
GREATER BEN HILL COUNTY 2031 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



COMMUNITY AGENDA

Adopted February 2011



**Prepared by the
Southern Georgia
Regional Commission**

“We will preserve and honor our unique and strong heritage by embracing new and creative economic development opportunities which lead to continued improvements in health, education and the quality of life of our residents.”

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1. Introduction

Purpose

The Community Agenda is the most important part of the Greater Ben Hill County 2031 Comprehensive Plan.

Based on the findings of the Community Assessment and the input gathered through the many Public Participation Plan meetings, this document provides the Vision for Greater Ben Hill County's future and it provides a community based plan to implement that vision.

The Community Agenda also prioritizes the key issues and opportunities that Greater Ben Hill County wants to address in the next 20 years, provides a list of policies which will direct the making of day-to-day decisions, and provides a detailed Short Term Work Program that outlines what specific actions Greater Ben Hill County will implement over the next 5 years.

Scope

This document was prepared following the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Chapter 110-12-1-.05, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, "Local Planning Requirements," effective May 1, 2005. It includes three basic requirements for a Community Agenda:

1. The Community Vision is intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a completed description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction. The Community Vision consists of a General Vision Statement, the Future Development Map and a Defining Narrative.
2. Community Issues and Opportunities. This is the list of Issues and Opportunities that the community intends to address and follow-up with specific implementation measures.
3. Short Term Work Program – These are specific implementation actions which the community intends to take over the next five years. This can include ordinances, review procedures, capital improvements, financing, investments or other incentives or programs.

This document also includes some information that is not required of a community agenda. The Chapter titled, "Greater Ben Hill County's Vision for the Future" describes the extensive public involvement effort that was undertaken as part of the Comprehensive Plan effort.

Use of the Plan

City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County staff, the City Council and County Commission, and local community leaders should use the Community Agenda, or the Comprehensive Plan, in three ways.

First, the Future Development Map should guide any zoning and capital investment decisions. It is a representation of the communities' vision and indicates areas of Future Development and Character Areas where certain types of land uses should be permitted. The Future Development Map takes into consideration the current zoning map, the existing uses on the ground, development suitability due to topography, soils, natural resources, the availability of existing and proposed infrastructure, as well as the needs of projected population and economic development growth.

Second, the Community Agenda provides Goals and Policies (GPs) that will help guide day-to-day decisions. These GPs reflect community priorities and should also be used as guidelines in the analysis of zoning and development review decisions.

Third, the Community Agenda includes an Implementation Plan that will help direct public investment and private initiatives. Plan implementation is carried out through the implementation of the Land Development Regulations and through projects outlined in the Short-Term Work Program. This Community Agenda outlines recommended changes in the Land Development Regulations and other codes to be consistent with Greater Ben Hill County's vision; and after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, it will be up to the City

Council and County Commission to consider these code changes and implement revisions as necessary.

In addition to these shorter term implementations and revisions, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated in regular intervals to reflect changing development and public policy conditions in Greater Ben Hill County.

2. Greater Ben Hill County's Vision for the Future

a. Introduction

Extensive public outreach, involvement and support are the key ingredients for a successful Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, a thorough outreach to the community was implemented as part of Greater Ben Hill County's planning process and the public and key community stakeholders were engaged early and often. This resulted in a clearer understanding of the issues and opportunities affecting Greater Ben Hill County. Elected officials, community leaders and citizens also actively engaged in discussions and consensus building resulting in a clear vision of Greater Ben Hill County's future and how to get there.

b. Vision Statement

The community leaders have come together to develop the following vision statement to guide future development of the community.

We will preserve and honor our unique and strong heritage by embracing new and creative economic development opportunities which lead to continued improvements in health, education and the quality of life of our residents.

c. Public Outreach

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) was completed early in the process prior to the Community Assessment with the goal to engage stakeholders and citizens as early as possible in the process, to engage them often, and to continue the public involvement from start to finish of the process.

The public involvement had three main goals:

- To educate and to increase public awareness of the Comprehensive Plan
- To take advantage of the expertise and local knowledge of the community leaders and stakeholders in Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County
- To mobilize early and continuing support for the plan

d. Project Oversight and Coordination

Greater Ben Hill County's elected officials and staff provided general oversight over the planning process. This oversight was accomplished by engaging these key players in the process through active participation in the stakeholder workshops, and by regular personal and e-mail consultations on specific planning issues.

e. Community Outreach Tools

Website

A website was developed to serve as a portal for everyone to access throughout the planning process. It was linked to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission website. The website was created in a simple format to facilitate navigation by the general public. A variety of information was posted on the website including schedules of meetings, invitations to meetings, draft and final documents including all maps, and contact information with the option to e-mail Southern Georgia Regional Commission staff anytime and directly. The website was updated often through the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Notification

Public Notification tools included fliers that were posted and distributed electronically to the Stakeholders and other interested parties. The local newspaper, The Herald Leader, also printed public hearing announcements and advertisements.

Meetings and Workshops

A large number of people participated in the various meetings and workshops held for the Comprehensive Plan. Working with the public began with the Visioning/Kick-off meetings in August 2009 and continued throughout the development of the Community Assessment in an evaluation and appraisal effort of the state of Greater Ben Hill County and culminated in the development of the Community Agenda in an effort to present a unified vision and implementation strategy for the individual communities and Greater Ben Hill County as a whole. A public hearing on May 4, 2010, completed the Community Assessment and a final public hearing on November 2, 2010 provided the community with a last opportunity to shape the Community Agenda.

The following Community Agenda is the result of the extensive public and stakeholder involvement efforts and is reflective of Greater Ben Hill County's commitment to their vision for the future.

3. Future Land Development

a. Introduction

The Future Land Development Section describes and implements very important tools that will be used to guide future land development and capital investment decisions in Greater Ben Hill County via a **Future Development Map**.

The map is based on Greater Ben Hill County's vision for the future and has been developed in coordination with the citizens, many diverse stakeholders and elected officials. The Future Development Map is a required component of the Comprehensive Plan under Chapter 110-12-1.05 of the new Local Planning Requirements adopted by DCA on May 1, 2005.

The Future Development Map defines a specific vision for each Character Area and outlines the boundaries on a local scale. Several Character Areas have been defined for the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County with their own vision, description, Goals and Policies (GPs) and implementation strategies. In addition it defines the distribution and location of where specific land use types such as agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, conservation, etc. should be allowed to develop. The policies associated with this map also define which zoning district should be allowed in each Character Area.

b. Future Development Maps

Considering the above mentioned items, a series of Future Development Maps was created. These maps, found on the following pages, represent a specific vision for each character area. A description of how the character areas were defined follows along with what types, forms, styles, and patterns of development are to be encouraged in the area, along with the specific land uses and zoning categories allowed in the area, Quality Community Objectives to be pursued and identification of implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns.

c. Character Areas for Greater Ben Hill County

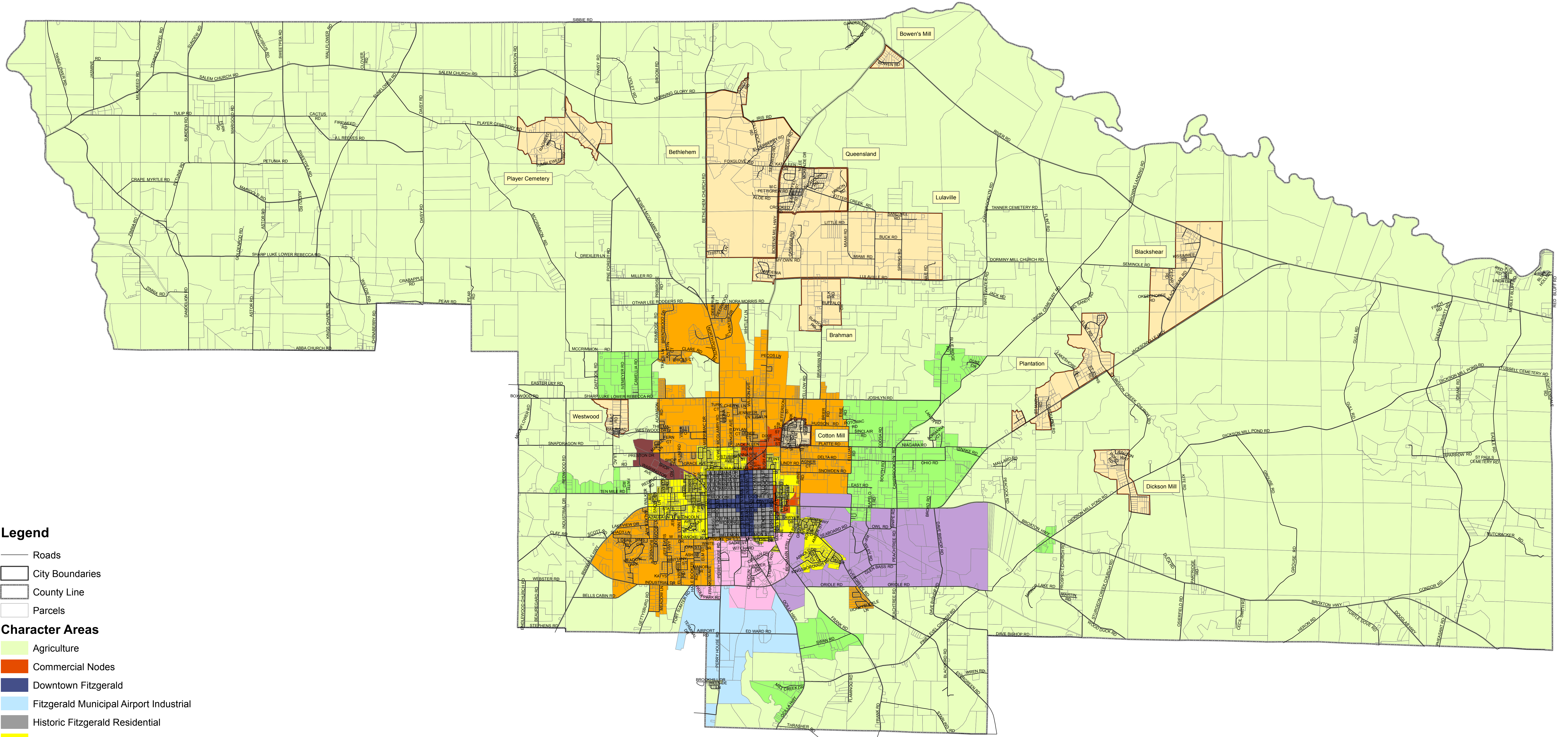
Each character area has a unique description stating either the existing or desired qualities for that area and shows the differences that exist among the different areas of Greater Ben Hill County. The development strategy developed for each character area should serve as a guide for all development and redevelopment taking place in that character area. Adherence to these development strategies will ensure consistent and complementary development, which promotes a greater sense of place and overall improved quality of life. The inclusion of permitted zonings provides guidance as to the type of land uses encouraged within each character area and to ensure compatible uses within and between the character areas.

Character areas in Greater Ben Hill County were defined by looking at the size and type of lots, site design features, and availability of infrastructure, density and intensity of development, type of development, environmental features and vision for future development. Some Character Areas are more generic and cover several geographic areas in Greater Ben Hill County that have the same characteristics, issues and goals for their future. Other Character Areas are more specific and defined as such in their name, and act more as an overlay zone in their nature than a Future Land Use designation.











d. Character Area Maps

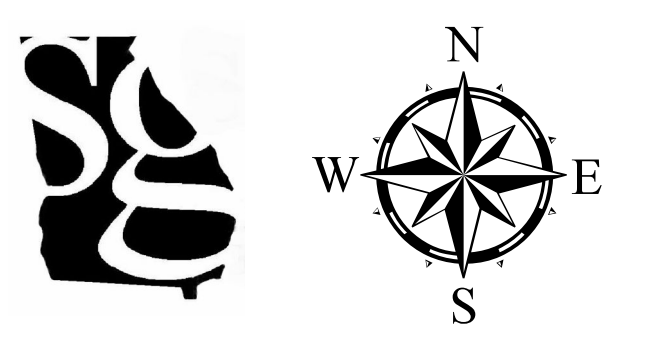
The following pages contain the customized Character Area Maps for Unincorporated Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. The Future Development maps were developed through workshops with the elected officials of each government and all stakeholders involved and reflect the local character of each area.

Ben Hill County Future Development Map

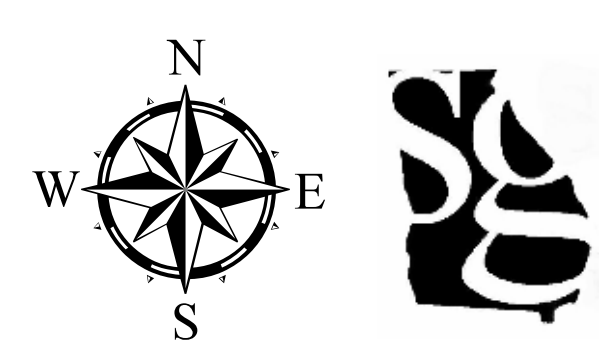


Legend

-  Roads
-  City Boundaries
-  County Line
-  Parcels
- Character Areas**
-  Agriculture
-  Commercial Nodes
-  Downtown Fitzgerald
-  Fitzgerald Municipal Airport Industrial
-  Historic Fitzgerald Residential
-  InTown Residential
-  Old Railroad Depot Industrial
-  Rural Residential
-  Rural Village
-  South Fitzgerald Commercial Corridors
-  SouthEast Fitzgerald Industrial
-  Suburban Fitzgerald

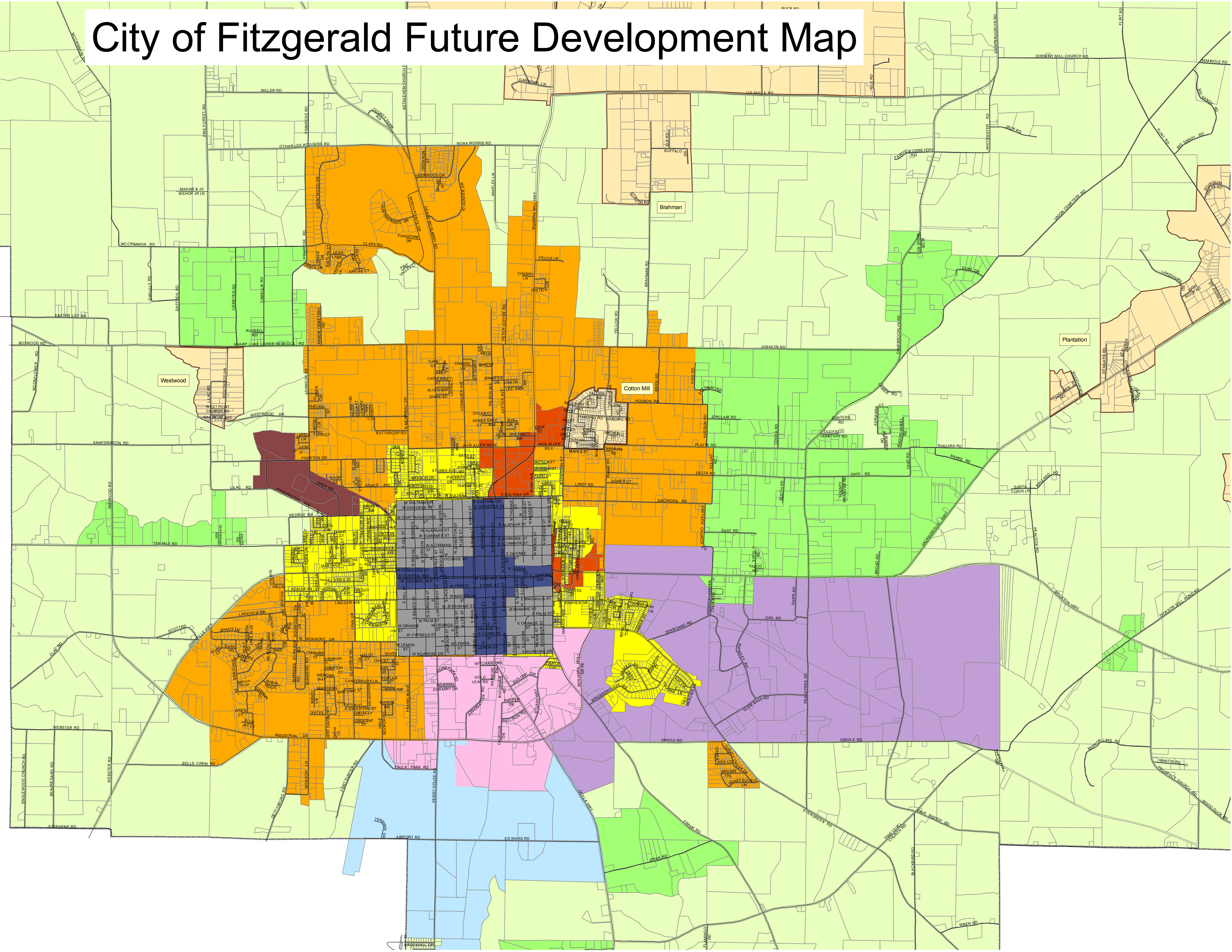


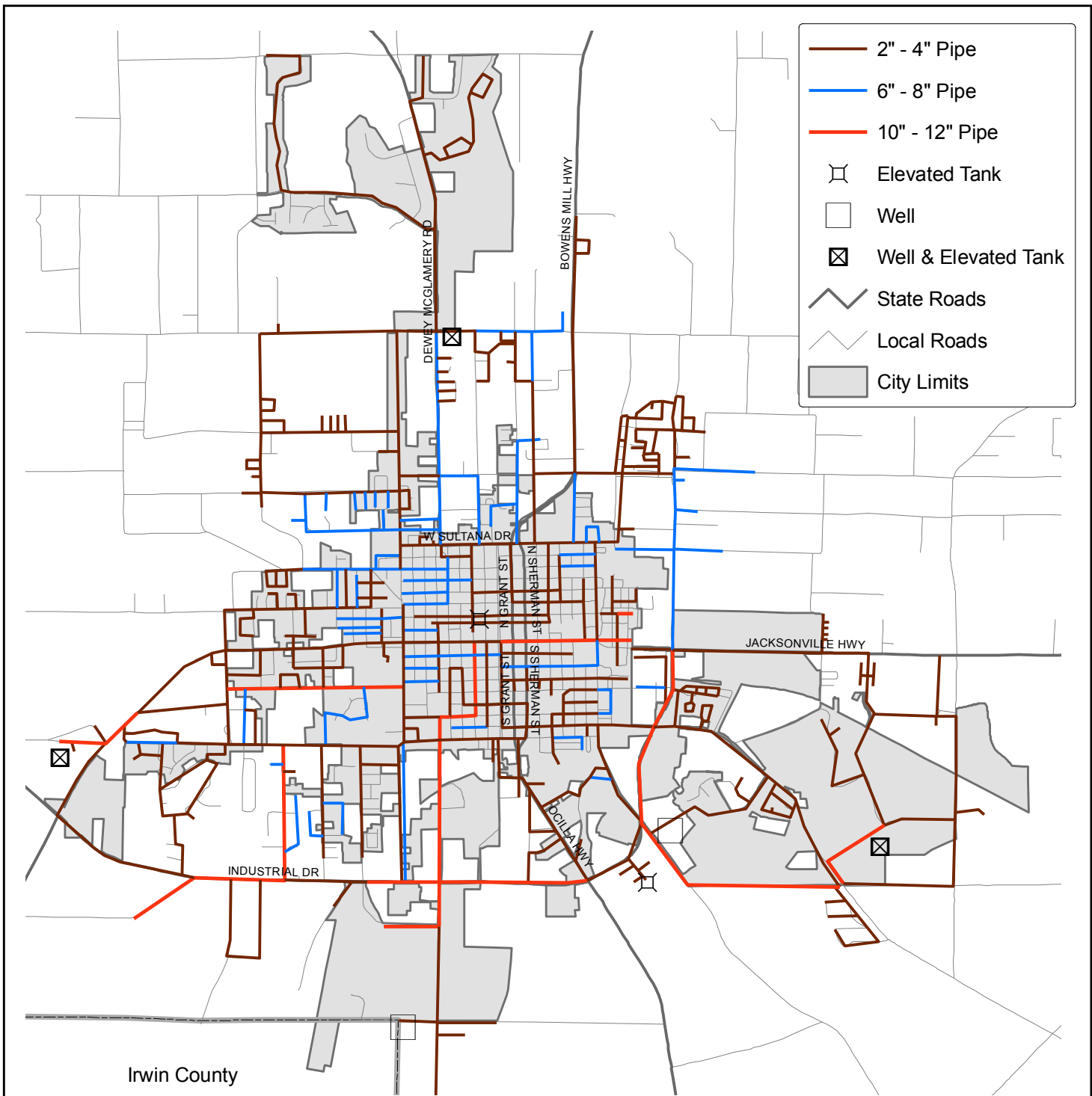
City of Fitzgerald Future Development Map



Legend

- Roads
- ▭ City Boundaries
- ▭ County Line
- ▭ Parcels
- ▭ Agriculture
- ▭ Commercial Nodes
- ▭ Downtown Fitzgerald
- ▭ Fitzgerald Municipal Airport Industrial
- ▭ Historic Fitzgerald Residential
- ▭ InTown Residential
- ▭ Old Railroad Depot Industrial
- ▭ Rural Residential
- ▭ Rural Village
- ▭ South Fitzgerald Commercial Corridors
- ▭ SouthEast Fitzgerald Industrial
- ▭ Suburban Fitzgerald

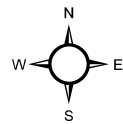




- 2" - 4" Pipe
- 6" - 8" Pipe
- 10" - 12" Pipe
- X Elevated Tank
- Well
- X Well & Elevated Tank
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- City Limits

Irwin County

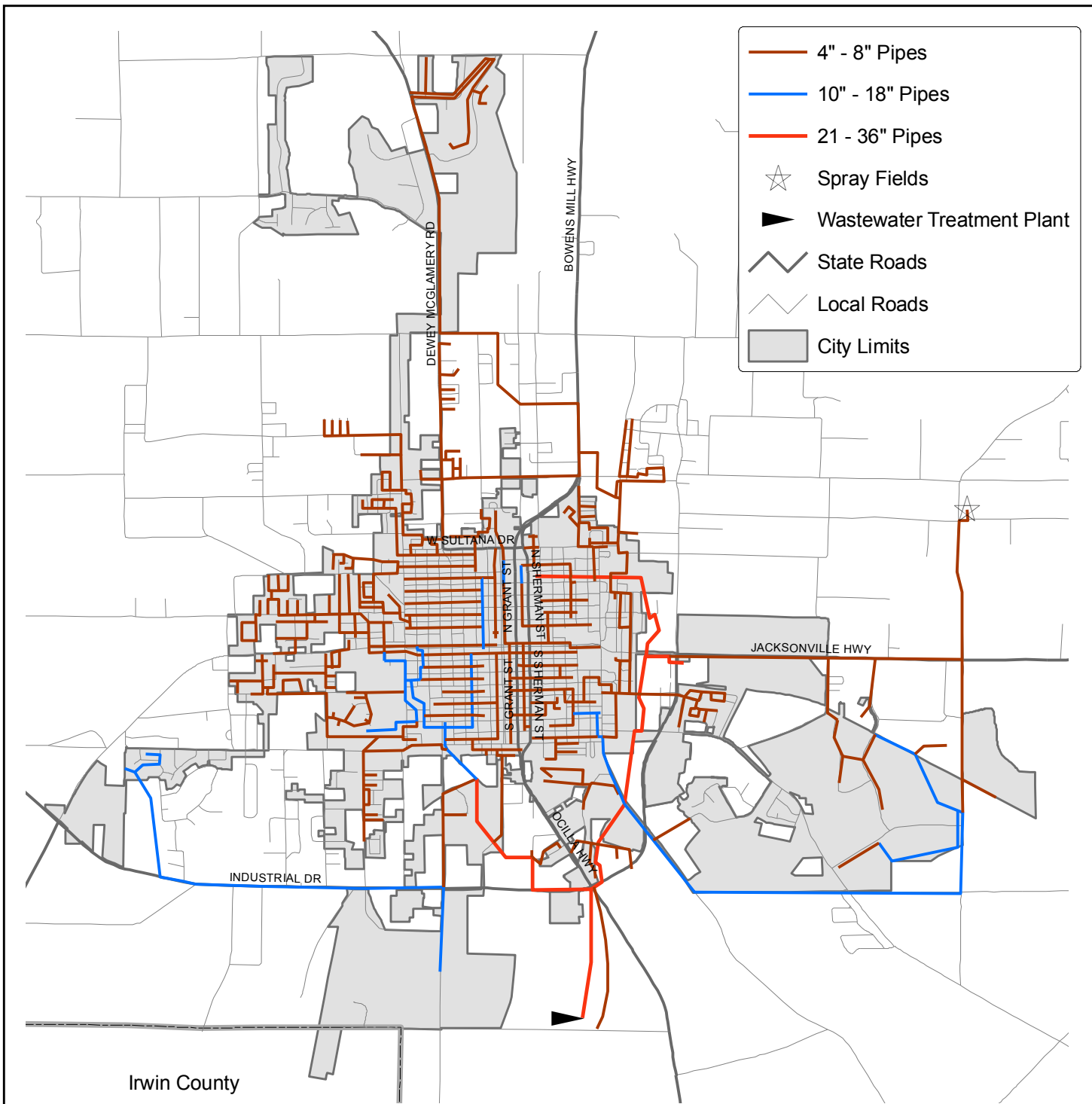
Water Lines continue
south to Ben Hill - Irwin
Tech School



0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: Fitzgerald Water Light & Bond Commission, 2005
Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - © GIS, 2010

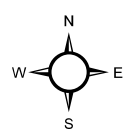
MAP 4-2 CITY OF FITZGERALD WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM



- 4" - 8" Pipes
- 10" - 18" Pipes
- 21" - 36" Pipes
- ☆ Spray Fields
- ▲ Wastewater Treatment Plant
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- City Limits

Irwin County

Sewer Lines continue south to Ben Hill - Irwin Tech School.



0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: Fitzgerald Water Light & Bond Commission, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - © GIS, 2010

MAP 4-3 CITY OF FITZGERALD SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

g. Character Area Description and Documentation

Agricultural Character Area (A)



Description

The rural and agricultural character area designation in Greater Ben Hill County is intended for those areas outside of the urban service area which are associated with agricultural farm operations and related activities, forestry, natural resource conservation, groundwater recharge areas, and very low-density residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operations of varying sizes. Many of these agriculturally utilized lands are under the 10-year conservation designation through the Tax Assessor, and therefore will not be available for development for those years.

Predominant Land Use

Agricultural farm operations and related activities, forestry, natural resources conservation, groundwater recharge areas and low-density residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operations of varying sizes.

Vision for the Future:

Preserve farming and conservation options as a viable and important part of Ben Hill County industry by maintaining very low density residential development primarily accessory to farm operations and right to farm principles. Use of conservation easements to protect environmentally sensitive areas should be encouraged. Roadways in these areas should be widened only when required to meet public safety standards.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
- **Environmental Protection Objective:** Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ground water recharge areas, wetlands and native upland habitat (such as mature tree stands and southern hardwoods) deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
- **Appropriate Business (Agricultural) Objective:** Agricultural operations are an integral part of the economic development lifeline in Greater Ben Hill County and should be protected from development pressures. Eco-agricultural businesses should be encouraged.
- **Regional Identity Objective:** The rural and agricultural character of the County should be preserved by maintaining large lot sizes accessory to and consistent with agricultural operations.

Implementation Measures:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may, but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **General Farming (G-F):** The purpose of this district is to permit agricultural uses, to encourage the maintenance of the rural countryside, to preserve forests and other undeveloped lands away from areas of population growth, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of life. The preferred land use in the district is agricultural, either active in the form of crops, or passive in the form of forest management or pasture lands. The G-F district should be utilized as a land use designation where a more intensive use of the land is unlikely to occur in the near future. The requirements of the district are designed to encourage the maintenance of a rural character until more intensive development is feasible.
 - **Rural Residential (R-R):** The purpose of this district shall be to allow for residential development on lots less than three acres in appropriate areas designated in the Comprehensive Plan in unincorporated Ben Hill County. With Health Department approval, such districts may use individual water supply and sewage disposal systems. Minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit in this district shall be 800 square feet.
 - **Residential (R-1, R-1A):** The purpose of these districts are to provide for residential areas, these areas being protected from the encroachment of those uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment, notwithstanding the Right to Farm Act.
 - **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Establish Conservation Subdivision Development Approval Process**
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal, which include but are not limited to:**
 - Provide for buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses
 - Allow Conservation Easements to be provided

Commercial Nodes Character Area



Description:

These areas are typically older established commercial uses and nodes, and are typically focused around major transportation corridors. They serve the needs of the immediately adjacent residential neighborhoods. Within Fitzgerald these areas are located on the north and east sides of the city.

Predominant Land Use:

These areas include a variety of established commercial uses, including general retail and light industrial.

Vision for the Future:

Maintain and promote these lower intensity commercial nodes that are adjacent to and compatible with residential areas through the applicable land use regulations. The uses located within these areas help to service the neighboring residential uses without adversely impacting them, thereby reducing the amount and distance of required vehicular trips.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Growth Preparedness Objective:** To identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth Greater Ben Hill County seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training to the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- **Appropriate Business Objective:** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher skill job opportunities.
- **Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available to each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.

- **Neighborhood Commercial (NC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for neighborhood shopping facilities consisting of sales and services oriented to the adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Community Commercial (CC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for community shopping facilities consisting of a wide variety of sales and services.
- **General Business (G-B):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for and encourage the proper grouping and development of uses which include a wide variety of sales and services that will best accommodate the needs of the community and the traveling public in order to reduce highway congestion, traffic hazards and blight along the public streets.
- **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.

- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal which include, but are not limited to:**
 - Provide for regulations to address public health, welfare and safety issues.
 - Provide for public/private partnerships to construct quality commercial development.

Downtown Fitzgerald Character Area



Description:

These are areas within the City of Fitzgerald where due to their location along the major transportation corridors and at major intersections public, institutional and commercial development originally occurred. The Downtown Fitzgerald area is located along US Highway 129 and US Highway 319 at the intersection of GA Highway 107 and GA Highway 90. As the original site of city development, this area contains the predominance of all cultural and historic buildings and sites, and therefore requires special attention to ensure its preservation.

Predominant Land Use:

Primary land uses within this area includes city services, entertainment and commercial recreation, mainstreet, mixed use businesses, business support services, urban neighborhoods, and traditional, older, but stable neighborhoods.

Vision for the Future:

Preserve, restore and reuse historic buildings. Improve the environment for private investment and development. Expand green and civic spaces. Mix land uses and control building typology. Implement a balance of transportation options and design.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Regional Identity Objective:** Regions should promote and preserve an “identity”, defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.
- **Heritage Preservation Objective:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community’s character.
- **Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available to each community. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged.
- **Infill Development Objective:** Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment closer to the downtown or traditional urban core.
- **Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.
- **Traditional Neighborhood Objective:** Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of on another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.
- **Sense of Place Objective:** Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that

serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may, but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **Multiple Residential (MR):** The purpose of this district is to provide orderly development of higher density residential areas for one, two and multi-family dwellings, with a minimum lot sizes of 6,000 square feet, said areas being protected from the encroachment of those uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
 - **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.
 - **Neighborhood Commercial (NC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for neighborhood shopping facilities consisting of sales and services oriented to the adjacent neighborhoods.
 - **Community Commercial (CC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for community shopping facilities consisting of a wide variety of sales and services.
 - **General Business (G-B):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for and encourage the proper grouping and development of uses which include a wide variety of sales and services that will best accommodate the needs of the community and the traveling public in order to reduce highway congestion, traffic hazards and blight along the public streets. **Only allow this Zoning District in the Downtown Fitzgerald Commercial character area along major corridors where general commercial characteristics are already existing and new General Business designations would not detrimentally affect the adjacent residential areas.**
 - **Downtown Commercial (DC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide a higher density commercial development which will include a wide variety of sales which should locate in the city's historical Central Business District.
 - **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.

- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code and as well as policies that provide action steps in general to implement the Goal which include but are not limited to:**
 - Provide for a downtown development coordinator to take the lead on the historic preservation, revitalization and development of this character area
 - Provide flexibility in zoning to encourage residential and commercial infill development as well as appropriate mix of uses including higher densities which will allow the roots of a traditional neighborhood to appear
 - Provide for incentives to attract private investors and encourage public/private partnerships including financial and density bonuses
 - Provide for pedestrian connections and increased walk ability
 - Encourage attractive designs, art and landscaping to increase attractiveness of place including architectural design guidelines
 - Provide for underground utilities wherever possible
 - Provide for traffic circulation and parking that will assist business without detracting from pedestrian experience

- Provide for sign regulations that control visual clutter and prohibit billboards
- Provide for traffic calming improvements to increase traffic safety in the older neighborhoods and encourage the streets as a social gathering space.

Fitzgerald Municipal Airport Industrial Character Area



Description:

This area is located south of Fitzgerald, and is comprised of the Fitzgerald Municipal Airport and the industrial uses along the east side of Perry House Road. The area serves as a focal point for transportation and business associations.

Predominant Land Use:

Airport transportation facility and associated industrial uses .

Vision for the Future:

Encourage the expansion of the airport to foster economic development and redevelopment as well as new industrial development along Perry House Road and the new Millennium Technology Pointe Park, while providing guidelines to minimize adverse impacts on neighborhoods and the environment. Work with neighboring Irwin County to promote the development of the Millennium Technology Pointe Park.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Growth Preparedness Objective:** To identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth Greater Ben Hill County seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training to the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **General Farming (G-F):** The purpose of this district is to permit agricultural uses, to encourage the maintenance of the rural countryside, to preserve forests and other undeveloped lands away from areas of population growth, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of life. The preferred land use in the district is agricultural, either active in the form of crops, or passive in the form of forest management or pasture lands. The G-F district should be utilized as a land use designation where a more intensive use of the land is unlikely to occur in the near future. The requirements of the district are designed to encourage the maintenance of a rural character until more intensive development is feasible.
 - **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.

- **Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect areas for those wholesale and light industrial uses which do not create excessive noise, odor, smoke, dust and which do not possess other objectionable characteristics which might be detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods, or to the other uses permitted in the district.
- **Heavy Industrial (HI):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect areas for those industrial uses which cannot comply with the requirements of the WLI district.
- **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal.**
 - Provide for appropriate buffering between the airport and other uses
 - Provide for adequate property purchase programs where negative impacts from public operations cannot be mitigated.
 - Develop a list of targeted industries to be located in this area.

Historic Fitzgerald Residential Character Area



Description:

Located within the historic city 16 by 16 block square, the areas are composed of predominantly older residential structures dating back to the 1930s and beyond. The houses, buildings and properties of these areas are often of historic and of architectural significance, and are located on small lots laid out in a grid pattern.

Predominant Land Use:

The predominant use is residential with some mix of smaller schools and churches and some very limited neighborhood commercial.

Vision for the Future:

Protect existing historic structures through the use of incentives and requirements for review and approval of modifications. Promote the preservation of deteriorating historic structures through rehabilitation programs. Ensure neighboring uses do not diminish the historic character of the area through setback and buffering requirements for new development.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Regional Identity Objective:** Regions should promote and preserve an “identity”, defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.
- **Heritage Preservation Objective:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community’s character.
- **Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available to each community. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged.
- **Infill Development Objective:** Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment closer to the downtown or traditional urban core.
- **Traditional Neighborhood Objective:** Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of on another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.
- **Sense of Place Objective:** Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.
- **Environmental Protection Objective:** Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ground water

recharge areas, wetlands, and native upland habitat (such as mature tree stands and southern hardwoods) deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining the traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

- **Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may, but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **Residential (R-1, R-1A, R-6, R-9, R-15, R-20, R-22):** The purpose of these districts are to provide residential areas with minimum lot sizes of between 6,000 square feet and one acre; these areas being protected from uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
 - **Multiple Residential (MR):** The purpose of this district is to provide orderly development of higher density residential areas for one, two and multi-family dwellings, with a minimum lot sizes of 6,000 square feet, said areas being protected from the encroachment of those uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
 - **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code and as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal, which include but are not limited to:**
 - Provide for very limited commercial businesses at neighborhood scale, and no “big box” development
 - Provide flexibility to mix compatible uses in order to minimize impacts on infrastructure and maximize use of available space.

In-Town Residential Character Area



Description:

These areas are located within the City of Fitzgerald, with small to medium size residential lots in a more suburban setting. They typically include single family residential, and the density ranges from low to medium density with predominantly single family homes and very few commercial uses.

Predominant Land Use:

The predominant use is residential with some mix of smaller schools and churches and some very limited neighborhood commercial.

Vision for the Future:

The focus for these areas is to reinforce the stability of the neighborhoods by encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing structures.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
- **Environmental Protection Objective:** Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ground water recharge areas, wetlands, and native upland habitat (such as mature tree stands and southern hardwoods) deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining the traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
- **Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may, but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **Rural Residential (R-R):** The purpose of this district shall be to allow for residential development on lots less than three acres in appropriate areas designated in the Comprehensive Plan in unincorporated Ben Hill County. With Health Department approval, such districts may use individual water supply and sewage disposal systems. Minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit in this district shall be 800 square feet.
 - **Residential (R-1, R-1A, R-6, R-9, R-15, R-20, R-22):** The purpose of these districts are to provide residential areas with minimum lot sizes of between 6,000 square feet and one acre; these areas being protected from uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.

- **Multiple Residential (MR):** The purpose of this district is to provide orderly development of higher density residential areas for one, two and multi-family dwellings, with a minimum lot sizes of 6,000 square feet, said areas being protected from the encroachment of those uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
- **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code and as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal, which include but are not limited to:**
 - Interconnectivity between subdivisions
 - Shared access points, mandatory ingress and egress turn-lanes, and right-of-way protection.
 - Provide for very limited commercial businesses at neighborhood scale, and no “big box” development
 - Provide flexibility in subdivision regulation to encourage creative design, green space, open space and green design, including bicycle and pedestrian way continuity.

Old Railroad Depot Character Area



Description:

Located at the old Railroad Depot at Shop Road and County Road 152, this area is comprised primarily of the old train tracks and depot, some adjoining vacant land and a few industrial uses. Further industrial development within the area is both suitable and likely.

Predominant Land Use:

The area includes railroad, freight and wholesale and warehousing uses.

Vision for the Future:

Maintain the historical use of the area by encouraging redevelopment and infill to ensure it serves as an active component of the local economy.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Growth Preparedness Objective:** to identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth Greater Ben Hill County seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training to the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- **Appropriate Business Objective:** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher skill job opportunities.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.
 - **Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect areas for those wholesale and light industrial uses which do not create excessive noise, odor, smoke, dust and which do not possess other objectionable characteristics which might be detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods, or to the other uses permitted in the district.
 - **Heavy Industrial (HI):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect areas for those industrial uses which cannot comply with the requirements of the WLI district.

- **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.

- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal.**
 - Provide for appropriate buffering between the commercial and other uses
 - Ensure sufficient public service capacity and infrastructure is in place prior to or concurrent with development and redevelopment

Rural Residential Character Area



Description:

These are areas of rural land that are likely to face development pressure for large lot, low density residential subdivision. Such developments typically consist of large residential lot subdivisions and open space. The majority of the Rural Residential areas can be found on the outer periphery of the City of Fitzgerald, along major collector roads leading into the city. The density ranges from low to medium density with mostly single family homes and very few commercial uses mixed in.

Predominant Land Use:

The predominant uses are agricultural and large lot single family residential.

Vision for the Future:

Provide connecting greenspace and recreational areas in order to maintain the low density and rural character of the area, with an emphasis on rural residential rather than agricultural activities. Include conservation subdivision planning.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
- **Environmental Protection Objective:** Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ground water recharge areas, wetlands, and native upland habitat (such as mature tree stands and southern hardwoods) deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining the traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may, but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **General Farming (G-F):** The purpose of this district is to permit agricultural uses, to encourage the maintenance of the rural countryside, to preserve forests and other undeveloped lands away from areas of population growth, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of life. The preferred land use in the district is agricultural, either active in the form of crops, or passive in the form of forest management or pasture lands. The G-F district should be utilized as a land use designation where a more intensive use of the land is unlikely to occur in the near future. The requirements of the district are designed to encourage the maintenance of a rural character until more intensive development is feasible.
 - **Rural Residential (R-R):** The purpose of this district shall be to allow for residential development on lots less than three acres in appropriate areas designated in the

Comprehensive Plan in unincorporated Ben Hill County. With Health Department approval, such districts may use individual water supply and sewage disposal systems. Minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit in this district shall be 800 square feet.

- **Residential (R-1, R-1A, R-6M):** The purpose of these districts are to provide for residential areas restricted with minimum lot size of between 6,000 square feet and one acre; these areas being protected from the encroachment of those uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
- **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal, which include but are not limited to:**
 - Provide for very limited commercial businesses at neighborhood scale, and no “big box” development
 - Ensure public services are adequate to serve new development. This also should include siting and size and type of schools, police and fire.
 - Provide flexibility in subdivision regulation to encourage creative design, green space, open space and green design, including bicycle and pedestrian way continuity.

Rural Village Character Areas



Description:

The “Villages” are typically small and often historic communities that have developed in the unincorporated county away from Fitzgerald. The areas are compact areas of varied lot size development that often share a historical background, are formed around a natural or cultural feature, or grow around an old intersection. Each community has been given a name (usually of historic origins) and labeled on the associated map. The areas include:

Player Cemetery

Queensland

Bethlehem

Lulaville

Brahman

Bowen’s Mill

Blackshear

Plantation

Dickson Mill

Westwood

Cotton Mill

Predominant Land Use:

The predominant uses are agricultural and single family residential.

Vision for the Future:

Promote the continued existence of these typically historic communities with good communication and coordination and active protection and guidance. Encourage the development of small, local businesses to meet the needs of the communities without requiring long and frequent vehicular trips. Ensure there is adequate enforcement of existing codes to prevent the decline of any of these “villages”.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Regional Identity Objective:** Regions should promote and preserve an “identity”, defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

- **Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
- **Environmental Protection Objective:** Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ground water recharge areas, wetlands, and native upland habitat (such as mature tree stands and southern hardwoods) deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining the traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
- **Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may, but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **Rural Residential (R-R):** The purpose of this district shall be to allow for residential development on lots less than three acres in appropriate areas designated in the Comprehensive Plan in unincorporated Ben Hill County. With Health Department approval, such districts may use individual water supply and sewage disposal systems. Minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit in this district shall be 800 square feet.
 - **Residential (R-1, R-1A, R-9, R-15, R-20, R-22):** The purpose of these districts are to provide residential areas with minimum lot sizes of between 6,000 square feet and one acre; these areas being protected from uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
 - **Multiple Residential (MR):** The purpose of this district is to provide orderly development of higher density residential areas for one, two and multi-family dwellings, with a minimum lot sizes of 6,000 square feet, said areas being protected from the encroachment of those uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
 - **Mobile Home Park (MHP):** The purpose of this district is to provide for the development of property that is located and planned for mobile home use. Property developed in this district is to remain under single ownership for rental purposes only. Mobile home parks shall be developed only in strict accordance with the mobile home park provisions of the code of ordinances.
 - **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.
 - **Neighborhood Commercial (NC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for neighborhood shopping facilities consisting of sales and services oriented to the adjacent neighborhoods.
 - **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal, which include but are not limited to:**
 - Interconnectivity between subdivisions
 - Shared access points, mandatory ingress and egress turn-lanes, and right-of-way protection.

- Provide for very limited commercial businesses at neighborhood scale, and no “big box” development
- Ensure that water, sewer and road infrastructure is provided concurrent with development. This also should include siting and size and type of schools, police and fire.
- Provide flexibility in subdivision regulation to encourage creative design, green space, open space and green design, including bicycle and pedestrian way continuity.

South Fitzgerald Commercial Corridors Character Area



Description:

Located on the south side of the Fitzgerald along the major corridors of GA Highway 107 and US Highway 129, the area is comprised primarily of larger commercial uses, which are not as compatible with residential areas due to the size of the lots and buildings, location on major roadways, and heavy traffic volumes created by the regional draw of the businesses.

Predominant Land Use:

These areas include a wide variety of both established and newer commercial uses.

Vision for the Future:

Encourage and maintain higher intensity commercial areas that are not as compatible with residential areas due to their high automobile orientation, and promote a greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Growth Preparedness Objective:** To identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth Greater Ben Hill County seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training to the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- **Appropriate Business Objective:** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher skill job opportunities.
- **Environmental Protection Objective:** Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ground water recharge areas, wetlands, and native upland habitat (such as mature tree stands and southern hardwoods) deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
- **Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available to each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.
- **Infill Development Objective:** Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.
 - **Neighborhood Commercial (NC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for neighborhood shopping facilities consisting of sales and services oriented to the adjacent neighborhoods.
 - **Community Commercial (CC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for community shopping facilities consisting of a wide variety of sales and services.
 - **General Business (G-B):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for and encourage the proper grouping and development of uses which include a wide variety of sales and services that will best accommodate the needs of the community and the traveling public in order to reduce highway congestion, traffic hazards and blight along the public streets.
 - **Downtown Commercial (DC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide a higher density commercial development which will include a wide variety of sales which should locate in the city's historical Central Business District.
 - **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
 - **Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect areas for those wholesale and light industrial uses which do not create excessive noise, odor, smoke, dust and which do not possess other objectionable characteristics which might be detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods, or to the other uses permitted in the district.

- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal which include, but are not limited to:**
 - Provide for flexibility in design standards to allow infill development to take place
 - Provide for regulations to address property maintenance as well as public health, welfare and safety issues.
 - Provide for public/private partnerships to construct and rehabilitate quality commercial and mixed use development.

Southeast Fitzgerald Industrial Character Area



Description:

As the name implies, this area is located on the southeast side of Fitzgerald, and is comprised of predominantly industrial uses, with some public/institutional and agricultural mixed in. Of special note is the location of the historic Evergreen Cemetary at Evergreen and Ben Hill Drive within this character area. Overall, the area serves as the City's primary industrial lands. The Ocilla Highway, Frank Road, Evergreen Road and the old railroad lines run through the area.

Predominant Land Use:

Agricultural Industries, Construction Services, Manufacturing, Millwork, Motor Freight Transportation and Warehousing, Wholesale Trades or other similar uses are the predominant uses within the area.

Vision for the Future:

Encourage development, redevelopment and infill within the area to ensure it continues to be a vital part of the local economy. Continue to provide adequate infrastructure and public services to the area to help local businesses succeed while minimizing adverse impacts on neighborhoods and the environment. Protect and preserve the historic Evergreen Cemetary.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Growth Preparedness Objective:** to identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth Greater Ben Hill County seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training to the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **General Farming (G-F):** The purpose of this district is to permit agricultural uses, to encourage the maintenance of the rural countryside, to preserve forests and other undeveloped lands away from areas of population growth, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of life. The preferred land use in the district is agricultural, either active in the form of crops, or passive in the form of forest management or pasture lands. The G-F district should be utilized as a land use designation where a more intensive use of the land is unlikely to occur in the near future. The requirements of the district are

-
- designed to encourage the maintenance of a rural character until more intensive development is feasible.
- **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.
 - **Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect areas for those wholesale and light industrial uses which do not create excessive noise, odor, smoke, dust and which do not possess other objectionable characteristics which might be detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods, or to the other uses permitted in the district.
 - **Heavy Industrial (HI):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect areas for those industrial uses which cannot comply with the requirements of the WLI district.
 - **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal.**
- Provide for appropriate buffering between the industrial uses and other uses
 - Provide for adequate education and notification requirements as well as deed restrictions and inclusions on potential impacts from uses permitted in Industrials.
 - Provide for adequate property purchase programs where negative impacts from public operations cannot be mitigated.
 - Develop a list of targeted industries to be located in this area.
 - Ensure sufficient public service capacity and infrastructure is in place prior to or concurrent with development and redevelopment

Suburban Fitzgerald Character Area



Description:

These areas are predominantly smaller lot, residential areas outside of the historic city limits, often in unincorporated Ben Hill County, with newer and more dense development than in the surrounding agricultural areas and older residential communities. These areas are characterized by traditional subdivision development on lots ranging from 20,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet. There is not much pedestrian activity and most commercial development is automobile oriented and centers around grocery stores. Typical Suburban Fitzgerald areas are located at the north, northeast and southwest edges of the City of Fitzgerald.

Predominant Land Use:

The predominant land use here is low to medium density residential with scattered strip commercial development and civic or institutional uses such as convenience stores, waste collection sites and churches.

Vision for the Future:

The suburban neighborhood areas should be encouraged to develop at lower densities as master planned developments, with an emphasis on connectivity and walkability. In addition, care should be taken to control growth and ensure that any development will occur concurrent with the provision of necessary infrastructure and to ensure equitable distribution of project created infrastructure cost to the new developments. The areas should provide for interconnectivity between subdivisions and encourage alternate modes of transportation. These areas should also provide for open space within and outside of subdivisions in order to provide additional green space, as well as passive and active recreation areas that will serve the residents.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Growth Preparedness Objective:** To identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth Greater Ben Hill County seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training to the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- **Appropriate Business Objective:** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher skill job opportunities.
- **Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
- **Environmental Protection Objective:** Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ground water recharge areas, wetlands, and native upland habitat (such as mature tree stands and southern hardwoods) deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining the traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of an area should be preserved.
- **Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities should be made

available to each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

- **Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Allow only Appropriate Zoning Districts which may, but do not have to be included in this Character Area:**
 - **General Farming (G-F):** The purpose of this district is to permit agricultural uses, to encourage the maintenance of the rural countryside, to preserve forests and other undeveloped lands away from areas of population growth, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of life. The preferred land use in the district is agricultural, either active in the form of crops, or passive in the form of forest management or pasture lands. The G-F district should be utilized as a land use designation where a more intensive use of the land is unlikely to occur in the near future. The requirements of the district are designed to encourage the maintenance of a rural character until more intensive development is feasible.
 - **Rural Residential (R-R):** The purpose of this district shall be to allow for residential development on lots less than three acres in appropriate areas designated in the Comprehensive Plan in unincorporated Ben Hill County. With Health Department approval, such districts may use individual water supply and sewage disposal systems. Minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit in this district shall be 800 square feet.
 - **Residential (R-1, R-1A, R-15, R-20, R-22):** The purpose of these districts are to provide residential areas with minimum lot sizes of between 6,000 square feet and one acre; these areas being protected from uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
 - **Multiple Residential (MR):** The purpose of this district is to provide orderly development of higher density residential areas for one, two and multi-family dwellings, with a minimum lot sizes of 6,000 square feet, said areas being protected from the encroachment of those uses which are incompatible to a desirable residential environment.
 - **Professional (P):** The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, professional, educational and institutional uses can be compatibly mixed while maintaining a healthful living environment for the residents of the district and at the same time preventing the development of blight and slum conditions. The minimum lot size in this district shall be 6,000 square feet.
 - **Neighborhood Commercial (NC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for neighborhood shopping facilities consisting of sales and services oriented to the adjacent neighborhoods.
 - **Community Commercial (CC):** The purpose of this district shall be to provide and protect convenient areas for community shopping facilities consisting of a wide variety of sales and services.
 - **Planned Development:** The purpose of this district shall be to provide for planned and mixed use developments of varying density that are site specific and approved individually by the Governing Authority.
- **Develop Policies to describe in detail implementation steps and regulations that should be carried forward into the Unified Land Development Code as well as policies that provide action steps to implement the Goal, which include but are not limited to:**
 - Interconnectivity between subdivisions
 - Shared access points, mandatory ingress and egress turn-lanes, and right-of-way protection.
 - Provide for commercial businesses at neighborhood scale, and no big boxes

- Ensure that water, sewer and road infrastructure is provided concurrent with development. This also should include siting and size and type of schools, police and fire.
- Provide flexibility in subdivision regulation to encourage creative design, green space, open space and green design including bicycle and pedestrian way continuity.
- Provide flexibility to mix compatible uses in order to minimize impacts on infrastructure and maximize use of available space

Future Development Character Area/Zoning District Compatibility Matrix												
Zoning	Character Areas											
	Agricultural	Rural Residential	In-Town Residential	Historic Fitzgerald Residential	Rural Villages	Suburban Neighborhood	Downtown Fitzgerald Commercial	South Fitzgerald Commercial Corridors	Commercial Nodes	Fitzgerald Municipal Airport	Southeast Fitzgerald Industrial	Old Railroad Depot
GF (General Farming)	x	x			x	x				x	x	
R-R (Rural Residential)	x	x	x		x	x						
R-1 (Single Family)	x	x	x	x	x	x						
R-1A (Single Family)	x	x	x	x	x	x						
R-6M (Single Family)		x										
R-6 (Residential)			x	x								
R-9 (Residential)			x	x	x							
R-15 (Residential)			x	x	x	x						
R-20 (Residential)		x	x	x	x	x						
R-22 (Single Family)		x	x	x	x	x						
MR (Multiple Residential)			x	x		x	x					
MHP (Mobile Home Park)		x			x							
P (Professional)					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
NC (Neighborhood Commercial)					x	x	x	x	x			
CC (Community Commercial)						x	x	x	x			
GB (General Business)							x	x	x			
DC (Downtown Commercial)							x	x				
WLI (Wholesale Light Industrial)								x		x	x	x
HI (Heavy Industrial)										x	x	x
Planned Development	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

4. Translating the Vision into the Plan: Goals, Issues and Policies

a. Introduction

In order to translate the Future Vision for Greater Ben Hill County into a feasible implementation plan, overall goals have to be developed to guide the plan and those issues and opportunities identified in the previous chapter that most likely will be encountered during the implementation phase. The goals, as are the issues and opportunities, are divided into eight major elements of Population, Economic Development, Housing, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities and Services, Land Use, Transportation, and Intergovernmental Coordination.

A goal statement for each of these elements, a list of issues and objectives, and policies are presented in the following sections. The issues and opportunities were first identified during the Community Assessment phase of the Plan through intense stakeholder and public participation input, and then confirmed and prioritized during the Community Agenda portion of this Plan. The issues are building the base for the goals as they are describing long-term issues that the community desires to address in the next twenty years, and policies were built upon the opportunities as defined in the Community Assessment earlier in the process. Therefore, the opportunities are building the base for the policies, implementation strategies and short-term work program to address the issues and realize the goals. Quantitative benchmarks are used where appropriate to keep track of success and progress, and identify areas where policies may need to be adjusted.

b. Top Five List of Issues and Opportunities

The following is an overview over the results of the stakeholder surveys concerning the issues and opportunities as identified in the Community Assessment.

1. Population Trends

Issues:

- The county is not retaining its young people
- Young families are not attracted by the pay structure and are therefore moving out of the county
- Loss of the locally educated workforce
- Increased promotion of the Hospital to attract more retirees to the area

Opportunities:

- The area with its slower pace and peace can be promoted as a good retirement area

2. Cultural Resources

Issues:

- Lack of a regional Historic Preservation Tourism map/guide to combine day trips into a several day historic preservation tour.
- Continual upkeep and rehabilitation of historical and cultural resources

Opportunities:

- The City of Fitzgerald is a name brand for historic resources
- The Arts Council is very active
- The Grand Theatre and its relationship to the Fox Historic Theatre Group
- The Carnegie Center
- The Chicken Festival
- The Grand Homecoming is a weeklong traditional event which occurs every three years. It is a homecoming reunion of the African-American Community.

- Blue & Gray Museum
- Bryant Theological Seminary
- Evergreen Cemetery (includes burial site of original founder of the City of Fitzgerald)
- Fitzgerald Cemetery
- Westwood Cemetery
- Kiokee Cemetery
- Grand Theatre Barton Organ Society installation of historic 1926 Barton Theatre Organ
- Encourage and promote participation in the Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails program
- Regional cultural coordination with such area attractions as the Tifton Agrirama
- Currently is archaeological research being conducted on a campsite of Hernando DeSoto along the Altamaha River

3. Economic Development

Issues:

- Growth and development have slowed considerably due to the economic situation.
- Most jobs have low-paying salaries
- High unemployment rate
- The City and County do not have enough tax revenue
- The area is not retaining or attracting enough young professionals
- The area needs more commercial retail facilities
- The hospital has financial problems and steps need to be taken to keep the hospital in the area for a minimum quality of life.
- The State has a misconception of the area and its needs, especially when federal funds are passed through the state.

Opportunities:

- Attract more technology industry with higher salaries
- Provide more support and development for agriculture (ag-economy)
- Increase & better public education to create a better workforce
- Continue the Literacy Program (certified literacy community)
- Work Ready Program
- Increase recruitment of businesses, especially biomass or other alternative energy/fuel industry.
- Expand the tax digest by attracting more business and increasing property values
- Attract emergency housing construction industry
- Utilize the airport to attract more industry and better workforce
- Create a technology center to provide assistance to area businesses
- Utilize and improve on the existing timber, cotton and soybean industries
- Encourage the local banks to offer their good mortgage programs
- City and County are entrepreneurial friendly
- Promote the area as a sportsman's paradise
- Retain the hospital to attract business
- Promote the area's quality school system from Pre-K to College.
- Promote the area's planted pine timber industry.
- Promote the area's easy railroad access.
- Promotion of Millennium Technology Pointe Park adjacent to ECTC/Wiregrass Tech

4. Housing:

Issues:

- Vacant parcels downtown
- Clearing of housing debris
- The area needs more diversity in housing choices
- The current zoning ordinance was developed in 1980 and was more of a boilerplate ordinance that does not meet the current needs of the community.

Opportunities:

- Eliminate slum/blighted old homes to create new affordable housing.
- Increase the downtown infill development program
- Provide a diversity of housing choices in various geographic locations in the county.
- Continue successful demolition program that demolished 300 blighted homes and constructed 450 new homes
- Continue downtown façade renovation program which has so far renovated 30 facades
- Continue to support Habitat for Humanity Fitzgerald/Ben Hill Affiliate which has built two homes so far and will be starting another in 2010 in conjunction with the Redevelopment Plan
- Utilize the domino effect of restoration and renovation to bring in new life to investments and increased revenues
- Continue to encourage redevelopment through private/public partnerships.

5. Natural Resources

Issues:

- The natural resources in the county are not sufficiently marketed
- Mixing private and public rights of using the river shorelines
- Lack of “No Polluting” education and awareness for recreational users of the local rivers
- Lack of marketing of agricultural and natural resources of the county

Opportunities:

- Ben Hill County has a great supply in ground/drinking water.
- Create a long range utility plan to protect groundwater sources.
- Ocmulgee River
- Bird Viewing Area behind the Hospital
- Promote the use of Paulk Park including the wetlands walking trail and the bird sanctuary
- Hunting Land
- There are several Wildlife Management Areas that are in driving distance.
- Promote the two Wildlife Preserves of Horse Creek and Mobley Bluff.
- Promote the use of existing public fishing docks
- Investigate the potential for a Agricultural Arena to promote the area’s agricultural resources

6. Land Use

Issues:

- The county’s small size requires that development needs to concentrate on quality of land use rather than quantity in order to create higher land values and growth to the tax digest
- Need to plan to minimize incompatible uses
- The area needs more dining and entertainment uses
- There is a need to install more pride in the citizens of this county and to increase beautification efforts in the area
- The area needs more shopping and commercial activity

- The zoning ordinance is out of date and doesn't meet the needs of the community

Opportunities:

- Utilize more Planned Developments
- Improve planning for residential subdivisions – define where they are needed and most suitable
- Create subdivision regulations to ensure compatibility of uses
- Promote “togetherness” for a higher quality of life (clarify)
- Direct the growth to where water and sewer lines are located.
- Collaboration by the City and County to plan for future utilities.
- Maintain the rural quality of life
- Review and update the zoning regulations to fit the City and County better than the current one.

7. Community Facilities and Services:

Issues:

- Water and sewer line expansions are needed in the county
- SR 107 needs to be four-laned as the main access to I-75
- The transportation system needs to be better utilized (clarify)
- The area lacks recreation opportunities for young people, specifically teens
- The area lacks transportation opportunities for transportation disadvantaged residents

Opportunities:

- Create a long range utility plan to protect groundwater sources.
- Ben Hill County has a large water capacity.
- Ben Hill County has water & sewer lines in place for future development.
- Continue to maintain and improve the existing EMS services
- Create an advisory Board for EMS
- Develop a cohesive comprehensive Emergency Plan.
- Quality school system
- Quality education system
- Create an assessment survey for public transportation
- Provide a public transportation system
- The airport is an asset for the community
- Senior citizens center is state of the art
- The railroad spur connections are positive for the area

8. Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues:

- The city and county need to work together to annex some properties.
- The city, county and the school system need to work together better
- Relationships with neighbor to the south could be improved
- Increasing regionalization of services is a problem (longer commutes, loss of control over opportunities)
- Coordination with the State

Opportunities:

- Increased outreach to involve people and recruit volunteers.
- Collaboration by the City and County to plan for future utilities.
- The Community has good leadership
- The Mayor's office has an open door policy
- Establish closer coordination with the Hospital Authority through a hospital agreement.

- Establish a dialogue with Tift County and Coffee County (City of Tifton and City of Douglas) to coordinate services in ways which eliminate duplication of services and encourages that services complement each other.

c. Goals, Issues & Policies

1. Population:

POPULATION GOAL

To ensure overall community growth and development benefits all segments of the population.

Population Issues and Policies

ISSUE

○ **LOSS OF YOUNG PEOPLE & YOUNG FAMILIES**

The county is not retaining its young people, nor are young families attracted by the pay structure.

Policy 1.1

Coordinate with local businesses and agencies to identify ways to attract and retain more young workforce age population to the area.

Policy 1.2

Upgrade existing recreational facilities and services, and provide additional facilities and services such as parks, fields, daycare services, etc.

Policy 1.3

Encourage safe neighborhood designs and active police and neighborhood patrols and watches.

Policy 1.4

Market the county and the city as safe places to live, work and play.

Policy 1.5

Work with the School Board, Technical College, local churches and foundations to identify ways to improve the local schools.

ISSUE

○ **ATTRACTING RETIREES**

As more and more retirees reconsider traditional retirement areas such as Florida, the county should focus on attracting these new and relocated retirees.

Policy 1.6

Identify facilities and services that will attract retirees and older populations to the area, and market the community as a great place to retire, highlighting those facilities and services and the quiet and historic setting, including the Senior Citizens Center.

Policy 1.7

Work with the Area Agency on Aging to assist local seniors with necessary services.

Policy 1.8

Work with the hospital to promote the hospital facility and to attract more retirees to the area.

Policy 1.9

Work with the Area Agency on Aging and the Chamber of Commerce to attract more Adult Daycare, Assisted Living Facilities and elderly care facilities to the county.

2. Economic Development:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Improve the local economy by capitalizing on new and existing opportunities that will draw new and expand existing businesses, diversify the local economy and help the county compete in the regional economy.

Economic Development Issues and Policies

ISSUE

- **SLOW GROWTH**

Growth and development have slowed considerably due to the economic situation.

Policy 2.1

Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority to identify new target industries that will help diversify the local economy, and work together to recruit those businesses to the area .

Policy 2.2

Encourage the formation of public/private partnerships between the City, the County, local businesses and the School Board for the identification and securing of new businesses in the area.

Policy 2.3

Encourage the redevelopment of greyfields and brownfields within the community.

Policy 2.4

Continue to support industrial development within Millennium Technology Pointe and other industrial areas within the County.

Policy 2.5

Promote the area's good quality of life on the website and within all marketing materials which may be funded through a Georgia Tourism grant.

ISSUE.

- **LOW PAY**

Most jobs have low-paying salaries

Policy 2.6

Work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Development Authority to identify high tech and high pay industries to direct marketing efforts toward.

Policy 2.7

Coordinate with the local college to identify opportunities to develop high tech industries and technologies within the area, and to train the local students for high tech jobs.

Policy 2.8

Work with the hospital on any new hospital facility expansion or growth to increase healthcare industry jobs.

Policy 2.9

Promote the low cost of living in all marketing and promotional materials for the city and the county.

ISSUE

○ **HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT**

The unemployment rate is exceptionally high, even given the current economic downturn.

Policy 2.10

Identify ways to expand marketing efforts throughout the state to attract more jobs to the area.

Policy 2.11

Work with the surrounding counties to identify ways the region as a whole can attract new businesses to the area.

ISSUE

○ **LACK OF TAX REVENUE**

The City and County do not have enough tax revenue

Policy 2.12

Explore ways to revise the County's tax collection system through increased use of computer programs and software.

Policy 2.13

Have an existing staff member trained in the identification and procurement of public grants and loans to help supplement the tax revenues.

Policy 2.14

Research other means to collect additional revenues.

ISSUE

○ **ATTRACT AND RETAIN YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

The area is not attracting or retaining enough young professionals

Policy 2.15

Market the community on college and university campuses and at job fairs throughout the area and the state.

Policy 2.16

Develop facilities, services (primarily parks and recreation facilities and services) and events for active young people and families.

ISSUE

○ **MORE COMMERCIAL FACILITIES**

The area needs more commercial retail facilities

Policy 2.17

Develop an online marketing campaign and update the county and city website.

Policy 2.18

Advertise the community to national businesses through key industry periodicals and magazine advertisement.

Policy 2.19

Actively seek out and directly contact target industries.

Policy 2.20

Develop a set of incentives for the location of shopping and commercial businesses to locate within the downtown area and Ben Hill County, and advertise and promote the incentives through the city and county websites and the Chamber of Commerce.

Policy 2.21

Encourage infill development throughout the City of Fitzgerald.

ISSUE

○ **STATE'S MISCONCEPTION**

Need to encourage the State to be sensitive to the needs of the city and the county, especially when federal funds are passed through the state.

Policy 2.22

Actively seek out opportunities to participate in state pilot programs and new procedures to help familiarize state officials with Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald and all the area's opportunities and issues.

Policy 2.23

Attend online and onsite state meetings and actively participate in discussions.

Policy 2.24

Work with state and regional agencies to develop more local and on-line training opportunities for local board and authority members.

ISSUE

○ **LOSS OF EDUCATED WORKFORCE**

The county is losing its locally educated workforce.

Policy 2.25

Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority to identify target industries and recruit new businesses to the area.

Policy 2.26

Maintain and expand the inventory of available land suitable for development to facilitate the location of new businesses within the county.

Policy 2.27

Market the County's status as a Work Ready community, and continue to maintain the status.

ISSUE

○ **VACANT PARCELS DOWNTOWN**

The downtown Fitzgerald area has several vacant parcels.

Policy 2.28

Amend the land use regulations to allow smaller homes to be developed on small parcels (5,000 sf lots) within the downtown Fitzgerald area.

Policy 2.29

Promote the development of the downtown area through marketing and incentives.

3. Housing:

HOUSING GOAL

Provide opportunities for homeownership and housing resources for all citizens of Greater Ben Hill County through public/private partnerships.

Housing Issues & Policies

ISSUE

○ **CLEARING HOUSING DEBRIS**

Many of the older, foreclosed or abandoned homes within the City are littered with debris on the inside and the outside.

Policy 3.1

Continue to participate in the Georgia Community Housing Program, and promote the rehabilitation of housing through existing programs.

Policy 3.2

Utilize local youth, underemployed and Community Service workers to clear housing debris on publicly owned properties.

Policy 3.3

Support Code Enforcement efforts to require the clean up of debris from residential neighborhoods on private property.

ISSUE

○ **DIVERSITY OF HOUSING CHOICES**

A greater diversity of housing choices for people of all incomes and abilities is needed.

Policy 3.4

Encourage quality and affordable housing for all ages and economic groups.

Policy 3.5

Encourage support businesses such as grocery stores to locate within close proximity to residential neighborhoods to attract more quality housing choices.

Policy 3.6

Encourage development and use of second story apartments over commercial businesses within the downtown area.

4. Natural Resources

NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL

Conserve and protect the functions and values of the natural resources of Greater Ben Hill County for future generations appropriate use and enjoyment.

Natural Resources Issues & Policies

ISSUE

○ **LACK OF MARKETING**

Ben Hill County has insufficient marketing of value –added agricultural and natural resources, and agri-tourism within the county.

Policy 4.1

Develop a page on the county website to highlight the agricultural lands and products, and the natural resources of the county.

Policy 4.2

Develop and distribute a magazine describing the recreational opportunities within Ben Hill County and distribute the pamphlet throughout the region.

Policy 4.3

Promote the local farmer’s market.

ISSUE

○ **PUBLIC VS PRIVATE USE RIGHTS OF RIVER SHORELINES**

Public access to the river shorelines sometimes creates conflicts with private property owners.

Policy 4.4

Seek state and federal grants for the purchase of riverfront properties to provide public access.

Policy 4.5

Include language within all signage and pamphlets on river usage regarding private property rights and respect of the land.

Policy 4.6

Support and participate in the development of the proposed Ocmulgee River Blueway plan.

ISSUE

○ **POLLUTION EDUCATION FOR RIVER USERS**

Public use of the local rivers leads to littering, dumping and can result in pollution.

Policy 4.7

Promote cleanup of the local rivers, and cleanup efforts.

Policy 4.8

Develop education materials to be distributed via the county website and through regional distribution

regarding river pollution and its harmful impact on all river users.

Policy 4.9

Provide signage and trash receptacles at all river access points.

ISSUE

○ **PRESERVATION OF TREES AND OPEN SPACE WITHIN FITZGERALD**

The tree canopy within the City of Fitzgerald needs to continue to be monitored and replenished

Policy 4.10

Investigate the requirements for the development of a Green Space Master Plan for the City of Fitzgerald.

Policy 4.11

Develop and adopt a Tree Protection Ordinance for the City of Fitzgerald.

Policy 4.12

Implement a tree planting program for common space areas throughout the city.

Policy 4.13

Develop and adopt a Street Tree Ordinance requiring private developers to provide street trees along specific major public rights-of-way within the City of Fitzgerald.

ISSUE

○ **PROTECTION OF COUNTY'S NATURAL RESOURCES**

The County's abundant natural resources are often taken for granted.

Policy 4.14

Research the costs and requirements of conducting a natural resources inventory for the county.

Policy 4.15

Develop and implement a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and encourage the use of conservation easements for the protection of natural resources on private development.

Policy 4.16

Develop local groundwater testing requirements for rural communities within the County.

5. Cultural Resources:

CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL

Protect, preserve and promote the historic and cultural resources of Ben Hill County through such measures as regulations, adaptive reuse, tourism and education programs focused on historic preservation.

Cultural Resources Issues and Policies

ISSUE

- **LACK OF A REGIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION TOURISM MAP**
A regional Historic Preservation Tourism map/guide could encourage combining day trips into a several day historic preservation tour.

Policy 5.1

Update the historical resources inventory for Fitzgerald, and develop a new historical resources inventory for Ben Hill County.

Policy 5.2

Coordinate with Irwin County to identify civil war sites, structures and places of interest for potentially including in a local touring map.

Policy 5.3

Work with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to develop a Historic Preservation map for the region.

ISSUE

- **UPKEEP AND REHABILITATION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**
Too often local historical and cultural resources are lost to disrepair and lack of maintenance.

Policy 5.4

Continue to seek grant and loan opportunities for rehabilitation projects.

Policy 5.5

Consider placing major rehabilitation projects in the next SPLOST.

Policy 5.6

Partner with local churches and the private sector for minor rehabilitation and upkeep projects.

Policy 5.7

Help identify and encourage private rehabilitation through awards or recognition programs for rehabilitation and maintenance projects.

Policy 5.8

Consider hiring a Downtown Development Coordinator to take the lead on historic preservation, revitalization and development of the downtown area.

Policy 5.9

Evaluate how the county may fund and develop a countywide historic resources inventory.

6. Land Use:

LAND USE GOAL

Ensure the highest quality of living environment possible through a mixture of compatible land uses and character areas reflecting the needs and desires of the local residents and their vision of Greater Ben Hill County.

Land Use Issues and Policies

ISSUE

○ **SMALL SIZE OF COUNTY**

The county's small size requires development to concentrate on quality of land use rather than quantity in order to create higher land values and growth to the tax digest .

Policy 6.1

Allow higher density and intensity in appropriate areas with adequate services.

Policy 6.2

Identify and map areas suitable for various types of land development.

ISSUE

○ **INCOMPATIBLE USES**

Plan to minimize incompatible uses.

Policy 6.3

Amend the land development regulations, including the zoning ordinance, to require buffers and transitional zones between incompatible uses.

Policy 6.4

Encourage the protection of existing farmland.

Policy 6.5

Research grant and funding sources for monies to develop a property purchase program to avoid major negative impacts from adjacent developments and uses.

Policy 6.6

Ensure adequate education and notification is provided to uses adjacent or close to high intensity development.

ISSUE

○ **NEED MORE DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT**

The City has insufficient dining and entertainment venues.

Policy 6.7

Target marketing to dining and entertainment industries.

Policy 6.8

Work with the Chamber of Commerce to reach out to the dining and entertainment industry.

Policy 6.9

Encourage the use of local grown products at area restaurants.

ISSUE

○ **LOCAL PRIDE AND BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS**

The citizens of this county need to develop more pride for their county and increase beautification efforts in the area.

Policy 6.10

Implement a new Street Tree Planting program and invite public participation on planting efforts on public property.

Policy 6.11

Invite public participation at local public area cleanups, with T-shirts and lunch provided.

Policy 6.12

Establish a “Keep Georgia Beautiful” affiliate for Ben Hill County.

Policy 6.13

Consider developing architectural guidelines for the downtown area, and including the guidelines within the zoning ordinance.

Policy 6.14

Encourage the undergrounding of utility lines.

Policy 6.15

Review the local sign regulations to ensure that there are adequate protections against advertising clutter.

Policy 6.16

Discourage illegal dumping along roadsides, and consider the development of an Adopt-A-Road program.

Policy 6.17

Research available grant monies for local cleanup efforts.

Policy 6.18

Encourage the development of Community Gardens on vacant infill properties within the City.

ISSUE

- **OUTDATED ZONING ORDINANCE:** The current zoning ordinance was developed in 1980 and was more of a boilerplate ordinance that does not meet the current needs of the community.

Policy 6.21

Work with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to adopt the updated Zoning Ordinance previously developed.

Policy 6.22

Review and revise any sections in the previously developed zoning ordinance and provide new updates.

Policy 6.23

Consider establishing minimum standards for property maintenance and upkeep in the Zoning Ordinance.

Policy 6.24

Provide for flexibility within the subdivision regulations and zoning ordinance in order to help protect the county's natural resources, allow for mixing of uses within appropriate areas and encourage infill development.

Policy 6.25

Implement the land use goal through strict enforcement of the zoning ordinances and building codes.

7. Community Facilities and Services:

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOAL

Ensure needed community facilities such as water, sewer, solid waste, police, fire and EMS are provided in an effective, environmentally sound, safe and economic system, consistent and concurrent with present demand and future growth.

Community Facilities and Services Issues and Policies

ISSUE

- **WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSIONS**
Water and sewer line expansions are needed in the county.

Policy 7.1

Identify and prioritize all water and sewer infrastructure needs.

Policy 7.2

Consider developing regulations that would require developers to provide all project related infrastructure concurrent with development.

Policy 7.3

Continue to research all state and federal grant opportunities, including the Georgia Fund Loan Program, the Clean Water Revolving Loan fund and the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan fund for infrastructure funding opportunities.

ISSUE

- **FOUR-LANING SR 107**
SR 107 needs to be four-laned as the main access to I-75.

Policy 7.4

Continue emphasizing the need to four lane SR 107 to the Georgia Department of Transportation, and seek opportunities to meet with state officials.

Policy 7.5

Encourage the provision of interconnectivity, shared access and pedestrian connections along all roads.

ISSUE

- **BETTER UTILIZATION OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**
The transportation system needs to be better utilized.

Policy 7.6

Identify areas where there is sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development, and which will result in more efficient use of the existing road network.

Policy 7.7

Research ways to improve downtown parking and traffic circulation, and provide traffic calming devices and

techniques in the downtown area.

Policy 7.8

Continue to update and implement the Strategic Transportation Program for the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County.

ISSUE

○ **MORE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The area lacks recreation opportunities for young people, specifically teens.

Policy 7.9

Amend the zoning ordinance to require sidewalks to connect.

Policy 7.10

Seek more funding for parks and recreation facilities.

Policy 7.11

Consider requiring developers to provide recreational facilities to serve their development.

Policy 7.12

Seek ways to combine parks and recreation projects with other public services and facilities projects.

ISSUE

○ **TRANSPORTATION-DISADVANTAGED NEEDS**

The area lacks transportation opportunities for transportation-disadvantaged residents.

Policy 7.13

Seek funding for the development of more bicycle and pedestrian facilities on public property, and encourage private developers to install bicycle and pedestrian facilities on their properties.

Policy 7.14

Continue to work with other jurisdictions and the Regional Commission on a public transit system.

Policy 7.14

Ensure that all existing and new developments know of the requirements for ADA accessibility at their properties and facilities.

Policy 7.16

Continue to participate in all local and regional efforts to develop public transportation within the region.

Policy 7.17

Research potential funding opportunities for the development of a local elderly public transportation system.

ISSUE

○ **FINANCIAL ISSUES WITH THE HOSPITAL**

The hospital has financial problems and steps need to be taken to keep the hospital in the area for a minimum quality of life.

Policy 7.18

Coordinate with the hospital to identify ways to address their financial issues.

Policy 7.19

Offer to help the hospital develop a plan to secure the hospital's financial future.

Policy 7.20

Explore the potential for the consolidation and division of services with adjacent hospitals to increase cost effectiveness, avoid duplication, and provide better services.

8. Intergovernmental Coordination:

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION GOAL

Establish effective coordination measures among all pertinent public and quasi-public entities to best maintain Greater Ben Hill County’s quality of life and resources.

Intergovernmental Coordination Issues and Policies

ISSUE

○ **CITY AND COUNTY COORDINATION ON ANNEXATIONS**

The City and County need to work together on future annexations.

Policy 8.1

Develop a joint City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County annexation work group.

ISSUE

○ **CITY, COUNTY AND SCHOOL SYSTEM COORDINATION**

The City, County and the school system need to work together better.

Policy 8.2

Invite the School Board to attend all city and county workshops and public hearings and ensure that a city and county representative attends all School Board meetings.

Policy 8.3

Appoint a member of the School Board to the County Planning and Zoning Board with or without voting privileges.

ISSUE

○ **IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH SURROUNDING COUNTIES**

Relationships with the surrounding jurisdictions could be improved.

Policy 8.4

Encourage and facilitate regular contact between the corresponding departments from Ben Hill and each of the surrounding counties, as well as all relevant state, local and regional agencies such as Department of Families and Children, the Wellness Council, Social Services, etc.

Policy 8.5

Hold regular meetings between key staff of Ben Hill County and the surrounding jurisdictions.

ISSUE

○ **INCREASING REGIONALIZATION OF SERVICES**

As regionalization of services increases, need to ensure that Ben Hill County is at the forefront of the provision of services.

Policy 8.6

Research ways to improve the provision of public services at a regional level.

Policy 8.7

Identify grants and loans to develop and enhance local services.

ISSUE

○ **INCREASED COORDINATION WITH STATE**

There needs to be more coordination with state agencies and representatives.

Policy 8.8

Attend all state sponsored meetings and events.

Policy 8.9

Participate in state training sessions.

Policy 8.10

Participate in state sponsored local and regional planning efforts.

5. Implementation Program (Policies, Responsible Party, Partners, Time Frame)

Introduction

In this section, the Comprehensive Plan identifies the implementation policies and strategies along with the responsible parties and a projected time frame for implementation. Where applicable, the policies and strategies have been included within the Short Term Work Program in Section 6 below.

The following table is organized by Comprehensive Plan element and identifies action items by time frame, such as: 1. Ongoing, 2. Short-Term (1-5 years), 3. Medium Range (6-10 years) and 4. Long Range (10+ years).

The list of responsible parties or partners includes the following:

Responsible Parties and/or Partners	Abbreviation
Ben Hill County Board of Commission	Ben Hill County
City of Fitzgerald City Council	Fitzgerald
Ben Hill County School Board	School Board
Fitzgerald Utilities	Fitzgerald Utilities
Fitzgerald Fire Department	Fitzgerald Fire
Ben Hill County Volunteer Fire Department	Ben Hill Volunteer Fire
Ben Hill County Sheriff	Ben Hill Sheriff
Fitzgerald Police Department	FPD
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce	Chamber of Commerce
Joint Irwin-Ben Hill County Economic Development Authority	JIBHCEDA
Fitzgerald Downtown Development Authority	DDA
Fitzgerald Municipal Airport	Airport
Southern Georgia Regional Commission	SGRC
Georgia Department of Transportation	GDOT
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	DCA
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	DNR
Environmental Protection Agency	EPA
Army Corps of Engineers	ACE
Wiregrass Georgia Technical College	Tech College
University of Georgia	UGA
Federal Aviation Administration	FAA

a. Population

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
Loss of Young People & Families			
Policy 1.1	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Private	Ongoing
Policy 1.2	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 1.3	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Private	Ongoing
Policy 1.4	Chamber	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Ongoing
Policy 1.5	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald, School Board		Ongoing
Attracting Retirees			
Policy 1.6	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ongoing
Policy 1.7	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Ongoing
Policy 1.8	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald, Hospital		Ongoing
Policy 1.9	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Area Agency on Aging, Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing

b. Economic Development

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
Slow Growth			
Policy 2.1	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ongoing
Policy 2.2	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Private, School Board	Ongoing
Policy 2.3	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 2.4	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 2.5	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Low Pay			
Policy 2.6	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Short
Policy 2.7	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Tech College	Ongoing
Policy 2.8	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald, Hospital		Ongoing
Policy 2.9	Ben Hill County, Fitzgerald	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ongoing
High Unemployment			
Policy 2.10	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 2.11	Ben Hill	Irwin, Turner, Coffee, etc.	Ongoing
Lack of Tax Revenue			
Policy 2.12	Ben Hill		Medium
Policy 2.13	Ben Hill	Fitzgerald	Short
Policy 2.14	Ben Hill		Ongoing
Attract and Retain Young Professionals			
Policy 2.15	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Ongoing
Policy 2.16	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
More Commercial Facilities			
Policy 2.17	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Chamber	Medium
Policy 2.18	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Medium
Policy 2.19	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Short
Policy 2.20	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Short
Policy 2.21	Fitzgerald	DDA	Ongoing
State's Misconception			
Policy 2.22	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 2.23	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 2.24	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Medium
Loss of Educated Workforce			
Policy 2.25	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald, Chamber & JIBHCEDA		Ongoing
Policy 2.26	Ben Hill	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ongoing
Policy 2.27	Ben Hill	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Ongoing
Vacant Parcels Downtown			
Policy 2.28	Fitzgerald	DDA	Short
Policy 2.29	Fitzgerald	DDA	Ongoing

c. Housing

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
Clearing Housing Debris			
Policy 3.1	Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 3.2	Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 3.3	Fitzgerald	Ben Hill	Ongoing
Diversity of Housing Choices			
Policy 3.4	Fitzgerald	Ben Hill	Ongoing
Policy 3.5	Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Outdated Zoning Ordinances			
Policy 3.6	Fitzgerald		Ongoing

d. Natural Resources

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
Lack of Marketing			
Policy 4.1	Ben Hill		Short
Policy 4.2	Ben Hill	Chamber & JIBHCEDA	Short
Policy 4.3	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Public vs Private use of River Shorelines			
Policy 4.4	Ben Hill		Ongoing
Policy 4.5	Ben Hill	DNR	Medium
Policy 4.6	Ben Hill		Ongoing
Pollution Education for River Users			
Policy 4.7	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 4.8	Ben Hill	DNR, EPA	Short
Policy 4.9	Ben Hill	DNR	Short
Lack of Preservation of Trees and Open Space within Fitzgerald			
Policy 4.10	Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 4.11	Fitzgerald		Medium
Policy 4.12	Fitzgerald		Medium
Policy 4.13	Fitzgerald		Medium
Protection of County's Natural Resources			
Policy 4.14	Ben Hill	DNR, EPA	Short
Policy 4.15	Ben Hill		Medium
Policy 4.16	Ben Hill		Short

e. Cultural Resources

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
Lack of a Regional Historic Preservation Map			
Policy 5.1	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Short
Policy 5.2	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Irwin County	Short
Policy 5.3	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Medium
Upkeep and Rehabilitation of Historical and Cultural Resources			
Policy 5.4	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Ongoing
Policy 5.5	Ben Hill		Medium
Policy 5.6	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Private	Ongoing
Policy 5.7	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	DDA	Medium
Policy 5.8	Fitzgerald	DDA	Short
Policy 5.9	Ben Hill	Historical Society, SGRC	Short

f. Land Use

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
Small Size of County			
Policy 6.1	Ben Hill		Short
Policy 6.2	Ben Hill	SGRC	Medium
Incompatible Uses			
Policy 6.3	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 6.4	Ben Hill		Ongoing
Policy 6.5	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Ongoing
Policy 6.6	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Need More Dining and Entertainment			
Policy 6.7	Chamber, DDA	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Ongoing
Policy 6.8	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Chamber	Ongoing
Policy 6.9	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Private	Ongoing
Local Pride and Beautification Efforts			
Policy 6.10	Fitzgerald	DDA	Medium
Policy 6.11	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	DDA	Ongoing

Policy 6.12	Ben Hill		Medium
Policy 6.13	Fitzgerald	DDA	Short
Policy 6.14	Fitzgerald	DDA	Ongoing
Policy 6.15	Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 6.16	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing/Short
Policy 6.17	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 6.18	Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Outdated Zoning Ordinances			
Policy 6.21	Ben Hill	SGRC	Short
Policy 6.22	Ben Hill	SGRC	Short
Policy 6.23	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Short
Policy 6.24	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Short
Policy 6.25	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing

g. Community Facilities & Services

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
Water and Sewer Infrastructure Expansions			
Policy 7.1	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 7.2	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 7.3	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Short
Four-Laning SR 107			
Policy 7.4	Ben Hill	GDOT	Ongoing
Policy 7.5	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Better Utilization of Transportation System			
Policy 7.6	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 7.7	Fitzgerald		Medium
Policy 7.8	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
More Recreational Opportunities			
Policy 7.9	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 7.10	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Ongoing
Policy 7.11	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Short
Policy 7.12	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Transportation Disadvantaged Needs			
Policy 7.13	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Ongoing
Policy 7.14	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	GDOT, SGRC, Irwin	Ongoing
Policy 7.15	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 7.16	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 7.17	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Short
Financial Issues with Hospital			
Policy 7.18	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald, Hospital		Short
Policy 7.19	Hospital	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	Short
Policy 7.20	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald, Hospital		Short

h. Intergovernmental Coordination

Policy/Strategy/Action	Responsible Party	Partners	Time Frame
City and County Coordination on Annexations			
Policy 8.1	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Short
City, County and School System Coordination			
Policy 8.2	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	School Board	Ongoing
Policy 8.3	Ben Hill	School Board	Short
Improved Relationships with Surrounding Counties			
Policy 8.4	Ben Hill		Ongoing

Policy 8.5	Ben Hill	Irwin County	Ongoing
Increasing Regionalization of Services			
Policy 8.6	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 8.7	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald	SGRC	Ongoing
Increased Coordination with State			
Policy 8.8	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 8.9	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing
Policy 8.10	Ben Hill, Fitzgerald		Ongoing

6. Short-Term Work Program

Introduction

In this section, the Comprehensive Plan identifies the capital improvements projects along with a projected time frame and a projected cost and funding source for implementation. The following table is organized by Comprehensive Plan element and identifies projects by time frame, projected cost and funding source. The update of this table will be incorporated into the annual capital improvements projects budget process by Greater Ben Hill County.

Short Term Work Program Ben Hill County			
Capital Improvement Project	Cost/Responsible Party	Time Frame	Proposed Funding Source
Planning			
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG, EDA, RD, LDF, etc) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority	Unknown/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Annually re-evaluate the Ben Hill County Short Term Work Program	Unknown/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Participate in all amendments/mediation to the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan	Unknown/County Commission, Planning Advisory Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	TBD
Continue exploration of functional cooperation with Fitzgerald	Unknown/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Natural & Cultural Resources			
Support the preservation/reuse of historic schools identified in the Regional Historic Schools Initiative/Multiple Property Register Nomination	Unknown/County Commission, Historic Society, RDC, SHPO	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	TBD
Economic Development			
Continue to support the Joint City/County Economic Development director position	\$80,000 per year/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	General Fund

Continue to support JDA in development of Millennium Technology Pointe	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	TBD
Continue to coordinate with the Georgia Wiregrass Technical College on joint Economic Development projects.	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Continue to support the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Development Authority/Joint Economic Development Authority	\$75,000 per year/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	Public/Private
Prepare and maintain an inventory of incentives, business programs, housing stock and available sites to accommodate new businesses and business expansions, and provide the list on the county website.	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2012	General Fund
Develop a guidebook for development that describes the local development process and provides useful information to potential new businesses regarding zoning, site plan approval, permitting and potential incentives.	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2012	General Fund
Land Use			
Continue to coordinate zoning ordinance administration and enforcement with the Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Planning Advisory Commission	Unknown/City Council, County Commission, PAC, RDC	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Update the County's Zoning Ordinance	Unknown/County Commission	FY 2011	General Fund
Housing			
Continue to foster and support the rehabilitation/reconstruction of affordable housing	\$750,000/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	CHIP Grant
Community Facilities & Services			
Transportation:			
Repave County Roads using \$2.0 million of SPLOST funds	\$2.0 million/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012,	SPLOST

		2013, 2014, 2015	
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	Unknown/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Promote 4 laning SR 129 to Ocilla	Unknown/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	Unknown/County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
<i>Parks & Recreation:</i>			
Upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	TBD
Develop a multi-purpose sports facility at Paulk Park	\$1.5 million/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	SPLOST
<i>Miscellaneous:</i>			
Airport Improvements: Runway extension and Expand Apron; Install MALS-F & PAPT's systems	\$2.5 million/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	Grants

Short Term Work Program City of Fitzgerald			
Capital Improvement Project	Costs/Responsible Party	Time Frame	Proposed Funding Source
Planning			
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG, EDA, RD, LDF, etc) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Annually re-evaluate the Fitzgerald Short Term Work Program	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Participate in all amendments/mediation to the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan	Unknown/City Council, Planning Advisory Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Continue exploration of functional cooperation with Ben Hill County	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Natural & Historic Resources			
Support the preservation/reuse of historic schools identified in the Regional Historic Schools Initiative/Multiple Property Register Nomination	Unknown/City Council, Historic Society, RDC, SHPO	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	ELOST/School Board
Develop Downtown Master Plan	Unknown/City Council, DDA	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	City/DDA
Pursue redevelopment of the Aldine Hotel	Unknown/City Council, DDA, Arts Council, HPC	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	City/DDA

Continue support of DDA, HPC	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Economic Development			
Continue to promote the Façade Rehab Program to attract and maintain Downtown businesses	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	DDA & Fitzgerald Forever
Continue to support the Joint City/County Economic Development director position	\$80,000 per year/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	City & County General Funds, and Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County DA
Continue to support JDA in development of Millennium Technology Pointe	Unkown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County, Ocilla, and Irwin County
Expand tourism initiative through additional regional cooperation, Grand Theater and Conference Center, fire museum, new museums, scheduled events, and recruitment of complementary Downtown businesses	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	Fitzgerald Tourism and DDA
Continue to coordinate with the Wiregrass Georgia Technical College on joint economic development projects.	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Apply for expanded water pumping permit	Unknown/W, L & B	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	W, L & B Funds
Seek expanded natural gas pipeline capacity.	Unknown/W, L & B	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	TBD
Seek local electrical generating capacity through traditional generation, alternative generation and/or gas turbine	Unknown/Fitzgerald-Ben Hill DA; W, L & B	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	TBD

Continue to support the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Development Authority/Joint Economic Development Authority	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Continue acquisition, rehabilitation, sale, and leasing of Downtown buildings for redevelopment purposes	\$75,000 per year/City Council, DDA	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	DDA and SPLOST
Housing			
Continue to use HOME, USDA, DCA, NSP, LIHTC and other available Programs	\$750,000 per year/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Continue to clear derelict property and reestablish housing in the City's redevelopment area.	Cash & In-Kind/ City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	General Fund
Continue to refine code enforcement efforts regarding rental housing properties.	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	General Fund
Land Use			
Continue to coordinate zoning ordinance administration/enforcement with the Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Planning Advisory Commission	Unknown/City Council, County Commission, PAC, RDC	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	City Funds, County Funds
Continue to review Subdivision & Zoning Ordinances for Opportunities to promote Smart Growth and remove barriers to affordable housing	Unknown/City Council, PAC, RDC	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	General Fund
Community Facilities & Services			
Miscellaneous:			
Jaycee Stadium improvements	\$900,000/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	SPLOST and ELOST
Engage the Regional Board regarding the State	N/A/City	FY 2011,	N/A

Transportation Plan	Council, County Commission	2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	
Renovate A, B & A Depot for preservation and flexible space generation.	\$625,000/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	Private funds, grants, general fund
Review existing services for better productivity, pro-activity and fee based operation where possible	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Airport Improvements: Runway extension and Expand Apron; Install MALS-F & PAPI systems	\$2.5 million/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	Grants, City and County
<i>Parks and Recreation</i>			
Upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities	\$1.5 million/City Council, County Commission	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	SPLOST, City and County
<i>Transportation:</i>			
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Promote 4 laning SR 129 to Ocilla	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	Unknown/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Resurface approximately 25 miles of city streets; Associated transportation improvements: sidewalks, parking, and storm drainage right-of-way.	\$1.7 million/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	SPLOST and GDOT

Continue to study and implement downtown parking solutions.	Unknown/City Council, DDA	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	TBD
Wastewater System:			
Engage with the Regional Water Board	N/A/City Council	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	N/A
Coordinate with Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond regarding sewer system for annexations	Unknown/City & W, L & B	FY 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015	City General Fund, W, L & B Funds

7. Report of Accomplishments

BEN HILL COUNTY FIVE YEAR REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

(Fiscal Year July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2010)

NA = Not Accomplished
CD = Completed
CU = Currently Underway
PD = Postponed

PROJECTS	Estimated Cost/Resp.	CFY 06	CFY 07	CFY 08	CFY 09	CFY 10	ROA
PLANNING							
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG, EDA, RD, LDF, etc) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority	Unknown/County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Annually re-evaluate the Ben Hill County Short Term Work Program	Unknown/County Commission		*	*	*	*	CU
Participate in all amendments/mediation to the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan	Unknown/County Commission, Planning Advisory Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Continue exploration of functional cooperation with Fitzgerald	Unknown/County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES							
Participate with cities/counties/Historical Society to prepare a countywide historic resources inventory. (60% Federal, 40% Local)	\$12,000 Shared/City, County, SHPO, RDC	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Support the preservation/reuse of historic schools identified in the Regional Historic Schools Initiative/Multiple Property Register Nomination	Unknown/County Commission, Historic Society, RDC, SHPO	*	*	*	*	*	CU
HOUSING							
Continue to foster and support the rehabilitation/reconstruction of affordable housing	\$750,000/County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT							
Continue to support the Joint Economic Development director position	\$80,000 per year/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Continue to support JDA in development of Millennium Technology Pointe	\$6,000,000/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Develop with Wiregrass Technical College the Regional Technology Communication Center	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*			CU
Continue to support the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Development Authority/Joint Economic Development Authority	\$75,000 per year/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU

LAND USE							
Continue to coordinate zoning ordinance administration/enforcement with the Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Planning Advisory Commission	Unknown/City Council, County Commission, PAC, RDC	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Prepare amendments to land subdivision ordinance to require paved streets in new subdivisions and provisions for smart growth	\$9,000/County Commission, PAC, RDC	*	*				CD
1.1.1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES							
Complete the remodeling of the County Courthouse	\$600,000/County Commission	*					CD
Repave County Roads using \$2.0 million of SPLOST funds	\$2.0 million/County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Turkey Creek Flood Control Project	\$1.2 million/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*		PD
Airport Improvements: Runway extension and Expand Apron; Install MALS-F & PAPI's systems	\$2.5 million/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*			CU – Mediation w/ Irwin
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	Unknown/County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Promote 4 laning SR 129 to Ocilla	Unknown/County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Develop flagship park at Blue & Gray Park	\$200,000/City Council, County Commission	*	*				CD

Upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities	\$1.3 million/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	Unknown/County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU

CITY OF FITZGERALD FIVE-YEAR REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS
(Federal Fiscal Year October 01 – September 30)

NA = Not Accomplished
CD = Completed
CU = Currently Underway
PD = Postponed

PROJECTS	Estimated Cost/Resp.	CFY 06	CFY 07	CFY 08	CFY 09	CFY 10	ROA
PLANNING							
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG, EDA, RD, LDF, etc) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Annually re-evaluate the Fitzgerald Short Term Work Program	Unknown/City Council		*	*	*	*	CD
Participate in all amendments/mediation to the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan	Unknown/City Council, Planning Advisory Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Evaluate adoption of new DCA Planning guidelines	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CD
Continue exploration of functional cooperation with Ben Hill County	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU

PROJECTS	Estimated Cost/Resp.	CFY 06	CFY 07	CFY 08	CFY 09	CFY 10	ROA
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES							
Participate with city/county/Historic Society to prepare a countywide historic resources inventory. (60% Federal, 40% Local)	\$12,000 Shared/City, County, SHPO, RDC	*	*	*	*	*	CD
Develop and implement the Downtown Loft housing program	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CD
Support the preservation/reuse of historic schools identified in the Regional Historic Schools Initiative/Multiple Property Register Nomination	Unknown/City Council, Historic Society, RDC, SHPO	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Develop Downtown Master Plan	Unknown/City Council, DDA	*	*				NA
Develop Arts Incubator in Aldine Hotel	\$500,000/City Council, DDA, Arts Council, HPC	*	*	*			NA
Continue support of DDA, HPC	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
HOUSING							
Continue to use HOME, USDA, DCA and other available Programs	\$750,000 per year/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU

PROJECTS	Estimated Cost/Resp.	CFY 06	CFY 07	CFY 08	CFY 09	CFY 10	ROA
Continue to clear derelict property and reestablish housing in the City's redevelopment area.	\$750,000 per year/ City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Develop rental housing code compliance program	Unknown/City Council	*	*				NA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT							
Continue to promote the Façade Rehab Program to attract and maintain Downtown businesses	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Continue to support the Joint Economic Development director position	\$80,000 per year/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Continue to support JDA in development of Millennium Technology Pointe	\$6,000,000/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Expand tourism initiative through additional regional cooperation, Grand Theater and Conference Center, new museums, scheduled events, and recruitment of complementary Downtown businesses	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Develop with ECTC the Regional Technology Communication Center	Unknown/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*			CU
Develop/continue redundant broadband connectivity at tier 1 rates through public/private collaboration	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CD

PROJECTS	Estimated Cost/Resp.	CFY 06	CFY 07	CFY 08	CFY 09	CFY 10	ROA
Apply for expanded water pumping permit	Unknown/ W, L & B	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Seek expanded natural gas and/or gas turbine	Unknown/ W, L & B	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Seek local electrical generating capacity through alternative generation and/or gas turbine	Unknown/Fitzgerald-Ben Hill DA; W, L & B	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Continue to evaluate creation of Downtown “Hotspot” internet connectivity	\$20,000/City Council, DDA	*	*				CD
Continue to support the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Development Authority/Joint Economic Development Authority	\$75,000 per year/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Continue acquisition, rehabilitation, sale, and leasing of Downtown buildings for redevelopment purposes	\$75,000 per year/City Council, DDA	*	*	*	*	*	CU
LAND USE							
Continue to coordinate zoning ordinance administration/enforcement with the Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Planning Advisory Commission	Unknown/City Council, County Commission, PAC, RDC	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Continue to review Subdivision & Zoning Ordinances for Opportunities to promote Smart Growth and remove barriers to affordable housing	Unknown/City Council, PAC, RDC	*	*	*	*	*	CU

PROJECTS	Estimated Cost/Resp.	CFY 06	CFY 07	CFY 08	CFY 09	CFY 10	ROA
1.1.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES							
Expand Blue & Gray Museum	\$100,000/City Council	*	*				NA
Resurface approximately 35 miles of city streets; Associated transportation improvements: sidewalks, parking, etc.	\$1.5 million/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CD
Turkey Creek Flood Control Project	\$1.2 million/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*		CU
Airport Improvements: Runway extension and Expand Apron; Install MALS-F & PAPI's systems	\$2.5 million/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*			PD
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Promote 4 laning SR 129 to Ocilla	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Reconstruct old City Hall	\$1.5 million/City Council	*					CD
Renovate Carnegie Building for Arts	\$500,000/City Council	*					CD

PROJECTS	Estimated Cost/Resp.	CFY 06	CFY 07	CFY 08	CFY 09	CFY 10	ROA
Renovate A, B & A Depot for museum expansion, & genealogy/local history library annex w/ 5311 office space	\$1 million/City Council			*	*		PD
Renovate Ford building façade for economic Development/Chamber	\$500,000/City, County, DDA, Chamber		*	*			NA
Expander sewer system for annexations	\$500,000/City, W, L & B	*	*				PD
Develop flagship park at Blue & Gray Park	\$200,000/City Council, County Commission	*	*				CU
Upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities	\$1.3 million/City Council, County Commission	*	*	*	*	*	CU
Expand creative signage plan addressing navigation and scenic considerations	\$50,000/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CD
Review existing services for better productivity, pro-activity and fee based operation where possible	Unknown/City Council	*	*	*	*	*	CU