

GREATER BEN HILL COUNTY 2031 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT
May 2010**



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Assessment is to present the foundation for the update of the 2031 Greater Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan. It provides a comprehensive review of the issues and opportunities that will affect the future growth of unincorporated Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. The Community Assessment includes an analysis and inventory of the existing Land Use, public policies and proposed revisions and capital improvements.

1.2 Preparation

The Community Assessment was prepared in compliance with the “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning” as set forth by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on May 1, 2005.

1.3 Scope

As required in the DCA Standards, the Community Assessment includes four basic components:

- 1) A list of issues and opportunities which the community wants to address.
- 2) An analysis of existing land use and development patterns.
- 3) An evaluation of the Community’s existing policies, actions, and development patterns for consistency with the State’s Quality Community Objectives.
- 4) An analysis of supporting data and information for seven different community elements: population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, intergovernmental coordination, and transportation.

The detailed statistical and quantitative findings of this assessment are included in the “Technical Addendum”.

2. STATEWIDE PLANNING GOALS

The State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has established the following goals to assist communities in implementing their Comprehensive Plan. These goals will serve as a guide for the development of the 2031 Greater Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan and its Community Agenda.

2.1 Economic Development Goal

To achieve a growing and balanced economy, consistent with the prudent management of the state's resources that equitably benefits all segments of the population.

2.2 Natural and Cultural Resources Goal

To conserve and protect the environmental, natural and cultural resources of Georgia's communities, regions and the state.

2.3 Community Facilities and Services Goal

To ensure the provision of community facilities and services throughout the state to support efficient growth and development patterns that will protect and enhance the quality of life of Georgia's residents.

2.4 Housing Goal

To ensure that all residents of the state have access to adequate and affordable housing.

2.5 Land Use and Transportation Goal

To ensure the coordination of land use planning and transportation planning throughout the state in support of efficient growth and development patterns that will promote sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural resources and provision of adequate and affordable housing.

2.6 Intergovernmental Coordination

To ensure the coordination of local planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, with neighboring communities and with state and regional plans and programs.

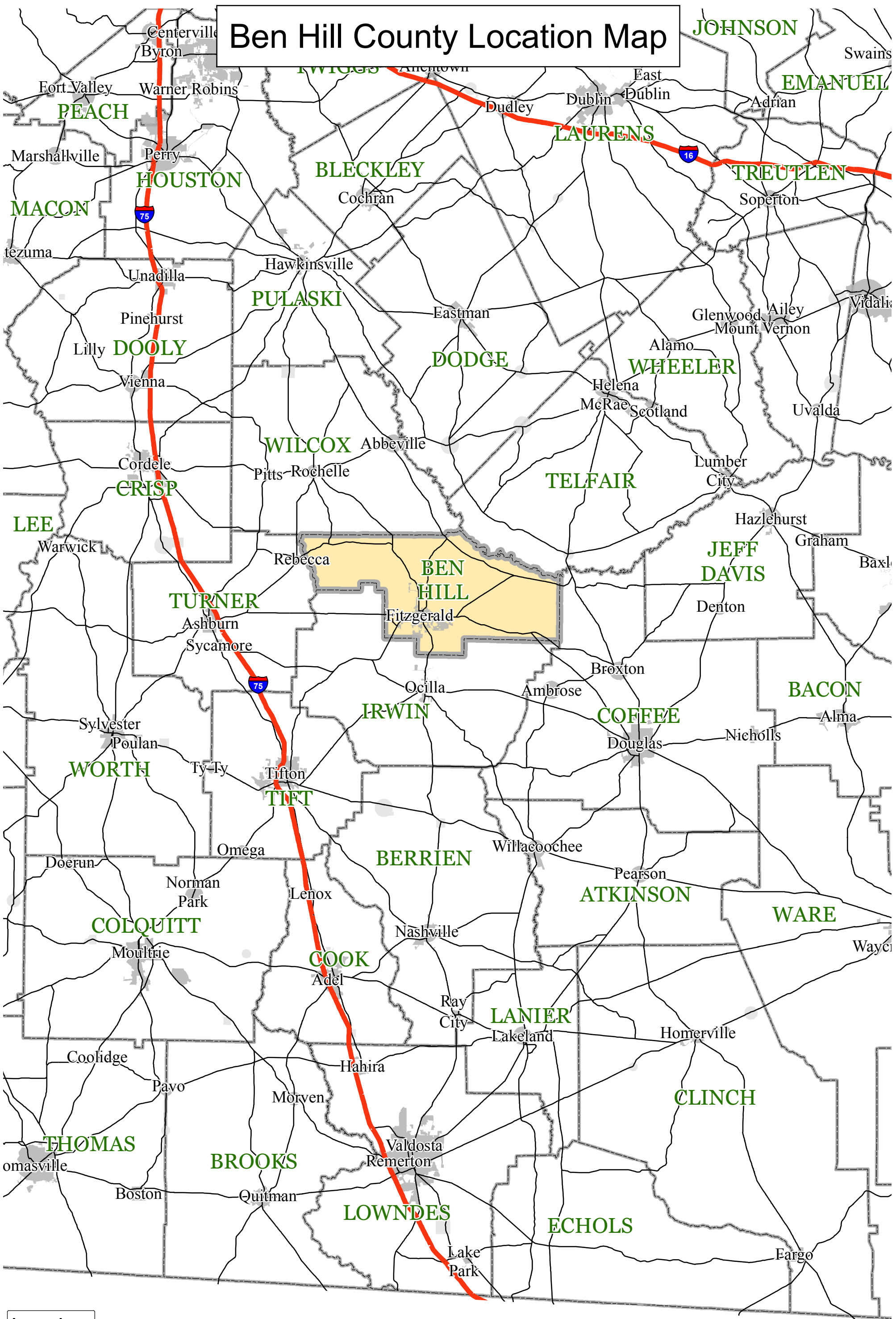
3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Ben Hill County is located in south central Georgia, and is bordered to the south by Irwin County, to the west by Turner County, to the east by Coffee County and to the north by Wilcox and Telfair Counties. Its population in 2007 was estimated to be 17,650. Ben Hill County encompasses a 254 square mile area. The City of Fitzgerald serves as the county seat and is the only incorporated community within the county.

Ben Hill County was the 146th county formed in Georgia in 1906 from Irwin and Wilcox Counties. It was named for Benjamin Harvey Hill, a former Confederate and U.S. Senator. Ben Hill County is in the 13th State Senatorial Districts, the 144th and 154th State House District and the 8th U.S. Congressional District.

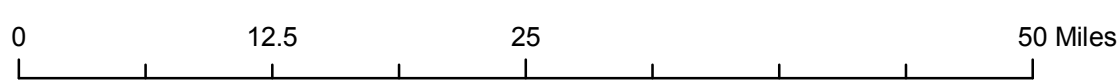
The City of Fitzgerald is the county seat of Ben Hill County and was created in 1895 with the purchase of 50,000 acres by the American Tribune Soldiers Colony Company, a company formed by a newspaper editor and veteran's pension attorney by the name of P.H. Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald envisioned a new southern colony for aging Union soldiers where they could find relief from the bitter northern winters and oppressive drought which were plaguing the country. The City encompasses 7.3 square miles and its population at the time of the 2000 census was 8,758.

Ben Hill County Location Map



Legend

- Highways
- Cities
- Ben Hill



A compass rose indicating North (N), South (S), East (E), and West (W). To the right of the compass is a logo consisting of a stylized leaf or flame shape.

4. ISSUES and OPPORTUNITIES

In order to be a realistic and implemental document, the Comprehensive Plan must identify and provide Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald with workable goals, objectives and policies (= strategies) which will address the issues facing the communities and embrace opportunities that present themselves to all of Ben Hill County. The Technical Addendum of this document was the first step taken towards identifying these issues and opportunities. The quantitative information detailed in the addendum is summarized in the Community Assessment in a series of concise issue and opportunity statements. However, this series of statements is only a preliminary list of potential issues. The list will be further studied, refined and prioritized during subsequent local public and technical planning efforts and a final list of locally defined issues and opportunities for Ben Hill County will be included and published in the Community Agenda, which is the third and final portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following issues and opportunities are organized according to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Population
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Facilities and Services
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Intergovernmental Coordination

The issues and opportunities statements included here were presented and discussed with the Stakeholder Committee. This committee was formed to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan. These statements were also presented during public participation workshops in the planning process. Through these discussions and the resulting feedback the final list of issues and opportunities was developed for the Community Agenda as well as a series of strategies and implementation programs. These strategies and implementation programs were then the basis for the Short Term Work Program component of the Comprehensive Plan.

4.1 Population Change

Issues:

- **Retention of younger population segment:** In order to provide a sustainable population base and workforce, initiative needs to be taken to provide quality education and job opportunities for the younger population to minimize the desire to leave the area.
- **Loss of young families:** Minimal job opportunities and a noncompetitive pay structure is driving young families out of the county.
- **Hispanic Immigration:** The introduction of a large Hispanic population (4,000 – 5,000 residents) has created unique challenges to the provision of public services for this community.

Opportunities:

- The peaceful and slow paced atmosphere of the county is attractive to retirees, and could be promoted as a retirement community. Elderly populations can enhance a community's economic base and provide a largely untapped knowledge and experience base for the labor market.

4.2. Economic Development

Issues:

- **Slow Growth:** Countywide growth and development have slowed significantly due to the current economic downturn.
- **Low Paying Jobs:** There is a predominance of low-paying jobs within the county.
- **High Unemployment:** Currently, the county has a high unemployment rate.
- **Insufficient Tax Revenues:** Both the City and the County do not currently have sufficient tax revenues.
- **Loss of Younger Population:** The area is not attracting or retaining young professionals.
- **Lack of Retail Commercial Businesses:** There is a lack of commercial retail facilities in the County.
- **State Misconception:** There is a misconception of the area on the part of the State when funds are being distributed to the local jurisdictions.
- **Financial Problems at the Hospital:** The hospital is suffering financial problems. Without the hospital the County will not be able to provide a minimum quality of life for its residents.

Opportunities:

- We need to attract more industry jobs with higher salaries.
- Support and develop the county's substantial agricultural economy.
- Improve public education and provide more educational opportunities to enhance the workforce.
- We are a certified literacy community.
- Recruit new businesses, especially in the biomass and alternative fuels industry.
- The County is a member of the Work Ready Program.
- The community participates in the East Central Regional Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP) to improve literacy levels of children, families and workers.
- Expand the tax base by attracting more businesses and increasing property values.
- Attract the emergency housing construction industry.
- Utilize the airport to attract more industry and a 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.
- Both the City and the County are entrepreneurial friendly communities.
- There are significant outdoor recreational opportunities within the County that are attractive to outdoor sportsmen.
- The presence of the local hospital is attractive to businesses.
- The school system is high quality all the way from Pre-K to college.
- There is a vast planted pine-timber industry within the County.
- The county has extensive and easily accessible railroad lines.

4.3 Housing

Issues:

- **Vacant Parcels:** There are several vacant parcels downtown.
- **Housing Debris:** Several houses and neighborhoods have a predominance of housing debris on patios or in the yards.
- **Lack of Housing Choices:** There is a lack of housing choices within the County.
- **Outdated Zoning Ordinance:** The zoning ordinance is outdated and does not meet the needs of the community.

Opportunities:

- Eliminate or rehabilitate older homes that are contributing to an atmosphere of slum and blight, and create more affordable housing.
- There is an active Downtown Infill Development Program.
- Provide a diversity of housing choices in various locations throughout the county.
- A successful demolition program that has removed 300 blighted homes and constructed 450 new homes.
- Successful downtown façade renovation program that has renovated 30 facades.
- Active support of the 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.
- Restoration and renovation efforts can have a domino effect, bringing in new investments which will increase revenues.
- Encourage redevelopment through private/public partnerships.

4.4 Natural Resources

Issues:

- **Lack of Marketing:** The natural resources of the county are not effectively marketed.
- **Public/Private Shoreline Conflicts:** Adjacent public and private use of the shorelines of the Alapaha and Ocmulgee Rivers often create conflicts.
- **No Natural Resources Inventory:** Neither the city nor the county has conducted a natural resources inventory, and therefore resources may be lost without our knowledge.

Opportunities:

- Ben Hill County has a great supply of groundwater resources.
- Create a long range utility plan to protect groundwater resources.
- The county is bordered by both the Alapaha and the Ocmulgee Rivers.
- There is a bird viewing area behind the hospital.
- There is a large wetlands area at Paulk Park, including a wetlands walking trail and bird sanctuary.

- There are significant amounts of hunting lands throughout the county.
- Two Wildlife Preserves: Horse Creek and Mobley Bluff.
- Several public fishing docks throughout the county.

4.5 Cultural Resources:

Issues:

- **Historic Preservation Map/Guide:** The development of a regional Historic Preservation Tourism map/guide could help promote tourism by encourage people to combine day trips into a several day historic preservation tour.

Opportunities:

- The City of Fitzgerald is well known for its historic resources.
- The Arts Council is very active and can be more heavily utilized and promoted.
- The Grand Theater is a unique resource, with historic ties to the Fox Historic Theater in Atlanta.
- The Carnegie Center provides great opportunities for the enjoyment of art and musical performances.
- The Chicken Festival captures the whimsical and fun loving atmosphere that the presence of the local wild chicken population brings to the City of Fitzgerald.
- The Grand Homecoming is a weeklong reunion for the local African American community that occurs every three years.
- The civil war connection create a unique historical background for the City of Fitzgerald, which is preserved in the Blue and Gray Museum
- The presence of a full time seminary at the Brian Theological Seminary presents unique opportunities.
- The presence of several historic cemeteries, including:
 - Evergreen Cemetery
 - Fitzgerald Cemetery
 - Westwood Cemetery
 - Kiokee Cemetery

4.6 Community Facilities and Services

Issues:

- **Improvements and Expansion to the Water and Sewer Lines:** Water and sewer line expansions are needed throughout the county.
- **SR 107 is only 2 lanes:** SR 107 needs to be four laned to accommodate more traffic.
- **Improve the Transportation System:** The current transportation system is simple and lacks diversification.
- **Lack of Recreational Opportunities for Young People:** Young people (especially teenagers) do not have enough recreational opportunities within the county. Particularly, the city and the county need to develop the following facilities:
 - Multi-purpose recreational arena

- Public swimming pool
- Gymnasium
- **Lack of Opportunities for Transportation Disadvantaged:** People that cannot drive do not have adequate transportation options within the county.
- **Lack of Maintenance of Public Buildings and Facilities:** Several public buildings are in need of immediate repair and maintenance, including the following structures:
 - Federal Building
 - Jail
 - Library
 - Grand Theater
 - Carnegie Center

Opportunities:

- Create a long range utility plan to protect groundwater resources.
- The County has a large water capacity.
- The County has water and sewer lines in place for future development.
- Presence good EMS services.
- Create an advisory Board for the EMS Services.
- Develop a comprehensive Emergency Plan.
- The County has quality schools and a quality education system.
- Create an assessment survey for public transportation.
- Develop a public transportation system.
- County Airport has an extended runway and significant capacity.
- There is a state of the art Senior Citizen Center.
- The county has several railroad spurs.
- Maintain the quality of the existing hospital system which includes state-of-the-art baby delivery suites

4.7 Land Use and Development

Issues:

- **Small Size:** The County's small size requires more focus on quality of development versus quantity development in order to create higher land values and growth to the tax base.
- **Incompatible Uses and Farmland Loss:** Need to plan to minimize incompatible uses and protect farmland uses.
- **Lack of dining and entertainment:** There are not enough dining and entertainment uses within the County to keep people spending money within the county after working hours.
- **Lack of Community Pride and Beautification Efforts:** We need to help develop more community pride among local residents, as well as increasing efforts at beautification of the community.
- **Lack of Commercial Retail Businesses:** Without sufficient retail and commercial businesses, local residents end up shopping outside of the County, and thus the County loses potential revenues.
- **Outdated Zoning Ordinance:** The Zoning Ordinance was developed in the 1980s, and no longer

serves the needs of the community.

Opportunities:

- Planned Development regulations can be more widely utilized.
- Plan for residential subdivisions by defining where they are most suitable and needed.
- Develop subdivision regulations to ensure compatibility of uses.
- Promote “togetherness” for a higher quality of life.
- Utilize the presence of water and sewer lines to direct growth.
- Collaborate between the city and the county to plan for future utilities.
- County has a high quality rural lifestyle.
- Review and update the zoning regulations to fit the City and the County better than the current regulations.

4.8 Intergovernmental Coordination**Issues:**

- **Lack of Coordination on Annexation:** The city and the county need to work together to annex some properties.
- **Lack of Coordination with School District:** The city, county and the school district need to work together better.
- **Poor Relations with Southerly Neighbors:** Relations with neighboring communities to the south could be improved.
- **Regionalization of Services:** Increasing regionalization of the provision of services is problematic, causing longer commutes and loss of local control, particularly in the areas of healthcare, utilities and education.
- **State Coordination:** More and better coordination with the state is needed.

Opportunities:

- Outreach efforts could be increased to involve more people and recruit volunteers.
- Collaboration between the City and the County will help planning for future utilities.
- There is good community leadership.
- The Mayor’s office has an open door policy.
- An Agreement with the Hospital Authority would foster closer coordination.
- Coordination with Tift and Coffee County regarding the provision of services could eliminate duplication of services and encourage the provision of complementary services.

5. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LAND USE and DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

In order to adequately develop Ben Hill County's vision for future development, an understanding of its historic development and existing land use patterns is necessary. For a future vision to be achievable, it must be grounded in the reality of the current environment. This section provides a brief synopsis of the historical development of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald, an analysis of the Existing Land Use, and a discussion of the development patterns including any Character Areas and Areas which may require Special Attention during the planning process.

5.1 Existing Land Use

An existing land use map is a representation of what is on the ground at any given point in time. For the purpose of this analysis, Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald's Current Land Use Maps (Map 5-1 through 5-2) were created based on information from residents, physical site visits and information received from the Ben Hill County Tax Assessor's Office. The depicted uses may or may not be accurately reflected by the property's current zoning classification.

Table 5-1: Current Land Use Categories

USE	OVERVIEW
Agriculture/Forestry	Land dedicated to farming, agriculture or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.
Commercial	Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of densities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building. Office uses may be separated from other commercial uses such as retail, service or entertainment.
Industrial	Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.
Parks/Recreation/ Conservation	Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. May be publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, parks, preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or other similar uses.
Public/Institutional	State, federal or local government uses and institutional land uses. These include city halls, government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals. Also includes major transportation routes, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, ports, or other similar uses.
Residential	The predominant use of land within this category is for single family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.
Transportation/ Communication/Utilities	Includes major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, ports or others similar uses.

Table 5-2: Current Land Use Unincorporated Ben Hill County, February 2010

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Agricultural/Forestry/Conservation	135,170.37	88.06%
Commercial	875.42	0.57%
Industrial	264.76	0.17%
Residential	16,883.37	11.00%
Utilities	153.80	0.10%
Unknown	155.80	0.10%
Total	153,503.53	100%

Source: Ben Hill County Tax Assessor, February 2010

Table 5-3: Current Land Use City of Fitzgerald, February 2010

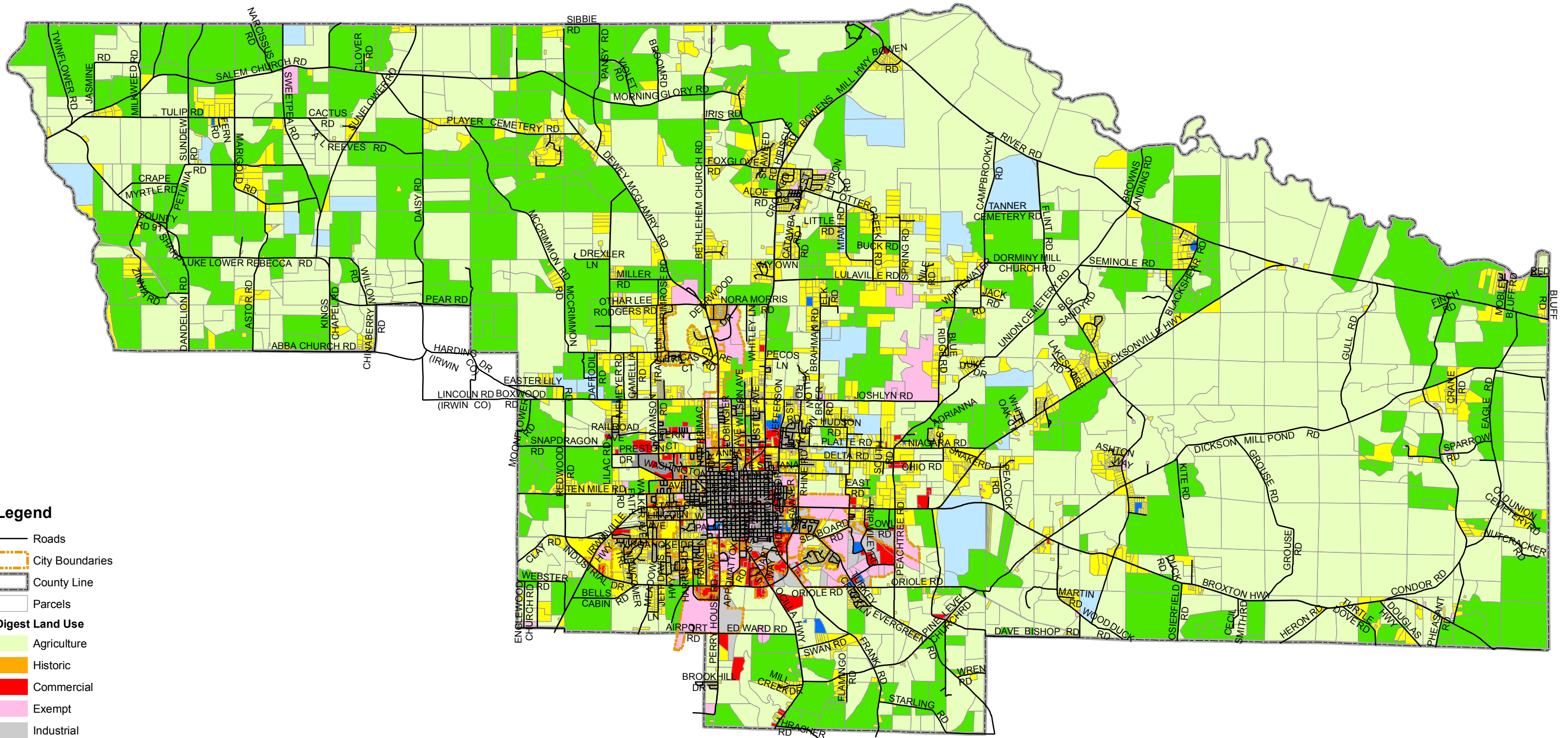
Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Agricultural/Forestry/Conservation	1,946.36	39.68%
Commercial	519.59	10.60%
Industrial	427.60	8.72%
Residential	1,908.53	38.91%
Utilities	17.97	.37%
Unknown	85.30	1.74%
Total	4,905.65	100%

Source: Ben Hill County Tax Assessor, February 2010















With approximately 88%, unincorporated Ben Hill County has a large percentage of its land use in agriculture. Residential development accounts for about 11% of the land use. This is the second major land use in the unincorporated area. Commercial and industrial uses cover less than 1% of the area. Missing data accounts for 0.1% of the total acreages of Ben Hill County land uses.

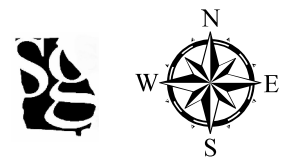
The City of Fitzgerald's residential land uses are very close in acreage with agricultural acreage at approximately 38.91% and agricultural land at 39.68%. Commercial land uses are about 11% while industrial trails at approximately 9%. Missing data accounts for 1.74% of the total acreages of Fitzgerald's land uses.

Ben Hill Digest County Land Use

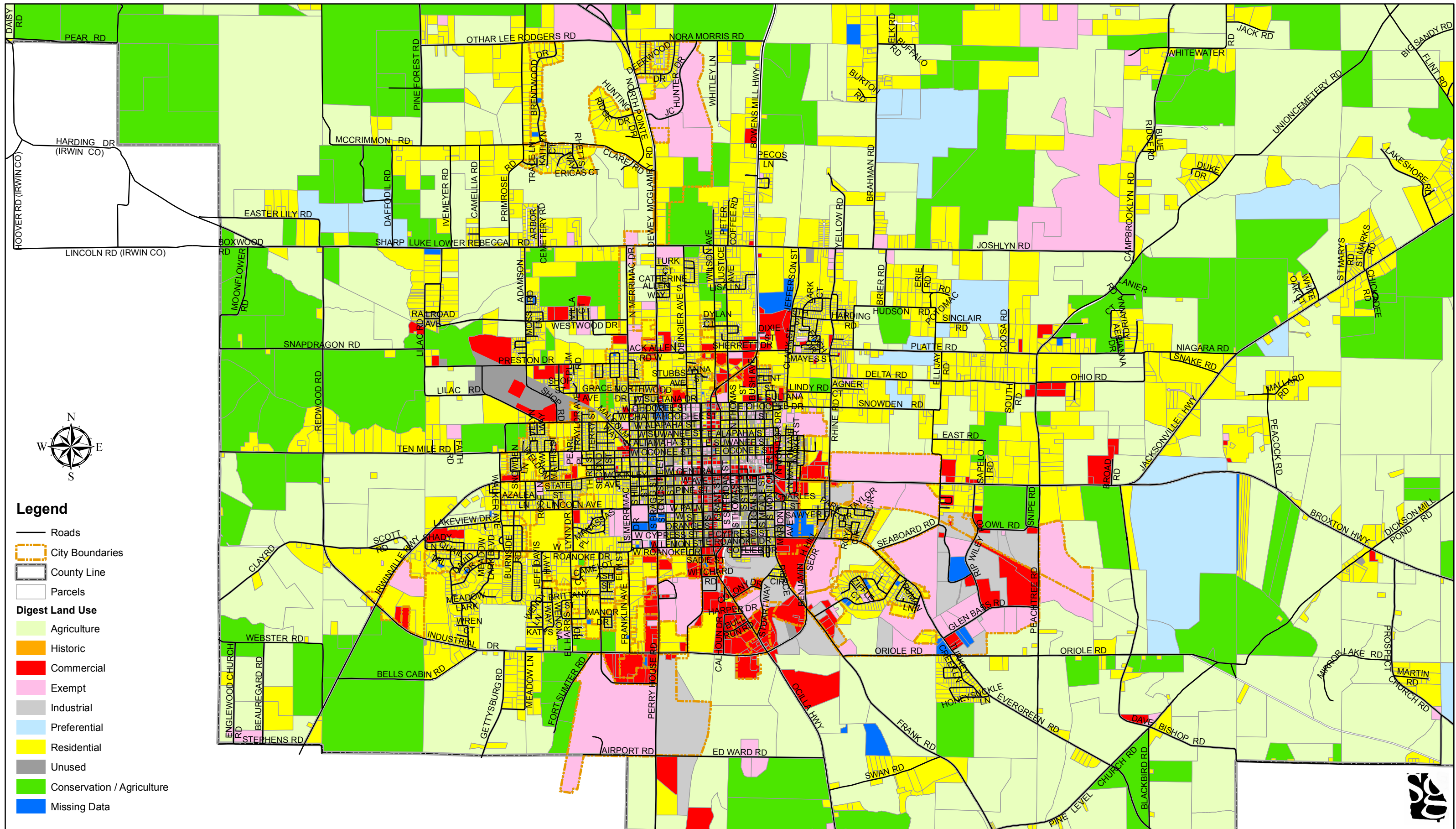


Legend

-  Roads
-  City Boundaries
-  County Line
-  Parcels
- Digest Land Use**
-  Agriculture
-  Historic
-  Commercial
-  Exempt
-  Industrial
-  Preferential
-  Residential
-  Unused
-  Conservation / Agriculture
-  Missing Data



City of Fitzgerald Digest Land Use



5.2 Areas Requiring Special Attention

Ben Hill County's growth and development will have significant impacts on its existing residents, natural and cultural resources, community services and facilities and its infrastructure. This section summarizes the locations of some of the likely impacts of growth, including delineating areas where growth should be restricted or even completely avoided. Also included are areas in need of additional investment because of aesthetics, disrepair, pollution or other special need. These would primarily be areas where growth and redevelopment should be directed to.

Map 5-3 shows the general location of these areas.

The Department of Community Affairs has identified the following seven special conditions and requires that they be addressed if they exist within the area of influence:

- Areas of significant natural resources include wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and river corridors particularly where they are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development;
- Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur.
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation facilities.
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors).
- Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated such as Brownfield.
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites).
- Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole.

Through a review of Ben Hill County's Existing Land Use and the Technical Addenda, the following areas have been determined to warrant special attention:

5.2.1. Significant Natural and/or Cultural Resources

- Existing River Corridors and Floodplains:
 - Ocmulgee River
 - Alapaha River
- Wetlands:
 - Airport Farms: Surrounding the airport are several farms with creeks, ponds and other wetland areas. The areas may be susceptible to impacts from the expansion of the airport and the development of the surrounding lands, particularly those slated for industrial development. These properties need protection from any potential adverse impacts through such measures as buffers, stormwater management best practices, and onsite detention or retention. These properties are included in the Airport/Industrial Area Requiring Special Concern.

- Floodplains
 - FEMA mapped areas
- Watersheds
 - Atlantic/Gulf watershed
 - Headwaters of the Satilla River at Jacksonville/Broxton Road
 - Headwaters of Otter Creek
- Downtown Fitzgerald: The original 1 ¼ mile city grid is bordered by Sultana Drive, Monitor Drive, Merrimac Drive and Roanoke Drive. Within this historic downtown area the predominance of structures were constructed before 1915, and reflect the various architectural styles of the turn of the century era. The area contains the historic Grand Theater and many historic residential and commercial structures.

Over the years the City has diligently worked to preserve and maintain the integrity of the downtown area, including both the commercial core along the major arterials and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Part of these efforts includes the significant continuing redevelopment efforts within the deteriorating areas of the downtown residential neighborhoods. The area requires continued redevelopment efforts and architectural compatibility review for new development. Furthermore, the maintenance of consistent and compatible historic signage and streetscape regulations is important to continue the preservation of the historic integrity of the downtown area.

5.2.2. Areas where Development or Change of Land Use is Likely to Occur

- Airport/ Industrial Zone – The airport currently lies between Fort Sumter Road, Perry House Road and Airport Road on the south side of the City. Plans have been developed to expand the airport runway to accommodate larger planes. In addition, there are lands surrounding the airport which are viable for new development, and upon which the City and the County are encouraging new growth. To the east across Perry House Road is the old GM Parcel, a vacant industrial site which is likely to redevelop, particularly considering the expansion of the airport. To the south are more industrial properties, including the old Delphi site that was bought by the City for future development. In addition, the new industrial park is located to the south at the county line off of Perry House Road. These areas need to be provided with sufficient water, sewer and transportation services to accommodate the new growth. In addition, the surrounding properties are predominantly forestry lands, with some residential and agricultural lands intermixed. Sufficient buffering and other land management requirements need to be established to ensure the surrounding properties can continue their current land use, and that future development is compatible with the anticipated airport expansion and industrial development.

5.2.3. Areas where the pace of development may outpace the availability of public facilities and services

None identified

5.2.4. Areas of disinvestment, needing redevelopment, or improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness

- Monitor Drive: On the east side of the original boundaries of the city there are old and abandoned warehouses and buildings associated with the intersection of the railroad line and the main east-west road, East Central Avenue. The area is focused around Monitor Drive, and is currently underutilized and is in need of rehabilitation and infill. In addition, code enforcement needs to be actively utilized to encourage the upkeep and reuse of the lands.

5.2.5. Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

- **Delphi Site:** Across from the industrial park along Perry House Road there was formerly a Delphi battery plant. All the structures and facilities were demolished, and the property was sold to the City for future redevelopment. Environmental cleanup of the site was performed prior to the transfer of the property to the city. However, the site remains vacant and undeveloped. The City and the County continue to try and identify new industries to locate on the property. The site has been included within the boundaries of the Airport/Industrial Park Area Requiring Special Attention.
- **Railroad Yard:** Within the area of Shop Road and Washington Avenue there is the old railroad yard. While still being utilized, the area is in disrepair and is suspected of containing contaminated and polluted properties. Environmental assessment and potentially cleanup are needed to determine the current environmental condition of the properties, and to ready the lands for future development and redevelopment. In addition, the area is underutilized and should be considered for new expansions and developments, especially those requiring proximity to major transportation lines.

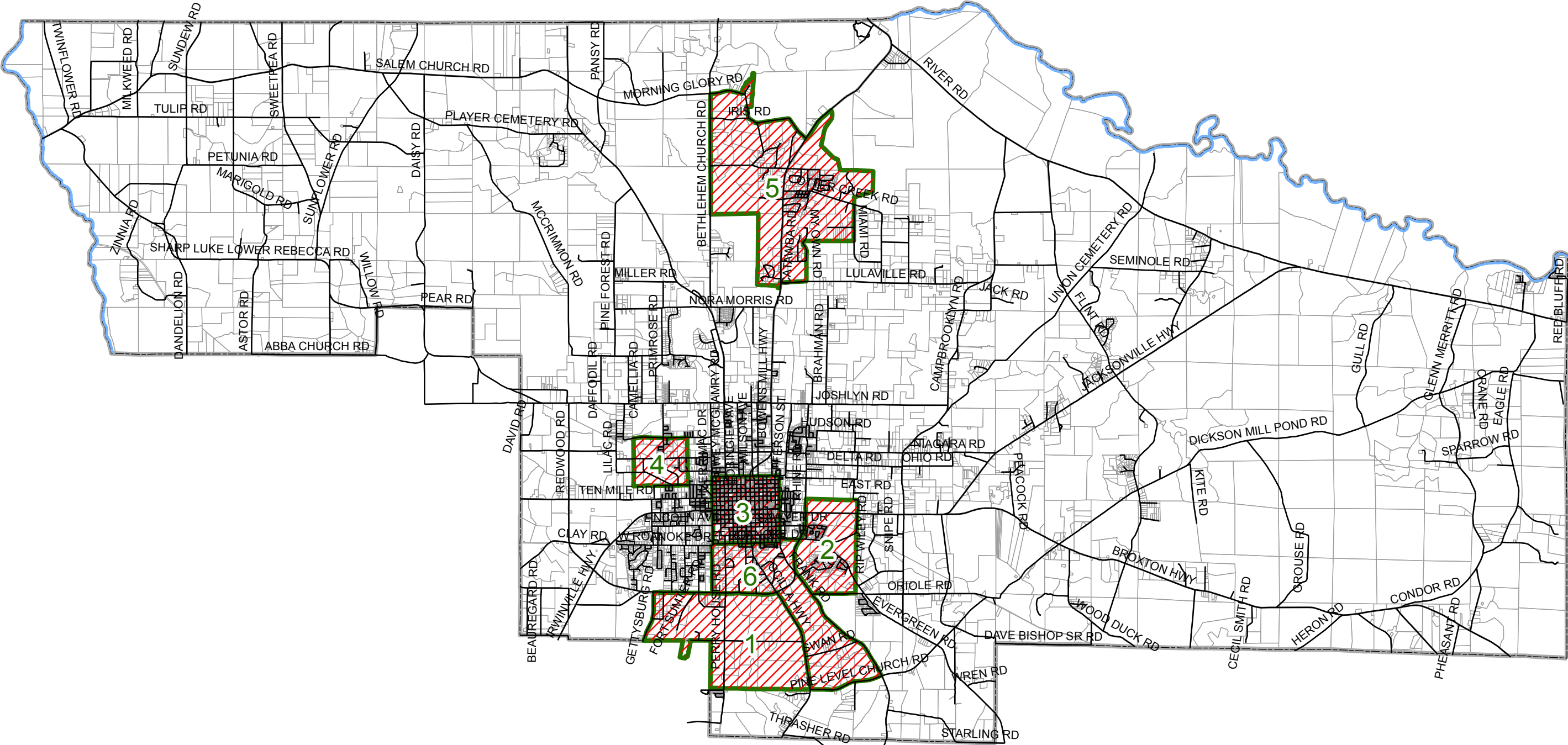
5.2.6. Areas with significant Infill Development Opportunities

Old GM Parcel: The property along the east side of Perry House Road between Airport Road and Benjamin Hill Drive was formerly owned by GM, but is currently vacant. Future development is likely considering the City and County's efforts and the proximity of the property to the airport. The site is included within the boundaries of the Airport/Industrial Park Area Requiring Special Attention.

5.2.7. Areas with high levels of poverty, unemployment and blight

None identified

Ben Hill County and City of Fitzgerald Areas Requiring Special Attention



- Legend**
- Roads
 - River 250' Buffer ARSA
 - ▨ Areas Requiring Special Attention
 - - - City Boundary
 - ▭ County Line
 - ▭ Parcels

- Areas Requiring Special Attention:**
1. Airport / Industrial Area
 2. East Fitzgerald
 3. Historic Fitzgerald
 4. Historic Railroad Depot
 5. Northside / Queensland
 6. South Corridor



5.3 Recommended Character Areas

The use of “Character Areas” in planning acknowledges unique visual and functional differences that exist today in the various areas of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. Character Areas are intended to pro-actively guide future development by putting in place policies and implementation strategies which are tailored to each area. It is important to recognize that the designation of a Character Area will reflect the defining character of the entire geographic area outlined, but may not be accurate for every single parcel in the area.

Recommended Character Areas can be used to more specifically define areas that:

- (1) Have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved;
- (2) Have the potential to evolve into unique areas; or
- (3) Require special attention because of unique development issues.

Table 5-4 provides a description of the proposed Character Areas for Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald and Maps 5-5 through 5-6 show their location.

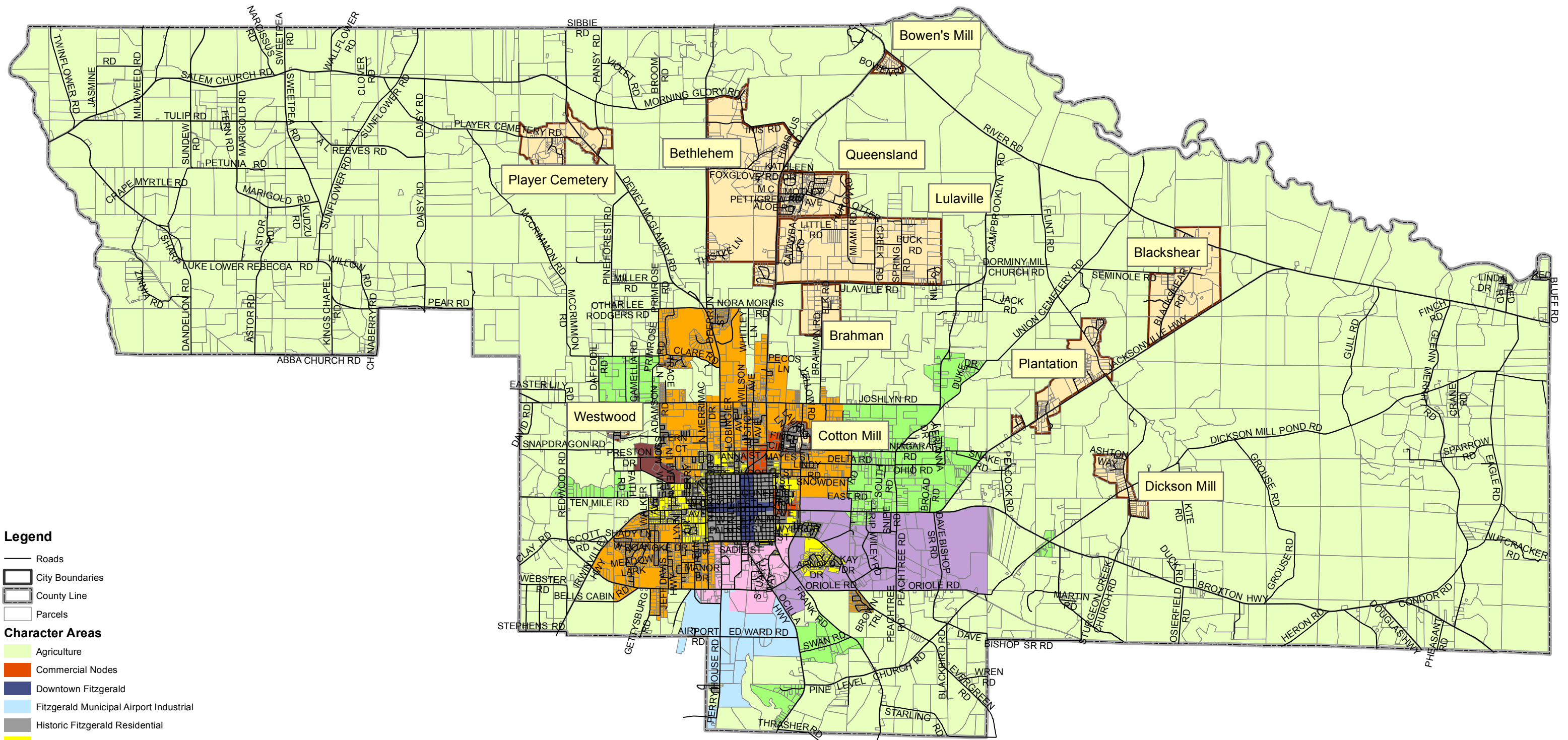
Recommended Character Areas	Description/Location	Development Strategy
Agricultural	The predominant uses are agricultural farm operations and related activities, forestry, natural resources conservation, groundwater recharge areas, and very low-density residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operations of varying sizes.	Preserve farming and conservation options as a viable and important part of the Ben Hill County economy. Apply right to farm principles and low density development to maintain agricultural and rural character.
Rural Residential	Rural land likely to face development pressures for lower density large lot type of development. These developments typically consist of large residential lot subdivisions and open space.	Provide connecting greenspace and recreational areas. Maintain lower density to preserve rural character with emphasis on rural residential use rather than farming activities. Include conservation subdivision planning.
Rural Villages	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	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

Recommended Character Areas	Description/Location	Development Strategy
	<p>intersection. Each community has been given a name (usually of historic origins) and labeled on the associated map. The areas include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Player Cemetary 2. Queensland 3. Bowen's Mill 4. Tallapoosa 5. Plantation 6. Dickson Mill Pond 	<p>frequent vehicular trips. Ensure there is adequate enforcement of existing codes to prevent the decline of any of these "villages".</p>
<p>InTown Residential</p>	<p>These areas are located within and immediately adjacent to the Fitzgerald city limits, and are characterized by smaller type residential lots in a more urban setting. They include predominantly single family residential, with some duplex housing.</p>	<p>Provide connectivity and walkability through continuous sidewalks, encourage infill development and limited mix of uses including educational uses, institutional uses and professional services to serve the immediate residential neighborhood without increasing traffic.</p>
<p>Suburban Fitzgerald</p>	<p>Mostly residential uses on smaller lots on the fringes of Fitzgerald and the more densely developed areas along the northern and southwestern boundaries of the city. These areas have a high reliance on the automobile, are predominantly single family with some townhouse developments and little commercial use.</p>	<p>Encourage lower density mixed used planned developments with emphasis on walkability, connectivity and the use of alternative modes of transportation.</p>
<p>Historic Fitzgerald Residential</p>	<p>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 architectural significance, and are located on small lots laid out in a grid pattern.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Downtown Fitzgerald</p>	<p>This area is located along the major historic transportation corridors of US Highway 129 and GA Highway 125 within the original city square. The area is</p>	<p>Develop preservation and rehabilitation programs to encourage the maintenance of the unique buildings, sites and character of the downtown.</p>

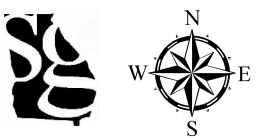
Recommended Character Areas	Description/Location	Development Strategy
	composed of a mix of mostly older residential, commercial and institutional structures on small lots laid out in a grid pattern.	Continue to develop new and existing events that revitalize the area by drawing people and businesses downtown.
Commercial Nodes	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 Ben Hill, these areas are located on the north and east sides of the city.	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.
South Fitzgerald Commercial Corridors	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.	Maintain this area of higher intensity commercial uses, and ensure its separation and buffering from existing residential uses and the downtown. In this manner, provide for convenient and accessible commercial services without impacting other more residential and historic uses.
Southeast Fitzgerald Industrial	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. 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.	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.
Old Railroad Depot Industrial	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.	Maintain the historical use of the area by encouraging redevelopment and infill to ensure it serves as an active component of the local economy.
Fitzgerald Municipal Airport	This area is located south of	Encourage the expansion of

Recommended Character Areas	Description/Location	Development Strategy
Industrial	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.	the airport and the development of new businesses both on the airport properties and along Perry House Road. Work with Irwin County to continue to promote development within the new industrial park to the south.

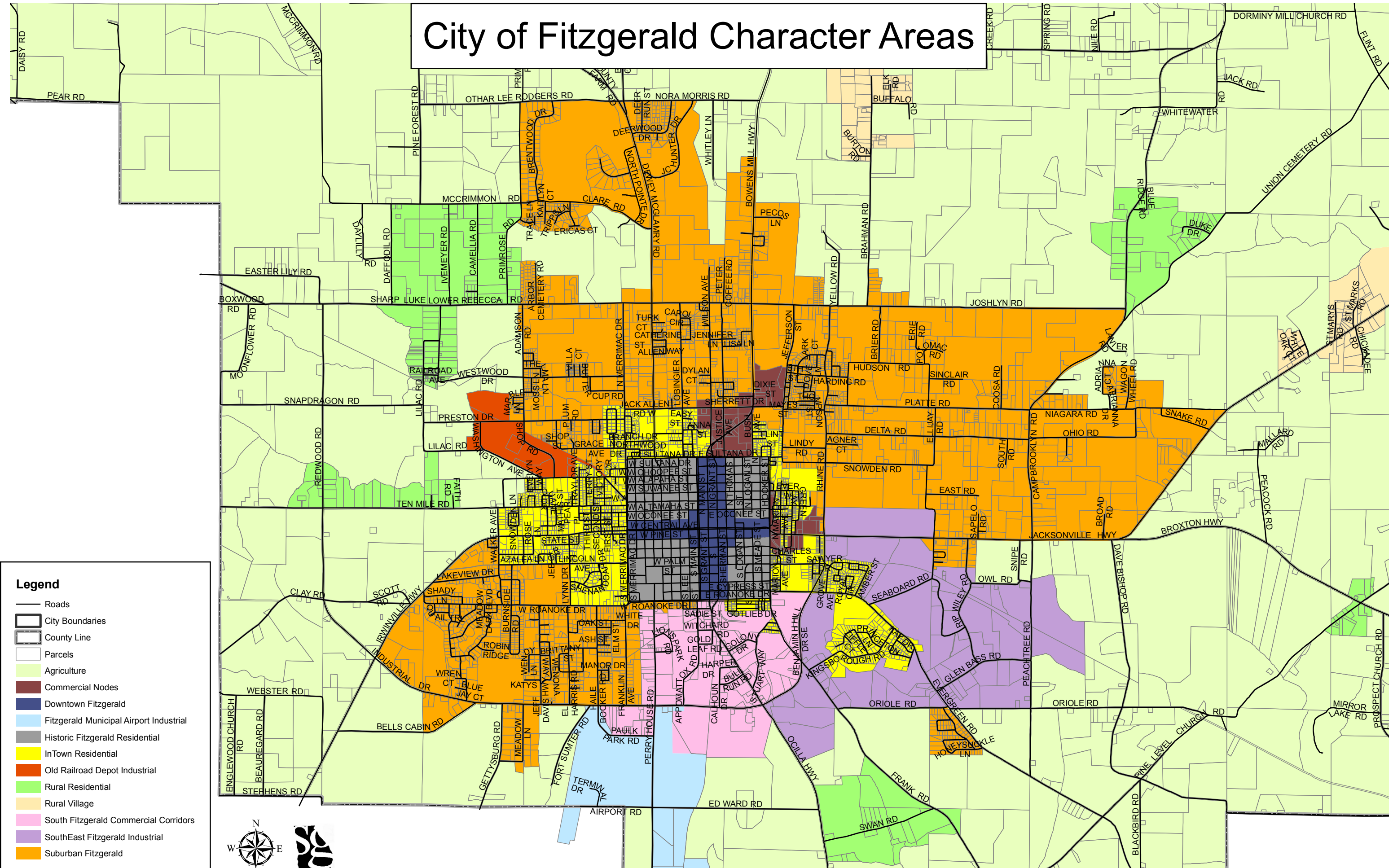
Ben Hill County Character Area Map



- 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 Character Areas



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



6. ANALYSIS of CONSISTENCY with QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

The Quality Community Objectives (QCO) as adopted by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) further define the statewide planning goals based on growth and development issues identified in local and regional plans throughout the state. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the consistency of Ben Hill County’s goals, objectives and policies with those objectives and to propose any necessary improvements.

Proposals for recommended improvements will have been discussed in the Public Participation Phase of this Plan and will be utilized as a basis for the implementation program included in the Community Agenda.

The analysis shows that Ben Hill County is in the process of addressing many of the Quality Community Objectives and will continue to do so with the development and implementation of existing and new planning strategies in the planning period.

6.1 Development Patterns

Traditional Neighborhoods			
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.		x	
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by-right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.		x	Possibly in FG downtown
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade bearing trees appropriate to our climate.			
4. Our community has an organized tree planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.	x		Needs more focus
5. We have a program to keep poor public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	x		
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would chose.	x		
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	x		
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	x		
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	x		
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	x		Some schools are, such as the high school and Head Start

Infill Development			
Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	x		Development Authority
2. Our community is actively working to promote Brownfield redevelopment.	x		
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfields redevelopment.		x	
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).		x	
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.		x	

Sense of Place			
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.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	x		Especially within the City of Fitzgerald
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.	x		
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	x		Especially in the City
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	x		
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		x	
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		x	

Transportation Alternatives			
Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.		x	Ben Hill County is coordinating with Fitzgerald, GDOT and DBHDD to develop a public

			transportation system.
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.		x	
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	x		
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	x		
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.		x	
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	x		The South Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	x		

Regional Identity			
Each region should promote and preserve a “regional identity”, or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.		x	
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	x		
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.)	x		
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s regional tourism partnership.	x		
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	x		
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	x		

6.2 Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation			
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.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	x		

2. We have an active historic preservation commission.	x		
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	x		

Open Space Preservation 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. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a green space plan.		x	
2. Our community is actively preserving green space, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.		x	
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	x		The County is working with NRCS
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.		x	

Environmental Protection Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, 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.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.		x	
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		x	
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.		x	
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	x		
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.	x		
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.		x	
7. We are using storm water best management practices for all new development.	x		
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	x		Floodplain ordinance and River Corridor ordinance

6.3 Social and Economic Development

Growth Preparedness			
Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.		x	
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		x	
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	x		
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and /or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	x	x	Zoning Codes need to be updated
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	x		The City has a CIE, and a SPLOST CIE does exist
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		x	
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	x		
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	x		Leadership program as well as open City Council and County Commission meetings
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	x		
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	x		

Appropriate Businesses			
The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skills job opportunities.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community’s strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	x		
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	x		

3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.	x		
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	x		

Employment Options			
A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	x		
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	x		
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	x		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	x		

Housing Choices			
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 (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	x	x	If they are attached, they are allowed in the City, the County allows accessory units in general.
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	x		
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above average).	x		
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.	x		Mostly within pre-existing areas of development in order to ensure compatibility.
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	x		
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	x		
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	x		
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.		x	The need for lower income housing is addressed with other forms of public/private housing partnerships.
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	x		
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.		x	

Educational Opportunities			
Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	x		
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	x		
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	x		
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	x		The opportunities are there, but are limited.

6.4 Governmental Relations

Regional Solutions			
Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	x		
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	x		
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security etc.	x		
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	x		

Regional Cooperation			
Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	x		
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	x		

3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to raft region-wide strategies.	x		
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	x		

7. SUPPORTING DATA AND INFORMATION

The validity of the identified Issues and Opportunities and recommended Character Areas was checked by evaluating data and information pertaining to the following seven elements:

- 1) Population
- 2) Economic Development
- 3) Housing
- 4) Natural Resources & Cultural Resources
- 5) Community Facilities and Services
- 6) Transportation
- 7) Intergovernmental Coordination

A 20-year planning time frame was employed for evaluating the listed data and information items. A variety of information and sources was used to compile the data including but not limited to interviews with city and county representatives, review of Census data, and review of past trends.

When evaluating this data and information, staff focused on:

- Whether it verified potential issues or opportunities identified above;
- Whether it uncovered new issues or opportunities not previously identified;
- Whether it indicated significant local trends that need to be brought to the attention of decision-makers;
- Whether it suggested adjustment of recommended character areas (e.g., to avoid intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas, etc.).

In order to ensure a concise and readable *Community Assessment* report, the following pages only include general statements and/or recommendations taken from the completed assessment. These statements pertain to potential issues or opportunities, significant trends affecting the community, or character area delineation.

**The complete evaluation including all data and maps
can be found in the respective Appendices A through G.**

APPENDIX A
POPULATION

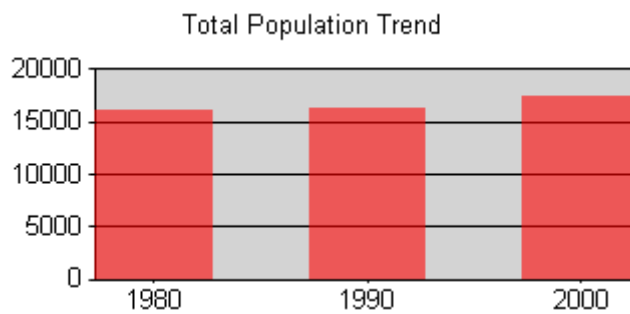
APPENDIX A: POPULATION

Understanding past population trends and patterns is an important first step towards understanding how the population may change in the future. This section presents detailed information on the population demographics for Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. This includes past trends using data provided by the U.S. Census and future predictions based on county and regional trends and development patterns.

Past Population Trends:

Between 1980 and 2000 the total population of Ben Hill County increased from 13,490 to 15,771; an increase of 2,281. (Figure A-1)

FIGURE A-1 BEN HILL COUNTY HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS



Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

FIGURE A-2 POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISON

Total Population Growth Comparison	Ben Hill	Fitzgerald	Georgia
2000 Population	17,484	9,032	8,186,816
2008 Population	17,635	9,185	9,685,744
Increase in Population	151	153	1,498,928
Growth between 2000 and 2008	0.9%	1.7%	18.3%

Source: U. S. Census 2000 & Census Estimates for 2008

In comparing the growth of Ben Hill County to that of the State of Georgia, it appears that Ben Hill County has experienced a positive growth rate from 2000 to 2008. While the county did not grow as rapidly as the State of Georgia as a whole, the County experienced growth increases in most areas. The difference in the growth rate between the County and the State of Georgia is probably very reasonable considering rapid growth in the Atlanta region and some other more metro areas of the state. For a mostly rural area, the growth in Ben Hill County from 2000-2008 seems to be accurate and reasonable. The City of Fitzgerald saw more growth during that period than did the County, at an increase of over 1.7 percent. This growth is probably due to the services and facilities in Fitzgerald.

FIGURE A-3 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population Projections											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Ben Hill	16,000	16,123	16,245	16,865	17,484	17,855	18,226	18,597	18,968	19,339	19,710
Fitzgerald	10,187	9,400	8,612	8,685	8,758	8,401	8,044	7,686	7,329	6,972	6,615

Source: <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2>

The population projections for Ben Hill County represent a slight increase in population for the County, but a decrease in population for the City of Fitzgerald. Thus, it is apparent that the projections anticipate a slight increase in the unincorporated Ben Hill County population. However, there were no large increases in population projected for any area of the County.

Age Distribution:

The most apparent trends in Ben Hill County and its cities involve:

- Overall loss of people from ages 0 to 34
- Growth of the 35 and older population within the unincorporated county
- Significant gains of people 35 to 54 years old.

The City of Fitzgerald has experienced small losses in all age groups except 35-54 from 1980-2000, and only moderate gains in the ages 35 to 54 groups. Table A-4 shows the historical age distribution of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. Graph A-5 shows the age distribution for Ben Hill County for the year 2000. Table A-6 shows age distribution comparisons for Ben Hill County versus the State of Georgia and the rest of the country.

TABLE A-4, HISTORICAL AGE DISTRIBUTION

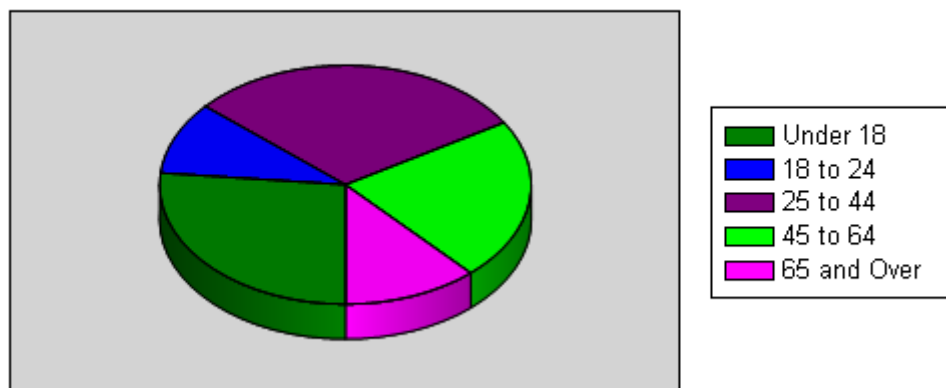
Age Distribution Trend	BEN HILL COUNTY			FITZGERALD		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
0-4 Years Old	1,376	1,293	1,282	889	736	701
5-13 Years Old	2,363	2,827	2,675	1,449	1,458	1,360
14-17 Years Old	1,186	862	852	734	477	418
18-20 Years Old	695	675	795	440	356	371
21-24 Years Old	1,023	762	895	664	397	473
25-34 Years Old	2,398	2,357	2,293	1,427	1,207	1,069
35-44 Years Old	1,646	2,292	2,423	986	1,084	1,182
45-54 Years Old	1,470	1,557	2,311	920	731	1,027
55-64 Years Old	1,614	1,334	1,630	1,018	718	777
65 And Over	2,229	2,286	2,328	1,660	1,448	1,380

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 1

According to Graph A-5 below, approximately half the county’s population is between 25 and 64. Based upon the trend indicating increases in that segment of the population, the number of people ages 35 to 54 is likely to increase, causing Ben Hill County to increase certain services and facilities to meet the needs of these age groups. It is also apparent that the 65 and older age groups is increasing within the county, which will create additional needs for more health care facilities and services, as well as for retirement homes and communities serving the older generation. Decreases in the age groups below 35 could be based on several factors. Young adults that graduated from high school could be moving on for different educational opportunities and some may leave to find other work opportunities. As they leave, there are less and less people of child bearing age, and subsequently the younger age groups also begin to decrease.

GRAPH A-5, AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR 2000

Age Distribution for Year 2000



It appears that in 2000, the greatest percentage of Ben Hill County’s population was below 18. However, as this age group is comprised of predominantly school age children, this population does not enhance the current workforce. The next largest age group within Ben Hill County is between 25 and 44 years of age. This should make for a very viable workforce and will also cause an increase in the younger population in the future years. With people having families and settling in Ben Hill County, the total population will see an increase based on this age group growing. There will be a need for more housing and development to accommodate this group and their families.

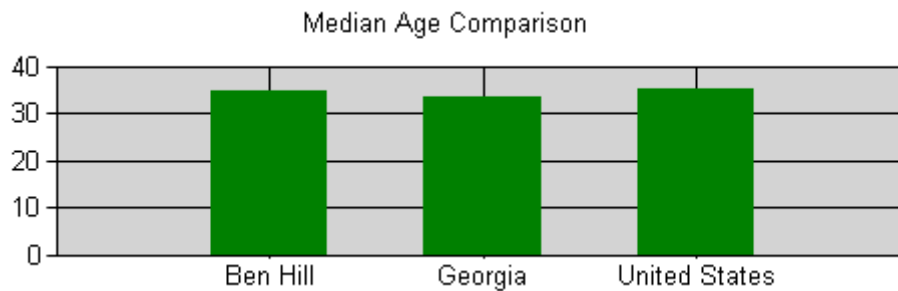
TABLE A-6, AGE DISTRIBUTION COMPARISON

Age Distribution Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Population	17,484	8,186,453	281,421,906
Percent below 18	27.5	26.5	25.7
Percent 18 to 24	9.7	10.2	9.6
Percent 25 to 44	27	32.4	30.2
Percent 45 to 64	22.5	21.3	22
Percent 65 and over	13.3	9.6	12.4
Median Age	34.8	33.4	35.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

The percentage of people 25 and older in Ben Hill County has increased moderately over time. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that this population is a very stable population and is merely increasing naturally. This age group should steadily contribute to the work force of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald.

TABLE A-7, MEDIAN AGE COMARISON BEN HILL COUNTY



The median age of people in Ben Hill County seems to be in line with the rest of the state and the United States as a whole. The Median Age in Ben Hill County is between 34 and 35, which shows a natural increase in a steady population.

Race and Ethnicity:

Table A-8 shows the racial composition trend of Ben Hill County based on use of 2000 Census data.

TABLE A-8 RACIAL COMPOSITION TREND

Racial Composition Trend	BEN HILL COUNTY			FITZGERALD		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
White Alone	11,133	11,098	11,059	6101	4507	4140
Black or African American Alone	4,833	5,088	5,706	4071	4076	4315
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	17	16	36	5	5	16
Asian or Pacific Islander	7	34	39	6	20	27
Other Race	10	9	634	4	4	260

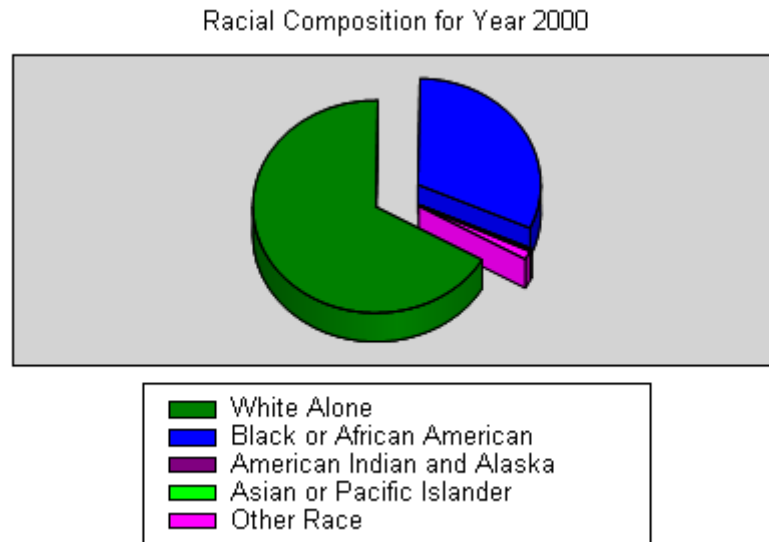
The most notable trend in the racial composition of the population is the significant increase in the “Other Race” category between 1990 and 2000. As additional tables below will indicate, this was due to a large increase in the Hispanic population between those years.

TABLE A-9 RACIAL COMPOSITION COMPARISON

Racial Composition Comparison (Percent)	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
White Alone	63.3	65.1	75.1
Black or African American Alone	32.6	28.7	12.3
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	0.2	0.3	0.9
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.3	2.1	3.6
Other Race	2.9	2.4	5.5

The racial compositions of the population in Ben Hill County are very much in line with the racial compositions in the rest of the State of Georgia and also in the United States. The US Census States that in 2008 Ben Hill County’s race was 66% white; a slight growth from 2000. The black population in 2008 made up 34% of the total; a slight increase from 2000. The American Indian and Alaska Native population experienced no change from 2000-2008, and the Asian population did not change significantly between 2000 and 2008.

A-10 RACIAL COMPOSITION FOR 2000



A-11 TREND OF HISPIANIC RESIDENTS

Hispanic Trend	1980	1990	2000
Persons of Hispanic Origin	82	78	800

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

While most of the race groups in Ben Hill County are increasing steadily, the Hispanic population segment appears to be increasing at a much faster rate. While the Hispanic population did not increase at all between 1980 and 1990, between 1990 and 2000 it increased tenfold. This growth is most likely due in part to revisions to the census form made for the 2000 Census, but also may be partly attributable to the large agriculture industry in Ben Hill County.

A-12 HISPANIC POPULATION COMPARISON

Hispanic Population Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
2000 Population	17,484	8,186,453	281,421,920
Hispanic Population	800	435,227	35,305,818
Percent Hispanic	4.58 %	5.32 %	12.55%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

While it does appear that the Hispanic population is growing at a very rapid rate in Ben Hill County, in comparison with the state of Georgia and the United States, Hispanic growth is quite normal and steady.

Income:

According to the U.S. Census the household income in 1990 for Ben Hill County was \$24,530.00. In 2000 the number rose to \$35,491.00. Therefore, household income rose by \$10,961.00.

Table A-14 shows how Ben Hill County compares to the State of Georgia in Household Income. Ben Hill County has a lower household income than the State of Georgia. The State of Georgia does appear to be much higher, but when looking at table A-13 it is evident that although this number is lower, it is increasing at a steady rate. The difference in Georgia as a State and in Ben Hill County is probably so large due to more metro areas being factored in to this count.

A-13 HOUSEHOLD INCOME, BEN HILL COUNTY

Household Income Trend	1990	2000
Income (\$)	24,975	36,572

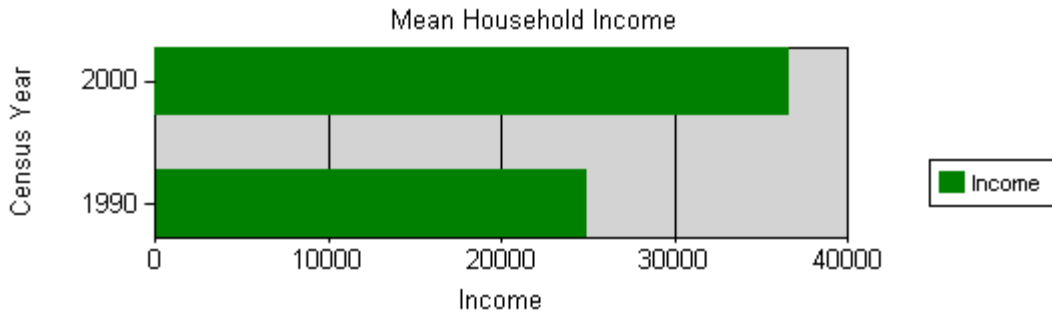
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

A-14 HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON

Household Income Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Income (\$)	36,572	80,077	56,675

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

A-15 HOUSEHOLD INCOME BEN HILL COUNTY, GA



In 1990 the household income for Ben Hill County was around \$25,000. By 2000, the household income had increased to about \$36,500. This growth is normal for a 10 year period. The cost of living increases each year, so household income naturally increases to meet this growth.

A-16 PER CAPITA INCOME TREND

Per Capita Income Trend	1990	2000
Per Capita Income Ben Hill County (\$)	9,300	14,093

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald have seen a rise in per capita income as shown in Table A-16. Per Capita Income is the total personal income divided by the total population and is often used to measure the personal wealth of a population. The per capita income compared to the state of Georgia is outlined in Table A-17.

A-17 PER CAPITA INCOME COMPARISON

Per Capita Income Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
2000 Per Capita Income (\$)	14,093	21,154	21,587

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

Ben Hill County’s per capita income for the year 2000 was less than the per capita income of Georgia and the United States. Comparing per capita income of a small rural area like Ben Hill County to the whole state is likely to not be the most accurate comparison due to the difference in income by industry. Georgia’s per capita income closely mirrors that of the Country, but Ben Hill County falls about \$7000 below either. The Bureau of Economic Analysis of the US Department of Commerce reports that Ben Hill County’s per capita income for 2007 was \$24,455. The 2007 per capita income for the State of Georgia was \$33,499.

Educational Attainment

Since 1980, fewer children have dropped out of school and more adults have pursued college educations and graduate degrees. Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald have both seen an increase in the number of people graduating from high school. Figure A-18 shows the educational attainment of Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald’s residents in 1980, 1990, and 2000.

A-18, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational Attainment Trend	BEN HILL COUNTY			FITZGERALD		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Less than 9th Grade	3,028	1,814	1,413	2,030	1,056	808
9th to 12th Grade (no diploma)	2,294	2,428	2,338	1,411	1,320	1,288
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	2,362	3,494	4,067	1,396	1,695	2,010
Some College (No Degree)	923	923	1,702	570	545	748
Associate Degree	NA	409	386		177	136
Bachelor's Degree	496	444	635	400	214	264
Graduate or Professional Degree	258	298	393	204	174	241

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

A-19, BEN HILL COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISONS

Educational Attainment Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Less than 9th Grade	12.92%	7.54%	7.55%
9th to 12th Grade (no diploma)	21.38%	13.86%	12.05%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	37.20%	28.71%	28.63%
Some College (No Degree)	15.57%	20.40%	21.05%
Associate Degree	3.53%	5.19%	6.32%
Bachelor's Degree	5.81%	16.01%	15.54%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.59%	8.30%	8.86%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

Compared to the State, Ben Hill County has a higher rate of high school graduates. Although the level of people receiving some form of higher education falls short compared to the state, the numbers are not terribly low. This data makes it apparent that the Ben Hill County School System and other educational agencies are doing their job to drive students to graduate from high school or earn a GED.

APPENDIX B
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX B: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A thorough understanding of the economic development characteristics can help to improve the overall economic wellbeing of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald, allow early planning for any future housing and education needs, and provide the basis to develop the necessary economic development tools to ensure sustainable growth in the targeted industries.

Employment by Industry

The Greater Ben Hill economy is based on 13 primary sectors. Table B-1 shows the total number of residents employed in each sector for Ben Hill County from 1980 to 2000.

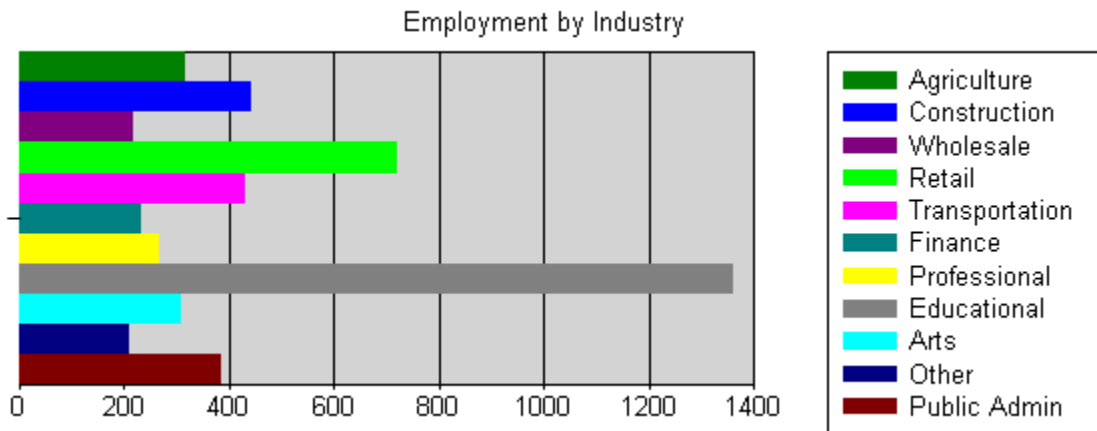
B-1 BEN HILL EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Employment by Industry	1980	1990	2000
Total Employed Civilian Population	5,945	6,678	7,387
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	267	336	318
Construction	416	309	444
Manufacturing	1,913	2,254	2,391
Wholesale Trade	175	165	218
Retail Trade	910	969	721
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	502	591	433
Information	NA	NA	92
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	287	294	235
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	135	195	268
Educational, health and social services	783	1,054	1,363
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	241	36	309
Other Services	139	329	211
Public Administration	177	146	384

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

The number of individuals employed in Ben Hill County has increased by 1,442 from 1980-2000. This represents steady growth in the employment sector as a whole over the past 20 years. This is due to general growth in Ben Hill County as a whole. Manufacturing has increased slightly for the 20 year period, which shows that manufacturing is a viable and growing economic engine in Ben Hill County. The largest percentage growth in a particular employment sector has been seen in the professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services, and in the educational, health, and social services.

B-2 BEN HILL EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

B-3 EMPLOYMENT COMPARISONS

While Manufacturing makes up a larger portion of the work force in Ben Hill County than in the State of Georgia, the number of people working in the industry has not experienced large increases over this 20 year period. The current state of the United States' Economy has affected many industries, largely from 2007-2009. Many communities have seen a loss in manufacturing careers and establishments.

Employment by Industry Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Total Employed Civilian Population	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	4.30 %	1.39 %	1.87 %
Construction	6.01 %	7.94 %	6.78 %
Manufacturing	32.37 %	14.81 %	14.10 %
Wholesale Trade	2.95 %	3.86 %	3.60 %
Retail Trade	9.76 %	11.97 %	11.73 %
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	5.86 %	6.02 %	5.20 %
Information	1.25 %	3.53 %	3.08 %
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	3.18 %	6.54 %	6.89 %
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	3.63 %	9.44 %	9.30 %
Educational, health and social services	18.45 %	17.59 %	19.92 %
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	4.18 %	7.15 %	7.87 %
Other Services	2.86 %	4.74 %	4.87 %
Public Administration	5.20 %	5.03 %	4.79 %

“The Community has done a very effective job of diversifying its industrial base. The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority (FBHDA), Ben Hill County Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority of Fitzgerald, and the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) continue to develop strategies and long range goals to better provide for economic development activities.

Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County have been able to attract a variety of Industrial businesses to the area, including businesses in the building products, food packaging, light metal works and distribution and transportation systems servicing and repair industries. Local companies in these industries employ over 2,500 people alone.

In addition, new businesses are coming to the area, including an alternative energy plant, Fitzgerald Renewable Energy, LLC. The plant will utilize locally produced wood waste fuel to generate 55 megawatts of renewable electric power. The plant is expected to come on line in 2012, and will employ 24 permanent employees, and is expected to generate approximately 100 additional jobs in related activities. Alternative

Energy and Technology associated companies are being targeted. These companies represent a long term approach to sustainable jobs. Also, on international basis a new business is seeking to develop a high protein, peanut based food product for malnourished peoples that is currently being heavily utilized within the southern African continent.” This project named “MANNA” will provide an international light on Fitzgerald Ben Hill area. The cooperative spirit among our elected leadership has provided a nice platform to be aggressive in economic development circles. We plan to grow our community into the future.

B-4, LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION, BEN HILL COUNTY

Labor Force Participation Trend	1990	2000
Total Males and Females	11,828	13,216
In Labor Force	7,126	7,891
Civilian Labor Force	7,126	7,884
Civilian Employed	6,678	7,387
Civilian Unemployed	448	497
In Armed Forces		7
Not In Labor Force	4,702	5,325
Total Males	5,267	6,185
Male in Labor Force	3,799	4,288
Male Civilian Labor Force	3,799	4,281
Male Civilian Employed	3,588	4,051
Male Civilian Unemployed	211	230
Male in Armed Forces		7
Male Not in Labor Force	1,468	1,897
Total Females	6,561	7,031
Female in Labor Force	3,327	3,603
Female Civilian Labor Force	3,327	3,603
Female Civilian Employed	3,090	3,336
Female Civilian Unemployed	237	267
Female In Armed Forces		
Female Not in Labor Force	3,234	3,428

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

B-5, LABOR FORCE COMPARISON

Labor Force Participation Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Total Males and Females	13,216	6,250,687	217,168,077
In Labor Force (percent)	59.71 %	66.07 %	63.92 %

It appears that the total number of males and females in the working force in Ben Hill County is comparable with the total number in the working force in Georgia and the US. While there are slightly lower numbers in Ben Hill County, it appears that the County is fairly in line in comparison to the larger picture (the State and the Country).

B-6, LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF WORK, BEN HILL COUNTY

Labor Force by Place of Work Trend	1990	2000
Total Population	16,245	17,484
Worked in State of Residence	6,550	7,143
Worked in County of Residence	5,637	5,660
Worked outside of County of Residence	913	1,483
Worked outside of State of Residence	34	60

B-7 LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF WORK for FITZGERALD

Labor Force by Place of Work Category	FITZGERALD	
	1990	2000
Total population	8,612	8,758
Worked in State of residence	3,228	3,341
Worked in place of residence	2,036	2,025
Worked outside of place of residence	1,192	1,316
Worked outside of state of residence	0	0

Examining where individuals work, it appears that approximately 1/3 of the work force in Ben Hill County is employed within Ben Hill County. Approximately 1/4 of the workforces who live in Fitzgerald also work in Fitzgerald.

Looking at Census Commuting Patterns, 21 percent of the 16 year old and older working class from Ben Hill County works outside of the county. The mean travel time for people who do not work at home was 10-15 minutes at the time of the last census.

B-8 COMMUTING PATTERNS

Geographic Area	Population 16 years and over—percent in labor force	Civilian labor force—Percent unemployed	Working 16 years and over			
			Percent in car pool	Percent using public transportation	Who did not work at home—mean travel time to work (minutes)	Percent worked outside county of residence
Ben Hill County	59%	7%	16%	1%	10-15	21%

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3

B-9 UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Location	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	
			Number	Rate
Georgia	4,702,210	4,217,108	485,102	10.3
Ben Hill	7,111	5,986	1,125	15.8
Turner	4,651	4,045	606	13.0
Irwin	3,860	3,297	563	14.6

Source: Georgia Department of Labor—December 2009

In comparing Ben Hill County’s unemployment rate with the rest of the State and the surrounding counties that are similar in size, Ben Hill County is slightly higher than Georgia, and closely in line with Turner and Irwin Counties. According the Georgia Department of Labor statistics, from December 2008 to December 2009, Ben Hill County’s unemployment rate increased from 15.3 to 15.8. Irwin County’s rate increased from 13.3 to 13.6, and Turner County’s rose from 9.3 to 13.0. With the current economic situation, many of Georgia’s Counties are facing increased unemployment rates.

Economic Resources

Development Agencies:

- *Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce:* The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary countywide association of the industrial, business, and professional leaders and concerned citizens in Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County working together to improve the economic well being, image, and livability of Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County.
- *Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority:* The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority (FBHDA) works to recruit new industry into the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County and also seeks to help existing businesses to expand. The FBHDA serves as the conduit for bond financing and project development.

Programs:

- *SGRC Loan Program:* The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's loan department offers in-house loans and Small Business Administration financing to businesses within the 18- county region including Greater Ben Hill County.
- *Workforce Investment Act Programs:* Various programs include the South Georgia Workforce Development Board, South Georgia CareerNET, area employers, and economic development organizations. The programs serve a 18-county region by providing job-skills training and education, establishing partnerships, and leveraging resources.
- *Department of Labor:* Through various programs, the department provides job matching for employers and job seekers, unemployment insurance, GED classes, a job-search resource center, assistance for individuals with disabilities, and education for migrant farm workers.

Major Employers

The Chamber of Commerce identified the following as the major employers in the Ben Hill County for 2009.

Top 10 Employers for Greater Ben Hill County

Ben Hill Co. Education Systems	525
Shaw Industries, M1	400
Dorminy Medical Center	375
Amercian Blanching	193
Modern Dispersions South, Inc.	135
Gilman Building Products	122
Watco Mechanical Service	120
Deep South (Winn Dixie)	114
Southern Veneer Products	107
East Central Technical College	100

APPENDIX C
HOUSING

APPENDIX C: HOUSING

Housing is not only an important resource for individuals and families; it is also an integral part of economic and community development. It is important to have a stock of affordable and quality housing that fits in with the character of the community. Substandard housing and a lack of affordable housing often show a relationship to crime, declining neighborhoods and many other social problems.

Following is a series of briefly discussed topics that provide a description of the existing housing conditions for Greater Ben Hill County.

Housing Types

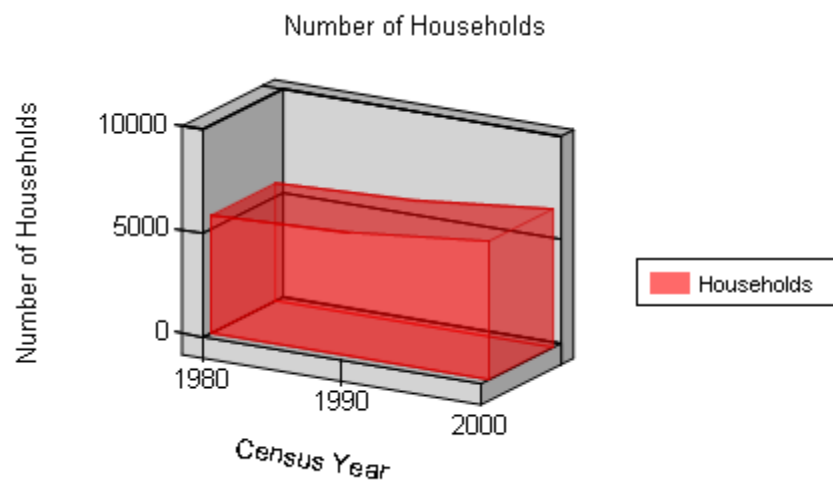
All housing type data comes from the US Bureau of Census, which identifies housing types by the amount of units per structure.

TABLE C-1, CURRENT AND PROJECTED HOUSING TYPES

Number of Households Trend	1980	1990	2000
Number of Households	5,670	5,972	6,673

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

GRAPH C-2, NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS



The number of households in Ben Hill County has increased by 1,003 or 18% from 1980-2000. With the population in Ben Hill County is slowly increasing, it is natural that the number of households would increase. From 1980-1990 the increase was only about 6%. This shows that most of the household growth occurred from 1990-2000. This is in line with the rate of population growth for Ben Hill County which increased the most from 1990-2000.

C-3, HOUSING TRENDS

Types of Housing Trend	1980	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	6,186	6,875	7,623
Single Units (detached)	4,694	4,511	4,619
Single Units (attached)	43	74	131
Double Units	308	276	312
3 to 9 Units	191	388	381
10 to 19 Units	61	115	69
20 to 49 Units	28		44
50 or more Units	92	83	138
Manufactured Home or Trailer	769	1,345	1,918
All Other		83	11

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

The total number of housing units in Ben Hill County increased by 24% from 1980-2000. From 1980-1990 the increase in housing units was 12%. Thus, the increase in housing units was distributed evenly over the 20 year period. The most significant increase in type of housing has been in the number of mobile homes in Ben Hill County. From 1980-2000 the number of manufactured homes increased by 1,149 (150%). It appears that there is a decent mix of housing stock in Ben Hill County, but if trends continue to follow the pattern they have been, there will be more manufactured homes than any other type of housing in the County. The current economic situation facing the entire country has highly affected home building and the number of manufactured homes produced and sold. There are many contractors with new homes which they are unable to sell and are being forced to rent, or otherwise the houses sit unoccupied. The US Census states that in 2008, the total number of housing units is 8,004. Comparing the growth from 2000-2008 with the previous year's growth, shows how the economy has slowed. Growth from 1980-1990 was 12% more housing units in Ben Hill County. From 1990-2000, the number of housing units grew 11%. From 2000-2008, the number of housing units only increased by 5%.

C-4, HOUSING TRENDS COMPARISON

Types of Housing Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Total Housing Units	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
Single Units (detached)	60.59 %	64.21 %	60.28 %
Single Units (attached)	1.72 %	2.87 %	5.56 %
Double Units	4.09 %	2.75 %	4.31 %
3 to 9 Units	5.00 %	9.32 %	9.41 %
10 to 19 Units	0.91 %	3.94 %	4.00 %
20 to 49 Units	0.58 %	1.76 %	3.34 %
50 or more Units	1.81 %	2.97 %	5.29 %
Manufactured Home or Trailer	25.16 %	12.03 %	7.57 %
All Other	0.14 %	0.13 %	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

Ben Hill County is similar to Georgia and the United States in percentages of household types. The largest difference seems to be in manufactured homes. While Georgia has only 12.03% of its total housing units as manufactured homes, and the United States 7.57% Ben Hill County has 25.16% of its total housing stock made up of manufactured homes. This percentage probably represents the need for affordable housing in Ben Hill County. If there were more affordable single family or multi-family residents, the number of manufactured homes in the area would likely decrease.

Age of Housing Units

It appears that Ben Hill County and its cities have had a good mix of housing over the past 60-70 years. As one would expect, the age of the housing stock is getting newer each year.

C-5, AGE OF HOUSING TREND

Age of Housing Trend	BEN HILL		FITZGERALD	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Built 1970 - 1979	1,653	1,374	763	766
Built 1960 - 1969	712	993	291	650
Built 1950 - 1959	1,048	967	717	613
Built 1940 - 1949	608	533	465	346
Built 1939 or earlier	994	775	686	541

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

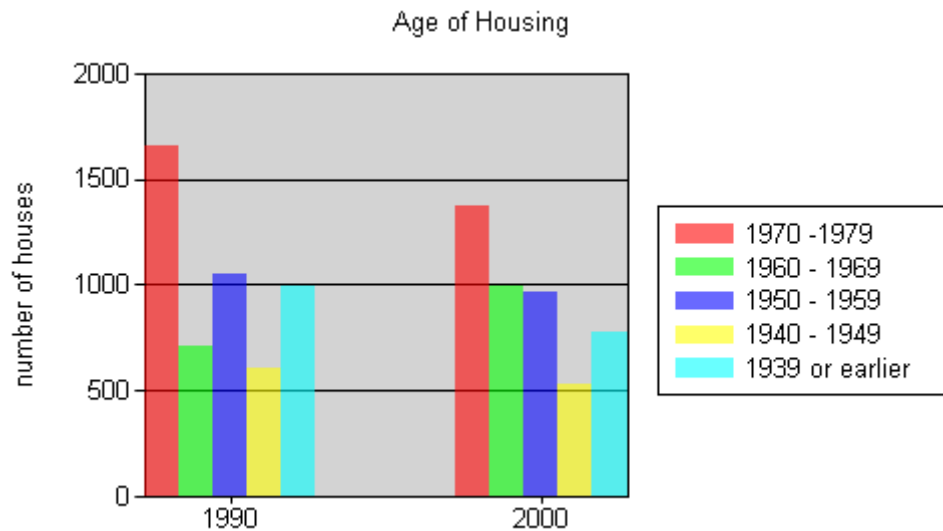
C-6, AGE OF HOUSING COMPARISON

Age of Housing Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia
Built 1970 - 1979	18.02 %	18.55 %
Built 1960 - 1969	13.03 %	12.68 %
Built 1950 - 1959	12.69 %	8.64 %
Built 1940 - 1949	6.99 %	4.39 %
Built 1939 or earlier	10.17 %	5.88 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

When comparing Ben Hill County's housing stock to that of the State of Georgia, it appears that the age of housing in Ben Hill County is generally older than that of the State. This could attest to Ben Hill County's significant historic resources and its ability to restore and maintain those historic structures.

GRAPH C-7, AGE OF HOUSING



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

C-8, CONDITION OF HOUSING TREND

Condition of Housing Trend	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	6,875	7,623
Complete Plumbing Facilities	6,783	7,526
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	92	97
Complete kitchen facilities	6,764	7,529
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	111	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

It appears that 99% of these houses have complete plumbing facilities and almost 99% of them have complete kitchen facilities. In comparing Ben Hill County’s housing stock to that of the State and the Country, it appears that the County is only a little bit behind in keeping their housing conditions up.

C-9, CONDITION OF HOUSING COMPARISON

Condition of Housing Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Total Housing Units	7,623	3,281,737	115,904,641
Percent Lacking Kitchen Facilities	1.2	1	1.3
Percent Lacking Plumbing Facilities	1.3	0.9	1.2
Percent Built 1990 to 2000	19	27.9	17
Percent Built 1939 or earlier	10.2	5.9	15

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

C-10, OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS

Occupancy Characteristics Trend	1990	2000
Total Housing Units Built	6,875	7,623
Housing Units Vacant	903	950
Housing Units Owner Occupied	3,962	4,448
Housing Units Renter Occupied	2,010	2,225

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

Between 1990 and 2000, the vacancy rate in Ben Hill County has remained relatively constant. The number of people owning homes has only increased by approximately 500 units from 1990-2000. This category has seen no drastic changes. The number of people renting homes has stayed about the same, as well. It appears that home ownership is something that the people of Ben Hill County value. When compared to the State of Georgia and the Country, Ben Hill County has similar rates of people owning homes and people who rent housing units within the county.

C-11, OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS COMPARISON

Occupancy Characteristics Comparison	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Total Population	17,484	8,186,453	281,421,906
Total Housing Units Occupied	6,673	3,006,369	105,480,101
Percent Housing Units Owner Occupied	66.7	67.5	66.2
Percent Housing Units Renter Occupied	26.7	23.6	25.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

C-12, HOUSING COST TREND

Housing Cost Trend (in Dollars)	1990	2000
Median property value	42,000	60,700
Median rent	265	371

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

One factor that has not remained constant is the cost of housing. In 1990, the median property value was \$42,000. By 2000, it had risen by almost 45% to reach \$60,700. Rent saw an increase from \$265 a month to \$371 per month, a rise of 40%. The median property value in Ben Hill County is much lower than that of Georgia or the Country. This is more than likely a reflection of the more rural location of Ben Hill County compared to some of the larger more metro places in Georgia that account for a large portion of this percentage.

C-13, HOUSING COST COMPARISON

Housing Cost Comparison (in Dollars)	Ben Hill	Georgia	United States
Median property value	60,700	111,200	119,600
Median rent	257	505	519

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1

C-14, Building Permit Data

YEAR	Total Number of Permits
2008	30
2007	94
2006	41
2005	78

Source: US Census Bureau

APPENDIX D
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX D: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources Introduction

Consideration of natural resources is an important item in planning future growth patterns for any community. For Greater Ben Hill County, the characteristics of the natural environment, including soils, topography, water supply, and wildlife habitats is essential information in defining the county's existing attributes and potential areas of improvements. An understanding of these will guide community leaders in maintaining a high quality of life and protecting the community's vital natural resources. Numerous times in this appendix the communities will be advised to consult the enclosed maps for making basic determinations about land uses and location of development relative to the boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas. To assist the communities with making more accurate determinations at reasonable scales, this data has been integrated into each community's Geographic Information System (GIS) housed at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC). This data is also available for viewing and query at numerous GIS-capable terminals throughout the county.

General Physical Environment

Ben Hill County is located in south-central Georgia and has a total land area of approximately 163,200 acres, or about 255 square miles. It is within the Middle South Georgia Soil and Water Conservation District as well as the Southern Coastal Plain Major Land Resource Area. The majority of the land is well-drained and most of the county is well-suited for agriculture and commercial timber production. The physical landscape is fairly homogenous with no outstanding physical features. The following natural resource areas have been examined and surveyed as they pertain to Ben Hill County.

Ben Hill County is divided into two physiographic districts, the Vidalia Upland District and Tifton Upland District, both of the Atlantic Plain Major Division (Coastal Plain Province). The county's land surface is mostly level to gently sloping. It is moderately dissected by numerous shallow rivers and streams which generally flow from west to east. The largest of these by far is the Ocmulgee River, which flows eastward along the county's northeastern border. The next largest river of influence is the Alapaha River, which flows southward along the county's extreme western border.

Most of Ben Hill County's land area is more than 230 feet above sea level and about half is above 285 feet. The county's lowest elevation is 130 feet at the extreme northeastern part of the county where the Ocmulgee River enters Coffee and Telfair Counties. The highest elevations are a little greater than 390 feet along several hilltops in the northwestern part of the county, mainly along Sweet-pea Road. Other elevations worthy to note include: Alapaha River 295 feet (where it crosses into Irwin County), Red Bluff 175 feet, Lake Beatrice 303 feet, Fitzgerald Country Club 328 feet, and the Fitzgerald Municipal Airport at 365 feet.

Most of the City of Fitzgerald is above 345 feet with the downtown area averaging around 345 feet. The city's lowest elevation is 260 feet where Turkey Creek and its tributaries exit the south side of the city. The highest elevation is 360 feet in the city's northwestern residential area. Maps D – 1 shows for the *City of Fitzgerald Topography* and Map D – 2 for *Greater Ben Hill County Topography*.

The county's topography and forest cover is such that notable views and vistas are not present. The most pronounced topography is along the east side of the Alapaha River floodplain, south of GA Highway 90, where the elevation changes 50-60 feet over a very short distance. Also, at Red Bluff along the Ocmulgee River, the land drops very sharply a distance of 40 feet down to the river bank. The Ocmulgee River floodplain is very broad and ranges from 8,000 to 10,000 feet wide. However, typically only half of the floodplain is within Ben Hill County since the stream channel is the county boundary. By comparison, the Alapaha River floodplain is much smaller (2,000 to 4,000 feet wide) with again only about half of it lying within Ben Hill County.

Ben Hill County's bedrock is composed of Pliocene-Miocene-Oligocene sedimentary rocks which were formed mostly during the Cenozoic Era (up to 70 million years ago). Below this, the rocks are Eocene and

Paleocene sedimentary rocks. The sediments which formed these rocks originated in the "ancient" Appalachian Mountains which have been eroded to form the present day Piedmont and remnant mountains.

Ben Hill County's climate is classified as humid-mesothermal (Cfa) according to the Köppen climate classification system. Winters are short and mildly cool with periodic cold spells moderating in 1-2 days. Summers are hot and humid. Annual precipitation typically ranges from 45 to 50 inches and is spread evenly throughout the year (2-5 inches each month). Measurable snowfalls are very rare with a less than 5% probability each year. When they occur, snowfall amounts are most always less than one inch and melt quickly. In winter, the average low temperatures are 38 degrees in January, 40 degrees in February and 47 degrees in March. In summer, the average high temperatures are 92 degrees in July, 91 degrees in August and 87 degrees in September. Ben Hill County's growing season ranges from 8-9 months with an average of 260 days that have daily minimum temperatures greater than 32 degrees. The first winter freeze typically occurs in early November and the last freeze typically occurs in mid-March.

Water Resources

Annual precipitation runoff for Ben Hill County is about 11.5 inches, which equals approximately 6.81 billion cubic feet (50.94 billion gallons) of water. This represents the volume of water directly entering the county's ponds, rivers and streams. The remaining water either evaporates or is absorbed by the ground. Surface drainage within Ben Hill County is directed by a dendritic (branching tree-like) pattern which flows generally eastward and southeastward.

Ben Hill County is located in 3 major river basins, which are the Suwannee River Basin, Ocmulgee River Basin, and the Satilla River Basin. Map D - 3 depicts *Greater Ben Hill County Drainage Basins*. Within each of these major river basins, they can be subdivided into smaller basins known as sub-watersheds. In Ben Hill County, the sub-watersheds are Alapaha (HUC 03110202), Ocmulgee (HUC 03070104), and the Satilla (HUC 03070201). The Ocmulgee subwatershed encompasses a little more than half of the county's total land area which includes all of the land to the north and east of Fitzgerald. Major tributaries of the Ocmulgee River include: Otter, South Prong House, and Sturgeon Creeks. Approximately two-thirds of the remaining portion (area around Fitzgerald and the western tip of the county) lies within the Alapaha sub-watershed. Major tributaries here include the Willacoochee River and Turkey Creek which flow southeastward from the Fitzgerald area into Irwin County and then empty into the Alapaha River further south. The remaining portion of the county (along the extreme southeastern border with Irwin County) is within the Satilla sub-watershed. Both the Satilla and Ocmulgee sub-watersheds flow eastward to the Atlantic Ocean, while the Alapaha sub-watershed flows southward to the Suwannee River in Florida and then eventually to the Gulf of Mexico.

Flood hazards along the major rivers and streams typically occur in late winter and early spring. Ben Hill County has a high water table and is relatively susceptible to flooding. The risk of flooding is an important economic issue as well as a public safety concern in the area. Any major increase in population density and industrial and economic development could heighten the intensity of development within these flood plains. Foresight is now needed to restore the natural function and preserve the capacity of the flood plains and, where possible, limit development. Within Ben Hill County, the city of Fitzgerald has official flood hazard area maps (FIRMs -- Flood Insurance Rate Maps) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Map D - 4 depicts the *City of Fitzgerald Flood Insurance Rate* and Map D - 5 depicts *Greater Ben Hill County Flood Insurance Rate*. These maps represent areas affected by a 100 - year flood which has a 1% chance of occurrence in any given year. It should be noted that smaller flood events occur more frequently and affect portions of flood hazard areas.

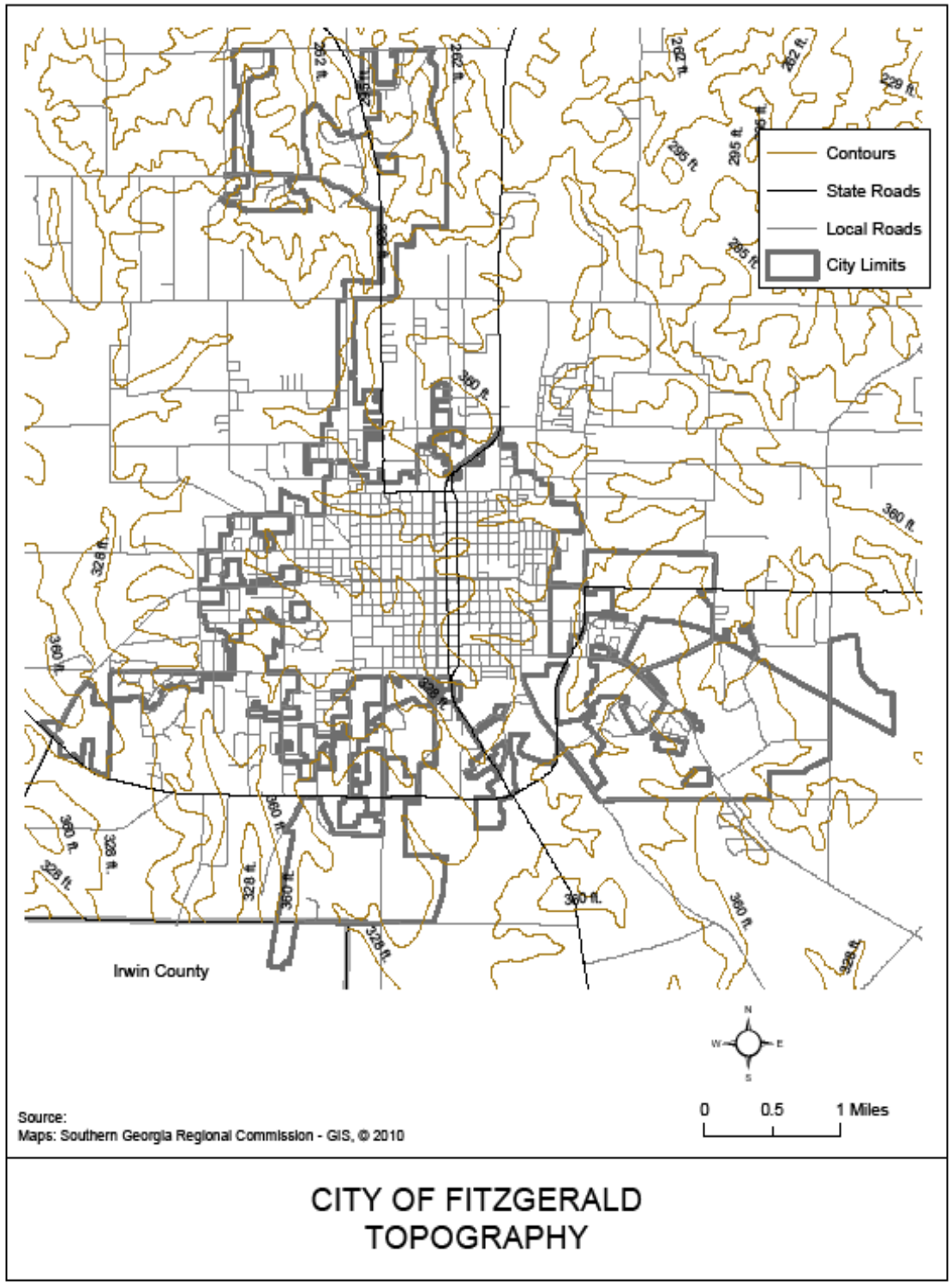
In terms of topography, the Ocmulgee River valley dominates the shape of the county. When traveling westward and southwestward away from the river, the land gradually rises more than 200' over a course of 5-8 miles to the drainage divide which is generally at about an elevation of 350' above sea level. This sloping river valley is heavily dissected by streams which leave very little level land. Consequently, this area experiences erosion problems which make crop production difficult and cause the land to be best suited for forest production. Southwestward from the main drainage divide, the land only drops about 50'

through the remainder of the county. As a result this area appears nearly level and is more suitable for cropland.

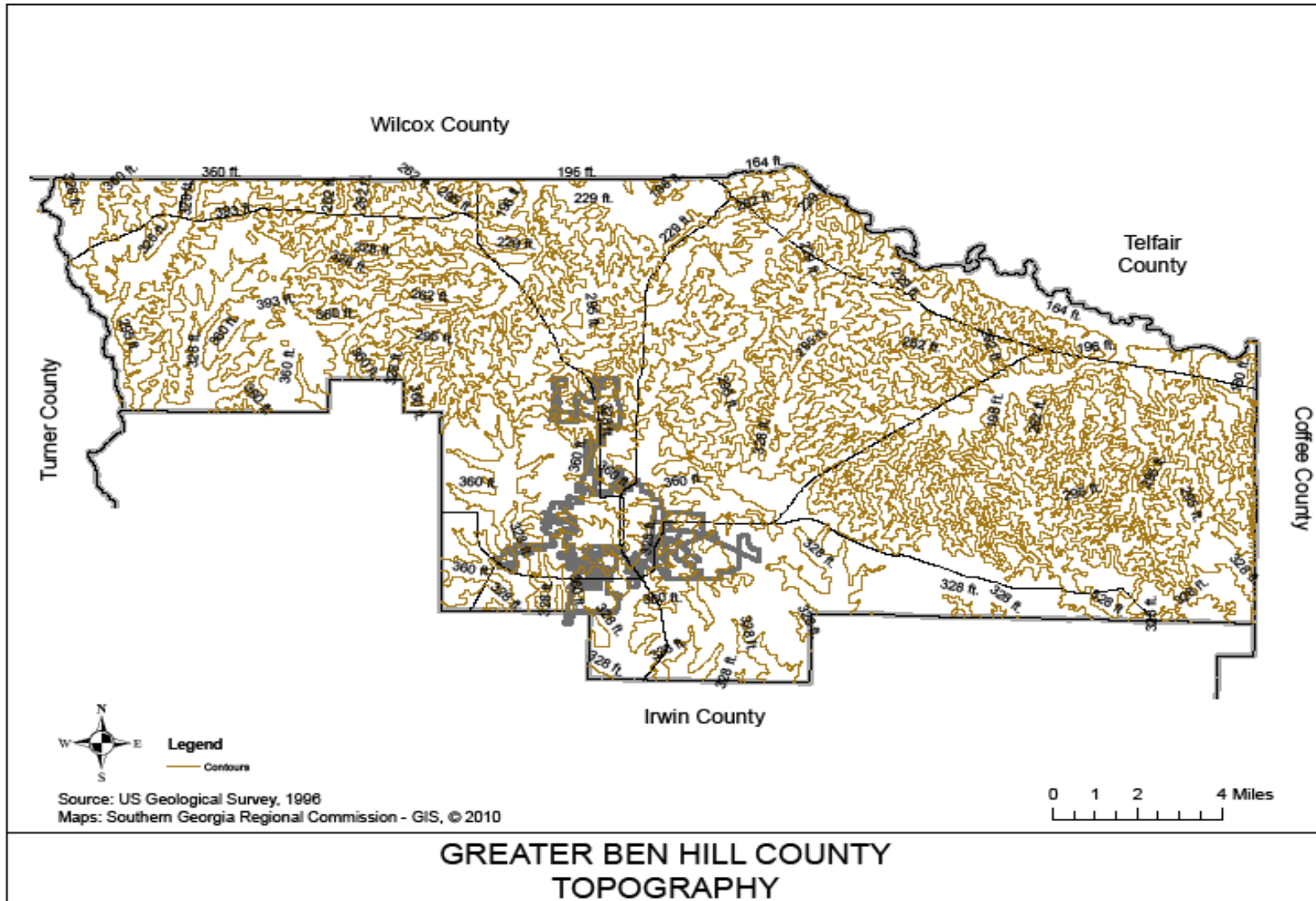
Environmental Planning Criteria

In 1989, the Georgia Planning Act encouraged each local government to develop a comprehensive plan to guide its activities. In order to provide the local governments with a guideline so that they could prepare their comprehensive plan, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) developed a set of minimum requirements that each local plan must meet known as the “Minimum Planning Standards.” Part of the Minimum Planning Standards is the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria that specifically deal with the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands. River corridors and mountains were added through a separate Act in 1991. In order for a comprehensive plan to meet the Minimum Planning Standards, it must identify whether any of these environmentally sensitive areas exist within the local government’s jurisdiction, and if so, must prepare local regulations to protect these resources.

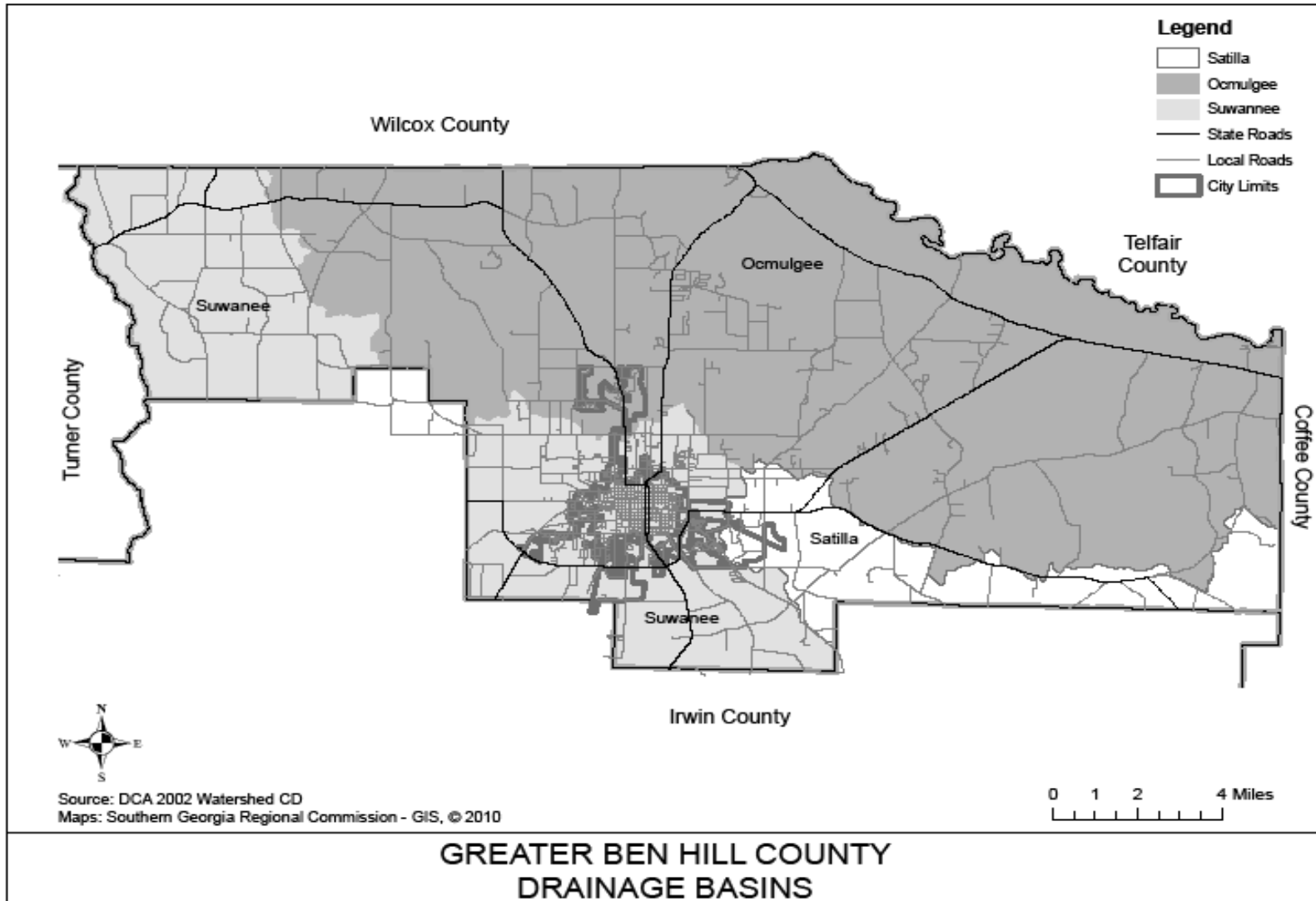
MAP D - 1



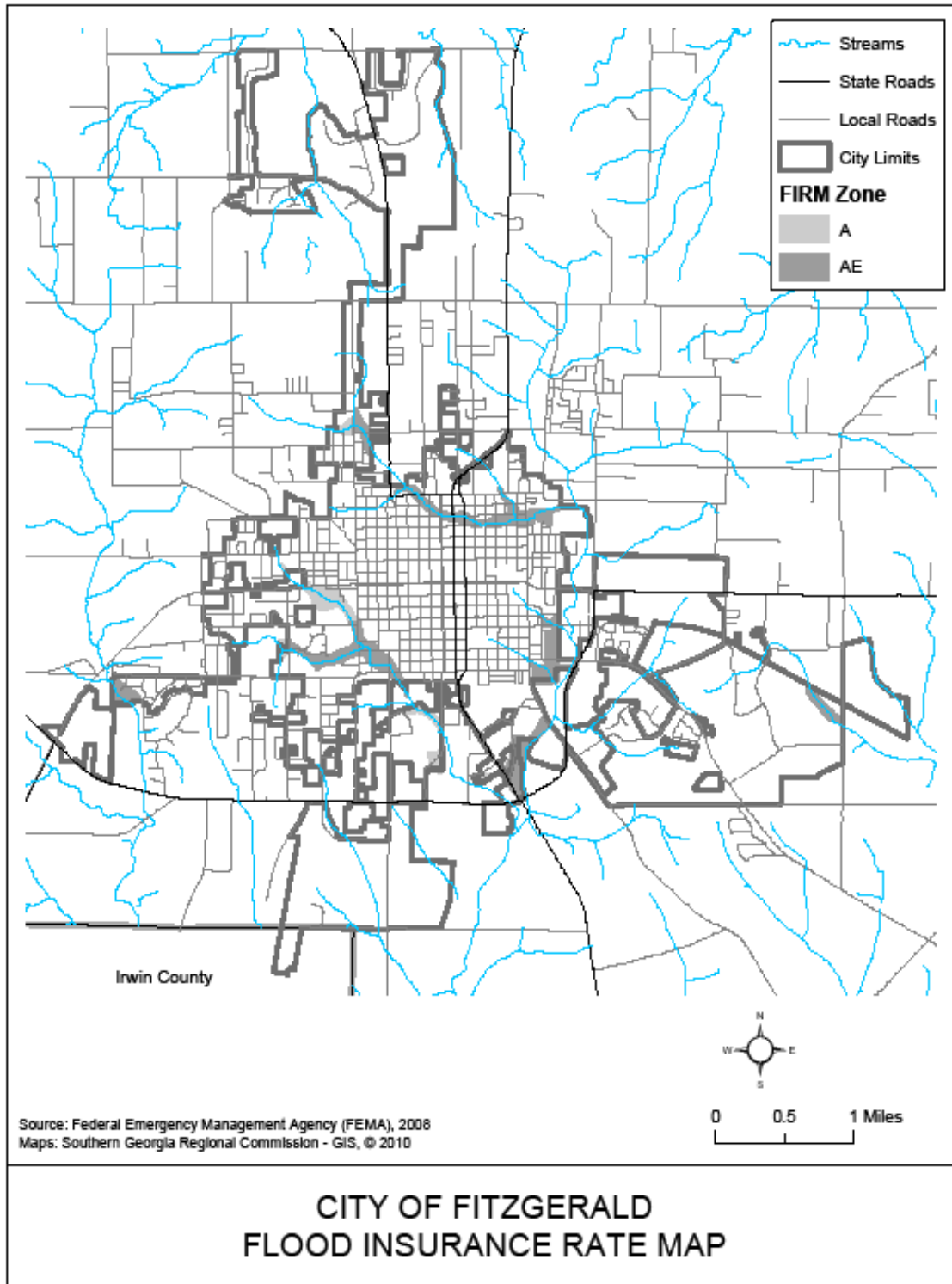
MAP D – 2



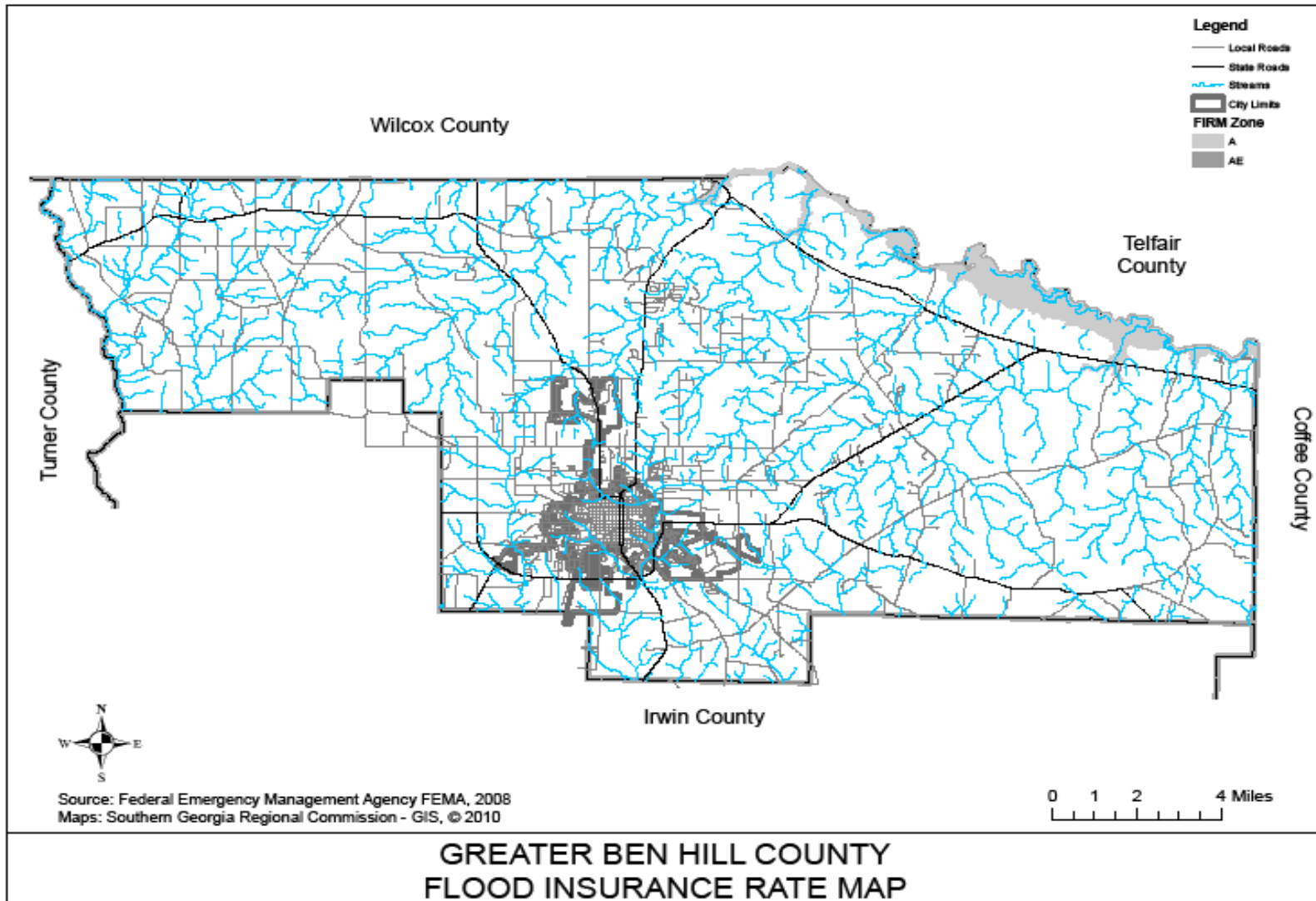
Map D – 3



Map D – 4



Map D – 5



The Water Resource Protection Districts Ordinance (WRPDO) was adopted by Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. This ordinance protects the sensitive natural resources: groundwater recharge areas, protected river corridors, and wetlands located throughout Ben Hill County. By explaining the requirements for developing property containing protected water resources, the ordinances help ensure our water resources are protected from adverse affects of land development. Map D – 6 depicts the Greater Ben Hill County Water Resource Protection Districts.

Water Supply Watersheds

Not applicable.

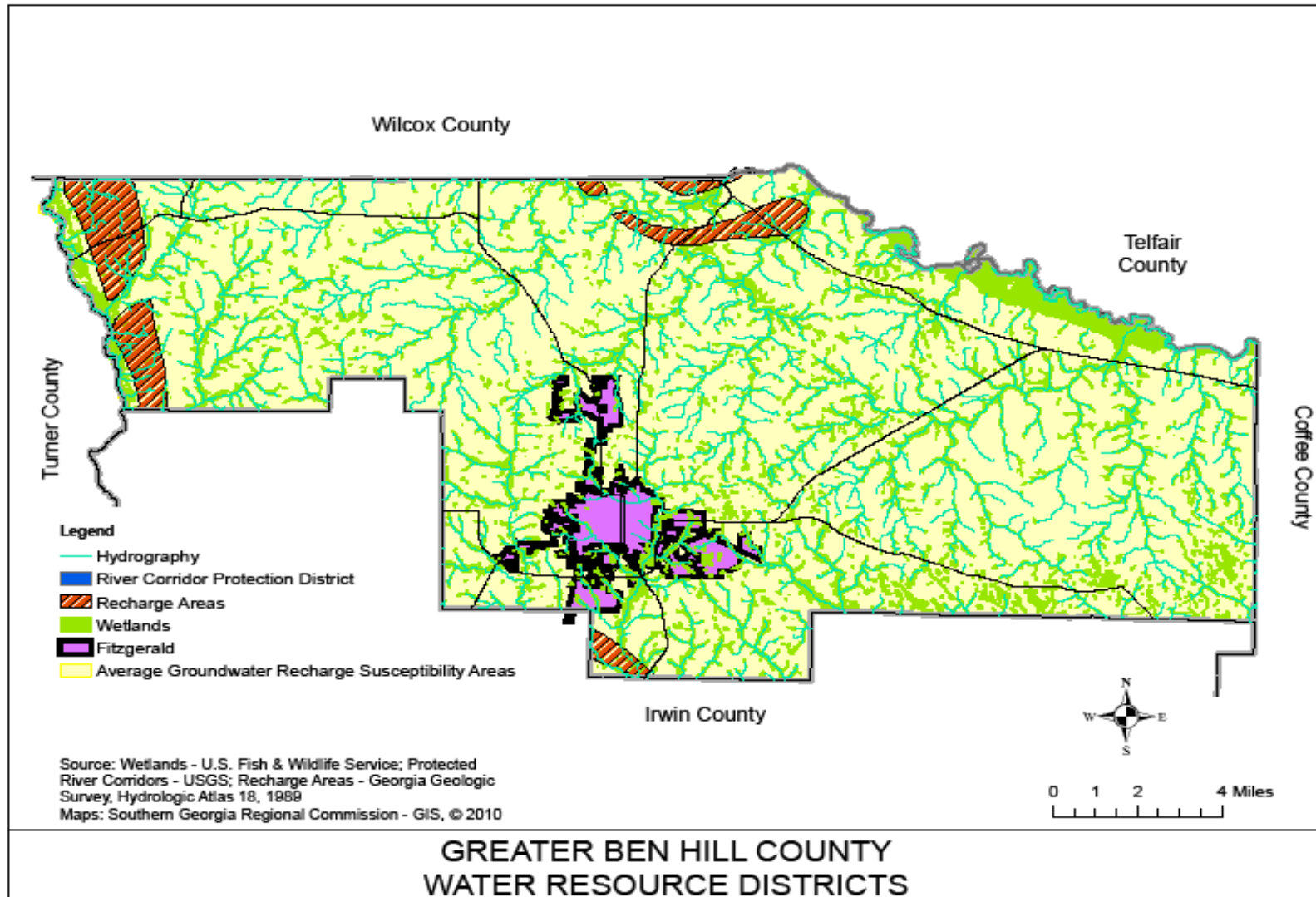
Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands are defined by federal law to be "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." Wetlands generally include bogs, marshes, wet prairies, and swamps of all kinds. When a wetland functions properly, it provides water quality protection, fish and wildlife habitat, natural floodwater storage, and reduction in the erosive potential of surface water; in addition to recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and sites for research and education. However, a degraded wetland is less able to effectively perform these functions. Wetlands play an important role in both the natural and built environments and should be preserved for this purpose. Human activities cause wetland degradation and loss by changing water quality, quantity, and flow rates, increasing pollutant inputs, and changing species composition as a result of disturbance and the introduction of nonnative species.

Over the past several decades, expansion of both forestry and urban development in Georgia has caused a steady reduction of wetlands acreage. This has resulted in the destruction of valuable plant and animal habitats, increased magnitude of floodwaters, and the removal of natural filters for surface water drainage thereby endangering water quality throughout the county. Draining wetlands for forestry purposes is still a common, but declining practice, while development pressure is emerging as the largest cause of wetland loss. Many natural wetlands are in poor condition and man-made wetlands fail to replace the diverse plant and animal communities destroyed by development. Prior to developing parcels containing wetlands, or that are suspected of having wetlands, a detailed wetlands survey and all applicable requirements under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act should be completed.

A National Wetland Inventory (NWI) database for the geographic extent of Ben Hill County has been constructed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and integrated into the county's Geographic Information System (GIS) and should be used to protect these sensitive areas. To ensure the protection of the wetlands in Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald, the local governments adopted the Local Wetlands Policy Ordinance in 2001. This regulation can be found in the Zoning Ordinance for Ben Hill County, Georgia under Section 10: Water Resource Districts. Map D – 7 depicts the Greater Ben Hill County Generalized Wetlands. See Table D – 1 for a breakdown of wetlands within the city and county boundaries.

Map D – 6



Map D – 7

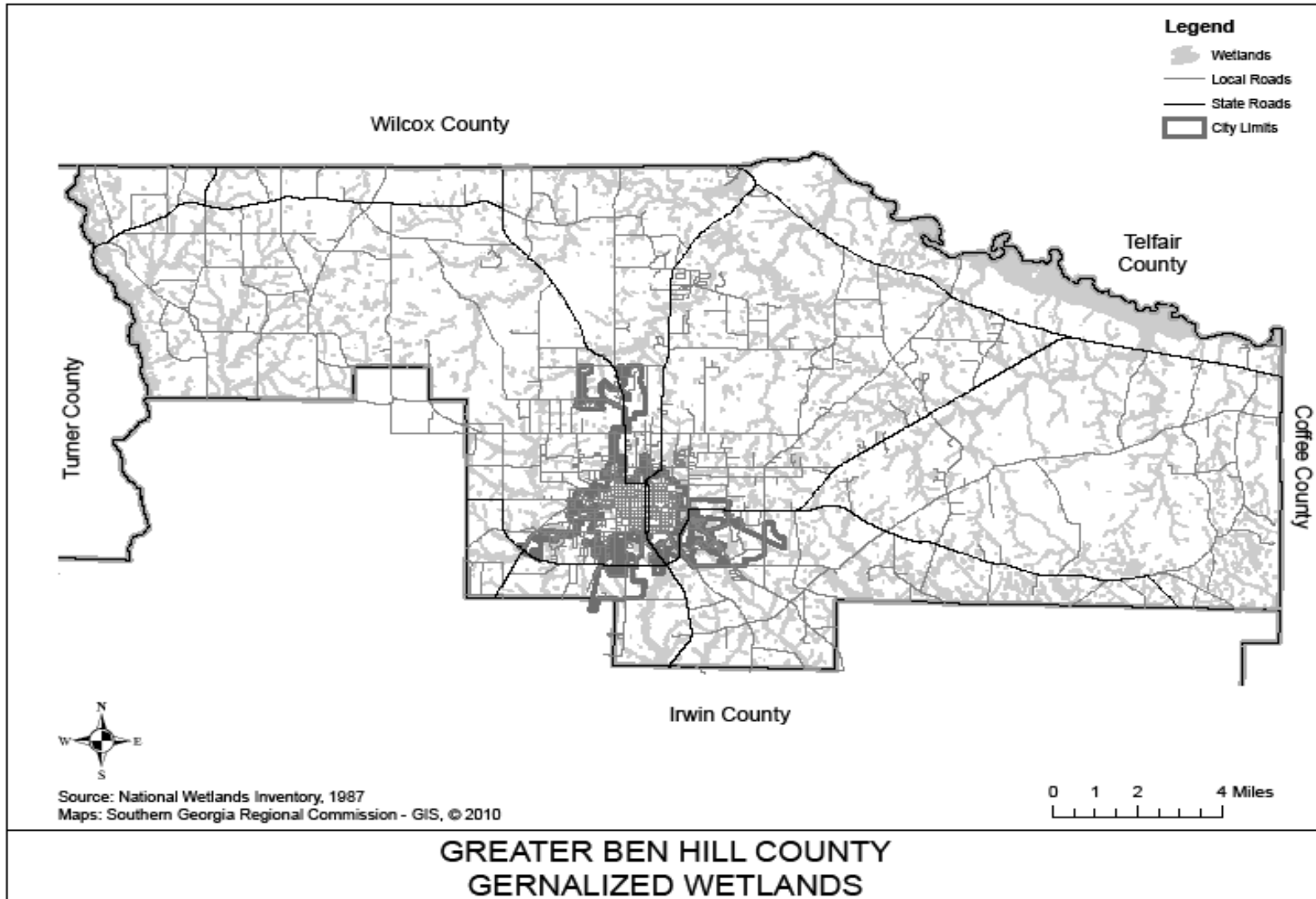


Table D-1, Wetlands

Location	Wetland Acreage	Overall Wetland Percentage
Unincorporated Ben Hill County	22,586.98	98%
City of Fitzgerald	463.59	2%

Source: National Wetland Inventory and Southern Georgia Regional Commission

To assist with the protection and incorporation of wetlands, examples of preservation opportunities for wetlands include:

- Use docks or boardwalks to cross a wetland rather than filling it in;
- Layout access paths along high ground;
- Preserve existing drainage and minimize diverting water to or from wetland areas;
- Avoid clearing or replacing natural native vegetation along the wetland edge;
- Control exotic/invasive plant species; and
- Follow State and Federal Wetland Regulations.

Conservation Areas

A conservation area can be defined as a tract of land that has been awarded protected status in order to ensure that natural features, cultural heritage or biota are safeguarded. A conservation area can include a nature reserve, park, land reclamation project, conservation easement, etc. In many cases, properties that cannot be developed due to natural features are placed in conservation easements and this information can be located at the local tax office. Conservation areas consist of almost half the county. Outside the swamp most of the land is wooded, and traditionally it has been used for timber. Agriculture is quite limited and sporadic.

Parks

A park can be defined as a piece of open land for either passive or active uses and maintained by a local, state or federal government. There are no federal or state owned recreation or wildlife management areas within Ben Hill County. Efforts should be taken to maintain the current park inventory and possibly explore areas where parks and natural habitats could be incorporated into Ben Hill County. Table D – 10, lists the state parks and historic sites that are located within 100 miles of Ben Hill County. As new parks are always welcomed by the community, it is also important to enhance the existing parks within Greater Ben Hill County. There are a variety of mechanisms for protecting the natural resources found in Greater Ben Hill County. Opportunities can range from local government initiatives, private property owner, and joint public – private partnerships and result in the designation of conservation areas, parks, and/or open space. Map D – 8 depicts the *City of Fitzgerald Recreation Department and Parks*. Table D – 2 outlines the recreation department facilities

Map D – 8

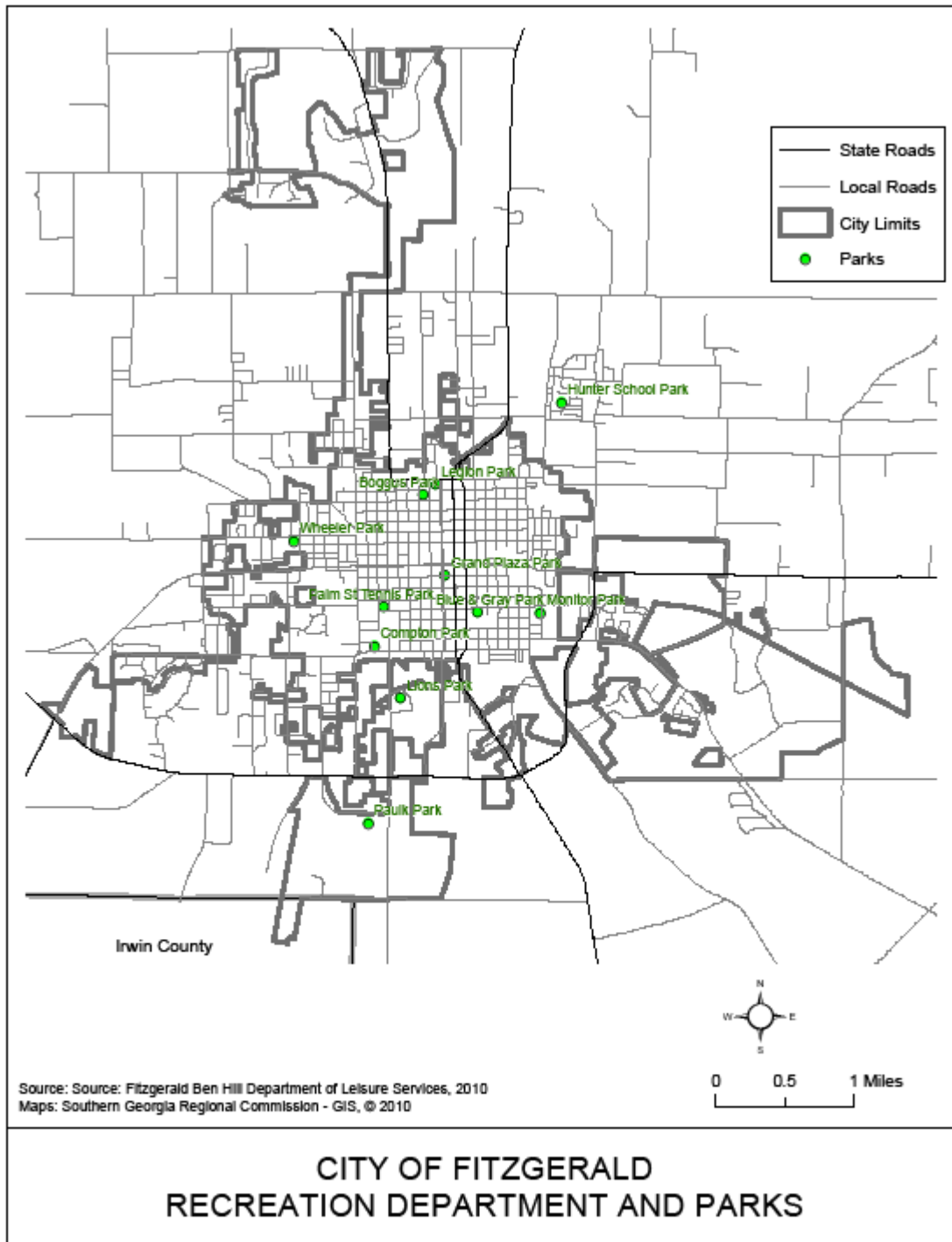


Table D-2, Recreation Department Facilities

Facility	Includes	Acreage
Blue/Gray Park	Basketball court, passive recreation/picnicking area, a loop walking trail, a multi-purpose playing field and practice baseball areas.	10
Ceramics Studio	Large assortment of crafts to be made.	NA
Compton Park	Practice baseball fields and tennis courts situated on it at the present time. Plans are being considered to redeveloping the practice baseball fields into multi-purpose soccer fields to maximize the use of this area.	11
Hunter School Park	Playground.	6
Lions Park	4 baseball fields, maintenance facility and a playground.	8.2
Monitor Park & Community Center	Community center, after-school activity center, gymnasium, playground with two structures, a multi-purpose field with backstop, two outdoor basketball courts, two shelters, restroom and picnic tables.	5
Legion Center/Boggus Park	Lighted practice baseball field, swimming pool complex, picnic shelter, basketball court, playground, horseshoe pits, picnic tables and this is also where the main office of the D.L.S. is located.	13
Palm Street Tennis Courts	6 courts and one practice wall and is lighted for extended day occupation.	1.2
Paulk Park	2 softball fields, one high school baseball field, one multi-purpose field for baseball, football and soccer, a concession /restroom building, two large fenced fields, wetland/natural area, lake, camper hook-ups, band shell, shelter and a maintenance building. Located across the lake is the new Paulk R.V. Park with 20 new hook-ups.	95
Wheeler Park	4 practice baseball backstops, restroom facilities, playground all surrounded with a walking track.	6.9
Grand Plaza Park		.2
Total		156.5

Source: Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Groundwater Recharge Areas

A groundwater recharge area is a surface land area where water that eventually enters an aquifer (an underground reservoir) is first absorbed into the ground¹. The term “recharge” is often used to describe the process by which groundwater is replenished. Most areas, unless composed of solid rock or covered by development, allow a certain percentage of precipitation to reach the water table. There are several factors that must be considered when calculating infiltration including vegetation cover, slope, soil composition, depth to the water table, and much more. It is also important to know that some areas allow more precipitation to infiltrate than in others and these areas of often referred to as "high", "critical", or “most significant” recharge areas.

Map D – 9 depicts the *Greater Ben Hill County Groundwater Recharge Areas*. Aquifer recharge areas are vulnerable to both urban and agricultural development. Pollutants from stormwater runoff in urban areas and excess pesticides and fertilizers in agricultural areas can access a groundwater aquifer more easily through these recharge areas. Once in the aquifer, pollutants can spread uncontrollably to other parts of the aquifer thereby decreasing or endangering water quality for an entire region. Therefore, development of any kind in these areas, including installation of septic tanks, should be limited.

Table D – 3 provides a breakdown of the most significant groundwater recharge areas within the city and county boundaries.

Table D-3, Most Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas

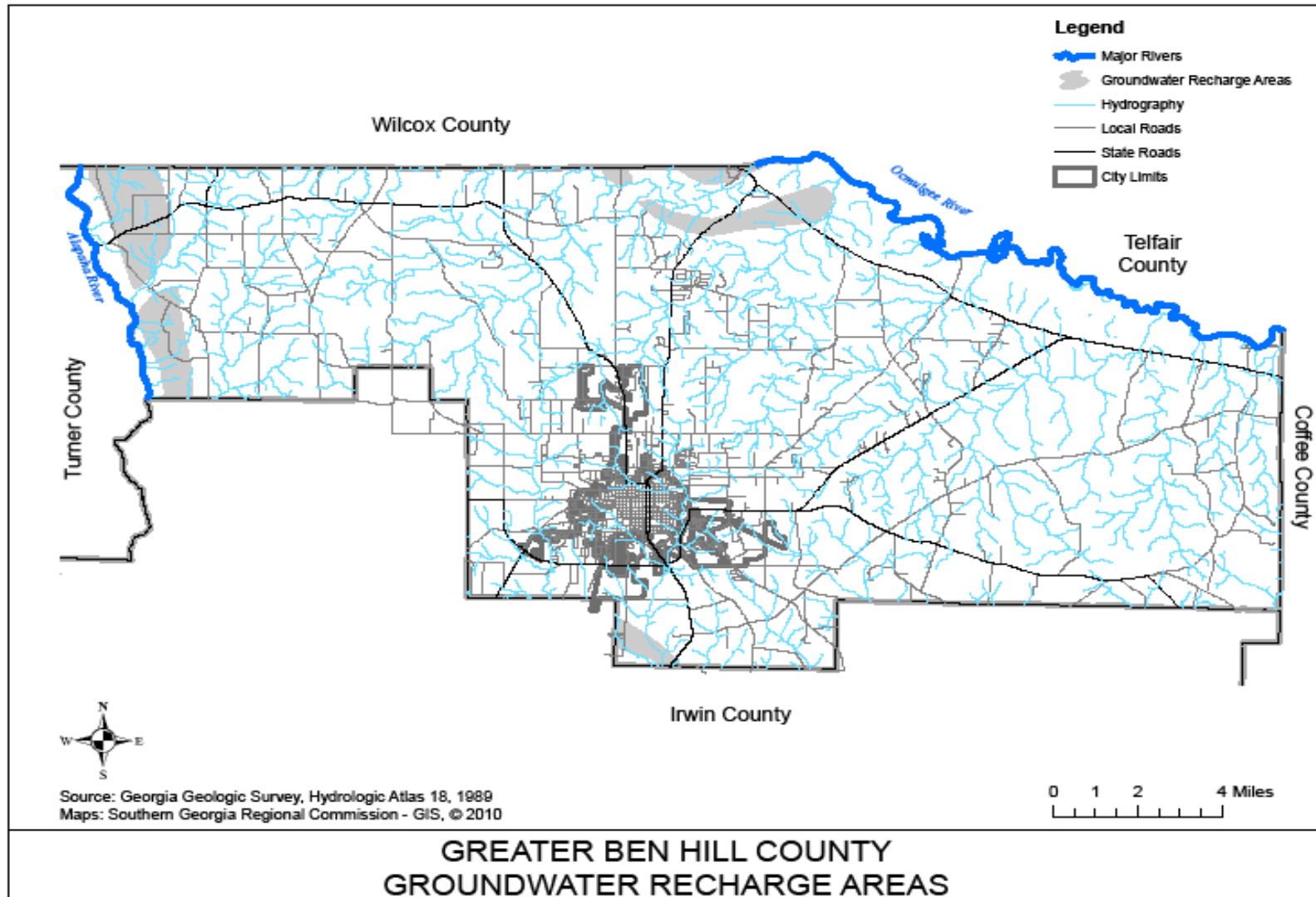
Location	Groundwater Recharge Acreage	Groundwater Recharge Percentage
Unincorporated Ben Hill County	6,585.86	100%

Source: USDA – Hydrologic Atlas 18 and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission

If hazardous waste or toxic substances pollute the water that seeps into the ground in a recharge area, these pollutants are likely to be carried into the aquifer and contaminate the groundwater, making it unsafe to drink. Once polluted, it is almost impossible for a groundwater source to be cleaned up. Since Greater Ben Hill County receives all of its drinking water from groundwater, the Floridan aquifer, it is important that additional measures be taken to protect these highly sensitive areas. To assist with the protection of most significant groundwater recharge areas, examples of opportunities include:

- Wellhead protection program;
- Limit impermeable surfaces (e.g. maximum building footprints);
- Require sewer services instead of septic systems; and
- Zoning overlay district (e.g. types of development allowed, increased minimum lot size, incentives for recharge – sensitive cluster development).

Map D – 9



Protected River Corridors

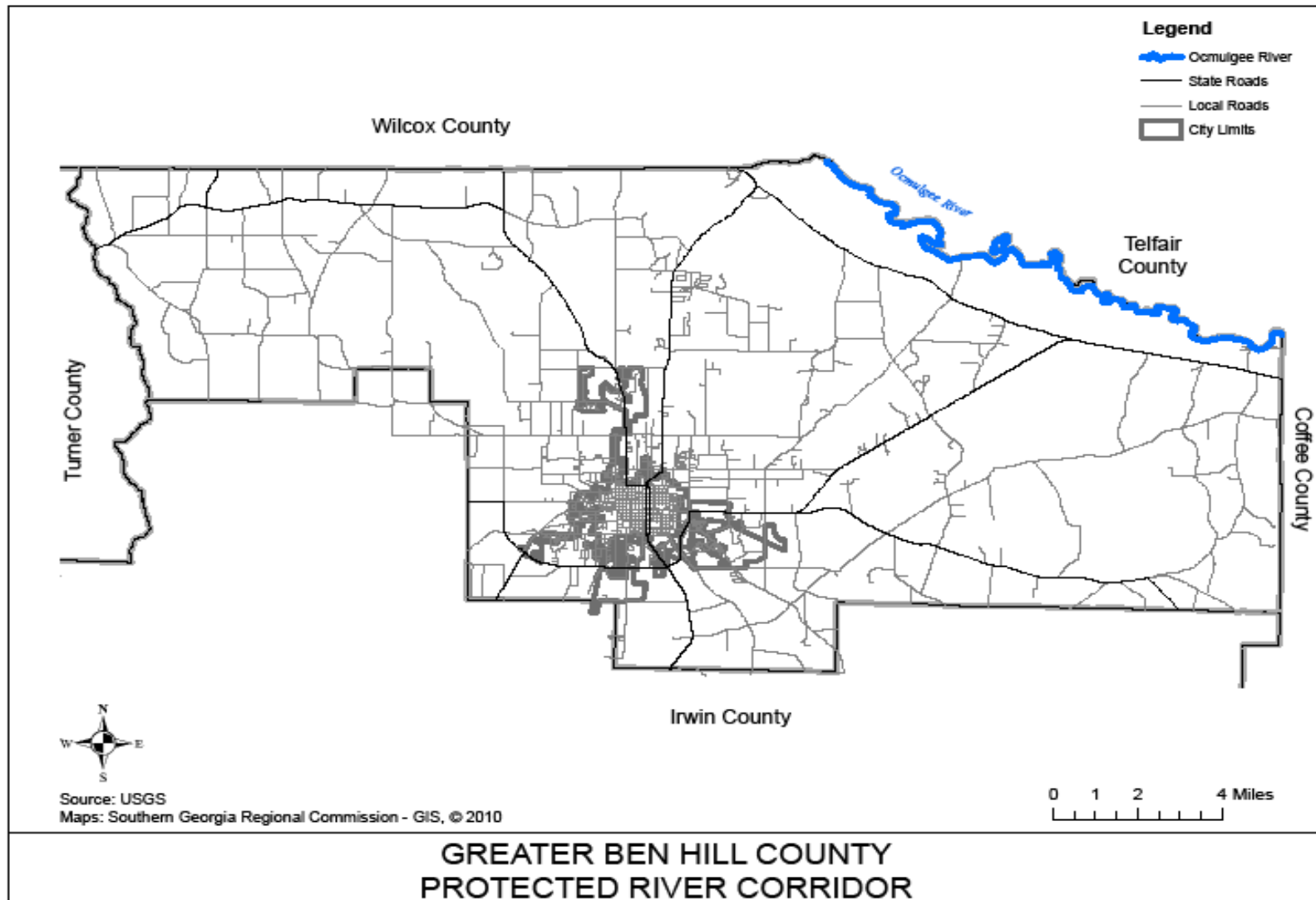
The Georgia General Assembly passed the "Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act" in 1991, which requires local governments to adopt river corridor protection plans for certain designated rivers affecting or bordering their jurisdiction. In Ben Hill County, the only rivers affected by this Act are the Ocmulgee River. Map D – 10 depicts the *Greater Ben Hill County Protected River Corridor*.

Under the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act, Ben Hill County is required to adopt a "Corridor Protection Plan" for these river segments in accordance with the minimum criteria contained in the Act and as adopted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Ben Hill County adopted the provisions in 2000 and its erosion and sedimentation control ordinances in 2001.

Protected Mountains

Not applicable.

Map D - 10



Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Steep Slopes

Not applicable.

Coastal Resources

Not applicable.

Floodplains

Flood hazards along the major rivers and streams typically occur in late winter and early spring. Within Ben Hill County, only the city of Fitzgerald has official flood hazard area maps (FIRMs -- Flood Insurance Rate Maps) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Maps D – 4 and D – 5 depict the *Greater Ben Hill County Mapped Floodplains*.

Table D – 5, Floodplains

Location	Acreage
Fitzgerald	4,062.9

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Soils

Soils in Ben Hill County have been identified and grouped into 10 major soil associations. Individual soil types are typically found in smaller pockets and usually located near other specific soil types. For ease of description and analysis, the various soil types have been grouped into the following 10 major soil associations. The location of these soil associations is shown on Map D – 11.

Tifton-Carnegie-Fuquay Association:

This association is made up mainly of well drained, gently sloping and sloping, eroded ridges that are dissected by small intermittent streams. Slopes range from 3 to 12 percent. Most of this association is in sloping areas adjacent to and west of the flood plains of the Alapaha, Willacoochee, and Satilla Rivers. This association is used mostly as woodland, chiefly pine. Strong slopes and erosion limit use for cultivated crops and pasture to a moderately small acreage. Corn is the principal crop. The dominant soils in this association are considered to have only slight limitations to use as sites for residences and light industry served by public or community sewerage systems, and slight to moderate limitations to use for those served by septic tank filter fields. These soils have slight to moderate limitations to use for recreational facilities such as campsites, intensive play areas, picnic grounds, and traffic ways. Some of the minor soils have moderate or severe limitations for many non-farm uses because the water table is seasonally high, flooding is likely, slopes are strong, or the shrink-swell potential is high.

Swamp-Osier-Bibb Association:

This association is made up of nearly level flood plains along the Alapaha River and its major tributaries. Slopes are not more than 2 percent. The flood plains generally receive a thin deposit of fresh soil material each time they are flooded. Water covers parts of this association for long periods. About 95 percent of this association is wooded. Hardwoods are dominant, but there are some pines. The dominant soils generally are not cultivated, because they are subject to flooding several times each year. The major soils of this association are considered to have severe limitations to use as sites for residences and light industry. They also have severe limitations to use for campsites, intensive play areas, picnic areas, and other recreational facilities because the water table is seasonally high and flooding is likely.

Tifton-Alapaha-Carnegie Association:

This association consists mainly of very gently sloping and gently sloping divides that are dissected by numerous small, shallow streams that originated within the boundaries of the association. Slopes range from 3 to 8 percent. Some broken areas also occur. A considerable amount of the cultivated acreage in the two counties is within this association. Corn, cotton, and peanuts are the main row crops. A considerable acreage is in pasture. Farms in this association average about 190 acres in size and are of the general type. Nearly all of the farms are privately owned and are operated by their owners.

Troup-Kershaw-Plummer Association:

This association consists mainly of broad, very gently sloping ridges that have slopes mostly less than 5 percent. It is adjacent to and east of the flood plain of the Alapaha River and is on the north and south slopes of the flood plain of Little House Creek. Flats are numerous. A number of streams have originated within this association. In most of this association, sand extends from the surface to a considerable depth, and available moisture capacity is low to very low. Sand generally extends to a depth of 40 to 60 inches in the Troup soils and to a depth of 6 to 10 feet in the Kershaw soils. Both soils are excessively drained. The Troup and Kershaw soils are on ridge tops and side slopes. The Plummer soils are on low flats, around the heads of streams, and along drainageways. They have poor drainage. The Troup soils are considered to have only slight limitations to use as septic tank filter fields and as sites for residences and light industry served by public and community sewerage systems. The Kershaw soils are moderately limited for these uses because they are sandy and unstable. The sandy nature of the Troup and Kershaw soils also causes moderate limitations to use of these soils for campsites, intensive play areas, and picnic grounds. The Plummer soils have severe limitations for all these non-farm uses because these soils are wet and are likely to be flooded.

Ocilla-Plummer-Alapaha Association:

This association consists of broad, nearly level areas in which slopes are generally less than 2 percent. Intermittent ponds are numerous and widely distributed, and a few branches head in the outer parts of the association. The Ocilla soils are somewhat poorly drained, and the Plummer and Alapaha soils are poorly drained. The Alapaha soils commonly occupy intermittently ponded areas and the heads of intermittent streams. The Plummer soils are on broad flats and in small drainageways. A small to moderate part of this association is in cultivated crops. The Ocilla, Fuquay, Leefield, and Irvington soils are cultivated. Corn, tobacco, and peanuts are commonly grown. Alapaha and Plummer soils are used mostly as woodland, but some areas are used for pasture. Farms in this association average about 200 acres in size, but several are much larger. General farming dominates, and most of the farms are operated by their owners. The major soils in this association are considered to have moderate to severe limitations for many non-farm uses because they have a seasonally high water table or are flooded. The Ocilla soils have moderate limitations to use as sites for residences and light industry or for campsites, intensive play areas, picnic grounds, traffic ways, and other recreational facilities. They have severe limitations to use for septic tank filter fields because the water table is seasonally high and the risk of contamination to nearby water supplies is severe. Plummer and Alapaha soils have severe limitations for these non-farm uses because of the seasonally high water table and the hazard of flooding.

Tifton-Alapaha-Fuquay Association:

This association is in level to very gently sloping areas on broad divides, on flats, and in drainageways. Slopes do not exceed 4 percent. The divides are cut by many small, shallow streams that originate within the boundaries of the association. The Tifton and Fuquay soils are on uplands. Both kinds of soils are well drained. The Alapaha soils are around the heads of drainageways and intermittently ponded areas. They are poorly drained and have a sandy surface layer 20 to 40 inches thick. A large part of the cultivated acreage in the two counties is in this soil association. Corn, cotton, peanuts, and tobacco are the main crops. A considerable acreage is in pasture. Farms on this association average about 150 acres in size, and are all of the general type. Nearly all of the farms are privately owned and are operated by their owners. The Tifton and Fuquay soils are considered to have only slight limitations to use as it is for residences and light industries served by public or community sewerage systems, and to use as campsites, intensive play areas, picnic grounds, and traffic ways. The Tifton soils, however, have moderate limitations to use as septic tank filter fields because of the moderately slow percolation rate in the substratum. The Alapaha soils have severe limitations for many non-farm uses because these soils are wet and are likely to be flooded.

Carnegie-Cowarts-Alapaha Association:

This association consists mainly of gently sloping and sloping ridges that are cut by many small, narrow drainageways. Slopes range from 3 to 12 percent. The landscape is choppy and, in most places, is eroded. This association is mainly along the sharp breaks adjacent to and east of the flood plains along the Satilla River and Hunters Creek and adjacent to and south of the flood plains along Randall Creek. The most prominent is the area of sharp breaks about a mile north of Fitzgerald. Most of this association is woodland, mainly pines. Pines occupy many fields that were formerly cultivated. Because of the slope, erosion, and shallow root zone, only a small part of the association is cultivated. Corn is the main crop. A moderate acreage is in pasture. The Carnegie and Cowarts soils are considered to have only slight limitations to use for picnic grounds and as sites for residences and light industries served by public or community sewerage systems. They, however, have moderate limitations to use for septic tank filter fields, campsites, and intensive play areas. These limitations are caused by slope and slow percolation. The Alapaha soils have severe limitations for all these non-farm uses because of wetness and flooding.

Osier-Bibb-Leaf-Chastain Association:

This association consists of nearly level flood plains along rivers and creeks. Slopes generally do not exceed 1 percent. The flood plains receive a thin deposit of fresh soil material the many times each year they are flooded. Most of the alluvium is recent, but there are a few areas of old alluvium that normally are flooded only a few times each year. About 96 percent of this association is wooded. Hardwoods are the dominant trees, but there are some pines. Only a small acreage is used for pasture. Nearly all of the acreage in this association is privately owned. Nearly all of the soils are considered to have severe limitations for many non-farm uses. All the major soils have severe limitations for use as sites for residences and light industry, and for use as campsites, intensive play areas, picnic grounds, traffic ways, and other recreational facilities. These limitations are caused by wetness and flooding.

Esto-Cowarts-Plummer Association:

This association consists of short, narrow, very gently sloping ridge tops, gently sloping and sloping side slopes, and numerous small drainageways and narrow breaks along the drainageways. Slopes range from 3 to 12 percent. Most of the acreage of this association is in trees used for the production of pulpwood, lumber, and gum turpentine. Some of the Cowart soils on the milder slopes and in non-eroded areas are cultivated. Corn is the principal crop. A few areas are in pasture. Many fields that were formerly cultivated are now planted to slash pines. Most of this association is privately owned. Large paper companies own a considerable acreage, and all of it is used for wood crops. Farms average about 200 acres in size. The Esto soils are considered to have severe limitations to use for septic tank filter fields and for traffic ways. They have moderate limitations to use as sites for residences and light industries served by public or community sewerage systems, and to use as campsites, intensive play areas, picnic grounds, and other recreational facilities. Limitations to use of the Esto soils are caused by moderate to high shrink-swell characteristics and a slow percolation rate. The Cowarts soils have slight to moderate limitations to these non-farm uses. Because of wetness and flooding, the Plummer soils have severe limitations.

Fuquay-Cowarts-Plummer Association:

This association consists of narrow ridges and knobs that have gently sloping to sloping side slopes and of numerous small drainageways, most of which originated in the association. Slopes range from 3 to 12 percent. Many areas are rough, choppy, and eroded. This association is in the northern and northeastern parts of Ben Hill County. The Fuquay soils occur on the broader ridges and side slopes. The Cowarts soils occur on narrow ridges, in broken areas, and on the steeper side slopes. The Fuquay and Cowarts soils are well drained. The Plummer soils occur in low areas and are poorly drained. They are gray and are sandy to a depth of 40 to 60 inches. Most of this association is in trees used for the production of pulpwood, lumber, and gum turpentine. Large paper companies own a considerable acreage, all of which is in trees, mostly pines. Many fields in this association that were formerly cultivated are now planted to slash pine. The Fuquay and Cowarts soils are commonly cultivated in their less sloping areas. The cultivated acreage is small. Corn, cotton, and peanuts are the chief crops. A moderate acreage is in pasture. Most of the land in this association is privately owned. Farms average about 200 acres in size. The dominant soils in this association are considered to have slight to moderate limitations to many non-farm uses. The Cowarts soils have slight limitations to use as sites for residences served by public or community sewerage systems, and to use for picnic grounds and traffic ways. Cowarts soils have moderate limitations to use as sites for

residences served by public or community sewerage systems, and to use for picnic grounds and traffic ways. Cowarts soils have moderate limitation to use for septic tank filter fields, campsites, intensive play areas, and foundations for light industry. The Fuquay soils have only slight limitations to all these uses, but the Plummer soils have severe limitations because of wetness and flooding.

Prime Agriculture and Forest Land

For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the ten general soil associations have been arbitrarily classified in terms of land development capability for both agricultural and urban uses. Table D - 6 depicts the land capability for Ben Hill County. The terms "good", "fair", and "poor" have been used to describe their relative capabilities. Agricultural yields per acre for major crops were used in determining agricultural capability. Limitations on building site development, roadways, and septic tank drainage fields were all used in determining urban capability.

Table D – 6, Summarized Land Capability For Greater Ben Hill

Soil Type Association	Agricultural Uses			Urban Uses		
	Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor
Tifton-Carnegie-Fuquay	X			X		
Swamp-Osier-Bibb			X			X
Tifton-Alapaha-Carnegie	X			X		
Troup-Kershaw-Plummer		X		X		
Ocilla-Plummer-Alapaha		X				X
Tifton-Alapaha-Fuquay	X			X		
Carnegie-Cowarts-Alapaha		X			X	
Osier-Bibb-Leaf-Chastain			X			X
Esto-Cowarts-Plummer		X			X	
Fuquay-Cowarts-Plummer		X		X		

Source: Soil Survey of Ben Hill and Irwin Counties, Georgia, 1969; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service.

As can be seen by these maps, there are only three soil associations that ranked "good" for both agricultural and urban uses. These areas are generally located in and around Fitzgerald, and the higher areas of the western portion of the county. The poor soils for these uses are generally limited to the floodplains of the Ocmulgee and Alapaha Rivers and their major tributaries.

It should be noted that each soil association consists of individual soil types with varying degrees of capability for agricultural or urban uses. For example, a soil association containing soil types with a particularly high agricultural production may also contain soil types with a particularly low production. Therefore, the land capability ratings are generalized based on the total composition of the soil association.

Consideration of septic tank drainage/percolation fields was included in the determination of land capability for urban uses. However, when considering only septic tanks, only two (2) of the county's associations are considered "good" and these are mostly limited to the outlying areas of the Ocmulgee River valley in the northern and eastern areas of the county. Table D - 7 depicts these soil association ratings.

Table D – 7, Land Capability For Septic Tanks

Soil Type Association	Septic Tank Absorption Fields		
	Good	Fair	Poor
Tifton-Carnegie-Fuquay		X	
Swamp-Osier-Bibb			X
Tifton-Alapaha-Carnegie		X	
Troup-Kershaw-Plummer	X		
Ocilla-Plummer-Alapaha			X
Tifton-Alapaha-Fuquay		X	
Carnegie-Cowarts-Alapaha		X	
Osier-Bibb-Leaf-Chastain			X
Esto-Cowarts-Plummer			X
Fuquay-Cowarts-Plummer	X		

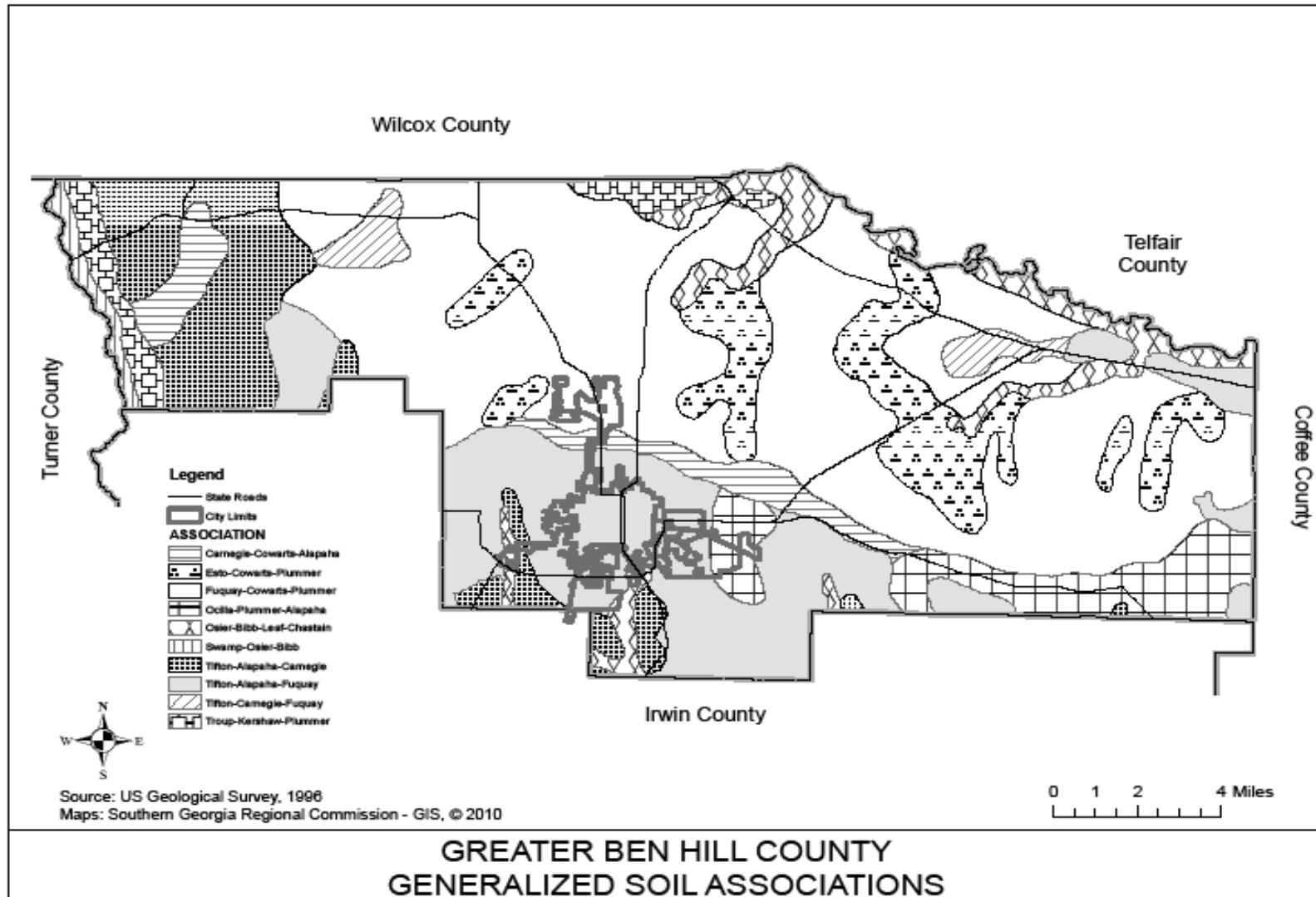
Source: Soil Survey of Ben Hill and Irwin Counties, Georgia 1969; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service.

In Ben Hill County, there are two soil associations with a “good” rating for septic tank systems; four associations that have a “fair” rating; and four associations that are rated “poor” and have severe limitation for septic tank systems. It is not impossible to construct a drain field on severely rated soils, but it will be expensive and the county should steer develop requiring such systems to more suitable locations. This analysis is based upon broad soil associations and provides inconclusive evidence of the likelihood that a majority of the existing septic systems will have a high failure rate. Further studies are merited and the county sanitary code needs to be enforced. Therefore, the effective use of septic tanks in Ben Hill County is not generally compatible with natural soil conditions and the use of municipal sewers should be required in developing areas.

Assessment

- Current policy/ordinance meets state standards. Education outreach and enforcement should be implemented and/or continued (E&S ordinance).

Map D - 11



Plant and Animal Habitats

River corridors, wetlands, and lakes provide natural habitat for a variety of rare and common plant and animal species. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Wildlife Resources Division – Georgia Natural Heritage Program has worked with a number of groups to compile a list of Georgia’s rare species. The most recent data on threatened or endangered plant and animal species in Ben Hill County is from 2009. Table D – 8 lists the *Endangered or Threatened Plant and Animal Species in Ben Hill County*.

Table D – 8, Endangered or Threatened Plant and Animal Species in Ben Hill County

Species (<i>Species Name</i>) - Common Name	Georgia (<i>state status</i>)	Federal
Animals		
Eastern indigo snake <i>Drymarchon corais couperi</i>	Threatened	Threatened
Flatwoods salamander <i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i>	Threatened	Threatened
Gopher tortoise <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	Threatened	---
Red-cockaded woodpecker <i>Picoides borealis</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Wood stork <i>Mycteria americana</i>	Endangered	Endangered
Plants		
Georgia plume <i>Elliottia racemosa</i>	Threatened	---
Ocmulgee skullcap <i>Scutellaria ocmulgee</i>	Threatened	---
Parrot pitcher-plant <i>Sarracenia psittacina</i>	Threatened	---
Pondspice <i>Litsea aestivalis</i>	Threatened	---

Impaired Streams

In 1994, a lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court against the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) by the Sierra Club, Georgia Environmental Organization, Inc., Coosa River Basin Initiative Inc., Trout Unlimited, and Ogeechee River Valley Association for the failure to prepare Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), under provisions under the Clean Water Act, for the State of Georgia.

A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a river, stream, or lake can receive and still be considered safe and healthy. A TMDL is a means for recommending controls needed to meet water quality standards, which are set by the state and determines how much of a pollutant can be present in a waterbody. If the pollutant is over the set limit, a water quality violation has occurred. If a stream is polluted to the extent that there is a water quality standard violation, there cannot be any new additions (or “loadings”) of the pollutant into the stream until a TMDL is developed. Pollutants can come from point source and non-point source pollution. Examples of “pollutants” include, but are not limited to: Point Source Pollution – wastewater treatment plant discharges and Non – point Source Pollution – runoff from urban, agricultural, and forested area such as animal waste, litter, antifreeze, gasoline, motor oil, pesticides, metals, and sediment.

In 2007, the SGRC entered into a contract with the GA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to prepare fourteen (14) local TMDL Implementation Plans for stream segments in the Satilla Basin that had been identified as impaired waterbodies due to high fecal coliform (FC), Mercury, or low dissolved oxygen (DO). Of the thirteen (13) TMDL Implementation Plans located in the Suwannee Basin, 2 of the streams were located within Ben Hill County.

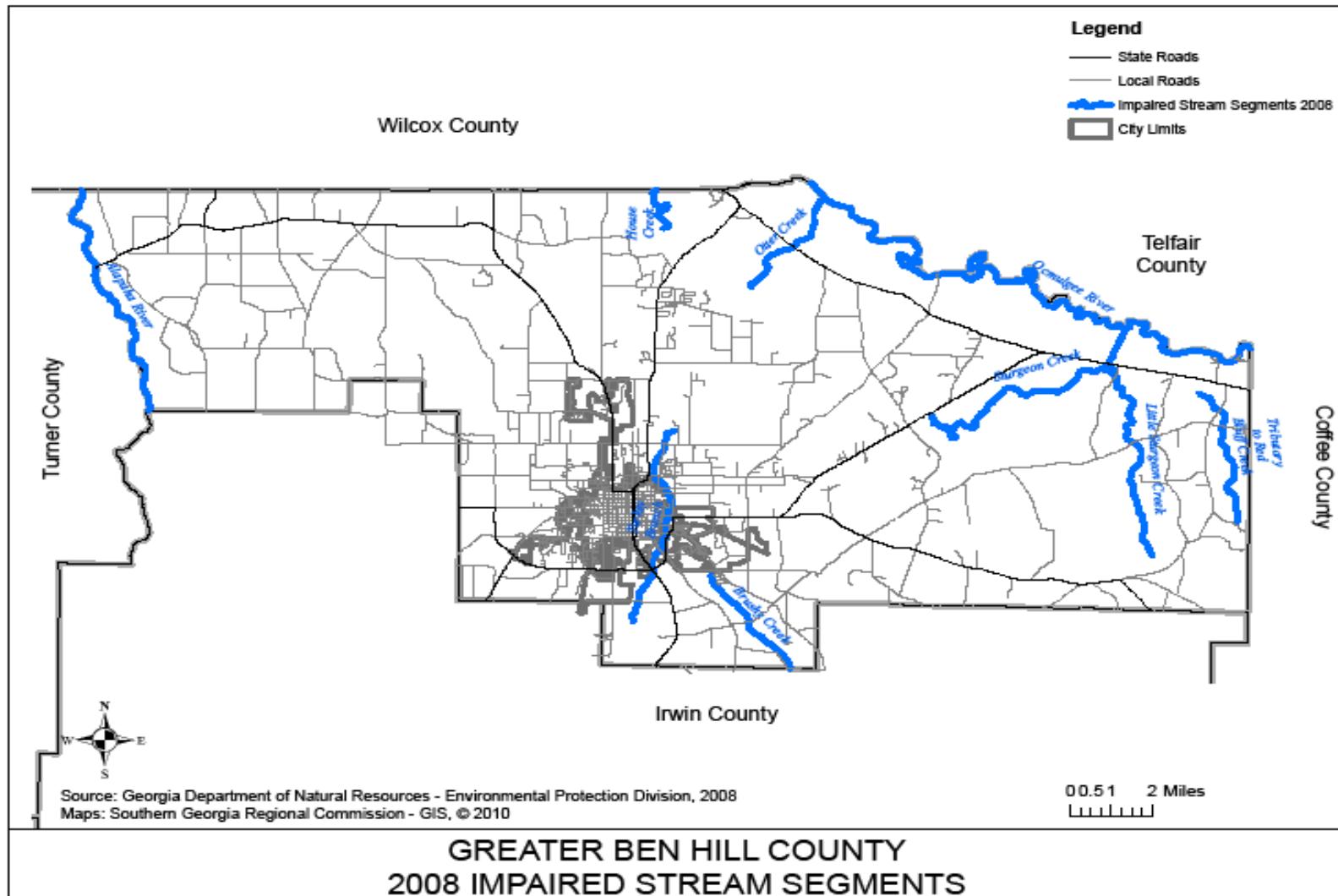
The Georgia 2008 305(b)/303(d) list of waters was prepared as a part of the Georgia 2006 – 2007 assessment of water quality prepared in accordance with Sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act and guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Assessed waterbodies are classified according to a comparison of water quality monitoring results to water quality standards and other pertinent information. Table D – 9 depicts the 2008 list of impaired streams located within Ben Hill County. Map D – 12 shows the impaired stream segments in Ben Hill County.

Table D-9, Ben Hill County 2008 305(b)/303(d) List

Waterbody Name	Location	County(s)	Impairment	Miles Impacted
Turkey Branch	Headwaters to Willacoochee River downstream Fitzgerald	Ben Hill	FC	8
Alapaha River	U.S. Hwy. 280 to Sand Creek	Wilcox/ Ben Hill/ Turner/ Irwin	DO	29

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, 2008

Map D – 12



Other Significant Natural Resources

Scenic Areas

Not applicable.

Major Parks, Recreation, and Conservation AreasTable D – 10 lists the *State Parks and Historic Sites Within 100 miles of Ben Hill County*.**Table D-10, State Parks & Historic Sites within 100 Miles of Ben Hill County**

State Park and/or Historic Site	Address	Distance (road miles)
Andersonville National Historic Site	496 Cemetery Rd. Andersonville	45
Dixon Memorial State Forest	NA	NA
General Coffee State Park	5549 GA Hwy 32 E, Nicholls	47
George L. Smith State Park	371 George L. Smith State Park Rd., Twin City	97
Georgia Veterans State Park	2459 US Hwy 280, Cordele	37
Gordonia Altamaha State Park	322 Park Ln, Hwy 280 W, Reidsville	82
Jefferson Davis Memorial Historic Site	388 Jeff Davis Park Rd., Fitzgerald	0
Laura S. Walker State Park	5653 Laura Walker Rd., Waycross	70
Little Ocmulgee State Park	80 Live Oak Trl, Helena	33
Reed Bingham State Park	542 Reed Bingham Rd, Adel	42

Source: Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, 2007, www.gastateparks.org

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction:

Though a county-wide comprehensive historic resources survey has not been completed for all of Ben Hill County, it is quite evident to anyone that travels through the unincorporated areas, and the City of Fitzgerald, that there is a rich history of architecture present which is worthy of preservation. Historic properties and districts potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (as well as the two districts and five properties already listed) form the basis for preservation efforts at the local level. In the future, more of these potentially eligible properties and districts could be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or protected locally through Historic Preservation Enabling Ordinances and Local Historic Property and/or District Designation Ordinances. At the present time, only the City of Fitzgerald has a Historic Preservation Enabling Ordinance and also has passed Designation Ordinances creating Local Historic Properties and Districts.

Ben Hill County

Properties On The National Register of Historic Places:

Ben Hill County has a rich heritage that is evidenced by its historic sites. Two historic properties owned by Ben Hill County and one historic property in Unincorporated Ben Hill County have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Georgia Register of Historic Places (GARHP). Although the Miles V. Wilsey House has burned, it has not been de-listed officially. There are also National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and Georgia Register of Historic Places (GARHP). Properties and Districts located in the City of Fitzgerald that are listed in the section for that city (see below).

Table D-11, Ben Hill County Owned Properties And Unincorporated Ben Hill County Properties Listed On The National Register Of Historic Places

SITE	ADDRESS	CITY	DATE LISTED
Ben Hill County Courthouse	E. Central Avenue	Fitzgerald	1980 ¹
Ben Hill County Jail	Pine Street	Fitzgerald	1982 ²
Miles V. Wilsey House (Burned)	137 Hudson Road	County	2001 ³

The properties referenced in Table D-11 are shown on Map D-13.

Historic Cemeteries:

Throughout the years, various cemeteries, both public and private, have developed in Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. Below, we have listed those that are believed to be historic. Many are still active.

¹ National Register of Historic Places Record Page for Ben Hill County Courthouse Record #80000973

² National Register of Historic Places Record Page for Ben Hill County Jail Record #82002383

³ National Register of Historic Places Record Page for Miles V. Wilsey House Record #01000166

Some of these cemeteries are not marked on USGS Maps and their location is approximate based on other sources.

Table D-12, Greater Ben Hill County Historic Cemeteries⁴

CEMETERY	LOCATION	MAP #
Abba Cemetery	Abba Rd./Abba Church Rd.	1
Arbor Cemetery	Arbor Cemetery Rd.	2
Ashton School Cemetery	SR #206 at Pine Level Church Rd in Ashton	3
Bethlehem Cemetery	Bethlehem Church Rd.	4
Crisp Cemetery ⁵⁶	SR #182, 3.8 miles from SR #129 at Bowens Mill	5
Dicksons Cemetery	Dickson Cemetery Road	6
Dixon Cemetery	Snapdragon Rd., E of Redwood Rd.	7
Dixon Cemetery	N. Lee McKenzie Rd.	8
A.S. Dorminey Family Cemetery	3/10 of a mile N of Intersection of SR #182 & US #319N, W side of road, up small dirt road	9
Dorminey Cemetery	N. of Intersection of River Rd. and SR #107.	10
Dorminy Mill Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery	Camp Brooklyn Rd. & Dorminy Mill Church Road	11
Englewood Cemetery	Englewood Church Rd.	12
Evergreen Cemetery	Evergreen Rd. at E. Benjamin H. Hill Dr.	13
Evergreen Cemetery	City Rd. # 187	14

⁴ USGS Quadrangle Maps (Various) except #5, #24, #32 and #35
(<http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Cemetery>)

⁵ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=csr&CSsnty=391&CSsr=1&>

⁶ Georgia Department of Transportation Division of Planning, Data and Intermodal Development General Highway Map of Ben Hill County Georgia, 2008.

Fairview Cemetery	Fairview Church Rd.	15
Fitzgerald City Cemetery	Benjamin H. Hill/Industrial Dr. at Calhoun Dr.	16
Fussell Cemetery	CR #321 N of Fussell Cemetery Rd.	17
Fusselle Cemetery	Fussell Cemetery Rd.	18
Georges Chapel Cemetery	Tanner Cemetery Rd. at Camp Brooklyn Rd./CR #199	19
Gibbs Cemetery	W of City Rd. #94 Between Lower Rebecca Rd. and Astor Rd./Abba Church Rd.	20
Gibbs Cemetery	Sunflower Rd.	21
King's Chapel Cemetery	King's Chapel Road	22
Kiokee Cemetery	CR #182 at Joshlyn Rd.	23
Luke Cemetery ⁷⁸	Lower Rebecca Rd. at Daisy Rd. (CR #50)	24
Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery	CR #224 N of SR #206	25
McCook Cemetery	CR #243, E of Frank Rd.	26
McMillan Cemetery	Taylor Farm Rd.	27
McMillan Cemetery	SR #206 at Heron Rd.	28
Mims Cemetery	Broom Rd.	29
Mobley Cemetery	SR #107, W of CR #190	30
Mount Cavalry Church Cemetery	Mt. Cavalry Church Rd.	31
Mount Issaac Cemetery ⁹	Abba Rd./Abba Church Rd.	32
Mount Olive Church Cemetery	US 129 S. 2-3 miles S. of Fitzgerald, Just N of Pine	33

⁷ <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gabenhil/cemeteries.htm>

⁸ Georgia Department of Transportation Division of Planning, Data and Intermodal Development General Highway Map of Ben Hill County Georgia, 2008.

⁹ Ibid.

	Level Church Rd.	
New Bethel Cemetery	New Bethel Church Rd.	34
New Corinth Cemetery ¹⁰	SR #206 W of CR #224 (W of Macedonia Cemetery)	35
Old Field Cemetery	Old Field Lem Rd.	36
Old Union Cemetery	Eagle Rd. at CR #35	37
Penn Cemetery	Fairview Church Rd. at Camp Brooklyn Rd.	38
Pine Level Church Cemetery	CR #126 at CR #243 and Dave Bishop Sr. Rd.	39
Player Cemetery	Player Cemetery Rd.	40
Prospect Cemetery	Prospect Church Rd.	41
Rinor Cemetery	Othar Lee Rogers Rd.	42
Saint Paul's Cemetery	St. Paul's Cemetery Rd.	43
Salem Cemetery	SR #90, E of Sweetpea Rd.	44
Tanner Cemetery	Tanner Cemetery Rd.	45
Troup Cemetery	NW of Intersection of SR #206 & CR #354	46
Tucker Cemetery	Tucker Cemetery Rd.	47
Union Cemetery	Union Cemetery Rd.	48
Wesley Chapel Methodist Church Cemetery	Clark St. in Fitzgerald	49
Westwood Cemetery	Sharp Luke Lower Rebecca Rd. E of Arbor Cemetery Rd.	50
Wilcox-Reid Cemetery	N on Dirt Rd., Just Off River Rd., E of Flint Rd.	51
Young Cemetery	Lower Rebecca Rd, N of Grape Myrtle Rd.	52
Young's Chapel Cemetery	Young's Chapel Rd.	53

¹⁰ Ibid.

The properties referenced in Table D-12 are shown on Map D-14.

In addition, there are unknown locations for the Fisk Family Cemetery¹¹, Jashua Luke Cemetery¹² Mountaintop Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery¹³, Old Prescott Cemetery¹⁴ and Tomberlin Family Cemetery (Fitzgerald)¹⁵

Historic Schools

Various Ben Hill County Historic Schools were identified through U.S.G.S. Quadrangle Maps. Also, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's has more detailed information on Ben Hill County Historic Schools in its Historic Rural School's Initiative files in the Valdosta, Georgia Office.

Table D-13, Greater Ben Hill County Historic Schools¹⁶

HISTORIC SCHOOL	LOCATION	MAP #
Ashton School	Highway #206 at Pine Level Church Rd in Ashton	1
Ben Hill County Elementary School/Lynnwood Elementary	Sharp Luke Lower Rebecca Rd. at Dewey McGlamry Rd.	2
Dorminy School	River Rd. Just NW of Highway #319	3
Fitzgerald Elementary School/First Ward School	N. Longstreet St. at W. Suwannee St.	4
Fitzgerald High School (historical)	S. Monitor Dr. at Sawyer Dr.	5
Fitzgerald Junior High School	S. Jackson St. at W. Jessamine St.	6
Hunter Elementary School/Old Cotton Mill School	Mayes St.	7
Monitor Elementary School	S. Monitor Dr. at Sawyer Dr.	8
Roanoke School	W. Roanoke Dr. at Lynn Dr.	9
Second Ward School	N. Sheridan St. at E. Suwannee St.	10

¹¹ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=csr&CSnty=391&CSsr=21&>

¹² <http://usgwarchives.net/ga/benhill/cemetery.html>

¹³ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=csr&CSnty=391&CSsr=21&>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ USGS Quadrangle Maps (Various)(<http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=School>)

Third Ward School	S. Sheridan St. at E. Jessamine St.	11
Union School	County Rd. #35 at Eagle Rd.	12
Vaughn Taylor School	WSW of Morning Glory Rd. and Bethlehem Church Rd. Intersection	13

The properties referenced in Table D-13 are shown on Map D-15.

Schools in unknown exact locations include: Emory School (located 4 miles west of Oak Ridge School & 5 miles southwest of Lakeview School), Lakeview School (located 5 miles northeast of Emory School & 5 miles southwest of Vaughn-Taylor School), Crisp School (located 4 miles west of Dorminey School & 7 miles north of Ashton), Eureka School (located 3 miles west of Evergreen & 5 miles southeast of Dorminey School), Evergreen School (located 3 miles east of Eureka & 6 miles southeast of Dorminey School), Oak Ridge School (located 4 miles east of Emory School & 4 miles south of Lakeview School) and Queensland “Negro” School (located 8 miles from Fitzgerald). There were also 13 other “negro” schools in unknown locations throughout the county in 1918.¹⁷

Historic Place Names

Throughout the history of Ben Hill County, various communities have been named, many for the families that lived there, or a particular event, feature, or church. The following is a list of those known communities and their locations. Note that some historic places are approximations based on wide scale maps.

Table D-14, Greater Ben Hill County Historic Place Names

HISTORIC PLACE NAMES	LOCATION
Abba ¹⁸	Abba Road
Arp ¹⁹	City Road #97/Abba Church Rd. at Kennedy Road
Ashley ²⁰	Near SR #90 and SR #233 on old rail line between Van and Talmadge
Ashton ²¹	SR #206 at Pine Level Church Rd
Bowen’s Mill ²²	Intersection of SR #182 and US

¹⁷ Duggan, M.L. *Educational Survey of Ben Hill County*. Atlanta: Georgia Department of Education, 1918.

¹⁸ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Populated+Place>

²² Ibid.

	#129/SR #11
Camp Brooklyn ²³	Bowen's Landing Rd. off SR #182
Carswell ²⁴	NE of Bowen's Mill On or Near US #129/SR #11
Crisp ²⁵	SR #182, Approx. 3.8 miles from US #129 at Bowens Mill
Dickson Mill ²⁶	Sturgeon Creek Rd. at Dixon's Mill Pond Rd.
Dorminey ²⁷	Frank Rd. Area at Irwin County Line
Dorminey's Mill ²⁸	Camp Brooklyn and Dorminy Mill Church Rd. area
Evergreen ²⁹	Area around US #319 and CR #224
Fitzgerald ³⁰	US #319 and US #129 Area
Fitzgerald Cotton Mill ³¹	S. Meade and E. Magnolia St. Area of Fitzgerald
Fussel Store ³²	SW of US #319 and CR #224 Intersection along CR #304 Area
Garbutts Lodge ³³	Along Ocmulgee River N of CR #199 Area
Handleys ³⁴	US #129 and SR #107 Area Around

²³ <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Locale>

²⁴ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Locale>

²⁷ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Populated+Place>

³¹ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

³² <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Locale>

³³ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

³⁴ Ibid.

	Fitzgerald
Hyacinth ³⁵	Near CR #50 and CR #49 Area
Irwin ³⁶	SR #1028 and CR #54 Area Around Fitzgerald
Lulaville ³⁷	US #129/SR #11 at Lulaville RD.
Pinargo ³⁸	CR #68 and CR #71 Intersection Area
Queensland ³⁹	US #129/SR #11 at Foxglove Rd.
Red Bluff ⁴⁰	On Ocmulgee River, Near Ben Hill/Telfair/Coffee County Border on Red Bluff Rd.
Sibbie ⁴¹	SR #215 at Sibbie Rd.
Swan ⁴²	Fitzgerald was formerly Swan
Van ⁴³	On rail line between Abba and Ashley Near CR #94 and CR #97 Intersection
Westwood ⁴⁴	Preston Dr. and Adamson Rd. Area of Fitzgerald
Wright ⁴⁵	CR #48 Area
Zana ⁴⁶	SR #1028 and SR #90 Intersection Area Around Fitzgerald

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Populated+Place>

³⁸ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

³⁹ <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Populated+Place>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ <http://www.topozone.com/states/Georgia.asp?county=Ben+Hill&feature=Populated+Place>

⁴⁵ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/benhillcopn.htm>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The properties referenced in Table D-14 are shown on Map D-16.

Historic Resources Surveys:

A comprehensive historic resources survey has not been undertaken for all of Ben Hill County. Only the City of Fitzgerald has had a comprehensive historic resources survey which was completed in 1981.⁴⁷

The purpose of such a survey is to identify and inventory what historic resources exist in order to take further actions to protect and preserve them. Because a complete comprehensive historic resources survey has not been done, it is difficult to assess Ben Hill County's historic resources. However, based upon several windshield surveys of the area and several surveys of various types, it is obvious that there are numerous historic and cultural resources in Ben Hill County. Ben Hill County also has many mature agricultural landscapes, which significantly contribute to the historic and aesthetic character of the county.

As stated previously, the City of Fitzgerald has properties and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and Georgia Register of Historic Places (GARHP). It also has properties and districts that may be eligible.⁴⁸

Some individual areas in Ben Hill County have had some type of project specific historic resources surveys completed due to Federal Section 106 requirements or preliminary National Register of Historic Places submittals. In the case of Unincorporated Ben Hill County, at least five (5) properties were found to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. None in the City of Fitzgerald were identified under these programs in recent years (except the Former Atlantic & Birmingham Railway noted below which also passes through the city limits).⁴⁹

Table D-15, Unincorporated Ben Hill County National Register Eligible Properties & Sites Identified During Project Specific Historic Resources Surveys

NR ELIGIBLE PROPERTY OR SITE	LOCATION	DATE OF SURVEY	AGENCY
Castleberry Family Farm	266 Appomattox Rd., Ben Hill County	2007	GDOT ⁵⁰
Fitzgerald Country Club	107 S. Ocilla Highway, Ben Hill County	2007	GDOT ⁵¹
Former Atlantic & Birmingham Railway	North/South Alignment Perpendicular to SR 107/Benjamin H. Hill Drive/E. of Appomattox Road, Ben Hill County	2007	GDOT ⁵²
Herndon House	248 Jeff Davis Highway, Ben Hill	2007	GDOT ⁵³

⁴⁷ Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division. [File-User's Guide to Georgia Historic Resources Surveys](http://www.gashpo.org), www.gashpo.org.

⁴⁸ See Tables D-13, D-19 & D-20

⁴⁹ See Table D-15

⁵⁰ Edwards-Pitman Environmental Inc.. *Historic Resources Survey Report GDOT Projects STP-0000-00(311) (314) and (313), Turner, Irwin and Ben Hill Counties P.I. Nos. 0000311, 0000314 and 0000313 HP No. 060517-004 Smyrna, Georgia: Privately Published, January 8, 2007.*

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

	County		
White Farm	287 Benjamin H. Hill Drive	2007	GDOT ⁵⁴

The properties referenced in Table D-15 are shown on Map D-17.

In addition to the above, the Graham Family Farm had been found eligible in the same survey. However, afterward, the farmhouse was destroyed by fire and the tobacco barn disassembled. It was then determined to be not eligible.⁵⁵

State Historic Markers:

There are presently zero (0) state historic markers of various types located in Unincorporated Ben Hill County. There are historic markers located in the City of Fitzgerald (see below).

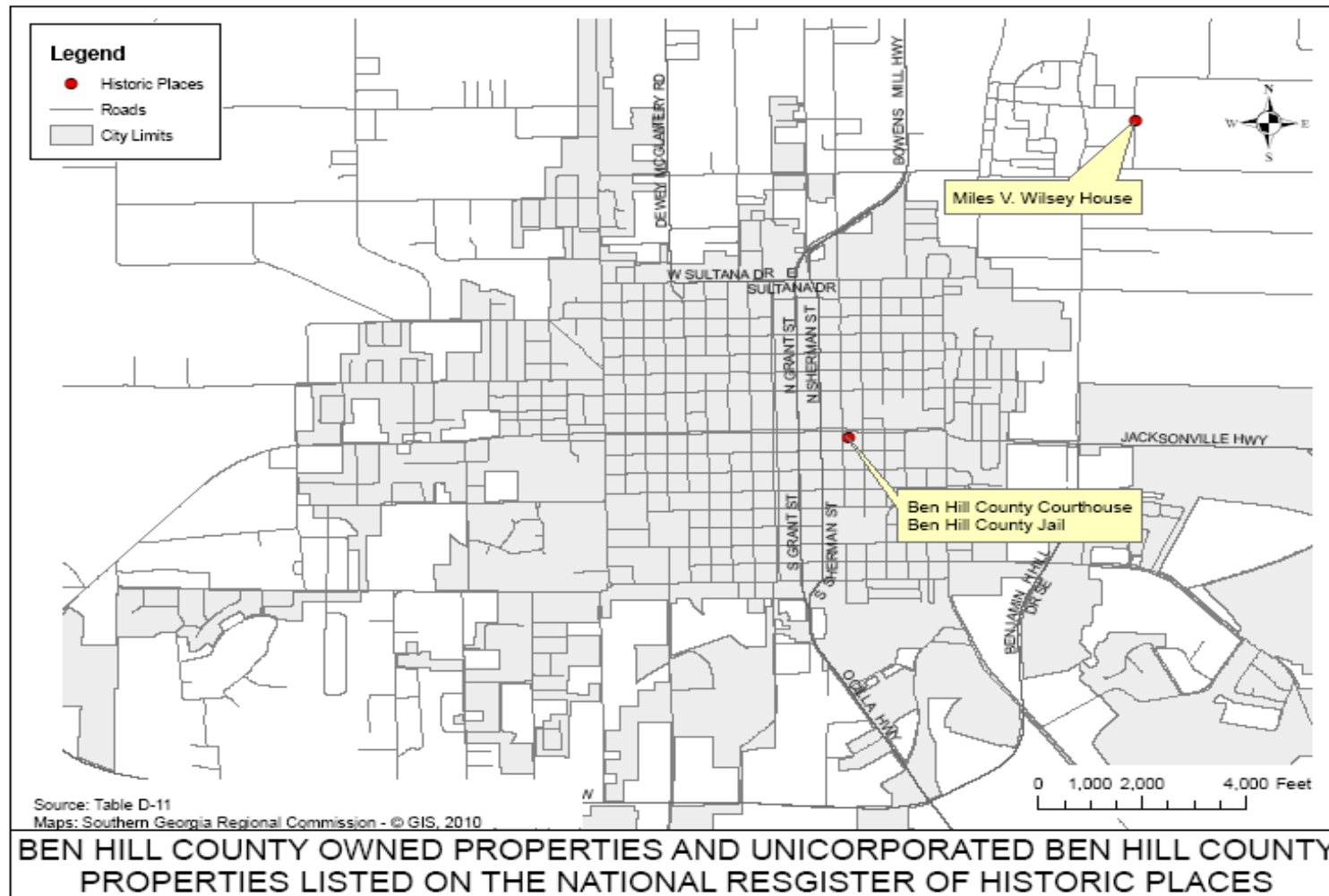
⁵³ Southall, Sharman. "GDOT Projects CSSTP-0000-00 (311)(314)(313), Turner, Irwin & Ben Hill Counties, P.I. #s 0000311, 0000314 & 0000313; HP-060517-004 Revised Property Information Forms & Technical Assistance Meeting Minutes." June 12, 2007.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

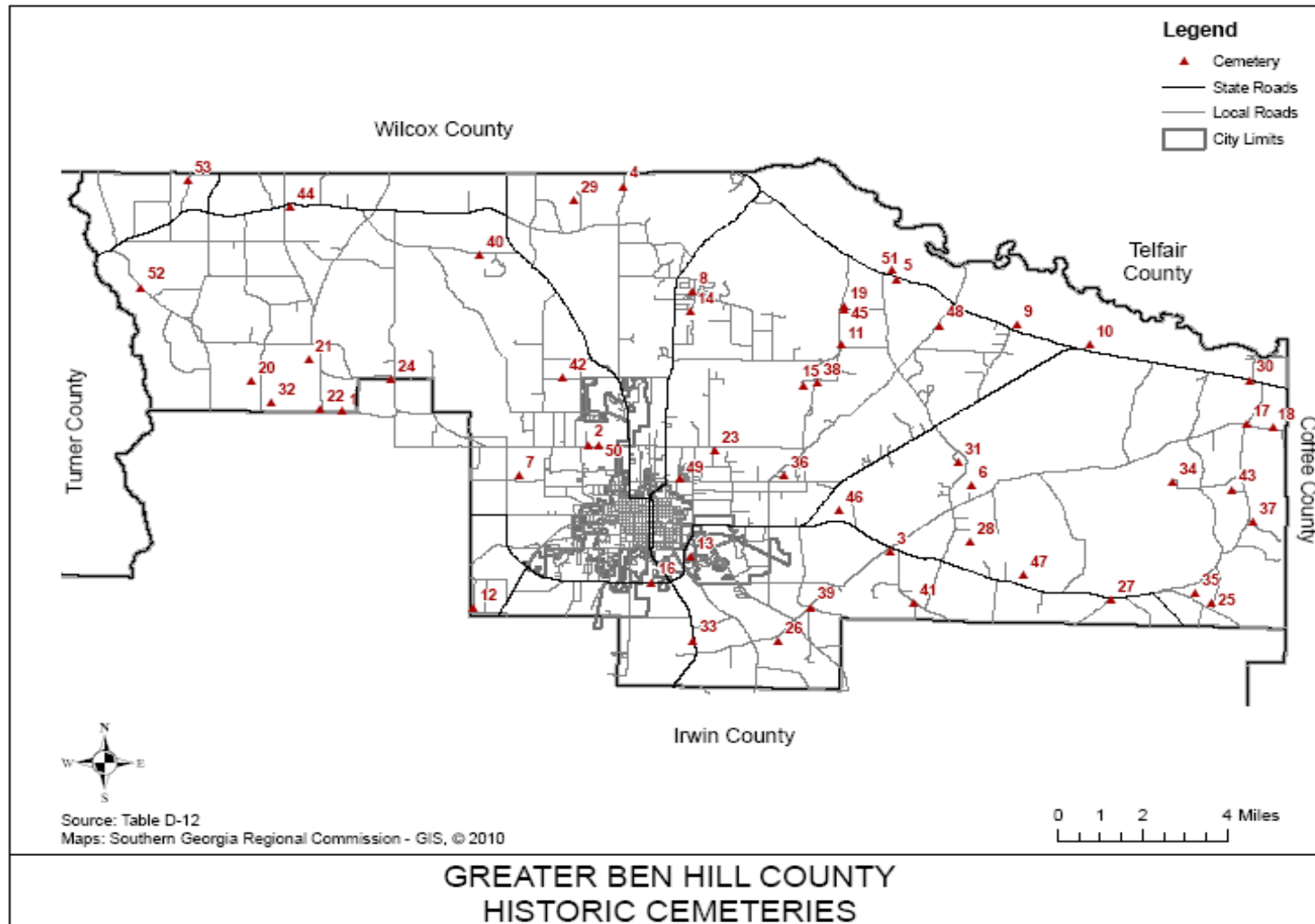
⁵⁵ Southall, Sharman. "GDOT Projects CSSTP-0000-00 (311)(314)(313), Turner, Irwin & Ben Hill Counties: HP-060517-004 Revised Property Information Form for the Graham Family Farm/Resource 39." June 18, 2008.

MAP D-13

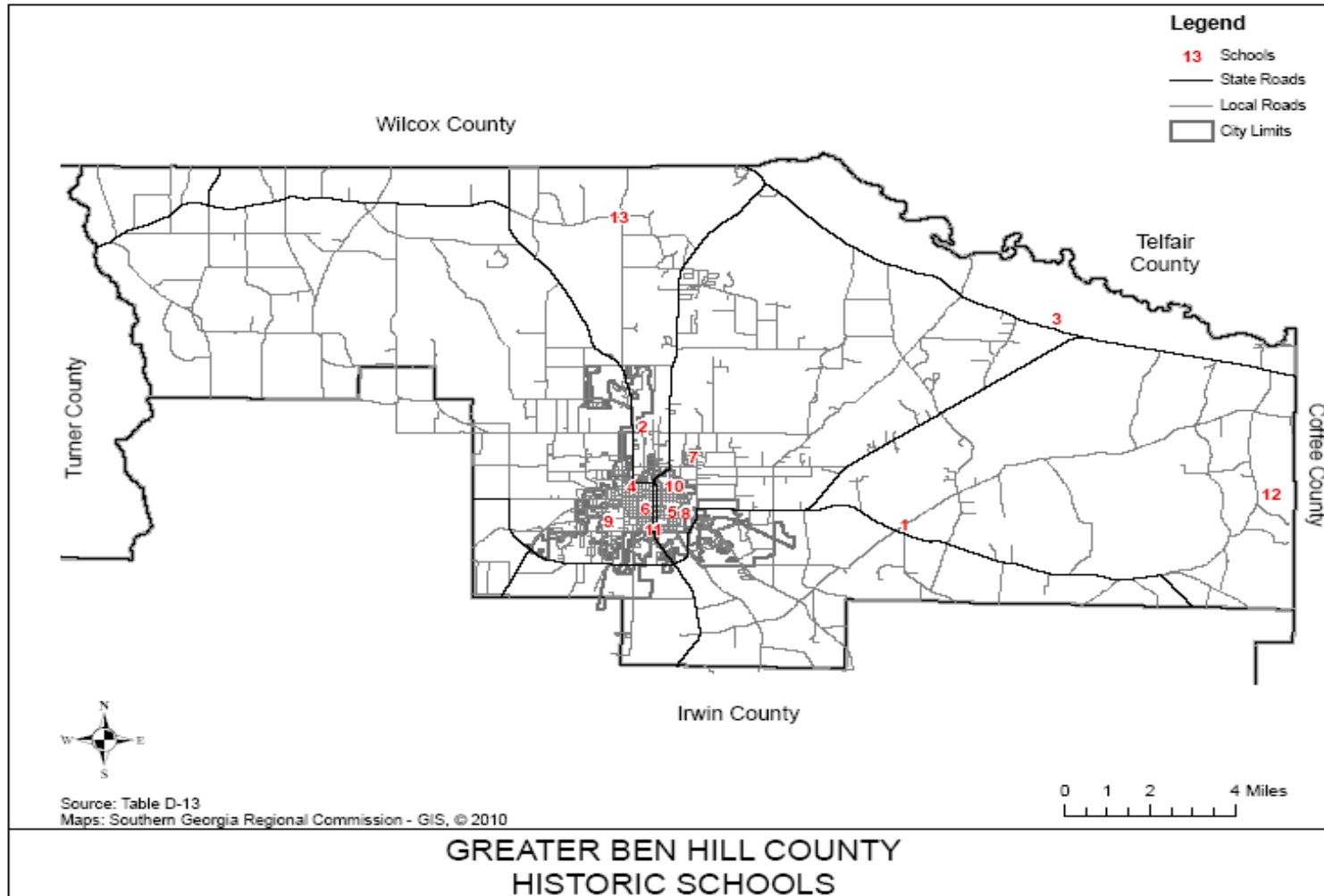
Ben Hill County Owned Properties And Unincorporated Ben Hill County Properties Listed On The National Register Of Historic Places



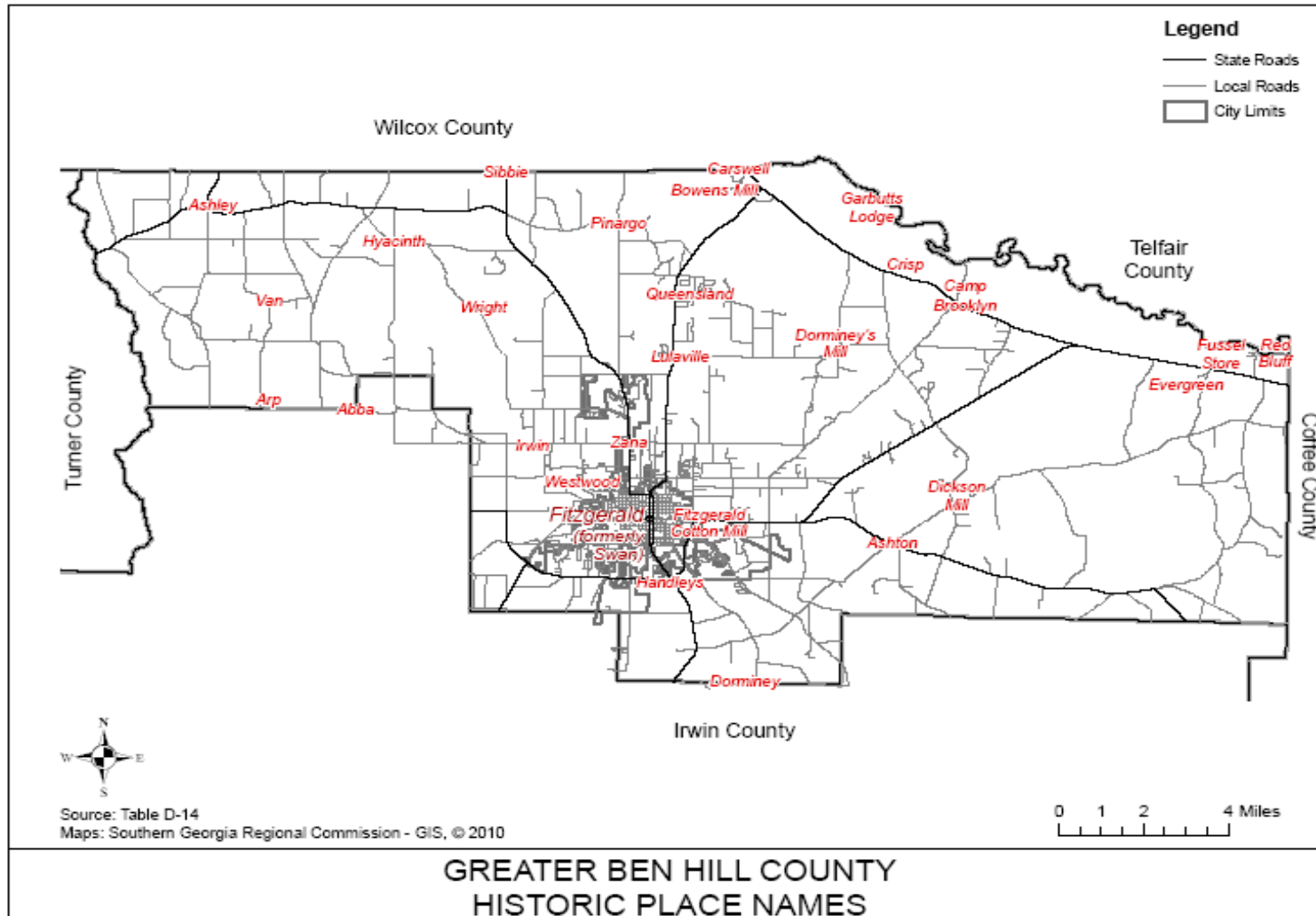
MAP D-14
Greater Ben Hill County Historic Cemeteries



Map D-15
Greater Ben Hill County Historic Schools

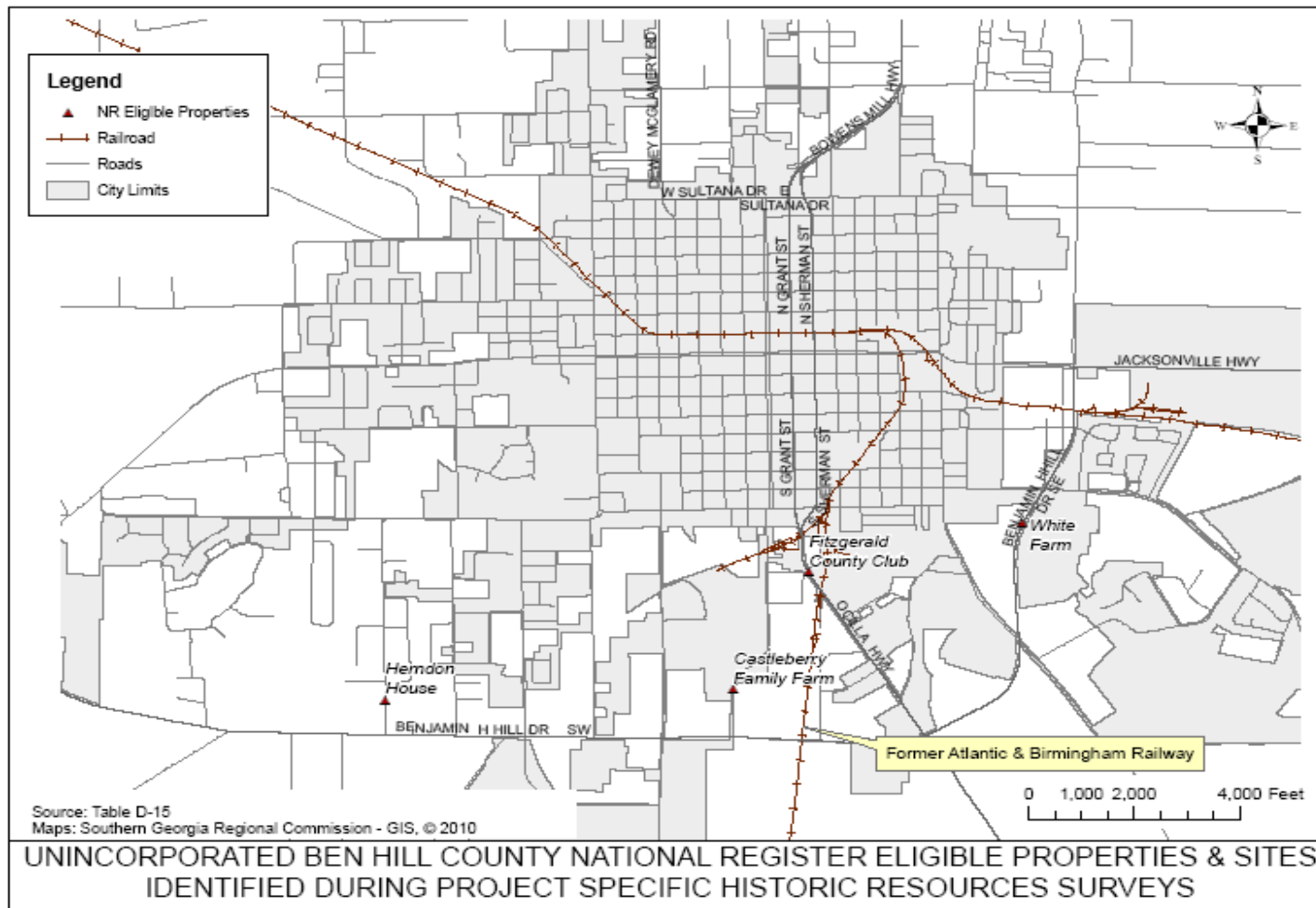


Map D-16
Greater Ben Hill County Historic Place Names



Map D-17

Unincorporated Ben Hill County National Register of Historic Places Eligible Properties & Sites Identified During Project Specific Historic Resources Surveys



Fitzgerald

Properties & Districts Listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

The City of Fitzgerald has a rich heritage that is evidenced by its historic sites. Two historic properties (not including the two properties owned by Ben Hill County and located in the City of Fitzgerald) and two historic districts have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Georgia Register of Historic Places (GARHP).

The South Main-South Lee Street Historic District is primarily residential. The district is comprised of approximately 20 blocks and was home to the city’s most prominent citizens in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Immediately following the community of Fitzgerald being surveyed and laid out in 1895, the development of the area began. The earliest houses were wood-framed and later homes were constructed of masonry and “granitoid”, a rusticated, hollow-core concrete block manufactured locally. The larger houses are generally clustered along South Main Street, while the more moderately sized dwellings are found along South Lee and the intersecting streets.

The Fitzgerald Commercial Historic District is primarily commercial with Ocmulgee, Thomas, Magnolia and Lee Streets roughly bounding the District. There are many architectural styles in this district which dates to the early 1900s. Most of these completely fill their lots, share common walls and front directly on the sidewalk.

Table D-16, City of Fitzgerald Properties & Districts Listed On The National Register Of Historic Places

SITE	ADDRESS	CITY	DATE LISTED
Dorminy-Massee House	516 W. Central Avenue	Fitzgerald	2000 ⁵⁶
Fitzgerald Commercial Historic District	Roughly bounded by Ocmulgee, Thomas, Magnolia and Lee Streets	Fitzgerald	1992 ⁵⁷
Holtzendorf Apartments	105 W. Pine Street	Fitzgerald	1988 ⁵⁸
South Main-South Lee Streets Historic District	Roughly bounded by Magnolia Street, S. Main Street, Roanoke Drive and Lee Street	Fitzgerald	1989 ⁵⁹

The properties referenced in Table D-16 are shown on Map D-18.

State Historic Resources Surveys:

⁵⁶ National Register of Historic Places Record Page for Dorminy-Massee House Record #00000529

⁵⁷ National Register of Historic Places Record Page for Fitzgerald Commercial Historic District #92000383

⁵⁸ National Register of Historic Places Record Page for Holtzendorf Apartments Record #87001905

⁵⁹ National Register of Historic Places Record Page for South Main-South Lee Streets Historic District Record #89000294

A comprehensive historic resources survey was conducted in 1981 in the City of Fitzgerald only. The survey shows that properties were identified as historic at the time, although more may be considered historic now, as more than 29 years have elapsed since its completion.

Table D-17, City of Fitzgerald Comprehensive Historic Resources Surveys

NR POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES AND DISTRICTS	LOCATION	DATE OF SURVEY	AGENCY
Historic Properties & Districts	City of Fitzgerald	1981	GA DNR ⁶⁰

State Historic Markers:

There are presently five (5) state historic markers of various types located in the City of Fitzgerald.

Table D-18, City of Fitzgerald State Historic Markers⁶¹

MARKER	LOCATION	Marker #
Ben Hill County	Ben Hill County Courthouse E. Central St.	GHM 009-2
First Baptist Church Bell	402 S. Merrimac	GHM No#
Fitzgerald The Colony City	US #129 at Central Avenue	GHM 009-4
General Bush's Home	608 W. Suwannee	GHM 009-1
Jefferson Davis Memorial State Park	US #129 at Central Avenue	GHM 009-3

GHM - Georgia Historical Marker [indicating an official state marker erected by the Georgia Historical Commission (1953-1971) or its successor, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (after 1971)]

GCG - Garden Clubs of Georgia

The properties referenced in Table D-18 are shown on Map D-18.

Local Historic Properties & Districts:

⁶⁰ Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division. [File-User's Guide to Georgia Historic Resources Surveys](http://www.gashpo.org). www.gashpo.org.

⁶¹ <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/gahistmarkers/gamarkersA-E.htm#anchor807449>

The City of Fitzgerald first enacted a Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1986 ⁶², which has since had several amendments. Several properties and districts have been listed as Local Historic Properties and Local Historic Districts under the control of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Table D-19, City of Fitzgerald Local Historic Properties & Districts⁶³

SITE	DATE LISTED
Ben Hill County Courthouse & Jail	9/14/1987
Fitzgerald Junior High School (4 th Ward)	9/14/1987
Gen. William Jordon Bishop House	9/14/1987
Local Historic Districts Primarily Along S. Main, S. Lee and W. Central	9/14/1987
Medians On Central Ave. And Main St.	9/14/1987
St. Mathews Episcopal Church	9/14/1987

The properties referenced in Table D-19 are shown on Map D-19.

Other Historic Properties And Sites:

In 2005, the South Georgia Regional Development Center (now the Southern Georgia Regional Commission) identified several historic resources in the City of Fitzgerald worthy of preservation.

Table D-20, City of Fitzgerald Other Historic Properties & Sites⁶⁴

SITE	ADDRESS
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church	903 E. Oconee St.
Central Christian Church	175 W. Jessamine St.
Central Methodist Church	201 W. Central Ave.
Church of God	700 E. Altamaha St.

⁶² City of Fitzgerald Ordinance #1093 Enacted 10/13/86

⁶³ City of Fitzgerald Ordinance #1101 Enacted 9/14/87

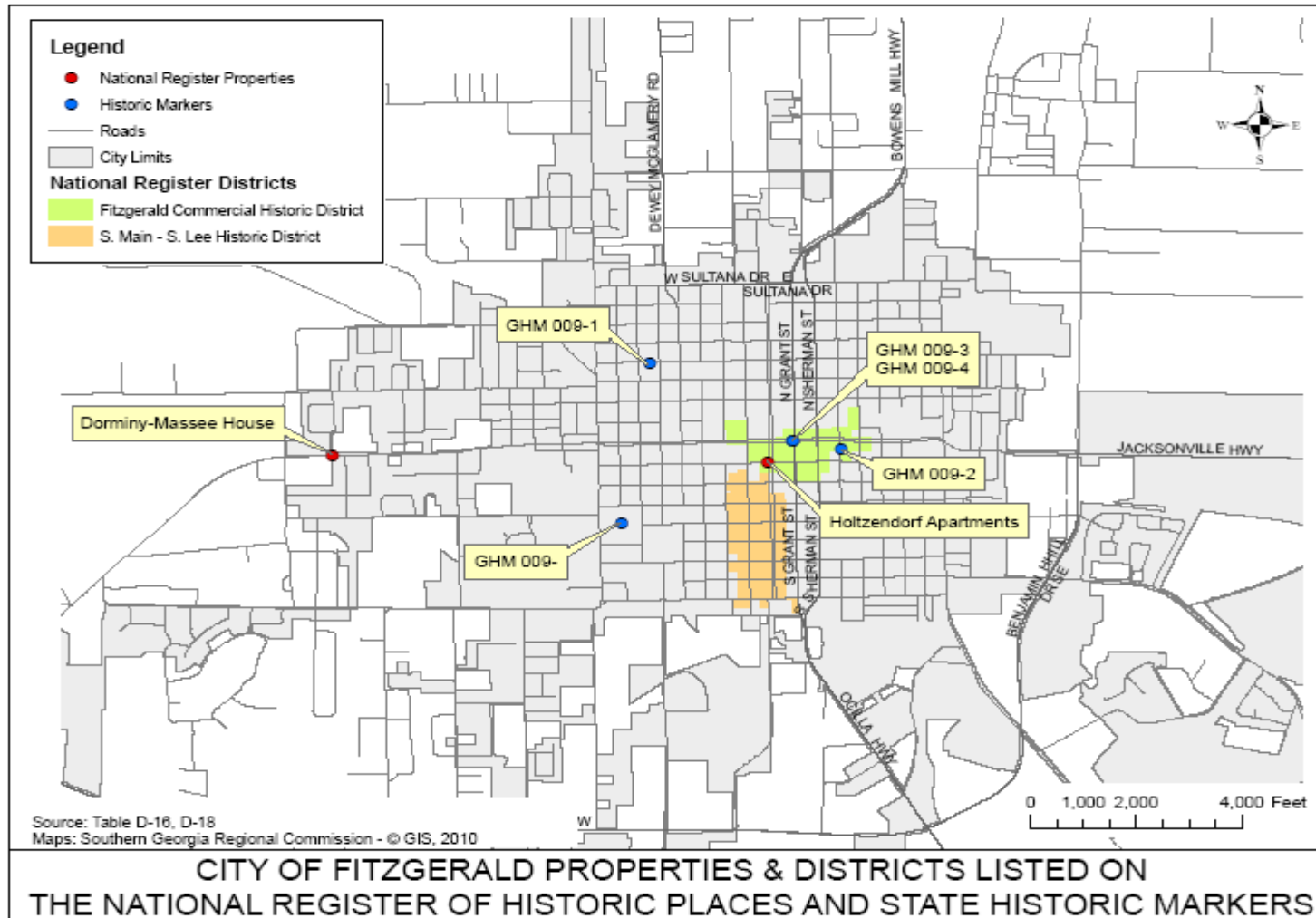
⁶⁴ South Georgia Regional Development Center. 2005 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan For Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. Valdosta, Georgia: Self Published, 2005, Map 3-16.

Church of the Nazarene	323 N. Main St.
Community Church	E. Jessamine St. @ S. Monitor Dr.
First Baptist Church	402 S. Merrimac Dr.
First Presbyterian Church	234 Irwinville Hwy.
Holiness Church	E. Jessamine St. @ S. Monitor Dr.
Holsee Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	N. Marion Ave.
Mount Olive Baptist Church	808 E. Jessamine St.
New Providence Baptist Church	107 S. Walden Ave.
Saint Mathews Episcopal Church	W. Pine St.
Saint Peters Church	808 W. Sultana Dr.
Saint Williams Catholic Church	715 S. Merrimac Dr.
Salem Baptist Church	816 E. Palm St.
Shiloh Church	124 Fairview Ave.
Union Holiness Church	W. Orange St. @ S. Bragg St.
Westside Church	612 W. Altamaha St.
Zion Rest Primitive Baptist Church	W. Oconee St.

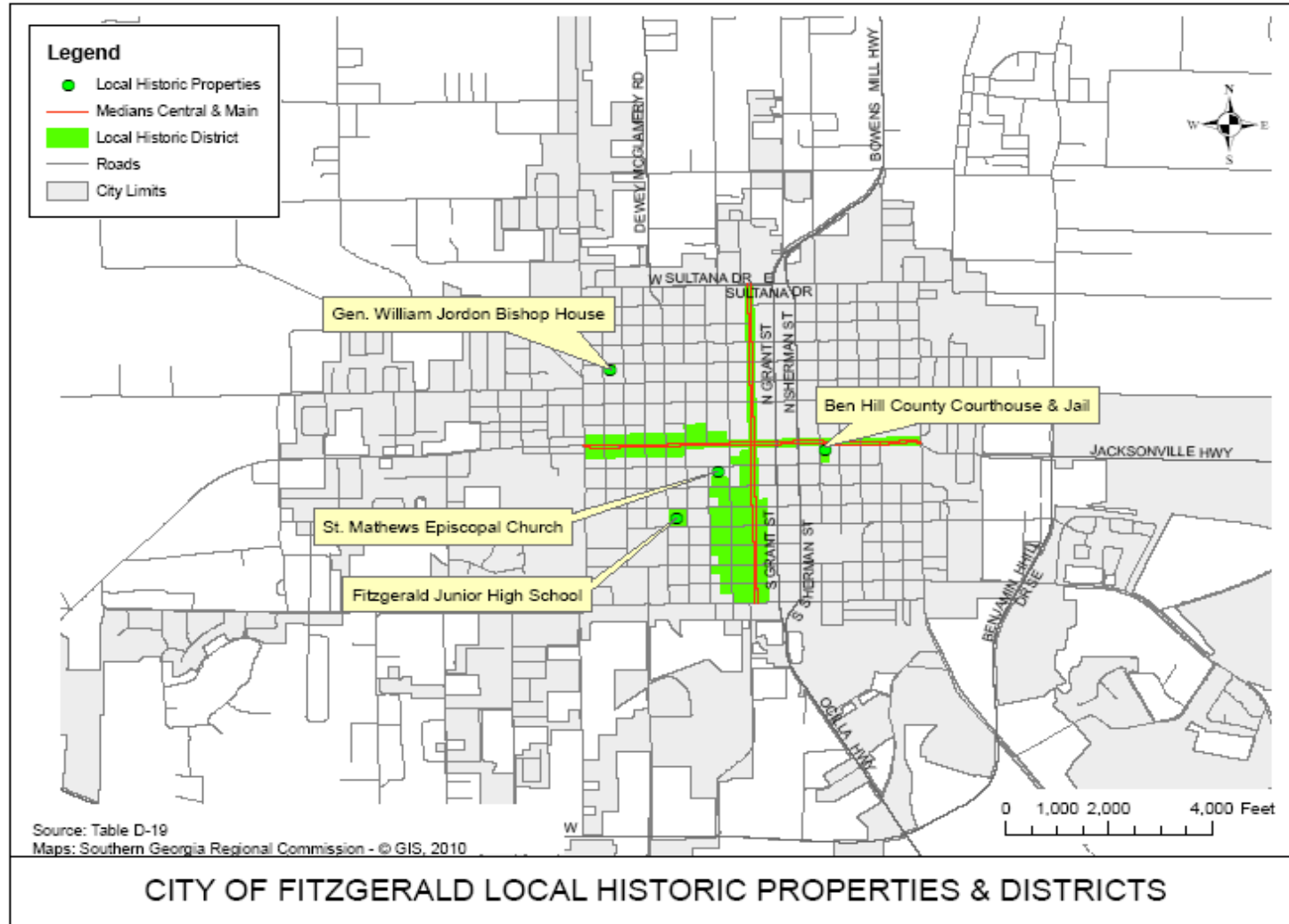
The properties referenced in Table D-20 are shown on Map D-20.

Map D-18

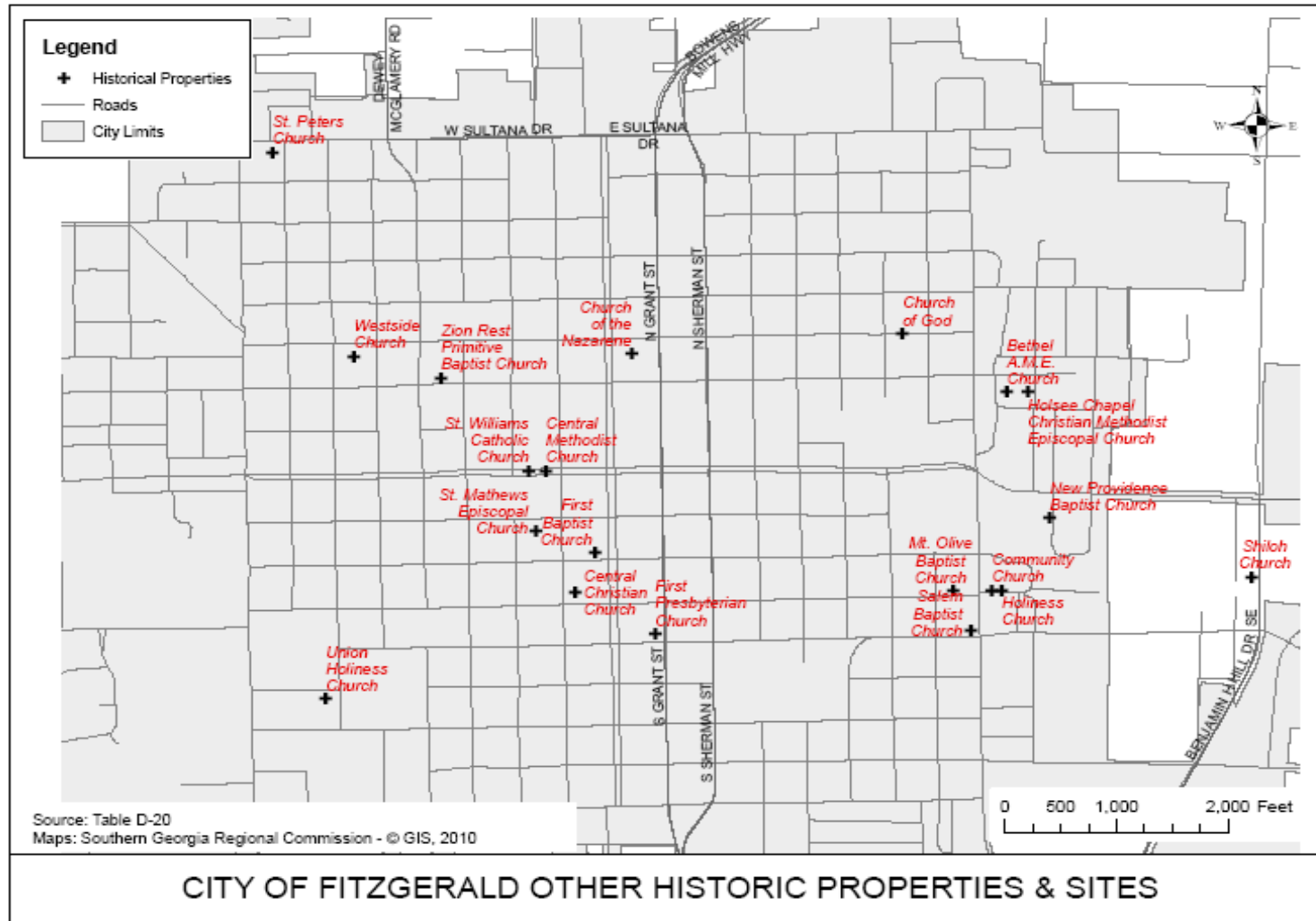
City of Fitzgerald Properties & Districts Listed on the National Register of Historic Places And State Historic Markers



Map D-19
City of Fitzgerald Local Historic Properties & Districts



Map D-20
City of Fitzgerald Other Historic Properties & Sites



Archaeological Sites

The earliest known human inhabitants of the region now known as Ben Hill County came into the area approximately 12,000 years ago, towards the end of the last Ice Age.⁶⁵ European settlers began to enter the area in the early eighteenth century, but more so in the early nineteenth century with the creation of Irwin County in 1818⁶⁶ and the land lottery land grants of 1820⁶⁷. The population was further enhanced by the opening of the Coffee Road in 1823.⁶⁸ Over the 12,000 years, humans have left a substantial material record of their lives. The study of this material record forms the basis of **archaeology** and the basic unit of this record is the **archaeological site**. To date, there have been twenty-three (23) archaeological sites recorded by the Georgia Archaeological Site File in Ben Hill County.⁶⁹ Archaeological sites in Ben Hill County can range from locations where hunters manufactured stone tools 12,000 years ago to small late nineteenth/early twentieth century farmsteads.

Historic Preservation

Historic communities and historic areas within communities represent a unique collection of resources, connected by time, place, and feeling. Historic preservation planning provides communities with the tools to protect these resources and their settings for future generations to appreciate and learn from. Historic preservation planning is also a thriving economic development tool. There are several historic preservation opportunities that communities in Ben Hill County could take advantage of in order to promote the county, preserve its heritage and foster economic development.

Tourism

The rich history of Ben Hill County is a tremendous cultural asset, but can also become a financial asset. The county's location near Interstate 75, a major transportation corridor, and its location on the Jefferson Davis Heritage Trail (a Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail) gives it many tourism opportunities that should be pursued. Aspects of Ben Hill County's heritage that would be of interest to tourists include Civil War heritage, agricultural heritage, railroad heritage, and the City of Fitzgerald's Grand Theater (soon to have a completely rebuilt historic pipe organ), wild chickens, commercial areas and residential areas (which include many fine examples of architecture). Regarding architecture, the City of Fitzgerald could promote and expand upon the multiple examples of architectural types that are readily available here and rarely seen elsewhere in such a confined area in Georgia. Students and tourists could be targeted to view these architectural type examples brought here by northern and western based settlers.

Ben Hill County could also consider the development of a county-wide driving tour which would highlight areas of interest to both residents and tourists. The City of Fitzgerald has already developed such a tour.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ <http://www.lostworlds.org/georgia.html>

⁶⁶ Cooksey, Elizabeth B. "Irwin County". *The New Georgia Encyclopedia* (www.georgiaencyclopedia.org), May 8, 2006.

⁶⁷ Gigantino, Jim. "Land Lottery System". *The New Georgia Encyclopedia* (www.georgiaencyclopedia.org), February 17, 2006.

⁶⁸ Georgia Historic Commission. "Old Coffee Road GHM 037-1". <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/gahistmarkers/gamarkersA-E.htm#anchor818188>

⁶⁹ Hinson, Lindsay. Georgia Archaeological Site File, Athens, Georgia. Interviewed by Michael Jacobs, March 15, 2010.

⁷⁰ City of Fitzgerald. *Architectural Treasures Tour*. Available online at www.fitzgeraldga.org

APPENDIX E
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The location and quality of community facilities and services is as important to a community's well being as the traditional development of commercial, residential, and industrial uses. Community facilities include schools, parks, government administration offices, libraries, hospitals and fire and police protection. Community services also include public or semi-public water and sewer systems. Included in this appendix is the inventory and assessment of each category of community facilities grouped by jurisdiction. Services are described for joint services and for each individual municipality.

Water Supply And Treatment

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Utilities Commission is responsible for providing water service to approximately 5,800 customers. The water system consists of five deep wells, four of which pump 1,000 gallons per minute. One well pumps 1,200 gallons per minute with 110 miles of water mains and distribution lines. The water is drawn from the Floridan Aquifer, and fluoride is added to prevent tooth decay and cavities.

The water supply system is currently permitted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for an annual daily average withdrawal of 3.1 million gallons per day, with peak dry season withdrawal limited to 3.75 million gallons per day.

The total water storage capacity is 1,750,000 gallons consisting of three storage tanks holding 250,000 gallons each, and two storage tanks holding 500,000 gallons each.

The Utilities Commission serves not only the City of Fitzgerald, but also a large portion of the urban and suburban area in Ben Hill County adjacent to the city's corporate limits. The water distribution system consists of lines between 2 and twelve inches in diameter.

Sewer System and Wastewater Treatment

Fitzgerald operates a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant that provides wastewater and sewer service to approximately 4,000 customers. The facility embodies the latest and most advanced techniques, exceeds the standards set by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, and has made possible increased growth and planned economic expansion. Improvements are continually made to the wastewater treatment plant to keep up with changing technology and general maintenance.

In addition, the collection system consists of small, 4 inch collector lines all the way up to large 36 inch interceptor lines, which take the effluent to the wastewater treatment plant. The C. A. Newcomer Wastewater Treatment Facility is located south of the city on Ed Ward Road, and was placed on line in 1985. Located on an 18 acre tract, the facility has a 6.0 million gallon per day treatment capacity.

Stormwater Management

Precipitation that does not soak into the ground becomes stormwater runoff, which either flows into surface waterways or is channeled into storm sewers. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater runoff from naturally soaking into the ground. Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream,

river, or wetland. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into our local waterbodies.

All communities are faced with stormwater issues; however, not all are required to address them. In 1990, the Phase I stormwater program was created under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and required a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for (1) “medium” and “large” municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) generally serving populations of 100,000 or greater, (2) construction activity disturbing 5 acres of land or greater, and (3) ten categories of industrial activity. In 1999, the Phase II stormwater program was created to further expand the Phase I program by requiring additional operators of MS4s in urbanized areas and operators of small construction sites, through the use of NPDES permits, to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff¹.

The City of Fitzgerald maintains a curb and gutter storm drain system throughout the majority of the downtown area. Stormwater management outside of the downtown is handled via open swales and ditches.

Solid Waste Management

The City of Fitzgerald provides curbside pickup of solid waste to 4,264 customers and 462 businesses within the City’s “urban service boundary”, which is generally comprised of the city limits and properties within outer perimeter bypass.

Ben Hill County provides limited commercial garbage service outside the city limits, and the County Road Department provides solid waste services at its seven dump sites located throughout the county. The dumpsites are open from 7:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. from Monday through Saturday.

Fire Protection

The Fitzgerald Fire Department is comprised of 22 fire fighters and officers that are guided by Chief Jay Whitley. Equipment and training in the fire department are constantly being upgraded to ensure our town is well protected. The Ben Hill County Volunteer Fire Department covers the area of unincorporated Ben Hill County.

Public Safety

Sheriff’s Department Ben Hill County

The Ben Hill County Sheriff’s Office serves all areas of unincorporated Ben Hill County. The Sheriff’s department is located at 255 Appomattox Road. Sheriff Bobby McLemore is responsible for the direction of the Ben Hill County Sheriff’s Department.

Police Department City of Fitzgerald

Consisting of 28 full-time, duly sworn officers, the Fitzgerald Police Department serves as the main body of law enforcement in the city. There are also eight support personnel and one court officer on staff. Headquarters, including the office of Chief Bill Smallwood, are located at 255 Appomattox Rd. The police department occupies a precinct in the Roanoke Homes area and plans to open a second precinct soon.

911 / Emergency Management Agency

¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency

Ben Hill County E-911 is the central answering point for all Ben Hill County emergency and non-emergency calls and is located adjacent to the Ben Hill County Sheriff's Office at 255-A Appomattox Road. It consists of nine full time communication officers, and three part time communication officers. The E-911 center provides 24 hour dispatching and other support services for the following Ben Hill area Public Safety Agencies:

- Ben Hill County Sheriff's Office
- Fitzgerald Police Department
- Ben Hill County EMS
- Fitzgerald Fire Department
- Ben Hill County Volunteer Fire Department

Director Diane Sims manages the activities of the Ben Hill County E-911 Center.

Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

The Ben Hill County EMA program's purpose is to increase the County's resiliency to, and ability to respond and recover, from the hazards that threaten it. This is done through mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, which is a combined effort with EMS, E-911, police and Sheriff's departments, fire department and the volunteer fire department.

Leisure Services

Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Department of Leisure Services

As a joint service of the city and county, the Department of Leisure Services (DLS) is charged with the supervision and direction of countywide recreational activities. Its headquarters are at 816 North Main Street (Legion Park). Aside from the parks, the DLS also oversees the Monitor Cultural Center and the Pine Street Ceramics Studio located at 115 W Pine.

For sports fans, the DLS offers youth and adult programs in baseball, softball, swimming, football, basketball, soccer, archery, horseshoes, wrestling, tennis, and golf. Not only do these programs teach athletic skills and sportsmanship, they also create teams that are successful in competitive arenas. Fitzgerald, which competes in the Georgia Recreation and Park Association, repeatedly wins district and state championships, as well as hosts some of the top tournaments on an annual basis.

For those not as athletically inclined, the Department varies its activities. The Pine Street ceramics studio has classes throughout the year. There are also active dancing groups. The programs vary from season to season, but the DLS promises to always have several short courses--from needlework to square-dancing--available during the year. Senior programs include a monthly fish fry and a Christmas feast.

There are seven parks maintained by the DLS. These include: Legion Park, Monitor Park, Paulk Park, Lions Park, Blue/Gray Park, Wheeler Park and Old Hunter School Park. There are also two banquet facilities managed by the DLS: Legion Banquet Hall and Monitor Banquet Hall. All of the parks are open from dawn to dusk each day and include a variety of services at each location. Parks include things such as softball fields, playgrounds, walking tracks, gazebos with grills for public use, basketball courts, t-ball and baseball fields, soccer fields, concessions, and restrooms.

MISSION STATEMENT:

“To provide, establish, maintain, and conduct City/County-wide leisure services programming; to maintain such activities that contribute to individuals physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth, and by such other means as may aid in the accomplishment of this purpose.”

Hospitals And General Public Health**Dorminy Medical Center**

Dorminy Medical Center is a 75 bed, acute care facility located in Fitzgerald. The Center is accredited by Joint Commission (formerly the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations, or JCAHO) and a member of the Georgia Rural Hospital Association. The Medical Center has approximately 352 personnel, including both full time and part time staff. Services offered by Dorminy Medical Center include:

- Pain Rehabilitation Center
- Sleep Studies
- Operating Room
- Step Down
- Specialty Clinic
- Rehabilitation
- Wound Care Clinic
- Cardiopulmonary Services (CPR)
- Dorminy Care Clinic
- Infection Control
- Hospice
- Emergency Room
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
- Laboratory
- Medical Imaging
- Nursing Services
- Obstetrics (Labor and Delivery)

Ben Hill County Health Department

The Ben Hill County Health Department offers a wide range of services, including a family planning clinic, clinics for diabetes screening and information, pap smear tests, blood pressure tests, X-rays, immunizations for all ages, child health services, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental food program. Children's medical services include orthopedics, heart and congenital abnormalities, and sickle cell anemia. Confidential diagnosis and treatment of sexually and socially transmitted diseases are also available. The Ben Hill County Health Department is located at 251 Appomattox Road, Fitzgerald, Georgia.

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

DFCS's mission is to promote and protect the well-being of children, adults, families and the community through a comprehensive and coordinated social services program, and to seek a safe and responsible environment in which the achievement of family and individual goals is possible. A variety of services are offered through the department:

Adoption Services
 Foster Care Program
 Home Evaluation and Supervision
 Home Management/Functional Educational Services
 Information and Referral
 Protective Services for Adults

Recreational Services
 Services to Expectant Parents
 Aid to Families with Dependent Children
 Transportation

Libraries And General Cultural Facilities

Library

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Public Library is a branch of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System which covers Tift, Turner, Ben Hill, Berrien, and Irwin Counties. The library is located at 123 North Main Street in Fitzgerald. Library collections include popular fiction and non-fiction, magazines, books on tape, videocassettes DVDs, and reference materials. As a member of PINES, (Public Information Network for Electronic Services), materials can be easily borrowed between member libraries. Many programs for children are offered throughout the year. The Library's hours are from 9:30-8:00 p.m., Monday-Thursday and 9:00-6:00 Friday-Saturday. The library is closed on Sundays.

Grand Theater

The Grand Theatre is a restored 1930's Art Deco facility capable of showing historic and first run 35 mm film in addition to full live concert and dramatic capabilities. The auditorium seats 858 patrons including areas reserved for patrons in wheelchairs and their companions. Large dressing rooms backstage accommodate many performers. A loading ramp allows shows to load directly on stage without use of an elevator or stairs. The theater is located at 119 South Main Street.

Carnegie Center

The Carnegie Center is located in the historic Carnegie Library. It originally opened in 1915 as the Carnegie Library. The newly renovated space boasts an upstairs meeting room gallery as well as the larger 1st floor gallery. The local Arts Council currently staffs the facility and maintains a rotating calendar of visual art shows as well as a monthly chamber music series. The facility is located at 120 South Lee Street.

Educational Facilities

Ben Hill County Public School System: Ben Hill County's Public School System includes 6 schools that currently serve more than 3,300 students in Grades Pre-K through 12. The schools include Ben Hill Co. Preschool (Pre-K to 2), Ben Hill County Primary School (K-2), Ben Hill County Elementary School (3-5), Ben Hill County Middle School (6-8), Fitzgerald High School (9-12), and the Ben Hill Even Start School.

Colleges and Universities

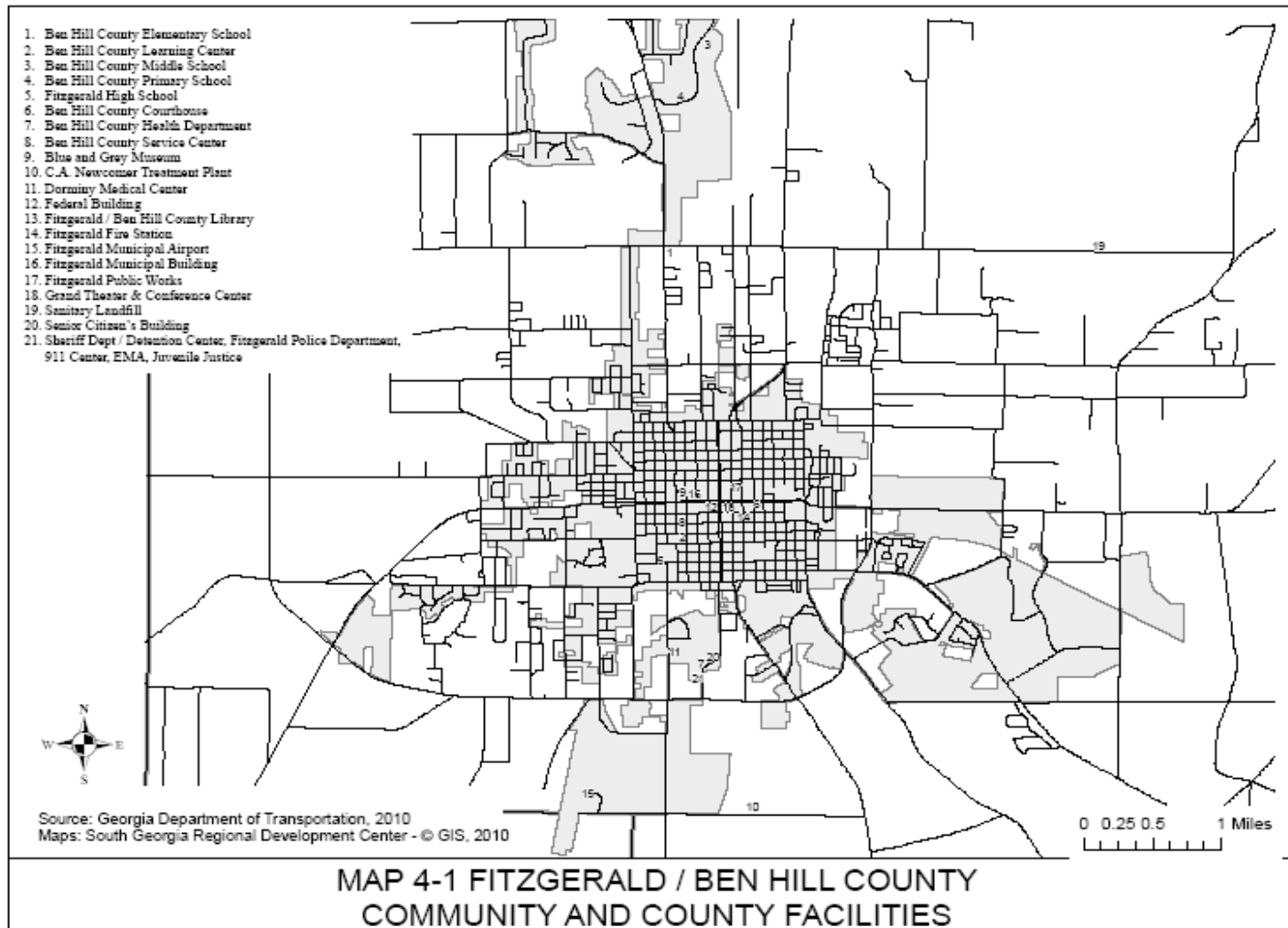
East Central Technical College provides higher education services to the county. The college awards Associates Degrees, Diploma Degrees and Technical Certificates in the following program areas:

- Business Marketing
- Computer Information Technology
- Commercial Truck Driving
- Health Services
- Public Services and Education
- Telecommunications Technology

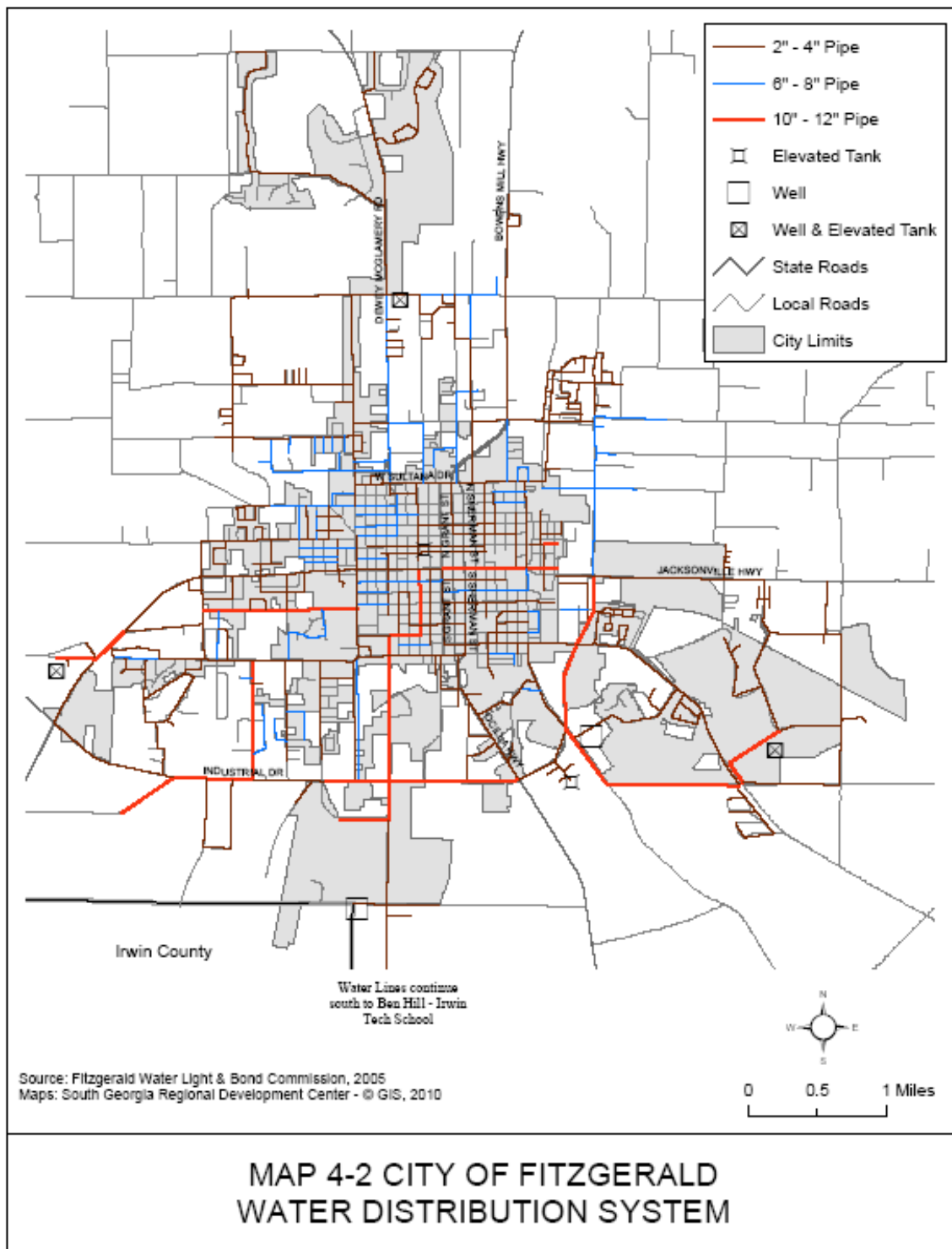
In addition, East Central Tech provides online learning and adult education services to local residents from its Ben Hill-Irwin County campus located at 667 Perry House Road.

All facilities within Greater Ben Hill County are depicted on Maps E-1 through and E-5. These facilities are definite benefits to the economic development of our community by providing jobs, preparing future employees, and attracting regional attention. However, both collective and individual planning is important to ensure each facility is surrounded by appropriate uses, has sufficient infrastructure, and does not cause a negative impact to the surrounding properties.

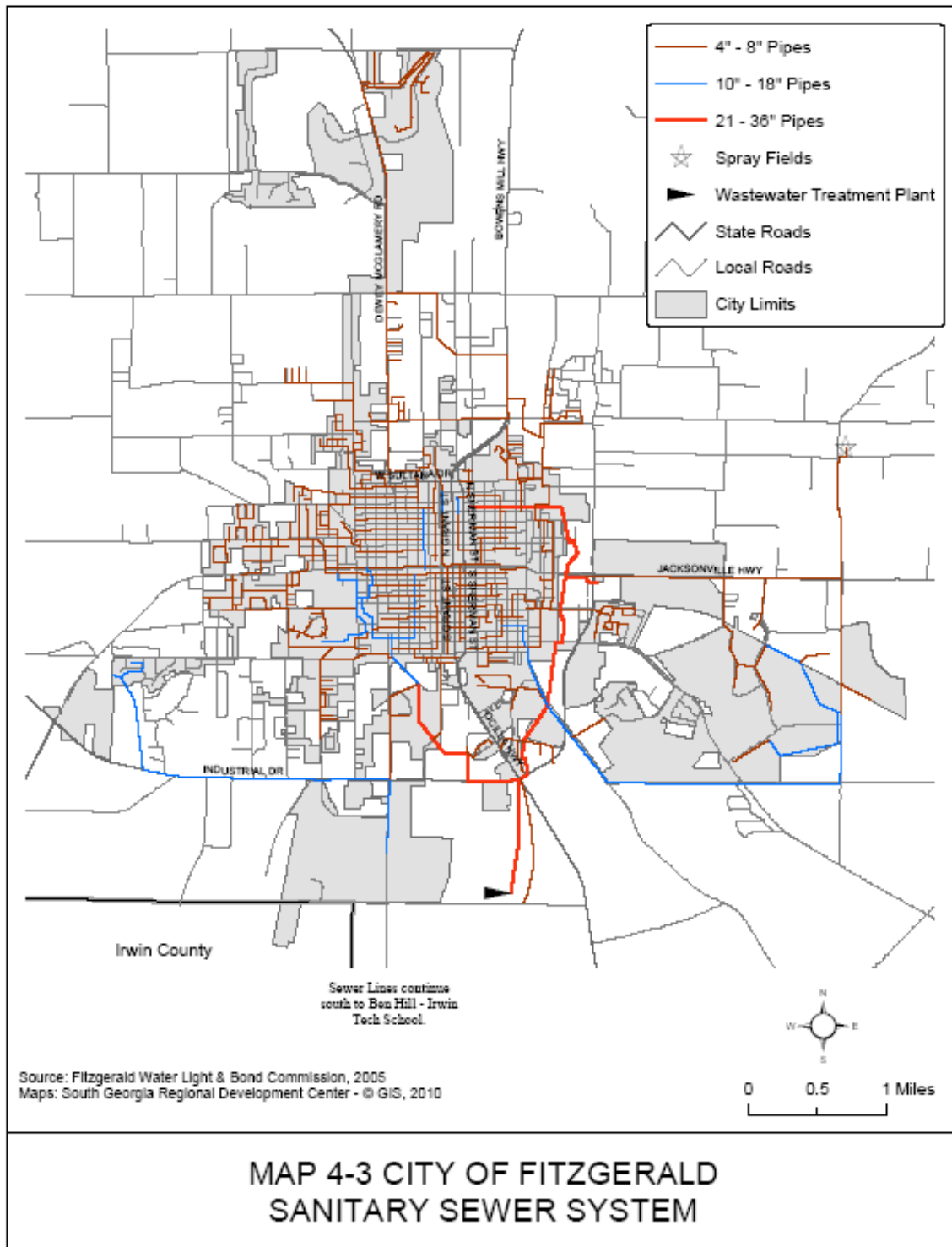
Map E-1



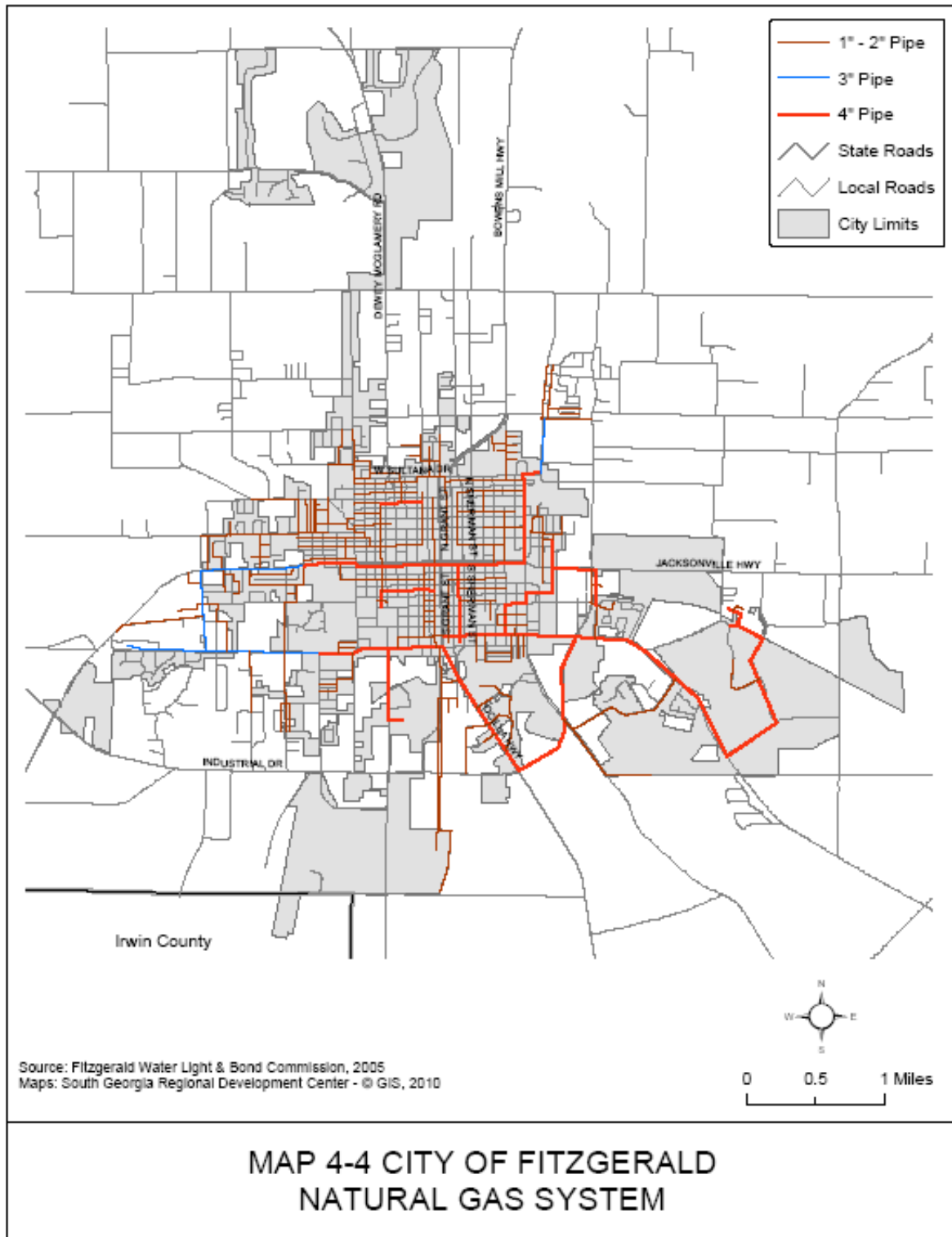
Map E-2



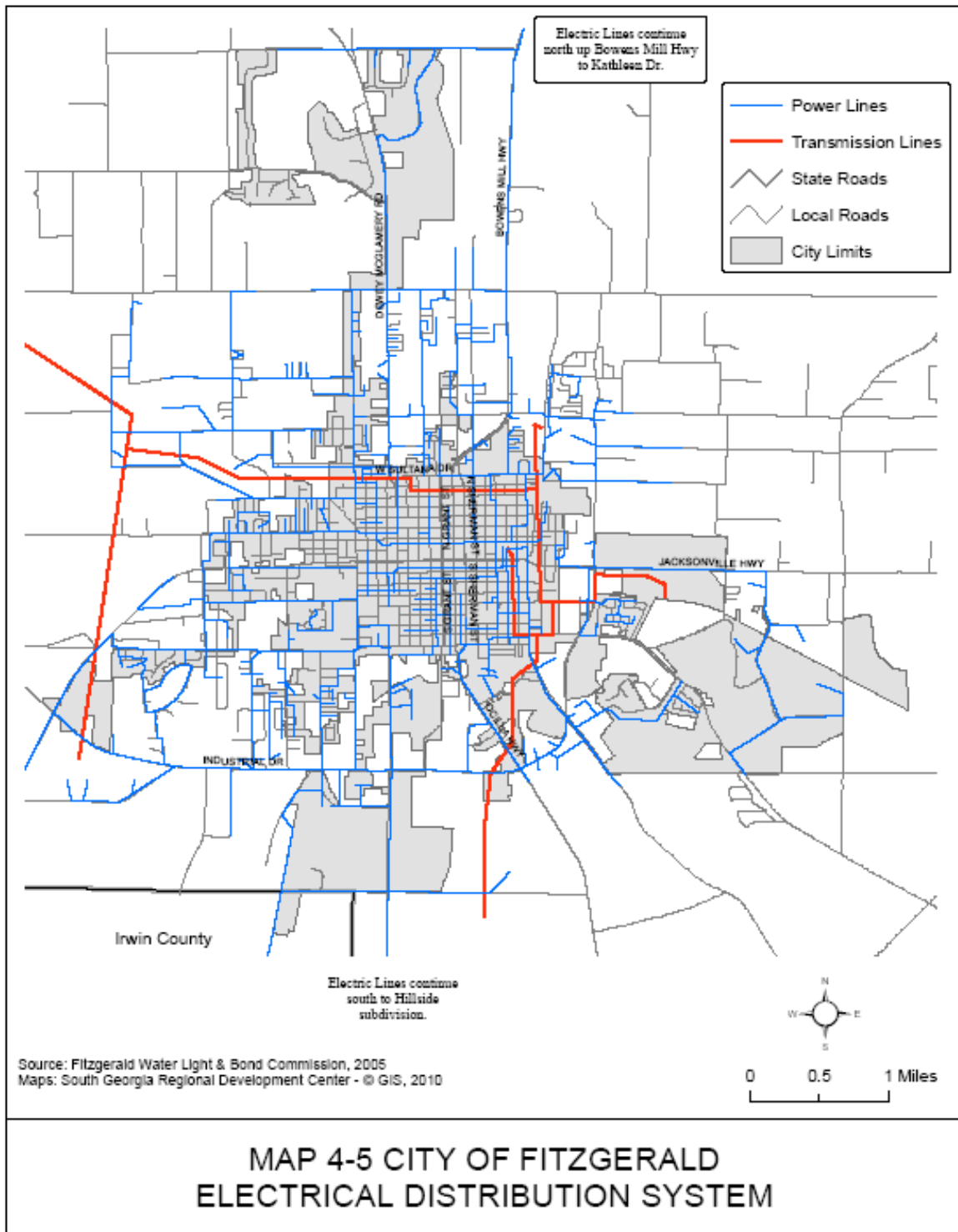
Map E-3



Map E-4



Map E-5



APPENDIX F
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

APPENDIX F: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The number of activities, issues and services that need to be addressed by local governments to effectively plan for a community's future is immense. Increasing complexity of the issue is the fact that the actions of other local governments, governmental entities, and local authorities can have profound impacts on the implementation of a local government's comprehensive plan. A comprehensive review of the existing intergovernmental coordination facilities allows a community to identify weakness in communication and cooperation, which are vital to ensuring quality planning on a regional level.

Adjacent Local Governments

Wilcox and Telfair County border Ben Hill County to the north, Coffee County to the east, Irwin County to the south, and Turner County to the west.

School Systems

Ben Hill County School District Goal and Objectives:

Goal

The Ben Hill County School District will ensure that all employees are apprized of, and buy into, the fact that the only reason for existence of the school system is for the education of our children.

Objectives

- Promote the belief to all personnel, parents, and students that holding high academic expectations for all students, including students with exceptionalities, or disabilities will improve academic achievement.
- Inform all stakeholders of state and federal standards including NCLB requirements.
- All personnel will exhibit and adhere to ethical and professional conduct as applicable to Georgia Code of Ethics.

Independent Authorities And Districts

Fitzgerald Housing Authority
Hospital Authority of Ben Hill County
Fitzgerald Municipal Airport
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Regional Solid Waste Authority

Development Authorities

Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority
Fitzgerald Development Authority
Ben Hill Development Authority
Ben Hill-Irwin Joint Development Authority
Downtown Development Authority of Fitzgerald
Ben Hill Revolving Loan Fund Board

Service Delivery Strategy

As required by House Bill 489, a Service Delivery Coordinating Committee was put in place to discuss and coordinate all services provided by and within Greater Ben Hill County. The following are areas where joint service agreements have been put into place and action is underway to update the Service Delivery Strategy in conjunction with this comprehensive plan update.

Service	GOVERNMENT OR AUTHORITY		
	BEN HILL	FITZGERALD	AUTHORITIES
Airport	X Jointly Funded	X Jointly Funded	
Animal Control	X	X	
Arts Council	X Jointly Funded	X Jointly Funded	
Building Inspection/Code Enforcement/Zoning	X	X	
Building & Grounds Maintenance	X	X	
Business License	X	X	
Cemetery		X	
Chamber of Commerce	X Jointly Funded	X Jointly Funded	
Constitutional Officers	X		
Coroner	X		
Courts	X		
Cultural Center/Grand Theater	X Jointly Funded	X Jointly Funded	
Economic Development			X Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority
Electricity, Gas, Sewer, Water		X	
EMA & EMS-911	X		
Garbage Collection	X	X	
Georgia Extension Service	X County & UGA		
Fire	X County VFD	X City Fire Dept.	
Hospital	X		X Hospital Authority
Humane Society	X Jointly Funded	X Jointly Funded	
Landfill, Waste Disposal			X Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Regional Solid Waste Authority
Law Enforcement	X County Sheriff	X City Police	
Library	X	X	

Service	GOVERNMENT OR AUTHORITY		
	Jointly Funded	Jointly Funded	
Main Street		X	
Maintenance Facility	X	X	
Mental/Health/DFACS	X		
Municipal Courts		X	
Public Safety Center	X		
Recreation & Parks	X Jointly Funded	X Jointly Funded	
Recycling		X	
Tourism		X	
Senior Citizens Center	X		
Streets and Roads	X	X	
Tax Commissioner	X		
Voter Registration & Elections	X		

APPENDIX G
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

APPENDIX G: TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Transportation systems have a great impact on a community's growth and development, including established land use practices and quality of life for residents. Understanding the general regional impact of traffic facilities, the following traffic related elements are reviewed from a countywide perspective. However, individual communities have unique transportation issues, and any specific issues or opportunities are noted separately.

Road Network

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes or systems according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Most travel involves movement through a network of roads, and these roads receive a functional classification according to the character of traffic service intended for that roadway. There are two systems of roadway classifications, Urban and Rural, and four functional classifications.

Functional Classifications

Roads are generally classified into four major groups:

Interstate:	These roads have trip lengths and travel density characteristics that indicate substantial statewide or interstate travel. These roads serve almost all urban areas of 50,000 and over population and a large majority of those with a population of 25,000 or greater.
Arterial:	These roadways are designed to carry relatively high traffic volumes throughout the community and to major trip-generating destinations such as centers of employment and large shopping districts.
Collector:	These roadways are designed to collect traffic from the local street system and carry it to the arterial roadway system. While experiencing greater volumes than the local road network, these roadways also provide access to neighboring properties.
Local:	These roads serve to access adjacent lands and provide travel over relatively short distances.

Ben Hill County has a total of 509.14 miles of roadways, including: 89.18 miles of state routes, 364.59 miles of county roads, and 55.37 miles of city streets. Of these roadways, 37.09 miles are arterial roadways, 138.08 miles are collector roads and the rest are rural local roads. As of 2008, there was a yearly total of 861,000 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) on these roadways.

Interstate 75 (I-75), which runs north/south throughout the State of Georgia, is the closest interstate to Ben Hill County. I-75 passes most near to Ben Hill County in Turner County, at exit 80 near the City of Sycamore, and exits 82 and 84 located in the City of Ashburn. From exit 80, Hwy. 32 connects to Hwy 125 in Irwin County and leads northeast into the City of Fitzgerald. From exit 82 in the City of Ashburn, Hwy 112 connects to Hwy 107 and leads directly into the City of Fitzgerald, providing the shortest route from Fitzgerald to the Interstate.

Arterial roadways in Ben Hill County include GA 215/90 (Dewey Mcglamry Hwy), US 129/GA 11 (Bowens Mill Hwy.), US319/GA107 (Jacksonville Hwy.), and US 319/129/ GA 11/90 (Jefferson Davis Memorial Hwy.).

Currently the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) includes one resurfacing/maintenance project for the county, which is a 1.09 mile project on CR 254/Osierfield from SR 206 to the Irwin County line.

Alternative Modes:

Bicycle Facilities

One designated State bicycle route passes through Ben Hill County. The Wiregrass Route, or Georgia Bicycle Route 20, enters Ben Hill County on GA 125 (Irwinville Hwy) from Irwin County. In the City of Fitzgerald the route travels along Central Ave., Ashton Hwy., and on to GA 107/US 319. As the route leaves the City limits it continues until it turns southeast on GA 206 (Broxton Hwy.) into Irwin County and on to the City of Douglas in Coffee County.

Sidewalks

There are currently 24,166 ft., or 4.58 mi. of sidewalk in Ben Hill County. Most of these sidewalks are located within the City of Fitzgerald, however some lengths of sidewalk do continue past the city limit and into the county. There have been several projects undertaken in recent years to upgrade sidewalks in the downtown area and there are plans in the STIP to continue these efforts.

Public Transportation

There is no public transportation service offered within Ben Hill County. However, there is a strong local planning effort underway to provide a public transportation service within the county and planning activities have been coordinated between Ben Hill County, the City of Fitzgerald, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), citizens and other local stakeholders. Public participation has been strong and planning assistance and interest from the GDOT and the DBHDD has shown that this project is not only of local and regional interest, but that it also has strong support on the State level as well. Efforts have been centered on providing transportation to the citizens of Ben Hill County; however, regional transportation plans and regional public transportation systems have been researched and visited with the possibility of Ben Hill County's local planning efforts developing into a regional transportation plan and, possibly, a regional system.

Railroads, Trucking, and Airports

Rail Transportation

Rail freight moves through Ben Hill County from north to south on a line owned by CSX Corporation. This is a main rail line that runs from the City of Atlanta south through the City of Fitzgerald and on to the City of Folkston in Southeast Georgia before crossing into Florida and ending in Jacksonville. This rail line moves between 60 and 75 million gross tons of freight through Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald every year.

Trucking

Truck freight movement is especially important in the State of Georgia, where, according to the Georgia Motor Trucking Association, over 87.43% of all manufactured freight tonnage in the state is moved by trucks. Roughly two-thirds of Georgia's communities rely solely on trucking for the delivery of goods and commodities. Most of this freight is moved throughout the country along the National Highway System (NHS), approximately 160,000 miles of roadways important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility. The NHS includes interstates, other principal arterial roadways, and other roadways of national importance. One roadway in Ben Hill Count has been designated as a NHS roadway, GA 125, and it is listed as an "other principal arterial" roadway from the Irwin County/Ben Hill County line to the City of Fitzgerald.

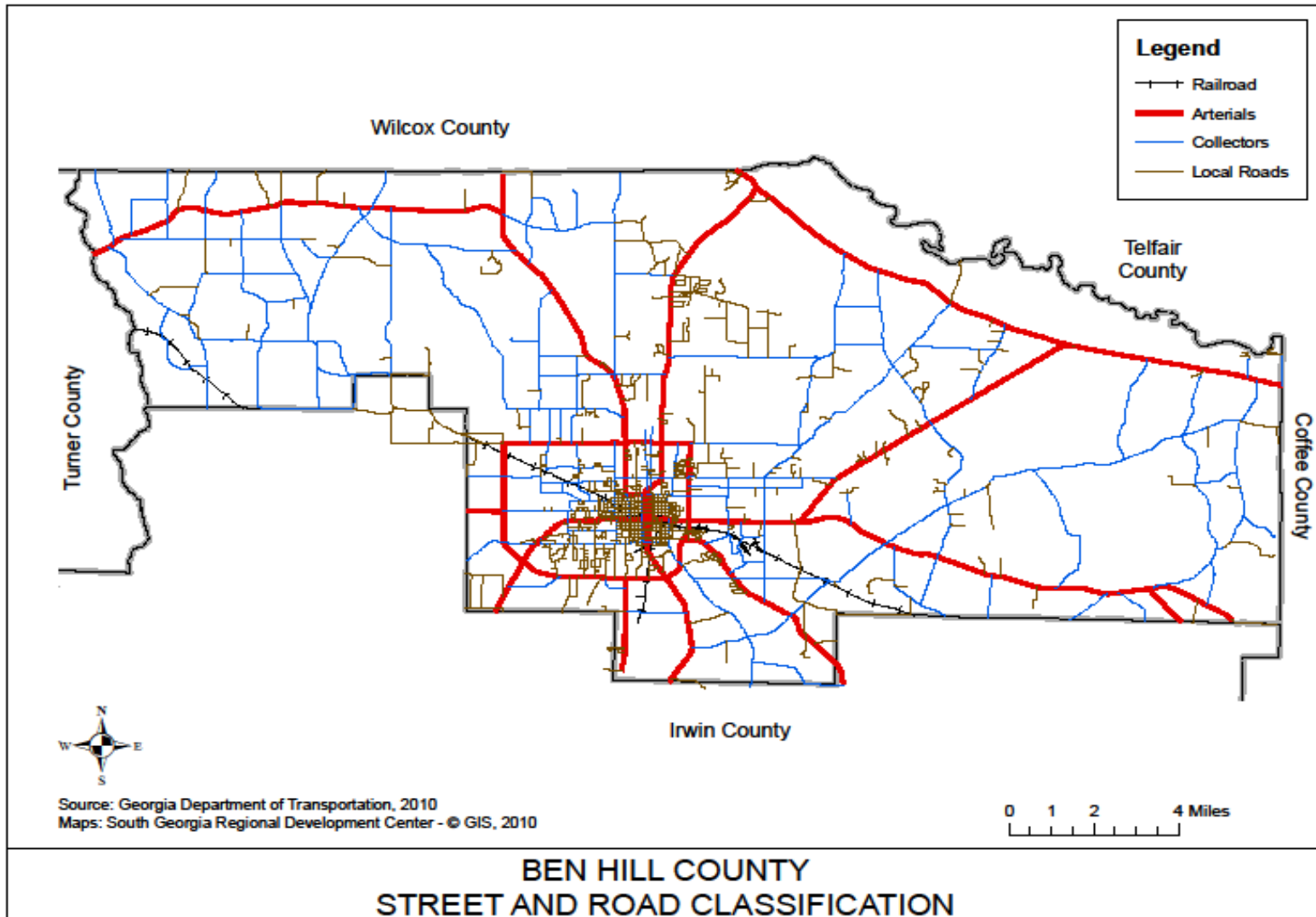
The NHS has also designated certain roadways and corridors as “NHS High Priority Corridors”, or roadways for inclusion into the NHS as specific routes or general corridors. In Georgia, these corridors were defined in state legislation as the Georgia Developmental Highway System Corridors and identified in section 32-4-22 of the Official Code of Georgia. This system includes those roads and corridors referred to as the “Governor’s Road Improvement Program”, or GRIP. Several of these roadways or corridors pass through Ben Hill County, including: US 319, SR 125 from Fitzgerald to I-75, and SR 125 from its intersection with SR 107 in Ben Hill County (Fitzgerald Bypass) to its intersection with SR 32 in Irwin County. These roadways and corridors have been designated as routes critical for the movement of freight on the state and national levels, and have been designated by Congress as areas for continued improvement to ensure safe and efficient travel routes for freight.

Aviation

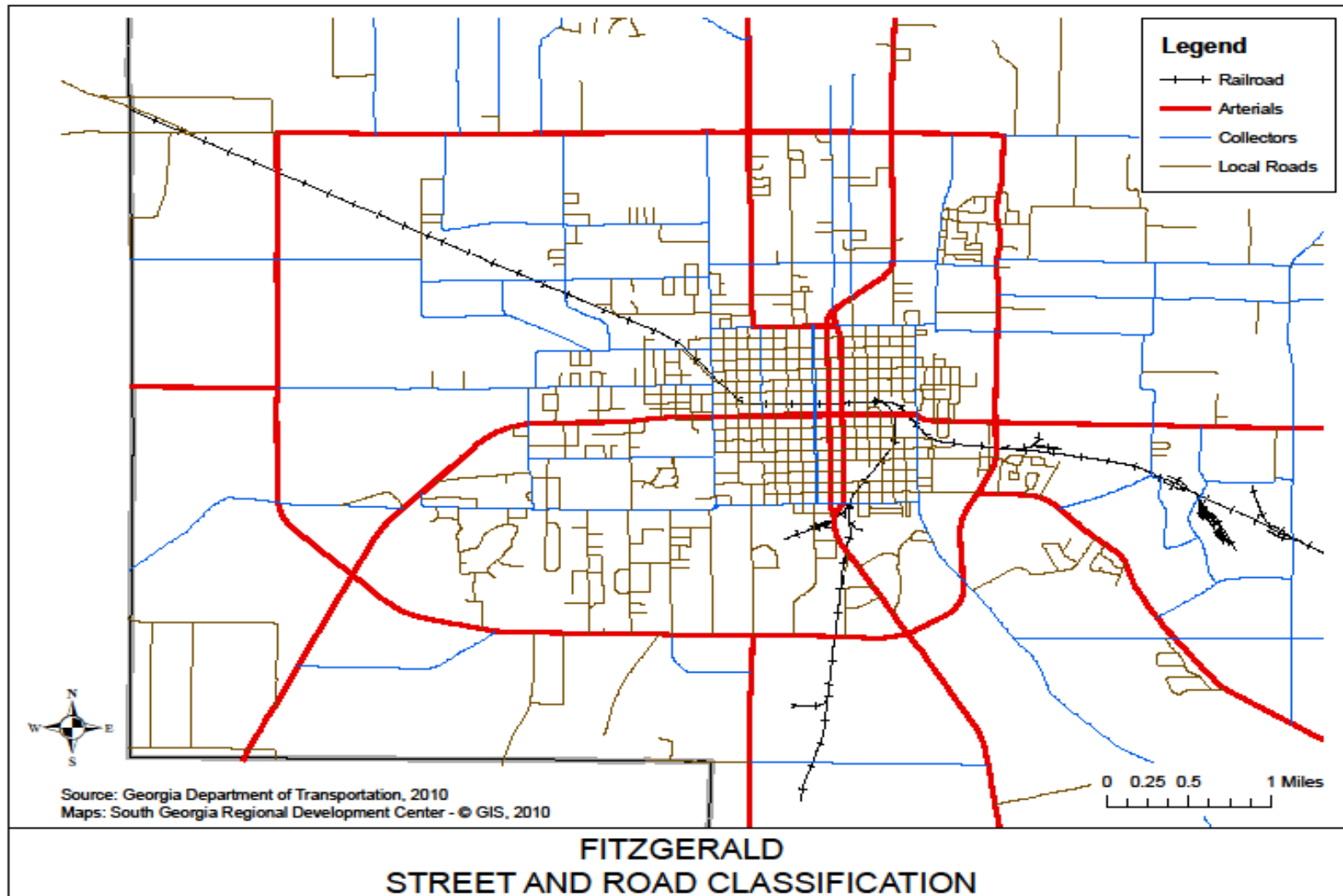
The Fitzgerald Municipal Airport is located in southern Ben Hill County and has been classified as a Level II airport, which is a “Business Airport of Local Impact” according to the Georgia Aviation System Plan. The airport can be accessed from the north and south via US Highways 129 and 319 and GA Hwy 11. Situated on 271 acres at the corner of Ed Ward Rd. and Perry House Rd., the airport is owned by the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County. A variety of aviation-related activities occur here, including recreational flying, agricultural spraying, law enforcement activities, corporate/business jets, experimental aircrafts and skydiving.

Fitzgerald Municipal Airport has one asphalt runway that is 5,000 ft. long and 100 ft. wide with medium-intensity runway lighting (MIRL), visual approach slope indicators (VASI), and a full parallel taxiway with medium-intensity taxiway lighting (MITL). This runway also has an omni-directional approach lighting system (ODALS). The airport has a wind cone and, segmented circle, a rotating beacon, and an AWOS-3. The airport also has a lateral position localizer (LOC) and a non-directional radio homing beacon (NDB) as well as GPS approach to this runway. Also located at the airport is a 3400 ft. by 300 ft. turf runway, a fuel concession that provides AvGas and Jet A fuel as well as a 4,800 sq. ft. administration building/terminal. There are 51 auto parking spaces and 31 hangar spaces.

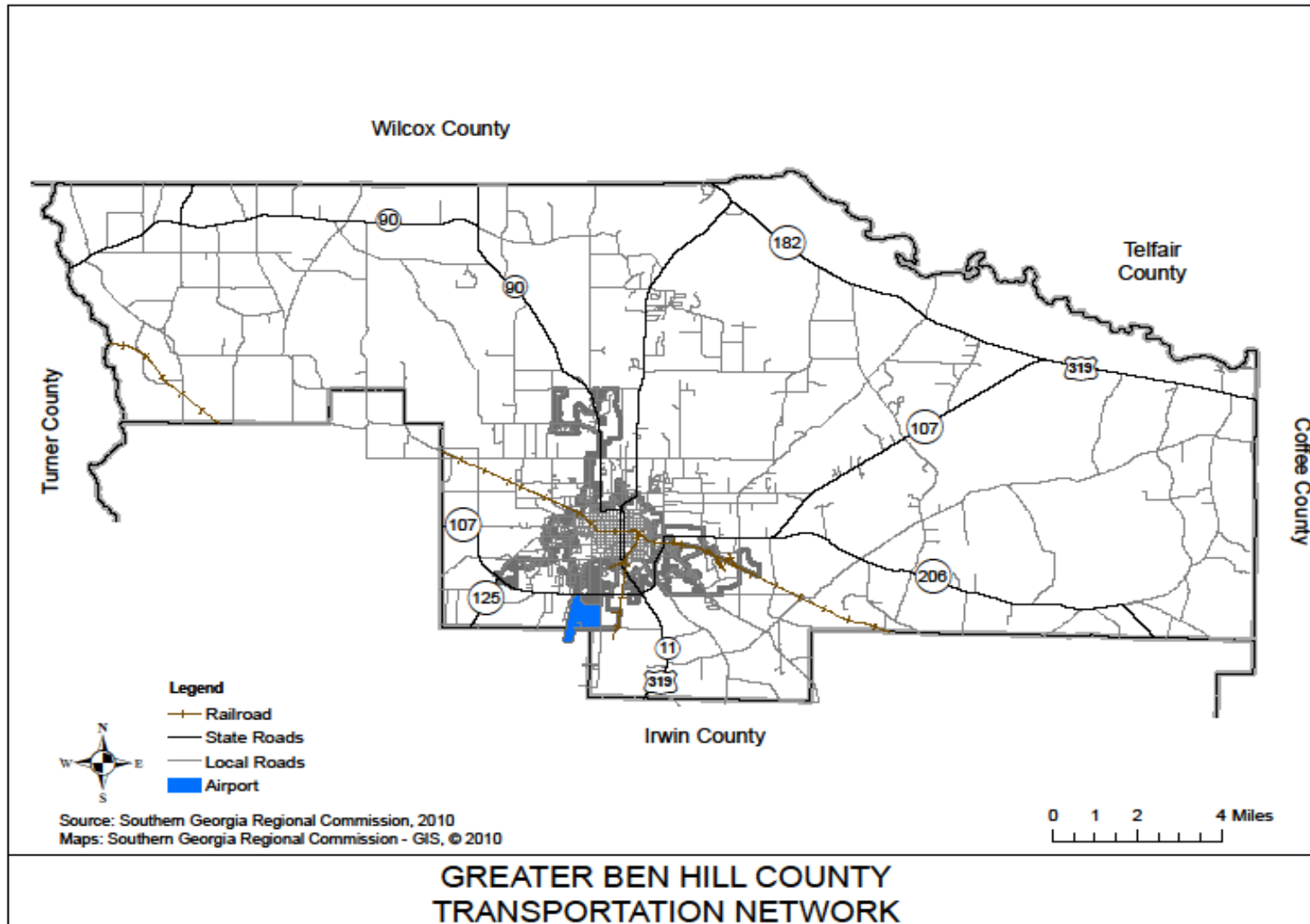
Map G-1



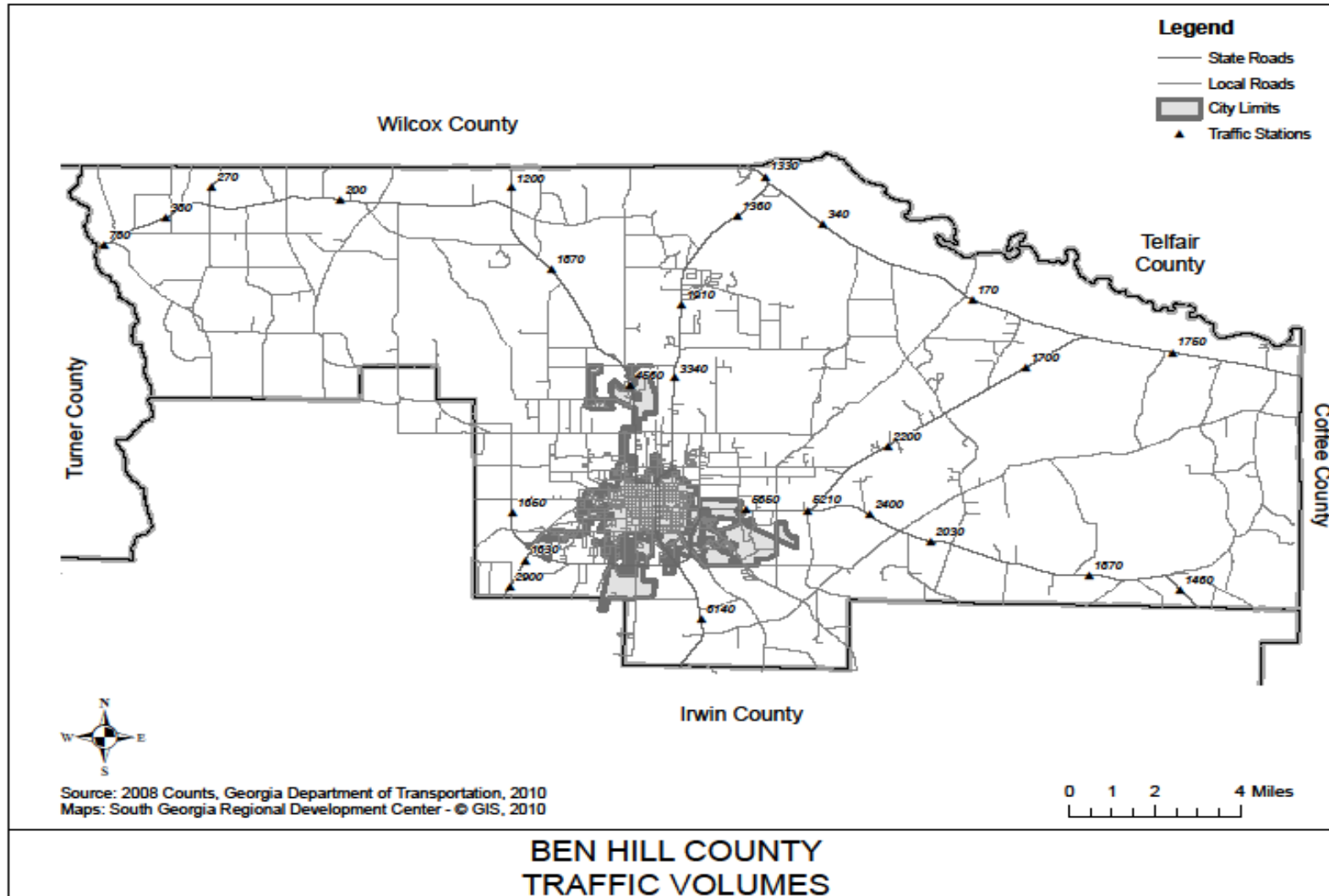
Map G-2



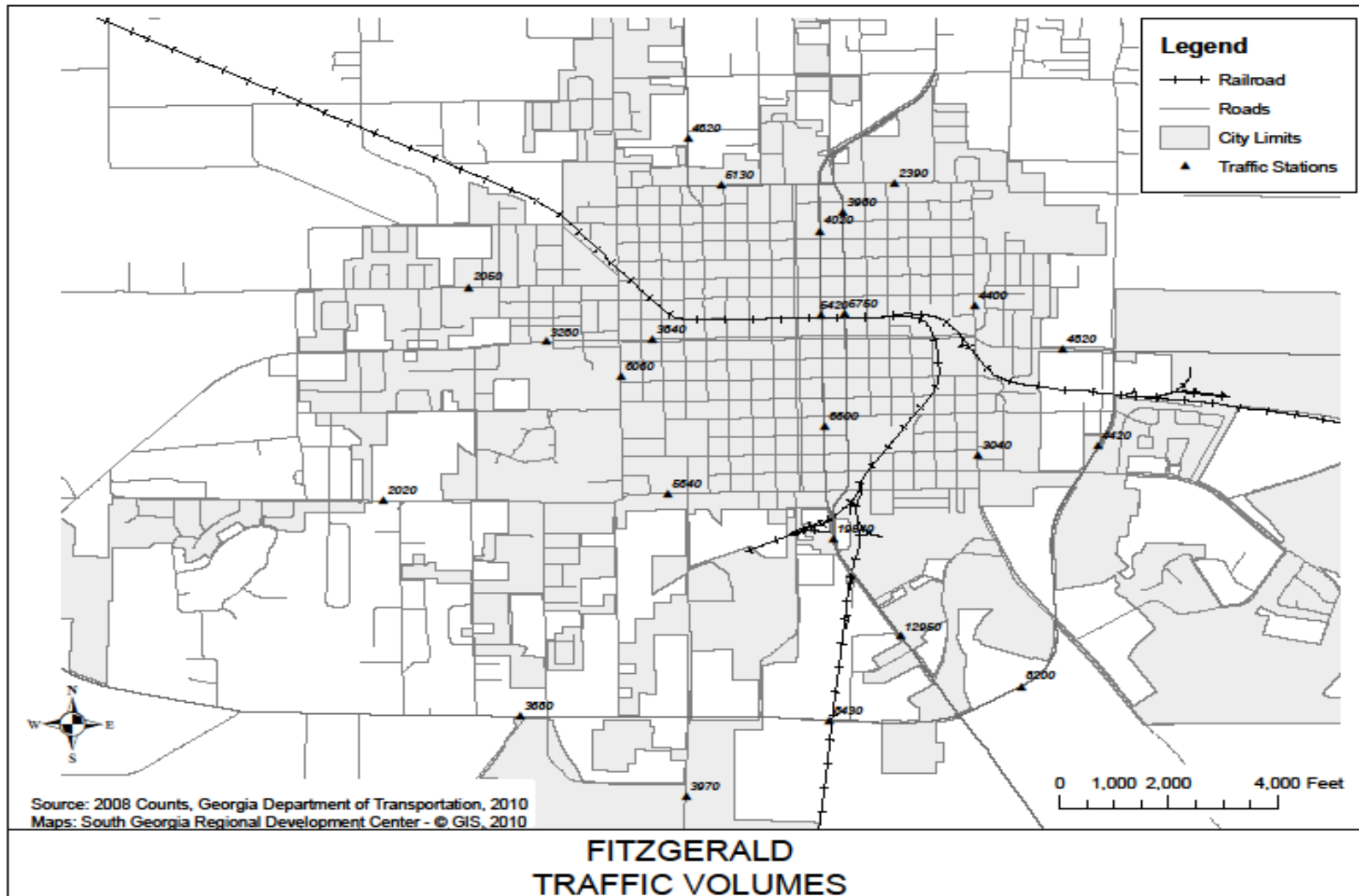
Map G-3



Map G-4



Map G-5



Map G-6

