

**2025 FITZGERALD / BEN HIL COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR**

**BEN HILL COUNTY
and the CITY of FITZGERALD**

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**PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH THE
SOUTH GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
327 West Savannah Avenue, Valdosta, Georgia 31601**

DECEMBER 2005

2025 FITZGERALD / BEN HILL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan is to provide elected and advisory officials with a tool to manage and guide future growth and development of the county through the year 2025. The Plan represents a coordinated planning process as set forth by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. By meeting the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established as part of the legislation, the 2025 Fitzgerald / Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan establishes a planning process for the provision of public facilities and services. In addition, the comprehensive plan will serve as the basis for local government decision-making regarding the future land use pattern, environmental protection, and economic development.

PLANNING PROCESS

The original joint plan and this updated 2025 Fitzgerald / Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan were prepared using the basic planning process required by Georgia's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. This process is summarized below:

PART I - WHERE ARE WE?

Inventory and Assessment: Background information on such factors as population, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, housing and land use was collected and analyzed. An assessment of these factors was conducted to determine their adequacy in light of projected population changes and anticipated future development patterns.

PART II - WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

Statement of Impacts and Opportunities, Goals and Policies: Based upon the inventory and assessment, problems and needs were identified. Goals and policies were developed to meet identified needs and to document the future aspirations of the city and the county. The Plan's goal statements are consistent with, and supportive of, the statewide planning goals as set forth in the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. These statewide goals are:

- (a) **Economic Development:** To achieve a growing and balanced economy, consistent with the resources of this state and its various regions, that equitably benefits all sections of the state and all segments of the population.
- (b) **Natural and Historic Resources:** To conserve and protect the environmental, natural and historic resources of Georgia's communities, regions and the state.
- (c) **Community Facilities & Services:** To ensure that public infrastructure facilities serving local governments, the region and the state have the capacity and are in place when needed to support and attract growth and development and/or maintain and enhance the quality of life of the residents of the state.
- (d) **Housing:** To ensure that all people within the state and its various regions and communities have access to adequate and affordable housing.
- (e) **Land Use:** To ensure that the land resources of the state are allocated for uses required to promote and sustain growth and economic development; to conserve and protect the natural, environmental and historic resources of the state; and to protect and promote the quality of life of the people of Georgia's communities, regions, and the state.

PART III - HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Implementation: Based upon the assessments in Part I and the Goals and Policies (found in Part II) of the Plan, a strategy to put the plan into action is prepared. Part III of the Plan includes a Five-Year Short-Term Work Program, which outlines projects, and programs, which need to be undertaken and/or completed by the year 2010 to meet existing needs and achieve future goals, and Future Land Use Plans for the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County.

PLAN PRODUCTS

As stated previously, the 2015 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan was prepared following the guidelines in the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. This Plan provides an inventory and assessment of existing conditions of the county, and an implementation strategy consisting of impacts and opportunities, goal and policy statements, and a Five-Year Short-Term Work Program, and a future land use plan for Greater Ben Hill County.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, a public hearing was held on June 20, 2005, prior to the preparation of the Plan. Two second public hearings were conducted to receive input on the draft "**joint comprehensive plan**" on December 6 and 12, 2005.

The comprehensive plan underwent two amendments, namely in 1993 to include the solid waste management element; and in 1994 to add the Ocmulgee River Corridor Protection Plan. Each of these amendments utilized one public hearing prior to their adoption.

CHAPTER ONE: POPULATION

POPULATION TRENDS

An understanding of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald's past and future population changes, characteristics and distribution provides insight about future needs in utilities, streets, schools, housing, police, fire protection and emergency services, recreation, and other public services and facilities.

Table 1-1 shows that between 1970 and 2005 the entire county gained 5,123 persons, a 38.9 percent increase in total population. The rural portions of Ben Hill County gained the most persons, 4,306, which amounted to a 83.5 percent increase over the last thirty-five years. The City of Fitzgerald experienced growth and decline in population between 1970 and 2005, and overall showed a gain of 817 persons, or a 10.2 percent increase from the 1970 population. The percentage share of population residing in the city versus the county (unincorporated) has changed dramatically from a 61%/39% to 48 percent City and 52 percent County between 1970 and 2005. The percentage change in population between 1970-'05 for Fitzgerald was a mere 16 percent, while the unincorporated county's increase was 84 percent. Part of Fitzgerald gains have come as a result of annexations since 1990. Comparisons of rates of population change show Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald rate was equal to the South Georgia region in the 1970-1990 period and the region's rate in the 1990-2005 period. With the exception of the 2005-2010 the State of Georgia shows far higher rates of growth than Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald. Table 1-2 shows the births, deaths, natural increase (births minus deaths), provides the components that fostered the gains in population over the last thirty years.

**TABLE 1-1
1970 - 2010 TOTAL POPULATION FOR BEN HILL COUNTY AND FITZGERALD**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Co./City Total	13,171	16,000	16,245	17,495	18,294	18,443	18,592	18,742	18,891	19,041
Fitzgerald	8,015	10,187	8,612	8,758	8,832	8,904	8,976	9,048	9,120	9,192
Co., unincorp.	5,156	5,813	7,633	8,737	9,462	9,539	9,616	9,694	9,772	9,849
RDC	157,500	186,200	195,448	227,421	221,514	223,628	225,742	227,856	229,970	232,085
State	4,611,479	5,484,527	6,522,645	8,186,453	8,784,650	8,897,652	9,010,654	9,123,656	9,236,658	9,349,660

Numerical and Percentage Change

	1970-1990		1980-2000		1990-2005		2005-2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Co./City Total	3,074	23.3	1,495	9.3	2,049	12.6	747	4.1
Fitzgerald	597	7.4	-1,429	-14.0	220	2.6	360	4.1
Co., unincorp.	2,477	48.0	2,924	50.3	1,829	24.0	387	4.1
RDC	37,948	24.1	41,221	22.1	26,066	13.3	10,571	4.8
State	1,911,166	41.4	3,331,926	60.8	2,262,005	34.7	565,010	6.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1970 - 2000 and Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 1-2 1960 - 1999
RESIDENT BIRTHS, DEATHS, & NATURAL INCREASE IN GREATER BEN HILL

Year	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase
1960	278	162	116
1961	261	148	113
1962	275	160	115
1963	281	168	113
1964	286	171	115
1965	240	172	68
1966	242	191	51
1967	200	187	13
1968	237	194	43
1969	203	188	15
1970	233	185	48
1971	218	179	39
1972	257	186	71
1973	264	177	87
1974	280	185	95
1975	217	150	67
1976	252	148	104
1977	258	180	78
1978	306	190	116
1979	327	193	134
1980	282	167	115
1981	295	208	87
1982	291	202	89
1983	294	199	95
1984	282	193	89
1985	288	200	88
1986	271	183	88
1987	282	211	71
1988	268	224	44
1989	304	191	113
1990	292	175	117
1991	267	182	85
1992	268	186	82
1993	252	236	16
1994	270	201	69
1995	229	180	49
1996	264	189	75
1997	264	191	73
1998	290	217	73
1999	307	230	77

Source: Georgia Vital Statistics Reports, 1960-1999.

The components of population change for Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald are the area's natural increase (number of live births subtracted from number of deaths) added to the previous decennial census, and then computing in or out migration of persons. The 1960 - 2005 computations are:

- 1960 population plus natural increases of 762 equals 14,395, but 1970 population was 13,171. Therefore, out-migration amounted to $(14,395 - 13,171) = 1,224$ persons. This means there was a net migration loss of 1,224 persons from Ben Hill County.
- 1970 population plus natural increases of 839 equals 14,010, but 1980 population was 16,000. Thus, in-migration amounted to $(16,000 - 14,010) + 1,990$. During this ten-year period the net migration amounted to an average increase of 199 persons per year.
- 1980 population plus natural increases of 879 equals 16,879, but the 1990 population was 16,245. In this decade, out-migration amounted to $(16,879 - 16,245) = 634$. Net out-migration amounted to 634 persons between 1980 and 1990.
- 1990 population plus natural increases of 716 equals 16,961, the 2000 population was 17,294. Therefore, in-migration amounted to $(17,294 - 16,961) = 333$. Net migration during this ten-year period amounted to an increase of 333 persons for an average of 33.3 persons per year.

The natural increase averages per decade have ranged from 71.6 to 87.9 persons per year. The average number of births rose from 250/year in 1960's to 270/year in the 1990's. The average number of deaths per decade has risen from 174 to 199. Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald have witnessed large population losses and gains due to migration. There was a 1,224 person loss between 1960-1970; followed by a 1,990 gain between 1970-1980; another decrease of 634 persons between 1980-1990; and a 333 person increase between 1990-2000. The increases and decreases attributed to migration of persons is an estimate at best and trend-line data needs to be monitored. The thirty-nine year period (1960-1999) averages out to 34-person/year decrease attributed to out migration.

Out-migration negatively impacts the labor market, potential leadership, and can contribute to a pessimistic attitude toward progress. There are a host of contributing factors that have evolved over the past forty or more years and they are summarized in the following four categories:

- (1) Changing agricultural practices, markets and crop allotments. In the past the major agricultural dependency of the County has been peanuts, cotton, and tobacco, crops which have acreage allotment controls. Decreasing percentage of acreage allotments, dependency upon price supports, and rising costs have discouraged the small farmer. Mechanization of agricultural procedures call for higher capital requirements for profitable farming, resulting in larger land holdings and a decreasing dependency upon unskilled hand labor.
- (2) In 1970, 47.5 percent of the population over 25 years of age had less than 8 years of education. In 2000, 12.9 percent of the population over 25 years of age had less than an 8th grade education. Whether this is a resultant or a cause of out-migration is impossible to determine. However, with 65.9 percent of the 25+ population completing high school it does impact and influence the labor market. The Ben Hill/Irwin Technical Institute created in 1966 has greatly improved the skill and educational levels of the Ben Hill County labor force.
- (3) In 1960, nearly 60% of the families earned less than \$3,000 per year, compared to a state figure of 35.6%. In 2000, 11 percent of the families in Ben Hill County earned comparable dollars and 22% of the population was below the poverty level. Within the nine county region Ben Hill County ranked fourth lowest behind Echols, Turner and Brooks counties in percent persons below the poverty level.

- (4) The close proximity of a primary growth center in the City of Tifton.

AGE COMPOSITION

One characteristic which influences population changes is age composition. Table 1-3 shows the age group breakdowns for Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald from 1980 - 2025. Table 1-4 shows the Fitzgerald age groups for 1980 - 2000. With the exception of the 45 to 64 age groups, which showed substantial increases in the last twenty years, the other age groups have maintained a very balanced composition. The 0-4 age group has maintained itself and will continue through 2025 at a level of 8% of all age groups. The 65+ age group will continue to represent between 13.3 percent and 16.7 percent of the total population. Within the City of Fitzgerald, between 1980 and 2000, the 45-64 age groups decreased/increased in population, and the 0-4, 25-44, and the 65+ age groups decreased their numerical and percentage shares.

TABLE 1-3
1980 - 2025 GREATER BEN HILL POPULATION BY AGE (number of persons)

	1980	%	1985	%	1990	%	1995	%	2000	%
Total	16,049	100.0	16,784	100.0	16,215	100.0	17,395	100.0	17,495	100.0
0 to 4	1,376	8.6	1,412	8.4	1,330	8.2	1,349	7.8	1,282	7.3
5 to 9	1,354	8.4	1,371	8.2	1,356	8.4	1,362	7.8	1,283	7.3
10 to 14	1,294	8.1	1,379	8.2	1,445	8.9	1,522	8.7	1,393	8.0
15 to 19	1,357	8.5	1,345	8.0	1,298	8.0	1,457	8.4	1,383	7.9
20 to 24	1,266	7.9	1,237	7.4	984	6.1	1,091	6.3	1,160	6.6
25 to 29	1,318	8.2	1,337	8.0	1,102	6.8	1,005	5.8	1,163	6.6
30 to 34	1,102	6.7	1,241	7.4	1,248	7.7	1,247	7.2	1,130	6.5
35 to 39	891	5.6	1,135	6.8	1,205	7.4	1,352	7.8	1,175	6.7
40 to 44	760	4.7	913	5.4	1,070	6.6	1,251	7.2	1,249	7.1
45 to 49	675	4.2	733	4.4	843	5.2	1,084	6.2	1,247	7.1
50 to 54	798	4.9	740	4.4	717	4.4	896	5.2	1,071	6.1
55 to 59	813	5.1	784	4.7	667	4.1	746	4.3	888	5.1
60 to 64	805	5.0	804	4.8	677	4.2	677	3.9	742	4.2
65 & up	2,240	14.0	2,353	14.0	2,193	13.5	2,356	13.5	2,329	13.3

	2005	%	2010	%	2015	%	2020	%	2025	%
Total	18,294	100.0	19,041	100.0	19,933	100.0	20,800	100.0	21,732	100.0
0 to 4	1,370	7.5	1,460	7.7	1,549	7.8	1,592	7.7	1,610	7.4
5 to 9	1,345	7.4	1,427	7.5	1,524	7.6	1,613	7.8	1,670	7.7
10 to 14	1,299	7.1	1,357	7.1	1,453	7.3	1,542	7.4	1,632	7.5
15 to 19	1,384	7.6	1,288	6.8	1,361	6.8	1,442	6.9	1,550	7.1
20 to 24	1,311	7.2	1,277	6.7	1,197	6.0	1,285	6.2	1,363	6.3
25 to 29	1,236	6.8	1,346	7.1	1,293	6.5	1,228	5.9	1,325	6.1
30 to 34	1,255	6.9	1,313	6.9	1,418	7.1	1,367	6.6	1,297	6.0
35 to 39	1,160	6.3	1,286	6.8	1,347	6.8	1,447	7.0	1,392	6.4
40 to 44	1,182	6.5	1,155	6.1	1,283	6.4	1,338	6.4	1,446	6.7
45 to 49	1,267	6.9	1,196	6.3	1,175	5.9	1,295	6.2	1,358	6.2
50 to 54	1,224	6.7	1,252	6.7	1,192	6.0	1,163	5.6	1,300	6.0
55 to 59	977	5.3	1,127	5.9	1,159	5.8	1,001	4.8	1,088	5.0
60 to 64	843	4.6	924	4.9	1,078	5.4	1,118	5.4	1,068	4.9
65 & up	2,441	13.3	2,633	13.8	2,904	14.6	3,269	15.7	3,633	16.7

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 1-4
1980 - 2000 FITZGERALD POPULATION BY AGE (number of persons)

	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
0 to 4	889	8.7	736	8.6	701	8.0
5 to 13	1,449	14.2	1,458	16.9	1,360	15.5
14 to 17	734	7.2	477	5.5	418	4.8
18 to 20	440	4.3	356	4.1	371	4.2
21 to 24	664	6.5	397	4.6	473	5.4
25 to 34	1,427	14.0	1,207	14.0	1,069	12.2
35 to 44	986	9.7	1,084	12.6	1,182	13.5
45 to 54	920	8.5	731	8.5	1,027	11.7
55 to 64	1,018	10.6	718	8.3	777	8.9
65 & up	1,660	16.3	1,448	16.8	1,380	15.8
Total	10,187	100.0	8,612	100.0	8,758	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

SEX AND RACE CHARACTERISTICS

The percentage of males and females has remained fairly constant in Ben Hill County in 1980 and 1990. The county has less males and more females than the South Georgia Region and the State of Georgia. Table 1-5 shows the breakdowns, and the unincorporated areas by 1990 exhibit a nearly 50/50 split between males and females. The City of Fitzgerald has more females than males in both 1980 and 1990 with 55.9% of the population being of the female gender in 1990.

TABLE 1-5
1980 - 1990 POPULATION BY SEX FOR BEN HILL COUNTY AND FITZGERALD

Unit	1990				2000			
	Males	%	Females	%	Males	%	Females	%
Ben Hill Co.	7,635	47.0	8,610	53.0	8,369	47.9	9,115	52.1
Fitzgerald	3,802	44.1	4,810	55.9	3,986	45.5	4,772	54.5
Co., unincorp.	3,833	50.2	3,800	49.8	4,383	50.2	4,343	49.8
RDC	94,391	48.3	101,075	51.7	111,664	49.1	115,757	50.9
State	3,144,503	48.5	3,333,713	51.5	4,027,113	49.2	4,159,340	50.8

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000.

Tables 1-6 and 1-7 show the racial composition today and tomorrow for Ben Hill County, the City of Fitzgerald, and the unincorporated areas (persons outside Fitzgerald). The overall breakdown varies six percent with whites dropping and blacks and other increasing. The 2025 racial composition for Greater Ben Hill pegs the breakdown at 51.8 percent white, 38.1 percent black, 0.7 percent other and 9.4 percent Hispanic, any race. Within the City of Fitzgerald the racial composition has changed from a near 60/40 split between white and black in 1970 to 47.3 percent white, 49.3 percent black, 0.5 percent other and 2.9 percent hispanic in 2000. By factoring out the city numbers from the total county numbers found in Table 1-6, there were fewer blacks, (percentage wise) in the unincorporated areas in 2000 than in 1970. The 1970 breakdowns were 81.2% white, 18.8% black and by 2000 there were 77.6 percent white, 13.1 percent black and 0.4 percent other. Projected racial composition in Fitzgerald will follow existing trends that by 2025 will have 48% white and 52% nonwhite (black, other & hispanic combined). Racial composition in the unincorporated areas will have 87 percent white and 13 percent nonwhite ratio by 2025.

TABLE 1-6
1980 - 2025 GREATER BEN HILL POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND
(number and percent of persons)

	1980	%	1985	%	1990	%	1995	%	2000	%
White	11,176	69.6	11,602	69.1	11,008	67.9	11,300	65.0	10,920	62.4
Black	4,849	30.2	5,132	30.6	5,079	31.3	5,560	32.0	5,695	32.6
Other	24	0.2	50	0.3	50	0.3	104	0.6	80	0.5
Hispan.	59	ND	73	ND	78	0.5	431	2.4	800	4.5
Total	16,049		16,784		16,215		17,395		17,495	
	2005	%	2010	%	2015	%	2020	%	2025	%
White	11,014	60.0	11,010	57.8	11,123	55.9	11,173	53.7	11,253	51.8
Black	6,148	33.5	6,679	35.1	7,231	36.3	7,761	37.3	8,287	38.1
Other	139	0.8	104	0.5	86	0.4	139	0.7	162	0.7
Hispan.	1,046	5.7	1,248	6.6	1,464	7.4	1,727	8.3	2,030	9.4
Total	18,347		19,041		19,904		20,800		21,732	

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002. Percent calculations by South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Note ND in "Hispanic" denotes an ethnic origin, not a race, so no percentage calculations were made. Persons of Hispanic origin are also counted in the White, Black and Other totals for 1980 and 1985.

TABLE 1-7
1980 - 2000 FITZGERALD AND UNINCORPORATED BEN HILL COUNTY BY RACE
(number and percent of persons)

	Fitzgerald						Ben Hill Co. Unincorporated					
	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
White	6,104	59.9	4,507	52.3	4,140	47.3	5,051	86.9	6,591	86.3	6,780	77.6
Black	4,071	40.0	4,076	47.3	4,315	49.3	762	13.1	1,012	13.3	1,380	15.8
Other	12	0.1	29	0.4	43	0.5	ND	ND	30	0.4	37	0.4
Hispani	ND		ND		260	2.9	ND		ND		540	6.2
Total	10,187		8,612		8,758		5,813		7,633		8,737	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

Population projections are systematically determined forecasts of future levels of population within a given area. They are used to forecast county and city facilities and services. Population projections also fuel how many acres within the study area should be reserved for various needed land uses.

Various methods can be used to predict population changes. Most of them take a known base year population and apply formulas representing assumptions about rates of change to this base number. Usually the most current U.S. census count, taken nationwide every ten years, is used as the base year projection. Generally, the larger the study area, the more reliable will be the projections. This is true in a small community, a major economic change like an unexpected closing of a large manufacturing plant, can render the most carefully prepared population projections inaccurate.

Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., a private forecasting company, to produce county data for use in local planning efforts across the state. Woods and Poole uses information from the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Economic Analysis as a basis for its forecasts and "enhances" this data by using inter-census estimates prepared by the Census Bureau, along with additional information and statistical techniques to prepare their estimates and projections of population and economic projections which might be expected to affect migration rates.

**TABLE 1-8
2000 - 2025 GREATER BEN HILL POPULATION PROJECTION**

Unit	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Woods & Poole	17,495	18,294	19,041	19,993	20,800	21,732

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002; U.S. Bureau of Census,; and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

The Woods and Poole projection recognizes the thirty-year 0.64% annual population growth rate and projects a 2025 population, which would increase this annual growth, rate to 0.95 percent. This 2005 - 2025 projection by Woods & Poole is more clearly in tune with the trends and gains the endorsement of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald.

The future population outlook for Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald shown in Tables 1-9 and 1-10 recognizes the split of population between Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County unincorporated was 60/40, but by 2000 the split was 50/50 city and unincorporated county. Residential growth has occurred outside Fitzgerald and in subsequent years the city has annexed developed and undeveloped parcels. This process is projected to continue from 2005-2025, which means the split in population between the city and the county could average out to a 47/53 split.

**TABLE 1-9
2000 - 2025 BEN HILL COUNTY / FITZGERALD POPULATION PROJECTION**

Unit	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Co./City Total	17,495	18,294	19,041	19,904	20,800	21,732
City	8,758	8,832	9,192	9,381	9,807	10,265
Co. Unincorp.	8,737	9,462	9,849	10,042	10,540	11,031

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002; and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005. A basic assumption of this projection continues the nearly 48/52 percentage split after 2005 between Fitzgerald and unincorporated Ben Hill County.

TABLE 1-10
2000 - 2025 PROJECTION COMPARISONS COUNTY/CITY, REGION, and STATE

Unit	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	
County/City Total	17,495	18,294	18,443	18,592	18,742	
Fitzgerald	8,758	8,832	8,904	8,976	9,048	
Co. Unincorp.	8,737	9,462	9,534	9,616	9,694	
So. Ga. RDC	227,421	221,514	223,628	225,742	227,856	
State	8,186,453	8,784,650	8,897,652	9,010,654	9,123,658	
Unit	2009	2010	2015	2020	2025	
County/City Total	18,891	19,041	19,423	20,800	21,732	
Fitzgerald	9,120	9,192	9,381	10,026	10,475	
Co. Unincorp.	9,772	9,849	10,042	10,774	11,257	
So. Ga. RDC	229,970	232,085	243,361	255,122	267,460	
State	9,236,658	9,349,660	9,940,380	10,550,700	11,185,100	
	2000 - 2005 Numerical Change	%	2005 - 2015 Numerical Change	%	2005 - 2025 Numerical Change	%
County/City Total	799	4.5	1,129	6.2	3,438	18.8
Fitzgerald	74	0.8	549	6.2	1,643	18.6
Co. Unincorp.	725	8.3	580	6.1	1,795	19.0
So. Ga. RDC	- 5,907	- 2.6 ¹	21,847	9.9	45,946	20.7
State	598,197	7.3	1,155,730	13.2	2,400,450	27.3

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

1) South Georgia RDC went from ten counties to nine counties between 2000 and 2005.

By the year 2025, Ben Hill County population will total 21,732 and Fitzgerald will have 10,475 persons.

HOUSEHOLD AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

According to Woods and Poole Economics Inc., the number of occupied housing units in Ben Hill County increased 133.4 percent (4,040 units) between 1980 and 2005. Table 1-11 shows the 1980 to 2025 occupied housing unit trends and projections for Ben Hill County, Fitzgerald, the unincorporated area, the nine county region and the state. The 1980-2025 numerical gains in housing units in the unincorporated areas far surpassed those in the city. Regional percentages align with Greater Ben Hill and the state is increasing at a faster rate. Ben Hill County's population trends and projections dictate future housing unit needs, and the projected summary of additional occupied housing units is shown in Table 1-11.

**TABLE 1-11
1980 - 2025 NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS**

Unit	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total County-City	6,184	6,875	6,673	7,068	7,432	7,773	8,065	8,316
Fitzgerald	3,256	3,620	3,513	3,643	3,734	3,887	3,952	4,075
Unincorp.	2,928	3,255	3,160	3,425	3,698	3,886	4,113	4,241
Region	61,783	66,061	76,532	81,006	85,293	89,213	92,652	95,305
State	1,882,038	2,383,291	3,022,410	3,265,030	3,501,680	3,727,580	3,929,140	4,108,410

Numerical and Percentage Change

Unit	1980 - 2000		2000 - 2005		2005 - 2015		2015 - 2025		2005 - 2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Co./City	489	7.9	395	5.9	705	10.0	543	7.0	1,248	17.7
Fitzgerald	257	7.9	130	3.7	244	6.7	188	4.8	432	11.9
Unincorp.	232	7.9	265	8.4	461	13.5	355	9.1	816	23.8
RDC	15,749	25.5	4,474	5.8	8,207	10.1	6,092	6.8	14,299	17.7
State	1,140,372	60.6	242,620	8.0	462,550	14.2	380,830	10.2	843,380	25.8

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Additional occupied housing units

	2000 - 2005	2005 - 2010	2010 - 2015	2015 - 2020	2020 - 2025	Total 2000 - 2025
Co./City	395	364	341	292	251	1,643
Fitzgerald	130	91	153	65	123	562
Unincorporated	265	273	188	227	128	1,081

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002, and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Table 1-12 exhibits the decreasing number of persons per housing unit. Greater Ben Hill averaged 2.82 persons per housing unit in 1980 and this dropped to 2.56 by 2000. Corresponding decreases are shown for Fitzgerald, the unincorporated areas, the region and the state. Greater Ben Hill will maintain a lower number of persons per housing unit than the state, which will increase to 2.67 by 2025. The impact of less persons per households is a need for a variety of housing unit types. The differences between Fitzgerald and the unincorporated ratios are largely influenced by the number of apartments within the city serving 1-2 person households.

**TABLE 1-12
1980 - 2025 PERSONS PER HOUSING UNIT --- BEN HILL COUNTY & FITZGERALD**

	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2015	2020	2025
Co./City	2.82	2.72	2.56	2.54	2.54	2.53	2.53	2.52	2.51	2.45	2.53	2.57
Fitzgerald	2.67	2.61	2.47	2.36	2.36	2.37	2.38	2.39	2.40	2.36	2.48	2.52
Unincorp.	3.02	2.80	2.65	2.72	2.70	2.66	2.65	2.64	2.63	2.55	2.59	2.62
Region	3.00	2.78	2.87	2.61	na	na	na	na	2.60	2.61	2.64	2.70
State	2.83	2.66	2.63	2.62	na	na	na	na	2.60	2.60	2.63	2.67

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980, 1990 and 2000; Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002, and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Table 1-13 lists average household income and per capita income from 1980 to 2025. Be advised that the County/City and State figures are shown in 1996 constant dollars for per capita income, while Fitzgerald's figures are in current dollars. The metropolitan and urban economies of the state with wage levels far higher than rural South Georgia makes comparisons impossible. However, the County/City household income maintains the pace of increases with the state through 2025. The diversification of the county's economic base has influenced the gains in household income. These projections made by Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., to 2025 is premised upon population increases to 21,732 and a 20 percent increase in total employment.

**TABLE 1-13
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD & PER CAPITA INCOME 1980 - 2025**

Unit	1980		1985		1990	
	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income
Co./City	\$22,673	\$11,394	\$23,716	\$14,403	\$24,975	\$15,836
Fitzgerald	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$22,019	\$8,456 ₁
State	NA	\$15,353	NA	\$18,512	\$33,259	\$20,715
Unit	1995		2000		2005	
	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income
Co./City	\$29,195	\$17,920	\$36,572	\$21,741	\$32,141	\$23,439
Fitzgerald	NA	NA	\$32,735	\$12,775 ₁	NA	NA
State	\$35,692	\$22,287	\$42,158	\$25,433	\$44,169	\$26,975
Unit	2010		2015		2020	
	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income
Co./City	\$40,869	\$25,131	\$43,790	\$26,540	\$46,710	\$27,869
State	\$52,533	\$28,549	\$54,203	\$30,141	\$63,964	\$31,767
Unit	2025					
	Household \$ Income	Per Capita '96 \$ Income				
Co./City	\$49,629	\$28,988				
State	\$59,049	\$33,413				

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002, Greater Ben Hill/State per capita income data in constant 1996 dollars; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1) 1990 and 2000 Fitzgerald per capita income in current dollars.

Tables 1-14 and 1-15 show the 1990 and 2000 number and percent distribution of household incomes in Greater Ben Hill, Fitzgerald, the unincorporated area and the state. Two-thirds of Fitzgerald households (69 percent in 1990 and 58 percent in 2000); over half (54.3 percent in 1990 and 36.5 percent in 2000) of the unincorporated area; and (43.1 percent in 1990 and 28.1 percent in 2000) of the state have household incomes less than \$25,000. Nearly one-third of all households (31.6 percent in 1990 and 23 percent) in Fitzgerald; (20.5 percent in 1990 and 11.2 percent in 2000) in the unincorporated area; and (16.8 percent in 1990 and 10.1 percent in 2000) in the state have household incomes less than \$10,000. The urban/metro fueled economies of the state shows the that comparison is purely informative. Greater Ben Hill exceed the state percentages in every category from less than \$9,999 up to \$29,999 in 1990 and 2000.

TABLE 1-14
1990 & 2000 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME
FOR BEN HILL COUNTY, FITZGERALD AND UNINCORPORATED AREA

	Number Households					
	County/city		Fitzgerald		Unincorporated	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total	5,939	6,637	3,216	3,506	2,723	3,131
Income less than \$ 9,999	1,576	1,155	1,017	805	559	350
Income \$ 10,000 - \$ 14,999	799	745	480	519	319	226
Income \$ 15,000 - \$ 19,999	705	683	358	381	347	302
Income \$ 20,000 - \$ 29,999	1,056	1,067	588	539	468	528
Income \$ 30,000 - \$ 34,999	380	397	137	175	243	222
Income \$ 35,000 - \$ 39,999	329	308	160	122	169	186
Income \$ 40,000 - \$ 49,499	392	556	184	239	208	317
Income \$ 50,000 - \$ 59,999	274	538	138	255	136	283
Income \$ 60,000 - \$ 74,999	313	467	90	180	223	287
Income \$ 75,000 - \$ 99,999	60	427	26	140	34	287
Income \$100,000 - \$124,999	25	217	16	91	9	126
Income \$125,000 - \$149,999	4	80	4	39	0	41
Income \$150,000 or more	26	37	18	21	5	16

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000; and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

TABLE 1-15
PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME – 1990 FOR
BEN HILL COUNTY, FITZGERALD, UNINCORPORATED AREAS AND STATE

	Percent of Households						
	County /City		Fitzgerald		Unincorporated		State
	.1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%
Income less than\$ 9,999	26.5%	17.3%	31.6%	23.0%	20.5	11.2	10.1%
Income \$ 10,000 - \$ 14,999	13.5%	11.2%	14.9%	14.8%	11.7	7.2	5.8%
Income \$ 15,000 - \$ 19,999	11.9%	10.2%	11.1%	10.9%	12.7	9.6	5.9%
Income \$ 20,000 - \$ 29,999	17.8%	16.0%	18.3%	15.4%	17.2	16.9	12.7%
Income \$ 30,000 - \$ 34,999	6.4%	5.9%	4.3%	5.0%	8.9	7.1	6.2%
Income \$ 35,000 - \$ 39,999	5.5%	4.6%	5.0%	3.5%	6.2	5.9	5.8%
Income \$ 40,000 - \$ 49,999	6.6%	8.3%	5.7%	6.8%	7.6	10.1	10.9%
Income \$ 50,000 - \$ 59,999	4.6%	8.1%	4.3%	7.3%	5.0	9.0	9.2%
Income \$ 60,000 - \$ 74,999	5.3%	7.0%	2.8%	5.1%	8.2	9.2	10.5%
Income \$ 75,000 - \$ 99,999	1.0%	6.4%	0.8%	4.0%	1.2	9.2	10.4%
Income \$100,000 - \$124,999	0.4%	3.2%	0.5%	2.6%	0.3	4.0	5.2%
Income \$125,000 - \$149,999	0.1%	1.2%	0.1%	1.1%	0.0	1.3	2.5%
Income \$150,000 or more	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.2	0.5	4.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The following four tables provide information on education in Ben Hill County. Table 1-16 and Table 1-19 show census statistics on the number of adults with various levels of formal education. The twenty-year trend shows that more adults are completing more years of formal education. In 1980, 32.3 percent of the adult population had less than an eighth grade education and by 2000 just 12.9 percent of the adult population was in this category. Those adults completing high school plus more formal education amounted to 43.2 percent in 1980 and rose to 65.9 percent by 2000. From a regional comparison, shown on Table 1-19, Ben Hill County ranked sixth in the nine county region with 71 percent of their adult population attaining high school and beyond formal education. In 2000, Georgia and the United States exhibited a 78.6/80.3 percent respectively in the high school or greater educational attainment level.

TABLE 1-16
1980-2000 BEN HILL CO./FITZGERALD EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
(number of adults, age 25 and over)

	County/City			Fitzgerald		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Total	11,175	9,810	10,990	6,011	5,181	5,536
Elementary School (0-8 years)	3,610	1,814	1,418	2,030	1,056	815
High School (1-3 years)	2,738	2,428	2,341	1,411	1,320	1,288
High School (4 years)	2,816	3,494	4,088	1,396	1,695	2,028
College (1-3 years)	1,106	1,332	2,099	570	722	984
College (4+ years)	905	742	1,055	604	388	518

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 1-17
1985 - 1991 AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
County	463	469	455	455	NA	NA
Georgia	480	480	481	483	NA	NA

Source: Georgia Department of Education. (note: until 1990-91 County/City school systems were not consolidated.)

Table 1-17 shows high school test score averages from 1997-2002 with comparison to the state average. Table 1-18 shows a comparison Pre-K through twelfth grade enrollments and dropouts statewide.

TABLE 1-18
1996 - 2005 AVERAGE ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL DROPOUTS
FOR BEN HILL COUNTY ELEMENTARY AND GEORGIA
(number of students, dropout percentages)

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-'00
Enrollments	3,640	3,637	3,582	3,547	3,526
Dropouts 6-12	9.0%	6.5%	6.5%	4.7%	5.0%
Dropouts 9-12	16.6%	10.6%	10.1%	8.2%	8.0%
Georgia 9-12	8.6%	na	6.5%	6.5%	6.5%
	2000-'01	2001-'02	2002-'03	2003-'04	2004-'05
Enrollments	3,425	3,459	3,309	3,290	3,320
Dropouts 6-12	4.9%	5.0%	nd	nd	nd
Dropouts 9-12	9.1%	9.1%	nd	nd	nd
Georgia 9-12	na	na	na	na	na

Source: Georgia Department of Education, various years.

The Ben Hill County Consolidated Board of Education and the parents have made excellent progress through programs and persuasion to focus their children to graduate from high school and gain post-secondary training and education. Between 1980 and 2000 there has been a ninety-five percent increase of adults attaining a post-secondary education.

**TABLE 1-19
1980 - 2000 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE SOUTH GEORGIA REGION**

	1980 Educational Attainment						1990 Educational Attainment						2000 Educational Attainment					
	Adults, 25 & over	Elem. Grades 1-8	High School		College		Adults, 25 & over	Elem. Grades 1-8	High School		College		Adults, 25 & over	Elem. Grades 1-8	High School		College	
			No Diploma	Graduate	No Degree	Graduate			No Diploma	Graduate	No Degree	Graduate			No Diploma	Graduate	No Degree	Graduate
Ben Hill	11,175	32.3%	24.5%	25.2%	8.1%	9.9%	9,810	18.5%	24.8%	35.6%	23.6%	7.6%	10,990	12.9%	21.3%	37.2%	19.1%	9.6%
Berrien	9,581	32.8%	26.1%	27.9%	5.9%	7.3%	8,782	20.4%	22.1%	34.7%	15.2%	7.5%	10,451	11.8%	22.2%	34.6%	22.0%	9.4%
Brooks	10,235	36.8%	23.7%	24.5%	7.4%	7.5%	9,363	19.1%	22.3%	36.0%	13.6%	9.1%	10,445	12.0%	20.6%	37.1%	19.1%	11.3%
Cook	9,276	34.9%	26.4%	25.7%	5.7%	7.4%	8,231	20.9%	23.9%	34.6%	14.1%	6.5%	9,876	12.9%	22.6%	36.0%	20.5%	8.2%
Echols	1,487	33.8%	25.2%	31.4%	3.9%	5.8%	1,396	18.3%	20.7%	45.3%	10.9%	4.7%	2,167	17.9%	21.7%	35.6%	16.5%	8.4%
Irwin	6,322	34.3%	26.2%	25.1%	5.7%	8.7%	5,350	21.0%	26.0%	32.9%	11.9%	8.3%	6,196	12.6%	19.7%	38.5%	19.4%	9.8%
Lanier	3,760	35.0%	25.7%	24.1%	5.3%	10.0%	3,332	21.9%	26.8%	29.9%	16.0%	5.4%	4,487	10.7%	22.3%	34.2%	24.0%	8.8%
Lowndes	40,400	22.3%	20.6%	30.8%	13.2%	13.1%	43,540	11.3%	18.9%	31.7%	21.7%	16.3%	54,237	6.6%	15.8%	30.6%	27.4%	19.7%
Tift	21,073	31.5%	23.0%	22.9%	11.1%	11.5%	20,829	17.2%	21.5%	27.0%	20.3%	14.0%	23,433	11.7%	20.4%	30.3%	21.9%	15.6%
Turner	6,175	35.1%	25.0%	23.5%	7.8%	8.5%	5,170	19.2%	25.5%	35.1%	13.0%	7.2%	5,707	10.5%	21.8%	38.7%	18.5%	10.5%
United States	144,384,211	17.5%	13.9%	36.8%	17.0%	14.8%	158,868,436	10.4%	14.4%	30.0%	24.9%	20.3%	182,211,639	7.5%	12.1%	28.6%	27.3%	24.4%
Georgia	3,569,283	23.7%	19.9%	28.5%	14.6%	13.3%	4,023,420	12.0%	17.2%	29.6%	22.0%	19.3%	5,185,965	7.6%	13.8%	28.7%	25.6%	24.3%

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WITH HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA and COLLEGE

	1980	1990	2000
SGRDC	47.1%	62.2%	71%
Ben Hill	43.2%	56.8%	65.9%
Berrien	41.1%	57.4%	66.0%
Brooks	39.4%	58.7%	67.5%
Cook	38.8%	55.2%	64.7%
Echols	41.1%	60.9%	60.5%
Irwin	39.5%	53.1%	67.7%
Lanier	39.4%	51.3%	65.0%
Lowndes	57.1%	69.7%	77.7%
Tift	45.5%	61.3%	67.8%
Turner	39.8%	55.3%	67.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

CHAPTER TWO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The primary purpose of the economic element is to gain some perspective of the existing and future potential of Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald. The economic base can provide the stimulus for population growth, improve the quality of life and allow residents to raise families and retire in Ben Hill County. The economic element directly impacts all other elements of the comprehensive plan, especially goals and policies, future land use plans, and the five-year short-term work programs.

Ben Hill County's economic history has relied upon saw log timber as a mainstay industry. Field crops of peanuts, corn, tobacco, pecans, soybeans, cotton and wheat have remained an important aspect of Ben Hill's economy but to a relatively lesser degree than in the formation decades.

An early non-agricultural sector industry, the H. R. Kaminsky and Sons Company was established in 1937. This company ceased as a strong basic industry concentrating mainly on the production of men's, boys and ladies slacks for widespread markets in the 1990's.. Other apparel industries have flourished and faded out in Fitzgerald, namely, Fitzgerald Underwear-1953; S.W.S. Garments-1969; and Champion Outerwear-1984. Y & W Sportswear-1975 is the lone trouser-manufacturing firm in Fitzgerald.

In 1940, the Fitzgerald Packing Company commenced smoked meat and sausage operations. Lowell Packing Company purchased Fitzgerald Packing Company in 1943 and has continued to the present.

Another manufacturing company which influenced Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County's development started in 1960 as Little Beaver Travel Trailers and was purchased by Coachmen Industries in 1971 and remains a strong basic industry today.

The production of carpet yarn commenced in 1970 and 1971 by Shaw Industries and Modern Fibers. Delco-Remy, a Division of General Motors, began manufacturing lead acid batteries in 1973. In 1982, Ocilla Industries commenced operation in the manufacture of manufactured homes, and by 1990 this operation ceased in Ben Hill County. Between 1990 and 2000 several new industries commenced operations, namely Deep South - a food processor (which is now for sale); Pace American - utility trailers; Fitzgerald Forest Products - pine veneer; Pioneer Housing and Fleetwood Valuhomes - mobile homes; Lippert Components - frames for recreational vehicles and mobile homes and Hallmark Industries - construction of cargo trailers. These additional industries added over 900 jobs in Ben Hill County. By 2005 an existing peanut processor has added 106 employees; a new wire plant will have 50 employees and a cargo trailer company with 125 employees.

The City and County Today

The city and county's main economic functions, in order of economic impact, are: (1) a manufacturing center, (2) a trade center, and (3) a retirement center. This is borne out by employment figures prepared by the Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce. An employment breakdown for the manufacturing sector of the city-county is as follows:

Manufacturing - 2005

Alvin Wynn Electric, motors & engines	42
Astro Products, cleaning chemicals/equipment	5
American Blanching, processed peanuts	150
Coachmen Industries, recreational/travel trailers	292
Custom Profiles, plastic extrusions	35
Deep South (Winn Dixie), food processing/distribution	170
Delphi Automotive Systems, lead acid batteries	408
Eaton Corporation, plastic extrusions	35
Envirolog, firelog products	20
Elixir Industries/G. L. Steel, trailer roofs/metal parts	50
Fitzgerald Railcar, railroad car repair	80
Greene Concrete Construction, concrete products	10
Gilman Building Products, lumber mill	126
Haulmark Industries, cargo trailers	166
Frontier RV; Shapiro Metals; Fitzgerald Recycling; Plantation Builders	100
Fitzgerald Paper Converters, paper company	10

Kampco Steel, steel fabrication	13
L. E. Harper Construction, construction/decorating	10
Lowell Packing Co., sausage/smoked meats	100
Lippert Components, frames for RV's/manufactured homes	47
Massee Builders, Inc., commercial buildings	50
Modern Fibers, textile	432
Pace American, Inc., cargo trailers	200
Rainbow Irrigation, irrigation systems	40
Shaw Industries, carpet yarn	512
Shep Dunn Construction, construction	4
Southern Veneer Products, pine veneer	190
Southern Timber Products, timber	12
Wilson Wire Products, metal work/racks	11
Cemex Inc., ready-mix concrete-masonry	3
Modern Dispersions South, Inc., mfg. plastic pigment	96
T. & T. Machine Shop, machine parts	5
Vopak Logistics Services, railcar cleaning services	14
ALLTEL, communications	35
Y & W Sportswear, trousers	85

To comprehend past trends and future expectations to the year 2025, Tables 2-1 through 2-24 (found at the end of this chapter) have been prepared for the following subjects: employment by sector, sector earnings, earned income, type of income, average weekly wages, unemployment, labor force characteristics and participation rates, occupations, and general economic indicators. In most instances the county data and trends are compared to state and national trends.

Economic Sectors

Tables 2-1 through 2-8 exhibit existing and future employment and earnings for thirteen economic sectors, namely Farming; Agricultural Services; Mining; Construction; Manufacturing; Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities (TCPU); Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Financial, Insurance, & Real Estate (FIRE); Services; Federal Government-Civilian (Gov FC); Federal Government-Military (Gov FM); and State and Local Government (Gov SL). Comparisons are made with the State of Georgia, the United States, and nearby counties. Similar data and projections were not available for Fitzgerald, so the county information must suffice. The employment and earnings figures represent jobs located in Ben Hill County regardless of the residence of the jobholder. Likewise, Ben Hill County residents who work in other counties are not included in the totals for the Ben Hill County tables.

Farming and Wholesale Sales lost employment during the last twenty years and all other economic sectors show net gains in the same period. The modest twenty year overall employment gain (4,061) with a loss in the farming sector mirrors most rural agrarian-oriented South Georgia counties. The three largest numerical gaining sectors were manufacturing (2,307), state and local government (623), retail trade (629), and services (499).

The twenty year projected outlook for Ben Hill County shows a net increase of 2,488 new jobs (124/year). The percentage distribution shows farming continuing to have less jobs (-19.8 percent), and all other sectors maintaining the same ratios throughout the 20 years. Manufacturing is projected to increase by 1,035 jobs or 20.6 percent over the 2005 level. The projected Ben Hill County scenario does not compare to the state or the nation, where the manufacturing sector is considered. The state and the nation show continual growth in retail, wholesale, and services sectors and a slight drop in the manufacturing sector. With increases shown in the wholesale sector Ben Hill County is beginning to mirror the diversified balance of the state and national figures with modest gains.

Earnings by Sector

The earnings by economic sector data contained in Tables 2-5 through 2-8 shows existing and projected total wages, salaries, and other earned income paid to persons working for businesses or industries in each economic sector that are located in Ben Hill County. The figures for the Agricultural Services sector includes earnings from establishments involved in forestry (timber harvesting) and agricultural services (crop services, veterinary services, etc.).

Overall, between 1980 and 2000, there was a 121 percent gain countywide in total earnings in Ben Hill County. Major

gainers in percentage order by economic sector are: Manufacturing – 166 percent, State and Local Government – 115 percent, Financial, Insurance and Real Estate – 74 percent, and Services – 81 percent. Economic sectors, which showed declines in earnings between 1980 and 2000, were Farming and Mining. The farming sector has seen a general decline in employment and a rapid increase in costs and consequently earnings have been negatively impacted.

Earnings for Ben Hill County are projected to increase by 45.2 percent from 2005 - 2025. The Transportation, Communications and Public Utilities sector will lead all sectors with a 54.2 percent increase in earnings, followed by Construction at a 53 percent increase; State and Local Government-49.9 percent increase; Manufacturing at a 47.9 percent increase. Following close in gains are Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate – 42.5 percent;; Retail – 24 percent; and Services - 40.9 percent.

While the County showed a 121 percent gain in earnings from 1980 to 2000, the state and nation are projected to showed a 141 percent and 75.9 percent gains respectively. The Services sector at the state and national levels showed the largest gain in earnings with a 313 percent and 180 percent gain respectively in the last 20 years and the Manufacturing sector posted a 59 percent gain in Georgia and only a 16 percent gain for the United States. The projected earnings for the state between 2005-2025 amount to a 56 percent gain and the nation will experience a 51 percent increase. The Service sector will post the greatest earning gains of all economic sectors at the state and national levels during the next twenty-five years.

Income By Type

The sources of personal income by type for Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald are identified and compared to the state and the nation in Tables 2-9 through 2-12. It may not be clear what the data for personal income by type means, so the following definitions seek to explain the terminology:

- **Wage and Salary** - measures total income earned as compensation for working or rendering services.
- **Other Labor Income** - measures total employer contributions to private pension or worker's compensation funds.
- **Proprietor's Income** - measures total profits earned from partnerships and proprietorships.
- **Dividend, Investment, Rent and Interest Income** - measures the total income from investments and rental property.
- **Transfer Payments** - measures total income from payments by the government under many different programs, including Social Security, unemployment insurance, food stamps, veteran's benefits, etc.,
- **Residence Adjustment** - measures the net amount of personal income of residents of the county that is earned outside the county. For example, a person who earns income in one county but lives in a different county would have their income counted as follows:

The income would be added to the appropriate income category (e.g., Wage and Salary, etc.) of the county in which it was earned.

The same figure would be added to the Residence Adjustment of the county in which it was earned as a negative number.

This same income figure would be added to the Residence Adjustment of the county in which the person lived as a positive number.

Therefore, Residence Adjustment is a net number for each county: if it is a negative it means that the amount of income earned in the county by non-residents is greater than the amount of income earned outside the county by residents of the county; if it is positive it means that the amount of income earned outside the county by residents is greater than the amount of income earned in the county by non-residents of the county.

Tables 2-9 through 2-12 show the ways Ben Hill County compares to state and the nation in the "income by type". The percentage tables portray the agricultural/forestry-based economy, with slightly lower numbers percentage wise of wage and salary incomes and higher than state and nation percentages in the proprietor's income. The strong earnings in the

wage and salary class reflect the strength of the manufacturing sector. In all years transfer payments have been higher than the state and the nation and these payments tend to increase during high levels of unemployment. The resident adjustment for Ben Hill County has been negative for the last twenty years, meaning more persons from other counties worked inside Ben Hill County.

The projections from 2005 to 2025 indicate a softening of the income earned from proprietorships and gains in the wage and salary category. This balance of income types would become more closely aligned to those projected for the state and the nation.

Average Weekly Wages

Table 2-13 shows the 1980 -2000 average weekly wage for Ben Hill County and the state. During this twenty-year period weekly wages for all persons increased 126 percent in the county and 184 percent for the state. However, Ben Hill County's average weekly wage in 2000 is just 66 percent of the state weekly wage, so comparisons are next to impossible. It is a case of the rural wage rates not keeping pace with the urban-metropolitan wage structure.

Unemployment Rates

Between 1990 and 2002 Ben Hill County's unemployment rate was greater than the state in each year except 1992 (See Table 2-14). The County's rate was less than the national rate in 1992 and 1995. Ben Hill County ranges from a 5.2% rate to 7.3% rate of unemployment and exhibits the mid-middle-range of unemployment when compared to the other eight counties of the South Georgia region.

Labor Force Characteristics

In Tables 2-15 and 2-16 the percentage of private wage and salary workers has increased moderately from 74 percent to 79 percent and then down to 76 percent over the last twenty years. Government workers have decreased moderately by 1990 and increased slightly by 2000. Self-employed workers decreased slightly between 1980 and 2000. The residents commuting to work outside Ben Hill County has risen from 13.9 percent to 20.8 percent of the work force between 1990 and 2000. The majority of these commuting workers (38 percent) end up in Irwin County/Ocilla. Other work destination for commuting workers in 2000 were Coffee County-233 persons (15 percent), Tift County-187 (12.3 percent), Turner County-57 (3.7 percent), Wilcox County-58 (3.8 percent), Ware County-26 (1.7 percent), Crisp County-26 (1.7 percent), and 262 (17.2 percent) persons commute elsewhere.

Tables 2-17 through 2-19 show the rate of labor force participation in various categories by total labor force, male labor force, and female labor force for Ben Hill County, the State of Georgia and the United States. A side note to the user the "not in labor force" category for Ben Hill County includes those persons not shown to be in the Armed Forces in 1980 and 1990; and consequently Ben Hill's rate of participation is slightly skewed when compared to the state and national rates. Ben Hill County male and female participation rates are more similar to the U S rates than they are to the State of Georgia. The female participation rate has increased between 1980 and 2000 from 44 percent to 51.2 percent. The male participation rate risen between 1980 and 2000 from 66.6 percent to 69.2 percent in Ben Hill County. In 1980 the female gender in Ben Hill County had a lower unemployment rate than the state and nation. The male gender compared favorably with the state and the nation from an unemployment perspective.

Tables 2-20 through 2-23 do not provide in-depth information, but they can be used to gain insight into the work-related skills and backgrounds of Ben Hill County residents. The work skill categories of "Precision production, craft and repair, and Equipment operation, assembly, inspection" garner the most persons in Ben Hill County. The state and the nation's top two categories are the "Professional and technical specialty and Clerical and administrative support".

Comparative Economic Indicators

The statewide master economic rank compares all 159 counties in Georgia. (see Table 2-24) It is a measure of economic health based on personal income, sales tax receipts, motor vehicle tags and assessed property value. Table 2-24 illustrates how Ben Hill County compares to six adjacent and neighboring counties, namely Berrien, Brooks, Cook, Irwin, Lowndes and Tift. Ben Hill's master economic rank ranged from a high of 74 in 1979 to a low of 98 in 1998. (1 is the highest and 159 being the lowest) Total taxable sales in Ben Hill County increased by 79% between 1979 and 1990. Irwin and Brooks Counties had 48% and 52% increases respectively, and the other four counties increases ranged from 63% to 109%. The statewide increase in total taxable sales was 76%. Consequently the local tax revenues from sales taxes has kept pace with

the State of Georgia.

Per capita incomes compared to the state and nation are also shown in Table 2-24. In 2000, Ben Hill County's per capita income compares more favorably percentage wise with the state in 1979 and the nation in 1981. Of the nine other comparison counties Brooks, Berrien, Colquitt, Cook, Turner and Lanier Counties have a lower per capita income than Ben Hill County.

The Retail Pull Factor reported in the Georgia County Guide, 2003 is a measurement of a county's retail buying power that incorporates the effects of income and population on a county's retail sales activity. A high pull factor > 1.00 can indicate that dollars are flowing into the county, and a low pull factor < 1.00 can indicate that dollars are flowing out of the county. The following show the adjacent counties pull factors:

	Pull Factor
Ben Hill	0.87
Turner	0.78
Coffee	1.45
Cook	0.79
Tift	1.36
Lanier	0.34
Lowndes	1.57

Inventory and Assessment of Economic Base

Farming and Agricultural Services - The farming sector in the 1980's employed 6.2 percent of the labor force, but by 2000 it accounted for 2.4 percent. The number of farms has decreased and by 2025 employment and earnings will drop to 1.4% and 3.3 percent respectively and play a minor role in the overall economy of Ben Hill County. Agricultural Services rose to a peak in employment and earnings by 1985, and will have a minor share of total earnings by 2025.

Mining - The tabular summaries show one to three persons employed in mining and consequently very small earnings derived from the mining sector.

Construction - Construction employment has remained steady at 4.1 percent, and will rise to 4.5 percent in 2025. Earnings averaged 4.2 percent through 2000, and rise to average 4.6 percent during the next twenty years.

Manufacturing - This sector has ranged from 32.0 percent to 40.8 percent from an employment perspective between 1980 and 2000. Employment projections for the next 20 years have manufacturing pegged at 41.6 percent of the total employment base of Ben Hill County. Manufacturing will then account for 41.5 percent of total earnings in 2025. This scenario maintains current trends and allow for steady, but not rapid growth in the manufacturing sector. These projections do not take into account the more than moderate increases in manufacturing employment between 2000 and 2005. Therefore, these projections for employment and earnings should be considered conservative projections.

Transportation, Communications, & Public Utilities - This sector averaged 4.9 percent of the employment base between 1980-2000 and 9.4 percent of the earnings. The twenty-year forecast drops the employment percentage to 4.2 percent and drops the earnings average to 7.5 percent of the total.

Wholesale Trade - The wholesale trade sector is a growth sector averaging 3.0 percent of total employment from 1980-2000, and is forecast to drop to 1.9 percent of total employment through 2025. Earnings during the 1980 to 2000 period averaged 3.2 percent, but are forecast to average 1.6 percent from 2005-2025.

Retail Trade - The retail trade sector held 12.0 percent of the employment in 1980, but from then and to the present it fell to the twenty-year average of 13.8 percent. The projected future employment in retail trade will decrease to average 12.0 percent of total employment. However, earnings averaged 8.6 percent of the total between 1980-2000 and will drop to an average of 5.9 percent during the next twenty years.

Finance, Insurance and Real Estate - The FIRE sector is the fifth largest sector in employment and earnings. Total employment and earnings for this sector will rise percentage wise during the next 20 years.

Services - The services sector is second only to manufacturing, and it includes motels, restaurants, business services,

automotive repair, amusement and recreation businesses, health, legal and social services. The services sector maintained and grew a little between 1980 and 2000, and is projected to maintain its employment share and increase its earnings share through 2025.

State and Local Government - This sector includes teachers, hospital and nursing home employees, city, county and state employees, public and safety personnel. The employment share increased from 13.5 percent in 1980 to 14.6 percent by 2005. Employment is projected to rise to an average of 15.1 percent during the 2005-2025 period. Earnings averaged 14.5 percent during the 1980-2000 period and will average 13.8 percent from 2005 through 2025.

Special or Unique Economic Sectors - Major special or unique economic sectors in Ben Hill County are the advances into technology with a new technology industrial park under development and direct linkage with their technical college for training and future employment.

Planned Major Economic Activities

City and County economic development efforts follow the 2004 Strategic Plan and market the city and county for major new economic activities. Their efforts include supporting the retention and provision of services for the existing industrial and commercial enterprises. There are ample lands, buildings and infrastructure in place for new industries, and with their active track record of attracting new industries and assisting existing companies to expand.

Individual City Economic Assessments - City of Fitzgerald

The City of Fitzgerald is centrally located in South Georgia approximately 135 miles west of the Atlantic Ocean, 135 miles east of the Alabama state line, 84 miles north of the Florida line and 80 miles south of Macon, Georgia. The community is served by Federal Highways 129 and 319, and State Highways 11, 90, 107, and 125. Fitzgerald is only 20 miles east of Interstate 75, and is located along one of the main lines of the CSX Seaboard System Railroad. Fitzgerald Municipal Airport provides a 5,000-foot paved, lighted runway for corporate aircraft. Expansion of the runway is being proposed and a new company that refurbishes executive aircraft is planning to locate at the airport.

The City's industrial community have repeatedly been cited for their low production costs and high efficiency ratings when compared to other plants across the country. This record of efficiency is attributed to several positive factors including: low tax rates, low interest development authority financing packages for land, building, and equipment. The multiple advantages of "freeport" also save industries tax dollars.

Since 2000 ten new industrial firms have located in Ben Hill County and over 250 jobs have been created. The economic base is very diversified lending itself to withstand the ups and downs of the economy. The economic community continues to foster strong leadership to help existing businesses expand and create a positive atmosphere-adequate land, infrastructure and incentives to attract new businesses.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Development Authority & Ben Hill-Irwin Area Joint Development Authority

The Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce actively maintains the community and county economic profiles, maintains lines of communication open for new prospects, and addresses the needs of existing industries. The Chamber has two staff persons and one appointed executive director. The Industrial Development Authority/Joint Development Authority negotiates the contractual agreements needed to consummate the needed transactions. The Industrial Development Authority has issued tax-free revenue bonds to purchase land, buildings, machinery and equipment for several of the existing industries. The Authority has an excellent track record, and could apply its expertise if and when needed. Unique water, sewer, electric or gas services are effectively handled by the city owned Water, Light and Bond Commission.

Educational and Training Opportunities

The Ben Hill/Irwin Technical Institute, since 1966, has offered a wide range of educational programs ranging from adult basic education to highly technical occupational skills. This school, as well as the ones located in Valdosta and Douglas,

as the capacity to retrain those persons displaced by technological changes, and training them for new jobs in partnership with new and existing industry needs.

RDC Economic Development Tools and Programs

The South Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) is located at 327 West Savannah Avenue and 116 McKey Street, Valdosta, Georgia. Facilities on Savannah Avenue consist of three structures with a combined floor area of 8,025 square feet. Facilities on McKey Street utilized by the RDC consists of approximately 3,600 square feet.

Housed at the RDC on Savannah Avenue are office spaces for programs including Economic Development, Community Development Programs, Governmental Administration, Local and Regional Planning, Job Training Partnership Program (JTPA), graphics, design, and conference space for administrated needs. Activities on McKey Street include data processing for 27 cities and nine counties, and administration of the data processing systems.

Specific programs and financing mechanisms for industrial development and business financing handled by the South Georgia Regional Development Center include:

- Economic Development Administration – Revolving Loan Program
- Small Business Administration 504 Loan Program
- Small Business Administration 7A Loan Program
- Farmers Home Administration Intermediary Re-lending Program
- Farmers Home Administration Rural Business Enterprise
- Farmers Home Administration Business and Industry Loan Program
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs Employment Incentive Program

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL

Create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economic base in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and Nation.

POLICIES

- Private sector economic investments should be encouraged and fostered through the availability of financial and technical assistance.
- Public sector financed economic developments should be encouraged and used as a tool to stimulate or leverage private sector economic investments. Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald should actively pursue new industrial clients for their industrial parks.
- Products and raw materials available in the region should be given first consideration for use in manufacturing in the area.
- Diversification of the economic base should be fostered and maintained. The development of recreational, educational and health care facilities and services should be considered as legitimate economic development

activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, and support industrial development.

GOAL

Encourage economic development through business/industry recruitment and/or expansions that capitalize on and are compatible with the natural attributes of Ben Hill County.

POLICIES

- Economic developments should be compatible with environmental standards.
- In cases where development is incompatible with the environment, such developments should be located where environmental and social costs are minimized.

GOAL

Create and maintain a well-trained work force of professional, technical, and skilled workers capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.

POLICIES

- Training programs, vocational and technical, should be designed to correlate with anticipated industrial and commercial growth and needs.
- Training and manpower programs should be designed which are readily accessible to the unemployed and underemployed.
- Programs should be developed which encourage local college and technical school graduates to seek employment within the county.
- Industries, both existing and new, should initiate on-the-job training programs for the benefit of themselves and their employees.

GOALS

Develop and maintain public services and facilities to accommodate existing economic development and to encourage future economic growth.

POLICIES

- Industrial growth and expansions should be located within or adjacent to industrial parks and sites that can be readily served by public utilities.
- The development of cultural, historic and educational services and facilities should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, and foster economic and industrial development.

TABLE 2-1
1980 – 2025 BEN HILL COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (number of jobs)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	7,190	7,888	8,655	9,681	11,251
Farming	445	362	319	280	271
Agricultural Services	29	180	81	128	158
Mining	1	3	2	0	0
Construction	347	361	341	350	446
Manufacturing	2,279	2,485	2,704	3,303	4,586
Transportation, Communications, Public utilities	409	402	443	407	427
Wholesale	330	277	253	223	218
Retail	854	1,167	1,222	1,497	1,483
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	354	407	469	441	475
Services	999	1,063	1,411	1,495	1,498
Federal Government, Civilian	31	30	42	37	35
Federal Government, Military	66	81	71	71	66
State & Local Government	965	1,070	1,297	1,449	1,588
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	12,131	12,923	13,611	14,182	14,619
Farming	248	230	217	207	199
Agricultural Services	165	173	182	192	202
Mining	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	510	569	623	671	708
Manufacturing	5,013	5,389	5,694	5,916	6,048
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	478	527	572	610	639
Wholesale	237	253	265	273	278
Retail	1,518	1,563	1,611	1,661	1,714
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	500	517	536	556	578
Services	1,595	1,679	1,743	1,784	1,801
Federal Government, Civilian	35	36	36	37	37
Federal Government, Military	67	68	68	69	69
State and Local Government	1,765	1,919	2,064	2,206	2,346

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-2
1980 – 2025 BEN HILL COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR
(percent of jobs)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Farming	6.2%	4.5%	3.6%	2.9%	2.4%
Agricultural Services	0.4%	2.2%	1.1%	1.3%	1.4%
Mining	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	4.8%	4.5%	3.6%	3.6%	4.0%
Manufacturing	32.0%	31.5%	31.6%	34.1%	40.8%
Transportation, Communications, Public utilities	5.7%	5.0%	5.6%	4.2%	3.8%
Wholesale	4.6%	3.5%	2.7%	2.3%	1.9%
Retail	12.0%	14.7%	13.9%	15.5%	13.2%
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	4.9%	5.1%	4.9%	4.6%	4.2%
Services	14.0%	13.4%	16.6%	15.4%	13.3%
Federal Government, Civilian	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%
Federal Government, Military	0.9%	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%
State & Local Government	13.5%	13.5%	15.2%	15.0%	14.1%
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Farming	2.0%	1.8%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%
Agricultural Services	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%
Mining	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	4.8%
Manufacturing	41.3%	41.7%	41.8%	41.7%	41.4%
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	3.9%	4.1%	4.2%	4.2%	4.4%
Wholesale	1.6%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%
Retail	12.5%	12.1%	11.8%	11.8%	11.7%
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	4.1%	4.0%	3.9%	3.9%	4.0%
Services	13.2%	13.0%	12.8%	12.8%	12.3%
Federal Government, Civilian	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Federal Government, Military	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
State and Local Government	14.6%	14.9%	15.2%	14.9%	16.1%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABKE 2-3: STATE OF GEORGIA EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (number and percent of jobs)

	1980		1985		1990		1995		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	2,747,310		3,224,300		3,690,610		4,229,290		4,859,970	
Farming	96,559	3.5	82,370	2.6	74,286	2.0	68,780	1.6	67,356	1.4
Agriculture Services	16,432	0.6	24,574	0.8	31,487	0.9	44,659	1.1	54,829	1.1
Mining	8,809	0.3	10,241	0.3	10,590	0.3	9,408	0.2	9,522	0.2
Construction	139,233	5.0	196,913	6.1	212,342	5.8	236,159	5.6	296,572	6.1
Manufacturing	528,812	19.3	565,278	17.5	572,477	15.5	603,394	14.3	613,992	12.6
Transp. Comm. Util.	152,583	5.6	177,746	5.5	216,343	5.9	241,886	5.7	296,267	6.1
Wholesale Trade	174,084	6.3	214,310	6.7	228,213	6.2	242,508	5.7	276,326	5.7
Retail Trade	407,627	14.8	520,232	16.1	606,608	16.4	724,946	17.1	816,701	16.8
Finance., Ins., Real Est	199,887	7.3	225,090	7.0	244,947	6.6	269,183	6.4	345,923	7.1
Services	502,841	18.3	664,476	20.6	876,597	23.8	1,125,360	26.6	1,391,460	28.6
Federal Govt - Civilian	84,599	3.1	92,561	2.9	102,981	2.8	98,336	2.3	92,262	1.9
Federal Govt - Military	92,295	3.4	98,319	3.1	90,745	2.5	94,733	2.2	93,789	1.9
State and Local Govt	343,553	12.5	352,189	10.9	422,991	11.5	464,941	11.1	504,969	10.4
	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	5,235,630		5,623,650		6,029,160		6,451,320		6,890,350	
Farming	64,877	1.2	62,438	1.1	60,240	1.0	58,297	0.9	56,584	0.8
Agriculture Services	60,079	1.2	65,359	1.2	70,538	1.2	75,465	1.2	80,033	1.2
Mining	9,645	0.2	9,813	0.2	10,047	0.2	10,324	0.2	10,653	0.2
Construction	316,876	6.1	333,895	5.9	349,870	5.8	365,279	5.7	380,526	5.5
Manufacturing	632,106	12.1	649,864	11.6	665,184	11.0	677,683	10.5	687,263	10.0
Transp. Comm. Util.	322,804	6.2	347,846	6.2	371,521	6.2	392,902	6.1	411,295	6.0
Wholesale Trade	300,312	5.7	322,310	5.7	344,504	5.7	367,022	5.7	389,992	5.7
Retail Trade	893,996	17.1	3,979	17.3	1,055,500	17.5	1,138,660	17.7	1,223,640	17.8
Finance., Ins., Real Est	369,137	7.1	392,407	7.0	416,440	6.9	440,943	6.8	465,714	6.8
Services	1,532,290	29.3	1,692,630	30.1	1,873,380	31.1	2,074,950	32.2	2,298,230	33.4
Federal Govt - Civilian	91,889	1.8	91,883	1.6	92,089	1.5	92,439	1.4	92,936	1.4
Federal Govt - Military	95,235	1.8	96,403	1.7	97,224	1.6	97,709	1.5	97,839	1.4
State and Local Govt	546,388	10.4	584,820	10.4	622,628	10.3	659,644	10.2	695,636	10.1

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-4: UNITED STATES EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (thousands of jobs, percent of jobs)

	1980		1985		1990		1995		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	114,231,000		124,512,000		139,427,000		149,359,000		166,602,000	
Farming	3,798,000	3.3	3,466,000	2.8	3,153,000	2.3	3,106,000	2.1	3,175,210	1.9
Agriculture Services	908,981	0.8	1,152,320	0.9	1,452,950	1.0	1,789,100	1.2	2,091,200	1.3
Mining	1,277,600	1.1	1,385,000	1.1	1,044,090	0.8	883,860	0.6	789,502	0.5
Construction	5,654,200	5.0	6,465,520	5.2	7,260,790	5.2	7,731,500	5.2	9,435,370	5.7
Manufacturing	20,781,100	18.2	19,778,600	15.9	19,697,200	14.1	19,186,300	12.9	19,293,300	11.6
Transp. Comm. Util.	5,672,110	5.0	5,894,890	4.7	6,568,620	4.7	7,076,200	4.7	8,103,400	4.9
Wholesale Trade	5,741,680	5.0	6,136,100	4.9	6,711,510	4.8	6,930,520	4.6	7,607,260	4.6
Retail Trade	17,883,900	15.7	20,261,800	16.3	22,920,500	16.4	25,204,200	16.9	27,206,600	16.4
Finance., Ins., Real Est	8,756,010	7.7	9,491,990	7.6	10,712,600	7.7	11,037,800	7.4	13,194,100	7.9
Services	24,999,600	21.9	31,241,500	25.1	38,709,600	27.8	44,768,300	30.0	52,754,000	31.8
Federal Govt - Civilian	2,993,990	2.6	3,008,000	2.4	3,233,000	2.3	2,946,000	2.0	2,790,270	1.7
Federal Govt - Military	2,501,010	2.2	2,746,000	2.2	2,718,000	2.0	2,293,000	1.5	2,074,010	1.3
State and Local Govt	13,263,000	11.6	13,484,000	10.8	15,245,000	10.9	16,406,000	11.0	17,654,100	10.6
	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	176,602,000		187,343,000		198,813,000		211,062,000		224,148,000	
Farming	3,140,230	1.8	3,082,700	1.7	3,022,620	1.5	2,960,180	1.4	2,895,580	1.3
Agriculture Services	2,226,860	1.3	2,357,990	1.3	2,493,920	1.3	2,634,560	1.3	2,779,880	1.2
Mining	827,217	0.5	865,976	0.5	905,691	0.5	946,461	0.5	988,196	0.4
Construction	10,017,500	5.7	10,522,800	5.6	11,039,300	5.6	11,566,000	5.5	12,102,300	5.4
Manufacturing	19,454,200	11.0	19,650,900	10.5	19,854,900	10.0	20,066,600	9.5	20,286,100	9.1
Transp. Comm. Util.	8,540,080	4.8	8,952,030	4.8	9,376,140	4.7	9,812,210	4.7	10,260,100	4.6
Wholesale Trade	8,140,740	4.6	8,618,440	4.6	9,111,380	4.6	9,618,920	4.6	10,140,300	4.5
Retail Trade	28,629,500	16.2	30,161,600	16.1	31,706,500	16.0	33,357,400	15.8	35,087,700	15.7
Finance., Ins., Real Est	13,937,200	7.9	14,673,000	7.8	15,422,200	7.8	16,245,900	7.7	17,085,500	7.6
Services	57,868,500	32.8	63,417,200	33.9	69,489,800	35.0	76,134,900	36.1	83,405,800	37.2
Federal Govt - Civilian	2,821,890	1.6	2,851,960	1.5	2,882,070	1.5	2,912,160	1.4	2,942,240	1.3
Federal Govt - Military	2,106,070	1.2	2,131,770	1.1	2,150,020	1.1	2,160,680	1.0	2,163,540	1.0
State and Local Govt	18,891,600	10.7	20,087,100	10.7	21,338,100	10.7	22,645,800	10.7	24,011,000	10.7

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-5: BEN HILL COUNTY EARNINGS BY SECTOR
(thousands of 1996 constant dollars)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	\$ 136,533	\$ 175,255	\$ 190,931	\$ 238,066	\$ 301,452
Farming	(\$3,965)	\$ 5,851	\$ 4,364	\$ 14,034	\$ 12,204
Agricultural Services	\$ 456	\$ 3,476	\$ 1,617	\$ 1,877	\$ 2,824
Mining	\$ 225	\$ 121	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Construction	\$ 7,256	\$ 6,470	\$ 7,904	\$ 8,481	\$ 13,108
Manufacturing	\$ 54,429	\$ 67,407	\$ 72,654	\$ 101,954	\$ 144,687
Transportation, Communications, Public utilities	\$ 16,580	\$ 18,886	\$ 19,274	\$ 18,958	\$ 21,545
Wholesale	\$ 7,727	\$ 6,741	\$ 4,931	\$ 4,805	\$ 5,166
Retail	\$ 12,184	\$ 16,775	\$ 15,330	\$ 19,490	\$ 21,176
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	\$ 4,994	\$ 6,550	\$ 7,524	\$ 8,189	\$ 8,683
Services	\$ 15,660	\$ 15,991	\$ 23,819	\$ 23,447	\$ 28,357
Federal Government, Civilian	\$ 1,308	\$ 1,347	\$ 1,665	\$ 1,548	\$ 1,627
Federal Government, Military	\$ 462	\$ 949	\$ 787	\$ 806	\$ 845
State & Local Government	\$ 19,214	\$ 24,691	\$ 31,062	\$ 34,477	\$ 41,230
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	\$ 343,461	\$ 385,242	\$ 425,835	\$ 464,064	\$ 498,869
Farming	\$ 12,639	\$ 13,262	\$ 14,054	\$ 15,034	\$ 16,237
Agricultural Services	\$ 3,076	\$ 3,374	\$ 3,701	\$ 4,055	\$ 4,438
Mining	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Construction	\$ 15,401	\$ 17,598	\$ 19,771	\$ 21,797	\$ 23,568
Manufacturing	\$ 167,752	\$ 190,633	\$ 212,252	\$ 231,692	\$ 248,129
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	\$ 25,003	\$ 28,591	\$ 31,130	\$ 35,495	\$ 38,568
Wholesale	\$ 5,759	\$ 6,289	\$ 6,761	\$ 7,146	\$ 7,425
Retail	\$ 22,197	\$ 23,390	\$ 24,682	\$ 26,055	\$ 27,506
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	\$ 9,699	\$ 10,626	\$ 11,609	\$ 12,671	\$ 13,818
Services	\$ 32,052	\$ 35,746	\$ 39,238	\$ 42,404	\$ 45,150
Federal Government, Civilian	\$ 1,710	\$ 1,794	\$ 1,879	\$ 1,964	\$ 2,050
Federal Government, Military	\$ 898	\$ 950	\$ 1,002	\$ 1,053	\$ 1,102
State and Local Government	\$ 47,275	\$ 52,989	\$ 58,756	\$ 64,698	\$ 70,878

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-6: BEN HILL COUNTY EARNINGS BY SECTOR
(percent of earnings-1996 constant dollars)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Farming	-2.9%	3.3%	2.3%	5.9%	4.1%
Agricultural Services	0.3%	2.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%
Mining	0.2%	0.0%	-0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	5.3%	3.7%	4.1%	3.6%	4.4%
Manufacturing	39.9%	38.5%	38.1%	42.8%	48.0%
Transportation, Communications, Public utilities	12.1%	10.8%	10.1%	8.0%	7.2%
Wholesale	5.7%	3.9%	2.6%	2.0%	1.7%
Retail	8.9%	9.6%	8.0%	8.2%	7.0%
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	3.7%	3.7%	3.9%	3.4%	2.9%
Services	11.5%	9.1%	12.5%	9.9%	9.4%
Federal Government, Civilian	1.0%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%
Federal Government, Military	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
State & Local Government	14.1%	14.1%	16.3%	14.5%	13.7%
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Farming	3.7%	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%
Agricultural Services	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Mining	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	4.5%	4.6%	4.6%	4.7%	4.7%
Manufacturing	48.8%	49.5%	49.8%	49.9%	49.7%
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	7.3%	7.4%	7.6%	7.7%	7.7%
Wholesale	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%
Retail	6.5%	6.1%	5.8%	5.6%	5.5%
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	2.8%	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%
Services	9.3%	9.3%	9.2%	9.1%	9.1%
Federal Government, Civilian	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Federal Government, Military	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
State and Local Government	13.8%	13.8%	13.8%	13.9%	14.2%

Source Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-7: STATE OF GEORGIA EARNINGS BY SECTOR
(millions of 1996 constant dollars)

	1980		1985		1990		1995		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	66,537		85,920		102,642		123,514		160,462	
Farming	106	0.2	1,088	1.3	1,391	1.4	1,7347	1.4	1,566	1.0
Agriculture Services	244	0.4	350	0.4	475	0.5	661	0.5	944	0.6
Mining	430	0.7	414	0.5	374	0.4	360	0.3	438	0.3
Construction	3,766	5.7	5,648	6.6	5,975	5.8	6,661	5.4	9,630	6.0
Manufacturing	14,999	22.5	17,212	20.0	17,974	17.5	20,801	16.8	23,850	14.9
Transp. Comm. Util.	6,209	9.3	7,605	8.9	8,981	8.8	11,644	9.4	15,868	9.9
Wholesale Trade	5,901	8.9	7,767	9.0	9,091	8.9	10,085	8.2	13,549	8.4
Retail Trade	6,870	10.3	9,141	10.6	9,414	9.2	11,217	9.1	14,426	9.0
Finance., Ins., Real Est	3,617	5.4	4,803	5.6	6,601	6.4	8,476	6.9	12,154	7.6
Services	10,402	15.6	14,916	17.4	22,532	22.0	30,045	24.3	42,960	26.8
Federal Govt - Civilian	3,751	5.6	4,391	5.1	4,781	4.7	5,147	4.2	5,443	3.4
Federal Govt - Military	2,475	3.7	3,160	3.7	2,765	2.7	3,080	2.5	3,298	2.1
State and Local Govt	7,767	11.7	9,425	11.0	12,288	12.0	13,603	11.0	16,338	10.2
	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	180,868		202,919		227,019		253,253		281,758	
Farming	1,683	0.9	1,803	0.9	1,933	0.9	2,076	0.8	2,233	0.8
Agriculture Services	1,086	0.6	1,239	0.6	1,401	0.6	1,567	0.6	1,733	0.6
Mining	445	0.3	456	0.2	471	0.2	490	0.2	511	0.2
Construction	10,607	5.9	11,506	5.7	12,401	5.5	13,309	5.3	14,243	5.1
Manufacturing	26,144	14.5	28,510	14.1	30,855	13.6	33,129	13.1	35,299	12.5
Transp. Comm. Util.	18,060	10.0	20,305	10.0	22,610	10.0	24,909	9.8	27,140	9.6
Wholesale Trade	15,125	8.4	16,662	8.2	18,270	8.1	19,956	7.9	21,730	7.7
Retail Trade	16,215	9.0	18,127	8.9	20,145	8.9	22,277	8.8	24,531	8.7
Finance., Ins., Real Est	13,863	7.7	15,689	7.7	17,666	7.8	19,784	7.8	22,033	7.8
Services	50,244	27.8	58,891	29.0	69,107	30.4	81,085	32.0	95,046	33.7
Federal Govt - Civilian	5,622	3.1	5,826	2.9	6,052	2.7	6,295	2.5	6,557	2.3
Federal Govt - Military	3,502	1.9	3,706	1.8	3,907	1.7	4,106	1.6	4,298	1.5
State and Local Govt	18,271	10.1	20,199	10.0	22,201	9.8	24,272	9.6	26,404	9.4

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-8: UNITED STATES EARNINGS BY SECTOR
(millions of 1996 constant dollars)

	1980		1985		1990		1995		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	3,133,270		3,561,430		4,097,140		4,506,710		5,512,010	
Farming	38,587	1.2	43,719	1.2	51,250	1.3	37,484	0.8	43,690	0.8
Agriculture Services	13,876	0.4	18,083	0.5	25,894	0.6	28,539	0.6	37,868	0.7
Mining	65,933	2.1	59,187	1.7	42,579	1.0	40,303	0.9	45,540	0.8
Construction	193,519	6.2	220,510	6.2	241,731	5.9	243,138	5.4	322,680	5.9
Manufacturing	758,592	24.2	763,929	21.5	777,101	19.0	807,717	17.9	877,790	15.9
Transp. Comm. Util.	232,755	7.4	248,347	7.0	266,311	6.5	303,367	6.7	372,145	6.8
Wholesale Trade	202,960	6.6	221,496	6.2	258,319	6.3	275,724	6.1	341,651	6.2
Retail Trade	306,453	9.8	361,053	10.1	375,469	9.2	405,467	9.0	489,059	8.9
Finance., Ins., Real Est	182,810	5.8	214,835	6.0	284,928	7.0	358,925	8.0	506,185	9.2
Services	573,750	18.3	760,538	21.4	1,038,030	25.3	1,220,240	27.1	1,607,450	29.2
Federal Govt - Civilian	140,121	4.5	148,845	4.2	160,018	3.9	167,212	3.7	172,986	3.1
Federal Govt - Military	61,484	2.0	86,436	2.4	79,657	1.9	69,637	1.6	69,114	1.3
State and Local Govt	359,434	11.5	414,422	11.6	495,435	12.1	548,953	12.2	625,852	11.4
	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	6,125,480		6,787,980		7,521,840		8,334,940		9,236,090	
Farming	47,858	0.8	51,907	0.8	56,099	0.8	60,414	0.7	64,829	0.7
Agriculture Services	42,138	0.7	46,575	0.7	51,364	0.7	56,520	0.7	62,057	0.7
Mining	48,441	0.8	51,462	0.8	54,611	0.7	57,891	0.7	61,301	0.7
Construction	352,152	5.8	379,842	5.6	409,052	5.4	439,801	5.3	472,104	5.1
Manufacturing	932,794	15.2	990,395	14.6	1,049,610	14.0	1,110,000	13.3	1,171,680	12.7
Transp. Comm. Util.	407,808	6.7	444,234	6.5	483,360	6.4	525,331	6.3	570,292	6.2
Wholesale Trade	374,537	6.1	406,039	6.0	439,532	5.8	475,077	5.7	512,729	5.6
Retail Trade	527,296	8.6	568,405	8.4	612,558	8.1	659,971	7.9	710,869	7.7
Finance., Ins., Real Est	572,351	9.3	642,912	9.5	719,984	9.6	803,853	9.6	894,770	9.7
Services	1,873,830	30.6	2,179,600	32.1	2,532,800	33.7	2,940,370	35.3	3,410,190	36.9
Federal Govt - Civilian	181,506	3.0	190,237	2.8	199,308	2.7	208,727	2.5	218,504	2.4
Federal Govt - Military	73,365	1.2	77,611	1.1	81,811	1.1	85,934	1.0	89,945	1.0
State and Local Govt	691,400	11.3	758,756	11.2	831,842	11.1	911,057	10.9	996,817	10.8

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-9
BEN HILL COUNTY INCOME BY TYPE
(thousands of 1996 constant dollars)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	\$ 182,856	\$ 241,740	\$ 256,786	\$ 311,724	\$ 380,360
Wage & Salary	\$ 113,111	\$ 134,017	\$ 145,697	\$ 177,855	\$ 228,425
Other Labor	\$ 12,622	\$ 17,228	\$ 20,633	\$ 25,957	\$ 24,713
Proprietor's Income	\$ 10,800	\$ 24,010	\$ 24,601	\$ 34,254	\$ 48,294
Dividend, Interest & Rent Income	\$ 30,086	\$ 41,142	\$ 43,048	\$ 46,136	\$ 56,386
Transfer	\$ 35,931	\$ 45,666	\$ 57,058	\$ 69,751	\$ 74,778
Less: Social Ins. Contributions	\$ 6,702	\$ 9,753	\$ 11,558	\$ 14,259	\$ 17,343
Residence Adjustment	(\$ 12,992)	(\$ 10,570)	(\$ 22,693)	(\$ 27,970)	(\$ 34,913)
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	\$ 428,791	\$ 478,518	\$ 529,021	\$ 579,668	\$ 629,974
Wage & Salary	\$ 261,143	\$ 293,588	\$ 325,239	\$ 355,195	\$ 382,624
Other Labor	\$ 27,816	\$ 30,795	\$ 33,594	\$ 36,127	\$ 38,320
Proprietor's Income	\$ 54,502	\$ 60,859	\$ 67,002	\$ 72,742	\$ 77,925
Dividend, Interest & Rent Income	\$ 62,404	\$ 68,809	\$ 75,590	\$ 82,731	\$ 90,207
Transfer	\$ 84,350	\$ 95,319	\$ 107,853	\$ 122,195	\$ 138,625
Less: Social Ins. Contributions	\$ 20,634	\$ 24,156	\$ 27,733	\$ 31,240	\$ 34,545
Residence Adjustment	(\$ 40,790)	(\$ 46,696)	(\$ 52,524)	(\$ 58,082)	(\$ 63,182)

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002

TABLE 2-10
BEN HILL COUNTY INCOME BY TYPE (percent of total income)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Wage & Salary	61.9%	55.4%	56.7%	57.1%	60.1%
Other Labor	6.9%	7.1%	8.0%	8.3%	6.5%
Proprietor's Income	5.9%	9.9%	9.6%	11.0%	12.7%
Dividend, Interest & Rent Income	16.5%	17.0%	16.8%	14.8%	14.8%
Transfer	19.7%	18.9%	22.2%	22.4%	21.1%
Less: Social Ins. Contributions	3.7%	4.0%	4.5%	4.6%	4.6%
Residence Adjustment	-7.1%	--4.4%	--8.8%	-9.0%	-9.2%
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Wage & Salary	60.9%	61.4%	61.5%	61.3%	60.7%
Other Labor	6.5%	6.4%	6.4%	6.2%	6.1%
Proprietor's Income	12.7%	12.7%	12.7%	12.6%	12.4%
Dividend, Interest & Rent Income	14.6%	14.4%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Transfer	19.7%	19.9%	20.4%	21.1%	22.0%

Less: Social Ins. Contributions	4.8%	5.1%	5.2%	5.4%	5.5%
Residence Adjustment	-9.5%	-9.8%	-9.9%	-10.0%	-10.0%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-11: 1980--2025 Georgia Personal Income by Type (Thousands of '96 Constant Dollars)

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	\$84,202,100	\$110,382,000	\$134,782,000	\$163,230,000	\$209,309,000	\$236,962,000	\$266,921,000	\$299,617,000	\$335,164,000	\$373,728,000
Wages & Salaries	\$53,972,900	\$68,598,800	\$81,355,600	\$96,422,800	\$128,049,000	\$144,760,000	\$162,812,000	\$182,588,000	\$204,172,000	\$227,684,000
Other Labor Income	\$7,079,350	\$9,626,200	\$11,702,300	\$14,092,000	\$14,308,000	\$15,909,500	\$17,605,100	\$19,429,500	\$21,384,600	\$23,476,200
Proprietors Income	\$5,484,850	\$7,694,690	\$9,584,280	\$12,998,900	\$18,105,400	\$20,196,600	\$22,501,700	\$25,001,500	\$27,696,800	\$30,597,400
Dividends, Interest, & Rent	\$10,987,000	\$17,428,300	\$23,366,900	\$26,625,000	\$35,169,000	\$39,713,000	\$44,582,200	\$49,772,600	\$55,274,600	\$61,073,900
Transfer Payments to Persons	\$9,867,380	\$11,841,300	\$14,749,800	\$20,606,700	\$23,300,900	\$26,662,000	\$30,514,500	\$34,921,900	\$39,972,800	\$45,770,200
Less: Social Ins. Contribut.	\$2,978,190	\$4,527,880	\$5,839,730	\$7,270,250	\$9,397,990	\$11,070,600	\$12,973,800	\$15,086,600	\$17,406,500	\$19,929,400
Residence Adjustment	(\$211,163)	(\$279,790)	(\$136,775)	(\$245,276)	(\$224,740)	\$791,423	\$1,879,200	\$2,989,750	\$4,070,240	\$5,055,280

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-12: 1980--2025 United States Personal Income by Type (Millions of '96 Constant Dollars)

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total	\$4,191,050	\$4,928,110	\$5,705,390	\$6,325,130	\$7,614,100	\$8,463,820	\$9,386,120	\$10,405,800	\$11,533,600	\$12,781,600
Wages & Salaries	\$2,481,760	\$2,795,900	\$3,204,070	\$3,494,530	\$4,378,830	\$4,880,410	\$5,421,190	\$6,021,340	\$6,687,710	\$7,427,760
Other Labor Income	\$330,851	\$389,213	\$447,932	\$503,672	\$485,146	\$532,800	\$583,175	\$638,256	\$698,515	\$764,459
Proprietors Income	\$320,666	\$376,316	\$445,140	\$508,508	\$648,028	\$712,266	\$783,615	\$862,239	\$948,720	\$1,043,870
Dividends, Interest, & Rent	\$691,279	\$961,618	\$1,151,530	\$1,188,510	\$1,440,790	\$1,602,780	\$1,776,320	\$1,961,370	\$2,157,660	\$2,364,800
Transfer Payments to Persons	\$506,765	\$593,452	\$694,571	\$904,851	\$993,690	\$1,121,230	\$1,267,840	\$1,435,930	\$1,628,900	\$1,850,780
Less: Social Ins. Contributions	\$139,443	\$187,538	\$236,989	\$274,028	\$332,391	\$385,662	\$446,021	\$513,321	\$587,902	\$670,042
Residence Adjustment	(\$822.3)	(\$849.4)	(\$860.7)	(\$912.2)	\$2	\$12	\$16	\$17	(\$9)	\$6

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2002.

TABLE 2-13 : BEN HILL COUNTY and GEORGIA Average Weekly Wages (actual dollars)

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, various years

	County			State		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
All Industries	\$204	\$326	\$462	\$248	\$425	\$704
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	D	262	371	179	276	421
Mining	NR	NR	NA	323	589	952
Construction	227	348	392	264	434	710
Manufacture of Durable Goods	331	540	553	261	449	761
Manufacture of Non-Durable Goods	163	303	NR	372	603	838
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	264	439	581	337	603	1,032
Wholesale	231	320	445	164	236	454
Retail	142	176	247	274	543	1,117
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	225	382	507	214	414	482
Services	150	217	336		534	D
International Government	NR	NR	NR	287	386	681
Federal Government	337	458	NA		450	D
State Government	248	416	NA	202	341	483
Local Government	179	308	349			
Miscellaneous, Not elsewhere identified	D	D	NR	NR	NR	NR

TABLE 2-14
1990 - 2002 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
UNITED STATES, GEORGIA AND SOUTH GEORGIA RDC COUNTIES

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Nation	5.6%	6.8%	7.5%	6.9%	6.1%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	5.40%	5.70%
Georgia	5.5%	5.0%	7.0%	5.8%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%	4.00%	5.10%
South GA	5.8%	4.8%	6.7%	6.3%	5.1%	4.7%	4.7%	5.1%	5.0%	5.1%	5.5%	4.60%	4.30%
Ben Hill	6.4%	5.5%	7%	7.3%	6.2%	5.2%	6.4%	6.8%	6.1%	6.4%	6.2%	5.60%	5.90%
Brooks	3.8%	3.3%	4.9%	4.5%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	5.3%	6.0%	4.5%	5.7%	5.10%	4.80%
Cook	6.5%	7.1%	7.5%	6.9%	4.9%	3.6%	3.9%	5.2%	4.8%	5.0%	5.1%	5.00%	4.30%
Echols	5.0%	3.5%	5.5%	7.4%	5.5%	3.6%	3.2%	3.6%	3.9%	4.4%	4.7%	3.70%	2.90%
Irwin	5.9%	4.7%	5.9%	6.0%	4.8%	4.5%	4.9%	5.7%	5.3%	4.7%	5.7%	5.60%	5.50%
Lanier	4.8%	4.1%	5.6%	5.3%	3.7%	4.0%	5.3%	3.5%	2.9%	4.1%	5.7%	3.90%	3.80%
Lowndes	4.8%	3.9%	6.2%	5.4%	4.4%	3.9%	3.7%	4.0%	4.0%	4.4%	5.6%	3.70%	3.50%
Tift	7.4%	5.6%	7.5%	7.4%	6.0%	5.8%	5.5%	5.7%	5.6%	4.9%	4.6%	4.40%	3.90%
Turner	7.9%	5.3%	8.8%	7.5%	6.6%	7.2%	7.3%	11.1%	12.1%	10.1%	8.8%	8.50%	8.70%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & Georgia Department of Labor. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2003.

TABLE 2-15
BEN HILL COUNTY LABOR FORCE BY CLASS OF EMPLOYMENT
(number of persons)

	1980		1990		2000	
Total Employed	5,945	100.0%	6,678	100.0%	7,387	100.0%
Private Wage or Salary Workers	4,375	73.6%	5,276	79.0%	5,607	75.9%
Government Workers	995	16.7%	847	12.6%	1,286	17.4%
Self-Employed Workers	536	9.0%	512	7.8%	475	6.4%
Unpaid Family Workers	39	0.7%	43	0.6%	19	0.3%

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 2-16
BEN HILL COUNTY LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF WORK
(number of persons)

	1970		1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Residents Working Inside County	4,304	89.9%	5,067	90.3%	5,637	86.1%	5,660	79.2%
Residents Working Outside County	482	10.1%	546	9.7%	913	13.9%	1,483	20.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 2-17
1980 – 2000 BEN HILL COUNTY LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Total Labor Force 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	6,310	54.2%	7,126	60.2%	7,891	59.7%
Civilian Labor Force	6,310	54.2%	7,126	60.2%	7,884	59.7%
Employed	5,945	51.0%	6,678	56.5%	7,387	55.9%
Unemployed	365	3.1%	448	3.8%	497	3.8%
Armed Forces	-0-	0.0%	-0-	0.0%	7	0.05%
Not in Labor Force	5,342	45.8%	4,702	39.8%	5,325	40.3%
Males 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	3,483	66.6%	3,799	72.1%	4,288	69.3%
Civilian Labor Force	3,483	66.6%	3,799	72.1%	4,281	69.2%
Employed	3,311	63.3%	3,588	68.1%	4,051	65.5%
Unemployed	172	3.3%	211	4.0%	230	3.7%
Armed Forces	-0-	0.0%	-0-	0.0%	7	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,748	33.4%	1,468	27.9%	1,897	30.7%
Females 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	2,827	44.0%	3,327	50.7%	3,603	51.2%
Civilian Labor Force	2,827	44.0%	3,327	50.7%	3,603	51.2%
Employed	2,634	41.0%	3,090	47.1%	3,336	47.4%
Unemployed	193	3.0%	237	3.6%	267	3.8%
Armed Forces	-0-	0.0%	-0-	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	3,594	56.0%	3,234	49.3%	3,428	48.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 2-18
1980 - 2000 GEORGIA LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
(persons, 16 years old and older)

Total Labor Force 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	2,553,062	63.4	3,351,513	67.9	4,129,666	66.1%
Civilian Labor Force	2,481,298	61.6	3,278,378	66.4	4,062,808	65.0%
Employed	2,335,835	58.0	3,090,276	62.6	3,839,756	61.4%
Unemployed	145,463	3.6	188,102	3.9	223,052	3.6%
Armed Forces	71,764	1.8	73,135	1.5	66,858	1.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,473,908	36.6	1,586,868	32.1	2,121,021	33.9%
Males 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	1,444,285	75.8	1,804,052	76.6	2,217,015	73.1%
Civilian Labor Force	1,379,229	72.4	1,738,488	73.9	2,159,175	71.2%
Employed	1,309,577	68.7	1,648,895	70.1	2,051,523	67.7%
Unemployed	69,652	3.7	89,593	3.8	107,652	3.6%
Armed Forces	65,056	3.4	65,564	2.8	57,840	1.9%
Not in Labor Force	461,273	24.2	549,607	23.4	815,427	26.9%
Females 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	1,108,777	52.3	1,547,461	59.9	1,912,651	59.4%
Civilian Labor Force	1,102,069	51.9	1,539,890	59.6	1,903,633	59.2%
Employed	1,026,258	49.4	1,441,381	55.8	1,788,233	55.6%
Unemployed	75,811	3.6	98,509	3.8	115,400	3.6%
Armed Forces	6,708	.3	7,571	.3	9,018	0.3%
Not in Labor Force	1,012,635	47.7	1,037,261	40.1	1,305,594	40.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 2-19
1980 - 2000 UNITED STATES LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
(persons, 16 years old and older)

Total Labor Force 16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
In Labor Force	106,084,668	62.0	125,182,378	65.3	138,820,935	63.9
Civilian Labor Force	104,449,817	61.0	123,473,450	64.4	137,668,798	63.4
Employed	97,639,355	57.0	115,681,202	60.3	129,721,512	59.7
Unemployed	6,810,462	4.0	7,792,248	4.1	7,947,286	3.7
Armed Forces	1,634,851	1.0	1,708,928	.9	1,152,137	0.5
Not in Labor Force	65,129,590	38.0	66,646,893	34.7	78,347,142	36.1
Males 16-years and older	1980 number	%	1990 number	%	2000 number	%
In Labor Force	61,416,203	75.1	68,509,429	74.4	74,273,203	70.8
Civilian Labor Force	59,926,488	73.3	66,986,201	72.8	73,285,305	69.8
Employed	56,004,690	68.5	62,704,579	68.1	69,091,443	65.8
Unemployed	3,921,798	4.9	4,281,622	4.7	4,193,862	4.0
Armed Forces	1,489,715	1.8	1,523,228	1.7	987,898	0.9
Not in Labor Force	20,315,887	24.9	23,516,484	25.6	30,709,079	29.3
Females 16-years and older	1980 number	%	1990 number	%	2000 number	%
In Labor Force	44,688,465	49.9	56,672,949	56.8	64,547,732	57.5
Civilian Labor Force	44,523,329	49.7	56,487,249	56.6	64,383,493	57.4
Employed	41,634,665	46.5	52,976,623	53.1	60,630,069	54.0
Unemployed	2,888,664	3.2	3,510,626	3.5	3,753,424	3.4
Armed Forces	165,136	.2	185,700	.2	164,239	0.2
Not in Labor Force	44,813,703	50.1	43,130,409	43.2	47,638,063	42.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 2-20
BEN HILL COUNTY OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS
(employed persons, 16 years old and older)

	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL All Occupations	5,898	6,678	7,387
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	311	411	1,042
Professional and technical specialty	629	732	NA
Sales	616	568	592
Clerical and administrative support	669	705	849
Private household services	89	39	NA
Services (not private household)	535	754	747
Farming, fishing, and forestry	354	336	107
Precision production, craft, and repair	736	860	1,592
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	1,184	1,355	916
Transportation equipment operation	457	576	773
Labor (not farm)	318	342	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 2-21: BEN HILL COUNTY OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS
(percent of employed persons, 16 years old and older)

	1980	1990	2000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	5.2%	6.2%	15.7%
Professional and technical specialty	10.6%	11.0%	0.0
Sales	11.2%	8.5%	8.9%
Clerical and administrative support	11.3%	10.6%	12.8%
Private household services	1.5%	0.6%	0.0
Services (not private household)	9.0%	11.3%	11.3%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	6.0%	5.0%	1.6%
Precision production, craft, and repair	12.4%	12.9%	24.1%
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	19.9%	20.3%	13.8%
Transportation equipment operation	7.7%	8.6%	11.7%
Labor (not farm)	5.3%	5.1%	0.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-22: 1980 - 2000 GEORGIA OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS
(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	237,945	10.2	378,984	12.3	538,647	14.0
Professional and technical specialty	317,846	13.6	493,037	16.0	717,312	18.7
Sales	239,377	10.2	379,602	12.3	446,876	11.6
Clerical and administrative support	382,738	16.4	494,484	16.0	581,364	15.1
Private household services	23,331	1.0	15,912	.5	NA	NA
Services (not private household)	260,037	11.1	354,735	11.5	444,077	11.6
Farming, fishing, and forestry	66,750	2.9	68,174	2.2	24,489	0.6
Precision production, craft, and repair	297,604	12.7	366,391	11.9	346,326	9.0
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	274,920	11.8	262,698	8.5	415,849	10.8
Transportation equipment operation	112,669	4.9	142,092	4.6	245,642	6.6
Labor (not farm)	122,618	5.2	134,167	4.3	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

**TABLE 2-23
1980 - 2000 UNITED STATES OCCUPATION OF RESIDENTS
(employed persons, 16 years old and older)**

16-years and older	1980		1990		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Executive, administrative and managerial (not farm)	10,379,000	10.0	14,227,916	12.3	17,448,038	13.5
Professional and technical specialty	15,338,000	14.8	20,562,901	17.8	26,198,693	20.2
Sales	10,257,000	9.9	13,634,686	11.8	14,592,699	11.3
Clerical and administrative support	17,564,000	16.9	18,826,477	16.3	20,028,691	15.4
Private household services	627,000	.6	521,154	.5	NA	NA
Services (not private household)	12,979,000	12.5	14,774,763	12.8	15,575,101	12.0
Farming, fishing, and forestry	3,032,000	2.9	2,839,010	2.5	951,810	0.7
Precision production, craft, and repair	13,555,000	13.1	13,097,963	11.3	11,008,625	8.5
Equipment operation, assembly, inspection	10,082,000	9.7	7,904,197	6.8	12,256,138	9.5
Transportation equipment operation	4,820,000	4.6	4,729,001	4.1	7,959,871	6.1
Labor (not farm)	5,086,000	4.9	4,563,134	3.9	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

TABLE 2-24
GENERAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS
(master economic rank, taxable sales and income)

Unit	Master Economic Rank ¹	Taxable Sales (Millions)	Rank ²	Adj. Gross Income Reported (Millions)	Rank ²	Per Capita Income as % of State/U.S.
1979			1978			
Berrien	83	45.0	85	41.0	87	80.1/NA
Brooks	99	33.0	104	30.0	111	82.1/NA
Ben Hill	74	62.0	62	56.0	70	82.6/NA
Cook	90	44.0	89	38.0	92	79.0/NA
Irwin	118	22.0	119	24.0	120	80.2/NA
Lowndes	17	374.0	16	231.0	18	85.1/NA
Tift	32	163.0	26	115.0	38	86.8/NA
1979 GA Per Capita Income				\$7,627		
1982			1981			
Berrien	89	50.0	90	52	86	75.6/64.3
Brooks	94	38.0	106	38	111	71.1/60.5
Ben Hill	77	74.0	65	73	74	79.8/78.6
Cook	97	50.0	91	44	97	69.9/59.4
Irwin	121	25.0	120	28	125	74.8/63.7
Lowndes	17	453.0	18	286	19	83.0/70.6
Tift	34	190.0	26	144	40	82.0/69.8
1981 GA Per Capita Income				\$ 8,968		
1981 U.S. Per Capita Income				\$10,544		
1986			1985			
Berrien	95	62.601	93	73.518	94	73.3/67.3
Brooks	101	43.011	111	53.697	109	60.0/55.1
Ben Hill	79	97.185	67	99.685	77	73.0/67.1
Cook	102	65.600	92	68.725	98	68.2/62.6
Irwin	124	31.484	121	42.378	124	75.8/69.6
Lowndes	17	651.125	16	432.314	17	78.3/72.0
Tift	35	255.314	29	215.314	41	84.0/77.2
1986 GA. Per Capital Income				\$13,451		
1986 Southeast Per Capita Income				\$12,698		
1986 U.S. Per Capital Income				\$14,638		
1990			1989			
Berrien	93	73.505	93	100.490	92	72.3/66.8
Brooks	106	50.146	113	71.967	11	61.3/55.9
Ben Hill	87	111.179	69	122.834	81	75.7/69.1
Cook	101	80.221	90	92.305	97	69.6/63.5
Irwin	131	32.510	126	50.318	132	66.0/60.2
Lowndes	20	784.264	26	599.972	24	86.9/79.3
Tift	38	321.557	27	292.082	40	89.3/81.5
1989 GA Per Capita Income				\$16,050		
1989 Southeast Per Capita Income				\$15,409		
1989 U.S. Per Capita Income				\$17,592		

Unit	Master Economic Rank	1998 Millage Rate	Rank ²	Adi. Gross Income (Millions)	Woods & Poole Wealth Index	Per Capita Income as % of State/U.S.
1998			2000			
Turner	133	29.13	66	151.6	61.780	62.7/59.1
Lanier	147	26.14	67	122.7		67.2/63.4
Ben Hill	98	34.75	11	170.0		79.9/75.9
Berrien	110	24.50	89	223.4	69.740	72.3/68.1
Brooks	103	24.70	85	202.6	66.190	66.2/62.6
Colquitt	48	22.48	113	584.9	68.840	71/66.9
Cook	115	22.73	105	182.4	63.100	65.8/62.3
Irwin	125	28.79	36	179.4	69.170	80.9/76.3
Lowndes	26	19.47	141	1,904.7	78.960	85.1/74.2
Tift	43	20.77	127	829.2	81.610	84.8/79.9
1999 GA Per Capita Income \$27,346						
1999 U.S. Per Capita Income \$29,018						

¹ Master economic rank is determined by using the information of personal income, sales tax receipts, motor vehicle tags and assessed property value.

² Rank 1 = Highest (range 1-159)

Source: The Georgia County Guide and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

CHAPTER THREE: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

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, climate, 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 county and city leaders in maintaining a high quality of life and protecting the community's future. Numerous times in this chapter the community will be advised to consult the enclosed maps for making basic determinations about land uses and location of developments relative to the boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas. To assist the community with making more accurate determinations at more reasonable scales, this data has been integrated into the community's Geographic Information System (GIS) housed at South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC). This data is also available for viewing and query at numerous GIS-capable terminals throughout the county.

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.

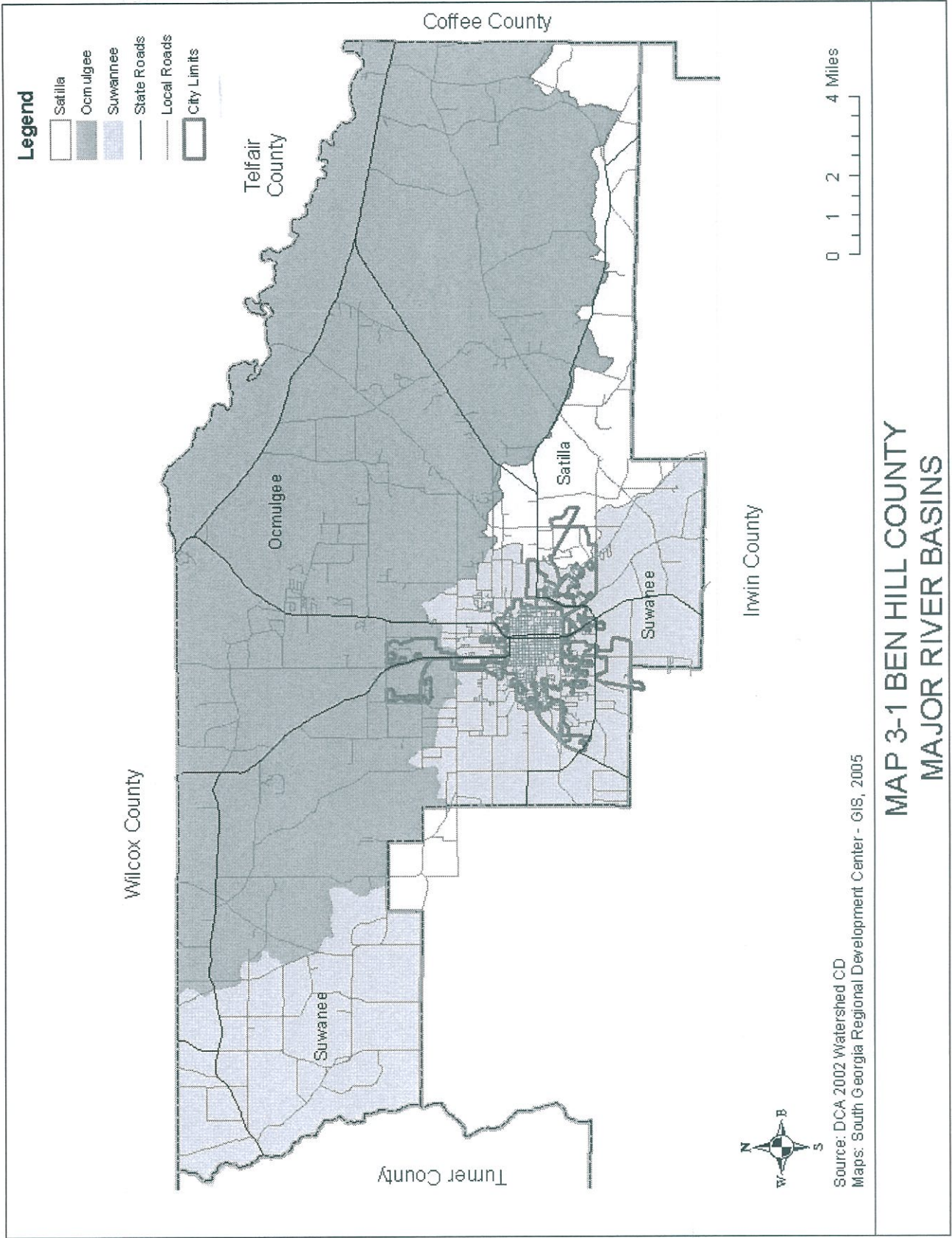
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

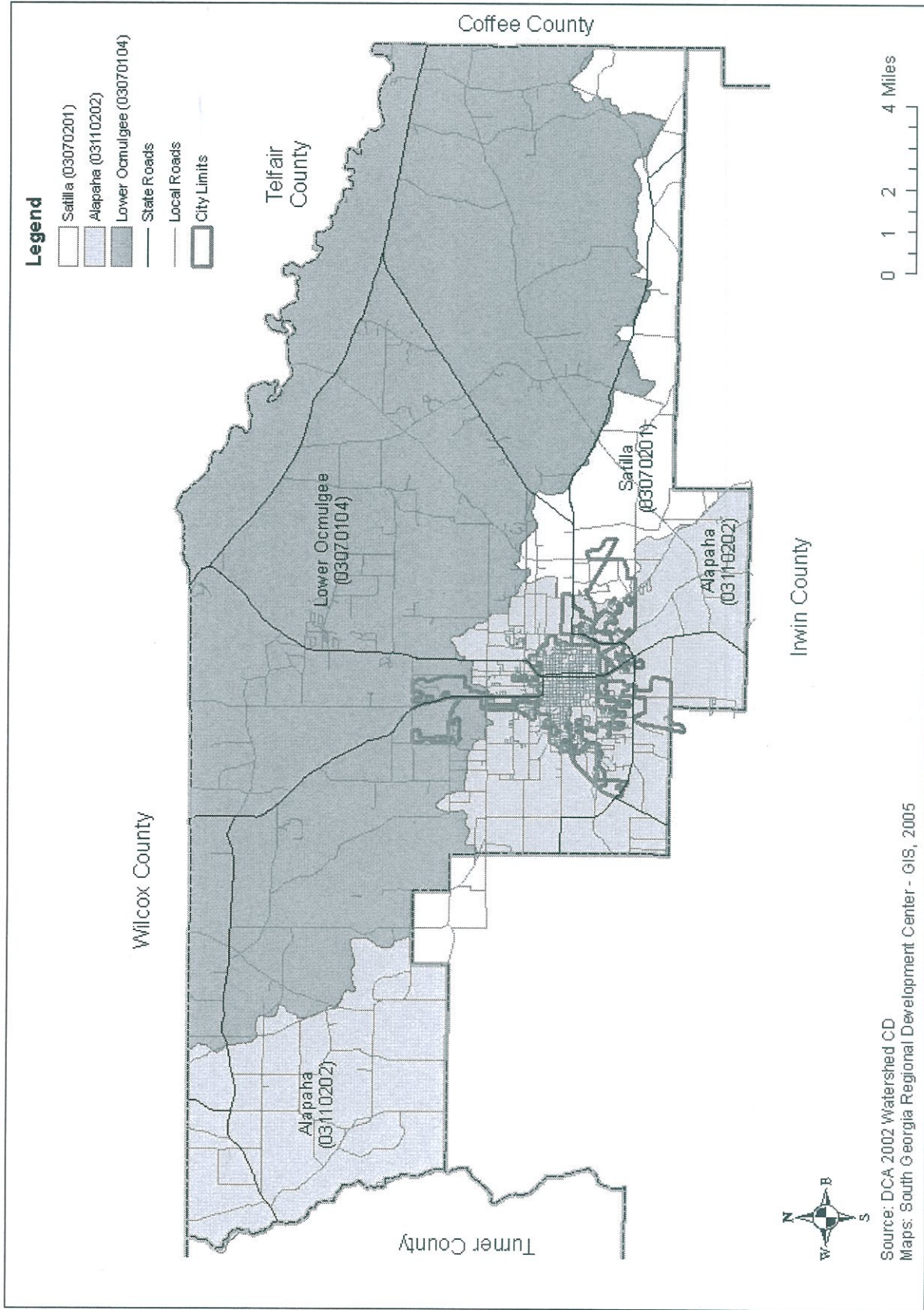
Ben Hill County is divided into two physiographic districts, the Vidalia Upland District and Tifton Upland District, both of the Atlantic Plain Major Division (Coastal Plain Province). The county's land surface is mostly level to gently sloping. It is moderately dissected by numerous shallow rivers and 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.

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.





Source: DCA 2002 Watershed CD
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005

**MAP 3-2 BEN HILL COUNTY
 SUB-WATERSHEDS**

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 3-1 depicts the major river basins within Ben Hill County. 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). Map 3-2 depicts the sub-watersheds within Ben Hill County. 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.

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.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SOURCES

Typical of coastal plain areas, most of Ben Hill County's consumer water comes from underground aquifers which are porous underground rock layers containing water. The main aquifer beneath Ben Hill County is the Floridan aquifer which consists of confined limestone, dolostone, and calcareous sand. This aquifer serves as the water supply

watershed for Fitzgerald's municipal water systems as well as many agricultural irrigation systems. Beneath the Floridan aquifer are the Claiborne and Clayton aquifers. The Floridan aquifer is principally recharged immediately south of the Fall Line which stretches across central Georgia from Columbus to Macon to Augusta. This is the point at which streams from harder rock formations of the Piedmont cross into softer rock formations of the Coastal Plain. Most sedimentary rock formations of the Coastal Plain begin at the ground surface just south of the Fall Line; therefore this is where most aquifer water originates.

Total water consumption in Ben Hill County averages approximately 11.16 million gallons per day. Approximately 8.36 million gallons (74.9%) of this comes from groundwater and the remaining 2.8 million gallons (25.1%) is from surface water. Crop irrigation is by far the heaviest user of water with more than 12,000 acres being irrigated. Table 3-1 depicts the breakdown of water consumption in Ben Hill County.

**TABLE 3-1
GREATER BEN HILL AVERAGE DAILY WATER CONSUMPTION (number of gallons)**

User Category	Groundwater		Surface Water		Total Consumption	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Crop Irrigation	3,590,000	42.9	2,760,000	98.6	6,350,000	56.8
Livestock	10,000	0.1	40,000	1.4	50,000	0.5
Public Water Supply --- Domestic	4,210,000	50.3	---	---	4,210,000	37.7
Public Water Supply --- Other	10,000	0.1	---	---	10,000	0.1
Self-Supplied --- Domestic/Commercial	550,000	6.6	---	---	550,000	4.9
Self-Supplied --- Industrial	---	---	---	---	---	---
TOTAL CONSUMPTION	8,370,000	100%	2,800,000	100%	11,170,000	100%

Source: Georgia Water Use by County, 2000. (Numbers are translated from "millions of gallons per day (mgd)" calculations).

The vertical distance from the ground surface to the top of the first major subterranean reservoir is approximately 200 feet. Most wells in the county range from 200-500 feet deep. Groundwater throughout the county is moderately hard. Surface water in Ben Hill County is only used for irrigation and livestock, and this practice is becoming increasingly popular. Many farm fields contain small ponds which result from dammed up local streams.

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVE AREAS

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 with the local government's jurisdiction and must prepare local regulations to protect the resources.

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

A groundwater recharge area is any portion of the earth's surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. Groundwater recharge areas can occur at any point where the aquifer updips to become closer to the surface allowing water from streams, sink holes, and ponds to permeate through more shallow ground into the aquifer. According to state geologic data, groundwater recharge areas in Ben Hill County are mostly limited to the area immediately east of the Alapaha River floodplain, along the floodplain of South Prong House Creek near the border with Wilcox County, and the Willacoochee River area south of Fitzgerald. Map 3-3 depicts the groundwater recharge areas within Ben Hill County. All aquifer recharge areas are vulnerable to both urban and agricultural development. Pollutants from stormwater runoff and septic tanks 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 restricted.

Ben Hill County adopted the Groundwater Recharge Area Ordinance in 2001 and can be found in the *Zoning Ordinance for Ben Hill County, Georgia* under Section 10: Water Resource Districts. The Groundwater Recharge Area polygons were provided by the Hydrologic Atlas 18, 1989 Edition "Most Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas of Georgia". Groundwater pollution susceptibility rating for Ben Hill County is predominately "High" based on "Groundwater Pollution Susceptibility Map of Georgia", Hydrologic Atlas 20, 1992 Edition.

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. Under natural conditions, wetlands help maintain and enhance water quality by filtering out sediments and certain pollutants from adjacent land uses. They also store water, reduce the speed and magnitude of flood waters, and serve as an important and viable habitat for plant and animal species.

Wetlands play an important role in mankind's environment and should be preserved for this purpose. 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). Map 3-4 depicts the location of generalized wetland areas for all of Ben Hill County. These exist along floodplains of the major rivers but most are primarily in small pockets chained together by numerous small streams. Developing parcels that are within depicted wetlands areas shown on Map 3-4, or suspected of having wetlands, should have a detailed wetlands survey and follow all applicable requirements under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act.

Over the past several decades, expansion of both agricultural 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 flood waters, and the removal of natural filters for surface water drainage thereby endangering water quality throughout the county. 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.

PROTECTED MOUNTAINS

Not applicable.

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 river affected by this Act is the Ocmulgee River, which runs for approximately 21 miles along the county's northeastern border. Map 3-5 depicts this protected river corridor within Ben Hill County.

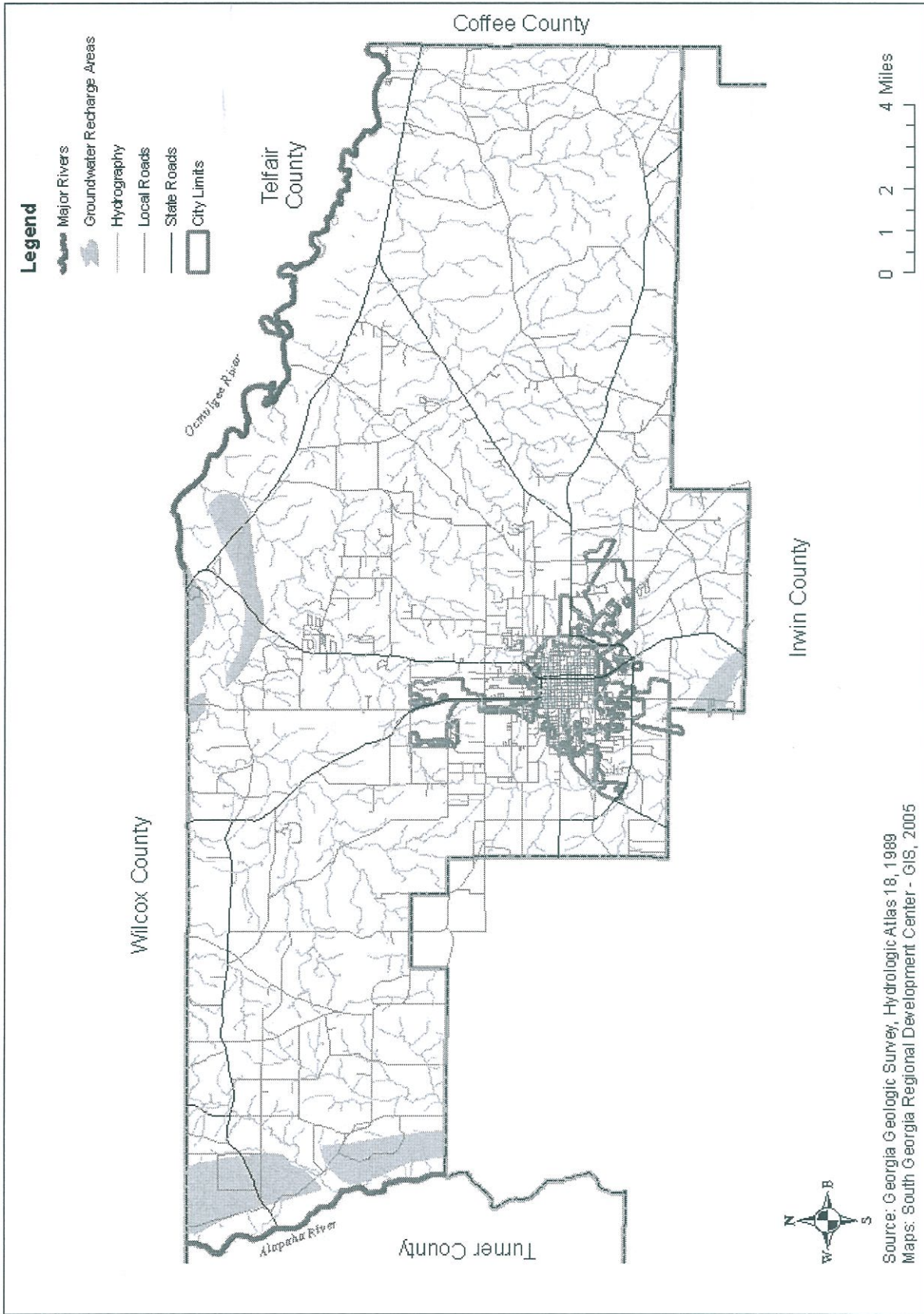
Under the Act, Ben Hill County is required to adopt a "Corridor Protection Plan" for the Ocmulgee River in accordance with the minimum criteria contained in the Act and as adopted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. With exception of a vacation house and houseboat dockage at Red Bluff, and a recreational boat ramp at the county park on Mobley Road, field surveys indicate only natural (mostly riverine wetlands) vegetation associated with river floodplains to be located within 100 feet of the river bank which is the state's minimum corridor width. There are no other land uses currently within this area along the Ocmulgee River. In 2001, Ben Hill County adopted the Protected River Corridor Ordinance to further protect the Ocmulgee River. This regulation can be found in the *Zoning Ordinance for Ben Hill County, Georgia* under Section 10: Water Resource Districts.

TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

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.

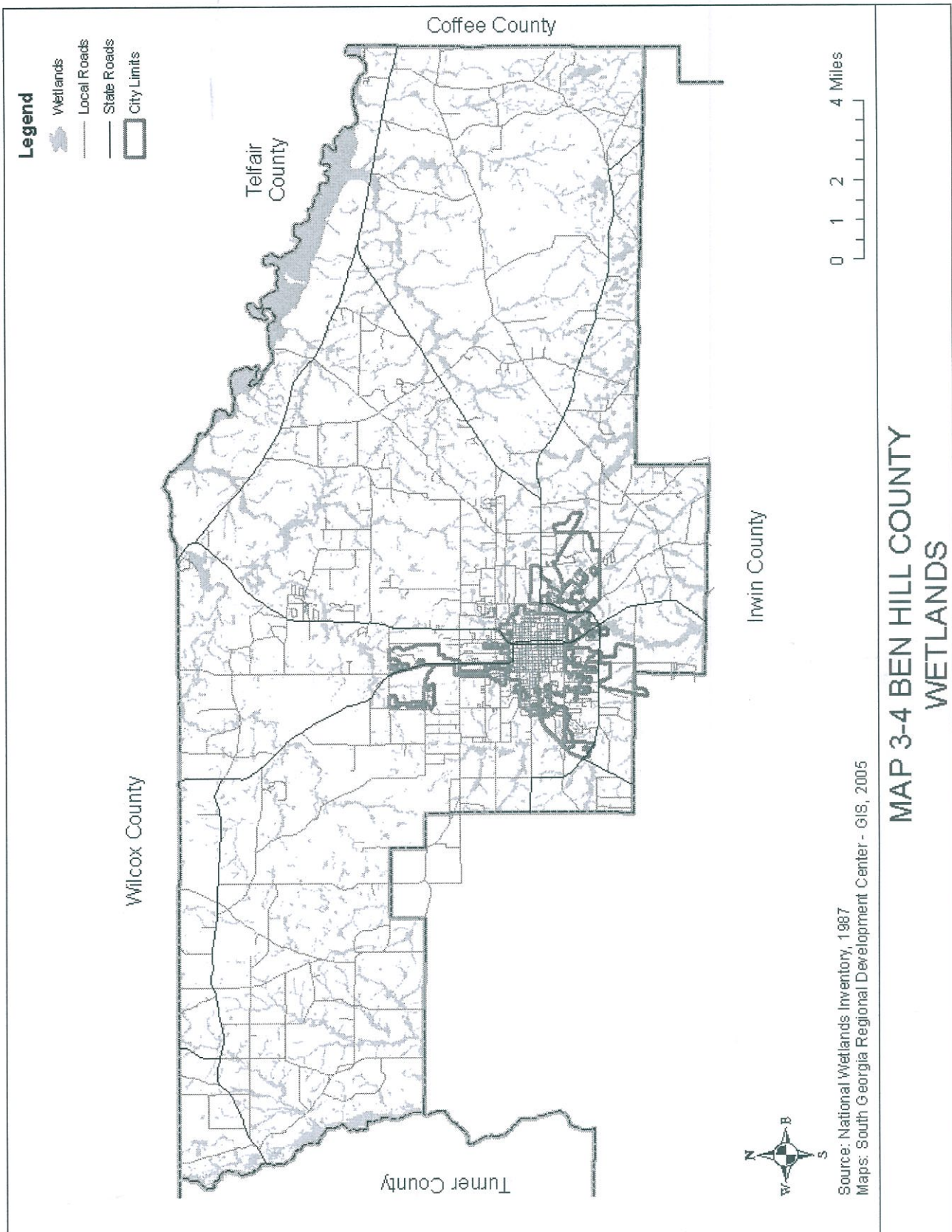
A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a river, stream or lake can receive and still be considered safe and healthy. A TMDL is a means for recommending controls need to meet water quality standards, which are set by the state and determine how much of a pollutant can be present 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 to 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, sediment; et al.

In August 2002, the SGRDC received and accepted a contract with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Environmental Protection Division (EPD) in the amount of \$87,500 to prepare 35 local Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans for stream segments in the Suwannee Basin that had been identified as impaired water bodies due to high fecal coliform (FC) and/or low dissolved oxygen (DO). The SGRDC also had to identify and advise local governments, stakeholders and any other interested parties of the water bodies within their jurisdictions, which have or will require the preparation and implementation of TMDLs and provide outreach and education to local/county governments, school systems, and citizens within the SGRDC region. Of the 35 TMDL Implementation Plans located in the Suwannee Basin, two (2) stream segments were located within Ben Hill County, which were the Alapaha River and Turkey Branch. An additional five other stream segments were listed for Ben Hill County in the Ocmulgee Basin, which are House Creek, Otter Creek, Sturgeon Creek, Little Sturgeon Creek, and the Ocmulgee River. Map 3-6 depicts the location of the impaired stream segments in Ben Hill County. Table 3-2 list the impaired waterbodies, impairment(s), and number of miles impacted:

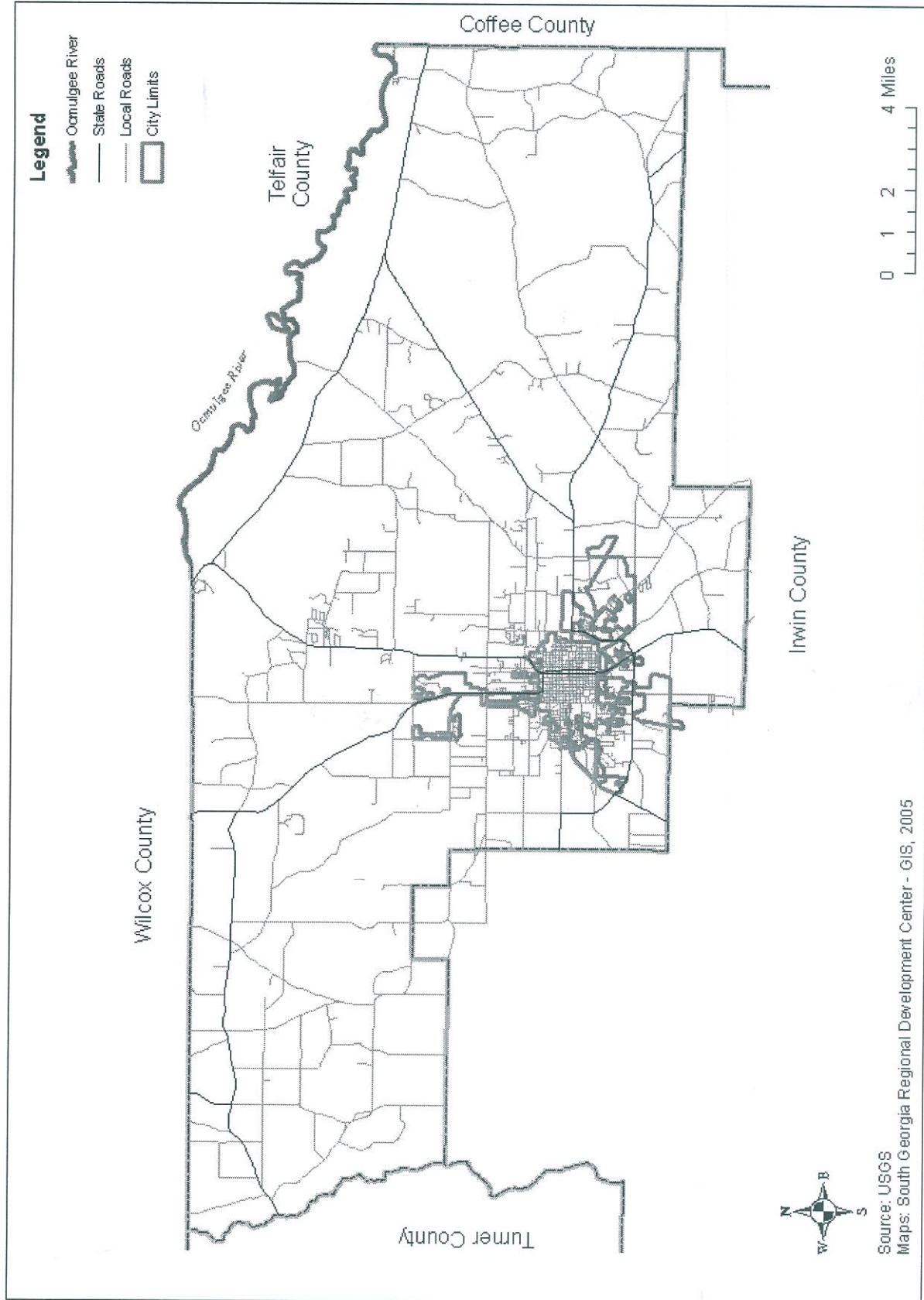


Source: Georgia Geologic Survey, Hydrologic Atlas 18, 1989
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005

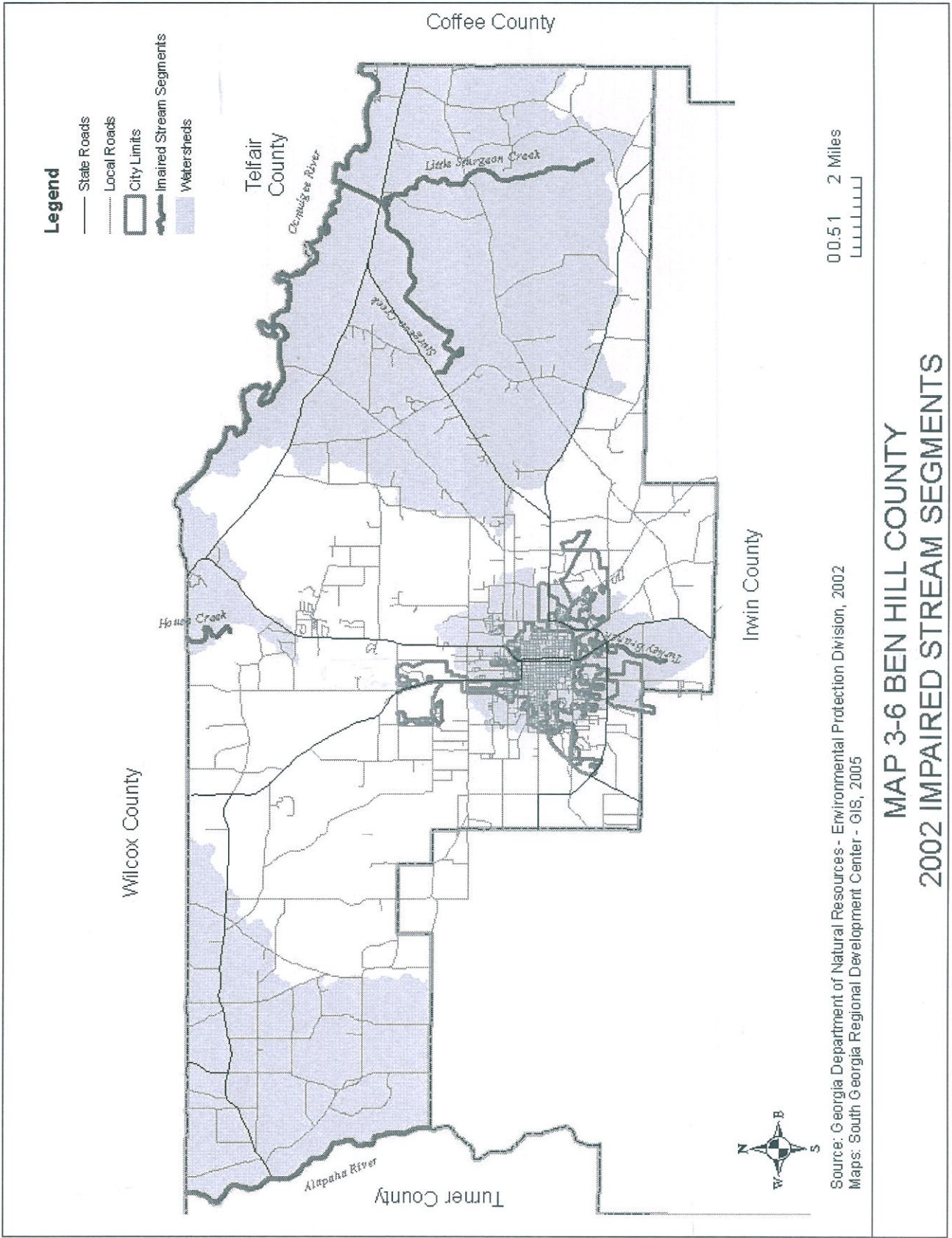
**MAP 3-3 BEN HILL COUNTY
 GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS**



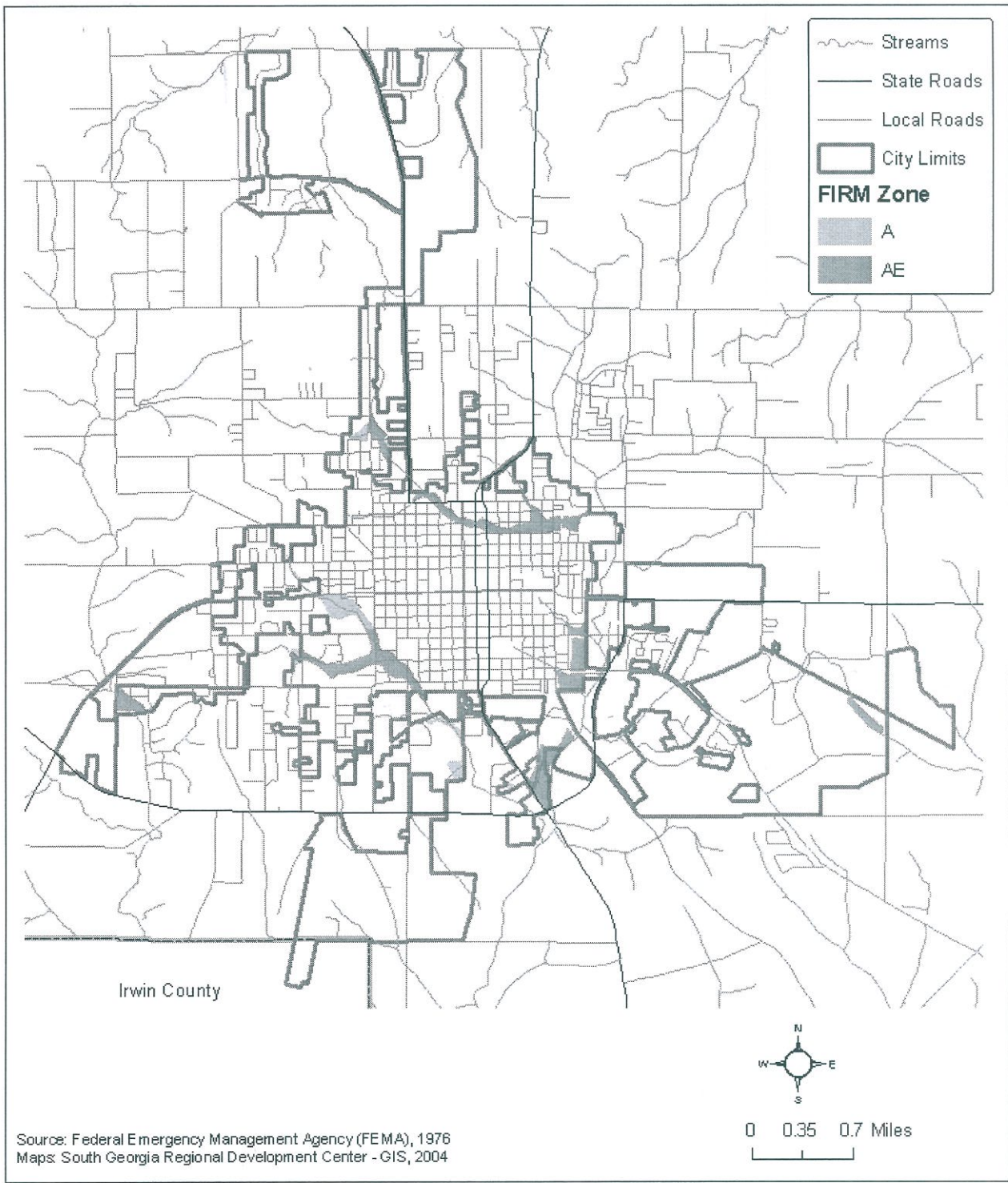
**MAP 3-4 BEN HILL COUNTY
 WETLANDS**



**MAP 3-5 BEN HILL COUNTY
 PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDOR**

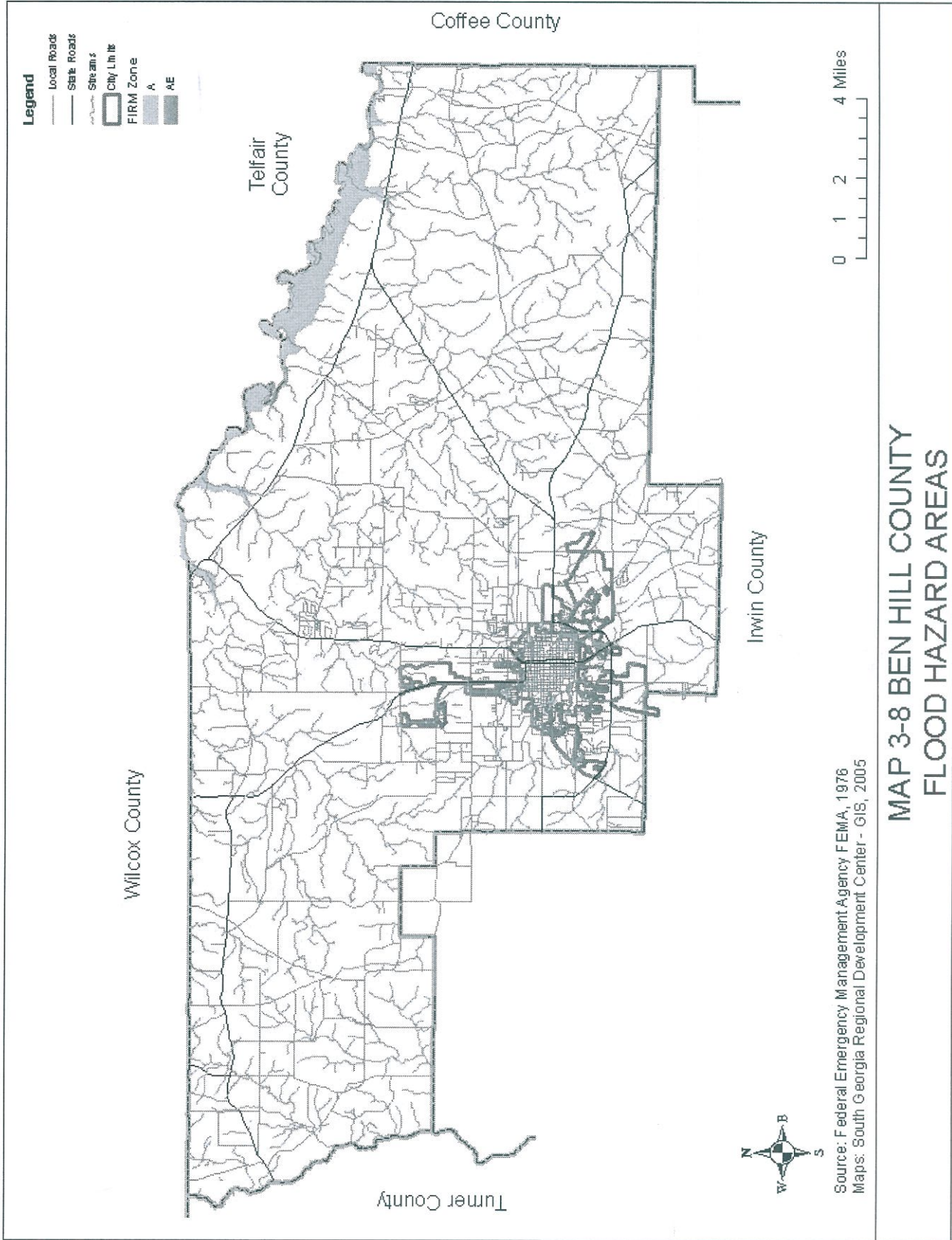


**MAP 3-6 BEN HILL COUNTY
 2002 IMPAIRED STREAM SEGMENTS**



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 1976
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2004

MAP 3-7 CITY OF FITZGERALD FLOOD HAZARD AREAS



**TABLE 3-2
STREAM SEGMENTS WITH TMDL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS FOR 2002**

Waterbody Name	Location	County	Impairment	Miles Impacted
Alapaha River	U.S. Highway 280 to Sand Creek	Turner, Ben Hill, and Irwin	Low Dissolved Oxygen (DO)	29
Turkey Branch	Headwaters to Willacoochee River downstream of Fitzgerald	Ben Hill	High Fecal Coliform (FC), Low Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Cadmium (Cd), Copper (Cu), Mercury (Hg), Lead (Pb), Toxicity (Tox), and Zinc (Zn).	8
House Creek	Ball Creek to Little House Creek		Low Dissolved Oxygen (DO), pH, Fecal Coliform (FC)	8
Otter Creek	1.7 miles south of GA 182 (Old River Road) to Ocmulgee River	Ben Hill	Biohabitat	4
Sturgeon Creek	Dickson Mill Creek to Ocmulgee River	Ben Hill	Biohabitat	6
Little Sturgeon Creek	Headwaters to Sturgeon Creek	Ben Hill	N/A	7
Ocmulgee River	House Creek to Altamaha River	Telfair, Ben Hill, Coffee, Jeff Davis, Wheeler	Fish Consumption Guildelines (FCG) and Mercury (HG)	67

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, 2002.

FLOODPLAINS

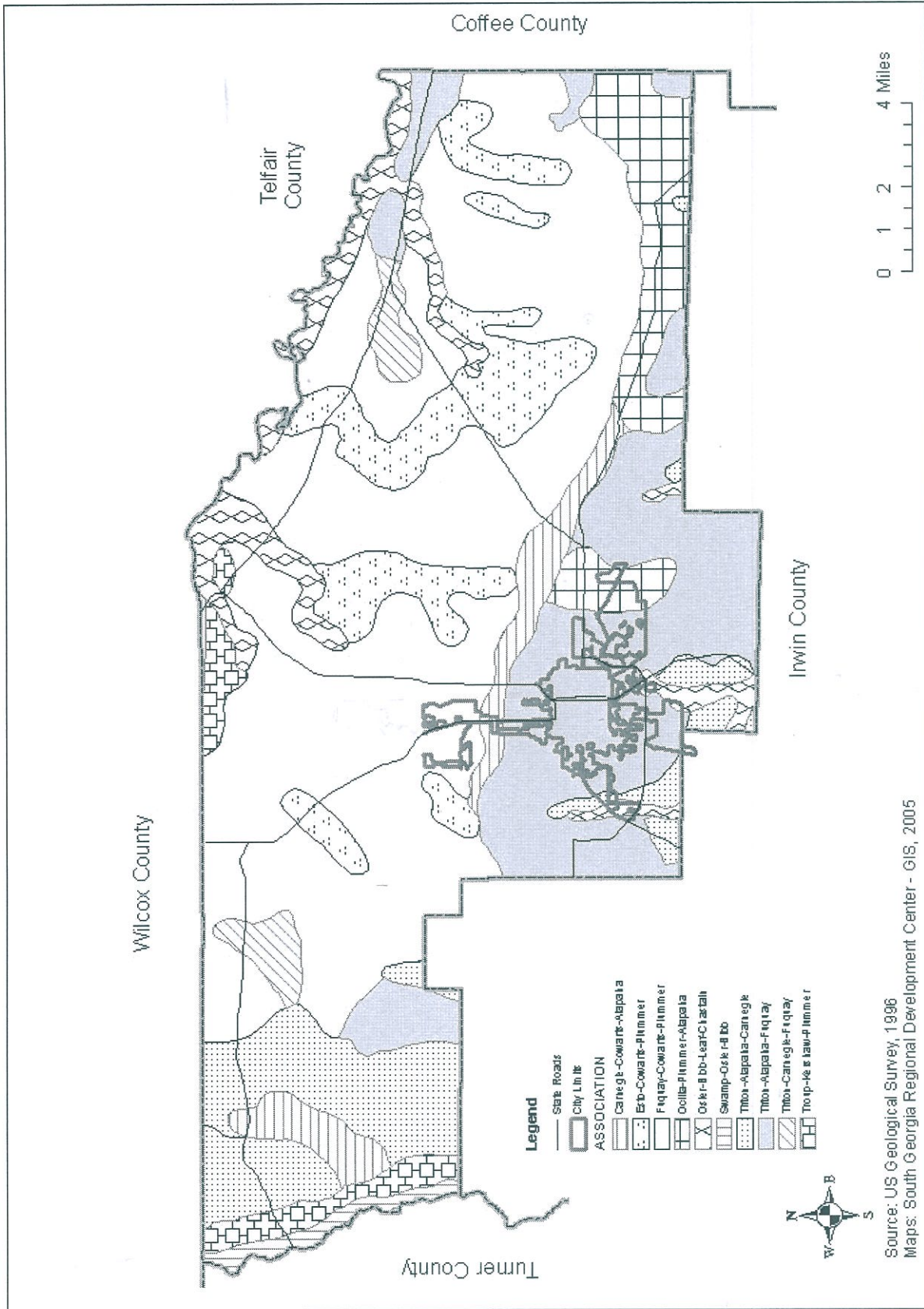
Flood hazards along the major rivers and streams typically occur in late winter and early spring. Within Ben Hill County, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has prepared official flood area maps, also known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM's) for both Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. Map 3-7 depicts these flood hazard areas in the City of Fitzgerald as of December 15, 1989. Flood maps for the Ocmulgee River portion of Ben Hill County have been prepared as a result of the 1994 flood. Official maps have not yet been prepared for the remaining unincorporated areas of Ben Hill County. Map 3-8 however, depicts the flood hazard areas in Ben Hill County along the Ocmulgee River as of September 6, 1996. Based on the county's topography and abundance of rivers and streams, flood hazards do exist in all parts of the county and these should be considered when making development decisions.

SOIL TYPES

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 nine (10) major soil associations. The location of these soil associations is shown on Map 3-9.

1. 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



**MAP 3-9 BEN HILL COUNTY
 GENERALIZED SOILS**

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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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. Most of the intermittent streams from northeastward across this association. 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.

STEEP SLOPES

Not applicable.

PRIME AGRICULTURAL 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 3-3 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. Map 3-10 depicts the county's land capability for agriculture, and Map 3-11 depicts the county's land capability for general urban development.

**TABLE 3-3
SUMMARIZED LAND CAPABILITY FOR GREATER BEN HILL COUNTY**

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 3-4 depicts these soil association ratings and Map 3-12 depicts the land capability for septic tank usage.

**TABLE 3-4
LAND CAPABILITY FOR SEPTIC TANK**

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.

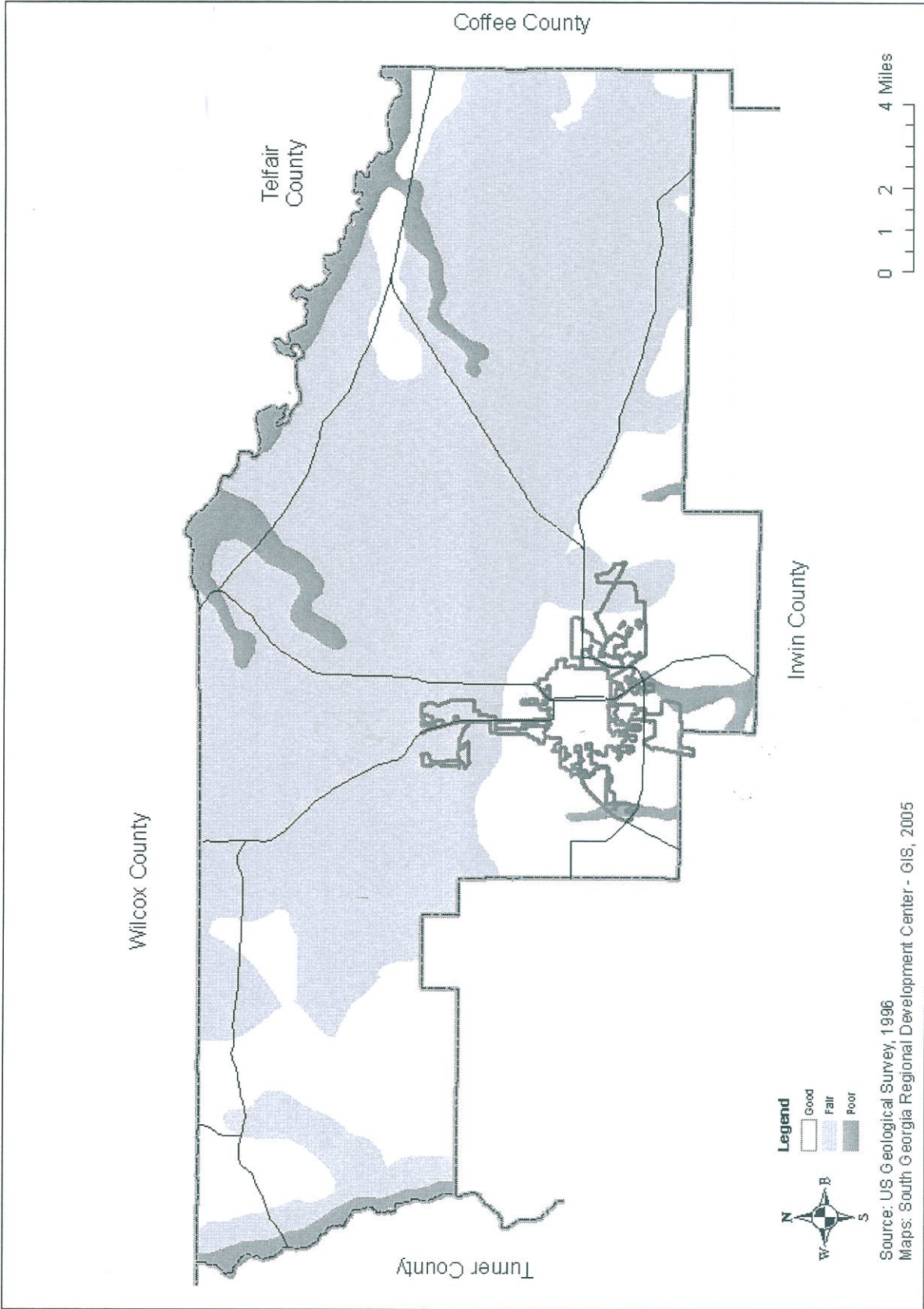
In Ben Hill County, there are two soil associations with a "good" rating for septic tank systems; four associations that have a "fair" rating; and four associations that are rated "poor" and have severe limitation for septic tank systems. It is not impossible to construct a drain field on severely rated soils, but it will be expensive and the county should steer development requiring such systems to more suitable locations. This analysis is based upon broad soil associations and provides an 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.

Table 3-5 depicts the various individual soil types and their proportionate share of the county. It also depicts those soils identified by the USDA as being "prime farmland" or "farmland having statewide importance" which are based on underlying soil types. Prime farmland is defined as land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high crop yields if acceptable farming methods are used. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and money. The use of prime farmland for agricultural purposes results in the least damage to the environment. The supply of high quality farmland is limited and should be used with wisdom and foresight. Farmland of "statewide importance" consists of soils that are nearly "prime farmland" in quality and are still important to agriculture in the county. They will economically produce high crop yields when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Many of these soils are well-suited to commercial timber production and are often used as such.

**TABLE 3-5
GREATER BEN HILL'S USDA FARMLAND CLASSIFICATION AND SOIL**

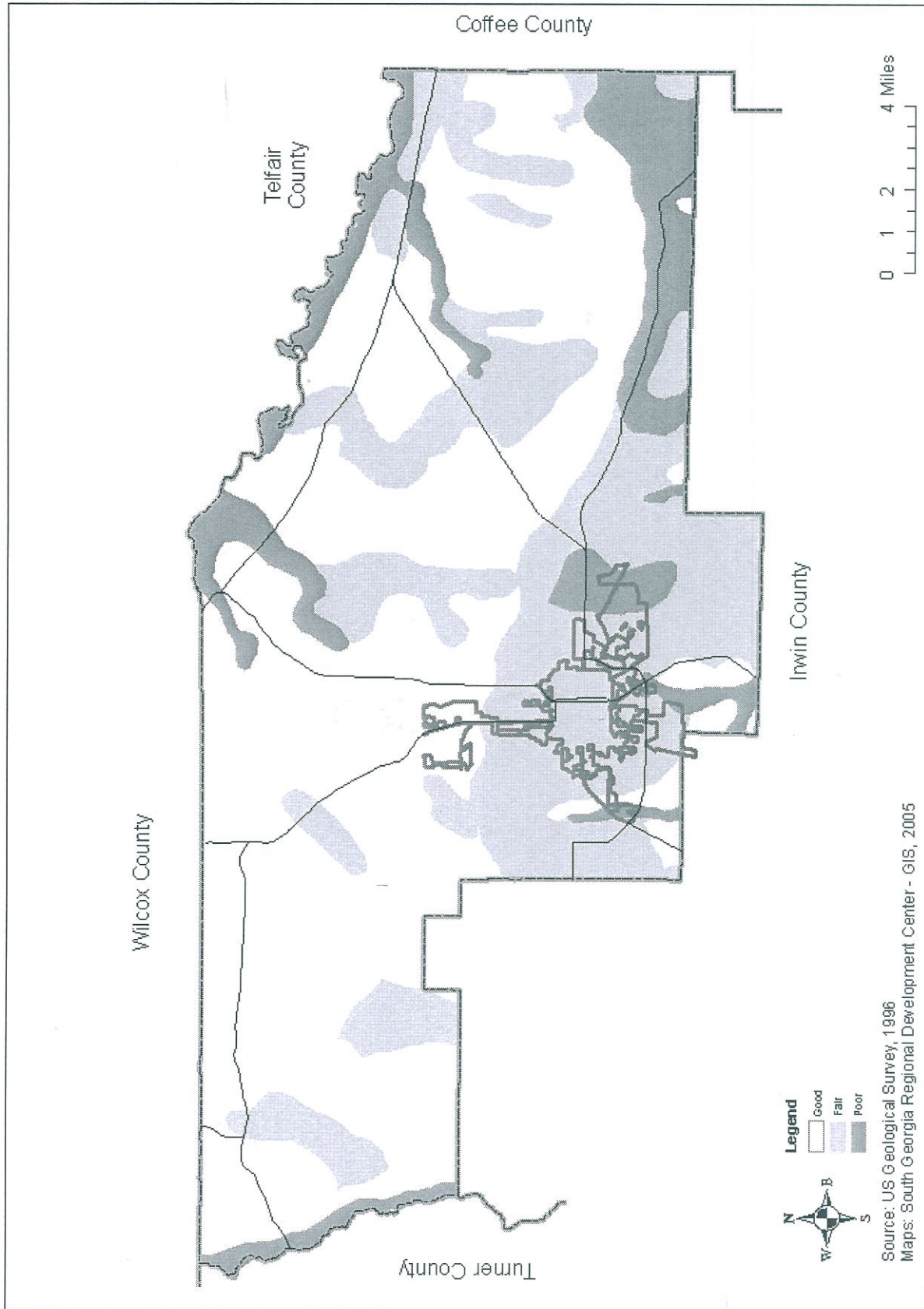
Soil Name (mapping symbols)	Farmland Classification		# Acres	%County
	Prime	Important		
Alapaha (AtA)			19,741	12.1
Albany (AdA, AsA)		X	710	.4
Ardilla (AqA)		X	190	.1
Carnegie (CoB2, CoC)	X		1,273	.8
Carnegie (CoC2)		X	4,120	2.5
Carnegie (CkC3, CoD2)			313	.2
Cowarts (CqB, CqB2, CqC)	X		7,674	4.7
Cowarts (CqC2)		X	11,304	6.9
Dothan (DaA, DaB)	X		3,365	2.1
Esto (EnB)	X		2,590	1.6
Esto (EnB2)		X	1,523	.9
Esto (EnC2, EnD2)			11,547	7.1
Fuquay (FqB, FqC, FsA, FsB, FsC)		X	25,168	15.5
Grady (Gra)			486	.3
Irvington (IjA)	X		1,100	.7
Kershaw (KkC)			580	.4
Leaf & Chastain (LiD)			2,435	1.5
Leefield (LsA)		X	2,729	1.7
Ocilla (OhA)		X	5,576	3.4
Ona (ObA)			381	.2
Osier-Bibb Complex (Obs)			5,630	3.4
Plummer (PeA)			14,683	9.0
Rains (RfA)			383	.2
Stilson (SeA)		X	2,016	1.2
Sunsweet (ShC2)		X	31	< .1
Sunsweet (ShD2)			180	.1
Susquehanna (SiB)		X	1,491	.9
Susquehanna (SiC2)			1,869	1.1
Swamp (Swa)			458	.3
Tifton (TqA, TqB, TqB2, TqC, TqC2)	X		25,972	16.0
Troup (TpB, TpC)		X	7,682	4.7
TOTAL ACREAGE	41,974	62,540	163,200	
TOTAL PERCENTAGE	25.7	38.3		100.0

Source: Soil Survey of Ben Hill and Irwin Counties, Georgia, 1969; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service Prime Farmland Soils of Georgia, 1987, USDA Soil Conservation Service Additional Lands of Statewide Importance, 1992, USDA Soil Conservation Service



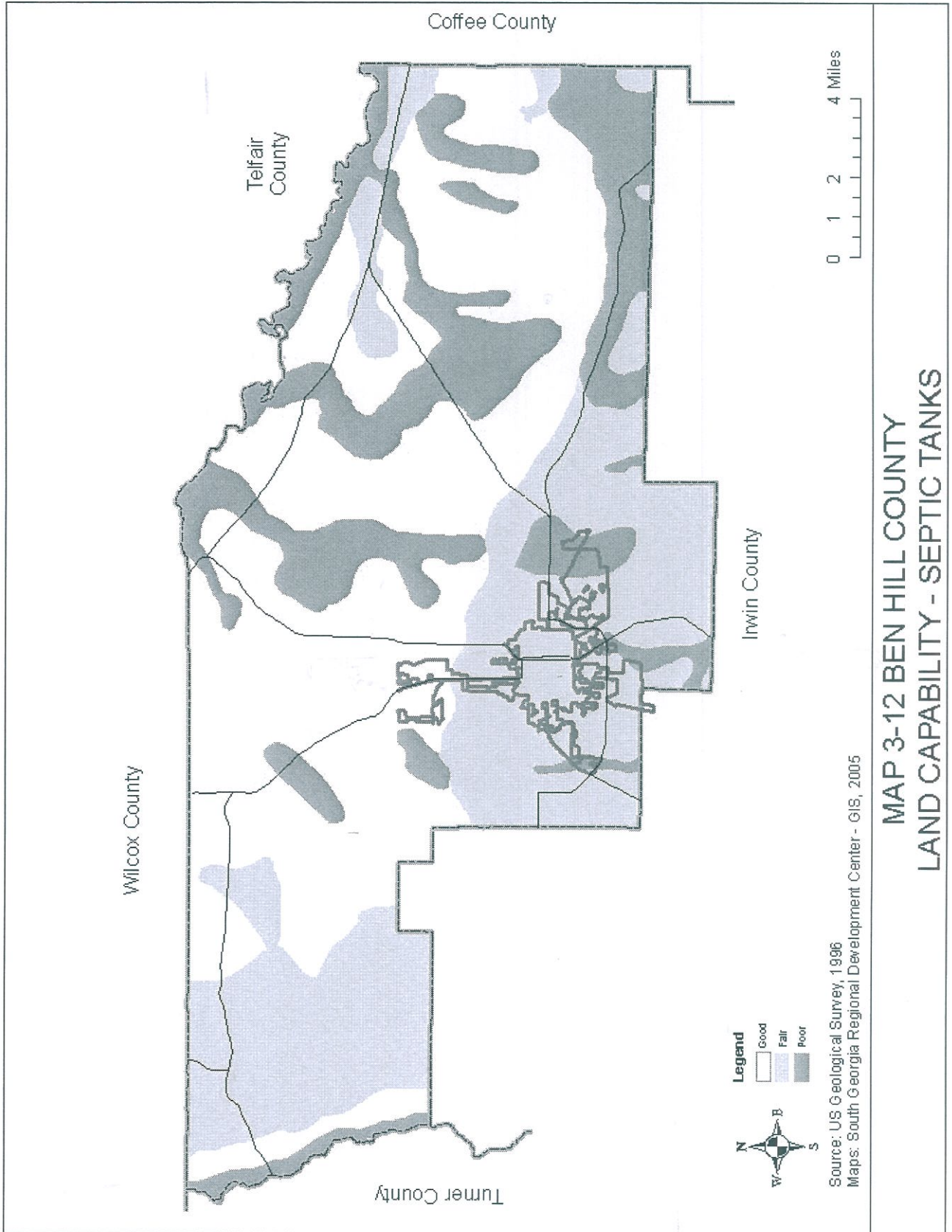
**MAP 3-10 BEN HILL COUNTY
LAND CAPABILITY - AGRICULTURE**

Source: US Geological Survey, 1996
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005



Source: US Geological Survey, 1996
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005

**MAP 3-11 BEN HILL COUNTY
 LAND CAPABILITY - URBAN**



As shown in Table 3-5, only 25.7% of Ben Hill County is classified as “prime farmland” but another 38.3% is classified as having “statewide importance.” Therefore, about 64% of Ben Hill County is recognized as being able to best support agricultural uses.

PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITATS

Both the Georgia and U.S. Department of Natural Resources have inventoried plant and animal species in the State of Georgia. Table 3-7 depicts plants and animals that are on the "possible endangered" or "threatened" species lists for the State and Federal governments. Current local regulations should adequately protect habitats for these plant and animal species.

**TABLE 3-7
ENDANGERED OR THREATENED PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES**

SPECIES Common Name – (<i>Species Name</i>)	GEORGIA		FEDERAL
	Threatened	Endangered	Endangered
PLANTS			
Purple Honeycomb Head – <i>Balduina atropurpurea</i>		X	
Georgia Plume – <i>Elliottia racemosa</i>		X	
Deckert Pinweed – <i>Lechea deckertii</i>	X		
Pondspice – <i>Litsea aestivalis</i>		X	
Flame Flower – <i>Macranthera flammea</i>	X		
Pineland Barbara Buttons – <i>Marshallia ramosa</i>		X	
Grit Beardtongue – <i>Penstemon dissectus</i>		X	
Yellow Flytrap – <i>Sarracenia flava</i>		X	
Hooded Pitcherplant – <i>Sarracenia minor</i>		X	
Ocmulgee Skullcap – <i>Scutellaria ocmulgee</i>		X	
Smooth Buttonweed – <i>Spermacoce glabra</i>	X		
Pine-needle Air-plant – <i>Tillandsia setacea</i>	X		
Catbird Grape – <i>Vitis palmata</i>	X		
ANIMALS			
Mud Sunfish – <i>Acantharchus pomotis</i>	X		
Altamaha Arcmussel – <i>Alasmidonta arcula</i>	X		
Ocmulgee Shiner – <i>Cyprinella callisema</i>	X		
Southern Hognose Snake – <i>Heterodon simus</i>	X		
Ironcolor Shiner – <i>Notropis chalybaeus</i>	X		
Red-cockaded Woodpecker – <i>Picoides borealis</i>		X	X
Sailfin Shiner – <i>Pteronotropis hypselopterus</i>	X		

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Division – Georgia Natural Heritage Program, 2004.

MAJOR PARK, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AREAS

There are no federal or state owned recreation or wildlife management areas within Ben Hill County. There are, however, approximately 9 local parks that contain 15 baseball/softball fields, 4 basketball courts, 6 tennis courts, 2 swimming pools, and 1 river access. 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 3-8, lists the state parks and historic sites that are located within 40 miles of Ben Hill County.

**TABLE 3-8
STATE PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES WITHIN 40 MILES OF BEN HILL COUNTY**

STATE PARK AND / OR HISTORIC SITE	ADDRESS	FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES	DISTANCE
Jefferson Davis Memorial Historic Site	338 Jeff Davis Park Rd Fitzgerald, GA 31750 <u>Park Office:</u> 229.831.2335 <u>Park Fax:</u> 229.831.2060	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil War Museum: film and artifacts - Monument - 1/3-Mile Nature Trail - 13 Picnic Sites - Group Shelter (seats 100, \$150) - Gift Shop 	Located in Irwin County
Little Ocmulgee State Park and Lodge	P.O. Drawer 149 McRae, GA 31055 <u>Reservations:</u> 800.864.7275 <u>Park Office:</u> 229.868.7474 <u>Park Fax:</u> 229.868.3007	Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1,360 Acres - 55 Tent, Trailer, RV Campsites (\$17-\$19) – cable TV hookups - 10 Cottages (\$70-\$95) - 60-Room Lodge (\$60-\$70)/Conference Center - Restaurant - 265-Acre Lake with Beach - Swimming Pool (overnight guests only) - 18-Hole Wallace Adams Golf Course and Pro Shop (\$30-\$34) - C.C.C. Lakeside Annex Shelter (seats 45, \$90) - 7 Picnic Shelters (\$45) - Group Shelter (seats 125, \$210) - Group Camp (sleeps 24, \$100) - Pioneer Campground (\$15) - 2 Tennis Courts - Amphitheater Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fishing - Boating and Skiing – ramp - Canoe and Pedal Boat Rental - Hiking – 2.6-mile trail and boardwalk - Miniature Golf (seasonal) 	34.7 miles
Little Ocmulgee's Wallace Adams Golf Course	P.O. Box 149 McRae, GA 31055 <u>Tee Times and Package Information:</u> 800.434.0982 <u>Pro Shop:</u> 229.868.6651 <u>Lodge/Cottage/Campsite Reservations:</u> 800.864.7275	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full Service Pro Shop - 60-room lodge - 10 cottages - 55 campsites - restaurant - Course Layout: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holes: 18 Yards: 6,625 Rating: 71.5 Slope: 128 Par: 72 Bunkers: 52 	34.7 miles

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites, 2004.

TABLE 3-8 (Continued)
STATE PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES WITHIN 50 MILES OF BEN HILL COUNTY

STATE PARK AND / OR HISTORIC SITE	ADDRESS	FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES	DISTANCE
Georgia Veterans Memorial Golf Course	2315 Hwy 280 West Cordele, GA 31015 <u>Tee Times and Package Information:</u> 800.434.0982 <u>Pro Shop:</u> 229.276.2377 <u>Lodge/Cottage/Campsite Reservations:</u> 800.864.7275	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full Service Pro Shop - 10 cottages - 85 campsites - restaurant - Course Layout: Holes: 18 Yards: 7,059 Rating: 72.1 Slope: 130 Par: 72 Bunkers: 105 	37.5 miles
Georgia Veterans State Park	2459 U.S. Hwy 280 W Cordele, GA 31015 <u>Reservations:</u> 800.864.7275 <u>Park Office:</u> 229.276.2371 <u>Park Fax:</u> 229.276.2372	Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1,308 Acres - 77 Tent, Trailer, RV Campsites (\$17-\$22) – cable TV hookups - 10 Cottages - The Lake Blackshear Resort and Golf Club 18-Hole Golf Course (\$33-\$37) - Beach - Lake Blackshear -- marina - 1-Mile Nature Trail - 4 Picnic Shelters (\$40) - 2 Group Shelters (seats 100 and 150, \$110-\$160) - Pioneer Campground (\$15) - R/C Model Airplane Flying Field Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boating and Waterskiing - private boats permitted - Boat rental - Fishing - bass, crappie, catfish, bream - Birding 	37.5 miles

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites, 2004.

TABLE 3-8 (Continued)
STATE PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES WITHIN 50 MILES OF BEN HILL COUNTY

STATE PARK AND / OR HISTORIC SITE	ADDRESS	FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES	DISTANCE
Reed Bingham State Park	542 Reed Bingham Rd. Adel, GA 31620 <u>Reservations:</u> 800.864.7275 <u>Park Office:</u> 229.896.3551	Facilities: - 1,613 Acres - 46 Tent, Trailer, RV Campsites (\$19-\$21) - cable TV hookups - 375-Acre Lake - Swimming Beach - 3 Boat Ramps - Playground - Pioneer Campground (\$15) - 6 Picnic Shelters (\$30) - 4 Group Shelters (seat 40–150, \$90–\$175) - Accessible Fishing Pier Activities: - Hiking – 4 miles of trails - Boating - Fishing – dock, boat rental - Miniature Golf - Birding	41.6 miles

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites, 2004.

NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL AND POLICIES

GOAL:

Identify, conserve and protect the broad range of natural resources in Greater Ben Hill County that could potentially be affected by growth and development (i.e. Floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, etc).

POLICY:

All natural resources such as water resources, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and soil types that contribute to the current and future development of Greater Ben Hill County should be recognized and protected by appropriate county authorities. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Soil resources should be managed in a manner that is consistent with maintaining and enhancing water quality.
- An adequate minimum flow and water quality should be maintained in all rivers and streams to ensure a productive fish habitat and protection of aquatic life and scenic qualities.

POLICY:

State and/or Federal agency rules and regulations mandating local enforcement programs should be accompanied with adequate staff and financial assistance to help local units in their implementation programs. Examples include but are not limited to:

- These include rules and regulations on local floodplain management, erosion and sedimentation control, wetlands protection, river corridors, and similar laws designed to prevent degradation of the natural environment.
- Ongoing public awareness and education activities should also be developed to encourage participation in natural resource preservation and other related activities. Agencies that currently offer education material on the conservation and protection of natural resources are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division (EPD), Georgia Department of Natural Resources Pollution Prevention Assistance Division (P2AD), Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), etc.

POLICY:

Appropriate funding source should be identified and utilized to encourage the continual use and protection of significant natural resources. Examples include but are not limited to:

- State and Federal natural resource programs such as the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division (GA DNR EPD), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), and the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) are examples of funding sources that should be utilized to maintain and preserve all of the county’s natural resources.

POLICY:

Special planning activities should be conducted to encourage sensible development that will enhance and protect all of the county’s natural resources. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Development should not pollute, exhaust or interfere with the natural replenishment cycles of groundwater.
- Development should not grossly impair the function of vital natural systems.
- Land use should be primarily determined by natural characteristics, suitability of the land, and the availability of urban services.
- Lands that are not suitable for on-site absorption systems should not be subdivided/developed unless public sewers are available or other provisions are made for the handling of sewage.
- Treatment facilities should be available for the discharge of septic tank, holding tank, and recreational vehicle pumpage.
- Land management practices that minimize siltation and pollution should be utilized. These practices include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Approval of grading, filling, and excavation plans by the cities and county to ensure that erosion and siltation are minimized. (I.e. sodding, seeding, re-vegetation schedules, etc).
 - (b) Provide and maintain strategically located settling basins to remove silt and debris from surface water runoff.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The conservation of cultural, historic, and archaeological resources can have positive impacts on Ben Hill County's visual appeal, tourism potential, downtown revitalization, and overall economic development potential. In addition, the preservation of historic properties and landscapes is an important aspect of maintaining a community's sense of place and pride. Continued interest in local heritage is essential in retaining a community vision with an understanding of its past.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BEN HILL COUNTY

Since the close of the colonial period, Georgia has had a history of numerous county creations and changing boundary lines which were influenced by political and economic factors. On July 31, 1906, the Georgia General Assembly (state legislature) created Ben Hill County from parts of Irwin and Wilcox Counties. The county is named for Benjamin Harvey Hill, a staunch supporter of the administration in the Confederate Senate. After the War Between the States, he served in the U. S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate and was considered one of America's greatest orators.

Before the turn of the century, a community had already been developed within Ben Hill County. In 1880, four Drew Brothers and their families came from Darien, North Carolina to the area located approximately 15 miles west of the Ocmulgee River and purchased thousands of acres and established a post office, commissary naval stores operation, and saw mill operation, naming the community Swan for the boat which carried them to Georgia.

In 1895, Philander H. Fitzgerald, a pension attorney for the United States and editor of the American Tribune weekly newspaper located in Indianapolis, was concerned with the condition of Union veterans and drought stricken farmers in the Midwest. After the organizing the American Tribune Soldier's Colony Company, Fitzgerald purchased 50,000 acres of pineland in Central Georgia to organize a new colony that would provide a healthier climate and better economic opportunities. By the summer of 1895, people had already begun arriving prior to the survey being completed. Swan, now known as Shacktown, became the center for temporary shacks for settlers waiting for the new colony to be laid out. The plan for the new town consisted of 1,000 acres of land surveyed into four wards or blocks of identical size. The four wards were then subdivided into four more blocks. Each of the four blocks was further divided into sixteen identically sized city blocks for a total of 256 blocks. The subdivision pattern with the squares created a grid pattern of development within the city. Of the many blocks, four were set aside for schools, twelve for parks, 36 were further subdivided further for business lots and the remainder was used for residential lots. Immediately surrounding the town site were five-acre tracts, then ten, twenty and forty acre tracts, all for residential/agricultural uses.

By June of 1896, there were two railroads, twenty-five miles of open streets, a bank, three newspapers, 250 businesses and eleven churches. Around that same time, an opera house, seating 1,200 people, was built and shortly thereafter, the Lee-Grant Hotel, a result of the first work relief program in the U.S., was built.

On December of 1896, the City of Fitzgerald was incorporated and its charter provided \$23,000, which would be paid to The American Tribune Soldier's Colony Company, for clearing the city, building the schools, etc.

Fitzgerald is a unique city in that it was developed based solely on social and humanitarian needs and wants without the restraints of politics. Therefore, an unusual mix of people originating from the North and the South and were able to live in peaceful co-existence. In addition, while many communities perished with the creation of the highway and later Interstate, Fitzgerald has prospered and many of its historic buildings have been retained and

cherished.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES

An initial inventory of historic resources was conducted. This inventory is a basis for a comprehensive survey and should assist in planning for new development, as well as determining areas for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places or the development of local historic districts.

INVENTORY OF RESOURCE TYPES

Residential

Concentrations of historic resources exist throughout Ben Hill County. However, the City of Fitzgerald has significantly more resources than any other area within the county.

Fitzgerald

Realizing the importance in preserving its historic resources, the City of Fitzgerald adopted the municipality's first preservation ordinance in 1986. In addition, the city received Certified Local Government status, which enhanced the local government role in preservation by strengthening the community's preservation program and its link with the state historic preservation office. The ordinance established a locally designated historic district. Fitzgerald's local historic district contains a variety of commercial and residential buildings. The architectural styles for this area include Gothic Revival, Italianate, Spanish Mission Revival, Victorian Eclectic, Beaux Arts, Art Deco, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical, Colonial Revival, Pueblo Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, English Tudor Revival, Folk Victorian, Shingle, and Craftsman. Map 3-14 shows the boundaries of the Fitzgerald Local Historic District.

Besides having a local historic district, Fitzgerald has two National Register districts and six individual properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Of the two districts listed on the National Register, 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, development of the area began. The earliest houses were wood-framed and later homes constructed of masonry and "granitoid", a rusticated, hollow-core concrete block manufactured locally. The larger houses are generally clustered along South Main Street, while more moderately sized dwellings are found along South Lee and the intersecting streets. Refer to map 3-13 for the location of the South Main-South Lee Street Historic District.

The City of Fitzgerald has four individually listed properties on the National Register of Historic Places that are residential. The properties include the Dorminy-Massee House (516 W. Central Avenue), Holtzendorf Apartments (105 W. Pine Street), Charles Kimball House (137 Hudson Street), and the Miles Wilsey House (137 Hudson Road).

Commercial/ Industrial

Fitzgerald

Within the City of Fitzgerald, Ocmulgee, Thomas, Magnolia and Lee Streets bound the commercial core. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Fitzgerald Commercial Historic District contains buildings of many architectural styles, which date from the early 1900's. These buildings completely fill their lots, share party walls, and front directly on the sidewalk. Details such as arched windows, stringcourses and pressed tin cornices are common. Map 3-13 illustrates the location of the Commercial Historic District.

Institutional

The Regional Historic Rural Schools Initiative has identified nine existing historic school buildings in Ben Hill County as depicted on Map 3-15 and 3-16.

The city of Fitzgerald has two individually listed properties on the National Register of Historic Places. These properties are the Ben Hill County Courthouse and the Ben Hill County Jail.

Transportation-Related

Fitzgerald is widely known for its grid pattern of development. The grid plan was developed by Mr. P.H. Fitzgerald and is unique in that it divides the city into quadrants of equal size and provides large north/south and east/west corridors. These corridors contain large islands or parkways, which were originally landscaped by the numerous garden clubs in the City. Today, these beautiful parkways remain in the pride of the City. The parks are overseen and maintained with the help of some volunteers and by the City.

Although a context study has not been completed for historic roads in Ben Hill County, nine (9) historic bridges have been documented. Information on the historic bridges can be obtained from the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Agricultural

Agricultural sites are patterns in the land and the related structures created by human activity. Although no landscapes appear exactly as they did in the past, they often retain significant characteristics. Agricultural sites in Ben Hill County typically have the following aspects: individual buildings for separate functions (dwelling, smokehouse, livestock barns, equipment buildings, etc.); paths for access, frequently shaded by trees; and fields that are irregularly arranged and follow natural topography. Ben Hill County's agricultural resources are extensive and include numerous types of buildings and landscapes.

Archaeological Sites

To date, there have been only twenty-three sites (23) recorded in Ben Hill County; however, this likely reflects a lack of archaeological research, not a lack of sites. Archaeological sites in Ben Hill County range from locations where hunters manufactured stone tools 10,000 years ago to small late nineteenth/early twentieth century farmsteads.

Archaeological sites, like historic buildings, are considered cultural resources. However, unlike historic buildings, archaeological sites are not always evident to the untrained eye. While some archaeological sites have obvious above ground indicators such as earth mounds, or chimney remnants, most consist of artifacts (objects made or modified by humans such as stone tools, pottery, and bottle glass) and features (post holes, trash pits, stone hearths, human burials, etc.) that are underground.

The only sure way to know if an archaeological site exists is to have a professional archaeologist sample or survey the area. However, there are some general criteria you can apply to help prioritize areas. Prehistoric (Indian) sites are most commonly located near water sources such as streams, springs, or lime sinks. Historic (Euro/Afro-American) sites are commonly located close to old/historic roads. Both prehistoric and historic

sites are generally located on level to gently sloping ground and on well-drained soils. Previous disturbance can also affect a location's potential to contain archaeological sites. For example, road or utility right-of-ways have usually been subjected to heavy disturbance and are not likely to contain any intact archaeological deposits. Cultivation, however, does not necessarily destroy archaeological sites and does not, by itself, indicate a low potential area. Such criteria, even when developed into a formal predictive model, should only be used as a tool at the most basic planning level. Hiring a professional archaeologist/consultant is an effective way of streamlining the compliance process and insuring that archaeological resources are being treated according to the law.

While cultural resources work is most often done in response to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), meaning that there is some federal involvement (i.e. federal funds, permits, etc.), it is important to remember that there are also state laws to consider. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 states that a person who is not operating under Section 106 of the NHPA must have written landowner permission to conduct archaeology on private property and must provide written notification to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at least five (5) business days prior to excavation. Other code sections apply more generally to human remains, but are relevant because of the possibility of discovering such remains at archaeological sites. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon the disturbance of human remains. If law enforcement determines that it is not a crime scene, DNR is notified of the discovery.

Key points to remember when considering archaeology in development and compliance:

- Humans have been in the area now known as Ben Hill County for at least 10,000 years, so the potential for finding evidence of past human activity (i.e., archaeological sites) is generally high.
- Unlike historic buildings, archaeological sites often have no above ground components that would indicate their presence.
- While factors such as distance to water and/or old roads, slope, soil drainage, and previous disturbance can help prioritize areas of archaeological concern, the only sure way to know whether an area contains archaeological sites is to conduct an archaeological survey.
- Most archaeology is done in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and regulations implementing that act (36 CFR Part 800). These laws insure that projects receiving federal funds (CDBG/EIP grants, FDIC loans, etc) or requiring federal permits (e.g., Section 404 of Clean Water Act) take affects to archaeological resources into account.
- In addition to federal laws, there are state laws to consider as well. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 requires written landowner permission and DNR notification of intent to conduct non-Section 106 archaeology on private property. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon discovery or disturbance of human remains.

Other

Cemeteries are irreplaceable resources and are in need of preservation within Ben Hill County. Map 3-15 depicts the locations of all historic cemeteries in Ben Hill County. These cemeteries range from small family plots and slightly larger church graveyards, to sizable city cemeteries.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Today, Ben Hill County remains rich with natural resources in addition to many cultural, historic, and archaeological resources. Map 3-15 depicts an initial inventory of resources in the unincorporated areas but it should be noted that a comprehensive survey of all cultural, historic, and archaeological resources is necessary.

Conservation of cultural, historic, and archaeological resources should begin with a comprehensive countywide survey. At this point, a partial inventory has been done for the City of Fitzgerald, but it is incomplete. Funding is available through the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to assist with the completion of a Historic Resources Survey.

Although Fitzgerald has properties and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places, there are additional buildings and districts that can be designated. The National Register of Historic Places not only identifies significant properties and districts for general planning purposes, but it qualifies certain properties eligible to receive specific federal and state tax incentives for private property owners to rehabilitate historic buildings. The National Register also makes available historic preservation grants to assist local governments and not-for-profit agencies in accomplishing preservation projects.

In the design review process, owners of locally designated landmarks and districts must get approval from a locally appointed historic preservation commission or architectural review board for major exterior alterations, additions, and new construction. Commission approval is in the form of a "certificate of appropriateness." To be approved, an application must meet the design review criteria within the preservation ordinance that a community has adopted. Although the ordinance is the law and the design review criteria are part of the law, design guidelines are often developed to assist preservation commissions. Consisting of written and graphic information bound in book format, they are often key support materials for commissions, boards, and applicants when going through the review process. The City of Fitzgerald needs to update their design review guidelines to assist the Historic Preservation Commission.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL:

Identify, conserve and protect the broad range of cultural resources in greater Ben Hill County.

POLICY:

Individual cultural resources, historic districts, and historic communities that contributed to the evolution and development of Ben Hill County should be formally identified and designated by appropriate city and county authorities. Encourage new programs that promote designated properties and support the creation of historic property owners associations.

POLICY:

An ongoing public awareness and education program, such as the Georgia Trust's Heritage Education Program, should be developed to encourage participation in historic preservation and cultural activities.

POLICY:

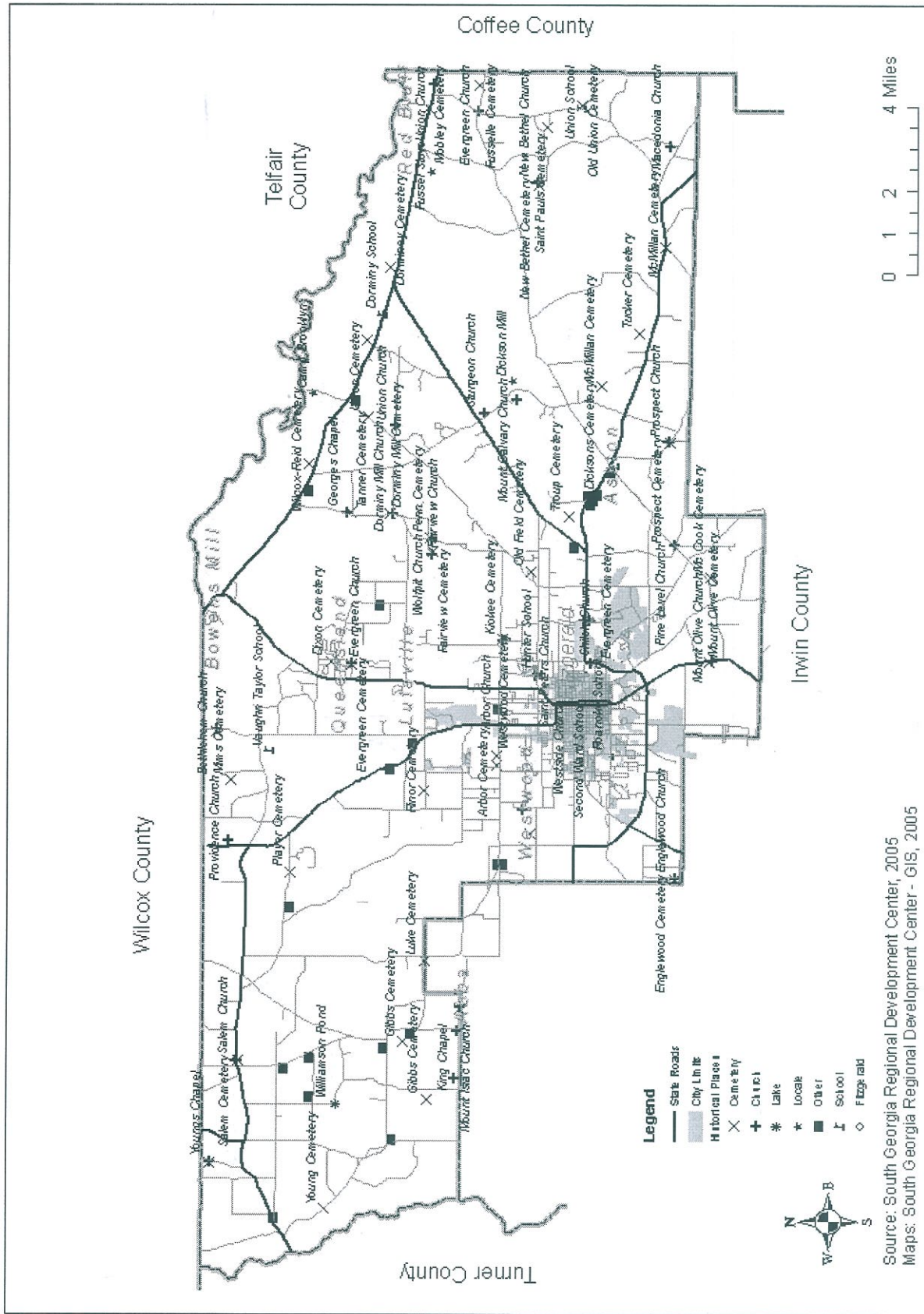
Appropriate funding sources should be identified and utilized to encourage the continual use and rehabilitation of significant cultural and historic resources. State and Federal historic preservation programs include Georgia Historic Resource Survey Funding, Georgia Heritage Grants, Historic Preservation Fund Grant, OneGeorgia Authority Grants, Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit Program, Historic Landscape and Garden Grant Program, Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century Program, Community Development Block Grant, and the Quality Growth Grant Program.

POLICY:

Special planning activities should be conducted to encourage sensible development that will enhance and protect the county's cultural, historic, and archeological resources.

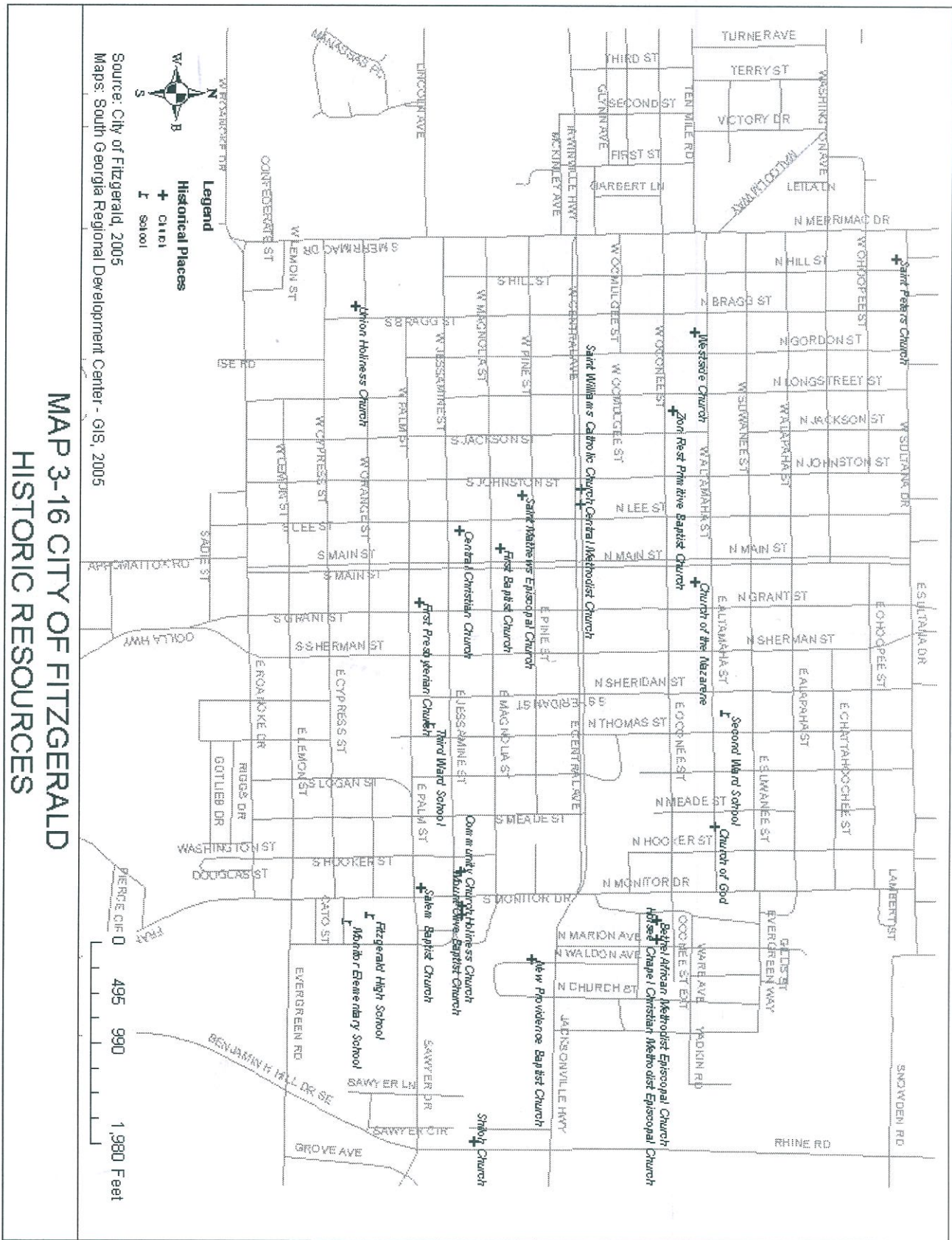
POLICY:

Encourage elected and appointed officials to be supportive of preservation in their decision-making. Develop and implement educational materials for new officials and routinely seek outside professional advice regarding preservation.



MAP 3-15 BEN HILL COUNTY
HISTORIC RESOURCES

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005



CHAPTER FOUR: COMMUNITY AND COUNTY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The location and quality of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald's facilities are as important to the county and city as its farms, commercial, industrial and residential areas. They not only enhance the well being of the area's residents, but along with the quality of shopping facilities and housing, largely determine the "livability" of the city and county.

County and city facilities as defined herein are those facilities, usually public or semi-public in nature, which primarily serve residents with such services as schools, parks, city and county administrative offices, library, fire departments, and police protection. The various facilities are identified in this chapter and can be assessed in relation to such factors as location, condition, capacity, present demand and future needs. The generalized location of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County's community and county facilities is shown on Map 4-1.

CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL SERVICE BUILDINGS

CITY HALL

Inventory

The Fitzgerald City Hall, locally known as the Municipal Building, is located on West Central Avenue immediately west of the city's central business district. The two-story, 9,040 square foot facility constructed in 1915, formerly served as the local depot for the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad, was purchased by the city for utilization as administrative offices. The building currently houses general administrative offices for the city, the Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission, and also contains the Blue and Gray Museum, a local museum dedicated to the city's founding as a planned retirement community following the Civil War. On the facility's first floor, approximately 1,700 square feet are dedicated to the museum, 3,300 square feet to Water, Light and Bond Commission offices, and the remaining 4,040 square feet of ground floor space is utilized by the city. By 2007 all municipal offices, City Council Chambers, and Fitzgerald Utilities will be located at the former Fire and Police Department Complex located at 304 East Central Avenue. That structure will undergo a \$1.75M renovation. The vacated Municipal Building on West Central Avenue will be used for expansion of the Blue and Grey Museum and the genealogy/local history offices.

The renovated Municipal Building will house the city's general administrative staff and includes the office of the City Administrator, the City Clerk, the City Administrator, the city Building and Zoning Department, city's general administrative staff, and the offices of Fitzgerald Utilities.

Assessment

- Both the museum and the renovated municipal building will adequately serve the needs throughout the twenty-year planning period. An additional 3,600 square feet of potential museum space is available on the building's second floor. Should public access to the second story be necessary, installation of an elevator will be required as part of any restoration or expansion plans at the museum building on West Central Avenue.

BEN HILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Inventory

The Ben Hill County Courthouse is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of East Central Avenue and Sheridan Avenue and lies on the eastern edge of the City of Fitzgerald's central business district. In

addition to housing the county's courtroom facilities, the courthouse currently houses the office of the Probate Judge, the Clerk of Superior Court, the Tax Commissioner's Office, the Tax Assessor's Office, the District Attorney, and a secretarial office for the Sheriff's Department, and also provides meeting space for the Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners. Immediately south of the courthouse is the remodeled jail building (2002), which provides offices of the County Clerk, the County Manager and the county's general administrative staff.

The courthouse is undergoing major renovations that include an elevator, ramp for entrances, handicapped bathrooms and total overhaul on the interior totaling \$1.2M and should be completed by mid-2006. During the remodeling phase the county purchased a building fronting on 301 East Pine Street to create a county commissioner meeting room, and offices for the State Public Defender, county tax assessor and collector, and the Probate Judge.

Assessment

- The improvements to the courthouse, former jail, and additional office/meeting room building will adequately serve the county needs throughout the twenty-year planning period.

COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING

Inventory

The Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners owns and maintains five other office buildings, which are utilized for office and service space by numerous local, regional, state and federal agencies, which provide a broad range of services to improve the local quality of life in the greater Ben Hill County community.

The Ben Hill County Health Department was constructed in 1998 and is located on Appomattox Street near the County Jail. This facility was constructed in 1998 and is staffed and equipped to serve the county needs throughout the twenty-year planning period.

The Ben Hill County Senior Citizens Center is located at 400 East Altamaha Street and the Senior Citizens building (1999) is located at 253 Appomattox Road adjacent to the Fitzgerald Police Department.

The Ben Hill County Services building is located at the northeast corner of Thomas Street and Altamaha Street and houses the offices of Ben Hill County Election Board (12,658 square feet), Coastal Plains Economic Opportunity agency and the Ben Hill County Head Start school with 7,840 square feet used. The office facilities are located in a restored elementary school building, which is situated on an entire city block.

The fifth county office building is locally known as the Federal Building (USDA-Service Center), and is located at the southeast corner of West Central Avenue and Lee Street. Formerly utilized as the federal post office, the restored facility now serves as office space for the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency local office of the Soil Conservation Service, and a local office for the South Central Drug Task Force.

Assessment

- Ben Hill County has established a continuing building maintenance program within their annual budgeting process.

CITY OF FITZGERALD

Inventory

The City of Fitzgerald Public Works facility is located on North Grant Street, adjacent to the new municipal building in the former city Fire and Police Department Complex, and is located immediately north of and

adjacent to the city's historic central business district. The 12,000 square foot structures serve as the administrative offices, workshop and storage and maintenance facility for all city public works functions including both street maintenance and sanitation divisions. All city vehicle maintenance occurs at the facility, including garbage trucks, street equipment, and the city's heavy equipment. The facility, which currently serves 40 total employees, is owned by the city.

Assessment

- The City of Fitzgerald Public Works facility will adequately serve the city needs throughout the twenty-year planning period.

BEN HILL COUNTY

Inventory

The Ben Hill County Public Works facility, locally known as the Old County Farm, is located on Georgia 90 approximately 2 1/4 miles north of Industrial Drive. The facility houses all offices and workspace of the Ben Hill County Road Department, the Sanitation Department, and the Vehicle Maintenance Department. Forty-four (44) employees work out of this center and are afforded good and convenient access to all areas of Ben Hill County via the Industrial Perimeter Road.

The 140-acre facility is situated on both the east and west sides of Georgia 90, with approximately 20 acres on the western portion of the facility being devoted to storage of materials utilized by either the Sanitation Department or County Road Department. The entire storage area has security fencing. The county's Public Works Complex, comprised of three main buildings, several smaller storage shelters and a separate paint shop are located on the east side of Georgia 90.

Assessment

- The Ben Hill County Vehicle Maintenance Center is currently experiencing space problems and needs an additional building designed for general tune-ups and tire maintenance and repair.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Inventory

Fitzgerald Police Department

The Fitzgerald Police Department has a staff of 35 full-time employees. The department's headquarters are located in a building constructed in 1997 on Appomattox Road adjacent to the Ben Hill County Sheriff Department/Detention Center.

Personnel of the department are comprised of the following:

4	Administrative staff
5	Secretaries/Clerical staff
2	Animal control officers
4	Detectives
20	Regular Patrol officers
35	Total

The Fitzgerald Police Department utilizes a total of 26 vehicles. In 2004 the Detective Division investigated in excess of 1,138 cases, not including juvenile offenses. According to the U.S. Justice Department and the

International City Management Association standards, there should be at least 2.7 sworn certified officers per 1,000 population. The standards require 24 certified officers and the city has 28, therefore they exceed the minimum standards.

Assessment

- The Fitzgerald Police Department building will serve the needs of the city throughout the twenty-year planning period. The Police Department will add four additional regular patrol officers in the next five years.

County Sheriff's Department

The Sheriff's Department is charged with law enforcement responsibilities in the unincorporated area of Ben Hill County.

Personnel in the Sheriff's Department are comprised of twenty-two full-time and three part-time deputies, three investigators, and one chief deputy. There are also two combination secretary/deputy positions, and one secretary. Including the Sheriff, total personnel number 30. The department maintains two dog units that have been trained to detect illicit drugs.

The Ben Hill County Magistrate Judge and Ben Hill County Detention Center, a 136-bed facility is attached to the County Sheriff Department building located on Appomattox Road and constructed in 1997. Personnel to manage the Detention Center consist of eighteen full-time and two part-time jailers and two jail administrators. Plans are being investigated to add 46 beds to the present facility and offer detention services to neighboring counties. Within the next five years two more jailers will be needed.

The Sheriff's Department uses twenty-six vehicles to patrol Ben Hill County. The Ben Hill County Sheriff's Department handled 1,576 cases between January-June 30, 2005. According to the U.S. Justice Department and the International City Management Association standards, there should be 2.7 sworn officers per 1,000 population. The Sheriff's Department meets this standard with 27 sworn officers.

Assessment

- By the year 2010, the county will need two additional jailers.
- The Sheriff Department/Detention Center complex will adequately serve the county's needs throughout the twenty-year planning period.

FIRE PROTECTION

Inventory

The Fitzgerald Fire Department is staffed by eighteen firefighters with six more possibly added through a grant in 2005, with an administrative staff of chief and fire inspector. The fire department works from a central station located at 300 East Pine Street and at a satellite station north of the railroad tracks on Altamaha Street. The department answers an average of one call per day, and in 2004 the department completed three convicted arson cases. In addition to these functions, the department also conducts educational programs for schools and local industry.

Fitzgerald's Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating was established at Class 4 and county urban area within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant is also rated as Class 4. The ISO rating is used to set insurance rates, with a range of Class 1 (lowest risk) to Class 10 (highest risk) possible.

The Fitzgerald fire department's equipment includes the following:

<u>Model Year</u>	<u>Capacity</u>
1982	Ladder Truck
1965	1,000 gpm pumper
1975	1,250 gpm pumper
1985	1,000 gpm pumper
1994	1,250 gpm pumper
2004	1,250 gpm pumper

Approximately 20 volunteers staff the Ben Hill County Volunteer Fire Department. Equipment consists of five fire knockers and one tanker truck located at five stations. The county presently has an ISO rating of 9.

Assessment

- By the year 2010, the city will need to add six additional firemen and will need to add one 1,250 gpm pumper truck.
- Within the next five years, two new fire stations should be constructed to serve the southern industrial area and the northern residential/school areas.
- Ben Hill County should continue to develop dry hydrants throughout the rural areas of the county.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Inventory

The Ben Hill County Emergency Medical Service handles approximately 225 requests for assistance each month and affords joint service to all residents of Ben Hill County. The Emergency Medical Services staff includes thirteen full-time technicians with paramedic certification, ten part-time EMTs and seven part-time paramedics. The 911 system staff handles dispatching and one secretary completes the staff. The Emergency Medical Services staff is housed at 302 West Altamaha Street in a 8,386 square foot structure. The site was chosen due to its adequacy of office and storage space and was additionally influenced due to its proximity to the Longstreet Street underpass. Due to the critical response time required of the Emergency Medical Services unit, this centralized location appears ideal to prevent delays associated with the city's rail traffic.

The EMS staff has modern equipment to handle a broad range of emergency situations and includes five Type 1 model modular unit EMS vehicles. Specialized equipment consists of an external cardiac pacemaker, a respirator, and a device called "The Jaws of Life", a hydraulic device designed for extracting accident victims from damaged vehicles.

Assessment

- Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County have made a strong public commitment to maintaining an extremely high level of Emergency Medical Services to all county residents. There is a need to add one Type 1 model modular unit EMS vehicle; two cardiac monitors; and shift to a computerized trip report (PCR) system by 2007.

HEALTH CARE

Inventory

The Dorminy Medical Center (DMC) serves Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County, and the adjacent rural counties,, which is located on Perry House Road between Roanoke Drive and the Industrial Perimeter road. The Hospital

Authority of Ben Hill County operates Dorminy Medical Center, a five-member governing authority appointed by the Ben Hill County Commissioners. The non-profit hospital is, according to local officials, the last hospital built in the United States under the Hill-Burton Act. Opened in 1974, the 75-bed medical center has a staff of seventeen full-time resident physicians and three part-time physicians who operate a one-day-a-week specialty clinic, and has a nursing staff of 200.

DMC is an acute care facility, fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and offers a broad range of services of both inpatient and outpatient care including diagnostic medical imaging, pharmacy and laboratory services, general surgery, cardiopulmonary services, physical therapy, intensive and coronary care, maternity care, an extensive emergency services care unit, and hospice services. DMC was awarded the 2001 Hometown Hospital of the year.

A public health clinic, mental health clinic, and two private nursing homes with a total of 102 beds also provide services for the city and county. The health department serves about 1,000 clients per month. Staffing consists of three full-time registered nurses, a clinic aide, three secretaries, an outreach worker, a worker for the WIC nutrition program, and a part-time worker in the sexually transmitted disease (STD) control program. At least four professional staff based in other cities utilizes the clinic facilities for their practice in Ben Hill County. Primary services delivered by the health department today are family planning, children's health services, immunizations, STD screening and counseling, and client health education.

Assessment

- With an average occupancy rate of 35-40 percent, bed space in Dorminy Medical Center is more than adequate for the planning period.
- Public health and mental health services are guided by regional agencies and are designed to meet local needs based on state standards and guidelines.
- Plans are being prepared to construct a physician’s park facility for doctors associated with the Center.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

Inventory

The Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission administer the City of Fitzgerald’s water system. The water supply system consists of five deep wells, which have an aggregate pumping capacity of 5,200 gallons per minute. One of these wells was just recently added to the system, and increased the system's pumping capacity by 1,000 gallons per minute. Well locations are indicated on Map 4-2, and well capacities by location are indicated in Table 4-1.

TABLE 4-1 WELL CAPACITIES AND LOCATION FITZGERALD WATER, LIGHT AND BOND			
		FACILITY	CAPACITY (GPM)
Well F	-	Glen Bass Road	1,000
Well G	-	Frank Road	1,000
Well H	-	Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Airport	1,000
Well I	-	Irwinville Highway	1,200
Well J	-	Joshlyn Road	1,000

TOTAL PUMPING CAPACITY	5,200
-------------------------------	-------

Source: Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission, August 2005.

The City of Fitzgerald's 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. According to officials of the Water, Light and Bond Commission and their consulting engineers, average daily usage in 2004 averaged 2 million gallons per day. Based on system design, the water withdrawal system is currently capable of producing in excess of 7.5 million gallons per day.

Water storage capacity for the system totals 1,750,000 gallons consisting of five elevated storage tanks. Storage facility locations are indicated on Map 4-2, and storage location by capacity are indicated in Table 4-2.

TABLE 4-2 TREATED WATER STORAGE FACILITIES FITZGERALD WATER, LIGHT AND BOND	
FACILITY	CAPACITY (GPM)
Colony City Industrial Park Tank	250,000
Industrial Drive Tank	250,000
Downtown Tank	500,000
Irwinville Highway	500,000
Joshlyn Road	250,000
TOTAL	1,750,000

Source: Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission, August 2005.

Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond's water distribution system not only serves the entire City of Fitzgerald, but also serves a large portion of the urban and urbanizing fringe area located in unincorporated Ben Hill County adjacent to the city's corporate limits. The water distribution system consists of lines from two to twelve inches in diameter, and is illustrated on Map 4-3.

Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond have estimated that more than 99 percent of the households within Fitzgerald's corporate limits are served by the public water system. The 2004 number of residential, commercial and industrial water customers totals 3,854 in the city, 1,801 rural or non-city customers for a total of 5,655. Table 4-3 lists water system customers beginning in 2002.

**TABLE 4-3
WATER CUSTOMER ANALYSIS
FITZGERALD WATER, LIGHT AND BOND
2002 - 2004**

		RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	TOTAL
2002	(City)	3,442	376	26	3,844
	(County)	1,665	88	35	1,788
	Total	5,107	464	61	5,632
2003	(City)	3,394	396	25	3,815
	(County)	1,640	88	33	1,761
	Total	5,034	484	58	5,576
2004	(City)	3,426	404	24	3,854
	(County)	1,680	88	33	1,801
	Total	5,106	492	57	5,655

Source: Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission, August 2005.

Assessment

- Current consumption is approximately two million gallons per day and the system is currently capable, based on twelve hour pumping cycles, of producing in excess of six million gallons per day...more than adequate for the planning period. The system is capable of supporting industrial expansions.
- Elevated water storage capacities indicate excellent system pressure and availability for firefighting.
- Minimum standards for new line construction should be established, with sizing allowing for fire hydrant installation based on urban use standards. This should be coordinated between the city and the Water, Light and Bond Commission and should be reflected in local development standards.

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

Inventory

Like the public water system, the Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission administer the City of Fitzgerald's public sewer system. The system currently serves over 3,900 customers, the vast majority of whom are located within the city limits. It is estimated that over 98 percent of the households within the city's corporate limits are served by the public sewer system. Table 4-4 lists sewer system customers beginning in 2002.

**TABLE 4-4
SEWER CUSTOMER INFORMATION
FITZGERALD WATER, LIGHT AND BOND
2002 - 2004**

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	TOTAL
2002 (City)	3,293	342	12	3,647
(County)	281	21	17	319
Total	3,574	363	29	3,966
2003 (City)	3,226	358	13	3,597
(County)	273	22	18	313
Total	3,499	380	31	3,910
2004 (City)	3,220	362	12	3,594
(County)	276	23	21	320
Total	3,496	385	33	3,914

Source: Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission, August 2005.

The sewer collection system consists of small collector lines of 4-inches up to large 36-inch interceptor lines, which take the effluent to the wastewater treatment plan. A system schematic is presented on Map 4-3.

The sewer 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, and according to Water, Light and Bond officials, averaged slightly less than 2.8 million gallons per day in 2004. The installation of the advanced secondary treatment system eliminated seven pump stations and the city's three old oxidation ponds.

The sewer collection system is currently in an ongoing rehabilitation program, which is designed to eliminate the system's infiltration problems. The rehabilitation program will greatly aid with problems experienced during periods of wet weather, and resolution of this inflow problem will lead to the resolution of a major finding in the 201 Wastewater Facilities Management Plan.

Assessment

- C. A. Newcomer Wastewater Treatment Facility has 6.0 Million Gallons a Day (MGD) capacity. Usage averaged slightly less than 2.8 MGD in 2004.
- The sanitary sewer collection system is currently in an ongoing rehabilitation program, which should eliminate the system's wet weather infiltration problems.
- The sanitary sewer system has a 53 percent reserve capacity, which should be adequate for the planning period. This sewer reserve capacity has positive implications for local industrial recruitment programs.

NATURAL GAS SYSTEM

Inventory

Unlike many communities, which receive natural gas services from private industry, the Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission afford Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County residents this service. For many years, Water, Light and Bond purchased natural gas for distribution from the South Georgia Natural Gas Company. As costs continued to escalate, the Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond joined other Georgia cities providing this service to

form the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG), and in 1987 were successful as a part of MGAG in making bulk gas purchase direct from the wellhead. Transmission of the natural gas is through the pipelines of the Southern Natural Gas Company and the South Georgia Natural Gas Company.

The natural gas system consists of approximately fifty miles of distribution lines with a propane air peak shaving facility located on South Main Street Extension. Map 4-4 shows location and line size of the natural gas system.

Water, Light and Bond also provides liquefied petroleum (LP) gas service in Ben Hill County, and this gas is purchased on the open market for distribution for sale to all classes of customers. The liquefied petroleum storage facility has a 3,052,051 cubic feet capacity.

Assessment

- Rate advantages available for industrial customers will continue to support industrial recruitment.

ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Inventory

Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond also provides electrical service to the major portions of Fitzgerald and a limited service district in Ben Hill County. Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond base power allocations are from federally owned projects administered by Southeastern Power Administration (SEPA). All power and energy above its SEPA allotment are purchased from the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG). MEAG is a consortium of Georgia communities, which has banded together to invest in power generation facilities in order to allow its member communities to control costs associated with electrical energy purchases.

The electric distribution system covers a service area of approximately 23 square miles, and the system consists of four substations and 86 miles of 12.47 KV lines. The old power substation on Hooker Street has just been replaced by a new substation on Oconee, which will more than double the capacity of Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond's distribution system. A system schematic is presented on Map 4-5.

Assessment

- Having four substations to double the capacity of local distribution system, the electric distribution will adequately serve the needs throughout the twenty-year planning period.
- Rate advantages and ample availability of electrical power will strongly support industrial recruitment.
- Outside the Fitzgerald urban area Irwin Electric Cooperative serves the electrical needs in Ben Hill County.

SOLID WASTE

Inventory

The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 required all local governments in Georgia to develop a ten-year solid waste management plan. Ben Hill County, along with the following counties: Brooks, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Tift and Turner have jointly prepared and gained Georgia Departments of Natural Resources and Community Affairs concurrence on the South Georgia Multi-Jurisdictional Solid Waste Management Plan on September 18, 1992. Ben Hill adopted their individual solid waste management plan in 1992, amended the five-year work programs in 1998 and 2003. New local comprehensive planning standards and procedures and solid waste management planning standards and procedures became effective in 2004. Ben Hill County opted to prepare separate ten-year documents for the joint local comprehensive plan

and the solid waste management plan.

Since 1993, all county/city solid waste is collected by county/city sanitation departments and disposed in the public Sub-Title D landfill in Ben Hill County. In 2004, a transfer station was constructed and municipal solid waste is transferred to Pecan Row Landfill in Lowndes County. There are assurances in writing that these solid wastes can be disposed for ten years. The proposed “2006-2016 Ben Hill County Solid Waste Management Plan” includes programs and strategies to more effectively reduce the amount of solid waste and intensify recycling efforts. Ben Hill County is now implementing their action programs.

Assessment

- The Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County sanitary landfill and transfer station will adequately serve the solid waste needs throughout the twenty-year planning period
- To meet state law, alternative strategies need to be pursued to reduce the per capita waste volume by twenty-five percent. Emphasis should be placed on re-use of construction and demolition wastes to meet this state goal.

TRANSPORTATION

STREETS AND ROADS

Inventory

Seven major highways serve Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County. A general location map of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County is presented on Map 4-6, and will depict the city and county relationship to the regional road system. U. S. 319 enters Ben Hill County from the south, and turns northeast towards the Ocmulgee River. The federal route provides access between Tifton and Dublin, ultimately tying Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County to Interstates 16 and 75. In 2004, according to traffic data obtained from the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT), average daily traffic along U. S. 319/U. S. 129 from the Ben Hill County line north to the Perimeter Road, locally known as Industrial Drive, was 5,398 vehicles. Traffic counts east of the city limits to County Road 11 documented 4,826 vehicles daily. Additional access to Tifton is afforded to Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County via Georgia 125, which enters the southwest portion of the county. Average daily traffic along Georgia 125 west of Industrial Drive to the county line averaged 1,919 trips daily in 2004.

U. S. 129 traverses the county on a north-south axis, and provides access between Valdosta to the south and Macon to the north. U. S. 129 experiences the heaviest daily traffic volumes in Ben Hill County; from Industrial Drive north to the U. S. 129 one-way pair, this roadway segment averaged 10,652 vehicles daily according to 1989 DOT reports. 1989 traffic volume immediately north of the Fitzgerald city limits to Industrial Drive was 2,700 vehicles per day.

State Route 107 provides direct access from Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County to Interstate 75 and the route bisects Turner County to the west. 1989 traffic volume, along Georgia 107 from Walker Avenue west to the county line was 1,400 vehicles per day.

State Route 90 links Fitzgerald with Rebecca through the northwest corner of Ben Hill County, with a 1989 traffic volume of 2,536 vehicles per day from Jack Allen Road north to Industrial Drive.

Georgia 206 runs southeasterly through Ben Hill County and provides a connector route to Douglas, Georgia. Average daily traffic in 1989 along this route from County Road 811 southeast to the county line averaged between 1,176 and 1,849 vehicles per day.

The remaining major highway serving Ben Hill County is State Route 182, which serves as a connector paralleling the Ocmulgee River from Georgia 90 to U. S. 319, which ultimately ties in to U. S. 441.

These federal and state routes converge on Fitzgerald's "Philadelphia Plan" grid system of local roads. The Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County community has worked since the late 1950's to develop a local perimeter road system to effectively interconnect the local and state/federal roads system, and in 1988, the last leg of the perimeter road system was completed.

There are a total of 534 miles of roadway in Greater Ben Hill County. Within the City of Fitzgerald there are 97 miles of streets (96 miles of paved streets and less than one mile of dirt streets). Within Ben Hill County there are 437 miles of roads (249 miles of paved roads and 188 miles of dirt roads).

Additional heavy average daily traffic volumes were noted within the county's urban area and the City of Fitzgerald and included Perry House Road, the city's internal drives: Roanoke, Merrimac, Sultana, and Monitor, as well as Central Avenue, Main Street and Lee Streets. Maps 4-7 and 4-8 present a graphic depiction of the city and county's heaviest traveled roadways.

The City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County, working with the Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Planning Commission, have prepared a functional classification system for the community's road and street networks. The functional classification system provides a useful tool for public management in that road systems are classified according to the character of service that they provide. Roads provide two basic functions: access to property and corridors for the movement of people and goods. Maps 4-9 and 4-10 illustrate the functional classification of streets and roads in Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County. These classifications are:

1. Arterial Roadways. These roadways are designed to carry relatively large traffic volumes throughout the community and to major trip-generating destinations such as centers of employment and large shopping districts. On a countywide perspective, these roadways serve to connect Fitzgerald to the state's major roadway network.
2. Collectors. Collector roads are, as the name implies, designed to collect traffic from the local street system and carry it to the arterial roadway system. While experiencing greater volumes and typically speeds than the local road network, these roadways also provide access to abutting properties.
3. Local Streets. These are low volume streets whose primary function is to provide access to abutting properties.

Assessment

- Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County should utilize its functional classification system to assist in prioritization of local road maintenance/new road construction projects.
- The city and county should continue their strong participation in the Ga. DOT Local Assistance Roads Program (LARP) for resurfacing improvements and in the DOT city/county contracts program for new road construction.
- Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County will continue to implement the local transportation plan that specifies road improvements and also assist to improve local prioritization for LARP resurfacing.
- Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County should continue to work with the Department of Transportation in its five year work program - specific projects include:

Current Six Year \$1.5M Improvement Program

-

-

State Transportation Improvement Program

- S. R. 90 Little House Creek Bridge Replacement at 7.1 miles north of Fitzgerald.
 - Upgrade traffic signals at various locations in Ben Hill, Turner and Worth Counties.
 - Construct Jefferson Davis Heritage Trail.
- City and county subdivision ordinances should be revised to more fully coordinate with current zoning codes and should address current city/county requirements of developers in building of new streets.

RAIL SERVICE

Inventory

Rail freight service is provided to Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County by the Seaboard Coast Line system (CSX). The mainline traverses the southern portion of the county and ties Fitzgerald to Waycross and Brunswick on the east and to Cordele and Richland on the west, continuing into Alabama. Local spurs serve the Colony City and Forward Fitzgerald Industrial Park on the city's eastern city limits, and a local rail-switching yard is located on the city's northwestern limits.

Assessment

- Railroad crossings should be studied and appropriate safety measures installed.

AVIATION

Inventory

Fitzgerald Municipal Airport (KFZG), located approximately 2.5 miles southwest of downtown Fitzgerald, provides general aviation services and is a strategic gateway of commerce and economic development in Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County and the surrounding area. The facility includes a 5002-foot by 100-foot paved, lighted runway 01/19 with a parallel taxiway and a 3400' x 300' grass runway 15/33. The airport is equipped with modern navigational and weather aids including non-precision instrument Localizer Rwy 01 approach with ODALS, a Runway 01 NDB approach, VASI Runway 01/19, Ground Communications Outlet (GCO), Rotating Beacon, and Automated Weather Observation Station (AWOS-II). The fixed-base operator located in the new 4,500 SF Terminal provides 24-hour automated fuel service (Jet-A; 100LL), tie-down, twenty-nine (29) Tee Hangar units and local ground transportation

Currently, the airport surpasses the minimum standards of the Level II – Business Airport of Local Impact Airport System Development Criteria as detailed in the Georgia Department of Transportation Statewide Aviation System Plan. According to GADOT Intermodal Programs-Aviation Statistics, Fitzgerald Municipal Airport provided facilities for twenty-eight (28) locally based aircraft in 2005 and provided services for services for 4,027 flight operations during 2004.

By 2008, the airport will undergo a \$2.5M expansion with a 500-foot extension to runway 01 and the addition of an Instrument Landing System (ILS) with a full-precision instrument approach, Glide Slope and appropriate approach lighting. The five year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) currently on file with the GADOT Aviation office outlines the improvement schedule and includes construction of an internal vehicle access road, upgraded Localizer, expansion of the existing aircraft apron at the Terminal with connector taxiway, installation of security fencing around the full perimeter of the airport property and strengthening of existing parallel taxiway and itinerant aircraft apron. These improvements will establish the airport as a Level III – Business Airport of

III – Business Airport of Regional Impact under GADOT criteria.

The closest scheduled passenger service for Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County is in Valdosta and Albany.

Assessment

- The \$1.354M expansions include the 500-foot runway extension and this entire improvement program will raise the airport classification from Level II Business Airport of Local Impact to Level III Business Airport of Regional Impact.

RECREATION

Inventory

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Department of Leisure Services (DLS) is a joint service delivery arm of the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County. The Department of Leisure Services, which is administratively linked to the City of Fitzgerald, is guided by a five-man Board of Commissioners, three appointed by the City of Fitzgerald and two appointed by the Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners. The Fitzgerald City Council and the Ben Hill County Board of Commissioners in their annual budgeting process jointly provide funding for the department.

The Department of Leisure Services has four full-time professional staff, six full-time paraprofessionals, and two part-time employees. The staff provides a broad range of athletic programs and opportunities for both youths and adults, conducts various instructional programs including ceramics, dancing, and summer camps, and has a strong program geared toward the needs of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County's senior citizens. The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County DLS manages nine parks.

Ben Hill County maintains a 10.5 acre river access park in the northeast portion of the county off U. S. 319 which affords public access to the Ocmulgee River.

A description of Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County recreational facilities is presented in Table 4-5.

TABLE 4-5

OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>
Blue and Gray Park	East Palm Street	13.0
Baseball field, bleachers, grills, picnic tables, shelter, basketball courts, restrooms, natural area, playground equipment		
Boggus Park	West Sultana Drive	6.6
Lighted baseball field, restrooms, concessions, press box, natural area		
Compton Park	South Merrimac Drive	23.5
Three lighted baseball/softball/soccer fields, covered dugouts, bleachers, electric scoreboards, two press boxes, batting cages, lighted volleyball/tennis courts, restrooms, concessions, picnic tables, natural area		

Legion park	North Main Street	6.6
Legion Center, DLS offices, picnic tables, grills, barbecue pit, playground equipment, lighted horseshoe courts, lighted outdoor basketball court, outdoor swimming pool, bathhouse, natural area		
Lions Club Park	Perry House Road	8.2
Complex for 18-and-under baseball/softball. Four lighted fields, playground equipment, bleachers, rest-rooms, concessions, press box, electric scoreboards, covered dugouts, warm-up pitching mounds, batting cages.		
Monitor Park	South Monitor Drive	4.8
Monitor Center, swimming pool, bathhouse, playground equipment, outdoor basketball court, picnic tables, grills, baseball practice field, and Monitor Gym which houses two basketball goals, electric score clock, portable bleachers, concessions, and wrest-ling balcony		
Paulk Park	Perry House Road	95.0
30-acre stocked fishing lake, canoe and sail boating, boat ramp, sheltered picnic area, grill, restrooms, two 300 foot softball fields, 30 trailer camping sites with electric and water hookups (6 with direct septic), dump stations, security lights, jogging trail, concert shelter, eight- acre parking area, resident caretaker natural areas. Lodge, laundry, twenty recreational vehicle parking sites, two baseball fields		
Palm Street park	West Palm Street	1.0
Six lighted, surfaced tennis courts, bleachers, picnic tables		
Wheeler Park	West Wheeler Avenue	6.9
Four practice baseball fields, natural area, walking track, restrooms, playground equipment		
Ben Hill County Landing	U. S. 319 North	10.5
Public boat ramp, restroom facilities, tot lot, picnic tables, shelter and grills		
Grand Plaza park	Pine/Main Street	0.5
Stage, tables and chairs, fountain		
Hunter School Park	J. C. Hunter Drive	5.0
Playground equipment, multi-purpose field		
TOTAL		181.6

Source: Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Department of Leisure Services, 2005.

**TABLE 4-6
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES SUMMARY**

FACILITY	EXISTING
Baseball/softball fields	1 ¹
Basketball courts	15
Tennis courts	4
Swimming pools	6
River Access (10.5 AC)	1
	1
TOTAL ACREAGE	181.6 Acres

¹ Fields are converted each fall; for football and for soccer

Source: Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Department of Leisure Services, 2005.

Standards from the National Parks and Recreation Association were selected for comparison with the existing recreational facilities in Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County and are listed in Table 4-7.

TABLE 4-7 COUNTY/COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES STANDARDS	
FACILITY TYPE	STANDARD
Baseball/softball fields	1/3,000 population
Basketball courts	1/5,000 population
Tennis courts	1/2,000 population
Swimming pools	1/10,000 population
TOTAL PARK ACREAGE	10 acres/1,000 Population

Source: National Recreation and Park Association, 1983. Modified by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Applying standards to Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County's current population of 18,294 provides the analysis presented in Table 4-8.

TABLE 4-8 BEN HILL COUNTY/FITZGERALD RECREATION FACILITY DEFICIENCY ANALYSIS				
	Existing Facilities	Percent of Standard	Standard Met	Facilities Needed to Meet Standard
Baseball/Softball fields	15	100.0%	Yes	--
Basketball courts	4	100.0%	Yes	--
Tennis courts	6	33.3%	No	-3-
Swimming pools	1	100.0%	Yes	--
Total Park Acreage	181.6	99.3%	No	1.3

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

As is indicated in Table 4-8 above, Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County either meet or exceed standards in four of five areas, with total recommended park acreage falling only 1.3 acres below the identified standard. Recreational preferences from community to community can vary widely, depending upon preferences of the local user population. While comparison with national or state standards can assist in facility assessment, actual need for specific facilities should be based on local user preference. By applying these standards to population projections presented in Chapter One, projections of future facility needs can be calculated.

**TABLE 4-9
BEN HILL COUNTY/FITZGERALD CITY
ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Facility	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Park Acreage	1.3	18	16	10	9
Baseball/Softball fields	-	-	-	-	-
Basketball courts	-	-	-	-	-
Tennis courts	3			1	-
Swimming pools	-	-	-	-1	-

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Assessment

- Accepted recreation standards indicate an existing shortage of 1.3 acres of recreational land, and by the year 2025 a total of 35.7 additional acres of recreational land will need to be acquired and developed. This will include the addition of one new swimming pool by 2020.
- This assessment assumes that Ben Hill County has jurisdiction of the Ben Hill County Landing Park facility. This is a nature-oriented facility and provides a public access to the Ocmulgee River.
- Plans are being prepared to develop a twenty-acre site for a skeet shooting range and locate it at the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Landfill.

CULTURAL FACILITIES

Inventory

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Arts Council is an umbrella organization coordinating events and facilities in the area. The renovation of the Grand Theatre, one of Fitzgerald's historic downtown buildings, was a major project initiated by the Arts Council, and can be utilized for a welcome center, Main Street office, conference center and hosts a variety of performances and special events.

The Monitor Community Center is located at 502 South Monitor Drive and is a 8,120 SF building constructed in 1970. The center includes a gymnasium and is rented for family unions and used for an after school enrichment program with retired local teachers.

The Blue and Gray Museum, housed in the rehabilitated train depot that now houses several of Fitzgerald's governmental offices, is open afternoons and attracts 1,000 visitors annually.

Assessment

- Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County should continue to support the Grand Theatre project, which has made major redevelopment implications for the city's downtown.
- The Blue and Grey Museum will continue to be supported with public funds.
- The old Depot Building is going to be renovated and provide offices for the City-County Literacy Center, Historical Preservation Commission and expansion of the Blue and Gray Museum.
- All of these buildings are under a constant maintenance program and will serve the needs throughout the twenty-year planning period.

LIBRARY

Inventory

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Public Library, located at 123 North Main Street in downtown Fitzgerald, is one of Georgia's thirteen stand-alone libraries. The library is operated under the direction of the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library Board of Trustees, a seven-member governing authority comprised of four city appointees and three county appointees. The library functionally operates under the Georgia State Public Library Services Division of the Georgia Department of Education, and the State of Georgia recognizes the Library Board of Trustees as the local entity responsible for the operation of the facility.

Local funding for the library is shared by the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County on a 50/50 funding basis, respectively. The Library Director, who is administratively tied to the Fitzgerald City Administrator, manages operations of the facility.

The 12,000 square foot facility was constructed in 1984 and has 64,000 titles, 1,900 audio volumes, 1,760 video volumes, and currently subscribes to 170 periodicals. The library offers a unique children's section, a genealogy/ local history room, and a large conference-meeting room, which is available to the public on a reservation basis. The library has eleven public internet computers, three internal computers for library access,, two word processors, four children only computers, one computer for genealogy and six staff computers.

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library also operates numerous community outreach and educational programs and has sponsored special programs on Black History, poetry readings, a parents Halloween safety program and a gospel sing.

Assessment

- Based on Department of Education standards and local growth projections, Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County will maintain excellence standards throughout the twenty-year planning period.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Inventory

In July of 1990, following the recommendation of a joint study committee on school consolidation, local voters approved dissolving the independently chartered City Board of Education. In November of 1990, voters countywide elected the first seven-member Ben Hill County Consolidated School Board.

The Ben Hill County Consolidated Board of Education has 268 certificated personnel who include 242 teachers and 22 supported staff, including central office staff, principals, assistant principals, and counselors and media

specialists. One hundred ninety-five (195) non-certificated staff supports the operation of the system and includes para-professionals, secretarial, maintenance and lunchroom workers and the system's bus drivers.

A breakdown by school, location, grades, and teachers shows the Ben Hill County Consolidated Board of Education operates four schools with (total) teachers and (total) support personnel.

TABLE 4-10: TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF BEN HILL COUNTY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	TEACHERS	SUPPORT STAFF
Ben Hill Co. Elementary	327 Dewey McGlamry Road	Grades 03 - 05	51	35
Ben Hill Co. Middle School	134 J. C. Hunter Drive	Grades 06-08	57	33
Ben Hill Primary School	221 J. C. Hunter Drive	PK-02	71	71
Fitzgerald High School	601 West Cypress Street	09-12	63	38

Source: Ben Hill County Consolidated Board of Education, 2005.

**TABLE 4-11
BEN HILL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

Facility	Years of Construction Renovations	Acreage
Ben Hill Elementary	1920, 1984	20.19
Ben Hill Middle School	1996	100.64
Ben Hill Primary School	1996	60.0
Fitzgerald High School	1971, 1981, 1988	24.11
TOTAL		204.94

Source: Ben Hill County Consolidated Board of Education, 2005.

The consolidation of the formerly independent school systems has followed a cooperative program of open discussions and joint meetings of both former school boards since the consolidation work begun in 1989. The staff of the Ben Hill County Board of Education, working with the State Department of Education and the elected school board, follows their master plan for operation of the consolidated school system. This plan includes the staffing needs, current and projected school populations, facility adequacy, and school programs.

Staff of the Ben Hill County Board of Education has prepared, in cooperation with State Board of Education staff, the following school enrollment and age distribution projections to guide the local inventory and assessment process.

**TABLE 4-12: FITZGERALD/BEN HILL COUNTY
TRENDS IN ENROLLMENT**

The enrollment for Fitzgerald/Ben Hill has decreased at the rate of twenty-eight (28) students per year. Projected enrollment will stabilize and rise with population increases over the next ten years.

School Year	Total K-12 Enrollment
1995	3630
1996	3640
1997	3637
1998	3582
1999	3547
2000	3526
2001	3,425
2002	3,459
2003	3,363
2004	3,309
2005	3,320

Source: Georgia Department of Education 2005.

**TABLE 4-13
ENROLLMENT GRADE DISTRIBUTION
BASED ON 2005 STUDENT POPULATION OF 3,320**

PK/K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
502	248	252	242	243	226	236	251	232	252	270	186	180

Source: Georgia Department of Education, 2005.

Assessment

In the preparation of a new master plan for operations of the Ben Hill County School System, the Board of Education is considering many broad reaching changes to meet the requirements of Georgia's Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act, which includes numerous operational and school design and grouping changes.

COUNTY AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL

Increase an intensive mixture of employment, goods, services, and residential use in Activity Centers; link high intensity Activity Centers; provide a wide variety of residential and employment alternatives both inside and outside Activity Centers; and achieve the highest standards of quality in the urban environment.

POLICY

- Local services, such as schools, public safety and fire protection, public roads and streets, water, sanitary sewer and drainage facilities, and parks should be planned to be adequate for the population and employment densities anticipated. Areas of the community where local services are available should be developed first. New land should be opened for urbanization in a staged contiguous manner through a coordinated program of public service extensions. Cooperative arrangements between service providers are paramount. Where practical, investment in all services, including schools, shall be consistent with city and county future land use plans.

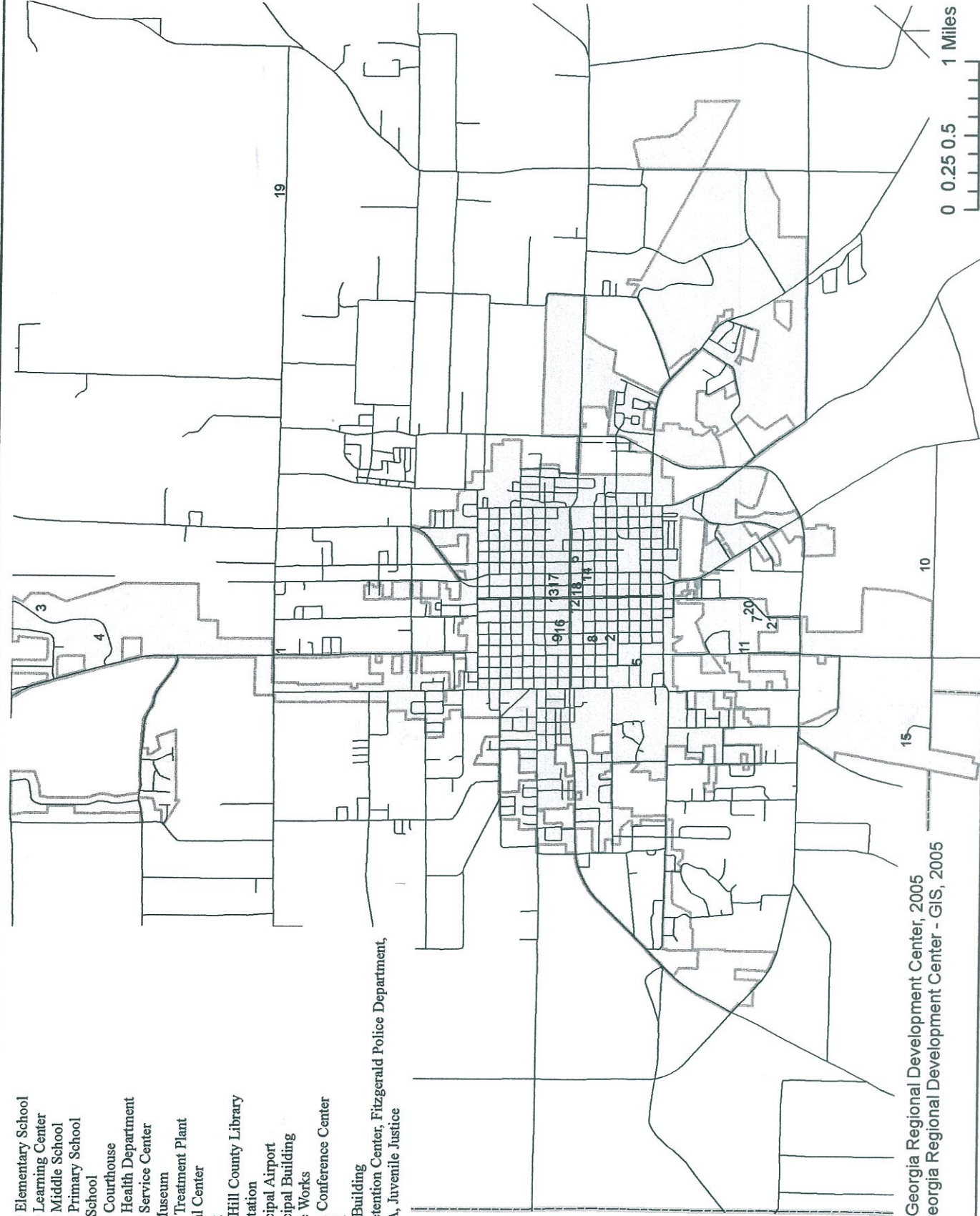
1. Ben Hill County Elementary School
2. Ben Hill County Learning Center
3. Ben Hill County Middle School
4. Ben Hill County Primary School
5. Fitzgerald High School
6. Ben Hill County Courthouse
7. Ben Hill County Health Department
8. Ben Hill County Service Center
9. Blue and Grey Museum
10. C.A. Newcomer Treatment Plant
11. Dorminy Medical Center
12. Federal Building
13. Fitzgerald / Ben Hill County Library
14. Fitzgerald Fire Station
15. Fitzgerald Municipal Airport
16. Fitzgerald Municipal Building
17. Fitzgerald Public Works
18. Grand Theater & Conference Center
19. Sanitary Landfill
20. Senior Citizen's Building
21. Sheriff Dept / Detention Center, Fitzgerald Police Department, 911 Center, EMA, Juvenile Justice

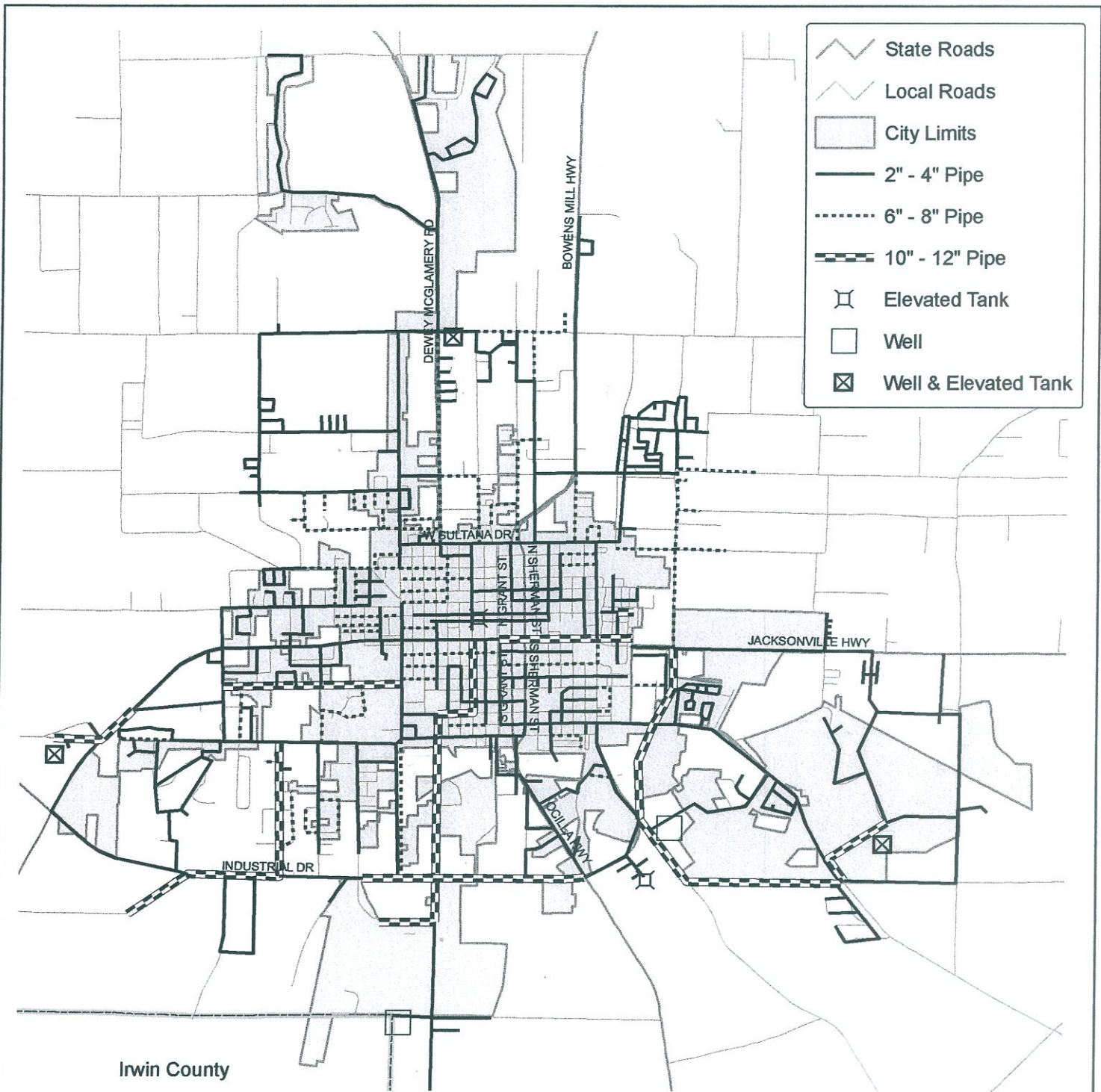


Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGRDC



MAP 4-1 FITZGERALD / BEN HILL COUNTY COMMUNITY AND COUNTY FACILITIES





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

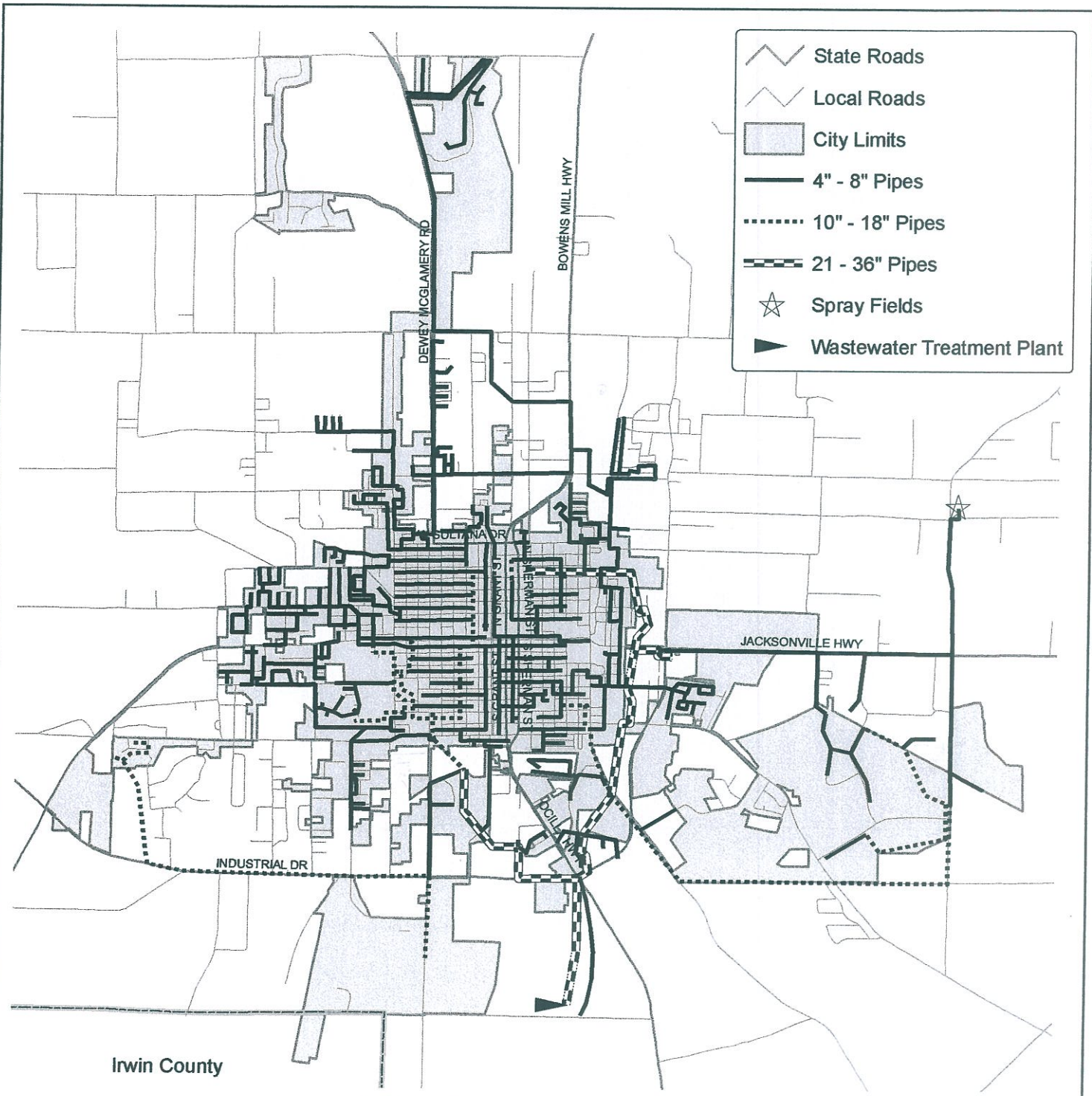
Irwin County

Water Lines continue
south to Ben Hill - Irwin
Tech School



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

MAP 4-2 CITY OF FITZGERALD WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM



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

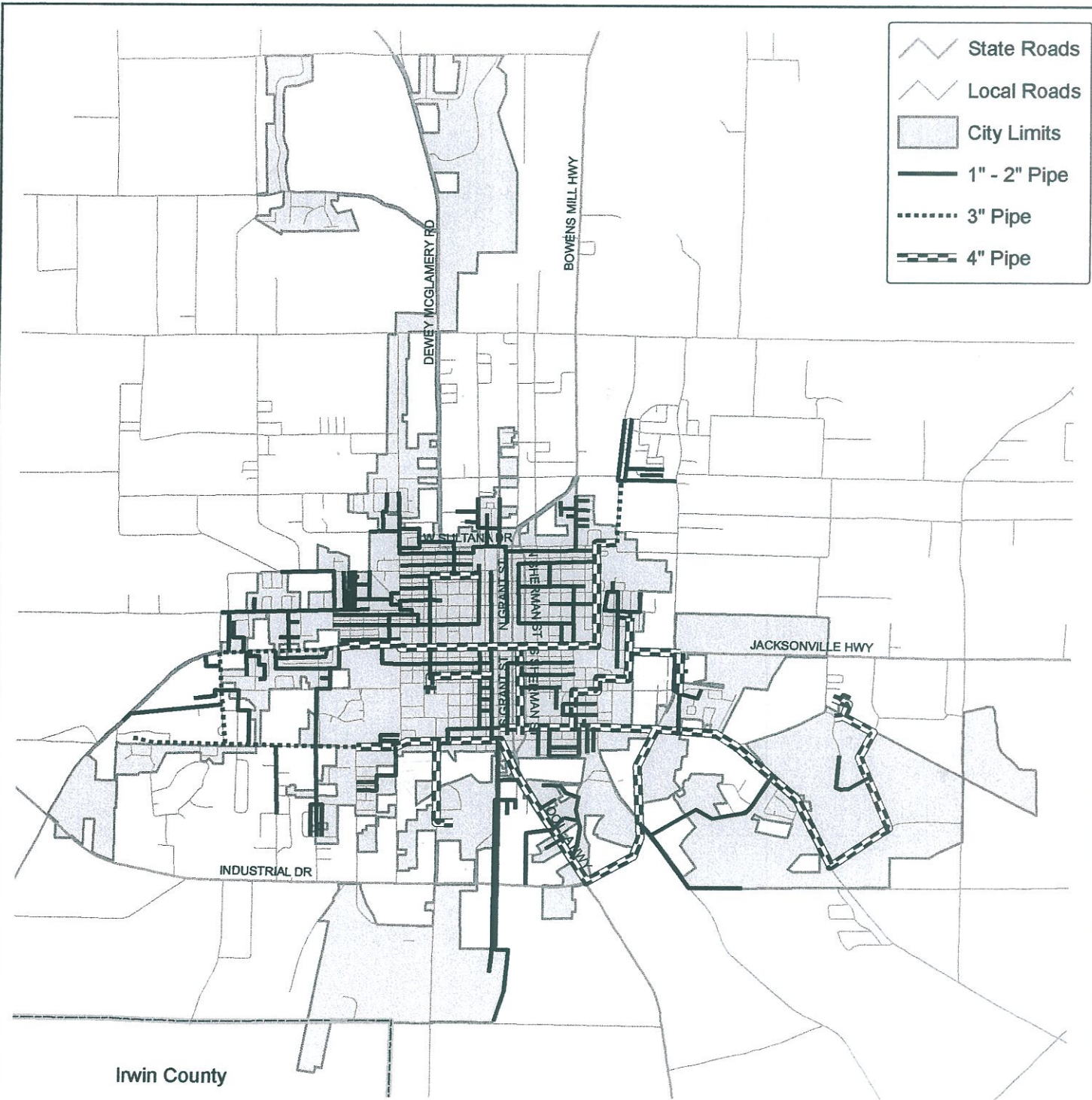
Irwin County

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



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

MAP 4-3 CITY OF FITZGERALD SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

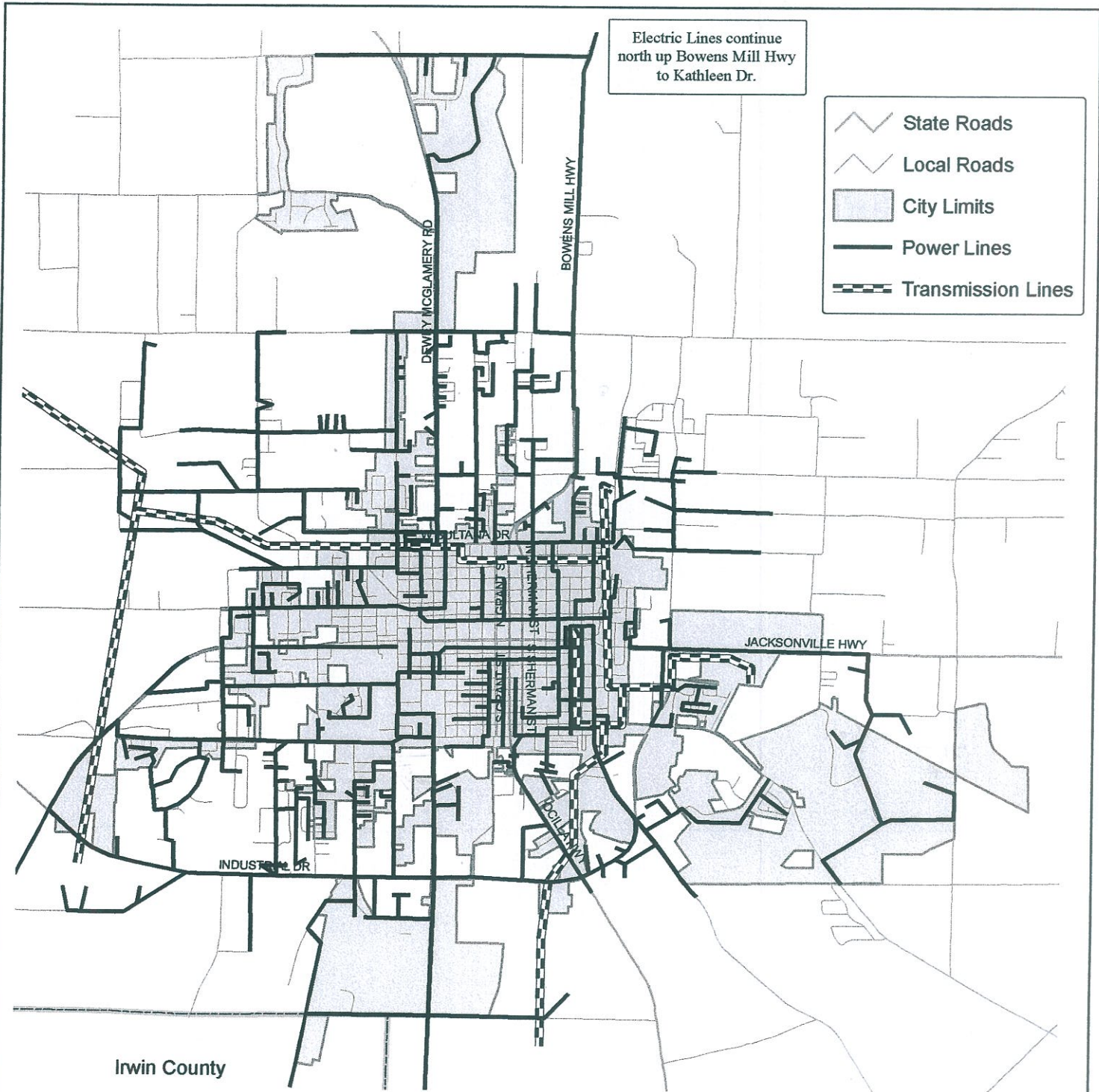


Irwin County



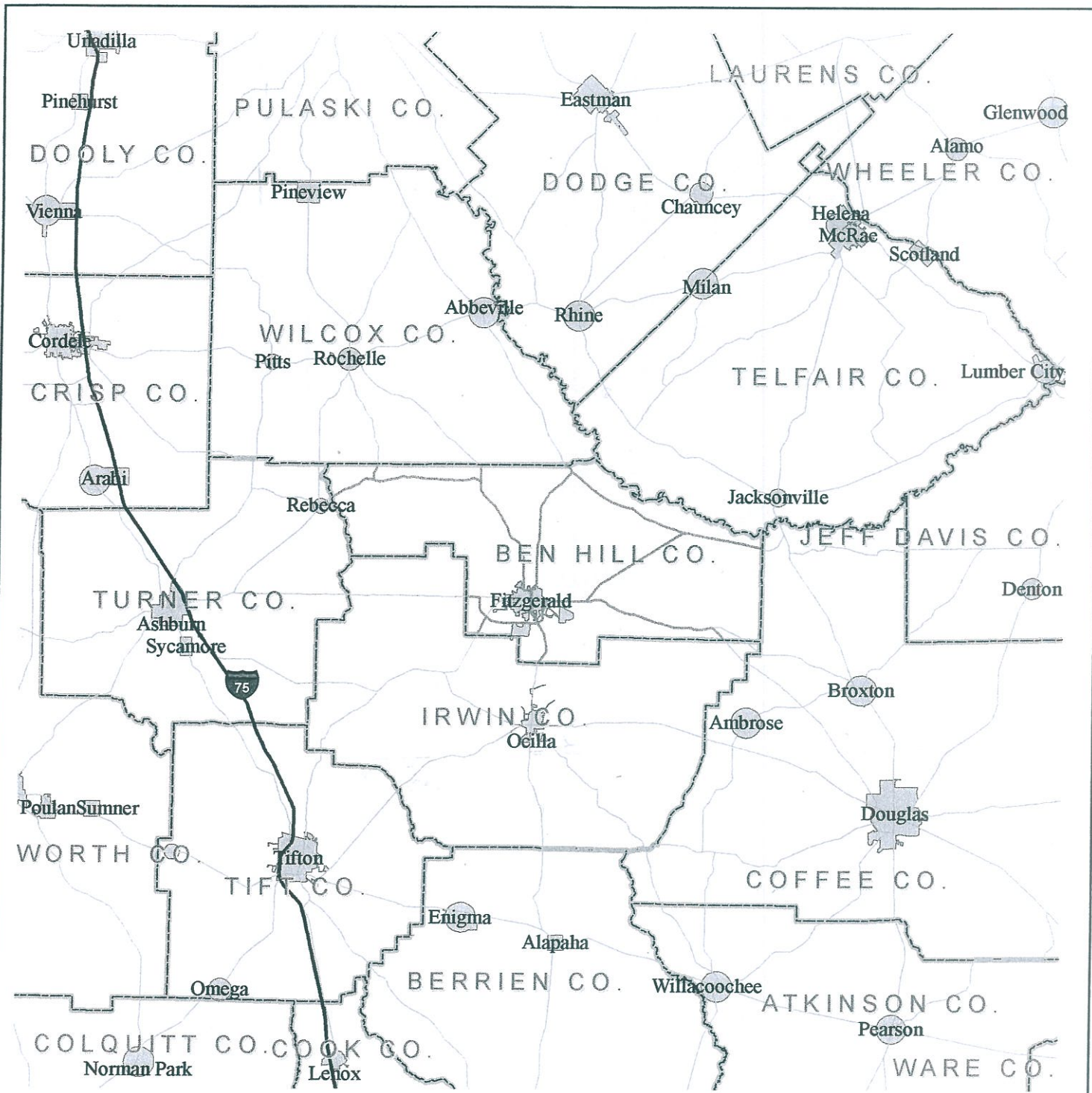
Source: Fitzgerald Water Light & Bond Commission, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGRDC, 2005

MAP 4-4 CITY OF FITZGERALD NATURAL GAS SYSTEM



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

MAP 4-5 CITY OF FITZGERALD ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

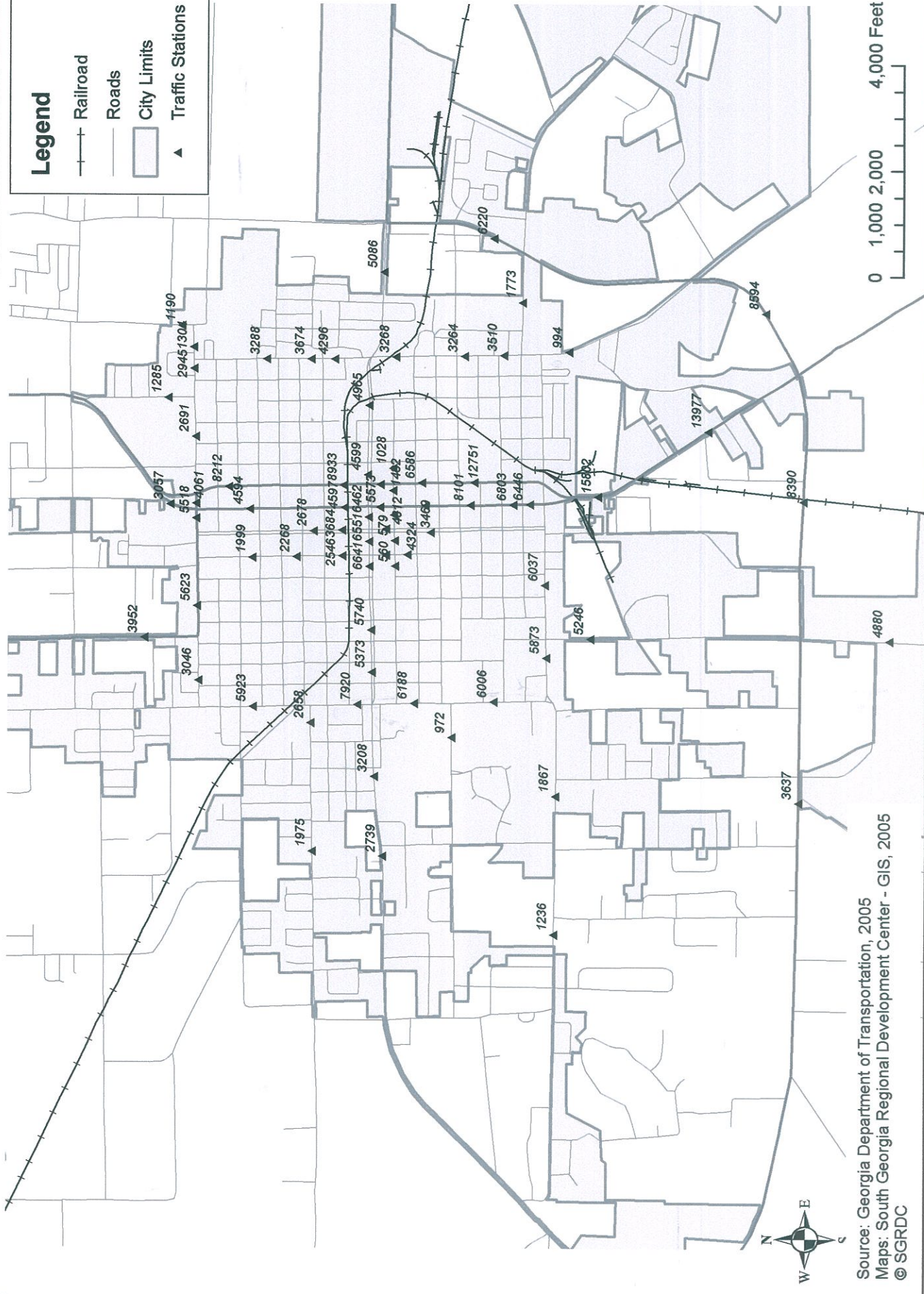


Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGRDC, 2005

MAP 4-6 BEN HILL COUNTY AND FITZGERALD GENERAL LOCATION

Legend

- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Traffic Stations

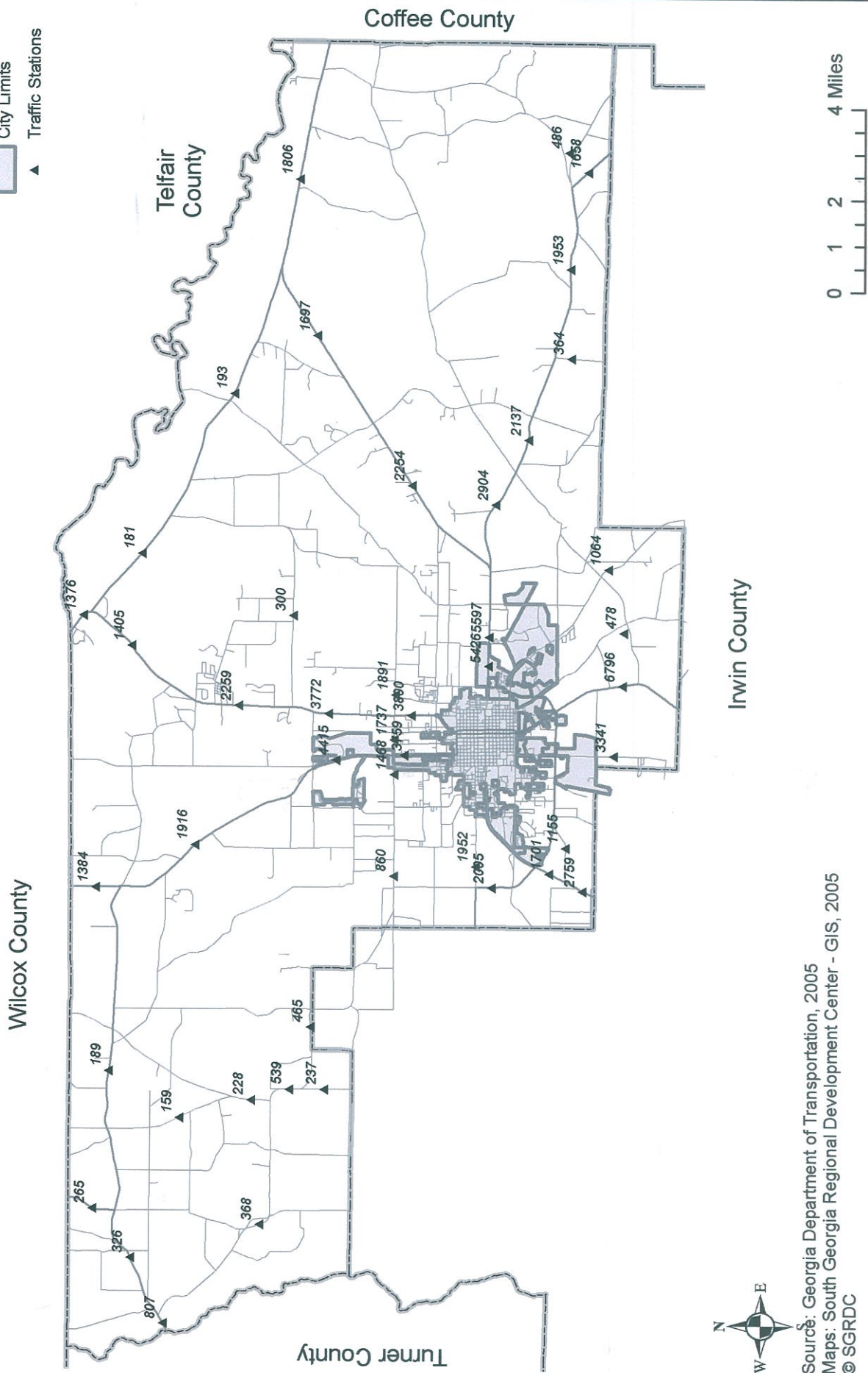


Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2005
Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
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MAP 4-7 FITZGERALD TRAFFIC VOLUMES

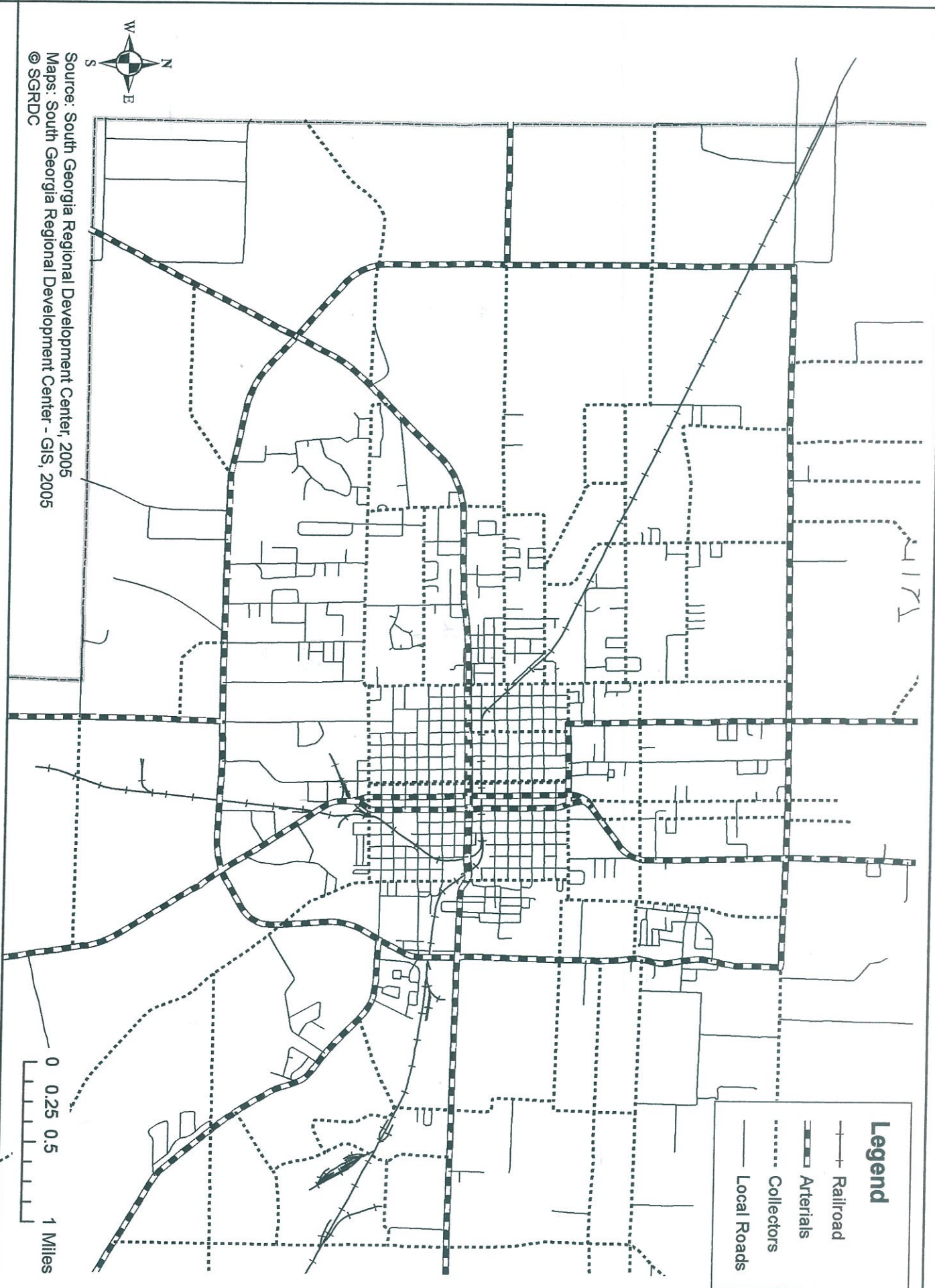
Legend

- State Roads
- Local Roads
- ▭ City Limits
- ▲ Traffic Stations



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGRDC

**MAP 4-8 BEN HILL COUNTY
 TRAFFIC VOLUMES**



Legend

- +— Railroad
- Arterials
- Collectors
- Local Roads



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGRDC

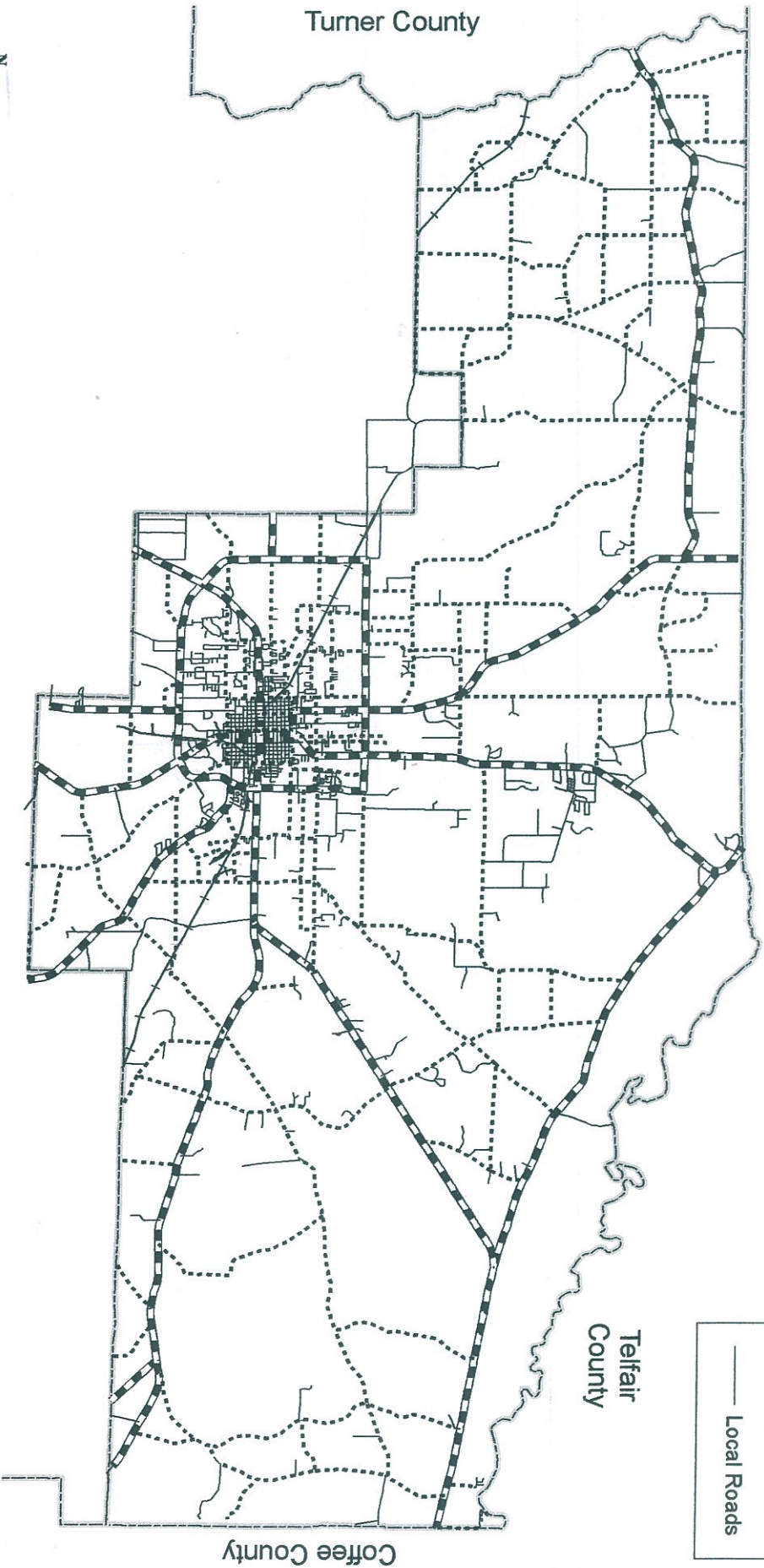


**MAP 4-9 FITZGERALD
 STREET AND ROAD CLASSIFICATION**



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
© SGRDC

Inwin County



Wilcox County

Telfair
County

Coffee County

Legend

- +— Railroad
- — — Arterials
- Collectors
- Local Roads



MAP 4-10 BEN HILL COUNTY STREET AND ROAD CLASSIFICATION

CHAPTER FIVE: HOUSING

It is important to take a close look at the existing housing supply in Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald to determine the types of housing needed in the next twenty years. A tabular summary of state, county and city housing data is presented to familiarize the reader with comparable and contrasting housing data and trends.

**TABLE 5-1
STATE OF GEORGIA HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

Category	1980	1990	2000		# Change 1980 - 2000	% Change
Total Units	2,012,640	2,638,418	3,281,737		1,269,097	63.1
Single Family	1,525,070	1,801,627	2,291,837	69.8	766,767	50.3
Multi-Family	334,622	508,903	681,019	20.8	346,397	103.5
Manufactured Homes	152,948	305,055	394,938	12.0	241,990	158.2
Owner Occupied Units	1,216,459	1,536,759	2,029,293	61.8	812,834	66.8
Renter Occupied Units	655,913	829,856	977,076	29.8	321,163	49.0
Vacant Units	140,988	271,803	275,378	8.4	134,380	95.3
Owner to Renter Vacancy Rate	NA	0.32	0.51			-
Owner Vac. Rate	NA	2.36	2.24			-
Renter Vac. Rate	NA	12.36	8.46			-
Built before 1939	296,662	212,294	192,972	5.9	-103,690	-35.0
Lacking complete plumbing	35,769	28,462	29,540	0.9	-6,229	-17.4
Median Value Owner Occupied	\$23,100	\$71,278	\$111,200	-	\$88,100	381.4
Lower Quartile		\$47,300	\$77,000			
Upper Quartile		\$102,100	\$167,000			
Median Rent	\$153	\$365	\$505	-	\$352	230.0
Lower Quartile		\$202	\$320			
Upper Quartile		\$466	\$692			
All other Units	4,289	22,833	4,313	0.1	24	0.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000.

NR = Not Reported

NA = Not Available

TABLE 5-2
BEN HILL COUNTY HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS
1980 - 2000

	Year-Round				All		1980 - 2000	
	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%	Change	%
Total Units	6,184		6,875		7,623		1,439	23.3
Single Family	4,923	79.6	4,585	66.7	5,062	66.4	139	2.8
Multi-Family	527	8.5	862	12.5	632	8.3	95	18.0
Manufactured Homes	734	11.9	1,428	20.8	1,918	25.2	1,184	161.3
Manufactured Homes Median Value	NR	--	NR	NR	\$26,900	-		
Vacant Units	514	8.3	903	13.1	950	12.5	436	84.8
Owner Occupied Units	3,828	61.9	3,962	57.6	4,448	58.3	620	16.2
Owner Vacancy Rate	NR	--	NR	3.0	-	3.0	-	-
Renter Occupied Units	1,842	29.8	2,010	29.2	2,225	29.2	383	20.8
Renter Vacancy Rate	NR	--	NR	12.3	-	15.0	-	-
Built before 1939	1,762	28.5	994	14.5	775	10.2	-987	-56.0
Lacking Complete Plumbing	202	3.3	92	1.3	97	1.3	-105	-52.0
Owner Median Value	\$25,100	--	\$42,300	--	\$60,700	-	\$35,600	141.8
25th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$27,100	--	\$41,000	-		-
75th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$63,100	--	\$86,700	-	-	-
Renter Median Rent	\$77	--	\$163	--	\$257	-	\$180	233.7
25th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$107	--	\$151	-	-	-
75th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$229	--	\$339	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000.

NR = Not Reported NA = Not Available

TABLE 5-3
UNINCORPORATED BEN HILL COUNTY HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS
1980 - 2000

	Year-Round				All		1980 - 2000	
	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%	Change	%
Total Units	2,136		3,154		3,592		1,456	68.2
Single Family	1,596	74.7	1,957	62.1	2,084	58.0	488	30.6
Multi-Family	71	3.3	140	4.4	36	1.0	-35	-49.3
Manufactured Homes	469	22.0	1,057	33.5	1,461	40.7	992	211.5
Vacant Units	217	10.1	416	13.2	432	12.0	215	99.0
Owner Occupied Units	1,457	68.2	2,087	66.2	2,513	70.0	1,056	72.3
Owner Vacancy Rate	NR	--	NR	--	-	-	-	-
Renter Occupied Units	462	21.6	651	20.6	647	18.0	185	40.0
Renter Vacancy Rate	NR	--	NR	--	-	-	-	-
Built before 1939	413	19.3	308	9.8	234	6.5	55	-13.3
Lacking Complete Plumbing	97	4.5	59	1.9	35	1.0	-62	-63.9
Owner Median Value	NA		NA	-	NA	-	NA	-
25th Percentile Value	NA	--	NA	--	NA	-	NA	-
75th Percentile Value	NA	--	NA	--	NA	-	NA	-
Renter Median Rent	NA	--	NA	--	NA	-	NA	-
25th Percentile Value	NA	--	NA	--	NA	-	NA	-
75th Percentile Value	NA	--	NA	--	NA	-	NA	-

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000.
 NR = Not Reported NA = Not Available

**TABLE 5-4
FITZGERALD HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS
1980 - 2000**

	Year-Round				All		1980 - 2000	
	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%	Change	%
Total Units	4,048		3,721		4,031		-17	-0.4
Single Family	3,327	82.2	2,628	70.6	2,978	73.9	-349	-10.5
Multi-Family	456	11.3	722	19.4	596	14.8	140	30.7
Manufactured Homes	265	6.5	371	10.0	457	11.3	192	72.5
Vacant Units	297	7.3	487	13.1	518	12.9	221	74.4
Owner Occupied Units	2,371	58.6	1,875	50.4	1,935	48.0	-436	-18.4
Owner Vacancy Rate	NR	--	NR	4.2	76	1.2	-	-
Renter Occupied Units	1,380	34.1	1,359	36.5	1,578	39.1	229	16.6
Renter Vacancy Rate	NR	--	NR	10.8	242	6.0	-	-
Built before 1939	1,349	33.3	686	18.4	541	13.1	-808	-59.9
Lacking Complete Plumbing	105	2.6	33	0.9	62	1.5	-43	-41.0
Owner Median Value	\$23,300	--	\$38,600	--	\$52,500	-	\$29,200	125.3
25th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$24,800	--	\$73,500	-	-	-
75th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$54,800	--	\$37,200	-	-	-
Renter Median Rent	\$73	--	\$158	--	\$244	-	\$171	234.2
25th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$103	--	\$129	-	-	-
75th Percentile Value	NR	--	\$225	--	\$337	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000.
NR = Not Reported NA = Not Available

**TABLE 5-5
1980 - 2025 BEN HILL COUNTY NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS**

Unit	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total County-City	6,184	6,875	6,673	7,068	7,432	7,773	8,065	8,316
Fitzgerald	3,256	3,620	3,513	3,643	3,734	3,887	3,952	4,075
Unincorp.	2,928	3,255	3,160	3,425	3,698	3,886	4,113	4,241
Region	61,783	66,061	76,532	81,006	85,293	89,213	92,652	95,305
State	1,882,038	2,383,291	3,022,410	3,265,030	3,501,680	3,727,580	3,929,140	4,108,410

NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE

Unit	1980 - 2000		2000 - 2005		2005 - 2015		2015 - 2025		2005 - 2025	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Co./City	489	7.9	395	5.9	705	10.0	543	7.0	1,248	17.7
Fitzgerald	257	7.9	130	3.7	244	6.7	188	4.8	432	11.9
Unincorp.	232	7.9	265	8.4	461	13.5	355	9.1	816	23.8
RDC	15,749	25.5	4,474	5.8	8,207	10.1	6,092	6.8	14,299	17.7
State	1,140,372	60.6	242,620	8.0	462,550	14.2	380,830	10.2	843,380	25.8

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2002; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Additional occupied housing units

	2000 - 2005	2005 - 2010	2010 - 2015	2015 - 2020	2020 - 2025	Total 2000 - 2025
Co./City	395	364	341	292	251	1,643
Fitzgerald	130	91	153	65	123	562
Unincorporated	265	273	188	227	128	1,081

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 2002, and South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

Table 5-6: Renter/Owner Housing Cost As A Percentage Of Household Income - 1980

Unit	RENTERS			HOMEOWNERS			Total Hsgholds	Total Hsgholds Greater than 30%	%	% Mobile Homes
	Households			Households						
	Costs Greater			Cost Greater						
	than 30%	Sub-Total	%	than 30%	Sub-total	%				
Ben Hill	477	1,167	40.80%	435	1,562	27.80%	2,729	912	33.40%	11.90%
Brooks	432	935	46.20%	419	1,815	23.10%	2,750	851	30.90%	14.00%
Cook	325	836	38.90%	536	2,133	25.10%	2,969	861	29.00%	12.10%
Echols	20	67	29.90%	25	259	9.70%	326	45	13.80%	24.00%
Irwin	209	530	39.40%	242	1,127	21.50%	1,657	451	27.20%	10.60%
Lanier	118	368	32.10%	137	676	20.30%	1,044	255	24.40%	18.20%
Lowndes	3,026	7,711	39.20%	2,004	10,182	19.70%	17,893	5,030	28.10%	10.20%
Tift	1,171	2,948	39.70%	916	4,713	19.40%	7,661	2,087	27.20%	14.80%
Turner	328	721	45.50%	307	1,179	26.00%	1,900	635	33.40%	10.40%
Region	6,106	15,283	40.00%	5,021	23,646	21.20%	38,929	11,127	28.60%	12.70%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, Summary Tape File 3A, 2000. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2003.

Table 5-7: Renter/Owner Housing Cost As A Percentage Of Household Income - 1990

Unit	RENTERS			HOMEOWNERS			Total Hsgholds	Total Hsgholds Greater than 30%	%	% Mobile Homes
	Households			Households						
	Costs Greater			Cost Greater						
	than 30%	Sub-Total	%	than 30%	Sub-total	%				
Ben Hill	771	1,749	44.10%	513	2,704	19.00%	4,453	1,284	28.80%	20.70%
Brooks	453	1,074	42.20%	543	1,982	27.40%	3,056	996	32.60%	36.80%
Cook	348	977	35.60%	331	2,136	15.50%	3,113	679	21.80%	27.10%
Echols	36	95	37.90%	43	252	17.10%	347	79	22.80%	42.90%
Irwin	254	574	44.30%	230	1,120	20.50%	1,694	484	28.60%	23.40%
Lanier	126	428	29.40%	104	664	15.70%	1,092	230	21.10%	34.20%
Lowndes	3,706	9,691	38.20%	2,173	11,390	19.10%	21,081	5,879	27.90%	15.50%
Tift	1,425	3,588	39.70%	886	5,117	17.30%	8,705	2,311	26.50%	23.70%
Turner	370	839	44.10%	268	1,140	23.50%	1,979	638	32.20%	20.10%
Region	7,489	19,015	39.40%	5,091	26,505	19.20%	45,520	12,580	27.60%	21.70%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, Summary Tape File 3A, 1990. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 1996, 2003.

Table 5-8: Renter/Owner Housing Cost As A Percentage Of Household Income - 2000

Unit	RENTERS			HOMEOWNERS			Total Hsgholds	Total Hsgholds Greater than 30%	%	% Mobile Homes
	Households			Households						
	Costs Greater			Cost Greater						
	than 30%	Sub-Total	%	than 30%	Sub-total	%				
Ben Hill	779	2,185	35.70%	635	3,022	21.00%	5,207	1,414	27.20%	25.20%
Brooks	418	1,346	31.10%	604	2,350	25.70%	3,696	1,022	27.70%	32.40%
Cook	471	1,417	33.20%	614	2,433	25.20%	3,850	1,085	28.20%	35.20%
Echols	74	272	27.20%	64	321	19.90%	593	138	23.30%	54.00%
Irwin	222	780	28.50%	284	1,372	20.70%	2,152	506	23.50%	32.10%
Lanier	188	578	32.50%	263	964	27.30%	1,542	451	29.20%	40.50%
Lowndes	4,791	12,672	37.80%	3,180	15,043	21.10%	27,715	7,971	28.80%	14.90%
Tift	1,462	4,530	32.30%	911	5,809	15.70%	10,339	2,373	23.00%	27.50%
Turner	319	948	33.60%	275	1,217	22.60%	2,165	594	27.40%	30.40%
Region	8,724	24,728	35.30%	6,830	32,531	21.00%	57,259	15,554	27.20%	24.20%

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, Summary Tape File 3A, 2000. Analysis: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2003.

Types of Housing in Georgia

Interpreting housing statistics from the Census Bureau is complicated by changes in definitions and reporting standards. In 1980, housing characteristics were presented only for year-round housing units. In 1990 and 2000 housing characteristics are shown for all housing units, which includes year-round units plus seasonal, migratory and recreational units. Care should be utilized in interpreting these statistics.

Condition of Housing in Georgia

Table 5-1 reviews two traditional indicators of housing quality. The "Built before 1939" statistic summarizes the inventory of older houses. Obviously, this is an incomplete indicator since some older houses may have been restored and/or remodeled. The "Lacking Complete Plumbing" value is probably more indicative of substandard housing.

Housing Costs in Georgia

Table 5-1 provides insights into the cost of owning and renting housing in Georgia. Median values for owner-occupied housing and median rent for rented units reported in the 1980, 1990 and 2000 Censuses are listed. Note that these figures are estimates provided by owners and renters filling out census questionnaires.

In addition, lower quartile and upper quartile values as reported in the 2000 Census is provided. Combined with the median (e.g. the "middle" value), useful insights into the cost of housing can be obtained. Note that these dollar values are in the "actual dollars" of the year reported, not in "constant dollars" that removes the effects of inflation.

Types of Housing in Ben Hill County

The 1980 to 2000 increase in year-round housing units totaled 1,439 units for all of Ben Hill County, including Fitzgerald. (refer to Table 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5) Of the total increase in units, 82.3 percent (1,184) were manufactured homes. During this same 20-year period 139 single-family homes and 95 multi-family units were added to the Ben Hill County housing stock. Manufactured homes constituted just 6.0% of the housing supply in 1970 and now in 2000 they represent 25.2 percent. Statewide, manufactured homes make up 12.0 percent of all housing units. The vast majority (76 percent) of the manufactured homes are located outside the City of Fitzgerald in the unincorporated areas.

Single-family housing units have dropped from 83% of the total housing units in 1970 to 66.4 percent in 2000. Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald have added an average of 7 single-family homes and 59 manufactured homes per year since 1980. Manufactured homes have increased 1,184 units, or 161.3 percent from 1980 to 2000. Statewide, the number of manufactured homes increased 158.2 percent in the same 20-year period. Multi-family units have increased from 527 in 1980 to 632 in 2000, an 18 percent increase. In the 1980's the split between county and city for multi-family units was 87%/13% respectively. By 2000 these percentages showed a decrease of units in the county with 94 percent of the multi-family units being located in the City of Fitzgerald and 6 percent located in the county.

Owner occupancy has dropped slightly (61.9 percent to 58.3 percent) between 1980 and 2000 in all of Ben Hill County. Statewide the rate increased from 60.4 percent to 61.8 percent. Common to most of rural Georgia is the placement of a manufactured home as a permanent residence. Ben Hill County is no exception. The level of personal income allows the residents to purchase an affordable manufactured home and this influenced the rate of owner occupancy in Ben Hill County.

Rental occupancy dropped slightly by 0.6 percent between 1980 and 2000. There have been several shifts in population and the number of renter occupied units have steadily increased (462 to 647 renter occupied units) in the unincorporated area (Table 5-3) and increased in the City of Fitzgerald (Table 5-4) by 229 units. This trend is not uncommon in South Georgia, those least able to own their own home, rent within an incorporated city.

Housing Value and Condition

The cost of housing is reflected in the median value of owner occupied units and the median rents paid by renters. Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald median housing unit values rose 141.8 percent between 1980 and 2000 at a rate quite similar to Georgia. However, comparisons with Georgia numerical housing values and median rents is not possible due to the metropolitan influences of extremely high land values, higher wage and personal incomes and more persons able to mortgage long-term high value housing. Tables 5-2 and 5-4 show owner median value houses rising by 141.8 percent in the county and 125.3 percent in Fitzgerald. The base year, 1980, had an owner median value of \$25,100 in the county and \$23,300 in Fitzgerald and these values rose to \$60,700-County and \$52,500-City. During the same twenty years renter median rent rose from \$77.00-county and \$73-city to \$257.00-county and \$244.00 in the city. The median rent throughout Georgia in 2000 was \$505.00.

Tables 5-1, through 5-4 show that Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald having a greater percentage of housing "built before 1939" than Georgia in 1980, 1990, and 2000. The rural farm and non-farm housing units in Ben Hill County have been maintained and passed on to succeeding generations. Fitzgerald has a very active historic preservation program which insures that many historic resources are preserved for future generations. In the category of housing condition-"lacking complete plumbing" the percentage descent corresponds very closely to the State numbers. The City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County have eliminated 105 units lacking complete plumbing since 1980. Substandard housing conditions (due to electrical, antiquated heating/cooling systems, deterioration, etc.,) still exists, but the city and county utilize building and housing code enforcement and rehabilitation programs to correct these substandard conditions.

Housing Vacancy

In Table 5-1 between 1980 and 2000 the statewide total of vacant housing units rose from 140,988 to 275,378, a 95.3 percent increase. Data does not exist to differentiate the 1980 the homeowner/renter vacancy rates. In 2000 Georgia had a homeowner vacancy rate of 2.2 percent and a renter vacancy rate of 8.5 percent. Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald have a 3.0 percent and 1.2 percent homeowner vacancy rate in 2000. The renter vacancy rates for Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald in 2000 were 15.0 percent and 6.0 percent respectively. Since 1990, the developers in Fitzgerald have recognized the need to construct additional rental units. Tables 5-2 and 5-4 for Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald show very low vacancy rates for owner/renter units in 1990 and 2000. There have been ten to fifteen units available in 1990 and 2000 for owners and ten to fifteen units vacant for rent.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Within Fitzgerald there are 221 public housing units for elderly, low/moderate income persons and the handicapped. Such housing units are at fair market or below fair market rent levels according to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 standards. A listing of the public housing units in Fitzgerald is as follows:

<u>Project & Location</u>	<u>Total Units</u>	<u># of Bedrooms</u>
Sultana Homes on Sultana Drive	52	16 1-bedroom 20 2-bedroom 16 3-bedroom
Roanoke Homes on Roanoke Drive	78	14 1-bedroom 28 2-bedroom 26 3-bedroom 10 4-bedroom
Scattered Sites throughout the City	91	11 1-bedroom 24 2-bedroom 44 3-bedroom 12 4-BEDROOM

Renter/Owner Cost Burden

Tables 5-6, 5-7, and 5-8 show the nine county region comparisons of the 1980-2000 renters and owner housing cost as a percentage of household income. The number and percentages are shown for all renters and owners that exceeded thirty percent of household income for rents and mortgage payments. Ben Hill County renters that exceed thirty percent of their household income were 40.8 percent in 1980; 44.1 percent in 1990 and 35.7 percent by 2000. Homeowners that exceeded thirty percent of their household income were 27.8 percent in 1980; 19 percent in 1990 and 21 by 2000. Total households (renters and owners) that exceeded greater than thirty percent of household income for housing ranged from 912 (33.4 percent) to 1,414 (27.2 percent) from 1980 to 2000.

FITZGERALD AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM

Fitzgerald has been engaged in efforts to create affordable housing since the mid 1990s. Taking advantage of the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Act, Fitzgerald has cleared blighted units and assembled tracts of land for new development. This has made it possible for developers to build infill housing. All results attributable to the use of the redevelopment tool kit including: CHIP, CDBG, DCA Home Buyer, USDA-RD Housing, Historic Preservation, Code Enforcement, Downtown Façade Program, Condemnation, and private investment. As a result of the city's efforts between 1998-2004, more than 315 housing units have been built or rehabilitated with a permit value of \$20,910,264, and there are additional units in the pipeline. Former blighted neighborhoods are now experiencing significant private investment that positively affects economic development.

HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL

Ensure that all people within Ben Hill County have access to adequate and affordable housing.

POLICY

- Housing development agenda in Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald should address needs of the elderly, low and moderate-income persons and families, handicapped and developmentally disabled persons.

GOAL

Ensure in an equitable manner that existing residential structures and neighborhoods are preserved, improved and maintained.

POLICIES

- Housing development agenda should give priority to projects involved in preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure: streets, walks, curbs, water and drainage systems, lighting and bridges.
- Neighborhood redevelopment projects should seek to conserve, rehabilitate, or relocate existing housing structures, in lieu of demolition, whenever feasible.
- The county/city is encouraged to adopt, enforce, revise and update building codes where applicable as to permit new concepts in building technology.
- Low interest loans and tax reduction activities or other alternatives should be developed to promote rehabilitation of existing housing.
- Actively encourage the redevelopment and renewal of blighted areas.

CHAPTER SIX: EXISTING LAND USE

The following provides an inventory of existing land uses within the City of Fitzgerald, its urbanizing fringe areas, and Ben Hill County. Existing land use patterns have a direct impact on a county or city's future growth, and the preparation and analysis of existing land use maps and data are important in understanding land use relationships within and between the city and the county.

METHODOLOGY

During early spring of 1996 and 2005, staff from the South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC) conducted a land use inventory and update for all of Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald. The method included fieldwork and consultations with officials and county tax parcel maps. These maps contain aerial photography from 1990, overlaid with current tax parcel boundaries.

Upon completion of the field survey, the parcel information and US Geological Survey quadrangle maps with land uses noted thereon was digitized and depicted graphically using the SGRDC's Geographic Information System (GIS). The digitized data was fully analyzed and assessed to include tabulations of the acreage for each land use category in unincorporated Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald.

Designation of agricultural and forested lands was included in the field survey. However, due to typically large tracts of land containing both agriculture and forest parcel-based information alone could not accurately determine acreages for either category. Therefore, special techniques developed by the National Center for Resource Innovation (NCRI) Southeast were used to distinguish these land use features. (NCRI Southeast is a federally funded project at SGRDC. NCRI project material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement # 91-38813-5956. Any opinions, findings or conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.) These techniques involved the reading of spectral images from satellite photography, with developed land "cover" data being converted to 1" = one mile base mapping prepared by SGRDC's GIS staff.

For purposes of analysis, land use inventory data was classified into nine (9) major categories which are based on standards currently established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs ("Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning", as amended April, 1992). The major land use categories are defined as follows:

RESIDENTIAL: Land primarily used for dwelling units, including single-family (all kinds), duplex, and multi-family. Farm houses and other singular dwelling units that are secondary to other land uses, and share the same parcel of land, are classified with the other land use.

COMMERCIAL: Land primarily used for non-industrial business uses; including retail sales, offices, and service and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

INDUSTRIAL: Land primarily used for manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing, wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction, landfills, or other similar uses.

PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL: Land, which primarily includes certain institutional uses, or federal, state, or local government, uses. Government uses include city halls, and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc.,. Facilities, which are publicly owned, but would be more accurately, classified in another land use category are not included in this category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities are placed in the PARK/ RECREATION/ CONSERVATION category, public landfills are placed in the INDUSTRIAL category, and office buildings containing government offices are placed in the COMMERCIAL category.

TRANSPORTATION / COMMUNICATION / UTILITIES: Land primarily used for street rights-of-way, railroads, public/private utilities, transmission towers, airports, or other similar uses.

PARK / RECREATION / CONSERVATION: Land primarily used for active or passive recreational uses. These may be either publicly or privately owned, and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national or state forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or other similar uses.

AGRICULTURE: Land primarily used for farming purposes, including fields, lots, pastures, croplands, specialty farms, livestock production, and aquaculture.

FORESTRY: Land primarily used for natural tree stands, commercial timber or pulpwood production.

UNDEVELOPED / UNUSED: Land that is cleared or platted but not developed for a specific use, or land that was developed for a particular use but which has been abandoned for that use. This includes undeveloped portions of platted subdivisions and industrial parks, and parcels containing structures that have been vacant for some time and allowed to become deteriorated or dilapidated.

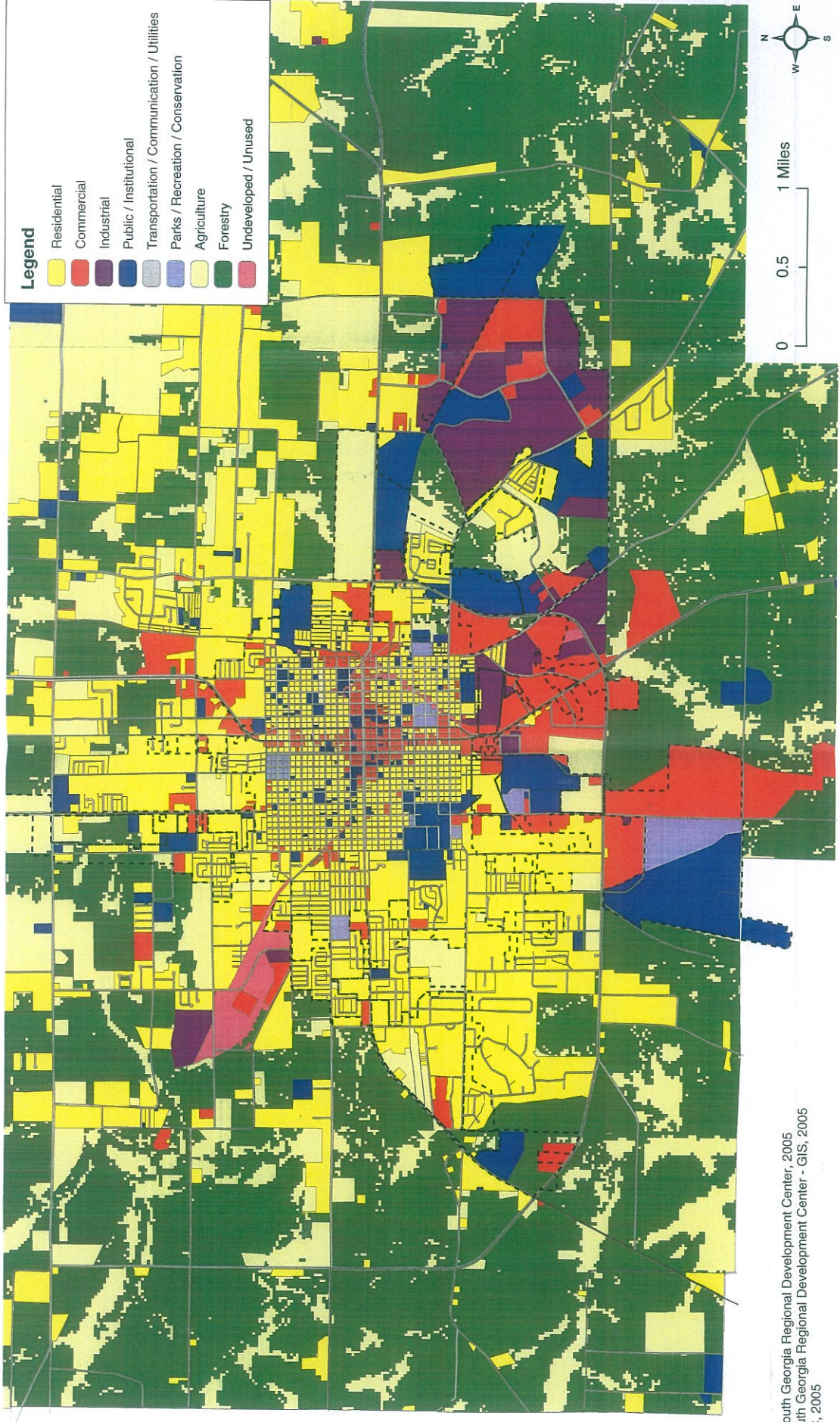
BEN HILL COUNTY (Unincorporated)

Predominantly rural in character, the majority of urban development in Ben Hill County is clustered in the City of Fitzgerald and its urban fringe area. Map 6-1, Ben Hill County Existing Land Use, depicts the vast agriculture/forested areas found in the county. Map 6-2, City of Fitzgerald Existing Land Use, details the broad range of urban uses found in Ben Hill County adjacent to the city limits. Table 6-1, Ben Hill County, Georgia, Unincorporated Area, Existing Land Use Acreages, shows the tabulation of acreages for the identified land use categories in 1996 and 2005.

**TABLE 6-1
Ben Hill County, Georgia
Unincorporated Area
Existing Land Use: 1996 and 2005**

Land Use Category	Number of Acres 1996	Number of Acres 2005	Percent Developed/ Non-Ag/For Land		Percent Total Land Area	
			1996	2005	1996	2005
Residential	3,376.50	5,305	44.89	51.1	2.15	3.4
Commercial	176.56	798.7	2.35	7.7	.11	0.51
Industrial	863.13	309.9	11.48	3.0	.55	0.19
Public/Institutional	210.10	588.2	2.79	5.7	.13	0.38
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	123.09	124.4	1.64	1.2	.08	0.08
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	2,772.18	3,253.9	36.85	31.3	1.77	2.08
Total Developed Non-Ag/For Land	7,521.56	10,380.1	100.00		4.79	6.65
Agriculture/Forestry	147,963.35	145,603.8			94.30	93.3
Undeveloped/Unused	1,428.72	128.8			.91	0.82
GRAND TOTAL	156,913.63	156,112.73			100.00	

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center
Field Survey Update, February 1996; August 2005.



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGRDC, 2005

**MAP 6-1 FITZGERALD / BEN HILL COUNTY URBAN AREA
 EXISTING LAND USE**



As shown on Map 6-2, the predominant land use acreage in Ben Hill County is for agriculture/forested uses. However, there are also clusters of urban scale residential development, as well as a scattering of individual urban uses throughout the county. These clusters and individual uses may range from less than one acre to several hundred acres in size.

Unincorporated, Ben Hill County consists of 156,112 acres, which is approximately 96.7 percent of the county's total 161,552 acres. In unincorporated Ben Hill County, 145,603 acres (93.3 percent) are devoted to agriculture/forested uses. Most of the County's open farmland is located in the south and southwestern portion of the county, adjacent to the Irwin County and Turner County lines. While Ben Hill County's native tree stands are scattered throughout the county, these features are much more concentrated in the northeastern half of the county toward the Ocmulgee River. Immense tracts of commercial forestry are also found in this same northeastern half of the county. The field survey noted that many of the commercial timberlands have been used repeatedly and that former open farmlands have been planted in native pine trees, since the passage of the erodible farmlands legislation of the 1980's.

Developed, non-agriculture/forested lands in unincorporated Ben Hill County consist of more than 10,380 acres, which is 6.7 percent of the total unincorporated area. Of the developed lands, residential uses occupy 5,305 acres, 51 percent of the county's developed non-agriculture/forested lands. Most rural residential subdivisions are clustered adjacent to main roads leading into Fitzgerald and include developments along the Jacksonville Highway (U.S.319), Bowens Mill Highway (U.S. 129) and the Dewey McGlamory Highway (Georgia Highway 90). By in large, these rural residential subdivisions have lots less than five acres, and most of the interior roads are unpaved. The other extreme of unincorporated area residential growth is found in the Fitzgerald urban fringe. Where water and sewer have been available through extension, lot size may range as small as 9,000 square feet. Adjacent 5 and 10 acres tracts may contain only a single use. Both of these density extremes are often found on adjacent tracts. Many residential areas in the urban fringe have developed without central sewage, which may have future negative impacts. Many of these fringe subdivisions are developed without paved streets and other urban amenities.

Commercial land uses in Ben Hill County total in excess of 798 acres, which exceeds the total commercial properties found in the Fitzgerald corporate limits. Commercial concentrations in the unincorporated fringe area are found along U.S. 129 just north of the city limits, at GA 107 at Rhine Road, and along U.S. 129 south inside the industrial perimeter. Only a few commercial establishments are found in rural Ben Hill County, and these are usually service or sales oriented to rural residential uses.

The county's industrial land uses are concentrated along South Industrial Drive between Perry House Road and U.S. 319 on the city's eastern limits. Another major industrial area exists in the city's northwest fringe area along Preston Avenue. However, limited road access presents a major problem as truck access is limited to Merrimac Avenue and its supporting collector street system. Industrial expansion will not occur in this area until suitable access, properly buffered from adjacent residential areas, is afforded to the northwest industrial perimeter. This industrial area presents substantial land use conflicts with the adjacent city and county residential areas due to industrial traffic being drawn through adjacent residential areas. Rural industrial land uses, which present little, if any, conflict, are also located along Ed Ward Road and the Ocilla-Fitzgerald Road. An insufficiently buffered auto reclamation yard exists on the urban area's northeast perimeter.

Public/Institutional land uses total over 588 acres in the county, and are largely comprised of the county's numerous churches and three schools, the Bowen's Mill School, the former county Elementary School off Georgia 90, and Ben Hill Irwin Technical Institute on Perry House Road. The county farm off Georgia 90 is

also included in this land use category.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities land use totals over 3,254 acres, and is second only to residential land usage in the county. With communication and utilities acreage totaling slightly over 52 acres, over 3,000 acres (over 98 percent of this category) are devoted to public rights of way.

The remaining land use category, Undeveloped/Unused, contains 128 acres, or 0.82 percent of the county's total land area. Found almost exclusively in Fitzgerald's urban fringe area, the majority of these parcels are undeveloped industrial properties or tracts in residential areas, which have been leapfrogged in the development process.

CITY OF FITZGERALD

Fitzgerald is the only incorporated city in Ben Hill County and lies in the south central portion of the county adjacent to the Ben Hill/Irwin County line. Originally incorporated as a new community in then Irwin County, the City of Fitzgerald was originally platted by Philander H. Fitzgerald as a planned retirement community for both Union and Confederate Civil War Veterans. The central core of the city, locally referred to as "inside the drives", is a platted grid pattern bounded by Merrimac, Sultana, Roanoke and Monitor Drives. The established grid street pattern runs on north/south and east/west axes and the central urban core of the City is bisected by Main Street and Central Avenues, both divided median streets with central islands or parks. The original plat of the community surrounding this grid pattern area contained concentric patterns of five, then and twenty acre tracts, and as such, the community had a strong planning basis.

The recruitment of the railroads to Ben Hill County in the early 1900's led to railroad rights of way bisecting the original grid pattern, and the establishment of the state and federal highway system has also effected the physical configuration of the city.

In the early 1960's, Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County undertook a strong local planning initiative, which led to the establishment of two major industrial areas and the city/county perimeter road system, which have strong influences on local land use patterns to the present. The most recent changes to the community include the establishment of a north/south one-way pair through the city along Grant and Sherman Avenues and the re-designation of U.S. 319 from its former Central Avenue Route to the southern leg of the industrial perimeter road. Post 1960 annexations included the annexation of several road rights of way to reach out lying parcels proposed for development. The major annexation since 1990 was for the new high school off Georgia Highway 90 on the north side of the City.

Map 6-2, City of Fitzgerald Existing Land Use, provides in vivid detail the land use classifications within the City of Fitzgerald and its adjacent urban area. Table 6-2 below, Fitzgerald Land Use Acreages, lists the total land use acreage of each of the city land use categories, which are graphically depicted on Map 6-2.

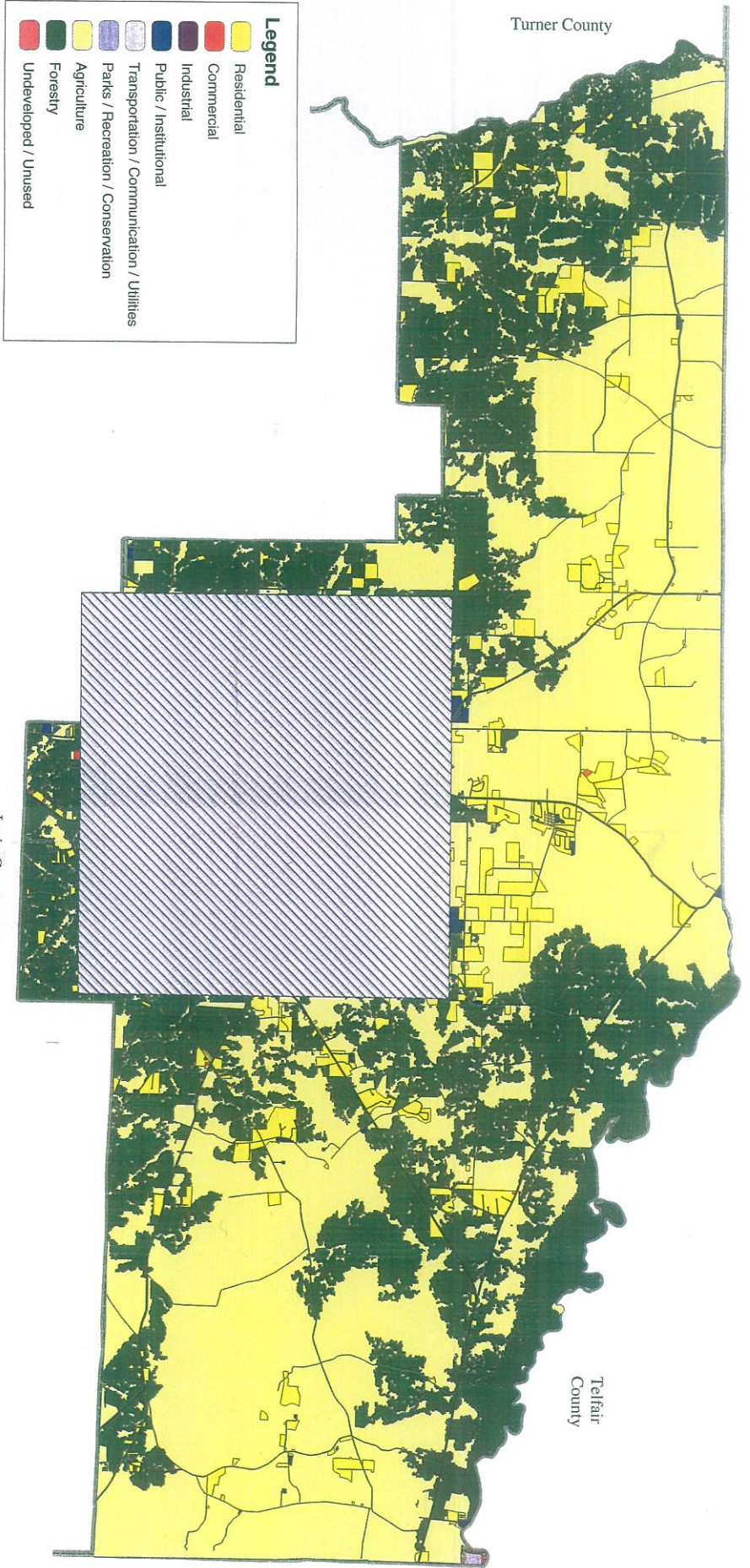
Wilcox County

Turner County

Telfair County

Coffee County

Irwin County



Legend

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Transportation / Communication / Utilities
- Parks / Recreation / Conservation
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Undeveloped / Unused

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGHDC, 2005

**MAP 6-2 BEN HILL COUNTY, RURAL AREA
 EXISTING LAND USE**



TABLE 6-2
Fitzgerald Existing Land Use Acreages: 1996 and 2005

Land Use Category	Number of Acres 1996	Number of Acres 2005	Percent Developed/ Non-Ag/For Land		Percent Total Land Area	
			1996	2005	1996	2005
Residential	1,652.08	1,515	38.26	31.6	29.15	27.9
Commercial	151.35	664	4.30	13.8	3.26	12.2
Industrial	497.80	459	14.09	9.6	10.73	8.4
Public/Institutional	329.64	1,130	9.32	23.5	7.13	20.8
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	225.16	225	6.37	4.7	4.85	4.1
Transportation/Communication / Utilities	977.54	826.9	27.66	17.2	21.07	15.2
Total Developed Non-Ag/For Land	3,533.57	4,802.9	100.00		76.19	88.3
Agriculture/Forestry	275.12	600.6			5.93	11.0
Undeveloped/Unused	829.30	18.6			17.88	0.3
GRAND TOTAL	4,637.99	5,438.89			100.00	

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center
 Field Survey Update, February 1996; August 2005.

As Table 6-2 indicates, the City of Fitzgerald's land area totals approximately 5,439 acres, or 8.49 square miles. This land area, which is comparatively compact in area, represents just over 3.36 percent of the county's total land area. The city's total land area increased from 3,706 acres in 1990 to 4,638 acres in February of 1996, and 800.9-acre increase to 5,438 by 2005. The land area of Fitzgerald has increased by nearly forty-seven percent between 1990 and 2005.

Residential land use, comprising just over 1,515 acres, represents 32 percent of the city's developed land acreage, and is the predominant land use in Fitzgerald. From February to 2005, this land use category increased from 1,352 to 1,515 acres, a 12.0 percent increase in just nearly ten years. Residential land use within the city's drives, that area of the planned historic grid pattern subdivision bounded by Merrimac, Sultana, Monitor and Roanoke Drives, is best described as small lot-historically oriented development, with larger lot single family development occurring outside of the drives. Duplex, triplex and multi-family developments in the city have typically occurred within the last 20 years and are generally located adjacent to downtown or along the city's major thoroughfare system.

The city's residential land use pattern is strongly influenced by its annexation patterns, with new residential growth primarily located west and south west of the original town center. Residential development patterns have been strongly influenced by water and sewer extension decisions made by the Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission, the city's Water and Sewer Development Authority. The city's two eastern ward contain the majority of blighted housing in the city, and the northwest ward is experiencing a loss of housing quality northwest of the city's downtown area.

Commercial land usage totaling over 664 acres, comprises over thirteen percent of the city's developed acreage. This land use category increased from 151 acres to 664 acres 1996-'05, an 340 percent increase for the ten year period. Commercial activities are primarily located in downtown Fitzgerald along Central Avenue, and Pine and Magnolia streets, as well as along U.S. 129 in a strip fashion both north and south of downtown. The growth of this strip corridor inside the drives has been accelerated by the development of the north/south one-way pair on U.S. 129 as traffic movements have made the properties less desirable for residential usage. A major commercial corridor is developing between the southern industrial perimeter and Roanoke Drive to the north, along U.S. 129 south. Neighborhood commercial development exists along the city's drives, but is typically restricted to major street intersections.

Industrial land uses of over 459 acres comprise over nine percent of the city's developed land usage and over eight percent of the city's total land. This land use category increased from 222 acres in 1990 to 497.8 in 1996, an increase of 124 percent in a five-year period; and decreased slightly by 7.8 percent by 2005. This dramatic increase can be attributed to three factors: the increased accuracy of the 1996 field survey due to parcel based mapping, the construction of several major industries, and the annexation of industrial use areas. The majority of the city's industrial land usage is clustered in the Colony City Industrial Park on the city's eastern boundary and the airport Industrial District along Perry House Road south of the industrial perimeter. The remaining city industrial area is located along East Central Avenue and the SCL railroad line, and is a part of the old industrial district associated with the early development of the Colony City.

Public/Institutional land uses total in excess of 1,130 acres in the city, representing over 23 percent of the city's developed land area, and over 20 percent of its total area. Major uses in this land use category are numerous city and county owned office buildings; Fitzgerald's numerous churches, the hospital on Perry House Road, and the city cemetery east of Industrial Boulevard and south of Evergreen road. Schools and their associated uses are also included in this land use category.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation uses in the city total over 225 acres, and represent nearly 5 percent of the city's developed area, and nearly 4 percent of its total land area. Major land uses and facilities in this category include the Legion Park Recreational Complex on North Main Street, Blue and Gray Park east of Sherman Avenue, Compton Park in the southwest quadrant of the city inside the drives, Lions Club Park on Perry House Road, and the baseball complex located on Perry House Road south of U.S. 319 (the industrial perimeter), is the former site of a city oxidation pond. With time and nature as an ally, the facility has been upgraded to a public fishing facility, and offers picnic and camping facilities and ballfields for public use. Three additional sites of old oxidation pond facilities are included in this land use category and may afford the city future active recreation opportunities.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities land usage represents the third largest land usage category in the city. The TCU category's 827 acres represents over 17 percent of the city's developed land use acreage, and over 15 percent of its total area. Major land uses in this category include the Water, Light and Bond Administrative and Service Complex, north of Central Avenue in the eastern portion of the City, numerous utility substations, and the Fitzgerald Municipal Airport off Perry House Road south of U.S. 319. Land devoted to federal, state and local roads total over 624 acres in this category, and have a dramatic impact on the city's annual budget for streets and public works.

Fitzgerald's developed non-agricultural/forested lands total in excess of 4,802 acres and represent in excess of 88 percent of the city's total land area. Ag/Forestry lands in Fitzgerald total some 600 acres, and include lands largely annexed as part of the city's annexation of the new high school property on the extreme northern edge of the city east of Georgia Highway 90 (Dewey McGlamory Highway). The city also has 17 acres of Undeveloped/Unused property, but these acreages are at best misleading. The vast majority of the Undeveloped/Unused land use category is associated with natural environmental constraints such as the Turkey Creek floodplain, which traverses the eastern perimeter of the city, or low-lying areas associated with natural depressions occurring in the city.

The state of Georgia's rather liberal annexation law that existed in the 1960's, 70's and 80's led to the random nature of annexation patterns found in the city today. Coupled with the independent decisions for water and sewer extension made by the Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission in the same era, the Fitzgerald City Limits is far from coterminous with its utility service areas and the public's perception of the city limits. A large urban density area exists immediately adjacent to the official Fitzgerald city limits, but is technically located in unincorporated Ben Hill County. While functioning as a part of the City of Fitzgerald, these areas are void of the full range of urban services and benefits afforded by the city. A great challenge lies in bringing the city's urban service area and its official limits together in the future.

CHAPTER 7 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

As detailed in the previous six chapters, the number of function activities, issues and services that must be addressed by local government in order to effectively plan for its future is immense. Adding complexity to this situation is the fact that the actions of other local governments, other governmental entities and even local authorities can have profound impacts on the implementation of local governments' comprehensive plans. The purpose of this plan section is to inventory and address the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms and policies to serve the current and future needs of Greater Ben Hill; as it seeks to implement goals and objectives that in many cases involve multiple governmental entities.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald are member governments served by the South Georgia Regional Development Center. One method of coordination of all state, federal and local governmental actions is the Georgia State Clearinghouse Intergovernmental Review Process that involves potentially affected governments/parties subject to the nature of the activity being undertaken. This review coordinating mechanism covers a large array of local, state and federal development projects and affected local jurisdictions are afforded the opportunity to comment on proposals in the planning stage.

A second strength for fostering local intergovernmental coordination is the design of the local planning function. By choice, and recognizing the need for local plan implementation and coordination, Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald have a single countywide planning advisory commission. This local planning process has been "seamless" since the creation of the Joint Growth Strategies Advisory Committee in 1990. When the 2015 Joint Fitzgerald – Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1991, the countywide planning commission was challenged to help the city and county reach their identified goals.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS WITH ADJACENT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The City of Fitzgerald has developed and executed Memorandums of Agreement with Ben Hill County concerning the potential for intergovernmental conflicts for Land Use Intensity Subject to Annexation. As noted above, Greater Ben Hill are served by a joint planning advisory commission, and have a seamless future land use plan. All actions for annexation/rezoning are subject to the intergovernmental agreement addressed as part of the local Service Delivery Strategy agreement. Potential for other development affecting Greater Ben Hill would be addressed by the Developments of Regional Impact Review Process (DRI) contained within the Georgia Planning Act.

SCHOOL BOARD COORDINATION

Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald are served by a single school system, the Ben Hill County Board of Education. All local land development ordinances call for siting approval for new facilities from the respective governmental jurisdiction, and all countywide public schools are located within the Fitzgerald Urban Service Area.

SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICTS

Greater Ben Hill has one special service district for water, sewer and electricity namely, Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond (Fitzgerald Utilities).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Greater Ben Hill has five independent development authorities that are outlined in Table 7-1 below.

**Table 7-1
Greater Ben Hill Authorities**

Authority Name	Type	Method of Creation	Dependency	Single or Multi-Jurisdictional
Ben Hill County Development Authority	Industrial Development	General Statute	Independent	Multi-Jurisdictional
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Solid Waste Authority	Solid Waste Management	General Statute	Independent	Multi-Jurisdictional
Fitzgerald Downtown Development Authority	Economic Development	General Statute	Independent	Single
Ben Hill, Irwin Joint Development Authority	Multi-County Industrial Development	General Statute	Independent	Multi-Jurisdictional
Housing Authority of the City of Fitzgerald, Georgia	Housing	General Statute	Independent	Single

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005.

While each authority is eligible for grant and loan programs, local control is maintained by the fact that the elected governmental bodies appoint each authority's membership and approve annual funding allocations in their budget. Coordination with these authorities is currently maintained through the chief elected official of the respective local government.

BEN HILL COUNTY SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

In 1995, the Georgia Legislature passed the Service Delivery Strategy Law (H.B. 489) that mandated the development of a local mechanism to encourage coordination of service delivery. Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald participated in and developed such a coordinating mechanism, and have reviewed and updated the agreement.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Upon inventory and assessment, Ben Hill County and Fitzgerald believe that current coordination mechanisms are sufficient to meet community needs through the twenty-year planning period. The respective jurisdictions are active participants in the Georgia Intergovernmental Review Process, the requirements of the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) and Intergovernmental review subject to annexation portions of the Georgia Planning Act, and routinely are represented at South Georgia Regional Development Center board meetings and functions.

Should issues arise Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald feel they cannot adequately handle, they will approach the appropriate governmental authority to institute communications and mediate the dispute.

PART II: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE ?

GOALS AND POLICIES

Introduction

Before specific recommendations can be made, general goals and policies must be established. A goal should be viewed as an outcome or end toward which the eventual realization of plans, development policies and programs are targeted. An example of a land use goal could be a statement that would call for the "wise use, protection, or rational development" of a given county or city characteristic. The goal is carried to fruition through enforcement of the land use plan, zoning and other ordinances, and by implementing the scheduled public works projects.

A policy is a definite strategy or course of action which will insure that the goals are realized. By nature, a policy becomes embodied in both the plan and the ordinances derived to carry out the plan. However, policies are useful only so long as they are well formulated and carefully reflect county and city goals. A well-conceived list of policies provides a basic framework for implementing the joint city/county planning program.

Finally, it is assumed that some persons reviewing the goals and policies contained in this document will feel they are "pie in the sky" types of statements, and without specific program objectives, which are presented in the five-year short-term work programs, this would be an accurate assessment. The intent of the goals and policies is to provide a framework within which needs and problems are identified and steps to ameliorate them are devised. As someone once said, "when you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there". These goals and policies provide the definition of where we're trying to go in Ben Hill County.

GOAL 1:

Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald should consist of an Urban Service Area and a Rural Service Area. Urban services (public water and sanitary sewers, etc.) will be provided within the Urban Service Area. Persons choosing a rural lifestyle should not expect to receive urban services outside of these planned Urban Service Areas.

URBAN SERVICE AREA

One of the main purposes of the 2025 Greater Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan is to determine general priorities for county and city investments. To provide guidelines in setting county/city priorities, the county and city will have an Urban Service Area (USA) within which county and city systems, existing and proposed, sanitary sewers, water systems, and highways will be provided. Urban density development should be encouraged to occur in the Urban Service Area to ensure that maximum use is made of public and private investments. The alternative of a rural lifestyle, including commercial forestry and agriculture, should also be available in Ben Hill County. Persons who live in the Rural Service Area (RSA) should not expect to receive an urban level of services.

The City of Fitzgerald, whose corporate limits include both urban and rural lands, has the responsibility to set the boundary between the Urban Service Area and the Rural Service Area within their community. Urbanizing communities should stage their growth for as long as practical, and they should consider allowing the continuance of agricultural activities, including sod farming and nursery stock on lands not planned for urban services.

Considerable development has already occurred in the areas included in Urban Service Areas. This development is scattered throughout the area, and there are hundreds of acres of vacant lots and large tracts of unused land. Most of this land is provided with a wide range of urban services, and as a result, there is a large capital investment in under-utilized public facilities.

In spite of the under-utilized facilities in the urbanized areas, development on unserved land continues both there and in the Rural Service Areas. Federal, state and county roads have made employment and shopping highly accessible. Consequently, the entire county is subject to increasing pressures for urbanization.

Although the highway system has contributed to current development trends by putting country living within easy commuting time of employment centers, there are other reasons for the county's pattern of scattered development. Two of the most important of these are the desire of a large portion of the population to live in a low density, semi-rural environment and the relatively low initial cost of rural housing. Housing in the rural areas is less expensive partially because of the lack of urban services and amenities such as sewer and water systems, paved streets, full-time police and fire departments, and recreation programs. Rural areas also often have fewer regulatory requirements than those in urban areas, and this means that housing can be built less expensively. Land can be less expensive in rural areas, so that larger lots can often be obtained at the same prices as smaller urban or suburban lots. However, people moving to rural areas are usually urban oriented, and they soon desire sewer and water systems, a network of paved streets and highways, parks, expanded police and fire departments, and other services. These services were not necessary to support a truly rural population primarily engaged in farming and forestry.

Public investments in new facilities are wasteful to the extent that existing utilities, roads, and schools have adequate capacity to accommodate growth. In addition, development contiguous to present development, rather than scattered across the countryside, is more economical to serve with electricity, telephone, coax cable, parks, and roads. The extra costs of scattered development are not borne entirely by the owners of scattered housing because many of the costs are spread throughout the county and state in the form of higher sales taxes, utility fees, and gasoline taxes. Persons choosing to live in a semi-rural environment do so without paying the full cost of their choice because other residents of the county and state subsidize many of the utilities and public improvements.

RURAL SERVICE AREA

In the Rural Service Area, agriculture and commercial forestry should be given first priority, but it must be anticipated that quasi-urban land uses such as recreation areas, horse stables and hobby farms will continue to expand. This Rural Service Area can contain other secondary uses including specialized agricultural uses such as sod farms, truck farms, nurseries, and plant farms, recreational areas, and forested tracts. The Rural Service Area promotes the concentration of Neighborhood Activity Centers (NAC) in existing and proposed subdivisions at densities which range from lots with private wells to lots that are serviced by a community-type domestic water supply, but not a joint sanitary sewer collection and treatment system. Examples could be Ashton, Lulaville and Queensland. These NAC's function for those persons who prefer larger than urban lot sizes and densities, and they never require the public provision of the full range of urban services. It becomes imperative that future NAC's in the RSA be developed on soils, which have few or no limitations for septic tanks and drain fields.

Commercial Agricultural Uses

A large part of the Rural Service Area contains prime farmland and these areas need to be protected. The agricultural economy remains strong; there is a large investment in farming, and farmers desire to continue the agricultural use of the land. Some of the land in the rural area, however, is of poor quality and more suited to forestry. Both the excellent and poorer quality areas should be protected from urban encroachment; a favorable social and economic climate is necessary if farm families are to make the heavy investment and take the risks necessary to keep their farm business viable.

To avoid these problems, agriculture should be considered an exclusive land use. The agricultural areas, which have high quality land and have substantial agricultural investments should be identified as Commercial Agricultural Areas and protected from further encroachment by non-agricultural land uses. Protection from encroachment should involve actions on many fronts including exclusive use zoning, restrictions on public works projects that are unrelated to agriculture and forestry, and relief from special assessments, and environmental ordinances not related to public health and safety.

GOAL 2:

To increase an intensive mixture of employment, goods, services, and residential use in Activity Centers; to link high intensity Activity Centers; to provide a wide variety of residential and employment alternatives both inside and outside Activity Centers; and to achieve the highest standards of quality in the urban environment.

Policy 2.1:

The City and County shall adopt/or amend their Land Development Regulations to provide standards, including minimum and maximum density standards, for three classifications of Activity Centers: the Downtown Activity Center, Urban Activity Centers, and Neighborhood Activity Centers.

Policy 2.1.1:

Activity Centers shall be intended to fulfill the following purposes:

- (a) **Downtown Activity Center** - This is the central business and service center of each city. Areas should be allocated for concentrated residential, commercial, office, industrial, recreational and cultural facilities at a scale which serves the entire area, and at the highest intensities to be found anywhere in the county. Pedestrian-oriented streets containing clusters of retailing, personal services, entertainment, and eating are an important attribute of downtown. The policies and requirements of this Activity Center are intended to retain the character of these areas by assuring that new development provides active uses on ground floor levels, and other design features conducive to pedestrian activity.
- (b) **Urban Activity Center** - To provide for concentrated areas of residential, commercial, office, industrial, recreational and cultural facilities serving major subregions of the Ben Hill County urban area, and at intensities significantly higher than in surrounding neighborhoods. Although some Urban Activity Centers may be composed of a single type of use, a mixture of land uses is specifically encouraged. These activity centers are intended for locations where the highest levels of thoroughfares are available, providing access between other counties and complimenting the primary arterial transportation system.

- (c) **Neighborhood Activity Center** - To provide for concentrated areas of neighborhood-serving commercial, office, residential, recreational and cultural facilities, at intensities compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Although some Neighborhood Activity Centers may be composed of a single type of use, a mixture of land uses is specifically encouraged. These activity centers are intended for locations where lower level thoroughfares and collectors are available, providing access to adjacent activity centers and the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy 2.2:

Community development should be responsive to the social, economic and environmental needs of the County. For this reason, the County and City should prepare and implement plans consistent with the following guidelines:

- (a) Local communities should accommodate their share of urban growth, as indicated by the comprehensive plan, to be located within the Urban Service Area.
- (b) Local services, such as schools, police and fire protection, public streets, water and drainage facilities, and parks and recreation should be planned to be adequate for the population and employment densities anticipated. Areas of the community where local services are available should be developed first. New land should be opened for urbanization in a staged, contiguous manner through a coordinated program of public service extensions. Existing facilities, including schools, should be used to full capacity. Cooperative arrangements between service districts should be made if necessary. Where practical, investment in all services, including schools, shall be consistent with City and County land use plans.
- (c) Community development should be compatible with features of the natural environment, including the soils, hydrologic system, and not intrude into prime farmlands.
- (d) Community development should provide a variety of housing types for all income levels convenient to employment, shopping, and services.
- (e) Business activities should be located in the downtown, Urban or Neighborhood Activity Centers, community retail and service centers, and planned industrial parks. Major Activity Centers should be developed through a clustering of regional shopping, service, cultural, entertainment, business office, governmental and high-density residential facilities in concentrated, highly accessible locations. The centers should be designed for good pedestrian mobility and landscaped to accommodate people and vehicles. Where major activity centers have already developed in a spread out or disconnected pattern, joint public-private programs should be developed to plan transportation systems to link the activity centers together so that the entire subarea may function as a single major activity center.
- (f) Density of development should be planned by local authorities to be consistent with the capacity of the Fitzgerald urban area water and sewer systems, federal and state environmental standards; and the continuation of agricultural activities on prime farm land not programmed for urban expansion.
- (g) Encourages the redevelopment and renewal of blighted areas.

- (h) Encourages the elimination or reduction of uses consistent with the community's character and future land use.
- (i) Ensures the protection of historic resources;
- (j) Discourages the proliferation of urban sprawl.
- (k) Ensures the availability of suitable land for utility facilities necessary to support proposed development.
- (l) Protect viable and stable neighborhoods from uses not in keeping with their established character and use.

GOAL 3:

Create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economic base in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and the Nation.

Policy 3.1:

Private sector economic investments should be encouraged and fostered through the availability of financial and technical assistance.

Policy 3.2:

Public sector financed economic developments should be encouraged and used as a tool to stimulate or leverage private sector economic investments.

Policy 3.3:

Products and raw materials available in the region should be given first consideration for use in manufacturing in the area.

Policy 3.4:

Diversification of the economic base should be fostered and maintained. The development of recreational, educational and health care facilities and services should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, economic, and industrial development.

GOAL 4:

Encourage economic development through business/industry recruitment and/or expansions that capitalize on and are compatible with the natural attributes of the county.

Policy 4.1:

Economic developments should be compatible with accepted environmental standards.

Policy 4.2:

In cases where development is incompatible with the environment, such developments should be located where environmental and social costs are minimized.

GOAL 5:

Create and maintain a well-trained work force of professional, technical, and skilled workers capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.

Policy 5.1:

Training programs, vocational and technical, should be designed to correlate with anticipated industrial and commercial growth and needs.

Policy 5.2:

Training and manpower programs should be designed which are readily accessible to the unemployed and underemployed.

Policy 5.3:

Programs should be developed which encourage local college and technical school graduates to seek employment within the county.

Policy 5.4:

Industries, both existing and new, should initiate on-the-job training programs for the benefit of themselves and their employees.

GOAL 6:

Develop and maintain public services and facilities to accommodate existing economic development and to encourage and stimulate future economic growth.

Policy 6.1:

Industrial growth and expansions should be located within or adjacent to developed industrial parks and sites to readily access public utilities.

Policy 6.2:

The development of cultural, historic and educational services and facilities should be considered as legitimate economic development activities by virtue of their strong tendency to generate employment, economic, and industrial development.

Policy 6.3:

Public investments in services and facilities for economic development should be reflected in the short-term work program.

GOAL 7:

To ensure that all people within Ben Hill County have access to adequate and affordable housing.

Policy 7.1:

Housing development agenda in the city and the county should address needs of the elderly, low and moderate-income families, minorities, handicapped, and developmentally disabled persons.

GOAL 8:

To ensure in an equitable manner that existing housing structures and neighborhoods are preserved, improved and maintained.

Policy 8.1:

Housing development agenda should give priority to projects involved in preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure: streets, walks, curbs, water, sewer and drainage systems, lighting and bridges.

Policy 8.2:

Neighborhood redevelopment projects should seek to conserve, rehabilitate, or relocate existing housing structures, in lieu of demolition, whenever it is feasible.

Policy 8.3:

The city and county are encouraged to adopt, enforce, revise and update building codes where applicable as to permit new concepts in building technology.

Policy 8.4:

Low interest loans and tax reduction activities or other alternatives should be developed to promote rehabilitation of existing housing.

GOAL 9:

A network of thoroughfares designed for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, which is linked to and coordinated with rail, air, and other transportation terminals.

Policy 9.1:

The carrying capacity of roadways should preserve the functional purpose of the road system to assure that the transportation network functions as originally intended.

Policy 9.2:

Land development, access, and circulation should be closely coordinated in the design of highway and street facilities in order to preserve the traffic carrying ability/safety aspects of highways and streets.

Policy 9.3:

Early acquisition of needed highway rights-of-way and access controls should be sought to minimize land costs, prevent undesirable development, and preclude land speculation.

Policy 9.4:

Costs of roadway construction should be justified by utilization and need.

Policy 9.5:

Frontage roads should be constructed to avoid proliferation of entrance to high volume arterial streets and highways.

Policy 9.6:

Increased off-street parking should be encouraged to maximize the traffic carrying capacity of roadways, reduce congestions and ensure safe and efficient traffic flow.

GOAL 10:

A well maintained system of rail lines, which facilitate safe and efficient movements of goods and serve the economic needs of the county.

Policy 10.1:

Grade separation should be provided on major arterials and collectors to eliminate traffic tie-ups, emergency vehicle delays and to enhance vehicle and pedestrian safety.

Policy 10.2:

Where rail abandonment is imminent, corridor maintenance and potential reuse should be evaluated to avoid unnecessary permanent loss of rights-of-way.

GOAL 11:

Air service connecting major regional centers and locations beyond with a well maintained, business and commuter sized airport.

Policy 11.1:

Land use regulations should protect airport approach zones, to avoid unnecessary land use conflicts.

GOAL 12:

The conservation of areas where natural processes would be endangered by development (i.e., in floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, drainageways, etc.).

Policy 12.1:

Areas where critical natural processes would be endangered by development should be avoided. The areas most directly impacted include drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas.

Policy 12.2:

An adequate minimum flow and water quality should be maintained in all rivers and streams to ensure a productive fish habitat and protection of aquatic life and scenic qualities.

Policy 12.3:

Current floodplain management practices of the City of Fitzgerald should be continued and strengthened. Ben Hill County should review FEMA mapped flood prone areas and should implement floodplain management guidelines consistent with state and federal policy.

Policy 12.4:

State or federal agency rules and regulations mandating local enforcement programs should be accompanied with adequate staff and financial assistance to help local units in their implementation programs. These include local floodplain management requirements, soil and sedimentation control requirements, wetlands protection, and similar laws designed to prevent degradation of the natural environment.

Policy 12.5:

Significant groundwater recharge areas, which occur in the north-central, extreme west and south-central county boundaries, should be protected from development encroachment.

Policy 12.6:

Soils that have been indicated as having severe limitations for development should be avoided. Prior to approval of development, land capability analysis should be keyed to the review and approval process.

Policy 12.7:

Treatment facilities should be available for the discharge of septic tank, holding tank and recreational vehicle pumpage.

Policy 12.8:

Soil resources should be managed in a manner that is consistent with maintaining and enhancing water quality.

Policy 12.9:

Land management practices that minimize siltation and pollution should be utilized. These practices include but are not limited to:

- a. Approval of grading, filling, and excavation plans by the cities and county to ensure that erosion and siltation are minimized. (Examples -sodding, seeding, re-vegetation schedules, etc.)
- b. Provide and maintain strategically located settling basins to remove silt and debris from surface water runoff.

GOAL 13:

Commercial, industrial and residential developments should locate in Fitzgerald's Urban Service Area on existing/proposed water and sewer systems.

Policy 13.1:

Allocate within the Land Use Plan an adequate amount of properly serviced lands to meet projected land use demands.

Policy 13.2:

Commercial growth and redevelopment should be restricted to existing and planned commercial districts.

Policy 13.3:

Industrial expansion should occur in the existing industrial parks.

Policy 13.4:

In general, redevelopment in vacant and redevelopable areas that are already serviced including water and sewer should be strongly encouraged.

Policy 13.5:

Local implementation devices should include a building code, subdivision control and zoning ordinances in Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County.

Policy 13.6:

Lands deemed unsuitable for any proposed development by the local unit of government because of:

- wetlands
- aquifer recharge
- flooding
- inadequate drainage
- adverse soil conditions
- severe erosion potential
- unfavorable topography
- inadequate water supply or sewage disposal capabilities, or any other feature likely to be harmful to the health, safety or welfare of the future residents of the proposed development should be deemed unsuitable building areas.

Policy 13.7:

Ben Hill County should limit development in rural service areas to uses and intensities, which would not require the county to provide urban or suburban levels of utilities and services.

GOAL 14:

To identify, conserve and protect the broad range of cultural resources in Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County.

Policy 14.1:

Areas, structures and districts of significant architectural and historic value should be so designated and approved by appropriate city and county authorities. Preservation techniques, including local designation through local historic district ordinance, should be continued and/or encouraged. Additional techniques to support these activities include various state and federal programs including state and national register listings, state tax program, the federal investment tax credit, and the Georgia Main Street Program.

Policy 14.2:

Develop a public awareness/education element to encourage participation in preservation activities. Maintain Fitzgerald's participation in the Certified Local Government program, coordinated through the State Historic Preservation Office. Ben Hill County might choose to develop a model county program and a joint city/county preservation commission could result.

Policy 14.3:

Greater Ben Hill County should preserve and protect for future generations their scenic, cultural, historic landscapes, buildings and archaeological sites. Special management practices should be applied to those areas possessing unique natural, cultural or historic features.

GOAL 15:

Preservation of lands suitable for all agricultural pursuits, including farming, forestry and soil conservation.

Policy 15.1:

Where soil productivity is high and where conditions are better suited for agriculture than urban uses, measures should be developed to preserve such land for agricultural use.

Policy 15.2:

Non-agricultural-forestry uses, which generally include a broad range of urban land use types, should not intrude into rural areas best suited for agricultural/forestry uses.

PART III: HOW DO WE GET THERE ?

FUTURE LAND USE PLANS & SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAMS

FUTURE LAND USE PLANS

A future land use plan reflects the consensus of community and county values that are inherent in goal and policy statements. It is designed to provide a summary of recommended growth patterns, which are depicted on the respective future land use maps. For Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald, the recommendations are designed to reflect goals and policies with strong emphasis on local government's provision of basic services; water, sewer and transportation. (The land use goals and policies are detailed in "Part II - Where Do We Want To Be ?".) These plan concepts propose land use patterns which take advantage of existing and planned infrastructure. This prevents undue hardship on local governments to provide unnecessary infrastructure improvements or additions. When growth is planned in a logical and straightforward manner and takes advantage of public investments, there will be positive benefits for all with an increase in long-term economic stability.

GREATER BEN HILL FUTURE LAND USE (IN GENERAL)

The concepts discussed in this section will apply to the future land use plans of Ben Hill County. The Goals and Policies define and emphasize a distinct separation between an Urban Service Area (USA) and a Rural Service Area (RSA). Greater Ben Hill, for future land use purposes, is divided into these two major service areas and they are graphically depicted on Maps III-1 and III-2. The USA represents the centralized growth center (Fitzgerald area) where there is already existing infrastructure and concentrated urban services to accommodate urban style development. All future urban development should locate in this area. The RSA comprises all of the remaining portions of the unincorporated county. This area should retain a dominantly rural character.

Within the major service areas there also exists subareas for the various Activity Centers and a special Commercial Agriculture Area; all of which are described in the Goals and Policies. In general from a countywide perspective, the Urban Service Area (USA) and its activity centers represent three levels of existing or proposed urban density. The Downtown Activity Center (DAC) will maintain the highest density, followed by the Urban Activity Center (UAC) and then the remaining portion of USA. Within the Rural Service Area (RSA) there are special Commercial Agriculture Areas (CAA), which are based on the presence of concentrated prime farmland and prime forestland soils. Exclusive agriculture, agribusiness, and commercial forestry uses will be promoted in these areas.

The RSA also contains Neighborhood Activity Centers (NAC), which represents small clusters of urbanized development, centrally located within a generally rural area. Any additional urban development in the rural area will be encouraged to locate in the NACs.

Greater Ben Hill has an abundance of existing undeveloped/unused, vacant uses and subdivided lands inside its existing utility service area. Additional lands lie adjacent to this utility service core, and with minimum effort, these services can be logically extended to serve areas contiguous to the urban core. Because of this availability of underutilized properties and lands, a coordinated infill development policy needs to be implemented and regarded as a priority for both city and county governments.

Many areas within Greater Ben Hill contain environmentally sensitive features, which must be considered when making development decisions. Therefore, all new development or redevelopment shall be subject to the following development constraints: floodplains, wetlands, soil suitability, and groundwater recharge areas. These constraints shall be reviewed on a site-by-site basis and shall take precedence when making development or land use approvals/decisions. The future land use maps should be consulted when reviewing land use changes or proposed development and redevelopment. However, land use designations on the future land use map are for general purposes and will be considered secondary to these development constraints.

BEN HILL COUNTY (Unincorporated) FUTURE LAND USE

In general, Ben Hill County contains a dominant pattern of active agriculture/forestry uses, which will continue through the 20-year planning period. The city of Fitzgerald, lying in the south central portion of the county, represents the county's center of urban activity. There is an abundance of vacant land in all parts of the county (both urban and rural areas) and those lands located in urban areas should be developed first since infrastructure improvements already exist to serve them. Therefore, future land use designations for unincorporated portions of Ben Hill County are generally the same as existing with most vacant lands given a future land use designation appropriate to their surroundings. Map III-1 depicts future land use designations as well as USA, RSA, and CAA boundaries for Ben Hill County.

The Urban Service Area (USA) portion of unincorporated Ben Hill County is located around the perimeter of water and sewer service areas. Many of these areas are county enclaves completely surrounded by the city limits, in most cases partially surrounded by annexed rights-of-way. Most of unincorporated Ben Hill County will fall into a Rural Service Area (RSA) since there are no existing public water and sewer services outside the Fitzgerald urban area.

Within the Rural Service Area outside of the Fitzgerald urban area, two Neighborhood Activity Centers (NACs) are found, one at Queensland off Ga. 129 in the north central portion of the county, and one at Bowens Mill, located at the extreme northern edge of the county adjacent to the Ocmulgee River. One special Urban Activity Center (UACs) is found in the county outside of the USA. The UAC is located off Perry House Road in the southern portion of the county and is the site of the Ben Hill-Irwin Technical Institute. This educational facility plays a major role in the county's future growth, and should be protected from incompatible land use encroachment.

Also within the RSA there are large areas designated as Commercial Agricultural Area (CAA). With prime agricultural soils located predominately in the southwestern third of the county, the City of Fitzgerald Urban Service Area falls almost completely within a prime soils area. While it is inevitable that some of these areas will be converted to urban uses, great care should be taken to encourage compact urban growth in order to protect this valuable resource.

There are some residential subdivisions within the rural area, far from any designated or planned services. Further development of these should be secondary to development of forestry and agricultural uses. Some are not suitable for development due to poor soils, wetlands, or groundwater recharge areas, and these should revert back to their original agriculture/forest usage.

Future Commercial, Industrial, and Public/Institutional uses in particular should locate in either a USA. Consequently there are no additional uses in these categories shown on the future land use map outside the Fitzgerald USA.

Future Parks/Recreation/Conservation uses include existing uses, plus a conservation corridor along the Ocmulgee River. The federal Emergency Management Agency has completed a flood plain study for the Ocmulgee River Corridor in northern Ben Hill County, and this same area is identified as a conservation corridor pursuant to the Georgia Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act of 1992. This designated conservation corridor is designed to maintain water quality, provide habitat for wildlife, and preserve the floodplain. County officials have indicated a desire to identify the county's remaining flood prone areas, and upon completion of the study, the identified floodplains will be added as conservation areas.

Future Transportation/Communication/Utilities uses will remain the same as existing. Due to projected slow growth and encouraged concentration of new development in the designated USA, no other significant expansions of the road system are anticipated in the unincorporated area through the 20-year planning period. Existing public rights-of-way within the county USA should be paved in accordance with proper urban standards and all public rights-of-way will continue to be maintained.

FITZGERALD FUTURE LAND USE

In general, the City of Fitzgerald's future land use pattern will be similar to its existing pattern with vacant lands being shown as developed generally in accordance with surrounding existing uses. Fitzgerald and its urban fringe will be the major focal point for all major residential, commercial, industrial and governmental growth in Ben Hill County. The city's historic grid pattern, and its perimeter road system will continue to exert strong impacts on future growth and development. Map III-2 depicts future land use designations, service areas and Activity Center boundaries for Fitzgerald and the adjacent unincorporated urban fringe areas of Ben Hill County.

Fitzgerald's Urban Service Area (USA) corresponds with that of its existing water and sewer service areas. Fitzgerald's Downtown Activity Center (DAC) corresponds with the locally designated and visually recognizable downtown district, which has served as the commercial and governmental center of Greater Ben Hill since its formation. The DAC will continue to be the urban core of the city and with the highest density of uses.

Fitzgerald also contains two Urban Activity Centers (UACs), which also contain a high density of land uses. One lies east of the city and largely corresponds with the Colony City Industrial Park, and the second UAC surrounds the Fitzgerald Municipal Airport and its associated uses.

Within Fitzgerald's USA, there are more than sufficient acreages of undeveloped/unused land or abandoned uses to accommodate projected growth during the 20-year planning period. These vacant lands are in all parts of the city and are generally adjacent to all land use categories. Therefore, these vacant lands will receive first priority for new development in any of the land use categories. The recommended pattern for infill development is depicted on the future land use map.

The Plan recommends two major residential growth areas within Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County. The first area lies south and southwest of the Fitzgerald city limits and is bounded by Perry House Road on the east, the Industrial Perimeter Road to the south, and Willacoochee Creek to the west. The second major residential growth area lies to the north of the city limits and is bounded by U.S. 129 on the east, Adams Road on the west and the Industrial Perimeter Road on the north. In addition to these two major residential growth areas, it is recommended that the infilling of existing platted lots within the City of Fitzgerald and its urban fringe area be encouraged in order to promote the most cost efficient use of available public services.

In general, Fitzgerald's Water, Light and Bond Commission has developed an extensive water and sewer infrastructure to the above referenced developing areas. Strong efforts should be made to require utilization of the existing public utility systems and avoid the leapfrog development patterns currently evident on both the city's southwest and northern urban fringe areas.

The future land use maps indicate limited commercial expansion for the twenty-year planning period. Extensive commercial areas already exist within the Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County urban area and are primarily located in the city's historic central business district (Downtown Activity Center), and adjacent to U.S. 129 (the north/south one-way pair of Grant Street and Sherman Street). A number of older historic buildings, formerly utilized for industrial purposes, are becoming available in the city's downtown and their conversion to retail office and associated used should be strongly encouraged and will support the plan concept of a strong and vibrant downtown area.

The second major shopping district in Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County is found along U.S. 129 south, immediately north of the Industrial Perimeter Road. Infilling of this area should be strongly encouraged and should any properties currently utilized for industrial purposes become vacant, their conversion to commercial use should be encouraged.

Properties designed for neighborhood oriented shopping should be limited, and all such development should be properly located, screened and buffered from adjacent residential use areas.

Industrial land uses recommended in the future land use plan maps are depicted as the infilling of available properties lying east and southeast of the Industrial Perimeter Road and are largely contained within the existing Forward Fitzgerald and Colony City industrial tracts located off Rip Wiley Road and Glen Bass Road. The city and county have made tremendous investments in public water and sewer into this area and the entire thoroughfare system is designed to service these industrial tracts. Should additional industrial lands be required, they should be extensions of these existing parks.

Public/Institutional land uses in particular should locate inside the Fitzgerald USA, and consequently no additional uses in this category are depicted outside the USA.

Future Transportation/Communication/Utilities land uses will remain significantly the same as existing, with the exception of new streets developed in residential subdivisions. Due to the encouraged concentration of new development in the USA, no other significant expansions of the road systems are anticipated through the planning period. Existing public rights-of-way within the Urban Service Area should be paved in accordance with proper urban standards and all public rights-of-way will continue to be maintained. Upgrading of the Industrial Perimeter Road system will remain a priority for both Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County.

Future Parks/Recreation/Conservation uses include existing park uses, and planned expansions and upgrades. In addition the city's identified flood plains are included in this category to encourage the maintenance of water quality, to provide habitat for wildlife and preserve the natural processes associated with the city's natural drainage system. Uses other than passive recreation will be prohibited in these conservation corridors.

Greater Ben Hill contains an abundance of existing vacant uses and subdivided lands, so there are ample acreages for development throughout the 20-year planning period. This means a coordinated infill development policy needs to be implemented and services extended into the county to open up lands adjacent to existing serviced development. The summary of future land use acreages needs between 1995 and 2015 is as follows:

Totals	Existing Acres	2015 Ac. Needed	
Residential	6,820	1,903	8,723
Commercial	1,462.7	100	1,562.4
Industrial	768.9	200	968.9
Public/Insti.	1,718.2	100	1,818.2
Park/Rec/Con.	349.4	120	469.4
Tran/Comm/Ut.	4,080.6	200	4,280.6
Ag/Forested	146,204.4	-2,475.6	143,728.8
Undev/Unused	147.4	-147.4	-0-
TOTAL	161,551.5	4,276.7	161,551.5

FY 2006 - FY 2010 SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAMS

The purpose of the Short-Term Work Program is to provide a detailed listing of the various projects and programs recommended by Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald for implementation during the first five years covered in the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan. By scheduling major county and city initiatives and capital expenditures in advance over a period of years, the five-year work program will assist the county and city in undertaking activities to implement their individual plans and achieve their goals.

The Short-Term Work Program should be linked to and coordinated with the county and city annual operating budgets. The majority of the elements of the work program require direct county and city expenditures or indirect costs through allocation of county and city employees. Therefore, implementation of the Plan's goals, policies, and recommendations are tied to each annual budget. Attempts to implement the Plan should: (1) review recommendations in the Short-Term Work Program for the upcoming year; (2) revise the recommendations based on current information; and (3) transfer the recommended items that require local funding to the respective annual operating budget. With this approach, Greater Ben Hill will be able to systematically implement their comprehensive plan.

Ben Hill County 2000-2005: Report of Accomplishments

Community Facilities		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Governmental Buildings: Design and install an elevator at the Courthouse	Completed	
Public Safety: Construct the station/EMT Substation Building	Completed	
Re-pave County Roads using \$2.8M of SPLOST funds	Underway	
Investigate mass transit alternatives	Underway	
Promote widening of State Route 319 through Ben Hill County	Completed	
Promote widening of State Route 107 to Interstate 75	Completed	
Promote 4-laning SR 129 to Ocilla	Completed	

Economic Development		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to support the county-wide Chamber of Commerce and all its program priorities	Completed	

Housing		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Support grant applications to upgrade conditions including the addition of public sewers	Underway	

Land Use		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Adopt ordinances to address the environmentally sensitive resources namely wetlands and groundwater recharge areas	Completed	
Adopt ordinance for the Ocmulgee River Corridor Protection Area	Completed	
Amend the subdivision ordinance to require developers to provide paved roads and other required infrastructure prior to county acceptance; and modify platting process to establish three-tier review planning commission, environmental, and engineering	Postponed	The County Commission would not contract with the RDC to perform the needed services. The Commission is reviewing other options.

Natural and Historic Resources		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Conduct a countywide historic resources inventory costing \$12,000 – 60% Federal; 40% Local	Postponed	Funding at SHPO was not available, but the activity will be attempted in FY 2006-2008

General Planning		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to seek functional consolidation with Fitzgerald	Postponed	Forward progress has been stalled by political differences

Participate in all updates to the 2015 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan.	Completed	
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG, FmHA) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority.	Completed	
Annually re-evaluate the Short-Term Work Program	Completed	
Coordinate stormwater drainage improvements with Fitzgerald	Underway	

Ben Hill County 2006-2010: Short Term Work Program Update

Community Facilities				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Complete the remodeling of the County Court House	2006	County Commission	\$600K	RD, SPLOST
Repave County Roads using \$2.0M of SPLOST funds	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission	\$2.0M	SPLOST
Turkey Creek Flood Control Project	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	County Commission, City Council	\$1.2M	SPLOST
Airport Improvements: Runway/Taxiway extension; install Glide Slope/Upgrade Localizer; Upgrade approach lighting	2006, 2007, 2008	County Commission, City Council	\$2.5M	General Fund, DOT, FAA
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission	Unknown	General Fund
Promote 4-laning SR 129 to Ocilla	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission	Unknown	General Fund
Develop flagship park at Blue & Gray Park	2006, 2007	County Commission, City Council	\$200K	SPLOST
Upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission, City Council	\$1.3M	SPLOST
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission	Unknown	General Fund

Economic Development				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to support the Joint Economic Development director position	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission, City Council	\$80K/y	General Fund
Continue to support JDA in development of Millennium Technology Pointe	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission, City Council	\$6M	EDA, General Fund, USDA, One GA, DCA
Develop with ECTC the Regional Technology Communications Center	2006, 2007, 2008	County Commission, City Council	Unknown	Fitz/Ben Hill DA, JDA
Continue to support the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill Co. Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Development Authority/Joint Economic Development Authority.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission, City Council	\$75K/y	General Fund,

Housing				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to foster and support the rehabilitation/reconstruction of affordable housing.	2006, 2007	County Commission	\$750K	CDBG, CHIP, Private

Land Use

Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to coordinate zoning ordinance administration/enforcement with the Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Planning Advisory Commission.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission, County PAC, RDC	Unknown	General Fund/Permit fees
Prepare amendments to land subdivision ordinance to require paved streets in new subdivisions and provisions for smart growth.	2006, 2007	County Commission, Ben Hill PAC, RDC	\$9k	General Fund

Natural and Historic Resources

Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Participate with cities/county/Historical Society to prepare a countywide historic resources inventory. (60% Federal; 40% Local)	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City, County, SHPO, RDC	\$12K Costs Shared	SHPO/General Fund/Private donations
Support the preservation/reuse of historic schools identified in the Regional Historic Schools Initiative/Multiple Property Register Nomination.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission, Historic Society, RDC, SHPO	Unknown	General Fund/Private donations

General Planning

Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG,EDA,RD,LDF, Etc) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission	Unknown	General Fund
Annually re-evaluate the Ben Hill County Short Term Work Program.	2007, 2008, 2009, 2010,	County Commission	Unknown	General Fund
Participate in all amendments/mediation to the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission, County PAC	Unknown	General Fund
Continue exploration of functional cooperation with Fitzgerald.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	County Commission	Unknown	General Fund

Fitzgerald 2000-2005: Report of Accomplishments

Community Facilities		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Renovate Harvey Building on East Pine for fire department	Completed	
Paulk Complex-Construct fenced and lighted 2-softball, 1-Pony League; 1-football field	Completed	
Renovate roof garden at the Grand Theater	Completed	
Rehabilitate/Overlay Taxiway; Pave T-Hangar Taxiway	Underway	
Design new indoor swimming pool	Not accomplished	The school system did not want to participate so the project was dropped
Develop new Blue and Gray Museum	Underway	
Funding plan to renovate Carnegie Building	Underway	Architectural plans were undertaken and funding plans are being prepared
Funding plan to renovate old City Hall	Underway	Reconstruction started in Aug. 2005
Expand sewer system for annexation	Completed	
Review existing services for better productivity, proactivity, and fee based operation where possible	Underway	
Develop a plan for traffic impact at landfill	Completed	
Research recycling alternatives to extend life of permitted landfill sites while maintaining cash flow	Completed	
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	Completed	
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	Completed	
Promote 4-laning SR 129 to Ocilla	Completed	
Construct a construction/demolition landfill	Completed	
Airport improvements: Expand apron and extend runway	Underway	Plans were near final stage and runway extension will be done by FY '07
Develop creative and comprehensive signage plan addressing navigation and scenic considerations	Underway	
Resurface approximately 60 miles of City streets	Completed	
Widen Long St. (Sultanna to Central) SR 90	Underway	
Airport improvements: Install MALS-F and PAPI systems	Completed	
Construct more cells in Phase 2 at sanitary landfill	Postponed	Decision made to contract out disposal with Onyx

Economic Development		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Apply for expanded water pumping permit	Completed	
Seek expanded natural gas capacity (pipeline)	Underway	
Expand wastewater treatment capacity	Completed	
Seek electrical generating facility	Postponed	Electrical generating facility has shifted from a coal plant to potential gas turbine or peanut hull boiler fired
Continue to support the county-wide Chamber of Commerce	Completed	

Continue to support the Joint Economic Development director position	Completed	
Continue to support JDA in development of Millenium Technology Pointe	Underway	
Develop with ECTC the Regional Technology Telecommunications Center	Underway	
Expand tourism initiative through additional regional cooperation, Grand Theater and Conference Center, new museums, scheduled events, and recruitment of complimentary Downtown businesses	Underway	
Develop with ECTC the Regional Technology Communication Center	Underway	
Continue to support JDA in development of Millenium Technology Pointe	Completed	
Develop redundant broadband connectivity at Tier 1 rates through public/private collaboration	Underway	

Housing		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to utilize the HOME programs	Completed	
Continue to clear derelict property and re-establish housing in the City's redevelopment area	Underway	

Land Use		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Amend or adopt codes and ordinances to address the environmentally sensitive resource wetlands	Completed	
Amend the city subdivision ordinance requiring curb and gutter; modify the platting process to establish a three tier review system-planning commission, environmental and city/county engineering	Underway	

Natural and Historic Resources		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Redevelop Downtown Streetscape to support historic areas	Completed	
Continue Downtown façade program	Underway	
Develop model program for Downtown loft housing	Underway	

General Planning		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to seek functional consolidation with Ben Hill County	Postponed	Forward progress continues in some functional areas, but governmental consolidation is not being considered
Annually re-evaluate the Fitzgerald Short Term Work Program.	Completed	
Participate in all updates to the 2015 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan.	Completed	
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG, FmHA, etc.) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority.	Completed	

Coordinate stormwater drainage improvements with Ben Hill County	Underway	
Promote opportunities for regional cooperation between members of JDA and other area partners	Underway	
Promote dialog and partnerships across agency lines through Family Connections and other collaborative efforts	Underway	

Fitzgerald 2006-2010: Short Term Work Program Update

Community Facilities & Services				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Expand Blue & Gray Museum	2008-2009	City Council	\$100,000	SAFETEA-LU HPP; SPLOST
Resurface approximately 35 miles of city streets; Associated transportation improvements: sidewalks, parking, etc.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	\$1,500,000	SPLOST
Turkey Creek Flood Control Project	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009	City Council, County Commission	\$1.2M	SPLOST
Airport Improvements: Runway extension and Expand Apron; Install MALS-F & PAPI's systems	2006, 2007, 2008	City Council, County Commission	\$2,500,000	General Fund, DOT, FAA
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	General Fund
Promote 4-laning SR 129 to Ocilla	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	General Fund
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	General Fund
Reconstruct Old City Hall	2005, 2006	City Council	\$1,500,000	SPLOST; W,L,&B
Renovate Carnegie Building for Arts	2006	City Council	\$500,000	SPLOST
Renovate A,B,&A Depot for museum expansion, & genealogy/local history library annex w/ 5311 office space	2008-2009	City Council	\$1,000,000	SPLOST, TEA, SAFETEA-LU HPP
Renovate Ford building façade for economic Development/Chamber	2007-2008	City, County, DDA, Chamber	\$500,000	Chamber & Other
Expand sewer system for annexations	2006-2007	City, W,L,&B	\$500,000	General Fund; W,L,&B
Develop flagship park at Blue & Gray Park	2006-2007	City Council, County Commission	\$200,000	SPLOST
Upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities	2006-2010	City Council, County Commission	\$1,300,000	SPLOST
Expand creative signage plan addressing navigation and scenic considerations	2006-2010	City Council	\$50,000	General fund, SPLOST trans.
Review existing services for better productivity, pro-activity and fee based operation where possible	2006-2010	City Council	Unknown	General fund

Economic Development				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to promote the Façade Rehab Program to attract and maintain Downtown businesses	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	DDA/SPLOST
Continue to support the Joint Economic Development director position	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council, County Commission	\$80,000/yr	General Fund
Continue to support JDA in development of Millennium Technology Pointe	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council, County Commission	\$6,000,000	EDA, General Fund, USDA, One GA, DCA
Expand tourism initiative through additional	2006, 2007,	City Council	Unknown	General Fund,

regional cooperation, Grand Theater and Conference Center, new museums, scheduled events, and recruitment of complimentary Downtown businesses	2008, 2009, 2010			Hotel/motel
Develop with ECTC the Regional Technology Communication Center	2006, 2007, 2008	City Council, County Commission	Unknown	Fitz./Ben Hill DA, JDA
Develop/continue redundant broadband connectivity at Tier 1 rates through public/private collaboration	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	General Fund, Private
Apply for expanded water pumping permit	2006-2010	W,L,& B	Unknown	W,L,& B
Seek expanded natural gas capacity (pipeline)	2006-2010	W, L, & B	Unknown	W,L,& B
Seek local electrical generating capacity through alternative generation and/or gas turbine	2006-2010	Fitz/Ben Hill DA; W,L,& B	Unknown	W,L,& B; MEAG; Private
Continue to evaluate creation of Downtown "Hotspot" internet connectivity	2006-2007	City Council, DDA	\$20,000	DDA
Continue to support the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill Co. Chamber of Commerce/Industrial Development Authority/Joint Economic Development Authority.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council, County Commission	\$75,000/y	General Fund,
Continue acquisition, rehabilitation, sale, and leasing of Downtown buildings for redevelopment purposes	206-2010	City Council, DDA	\$75,000/yr	DDA

Housing				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to utilize the HOME, USDA, DCA & other available Programs	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	\$750K/y	CDBG, Private, DCA, USDA
Continue to clear derelict property and re-establish housing in the City's redevelopment area.	2006-2010	City Council	\$750K/yr	CDBG, Private, DCA, USDA
Develop rental housing code compliance program	2006-2007	City Council	Unknown	General fund

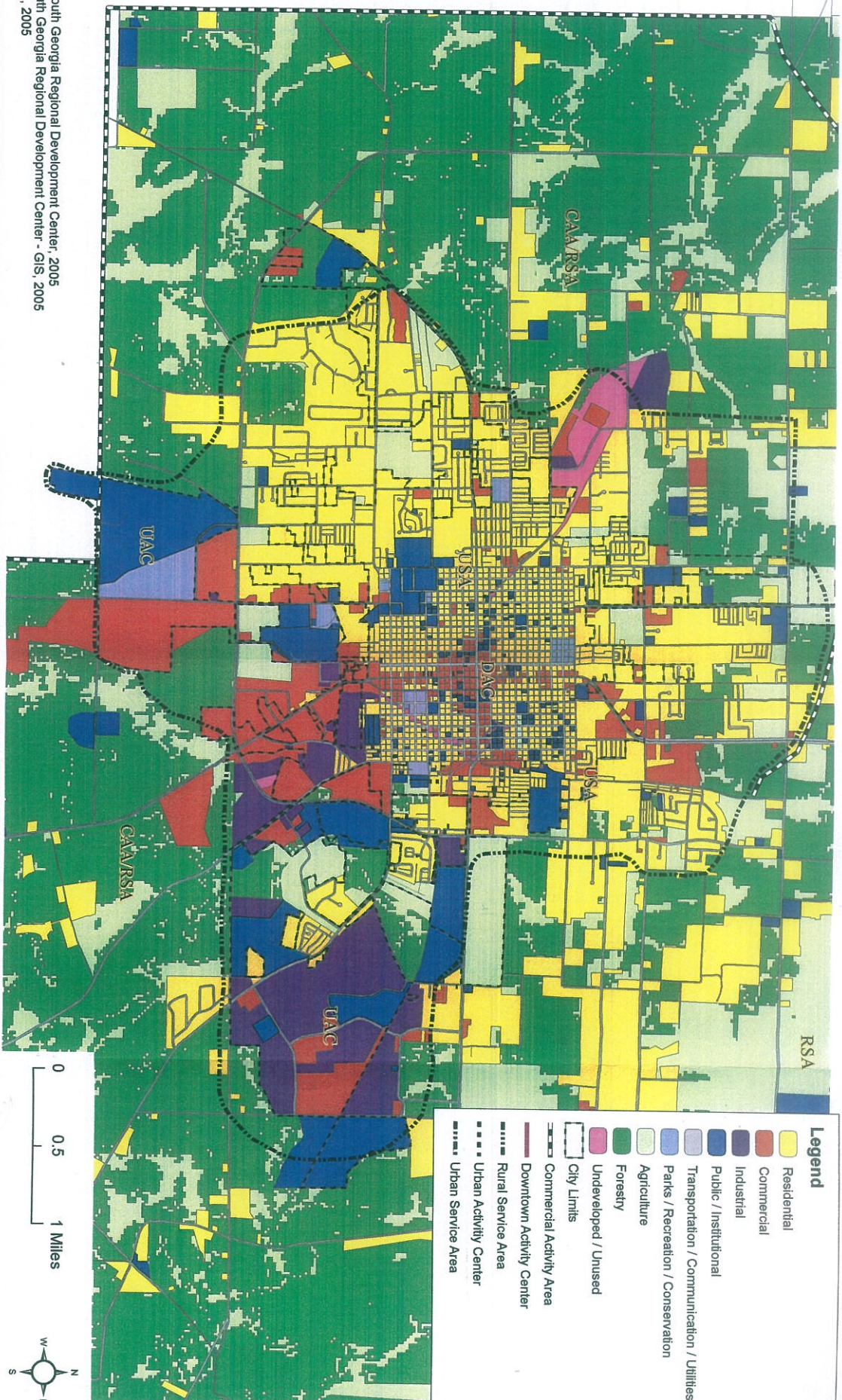
Land Use				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to coordinate zoning ordinance administration/enforcement with the Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Planning Advisory Commission.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council, County Commission, PAC, RDC	Unknown	General Fund/Permit fees
Continue to review Subdivision & Zoning Ordinances for Opportunities to promote Smart Growth and remove barriers to affordable housing	2006-2010	City Council PAC, RDC	Unknown	General Fund,

Natural and Historic Resources				
Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Participate with city/county/Historical Society to prepare a countywide historic resources inventory. (60% Federal; 40% Local)	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City, County, SHPO, RDC	\$12K Costs Shared	SHPO/General Fund/Private donations
Develop & Implement the Downtown Loft housing program	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	CDBG, CHIP, Private
Support the preservation/reuse of historic schools identified in the Regional Historic	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009,	City Council, Historic	Unknown	General Fund/Private

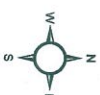
Schools Initiative/Multiple Property Register Nomination.	2010	Society, RDC, SHPO		donations
Develop Downtown Master Plan	2006-2007	City Council, DDA	Unknown	General Fund/ DDA
Develop Arts Incubator in Aldine Hotel	2006-2008	City Council, DDA, Arts Council, HPC	\$500,000	DDA, DCA, GMA, GA Trust
Continue support for DDA, HPC	2006-2010	City Council	Unknown	General fund, SPLOST

General Planning

Activity	Years	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Prepare grant/loan applications (CDBG,EDA,RD,LDF Etc) after conducting a needs assessment and public hearing to ascertain which project has the highest priority.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	General Fund
Annually re-evaluate the Fitzgerald Short Term Work Program.	2007, 2008, 2009, 2010,	City Council	Unknown	General Fund
Participate in all amendments/mediation to the 2025 Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Comprehensive Plan.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council, Planning Advisory Commission	Unknown	General Fund
Evaluate adoption of new DCA Planning guidelines	2006-2010	City Council	Unknown	General Fund
Continue exploration of functional cooperation with Ben Hill County.	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City Council	Unknown	General Fund



- Legend**
- Residential
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Public / Institutional
 - Transportation / Communication / Utilities
 - Parks / Recreation / Conservation
 - Agriculture
 - Forestry
 - Undeveloped / Unused
 - City Limits
 - Commercial Activity Area
 - Downtown Activity Center
 - Rural Service Area
 - Urban Activity Center
 - Urban Service Area



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
 © SGRDC, 2005

MAP III-1 FITZGERALD / BEN HILL COUNTY URBAN AREA
 FUTURE LAND USE

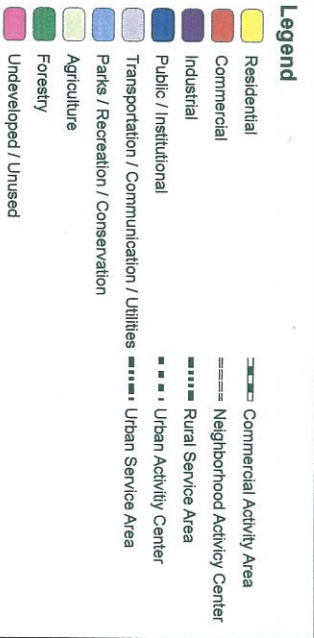
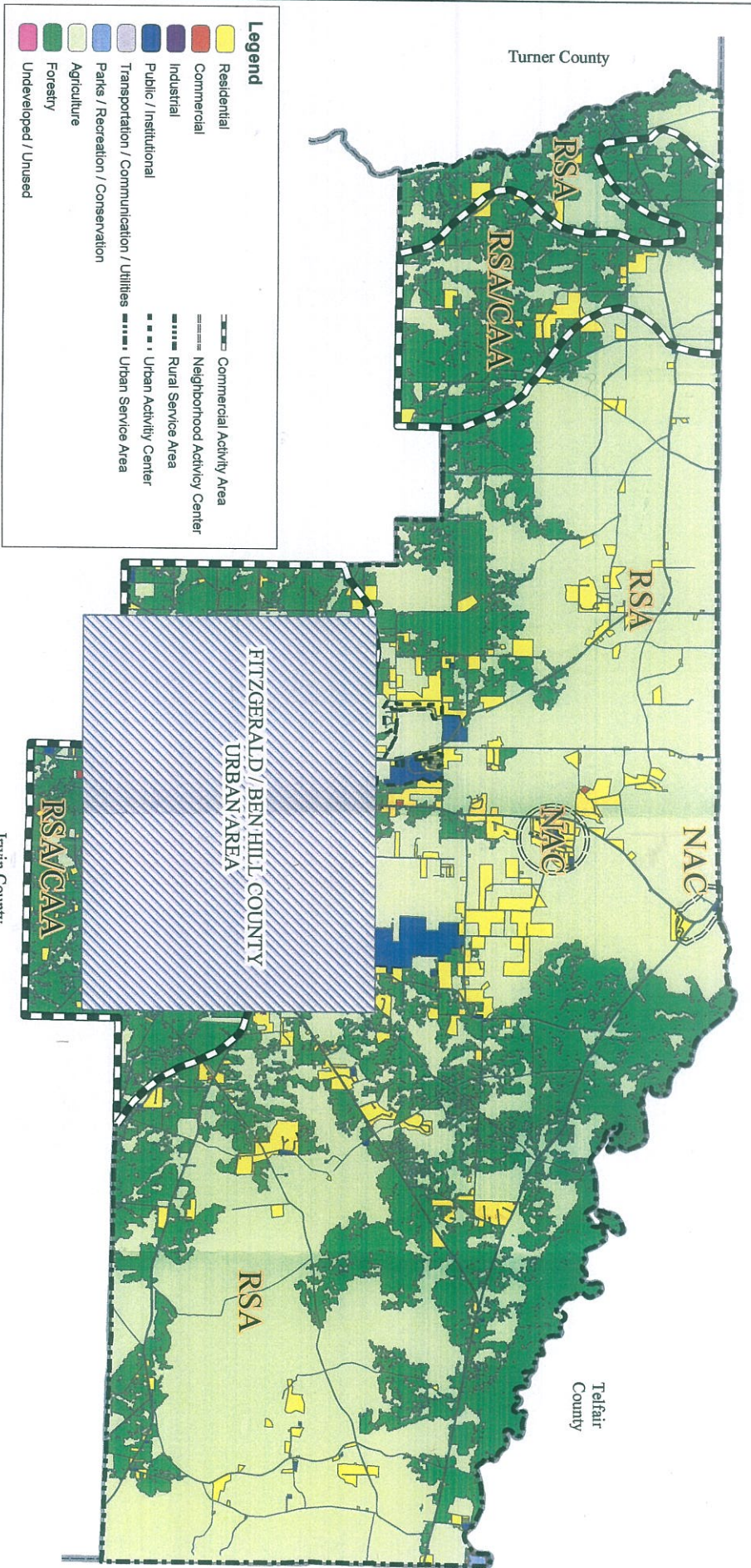


Wilcox County

Turner County

Telfair County

Coffee County



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2005
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**MAP III-2 BEN HILL COUNTY, RURAL AREA
 EXISTING LAND USE**



MAP III-2

