

2021 Comprehensive Plan

Town of Bowersville, Georgia



October, 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of planning and community development is to provide guidance for everyday decision-making by local government officials and other community leaders. This document, the *Town of Bowersville 2016 Comprehensive Plan*, represents the culmination of the efforts to plan for the future well-being for the Town, the residents and various stakeholders by identifying the critical, consensus issues and goals for the community. Implementing the plan will help the community address those critical issues and opportunities while moving towards realization of the unique vision for its future. As outlined by Georgia's planning standards (see below):

Statewide benefits of comprehensive planning

(Local) comprehensive planning should be conducted in the context of Georgia's strong and vibrant intergovernmental system that clearly recognizes the important role cities and counties play in fostering the state's image as an attractive place to invest, conduct businesses and raise a family. Town and county comprehensive planning enhances coordination at many levels.

Local benefits of comprehensive planning

The highest and best use of comprehensive planning for local governments is to show important relationships between community issues. A local comprehensive plan is a fact-based resource for local constituents that tracks implementation of community-based policies. Furthermore, local comprehensive planning creates an environment of predictability for business and industry, investors, property owners, taxpayers and the general public. In addition, the plan helps local governments to recognize and then implement important economic development and revitalization initiatives. For these reasons, the state finds that well-planned communities are better prepared to attract new growth in a highly competitive global market.

In short, local planning should recognize that:

*Assets can be **accentuated** and **improved**;*

*Liabilities can be **mitigated** and **changed** over time; and*

*Potential can be **sought after** and **developed**.*

Scope

This document addresses the local planning requirements and community development of the Town of Bowersville, Georgia. Some consideration has been given to those areas and political entities outside the town limits that influence conditions within the community, but all the cited issues, objectives and opportunities discussed herein are solely focused on the Town of Bowersville.

This document will be offered as supplemental material for the respective comprehensive plans for Hart County (in which Bowersville is located) and Franklin County, just a ½ mile away from Bowersville.

Plan Elements

This comprehensive plan serves to meet the requirements and intent of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs's "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," as amended in 2013, and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is essential that the plan be prepared in compliance with these rules and guidelines in order for local government to maintain their Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. Further, State law requires that the local government update its comprehensive plan every 5 years.

"The purpose of Minimum Standards is to provide a framework for the development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans at the local, regional and state government level. They reflect an important state interest: healthy and economically vibrant cities and counties are vital to the state's economic prosperity."

(1) Community Goals: *The purpose of the Community Goals element is to lay out a road map for the community's future, developed through a very public process of involving community leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of the community. The Community Goals are the most important part of the plan, for they identify the community's direction for the future, and are intended to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community, thereby leading citizens and leadership to act to ensure that the plan is implemented.*

(2) Needs and Opportunities: *This is the locally agreed upon list of Needs and Opportunities the community intends to address. Each of the needs or opportunities that the community identifies as high priority must be followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Community Work Program. The list must be developed by involving community stakeholders in carrying out a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) or similar analysis of the community.*

(3) Community Work Program: *This element of the comprehensive plan lays out the specific activities the community plans to undertake during the next five years to address the priority Needs and Opportunities, identified Target Areas (if applicable), or to achieve portions of the Community Goals. This includes any activities, initiatives, programs, ordinances, administrative systems (such as site plan review, design review, etc.) to be put in place to implement the plan.*

In addition to the required core elements local comprehensive plans in Georgia must also include the following:

An assessment of Community Broadband Technology Capacity. *The purpose of the broadband assessment is to facilitate the "promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services" throughout each community in recognition of how vital this technology is for economic development. In an effort to provide advance compliance with this standard the County and municipalities will provide a brief analysis of their needs and objectives regarding broadband technology.*

Consideration of the Regional Water Plan and the Environmental Planning Criteria. *During the process of preparing its comprehensive plan, each community must review the Regional Water Plan(s) covering its area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria... to determine if there is need to adapt local implementation practices or development regulations to address protection of these important natural resources. The community must certify that it has considered both the Regional Water Plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria when it transmits the plan to the Regional Commission for review.*

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As a community that has adopted a form of development regulations the Town of Bowersville must also include the necessary land use element within their plan to aid in the coordination of their development policies and capital improvement projects.

***Land Use Element.** The Land Use Element, where required, must include at least one of the two components listed below:*

(a) Character Areas Map and Defining Narrative. Identify and map the boundaries of existing or potential character areas (see definition in Chapter 110-12-1-.05) covering the entire community, including existing community sub-areas, districts, or neighborhoods.

(b) Future Land Use Map and Narrative. Prepare a Future Land Use Map that uses conventional categories or classifications to depict the location (typically parcel by parcel) of specific future land uses. If this option is chosen, prepare the Future Land Use Map using either of the land use classification schemes described below and include a narrative that explains how to interpret the map and each land use category.

The comprehensive plan was prepared in accordance with minimum procedural requirements for local plans, which include a public hearing prior to substantive work on the plan, and a public hearing prior to transmittal of the comprehensive plan for review by Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) and Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

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Material for the Purpose, Required Components and Required Procedures has been taken from the appropriate sections of Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning."

Public Participation

As a part of the planning process each local government must provide and implement opportunities to encourage public participation. The purpose of this is to ensure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process, are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan elements and have adequate access to the process of defining the community's vision, priorities, goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

At a minimum, the public participation program must provide for: adequate notice to keep the general public informed of the emerging plan; opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the plan; hold the required public hearings; and, provide notice to property owners through advertisements in the newspaper (legal organ) of the planning effort soliciting participation and comments. In addition, the local government must provide opportunities for public participation through other means and methods to help articulate a community vision and develop associated goals and implementation program.

Public involvement for Bowersville's planning process featured a series of public meetings throughout the fall of 2021, all held at the Town Hall. In addition, a survey was made available to the public by mail out in Town water bills during July and August, with additional copies available at Town Hall. Draft copies of the Comprehensive Plan were also made available for the public to review at Town Hall during the later stages of the process.

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The nominees for the Advisory Committee represented a wide cross-section of Town residents, offered on a basis of inviting residents from all parts of the town, from households with different lengths of tenure within the town, and across different economic spectrums. The Advisory Committee held two meetings of their own and took part in general public forums, as well as participated in discussion via email.

Bowersville Plan Advisory Committee

Matthew Butler
Jennifer Vaughn
Brandee Ellison
Jan Dean
Pruitt Manley (Mayor)

In all, the Town hosted 3 meetings in 2021 for the Town Council and the Plan Advisory Committee that walked through the Comprehensive Plan document and the needs and issues facing the community. There was also an online survey which yielded 30 results. Both formats provided layers of public comments to be considered by the Advisory Committee.

The live events were sparsely attended, due perhaps in part to the pandemic conditions that remained in effect and the presence of an online survey that allowed remote participation. These events did invite questions and discussion about options for directing growth as well as prioritizing issues and threats. One session focused on the SWOT analysis (discussed later in this document), while additional conversation was held regarding key topics such as land use, economic development, and coordinating with Hart County.

The prevailing sense from all participants during the planning process is a desire to secure the town's safety for existing and new residents, with a desire to remain a mostly peaceful residential community amidst a rural, but suburbanizing, part of northeast Georgia. Absent utilities, Bowersville has limited means to attract and direct growth, particularly for anything of larger commercial or industrial scale. However, it is believed that if the Town can capture a notable share of growth coming toward this part of Hart and Franklin Counties, it can do so in a manner that builds the community up, eventually providing the population base to lure some of the retail and social institutions residents desire and consider in keeping with the town's character.

Regional Compliance

This is to certify that as part of this planning process appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed the *Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Plan*, the *Georgie Mountains Regional Plan*, and the *Georgia State Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating this local plan. No conflicts were identified between this document and the other documents referenced, and the Bowersville Comprehensive Plan establishes goals that will support the advancement of objectives found within the regional/State documents.

This is also to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed for any compliance issues with the existing Hart County Comprehensive Plan, Hart County Service Delivery Agreement, and Georgia Mountains Regional Plan, and to date no conflicts were found.

COMMUNITY VISION

Community Profile

Bowersville is a small town in western Hart County, Ga. It's one of several communities nestled along the north/south run of SR17 as a legacy to the short-line rail line that still serves the corridor. It is an overwhelmingly rural town with little commerce and limited traffic or utility services capable of luring other industry. The result is that Bowersville's current form is that of a residential enclave amidst the largely agricultural activity in this part of Georgia.



That form does provide a serene and cherished identity among many locals, who've chosen to live in Bowersville because it is a rural community – Enough neighbors nearby to offer a sense of community, without the bustle or busyness that comes with larger cities. Commercial needs can be met by driving to nearby Canon, Lavonia, or Hartwell. For most in the area, what matters about Bowersville is the ability to retain that distinction from the other communities, and that should Bowersville grow as a result of overall regional growth that it should be managed in a way to focus on preserving the identity as a safe and peaceful town focused on the people and families that call it home.

Total Population

	2010	2015	2019
Franklin County	22,074	22,267	23,349
Canon city (pt.)	700	702	740
Carnesville city	594	594	601
Franklin Springs city	957	1,137	1,192
Lavonia city (pt.)	2,162	2,138	2,200
Martin town (pt.)	13	13	16
Royston city (pt.)	1,920	1,899	1,919
Balance of Franklin Co.	15,728	15,784	16,681
Hart County	25,240	25,410	26,205
Bowersville town	471	477	485
Canon city (pt.)	43	43	45
Hartwell city	4,370	4,341	4,437
Lavonia city (pt.)	-	-	-
Royston city (pt.)	649	646	649
Balance of Hart Co.	19,707	19,903	20,589

Source: US Bureau of the Census

SWOT Analysis/ Public Comments

The effectiveness of any planning process requires identifying the needs that must be addressed in order to achieve a community's goals, clarifying the targets for the local government. To do this the planning process asks communities to assess the information outlined in an effort to identify their respective **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats. In doing this SWOT analysis the communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions to as to better achieve the desired vision.



This part of the planning process also reviewed various forms of data and information about each community. Information such as Census data and Department of Labor data was reviewed for insight into local conditions, plus each local government was asked to provide summaries of their immediate operational and capital improvement needs to give an indication of their priorities ahead of discussions about public objectives. When evaluating this data and information the planning process focused on whether it verified needs or opportunities identified previously, whether it uncovered new needs or opportunities not previously identified, and whether it indicates significant local trends that need to be considered in the planning process.

The analysis for Bowersville was generated during public forums and based on discussions with local stakeholders, drawing inspiration from the survey comments and past planning efforts. While there is great appeal in the town's small size and charming character, it also means that as a local government Bowersville has limited resources with which to effect change. While there are several ideas and championed for improving the downtown area for social and commercial opportunities, the Town lacks the initial funding needed to pursue major projects.

The two biggest issues facing Bowersville's future come from outside: The potential wave of growth and change coming with increased economic development along the I-85 corridor, and the eventual prospect of SR17 being re-routed outside of Bowersville. Depending on the scale and urgency of activity related to the first issue, particularly in the form of new housing demanded for a growing labor force and increasing freight traffic as part of the new industry building along the interstate, that growth might lead to the Georgia Dept. of Transportation moving forward the timetable for completing SR17's planned widening. There outside forces will be the primary factors in shaping how this part of Franklin and Hart Counties do or do not experience major change within the 20-year time frame of this plan.

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STRENGTHS / KEY ASSETS	WEAKNESSES/LIABILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small town • “Know everybody” • Strong faith-based community • Potential for park/community facility • Location – SR17, I-85, Lake Hartwell • Pastoral scenery • Viable agricultural industry in the area • Downtown is a manageable size • Not a lot of dilapidated structures • Downtown a “clean slate” • City owns land for a park • Have railroad access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never replaced/reused old buildings • Railroad activity downtown • No money • Lack of involvement • Lack of excitement • Some eye sore properties and old RR equipment • City not active in economic development • Lack of historical district • No signage/promotions directing people to downtown • Lack of infrastructure • Lack of shops and activity in the city
OPPORTUNITIES/UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES	THREATS/OUTSIDE RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New park • Possible event venue/museum/Rehab of old gin bldgs. • Streetscaping for downtown • Vacant sites and bldgs. available • Agricultural industry • Farmers’ market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR17 – Relocation might hurt access • SR17 – Widening might alter city’s character • Possible Highway 51 bypass • Threat of incompatible development or nuisance activity

Of issues offered through public interaction, several items were mentioned enough, or considered seriously enough, to warrant formal consideration through this process. (Presented here in no particular order.)

- **Crime:** This issue may be a matter of perception and is largely hinged on speeding vehicles and the alleged lack of a regular presence of Hart County Sheriff’s deputies. While residents feel the town overall remains peaceful and safe from felonious crime, it’s felt that a more visible presence from law enforcement combined with some traffic control measures would yield results that resonate better with the residents.
- **Government Communications:** Residents and stakeholders expressed a desire to see more frequent messaging from Town Hall, particularly in evidence of follow through on critical issues. Like many small towns, Bowersville is catching up to applications of social media, but that is getting better. As the Town grows into using this platform, they should develop an overall communications strategy to ensure residents feel informed and can see how they’re own comments and questions are received and acted upon.
- **General Town Appearance:** Recognizing the Town has limited resources, it is felt by many that simply finding the means to reduce litter, add a streetscape to downtown, and addressing key dilapidated buildings could do wonders for the appearance of the community. It is hoped that making progress in these things might also engender support for bigger projects like the Town Park, and encourage residents to be more active in the community.

Vision Statement

The Minimum Standards and Requirements for Local Comprehensive Planning defines a community vision as something “... *intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.*” It is required as an element of the comprehensive plan so that communities can truly establish a pure and simple ideal for themselves in a format that is easily expressed and understood.

Visioning provides communities with an opportunity to pause and consider the “big picture” as well as to attempt to clearly define their ideal future. Developing a vision means that community has at least tried to identify current values, describe how they’re to be realized in the future and use that image as a foundation for short and long-term planning. As a process this also requires the community to develop a consensus on what conditions to change or to preserve.



CITY OF BOWERSVILLE VISION STATEMENT

Bowersville will be a community where our citizens can live, work, socialize and recreate in a safe, attractive, and healthy environment. The town will have a distinctive sense of place based on the quality and beauty of its natural and built environment, valued historic and cultural assets, unique local character, and commitment to quality design and construction. The Town will support and further develop sound residential and commercial land use, maintain environmental resources, and strive to supply the highest grade of utilities.

For now, residents and local stakeholders for Bowersville recognize the community remains a small residential hub within the still predominantly agrarian parts of Hart and Franklin Counties, and there remains a desire to keep this general character. Some commercial growth and possible revitalization of their town center is desired, but only balanced against the goal of maintaining the community's modest scale for both the comfort of residents and to ensure the Town remains fiscally sustainable.

As a result, the vision for Bowersville remains focused on making the most of the community for the residents by providing the amenities and elements vital for quality small towns. Ensuring Bowersville remains attractive to families and homeowners will help the community prosper in its own right as the region matures. While Franklin and Hart Counties are poised for additional economic expansion, Bowersville will concentrate on the elements that will build the sense of residential community, including parks, a possible community center, trails and sidewalks and attracting infill development.



Economic Development

The Economic Development element of a comprehensive plan attempts to define the assets and liabilities of industrial categories, geographical locations, and employment conditions. Economic development analyses inventory a community's functional conditions and achievements to identify the strengths, weaknesses and needs of native businesses. This portrait of a region's economic state is the foundation for assessing the performance of wages and job skills, employment and industry patterns, and the programs and efforts designed to improve local economies.

Reference material used for this planning process came from the Georgia Department of Labor's *Area Labor Profiles* for Hart and Franklin Counties, and from the 2019 GMRC *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*, both of which can be found in the appendix. The CEDS is a regional document that is required by the federal Economic Development Administration and is the overarching document used to coordinate federal and State investment in capital projects that support job growth or retention. Further discussion was held among stakeholders to determine the relative health of the local economy and in identifying the economic needs and opportunities for Bowersville.

Unemployment Rates

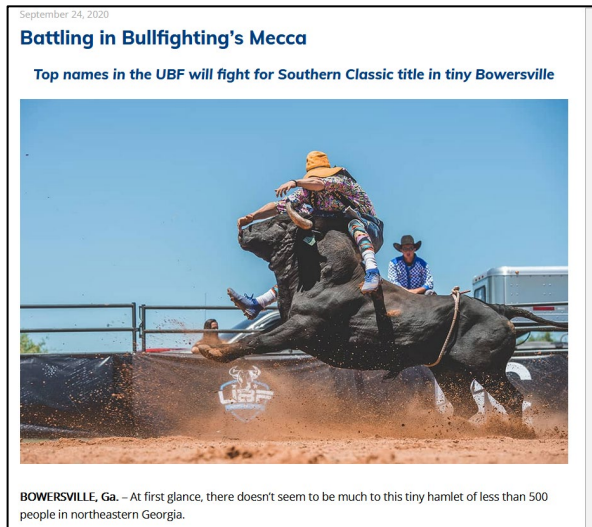
	2017	2018	2019	2020	'19-'20
Hart Co.	4.8	3.9	3.6	5.9	-2.3
Franklin Co.	4.5	3.7	3.6	5.4	-1.9

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor

Coming into 2021, Bowersville and much of the region was still managing recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Georgia Mountains region was not the hardest hit, but various industries in the area suffered, particularly smaller businesses and tourist-related industries that relied on in-person customers. In this sense Bowersville was not directly impacted due to the lack of businesses in the town, but some area households were among those whose income was impacted, and several businesses in Franklin and Hart Counties were lost. As 2021 moves toward a close, however, the overall Georgia economy has been recovering and both the tourist trade and the industrial development along the I-85 corridor have resumed to near normal pre-Covid levels.

For Bowersville, as with many small towns, the pandemic did reveal the impacts of broadband infrastructure on economic development and on the appeal of housing markets. Most businesses and households already prized strong, high-speed connections to area networks; The quarantine conditions of the pandemic made such connections a full-on necessity for communities wishing to compete for growth in the present and the future. This will be an issue for Bowersville to monitor in the coming years as provider options in the area evolve.

The other premier economic issue for Bowersville will be the impact of making a possible regular event out of the Bowersville Bull Festival, a days-long event centered around a professional freestyle bullfighting exhibit just north of downtown Bowersville. After two cycles in the past couple years, the event has raised some concerns over traffic and potential nuisances while also drawing comparably large crowds and the type of attention not normally given to Bowersville. Prospects for this becoming a regular showcase could provide the community with a means of revenues and a refined identity for Bowersville, provided a consensus can be generated regarding the format for managing that event and whether or not the space could work for other events throughout the year.



Needs & Opportunities

To achieve its stated vision a community must understand those obstacles and issues that must be addressed to reach the goals implied. The planning process asks communities to assess the information to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered to achieve the desired future. In doing so, communities can more effectively define their objectives and actions to as to better achieve the desired vision.

The following represents a refined listing of Issues and Opportunities for Bowersville. Some were carried over from the previous plan, but the list has been confirmed and/or refined based on the discussions and analyses throughout the current planning process.

Needs & Opportunities	Mitigation Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Potential for downtown park, community facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Renovate S.T. Fleming bldg.✓ Develop park on Town property
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Concern over impacts of SR17 realignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Set meeting with GDOT staff to determine potential to influence project
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to manage growth and development in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Reinstate, and update, land use ordinances✓ Adopt Conservation Design regulations✓ Develop design guidelines reference material
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to ensure long-term utility capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Perform study to assess water and sewer options for the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to address speeding and crime in town	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Begin documenting discussions with County Sheriff about enforcement✓ Keep unofficial log of problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to improve public communications from Town Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Find a means to keep and share a log regarding citizen comments and questions✓ Develop, adopt, and implement a communications strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demand to clean up downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Implement a litter control program✓ Develop a downtown streetscape plan✓ Host committee/forum to develop a signage strategy and branding for Bowersville✓ Review and update policies regarding management of dilapidated properties
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Potential to increase residential base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Host forum with realtors and developers about prospects for subdivisions and infill development in the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to address long-term impacts of Bowersville as an event host	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Commission a report on options for temporary event spaces in the town.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

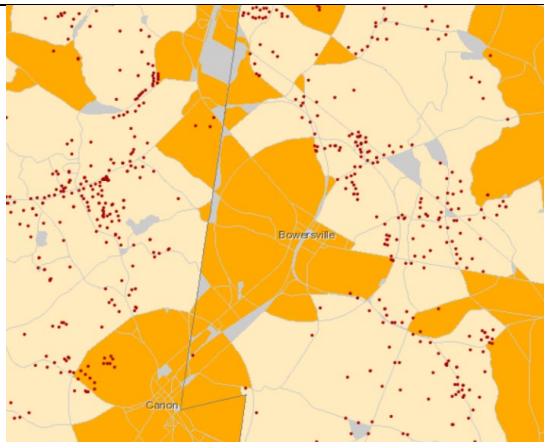
Broadband Assessment

The growing importance of access to reliable and high-speed, high-capacity internet connections cannot be overestimated. Unserved and underserved areas of Georgia will not remain economically competitive without sufficient internet infrastructure, as this technology becomes the default utility for all manners of communication. To address this issue the Georgia General Assembly amended the provisions of local planning in Georgia by passing the "Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act" to facilitate the enhancement and extension of internet access in communities. The ACE Act requires all local governments to incorporate the "promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services" into their local plan. Once these are in place the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Economic Development will identify and promote facilities and developments that offer broadband services at a rate of not less than 1 gigabit per second in the downstream to end users that can be accessed for business, education, health care, government.

One of the first products to come out of the Georgia Broadband Initiative was an inventory of general conditions across the State regarding access to high speed/ high-capacity broadband technology. Utilizing demographic data from the US Census Bureau and cross-referencing that information with knowledge of broadband infrastructure, the Department of Community Affairs produced a series of maps depicting the state of broadband accessibility in rural areas. (See map below) On this basis Hartwell as a whole at least has access to high-grade broadband, so any gaps in their local network remain small and likely effects mostly residential users.

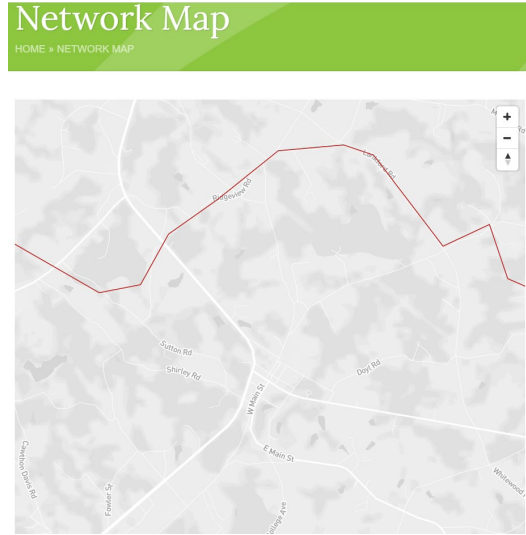
Bowersville Broadband Access - 2021

Legend
Served & Unserved Areas
■ Served
■ Unserved
■ No Locations
● Unserved Locations
Hart County
Unserved Locations: 1,863
Served Locations: 14,007
Percent Unserved: 12
Franklin County
Unserved Locations: 4,059
Served Locations: 9,635
Percent Unserved: 30



This map portrays broadband statistics for the State of Georgia. Statistics are available by census block, county and legislative boundary. Statistics are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, and where the broadband service is available to more than 80% of locations in a census block. Census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated as 'Unserved'. The map depicts access to broadband, not subscription status.

Bowersville does have access to the North Georgia Network (NGN), an incorporated cooperative providing a regional fiber optic system with over 1,600 linear miles of infrastructure. The NGN was conceived as part of visions for a more prosperous rural Georgia, with the knowledge that a fiber optic network that is fast, reliable, and affordable is vital to modern economic development. The NGN provides infrastructure that loops through the northeast Georgia mountains with 100 gigabit core line and connects to almost all the schools and colleges in the region as well as reaching many government structures and prominent business parks. A main line of this network runs through the northern tips of Bowersville, but it does not yet go through downtown, along Main Street, or along SR51 and SR17. The Town will want to see these areas connected in the future.



The other main issue is known as “last mile” connectivity, which has been a big obstacle for the whole region. For residents to utilize the internet to telecommute for work or school, or to perform business from home, requires connections to modern broadband, but a minimum of 770 residential properties are lacking that final connection. That number is likely much higher, with even more having a connection but one of insufficient capacity. This impacts the communities’ ability to lure wealthier households assuming the availability of broadband at every residence, particularly those households looking to perform business operations from home.

Priorities for Future Network Enhancements

- Ability to increase “last-mile” connections in rural areas
- Desire to extend the main NGN lines down SR17 and into downtown



As an additional reference, Bowersville included in the 2014 Georgia Mountains Digital Economy Plan (DEP), one of several such plans developed for each region across Georgia in accordance with standards defined by the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA). The DEP was designed to identify and coordinate the resources and efforts related to improving the region’s infrastructure in support of hi-tech industries and economies. As each regional plan is completed, the State and its partners can begin directing their energy and resources with clearer focus and understanding of needs from every part of Georgia. While specific investment actions have not been identified as part of this initial process, the DEP provides a work scope that addresses key focus areas and recommendations that will help the GMRC, its member governments and regional stakeholders move forward with an understanding of the regional and state context for building network connectivity, improving educational resources and fostering technology hubs. With continued coordination and monitoring of progress, it is hoped these efforts will make the region a more effective and efficient place enabling all manners of business to realize their potential in accessing and utilizing electronic data.

SWOC Assessment – GMRC Digital Economy Plan

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Workforce/ Education	Higher Educational Institutions – University of North Georgia, Brenau, North Georgia Technical School, Lanier Technical School,	Limited existing hi-tech labor force	Economic and demographic growth of metro Atlanta	Attraction/ Retention of top technology talent
	Faster Business Start-up Time	Low family income	Job fairs held within the region by GMRC Workforce Development	Competition from other metro areas
	Dawson GigCenter – Business start-ups			
	GMRC Workforce Development			
Strong Dev. Authorities and Chamber offices to assist start-up businesses and industries				
Infrastructure	Cooperative EMC's that deliver good products	System Redundancy. Residents and Businesses need more choices for internet service.	Tourism/outdoor recreation related industry	Topographically the GMRC Region is difficult to traverse for aerial line installation
	North Georgia Network	Cost prohibitive		
	Access to metro Atlanta	Geographic isolation		
	Ga 400 – Technology Corridor			
Residents ability to telecommute				
Local Government	GMRC fostering cooperation	Limited funding resources	Educating local government on importance of broadband access	Finding Grant funds for broadband projects
	Quality Development Authorities and Joint Development Authorities	State needs to put more emphasis on education		Need to better communicate to State Legislators the Region's needs regarding broadband initiatives & projects
	<p>Goal: <i>Ensure new telecommunication networks for needed accessibility and reliability to support the growth of the regional economy.</i></p> <p>Strategy: <i>Prepare to meet industry and business telecommunication needs by assisting with fiber optic network development.</i> The purpose of this strategy is to support, develop, and provide educational opportunities regarding telecommunication systems in the region.</p> <p>Strategy: <i>Promote and support the use of health information technology (IT).</i> The purpose of this strategy is to encourage local partnerships between health providers and local leaders in using telecommunications and other information technology to improve care to patients and lower health costs.</p>			

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A region’s natural resources are the native conditions and elements that contribute to the local character and livelihood. As the rivers and lakes supplying public water, mineral deposits that support local industry, or a scenic park serving locals and tourists alike, these resources can, properly managed, greatly serve a community’s health, culture, and economy. Because these sites and conditions are highly susceptible to disturbance from human activity, they are regarded environmentally sensitive and need to be preserved for public benefit.

The following is provided as a simplified assessment of critical environmental conditions in effect throughout Bowersville.

Clean Water Act Compliance

<i>N</i>	Any “not supporting” 303(d) listed waterbodies? <i>(See Below)</i> <i>If yes, these waterbodies have been found contaminated to the extent that they are not considered supporting their designated use. As such the local community should seek to manage land uses within the watershed so as to yield healthier water quality.</i>
<i>N</i>	Any 305(b) listed waterbodies? <i>(See Below)</i>
<i>NA</i>	<i>If yes, do the Implementation Plans/Watershed Management Plans require any outstanding actions from the local government? If so, please include these actions within the Implementation Program.</i>

As a smaller municipality amid the rolling hills of western Hart County, Bowersville has some creeks and streams within the town limits. In fact, every creek in Bowersville has its headwaters in the town, flowing outward to either the Shoal Creek (north), Beaverdam Creek (south), or Double Branch Creek (west). The waters west of SR17 all drain into Double Branch Creek, upstream from that creek’s sizable Reservoir 28. A number of other detention ponds can be found on various streams in the area.



At present no major contaminants have been cited within streams within Bowersville. This isn’t to affirm those waters are perfectly clean, however, as most testing is done much further downstream. If there was sampling done in this area the most likely concerns would be for ecoli/ fecal coliform as a result of any livestock and wildlife in the area, or possibly nutrients like nitrates and phosphates used to treat lawns and crops. The local extension service is aware of best practices and works with the Hart County code enforcement programs to help landowners with best practices for soil care and management of animal wastes, if any issues are discovered within the town limits.

Environmental Planning Criteria	Bowersville
<i>Floodplains</i>	N
<i>Forest Lands</i>	N
<i>Ground Water Recharge Areas</i>	Y
<i>Plant & Animal Habitat</i>	N
<i>Prime Agricultural Lands</i>	Y
<i>Protected Mountains</i>	N
<i>Steep Slopes</i>	N
<i>Water Supply Watersheds</i>	N
<i>Wetlands</i>	Y
<i>Protected Rivers</i>	N

Regarding environmental features, Bowersville has portions of groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and prime agricultural lands within the town limits. None of these are part of regionally significant resources, but they do play a part in shaping the local ecology and the integrity of the local well water. The town does need to work with residents and the County in trying to keep the groundwater viable and clean.

This is to certify that as part of this planning process appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed the *Savannah- Upper Ogeechee Water Plan*, the *Georgie Mountains Regional Plan*, and the *Georgia State Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating this local plan. No conflicts were identified between this document and the other documents

Land Use Assessment

Land use in and around Bowersville is relatively simple and unchanged for more than 20 years. The Town is a classic rural train-stop town, founded along a rail line with one side of Main Street on either side of the rail bed. For two blocks in either direction along the tracks the Town exhibits the remaining plots of traditional shop front buildings, though only several still remain. The cross street, Schaefer St., serves as Ga 51 and the arterial road to Hartwell to the east, while just beyond the 2 blocks west Schaefer dead-ends into GA 17, the north-south arterial connector reaching to Lavonia or Royston.

Surrounding these few blocks of the town center are various residential properties, churches and agricultural properties. Almost all of the residential homes are detached single-family units on more than 1 acre, with the only subdivision in the town being an atypical, affordable housing style development of some 20 properties off of Hillard Rd. and Kerry Lane. Apart from that the town is clearly one of agricultural heritage with the former town center functioning as a crossroads community for this part of the region.

Some commercial operations are scattered throughout and around the town. There is also the small Franklin-Hart Regional Airport located just 2 miles to the southwest in Canon while Ga 17 still commands strong traffic flow, so there is opportunity for the town to grow with more non-residential uses. The absence of sewer limits that potential, however, and for now other cities provide the retail and service base for local residents' needs.

Development Trends and Forces

- Ga. 17 is the primary roadway and a north south arterial connecting to larger employment and commercial centers in Lavonia and Royston.
- Ga 51 is the east-west arterial and the connection to Hartwell and Lake Hartwell.
- Franklin-Hart Regional Airport, just southwest in Canon
- Growing manufacturing and industrial base in Lavonia (3 miles north) and along I-85 corridor.

Areas Requiring Special Attention

Analysis of the prevailing trends will assist in the identification of preferred patterns of growth for the future. More specifically such analyses can identify those areas requiring special attention with regard to management policies, such as natural or cultural resources likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development. As part of this process, stakeholders and local governments are encouraged to evaluate about the presence of subsets of their communities subject to special circumstances such as:

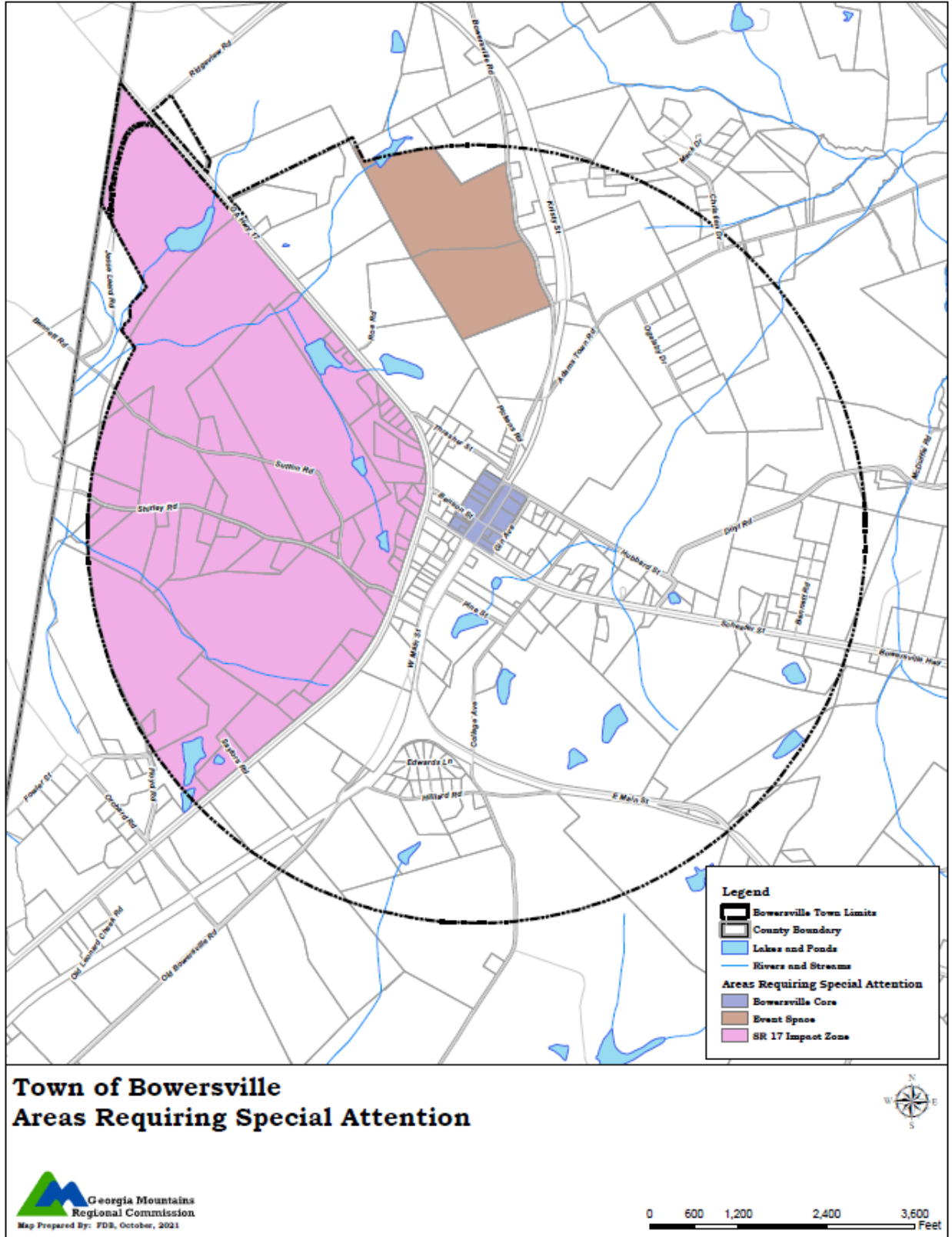
- *Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur*
- *Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation*
- *Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)*
- *Large, abandoned structures or sites, including possible environmental contamination.*
- *Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites).*
- *Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole*

Within Bowersville, the following areas have been identified for special attention when considering future development strategies:

The newly fostered ***Special Event Space*** on a rural parcel north of downtown has altered the considerations for how Bowersville might grow in the future. The popularity of the initial bullfighting events held on this site has introduced the notion that a) similar events could come to this site, providing commerce and social activity in Bowersville for more than just two weekends a year, and b) the northern part of the town might harbor a future different from conventional agriculture. If the Town is to encourage more events at this site it will warrant a review of possible different long-term plans for transportation infrastructure and residential development patterns.

The western part of the town remains subject to impacts from ***Impacts from SR 17***. Specifically, if GDOT's eventual plans for the road come to fruition within 20 years as planned, the arterial road will be re-routed outside of Bowersville, depriving the town of one potential commercial corridor and leading to possible realignment of another (SR51, as it connects to SR17). There are positives and negatives to be had with the SR17 corridor eventually moving out of the town, but the extent that those positives or negatives define the net results will depend on how the town responds. It will most likely mean that the properties west of the current SR17 will experience pressure from development, particularly non-residential uses seeking to capitalize on the widened arterial roadway.

The two above forces combined will also mean a need to reconsider Bowersville's ambitions for revitalizing their ***Downtown Core***. The general vision remains valid, however the outside conditions that influenced the traffic and character of the Main Street and SR51 intersection are changing. If it's assumed that within the planning horizon SR17 is relocated and the event space north of downtown becomes a more regular attraction, then chances are the main traffic along SR51 will grow, building pressure for a possible realignment or new bypass outside of a residential area. The Town should seek to recreate the planning exercises that went into the designs for their still-to-be-developed park and community center space, but look at fostering the right kind of connection with the event space, capitalizing on the energy from those events in a fashion that will draw attention and investment to Main Street.



Character Areas

Character area planning is designed to focus on the physical appearance (aesthetics) and function of a particular area. Development strategies are tailored and applied to each individual area. The goal is to enhance the existing character/function or promote a new, more desirable character for the future. Character areas identify portions of the community that have a unique or special character that needs to be preserved or require special attention because of unique development issues

A key component of the comprehensive planning process is the development of a Character Area Map that reflects the town's vision for future growth and development during the course of the planning period. This vision was developed through an extensive public visioning process and expresses the unique character of various portions of the town. The various character areas, when combined, form a single map that is intended to guide future development by organizing common themes of development patterns throughout the town. They promote the desired development patterns guiding the design of structures and physical development. They also provide a framework for changes to development regulation and policies. Finally, they help to guide future zoning decisions. The following pages present the map and narratives of each character area associated with the Town of Bowersville.

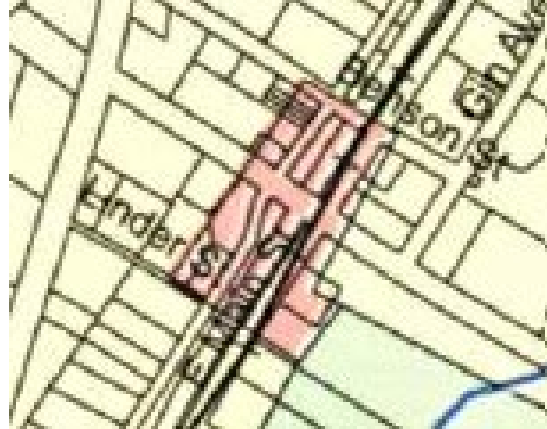
Each identified character area outlines a specific vision or plan that includes the following:

- Written description and pictures or illustrations that make it clear what types, forms, styles, and patterns of development are to be encouraged in the area.
- Listing of specific land uses and/or zoning categories to be allowed in the area.
- Identification of implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns for the area, including more detailed sub-area planning, new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments, and infrastructure improvements.



DOWNTOWN

This is the heart of Bowersville and the features the remaining notable non-residential structures for the community. The form is traditional railroad-oriented main street, with a handful of 1 and 2 story masonry structures on either side of the tracks. It is only a couple blocks and will function more like a cross-roads community center, socially. The district has the potential to expand depending on the pace of growth but for the foreseeable future the Town will focus on filling in the vacant spaces within this area before concerning the district reaching farther along either roadway.



The downtown constitutes the potential commercial and civic uses within the heart of the traditional rural neighborhood of Bowersville. Traffic is relatively quiet-to-non-existent on occasions, so there are no major needs with regards to road improvements or immediate concerns over utilities to meet current demands.



Management of commercial/freight traffic within downtown is an issue, due to some tight roads and the conditions of some roads. The Town is interested in seeking to reroute freight traffic and improve signage and pedestrian infrastructure with the hopes of calming traffic and making the area more appealing for visitors and civic events.

Just outside this district lies a predominantly residential area before reaching purely rural countryside.



DOWNTOWN

Development Encouraged

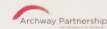
- 0/Near lot line development
- Mix of uses; preference for retail commercial
- Office, institutional and residential uses acceptable
- Limited surface parking lots for individual properties
- Should blend with architectural character of the neighborhoods and Main Street

Implementation Measures

- Develop Downtown Master Plan
- Implement streetscape improvements
- Restore/renovate S.T. Fleming bldg.
- Support preservation of existing structures
- Review development regulations against Comp Plan goals; Amend as needed
- Develop Town Park
- Develop new Depot Pavilion
- Develop design guideline reference material



Bowersville, GA Depot Pavilion



Before ▲
After ▼



AGRICULTURAL

This district is a catch-all designation for those larger lots that lie outside downtown or slightly more populated transitional zones. There is little agricultural activity within Town limits, and almost all of that is of a non-commercial scale. Many lots are simply large residential lots with most of the property left undeveloped.

These properties primarily feature a house with one or more storage or agricultural structures. Most are long established properties of 30 years or more. In a couple cases their residence is substantially improved and indicative of a high economic class. Others are simply modest homes on lots retained purely for their scenic, rural value.

While there is no distinct agricultural industry among Town landowners, cattle and poultry are prominent throughout the region and could prosper. However, as the area enables more growth and provides upgraded utilities these agricultural lots may feel more pressure to sell for development.



AGRICULTURAL



Development Encouraged

- Agricultural uses, residential development, conservation or recreation uses
- Agri-tourism uses
- Larger lot sizes: Min. 1 acre but preference for 3+ acres
- High percentage of natural landscape or pervious surfaces
- Conservation design subdivisions

Implementation Measures

- Adopt conservation design guidelines
- Review development regulations against Comp Plan goals; Amend as needed
- Commission study assessing conservation easements for Hart and Franklin Counties
- Continue to support and promote agricultural industry
- Develop design guideline reference material



RESIDENTIAL

Around Main Street are pockets of traditional rustic, residential neighborhoods depicting the development history of the town. As a district these areas consists mostly of undeveloped land or recently built suburban housing. By type the subdivisions are attempting to compliment downtown, but differs by departing from the classic urban grid and some of the houses are also larger both in structure and in terms of lot size.

Nor is it defined that this area need be reserved for housing. There are a few non-residential uses within the district, including commercial use, a church and some small farms. Some of these properties may be primed for future commercial or service industry development.

This district denotes the transition between downtown and the truly rural portions of Bowersville and the unincorporated surroundings. By softening the change in density and concentrations of development, adjoining agricultural uses and woodland experience less pressure for up-selling. Likewise, it aids utility and infrastructure management by marking the essential limits of urban-level services.



RESIDENTIAL



Development Encouraged

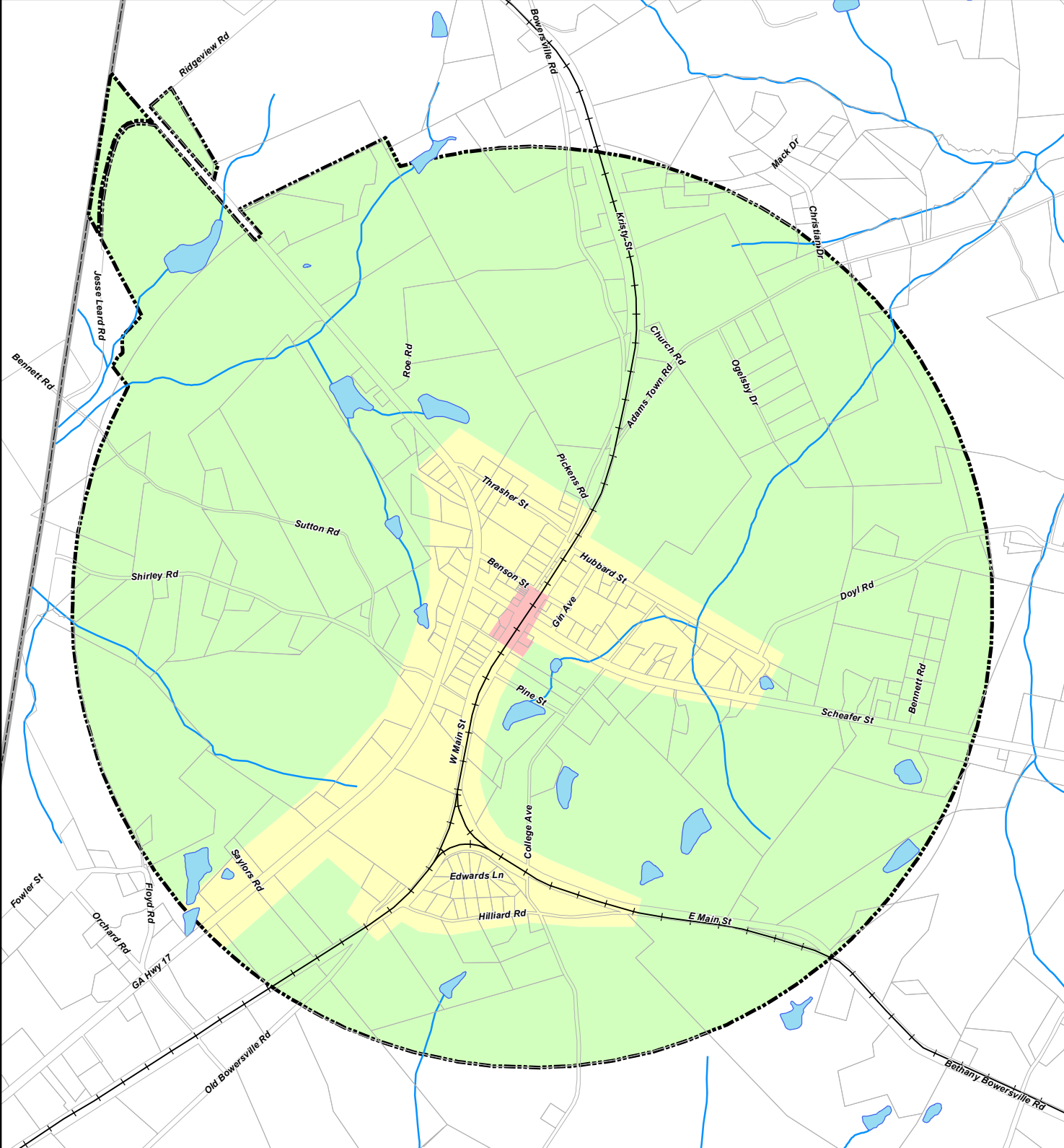
- Residential development, with some small (non-commercial) agricultural uses
- Institutional uses and parks also permitted, with minimal signage and lighting
- Medium-to-large lot sizes (1-3 acres)
- High percentage of natural landscape or pervious surfaces

Implementation Measures

- Adopt conservation design guidelines
- Review development regulations against Comp Plan goals; Amend as needed
- Develop design guideline reference material



City of Bowersville Character Area Map



Legend

Character Areas

- Agricultural
- Downtown
- Residential



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

4

Achieving the Vision and our goals for the community

The Implementation Program is the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision and for addressing each of the Community Needs and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures, both short and long-term, that must be undertaken by the community in order realize the community's goals. Identifying these items helps the community organize their actions

Policies

One type of action a community can establish to achieve its vision is the establishment of policy. These are those ongoing principles and practices that the community will observe in order to realize specific objectives. Some policies may compliment single action-items while others may provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Vision or addressing Community Issues and Opportunities.

- Maintain all Town facilities and infrastructure to the highest degree possible
- Strive to maintain a clean community
- Support the local Chambers of Commerce, Development Authorities and other partners in efforts of community and economic development for Hart and Franklin Counties
- Participate in all appropriate intra-county programs such as SPLOST and Service Delivery Agreements.
- Continue to support and promote agricultural industry
- Support the preservation and protection of existing structures within the town, to the best extent feasible

Long-Term Activities and Ongoing Programs

In addition to establishing policy, communities may also establish long-term or ongoing programs and activities that support identified objectives. These measures may compliment policies or may simply be action items that must be employed more than once. These are recognized here so as to distinguish their need and conditions apart from the single-action items and to identify any required special terms or context.

- Perform all necessary maintenance with regards to Town facilities, utilities, infrastructure and park space. Implement any work programs or master plans for such facilities.
- Coordinate with GDOT and other communities regarding the realignment and improvements to SR17

Report of Accomplishments

This is the review of the STWP from the previous five years. As a new STWP is produced every five years, the items within the previous STWP must be identified for their status as either complete, in progress, postponed or cancelled. Those items that have been postponed or are in progress must be shown in the next STWP where appropriate, while those items that have been postponed or cancelled must also include a reason for their status.

Action	Status	Comment
Meet with GDOT concerning latest status of SR17 project	Complete	
Speak with local industry about rerouting trucks	Complete	
Develop traffic management report	Cancelled	Deferred for lack of funds
Develop a photo exhibit of Bowersville history	Postponed	Scheduled for 2024
Review zoning ordinance, zoning map and dev. regulations; Amend as needed	In Progress	Scheduled for 2022
Pursue funding options for renovation of S.T Fleming Bldg.	Complete	
Develop concept for new Town Park	Complete	
Establish committee to explore farmer's market concept	Complete	
Develop a "SR17 Corridor Alliance"	Cancelled	Will be reconsidered as road improvements are scheduled
Reapply for LMIG road funding	Complete	Now an annual occurrence
Develop master plan for downtown	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funds; 2023
Improvements to Town Park, landscaping of Railroad Area	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funds; 2023
Adopt Conservation Design guidelines	In Progress	Scheduled for 2022
Consider adoption of development regulations for subdivisions.	In Progress	Scheduled for 2022
Pursue funding options for new park space/amities	Complete	Funding not awarded; Will be pursued as a regular policy until funding achieved
Expand waterlines along Christy Road, 4" line	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funds; 2025
Build new Depot Pavilion	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funds; 2025
Renovate the S.T. Fleming bldg.	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funds; 2025
Develop architectural design guidelines reference material	Postponed	To be considered in 2022
Report exploring Hart Agricultural Center concept	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funds; 2024
Develop report recommending development goals for Hart and Franklin Counties	Complete	Information available through Counties' comprehensive plans
Report exploring long-term water and sewer potential	Postponed	Deferred for lack of funds; 2023

2021 Comprehensive Plan

Develop study to assess options for alternate (SR17) alignment and impacts to Town	Cancelled	Will be reconsidered as road improvements are scheduled
Pursue funding assistance for streetscape	Complete	Funding not awarded; Will be pursued as a regular policy until funding achieved
Update comprehensive Plan	Complete	
Commission study assessing conservation easements for Hart and Franklin Counties	Cancelled	Not a priority at this time

Short-Term Work Program

The third forward-thinking element of the Implementation Program is the Short-Term Work Program (STWP). This identifies specific implementation actions the local government or other entities intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This can include any ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, financing arrangements, or other programs or initiatives to be put in place to realize the plan goals.

Years	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2022	Review zoning ordinance, zoning map and dev. regulations; Amend as needed	\$5,000	General Fund	Town Council
2022	Adopt Conservation Design guidelines	\$1,000	DCA, General Fund	Town Council, GMRC
2022	Consider adoption of development regulations for subdivisions.	\$5,000	General Fund	Town Council
2022	Develop architectural design guidelines reference material	\$1,000	DCA	Town Council, GMRC
2022	Meet w/ GDOT staff re: SR17	NA	NA	Mayor
2022	Reinstate, and update, land use ordinances	\$2,000	DCA, General Fund	Town Council, GMRC
2022	Develop, adopt, and implement a communications strategy	\$5,000	DCA	Town Council, GMRC
2022	Begin documenting discussions with County Sheriff about enforcement	NA	NA	Mayor
2022-2023	Review and update policies regarding management of dilapidated properties	NA	NA	Town Council
2023-2024	Improvements to Town Park, landscaping of Railroad Area	Minimal Cost	General Fund	Town Council
2023	Report exploring long-term water and sewer potential	\$10,000	ARC, DCA, General Fund	Town Council, GMRC
2023	Develop master plan/ Streetscape for downtown	\$5,000	DCA	Town Council, GMRC
2023	Perform study to assess water and sewer options for the future	NA	NA	Town Council, Canon, Lavonia, County

2021 Comprehensive Plan

Years	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Responsibility
2023	Initiate unofficial log of criminal activity	NA	NA	Town Clerk
2023	Commission a report on options for temporary event spaces in the town.	\$5,000	TBD	Town Council
2023	Implement a litter control program	TBD	TBD	Town Council
2023	Find a means to keep and share a log regarding citizen comments and questions	NA	NA	Town Clerk
2023	Host committee/forum to develop a signage strategy and branding for Bowersville	NA	NA	Town Council
2024	Host forum with realtors and developers about prospects for subdivisions and infill development in the community	NA	NA	Town Council
2024	Develop a photo exhibit of Bowersville history	\$1,000	General Fund	Town Council
2024-2025	Report exploring Hart Agricultural Center concept	\$5,000	General Fund	Town Council, Hart County
2025-2026	Build new Depot Pavilion	\$50,000	General Fund, grants	Town Council
2025-2026	Renovate the S.T. Fleming bldg.	\$250,000	ARC, SPLOST	Town Council
2026	Update comprehensive Plan	\$20,000	DCA	Town Council, GMRC
2026	Develop park on Town property	TBD	Grant funding	Town Council

APPENDICES

5

Population and Demographic Profile

Economic Climate/ Regional Economy

Area Labor Profiles for Hart and Franklin Counties

Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results

Meeting Sign-in Sheets

Quality Community Objective Analysis

Population and Demographic Profile



Community Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Bowersville t...

Population Summary	
2000 Total Population	381
2010 Total Population	468
2021 Total Population	548
2021 Group Quarters	0
2026 Total Population	579
2021-2026 Annual Rate	1.11%
2021 Total Daytime Population	429
Workers	92
Residents	337
Household Summary	
2000 Households	151
2000 Average Household Size	2.52
2010 Households	178
2010 Average Household Size	2.63
2021 Households	209
2021 Average Household Size	2.62
2026 Households	221
2026 Average Household Size	2.62
2021-2026 Annual Rate	1.12%
2010 Families	127
2010 Average Family Size	3.19
2021 Families	149
2021 Average Family Size	3.16
2026 Families	157
2026 Average Family Size	3.17
2021-2026 Annual Rate	1.05%
Housing Unit Summary	
2000 Housing Units	169
Owner Occupied Housing Units	75.1%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	14.2%
Vacant Housing Units	10.7%
2010 Housing Units	200
Owner Occupied Housing Units	67.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	22.0%
Vacant Housing Units	11.0%
2021 Housing Units	234
Owner Occupied Housing Units	70.5%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	18.8%
Vacant Housing Units	10.7%
2026 Housing Units	248
Owner Occupied Housing Units	71.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	18.1%
Vacant Housing Units	10.9%
Median Household Income	
2021	\$49,007
2026	\$52,091
Median Home Value	
2021	\$134,483
2026	\$157,857
Per Capita Income	
2021	\$22,207
2026	\$24,090
Median Age	
2010	36.9
2021	38.9
2026	41.2

Data Note: Household population includes persons not residing in group quarters. Average Household Size is the household population divided by total households. Persons in families include the householder and persons related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Per Capita Income represents the income received by all persons aged 15 years and over divided by the total population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

November 11, 2021



Community Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Bowersville t...

2021 Households by Income

Household Income Base	210
<\$15,000	7.6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	11.0%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	12.4%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	20.0%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	18.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	13.8%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1.0%
\$200,000+	1.0%
Average Household Income	\$59,578

2026 Households by Income

Household Income Base	222
<\$15,000	6.8%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	9.9%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	11.3%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	19.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	18.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	16.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	15.3%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1.4%
\$200,000+	0.9%
Average Household Income	\$64,595

2021 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value

Total	164
<\$50,000	12.8%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	25.0%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	17.7%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	18.3%
\$200,000 - \$249,999	15.9%
\$250,000 - \$299,999	3.0%
\$300,000 - \$399,999	7.3%
\$400,000 - \$499,999	0.0%
\$500,000 - \$749,999	0.0%
\$750,000 - \$999,999	0.0%
\$1,000,000 - \$1,499,999	0.0%
\$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999	0.0%
\$2,000,000 +	0.0%
Average Home Value	\$145,732

2026 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value

Total	177
<\$50,000	9.6%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	20.9%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	16.4%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	19.8%
\$200,000 - \$249,999	18.1%
\$250,000 - \$299,999	4.0%
\$300,000 - \$399,999	11.3%
\$400,000 - \$499,999	0.0%
\$500,000 - \$749,999	0.0%
\$750,000 - \$999,999	0.0%
\$1,000,000 - \$1,499,999	0.0%
\$1,500,000 - \$1,999,999	0.0%
\$2,000,000 +	0.0%
Average Home Value	\$164,266

Data Note: Income represents the preceding year, expressed in current dollars. Household income includes wage and salary earnings, interest dividends, net rents, pensions, SSI and welfare payments, child support, and alimony.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

November 11, 2021



Community Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
 Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
 Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

		Bowersville t...
2010 Population by Age		
Total		468
0 - 4		7.5%
5 - 9		8.8%
10 - 14		6.0%
15 - 24		12.8%
25 - 34		12.2%
35 - 44		14.3%
45 - 54		13.0%
55 - 64		10.7%
65 - 74		9.2%
75 - 84		4.7%
85 +		0.9%
18 +		72.0%
2021 Population by Age		
Total		546
0 - 4		6.4%
5 - 9		6.4%
10 - 14		6.4%
15 - 24		11.9%
25 - 34		13.4%
35 - 44		12.3%
45 - 54		14.3%
55 - 64		13.0%
65 - 74		9.9%
75 - 84		4.6%
85 +		1.5%
18 +		76.9%
2026 Population by Age		
Total		579
0 - 4		6.0%
5 - 9		6.6%
10 - 14		6.9%
15 - 24		11.4%
25 - 34		11.6%
35 - 44		12.8%
45 - 54		13.1%
55 - 64		13.1%
65 - 74		11.2%
75 - 84		5.7%
85 +		1.6%
18 +		76.7%
2010 Population by Sex		
Males		235
Females		233
2021 Population by Sex		
Males		269
Females		277
2026 Population by Sex		
Males		286
Females		293

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.



Community Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
 Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
 Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

		Bowersville t...
2010 Population by Race/Ethnicity		
Total		468
White Alone		73.1%
Black Alone		20.3%
American Indian Alone		0.2%
Asian Alone		0.0%
Pacific Islander Alone		0.0%
Some Other Race Alone		2.8%
Two or More Races		3.6%
Hispanic Origin		4.7%
Diversity Index		47.6
2021 Population by Race/Ethnicity		
Total		548
White Alone		77.9%
Black Alone		12.6%
American Indian Alone		0.0%
Asian Alone		0.9%
Pacific Islander Alone		0.0%
Some Other Race Alone		6.6%
Two or More Races		2.0%
Hispanic Origin		8.6%
Diversity Index		47.5
2026 Population by Race/Ethnicity		
Total		579
White Alone		76.7%
Black Alone		12.8%
American Indian Alone		0.0%
Asian Alone		1.2%
Pacific Islander Alone		0.0%
Some Other Race Alone		7.1%
Two or More Races		2.2%
Hispanic Origin		9.5%
Diversity Index		49.9
2010 Population by Relationship and Household Type		
Total		468
In Households		100.0%
In Family Households		88.7%
Householder		27.1%
Spouse		18.6%
Child		36.5%
Other relative		4.3%
Nonrelative		2.1%
In Nonfamily Households		11.3%
In Group Quarters		0.0%
Institutionalized Population		0.0%
Noninstitutionalized Population		0.0%

Data Note: Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race. The Diversity Index measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

November 11, 2021



Community Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
 Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
 Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

		Bowersville t...
2021 Population 25+ by Educational Attainment		
Total		377
Less than 9th Grade		7.4%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma		13.0%
High School Graduate		32.1%
GED/Alternative Credential		8.0%
Some College, No Degree		18.0%
Associate Degree		6.9%
Bachelor's Degree		5.8%
Graduate/Professional Degree		8.8%
2021 Population 15+ by Marital Status		
Total		443
Never Married		23.3%
Married		60.7%
Widowed		7.0%
Divorced		9.0%
2021 Civilian Population 16+ in Labor Force		
Civilian Population 16+		215
Population 16+ Employed		97.7%
Population 16+ Unemployment rate		2.3%
Population 16-24 Employed		13.3%
Population 16-24 Unemployment rate		3.4%
Population 25-54 Employed		70.0%
Population 25-54 Unemployment rate		0.7%
Population 55-64 Employed		13.8%
Population 55-64 Unemployment rate		12.1%
Population 65+ Employed		3.3%
Population 65+ Unemployment rate		0.0%
2021 Employed Population 16+ by Industry		
Total		210
Agriculture/Mining		5.2%
Construction		4.2%
Manufacturing		33.5%
Wholesale Trade		1.9%
Retail Trade		3.3%
Transportation/Utilities		14.2%
Information		1.4%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate		0.9%
Services		30.2%
Public Administration		5.2%
2021 Employed Population 16+ by Occupation		
Total		209
White Collar		39.7%
Management/Business/Financial		10.5%
Professional		12.9%
Sales		3.3%
Administrative Support		12.9%
Services		8.1%
Blue Collar		52.2%
Farming/Forestry/Fishing		2.4%
Construction/Extraction		1.4%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair		5.3%
Production		20.1%
Transportation/Material Moving		23.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

November 11, 2021



Community Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

	Bowersville t...
2010 Households by Type	
Total	178
Households with 1 Person	27.5%
Households with 2+ People	72.5%
Family Households	71.3%
Husband-wife Families	48.9%
With Related Children	26.4%
Other Family (No Spouse Present)	22.5%
Other Family with Male Householder	5.1%
With Related Children	2.8%
Other Family with Female Householder	17.4%
With Related Children	11.2%
Nonfamily Households	1.1%
All Households with Children	40.4%
Multigenerational Households	3.9%
Unmarried Partner Households	4.5%
Male-female	3.9%
Same-sex	0.6%
2010 Households by Size	
Total	178
1 Person Household	27.5%
2 Person Household	30.3%
3 Person Household	14.6%
4 Person Household	16.3%
5 Person Household	5.1%
6 Person Household	3.4%
7 + Person Household	2.8%
2010 Households by Tenure and Mortgage Status	
Total	178
Owner Occupied	75.3%
Owned with a Mortgage/Loan	46.6%
Owned Free and Clear	28.7%
Renter Occupied	24.7%
2021 Affordability, Mortgage and Wealth	
Housing Affordability Index	231
Percent of Income for Mortgage	11.5%
Wealth Index	47
2010 Housing Units By Urban/ Rural Status	
Total Housing Units	200
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Area	0.0%
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Cluster	0.0%
Rural Housing Units	100.0%
2010 Population By Urban/ Rural Status	
Total Population	468
Population Inside Urbanized Area	0.0%
Population Inside Urbanized Cluster	0.0%
Rural Population	100.0%

Data Note: Households with children include any households with people under age 18, related or not. Multigenerational households are families with 3 or more parent-child relationships. Unmarried partner households are usually classified as nonfamily households unless there is another member of the household related to the householder. Multigenerational and unmarried partner households are reported only to the tract level. Esri estimated block group data, which is used to estimate polygons or non-standard geography.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

November 11, 2021



Community Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
 Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
 Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Bowersville t...

Top 3 Tapestry Segments

1. Southern Satellites (10A)
- 2.
- 3.

2021 Consumer Spending

Apparel & Services: Total \$	\$284,710
Average Spent	\$1,362.25
Spending Potential Index	64
Education: Total \$	\$191,521
Average Spent	\$916.37
Spending Potential Index	53
Entertainment/Recreation: Total \$	\$457,342
Average Spent	\$2,188.24
Spending Potential Index	68
Food at Home: Total \$	\$772,385
Average Spent	\$3,695.62
Spending Potential Index	68
Food Away from Home: Total \$	\$521,955
Average Spent	\$2,497.39
Spending Potential Index	66
Health Care: Total \$	\$953,024
Average Spent	\$4,559.92
Spending Potential Index	73
HH Furnishings & Equipment: Total \$	\$317,521
Average Spent	\$1,519.24
Spending Potential Index	67
Personal Care Products & Services: Total \$	\$120,944
Average Spent	\$578.68
Spending Potential Index	64
Shelter: Total \$	\$2,437,166
Average Spent	\$11,661.08
Spending Potential Index	58
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind: Total \$	\$347,206
Average Spent	\$1,661.27
Spending Potential Index	69
Travel: Total \$	\$322,975
Average Spent	\$1,545.33
Spending Potential Index	61
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs: Total \$	\$162,085
Average Spent	\$775.53
Spending Potential Index	70

Data Note: Consumer spending shows the amount spent on a variety of goods and services by households that reside in the area. Expenditures are shown by broad budget categories that are not mutually exclusive. Consumer spending does not equal business revenue. Total and Average Amount Spent Per Household represent annual figures. The Spending Potential Index represents the amount spent in the area relative to a national average of 100.

Source: Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2018 and 2019 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Esri.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

November 11, 2021



Demographic and Income Profile

Bowersville Town, GA
 Bowersville Town, GA (1309656)
 Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Summary	Census 2010	2021	2026
Population	468	548	579
Households	178	209	221
Families	127	149	157
Average Household Size	2.63	2.62	2.62
Owner Occupied Housing Units	134	165	176
Renter Occupied Housing Units	44	44	45
Median Age	36.9	38.9	41.2
Trends: 2021-2026 Annual Rate	Area	State	National
Population	1.11%	1.05%	0.71%
Households	1.12%	1.06%	0.71%
Families	1.05%	0.97%	0.64%
Owner HHs	1.30%	1.26%	0.91%
Median Household Income	1.23%	2.43%	2.41%

Households by Income	2021		2026	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	16	7.6%	15	6.8%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	23	11.0%	22	9.9%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	26	12.4%	25	11.3%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	42	20.0%	44	19.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	38	18.1%	41	18.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	32	15.2%	36	16.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	29	13.8%	34	15.3%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	2	1.0%	3	1.4%
\$200,000+	2	1.0%	2	0.9%
Median Household Income	\$49,007		\$52,091	
Average Household Income	\$59,578		\$64,595	
Per Capita Income	\$22,207		\$24,090	

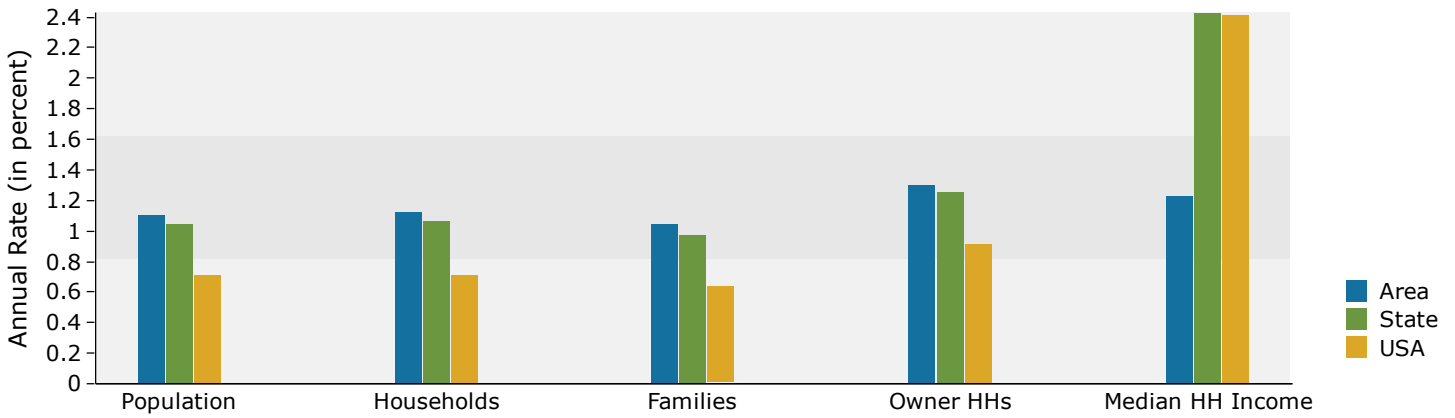
Population by Age	Census 2010		2021		2026	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	35	7.5%	35	6.4%	35	6.0%
5 - 9	41	8.8%	35	6.4%	38	6.6%
10 - 14	28	6.0%	35	6.4%	40	6.9%
15 - 19	38	8.1%	37	6.8%	35	6.0%
20 - 24	22	4.7%	28	5.1%	31	5.4%
25 - 34	57	12.2%	73	13.4%	67	11.6%
35 - 44	67	14.3%	67	12.3%	74	12.8%
45 - 54	61	13.0%	78	14.3%	76	13.1%
55 - 64	50	10.7%	71	13.0%	76	13.1%
65 - 74	43	9.2%	54	9.9%	65	11.2%
75 - 84	22	4.7%	25	4.6%	33	5.7%
85+	4	0.9%	8	1.5%	9	1.6%

Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010		2021		2026	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	342	73.1%	427	77.9%	444	76.7%
Black Alone	95	20.3%	69	12.6%	74	12.8%
American Indian Alone	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Asian Alone	0	0.0%	5	0.9%	7	1.2%
Pacific Islander Alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	13	2.8%	36	6.6%	41	7.1%
Two or More Races	17	3.6%	11	2.0%	13	2.2%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	22	4.7%	47	8.6%	55	9.5%

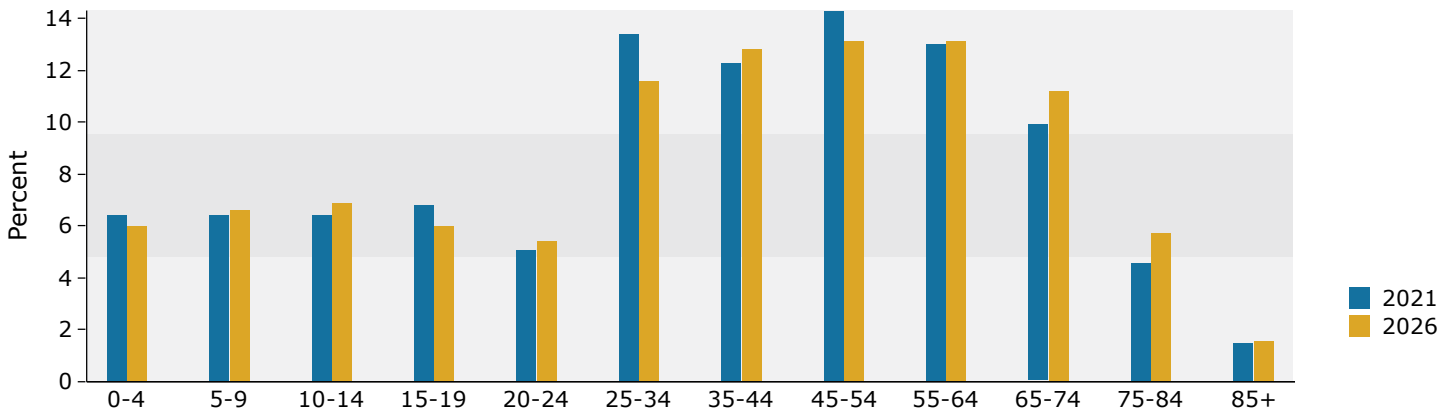
Data Note: Income is expressed in current dollars.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

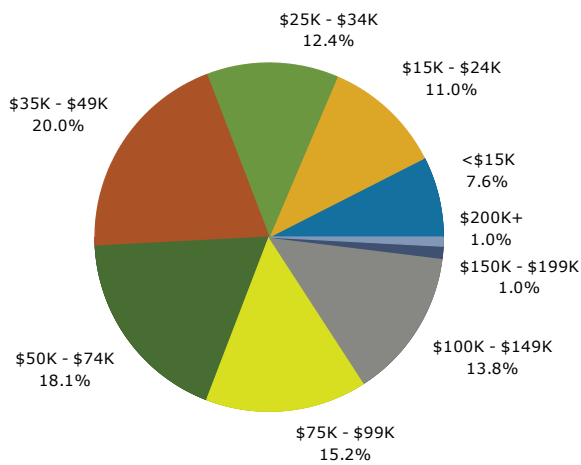
Trends 2021-2026



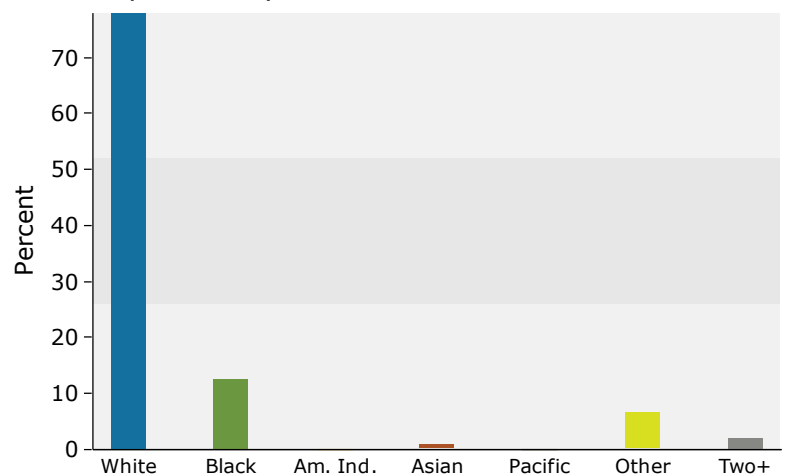
Population by Age



2021 Household Income



2021 Population by Race



2021 Percent Hispanic Origin: 8.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

Economic Climate/ Regional Economy

as taken from the

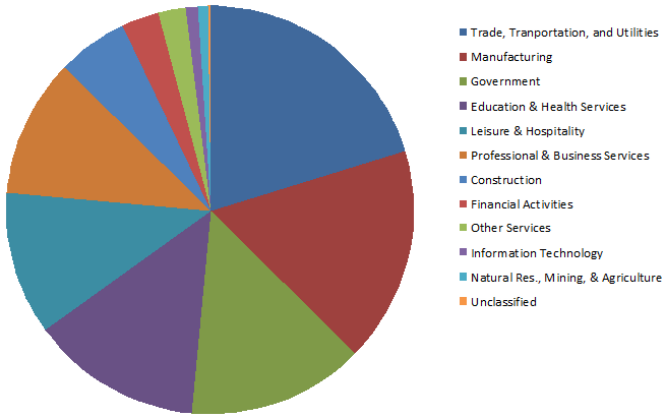
**Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
and Regional Agenda 2019**



REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Once defined as the transitional area between the agrarian piedmont and the small industrial sites found along waterways in the Appalachian foothills, the Georgia Mountains region is no longer solely reliant on agriculture. Instead, health care, tourism, distribution, retail, and a variety of industrial and high-tech companies comprise the regional economy. Problems surrounding future economic and community development for the region include, but are not limited to, shortages of skilled labor, out-migration of young adults, and lack of quality neighborhood housing for new executives and business employees. With approximately 18,721 people seeking employment in this region, the availability of key quality sites and/or buildings for new business remains a continuing challenge. Thus, continued diversification along with economic growth, are seen as the primary goals for the Georgia Mountains Region.



The entire region has a substantial goods production base and a strong desire to maintain and expand manufacturing jobs. Most local manufacturing firms have marginal ties with other firms in the region and companies have located and expanded here due to quality labor force, low cost of doing business, historic location of companies in the area, and quality of the transportation system. Most communities in the region see this as vital for expanding employment opportunities in the future.

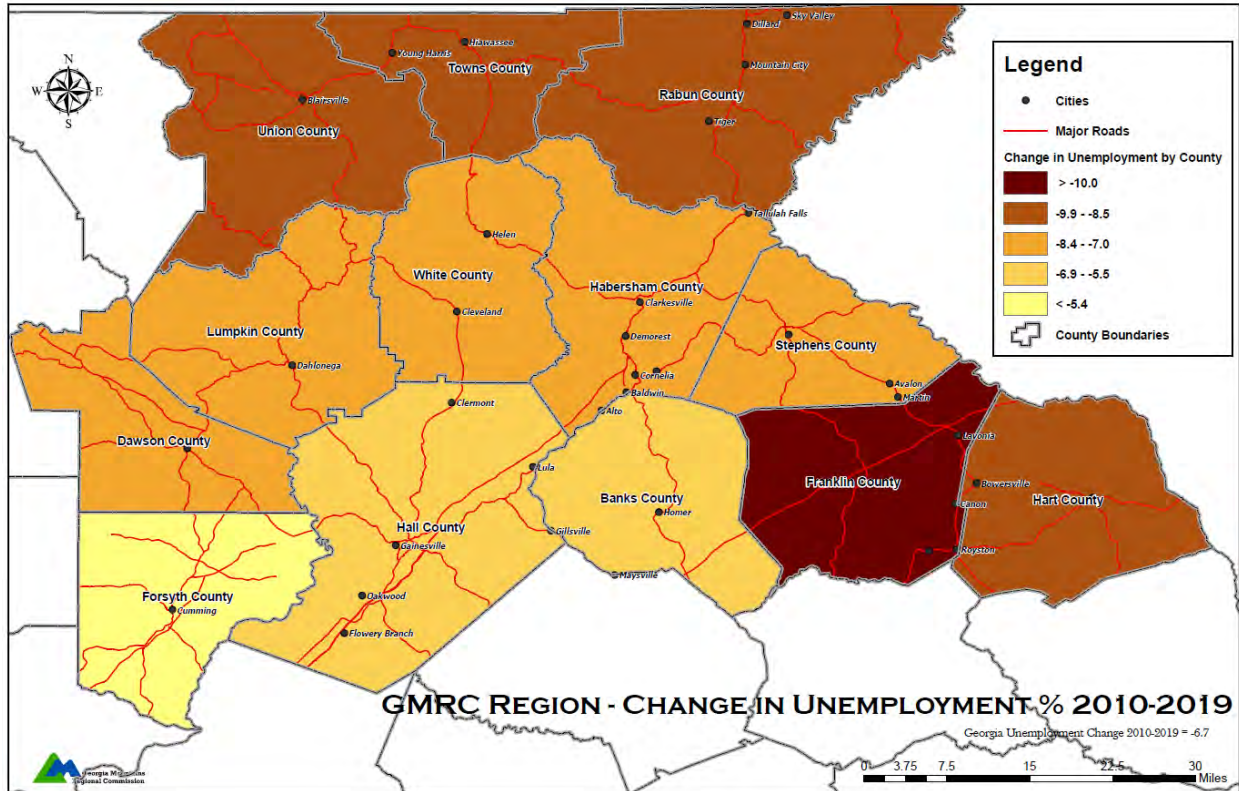
The nation faced an unprecedented 2020 with navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the negative impact of the virus, several industry sectors have continued to grow within the Georgia Mountains Region. Distribution and logistics are industry sectors that continue to grow within the Region. The region’s infrastructure is continuing to provide top quality support to the region’s economic clusters. Important components of the public infrastructure system to support all segments of the region’s economy include, but are not limited to: skilled labor force, strong workforce development facilities, advanced technological resources, and adequate physical infrastructure that includes a reliable water supply, reliable wastewater treatment capabilities, transportation, and a communications infrastructure system capable of handling the needs of today’s firms.

Low taxes and tax credits are attracting new industries and supporting the expansion of existing business in the region. The Georgia Mountains Region saw projects resulting in \$235 million investment and 692 new jobs created in FY 2020, according to the Georgia Department of Economic Development. Georgia’s leading industries are food processing, logistics, information technology, aerospace, automotive, and manufacturing.

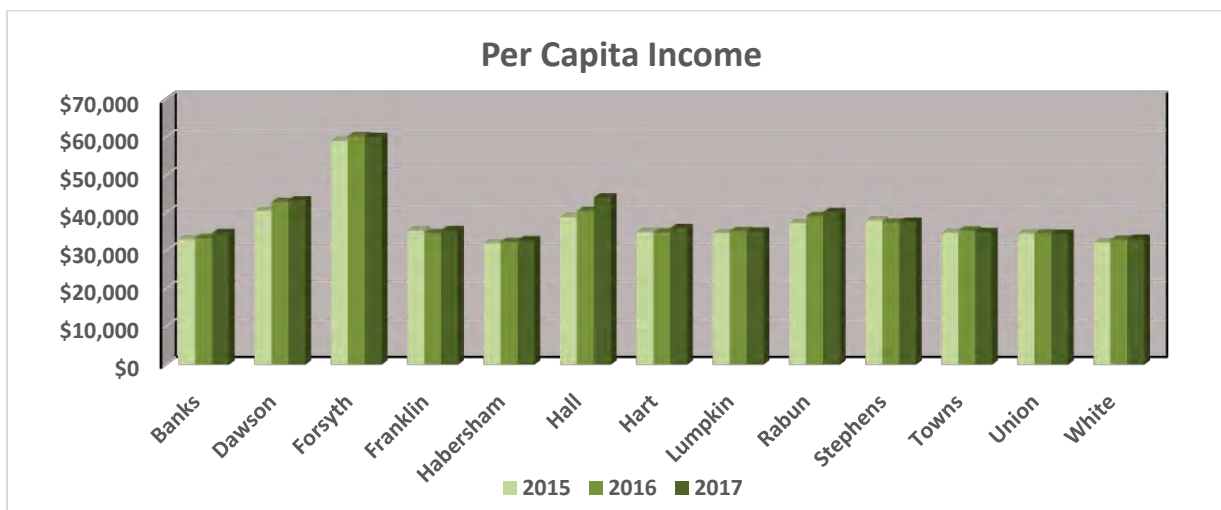
Top Five Region Industries

	Industry	# of Firms	# of Employees
1	Manufacturing	854	41,867
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,698	34,293
3	Retail Trade	2,230	31,732
4	Accommodation and Food Services	1,278	25,086
5	Education Services	367	24,707

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wage Program, 1st Quarter 2020



Significant changes in the area unemployment rate for the region occurred during 2020 as a result of COVID-19. The region had an unemployment rate of 5.5% (July 2020) which is lower than the state of 7.6%, and the U.S. rate of 10.2%. It is also the lowest rate for regions across the state. However, there is a noticeable trend of young adults leaving the area. Economic developers in the region have expressed some concerns with the migration of the youth, as well as State educational standards not matching up with industry needs, and these trends causing a shortage of skilled labor. Current efforts are now being implemented to educate, train and encourage the region’s youth to remain in the area and contribute to the much-needed workforce.



Though the region has the lowest unemployment rates in the State, per capita income throughout the region is frequently lower than state and national averages. Much of this is rooted in the region's reliance on service industry employment and the volume of businesses that are commercial, and tourist driven, meaning a prevalence of hourly-wage employees and lower demand for high-skilled labor. As a result, for most counties the trend in per capita income has been relatively stable, with only marginal increases.

The impact of tourism and related industries has a significant impact on the economy of the Georgia Mountains Region. As a primary gateway to the Blue Ridge Mountains the region annually hosts over seven million visitors to the many mountains, lakes, rivers, museums, and downtowns that make the region unique from the rest of the state. Although the tourism sector took had a significant decline in activity as a result of COVID-19, the region continues to see continued investment. Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, a 2.54-mile International Grand Prix Course, attracts 320,000 visitors annually. The new, state-of-the-art Michelin Tower was unveiled in 2019 and will serve as the primary hospitality and media facility during the 23rd Annual Motul Petit Le Mans October 7-10, 2020.

A fixture in downtown Toccoa, Georgia, the Ritz Theatre (pictured to the right) serves as a community center and performing arts center, hosting musicals and non-musical productions including "Fiddler on the Roof," "Guys and Dolls," "Raisin in the Sun," "Leader of the Pack," and "The Sound of Music" to mention just a few. The Currahee Artists Guild sponsored arts shows featuring visual artists in the area. The Ida Cox Music Series, named for the Toccoa-born artist who made her mark in music in the first part of the 20th century, was created by Main Street Toccoa to fill a need for quality local entertainment.

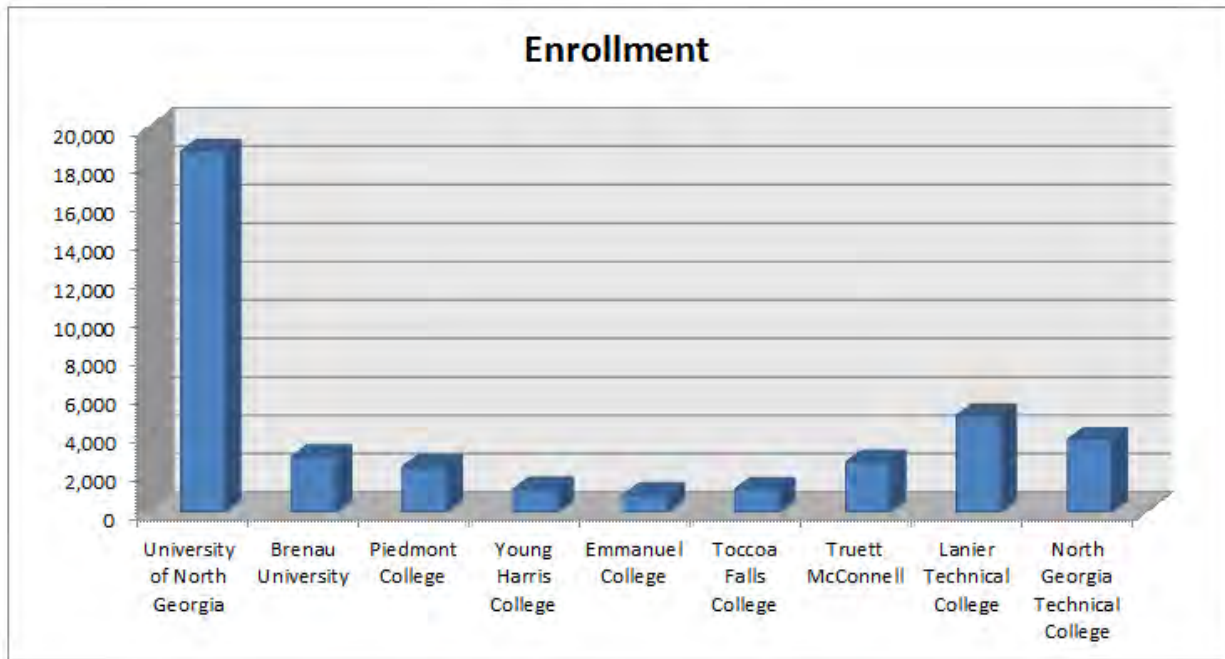


Economic Impact of Domestic Travel by County - 2016

Counties	Expenditures (\$ Millions)	Payroll (\$ Millions)	Employment	Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)	
				State	Local
Banks	\$15.53	\$3.7	154	\$0.73	\$0.44
Dawson	\$50.08	\$12.02	492	\$2.38	\$1.43
Forsyth	\$174.67	\$45.55	1,838	\$7.58	\$5.23
Franklin	\$37.78	\$5.8	282	\$1.53	\$1.13
Habersham	\$52.57	\$10.73	492	\$2.25	\$1.38
Hall	\$314.18	\$68.69	2,856	\$13.73	\$9.42
Hart	\$24.24	\$6.04	253	\$1.09	\$0.63
Lumpkin	\$41.54	\$8.19	343	\$1.83	\$1.16
Rabun	\$54.37	\$13.43	537	\$2.55	\$1.49
Stephens	\$31.34	\$5.94	288	\$1.28	\$0.84
Towns	\$48.78	\$11.37	453	\$2.35	\$1.33
Union	\$26.45	\$5.4	258	\$1.10	\$0.73
White	\$67.46	\$15.13	617	\$3.00	\$1.98
GM Region	\$938.99	\$211.99	8,863	\$40.30	\$27.19
Georgia	\$24,526.00	\$7,853.78	236,090	\$1,170.24	\$703.65

Source: Excerpted from Study Prepared for GDEcD by the U.S. Travel Association, Washington, DC

The economic development programs provided through the colleges and technical colleges provide customized training and other services for business and industry to help existing companies remain in the area and succeed and to stimulate new business start-ups. Quick Start training and services are provided to attract new companies to the area, to assist companies to expand, and to help existing companies to implement new technologies.



Labor Force Education Levels

Age Group	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	4.9%	9.2%	6.4%	5.3%	13.6%
Some High School	19.5%	11.9%	9.2%	9.4%	14.8%
High School Grad/GED	34.9%	29.7%	27.3%	31.7%	31.2%
Some College	33.7%	20.4%	18.4%	20.2%	16.6%
College 2 Year	3.0%	6.3%	7.2%	7.1%	3.6%
College 4 Year	3.7%	16.0%	22.3%	17.0%	12.2%
Post Graduate Studies	.4%	6.5%	9.2%	9.3%	8.0%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Area Labor Profile

While the overall regional economy has strengthened there are still issues that need attention and several opportunities remain to be built upon. Continued economic diversifications and strengthening the competitiveness of the region’s economy are still problems that need to be addressed, as is the depth and quality of the local labor force. Economic growth that occurs from internal business growth rather than from in-migration of businesses must be addressed for business retention.

Improving the economic climate of the region is a common goal and requires policy makers to understand how changes in the region’s population will affect the opportunities for economic growth. According to the Georgia Department of Labor it is projected that the region’s population in 2025 will reach 805,059 persons, reflecting a 30.3% increase from 2010. Therefore, the goals identified in the *CEDS/Regional Plan* are more important than ever in maintaining the balance between growth and the rural character of the region.



LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Development within the Georgia Mountains Region is dictated largely by three factors: 1) The topography of the mountains and foothills in the north, which limit development opportunities, 2) the proximity to metropolitan Atlanta and the burgeoning suburban development patterns reaching into and through Forsyth and Hall Counties, and 3) the main arterial roads that link the various economic centers within and outside of the region. These three forces have shaped the changing pace and make-up of growth and development that has affected the region, effectively creating 4 main sub-areas that have their own special needs and opportunities.

The *Urbanized/ Developed Area* consists largely of those parts of Dawson, Forsyth, and Hall Counties which have been designated as urban districts due to Census population counts and prevailing traffic volumes. These areas are already past conventional suburban scales of development, often featuring limited open space and agriculture, featuring points of significant traffic congestion, and account for approximately 60% of the region's population and employment.

The *Suburban/ Developing Areas* include those areas on the periphery of the urbanized districts as well as some other pockets of population and economic centers. Many of these represent catchment areas for the next wave of suburban expansion from metro Atlanta, such as portions of Dawson, Habersham and Banks Counties.

The *Conservation Ares* include all those lands recognized within the Georgia Mountains Regionally Important Resource (RIR) document with established levels of natural resource protection. This includes such places as National Forests, State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, and other lands receiving protected or conservation status. These lands represent the region's current ecological infrastructure.

The remaining lands fall within the *Rural/ Undeveloped Area* category. These areas are outside of near-term projected growth and represent the bulk of the existing agricultural and rural residential lands that defined the region's character and history. Where possible these lands should be preserved for ongoing rural forms and uses both to retain that character cherished by so many stakeholders but also for its contribution to the prevalent agrarian economy and preservation of local ecology.

Several market forces have had a direct impact on the development of land use patterns in the Georgia Mountains Region. The nature of these forces can be positive or negative, and often these market forces even create both positive and negative impacts. These forces devise a very complex land use matrix in which portions are easily analyzed and results can be simply forecasted. On the other hand, this matrix is full of intangibles that can be inputted and interpreted subjectively which make predictions, projections and planning at best a difficult and unstable process. Whatever the case, these forces are at work all the time with every commercial transaction, rain storm and person who migrates in or out of the region.

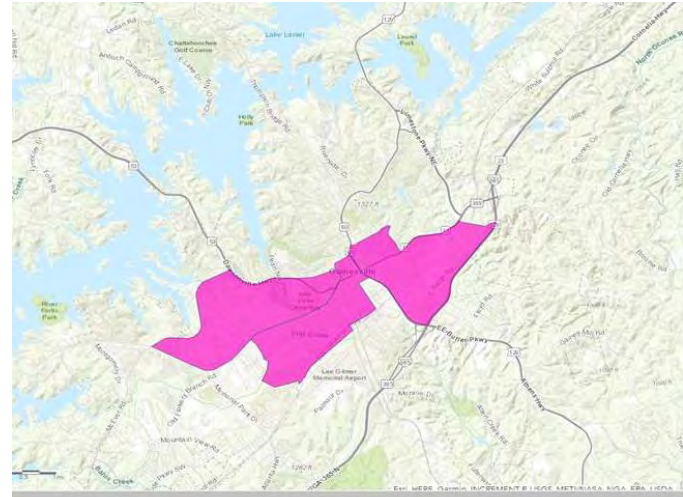
Identified as some of the more significant market forces in the region are: the various industries established in the region, the age of the migrating population, the abundance of natural resources, the property values and tax structure, the infrastructure improvements, the proximity of the region to other areas, the quality of life amenities that exists in the region and the regulatory structure for developers in the region.

There are several types of industries in the Georgia Mountains Region which influence the land use market. However, there are three which stand out from all the rest. They are recreational tourism, poultry and timber.



Another major market force affecting land use patterns is the proximity of the region to other areas. Forsyth County is the only county in the Georgia Mountains Region that lies within the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Gainesville/Hall County became its own MSA in 2000, not only by surpassing the amount of persons, but also the density required to become a MSA on its own. The Georgia Mountains Region is within a two hour or less drive from the metropolitan statistical areas (MSA's) of Athens, GA; Atlanta, GA; Augusta, GA/Aiken, SC; Anderson, SC; Greenville/Spartanburg, SC; Chattanooga, TN; Knoxville, TN; and Asheville, NC. From this perspective is easy to recognize proximity as a major market force in the land use development patterns within the region.

As part of local efforts to help improve economic expansion and development potential in depressed areas, Cities and Counties are now taking advantage of the federal and State designations for Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, and Rural Zones. Each of these provides a different option in tax breaks for either property redevelopment or the provision of new jobs within impoverished areas. These tools will aid communities looking to jump start private investment in weaker areas that need assistance in luring jobs and commercial development. Communities that put these measures in place can use the designated districts to spur economic expansion in accordance with their overall visions for revitalizing poorer neighborhoods.



The Federal Opportunity Zone district in Gainesville includes much of the older industrial areas and surrounding neighborhoods plus parts of the established commercial corridors in need of revitalization.

The Federal Qualified Opportunity Zone distinction was created by The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to spur economic growth in low-income communities by allowing investors to defer federal taxes by taking capital gains from other investments and investing in these designated areas. A Federal Opportunity Zone is an economically-distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. The City of Gainesville is currently the only designated Federal Opportunity Zone in the region.

The programs for various State designations are managed through the Dept. of Community Affairs and are all designed to incentivize job creation within distressed neighborhoods. Opportunity Zones and Enterprise Zones rely on statistical evidence of poverty as well as documentation of blight to warrant consideration, while Rural Zones focus on smaller downtowns with a history of unemployment and older buildings in need to of rehabilitation. Each program focuses on job creation and encourages the adaptive reuse of property in distressed areas.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Designation</u>
Cumming	Enterprise Zone
Young Harris	Enterprise Zone
Gainesville	Opportunity Zone
Forsyth Co.	Opportunity Zone
Stephens Co	Opportunity Zone
Baldwin	Opportunity Zone
Clarkesville	Opportunity Zone
Union Co	Opportunity Zone
Royston	Opportunity Zone
Rabun Co.	Opportunity Zone
Hartwell.	Rural Zone

NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

The effectiveness of any planning process requires identifying the needs that must be addressed in order to achieve a community's goals, clarifying the targets for the local government. To do this the planning process asks communities and stakeholders to assess the information outlined in an effort to identify their respective **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats. In doing this SWOT analysis the region can more effectively define their objectives and actions to as to better achieve the desired vision.



This part of the planning process also reviewed various forms of data and information about the region. Information such as Census data and Department of Labor data was reviewed for insight into local conditions, plus member governments were asked to provide summaries of their immediate operational and capital improvement needs to give an indication of their priorities ahead of discussions about public objectives. When evaluating this data and information the planning process focused on whether it verified needs or opportunities identified previously, whether it uncovered new needs or opportunities not previously identified, and whether it indicates significant local trends that need to be considered in the planning process. This information was reviewed and assessed by the standing CEDS committee and the GMRC Planning Committee for comment and recommendations. A summary of key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats can be found in the summary of survey results in the appendix.

Based on guidance by the stakeholders, the following represents a refined listing of Issues and Opportunities for the Georgia Mountains Region. Some were carried over from the previous plan, but the list has been confirmed and/or refined based on the discussions and analyses throughout the current planning process. *(Also shows year proposed or listed as policy)*

Natural and Cultural Resources

GOAL: *To conserve, protect and promote the environmental, natural and cultural resources of the region.*

As the namesake suggests the Georgia Mountains region is synonymous with an abundance of natural beauty and scenic landscapes. Even as it transitions from the mountains to the foothills and piedmont the region is full of rustic vistas and rural scenes that still define much of the character still cherished by residents and visitors. From National Forests to State Parks, from Wildlife Management Areas to thousands of farms, the Georgia Mountains region remains one very much defined by the land and the southern reach of the Appalachian Mountains.

This relationship between the landscape and local communities has heightened the urgency many area stakeholders feel regarding the protection of natural resources. While there remains ambition to grow there is a very strong desire to preserve the area's rural character as best as possible. There is an overwhelming demand to find ways to preserve the existing natural landscape from overdevelopment, to restrict suburban encroachment into more pristine areas, and to ensure the local ecology remains in good health. This latter part is crucial given the region's dependence on tourism and outdoor recreation.

Acting on this the charge before the GMRC is one of helping our member communities where possible find ways to preserve rural landscapes, protect local water resources, and foster stronger connections between economic development and resource stewardship. The management of water resources will be especially critical as the region (and all of Georgia) continues to grow. To this end the GMRC continues to work with the three State-appointed Water Planning Councils active within the region in support of implementing their respective plans and programs. The GMRC also works with the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D and other partners in planning and carrying out activities that conserve natural resources, support economic development, enhance the environment, and improve the standard of living for all communities. This involves the education in, and the implementation of, specific regulations and policies that ensure best practices of undeveloped land within the region.

Paired with this effort is the need, also, to protect and promote the areas cultural resources. There are many significant historic sites and structures in the region as well as an abundance of older structures that have shaped the character of many communities. From classic urban neighborhoods to vintage farmsteads, these resources are as much a part of the defining trait as the land when it comes to giving rise to the small-town charms that appeal to most stakeholders and to tourists. Most communities wish to retain this sense of character amidst any growth, so that as new development comes into the area the local communities will retain their identity and ties to their past.



Tallulah Gorge



Natural and Cultural Resources

Needs and Mitigation Strategies

Ensure communities employ Georgia's environmental planning criteria

- Develop an environmental performance monitoring tool for local comprehensive plans

Need to improve awareness about conservation design, environmentally sensitive areas, and best management practices

- Conduct/Facilitate a workshop on conservation design
- Develop catalog of best environmental policies for local governments
- Develop an environmental performance monitoring tool for local comprehensive plans
- Promote environmental BMPs within *Excellence Standards*

Need for more/ preserve local greenspace plans

- Develop an environmental performance monitoring tool for local comprehensive plans
- Develop template for greenspace planning to be incorporated into local comprehensive plans
- Inventory of available greenspace in local jurisdictions
- Promote environmental BMPs within *Excellence Standards*

Desire to attract funds for State parks and wildlife management areas

- Support funding measures for management of DNR lands
- Promote cooperative partnerships between State, local governments and private sector

Need to address habitat degradation caused by growth and development

- Develop an environmental performance monitoring tool for local comprehensive plans
- Develop template for greenspace planning to be incorporated into local comprehensive plans
- Encourage redevelopment in underused areas and brownfields instead of new development in greenfields
- Develop regional development build-out scenario
- Develop report on status of dams in the region
- Inventory/ Assessment of septic system management programs
- Inventory/Assessment of brownfields in the region

Support implementation of applicable Water Planning District management plans

- Develop Regional Source Water Assessment Plan
- Annually report to GMRC Council status of programs with each Water Planning Council

Promote the knowledge and preservation of existing historic resources

- Update GNAHRGIS, survey of regional historic resources
- Promote historic preservation BMPs within *Excellence Standards*
- Convene annual GMRC Historic Resource Forum



Land Use

GOAL: *To promote and coordinate land use planning and management that supports the other goals and ambitions for the region.*

This section provides a brief assessment of select issues and concerns around the region based on geographical reference, used to help each jurisdiction recognize those specific locations in need of special attention through physical investment or change of policy.

Areas where significant Regionally Important Resources (RIRs) are at risk from development

Lake Lanier and the un/underdeveloped parts of Forsyth and Hall Counties are most susceptible to new growth pressures but both communities have recently completed comprehensive plan updates that address these concerns and have policies and programs in place designed to address environmental management. There is concern about the impacts of new housing forms within the mountainous parts of the region, but to date the impact is minimal and communities are monitoring the situation.

Areas where rapid development or change of land uses may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation

As the main arterial between large and growing metropolitan centers, the I-85 Corridor is receiving increased growth and demand for utilities, possibly beyond local capacity. Banks County and Franklin County have updated land use policies and made infrastructure and utility improvements to support growth in their portions of the corridor. All of the local governments with interchanges along this highway are pursuing utility improvements for the purpose of attracting employers, with the potential demand for new service roads and increased traffic, as well as the change in the nature of land use patterns for the area. *(Map ID –I-85 Corridor)*

Several north-south arterial roadways that serve multiple purposes are at risk of over-congestion. Highways 129 and 17 provide critical access for local and through traffic, particularly for tourists traveling into the Georgia Mountains Region. Congestion levels and development pressures can increase as these roads are explored for commercial and industrial growth, while communities relying on such growth are also looking to preserve the free-flow of traffic and the scenic appeal of these rural arteries. Hall and Habersham Counties have done assessments of Highway 365 resulting in updated land use policies along the corridor. Meanwhile the Ga 400 corridor stretching from Forsyth County into White County has seen expansions on the south side with planned expansions for the north end reaching up to Cleveland. This area will be a prime target for increased suburban development and may experience pressures on utilities, community facilities, etc. *(Map ID –North-South Arterials)*

Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvement

There are no large areas with regional-scale concentrations of land in need of redevelopment, however the older town centers and neighborhoods should be improved through redevelopment programs. The GMRC is supporting multiple efforts to revitalize these historic downtowns through planning efforts, grant applications, and pursuit of opportunity zone designations. *(Map ID –Town Centers)*

Land Use

Needs and Mitigation Strategies

Need tools to preserve area farms

- Develop regional development build-out scenario
- Develop updated concept for, and inventory of, primary agricultural areas
- Develop template for comprehensive neighborhood plans and standards
- Review regional Future Development Strategy; Amend as needed
- Assess the performance of BMPs throughout the region

Need to ensure optimum land use planning tools and enforcement at local levels

- Review regional Future Development Strategy; Amend as needed
- Promote BMPs throughout the region as land use alternatives
- Promote neighborhood scale planning

Need to match land use plans with infrastructure plans

- Annually review regional Future Development Strategy to gauge accuracy
- Develop regional development build-out scenario
- Develop model cost-benefit impact analyses for new development on utilities and infrastructure

Need to stem the deterioration of downtown areas, buildings and infrastructure, and loss of economic activity as suburbanization occurs in the region

- Review regional Future Development Strategy; Amend as needed
- Develop/ maintain region-wide downtown economic database that includes historic resources
- Develop redevelopment plans for historic downtowns & urban areas
- Create model design guidelines and promote incentive programs for downtown areas
- Advocate for funding/private investment for downtown redevelopment
- Initiate GMRC Downtown Association, promote partnerships (The Georgia Cities Foundation)

Impact of population growth for impact on rural character

- Inventory and map agri-tourism assets of the region, promote Georgia Centennial Farm program
- Develop regional growth and tourism strategy specifically for historic downtowns
- Develop promotional material for area farmer's markets and canneries
- Develop updated concept for, and inventory of, primary agricultural areas
Develop inventory of regional wineries, breweries, and distilleries for promotional purposes

Lack of identification of plans for growth areas for industrial and commercial development

- Identify areas where future industrial growth may and can occur
- Develop growth management plans
- Identify funding mechanisms for required infrastructure
- Develop map/inventory of commercial and/or industrial properties in the region
- Identify major growth influencers such as the Inland Port or external regional contributors

Community Facilities and Services

GOAL: *To provide adequate facilities, utilities, and infrastructure in all areas to support existing business and industry, enable expansion, and recruit new business, and to support efficient growth and development patterns that will protect and enhance the region's quality of life.*

Governments across all levels provide or support a myriad of utilities and services that keep communities active, functional, and efficient. From water and roads, to parks and schools, and more. The core facilities and services are critical to ensuring the local economies remain on track to prosper and protect the welfare of area residents and visitors. To this end the overarching goal of the region in managing public facilities and services is to have all the local governments and their affiliated partners, including independent service providers and authorities, coordinate their efforts to efficiently use area resources in pursuit of all the other goals for the region.

Transportation

With the trending population growth in the region comes the need for improvement and maintenance to the highways and state routes within the area. These arterials provide a connection to the rest of the United States, linking cities and counties, providing a transportation route for exporting goods, bringing in tourist dollars and assisting commuters on their routes to and from work.

The GMRC works with local governments to assist with transportation needs and track improvements and new routes added to the area's transportation system. The Georgia Department of Transportation works with cities and counties in the Georgia Mountains Region to prioritize projects that will enhance its transportation network. Projects such as the addition the widening of Georgia State Route 400 in Forsyth County, and the completion of the Appalachian Parkway in White County will help ease travel for tourists and emergency responders traveling in the North Georgia Mountains while also attracting prospective business and industry.

Additionally, the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) has a significant impact on the state and regional economy. The GPA, together with private sector, account for more than 369,000 jobs statewide, \$84.1 billion dollars in revenue, and income exceeding \$20.4 billion annually. The GPA is now pursuing an inland port terminal in this region in Hall County off of GA 365, which will give this region a direct rail connection to the container port terminal in Savannah.

Water & Wastewater

The region is home to 39 surface water intakes, serving communities within and outside the 13 counties. Most of these are managed by municipal or county governments, with two managed by independent authorities, and all are subject to the rules and permitting of the State of Georgia Environmental Protection Division. According to EPD, all of the systems within the region currently meet the requirements to retain their permits and/or are in the process of updating their permits. It is also understood that there are no major violations of water quality standards for public water systems and that each system is currently, or is planning to update, the projected levels of service for the next 20-40 years as part of the State's efforts to manage future water resources.

As a result of this information and other planning efforts, first priority of issues and opportunities has been pulled from four other completed documents. First is the GMRC Regional Resource Plan, which provides a regional overview of resource management for the drinking water supply sources within the region. This document identifies the reservoirs, rivers and recharge aquifers used to supply local utilities with their water supplies, and will be the primary guide for coordinating resource protection. The other



three documents referenced will be the watershed management plans for the three Watershed Management Districts (WMDs) within the Georgia Mountains region:

WM District

North Georgia Metropolitan
Coosa – North Georgia
Savannah – Upper Oconee

GM counties

Forsyth, Hall
Dawson, Lumpkin, Habersham, Towns, Union, White
Banks, Franklin, Hart, Rabun, Stephens

Each of the WMDs has an organizing committee responsible for the development and oversight of a district management plan. This plan will be used to coordinate State support and planning for resource management and reservoir/intake permitting, and will be used by the local governments to coordinate their overall system management. As these documents address the key regional level issues and opportunities for water supply and treatment, the GMRC will defer to these documents for guidance and reference on these issues.

Telecommunications & Broadband Connectivity

The enhancement of telecommunications technology is critical to the future economic viability of the Georgia Mountains Region. Funding for telecommunication related projects continues to be a constant need by cities and counties in the region. Many regional businesses and industries require significant bandwidth for video applications of data sharing between company locations, distance learning, telemedicine and surveillance.

As communities move forward the importance of access to reliable and high-speed, high capacity internet connections cannot be overestimated. Unserved and underserved areas of Georgia will not remain economically competitive without sufficient internet infrastructure, as this technology becomes the default utility for all manners of communication.

To address this issue in 2018 the Georgia General Assembly amended the provisions of local planning in Georgia by passing the "Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act," intended to facilitate the enhancement and extension of high-speed internet access in communities that lack such infrastructure. In time the State will support programs and initiatives aimed at delivering the community improvement and empowerment potential that reliable, high-speed internet access can provide to even the most difficult-to-serve citizens, schools, and businesses. As the first step in planning for this critical, potentially catalytic infrastructure, the "Ace" Act requires all local governments to incorporate the "*promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services*" into their local plan.

These changes to state law and regulations dealing with local broadband will open more state rights of way along highways and interstates for broadband infrastructure, free up public money for technology grants and sets the groundwork for public-private partnerships in small communities around the state.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted people’s ability to work, access healthcare, and receive education services. Because of the shift to telehealth with “virtual visits”, teleworking, and remote continuity of learning, there is a stronger need for reliable broadband.

Healthcare

The primary medical facility within the region is the main campus for the Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS), a regional not-for-profit community health system serving approximately 700,000 residents in northeast Georgia. NGHS offers a full range of healthcare services through its Joint Commission accredited hospital in Gainesville, Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC), which was named one of the country's 100 Top Hospitals for 2009 by Thomson Reuters. The system features a capacity for 557 inpatients,



including 261-skilled nursing beds and a medical staff of more than 500 physicians. Additional facilities in Hall County include: three urgent care centers; a mental health and substance abuse treatment center; two outpatient imaging centers; two long-term care centers; and outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapy clinics. NGMC has now surpassed the \$1.75 billion mark in local and state economic impact according to a recent report by the Georgia Hospital Association (GHA), the state’s largest hospital trade association. The report found that, in 2016, NGMC generated \$1,751,543,053 in revenue for the local and state economy; provided more than \$52 million in uncompensated care; and sustained more than 18,000 full-time jobs throughout the region and state – in addition to the more than 8,000 employees directly employed by all of NGHS.

The second primary care facility in the region is Northside Hospital – Forsyth, based in Cumming. This facility features over 160 in-patient beds and nine different specialty departments. The recently completed Women’s Center is considered among the premier locations for births and newborn care in the region. The Forsyth campus is staffed by more than 450 doctors and 1,400 health care professionals overall as part of the acclaimed Northside system. Opened in 2002, this facility has permitted Forsyth County to provide residents local access to some of the best comprehensive care in the state.



**Photo source: St. Mary's Health System*

The third primary hospital in the region is the St. Mary’s Health System based in Lavonia, providing a total of 71 beds and employs 36 registered nurses with 2 pharmacists. The system also serves as a hub for human services in Franklin and Hart Counties with a Clinic and Urgent Care unit, the Women's Wellness Center, and Med Link. St. Mary’s Health System has committed to investing an additional \$2.4 million in St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital to improve patient safety and upgrade technology and services in areas ranging from the mother/baby unit to the operating rooms.

Waste Management

All counties in Georgia are required to submit a Solid Waste Management Plan to meet the existing solid waste management needs and future demands, implement waste reduction strategies to meet the state’s per capita waste reduction goal and assure that a 10 year solid waste disposal capacity exists. Businesses searching for site facilities need assurances from the municipalities that capacity is available for their waste and recycling needs. In order to preserve waste capacity, waste conservation and reduction is an essential method of waste management.

The North Georgia Resource Management Authority (RMA) was created in 1994 to provide a regional approach to handle existing solid waste issues, to provide for solid waste to be properly and economically diverted from landfill waste streams, to explore potential opportunities, to maximize resources and to expand existing programs. In fact, this Authority recycled 768,663,000 pounds of materials in 2016. Keep Our Mountains Beautiful is the environmental education arm of the RMA and the only regional Keep America Beautiful Affiliate in Georgia. This effort as well as many others such as Keep Hall Beautiful promotes good environmental stewardship.

Energy

The region recognizes the efforts of the local businesses and industries to include the use of renewable energy resources in their production such as wind and solar. Energy efficiency rebate and education



programs are some of the methods energy providers in the Georgia Mountains Region perform to promote efficiency. The region receives its energy from Sawnee EMC, Georgia Power, Habersham EMC, Blue Ridge EMC, Jackson EMC, and Hart EMC.

Community Facilities and Services

Needs and Mitigation Strategies

Growing demand for water supply sources, from both within and outside the region

- Develop regional development build-out scenario
- Update Regional Source Water Assessment Plan
- Develop in-house service for calculating cost- benefit analyses for new development & utility improvements
- Develop a metro-area growth strategy to support urbanizing communities
- Develop regional water infrastructure map
- Inventory and assessment of local water service rates
- Promote water conservation programs

Growing demand and environmental need for public sewer services

- Develop regional development build-out scenario
- Develop in-house service for calculating cost- benefit analyses for new development & utility improvements
- Develop regional water infrastructure map
- Assessment of septic system inventory

Strong need for, and great potential with, health care services and facilities

- Develop and implement a public awareness campaign about health information technology
- Conduct a medical accessibility study

Impact of growth and changing demographics on transportation needs

- Update Regional Bike/Pedestrian Strategy and related work program
- Develop comprehensive road improvement plan combining local and State goals
- Develop Commuter Traffic Study
- Develop a freight/ truck route transportation plan
- Develop long-range management plans for targeted corridors in conjunction with GDOT and local stakeholders
- Develop an I-85 corridor access and multi-modal study
- Develop 365 Corridor study to assess impact of future development and inland port
- Assess impact of large transportation and development projects on transportation network
- Develop a Regional Transportation Master Plan

Several State arterials struggle to sustain efficiency in serving both local and through traffic

- Develop comprehensive road improvement plan combining local and State goals
- Develop Commuter Traffic Study
- Develop a freight/ truck route transportation plan
- Develop long-range management plans for targeted corridors in conjunction with GDOT and local stakeholders
- Develop Highway 441 Tourism Study
- Develop 365 Corridor study to assess impact of future development and inland port
- Assess impact of large capital projects such as Inland Port on transportation network

Growing need for bike trails and on-road bike lanes



- GMRC to update regional bicycle and pedestrian plan
- Promote existing and proposed routes

Lingering potential for 2nd commercial passenger service airport to support Metro Atlanta

- Inventory and develop plans to improve local and regional airports

Potential support for revenues through the Transportation Investment Act of 2010

- Develop Commuter Traffic Study

Demand for improvements to I-85 and intersection arterials

- Develop an I-85 corridor access and multi-modal study
- Develop long-range management plans for targeted corridors in conjunction with GDOT and local stakeholders
- Develop a metro-area growth strategy to support urbanizing communities
- Assess impact of large transportation and development projects such as Inland Port on transportation network

Impact of changing demographics on transit demands, specifically the growing volume of retirement age residents and growing numbers of households with Hispanic/Latino ethnicity

- Develop Regional Rural Transit Plan
- Explore potential for increased rural transit services and autonomous vehicles/ride sharing within the region
- Inventory local housing programs, leaders and policies in each community
- Produce survey and distribute to local housing leaders
- Develop a regional strategic housing plan

Increasing Need for Improved Broadband capacity and access

- Promote Broadband Ready Designation and other state and federal programs
- Work with partners to fund mobile wifi hotspots
- Pursue funding for expansion of broadband in communities

Demand for expanded natural gas services

- Encourage the expansion of natural gas networks across North Georgia

Security issues related to infrastructure

- Encourage/promote initiatives to combat cyber security threats

Economic Development, Business and Industry

GOAL: *To stimulate and strengthen the regional economy through a collaborative effort embracing global trends resulting in job creation and retention, capital investments, and thereby enhancing the tax base and quality of life in the Georgia Mountains Region.*

Tourism

Goals: *Promote awareness of the Georgia Mountains Region as a tourism destination by fostering viable and sustainable initiatives.*

Update and maintain a master database of tourism assets in the Georgia Mountains Region.

Develop promotional and educational materials for the Georgia Mountains Region.

Foster regional partnerships to create and grow tourism product(s).

Improve infrastructure that supports tourism development and improvement of signage for tourism assets.

Advocate for more funding related to tourism product development.

Tourism is one of the most important economic drivers in the Georgia Mountains region. According to the Georgia Department of Economic Development, tourism is a \$61 billion industry in the State of Georgia. The Georgia Mountains Region is third in annual travel volume by domestic visitors behind only Metro Atlanta and the Georgia Coast.

Tourism Product Development Resource Team

The Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Product Development created a new initiative to assist communities interested in developing its tourism potential.

During a Resource Team visit, the team members work in closely with local leadership and assess the portfolio of tourism related assets within the community relevant to the areas of heritage and cultural tourism and Agritourism. The Resource Team's objectives include inventorying and discussing those assets that are the most likely candidates for developing a tourism based economy in a community, as well as identifying obstacles that might impede the implementation of such an effort.

Several communities in the Georgia Mountains Region have benefited from this resource team.



Located in Dahlonega, GA, the Consolidated Gold Mines and gold processing mill built in the early 1900's, was the largest gold mining operation east of the Mississippi River. Tours are conducted daily and guides are actual miners who are open to questions during your tour of underground mine tunnels.

**Photo Source: Dahlonega Consolidated Gold Mine*

Film Industry

Goals: *Attract film industry to the region.*

Create a business friendly environment which is conducive to the film industry.

Georgia is now the No. 1 filming location in the world, according to Film L.A., and the industry has a giant impact on the state's economy. In fact, the State experienced over \$2 billion dollars in direct production spending in 2016, and a recent study showed an overall impact of \$7 billion dollars.

Film and TV production professionals know that Georgia is a Camera Ready state, with highly desirable financial incentives, location diversity, production resources and professional support to make any size production a true success. Recent, notable productions filmed in the Georgia Mountains Region include Trouble with the Curve, Christmas in Homestead, County Line, and Heritage Falls.

The University of North Georgia (UNG) offers a Bachelor of Science in Film & Digital Media and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication with three concentrations: Organizational Leadership, Multimedia Journalism, and Public Relations.

The Georgia Film Festival (GFF) is a two-day film festival hosted by the University of North Georgia on its Gainesville campus. GFF is a festival built to celebrate filmmakers & works made in the state of Georgia and in the southeast. Filmmakers get to showcase their work and build relationships. Students who contribute to hosting the event develop a wide range of leadership and organizational skills. The GFF also helps to increase the visibility of the University, the Communication, Media & Journalism Department, and the Georgia film community.

With the diverse landscape, renowned attractions, and workforce, the Georgia Mountains Region has a unique opportunity to be a part of the State's film industry. The Georgia Film division of the State Department of Economic Development serves as a resource by marketing the state to production companies, scouting locations and coordinating the filming needs of companies with other state agencies, local governments and citizens. Additionally, the State offers a variety of incentives to qualified film projects.

Entrepreneurship

Goals: *To focus on creating new small, high-growth companies in the Georgia Mountains Region.*

Provide the Georgia Mountains Region's Residents with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start a new business.

Better connect venture capital, investors, and entrepreneurs within the Georgia Mountains Region.

Improve access to capital for startup and small businesses.

Promote successful entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial practices in the region.





The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Revolving Loan Fund (GMRC-RLF) was very active in FY 2020. The program works in partnership with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and allows GMRC to assist Region 2 in creating and retaining jobs. As a local economic development initiative, the RLF Program helps expand the region’s economy through business development and expansion.

The Revolving Loan Fund is available to businesses of all sizes and varieties. Borrowers are eligible for financing only when credit is not otherwise available. Since inception, the program has loaned out a total of \$5.4 million to 56 businesses throughout the Georgia Mountains Region. Those investments have translated to just over 658 jobs being retained or created.

In FY 2020, the GMRC received numerous inquiries into the RLF Program. Of those inquiries, 4 applications were submitted and 4 applications were analyzed and approved by the RLF committee and GMRC Council. The GMRLF Program was able to support small business expansion.

In July 2020, GMRC was awarded \$2,101,000 in EDA CARES Act funding, of which \$1.9 million will be reserved for loaning to businesses in all 13 of our counties. Applicants must be able to attest as to how they have been impacted by COVID-19.



Additionally, the region’s technical colleges serve as an important partner in the effort to expand entrepreneurship in the region. The Brenau University Business Incubator is a public/private partnership housed at Featherbone Communiversity. Thirty-seven businesses have been launched from the program, and 16 more start-ups are in development. Nineteen patents, 11 copyrights, and 21 trademarks have been developed. The Business Incubator provides entrepreneurs affordable space, access to professional services and educational and technical assistance. Small businesses launched in the Business Incubator have been responsible for the creation of more than 900 jobs since the organization opened ten years ago.

Agribusiness

Goal: *To foster sustainable agriculture by creating and/or retaining jobs and private investment within the agricultural sector and by adding value and developing new products and niche markets.*

Encourage and support the development of community supported agricultural cooperatives to sustain small and mid-sized producers.

Expand opportunities for production based on the byproducts of value-added processing.

Expand and upgrade infrastructure to support farms.

Support efforts to expand agro-tourism in the region.

Support the region’s wine industry, breweries, and distilleries by incentivizing and supporting area growers.

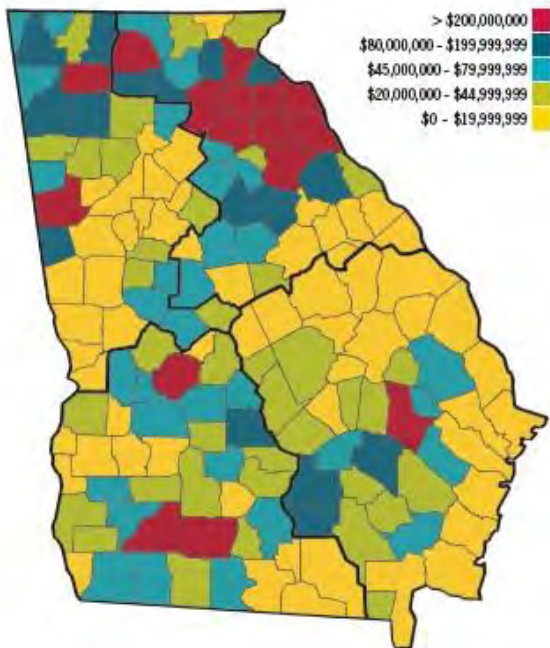
Agri-business is big business in Georgia. This industry is responsible for a \$74.3 billion contribution to Georgia’s economy. The State also leads the nation in key poultry production categories.

- According to a study from the U.S. Poultry and Egg Association, the poultry industry employed 11,486 people in Hall County in 2016, and generated an additional 15,193 jobs. The industry was responsible for some \$5.2 billion economic activity throughout Hall County in 2016.
- Hall County is a leader in agribusiness and food processing. In a 2016 report by Garner Economics, Gainesville – Hall MSA ranked as the highest concentrated metro area for food manufacturing and processing in the United States, with over 10,000 employees.
- As much as \$400 million economic impact for the state based on the number of wineries and farms producing fruits and honey for wine production. There are more than 23 wineries and wine tasting rooms throughout the region.
- The University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offers a statewide program of agri-business consulting with the mission to enhance the economic well-being of Georgians by providing a wide range of educational services for small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. In the last five years, the SBDC assisted clients with access to more than \$606 million through commercial loans and equity investments.

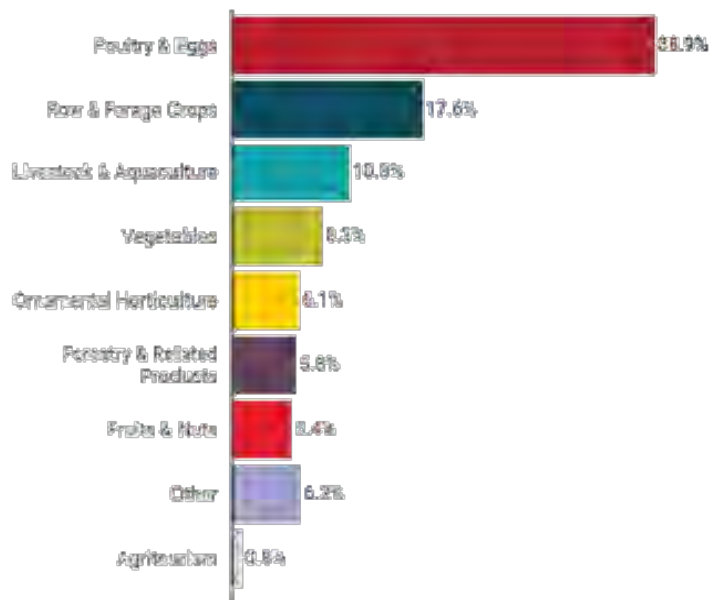
County Economic Importance—Georgia Mountains Region

2016 Total Farm Gate Value

2016 Georgia Farm Gate Value = \$13.75 billion
2015 = \$13.84 billion



TOTAL BY COMMODITY GROUP



Ag - Food & Fiber Related Industries - Total Economic Contribution

County	Farm Gate Value	Output	# of Jobs
Banks	\$262,644,461	\$411,909,603	1,096

Economists at the University of Georgia's Environmental Sciences

Dawson	\$63,890,251	\$221,836,747	918
Forsyth	\$78,686,828	\$1,324,350,842	7,429
Franklin	\$394,214,290	\$497,293,095	1,734
Habersham	\$265,108,687	\$787,605,038	3,210
Hall	\$237,310,277	\$4,420,427,400	18,761
Hart	\$385,306,806	\$708,209,086	1,901
Lumpkin	\$48,370,017	\$215,716,397	1,198
Rabun	\$24,365,613	\$151,291,085	603
Stephens	\$64,532,562	\$114,381,968	595
Towns	\$4,016,899	\$12,477,347	208
Union	\$26,122,351	\$56,336,882	729
White	\$105,163,283	\$174,845,515	1,141
Regional Totals	\$ 1,959,732,325	\$ 9,096,681,005	39,523

Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development annually calculate the total economic contribution (based on the Georgia Farm Gate Value Report) of all the sectors involved in agribusiness from seed and fertilizer to processing for the range of different commodities.

Source: 2018 Ag Snapshots, University of Georgia Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, based on 2016 Farm Gate Value Report

Existing Business and Industry

Goal: *Increase expansion and retention of the region's existing businesses and industries.*

Promote regional leadership and collaboration.

Invest in the beautification and revitalization of downtowns with financial assistance from regional and state partners.

Support new efforts for existing business and industry.

Provide the Georgia Mountains Region's residents with innovative educational resources to help them learn technical and financial resources to expand.

Although Region 2 was negatively impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, the area experienced another year of significant growth and prosperity with 692 jobs created. The addition of these jobs resulted in \$235 million in private investment. The list below are a couple of highlights from the last year.

- RAI Industrial Fabricators, LLC will build a new state of the art steel fabrication facility, creating 30 new jobs and investing \$20 million in Banks County.
- Alfrex, a manufacturer of fire proof exterior panels, will locate its North American headquarters, as well as sales and manufacturing facilities, in Hall County. The company will invest \$6.2 million in the project, creating 30 new jobs

Several new initiatives have been unveiled over the past year which support existing business and industry including the Georgia Broadband Initiative and USDA Broadband Re-Connect program.

Rural Zones: Recognizing that many small, rural downtown areas have experienced varying levels of economic distress, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) worked with the Georgia General Assembly to secure passage of a bill calling for the development of "Rural Zones." The establishment of up to 10 zones per year will enable businesses and investors to obtain tax credits for qualified activities occurring within designated Rural Zones. DCA, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, will receive applications and designate zones each year to provide



an incentive for job creation and private investment in the designated locations. In early 2019, the City of Hartwell was the latest GMRC community to receive this designation.

New Business Recruitment

Goal: *Devote local resources to the recruitment of new industry and businesses in the Georgia Mountains region.*

Objectives: *Assess local resources strengths and weaknesses to develop a list of feasible target industries.*

Work supplier networks both up and down stream to develop target industries.

Promote regional showcase events to attract new business and industry leaders and state partners.

Promote a regional marketing effort of regional assets.

Develop an inventory of building product in the region and identify funding for the development of that inventory.

- Georgia consistently receives high marks for its business climate, with Site Selection magazine ranking Georgia No. 1 seven years in a row (2013-2020). Georgia consistently stands out in life sciences, entrepreneurship and technology, earning countless accolades in the past few years.
- It’s no surprise that 17 Fortune® 500 headquarters and 30 Fortune® 1000 companies call Georgia home. Georgia makes it easy for firms to grow while keeping costs low. Companies here enjoy a low corporate tax rate (6 percent) that applies to income earned in state. They can earn tax credits for creating jobs, upgrading or expanding, research and more, as well as tax exemptions for purchases and inventory. The state also has incentives to encourage the creation of small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures.



Despite COVID-19, job numbers shows that Georgia’s economic momentum is continuing to grow two months into the state’s new fiscal year. August data shows job creation from new Georgia projects has already reached one-third of the total jobs reported for fiscal year 2020, and investments are up 11% over July. In fact, job creation is 1.5 times higher than the same two months last year.

- Georgia has the infrastructure to speed access to domestic and international markets. Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport simplifies travel to more than 75 countries and 150 U.S. cities daily. Four major U.S. interstates allow you to reach 80 percent of U.S. markets in two days or less.

Economic Resiliency

Goals: *Ensure that every community has a strategy and resources in place that specifically directs how to respond in economic recessions and/or when major employment centers are lost.*

Ensure all communities have access to, and are aware of, resources providing economic forecasts for their region, county and, where possible, municipality.

Establish a proper chain of communication regarding economic concerns and identify resources, providers and services for implementing economic crisis response actions.

Conduct a forum or concentrated assessment of the economic health and needs of the region’s most prominent industries.



In response to the recent global economic recession of 2008-2012, governments and communities are exploring ways of future-proofing their economic development processes. Specifically, while communities know they can't fully immunize themselves from economic downturns, they are strategizing for how best to project potential cycles and prepare and react when downturns occur so that they can more swiftly and more effectively restore their own economies.

Rapid Response's major purpose is to respond to layoffs and plant closings by coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers. Rapid Response provides customized services on-site at an affected company, accommodates any work schedule, and assists companies and workers through the painful transitions associated with job loss.

In FY20 WorkSource Georgia Mountains Rapid Response has provided assistance to 4 businesses and hundreds of dislocated workers.

The University of Georgia—Carl Vinson Institute of Government is also a resource and partnership program that is available to assist local governments in their efforts. The Archway Partnership's purpose is to enhance connectivity between the university and local governments to address the state's critical economic development needs. Archway is currently working closely with Hart County to address critical community and economic development needs.

Additionally, the development of a stronger broadband and fiber optic network will be a catalyst for improving economic development with enhanced education, healthcare, workforce development, business expansion and recruitment, helping to create and/or retain direct and indirect jobs.

Economic Development, Business and Industry

Needs and Mitigation Strategies

Comparably limited support for agribusiness, especially agri-tourism

- Creation of a regional food hub and promote through print and social media marketing
- Develop promotional material for area farmer's markets and canneries
- Establish a local food guide based on local assessments
- Develop an inventory of tourism industry resources

Potential for continued growth within tourism sub-markets

- Develop Highway 441 Tourism Study
- Initiate GMRC Downtown Association, promote partnerships (The Georgia Cities Foundation)
- Assist local governments and business in the development of multi-county tourism task force focusing on Lake Hartwell
- Develop promotional material for area farmer's markets and canneries through social media
- Improve coordination with North Georgia Tourism Association

Lack of diversity within economic base; too much reliance on a few large industries

- Develop and maintain a region wide downtown economic database that includes historic resources
- Develop a hi-tech strategy for the region
- Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC and Universities
- Develop and implement plans addressing economic diversification

Demand for expansion of goods-production industries

- Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC/colleges
- Address supply chain issues by cultivating partnerships in the Region

Potential within existing cities to nurture small business and entrepreneurship

- Develop and distribute educational materials for entrepreneur programs
- Initiate GMRC Downtown Association, promote partnerships (The Georgia Cities Foundation)
- Assist local governments and business in the development of multi-county tourism task force focusing on Lake Hartwell
- Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop
- Develop an entrepreneurship training program for teachers
- Identify and create a database of entrepreneur support resources in the region
- Implement an RLF focused on COVID response

Strong potential in health service industries, particularly around existing/ proposed hospitals

- Develop and implement a public awareness campaign about health information technology

Competition from South Carolina and North Carolina – border region

- Develop 1-page fact sheet with state tax incentive information and distribute to local chambers, economic development professionals, and city and counties
- Actively market existing industrial parks
- Work to enhance Georgia Statutory incentives in order to be competitive
- Develop a website/social media to market the region for new business development and expansion
- Utilization of Joint Development Authorities (JDA's) as an additional resource for cooperation across City/County lines

Need for coordinated informational and directional signage along entrance corridors

- GMRC to develop new Urban Revitalization Plans for area town centers and historic urban centers
- Assist local governments develop strategies and materials for wayfinding signage in the region

Lack of funding for developing new and existing building inventory

- Identify and educate the public about funding resources at both the state and federal level and related state agencies that administer such programs

Need to create a “business-friendly” environment for the film industry

- GMRC to serve as a central repository for the collection of draft ordinances to support film production

Need for awareness in the event of cyber attacks

- Identify initiatives or best practices related to cyber security

Workforce Development

GOAL: *To attract and retain business and industry by promoting education and implementing a world-class workforce development strategy.*

ASSESSMENT

WorkSource Georgia Mountains provides day-to-day management of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds that are allocated to the Georgia Mountains Region through the Georgia Department of Economic Development Workforce Division. The department continues to provide oversight of training providers who provide job training and job placement to eligible persons. This department provides assistance to adults, youth, and dislocated workers who meet program criteria.



Adult and Dislocated Worker

WorkSource Georgia Mountains Adult and Dislocated Services department served 502 individuals in FY 2020. Training for individuals 18 years or older was provided by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding. WIOA funding allowed these individuals to attend a technical school or college for up to 24 months to receive specialized training to enter today’s competitive job force in a Growth and Demand field in the Georgia Mountains.

- Worked with State and Local Offender Transition Centers to train returning inmates to enter the workforce.
- Incumbent Training is available for assistance to qualifying employers to assist with expenses associated with new or upgraded skills training for full-time, permanent employees.
- WIOA offers an opportunity to improve job and career options for Georgia’s workers and companies to fill positions thru the On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program. By promoting OJT, Georgia has the great opportunity to

increase its economic health and improve economic competitiveness. We have been working to implement the changes for WIOA as it applies to job seekers and employers in our region.

- Georgia Mountains WorkSource OJT Program assists employers with training costs while putting Georgians back to work. OJT provides employers with the opportunity to train new employees and receive up to 75% reimbursement for their salary during the OJT training period. It also helps employers fill the gap between a potential employees current skills and what is required to fully perform the job.

Career Coaches

Another great service provided by WorkSource Georgia Mountains are the Career Coaches/**Mobile Training Units (MTU)**. Not only do these units allow staff to offer assessment and training at numerous sites, they also serve as a mobile marketing tool, building public awareness of the program.



WorkSource Georgia Mountains Career Coaches/ Mobile Training Units provide services and training for both Adults and Youth combining computer and internet access for job search and career development. The Career Coaches visited 52 many unique locations this year including job fairs, community events, food banks, correctional facilities libraries. The Coaches served 973 individuals all over the Georgia Mountains region. Visitors to the Career Coach received assistance with job searches, online applications, resume assistance, WIOA Overview and application assistance, and more from our Career Coach Instructors. The Career Coaches also assisted several area businesses on on-site during hiring and Rapid Response events.

Youth Activities

WorkSource Georgia Mountains Youth Services Department served 125 youth in FY 2020 in the following youth programs:

- Beginning in late 2015, an Apprenticeship Program was created with the goal of working with business and industry in coordination with Georgia Department of Economic Development Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Labor, local Technical Colleges, and business and Industry within the Georgia Mountains Region.
- GED Training in the Gainesville Regional Youth Detention Center. The program provides a tutor to WIOA qualified youth to work on their GED combined with a learning coach to teach life skills that will improve their chances of success upon release. To date, there have been a total of 53 GED's acquired.

Youth Services opened the doors to the new Youth Center. The ROUTE (Road to Opportunity Utilizing Training and Enrichment) 180 Center held its grand opening and open house on February 20, 2020. The Center is designed as a training and enrichment center particularly geared toward youth and young adults ages 16-24. The Center it equipped with a classroom, tutor room, library/study, training room, interview and work clothing closet, etiquette room, and a game room.

Employment Training Program

28 participants participated in and completed the employment training program which involved hands on work experience, as well as classroom employability skills training.

Credit Recovery Assistance



The Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that each local workforce development area have at least one comprehensive or full-service One-Stop Center. A One-Stop Center is a place where Employers and Job Seekers can access a wide range of workforce services. In Georgia, there are over 45 “full-service” One-Stop Centers, and most areas have several other locations for accessing workforce services also. A majority of the full-service locations are GDOL Career Centers, while others are separate facilities. Many different education, training, and employment-related services available in the community are also provided by a variety of partner agencies at the One-Stop Center or through referrals.

Currently, the partners in WorkSource Georgia Mountain’s comprehensive one-stop system include:

- WorkSource Georgia Mountains - Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth WIOA Services
- Georgia Department of Labor
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency – career services
- Legacy Link—Aging services
- Technical College System of Georgia, represented by Lanier, North Georgia, and Athens Technical Colleges – career services
- Adult Education and Literacy Activities, and Post-Secondary Education

Workforce Development

Needs and Mitigation Strategies

Lack of labor skills to support a diverse group of industries

- Work directly with the businesses, career academies, technical colleges to identify lack of skills levels needed for their business and educational institutions
- Work with high schools and technical colleges to prepare individuals in the needed skill sets
- Support marketing efforts to citizens outlining the importance of an educated workforce

Lack of soft skills and state standards that do not match with industry needs

- Through regional awareness, inform State officials about the basic skill challenges
- Support GeorgiaBEST and other programs

Perception of low educational attainment by local residents

- Publicize with area newspapers the positive educational and skills attainment achieved in the region

Increasing demand for high quality education facilities and programs

- Start a school mentor / Junior Achievement program in every junior high and high school in the region
- Program promoting Career Days in primary and secondary schools
- Develop program linking local schools with area Technical Colleges
- Develop an entrepreneurship training program for teachers
- Identify and create a database of entrepreneur support resources in the region
- Creation of an entrepreneurial network
- Develop a hi-tech strategy for the region
- Further develop Apprenticeship, internship, work-based learning and mentoring programs
- Implement Sector Strategies report
- Educate parents on the importance/stigma of technical education

Historically Low Unemployment

- Re-Engagement of prospective workers who have dropped out of the labor force



HOUSING

GOAL: *Facilitate coordination of housing development with planning for infrastructure and overall community development for long-term sustainability, in every community in the region.*

The Housing Element of the comprehensive plan is used to evaluate whether existing and projected development will meet the county’s housing needs with respect to supply, affordability, and accessibility. Housing is a critical issue to every community as a primary factor of quality of life. The costs and availability of quality housing is a key gauge in calculating local costs of living and one measure in defining the long-term sustainability of the resident population.

America’s recovery from the Great Recession has resulted in increased commercial and industrial activity; however, unlike every other recovery since World War II this one has not had the same effect on the housing market. According to Norton’s 2018 Native Intelligence Report, the average mortgage score in 2017 was 735 compared to 661 in 2007. That takes one million households out of the market since the recession took place.

Within the Georgia Mountains Region the prevailing housing stock is single family detached, with most of that in suburban or rural settings. However since about 2000 there is a growing demand for more units and more varieties of housing, from an influx of vacation homes and private retirement communities to urban forms of affordable housing and units for special needs population. There are also the evolving markets for tiny homes, short-term rentals and other styles of housing that are challenging local policies and codes as well as community character. Local communities will need to monitor these trends closely and update their policies and practices so that they are allowing housing needs to be filled in a manner that doesn’t adversely impact local resources and infrastructure or detract from local character.

Among the current priority issues:

Rental Housing: The New Standard - Rental housing and developments are becoming more prevalent throughout the United States and in the Georgia Mountains Region. The drivers for rental housing come from a few different factors. The number one driver for rental housing in 2017 was the 55+ age group. This group is looking to “age in place” and individuals are re-prioritizing their wants and needs and either downsizing to age-restricted communities or renting for housing flexibility.

Furthermore, a segment of the millennial population is delaying home purchases due to a meager supply of affordable housing. The tightened market is driving multiple offers and strong price increases for most housing products under \$300,000, which would include the bracket to include most millennials. These scenarios are increasingly prevalent in suburban areas that offer pedestrian-friendly retail areas, access to great restaurants, access to green spaces, and access to quality public schools.

Affordable Workforce Housing: A Serious Issue for the Georgia Mountains Region - One of the most serious issues facing the Georgia Mountains Region in the housing sector continues to be the crisis caused by a rapidly diminishing stock of available affordable housing. According to a forecast prepared by the Norton Group for its annual Native Intelligence™ Report, the absence of affordable, livable, personal homes creates further disparity between the “haves” and the “have nots” (i.e. the wealth gap so widely discussed in America). Home ownership is coupled with wealth accumulation and family unit stability.

According to the Norton Native Intelligence Report™, new affordable home construction is hindered by excessive governmental regulations. These regulations, such as The International Building Code, have had an adverse effect on affordability. As a result, many developers have dropped almost all interest in building \$150,000 to \$200,000 homes. The fixed sunk cost diminishes the higher the price



point, and, as a result of the excessive regulations, traditional builders now run from the lower unit costs.

The housing demand issue has been exacerbated by the region's strong track record in industrial recruitment and existing business expansions. These announcements have been accompanied by the creation of hundreds of new jobs to be filled by qualified and trained individuals living in the district and by those that will relocate to the district. However, the current available housing supply will not be able to support the existing demand. Moving forward, it will be exceedingly difficult for communities to enjoy business expansion without available housing. In short, these two things are not mutually exclusive.

This lingering problem has caused governments to find creative ways to adapt to the current housing supply environment. One way is through the investigation of the construction of tiny homes. However, the challenge that many local governments face is the adaptation of federal, state, and local building and housing codes to facilitate the building of these homes.

When the supply of affordable housing hits zero, consumer spending could slow, new retail could go elsewhere and communities could enter a long cycle of decline. The issue of affordable workforce housing availability is a critical issue that will cause local governments and local residents to rethink their definition of housing and to revisit building and housing codes to address the lack of availability.



HOUSING

Needs and Mitigation Strategies

Shortage of specialty housing to accommodate retirement age population; Need to monitor long-term impacts and sustainability of the second-home market

- Inventory of local housing programs, leaders and policies in each community
- Produce survey and distribute to local housing leaders
- Develop a regional strategic housing plan
- Provide educational seminars and workshops on housing programs, aging and services
- Develop summary report on housing survey findings
- Develop new inventory for senior housing, independent and assisted living
- Market/Promote single and multifamily developments for seniors
- Help communities adopt codes to ensure sustainable and quality housing

Lack of and need to ensure sustainable quality of affordable workforce housing

- Inventory local housing programs, leaders and policies in each community
- Produce survey and distribute to local housing leaders
- Develop a regional strategic housing plan
- Provide educational seminars and workshops on housing programs, aging and services
- Develop summary report on housing survey findings
- Develop a metro-area growth strategy to support urbanizing communities
- Attract multi-family housing developers
- Examine unique methods to assist with the perception issue (model homes, housing summit)

Slow/limited responsiveness to issues of the housing and development industry

- Produce survey and distribute to local housing leaders
- Develop a regional strategic housing plan
- Provide educational seminars and workshops on housing programs and services
- Develop summary report on housing survey findings

Need to assist communities clarify affordable housing vs. low-income or subsidized housing

- Work with media and other outlets to educate citizens and communities about the difference

Need to ensure local development codes are not unintentionally prohibiting new workforce housing development

- Assisting communities to develop building codes and ordinance measures that promote housing development

Pre-Disaster Mitigation

GOAL: *Encourage disaster resiliency, extending beyond emergency responsiveness to advance planning and organizing to address vulnerabilities, and to enable rebuilding and recovery afterwards in ways that offer healthier, sustainable communities, and more robust regional economies.*

Any community is prone to hazardous events, either natural or man-made. The Georgia Mountains Region is committed to becoming more resilient with respect to mitigation and preparedness for such disasters, not only protects lives and area resources but to provide more security for economic development. The more prepared the community, the less the affect experienced by hazardous events.

Disaster resiliency can best be defined as the ability to anticipate threats, reduce the impact of these threats by taking preemptive action, respond appropriately and efficiently when these threats materialize, and have a plan in place for recovery. Every local government in the region has participated in a county-level Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) which outlines how a community and local stakeholders will prepare for, and respond to, critical and large-scale emergency situations. An HMP will assess a community's risks and vulnerabilities and then produce recommended mitigation strategies to reduce overall risk to the population and structures. HMPs are also critical for coordination of Federal and State programs which are oriented around the information, trends, and priorities reviewed in the local plans. Such mitigation planning is key to raising public awareness about reducing future losses before a disaster strikes, and to breaking the cycle of disaster damage, restoration, and reconstruction, and repeated damage.



However implementation of these plans is often subject to available funding, shifting local priorities, and evolutions in best practices: The rapid availability and applications of cellphones, for instance, has endowed new technologies for communicating with the public about emergency alerts and how to respond. So to ensure communities are making progress with their HMPs these documents need to be routinely updated and regularly reviewed to ensure recommended actions are being pursued.

COVID –19 Pandemic and Disaster Recovery

GMRC has worked closely with federal, state and local partners to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. A COVID resource page was created on the GMRC website to further assist residents, businesses, and governments within the Region.

Over the course of 2020, the CEDS Committee held virtual meetings more frequently to discuss the impacts in their respective communities. During this time, the committee outlined the pressing issues that are related to COVID-19:

- Expanding broadband coverage



- Addressing diversification of local and regional economies
- Tools for disaster recovery
- Addressing supply chain issues
- Funding for small businesses
- Entrepreneurship
- Increase in vacant office and retail spaces
- Decline in regional tourism
- Increasing need for more healthcare investment

In August 2020, GMRC was awarded \$400,000 in EDA CARES Act funding to support regional disaster recovery and resiliency efforts. Key components of the recovery efforts will include: (1) the development of an economic recovery and resilience plan, tied to the Georgia Mountains Region's approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), to address the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, (2) the deployment of disaster recovery coordinators to orchestrate the region's response to the pandemic, (3) the provision of technical assistance, as necessary, to local governments, businesses, and other stakeholder organizations, and (4) the funding of appropriate technology and staff support for these pandemic-response activities.

Needs and Mitigation Strategies

Need to ensure every community has AND USES their Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Survey local Emergency Management Departments regarding HMP implementation
- Work with GEMA and FEMA to develop a best practices guide for HMP implementation
- Facilitate an educational forum on HMP updates and implementation

Opportunity to provide regional support and coordination with local hazard mitigation planning

- Create and sustain a Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan
- Create a regional forum for local Emergency Management Directors
- Produce and distribute a specialty grants and loans resource guide for local emergency management departments.

Need for a regional COVID Disaster Recovery Response

- Implementation of a regional disaster recovery initiative
- Conduct assessments/surveys which will outline effects of COVID-19
- Conduct an economic base and sensitivity study
- Conduct a Medical Accessibility Study
- Conduct a Pandemic Transmission Assessment

Area Labor Profiles for Hart and Franklin Counties



Georgia

Area Labor Profile

Franklin

County



Updated: Aug 2021

Labor Force Activity - 2020

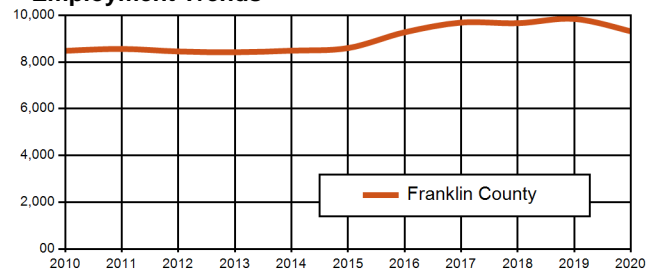
2020 ANNUAL AVERAGES

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Franklin	9,892	9,308	584	5.9%
Banks	9,778	9,359	419	4.3%
Hart	11,373	10,757	616	5.4%
Madison	12,972	12,302	670	5.2%
Stephens	10,414	9,745	669	6.4%
Franklin Area	54,429	51,471	2,958	5.4%
Georgia	5,072,155	4,741,191	330,964	6.5%
United States	160,742,000	147,795,000	12,947,000	8.1%
Oconee, SC	35,056	33,180	1,876	5.4%

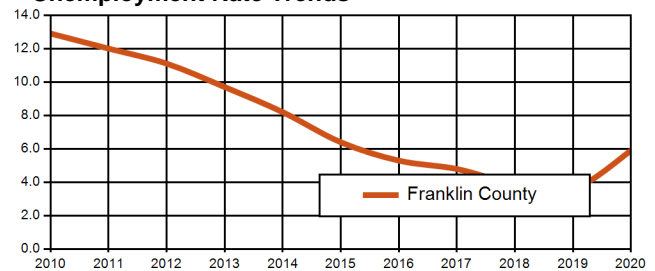
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

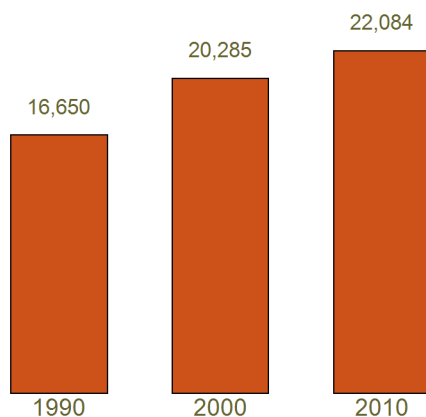
Employment Trends



Unemployment Rate Trends



Population Estimates



Population

	2010 Census	2020 Rank	2020 Estimate	% Change 2010-2020	2025 Projected*	% Change 2010-2025
Franklin	22,084	79	23,504	6.4	25,069	13.5
City of Carnesville	577					
Franklin Area	191,970		205,841	7.2	218,352	13.7
Georgia	9,687,653		10,710,017	10.6	11,335,283	17.0
United States	308,745,538		329,484,123	6.7	349,439,199	13.2
Oconee, SC	71,983		80,015	11.2	87,500	21.6

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, *Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

MARK BUTLER - COMMISSIONER, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary Aids and Services Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities

Workforce Statistics & Economic Research; E-mail: Workforce_Info@gdol.ga.gov Phone: (404) 232-3875

Industry Mix - 1st Quarter of 2021

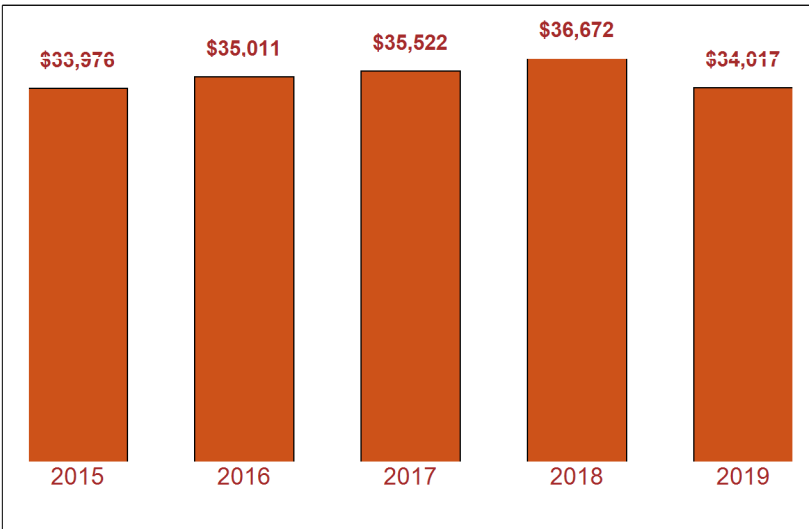
INDUSTRY	Franklin				Franklin Area			
	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE
Goods-Producing	85	1,867	24.1	874	488	8,300	27.7	885
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	12	158	2.0	765	58	860	2.9	933
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0.0	0	5	42	0.1	1,786
Construction	37	184	2.4	809	271	1,304	4.4	823
Manufacturing	36	1,526	19.7	893	154	6,094	20.4	886
Food	1	*	*	*	14	1,106	3.7	911
Wood Product	7	*	*	*	18	250	0.8	704
Printing and Related Support Activities	2	*	*	*	4	93	0.3	752
Plastics and Rubber Products	3	255	3.3	840	10	618	2.1	872
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	1	*	*	*	5	35	0.1	622
Fabricated Metal Product	12	389	5.0	857	36	818	2.7	840
Machinery	2	*	*	*	11	769	2.6	1,014
Transportation Equipment	6	253	3.3	951	9	332	1.1	1,197
Furniture and Related Product	1	*	*	*	14	912	3.0	855
Miscellaneous	1	*	*	*	6	*	*	*
Textile Product Mills	0	0	0.0	0	1	*	*	*
Apparel	0	0	0.0	0	1	*	*	*
Beverage and Tobacco Product	0	0	0.0	0	1	*	*	*
Petroleum and Coal Products	0	0	0.0	0	1	*	*	*
Primary Metal	0	0	0.0	0	1	*	*	*
Paper	0	0	0.0	0	2	*	*	*
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	0	0	0.0	0	4	240	0.8	789
Chemical	0	0	0.0	0	6	127	0.4	1,047
Textile Mills	0	0	0.0	0	10	596	2.0	774
Service-Providing	390	4,821	62.1	672	1,688	15,808	52.8	663
Utilities	1	*	*	*	8	177	0.6	1,413
Wholesale Trade	26	249	3.2	968	105	720	2.4	924
Retail Trade	108	912	11.8	606	400	3,996	13.4	527
Transportation and Warehousing	14	784	10.1	761	62	978	3.3	755
Information	6	*	*	*	21	237	0.8	1,307
Finance and Insurance	28	122	1.6	1,310	101	486	1.6	1,031
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	8	11	0.1	663	46	151	0.5	1,684
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	27	83	1.1	665	147	579	1.9	787
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4	71	0.9	2,086	9	389	1.3	2,080
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	39	167	2.2	513	132	1,115	3.7	665
Educational Services	3	*	*	*	16	538	1.8	534
Health Care and Social Assistance	44	820	10.6	767	177	2,193	7.3	782
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3	12	0.2	897	27	302	1.0	431
Accommodation and Food Services	52	994	12.8	285	183	3,205	10.7	310
Other Services (except Public Administration)	27	312	4.0	744	128	642	2.1	695
Unclassified - industry not assigned	25	15	0.2	1,207	126	101	0.3	821
Total - Private Sector	500	6,703	86.4	730	2,176	24,108	80.6	740
Total - Government	37	1,057	13.6	759	146	5,809	19.4	735
Federal Government	6	49	0.6	962	26	250	0.8	1,112
State Government	14	125	1.6	658	48	432	1.4	693
Local Government	17	883	11.4	762	72	5,127	17.1	720
ALL INDUSTRIES	537	7,759	100.0	734	2,322	29,916	100.0	739
ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia					329,450	4,374,238		1,198

Note: *Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cannot be released. These data use the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categories. Average weekly wage is derived by dividing gross payroll dollars paid to all employees - both hourly and salaried - by the average number of employees who had earnings; average earnings are then divided by the number of weeks in a reporting period to obtain weekly figures. Figures in other columns may not sum accurately due to rounding. All figures are 1st Quarter of 2021.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. These data represent jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

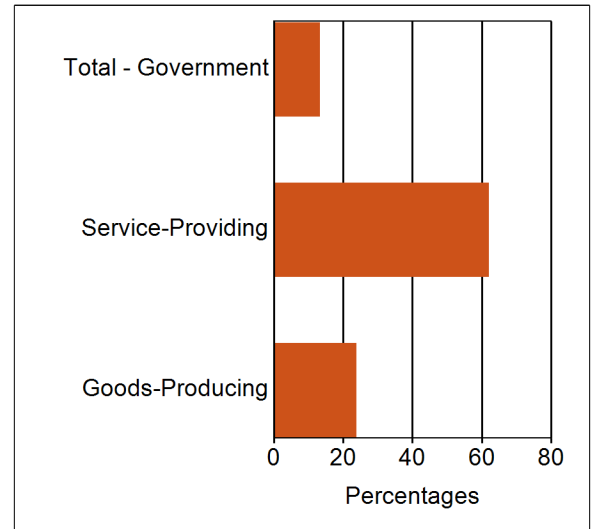
Franklin Per Capita Income

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Franklin Industry Mix 2021

Source: See Industry Mix data on Page 2.



Top Ten Largest Employers - 2021*

Franklin

AutoZone, Inc.
 Blue Beacon USA LP II
 Carry-On Trailer, Inc.
 Emmanuel College
 Kautex Textron
 Loadstar
 MagnaFlow
 McDonalds
 St Marys Sacred Heart Hospital, Inc.
 United Parcel Service

*Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state colleges and universities. Data shown for the First Quarter of 2021. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Franklin Area

Autozoners, Inc.
 Carry-On Trailer, Inc.
 GEM Southeast, Inc.
 Lake Foods, LLC
 Nestle Purina Petcare Company
 Nifco Ktw America Corporation
 Patterson Pump Co
 St Marys Sacred Heart Hospital, Inc.
 Walmart
 Walmart

COUNTY

Franklin
 Franklin
 Stephens
 Hart
 Hart
 Stephens
 Stephens
 Franklin
 Stephens
 Hart

Education of the Labor Force

Franklin Area

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

	PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE				
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	7.8%	4.4%	6.4%	3.6%	5.5%	18.6%
Some High School	18.1%	21.4%	18.5%	15.7%	16.2%	21.8%
High School Grad/GED	39.4%	40.7%	37.0%	43.1%	41.0%	34.4%
Some College	17.6%	28.7%	18.1%	16.7%	17.8%	11.2%
College Grad 2 Yr	5.1%	3.0%	7.8%	6.2%	5.4%	2.8%
College Grad 4 Yr	7.5%	1.8%	8.8%	10.4%	8.3%	6.0%
Post Graduate Studies	4.4%	0.0%	3.4%	4.5%	5.9%	5.2%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 - 65+. Some College category represents workers with some college with no degree less than two years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2010 Decennial Census.

High School Graduates - 2020



	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	PRIVATE SCHOOLS*	TOTAL
Banks	204	--	204
Franklin	248	--	248
Hart	217	--	217
Madison	297	--	297
Stephens	235	--	235
Franklin Area	1,201	--	1,201

Note: Public schools include city as well as county schools systems.

* Private schools data is not available for 2020 from Georgia Independent School Association.

Source: The Governor's Office of Student Achievement of Georgia.

Colleges and Universities

Franklin Area

Banks

Milledgeville Campus (Satellite campus of Central Georgia Technical College) www.centralgatech.edu

Franklin

Emmanuel College www.ec.edu

Stephens

Currahee Campus (Satellite campus of North Georgia Technical College) www.northgatech.edu
Toccoa Falls College www.tfc.edu

Note: The colleges and universities listed include public and private institutions. This list is updated periodically as information becomes available.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Technical College Graduates - 2020*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2018	2019	2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping°	237	235	235	-0.8	0.0
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General	86	57	55	-33.7	-3.5
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist°	49	41	48	-16.3	17.1
Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Other°	22	37	20	68.2	-45.9
Architectural Drafting and Architectural CAD/CADD°	1	2	4	100.0	100.0
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician°	150	169	127	12.7	-24.9
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician°	360	331	336	-8.1	1.5
Biology Technician/Biotechnology Laboratory Technician°	13	19	9	46.2	-52.6
Business Administration and Management, General°	113	88	194	-22.1	120.5
CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician°	27	37	26	37.0	-29.7
Child Care Provider/Assistant°	187	331	217	77.0	-34.4
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician	3	9	15	200.0	66.7
Commercial Photography°	22	33	13	50.0	-60.6
Computer Installation and Repair Technology/Technician°	195	167	57	-14.4	-65.9
Computer Programming Special Applications°	32	48	20	50.0	-58.3

Technical College Graduates - 2020*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2018	2019	2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General°	292	304	336	4.1	10.5
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies°	102	147	118	44.1	-19.7
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	23	25	11	8.7	-56.0
Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, General°	87	168	95	93.1	-43.5
Data Processing and Data Processing Technology/Technician°	54	42	53	-22.2	26.2
Dental Assisting/Assistant	23	18	19	-21.7	5.6
Dental Hygiene/Hygienist	12	11	8	-8.3	-27.3
Design and Visual Communications, General°	33	30	20	-9.1	-33.3
Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician°	39	29	18	-25.6	-37.9
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General°	37	39	34	5.4	-12.8
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	65	54	71	-16.9	31.5
Electrical and Power Transmission Installation/Installer, General°	12	12	13	0.0	8.3
Electrician°	122	148	97	21.3	-34.5
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)°	224	295	224	31.7	-24.1
Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other	6	9	11	50.0	22.2
Fire Prevention and Safety Technology/Technician°	3	8	1	166.7	-87.5
Fire Science/Fire-fighting°	14	36	28	157.1	-22.2
Fire Services Administration	2	6	3	200.0	-50.0
Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant°	23	39	11	69.6	-71.8
General Office Occupations and Clerical Services°	13	8	2	-38.5	-75.0
Graphic Design°	14	12	3	-14.3	-75.0
Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician°	19	24	29	26.3	20.8
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/°	136	185	176	36.0	-4.9
Hospitality Administration/Management, General°	20	64	26	220.0	-59.4
Hotel/Motel Administration/Management°	3	15	7	400.0	-53.3
Human Resources Management and Services, Other°	2	11	9	450.0	-18.2
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology°	151	223	244	47.7	9.4
Interior Design°	69	70	59	1.4	-15.7
Legal Assistant/Paralegal	10	14	6	40.0	-57.1
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	75	89	99	18.7	11.2
Lineworker°	59	62	61	5.1	-1.6
Machine Shop Technology/Assistant°	90	135	75	50.0	-44.4
Marketing/Marketing Management, General	19	8	8	-57.9	0.0
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, Other	12	11	13	-8.3	18.2
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder°	11	1	15	-90.9	1400.0
Medical Office Assistant/Specialist°	63	76	84	20.6	10.5
Medical/Clinical Assistant	107	89	108	-16.8	21.3

Technical College Graduates - 2020*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2018	2019	2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Medium/Heavy Vehicle and Truck Technology/Technician°	47	72	27	53.2	-62.5
Meeting and Event Planning°	9	14	7	55.6	-50.0
Network and System Administration/Administrator°	43	50	46	16.3	-8.0
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide°	125	92	82	-26.4	-10.9
Pharmacy Technician/Assistant°	8	9	8	12.5	-11.1
Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist°	32	26	24	-18.8	-7.7
Physical Therapy Technician/Assistant	17	17	15	0.0	-11.8
Professional, Technical, Business, and Scientific Writing°	25	16	35	-36.0	118.8
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	32	35	32	9.4	-8.6
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	54	53	54	-1.9	1.9
Selling Skills and Sales Operations°	14	11	2	-21.4	-81.8
Social Work, Other°	31	33	29	6.5	-12.1
Surgical Technology/Technologist	47	31	17	-34.0	-45.2
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor°	52	74	79	42.3	6.8
Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant°	21	18	10	-14.3	-44.4
Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design°	20	11	7	-45.0	-36.4
Welding Technology/Welder°	461	467	299	1.3	-36.0

Definition: All graduates except those listed as technical certificates(°) are diploma and degree graduates. Diploma and degree programs are one to two years in length. Technical certificates are less than a year in length. Duplication may occur due to graduates with multiple awards.

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

*Data shown represents Annual 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.

Georgia Department of Labor Location(s)

Career Center(s)

37 Foreacre Street

Toccoa, GA 30577-3582

Phone: (706) 282 - 4514

Fax: (706) 282 - 4513

For copies of Area Labor Profiles, please visit our website at: <http://dol.georgia.gov> or contact Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Georgia Department of Labor, 148 Andrew Young International Blvd N.E. Atlanta, GA. 30303-1751. Phone: 404-232-3875; Fax: 404-232-3888 or Email us at workforce_info@gdol.ga.gov

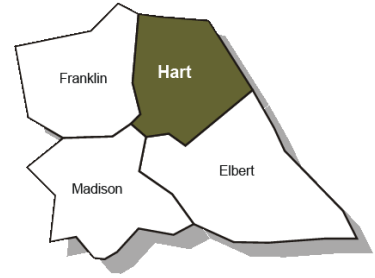


Georgia

Area Labor Profile

Hart

County



Updated: Aug 2021

Labor Force Activity - 2020

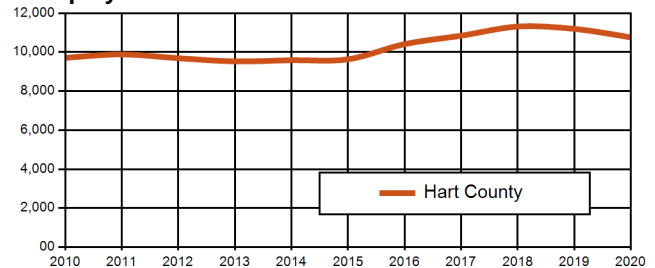
2020 ANNUAL AVERAGES

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Hart	11,373	10,757	616	5.4%
Elbert	7,969	7,418	551	6.9%
Franklin	9,892	9,308	584	5.9%
Madison	12,972	12,302	670	5.2%
Hart Area	42,206	39,785	2,421	5.7%
Georgia	5,072,155	4,741,191	330,964	6.5%
United States	160,742,000	147,795,000	12,947,000	8.1%
Anderson, SC	90,877	85,475	5,402	5.9%
Oconee, SC	35,056	33,180	1,876	5.4%

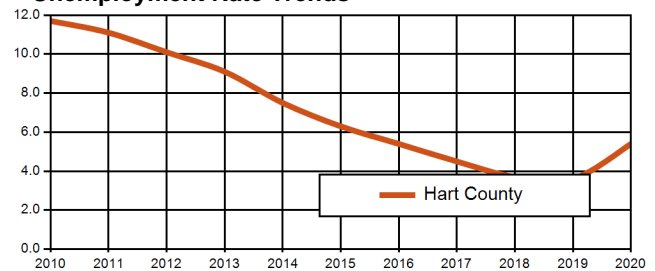
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

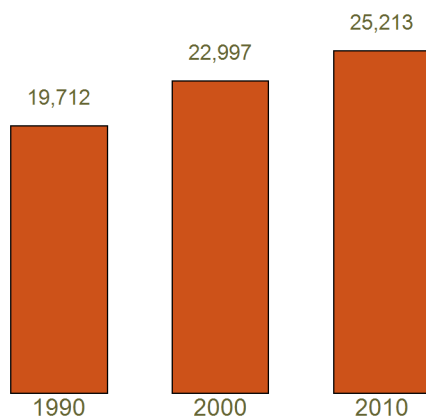
Employment Trends



Unemployment Rate Trends



Population Estimates



Population

	2010 Census	2020 Rank	2020 Estimate	% Change 2010-2020	2025 Projected*	% Change 2010-2025
Hart	25,213	72	26,406	4.7	26,461	4.9
City of Hartwell	4,469					
Hart Area	352,980		384,070	8.8	398,332	12.8
Georgia	9,687,653		10,710,017	10.6	11,335,283	17.0
United States	308,745,538		329,484,123	6.7	349,439,199	13.2
Anderson, SC	185,414		204,353	10.2	208,820	12.6
Oconee, SC	71,983		80,015	11.2	87,500	21.6

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, *Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

MARK BUTLER - COMMISSIONER, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary Aids and Services Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities

Workforce Statistics & Economic Research; E-mail: Workforce_Info@gdol.ga.gov Phone: (404) 232-3875

Industry Mix - 1st Quarter of 2021

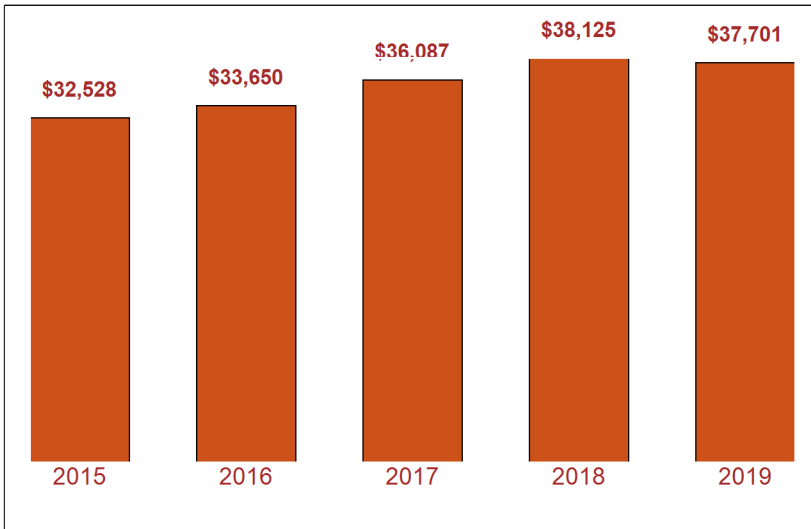
INDUSTRY	Hart				Hart Area			
	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE
Goods-Producing	97	2,187	34.2	898	465	6,758	29.0	850
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	14	218	3.4	711	48	467	2.0	710
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	*	*	*	17	170	0.7	1,206
Construction	53	258	4.0	729	226	980	4.2	785
Manufacturing	29	1,708	26.7	940	174	5,143	22.1	863
Food	4	938	14.7	934	9	1,243	5.3	890
Textile Mills	2	*	*	*	4	43	0.2	995
Textile Product Mills	1	*	*	*	1	*	*	*
Apparel	1	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Wood Product	2	*	*	*	15	152	0.7	702
Printing and Related Support Activities	1	*	*	*	3	*	*	*
Chemical	2	*	*	*	5	67	0.3	1,166
Plastics and Rubber Products	3	*	*	*	7	318	1.4	860
Fabricated Metal Product	4	93	1.5	738	36	646	2.8	809
Machinery	3	*	*	*	10	*	*	*
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	2	*	*	*	4	306	1.3	819
Transportation Equipment	1	*	*	*	9	561	2.4	997
Furniture and Related Product	1	*	*	*	6	*	*	*
Miscellaneous	2	*	*	*	5	*	*	*
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	0	0	0.0	0	58	929	4.0	745
Service-Providing	320	3,009	47.0	661	1,339	11,738	50.4	649
Utilities	5	*	*	*	8	177	0.8	1,413
Wholesale Trade	19	72	1.1	940	110	952	4.1	873
Retail Trade	79	904	14.1	499	316	2,889	12.4	517
Transportation and Warehousing	10	30	0.5	484	55	900	3.9	753
Information	6	*	*	*	17	153	0.7	1,336
Finance and Insurance	24	130	2.0	1,083	87	480	2.1	1,160
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	8	25	0.4	885	32	80	0.3	733
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	42	244	3.8	891	125	496	2.1	743
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0	0.0	0	9	173	0.7	1,369
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	21	247	3.9	923	97	643	2.8	699
Educational Services	5	31	0.5	396	12	336	1.4	484
Health Care and Social Assistance	30	380	5.9	828	133	1,725	7.4	746
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8	114	1.8	403	21	155	0.7	432
Accommodation and Food Services	35	581	9.1	315	129	2,017	8.7	296
Other Services (except Public Administration)	28	63	1.0	446	94	486	2.1	657
Unclassified - industry not assigned	25	23	0.4	984	94	75	0.3	813
Total - Private Sector	442	5,219	81.6	761	1,804	18,496	79.4	723
Total - Government	29	1,177	18.4	696	133	4,797	20.6	726
Federal Government	6	77	1.2	1,310	27	289	1.2	1,280
State Government	13	159	2.5	733	47	432	1.9	698
Local Government	10	941	14.7	640	59	4,076	17.5	689
ALL INDUSTRIES	471	6,396	100.0	749	1,937	23,292	100.0	723
ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia					329,450	4,374,238		1,198

Note: *Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cannot be released. These data use the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categories. Average weekly wage is derived by dividing gross payroll dollars paid to all employees - both hourly and salaried - by the average number of employees who had earnings; average earnings are then divided by the number of weeks in a reporting period to obtain weekly figures. Figures in other columns may not sum accurately due to rounding. All figures are 1st Quarter of 2021.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. These data represent jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

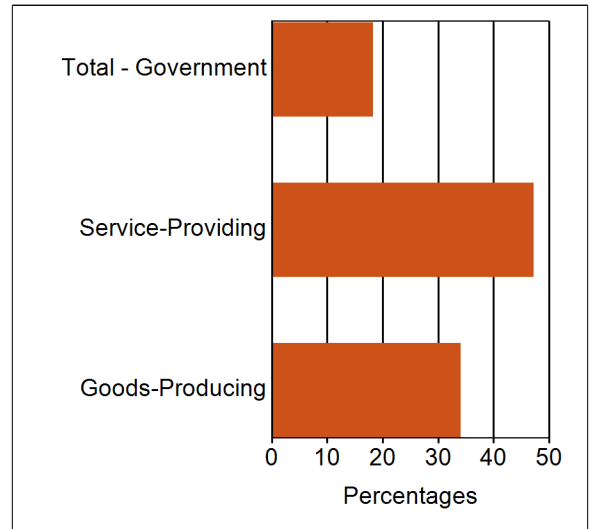
Hart Per Capita Income

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Hart Industry Mix 2021

Source: See Industry Mix data on Page 2.



Top Ten Largest Employers - 2021*

Hart

Hart Electric Membership Corporation
 Ingles Markets, Inc.
 Lake Foods, LLC
 Nestle Purina Petcare Company
 Pharma Tech Industries
 Ritz
 Rose Acre Farms, Inc.
 Royston, LLC
 The Home Depot
 Walmart

*Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state colleges and universities. Data shown for the First Quarter of 2021. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Hart Area

AutoZone, Inc.
 Carry-On Trailer, Inc.
 Lake Foods, LLC
 Mollertech South, LLC
 Nestle Purina Petcare Company
 Pilgrim's Pride Corporation
 Royston, LLC
 St Marys Sacred Heart Hospital, Inc.
 The York Group
 Walmart

COUNTY

Franklin
 Franklin
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Education of the Labor Force

Hart Area

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

	PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE				
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
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Some High School	18.7%	23.8%	22.2%	16.2%	16.1%	19.8%
High School Grad/GED	39.9%	41.4%	37.6%	41.4%	41.1%	37.3%
Some College	16.7%	24.4%	15.9%	17.4%	17.2%	11.3%
College Grad 2 Yr	5.2%	2.6%	7.2%	7.0%	6.2%	1.8%
College Grad 4 Yr	7.5%	1.8%	8.2%	9.5%	8.8%	6.4%
Post Graduate Studies	4.2%	0.0%	3.0%	4.3%	5.1%	5.6%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 - 65+. Some College category represents workers with some college with no degree less than two years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2010 Decennial Census.

High School Graduates - 2020



	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	PRIVATE SCHOOLS*	TOTAL
Elbert	152	--	152
Franklin	248	--	248
Hart	217	--	217
Madison	297	--	297
Hart Area	914	--	914

Note: Public schools include city as well as county schools systems.

* Private schools data is not available for 2020 from Georgia Independent School Association.

Source: The Governor's Office of Student Achievement of Georgia.

Colleges and Universities

Hart Area

Elbert

Elbert County Campus (Satellite campus of Athens Technical College) www.athenstech.edu/

Franklin

Emmanuel College www.ec.edu

Note: The colleges and universities listed include public and private institutions. This list is updated periodically as information becomes available.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Technical College Graduates - 2020*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2018	2019	2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping°	149	128	128	-14.1	0.0
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General	58	38	41	-34.5	7.9
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist°	17	11	15	-35.3	36.4
Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Other°	8	7	7	-12.5	0.0
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician°	66	101	67	53.0	-33.7
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician°	140	150	157	7.1	4.7
Biology Technician/Biotechnology Laboratory Technician°	13	19	9	46.2	-52.6
Business Administration and Management, General°	31	18	77	-41.9	327.8
CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician°	16	18	5	12.5	-72.2
Child Care Provider/Assistant°	76	223	114	193.4	-48.9
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician	3	9	15	200.0	66.7
Commercial Photography°	22	33	13	50.0	-60.6
Computer Installation and Repair Technology/Technician°	139	136	52	-2.2	-61.8
Computer Programming Special Applications°	32	48	20	50.0	-58.3
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General°	154	189	150	22.7	-20.6
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies°	85	87	59	2.4	-32.2
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	23	25	11	8.7	-56.0
Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, General°	30	37	22	23.3	-40.5

Technical College Graduates - 2020*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2018	2019	2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Data Processing and Data Processing Technology/Technician°	27	29	38	7.4	31.0
Dental Assisting/Assistant	10	11	9	10.0	-18.2
Dental Hygiene/Hygienist	12	11	8	-8.3	-27.3
Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician°	39	29	18	-25.6	-37.9
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General°	27	20	9	-25.9	-55.0
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	38	25	39	-34.2	56.0
Electrician°	103	133	81	29.1	-39.1
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)°	129	189	99	46.5	-47.6
Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other	6	9	11	50.0	22.2
Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant°	23	39	11	69.6	-71.8
General Office Occupations and Clerical Services°	13	8	2	-38.5	-75.0
Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician	9	2	8	-77.8	300.0
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/°	98	137	129	39.8	-5.8
Hospitality Administration/Management, General°	20	64	26	220.0	-59.4
Hotel/Motel Administration/Management°	3	15	7	400.0	-53.3
Human Resources Management and Services, Other°	2	11	9	450.0	-18.2
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology°	23	24	40	4.3	66.7
Interior Design°	42	47	15	11.9	-68.1
Legal Assistant/Paralegal	10	14	6	40.0	-57.1
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	47	54	65	14.9	20.4
Lineworker°	59	62	61	5.1	-1.6
Machine Shop Technology/Assistant°	32	81	25	153.1	-69.1
Marketing/Marketing Management, General	17	8	8	-52.9	0.0
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, Other	7	7	8	0.0	14.3
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder°	11	1	15	-90.9	1400.0
Medical Office Assistant/Specialist°	7	10	9	42.9	-10.0
Medical/Clinical Assistant	66	44	51	-33.3	15.9
Medium/Heavy Vehicle and Truck Technology/Technician°	47	72	27	53.2	-62.5
Meeting and Event Planning°	9	14	7	55.6	-50.0
Network and System Administration/Administrator°	28	36	32	28.6	-11.1
Pharmacy Technician/Assistant	8	7	8	-12.5	14.3
Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist°	14	12	9	-14.3	-25.0
Physical Therapy Technician/Assistant	17	17	15	0.0	-11.8
Professional, Technical, Business, and Scientific Writing°	6	2	4	-66.7	100.0
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	14	16	15	14.3	-6.3
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	54	53	54	-1.9	1.9
Selling Skills and Sales Operations°	12	11	2	-8.3	-81.8

Technical College Graduates - 2020*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2018	2019	2020	2018-2019	2019-2020
Social Work, Other°	31	33	29	6.5	-12.1
Surgical Technology/Technologist	16	14	8	-12.5	-42.9
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor°	52	74	79	42.3	6.8
Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant°	21	18	10	-14.3	-44.4
Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design	6	1	4	-83.3	300.0
Welding Technology/Welder°	150	175	67	16.7	-61.7

Definition: All graduates except those listed as technical certificates(°) are diploma and degree graduates. Diploma and degree programs are one to two years in length. Technical certificates are less than a year in length. Duplication may occur due to graduates with multiple awards.

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

*Data shown represents Annual 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.

Georgia Department of Labor Location(s)

Career Center(s)

37 Foreacre Street

Toccoa, GA 30577-3582

Phone: (706) 282 - 4514

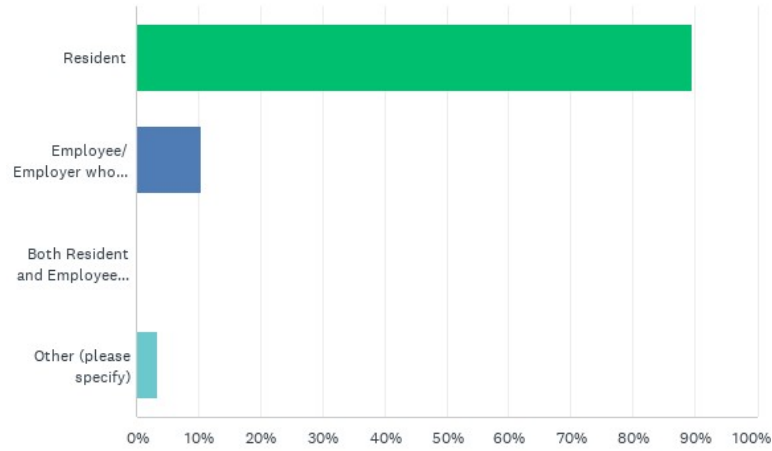
Fax: (706) 282 - 4513

For copies of Area Labor Profiles, please visit our website at: <http://dol.georgia.gov> or contact Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Georgia Department of Labor, 148 Andrew Young International Blvd N.E. Atlanta, GA. 30303-1751. Phone: 404-232-3875; Fax: 404-232-3888 or Email us at workforce_info@gdol.ga.gov

Summary of Comprehensive Plan Survey Results

Q1: I am submitting comments for Bowersville as a:

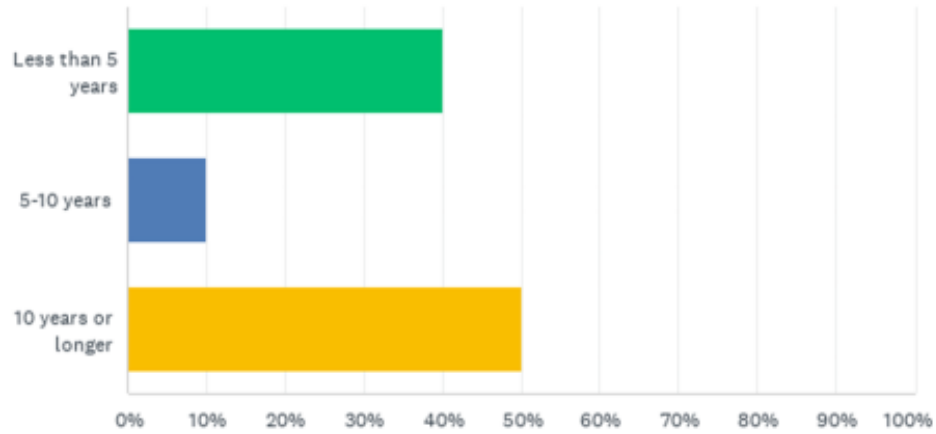
Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



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Q2: If you live and/or work in Bowersville, how long have you been in the area?

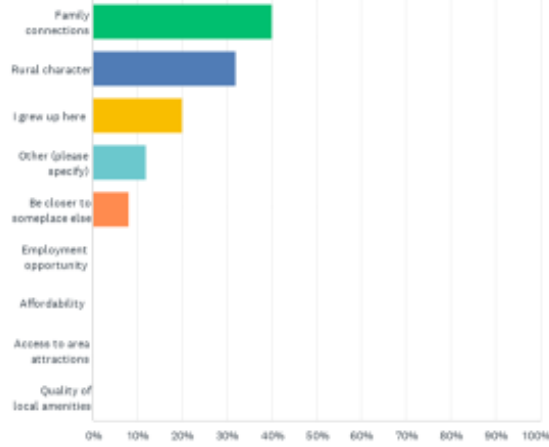
Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



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or Franklin Counties please indicate which of the reasons explain your move.

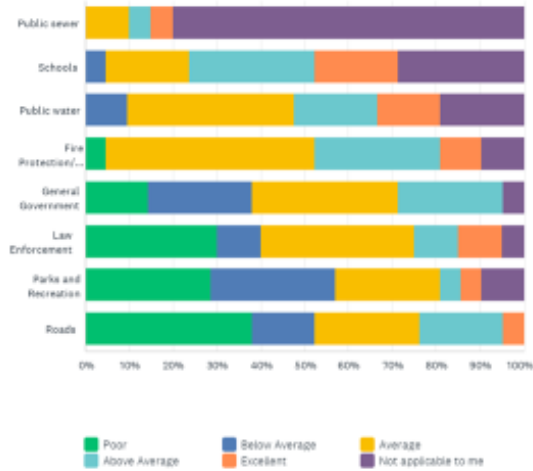
Answered: 25 Skipped: 5



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the following public services. Note: It is understood some of these services do not come from the City.

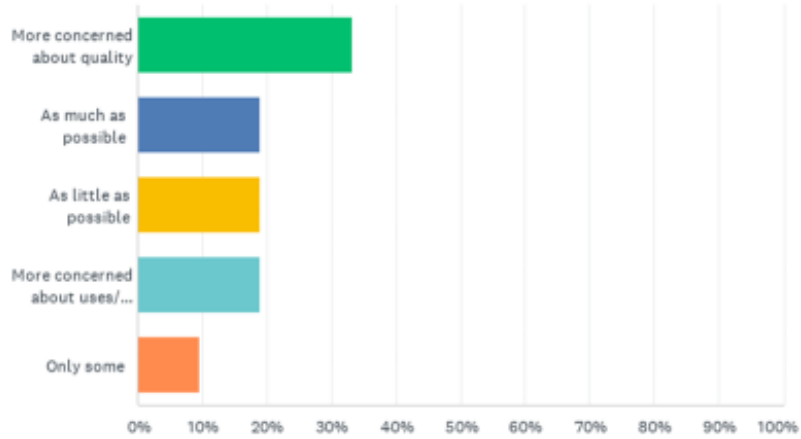
Answered: 21 Skipped: 9



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directed inside, or immediately around, the city limits of Bowersville? (Choose one)

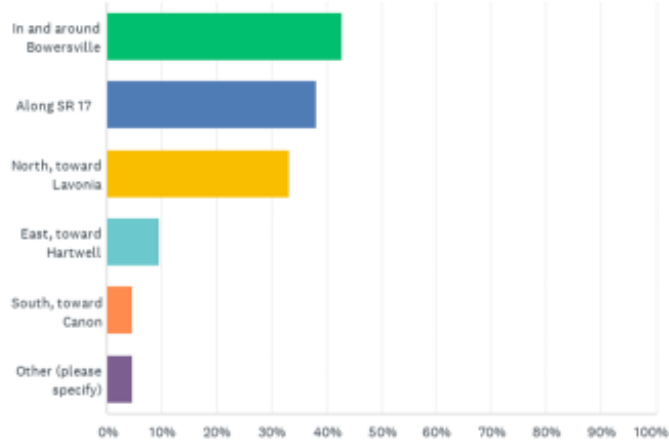
Answered: 21 Skipped: 9



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Q6: Any policies or capital investments to try and lure growth and development should be directed toward _____.

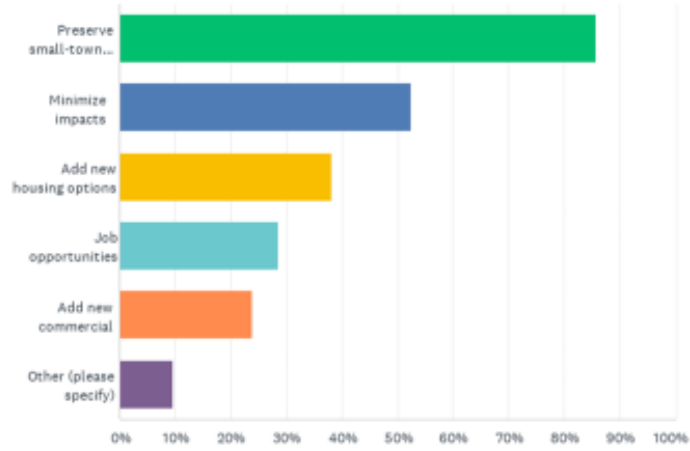
Answered: 21 Skipped: 9



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Q7: My priorities regarding any growth and development would be _____. (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 21 Skipped: 9



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

Meeting Sign-in Sheets

CITY OF BOWERSVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
COMMITTEE MTG./ PUBLIC FORUM

Community Center ~ 7:00 PM – Thursday, 8/19/21

Please Sign In

Name

Christie Simpson

Ted Seagr

Kimberly Walker
Kimberly Butler

Debby Walker

Melissa Holloway

Britt Manley

Jennifer Vaughn

Julie Brown

Janet Dorn

Brandee Ellison

Name

Matthew Butler

CITY OF BOWERSVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
COMMITTEE MTG./ PUBLIC FORUM

Community Center ~ 7:00 PM – Thursday, 9/16/21

Please Sign In

Name

Name

Matt Butler
Kimberly S. Butler
Alicia Barnett

Quality Community Objectives Assessment

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to its fullest potential. This assessment should be used a tool by a community to compare how it is progressing toward the sustainable and livable objectives, but no community will be judged on its progress. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles. A majority of positive responses for a particular objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. Negative responses may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives. Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective it may consider this assessment as a means of monitoring progress towards achievement.

1. Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

Bowersville participates in/coordinates activities with the local Chamber of Commerce and the joint Industrial Development Authority as part of ongoing efforts to support economic expansion in Hart and Franklin Counties. The Town also maintains contacts with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the State for pursuit of assistance and outside funding opportunities in support of economic development opportunities.

2. Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

The Town of Bowersville works with Hart County to monitor and enforce policies related to State Vital Areas, National Wetland Inventory (FIRM) data and other applicable environmental features for the protection of sensitive areas. The Town also maintains contact with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to work for the protection and promotion of cultural resources in the area as needed.

3. Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

There is a limited application of land use and development regulations throughout Hart and Franklin Counties. However, through this planning process, ongoing efforts to update area mapping, and regular communication with Hart County, the Town of Bowersville works to ensure

local development policies support sustainable development where possible that enables economic growth while managing local resources, utilities and infrastructure.

4. Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

Through this planning process, ongoing coordination and contracts with Hart County and Franklin County emergency responders, and through regular communication with Hart County, the Town of Bowersville works to ensure the community is properly poised to prevent, manage and respond to growth pressures and natural and man-made hazards.

5. Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

Through this and ongoing planning practices the Town of Bowersville is working to preserve and build upon the existing character of the community. The Town will regularly monitor development trends and local land use regulations (for both the Town and Hart County) to ensure all is being done to maintain the rural, small-town sense of community that defines Bowersville.

6. Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

Bowersville actively participates in the Hart County Service Delivery Strategy, the Hart County SPLOST program, the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, and other appropriate regional organizations. The Town also maintains regular contact with various State Departments to ensure knowledge of, and access to, their programs and resources.

7. Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

Through this and ongoing planning processes, the Town of Bowersville is actively working to monitor local housing needs and work to enforce policies that promote quality, affordable housing options as needed.

8. Transportation Options

Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

Neither the Town of Bowersville nor either of Hart and Franklin Counties has an active, comprehensive transportation planning program. However, all of these local governments do communicate their concerns and issues to the regional GDOT office and all communities do participate in the public involvement process for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as able. Hart County operates a federally sponsored 5311 rural transit program that serves Bowersville, while Franklin County provides these services through private company T and T Transportation. As the region grows additional transportation planning would be considered a benefit, if not a necessity.

9. Educational Opportunities

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

The Town of Bowersville works with the Hart County School Board to ensure access for quality primary and secondary educational facilities and programs for area residents. The Town also works with Hart County, the School Board and other partners to ensure access to viable post-secondary resources such as North Georgia Technical College (Toccoa), the University of Georgia (Athens), and other area educational institutions. In addition, there are several private colleges accessible to Bowersville residents in Franklin Springs (Emmanuel College), Toccoa (Toccoa Falls College) and Demorest (Piedmont College).

10. Community Health

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

The Town of Bowersville works with the St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital (Lavonia) and the Hart County Department of Public Health to ensure access for quality health care facilities and programs for area residents. The Town also works with Hart County and other partners to monitor residents' needs and requests in providing access to these services as the area grows and becomes more suburban.