

Community Assessment

For the Cities of

Boston,
Meigs and
Ochlocknee

January 2008



This page intentionally left blank

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Table of Contents

The Planning Process	4
Why Plan?	4
What is a Comprehensive Plan?	4
Who plans?	4
What is in this Plan?	5
How is the Plan Implemented?	6
Community Assessment	
City of Meigs Assessment	7
Issues & Opportunities	8
Existing Land Use Map	22
Recommended Character Areas	23
Areas Requiring Special Attention	24
City of Ochlocknee Assessment	25
Issues & Opportunities	26
Existing Land Use Map	40
Recommended Character Areas	41
Areas Requiring Special Attention	42
City of Boston Assessment	43
Issues & Opportunities	44
Existing Land Use Map	58
Recommended Character Areas	59
Consistency with Quality Community Objectives	60

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

The Planning Process

Why Plan?

The Cities of Thomas County plan for people. People need a safe and secure place to live, an economy that provides jobs, ways to get around, schools and colleges, and recreational opportunities. It is the local government's responsibility to provide public services and facilities, develop policies, and adopt regulations to efficiently guide the growth of a community that meets the needs of its people.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the orderly and coordinated physical development of a community into the future. A Comprehensive Plan anticipates change and provides specific guidance for future legislative and administrative actions. It reflects the results of citizen involvement, technical analysis, and the judgment of decision-makers.

The maps, goals, and policies of the plan provide the basis for the adoption of regulations, programs, and services which implement the plan. The plan serves as a guideline for designing land uses and infrastructure development as well as developing community services.

Who Plans?

Residents, business owners, and the city staff of each city work together to shape the future of their community through the ongoing development of the Comprehensive Plan. The planning process provides an opportunity for individual citizens to contribute to this effort by attending community meetings to identify issues of concern, by volunteering for citizen committees which oversee changes to sections of the Plan, or by serving on boards or commissions that function as citizen advisors to the City Council.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

The primary responsibility of formulating the Comprehensive Plan rests with the City Council. The Council is a citizen's committee elected by the people to make recommendations for land use or policy changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Proposed changes to the Plan are discussed by the elected officials at regular meetings. Before making a recommendation, the City Council conducts public hearings. Information and comments presented by individual citizens, citizen committees, and other boards are weighed by the City Council as it prepares to make revisions to the Plan.

The ultimate planning decisions are made by the City Councils. The Councils are responsible for initiating plan reviews, considering Planning Commission recommendations, and adopting the Comprehensive Plan. To implement the Plan, the Councils are also responsible for adopting regulations and programs, and for levying taxes and making appropriations.

What is in this Plan?

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a readable, functional document that will guide the cities of Thomas County's future development and fulfill the Government's state mandated responsibilities in growth management. This plan is organized into three parts:

Part 1 is called the *Community Assessment* and will include five sections, Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities, Analysis of Existing Development Patterns, Analysis of Consistency Quality Community Objectives, Supporting Analysis of Data and Information, and if necessary, Appendix items.

Part 2 is called the *Community Participation Program* and is comprised of three sections: Identification of Stakeholders, Identification of Participation Techniques, and the Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda.

Part 3 is called the *Community Agenda* and contains the assessment elements. Each of the elements is organized into three basic components: A statement or series of statements that synthesize the overall goal of the element, called a *community vision*; an overview that describes the background and context for the element; and a list of policies that, when implemented, will achieve the goals of the plan.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

How is the Plan Implemented?

Adopting a Comprehensive Plan is the first step toward realizing each city's vision. The vision is achieved when the Plan is implemented. Each implementation program for the Plan is comprised of a combination of short-term and long-term actions. Some of the short-term actions include amendments of regulations such as the zoning ordinance and the subdivision regulations, and the approval of rezonings that match the Plan's land use designations. Long-term actions include sub-area planning, monitoring, evaluating, and amending the Plan as conditions change, and developing a capital investment program that allocates resources to projects that will spur development in the direction envisioned in the Plan.

**Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities
of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston**

City of Meigs Assessment

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

City of Meigs Issues & Opportunities

Population

- Declining population within the City but increases in the County

Demographics

- Worker aged population is increasing
- Racial shift is occurring: Caucasians out, African Americans and Hispanics in

Housing

- Many small areas of dilapidated or vacant houses
- Good housing variety
- Areas in need of redevelopment
- Much of the existing housing stock is poorly maintained but many of the neighborhoods are stable; others are declining or in need of redevelopment

Income

- Low median household income
- High poverty level

Transportation & Circulation

- Disconnected from U.S. 19
- Low traffic flows in town
- Narrow streets provide traffic calming but lack of sidewalks in most areas is a problem
- Convenient highway and rail access

Economic Development

- Strong agricultural based industry
- Stagnant downtown business environment
- The disconnect from U.S. 19 is stifling the economy of the town

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Cultural Environment

- The GA 3 corridor and the rail corridor it parallels are historic corridors that are the main reason for the city's existence
- There are a number of historic homes in Meigs, but many are in disrepair or contain historically inappropriate architectural additions or repairs
- The lack of local historic preservation ordinances provides no protection to historic structures
- The historic quality of the downtown is showing signs of degradation
- The school building is a historic structure that currently is an eyesore, but has potential

Community Facilities & Services

- Most of the residences are on municipal water and sewer
- Solid waste services are provided by the City of Thomasville
- Gas service are provided by the City of Meigs
- There are not enough recreational facilities and no organized recreational programming

Residential Land Use

- There are many areas available for residential expansion within the city limits
- There are many areas suitable for redevelopment within the city limits
- Loose development standards are a cause for concern

Commercial Land Use

- Commercial growth is stagnant or declining throughout the city, and is most evident in the downtown where most of the buildings are empty
- There is a need for commercial growth and space available to accommodate it

Industrial Land Use

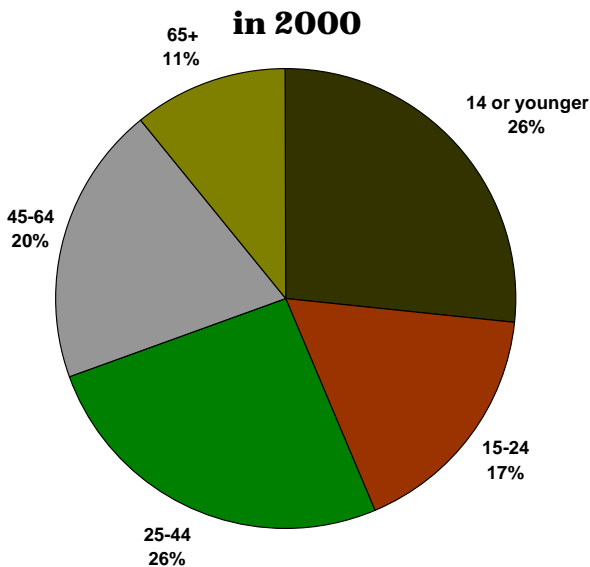
- There are still viable industrial areas, but the need for industrial redevelopment is apparent
- There is a need to identify areas for future industrial uses

Meigs at a Glance...

POPULATION		GENDER		Number	%
Total Population	1,090	Male		496	45.5
		Female		594	54.5
PROJECTIONS		RACE AND ETHNICITY			
2000	1,090	White		286	26.2
2005*	1,055	Black or African American		728	66.8
2010*	1,020	Hispanic or Latino		83	7.6
2015*	984				
HOUSEHOLD POPULATION					
2020*	949	Population in occupied housing units		1,087	100
2025*	914	In Owner-occupied housing units		750	69.0
2030*	879	In Renter-occupied housing units		337	31.0

AGE PROJECTIONS										
Age Category	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0 – 4 Years Old	99	102	104	95	85	82	78	75	71	68
5 – 13 Years Old	212	214	216	211	205	203	202	200	198	196
14 – 17 Years Old	121	91	61	65	68	55	42	28	15	2
18 – 20 Years Old	73	63	53	53	52	47	42	36	31	26
21 – 24 Years Old	76	74	72	69	66	64	61	59	56	54
25 – 34 Years Old	146	150	154	145	135	132	130	127	124	121
35 – 44 Years Old	117	128	138	142	146	153	161	168	175	182
45 – 54 Years Old	109	104	98	114	130	135	141	146	151	156
55 – 64 Years Old	107	95	83	84	85	80	74	69	63	58
65 and over	171	156	141	130	118	105	92	78	65	52

Meigs Population by Age



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Number	%
Population 25 and older	623	
High school graduates (includes equivalency)	255	40.9%
Some college, or associate's degree	54	8.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	8	1.3%
HOUSING COST (in dollars)		
Median property value	\$29,300	\$39,200
Median rent	\$190	\$282
INCOME		
Median household income		\$16,993
TRANSPORTATION TO WORK		
Workers 16 and over		289
Average travel time to work (minutes)		25

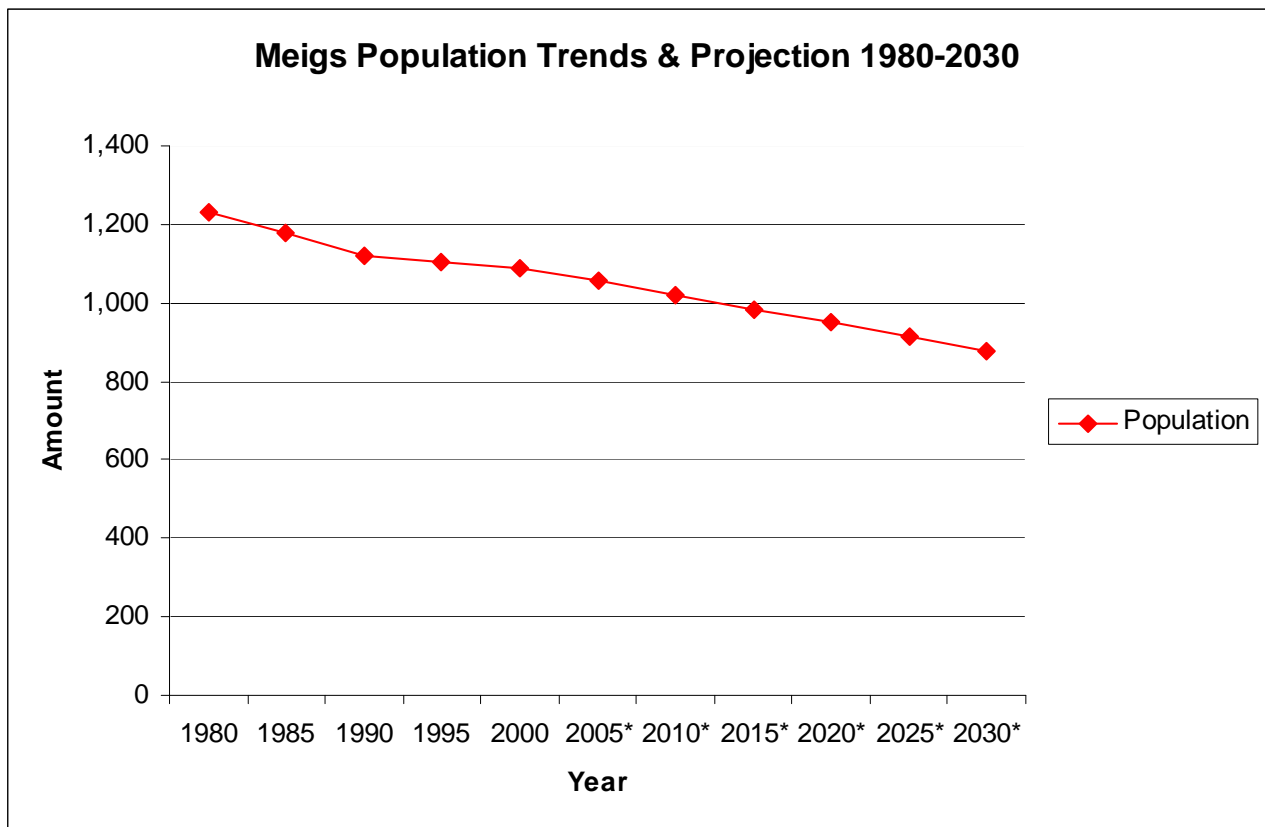
*Projection Figures are derived through linear extrapolation of Historical Data

Assumptions: Making population and household projections is an art as well as a science, and even with the best information the future is difficult to accurately predict. The following assumptions provide a basis for offering population projections. It is assumed that there will be no large-scale economic, political, legal, or environmental crisis in the region that could impact Meigs long-term growth. It is assumed that Meigs will have the necessary resources (water, power, land) and infrastructure to accommodate projected growth generally within the planning horizon of 20 years. It is assumed that Meigs economic growth, in terms of jobs and income, will not deviate significantly from established levels over the past 20 years. To the extent that these assumptions vary over time, the rate of Meigs population and household

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Population

The population of the City of Meigs has been in steady decline since at least 1980 and the future will most likely hold the same rate of decline. According to the census projections the total population will decrease by 20% by the year 2030. Hopefully, the census projections will prove to be wrong considering Thomas County, and to a lesser extent Mitchell County, are expected to increase in total population. If the City of Meigs can capture some of that increase the decrease in population should not be so profound.



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Demographics

The age projection data for Meigs differs slightly from other cities of similar size. For example, the 0-13 yr age bracket decreases slightly while the largest decrease occurs in the 14-17 year old age bracket. The 18-20 year old age bracket diminishes significantly, but this is quite common in small towns. The 21-24 year old age group usually follows the same pattern as the 18-20 year old group but in the case of Meigs, it does not decrease significantly. Generally the worker age groups are steady or increasing, which is a good sign and may counteract the projected loss of school aged children. The data shows the retiree age group diminishing steadily. This is not at all unusual in small towns. As people get older and retire they often choose to move closer to medical facilities and other amenities and services.

City of Meigs Racial Composition Projections											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
White alone	591	516	440	363	286	210	134	57	0	0	0
Black or African American alone	640	647	653	691	728	750	772	794	816	838	860
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	3	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	1	1	8	15	19	23	26	30	34	38
other race	0	11	21	41	61	76	92	107	122	137	153
Persons of Hispanic origin	32	34	35	59	83	96	109	121	134	147	160

The racial composition in Meigs has been steadily shifting as the white population decreases and the black population and Latino population increases.

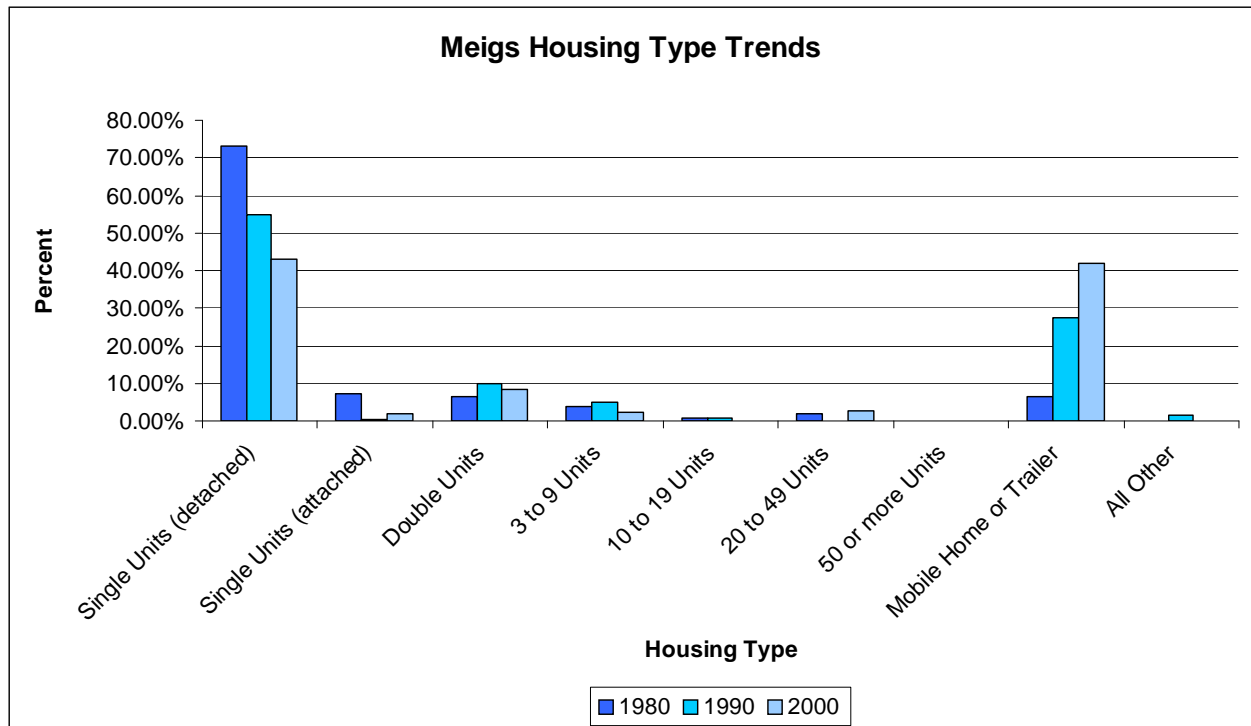
Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Housing

In 2000, the City of Meigs had 472 housing units (including owner and renter occupied units and vacant units), representing a 14% increase between 1980 and 2000. Most of the 472 units (43.2%) are single family detached dwellings. The number of manufactured housing homes has been increasing since 1980, and in 2000 comprised 41.9% of the total

City of Meigs Types of Housing Projection											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
TOTAL Housing Units	409	408	407	440	472	488	504	519	535	551	567
Single Units (detached)	299	261	223	214	204	180	157	133	109	85	62
Single Units (attached)	30	16	2	6	9	4	0	0	0	0	0
Double Units	27	34	40	40	39	42	45	48	51	54	57
3 to 9 Units	16	18	20	15	10	9	7	6	4	3	1
10 to 19 Units	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20 to 49 Units	8	4	0	6	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
50 or more Units	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile Home or Trailer	26	69	112	155	198	241	284	327	370	413	456
All Other	0	4	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

housing units. If trends continue, the City of Meigs will see a 56% increase in the number of manufactured homes by the year 2030. At that time manufactured homes will comprise approximately 80% of the housing stock.



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Because of the relatively low per-capita income of the area, homes in Meigs are generally small and inexpensive. Manufactured homes are very popular and are not necessarily bad, but when they dominate the landscape a problem of aesthetics may develop, particularly if they are not properly maintained. There appears to be a severe lack of moderate income homes in the city. This may be attributed to lack of demand, but the demand for these



homes is slowly increasing. As the economy of Thomas and Mitchell Counties strengthens, the need for additional middle to high income homes will increase. It is sometimes difficult to decide what should be developed first- houses or jobs- because one usually spurs the other. Business and industry generally look to settle in communities where enough housing exists in the right price range but it is very risky when a community builds homes to try to attract industry and jobs.

Income

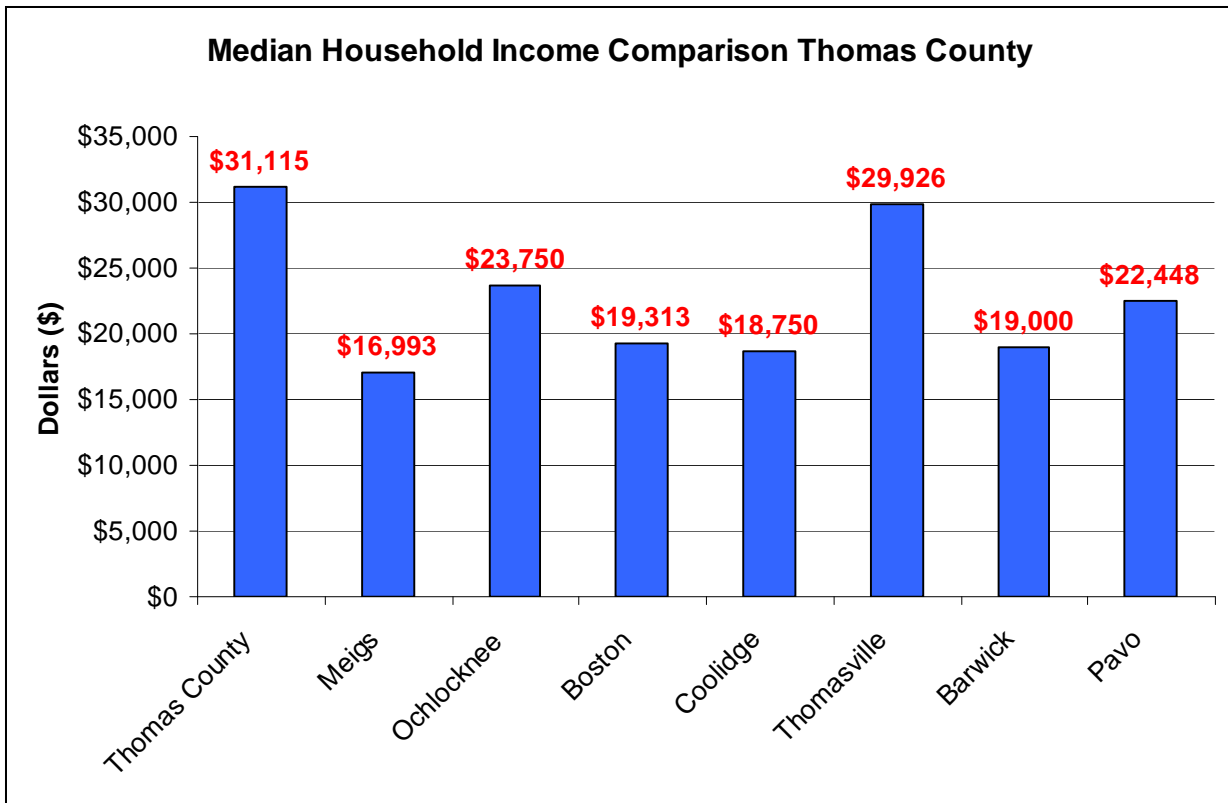
High paying jobs have not characterized Meigs in the past and that trend continues. The median household income in Meigs in 1999 was \$16,993. This amount was considerably less than the state's median household income of \$42,433 that same year. Nationally, the median household income in 1999 was \$41,994.

During 1999, 45.4% of the citizens lived below the poverty level, compared with Georgia's rate of 14.7% and the national rate of 13.3%. In addition, 65.1% of the children under the age of 18 lived below the poverty level in Meigs. Nationally, 19.9% of the population under the age of 18 years lived below the level of poverty.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Approximately 72% of the households of Meigs earn less than \$30,000 per year. The largest employment sectors in Meigs are manufacturing, retail, education and health and social services. Most of these jobs are low-wage, low-skill occupations.

In 1999 (the most current city level data available), the per-capita income of Meigs was \$8,104. This was \$13,050 below the state average and \$13,483 below the national average. There are a number of factors that correlate with the lower than average income including low education levels, race, the number of seniors and the rural location.



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Transportation and Circulation

Meigs sits at the crossroads of Highway 111 and the Old Dixie Highway (GA 3). The Old Dixie Highway runs north to Pelham, Camilla, Baconton, and Albany and south to Ochlocknee and Thomasville. Historically, it was the main road through town before the creation of U.S. 19/GA 300 that roughly parallels the Old Dixie Highway through much of Thomas County and essentially forms the eastern boundary of Meigs. U.S. 19/GA 300 runs north and south through Mitchell County north to Albany and beyond, and south into Florida. The U.S. 19/GA 300 four lane highway corridor has presented challenges for the Meigs community. Because most travelers now use U.S. 19/GA 300, instead of the Old Dixie Highway, the City of Meigs has much less traffic which, although good for traffic circulation in town, has negatively impacted downtown businesses that relied on the greater traffic flows that existed before the creation of U.S. 19/GA 300.



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Economy

The economic development element provides the opportunity to inventory and assess the community's economic base, labor force characteristics, local economic development opportunities and resources, to determine economic needs and goals, and to merge this information with information about population trends and characteristics, natural resources, community facilities and services, housing and land use so that a strategy for the economic well-being of the community can be developed.

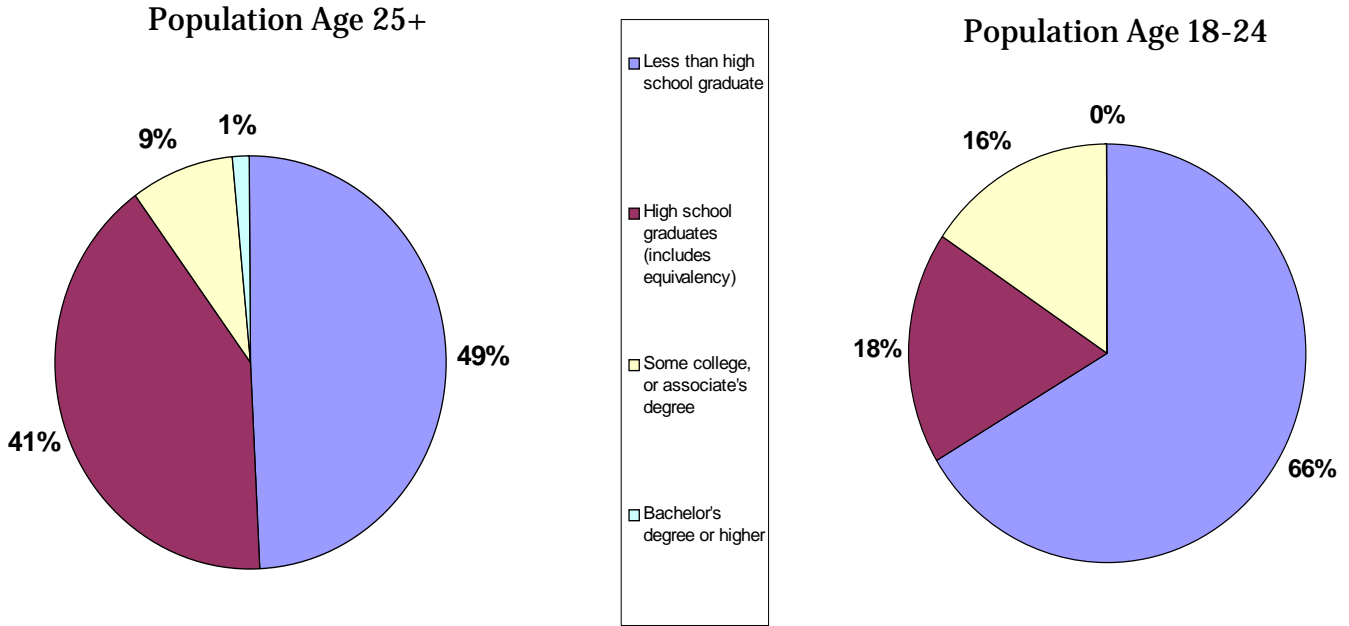
The City of Meigs has 477 employable people in the work force age group (ages 21-54). The proximity of Meigs to more urbanized areas may preclude it from attracting commercial businesses to any significant degree with regards to local job creation, but as business and industries locate to Pelham, Camilla, and Thomasville, Meigs is well positioned to expand as a bedroom community. Factors that may help Meigs attract business and industry are U.S. Highway 19 and the CSX rail line that runs through the city.

Education

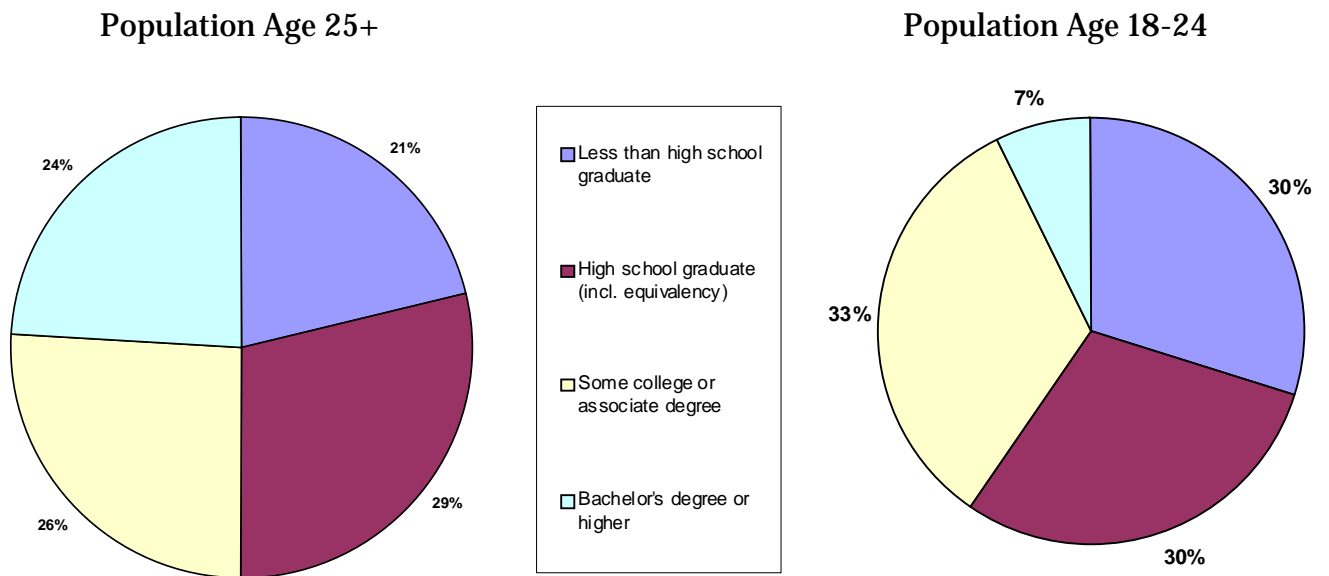
The lack of a well-educated population has plagued Meigs in terms of household income, housing type, economic development, and overall quality of life. According to the 2000 census figures, only 41% of the population 25 years and older graduated from high school and 18% of 18-24 year olds graduated from high school. The number of graduates aged 18-24 is somewhat misleading because the census does not distinguish between 18 year olds that have finished high school and those that have not finished their senior year. On average, the educational attainment of Meigs's citizenry is well below that of the state (28.7%) and therefore requires further attention. Because of the large percentage of adults without a high school education, many adults in Meigs may find it difficult to find employment other than menial, minimum-wage positions.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Meigs Educational Attainment



State of Georgia Educational Attainment



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Significant Cultural Resources

Although no specific buildings or districts have been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, Meigs has a downtown that is eligible. The downtown straddles the Old Dixie Highway (GA 3) and is reminiscent of the times when GA 3 was the major north/south avenue of travel. The Dixie Highway was planned in 1914 to connect the Midwest with the South. It was part of the National Auto Trail system, and grew out of an earlier Miami to Montreal highway. It was constructed and expanded from 1915 to 1927, and the final result is a network of interconnected paved roads, rather than a single highway.



The route of the Dixie Highway was marked by a red stripe with the letters "DH" on it, usually with a white stripe above and below. This was commonly painted on telephone and telegraph poles along the route.



The County boundary marker along the Dixie Highway was a common sight and the photo above is what remains of the marker in Meigs. It appears that this once had an arch extending over the road way with county markings.

DIXIE HIGHWAY: WEST LEG

The original route of the Dixie Highway started in Chicago. From there, it ran south to Danville, Illinois, and then turned east, passing through Veedersburg, Indianapolis (with a connector here to the East Leg), and Bloomington in Indiana; Louisville, Elizabethtown, and Bowling Green in Kentucky; Nashville, Shelbyville, and Chattanooga in Tennessee; Rome, Atlanta, and Macon in Georgia; and entered Florida at Tallahassee. From there, the Dixie High-

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

way continued south through Ocala, Orlando, and Fort Meyers, where it turned east to Miami and terminated at its junction with the East Leg.

DIXIE HIGHWAY: EAST LEG

Starting at Mackinaw, Michigan, this part of the highway passed through the cities of Bay City (with a loop serving Bad Axe and Port Huron), Flint, Saginaw, Detroit, and Monroe in Michigan; Toledo, Lima, Dayton, and Cincinnati in Ohio; Covington, Lexington, London, and Williamsburg in Kentucky; Jellico, Knoxville (with a to the West Leg at Chattanooga), and Newport in Tennessee; Asheville, North Carolina; Greenville, South Carolina; Augusta and Savannah in Georgia; and on into Florida through Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and West Palm Beach before terminating at Miami.

The Cities of Meigs and Ochlocknee owe much of their heritage to the Dixie Highway and traces of its history can still be found in many of the homes and roadside commercial structures along the route. Efforts should be made to protect and enhance this corridor.



The Dixie Highway in 1923

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Public Facilities and Services



The City of Meigs provides water and sewer to the majority of its residents and businesses, and has the capacity to provide these services to all of them if they want it. There is excess capacity for future growth for both water and sewer.

The City of Meigs does not provide recreational programming, however there are areas available for recreation. The sports field is essentially a baseball field that is big enough to be utilized for many different uses, including soccer, football, etc.

Meigs has its own police force, but relies on Thomas County for ambulance and fire services.

Land Use

Residential

Residential land use comprises approximately 50% of the land area in Meigs. Agricultural areas comprise approximately 30%, so there is room for new residential development within the city limits. There are also residential areas in need of redevelopment, and are the logical places to start in order to create quality housing throughout the city.

Commercial

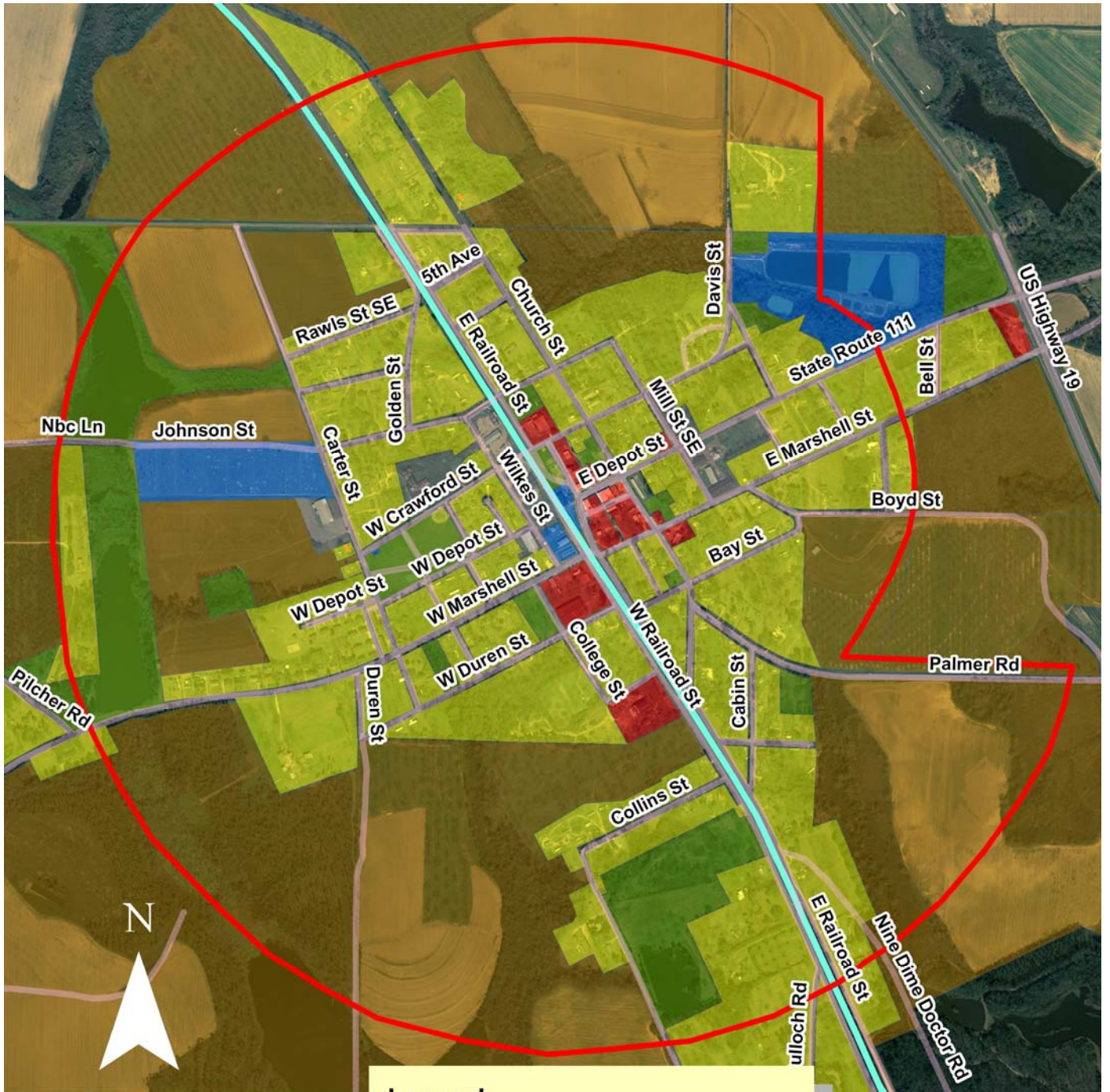
Commercial land use comprises approximately 5% of the land area in Meigs. Improving the business environment in the downtown is the first step towards a quality commercial environment. The City should embrace the historic character downtown and provide incentives to refurbish buildings and give people a reason to leave the highway and come to downtown Meigs. A rejuvenated downtown would induce locals to shop there too.

Industrial

Industrial uses comprise less than 5% of the land area in Meigs. The industrial uses are all directly tied to agriculture. Identifying new sites for industrial development and perhaps cleaning up any abandoned sites for new development will help the image of Meigs. Location is critical to industrial development. Abandoned sites in neighborhoods are good candidates for residential redevelopment.

City of Meigs

Existing Land Use Map

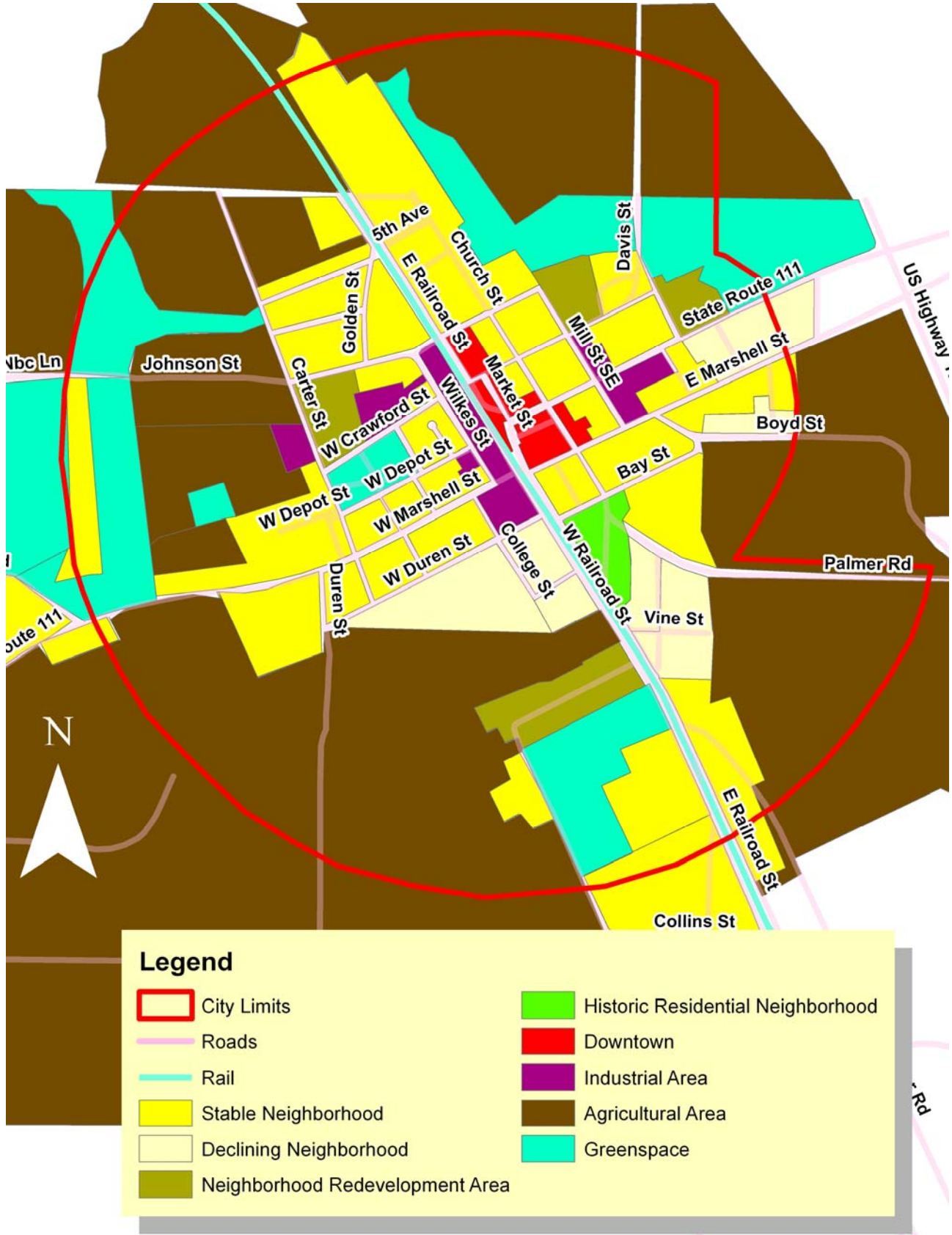


Legend

 City Limits	 Industrial
 Roads	 Open Space
 Rail	 Public/Institutional
 Agriculture	 Residential
 Commercial	

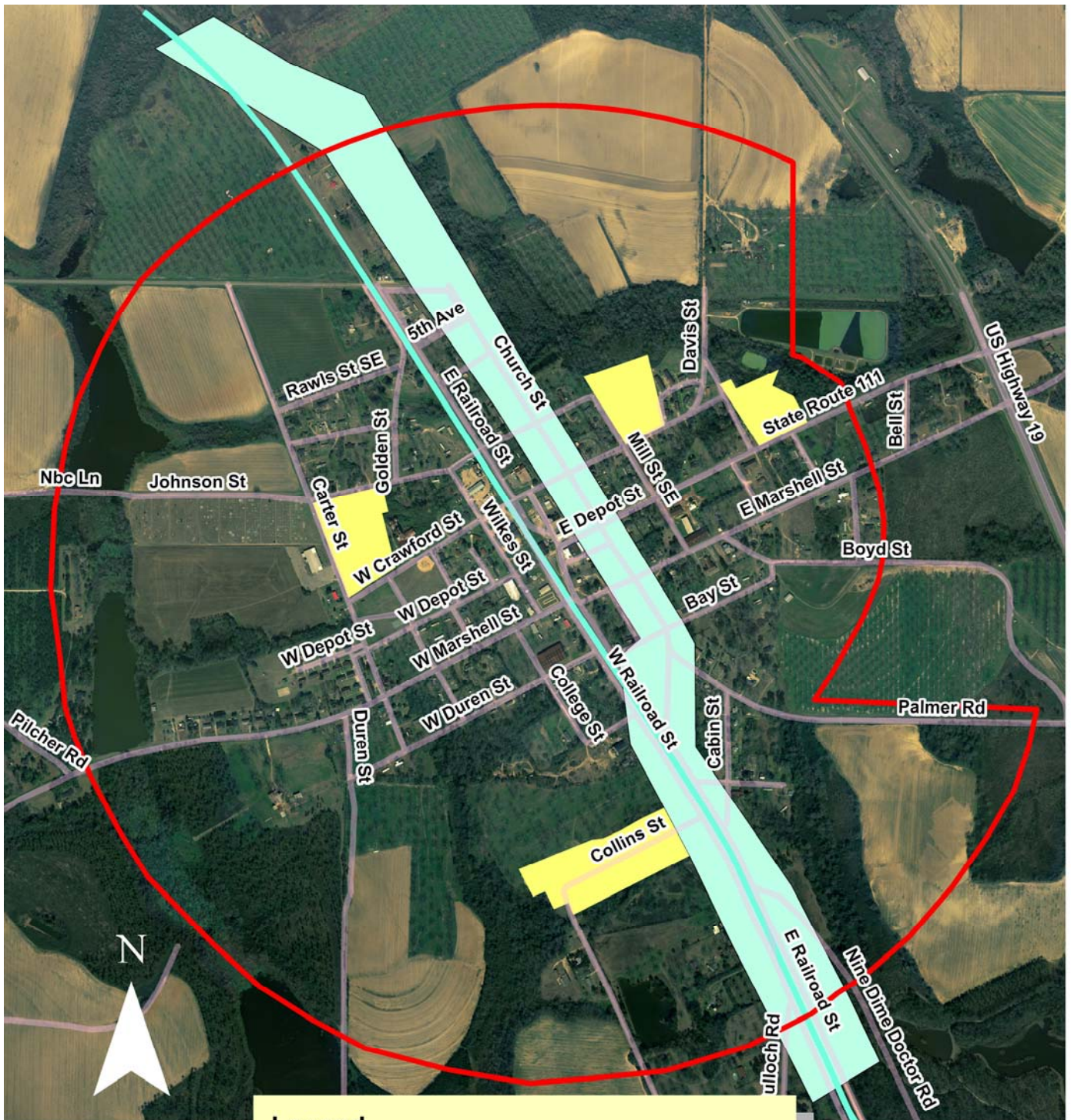
City of Meigs

Character Area Map








City of Meigs

Areas Requiring Special Attention



Legend

 City Limits	 Old Dixie Highway Corridor
 Roads	 Residential Redevelopment Area
 Rail	

**Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities
of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston**

City of Ochlocknee Assessment

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

City of Ochlocknee Issues & Opportunities

Population

- Declining population within the City but increases in the County

Demographics

- Worker aged population is increasing
- Racial shift is occurring: Caucasians out, African Americans in

Housing

- Mostly stable neighborhoods
- Good housing variety (price/style/age)
- Some residential areas in decline
- Some of the existing housing stock is poorly maintained and many neighborhoods are stable, but a couple areas are declining or in need of redevelopment

Income

- Moderate median household income
- High poverty level

Transportation & Circulation

- Property within city limits provides good access to U.S. 19
- Narrow streets calm traffic but the lack of sidewalks in most areas is a problem

Economic Development

- Strong agricultural based industry
- Declining downtown business environment

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Cultural Environment

- The GA 3 corridor is a historic corridor that, along with the railroad, is the main reason for the town's existence
- There are a number of historic homes present but many are in disrepair or contain inappropriate architectural additions/repairs
- Lack of local historic preservation ordinances provides no protection to these historic structures
- The historic fabric of the downtown is showing signs of deterioration
- Large tracts of open space and agricultural lands

Community Facilities & Services

- The city provides water to all of its residents
- Sewer is provided to approximately 70% of its residents
- Solid waste services are provided by the City
- Police, Fire, and Ambulance services are provided by the County
- There are adequate recreational facilities, but no organized recreational programming

Residential Land Use

- There are many areas available for residential expansion within the city limits
- There are areas available for redevelopment within the city limits
- The loose development standards are cause for concern
- Very few conflicting land uses

Commercial Land Use

- Commercial growth is stagnant or declining throughout the City, but is most evident in the downtown where many of the buildings are empty
- There is space available for much-needed commercial growth

Industrial Land Use

- Very little industrial uses within the City limits
- Need for identification of future industrial land

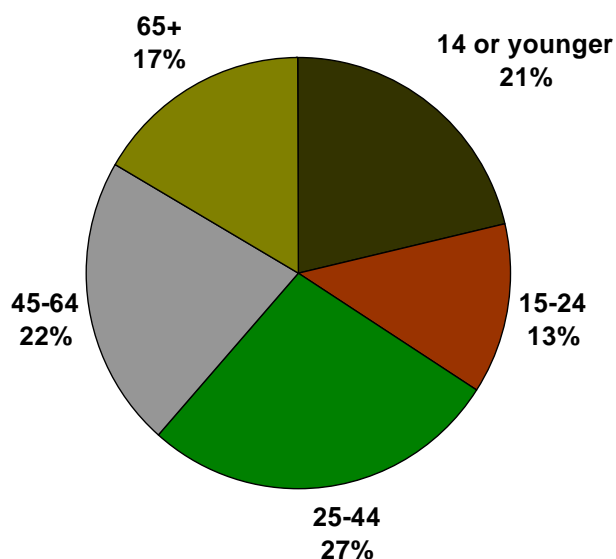
Ochlocknee at a Glance...

POPULATION		GENDER		Number	%
Total Population	605	Male		282	46.6
		Female		323	53.4
PROJECTIONS		RACE AND ETHNICITY			
2000	605	White		399	66.0%
2005*	600	Black or African American		194	32.1%
2010*	594	Hispanic or Latino		0	0.0
2015*	589				
2020*	583				
2025*	578				
2030*	572				

AGE PROJECTIONS

Age Category	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	
0 – 4 Years Old	51	43	34	39	44	42	41	39	37	35	34
5 – 13 Years Old	89	85	81	84	86	85	85	84	83	82	82
14 – 17 Years Old	49	41	32	28	23	17	10	4	0	0	0
18 – 20 Years Old	35	31	26	26	26	24	22	19	17	15	13
21 – 24 Years Old	47	34	21	24	27	22	17	12	7	2	0
25 – 34 Years Old	77	76	74	76	77	77	77	77	77	77	77
35 – 44 Years Old	68	76	83	86	88	93	98	103	108	113	118
45 – 54 Years Old	66	70	73	75	76	79	81	84	86	89	91
55 – 64 Years Old	71	69	66	62	58	55	52	48	45	42	39
65 and over	74	86	98	99	100	107	113	120	126	133	139

Ochlocknee Population by Age in 2000



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		Number	%
Population 25 and older		400	
High school graduates (includes equivalency)		145	36.3%
Some college, or associate's degree		42	10.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher		27	6.8%
HOUSING COST (in dollars)		1990	2000
Median property value		\$26,900	\$49,500
Median rent		\$224	\$421
INCOME			
Median household income			\$23,750
TRANSPORTATION TO WORK			
Workers 16 and over			221
Average travel time to work (minutes)			19

*Projection Figures are derived through linear extrapolation of Historical Data

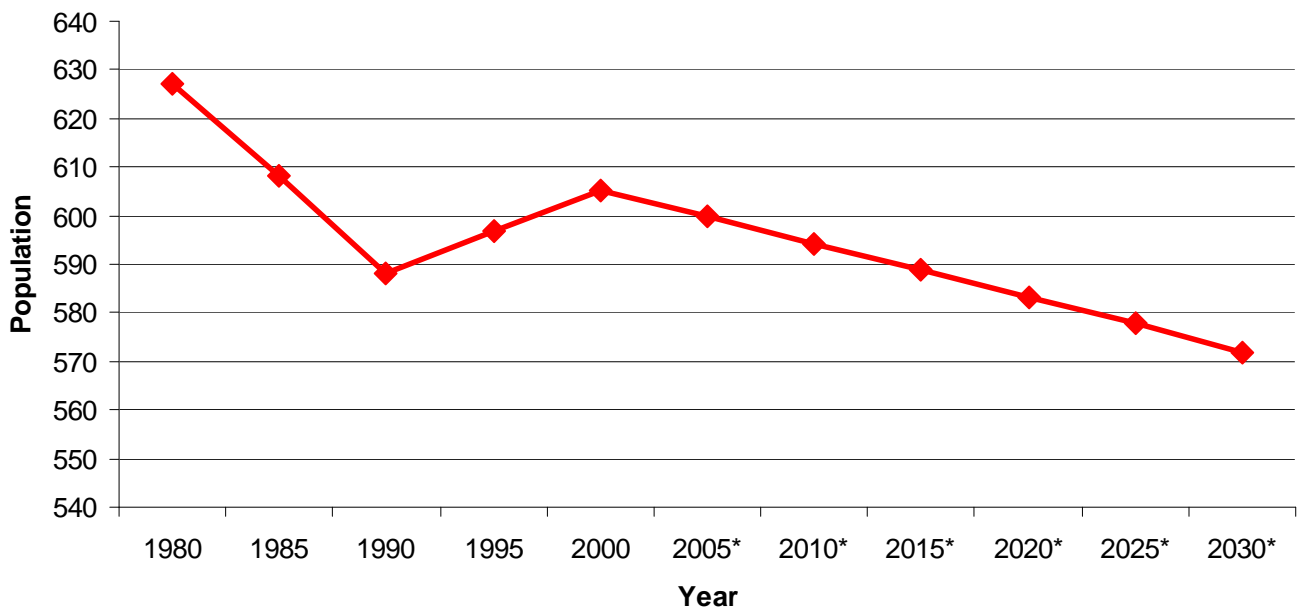
Assumptions: Making population and household projections is an art as well as a science, and even with the best information the future is difficult to accurately predict. The following assumptions provide a basis for offering population projections. It is assumed that there will be no large-scale economic, political, legal, or environmental crisis in the region that could impact Ochlocknee's long-term growth. It is assumed that Ochlocknee will have the necessary resources (water, power, land) and infrastructure to accommodate projected growth generally within the planning horizon of 20 years. It is assumed that Ochlocknee's economic growth, in terms of jobs and income, will not deviate

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Population

The population of the City of Ochlocknee had been in decline between 1980 and 1990 but spiked slightly between 1990 and 2000. According to the census projections the total population will decrease by 7% by the year 2030. Hopefully, the census projections will prove to be inaccurate considering Thomas County, and to a lesser extent Mitchell County, are expected to increase in total population. If the City of Ochlocknee can capture some of that increase the decrease in population should not be so profound.

Ochlocknee Population Trends & Projection 1980-2030

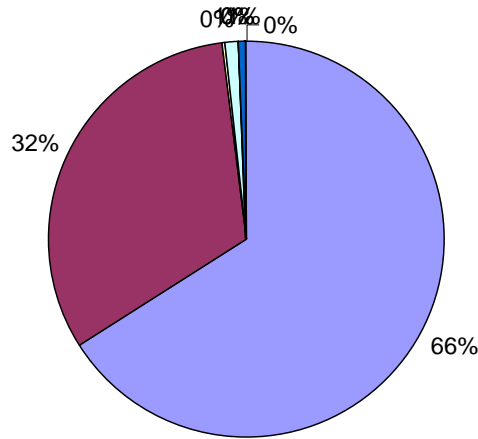


Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Demographics

The demographic projections of Ochlocknee are characteristic of rural small towns. The age group consisting of 0-13 year olds is steadily increasing, and like many small rural towns, the 14-34 year old age groups are declining moderately to rapidly. The 35-44 and the 45-54 year old age groups are increasing rapidly and moderately respectively. As expected, the 55+ age groups are steady to moderately decreasing.

Racial and Ethnic Composition



White	Black or African American	American Indian/Alaska native	
Asian	Native Hawaiian/Pacific islander	Some other race	
Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino		

The racial composition in Ochlocknee has been steadily shifting as the white population diminishes and the black population increases.

City of Ochlocknee Racial Composition Projections

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
White alone	485	462	439	419	399	378	356	335	313	292	270
Black or African American alone	142	146	149	172	194	207	220	233	246	259	272
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	3	6	8	9	11	12	14	15
Persons of Hispanic origin	2	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
other race	0	0	0	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

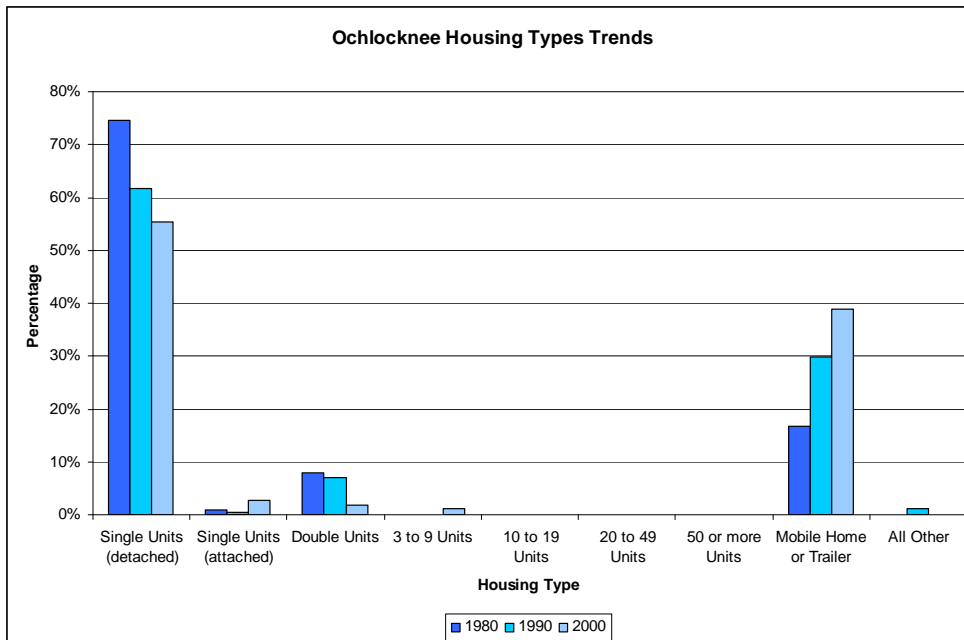
Housing

In 2000, the City of Ochlocknee had 285 housing units (including owner and renter occupied units and vacant units), representing an 8% increase between 1980 and 2000. Most of the 285 are single family detached dwellings (55.4%) The number of manufactured housing homes has been increasing since 1980 and in 2000, comprised 38.9% of the total housing units. If trends continue the City of Ochlocknee will see a 48% increase in the number of manufactured homes by the year 2030.

City of Ochlocknee Types of Housing Projection

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
TOTAL Housing Units	263	259	255	270	285	291	296	302	307	313	318
Single Units (detached)	196	177	157	158	158	149	139	130	120	111	101
Single Units (attached)	2	2	1	5	8	10	11	13	14	16	17
Double Units	21	20	18	12	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
3 to 9 Units	0	0	0	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	8
10 to 19 Units	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20 to 49 Units	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
50 or more Units	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile Home or Trailer	44	60	76	94	111	128	145	161	178	195	212
All Other	0	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Because of the relatively low per-capita income of the area, the homes in Ochlocknee are generally smaller, inexpensive homes. Manufactured homes are very popular and are not necessarily bad, but when they dominate the landscape a problem of aesthetics may develop, particularly when they are not properly maintained.

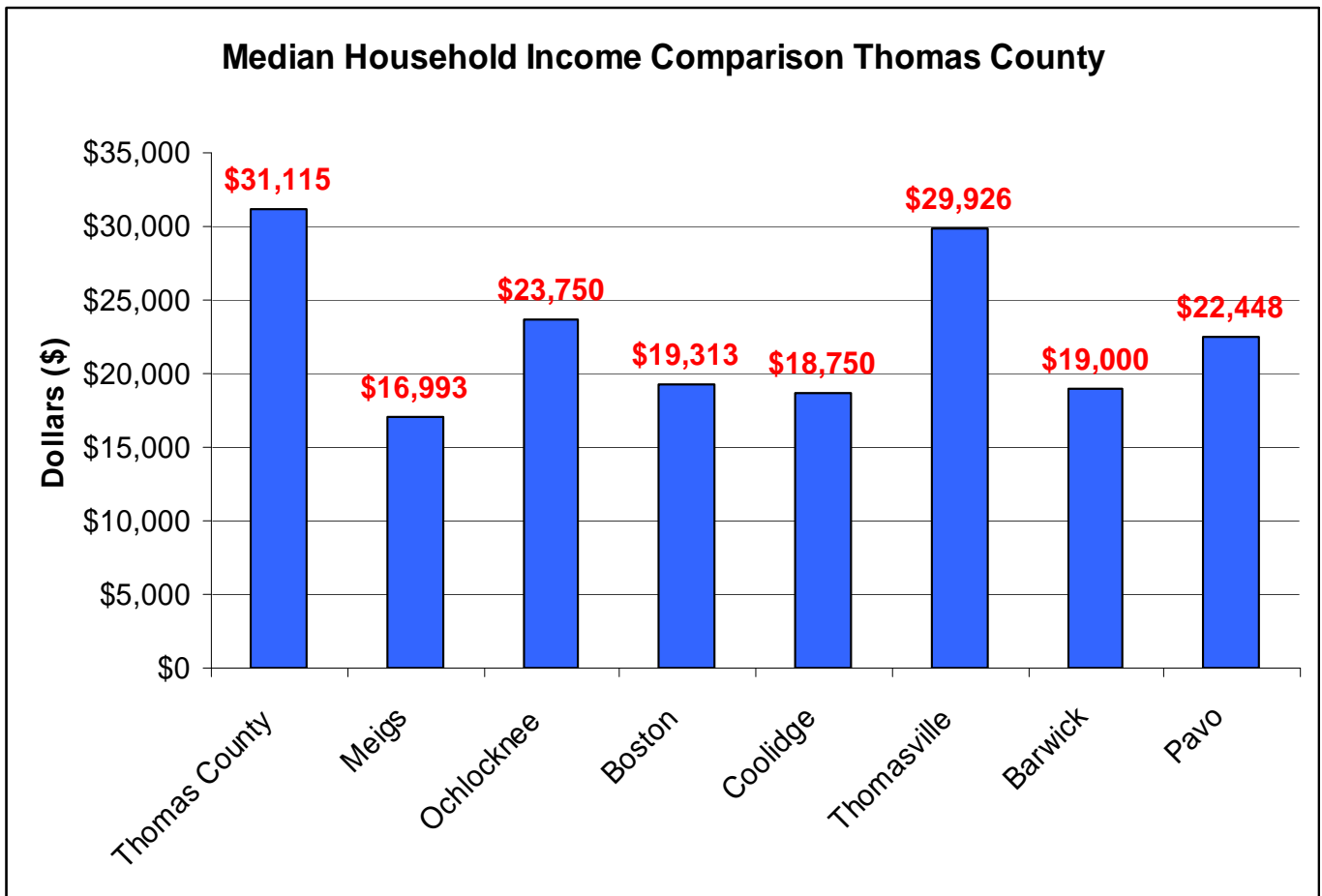


Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Income

High paying jobs have not characterized Ochlocknee in the past and that trend continues. The Ochlocknee median household income in 1999 was \$23,750. This amount was significantly less than the state's median household income of \$42,433 in that same year. Nationally, the median household income in 1999 was \$41,994.

During 1999, 27.5% of the citizens lived below the poverty level, compared with Georgia's rate of 14.7% and the national rate of 13.3%. In addition, 43.8% of the children under the age of 18 lived below the poverty level in Ochlocknee. Nationally, 19.9% of the population under the age of 18 years lived below the level of poverty.



Source: 2000 Census

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Approximately 61% of the households of Ochlocknee earn less than \$30,000 per year. The largest employment sectors for Ochlocknee are manufacturing, retail, education, health and social services. Most of these jobs are low-wage and low-skill positions.

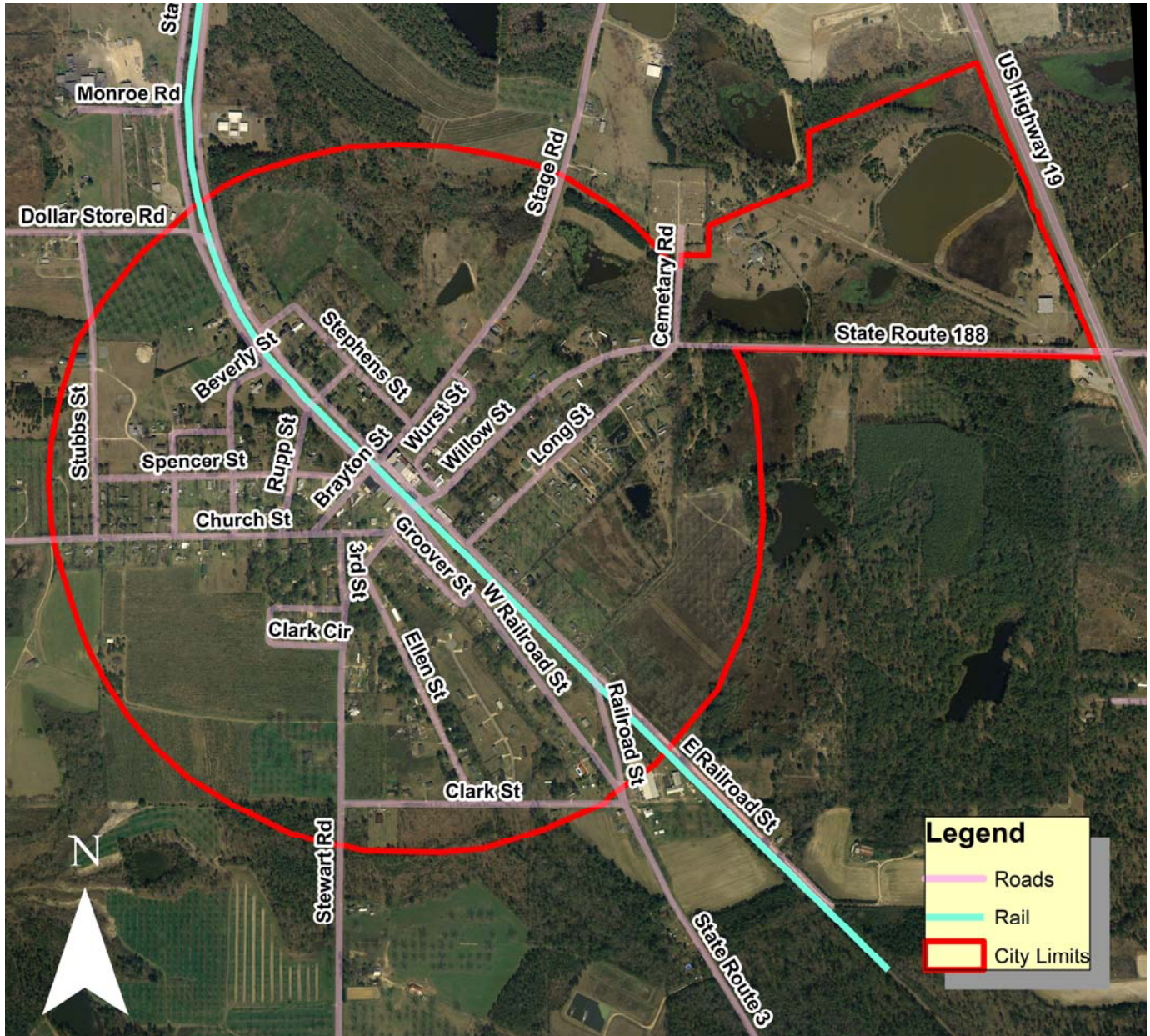
In 1999 (the most current city level data available), the per-capita income of Ochlocknee was \$10,112. This is \$11,042 below the state average and \$11,475 below the national average. There are a number of factors that influence this statistic including education, race, the numbers of seniors and Ochlocknee's rural location.

Transportation and Circulation

Ochlocknee sits at the crossroads of Highway 188 and the Old Dixie Highway (GA 3). GA 3 runs north to Pelham, Camilla, Baconton, and Albany and south to Ochlocknee and Thomasville. Historically, it was the main road north and south out of town before the creation of U.S. 19/GA 300 that essentially forms the eastern boundary of Ochlocknee. U.S. 19/GA 300 runs north/south through Mitchell County north to Albany and beyond, and South into Florida. The U.S. 19/GA 300 four lane highway corridor presents challenges to Ochlocknee. Because most travelers now use U.S. 19/GA 300, instead of GA 3, the City of Ochlocknee sees much less traffic. Although good for traffic circulation, downtown businesses that relied on the traffic that existed before the creation of U.S. 19/GA 300 have seen a decrease in business and face many challenges.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Ochlocknee Transportation Network



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Economy

The economic development element provides the opportunity to inventory and assess the community's economic base, labor force characteristics, local economic development opportunities and resources, to determine economic needs and goals, and to merge this information with information about population trends and characteristics, natural resources, community facilities and services, housing and land use so that a strategy for the economic well-being of the community can be developed.

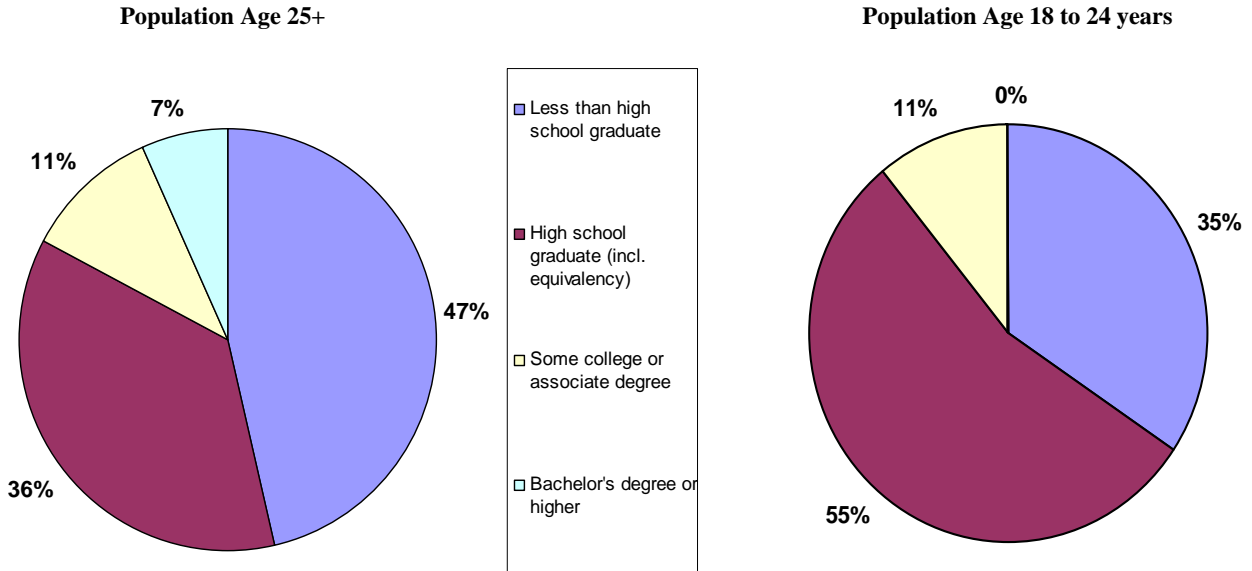
The City of Ochlocknee has 268 employable people in the work force age group (ages 21-54). Ochlocknee's proximity to larger urbanized areas may preclude it from attracting commercial businesses to any significant degree with regards to local job creation. However, as business and industry locate in Pelham, Camilla, and Thomasville, Ochlocknee is well positioned to expand as a bedroom community. Factors that may help Ochlocknee attract business and industry are U.S. Highway 19 and the CSX rail line that runs through the City.

Education

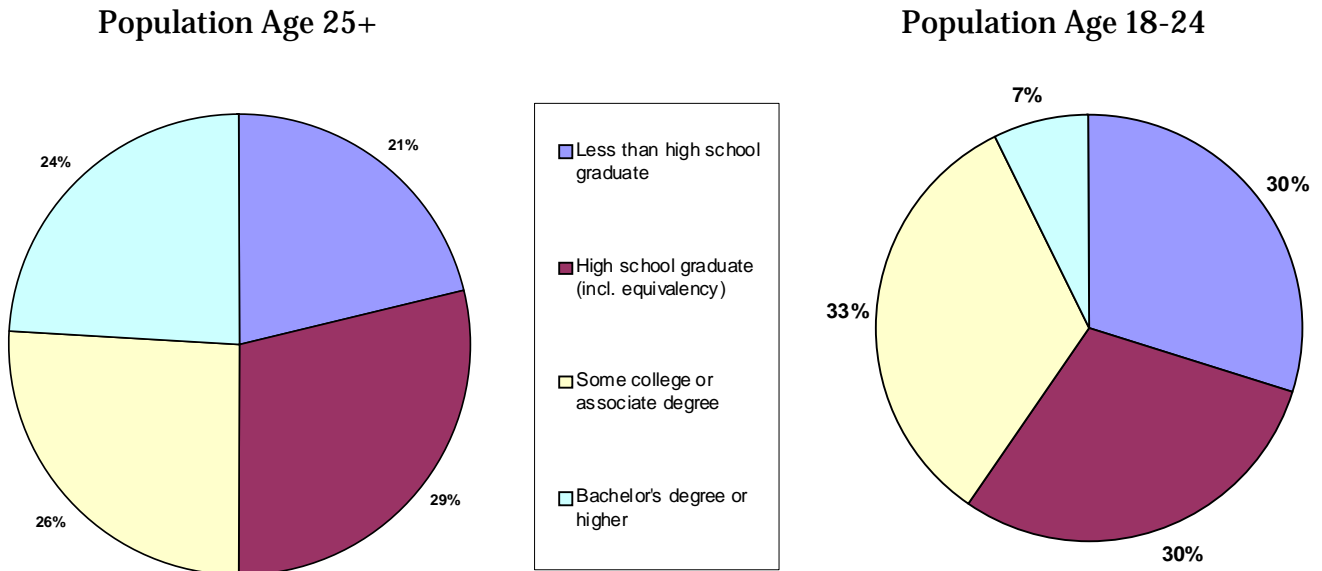
The lack of an educated population has plagued Ochlocknee in terms of household income, housing type, economic development, and overall quality of life. According to the 2000 census figures, only 36% of the population 25 years or older have graduated high school but fortunately 55% of 18-24 year olds have graduated high school. The number of graduates ages 18-24 is somewhat misleading because the census does not distinguish between 18 year olds that have finished high school and those that have not finished their senior year. On average, the educational attainment of Ochlocknee's citizenry is well below that of the state (28.7%) and therefore deserves further attention. Because of the large percentage of adults without a high school education, many adults in Ochlocknee may find it difficult to find employment other than menial, minimum-wage positions.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

City of Ochlocknee Educational Attainment



State of Georgia Educational Attainment



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Significant Cultural Resources

Although only one building has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places (Anderson, D.B., and Company Building), Ochlocknee has a downtown that is eligible for nomination. The downtown straddles the Old Dixie Highway (GA 3) and is reminiscent of the times when GA 3 was the major north/south Avenue of travel. The Dixie Highway was a United States automobile highway first planned in 1914, to connect the U.S. Midwest with the South. It was part of the National Auto Trail system, and grew out of an earlier Miami to Montreal highway. It was constructed and expanded from 1915 to 1927, and the final result is a network of interconnected paved roads, rather than a single highway.



The County boundary marker along the Dixie Highway was a common sight and the photo above is what remains of the marker in Meigs. It appears that this once had an arch



The route of the Dixie Highway was marked by a red stripe with the letters "DH" on it, usually with a white stripe above and below. This was commonly painted on telephone and telegraph poles along the route.

DIXIE HIGHWAY: WEST LEG

The original route of the Dixie Highway started in Chicago. From there, it ran south to Danville, Illinois, and then turned east, passing through Veedersburg, Indianapolis (with a connector here to the East Leg), and Bloomington in Indiana; Louisville, Elizabethtown, and Bowling Green in Kentucky; Nashville, Shelbyville, and Chattanooga in Tennessee; Rome, Atlanta, and Macon in Georgia; and entered Florida at Tallahassee. From there, the Dixie Highway continued south through Ocala, Orlando, and Fort Meyers, where it turned east to Miami and terminated at its junction with the East Leg.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

DIXIE HIGHWAY: EAST LEG

Starting at Mackinaw, Michigan, this part of the highway passed through the cities of Bay City (with a loop serving Bad Axe and Port Huron), Flint, Saginaw, Detroit, and Monroe in Michigan; Toledo, Lima, Dayton, and Cincinnati in Ohio; Covington, Lexington, London, and Williamsburg in Kentucky; Jellico, Knoxville (with a connector to the West Leg at Chattanooga), and Newport in Tennessee; Asheville, North Carolina; Greenville, South Carolina; Augusta and Savannah in Georgia; and on into Florida through Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and West Palm Beach before terminating at Miami.

The Cities of Meigs and Ochlocknee owe much of their heritage to the Dixie Highway and traces of history can still be found in many of the homes and roadside commercial structures along the route. Efforts should be made to protect and enhance this corridor.



The Dixie Highway in 1923

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Public Facilities and Services

The City of Ochlocknee provides water and garbage service to all its residents and sewer to approximately 70% of its residents, with the ability to provide these services to all of them if they want it. There is excess capacity of both water and sewer to accommodate future growth .

The City of Ochlocknee does not provide recreational programming, however there are areas available for recreation.

Thomas County provides all emergency services to the City of Ochlocknee.

Land Use

Residential

Residential land use comprises approximately 70% of the land area in Ochlocknee. Agricultural areas comprise approximately 20%, so there is room for new residential development within the city limits. There are also residential areas in need of redevelopment, and these are the logical place to start in order to achieve quality housing throughout the city.

Commercial

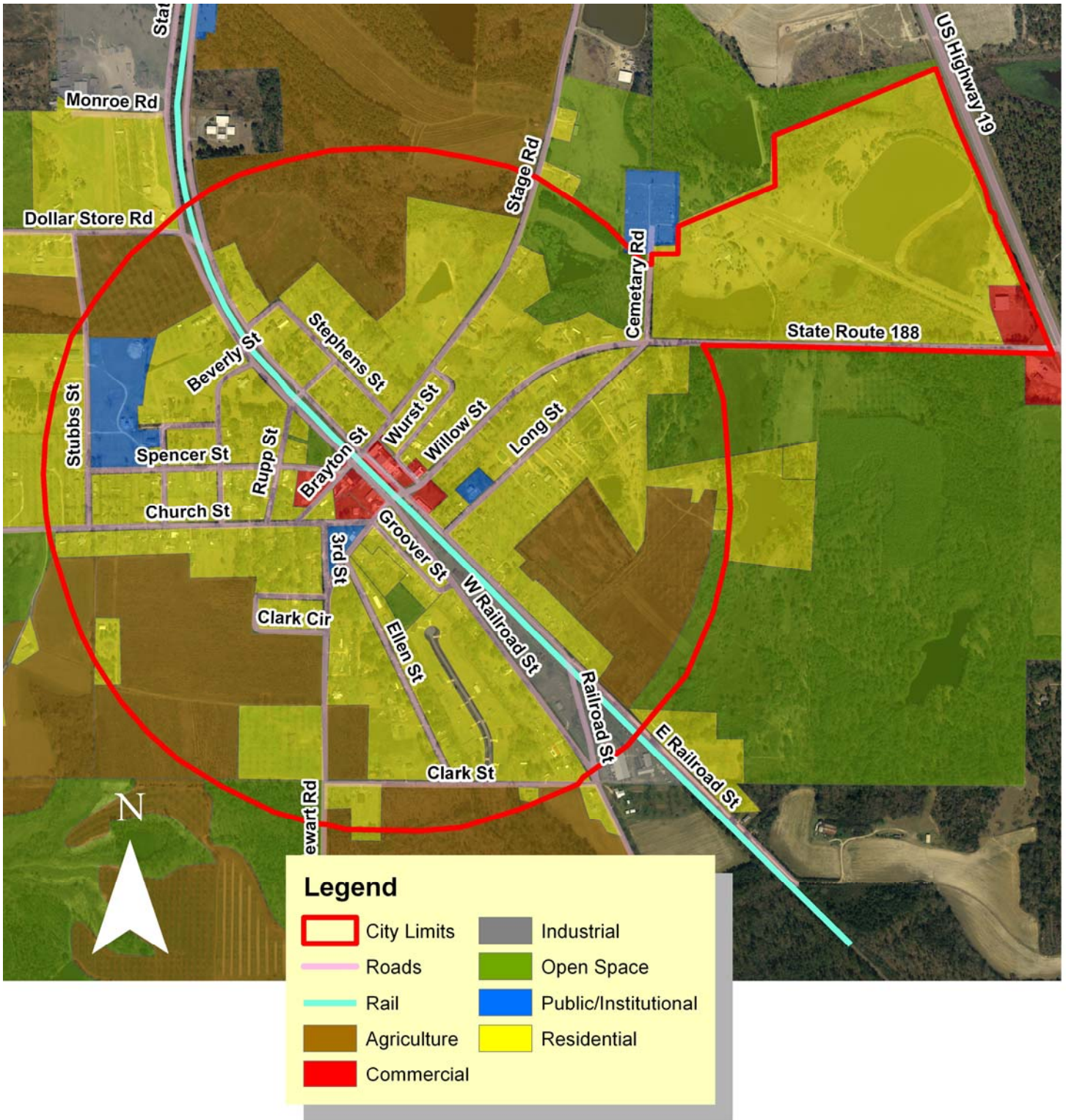
Commercial land use comprises approximately 5% of the land area in Ochlocknee. Improving the business environment in the downtown is the first step towards a quality commercial environment. The City should embrace the historic character downtown and provide incentives to refurbish buildings to give people a reason to leave the highway and come to downtown Ochlocknee.

Industrial

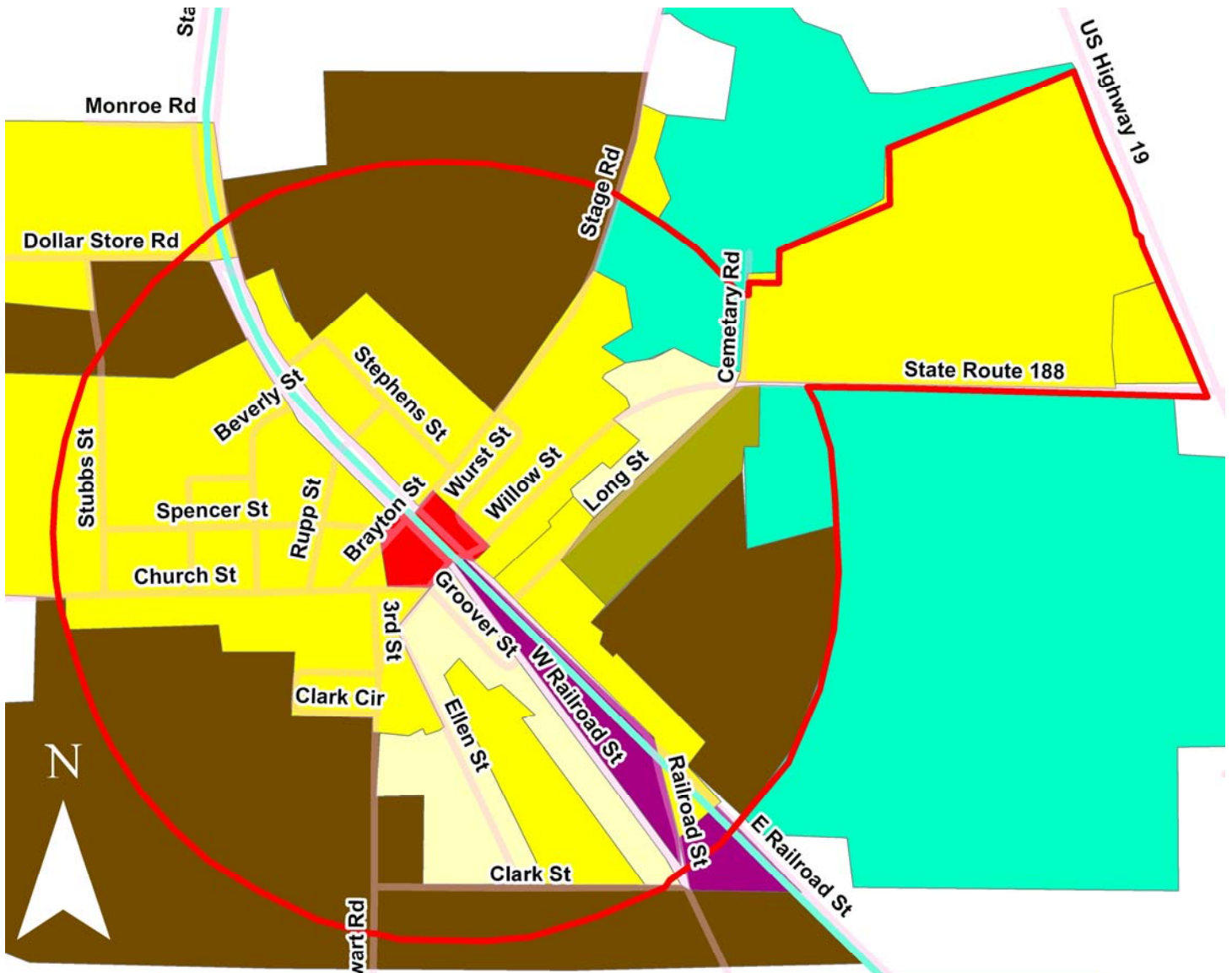
Industrial uses comprise less than 5% of the land area in Ochlocknee. The industrial uses are all directly tied to agriculture. Identifying new sites for industrial development and perhaps cleaning up any abandoned sites for new development will help Ochlocknee's image. Location is critical to industrial development, and the redevelopment of vacant industrial areas is the logical first step.

City of Ochlocknee

Existing Land Use Map



City of Ochlocknee Character Area Map

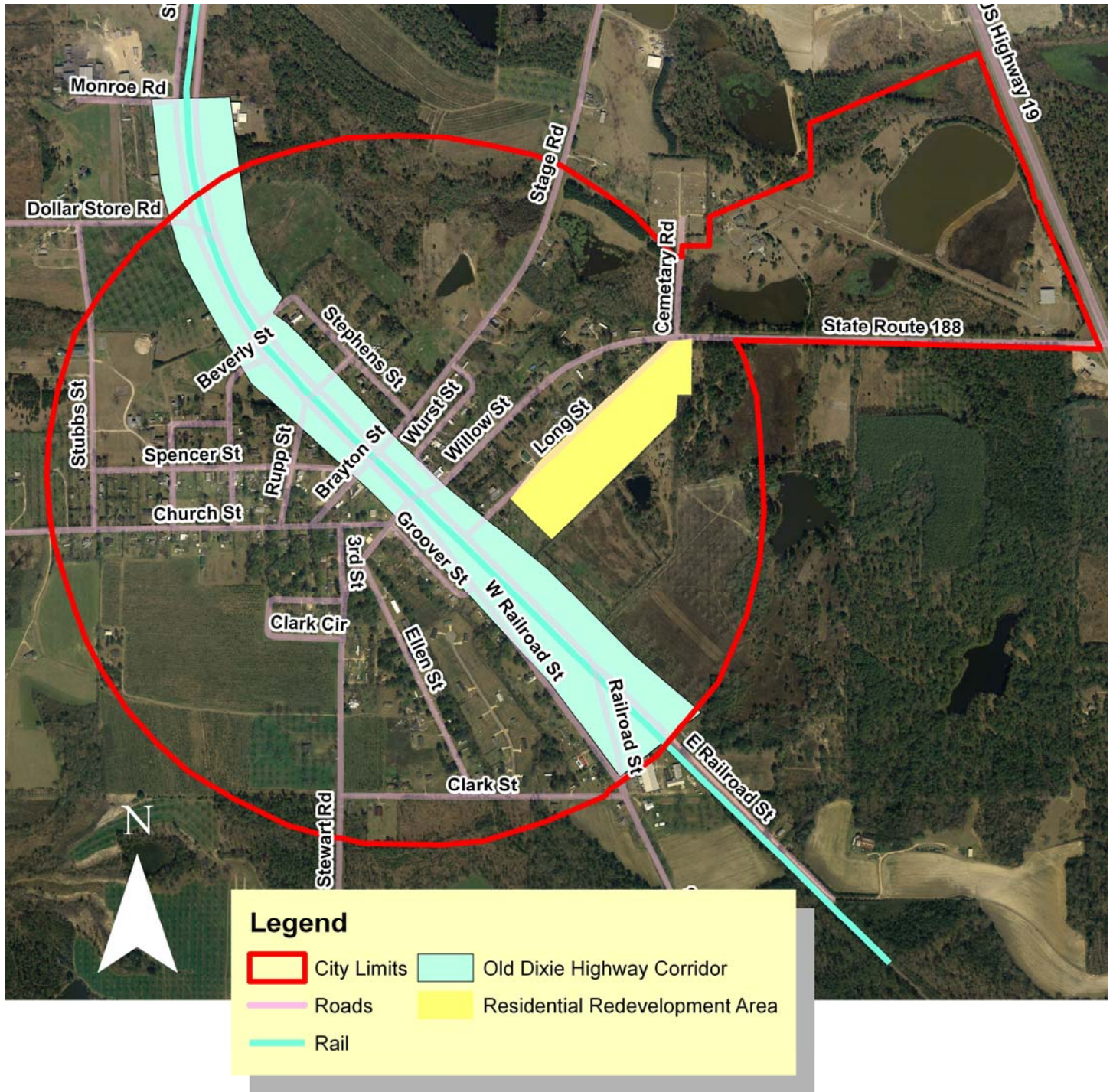


Legend

 City Limits	 Historic Residential Neighborhood
 Roads	 Downtown
 Rail	 Industrial Area
 Stable Neighborhood	 Agricultural Area
 Declining Neighborhood	 Greenspace
 Neighborhood Redevelopment Area	

City of Ochlocknee

Areas Requiring Special Attention



**Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities
of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston**

City of Boston Assessment

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

City of Boston Issues & Opportunities

~Issues~

Population

- Retention of current population (especially young adults)

Demographics

- Out-migration of young adults
- Aging population

Housing

- Substandard housing units and manufactured homes
- Many older homes in need of repair

Income

- Low median household income
- Low per-capita income

Transportation & Circulation

- Drainage needed for some streets

Cultural Environment

- Working on a historic preservation ordinance

Residential Land Use

- There is much unoccupied land that can potentially be used for new residences

Commercial Land Use

- Some historic commercial buildings need to be restored and occupied
- Need to utilize parcels adjacent to highway for appropriate commercial uses

Industrial Land Use

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

- More land for industry needed

~Opportunities~

Population

- Slow population growth allows town to maintain character

Demographics

- In-migration of older groups
- Racial diversity

Housing

- Affordable housing

Income

- Some entrepreneurs and shop owners service the local community, state, and even national clients

Transportation & Circulation

- No traffic congestion
- Convenient to Highway 84

Economic Development

- Room for growth
- Proximity to Thomasville, Tallahassee, and Valdosta
- Restaurants
- Antique stores
- Historic downtown with three buildings recently being purchased and renovations underway

Residential Land Use

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

- Tracts available for expansion

Commercial Land Use

- Largely intact historic commercial core
- Quality constructed and designed buildings downtown are in good condition, with a few structures and facades in need of cosmetic repairs
- Downtown community has anticipated new uses for remaining vacant stores

Industrial Land Use

- Room for additional industrial use
- Highway and rail access

Cultural Environment

- Boston Carnegie Library
- Broad range of annual events

Community Facilities and Services

- Operate their own water, sewer, and trash collection
- Excess capacity for future growth and development

Community Facilities and Services-Recreational Facilities

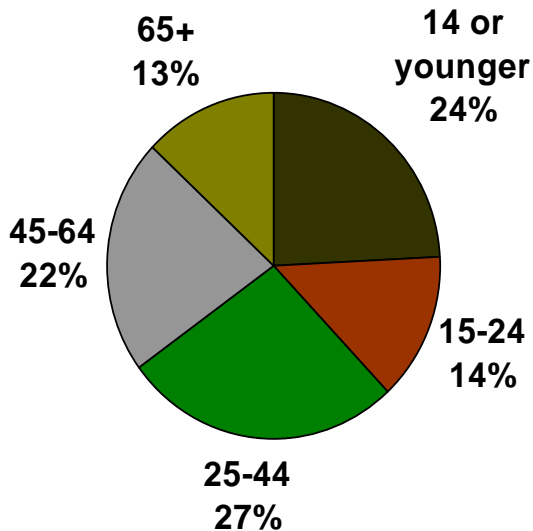
- Boston has four parks: North Boston Park, Stephens Street Sport Complex, Watt Park, and Rosa Barnes Park.
- The Sport Complex features a baseball field, basketball court, and running track
- Watt Park is a small park in downtown Boston with an outdoor stage that could be further utilized as a gathering place and area for plays and other performances

Boston at a Glance...

POPULATION		GENDER		Number	%
Total Population	1,417	Male		646	45.6
		Female		771	54.4
PROJECTIONS		RACE AND ETHNICITY			
2000	1,417	White		436	30.8
2005*	1,415	Black or African American		958	67.6
2010*	1,414	Hispanic or Latino		31	2.2
2015*	1,412	HOUSEHOLD POPULATION			
2020*	1,410	Population in occupied housing units		1,417	100
2025*	1,408	In Owner-occupied housing units		985	69.5
2030*	1,407	In Renter-occupied housing units		432	30.5

AGE PROJECTIONS										
Age Category	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0 – 4 Years Old	99	107	115	106	96	95	95	94	93	92
5 – 13 Years Old	256	246	235	242	248	246	244	242	240	238
14 – 17 Years Old	131	103	74	86	97	89	80	72	63	55
18 – 20 Years Old	79	72	64	52	40	30	21	11	1	0
21 – 24 Years Old	92	83	74	66	57	48	40	31	22	13
25 – 34 Years Old	191	188	184	177	169	164	158	153	147	142
35 – 44 Years Old	146	150	154	184	214	231	248	265	282	299
45 – 54 Years Old	135	144	153	164	174	184	194	203	213	223
55 – 64 Years Old	115	119	123	130	137	143	148	154	159	165
65 and over	180	200	219	202	185	186	188	189	190	191

Boston's Population by Age in 2000



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Number	%
Population 25 and older	857	
High school graduates (includes equivalency)	319	37.2
Some college, or associate's degree	181	21.1
Bachelor's degree or higher	44	5.1
HOUSING COST (in dollars)		
	1990	2000
Median property value	\$33,500	\$48,400
Median rent	\$246	\$335
INCOME		
Median household income		\$19,313
TRANSPORTATION TO WORK		
Workers 16 and over		444
Average travel time to work (minutes)		26

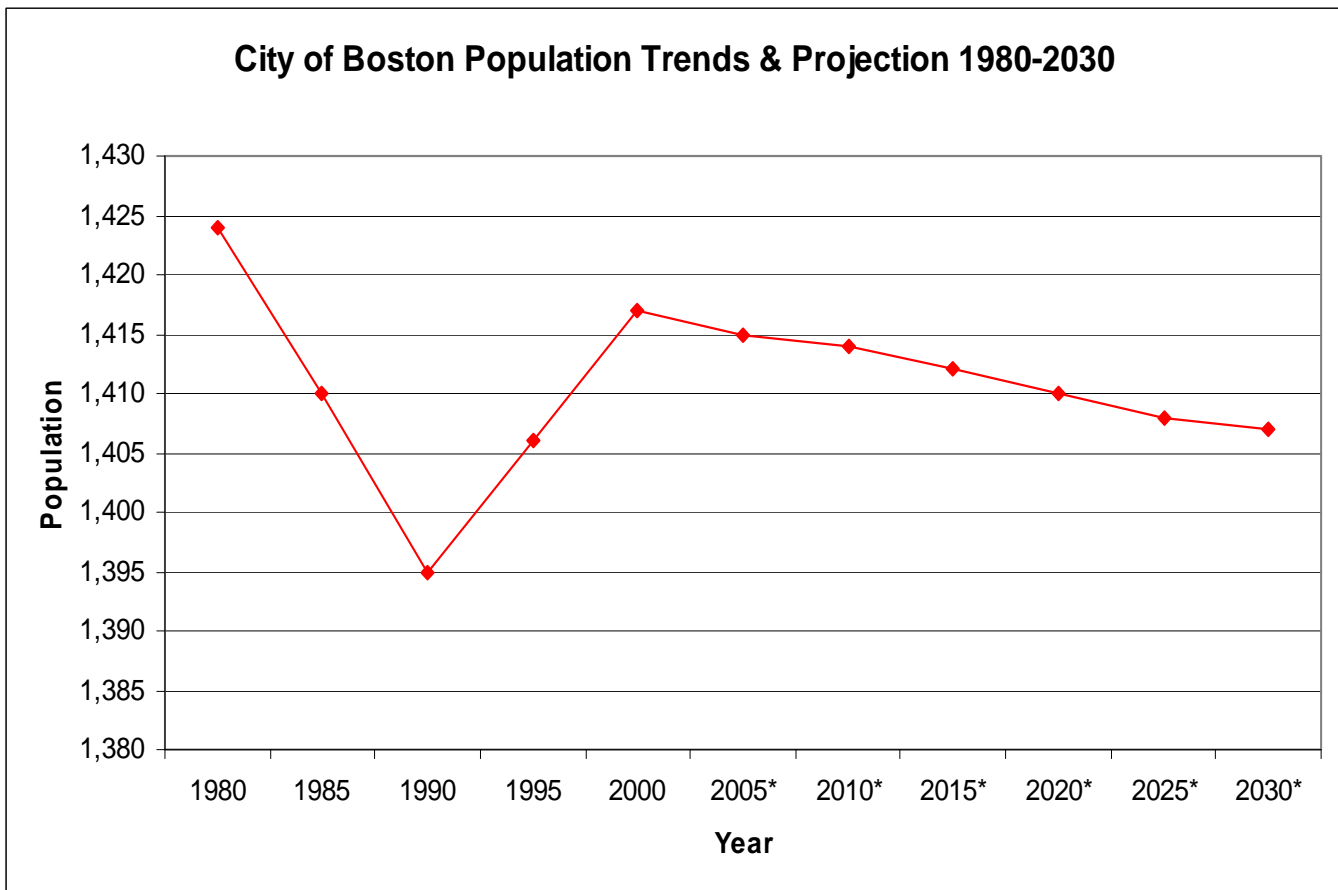
*Projection Figures are derived through linear extrapolation of Historical Data

Assumptions: Making population and household projections is an art as well as a science, and even with the best information the future is difficult to accurately predict. The following assumptions provide a basis for offering population projections. It is assumed that there will be no large-scale economic, political, legal, or environmental crisis in the region that could impact Boston's long-term growth. It is assumed that Boston will have the necessary resources (water, power, land) and infrastructure to accommodate projected growth generally within the planning horizon of 20 years. It is assumed that Boston's economic growth, in terms of jobs and income, will not deviate significantly from established levels over the

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Population

As of the census of 2000, there were 1,417 people, 553 households, and 382 families residing in the city. The population density was 635.8/mi². There were 632 housing units at an average density of 283.6/mi². The population of Boston declined slightly between the 1980 and 1990 census but has since nearly recovered. According to the DCA projections, the population is expected to diminish slightly, but Boston's proximity to Thomasville will most likely make it a desirable place to reside, therefore potentially increasing the population. People are attracted to small towns like Boston that have maintained their historic character, can provide many amenities, and are within easy driving distance to larger towns with additional amenities.

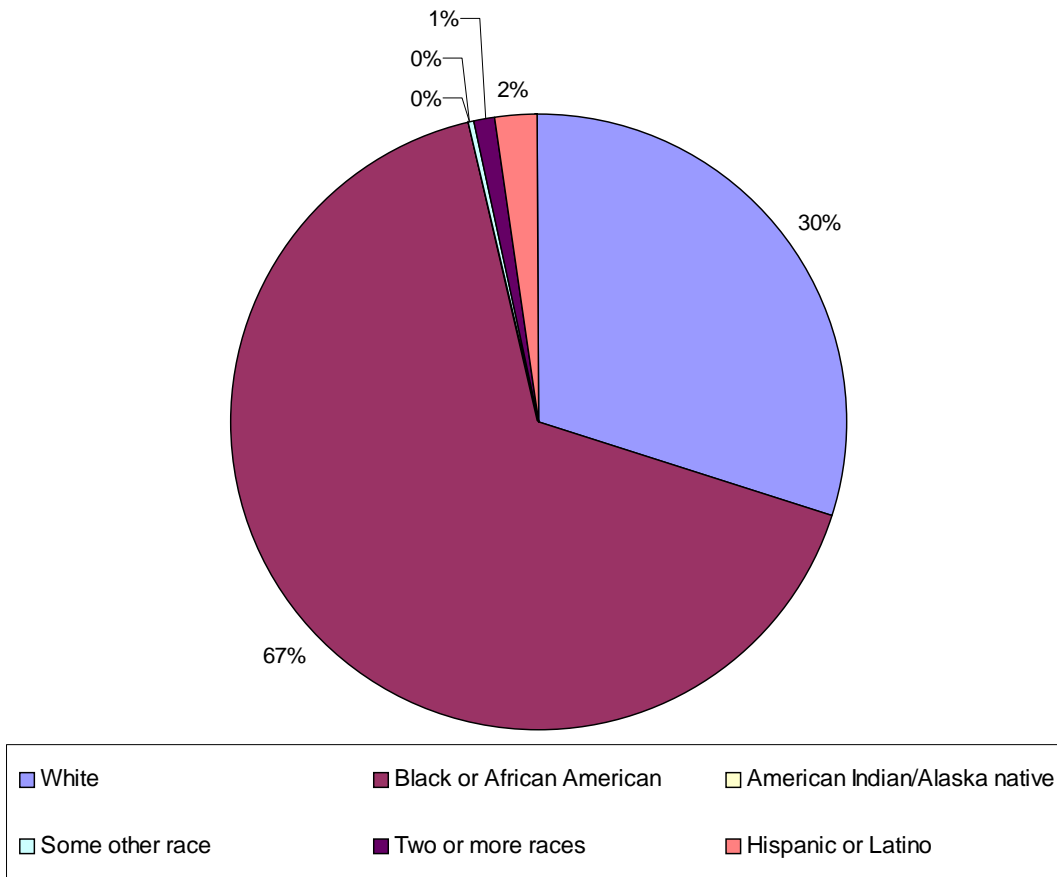


Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Demographics

The racial makeup of the city is 30.77% White, 67.61% African American, 0.07% Native American, 0.28% from other races, and 1.27% from two or more races. Latinos were 2.19% of the population.

Boston's Racial & Ethnic Composition



City of Boston Racial Composition Trends & Projections

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
White alone	620	580	540	488	436	390	344	298	252	206	160
Black or African American alone	803	829	854	906	958	997	1,036	1,074	1,113	1,152	1,191
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Persons of Hispanic origin	26	16	6	19	31	32	34	35	36	37	39

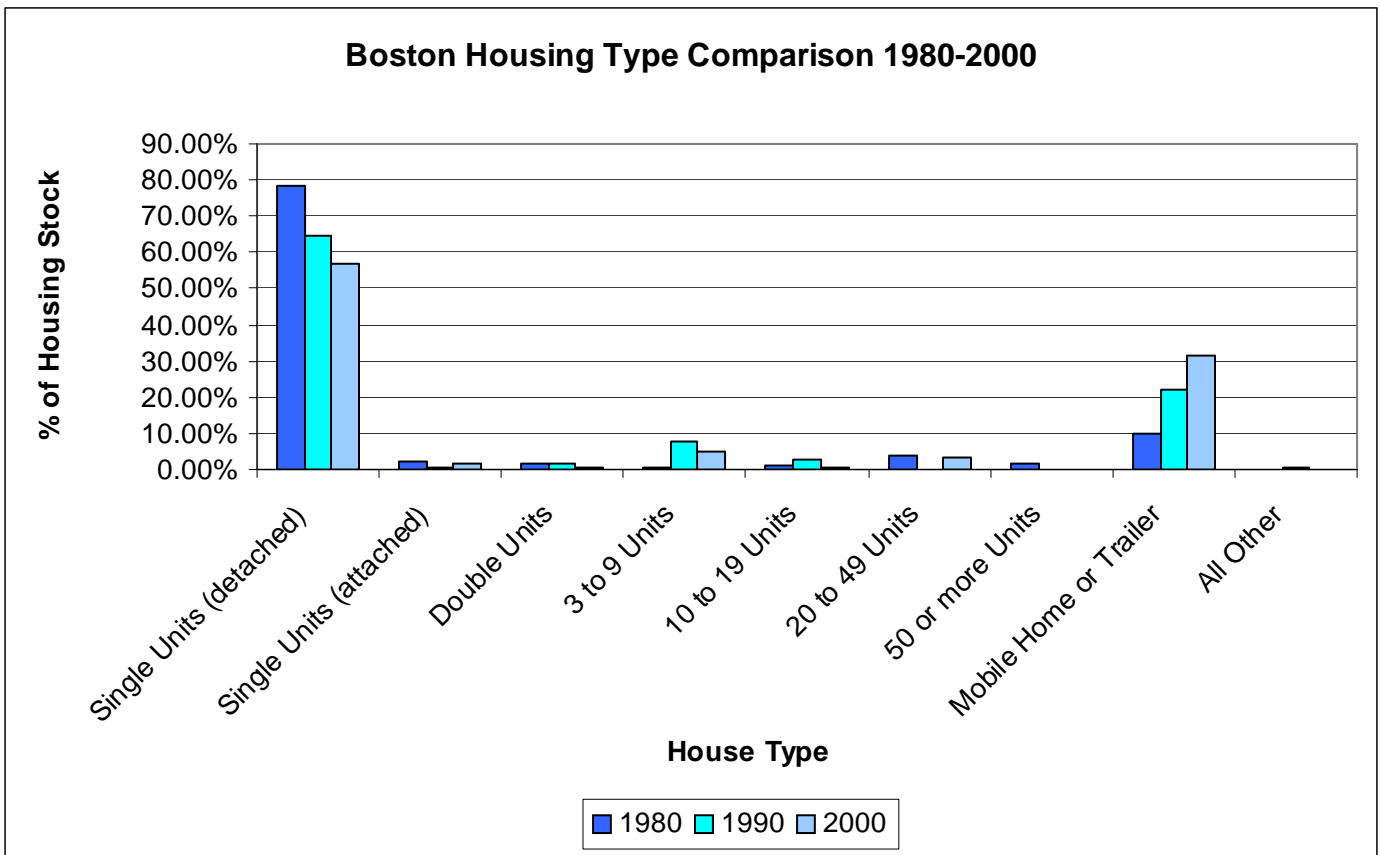
Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

The age distribution of Boston's population was: 31.1% under the age of 18, 6.8% from 18 to 24, 27.0% from 25 to 44, 21.9% from 45 to 64, and 13.1% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 35 years.

Housing

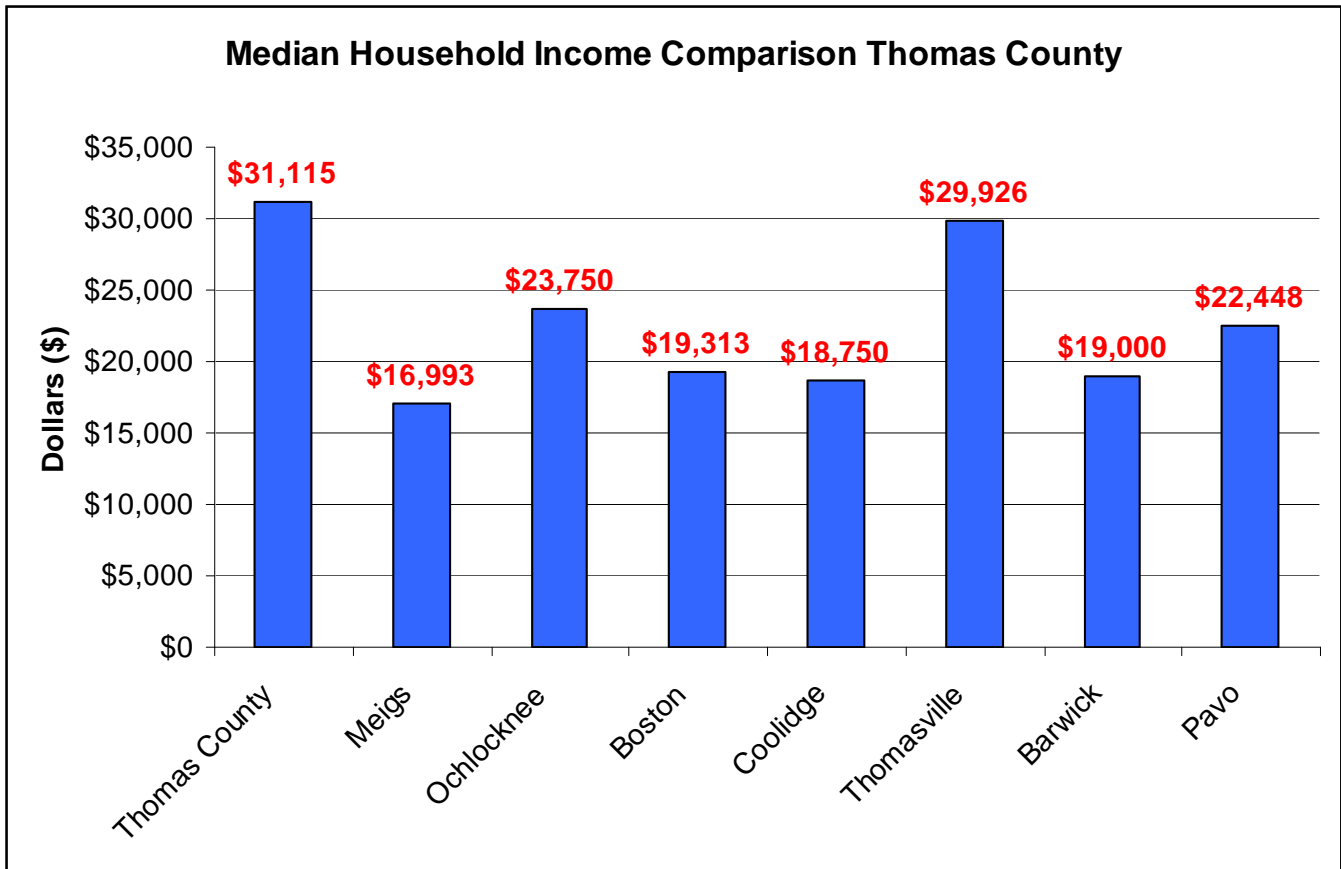
Boston has many historic homes as well as some more recently constructed housing. The overall character of the town is well preserved with a mix of old and new. However, the abundance of manufactured housing (198 or 31.5%), many of which are in poor condition, detracts from the appearance of the town. In all, there were 628 housing units in Boston in 2000 census. 376 were owner occupied and 127 were occupied by renters. Rent prices ranged between \$170 and \$250 while the average mortgage price was \$633.

Income



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

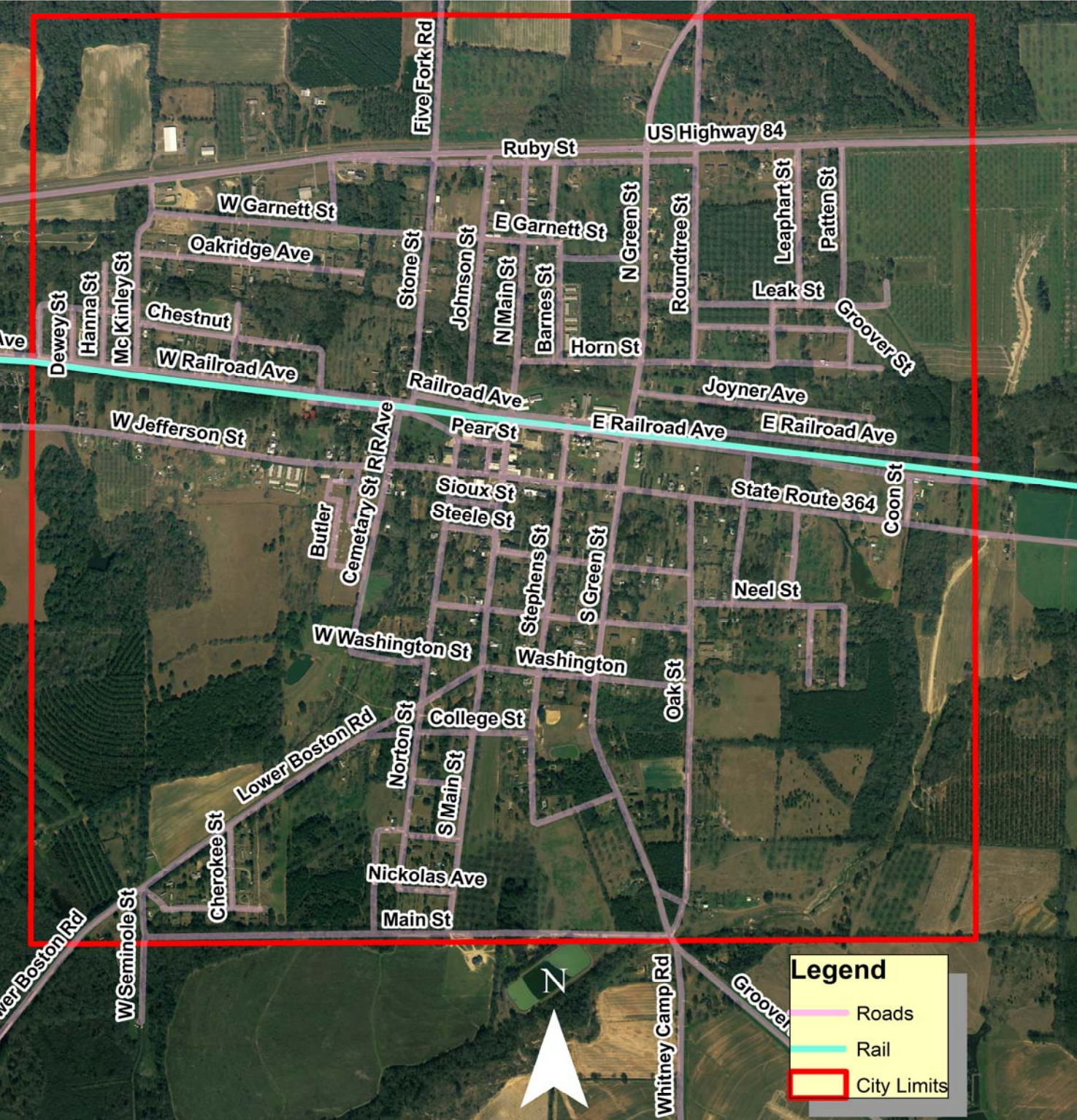
There is a lack of high paying jobs in Boston. The median household income for the City of Boston in 2000 was \$19,313, which is significantly lower than \$42,433 average for the entire state. There were 108 families or 29.8% of the families in Boston below the poverty line.



Transportation and Circulation

The City of Boston is served by State Highways 84 and 33. Thomasville, Valdosta and Tallahassee, Florida are all easily accessible from Boston. The majority of the people commute to and from work. The average travel time to work is 26 minutes which suggests that residents work in larger cities nearby. All of the major roads in Boston are paved and in decent condition. Most of the sidewalks are in the older areas and the downtown, although there are a few sidewalks outside of the downtown area.

City of Boston Transportation Network



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Economy

The City of Boston and the Boston Business Association have made great efforts to improve the local economy. Economic development seeks to provide jobs, increase per-capita incomes and to expand the local tax base. The City of Boston should continue to make public investments in infrastructure needs, recreation and housing and downtown rehabilitation.

It is recognized that the relatively small size of the City will limit its capacity in local economic development efforts. However, the City's economy is naturally linked to that of Thomas County and to the region where much of the organized economic developed efforts are carried out in partnership with the Thomas County Chamber of Commerce and other local and regional economic development organizations.

A survey of the 2000 census reports note that the City of Boston has a total labor force of 529 persons. The table below depicts the community's employment by sector and projected employment.

CITY OF BOSTON EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (TRENDS & PROJECTIONS)

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Employed Civilian Population	498	510	522	490	457	447	437	426	416	406	396
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	53	52	50	26	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	35	29	23	21	19	15	11	7	3	0	0
Manufacturing	134	129	123	104	84	72	59	47	34	22	9
Wholesale Trade	8	14	19	21	23	27	31	34	38	42	46
Retail Trade	79	89	98	71	43	34	25	16	7	0	0
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	32	30	27	22	16	12	8	4	0	0	0
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	96	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	29	18	7	10	12	8	4	0	0	0	0
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	11	9	6	15	24	27	31	34	37	40	44
Educational, health and social services	64	81	98	116	134	152	169	187	204	222	239
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	16	8	0	28	56	66	76	86	96	106	116
Other Services	11	30	49	30	10	10	10	9	9	9	9
Public Administration	26	24	22	28	34	36	38	40	42	44	46

The data generally reflect that the local and regional employment in manufacturing and agriculture is falling, but this is not a problem that is only characteristic of Boston. Manufacturing employment all over the country is falling and has been since the mid 1990s. Drops in agricultural employment started long before that, but has not dropped quite as rapidly in this region. Retail trade has also begun to decline while at the same time the data shows fairly large increases in the education, health, and social services sector.

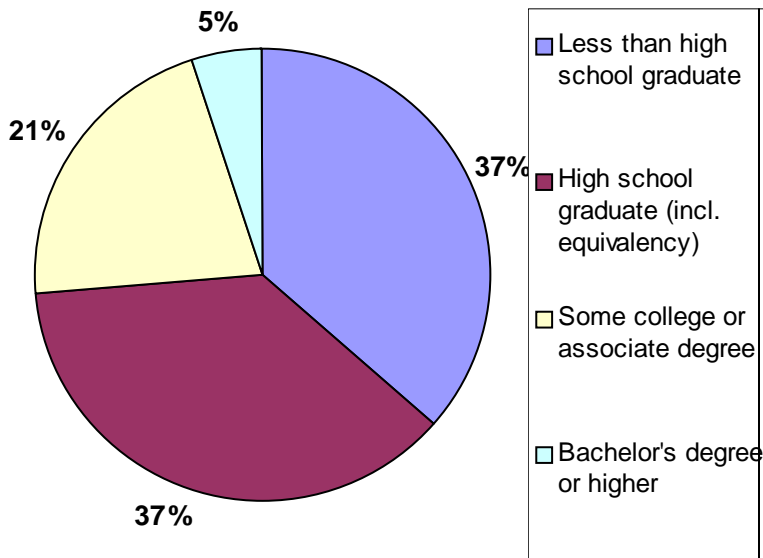
Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Education

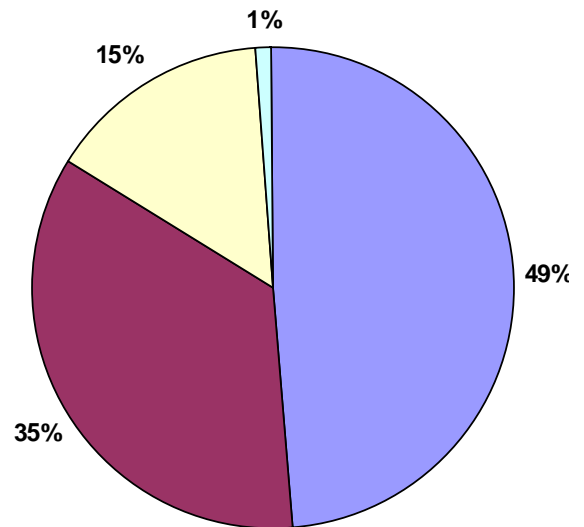
Boston is better educated than many other local communities in the region but they are still not on par with the state of Georgia or the rest of the U.S. Higher high school graduation rates are needed and adult education programs should be encouraged to bring educational achievement levels up to the state averages. There are a number of institutes of higher education within a fairly easy driving distance of Boston. An educated population generally equates to higher median household incomes, and enhanced quality of life.

City of Boston Educational Attainment

Population Age 25+



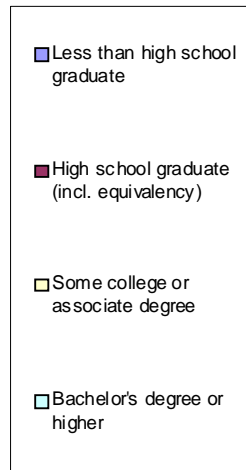
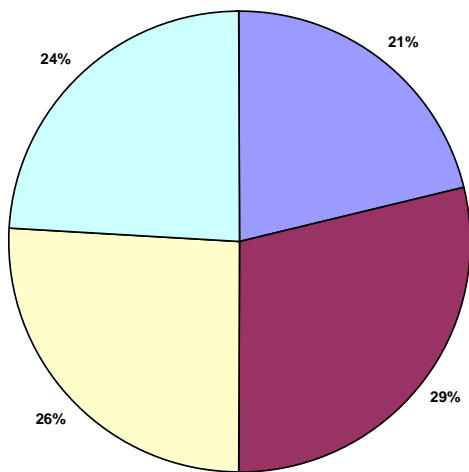
Population Age 18-24



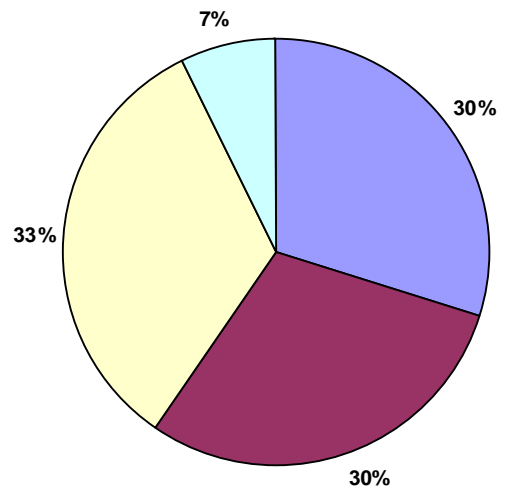
Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

State of Georgia Educational Attainment

Population Age 25+



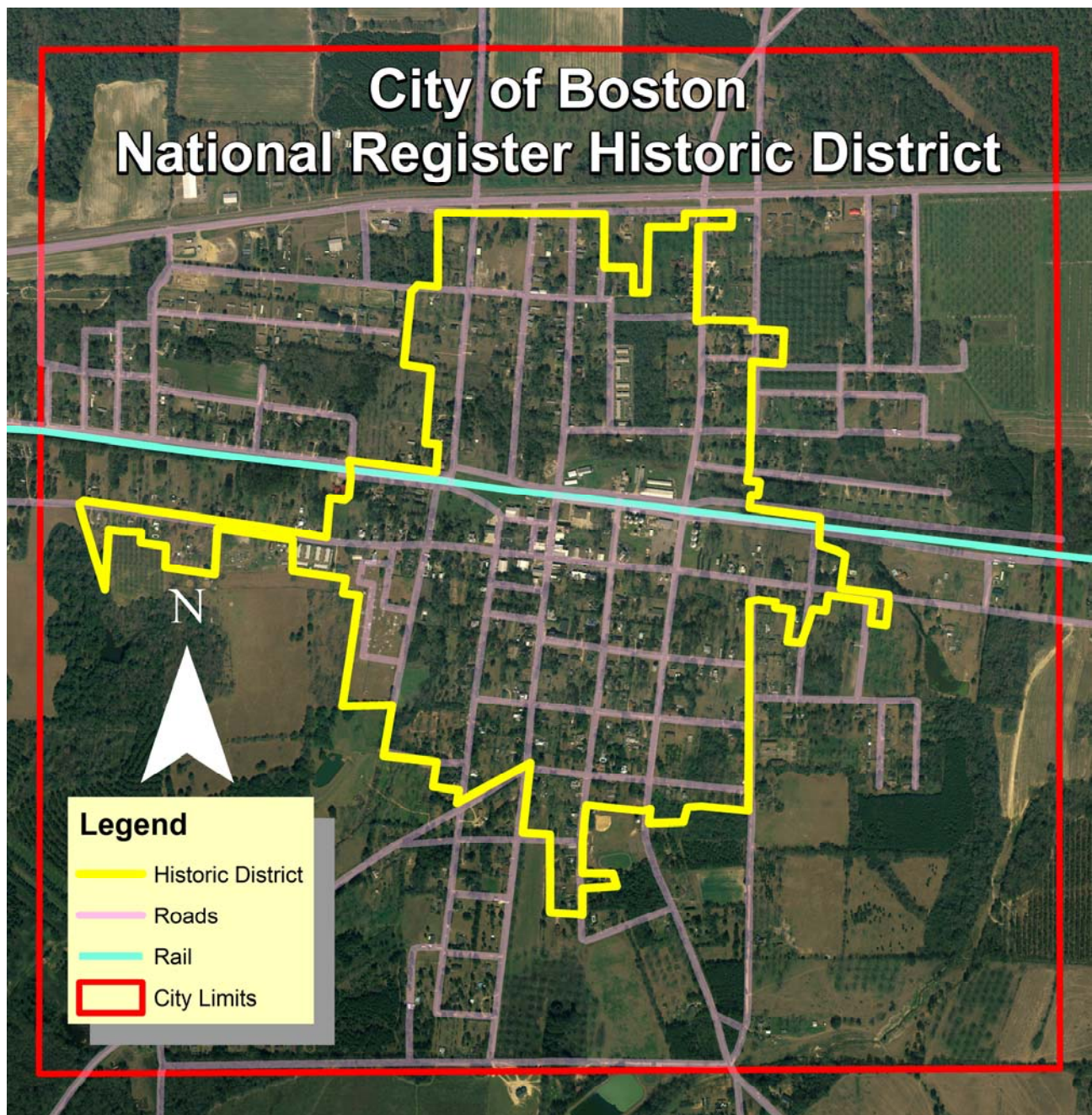
Population Age 18-24



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Significant Cultural Resources

The City of Boston has a strong appreciation for its heritage. Most of the residences and all of the downtown commercial structures in Boston are located within the National Register historic district. Although the number of resources in the historic district is significant, without a locally adopted historic preservation ordinance there is no protection for these structures.



Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Public Facilities and Services

Boston has its own fire, and police departments. The city also provides water, sewer services and trash collection. The water system has extra capacity for additional growth. All emergency services are provided by Thomas County.

The City of Boston has two different community Centers located in town. The Downtown Community Center is owned and maintained by the Boston Community Club and the Community Center on Johnson St. is owned and maintained by a community organization called the Concerned Citizens.

Land Use

Residential

Residential land use comprises approximately 70% of the land area in Boston. Agricultural areas comprise approximately 20%, so there is room for new residential development within the City limits.

Commercial

Commercial land use comprises approximately 5% of the land area in Boston. Improving the business environment in the downtown is the first step towards a quality commercial environment. This can be attempted by embracing the historic character available downtown and provide incentives to refurbish buildings and give people a reason to leave the highway and come to downtown Boston. There are areas suitable for commercial development along the highway that are not currently utilized.

Industrial




Industrial uses comprise less than 5% of the land area in Boston and are generally tied to agriculture. Identifying new sites for industrial development and perhaps cleaning up any abandoned sites for new development will enhance Boston's image. Location is critical to industrial development. Having rail and highway access, in addition to water and sewer, Boston is a good candidate for industrial development. The redevelopment of any vacant industrial areas is the logical first step.

City of Boston

Existing Land Use Map



Legend

 City Limits	 Industrial
 Roads	 Open Space
 Rail	 Public/Institutional
 Agriculture	 Residential
 Commercial	

City of Boston

Character Area Map



Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
|  City Limits |  Historic Residential Neighborhood |
|  Roads |  Downtown |
|  Rail |  Industrial Area |
|  Stable Neighborhood |  Agricultural Area |
|  Declining Neighborhood |  Greenspace |
|  Neighborhood Redevelopment Area | |

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Assessment of Quality Community Objectives for Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

The Department of Community Affairs' Local Planning Requirements require each community to evaluate current policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with the Quality Community Objectives, which are smart growth principles officially adopted by the DCA Board. This analysis is used to identify additional issues and opportunities to be addressed in the plan, and to hopefully direct development patterns and implementation practices toward smart growth principles.

Traditional Neighborhoods

“Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.”

The Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston have ordinances that separate different uses, none of which allow neo-traditional development “by-right” and none of them have requirements for sidewalks or tree plantings in new development. Facilities for pedestrians are generally not a priority in small towns in our region. There are generally few safe places to walk. Older areas of town generally have sidewalks, but pedestrians are forced to walk on road shoulders in most other areas. Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston have sidewalks but they are not required for new development in their ordinances and are only located along the older avenues. All the schools in Thomas County have been consolidated, so no functioning schools exist in Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston.

Infill Development

“Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.”

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Each of these cities know where most of the existing brownfields and greyfields exist within their community; however, no formal lists exist and no promotion of redevelopment is undertaken. Nodal development (Nodal development concentrates mixed used development such as commercial, office and higher density residential to provide requisite densities and service to make transit affordable and to foster community hubs where daily services can be reached within walking distance) has not occurred to any significant degree other than the traditional downtowns in each of these communities. Small lot development is allowed in all of the zoning codes because of the availability of sewer and water.

Sense of Place

“Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.”

Many small cities in our region are not distinct from one another. If someone were to drop from the sky into one of these communities, it might be difficult to guess where they are because of the similar nature of many cities in our region. Boston, however is distinct largely due to the intact downtown commercial core within the locally designated historic district that appears to be thriving. Meigs and Ochlocknee have not undertaken any historic preservation efforts within their cities, and ordinances regarding aesthetics do not exist in any of these cities. Signage restrictions are present in the ordinances of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston.

Guidebooks regarding the desired type of development do not exist for Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston nor do the communities provide any restrictions for the protection of farmland.

Transportation Alternatives

“Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.”

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Very few options exist for alternative transportation in Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston. The only form of alternative transportation is the Thomas County Transit Bus System, which serves the County and all Thomas County cities. There are no requirements in the ordinances for sidewalks in new development. Shared or joint parking is allowed provided the number of off-street parking spaces is not less than the sum of the individual requirements. Official bicycle routes have not been adopted for Thomas County or the Cities within, however bicycling is beginning to gain interest among many citizens and elected officials.

Regional Identity

“Each region should promote and preserve a regional “identity,” or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.”

Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston all share much of the same architectural styles and common heritage. The economy has traditionally been based on agriculture and associated products and activities.

Heritage Preservation

“The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community’s character.”

The City of Boston has an extensive National Register historic district including commercial and residential areas. None of the towns, however, has any historic preservation ordinances in place to protect historic structures.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Open Space Preservation

“New development should be designated to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.”

No ordinances are in place in any of the communities to preserve open space.

Environmental Protection

“Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.”

Few plans exist for the protection of natural resources in Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston, but they have all adopted the Part V environmental regulations set forth by the State of Georgia.

Growth Preparedness

“Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.”

The Cities Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston are not actively planning for growth. It is apparent that any kind of development is welcomed within these communities. Regulations for new development are not very strict and will not help the cities adequately achieve their Quality Community Objective goals. The City of Boston has a separate planning commission but none of these towns has a code enforcement officer.

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Appropriate Businesses

“The business and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.”

Any businesses except for adult businesses are encouraged in the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston. Agricultural related businesses continue to do well even when other businesses have not.

Employment Options

“A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.”

The majority of jobs in the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston are suitable for unskilled labor; however, there are exceptions and skilled labor jobs are provided on a small scale. Many residents commute approximately 20-25 minutes to work in the larger nearby cities, allowing each of these towns to function as bedroom communities.

Housing Choices

“A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.”

Consolidated Comprehensive Plan Assessment for the Cities of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston

Affordable housing is an issue in the region but not a significant problem in Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston. The most important objective of these towns should be rehabilitating their existing housing stock. New housing certainly should not be discouraged but since each town shows a potentially decreasing population, maintaining a healthy housing stock, regardless of its age, should be a priority.

Educational Opportunities

“Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.”

Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston are situated between several technical colleges within 45 minutes driving time. Adult education satellite programs are available through the Southwest Georgia Technical College in Thomasville, and online courses are also available to the residents of Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston.

Regional Solutions

“Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to local separate approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.”

Meigs, Ochlocknee, and Boston work closely together and with Thomas County when required to.

Regional Cooperation

“Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.”

Meigs Ochlocknee and Boston are satisfied with the current Service Delivery Agreement.