE | LAKESIDE | INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
HISTORIC RURAL COMMUNITY | SUBURBAN SPARTA

- Character Area
- Countryside
- Industrial Development
- Historic Rural Community
- Suburban Sparta
- Lakeside



COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER AREA



COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Countryside Character Area covers the majority of the county, characterized by rural, undeveloped land, farms and agricultural operations, low-density residential development, and commercial timber/pulpwood harvesting. Recreation, such as bicycle and pedestrian trails would be appropriate in this area.

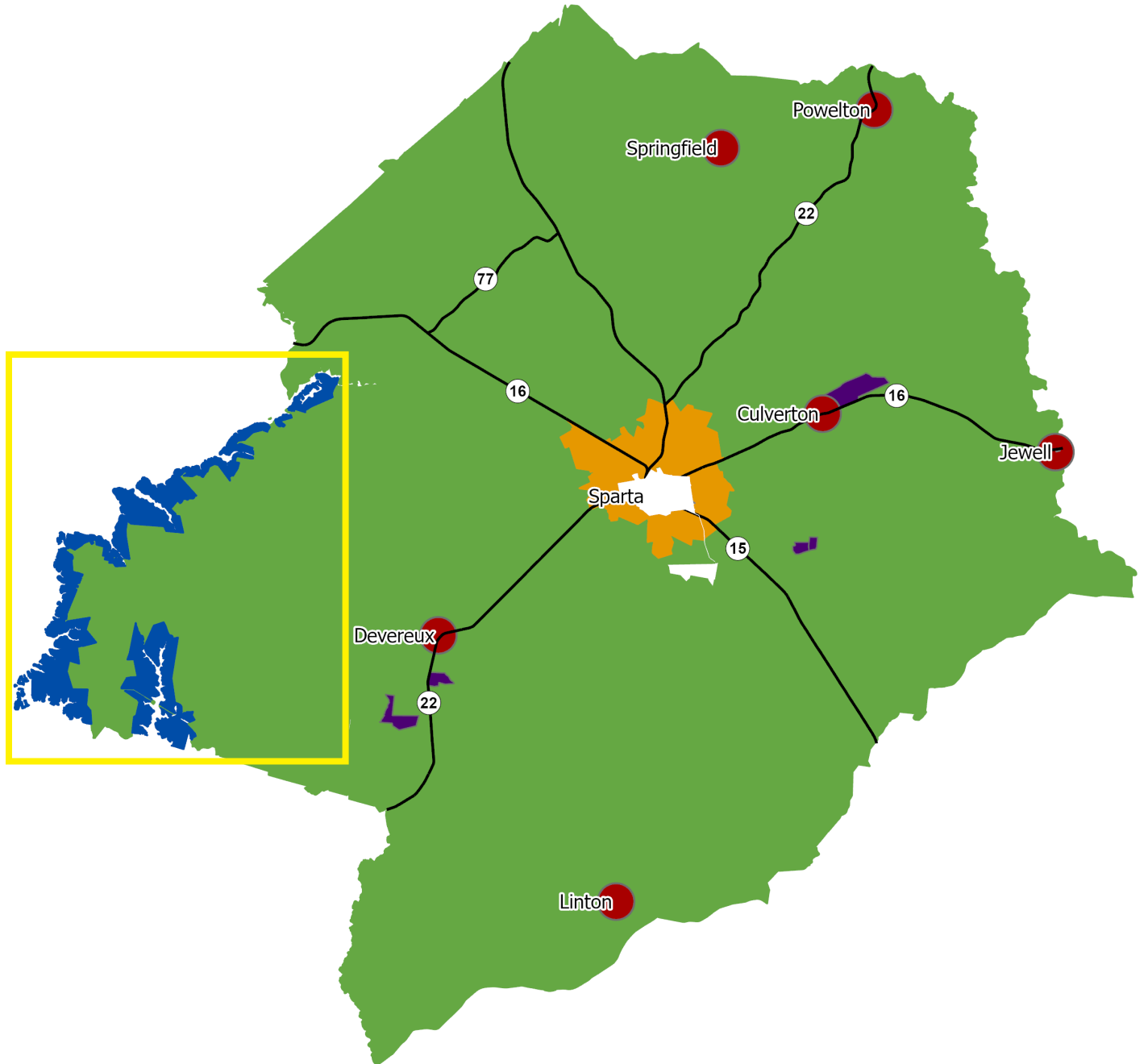
- Agriculture
- Residential
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation

Implementation Measures

- Promote forestry and timber harvesting with guidelines for replanting.
- Encourage the development of trails and other passive recreation opportunities.
- Review and adjust regulations as necessary to encourage open space preservation.
- Emphasize cluster subdivision design that incorporates a significant amount of open space. Clustered development is the grouping of residential properties on a development site in order to use the extra land as open space, recreation or agriculture.
- Support the historic character of properties near Historic Rural Community character area.



LAKESIDE CHARACTER AREA



LAKESIDE CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Lake Character Area is a predominantly residential area along Lake Sinclair, including seasonal homeowners. With additional infrastructure and investment, the area can grow as a featured location in the county. Protecting the lakefront while providing adequate facilities and infrastructure for the area is a major objective.

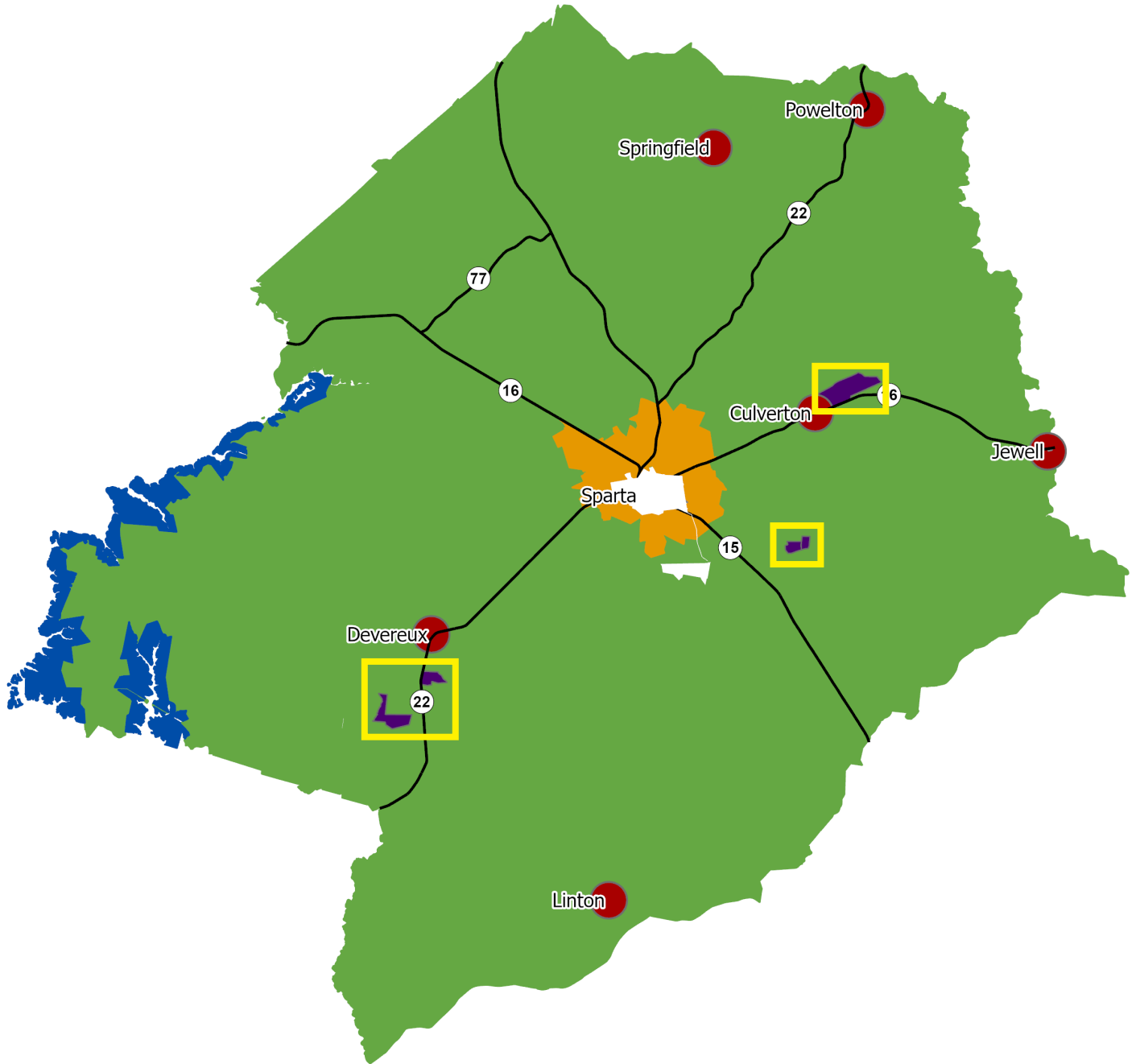
- Residential (medium density)
- Commercial (limited)
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation

Implementation Measures

- Maintain water and roadway infrastructure.
- Expand water service where feasible.
- Maintain (and increase as deemed appropriate) lake/waterway development buffers.
- Promote linkages between residential developments and commercial/recreational areas.
- Consider neighborhood-scale commercial in support of resident and seasonal needs.



INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA



INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Industrial Development Character Area is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, large-scale solar farms, warehousing facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, and other similar operations. These existing and potential sites are located throughout the county, not solely in the industrial park.

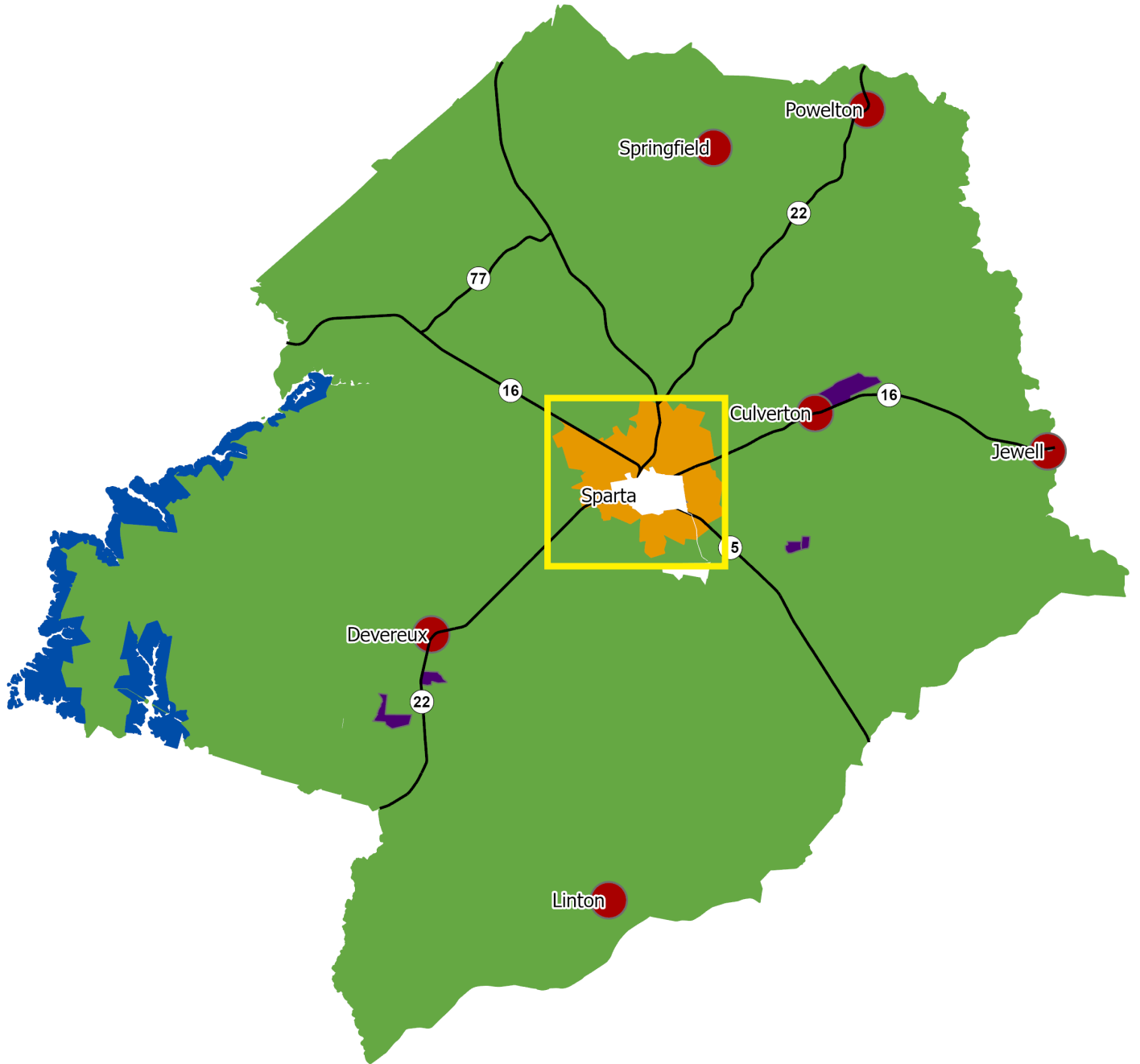
- Industrial
- Commercial (limited)

Implementation Measures

- Create and maintain landscape buffers to separate industrial uses from adjacent areas.
- Provide information regarding these areas to potential supporting commercial businesses.
- Limit noises, smells, and lighting associated with manufacturing uses.
- Provide and maintain streets that can accommodate continual large vehicle traffic.
- Invest in the development of the county industrial park.



SUBURBAN SPARTA CHARACTER AREA



SUBURBAN SPARTA CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Suburban Sparta Character Area covers areas of developed and undeveloped property near the City of Sparta. It includes a mix of uses and scales. Future development in this area includes a truck route and potential increases in commercial property.

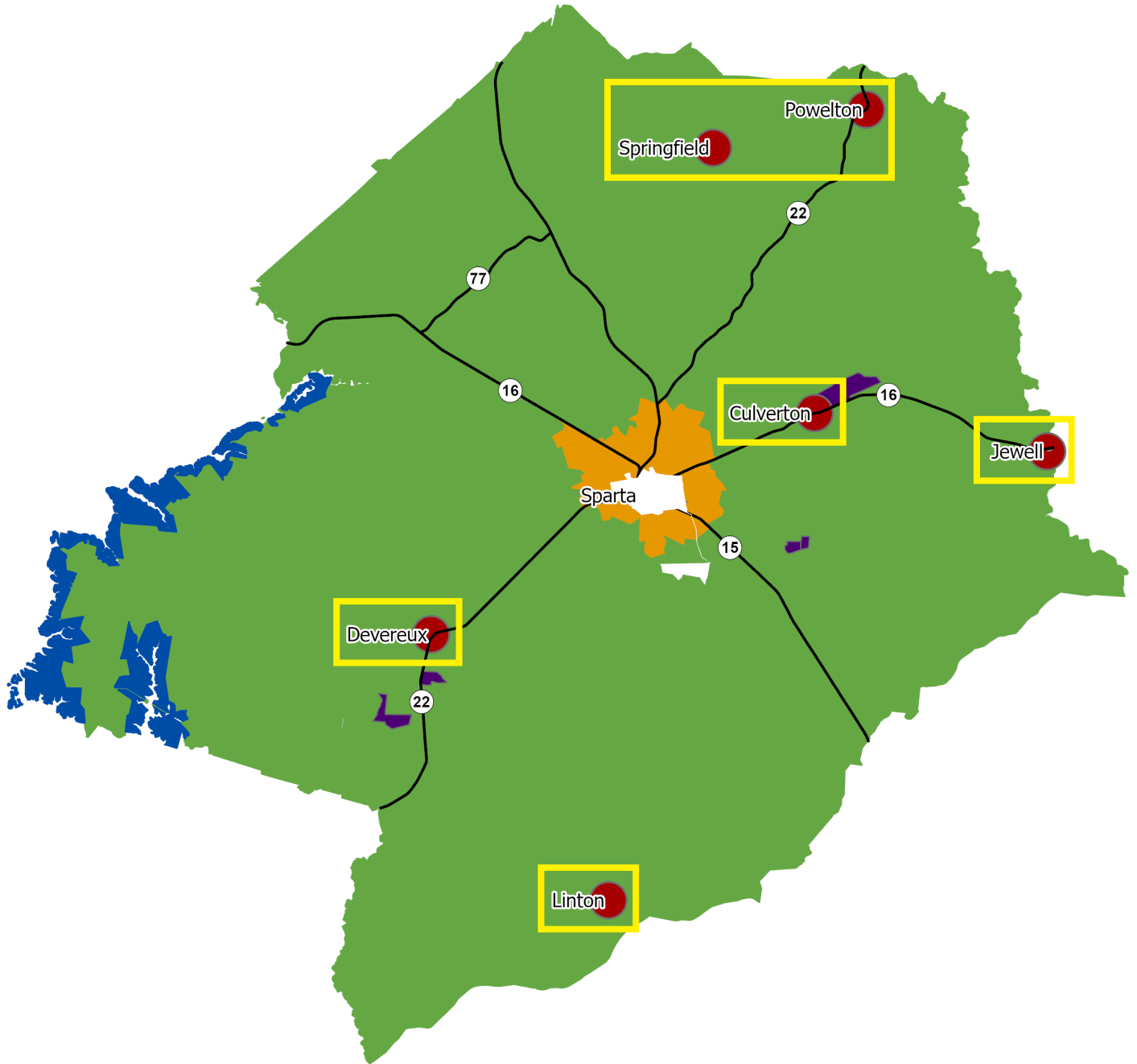
- Residential (single and multi-family)
- Commercial
- Public/Institutional
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Industrial (limited, grandfathered)

Implementation Measures

- Promote a variety of architectural styles and housing types/densities.
- Encourage street block and lot arrangements that promote interconnectivity between tracts.
- Create targeted open space or pocket parks in/near neighborhoods.
- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian features with direct linkages to community facilities.
- Encourage infill development (residential or commercial).
- Allow commercial development along the new truck route (distance from the road to be determined as ordinances are updated).



HISTORIC RURAL COMMUNITY CHARACTER AREA



HISTORIC RURAL COMMUNITY CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Historic Rural Community Character Area is represented by community nodes of historic significance, some of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR). Each has a unique history worthy of protection and promotion. These nodes include the local, state and federally designated/accepted historic boundaries.

- Residential
- Commercial (limited; neighborhood scale)

Implementation Measures

- Retain the historic character of each node, including building form, massing and materials where possible.
- Place and maintain local historic markers in each community.
- Require new and infill development to complement existing character.
- Inventory structures and nominate remaining NR-eligible buildings or districts.
- Protect historic viewsheds.
- Allow commercial uses in formerly residential structures as a means of building preservation, character retention and economic development.





Future Development

The 2021 Joint Comprehensive Plan incorporates a Sparta Character Area Map as its principal means by which the long-term land use goals and policies of the City of Sparta are represented. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan character area map includes a total of five (5) character areas:

DOWNTOWN SPARTA | INNOVATION - HISTORICAL | INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PERIMETER - HISTORIC | RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Character areas developed herein remain purposely broad. With limited near-term growth prospects, Sparta stakeholders determined that more specific land use policies for areas of existing population concentrations is best addressed through corridor, district, or neighborhood-specific special area planning processes as the need arises.

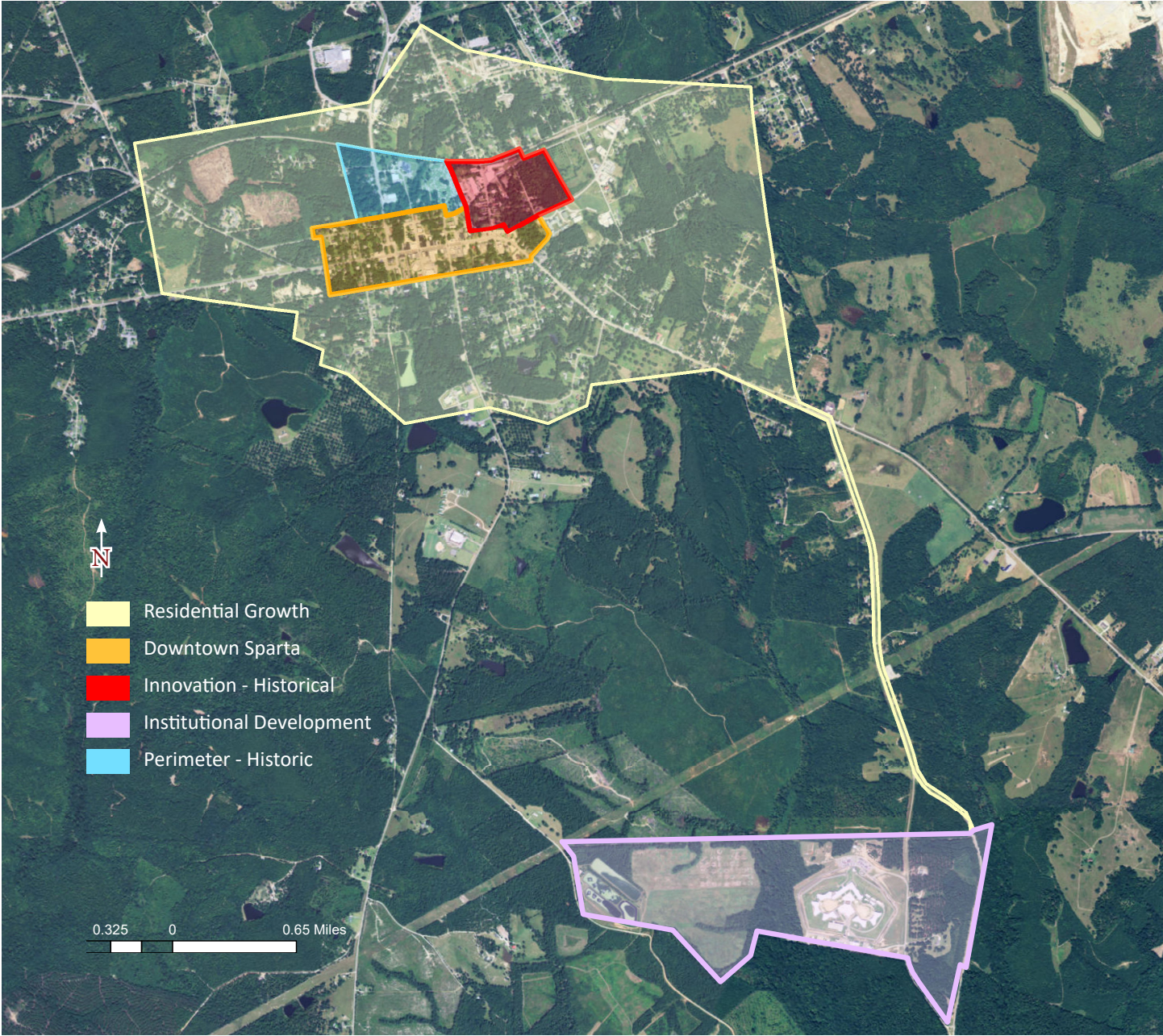
Supporting character area narratives are located on the pages following. When interpreting how best to use the comprehensive plan's character area map and supporting narratives, the reader should be mindful of the following two (2) parameters:

Character Area Boundaries. Unlike a parcel-specific future land use map, character area boundaries are conceptual and may cross parcel lines. The character area boundaries in this document represent “approximate” character area location. This flexibility allows the city government to make decisions based on changing conditions while reducing the need to continually amend the comprehensive plan. As a result, it is possible to assume that small parcels located directly adjacent to one (1) or more character areas may be permitted by the local government to develop according to the parameters of the adjacent area rather than the area in which it is located. Such an action should be taken sparingly and the decision should only be made if the local government can show that it is consistent with the recommendations provided in other sections of the comprehensive plan or other local policy document. For the most part however, tracts should develop according to the parameters established in the specific character area in which it is located.

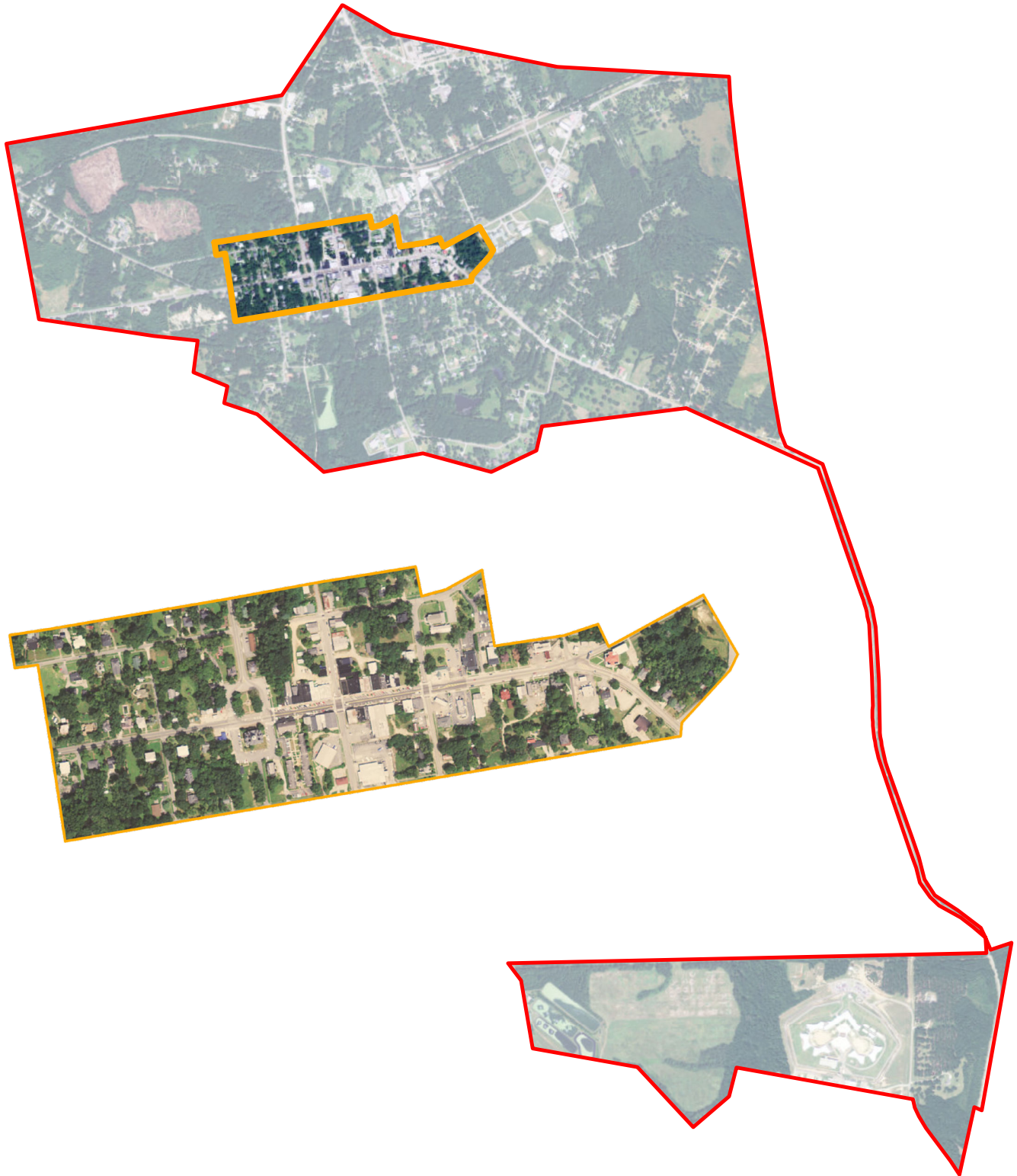
Character Area Narratives. The narratives which correspond to the character area map should be viewed as general policy statements - as statements of intent. Their use and applicability is similar to those other goals and policy statements found in the Community Goals section. They should inform future development decisions and perhaps form the basis for more detailed topic-specific studies in the future.



SPARTA CHARACTER AREAS



DOWNTOWN SPARTA CHARACTER AREA



DOWNTOWN SPARTA CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Downtown Sparta Character Area, primarily located along Broad Street, contains multiple land uses including commercial and small and medium lot residential. There is a focus on making this area a true community center where residents are able to gather and enjoy amenities in conjunction with local shopping and eating options.

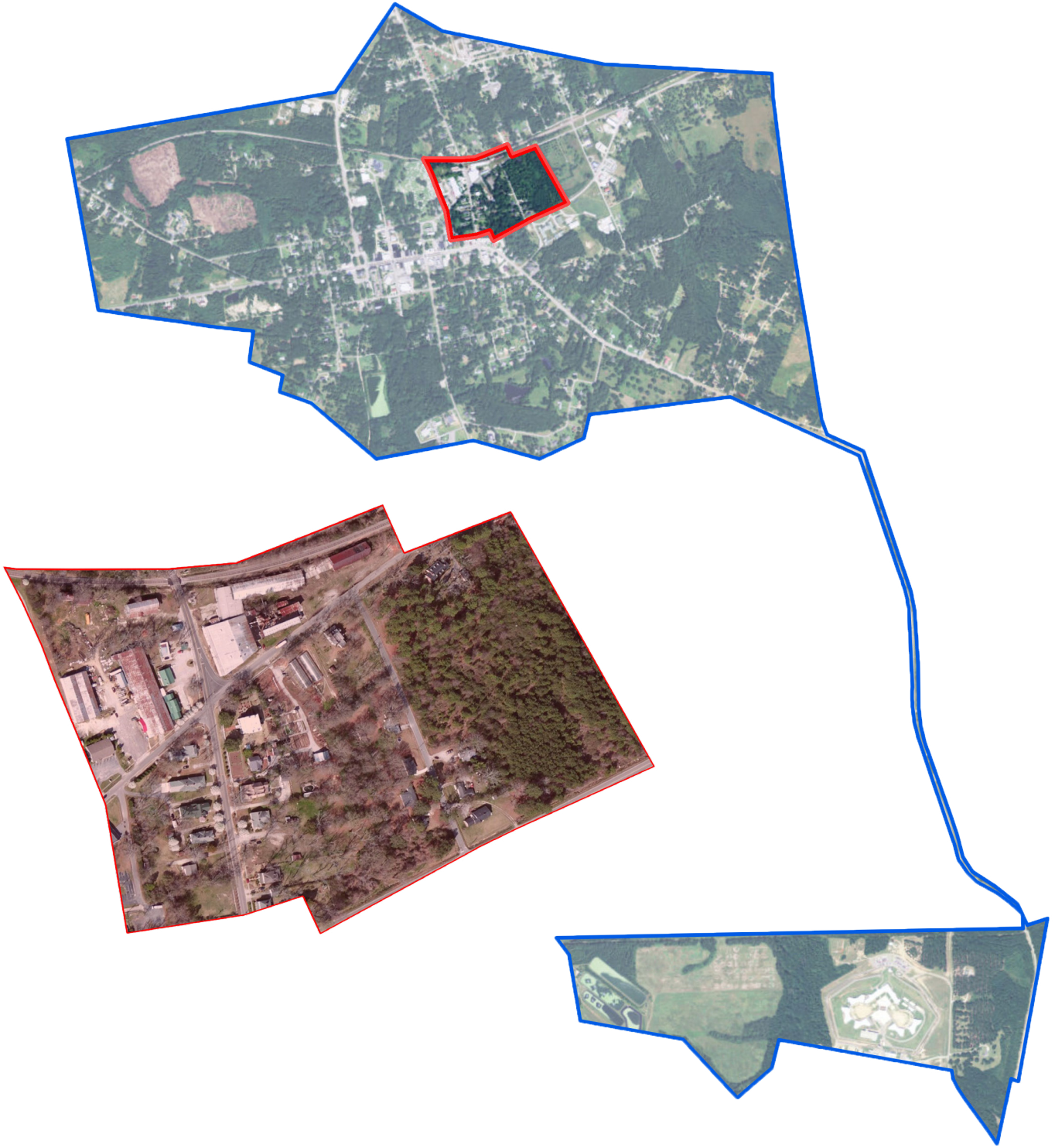
- Commercial
- Residential
- Parks/Recreation

Implementation Measures

- Provide incentives for certain commercial activities.
- Support the retention of historic residential properties.
- Improve commercial area pedestrian facilities.
- Increase advertisement of commercial area and incentives outside of area.
- Provide facilities or spaces where residents are able to congregate and enjoy events.
- Utilize design guidelines for residential and commercial property.



INNOVATION-HISTORICAL CHARACTER AREA



INNOVATION-HISTORICAL CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Innovation-Historical Character Area is an area where historical homes exist in conjunction with small-lot commercial hydroponic farming facilities. This unique combination of uses in proximity to one another is a model for rural communities and is promoted as such.

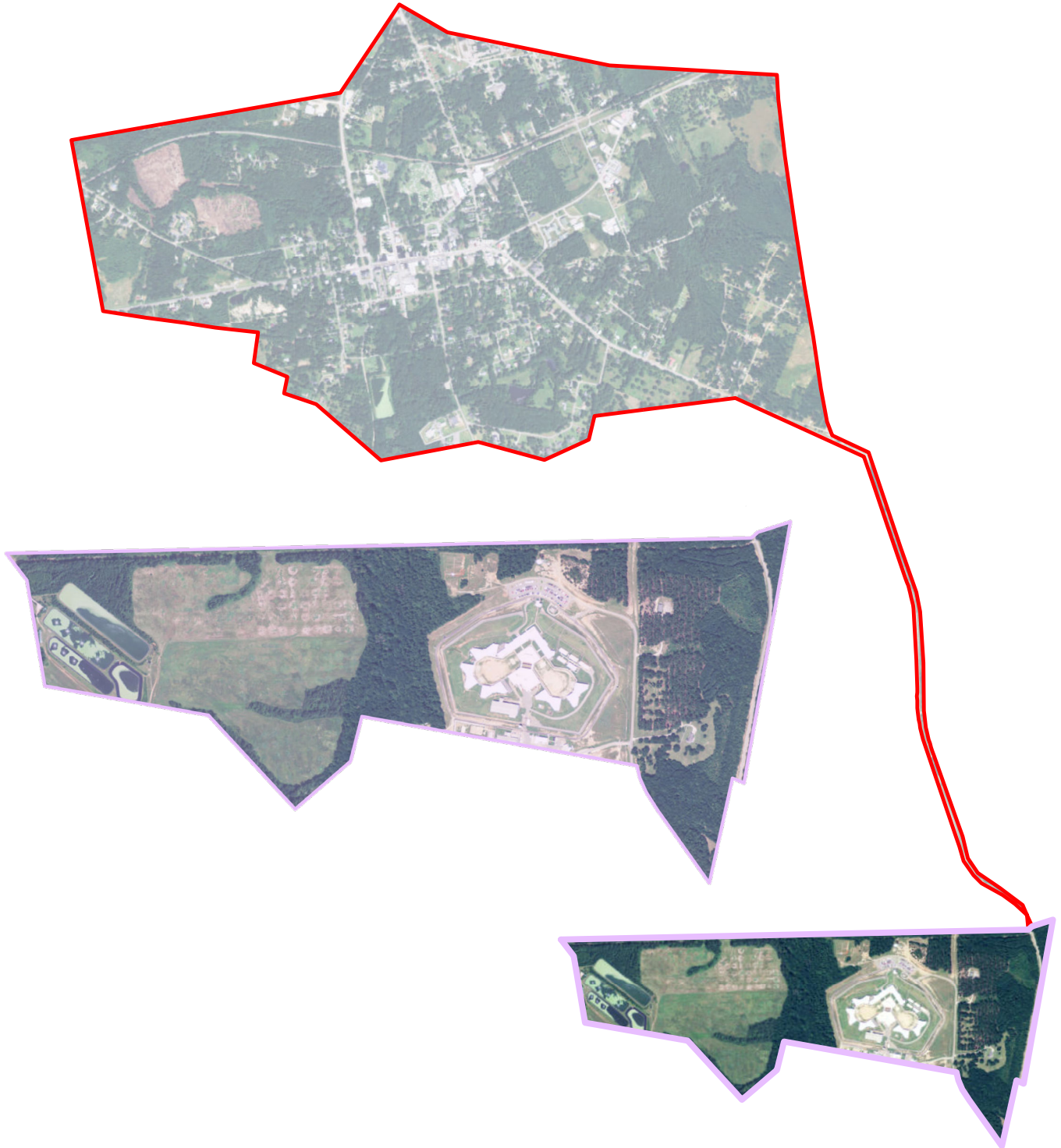
- Small-scale agriculture
- Residential
- Parks/Recreation

Implementation Measures

- Create and support publicly-accessible community gardens.
- Assist with incentives and funding through the University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University Agriculture extension offices.
- Support the retention of historic residential properties.
- Increase advertisement of area to attract visitors to unique marriage of agriculture within city residential area.
- Utilize design guidelines for residential property.



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Institutional Development Character Area currently contains the city’s sewerage treatment plant’s spray field and the Hancock State Prison, which comprise the majority of the land in this character area.

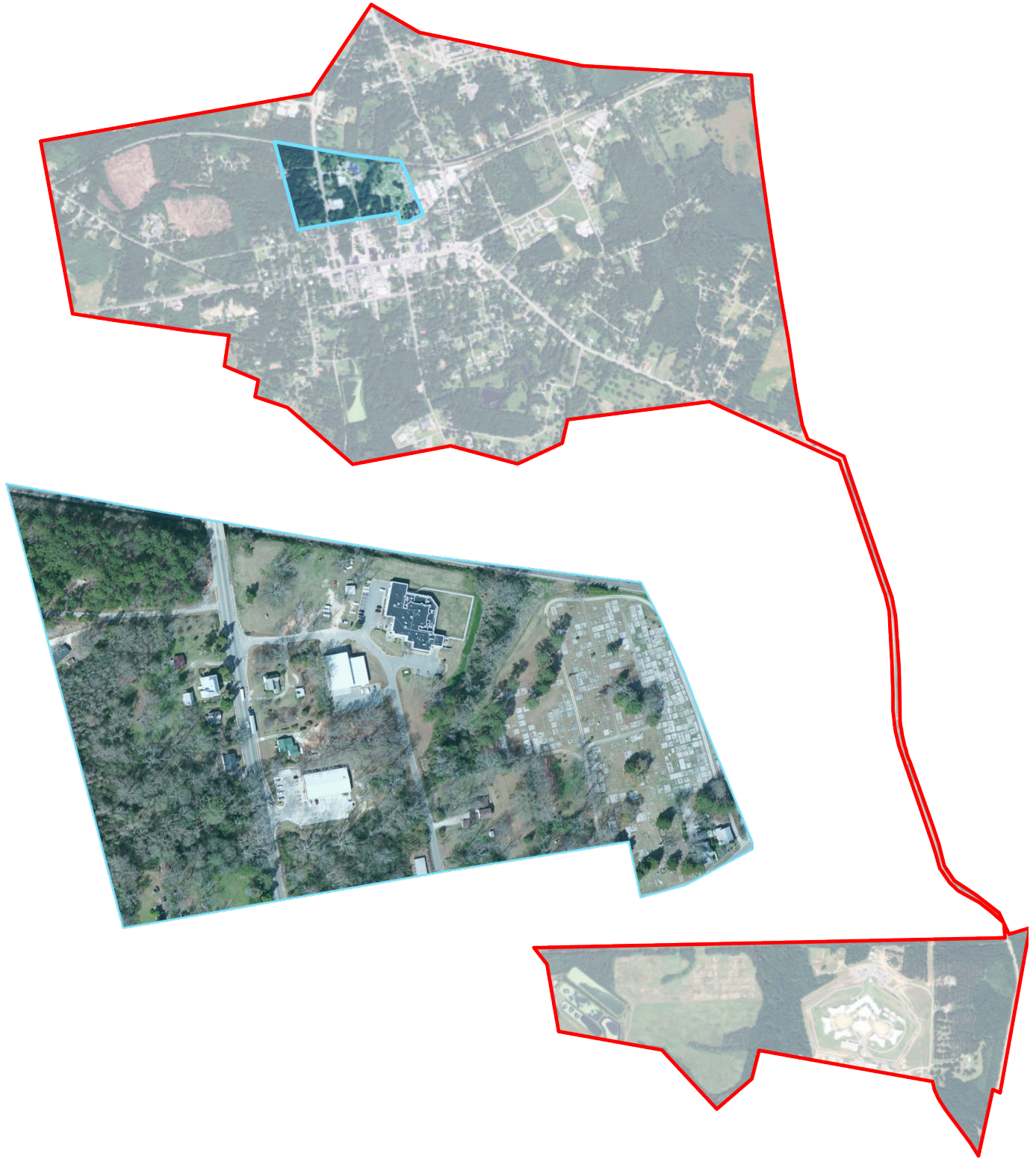
- Public/Institutional

Implementation Measures

- Expand the uses currently in this area.



PERIMETER-HISTORIC CHARACTER AREA



PERIMETER-HISTORIC CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

The Perimeter-Historic Character Area is characterized by historic homes and sites including the Sparta Cemetery listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This area is a current tourist attraction and should be maintained and beautified to continue to attract visitors to the area.

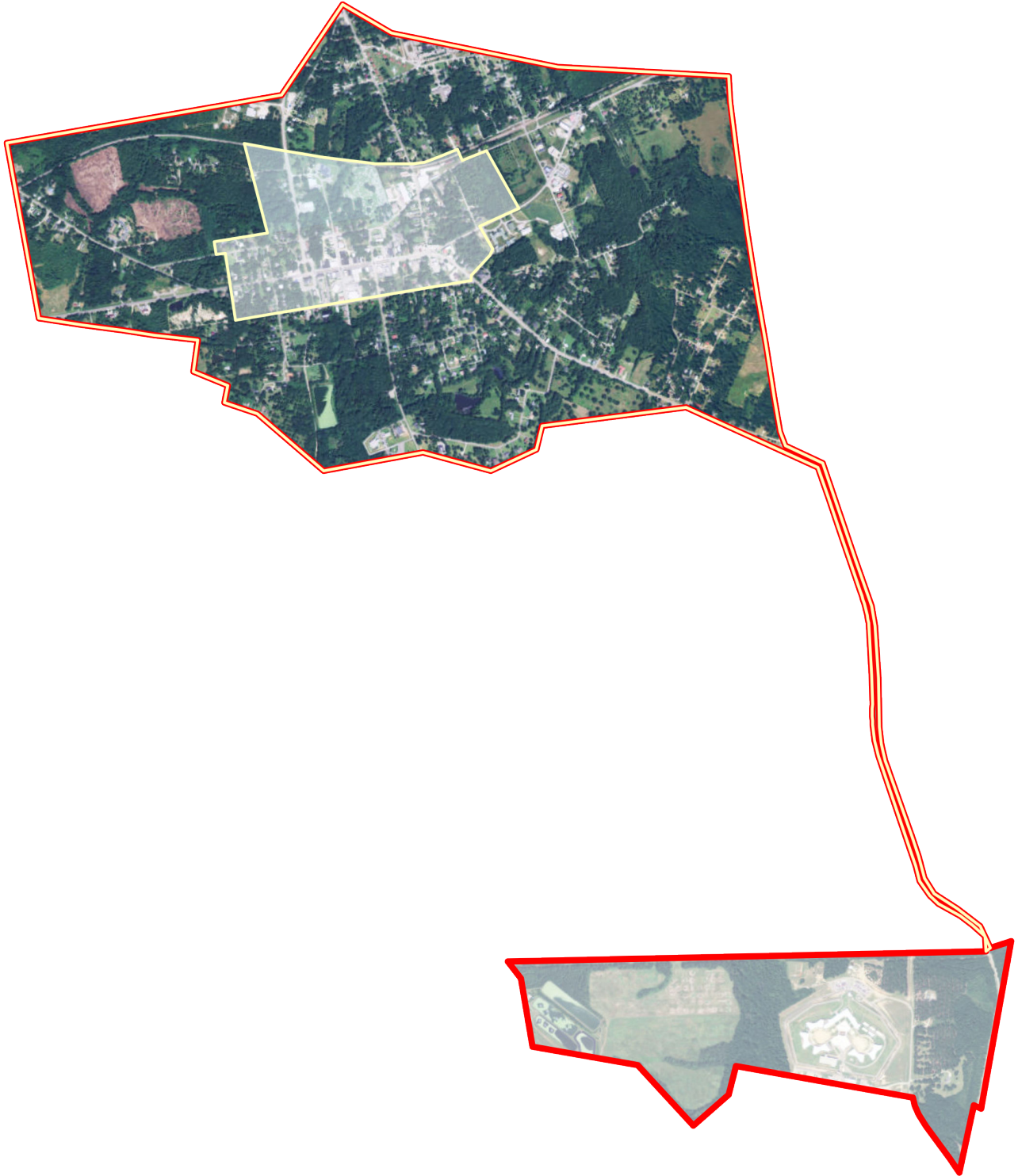
- Residential
- Public/Institutional
- Commercial (Bed & Breakfast Inns; commercial warehouse)
- Parks/Recreation

Implementation Measures

- Provide ordinance language to ensure the operation of Bed & Breakfast / Inns to ensure visitors have a place to stay on a visit to the city.
- Improve pedestrian facilities.
- Support the retention of historic residential properties.
- Utilize design guidelines for residential and commercial property.
- Increase the number of greenspaces and passive parks for visitors to enjoy.
- Create and support publicly-accessible community gardens.



RESIDENTIAL GROWTH CHARACTER AREA



RESIDENTIAL GROWTH CHARACTER AREA



General Description

Land Uses

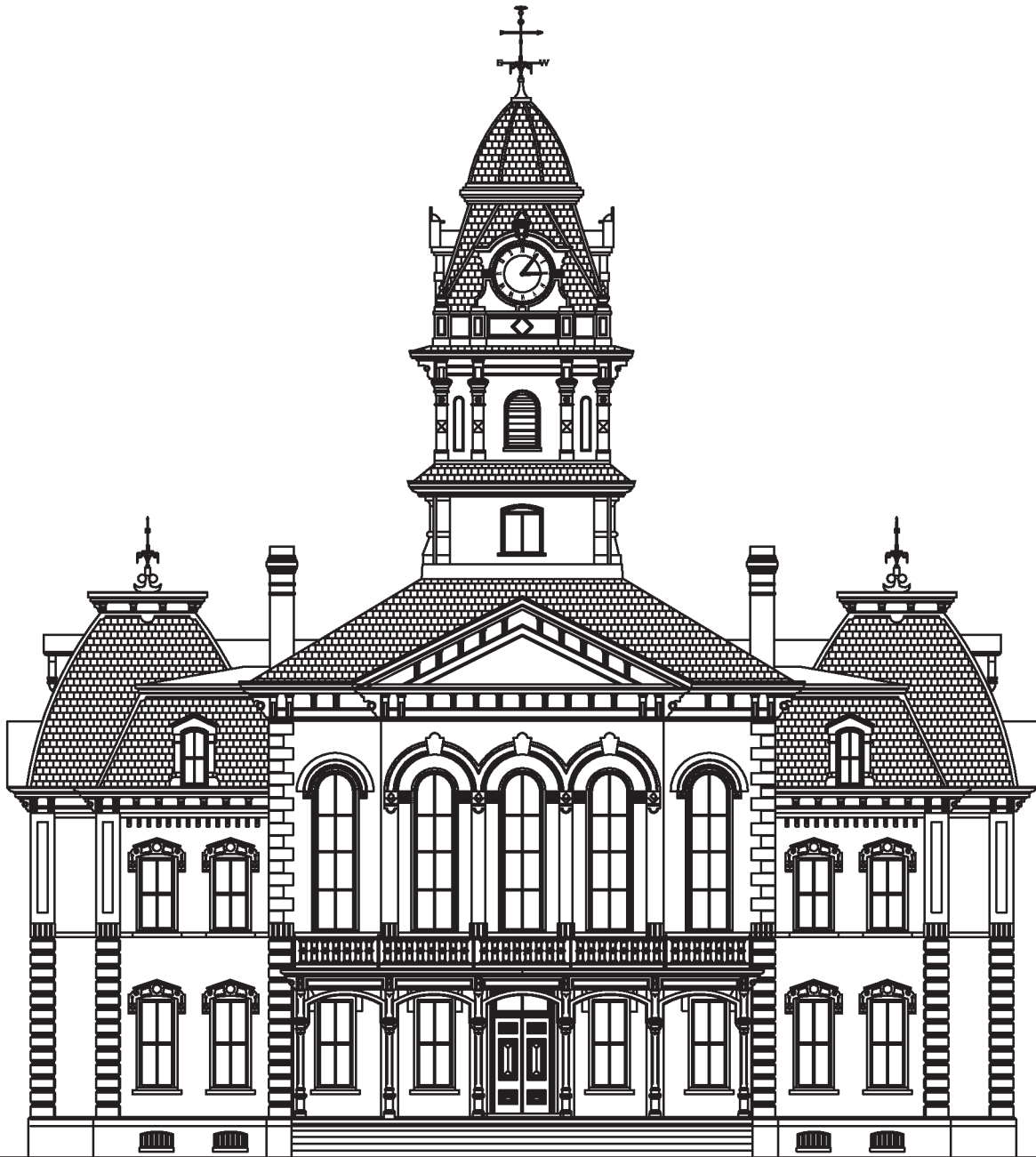
The Residential Growth Character Area contains primarily residential and commercial land uses. Commercial land uses are typically located along major thoroughfares. There is potential for residential development throughout this character area.

- Residential
- Parks/Recreation
- Commercial (limited, along main highways)

Implementation Measures

- Improve pedestrian facilities.
- Support the creation of greenspace, pocket parks and similar public options.
- Provide an area in which residents are able to congregate and enjoy events.





Chapter 3:

Plan Implementation

This portion of the comprehensive plan contains the following:

- Report of Accomplishments
- Community Work Program

Although this is a joint comprehensive plan with shared goals, each jurisdiction has maintained a report of accomplishments and 5-year work program for 2021-2026.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As part of the report, a list of activities from the prior community work programs is included on the following pages, and activities are assigned the following identifiers to acknowledge the status of each project as:

- Completed: the listed activity has been concluded
- Underway: the listed activity has started and is continuing
- Postponed: the listed activity has not been started or has halted for some reason
- Not Accomplished: the listed activity has not and will not moved forward

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

The Community Work Program component establishes priority activities (divided by topic area) that the county, city, and/or other vested or partnering agencies will undertake over the next five (5) years. It is the key implementation tool for addressing the needs and opportunities identified during this planning process. Although designed by local planning participants to guide community building activities prioritized from the local level, the community work program is structured to adhere to DCA minimum state comprehensive planning standards.

Consistent with state rules, the 2021 Joint Comprehensive Plan's Community Work Program includes the following information:

- Description of each activity
- Time-frame for undertaking the activity
- Responsible party and potential partners for implementing the activity
- Estimated Cost (if any) of implementing the activity
- Funding Source(s)

Abbreviations used in this portion of the plan include:

TBD - To Be Determined
CSRA-RC - Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission
CWP - Community Work Program
HPC - Historic Preservation Commission
GICH - Georgia Initiative for Community Housing
GDOT - Georgia Department of Transportation
DNR - (Georgia) Department of Natural Resources
DCA - (Georgia) Department of Community Affairs
CHIP - Community HOME Investment Program
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture
TSPLOST - Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax
OFTC - Oconee Fall Line Technical College
EMC - Electric Membership Corporation
UGA - University of Georgia
CLG - Certified Local Government
EPD - (Georgia) Environmental Planning Division



HANCOCK COUNTY

— GEORGIA —

Report of Accomplishments

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					Comments
Activity	Status				
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Establish an umbrella economic development organization, One Hancock, to promote county efforts from the development authority, tourism and chamber.				X	Upon consulting legal advice from the county attorney, it was determined that this is not possible in the county due to the way the Development Authority was created
Recruit additional solar farms to the county.		X			This activity is considered an on-going activity and is not included in the 2021 CWP.
Create a county business incubator.		X			Reworded in the 2021 CWP as “Create and operate one or more city-county business incubators throughout the county.”
Develop an annual fishing tournament at Lake Sinclair.			X		Postponed until a host entity can be determined
Join the state program whereby hunters can lease property from residents for hunting.				X	No longer necessary; currently accommodated by private landowners
Apply to the DCA Tourism Product Development Team for a visit and subsequent report for county tourism.		X			A TPD grant was obtained for the Pews and Pulpits tour, brochures and boxes
Work with neighboring counties to create a multi-county heritage tourism trail.	X				
Market and expand the current “tour of homes”.		X			This activity is not included in the 2021 CWP.
Restart the annual Renaissance Festival.	X				
Initiate a “Christmas at the Courthouse” annual program.			X		Postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Work with a developer to build lodging facilities for visitors.				X	Lack of funding
Promote the existing annual motocross event.		X			This activity is a continuous local action not included in the 2021 CWP.
Maintain and update a list of available industrial sites within the county.		X			This activity is viewed as on-going operation and is not included in the 2021 CWP.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Reinstate the historic preservation commission.	X				
Nominate additional properties to the National Register of Historic Places.		X			Regarded as on-going policy and not included in the 2021 CWP
Create a county repository of historical artifacts and records.		X			Artifacts have been collected and are being stored. The county is currently searching for locations to open a new museum and temporary exhibit space. Item is reworded in 2021 CWP as "Acquire property to re-establish a city-county museum."
Create a recreational trails plan.			X		Lack of funds
Apply for a recreational trails grant.			X		Postponed until more planning can be done
Assist Glen Mary Plantation with a tourism product development grant for restoration and repairs.	X				
Join with Putnam County to develop a dual park at the SR 16 bridge at Lake Oconee and expand upon existing boat ramp site.				X	Terminated due to a change in local priorities



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

HOUSING					
Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Review County ordinances and investigate the adoption of the International Building Code and other codes as necessary and appropriate.			X		Postponed due to lack of staff capacity; plans include hiring additional staff
Perform a housing survey and map project to identify and document areas of substandard housing.			X		Postponed due to lack of staff capacity; establishing a GICH committee will make this more feasible
Apply for CHIP funds to rehab units in targeted areas.	X				Applied but was not funded
Partner with USDA Rural Development and the Veteran's Administration to rehab housing units county-wide.				X	County has elected to allow individual property owners to participate in this in lieu of a county-coordinated program
Investigate the creation of a land bank authority to address unsafe, abandoned buildings.	X				



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

COMMUNITY FACILITIES					Comments
Activity	Status				
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Continue to find buyer/operator for Hancock Memorial Hospital.		X			
Stabilize existing county dirt roads.		X			This activity is not included in the 2021 CWP.
Construct a public splash pad.			X		Postponed until a suitable location can be confirmed; Reworded in the 2021 CWP as “Establish a new city-county park on a 8-acre tract of land recently donated to the county, including potential space for a splash pad, food forest, equipment and other options.”
Create a nuisance ordinance.	X				
Work with existing vacant facilities to create an community center/arts complex to house community events, local activities, a Boys and Girls Club, and artist space.				X	The designated space for this burned down, and it is not currently financially feasible to construct.
Rehabilitate the exterior of the historic train depot.	X				
Apply for funds to renovate the interior of the train depot.			X		Lack of matching funds
Apply for CDBG funds for infrastructure improvements throughout the county.		X			Stopped application for infrastructure due to lack of interest; applied for health department rehab and gym rehab and expansion instead
Build a courthouse annex to house the Board of Elections.				X	Terminated due to financial cost and lack of community member support
Secure an intergovernmental agreement with Baldwin County for an additional water supply.		X			
Expand county water system to Linton, Lake Sinclair, Holiday Shores and Devereux areas.			X		Lack of resident interest
Re-establish the Mayfield fire station.				X	Terminated due to inability to retain volunteer firefighters for the station



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Update the county recreational park.		X			Playground equipment was updated; courts will be resurfaced
Utilize the “Live Healthy Hancock” report to create a community garden program and expand existing school gardens.		X			
Establish a fire station in Linton.				X	Not feasible without water expansion
Establish an Animal Control Ordinance.				X	The county will focus on aiding the city with enforcing its ordinance.

BROADBAND SERVICES

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Adopt the DCA broadband model ordinance, tailored to Hancock County.	X				
Apply for DCA’s Broadband Ready designation.		X			
Work with the City of Sparta to determine joint broadband improvement possibilities.		X			This activity is not included in the 2021 CWP.
Consider and implement improvements to Wi-Fi availability at public facilities and businesses.		X			
Work with private sector partners to deploy broadband throughout the unserved county.		X			

LAND USE

Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Create a new county zoning ordinance and accompanying map.		X			
Adopt the CSRA-RC model solar ordinance.		X			
Upload current ordinances and record ordinance updates with Municode.		X			Regarded as on-going operations and not included in the 2021 CWP



HANCOCK COUNTY

— GEORGIA —

Community Work Program

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Activity	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026			
Create and operate one or more city-county business incubators throughout the county.	X	X	X	X		County, City, Private Sector	Varies	State, Federal, Local, & Private Funds
Develop an annual fishing tournament at Lake Sinclair.				X	X	County	TBD	Local Funds
Apply to the DCA Tourism Product Development Team for a visit and subsequent report for county tourism.			X			County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	Local Funds
Initiate a “Christmas at the Courthouse” annual program.		X	X			County	Staff Time	Local Funds
Work with Georgia “Camera Ready” program to update locations and images for Hancock County.		X	X			County, City, Chamber, HPC	Staff Time	Local Funds
Acquire property to host a farmers market.	X	X				County, City, Private Sector	TBD	Local Funds
Establish the Hancock County career academy.		X	X			County, School Board	TBD	Local Funds



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

HOUSING								
Activity	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026			
Review County ordinances and investigate the adoption of the International Building Code and other codes as necessary and appropriate.	X	X				County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Perform a housing survey and map project to identify and document areas of substandard housing.		X	X			County, CSRA-RC, GICH Team	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Apply for CHIP funds to rehab units in targeted areas.			X	X	X	County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Establish a local team and apply to become a GICH community (jointly with Sparta).	X	X				County, City, Volunteers, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	Local Funds
Research community options for addressing homelessness, including local partners and continuum of care. Take action as deemed appropriate.	X	X				County, City, Volunteers, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	Local Funds
Begin operations of the land bank authority (LBA): securing property donations, promoting properties for sale, and more.	X					City, County, LBA	Varies	Local Funds
Conduct a workshop or other local event on heirs property and related topics.		X	X			County, City, GA Heir Property Law Center, CSRA-RC	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES								
Activity	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026			
Create a recreational trails plan.				X	X	County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Apply for a recreational trails grant.					X	County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Create a program to recognize the importance of Native American culture in Hancock County.				X		County, City, Local Volunteers	Staff Time	Local Funds
Construct a temporary museum exhibit in a city or county facility.	X	X	X			County	TBD	Local Funds
Acquire property to re-establish a city-county museum.		X	X	X		County, City	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Work with community members and partners to develop components of the new museum building, including exhibits, dedicated office space for the HPC, genealogy area, and business incubator.		X	X	X		County, City, Volunteers	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds, Donations
Develop an historic resources survey for all of Hancock County, multiple phases if necessary.		X	X	X		City, HPC, Private Sector	TBD	Local Funds, CLG Grant



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES								
Activity	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026			
Continue to search for a buyer/operator for Hancock Memorial Hospital.	X	X	X	X	X	County	Staff Time	Local Funds
Conduct environmental testing and evaluate the structure of the Hancock Memorial Hospital to determine feasibility of use.	X	X				County	TBD	Local Funds
Apply for funds to renovate the interior of the train depot.			X			County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Apply for CDBG funds for infrastructure improvements throughout the county.	X		X		X	County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Secure an intergovernmental agreement with Baldwin County for an additional water supply.	X	X				County	Staff Time	Local Funds
Expand county water system to east lake and other designated areas.				X	X	County	\$2.5 million	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Update the county recreational park.	X					County	\$10,000	Local Funds
Utilize the “Live Healthy Hancock” report to create a community garden program and expand existing school gardens.	X	X	X	X		County	\$25,000	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Begin an in-school health clinic.	X	X				Family Connection	TBD	Local funds
Acquire land to create additional courthouse parking.	X	X				County	TBD	Local funds
Establish an electronic payment system for paying county taxes (e.g. online payments, credit card payments).	X	X				County	TBD	Local funds
Establish a new city-county park on a 8-acre tract of land recently donated to the county, including potential space for a splash pad, food forest, equipment and other options.		X	X			County, City, Private Sector	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Begin funding operations at Sparta’s animal rescue center, focusing on city rescuer staff and training.	X	X				County	Staff Time	Local Funds
Purchase refrigeration equipment for food storage at the American Legion (or other facility as deemed appropriate) to improve food access location.		X	X	X		County	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds

LAND USE								
Activity	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026			
Create a new county zoning ordinance and accompanying map.	X	X				County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State and federal funds, local funds
Adopt the CSRA-RC model solar ordinance.	X					County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	State and federal funds, local funds
Hire a code enforcement officer or procure shared enforcement services with another jurisdiction.		X	X			County	TBD	Local Funds



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

BROADBAND SERVICES								
Activity	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026			
Apply for DCA's Broadband Ready designation.	X					County, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	Local funds
Consider and implement improvements to Wi-Fi availability at public facilities and businesses.	X	X	X	X	X	County, Private Sector	TBD	State and federal funds, local funds, private funds
Work with private sector partners to deploy broadband throughout the unserved county.	X	X	X	X	X	County, Private Sector	TBD	State and federal funds, local funds, private funds





Report of Accomplishments

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Create a walking guide to the city that promotes the agricultural / historical sites within the city.	X				
Research the economic, social, and regional benefit of the Pine Tree Festival and provide suggestions to improve this event.		X			2020 Pine Tree Festival was canceled due to COVID-19
Create a tourism guide to include the scenic byway route and Native American historical sites.				X	Change in city priorities
Work with Hancock County Schools to create a youth business program.		X			The city is also working to get Oconee Fall Line Tech (OFTC) more involved.
Create a promotional package detailing the unique agricultural programs located within the city.		X			Restructured to focus on community gardens; Reworded in the 2021 CWP as “Establish two community gardens. Promote the gardens through utility billing and the Healthy Hancock Initiative.”
Initiate the Duckweed removal and processing business at city water treatment plant.				X	The Duckweed project is not feasible. Refurbishing of wastewater plant is underway.
Work with East Georgia Broadband Initiative to prepare a funding application for Broadband to Sparta-Hancock County.				X	This project was terminated. The city awaits an EMC project for rural customers.



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES					
Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Create a tree farm educational site on city owned property as an educational opportunity.		X			Planning underway
Initiate historical tours as an educational program using historic architectural structures.		X			Planning underway
Initiate a Keep America Beautiful program in Sparta.			X		Postponed due to shifting priorities
Create a program to recognize the importance of Native American culture in Sparta.				X	Change in city priorities; transferred to the county
Re-activate the Sparta-Hancock County Joint Historic Preservation Commission.	X				Very active commission
Develop an historic resources survey for the entire City of Sparta.		X			Surveying is underway.
Work to develop Georgia Historical marker for Jean Toomer, an African-American writer instrumental in the Harlem Renaissance.		X			Request has been made to state DNR.
Prepare and adopt DNR "Part V" environmental ordinances as applicable.		X			This activity is viewed as an on-going policy and is not included in 2021 CWP.



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

HOUSING					
Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Begin the planning process of the rehabilitation of the old Hancock Central School into residential units.				X	No developer interest
Develop a strategy to utilize Air BnB to provide a greater number of short stay options in historic residential homes.			X		COVID-related delays
Develop ordinance language to ensure loft apartments are allowed in downtown Sparta.			X		City Council will be working with Preservation Commission to move forward.
Create a housing inventory including historic homes with a Housing Action Plan.			X		Postponed due to lack of capacity; future plans include utilizing a GICH team and the Historic Preservation Commission

LAND USE					
Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Identify historic district boundaries for local designation and protection.		X			Occurring in conjunction with historic resource survey
Create an overlay zone to encourage downtown development.			X		Postponed until zoning ordinance can be updated
Complete "Full Comprehensive Plan Update".	X				



COMMUNITY FACILITIES					
Activity	Status				Comments
	Completed	Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Work with GDOT to address intersections within the City especially Five Points, Broad St., East Broad Street, Augusta Hwy, and Elm St.		X			State Highways 15, 16 & 22 converge in the business district. GDOT's permission is required for intersection improvements, including several needed pedestrian crossings.
Identify public properties within the city that can be used for park space and community garden.	X				A business district lot has been cleared, and construction is underway to create small park with picnic tables, shelter, etc.
Integrate duckweed removal with the water treatment plant.				X	This project was not feasible and was thus canceled.
Water distribution system and sewer upgrades.		X			Both systems are undergoing daily repairs and upgrades.
Replace defective water meters.	X				
Plan, design, and construct downtown streetscape improvements Phase 2.	X				
Ghettis Street Improvements.	X				
SR 15 Sparta Bypass (truck route).		X			TSPLOST project underway. Surveying has begun.
Work to re-instate the Commercial Truck Driving (CDL) classes with Oconee Fall Line Technical College.				X	OFTC's budget does not provide funding for the program here.



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



Community Work Program

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Project	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026			
Research the economic, social, and regional benefit of the Pine Tree Festival and provide suggestions to improve this event.		X				City, Local Business Owners	Staff Time	Local Funds
Create a tourism guide to include the Scenic By Way Route and Native American historical sites.					X	City, Local Business Owners	Staff Time	Local Funds
Work with Hancock County schools (and OFTC if possible) to create a youth business program.	X	X	X			City, Hancock County School Board, OFTC	Staff Time	State and Federal Funds, Local Funds
Establish two community gardens. Promote the gardens through utility billing and the Healthy Hancock Initiative.	X	X				City, Volunteers	Staff Time	Local Funds
Apply for Georgia Rural Zone designation.		X				City, CSRA-RC, Private Sector	Staff Time	Local Funds
Apply for and utilize CDBG funds to rehab and update blighted areas.		X	X	X	X	City, CSRA-RC, Private Sector	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds; CDBG Funds



HOUSING								
Project	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2021 - 2022	2022 -2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026			
Develop a strategy to utilize Air BnB to provide a greater number of short stay options in historic residential homes.					X	City, Local Volunteers	Staff Time	Local Funds
Develop ordinance language to ensure loft apartments are allowed in downtown Sparta.					X	City, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	Local Funds
Create a housing inventory including historic homes with a Housing Action Plan.			X			City, CSRA-RC, UGA, Volunteers	Staff Time, Technology Resources	Local Funds
Apply to become a GICH community (jointly with Hancock County).		X				County, City, CSRA-RC	Staff Time	Local Funds



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES								
Project	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026			
Work with GDOT to address intersections within the City, especially Five Points, Broad St., East Broad Street, Augusta Hwy, and Elm St.	X	X	X	X		City, GDOT, CSRA-RC	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Construct downtown business district park, including picnic tables, shelter and more.	X					City	\$25,000	Local Funds
Perform water distribution system and sewer upgrades throughout the city, including treatment facilities.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Varies	State, Federal, & Local Funds; CDBG Funds
Construct the State Route (SR) 15 Sparta Truck Route.	X	X				City, GDOT	\$11.6M	TSPLOST

LAND USE								
Project	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026			
Identify historic district boundaries for local designation and protection.	X					City, HPC, Private Sector, CSRA-RC	\$500	Local Funds
Review and update zoning ordinance (and map if needed).		X	X			City, CSRA-RC	\$15,000+	State, Federal, & Local Funds
Create an overlay zone to encourage downtown development.			X			City, CSRA-RC	TBD	State, Federal, & Local Funds



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES								
Project	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026			
Create a tree farm educational site on city owned property as an educational opportunity.	X	X				City, Fort Valley State University Extension Office	Staff Time	Local Funds
Initiate historical tours as an educational program using historic architectural structures.	X	X				City, University of Georgia	Staff Time	Local Funds
Initiate a Keep America Beautiful program in Sparta.					X	City	Staff Time	Local Funds
Develop an historic resources survey for the entire City of Sparta.	X					City, HPC, Private Sector	\$23,000	Local Funds, CLG Grant
Work to develop Georgia Historical marker for Jean Toomer, an African-American writer, instrumental in the Harlem Renaissance.	X	X	X	X		City, Georgia DNR, Volunteers	Staff Time	State and Federal Funds, Local Funds
Create a GIS map that corresponds to the updated historic resource survey.	X					City, CSRA-RC, HPC, Private Sector	Staff Time	Local Funds, State Funds
Apply for Main Street designation, and join the GA Main Street program.		X	X			City, HPC	Staff Time	Local Funds



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

BROADBAND SERVICES								
Project	Time-frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Fund Source
	2021 - 2022	2022 -2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026			
Apply for DCA’s Broadband Ready designation.	X					City	Staff Time	Local Funds
Consider and implement improvements to Wi-Fi availability at public facilities and businesses.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Private Sector	TBD	State and Federal Funds, Local Funds, Private Funds
Work with the EMC and private sector partners to deploy broadband throughout the unserved city.	X	X	X	X	X	City, EMC, Private Sector	TBD	State and Federal Funds, Local Funds, Private Funds



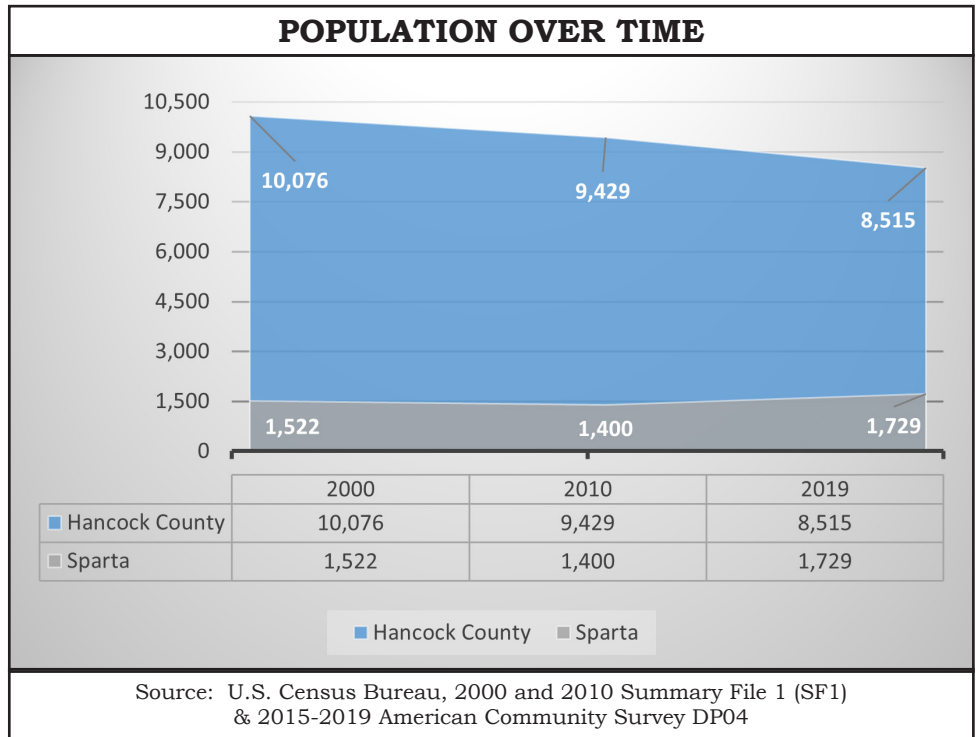
Appendix A:
Existing Conditions

General Demographics

POPULATION

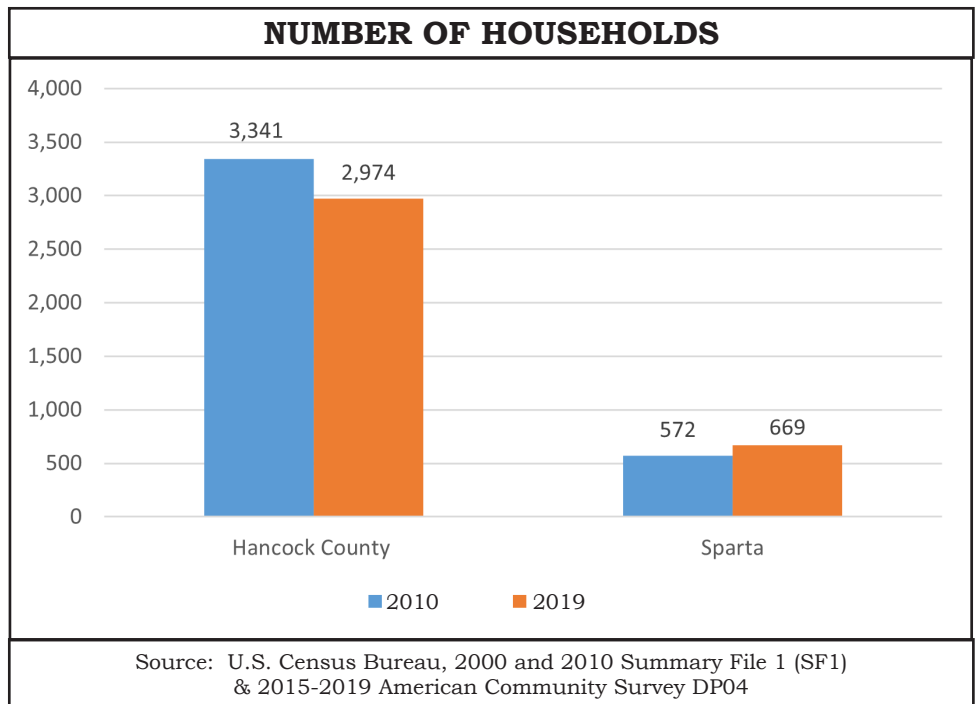
Like many rural counties in the CSRA region, Hancock County has experienced population decline over the last 20+ years. As of the 2019 American Community Survey, Hancock County had just 8,515 residents. This represents a loss of over 1,500 residents - a significant number in a small county. The city of Sparta, in contrast has more residents now than in 2000, with 1,729 - an increase of over 200.

The median age in Sparta is 44.6 and 45.6 in Hancock County overall.



HOUSEHOLDS

As with the overall population, the number of households in Hancock County and Sparta have followed the same trends of decline and increase respectively. The county lost 367 households, and the city gained 97 households between 2010 and 2019.



RACE & ETHNICITY

Observations of the racial composition of Hancock County and Sparta reveal one major racial groups: African-American. Over 70% of the population in both communities is African-American. This is followed by Caucasian with 24% (county) and 10% (city). In the state as a whole, these groups represent 32% (African-American) and 58.6% (Caucasian) of the population. Over the last decade, most racial groups in the county experienced a decline. However, the proportion of the population represented by these groups and others has remained relatively stable.

In observing ethnicity, less than 2% of the population in both communities is Hispanic, compared to 10% for the state as a whole. This also has remained stable between 2010 and 2019.

POPULATION BY RACE (HANCOCK COUNTY)

	2010	Percent of Population	2019 Estimate	Percent of Population	Change
Total Population	9,429	100%	8,515	100%	-914
Caucasian	2,300	24.4%	2,080	24.4%	-220
African-American	6,983	74.1%	6,235	73.2%	-748
American Indian / Alaska Native	35	0.4%	0	0.0%	-35
Asian	47	0.5%	31	0.4%	-16
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	1	0.0%	12	0.1%	11
Some Other Race	6	0.1%	114	1.3%	108
Two or More Races	57	0.6%	43	0.5%	-14

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Summary File 1 (SF1) & 2015-2019 American Community Survey

POPULATION BY RACE (SPARTA)

	2010	Percent of Population	2019 Estimate	Percent of Population	Change
Total Population	1,400	100.0%	1,729	100.0%	329
Caucasian	199	14.2%	170	9.8%	-29
African-American	1,160	82.9%	1,531	88.5%	371
American Indian / Alaska Native	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	-2
Asian	29	2.1%	28	1.6%	-1
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Some Other Race	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Two or More Races	10	0.7%	0	0.0%	-10

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey



APPENDIX A

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Within both jurisdictions, single-female households are the predominant household type with approximately 50% of all households. Provision of wrap-around services for this group should be a focus. The second largest group is married-couple family. As noted by the data and stakeholder anecdotes, the general population of Hancock County is aging; 19% (county) and 26% (city) of households are single individuals 65+ living alone. A significant portion of overall households have at least one resident age 65+ (43% in the county and 51% in the city). Provision of services for those individuals is important to help them age in place and build community or transfer to assisted living.

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE				
	<i>Hancock County</i>		<i>Sparta</i>	
	Estimate	Percent of Total Households	Estimate	Percent of Total Households
Married-couple family	977	32.9%	165	24.7%
With own children of the householder under 18 years	112	3.8%	9	1.3%
Cohabiting couple household	72	2.4%	25	3.7%
With own children of the householder under 18 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Male householder, no spouse/partner present	473	15.9%	106	15.8%
With own children of the householder under 18 years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Householder living alone	368	12.4%	91	13.6%
65 years and over	147	4.9%	51	7.6%
Female householder, no spouse/partner present	1,452	48.8%	373	55.8%
With own children of the householder under 18 years	246	8.3%	106	15.8%
Householder living alone	751	25.3%	126	18.8%
65 years and over	417	14.0%	66	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey DP02

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Stakeholder conversations revealed a shared sentiment that the county is losing its young people, and the 2019 ACS estimates also reflect this. Between the 2010 Census and 2019, all age groups



below age 25 experienced population declines. Working age adults 35-54 also experienced the greatest decline in residents. The groups with the most growth were 65+.

In Sparta, the groups with the largest percentage of the population (age 5-9 and 65-74) experienced the most growth. There was also decline in working-age population over the same time period.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE						
<i>Hancock County</i>	2010	Percent of Population	2015-2019	Percent of Population	2010-2019 Change	2010-2019 Change (%)
Total Population	9,429	100%	8,515	100%	-914	-9.7%
Under 5	433	4.6%	332	3.9%	-101	-23.3%
5-9 Years	415	4.4%	311	3.7%	-104	-25.1%
10-14 Years	484	5.1%	333	3.9%	-151	-31.2%
15-19 Years	618	6.6%	363	4.3%	-255	-41.3%
20-24 Years	613	6.5%	586	6.9%	-27	-4.4%
25-34 Years	1,249	13.2%	1,346	15.8%	97	7.8%
35-44 Years	1,184	12.6%	922	10.8%	-262	-22.1%
45-54 Years	1,541	16.3%	1,111	13.0%	-430	-27.9%
55-59 Years	741	7.9%	736	8.6%	-5	-0.7%
60-64 Years	683	7.2%	571	6.7%	-112	-16.4%
65-74 Years	875	9.3%	1,154	13.6%	279	31.9%
75-84 Years	425	4.5%	586	6.9%	161	37.9%
85 Years and Older	168	1.8%	164	1.9%	-4	-2.4%
<i>Sparta</i>	2010	Percent of Population	2015-2019	Percent of Population	2010-2019 Change	2010-2019 Change (%)
Total Population	1,400	100%	1,729	100%	329	23.5%
Under 5	88	6.3%	90	5.2%	2	2.3%
5-9 Years	79	5.6%	192	11.1%	113	143.0%
10-14 Years	94	6.7%	158	9.1%	64	68.1%
15-19 Years	93	6.6%	144	8.3%	51	54.8%
20-24 Years	86	6.1%	10	0.6%	-76	-88.4%
25-34 Years	135	9.6%	97	5.6%	-38	-28.1%
35-44 Years	123	8.8%	184	10.6%	61	49.6%
45-54 Years	217	15.5%	119	6.9%	-98	-45.2%
55-59 Years	119	8.5%	87	5.0%	-32	-26.9%
60-64 Years	107	7.6%	170	9.8%	63	58.9%
65-74 Years	145	10.4%	324	18.7%	179	123.4%
75-84 Years	71	5.1%	137	7.9%	66	93.0%
85 Years and Older	43	3.1%	17	1.0%	-26	-60.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Summary File 1 (SF1) & 2015-2019 American Community Survey DP05



Economic Development

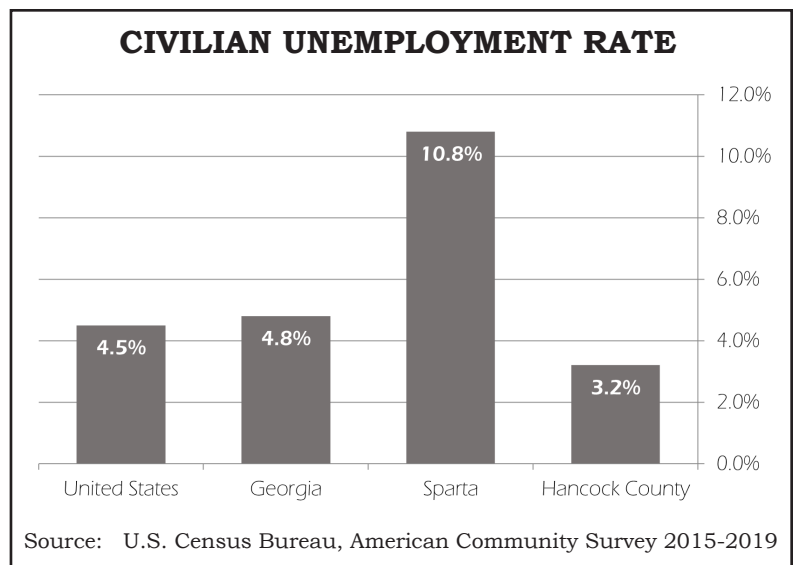
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Labor force participation (by residents age 16 and over) in Hancock County is 30% (all civilian) according to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (2019 ACS). The unemployment rate for this group is 3.2%; although unemployment for the entire age 16+ population is .9%. This is only slightly higher than the state of Georgia and the U.S. as a whole. Participation in Sparta is 41.5% (all civilian). Although Sparta’s civilian unemployment rate is significantly higher, it also has a larger margin of error for the collected data than the other areas.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
	Hancock County			Sparta		
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent
Population 16 years and over	7,411	±61	100%	1,230	±319	100%
In labor force	2,222	±532	30.0%	511	±161	41.5%
Not in labor force	5,189	±525	70.0%	719	±213	58.5%
Civilian labor force	2,222	±532	30.0%	511	±161	41.5%
Armed forces	0	±19	0.0%	0	±13	0.0%
Employed	2,152	±523	29.0%	456	±158	37.1%
Unemployed	70	±48	0.9%	55	±41	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015-2019

The 2008 economic recession had a devastating effect on employment throughout the country. The unemployment rate for the United States peaked at 10% in October 2009 according the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. Some parts of the country have continued to struggle to regain lost jobs, and the events of the COVID-19 pandemic (not reflected in this data) have driven unemployment back up in some areas. Hancock County has struggled with recovering jobs lost prior to COVID-19/the recession and with creating new jobs. As in previous years, many residents work outside of Hancock County. Part of this is due to a lack of available jobs within the county. Approximately 53% of the workforce worked inside county as of 2019, according to 2019 ACS data. The remaining 47% worked outside of the county. Increasing the low labor force participation (30%) can be helpful for both jurisdictions long-term. However, creating and sustaining jobs within the county, particularly at higher wages is a challenge.

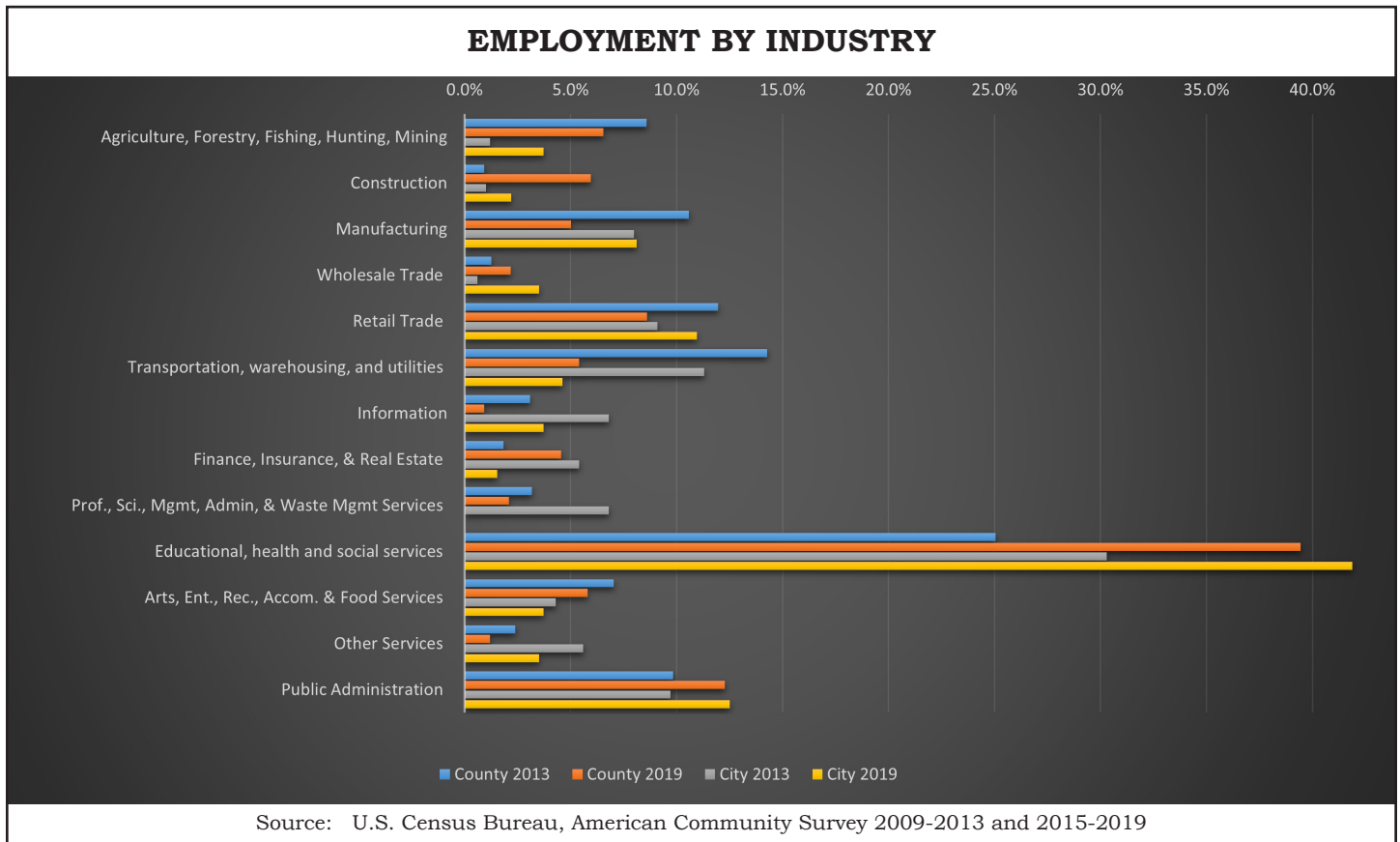


EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Census Bureau data indicates that the industry cluster with the highest employment is educational, health, and social services, with over 35% in both Hancock County and Sparta. If the county is able to secure additional healthcare facilities and providers (which is desired), this industry cluster will continue to grow.

Twenty years ago, manufacturing was one of the largest industries in the area, but it has experienced significant decline. Community leaders would like manufacturing and other similar uses to return. The current industrial park is small and has a number of acres that are unusable.

Despite some industry declines, other industries have grown: retail, information, agriculture and public administration. Additionally, with its many natural and historic assets, the county and city have worked diligently to expand tourism efforts and creating additional jobs in related industries to encourage residents to work in the county. Developing work-ready residents able occupy those positions is encouraged. Improvements to properties in downtown Sparta and efforts to start more local businesses will contribute to increases in several industries long-term.



APPENDIX A

INCOME

Based on the 2019 ACS, the median household income is \$31,860 in Hancock County and \$27,524 in Sparta. This is compared to \$61,980 for the state as a whole. This metric has increased in all jurisdictions over the last 20 years at varying rates. The majority of households are in the \$25,000 to \$34,999 range. There are significantly more households with incomes above \$100,000 in the county than in the city.

Approximately 48% of household incomes in the county include social security, 28% retirement income, and 26% Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND BENEFITS (IN 2019 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)						
	Hancock County			Sparta		
	Estimate	MoE	Percent	Estimate	MoE	Percent
Less than \$10,000	262	±125	8.8%	103	±62	15.4%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	294	±116	9.9%	95	±50	14.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	515	±147	17.3%	132	±72	19.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	620	±184	20.8%	158	±80	23.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	390	±127	13.1%	44	±35	6.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	311	±108	10.5%	67	±43	10.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	271	±123	9.1%	36	±38	5.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	235	±81	7.9%	11	±13	1.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	44	±33	1.5%	10	±14	1.5%
\$200,000 or more	32	±38	1.1%	13	±14	1.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015-2019



Housing

HOUSING MIX

Between the year 2000 and the year 2019, the number of housing units in Hancock County increased 26%, from 4,287 to 5,391. Most of these units were located in unincorporated areas of the county. The city of Sparta only experienced 8% growth, from 737 units to 795. Both the city and the county lack housing diversity. For example, there are two major housing types in Hancock County, single family (1-unit) detached, and mobile homes, comprising 53% and 41% of housing units respectively. Although multifamily is a very small portion of the housing stock (5%), larger developments of multifamily units have increased over the last twenty years. Some stakeholders have expressed a desire for more housing options. Outside investment for new developments may be difficult due to the declining population and incomes, among other factors.

TYPE OF HOUSING UNIT BY NUMBER OF UNITS IN STRUCTURE

	Hancock County			Sparta		
	Number	Margin of Error	Percent of Total Units	Number	Margin of Error	Percent of Total Units
1-unit, detached	2,854	±300	52.9%	422	±121	53.1%
1-unit, attached	36	±38	0.7%	13	±22	1.6%
2 units	56	±46	1.0%	49	±45	6.2%
3 or 4 units	54	±54	1.0%	26	±34	3.3%
5 to 9 units	40	±43	0.7%	17	±24	2.1%
10 to 19 units	9	±16	0.2%	9	±16	1.1%
20 or more units	138	±90	2.6%	81	±71	10.2%
Mobile home	2,204	±292	40.9%	178	±68	22.4%
Total Units	5,391	±344	100%	795	±190	100%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey Estimates DP04

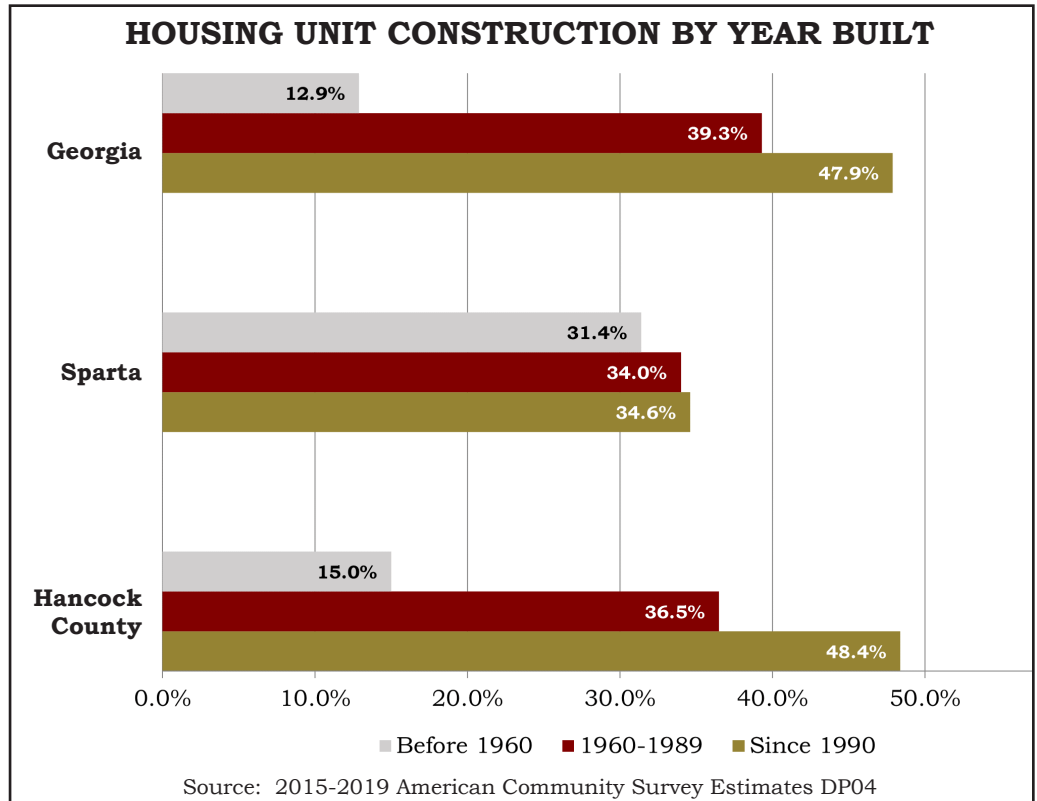


APPENDIX A

AGE OF HOUSING

As 2019 ACS data reveals, the majority of structures in Hancock County were built between 1990 and 2009 (~2,600) with a significant drop off after that. This is possibly due to the 2008 economic recession and housing crash. The lack of older structures in the county may be in part the result of “demolition by neglect”, as stakeholders have commented that the community struggles with this. Despite this, there are a number of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (and more that are NR eligible) in the county.

Although housing age is fairly evenly distributed in Sparta, it also experienced a significant drop in housing construction after 2009.



Approximately 31% of housing structures (250) in Sparta were constructed before 1960. Hancock County is one of the oldest in the state, and Sparta is known for its historic homes. Protection and rehab of older/aging properties is important for several reasons: safety, historic preservation and economic development. Based on community input, a portion of the non-historic housing units also require rehab.

Not all buildings can be rehabbed or reused. Some will have to be partially or completely demolished. Utilizing a blighted properties list and completing a full housing inventory will help both communities to better understand the amount and condition of all housing units. Participating in a program like the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) may also be beneficial for resources and peer networking with communities pursuing similar housing activities.

Potential avenues for rehab and construction funding include:

- USDA Rural Development (housing rehab)
- Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) grant (housing rehab and new construction for infill and sale)
- Historic preservation tax credits (housing rehab)
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit developments (new construction)



OCCUPANCY AND TENURE

Overall housing occupancy has suffered a significant decline between 2000 and 2019, despite an increase in the total number of units. The 2019 ACS notes 16% of housing units were vacant in Sparta and 45% in the county as a whole. This represents a significant increase for the overall county since 2000, when only 25% of units were vacant. The city number is close to its 2000 level.

Within the occupied units, 11.8% are estimated to have no vehicle available. Those without transportation access in a community without transit are limited in their access to employment and resources.

When comparing owner-occupied and renter-occupied units, the county is overwhelmingly occupied by homeowners with 71%. Sparta only contains 55% owner-occupied units. Both communities have experienced an increase in renter-occupants over the last 20 years. One significant stakeholder concern is the number of vacant, dilapidated properties across the city and county, particularly those in highly visible areas such as entrances. Adequately addressing the issue will take additional resources at the city and county level.

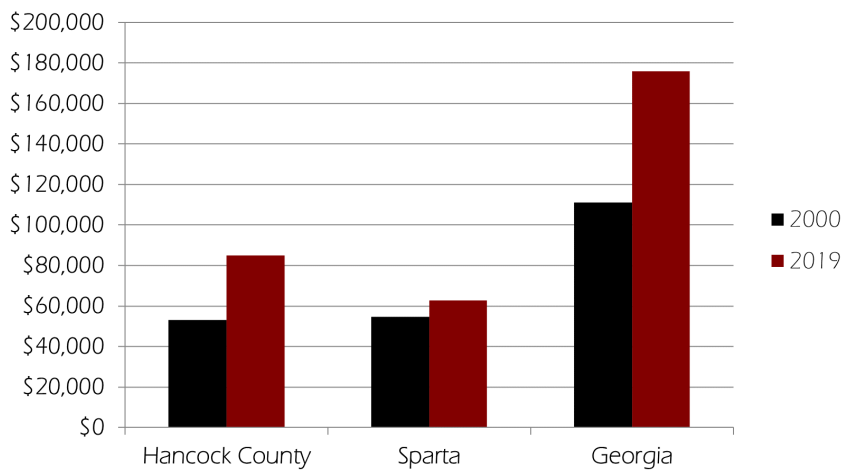
The consideration of housing may include creating provisions within subdivision regulations that allows government input in how future residential developments are designed, as well as including requirements or incentives for pedestrian facilities and greenspace.

OCCUPANCY & TENURE (HANCOCK CO.)				
<i>Year</i>	<i>2000</i>		<i>2015-2019</i>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	4,287	100.0%	5,391	100.0%
Occupied	3,237	75.5%	2,974	55.2%
Vacant	1,050	24.5%	2,417	44.8%
Owner-Occupied	2,473	76.4%	2,099	70.6%
Renter-Occupied	764	23.6%	875	29.4%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) & 2015-2019 American Community Survey DP04				

OCCUPANCY & TENURE (SPARTA)				
<i>Year</i>	<i>2000</i>		<i>2015-2019</i>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	725	100.0%	795	100.0%
Occupied	617	85.1%	669	84.2%
Vacant	108	14.9%	126	15.8%
Owner-Occupied	379	61.4%	366	54.7%
Renter-Occupied	238	38.6%	303	45.3%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) & 2015-2019 American Community Survey DP04				



MEDIAN VALUES FOR OWNER-OCCUPIED HOMES



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 3 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey Estimates

MEDIAN GROSS RENT BY LOCATION

	2000	2015-2019	Margin of Error
Hancock County	\$277	\$678	±196
Sparta	\$222	\$560	±238
Georgia	\$613	\$1,006	±4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 3 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey, DP04

HOME VALUE

Home values increased roughly 28% over the study period of 2000-2019. Data from the 2019 ACS reveals that median value reached \$85,000 in Hancock County and \$62,800 in Sparta. Two standouts in the home value distribution reveals that over 50% of housing is worth less than \$100,000, and another 25% is worth \$200,000-499,999.

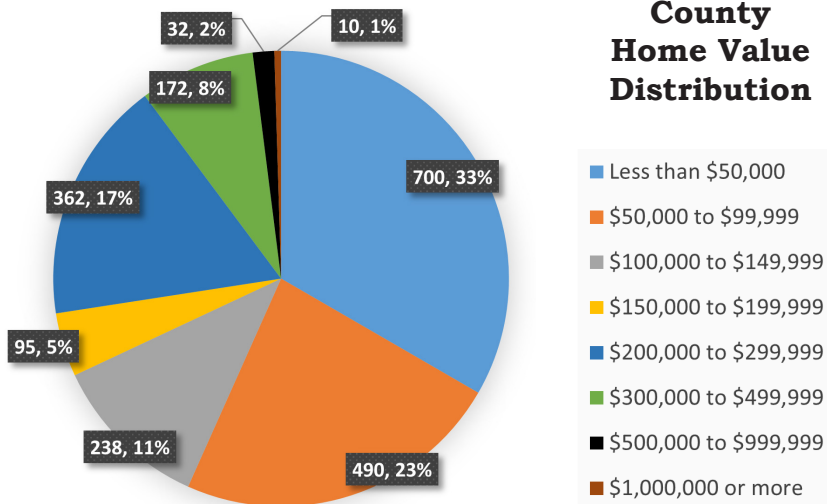
Although the median home values are significantly lower than the state value of \$176,000, one must remember that large metropolitan areas like Atlanta contribute to the overall state number. Both the state and county experienced over 50% increase in value. Reinvestment in historic properties throughout the city and the creation of homes along the county lakefront may continue to increase values in both jurisdictions.

GROSS RENT

Just as home values have risen, so have rents. Median rents in the county rose \$401, from \$277 in 2000 to \$678 in 2019. The city experienced a \$338 increase over the same period. When gross rent is calculated as a percentage of household income, 54% of occupants pay 35% or more of their income on rent.

Creation of rental housing should include a mix of market-rate and lower income units in the same development. This will aid in creating mixed-income areas while providing additional options.

County Home Value Distribution



Natural and Cultural Resources

Hancock County possesses a variety of natural and cultural resources, from the farms and lake to the historic sites that are vital parts of the community and serve a variety of purposes. These assets contribute to the vitality and sustainability of the county and have the potential to draw visitors natural beauty and historic preservation. They can also be connected to similar resources in other counties for regional tourism. As conditions change, it is important to focus efforts on protecting natural features like watersheds-not only for economic development, but because they provide resources to the community. Additionally, when development decisions are made, the cultural resources that make the county unique and tell its story must also be considered.

As part of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) developed the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for use by local communities. The criteria establish recommended minimum planning standards for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors and mountains. Recommended standards to protect surface water supplies include the use of buffer zones around streams and specifying allowable impervious surface densities within water supply watersheds.

As with all other counties across the state of Georgia, Hancock County is a part of a water planning region. Hancock County is part of the Upper Oconee Region with the following counties: Baldwin, Barrow, Clarke, Greene, Jackson, Laurens, Morgan, Oconee, Putnam, Walton, Washington, and Wilkinson. The 2017 update to the regional water plan indicated that both surface water gaps and 303(d) water quality issues existed in Hancock County. The plan indicates an increase in annual agricultural demand for surface water by 2050 in Hancock County. The plan states: “Any development of additional surface water to meet projected needs should be done in a manner that does not increase potential gaps.”

As stated on Georgia EPD’s website: “Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act requires States to assess its water quality every two years. To develop this report, Georgia compares water quality data collected across the State against our Water Quality Standards using the State’s Listing Assessment Methodology and places each water into one of three broad assessment categories; 1) supporting their designated use; 2) not supporting their designated use; or 3) assessment pending. Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires States to submit a list of all waters that are not supporting their designated uses and need to have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) developed. GA EPD has developed a Draft Priority Framework that describes how GA EPD will prioritize waters on the 303(d) list for development of TMDLs or TMDL alternatives. EPD has prepared a list of Priority Waters.” There are no priority waters from Hancock County on this list. However, Hancock County does have streams on the 2020 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) list.



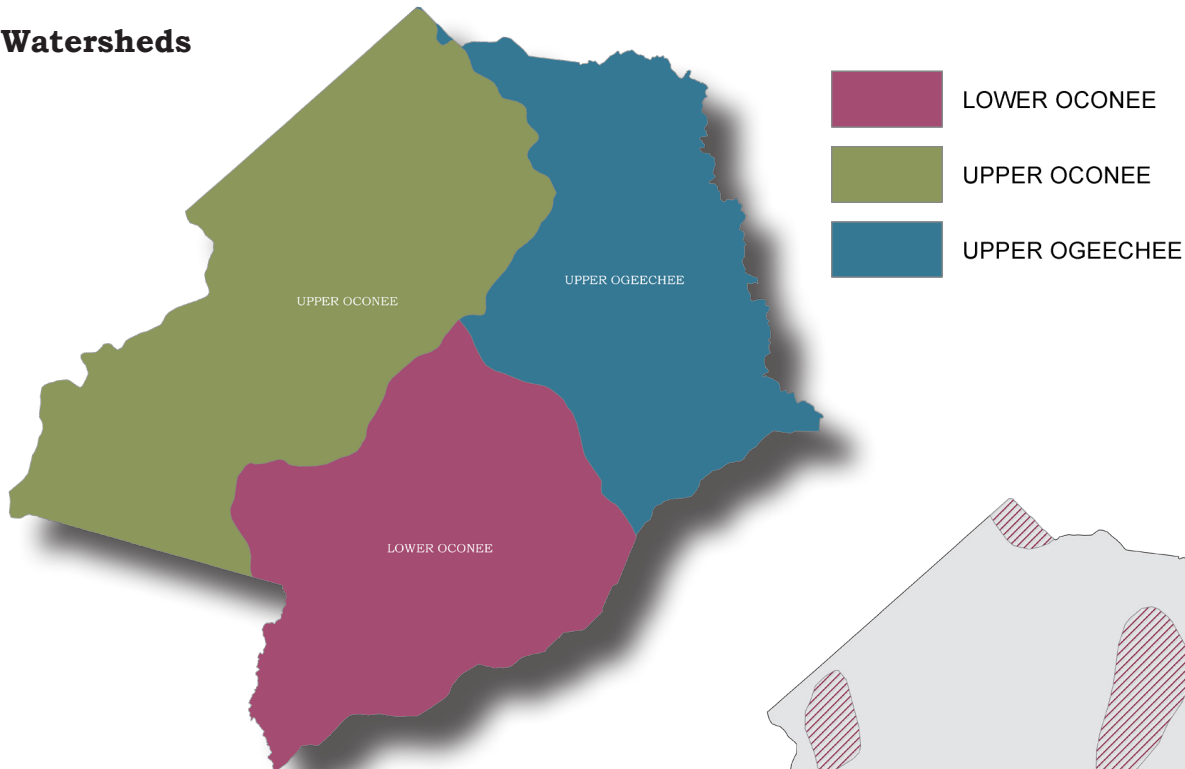
APPENDIX A

WATERSHEDS AND GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

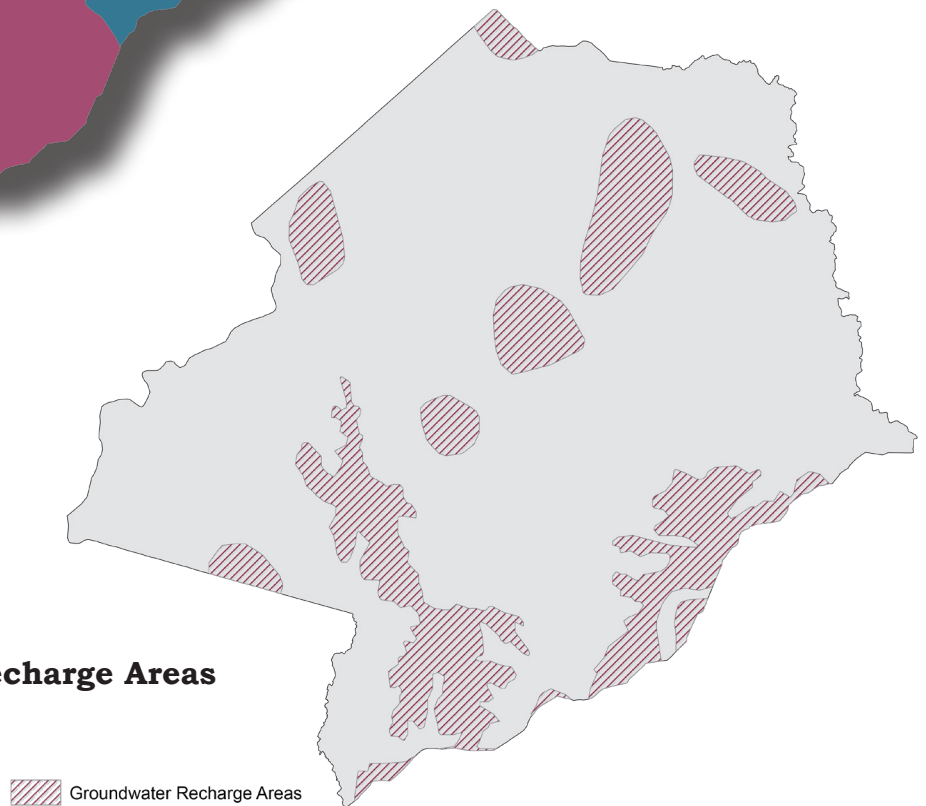
Watersheds and groundwater recharge areas are important components to public water supply. Watersheds are land formations which direct water (primarily rain water) flows in a certain direction and feeds smaller flows and water bodies.

Groundwater recharge areas are specific surface areas where water passes through the ground to replenish underground water sources. These areas should continue to be protected. Contamination of this water supply is a possibility that must be considered when discussing the development or placement of any type of facility in these areas.

Watersheds



Groundwater Recharge Areas

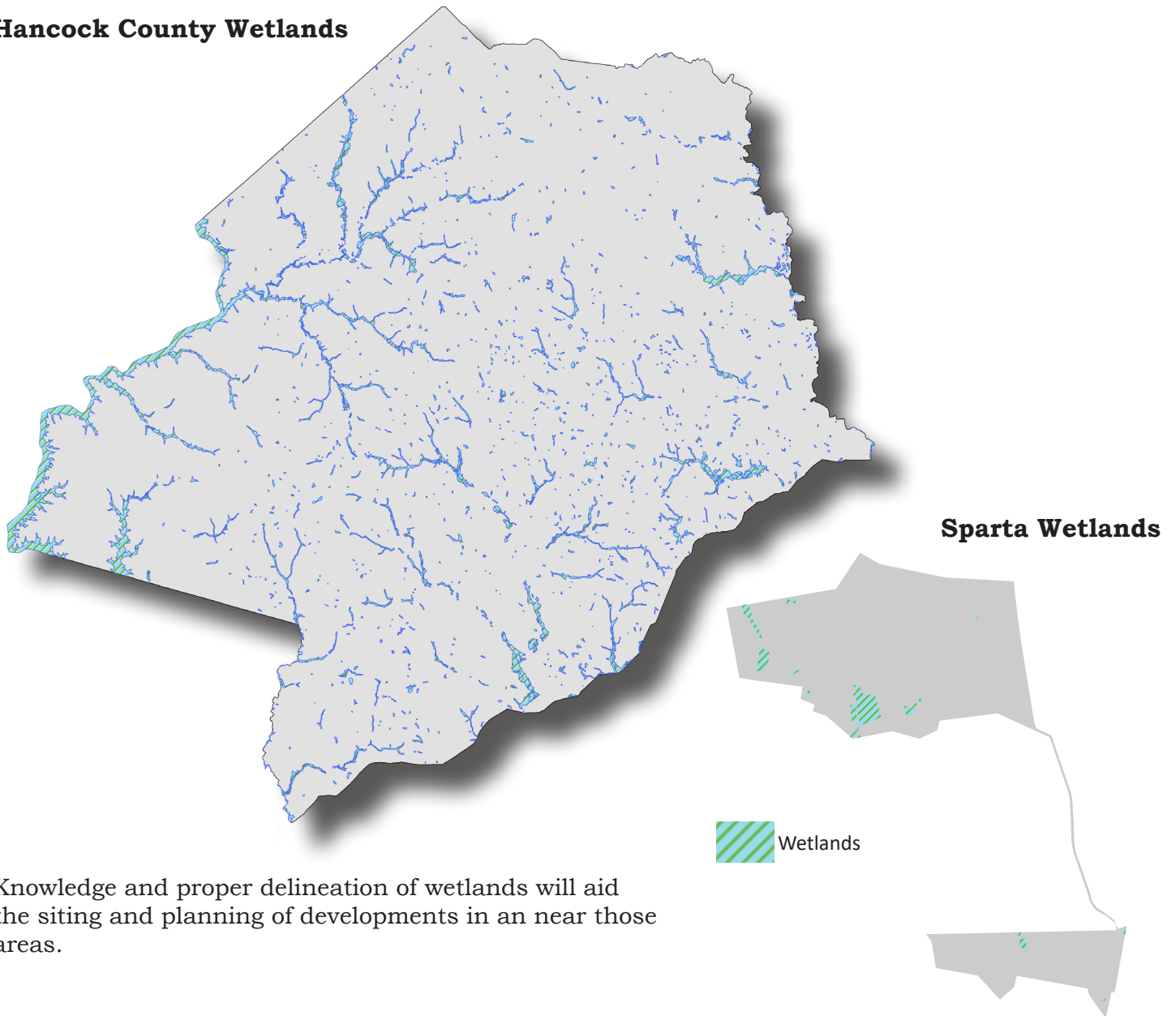


WETLANDS

Wetlands can be defined as lands which are saturated, either permanently or seasonally, creating an ecosystem that contains characteristic vegetation that has adapted to the unique soil conditions. Wetlands serve as a unique habitat for fish and wildlife, breeding ground, and home for unique plant and animal species that have adapted to these special conditions. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has identified five categories of wetlands which require special protection through ordinances: open water, scrub/shrub, altered, non-forested, and forested.

Land uses in wetland areas should be limited to low-to-no impact uses. Ultimately, even these uses should be examined for other conflicts or impacts.

Hancock County Wetlands



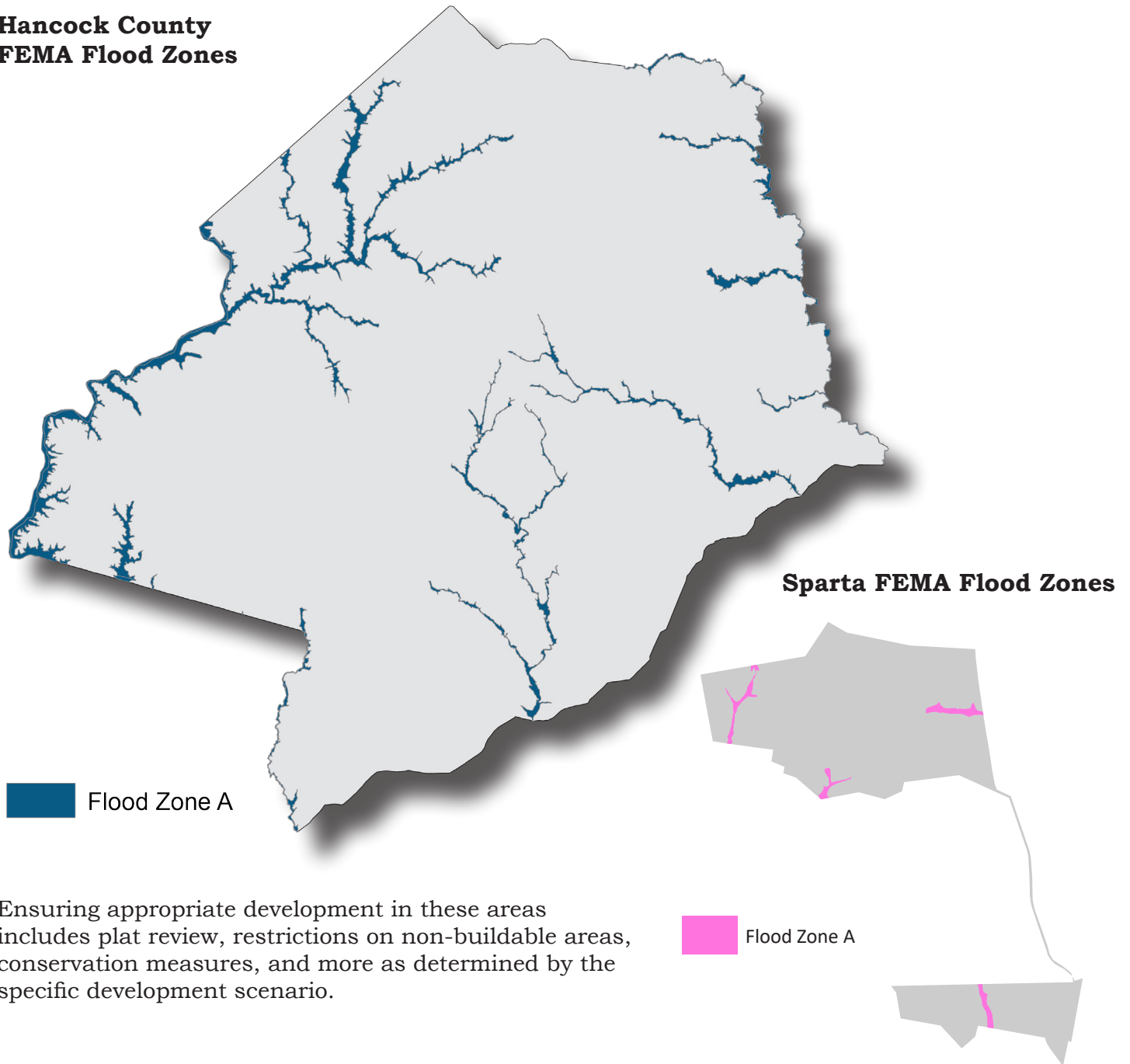
Knowledge and proper delineation of wetlands will aid the siting and planning of developments in an near those areas.



FLOOD PLAINS

Flooding can be defined as a situation in which an overflow of water submerges land which usually is not inundated with water. A floodplain is an area designated to store natural water and conveyance, maintain water quality, and provide groundwater recharge. These maps depict the designated flood zones as determined by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map. Areas located within the 100-year flood plain are in Zone A.

Hancock County FEMA Flood Zones



Ensuring appropriate development in these areas includes plat review, restrictions on non-buildable areas, conservation measures, and more as determined by the specific development scenario.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

As mentioned previously, history is an important part of Hancock County and Sparta; each have many historic buildings and sites of national, state and/or local cultural significance. One method of recognizing these sites is having them listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since the previous comprehensive plan, the city and county have reactivated the joint Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). They still desire nominating additional sites like the Culverton community and Millmore mill and historic bridge to the National Register. Also, a major project the county has completed is the exterior renovation of the historic train depot. However, funds are still needed in order to restore the interior of the building.

Sparta and Hancock County have a joint historic preservation ordinance which can provide protection of historic and cultural resources. In addition to the ordinance, the DREAM Streets Sparta program was formed by the HPC to revitalize, preserve, and grow the city of Sparta. A core focus is locating or relocating businesses to Broad Street and Spring Street. Physical improvements to buildings downtown will aid this effort, and there are approximately a dozen structures undergoing these improvements in partnership with building owners. A longer term goal of the city is to become a Main Street community.

Sparta and Hancock County are a joint Georgia Certified Local Government, a program that may govern designated local historic districts for design review. Locally, a historic resources survey would be a useful preservation tool for determining the identification, age, and condition of historic buildings 40-50 years old within the city limits.

The following are listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Sparta:

- Sparta Cemetery
- Sparta Historic District, includes Downtown and Drummer's Home (Lafayette Hotel), The Sayre-Shivers-Alford House, The Graves Barn, The Hancock County Courthouse (burned in 2014; exterior walls are original)

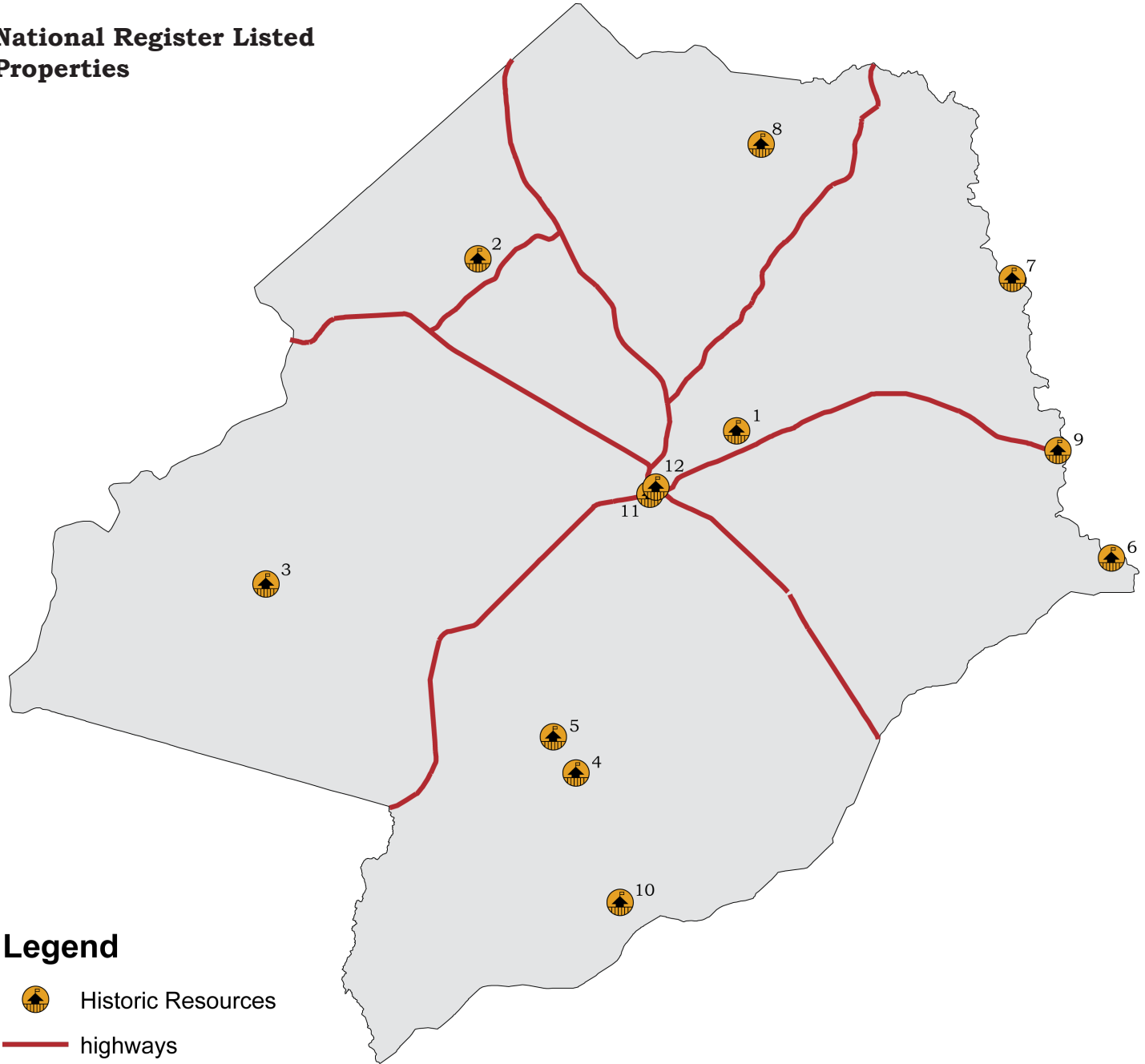
In addition to those resources in the National Register of Historical Place there are additional residential structures in the city which may be eligible to be listed in the National Register, based on a the age of these sites and the significance of the architectural style and age of structures. The following is a list of some historically significant sites:

- The Sayre-Shivers-Alford House
- The Baxter-Wiley House
- The Hudson House
- The DuBose-Peck-Hitchcock House
- The Brightside House
- The Graves Barn
- The Drummer's Home
- Holsey Memorial CME Church
- Pierce Memorial United Methodist Church
- Macedonia Baptist Church





APPENDIX A

National Register Listed Properties



Legend

-  Historic Resources
-  highways

Site #	Name	Site #	Name
1	Rockby	7	Shivers-Simpson House
2	Shoulderbone Mounds and John S. Jackson House	8	Camilla-Zack Community Center Historic District
3	Hurt-Rives Plantation	9	Jewell Historic District
4	Glen Mary	10	Linton Historic District
5	Pearson-Boyer Plantation	11	Sparta Historic District
6	Cheely-Coleman House	12	Sparta Cemetery



Community Facilities

WATER SUPPLY AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Hancock County currently purchases its water from Sparta. The county has also begun negotiations with Baldwin County to purchase water as well in order to extend service to other unincorporated areas, some with water quality concerns. The county has one (1) above ground water storage tank located in Devereux, approximately 250,000 gallons. In 2010 the county expanded its water system in the Beulah area with CDBG funds. Opportunity for expansion of the county system is possible to the Lake Sinclair area with adequate funding.

Sparta operates a municipal water system for its residents and provides some service for residents of unincorporated Hancock County. Sparta operates a 1.0 million gallon per day (mgd) capacity treatment facility located at the end of James Way Drive in Hancock County. Water from the lake is drawn and pumped through two 8 inch lines to the waterworks. Maximum capacity of this facility is 1,250 gal/min. Ford Creek is used as a secondary source for water allowing a total capacity of 500,000 GPD. The water distribution system primarily consists of 8 inch lines throughout central Sparta and 6 inch lines and smaller in other areas. The city operates three (3) elevated, treated water storage facilities with a storage capacity of 575,000 gallons.

The majority of residences in Hancock County are on septic systems. Since the previous comprehensive plan, the county transferred its 83 sewer customers to the City of Sparta. Sparta operates a sanitary sewerage system in which wastewater is treated at the city-operated George F. Green Water Reclamation Facility which can treat up to 200,000 (GPD). This facility is located on city owned property south of Sparta adjacent to the Hancock Correctional Institution. The facility was built in 1988 and serves both Sparta and unincorporated Hancock County. The wastewater treatment center was recently upgraded to meet the needs of the correctional facility.

FIRE, EMERGENCY SERVICES, AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Hancock County has 4 fire stations: Station 1 (Sparta); Station 2 (East Lake); Station 5 (Holiday Shores); Station 11 (Hancock State Prison). The fire department is all volunteer with 48 firemen. Changes in the way Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings are calculated has negatively affected citizens and caused a rise in insurance premiums. Because of this, the county is considering opening additional fire stations in under-served areas to help lower the ISO ratings and insurance premiums. However, finding volunteers to man those stations is a challenge.

County-wide emergency medical services (EMS) are contracted with Grady Health Systems.

The county has one main public safety station; the sheriff's department contains one (1) sheriff and 10 deputies. The City of Sparta operates a police department with seven 7 officers. The national rate of sworn officers per 1,000 residents was 2.4 in 2017 according to the Police Employee Data website (provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Division). The rate of civilian and sworn (full-time) was 3.4 per 1,000.



APPENDIX A

ROAD SYSTEM AND RAILROAD

Hancock County contains 1,183 lane miles (588 miles) of roads according to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). This calculation includes city streets, county roads, and state routes and is based on total lane mileage. City streets comprised 29 lane miles (14.5 miles) of this. Total lane mileage is defined as roadway mileage multiplied by the number of lanes. The condition of roads throughout the city and county varies. Hancock County is a part of the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) for the CSRA region. A significant project from this program is construction of the Hwy 15 truck route. The creation of this route could lead to additional commercial development along this road, and land use/zoning in the immediate area should be examined for future changes.

The county contains one railroad, owned and operated by CSX Transportation. CSX is defined by the Federal Surface Transportation Board as a Class 1 railroad, meaning that its average annual operating revenue meets or exceeds \$255.9 million dollars. As in the rest of the region, the rail line is used for freight transportation only.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Hancock County school district consists of three (3) schools: Lewis Elementary, Hancock Central Middle, and Hancock Central High, providing classes for students in Pre-K through 12th grade. There is also one private school, John Hancock Academy. Total enrollment in the public school system has decreased between 2000 and 2020, down to 786 students from 1,732. ACS data confirms a decline in both working-age adults and the student-age population.

Education is an important factor to look at in a community, as it plays a major role in resident ability to receive certain types of jobs. ACS data indicates that 74% of Hancock County residents and 72% of Sparta residents age 25+ have at least a high school diploma or equivalent. Possession of a Bachelor's degree or higher is at 9% and 10% respectively. There's room to improve both ends: increasing the percentage of residents with at least a high school diploma and those to complete a higher education degree. Organizations like Family Connection and Communities in Schools have made dropout prevention a priority. Depending on available jobs, there may be a mismatch for those with advanced degrees who wish to reside locally.

School Enrollment in Hancock County	
March 2, 2000 (FTE 2000-3)	
<i>School Name</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hancock Central High School	878
Lewis Elementary School	662
Southwest Elementary School	192
System Total	1732
March 4, 2010 (FTE 2010-3)	
<i>School Name</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hancock Central High School	413
Hancock Central Middle School	262
Lewis Elementary School	544
System Total	1219
March 5, 2020 (FTE 2020-3)	
<i>School Name</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hancock Central High School	229
Hancock Central Middle School	187
Lewis Elementary School	370
System Total	786



Broadband Services

BROADBAND AND THE ACE ACT

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) currently defines high-speed Internet access as download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps. The infrastructure of broadband is often described in three different sections: backbone, middle mile, and last mile. The backbone (aka trunk lines) are the major high-speed transmission lines linking smaller networks across the country. The middle mile is the connection between the backbone network and local networks. The last mile is the connection between the local network and end users (homes, institutions, businesses, etc.). Broadband includes several high-speed transmission technologies, such as fiber optic, wireless, digital subscriber line (DSL), coaxial cable, and satellite.

In 2018, the Georgia General Assembly passed the “Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act” as Senate Bill 402. The ACE Act enables several things, including:

- Local governments to apply for financial incentives for broadband services
- The Georgia Department of Transportation to use interstate highway rights-of-way for deployment of broadband services and other emerging communications technologies

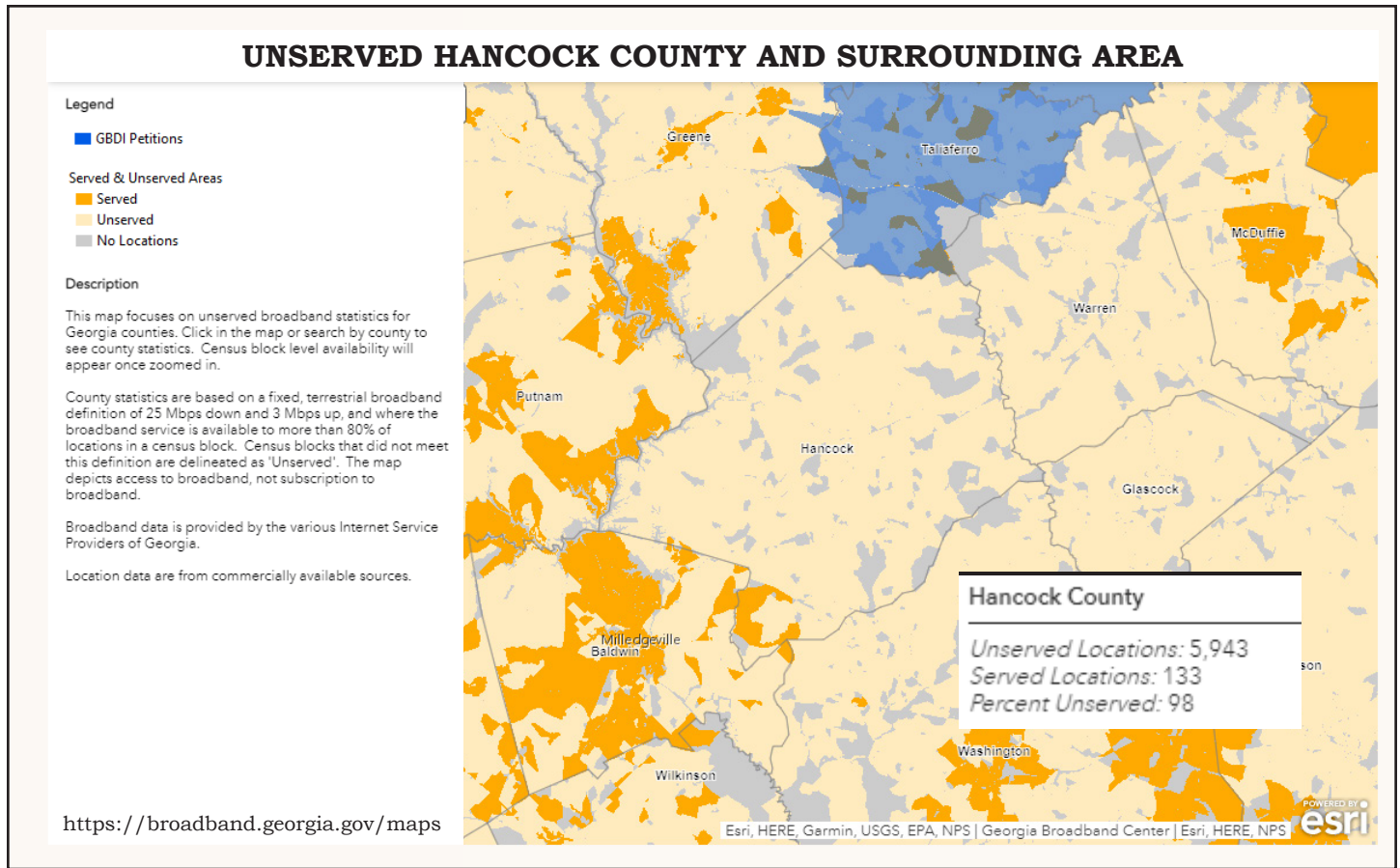
The ACE Act also requires each local government in the state to incorporate a broadband services element into its local comprehensive plan.

SERVED AND UNSERVED AREAS

Working with several state agencies, providers and the regional commissions, the state of Georgia has determined and mapped (as of summer 2020) areas in the state that are “served” and “unserved” by broadband. The Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI) provided information on census-block level access for this section of the comprehensive plan; GBDI was launched in 2018. The GBDI represents a collaborative effort by multiple state agencies to promote and deploy broadband level Internet in unserved areas across Georgia. This service is for a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds. According to DCA’s website, “The purpose of the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative is to coordinate and establish broadband programs to increase economic, education, and social opportunities for Georgia citizens and businesses. The initiative provides for the expansion of broadband infrastructure and services through new state and local broadband planning policies.” - <https://broadband.georgia.gov/about>

An “unserved” area means a census block in which broadband services are not available to 20% or more of the locations in that block (as determined by DCA). A “served” area does not imply subscription, only access. Additionally, it is still possible to have individual homes or businesses within a served area that are unserved. Hancock County, as displayed in the map on page 88, is 98% unserved, with only 133 served locations in the entire county.



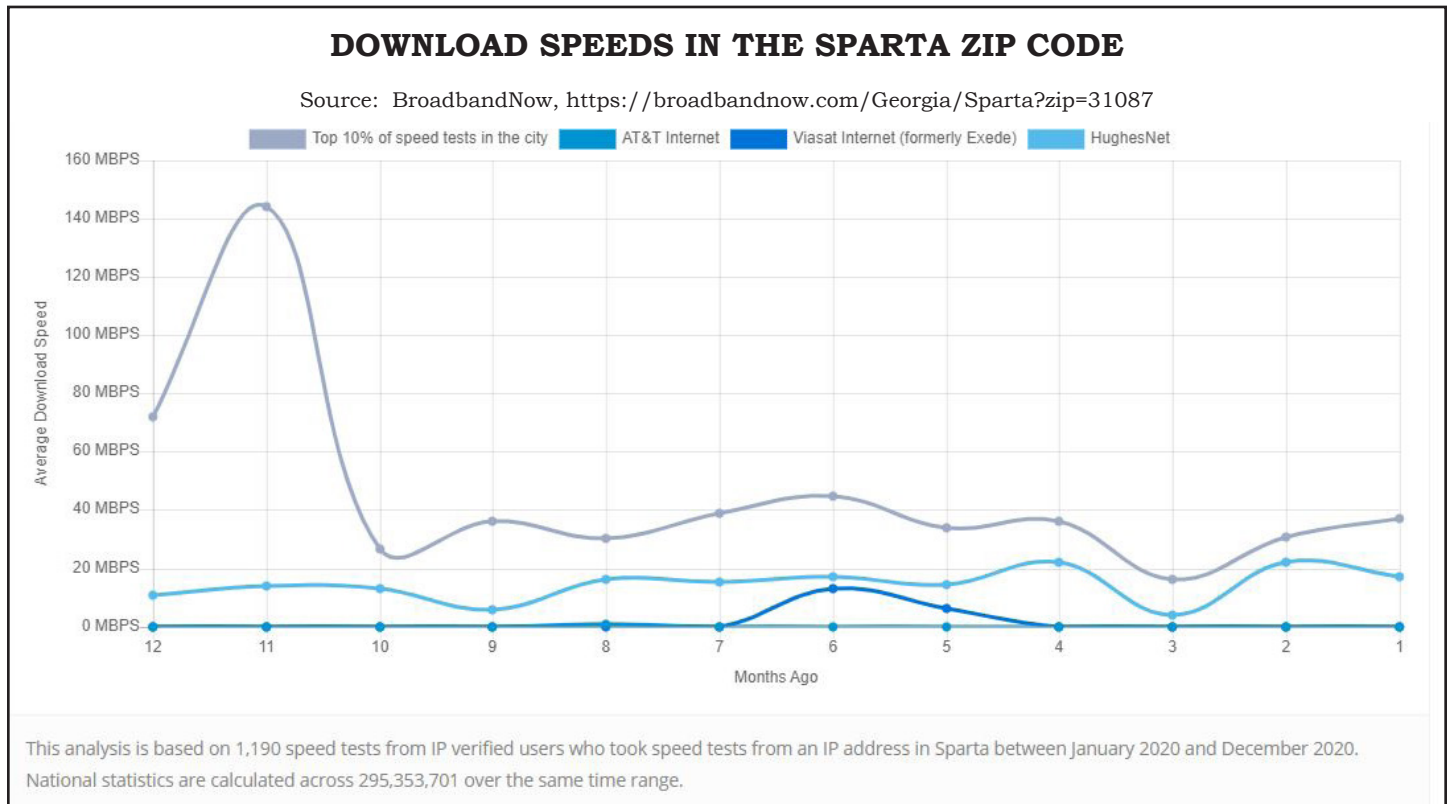


One major component of the GBDI is helping communities attain Georgia DCA’s Broadband Ready Community designation. This designation demonstrates a government’s effort in reducing barriers to broadband development. Two necessary steps in the process are including a broadband services element in the comprehensive plan and adopting the state’s broadband model ordinance. Communities with the designation receive additional points when applying for state funds.



INTERNET SPEEDS

Among the providers in the Hancock County area are AT&T, Viasat, Rayle EMC, Washington EMC, and HughesNet. Below is a graph depicting download speeds in the Sparta zip code based on speed tests conducted throughout 2020 for a few of these providers. The average download speed in Sparta is 15.80 Mbps. This is 83.0% slower than the average in Georgia and 459.6% slower than the national average. This information is provided by BroadbandNow via its website at <https://broadbandnow.com/>.



RECENT EFFORTS AND COMMUNITY DESIRES

It is understood that barriers to terrestrial broadband expansion in rural areas are installation cost and anticipated return on investment. Several communities in the CSRA region continue to research the feasibility of larger connectivity projects that would serve homes and businesses in multiple counties. One such project was the East GA Broadband Initiative (EGBI). The project was designed to connect cities across several counties to fiber, including several co-locator pods. These co-locator facilities would house servers for lease to businesses, corporations, residential contractors, etc. In Sparta, the co-locator facility would’ve been erected on a vacant lot owned by the Hancock County government directly behind the courthouse. Servers within the pod would be connected via fiber to businesses and other entities or leased by companies to provide wireless Internet. Although the attempt was unsuccessful, much of the groundwork and research completed can be used for future projects, including those for greater connectivity and co-locator pods. In preparation for fiber coming to Sparta, work to supply EGBI planners with details of priority entities (schools, city & county government locations, law enforcement services, E-911 dispatching, nursing homes, industrial park, etc.) began in December 2017. Water tanks and telecommunication towers throughout the city and county have also been identified and their locations plotted for installation of wireless service.



APPENDIX A

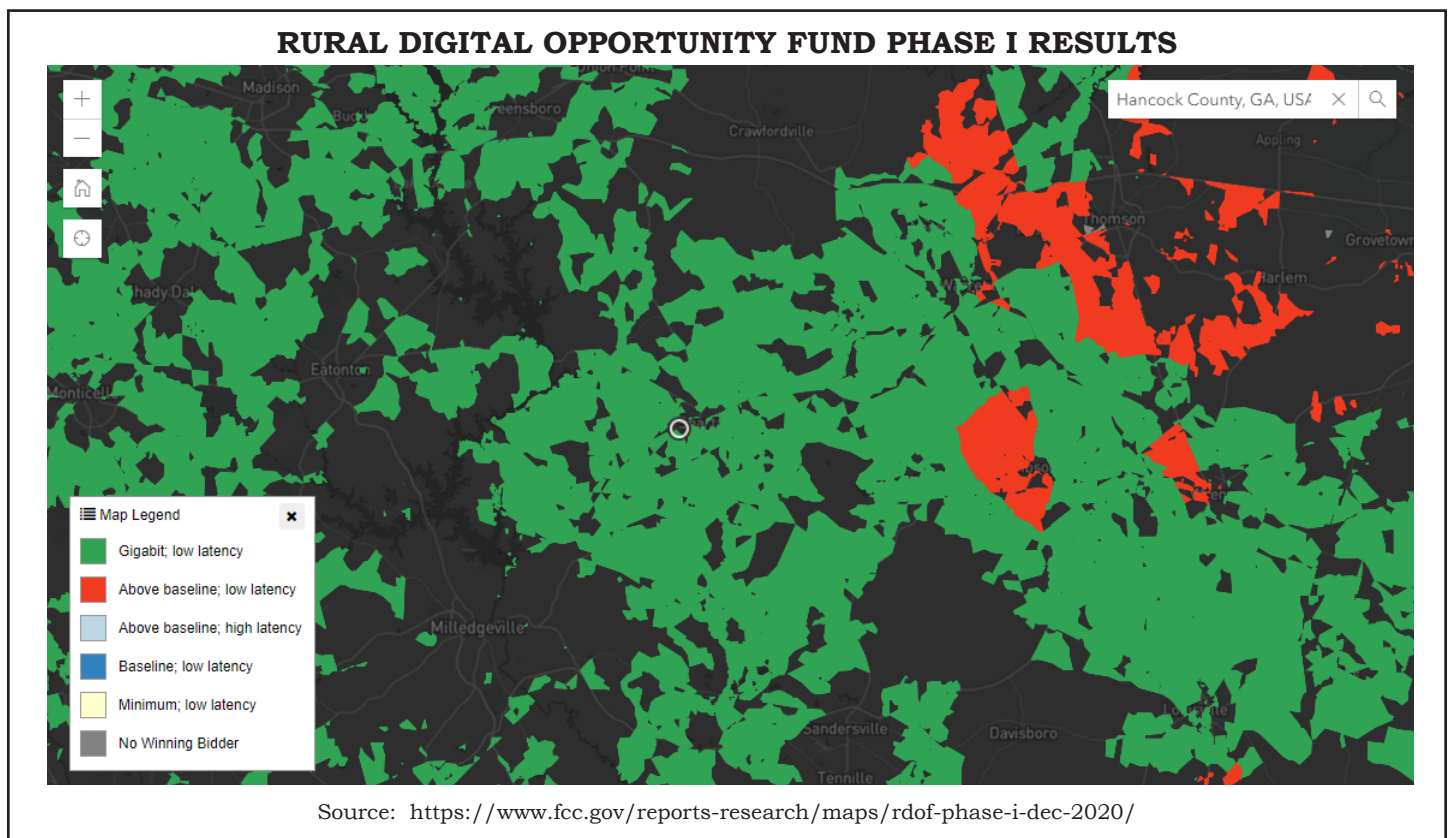
Conversations with stakeholders revealed a variety of improvement opportunities across the county. These include:

- Ensuring school buildings' Internet systems are updated
- Improving Wi-Fi currently offered at the library and courthouse
- Increasing the number of businesses that have Wi-Fi
- Getting residences effectively connected
- Supporting home-based businesses

FUNDING POSSIBILITIES

The state of Georgia has appropriated \$30 million in FY21/FY22 for broadband grants to OneGeorgia-eligible communities. A 50% cash match is required, and project eligibility will be determined in part on the GBDI map of served areas.

Additional funding exists through programs such as USDA Reconnect and the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction 904 (RDOF), for which much of Hancock County may qualify. In this auction, 180 bidders won over \$9 billion over 10 years to provide broadband. According to the RDOF website, "Winning bidders must meet periodic buildout requirements that will require them to reach all assigned locations by the end of the sixth year. Providers are incentivized to buildout to all locations as fast as possible." Through this program, broadband will be provided to 5.2 million locations across the U.S. and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The map below contains the RDOF Phase 1 auction results for Hancock County and the surrounding area as of 12/7/2020. The colors on the map represent the different levels of service associated with the winning bids. The service tier is based on download/upload speed, usage allowance, and latency.



Appendix B:

Public Involvement Overview

This portion of the comprehensive plan contains information on and documentation of the following:

- Stakeholder committee members
- Meeting and hearing dates
- Sign-in sheets
- Newspaper ads
- Social media and website screenshots
- Community survey

Stakeholders provided input and feedback throughout the planning process, from the SWOT analysis to the specific implementation measures within the community work program. Stakeholders included policy makers and others able to affect the plan, those affected by the plan, and partners in plan implementation.

APPENDIX B

A comprehensive plan should be composed to reflect the shared vision, goals and objectives for all communities involved in the process. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires the planning process for comprehensive plan to follow a set of minimum procedures to ensure that the public has the opportunity to provide input and review the comprehensive plan document as it is created.

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

Consistent public input is a necessary component for the creation and completion of this comprehensive plan document. One significant part of the process is forming a stakeholder committee of community members. This group of people is critical to the plan creation and informs the decision-making process. A committee of stakeholders was created and was comprised of community leaders from a cross-section of the county. The primary purpose of this committee was assuring that CSRA-RC staff reflect the aforementioned shared vision, goals, and objectives of the community.

The members of the Hancock County stakeholder committee for this planning process were:

- Sistie Hudson, Hancock County Board of Commissioners (Chairman)
- Allen Haywood, City of Sparta (Mayor); Development Authority
- Regina Butts, Family Connection
- Griffith Polatty, Resident; Historic Preservation Commission
- Makesha Brown, Resident; Business Owner
- Beth Webster, Business Owner
- Faye Sherrod, Resident

COMMUNITY MEETINGS & HEARINGS (in-person and virtual)

Stakeholder meetings were held on the following dates to provide information, review data, and gain community perspective:

June 3, 2021 | July 25, 2021 | August 5, 2021 | September 20, 2021

Two public hearings were also held as a part of this process on:

June 3, 2021 | September 30, 2021

COMMUNITY SURVEY


New to the community planning process this iteration was an electronic survey that garnered over 270 responses. The survey responses were reviewed and used to generate new ideas and provide community confirmation of priorities created by the stakeholder committee. Staff compared what the stakeholder committee developed with what survey results revealed when crafting the plan to ensure that voices were being heard. Local officials also retained survey results, including open-ended responses for future consultation.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

Additional channels included: word of mouth, social media, flyers in physical locations, and website posts/links.



Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan
3rd Stakeholder Committee Meeting
August 5, 2021



NAME	EMAIL	AFFILIATION
Regina Butts	Regina.butts.63@ycauca.com	FamilyConnection/OIS
SISTIE HUDSON	sistiehudson@AOL.COM	Hancock County
Griffith Polatty	bird-campbellhouse@att.net	Res: deatl
Makesha P. Brown-Foster	makeshabrown1@gmail.com	

Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026

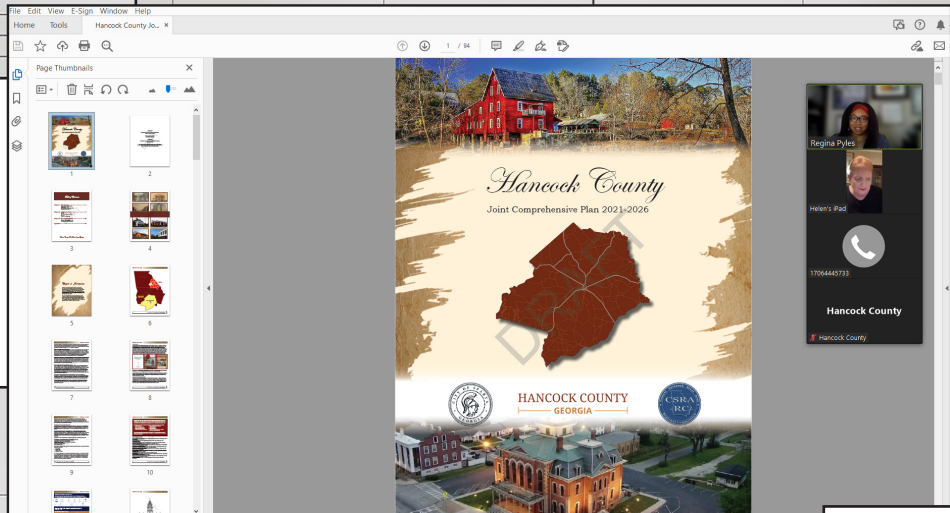
1st Public Hearing
June 3, 2021 | SPM

SIGN-IN

NAME
Carolyn B. Minter
Makesha P. Brown
SISTIE HUDSON
Griffith Polatty
R Allen Haywood
Regina Butts
JAMARUS WALLS
Balinda Richmond

Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Committee Meeting | June 3, 2021

NAME	AFFILIATION/ORGANIZATION	EMAIL	PHONE
Makesha P. Brown	Teacher/Educator	makeshabrown1@gmail.com	404-973-8500
Carolyn B. Minter	REACH / NCAD	carolyn.minter@aph.ga.gov	706-444-3200
SISTIE HUDSON	Hancock County	sistiehudson@AOL.COM	706-444-5746 EXT. 2602
Griffith Polatty	HPC	bird-campbellhouse@att.net	706-429-0521
R Allen Haywood	City of Sparta	spartamayor@bellcounty.net	478-456-4185
Regina Butts	Family Connection/OIS of Hancock	r.butts@hancock.k12.ga.us	478-456-1791



Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Committee Meeting | July 22, 2021

NAME	AFFILIATION/ORGANIZATION	EMAIL	PHONE
Griffith Polatty			
SISTIE HUDSON	Hancock CO.	Sistiehudson@AOL.COM	478-456-6698
R Allen Haywood	CITY OF SPARTA	spartamayor@bellcounty.net	478-456-4185
Makesha Brown	Stakeholder	makeshabrown1@gmail.com	404-973-8500

Participants (4)

- Regina Pyles (Me)
- Hancock County (Host)
- Helen's iPad
- Regina Butts

Chat

From Me to Everyone:

<https://csrar-ga.gov/planning/documents>



APPENDIX B

ROAD along the centerline of County Road No. 82 S 88 degrees 14' 26" W a distance of 73.58 feet to of said property, the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the party (or par-

FEET ORTH DINT

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICES

Public Hearing Notice

Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026

A joint virtual public hearing for Hancock County and the City of Sparta will take place on September 30, 2021 at 6PM via ZOOM at the Hancock County courthouse, 12630 Broad Street, Sparta, GA 31087. The purpose of this meeting will be to brief the community on the contents of the plan update and notify the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Commission for review. Residents wishing to comment or make suggestions should be in attendance. Residents may also submit comments or suggestions to countyclerk@hancockcountyga.gov prior to the Zoom meeting.

Join the Zoom meeting:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8954712568?pwd=RnBLWG0rMm9SV3BIYW5uTmtTelk1QT09>
 Meeting ID: 895 471 2568
 Passcode: 31087
 One tap mobile
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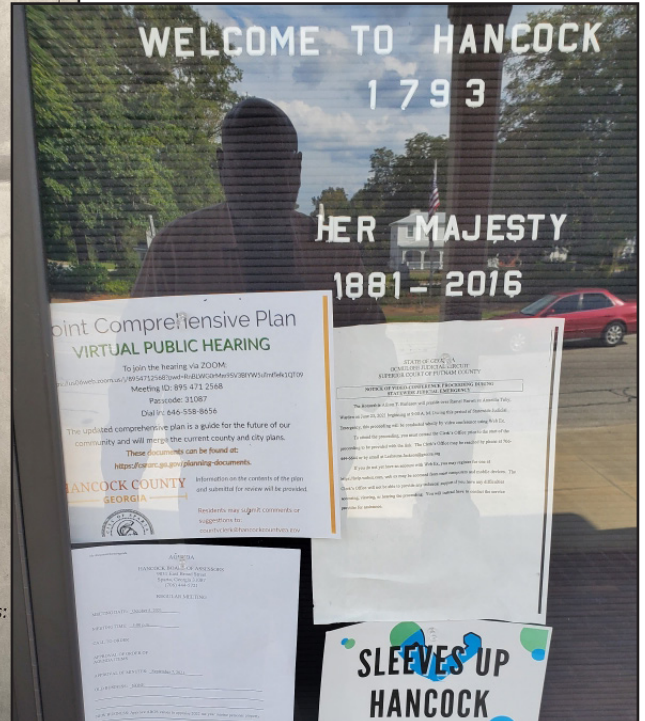
Dial by your location
 +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
 +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
 +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
 +1 720 707 2699 US (Denver)
 +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
 +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 895 471 2568
 Passcode: 31087
 Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kbGADiTyH>

The current plans for each jurisdiction and the draft plan will be available at the following web address:
<https://csrarc.ga.gov/planning-documents>

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language should contact Borderick Foster, County Clerk, at 706-444-5746 prior to September 28, 2021. This person can be located at the county courthouse, 12630 Broad Street Sparta, GA 31087, during the following hours: 8am-5pm. Persons with hearing disabilities can contact the Georgia Relay Service, at 7-1-1, 1-800-255-0056, or 1-800-255-0135 (Voice).

You Are Invited to... DogtoberFest 2021!



Public Hearing Notice

Initiation of the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026

A joint public hearing for Hancock County and the City of Sparta will take place on June 3, 2021 at 5PM at the Hancock County Youth Opportunity Center, 12560 Augusta Highway Sparta, GA 31087. The purpose of this meeting will be to initiate the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan process for Hancock County and the City of Sparta by briefing members of the community on the process for plan development and pending opportunities for public participation and gather general input. The Comprehensive Plan document establishes long-term goals and policies and a short-term action plan by which Hancock County and the City of Sparta will manage future community growth and development. Residents wishing to comment or make suggestions should be in attendance.

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language should contact Borderick Foster, County Clerk, at 706-444-5746 prior to June 1, 2021. This person can be located at the county courthouse, 12630 Broad Street Sparta, GA 31087, during the following hours: 8am-5pm. Persons with hearing disabilities can contact the Georgia Relay Service, at 7-1-1, 1-800-255-0056, or 1-800-255-0135 (Voice).

Hancock County/Sparta Joint Comprehensive Plan VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING

To join the hearing via ZOOM:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8954712568?pwd=RnBLWG0rMm9SV3BIYW5uTmtTelk1QT09>
 Meeting ID: 895 471 2568
 Passcode: 31087
 Dial in: 646-558-8656


The updated comprehensive plan is a guide for the future of our community and will merge the current county and city plans.

These documents can be found at:
<https://csrarc.ga.gov/planning-documents>.

HANCOCK COUNTY GEORGIA

Information on the contents of the plan and submittal for review will be provided.

Residents may submit comments or suggestions to:
countyclerk@hancockcountyga.gov
 prior to the ZOOM meeting.









Do You Have a Few Minutes?

Development of the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan is underway, and we want to hear from you. A guide for the future, this plan will merge the current county and city plans.

PLEASE GIVE YOUR INPUT ON OUR COMMUNITY SURVEY!



Use the camera on your phone to scan the QR code above or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HancockJCP21> to take the survey.



APPENDIX B

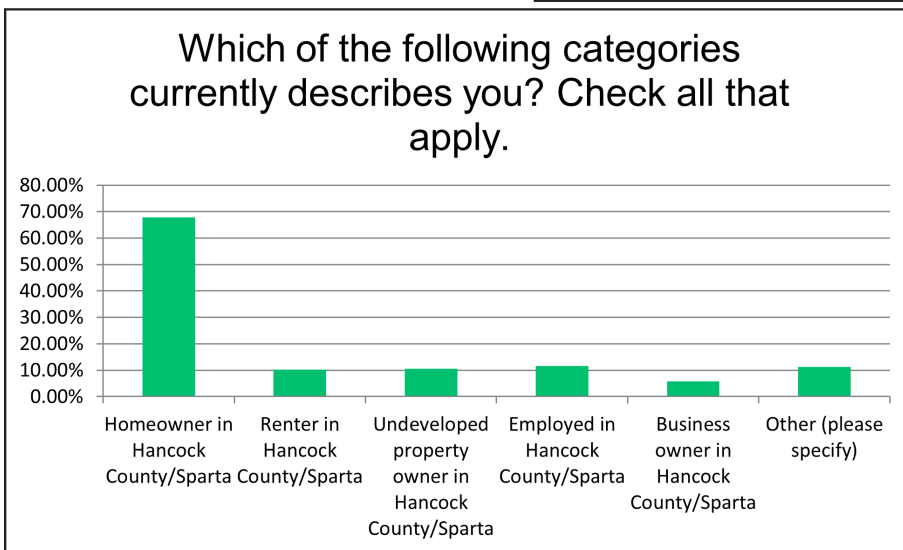
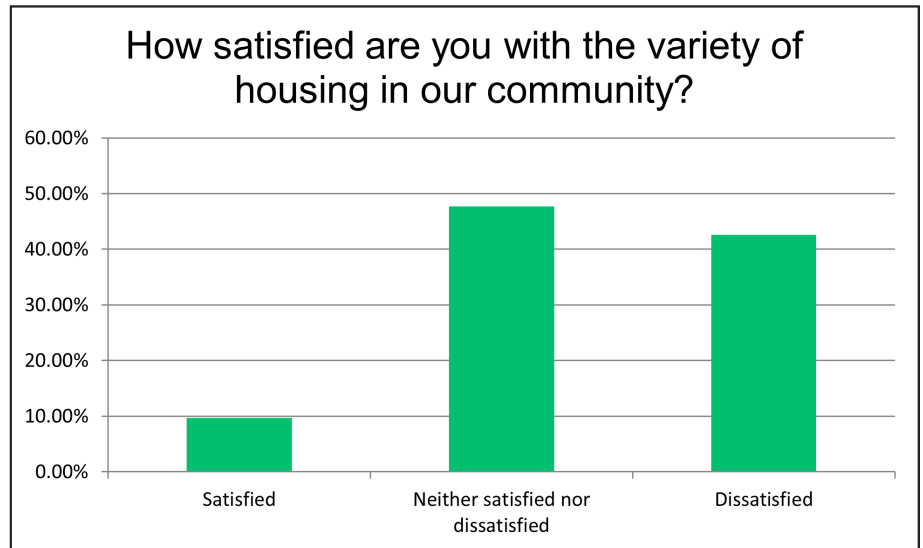
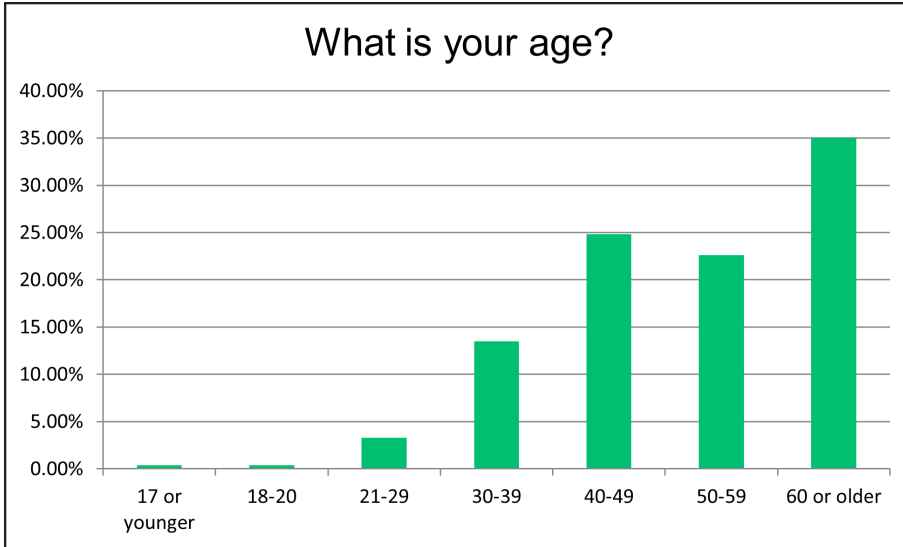


Community Survey Responses

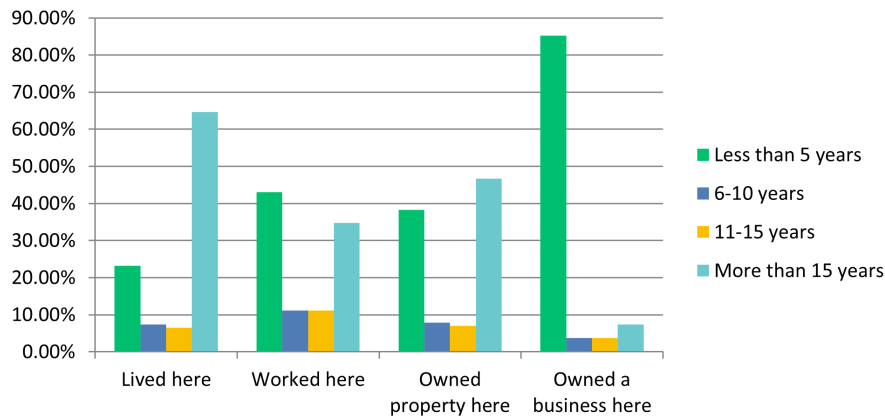
For non-open-ended questions



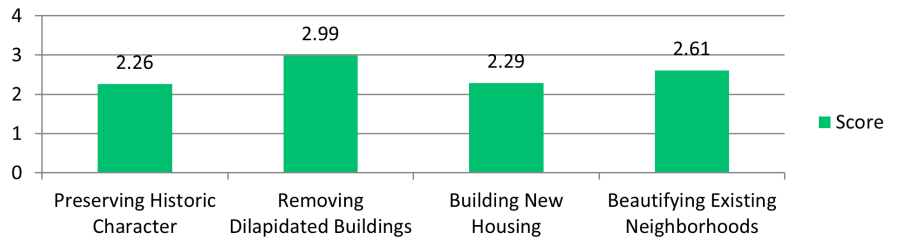
APPENDIX B



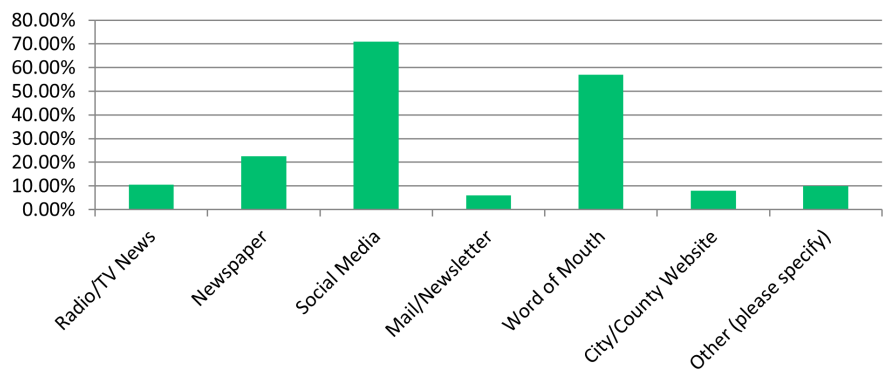
How long have you lived, worked, or owned property in our community?



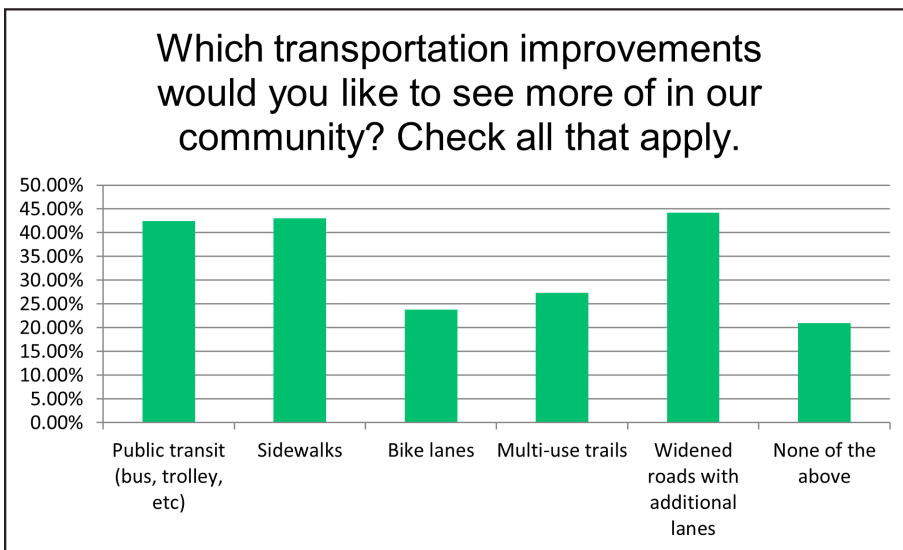
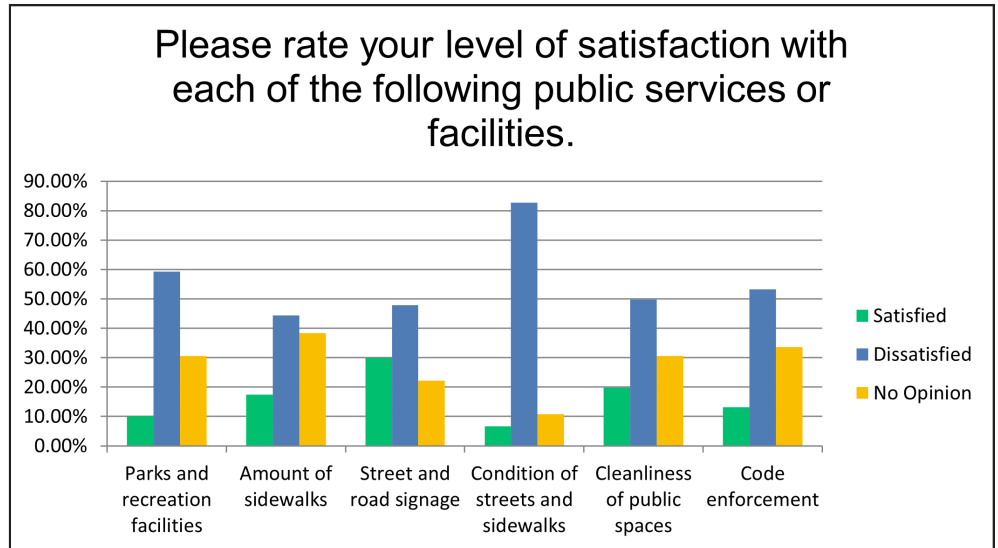
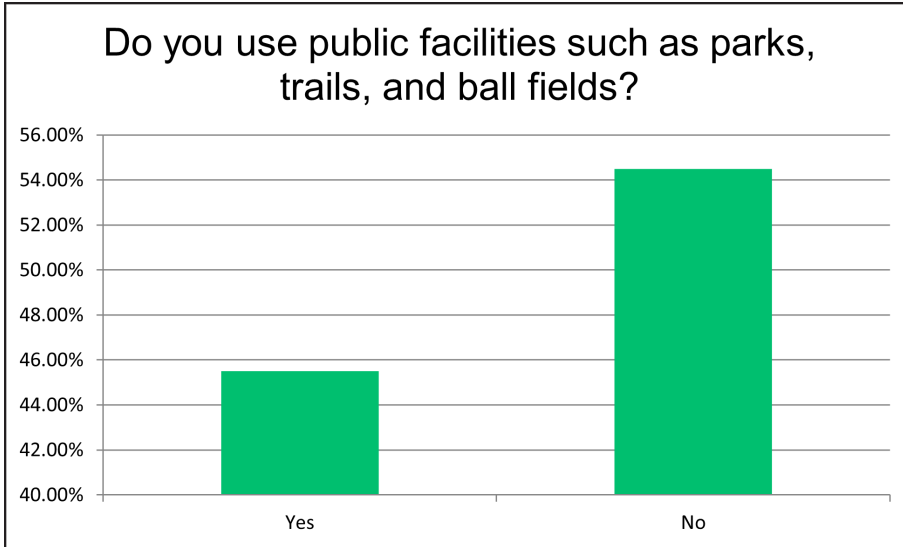
Please rank the following housing topics based on their importance to you from 1 to 4 (with 1 being most important). Each answer option does require a number rank, and each number can only be used once.

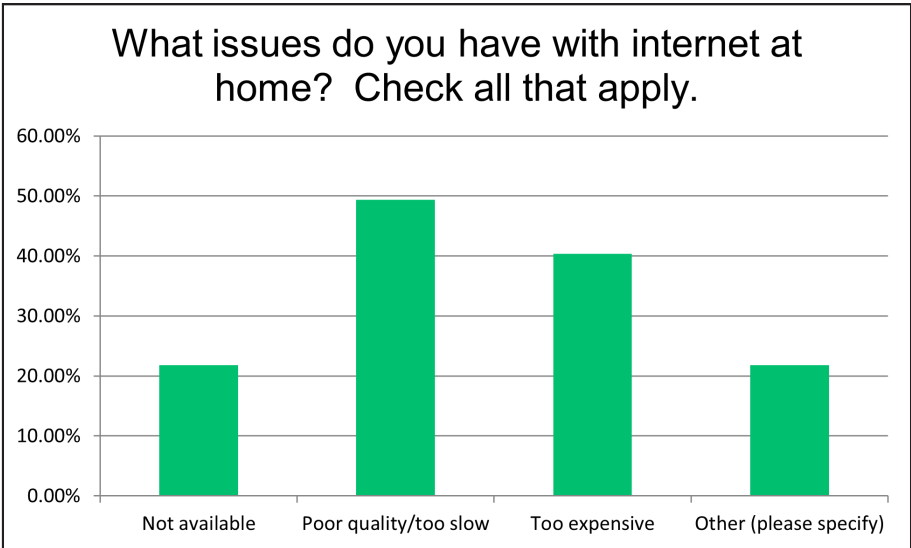
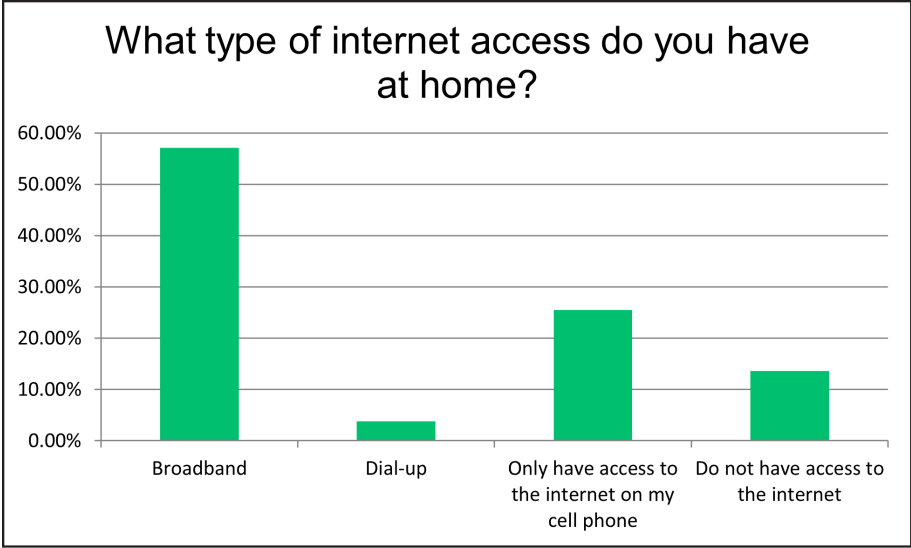


How do you typically find out about what's happening in our community? Check all that apply.



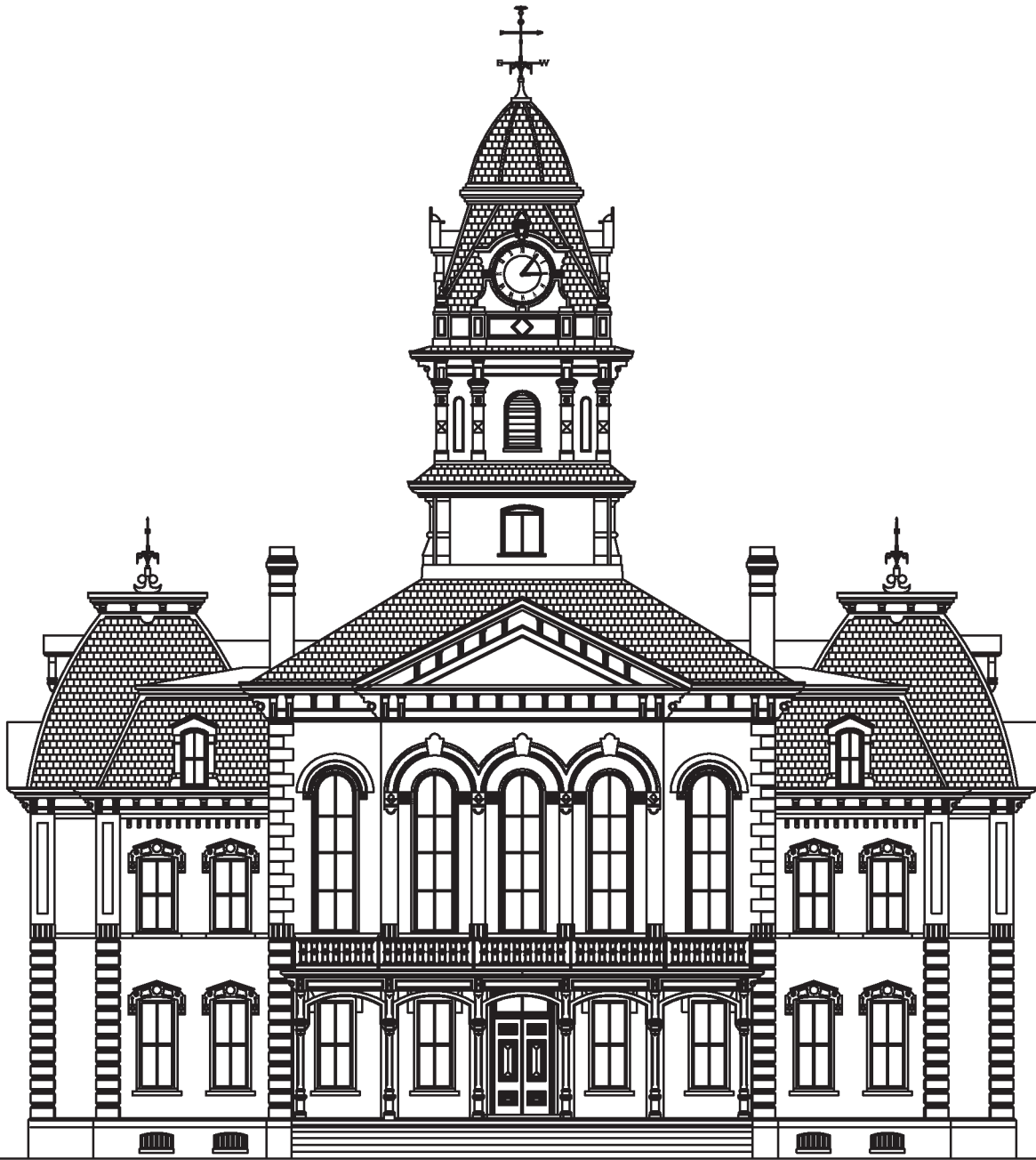
APPENDIX B





Thank you to all who contributed to this process, giving of their time and expertise to help our communities move forward! Please consider joining a local committee or initiative to continue our efforts.





HANCOCK COUNTY
— GEORGIA —



<https://hancockcountyga.gov> | <https://www.cityofsparta.org>



**A Resolution of Hancock County for the Adoption of
the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026**

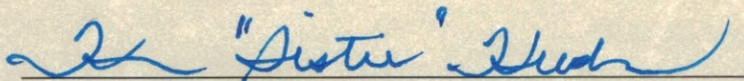
WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners, the governing authority of Hancock County, Georgia has prepared *the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* to replace their prior comprehensive plan and comprehensive plan update and,

WHEREAS, *the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* was prepared in accordance with the 2018 Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and,

WHEREAS, *the Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* has been reviewed by the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and found to be in compliance with the “Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning;”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Hancock County Board of Commissioners that the *Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* is hereby adopted and that a copy of this resolution shall be submitted to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission.

Adopted this 10 day of November, 2021



Helen “Sistie” Hudson, Chairman
Hancock County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Borderick Foster, Clerk
Hancock County



**A Resolution of the City of Sparta for Adoption of
The Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026**


WHEREAS, the City Council, the governing authority of the City of Sparta, Georgia, has prepared the *Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* to replace their prior comprehensive plan and comprehensive plan update and,

WHEREAS, the *Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* was prepared in accordance with the 2018 Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and,

WHEREAS, the *Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* has been reviewed by the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and found to be in compliance with the "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning;"

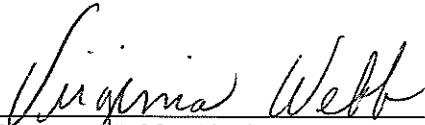
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Sparta City Council that the *Hancock County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2021-2026* is hereby adopted and that a copy of this resolution shall be submitted to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission.

Adopted this 9th day of November, 2021



Allen Haywood, Mayor
City of Sparta

ATTEST:



Virginia Webb, Clerk
City of Sparta