



LAMAR COUNTY

2024 - 2044

Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by Three Rivers Regional Commission

Adopted April 2024



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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Plan

This plan update was completed in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. The Lamar Comprehensive Plan shall provide guidance and policy standards for future growth and development.

The plan has a 20-year planning horizon and identifies the community's needs, opportunities, as well as goals, policies, and the desired land use characteristics of the county. This plan is a tool to enable decision-makers and citizens to align programs and projects with the community vision for the next two decades. Specific Implementation Strategies are listed in the 5-year community work program.



Overview of the Planning Area

Lamar County is located in the north-central part of Georgia. Along its boundaries are Butts County to the northeast, Spalding County to the northwest, Pike County to the west, Upson County to the south, and Monroe County to the east. The city of Barnesville, the county seat, lies approximately 55 miles south of Atlanta, 45 miles northwest of Macon, 15 miles south of Griffin, 15 miles west of Forsyth, and 17 miles northeast of Thomaston. Other municipalities in Lamar County are Milner and Aldora. Lamar County has an area of approximately 186 square miles and was formed in 1921 from the eastern portion of Pike County and the western portion of Monroe County. The scope of this plan is limited to unincorporated Lamar County and the Town of Aldora, though some of the information pertains to the municipalities and is relevant to the county.

Lamar County Commission

Ryran Traylor, Chairman
Jarrod Fletcher, District 1
Jason Lovett, District 2
Ashley Gilles, District 3
Nancy Thrash, District 4

PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

The plan’s update was guided by an appointed steering committee which included members of the Lamar County Commission and Lamar Planning and Zoning Commission, county and municipal government staff, business owners, and other community stakeholders. The committee met in 2023 and 2024 in conjunction with Planning and Zoning Commission meetings to encourage the general public to attend.

| Stakeholder | Affiliation |
|------------------|--|
| Ashley Gilles | Board of Commissioners |
| Dwight Fleming | Planning and Zoning Commission |
| Kathy Oxford | Barnesville-Lamar Industrial Development Authority |
| Angela Preston | Planning and Zoning Commission |
| Gerald Thompson | Planning and Zoning Commission |
| Michael Turner | Planning and Zoning Commission |
| Eddie Felton | Planning and Zoning Commission |
| Anita Buice | Lamar County Planning and Community Development |
| Niki Sappington | City of Barnesville Community Development |
| Tiffany Lowe | Recreation Department |
| Melissa Stephens | Real Estate Agent |

Public Participation

This plan’s update included opportunities for public participation to tailor the document’s content through community conversation. Two public hearings were held to allow for public review and comment, and all Steering Committee meetings were also open for public engagement. A community survey was utilized to gather citizen input; the results can be found in the appendix and were consulted in the writing of this plan.

**Please take a few minutes
to complete the:**


PUBLIC SURVEY

for the

Lamar County


Comprehensive Plan

2024 Update



<https://larcg.is/OS0XWr>

**Survey takes
approximately
5 minutes**

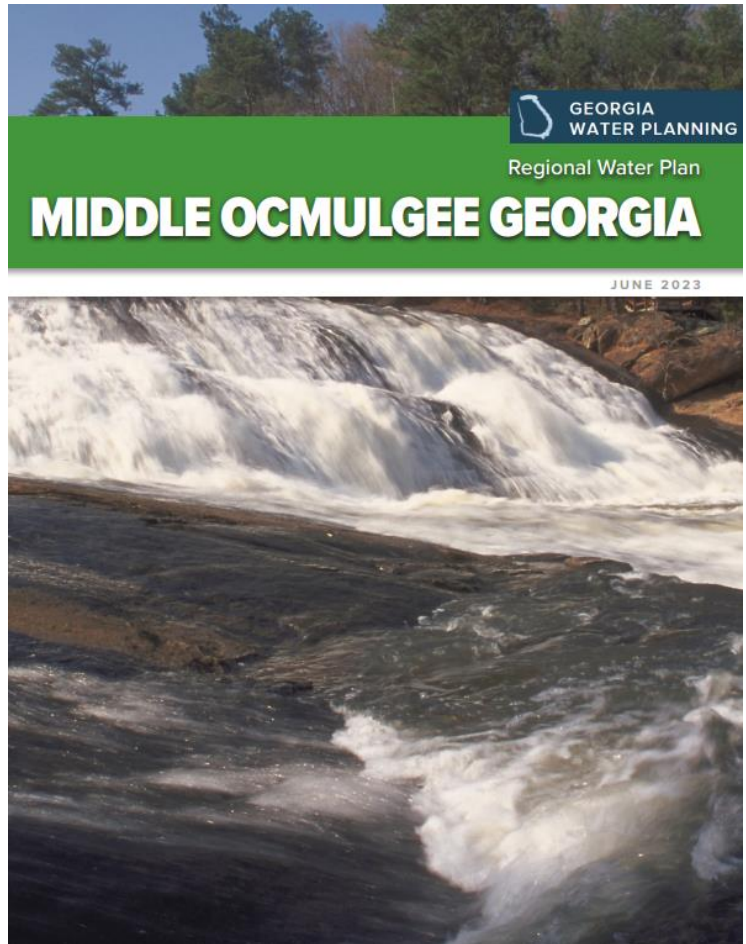


EXISTING PLANS

Lamar County has existing policies, ordinances, studies, and reports that relate to comprehensive planning, land use, economic development, quality of life, and environmental protection. The county also is part of regional planning efforts to address multi-jurisdictional needs and goals. County and regional planning efforts and documents should be consulted and followed along with this plan to inform future decisions.

Regional Water Plan

Lamar County has been identified in Georgia's State Water Plan as being in the Middle Ocmulgee Water Planning Region and the Flint River. That region consists of the following counties: Bibb, Butts, Crawford, Houston, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Monroe, Newton, Peach, Pulaski, and Twiggs. The Regional Water Plan provides a roadmap for implementing specific measures designed to promote sustainable water usage and management of the Middle Ocmulgee Region's water resources over the next 50 years. The Regional Water Plan was updated in June 2023. As mandated in the Georgia Planning Act as part of the Minimum Planning Standards, Environmental Planning Criteria require that local governments adopt a water supply watershed protection plan for their jurisdiction. The environmental criteria shall be incorporated into this comprehensive plan and addressed specifically through local ordinances and land development regulations.



COMMUNITY VISION

Achieving the Vision

This plan is a tool to guide and direct Lamar County’s decision making process to align with the community vision for the future. The following sections provide a framework for these decisions, starting with the consensus vision statement and the documentation of the community’s needs and opportunities as determined through stakeholder discussions, public input, and research. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted at the beginning of the planning process to capture an initial overview of existing and future conditions and considerations. Policies and strategies are incorporated throughout the plan and community work program to address concerns and achieve goals.

Vision Statement

Lamar County is rural and quiet county living with well-separated and designated industrial and commercial areas.



SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

| Lamar County SWOT Analysis | |
|--|---|
| Strengths | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet, rural, country home site, small town flavor • Centrally located between Atlanta and Macon for job opportunities • Gordon State College • Low traffic volume, short commutes within the county • Availability of home building sites • Small town values with forward looking goals • High school facilities • Improved and improving school scores • Low crime rates, feels safe • Industrial areas zoned in strategic areas • Great advancements in landfill technology at Lamar County Regional Solid Waste Authority • Fine Arts Center/Auditorium • Broad base of industry types compared to similar rural counties • Proximity of railroad to industrial area • Strong local commitment to agricultural areas and businesses, as well as maintaining the countryside | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong county/city relations • Low tax rates • Charming historic downtown area • Some houses are being revitalized through infill development and home renovations • Little to no vacancy rate downtown • High school programs, such as Junior ROTC and dual enrollment with Gordon State College • Local newspaper • Recently updated zoning ordinance • The horse show and rodeo facility • The library and library programs • Broadband expansion is in progress • VA hospital nearby in Pike County • The Boys and Girls Club • Southern Crescent Technical College nearby in Spalding County to provide adult/GED education and workforce development • Vibrant arts community, including a county-owned art gallery and meeting space |
| Weaknesses | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier, secondary access to industrial area • Needed improvements to Georgia State Route 36 from the industrial area to Interstate 75 • Limited access to specialty medicine • Aging sewer and water infrastructure needs major repairs and upgrades before further expansion for industry and development. Note: the City of Barnesville has a two-year improvement plan underway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of indoor recreation facilities • Lack of available workforce to recruit industry and fill jobs • Starter homes may be available in terms of size, but prices are high • Not enough housing inventory and housing diversity in terms of size, prices, and rental properties • No hotel is available |

SWOT Analysis (Continued)

Opportunities

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of space in the industrial area • Vibrant downtown for merchants • Growth of housing areas in the northern portions of the county • Mixed-use development area with shops within walking distance of homes • Commercial and industrial growth along State Route 36 and near Interstate 75 interchange • Expanded service to the industrial park area • Continue to expand indoor recreation facilities • Increase portion of property taxes carried by commercial and industrial activities • Community partnerships (e.g. Rock Springs Church has programs and facilities that benefit the community) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse shows are popular events • A passing lane on State Route 36 would help traffic • Events held at the high school stadium and gym could attract more people • Ensure that parks are appealing and available to residents (e.g. easy to use and rent) • Support the relationship between the high school and higher education institutions (e.g. Gordon State College and Southern Crescent Technical College) • Find ways to get wider public input such as through online feedback and public meetings with a special focus |
|---|---|

Threats

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat of overdevelopment resulting in loss of small town environment • Drug threats • Need for a new county jail • Economic shifts create a need to maintain diversity of industry and grow a resilient workforce • A portion of the population is resistant to any changes, which challenges discussions on a balanced approach to growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Route 36 is starting to have too much traffic due to its designation as a truck route. Driving SR 36 is difficult and dangerous for residents • Public health crises (e.g. pandemics) • Natural disasters • More employees will be needed to backfill people retiring |
|---|--|

Needs, Goals, and Strategies

Housing

Needs and Goals

- More houses need to be affordable, higher-quality, and available. Housing prices have increased due to people moving in with higher incomes, which creates an affordability challenge for people that have lived in the county all of their life on mill-worker level incomes
- Younger generations need starter homes, some young adults are having to choose to live with parents due to high local rents and high mortgage rates (e.g. the local rent is \$1,500 and average sales price of a home is \$250K, with new construction pushing \$300K on top of land costs)
- Workforce housing, including apartments, is needed nearby for employers
- Water and sewer infrastructure is owned by the City of Barnesville and needs to be upgraded before any more development can/should occur
- Residential development is expensive for jurisdictions and does not break even in terms of taxes collected versus
- Some people are showing preferences for smaller lots and homes; a range of housing sizes is needed
- Industrial (including small-scale industry) and commercial development needs to be emphasized. However, employers are best recruited when adequate housing is available for employees
- The five-acre minimum for subdividing land can create unintended consequences of high land and building prices
- Housing options are needed to keep the younger generations in the county, which will create a longer-lasting workforce
- Ensure zoning is not too restrictive that housing options cannot be built to meet needs

Opportunities and Strategies

- ➔ The governor's rural housing fund started in 2023 may help increase workforce housing options
- ➔ Housing shortages have become a national issue, and federal grants and incentives may become more available to encourage developers to do infill housing or other public-private partnerships
- ➔ Smaller lots and homes could be built in and nearby city limits where there are existing lots (some vacant), and that can be connected to infrastructure
- ➔ The county should be strategic with residential development in order to avoid creating fragmented agricultural land and potential sprawl
- ➔ Implement ordinances specifying building materials, such as restricting vinyl siding
- ➔ Some corridors outside of city limits could be potential higher density housing areas, with some parcels already having water infrastructure. If SR 36 becomes a 4-lane highway, that time might be best for putting in a sewer line. However, additional residential development along higher speed corridors will affect traffic and safety due to curb cuts, trucks, curves, and hard sightlines and must be considered carefully
- ➔ The county has a zoning code that enables a variety of housing types; ensure codes enable infill options that meet community goals
- ➔ The City of Barnesville is identifying opportunities for infrastructure upgrades and expansion

Community Facilities and Services

Needs and Goals

- Recreation facilities need to be updated, some have not been upgraded in many decades
- Lamar County has just one park, would be beneficial to add more, especially passive parks such as nature and walking trails
- Specific needs for lights: the pavilion power needs to be restored, the baseball field (a current SPLOST project) needs lights, soccer field light poles are leaning, and lights are needed in main parking lot
- A fence is needed at the baseball field (current SPLOST project)
- Specific needs for resurfacing: tennis/pickleball court, skate park, outdoor basketball court, main parking lot at the recreation center needs to be re-coated and lined
- Road needs: widening of the road leading to the upper fields; speed bumps are needed for safety
- A score tower at the football field is needed
- Large pine trees in the park need attention due to safety concerns.
- A new ball field with lights is needed, a score board is needed for field 1
- Updated bathrooms and concession areas needed
- Small play equipment is desired at the top of the recreation facility
- Small play equipment is desired at the soccer complex
- More sensory play and inclusive equipment is desired at facilities
- An indoor practice facility is desired
- A new pavilion is desired as an addition to the park
- Additional after school activities are needed for youth, including teens

Opportunities and Strategies

- ➔ The recycling center could be renovated to be an indoor practice facility
- ➔ The Trust for Public Land can assist with land acquisition for passive park space
- ➔ The federal government gave the county a property on SR-36 for future recreation that could be ideal for a passive park. The location is not safe for high impact recreation due to the curve in the road and GDOT not permitting a deceleration lane. However, passive recreation traffic wouldn't be as high compared to active recreation such as ball fields
- ➔ The popularity of pickleball creates more recreation possibilities for all ages. The county is currently finalizing the gym renovation, which will have indoor pickleball use and possibly extended hours
- ➔ Rock Springs Church has a recreation facility that the community is encouraged to use
- ➔ The county will continue partnering with the Boys and Girls Club to implement strategies for youth after school programs

Economic Development

Needs and Goals

- Business permitting can be challenging
- Industries may need additional infrastructure in order to be located in the county
- Increased well-paid employment opportunities are needed to keep residents in the community
- There is a need to ensure local agricultural practices are maintained and protected as an important part of the economy
- The commercial areas need a stronger ratio of locally-owned businesses versus chain businesses

Opportunities and Strategies

- ➔ Continue to support the Barnesville Lamar County Industrial Development Authority as the driving force in expanding and recruiting businesses and industries that align with community scale and infrastructure and will create jobs and a diverse tax base
- ➔ Continue to prioritize infill opportunities in the Industrial Park as vacancies occur
- ➔ The popularity of pickleball and organized youth sports events could be a basis for future projects
- ➔ Actively pursue medium sized manufacturers

Natural and Cultural Resources

Needs and Goals

- Scenic, pastoral views need to be protected
- Big land owners that want to keep land in agriculture need financial incentives (e.g. not taxing timber and farm property)
- The county's historic districts need to be protected and promoted

Opportunities and Strategies

- ➔ The Johnsonville Historic District is large, at over 1,000 acres, and has assets that should be preserved and promoted. The historic district enables tools such as tax credits and grants (e.g. DCA grants for public buildings) to be used to reinforce the character and appeal of this unique area
- ➔ Downtown Barnesville is also a designated historic district. The county and City of Barnesville could benefit from having a tourism/recreation market study done
- ➔ The county has a wetlands trail by the elementary school that is well designed and possibly underutilized. People can park by the horse arena and enjoy outdoor recreation. The county helps keep the trail up in conjunction with the Soil and Water Conservation District
- ➔ The 5 acre minimum zoning designation for agricultural activities promotes those activities on larger properties and reduces the residential/agricultural conflicts (e.g. people keeping livestock on smaller acreage)
- ➔ The county has added agritourism to provide revenue options and wants to find options to encourage large agricultural property owners not to sell land for non-agricultural development
- ➔ The Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption (GATE) program is an option to encourage farmers to continue owning and using land for agricultural activities
- ➔ Passive parks can protect environmentally sensitive land while providing public recreation benefits.
- ➔ The pastoral identity of the scenic routes identified within the county can be protected through land use regulations
- ➔ The county has important facilities within the City of Barnesville, such as the jail museum. The region has a number of popular jail museums, such as in Franklin, which could be models for how to utilize this structure

Transportation

Needs and Goals

- If passenger rail is desired, Norfolk Southern will need to be worked with
- Scenic roads should be designated and not have substantial through-traffic. Instead, non-state roads need to be designated as through roads (e.g. Swint Road for Spalding County) and give those high traffic count roads a priority for traffic flow
- Many roads need to be re-paved

Opportunities and Strategies

- ➔ Passenger rail would be an opportunity to get people to and from Atlanta and Macon. Lamar County voted against a high speed rail line many decades ago, but if this opportunity is presented again, passenger rail service could be a current preference and could provide many network benefits

Land Use

Needs and Goals

- Water and sewer infrastructure is not available throughout the county and is expensive to maintain, upgrade and expand. Butts County is implementing a lot of industrial development and would not necessarily be able to provide additional water. Development will need to be carefully aligned with strategic infrastructure upgrades and expansions
- Need to separate residential tracts from industrial areas to avoid becoming similar to Henry County where land use intensities are too mixed
- The costs of expanding infrastructure needs to be paid by the users (e.g. a developer coming in should pay for the additional fire hydrants if the project is within reasonable distance of water lines)
- Many businesses have moved to the county (e.g. electrical and trucking companies), and the county needs to be proactive about landscaping and building design and materials to improve appearances. Commercial zoning is in place, but not currently design requirements
- Aesthetics need to be protected and commercial traffic minimized along certain scenic roads (e.g. Johnsonville Rd, Brent Rd, and Community House Rd as these roads are throughways to I-75)

Opportunities and Strategies

- ➔ Step-down zoning can be used to minimize spot zoning and separate industrial from residential development, where industrial is put near highways, followed by commercial development, then single-family or other residential development
- ➔ Cluster industrial parcels in the northwest area, where many small industries are on old SR 41 and has easy access to SR 16
- ➔ Study impact fees to offset infrastructure costs
- ➔ Create design standards along corridors, such as through an overlay district
- ➔ Designate scenic roads and implement scenic protection measures, such as viewshed protection requirements/incentives, conservation subdivisions, and design overlays

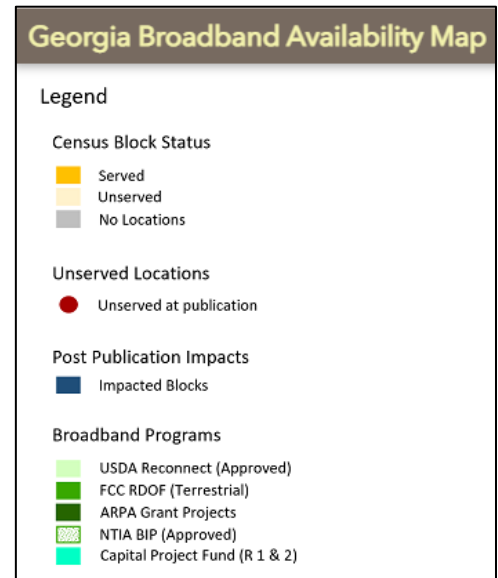
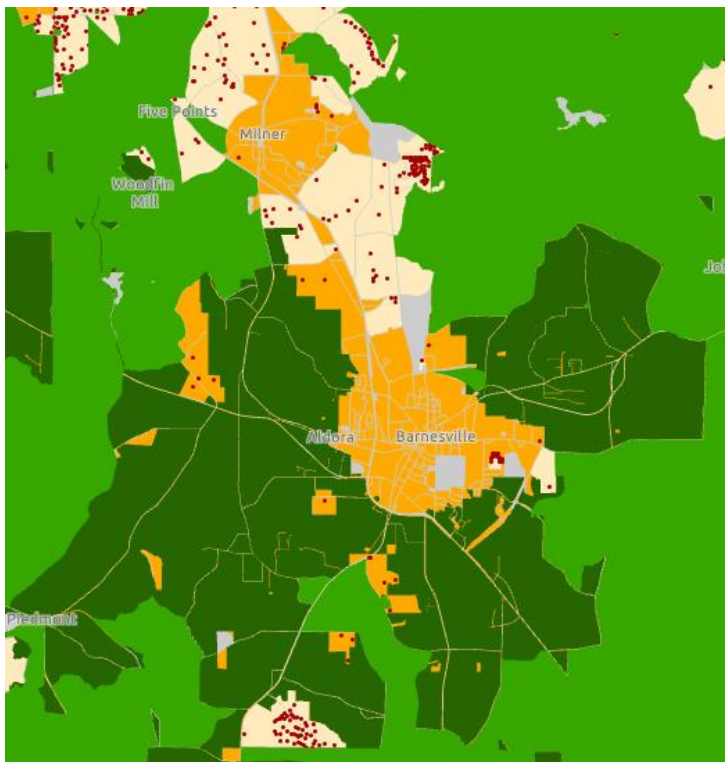
Broadband

Lamar County is located in an area that is 86% served with broadband internet access. Per DCA December 2023 analysis, Lamar County has a 14% unserved area, with 1,193 unserved locations, 7,443 served locations. Of those surveyed by the US Census, approximately 83% of internet subscribers have broadband service by a cable, fiber, or DSL connection.

| Type | Lamar County | |
|---|--------------|------------|
| | Total | % of Total |
| Total households | 6,918 | |
| Total with an internet subscription | 5,726 | 82.77% |
| Dial-up | 16 | 0.28% |
| Broadband (cable, fiber, DSL) | 5,710 | 82.54% |
| Satellite | 802 | 11.59% |
| Internet access without a subscription | 318 | 4.60% |

Source: US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates 2022, Presence and Types of Internet Subscriptions in Household

Below is the Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) 2023 Broadband Availability Map showing the coverage area for Lamar County and the immediate surrounding area.



FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER AREAS

What are Character Areas?

Character Areas are geographic sub-areas of a community that contain unique characteristics and physical form and serve to guide local future land use decisions and policy. According to the Department of Community Affairs, Character Areas have the potential to evolve into distinct areas intended to align with community vision. The vision for each character area is achieved through specific guidance through this plans and codes, intentional pursuit of this vision, and special attention to development patterns and issues. Character Areas may be identified by the types of development or lack of development, which purposefully seek to protect natural and cultural features, as well as align future decisions to the desired built environment that fits with that area.

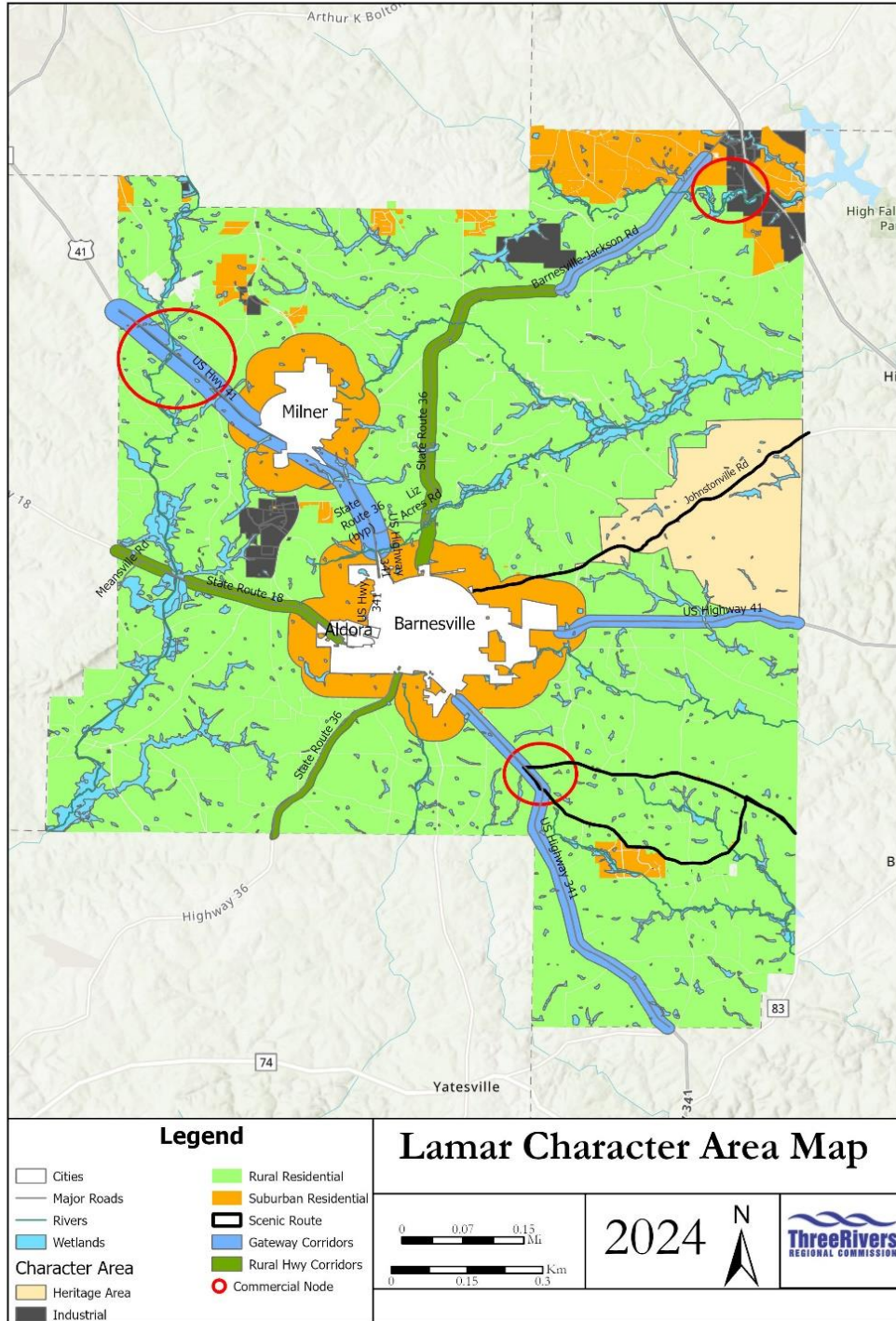
The below list identifies character areas found within Lamar County. Each character area is listed in the following pages with a description, desired development patterns, recommended land uses, and a list of Implementation Strategies.

Character Areas within Lamar County include:

- Heritage Area
- Industrial
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Rural Scenic Corridor
- Rural Highway Corridor
- Gateway Corridor

Character Area Map

The updated Character Area Map is intended to establish a vision for how Lamar County desires to develop over the next 20 years. This map provides a conceptual basis to which decision-makers and stakeholders can refer for desired land use planning, including review and changes to zoning and subdivision ordinances, as well as building and design codes.



Heritage Area

Description

The majority of the Heritage Area character area encompasses the rural Johnsonville-Goggins National Register Historic District. The approximately 1,000 acre district contains features and landmark structures such as churches, historic homes, stores, and community centers. These areas help maintain the longtime historic and small-town identity of the county. As these structures age or properties change hands, possible redevelopment could change the character of these areas without adequate codes and enforcement in place.



Desired Development Patterns

The Heritage Area will serve to help maintain the identity of the community and require specific development types and approaches. Any new development or infill should be sensitive to scale and include appropriate design reflective of the desired aesthetics of the community to match the character of the historic fabric. Within these areas, development focuses should involve continued preservation of historic structures. A mix of uses will remain vital for the vibrancy of these areas.

Recommended Land Uses

These areas are suitable for residential, mixed-use, commercial, public/civic, and faith-based land uses.

Implementation Strategies

- Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives and design practices. Maximize the Johnsonville area's National Register of Historic Places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs
- Improve existing structures and build new structures that honor the historic context of the original area. New development should have site plans and architectural design that are of scale to the historic fabric
- Pedestrian orientation and open space should be prioritized for connectivity and to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area, such as site placement with parking in the rear, façade revitalization, and linkages to sidewalks and trails
- Encourage or increase a mix of neighborhood-scale mixed-uses to maintain vibrancy
- Encourage the use of state conservation tax credit and other conservation tools to protect the rural landscape

Industrial

Description

The land on both sides of I-75 in the northeast corner of Lamar County has a strategic location for existing and future industrial and commercial areas. Although not in Lamar County, exit 198 is nearby and is the primary exit for High Falls Lake State Park, making this an area for potential commercial tourist activity. The county has other existing industrial areas, including an established quarry and Legacy Park and Barnesville-Lamar County Industrial Park. These areas can serve as employment hubs for residents of Lamar County and the surrounding area. Most industrial areas require substantial infrastructure, as well as proper access and connections to primary roadways.

Desired Development Patterns

Although the two nearest I-75 entrances/exits are not in Lamar County, their proximity to the county line make the area highly desirable for business activity. Industrial areas can provide job opportunities for residents, create a balanced economy, and help maintain a healthy tax base. Existing industrial areas should be maximized and sustainably integrated into the community in terms of pollution prevention, design, buffers, resource use, workforce, and housing. There are two streams that flow through the area into High Falls Lake, therefore making the area in proximity to the streams sensitive to the types of activity allowed.

Recommended Land Uses

Heavy and light industrial activities, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and larger scale commercial activities.



Implementation Strategies

- Promoted and maximize existing sites versus developing new sites
- Expand and upgrade infrastructure strategically, with careful consideration of the amount of resources needed and available to support proposed uses
- Pursue manufacturers that are scaled to the community resources and goals
- Consider adequate workforce and housing as important parts of recruiting and retaining industry.
- Ensure adequate screening and buffering is used between industrial and lower intensity uses surrounding the site, such as residential
- Implement water protection measures to collect and treat stormwater and protect waterbodies on the property as part of the larger watershed. Encourage the design of parking lots that incorporate on-site storm water mitigation and green infrastructure features, such as vegetative islands and swales
- Enable and encourage shared parking for adjacent sites
- Implement an overlay corridor ordinance
- Improve facades and parking areas of existing structures through incentives

Rural Residential

Description

These residential areas primarily consist of family farms, single-family homes on multiple acre properties, several subdivisions on one-acre lots, and manufactured homes on multiple acreage lots. Homes within these areas are located on lots a minimum of 1 acre in size, but are often 5+ acres in size for agriculture and conservation purposes. These areas are rural in nature with little pedestrian activity and limited city water and sewer services. Rural residential areas represent a large percentage of Lamar County and can protect the agricultural land and character that are important to residents and the economy.



Desired Development Patterns

Increased lot sizes and careful limits on subdividing have been desired to limit development density and protect farmland and rural character. Environmentally sensitive areas can be preserved by being set aside as public parks or trails, strong buffer and green space requirements, and agricultural/environmental conservation incentives. Future development should preserve agricultural farmland and green space, include viewshed protection, and have a relatively high degree of building separation. Water and sewer infrastructure should be extended strategically only to areas where higher development density is desired.

Recommended Land Uses

Large tract residential with a minimum lot size of 5 acres with limited exceptions for 2 acre home sites on working farms or conservation properties; agriculture; parks and conservation.

Implementation Strategies

- Carefully address subdivision of rural land through updated and enforced zoning codes
- Direct denser development toward incorporated areas and available water/sewer infrastructure
- Preserve viewsheds and open space through design overlays, buffer requirements, and greenspace acquisition
- Promote land preservation through the support of agritourism, active farming, and use of conservation easements
- Nominate "centennial farms" in the county to emphasize the importance of longterm farmland

Suburban Residential

Description

These areas include housing and housing developments surrounding the city limits of Barnesville and Milner that are connected to city water and sewer infrastructure. Bedroom communities have also developed in the northeast corner of the county near SR-36 and I-75. These homes connect to the city water that had been run along this corridor for industrial development, and are inhabited by many residents commuting outside of the county. Scattered subdivisions have also developed on smaller acre tracts with individual septic systems throughout the county. Nearby large undeveloped tracts may be under pressure to develop despite limited water and sewer services.



Recommended Land Uses

Residential development, public or institutional uses, recreational facilities.

Implementation Strategies

- Development should be permitted if only able to access water, sewer and road infrastructure efficiently. Protect woodland and open space by maintaining lots of required size where county water and sewer services are not provided
- Traditional neighborhood design should be encouraged near existing city boundaries and residential areas to maintain and build a sense of place, promote connectivity, and reduce infrastructure demands
- In more rural or greenfield areas, cluster or conservation subdivisions should be encouraged to protect significant amounts of open space
- Promote protection of environmentally sensitive land and encourage the protection of undeveloped land

Commercial Node

Description

Located mainly along the Gateway Corridor Character Areas along the state routes are emerging Commercial Nodes. These nodes are activity centers that contain a mix of uses including concentrations of mid-size businesses, light industry, locally owned manufacturing companies, and a few franchise establishments. These areas are primarily adjacent to agricultural development and have a strip development pattern that necessitates careful buffering and design considerations to align with the aesthetic values of a small-town, farming community. The northeast Commercial Node is also adjacent to residential development and could provide a design opportunity to incorporate connectivity for residents to be close to work and shopping.

Recommended Land Uses

Diverse mix of commercial business and industries.

Implementation Strategies

- Approve business development that will provide more local jobs and tax revenue
- Approve development only if longterm infrastructure needs can be efficiently met
- Strategically upgrade and expand existing infrastructure that aligns with growth goals
- Implement an overlay ordinance to promote development, landscaping, signage, streetscapes, and lighting that strengthens the aesthetics and resilience of the area
- Improve facades and landscaping of existing structures and parking areas
- Preserve and supplement natural screens and buffers, especially between nearby residential neighborhoods
- Encourage parking lot design that incorporates on-site storm water mitigation and green infrastructure features, such as vegetative islands and swales
- Enable and encourage shared parking and connected internal driveways for adjacent commercial uses



Gateway Corridor

Description

Lamar County has several highly visible and heavily traveled corridors between the northwest, northeast, east, and southeast boundaries of the county that are main points of access into the City of Barnesville. Residential development and commercial activity of various scale exist along the corridors, as well as undeveloped parcels and existing sites in need of revitalization. These roads can be prone to strip-style development and a high number of curb cuts.

Recommended Land Uses

Commercial, industrial, public/institutional, and residential.



Implementation Strategies

- Implement development ordinances that address signage, lighting, and landscaping that promotes a positive impression for people leaving and entering the county and cities
- Focus on beautification measures such as litter control and increased landscaping
- Incorporate welcome and directional signage along the corridor
- Retrofit or mask unsightly commercial structures, parking lots and other features as necessary
- Regulate access management to highways to minimize single entryways and promote inter-parcel access in order to increase safety and reduce fragmented buffers
- Provide bike and pedestrian linkages to adjacent residential and commercial development
- Encourage GDOT to prioritize safety projects along these corridors (e.g. SR-36)

Rural Highway Corridor

Description

Lamar County has several highly visible, highly-traveled corridors with developed or open land on both sides that are designated high-volume transportation facilities. These corridors can promote the rural character of the county through careful development patterns that minimize non-agricultural development.

Recommended Land Uses

Limited low density residential development, agriculture to include woodlands, conservation space.

Implementation Strategies

- Implement development ordinances that addresses signage, lighting, and building design that protect the agricultural, woodland, and greenspace character of these corridors
- Limit development inside the viewshed and encourage development to be compatible with the surrounding agricultural, natural, and cultural features through zoning overlay ordinances
- Focus development in well-planned rural villages or commercial nodes at major road crossings
- Maintain a natural vegetation buffer (at least 50 feet in width) along the corridor
- Any unavoidable new development and associated driveways and roads that will not be located in rural villages or commercial nodes should be set-back behind this buffer
- Regulate access management to rural highways to minimize single entryways and promote inter-parcel access in order to increase safety and reduce fragmented buffers
- Encourage GDOT to prioritize safety projects along these corridors (e.g. SR-36)



Scenic Route

Description

Lamar County has thoroughfares through primarily agricultural areas that have significant natural, historic, or cultural features, as well as scenic or pastoral views. These roads can promote the rural character of the county through careful development patterns that minimize non-agricultural development. Some of these routes lead into gateway corridors and can provide and exhibit the rural character and sense of place that residents and visitors value.

Recommended Land Uses

Limited low density residential development, agriculture to include woodlands, conservation space.

Implementation Strategies

- Implement development ordinances that protect the characteristics deemed to have scenic value. These regulations should utilize requirements for buffers, landscaping, signage, lighting, and architectural design to create a linear scenic corridor
- Limit development inside the viewshed and encourage development to be compatible with the surrounding natural and cultural features through zoning overlay ordinances
- Regulate access management to reduce the number of single parcel entryways to increase safety and limited fragmented buffers
- National Register nominations where appropriate
- Manage access to increase traffic safety and reduce fragmented buffers through minimizing single entryways and promoting inter-parcel access
- Conserve greenspace parallel to the corridor through clustered developments that set aside a significant amount of undeveloped land
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian linkages to adjacent and nearby residential or commercial districts, parks, and existing trails



COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Report of Accomplishments | 2019-2024

| Lamar County Report of Accomplishments 2019-2024 Community Work Program | | |
|---|-----------|---|
| Program or Activity | Status | Explanation |
| Acquire right-of-way for and pave up to 2 miles of existing dirt roads per year | Cancelled | County has shifted priority to repaving currently paved roads first. |
| Petition State to develop passing lanes on Ga. HWY 36 E to I-75 | Cancelled | GDOT has this project planned past this 5-year CWP |
| Pursue the expansion and availability of high speed internet services throughout County | Underway | GA Power and EMC expansion initiatives. Move to new CWP. |
| Perform flyover and develop new aerial maps with GIS data for County | Underway | Next flyover is scheduled for 2024, Move to new CWP. |
| Continue inspection and repair of County roads, bridges and culverts | Underway | Cannafax Farm Rd and Etheridge Mill Road are priorities. Move to new CWP |
| Investigate installation of traffic calming devices on County roads | Cancelled | Not a viable project. |
| Determine size needed for a county operated Animal Control Facility | Complete | First phase complete. Construction to commence soon. Move to new CWP. |
| Staff Fire Station 6 (Parker Branch) 24 hr/day to reduce response time to Northeastern part of County | Complete | Additional station needed. |
| Establish a replacement schedule for work out fire engines with each SPLOST | Complete | |
| Continue to encourage residents to sign-up for Code Red Emergency Warning system within five years | Underway | Including in new CWP to continue implementing. |
| Continue development of additional recreation facilities spread throughout County | Underway | Including in new CWP with focus on developing additional recreation activities and the expansion/improvement of existing facilities. (versus adding facilities) |
| Build new Health Department Building | Complete | |
| Build new jail | Cancelled | Referendum denied. Still a priority but outside five-year work program timeframe. |
| Update security and modernize Courthouse | Complete | |
| Investigate establishment of After School Programs | Underway | A Boys & Girls Club was established. County has an ongoing strategy for expanded programs including teens. Moved to community goals and strategies. |
| Determine need for and required Code changes for smaller affordable homes and lots | Cancelled | Likely a more city need or project. |
| Emphasize Health/Wellness information and services available in Lamar County to citizens | Underway | Strategy. Moved to community goals and strategies section. |
| Investigate/Improve school traffic patterns after new High School built | Cancelled | Not determined to be an issue. |

Community Work Program | 2024-2028

| Lamar County Community Work Program 2024-2028 | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Program or Activity | Year(s) 2024-2028 | Estimated Cost | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
| Broadband | | | | |
| Pursue the expansion and availability of high speed internet services throughout County. | 2024-2028 | UNK | Georgia Power, EMCs | Grants, Private |
| Community Facilities | | | | |
| New fire station near Milner | 2027 | \$1.5 M | County | SPLOST |
| Rehabilitate and modernize Jail Museum. New roof and windows are needed | 2028 | UNK | County, | Grants, General |
| Relocate/build mental health building | 2028 | UNK | County | Grants |
| Redevelop Booker School Property | 2024-2028 | \$1.5 Million | County | General, SPLOST, Grants |
| Complete new Animal Control Facility | 2024-2026 | \$750,000 | County | SPLOST, Private donations |
| Sign up citizens for the Code Red Emergency Warning System | 2024-2028 | Staff time | County | General |
| Recreation | | | | |
| Baseball field lights and fence | 2025 | \$1.3 Million | County | Current SPLOST project |
| Leaning soccer field lights | 2028 | \$200,000 | County | Grants |
| Update main recreation center parking lot lights | 2028 | \$50,000 | County | Grants |
| Resurface skate park | 2028 | \$30,000 | County | Grants |
| Resurface outdoor basketball court | 2028 | \$30,000 | County | Grants |
| Widen road to upper fields | 2026 | \$200,000 | County | General Fund |
| Large pine trees in park need attention for safety concerns | 2025 | \$50,000 | County | General Fund |
| Score tower at football field | 2028 | \$150,000 | County | Grants |
| Speed bumps needed on recreational facility roads | 2028 | \$10,000 | County | Grants |
| Update bathrooms & concession areas | 2028 | \$100,000 | County | Grants |
| Restore pavilion power | 2028 | \$5,000 | County | Grants |
| Construct new ball field with lights | 2028 | \$1 Million | County | Grants |
| Recoat and line the main parking lot at the recreation center | 2028 | \$50,000 | County | Grants |
| Purchase 2-body freezer for coroner | 2025 | \$15K | County | SPLOST |
| Outfit conference room to be an Emergency Operations Center | 2025 | 20K | County & Cities | General Fund |

| Lamar County Community Work Program 2024-2028 | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Program or Activity | Year(s) 2024-2028 | Estimated Cost | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
| Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan | 2024-2025 | \$15-20k | County, Regional Commission | General Fund |
| Small play equipment at the top of the main recreation facility would be beneficial | 2028 | UNK | County | Grants |
| Small play equipment at the soccer complex would be beneficial | 2028 | UNK | County | Grants |
| More sensory play and inclusive equipment would be beneficial | 2028 | UNK | County | Grants |
| Renovating the recycling center to be an indoor practice facility would be beneficial | 2028 | UNK | County | Grants |
| A new pavilion added to the park would be beneficial | 2028 | UNK | County | Grants |
| Transportation | | | | |
| Continue inventory, inspection, and repair of County roads, bridges, and culverts. | 2024-2028 | 7 Million | County | TSPLOST, LMIG |
| Pursue becoming an affiliate of Keep Georgia Beautiful. | 2024 | Staff time | County staff | General Fund |
| Stabilize dirt roads, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brinkley • Bottoms • City Pond • Possum Trot • Turner Bridge | 2025 | \$300K | County | SPLOST |
| Land Use and Economic Development | | | | |
| Perform flyover and develop new aerial maps with GIS data for County. | 2024 | TBD | County staff | General Fund |
| Conduct an impact fee study | 2024 | Planning Department | \$19,000 | General Fund |
| Update zoning and development codes for character areas, including overlay districts for corridors. | 2025-2028 | Staff time | Planning Department | General Fund |
| Update building codes to include materials requirements/restrictions | 2025-2028 | Staff time | Planning Department | General Fund |
| Create design overlay district along US Highway 19/41 | 2025-2028 | Staff time | Planning Department | General Fund |
| Create design overlay district along 4-lane portion of US Highway 341 | 2025-2028 | Staff time | Planning Department | General Fund |
| Create design overlay district along east side of SR 36 | 2025-2028 | Staff time | Planning Department | General Fund |

| Lamar County Community Work Program 2024-2028 | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Program or Activity | Year(s) 2024-2028 | Estimated Cost | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
| Implement scenic road overlay districts for Johnsonville Road, Brent Road, and Community House Road | 2025-2028 | Staff time | Planning Department | General Fund |

APPENDIX

Steering Committee Agendas and Sign-In Sheets
Survey Overview and Raw Results
Key Facts Infographics



Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting Schedule

Proposed Comprehensive Plan Committee Meetings and Activities Schedule

| Date | Time | Meeting Topic/Activity | Location | Participants |
|---------|------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Feb 21 | 7pm | First Public Hearing – Kick Off | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Open |
| Mar 9 | 6pm | Introduction, Purpose, Schedule, Public Outreach/Survey | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Planning Commission & Advisory Committee |
| April 6 | 6pm | SWOT Analysis | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Planning Commission & Advisory Committee |
| May 4 | 6pm | Housing, Land Use | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Planning Commission & Advisory Committee |
| July 13 | 6pm | Land Use and Character Area Map | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Planning Commission & Advisory Committee |
| Sept 28 | 6pm | Economic Development | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Planning Commission & Advisory Committee |
| Jan 11 | 4pm | Community Work Program | Lamar County Administration | Management, BOC, and Staff |
| Jan 11 | 6pm | Parks, Recreation, Tourism, Natural and Historic Resources | Lamar County Administration | Staff |
| Feb 20 | 7pm | Second Public Hearing | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Open |
| Feb/Mar | 7pm | Plan Adoption | Lamar County BOC Chamber | Open |



Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update
 Steering Committee Meeting #1
 Lamar County Planning Commission
 March 9, 2023

Please print clearly.

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | EMAIL ADDRESS | TELEPHONE |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| ELAINE HALLADA | REDBONE | elaine@villagephotography.com | 678 694 1443 |
| Mark Phinazze | milner | | |
| Brenda Bruan | Milner | | |
| Francisco Mery | | | |
| Mike Muddys | milner | | |
| Denise Maddox | Milner | | |
| Lynn Hadaway | Lamar Democrats | lynn@hadawayassociates.com | 404-495-1152 |
| Michael Turner | Barnesville/Cannafax Rd | | |
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Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update
 Steering Committee Meeting #2
 Lamar County Planning Commission
 April 6, 2023

Please print clearly.

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | EMAIL ADDRESS | TELEPHONE |
|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Angela H. Preston | Plan Commission | da81126@bellsouth.net | 770 358 2834 |
| GERALD G. THOMPSON | PLAN COMMISSION | | 770 358 4528 |
| Dwight Fleming | PLANNING Comm | LUDWIGT FLEMING @GMAIL.COM | 678-776-9011 |
| Kathy Oxford | B-L Industrial Devl. Auth | Kathy.Oxford@cityofbarnesville.com | 678 640 4357 |
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Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update
Steering Committee Meeting #3
Lamar County Planning Commission
May 4, 2023

Please print clearly.

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | EMAIL ADDRESS | TELEPHONE |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Angela H. Preston | Planning Commission | Da81126@bellsouth.net | 770-358-2834 |
| Dwight Fleming | Planning Commission | wdwightfleming@gmail.com | 678-776-9011 |
| Gerald G. Thompson | Planning Commission | | 770-358-4528 |
| Kathy Oxford | Barnesville-Lamar Industrial Development Authority | Kathy.oxford@cityofbarnesville.com | 678-640-4351 |
| Anita Buice | Director, LC Com Dev | abuice@lamarcountygga.com | 770-358-5364 |
| Katherine Smith | LC Com Dev | Ksmith@lamarcountygga.com | 770 358 5364 |
| Anthony Gilles | LCBOC | agilles@lamarcountygga.com | 770-557-9277 |
| Kathy Oxford | BLC IDA | Kathy.oxford@cityofbarnesville.com | 678-640-4351 |
| Rick Stephenson | | ricks078@gmail.com | 770-584-7330 |
| Michael Turner | | mtturner0331@gmail.com | 770-856-9820 |
| Melissa Stephens | Realtor | melissa.stephens@metrobrokers.com | 678-776-1895 |
| ELAINE HALLADA | Small Bus | ELAINE@VILLAGEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM | 678 644 1443 |
| | | | |



Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update
 Steering Committee Meeting #4
 Lamar County Planning Commission
 July 13, 2023

Please print clearly.

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | EMAIL ADDRESS | TELEPHONE |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| GERALD THOMPSON | ZONING | | 770 358 4528 |
| Angel Preston | Plan Commission | | 770 597 2490 |
| Dorothy Fleming | " " | | 678-776-9011 |
| Anita Brice | | | |
| Michael Turner | " " | | 770-856-9820 |
| Kathryn Oxford | IDA | | 678-640-4357 |
| Ashley Gilles | Commissioner | agilles@lamarcountyga.gov | 770-557-9277 |
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Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update
Steering Committee Meeting #5

September 28, 2023

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Sara Mayer | High Falls Park Rd | Saraclark86@gmail.com | 770 883-3911 |
| RALPH ADAMSON | 13 th GEORGIA AVE | RALPHADAMSON@GMAIL.COM | 770-468-6622 |
| BRUTZ ENGLISH | 901 Thomaston St. | brutzeng124@gmail | 770 843 2110 |
| Michael Turner | 832 Cannapax Rd | mtturner0331@gmail.com | 770-856-9820 |
| Ashley Gilles | 425 Abbott Rd | agilles@lamarcountygov.com | 770-557-9277 |
| HOLLY WELLS | 689 High Falls Rd | hmwells310@att.net | 404-518-8075 |
| Robert Babon | 113 Craftsmen Wy | RABARRIA1958@gmail | 678 603-5594 |
| Angela H. Preston | 201 Spencer St | | |
| Monica Walters | 1305 Crawford Rd | moni.walters@yahoo.com | 770 584-5845 |
| Melissa Warren | 499 mckenzie Rd | mstephens731@yahoo.com | 678-776-1895 |
| Dorothy Carter | 323 Fessell St | dcarter_brown@gmail.com | 770-358-7660 |
| MARTHA WINDLE | 440 JOHNSTONVILLE RD | MARTHA.WINDLE@ATT.NET | 678 603 9989 |
| | | | |

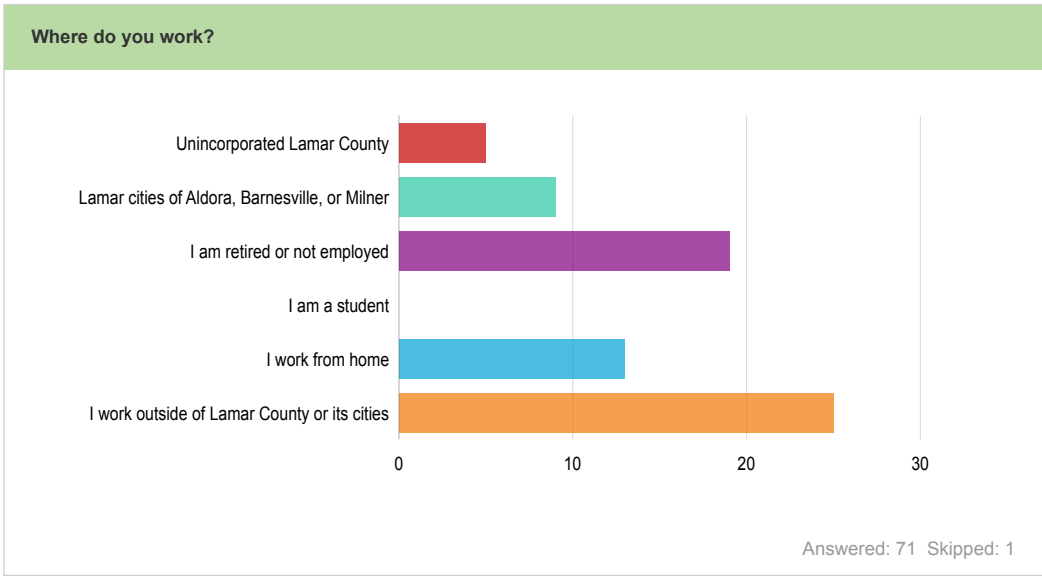
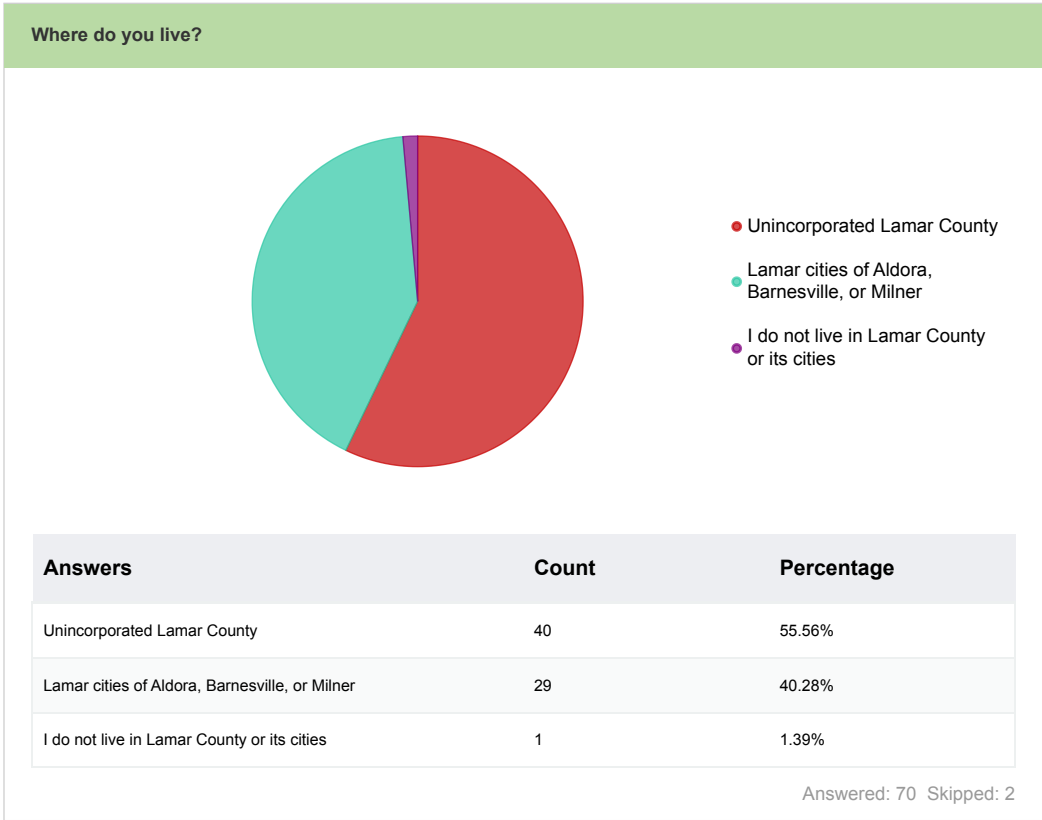


Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Update
 Steering Committee Meeting #6
 Lamar County Planning Commission
 January 11, 2024

Please print clearly.

| NAME | ORGANIZATION | EMAIL ADDRESS | TELEPHONE |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Michael Floyd | Planning Commission | MichaelFloyd86@aol.com | 478 952 3513 |
| Eddie Felton | PLANNING COMMISSION | ef4857@YAHOO.COM | 238-770-7138 |
| Lavetrece Wallar | PLANNING COMMISSION | lavetrec@wallker@pharm | 470-765-7918 |
| Utaki Sappin | City of Bamerville | | 770-358-0181 |
| Tiffany Lowe | Recreation | tlowe@lamarcountyga.com | 678-603-3543 |
| Darwin Fleming | P&Z | WDW1617FLEMING@SMALL.COM | 678-776 9011 |
| Autta Buice | County | abuice@lamarcountyga.com | |
| CORINNE HARTMAN | DCA | corinne.hartman@dca.ga.gov | 406 340 2461 |
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Lamar County - Comprehensive Plan 2023 Update



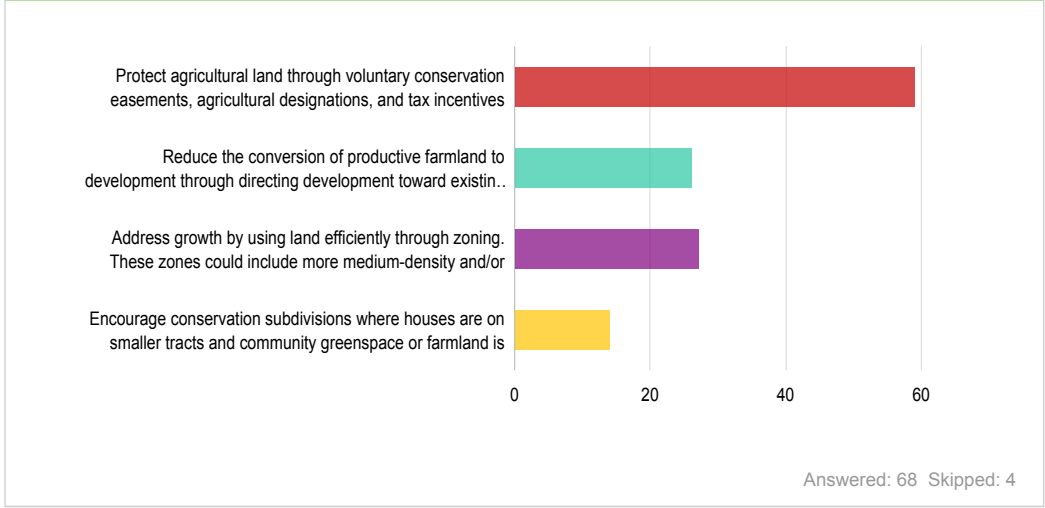


Other Input on Location of Residential Development

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

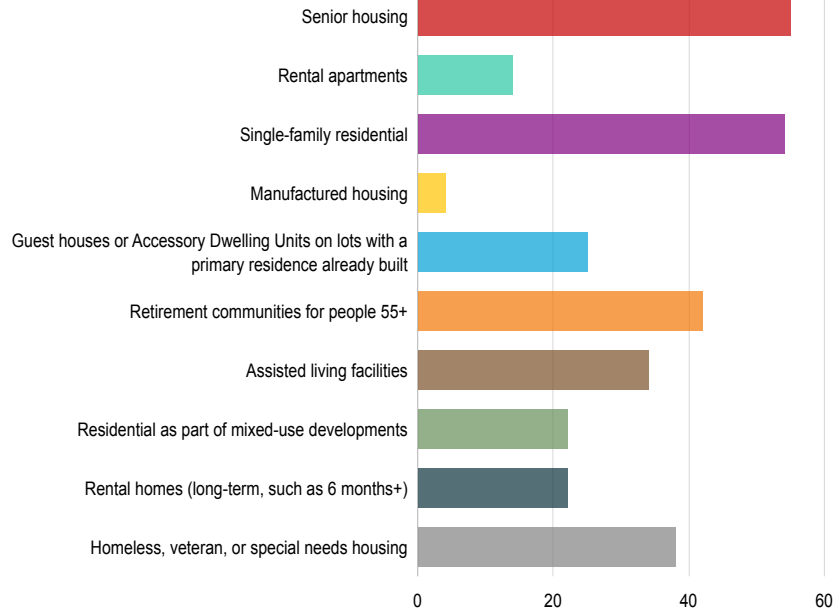
Answered: 13 Skipped: 59

Agricultural Lands



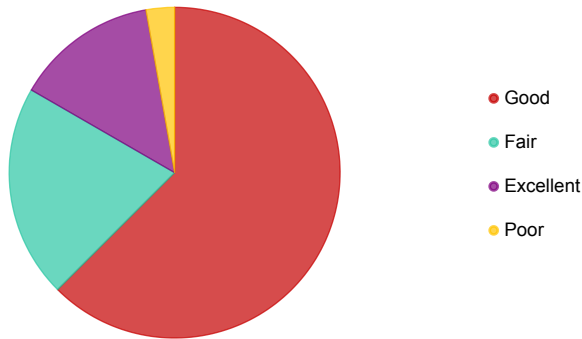
Housing Options Needed

[Empty area for housing options needed]



Answered: 62 Skipped: 10

Quality of Life in Lamar



Answered: 72 Skipped: 0

Additional Comments on Livability

The word cloud requires at least 20 answers to show.

Answered: 14 Skipped: 58

20 Year Vision

Key Facts

Lamar County, GA 3
Geography: County

KEY FACTS

19,205

Population



2.5

Average Household Size

41.1

Median Age

\$59,750

Median Household Income

EDUCATION

9.7%

No High School Diploma



36.0%

High School Graduate



34.7%

Some College/
Associate's Degree



19.6%

Bachelor's/Grad/
Prof Degree

BUSINESS



425

Total Businesses



4,437

Total Employees

EMPLOYMENT



55.3%

White Collar



24.1%

Blue Collar



20.6%

Services

4.4%

Unemployment Rate

INCOME



\$59,750

Median Household Income



\$30,362

Per Capita Income



\$133,002

Median Net Worth

2023 Households by income (Esri)

The largest group: \$50,000 - \$74,999 (18.4%)

The smallest group: \$200,000+ (3.6%)

| Indicator▲ | Value | Diff | |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|--|
| <\$15,000 | 11.7% | +2.3% | |
| \$15,000 - \$24,999 | 8.9% | +1.5% | |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999 | 7.9% | -0.1% | |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999 | 12.5% | +1.6% | |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 18.4% | +1.3% | |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 15.2% | +1.7% | |
| \$100,000 - \$149,999 | 14.5% | -2.0% | |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999 | 7.3% | -0.7% | |
| \$200,000+ | 3.6% | -5.5% | |

Bars show deviation from Georgia