

City of Commerce Comprehensive Plan

Community Assessment

Technical Appendix

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City of Commerce

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CONTENTS

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY	10
POPULATION	10
Population Trends	10
Population Characteristics	10
Population Projections	11
HOUSING	11
LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMY	12
CHAPTER 1 POPULATION	14
PURPOSE	14
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR POPULATION ANALYSES	14
TOTAL POPULATION – HISTORIC AND CURRENT TRENDS	14
Components of Population Change	15
Population by Subcounty Area (Census Tract)	16
HOUSEHOLDS AND GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION	18
POPULATION PROJECTIONS	19
AGE DISTRIBUTION	20
RACIAL AND ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS	22
INCOME	23
POVERTY STATUS AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INCOME	24
SOURCES OF INCOME	25
CHAPTER 2 HOUSING	26
PURPOSE	26
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING ANALYSES	26
HOUSING UNITS	27
TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS	28
OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY	28
TENURE	29
AGE	30
CONDITION	31
OVERCROWDING	31
COST	32
COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS	33
SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING	34
ANTICIPATED FUTURE TRENDS IN THE HOUSING MARKET	35
INITIAL HOUSING ISSUES TO CONSIDER	36
Housing for the Disabled	36
Accessory Housing Units	37
CHAPTER 3 LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMY	39
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ECONOMIC ANALYSES	39
DATA LIMITATIONS	39
LABOR FORCE AND COMMUTING PATTERNS	39

Regional Labor Force and Economies	39
Commuting Patterns	40
Labor Force by Industry	41
Labor Force by Occupation	43
COMMUTING PATTERNS INTO JACKSON COUNTY	44
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN JACKSON COUNTY	44
Major Employers	46
Manufacturing	47
Wholesale Trade	49
Transportation and Warehousing	49
Retail Trade	49
Accommodation and Food Services	50
Construction	51
Finance and Insurance	51
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	51
Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Service	51
Health Care and Social Assistance	52
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	52
Agriculture and Forestry	52
Government	52
JOB AND LABOR FORCE COMPARISON	53
Industries With More Workers than Jobs in Jackson County	53
Industries with About the Right Mix in 2000: Retail Trade and Manufacturing	53
Industries with Job Surpluses as of 2000	54
WAGES	54
COUNTY EMPLOYMENT FORECAST	56
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES	56
Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce	56
Jackson County Industrial Development Authority	57
Area Attractions	57
Land Available for Industry	58
Existing Industrial Parks and Sites	59
Universities, Colleges, and Technical Schools	59
Economic Development Bond Program	59
Commerce Downtown Development Authority	59
CHAPTER 4 NATURAL RESOURCES	61
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA	61
WETLANDS	61
Defined	61
Functions and Importance	61
Inventory	61
Wetland Regulation	61
Impacts on Wetlands and Additional Regulatory Efforts	63
Wetland Mitigation Banks	63
FLOOD PLAINS	63
GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS	66
RIVERS AND STREAMS	66
WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS	66

SOILS	68
PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS	68
STEEP SLOPES	68
OPEN SPACES AND SCENIC RESOURCES	68
CHAPTER 5 HISTORIC RESOURCES	71
HISTORIC NARRATIVE	71
SURVEY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES	71
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	71
Overview	71
National Register Listings	72
HISTORIC RESOURCES	74
HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS	74
CHAPTER 6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	77
PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW	77
PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	77
Police Department and Corrections	77
Fire and Rescue	79
Emergency Medical Services	79
911 Communications Center/Services	79
E-911 Addressing Services	79
Emergency Management and Homeland Security	81
Animal Control	81
Courts	81
UTILITY-TYPE OPERATIONS	81
Water	81
Wastewater Collection and Treatment	84
Solid Waste Collection and Disposal	86
PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL FACILITIES	86
Parks and Recreation	86
Commerce Civic Center	88
Commerce Cultural Center	88
Senior Center	88
GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES	88
GROUPS, PUBLIC WORKS, AND TRANSPORTATION	89
PLANNING AND ZONING-RELATED FUNCTIONS	89
Land Use Planning	89
Planning Commissions, Zoning Administration and Development Plan Review	89
Geographic Information Systems	89
Building Inspections	89
HEALTH, EDUCATION, WELFARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES	89
Public and Environmental Health	89
Hospitals	90
Public Schools	90
Libraries	92
Housing Authority	93
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	93

Chamber of Commerce	93
Downtown Development Authority	93
CHAPTER 7 TRANSPORTATION	94
AIR TRANSPORTATION	94
WATER TRANSPORTATION	94
RAILROADS	94
TRUCKING FACILITIES	94
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	95
PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION	95
Existing Facilities	95
Northeast Georgia Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan	96
PARKING FACILITIES	96
TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE CONNECTIONS	96
DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR ROADS	98
Interstate 85	98
U.S. Highways	98
SR 15 ALT.	98
SR 98	98
SR 326	99
SR 59	99
SR 334	100
Steve Reynolds Industrial Boulevard	100
Steven Tanger Boulevard	100
Bana Road	100
Hospital Road	100
Mount Olive Road	100
Woods Bridge Road	100
Waterworks Road	100
Ridgeway Church Road	100
Basic Operational Safety Considerations	100
Identified Road Improvement Needs	102
Identified Road Maintenance Needs	102
Concerns and Issues with Roads in Commerce	103
CHAPTER 8 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION	104
INTRODUCTION	104
SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIES	104
INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES	104
Annexation	104
U.S. Highway 441 Corridor	104
Water and Sewer	105
Fire Services to Maysville	105
GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS	106

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1 POPULATION

1.1	Historic Population Trends and Percent Change, 1990-2000 City of Commerce, Jackson County, and State	15
1.2	Population Estimates, July 1, 2000-2008 City of Commerce and Jackson County	15
1.3	Reported Annexation Acreage, 2000 to June 1, 2009 City of Commerce	16
1.4	Population by Selected Census Tract (CT), Jackson County, 2000	18
1.5	Household and Group Quarters Populations, 2000 City of Commerce	18
1.6	Population, Households and Average Household Size by Type of Household, 2000, City of Commerce	19
1.7	Population Projections, 2008-2028 City Commerce and Jackson County	19
1.8	Population by Sex by Age Group, City of Commerce, 2000	20
1.9	Comparison of Age Distribution Commerce 2000 and Jackson County 2000 and 2008	21
1.10	Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2000 City of Commerce and Jackson County	22
1.11	Comparison of Income Measures, 1999 City of Commerce, Jackson County and State of Georgia	23
1.12	Households by Income Grouping, 1999 City of Commerce and Jackson County	24
1.13	Poverty Status and Public Assistance Income in 1999 Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County	25
1.14	Sources of Household Income, 1999 City of Commerce	25
CHAPTER 2 HOUSING		
2.1	Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County	27

2.2	Types of Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County	28
2.3	Occupied and Vacant Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County	29
2.4	Owner and Renter Units and Vacancy Rates, 2000 City of Commerce and Jackson County	29
2.5	Tenure of Occupied Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce and Jackson County	30
2.6	Comparison of Age of Housing Units as of 2000 City of Commerce, Jackson County and State	30
2.7	Structural and Plumbing Characteristics of Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce and Jackson County	31
2.8	Overcrowded Housing Units by Tenure, 2000, City of Commerce	31
2.9	Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce, Jackson County and State	32
2.10	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units and Mobile Homes, 2000 City of Commerce, Jackson County and State	32
2.11	Gross Rent, Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce, Jackson County and State	33
2.12	Median Gross Rent, Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000 City of Commerce and Jackson County	33
2.13	Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999 City of Commerce and Jackson County	34
2.14	Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999 and 2005-2007 City of Commerce and Jackson County	34
 CHAPTER 3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
3.1	Annual Average Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment, 2003-2009 Persons 16 Years and Older, Jackson County	40
3.2	Labor Force by Place of Work, 2000 Workers 16 Years and Older, Jackson County	40
3.3	Place of Work by County and Place of Residence, 2000 Workers 16 Years and Older City of Commerce and Jackson County	41

3.4	Employment by Industry, 2000 Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson	42
3.5	Employment by Occupation, 2000 Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson	43
3.6	Workers 16 Years and Older Working in Jackson County by County of Residence, 2000	44
3.7	Establishments and Employment by Commerce Area Zip Codes, 2006	46
3.8	Employment For Week Including March 12 by Key Industry, 2002 Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson	46
3.9	Major Employers in Commerce	47
3.10	Establishments by Industry for Commerce Zip Codes, 2006	48
3.11	Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services Establishments and Employment, 2006, Jackson County	50
3.12	Annual Average Wages per Job, 2005-2007 Jackson County and Selected Geographies	54
3.13	Average Weekly Wages by Industry, 2003 and 2008 Jackson County	55

CHAPTER 6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

6.1	Parks and Recreation Facilities in Commerce	88
6.2	Public School Enrollment by System by Grade, FY 2007 to FY 2009 Commerce Public School System	90
6.3	City of Commerce School Enrollment by School, FY 2007 to FY 2009	92
6.4	Current Library Stock and Existing and Planned Building Inventory, 2009 Commerce Library	92
6.5	Library Level of Service and Projected Populations City of Commerce Library	93

CHAPTER 7 TRANSPORTATION

7.1	Inventory of Parking Spaces in the Downtown by Zone	96
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LIST OF FIGURES

Census Tracts, 2000, Jackson County, with Current Municipal Boundaries	17
Zip Codes Within and Partially Contained in Jackson County	45
Economic Development Structure	57
Industrial Land Zoned in Jackson County	58
Downtown Development Authority Jurisdiction	60
Wetlands	64
Floodplains	65
Water Supply Watersheds	67
Prime Farmland	69
Steeply Sloping Soils	70
Jackson County, 1883	71
Historical Districts	73
Walking Tour of Downtown Commerce	75
Historical Resources and Markers	76
Public Facilities	78
Fire Service Districts	80
Water Lines	83
Sewer Lines	85
Parks and Recreation Facilities	87
School Districts	91
Jackson County Bicycle and Pedestrian Network	97

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

This section of the technical appendix overview a summary of the socio-economic data analysis provided in the technical appendix document. It emphasizes population, housing, and economic data presented in more detail in later chapters.

POPULATION

Population Trends

Commerce increased its total population from 4,844 persons in 1990 to 5,292 persons in 2000, a 9.2 percent increase (see Table 1.1 of data appendix). The estimated year-2008 population of the city is 6,394 persons, an increase of 943 persons in the last eight years (Table 1.2 data appendix). This means that Commerce during the past eight years has more than doubled the population increase it experienced in the 1990s. A substantial share of population growth in Commerce during the last decade can be attributed to annexation of residential areas. Since 2000, Commerce had added approximately 2,359 acres of additional land to the city limits (Table 1.3 data appendix), though a substantial portion of the annexed properties have occurred in nonresidential areas. As of 2009, Commerce encompasses approximately 11.65 square miles (source: Jackson County GIS). Since future annexations cannot be predicted with any certainty, a significant issue for Commerce is whether the city will invest in efforts needed to plan ahead for areas it anticipates annexing into the city limits in the future.

Population Characteristics

Almost all of Commerce's population as of 2000 resided in households; the group quarters population in Commerce in 2000 was only 247 persons, or 4.7 percent of the total population (Table 1.4 data appendix). In 2000, Commerce had a total of 2,051 households and an average household size of 2.46 persons per unit (Table 1.6 data appendix).

Age is an important characteristic of the population. In 2000, Commerce had a substantially higher percentage of its total population (18.7 percent) comprised of seniors (65 years and over) when compared with the county in 2000 (10.4 percent) and 2008 (11.1 percent) (Table 1.9 data appendix). In 2000 Commerce had significantly smaller percentages than the county as a whole in most of the other categories, including smaller shares than the county of high-school age population (14 to 17 years), and the prime labor force ages (25 to 44 and 45 to 64). Besides seniors, the only age group in Commerce that had a larger percent of total population than the county in 2000 was the 18 to 24 age group; these are young adults who are recent entries to the labor force and probably take on relatively low-wage jobs in the city, county and at Banks Crossing. In all, the year 2000 age distribution for Commerce indicates that the city had a higher "dependent" population in 2000 – that is, it had a higher ratio of non-working to working residents in 2000 than compared to Jackson County as a whole.

Compared with Jackson County as a whole in 2000, Commerce's population had a higher percentage of Black or African Americans (14.7 percent versus 7.8 percent for the county as a whole) (Table 1.10 data appendix). On the other hand, Commerce in 2000 had a much smaller percentage of the population that was Hispanic (an ethnic origin, not a race). The racial composition of future populations in Commerce is unlikely to change much; if any changes

occur, they will probably be in the direction of a more homogeneous population (i.e., an increase in the percentage of whites).

With regard to incomes, households in Commerce in 1999 had lower median household incomes than households in Jackson County or the state as a whole (Table 1.11 data appendix); however, somewhat ironically, per capita income in Commerce in 1999 was higher than the county. This reflects smaller household sizes in Commerce and apparently fewer income-producing persons within households in Commerce when compared with Jackson County. For instance, in Commerce in 2000, the average size of non-family households was only 1.35 persons per unit (Table 1.6 data appendix).

In Commerce, more than one-third (37.8 percent) of the households in 2000 had incomes of less than \$25,000, whereas the corresponding figure for the county in 2000 was 30.9 percent. This means that in 2000 there was a significantly higher proportion of lower income households in Commerce than in the county as a whole. However, 9.3 percent of households in Commerce in 2000 had incomes of \$100,000 or more, and that percentage was significantly higher than the county (7.9 percent). Additionally, a majority of the households with public assistance incomes in 1999 in Census Tracts 103 and 104 (the two tracts in which Commerce is located) resided in the City of Commerce. Furthermore, Commerce had 12.9 percent of the total persons with poverty incomes in 1999 in Jackson County (627 of 4,878) (Table 1.13 data appendix). And one of five households in Commerce in 2000 had no incomes at all from any income sources (Table 1.14 data appendix). A large share of lower income households signals greater demands on social services, such as food stamp programs, public or subsidized housing, and community development efforts; it also raises issues of the extent to which city government can mitigate or assist those conditions.

Population Projections

Projections prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. for the countywide roads plan indicates that Commerce will increase its population to a total of 9,186 people in the year 2028 (Table 1.7 data appendix). This means Commerce should anticipate a population increase of 2,792 persons in 2028, an increase of 43.7 percent during the 20-year period from 2008 to 2028. That figure does not necessarily take into account the possibility that Commerce might increase its population further through annexation of residential subdivisions. That, again, underscores the benefit of planning ahead for future annexations, in order to gauge the total impact on the community and its facilities and services.

HOUSING

In 1990, Commerce had 1,724 total housing units (1998 comprehensive plan). Commerce had 2,273 housing units as of 2000, comprising 14 percent of the county's total housing stock and an increase of 549 housing units during the 1990s (Table 2.1 data appendix).

Of the total increase in housing units in Commerce from 1990 to 2000 (a total of 549 housing units), about half (275 units) were detached, single-family, 153 were mobile or manufactured homes, and less than 100 were attached or other (multi-family) housing types. As of 2000, Commerce's housing stock had higher percentages of single-family detached and attached/other unit types when compared with Jackson County's housing stock in 2000, but a significantly lower percentage of mobile or manufactured homes.

Commerce had a high housing vacancy rate in 2000, nearly approaching 10 percent (Table 2.3 data appendix). Almost two-thirds (64.6 percent) of the total housing units in the city in 2000 were owner-occupied, with about one-third (35.4 percent) renter-occupied (Table 2.5 data appendix). The vacancy rate was much higher for renter-occupied units (12.4 percent) than for owner-occupied units (3.3 percent) (Table 2.4 data appendix). It should be acknowledged here that some vacancy rate for housing units is desirable; if there were no vacant homes, there would be no mobility in terms of housing choice – people could not move into the community and those already in the community would not be able to change housing if they desired, when no homes are vacant. Therefore, it is healthy and appropriate to have some vacancy rates. The rental vacancy rate in Commerce in 2000, while apparently high, is not considered to be out of the ordinary.

Commerce's housing stock is much older than Jackson County's as a whole. As of the year 2000, more than one-third (38.1 percent) of the city's housing stock was built before 1960 (Table 2.6 data appendix), and about 16 percent (359 homes) were constructed prior to 1939. That figure underscores the historic significance of Commerce's housing stock. This may mean that Commerce's neighborhoods have significant potential for designation as residential historic districts. Finally, the older housing stock means that Commerce may witness an increasing number of demolition of older homes which are substandard, dilapidated, or perhaps obsolete due to size or configuration. Conditions such as overcrowding or units lacking plumbing or kitchen facilities are not significant housing issues in Commerce.

With regard to value, from census sample statistics, more than two-thirds (68.1 percent) of Commerce's housing stock in 2000 was valued at less than \$100,000 (Table 2.9 data appendix). Commerce's occupied housing stock as of 2000 also had much smaller percentage of mid-priced and higher priced housing than the county or the state as a whole. The median value for all owner-occupied housing units in 2000 was \$74,000 for Commerce, \$89,900 for Jackson County, and \$100,600 for the state of Georgia as a whole. The values of mobile homes in Commerce were very low in 2000 (Table 2.10 data appendix). The majority of renter-occupied housing units in Commerce with cash rent in 2000 rented for between \$500 and \$749 a month (Table 2.11 data appendix), and rents in Commerce averaged higher than the county as a whole in 2000 (\$528 in Commerce versus \$501 in Jackson County) (Table 2.12 data appendix).

Relating closely to the discussion of household incomes in Chapter 2 of this summary report, a significant share of low-income households (and households with no incomes at all) means that there is a significant share of households that are burdened in terms of making payments for housing. Almost one in every four owner-occupied households (23.8 percent) in Commerce in 2000 were considered "cost burdened" or "severely cost burdened" (Table 2.13 data appendix). "Cost burdened" is defined as paying more than 30 percent of a household's income for housing, and "severely cost burdened" is defined as paying more than 50 percent of a household's income for housing. Not surprisingly, cost burdens are greater for renter-occupied households. In 2000, nearly one-third (32.1 percent) of all renter-occupied households were considered "cost burdened" or "severely cost burdened" (Table 2.14 data appendix).

LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMY

Slightly more than 4 of every 10 working residents (41.6 percent) of Jackson County worked within the county in 2000. Stating the obverse, the vast majority of working residents of Jackson County commuted out of the county for work in 2000. The largest single location of jobs outside

Jackson County for its working residents in 2000 was Athens-Clarke County, with almost 16 percent of all workers (Table 3.2 data appendix). The City of Commerce was second only to Jefferson of all municipalities in the county, with nearly half (48.9 percent) of its resident labor force working in Jackson County. More than one-quarter of working residents of Commerce worked within the City of Commerce in 2000 (Table 3.3 data appendix).

Manufacturing employed about one of every five working residents in Jackson County (21.3 percent), Commerce (19.7 percent), and Jefferson (21.0 percent) in 2000. Employment in retail trade was significant for Commerce's resident labor force in 2000, with a 14.4 percent share of the total city resident labor force (Table 3.4 data appendix).

The labor force division by occupation in Commerce as of 2000 is shown in Table 3.5 of the data appendix. If one adds together all of the service-related occupations, plus management and sales and service occupations, more than two-thirds (68.1 percent) of Commerce's working residents in 2000 fell into the non-blue-collar category.

Employment data specifically for the City of Commerce are quite limited and dated (year 2002). The data appendix refers to some data available by zip code – Commerce is partially located within two zip codes, 30529 and 30530. In 2002, Commerce had 1,331 employees, constituting nearly one-half (45.1) of total retail employment in the county. That same year there were 648 employees in the health care industries, comprising a whopping 83.8 percent of all employment in health care industries in Jackson County that year. In particular, BJC Medical Center employed 411 persons in the health care industry (Table 3.9 data appendix). Of the 12 Zip Codes within or partially contained within Jackson County in 2006, Commerce (30529) led the way in terms of the total number of these types of establishments, with 34 (Table 3.10 data appendix).

Manufacturing is also significant in Commerce; in 2002, there were 546 manufacturing jobs in Commerce, representing 12.6 of all manufacturing employment in the county. Major manufacturing employers in Commerce include Baker & Taylor Books (500 employees), Roper Pump Company (200 employees), Southeast Toyota Distributors (163 employees), and Huber Engineered Woods (153 employees) (Table 3.9 data appendix). Accommodation and food services establishments in Jackson County are concentrated most heavily in the 30529 (Commerce) Zip Code, which includes even more lodging and accommodation establishments in Banks Crossing outside of Commerce (in Banks County).

CHAPTER 1 POPULATION

PURPOSE

This analysis provides an inventory and assessment of trends in population growth and in the demographic characteristics of the population. This information will assist the city in determining community service and infrastructure needs, employment opportunities, and housing needed to support the existing and future population. The information gathered in this inventory is assessed to identify significant trends, issues, and opportunities with regard to the local population and its characteristics.

The city can also use the information gathered in this analysis to determine whether the growth trends identified are desirable for the community and whether alternatives for managing or redirecting these trends should be considered. Such an assessment can result in the development of population-specific needs and goals that specify an appropriate rate of growth, and an implementation strategy for managing the community's growth throughout the planning period.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR POPULATION ANALYSES

Local planning requirements require, at minimum, for the community assessment to include the following:

(a) Population. Identify trends and issues in population growth and significant changes in the demographic characteristics of the community, including:

Total Population. Evaluate how the total population of the community has changed in recent years, what is projected for the future, and how the community compares, in terms of growth rate, to other areas.

Age Distribution. Evaluate the community's age groupings and how these are projected to change over time. Identify implications for the community.

Race and Ethnicity. Evaluate the community's racial and ethnic composition, how it is changing, and how it compares to neighboring communities. Identify implications these future trends will have for the community.

Income. Evaluate income levels, income distribution and poverty levels in the community and how these have changed and are expected to change over time.

TOTAL POPULATION – HISTORIC AND CURRENT TRENDS

Historic population trends are provided in Table 1.1 for Commerce, Jackson County, nearby counties and the state. Jackson County's decennial population increase from 1990 to 2000 was a substantial 38.6 percent, far greater than the state. The City of Commerce's population increased more modestly than the county's population increase from 1990 to 2000, at 9.2 percent.

**Table 1.1
Historic Population Trends and Percent Change, 1990-2000
City of Commerce, Jackson County, and State**

	1990 (Census)	2000 (Census)	% Change 1990-2000
City of Commerce	4,844	5,292	9.2%
Jackson County	30,005	41,589	38.6%
State of Georgia	6,478,149	8,186,453	26.4%

Sources: 1990 and 2000 figures and 1990-2000 percent change from *The 2002 Georgia County Guide, 21st Ed.*, edited by Susan R. Boatright and Douglas C. Bachtel (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, October 2002).

Table 1.2 provides annual estimates of the total population for Commerce and Jackson County from 2000 to 2008. While Commerce’s population increased by only 448 persons between 1990 and 2000, it has increased by almost twice that (943 persons) in the last eight years.

**Table 1.2
Population Estimates, July 1, 2000-2008
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Total Population	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Commerce	5,451	5,376	5,563	5,568	5,797	5,871	6,083	6,323	6,394
Jackson County	41,894	43,631	45,486	46,929	49,347	51,999	55,542	59,254	61,620

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. “Annual Estimates of the Population for Incorporated Places in Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008”. Release Date: July 1, 2009; and “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties of Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008.” Release Date: March 19, 2009.

Components of Population Change

Population changes can be explained in terms of two components: natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths), and net migration (the number of persons moving into the area minus the number of persons moving out of the area). In addition, municipalities can add to their total populations through annexation (the incorporation of additional land containing population). Table 1.3 provides a summary of acreage annexed into Commerce from 2000 through June 2009. The annexation data reported by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs do not indicate the land use annexed or planned, so one cannot conclude with precision just how much annexation has contributed to Commerce’s population increase over the years. Population increase through annexation has apparently been significant, however.

**Table 1.3
Reported Annexation Acreage, 2000 to June 1, 2009
City of Commerce**

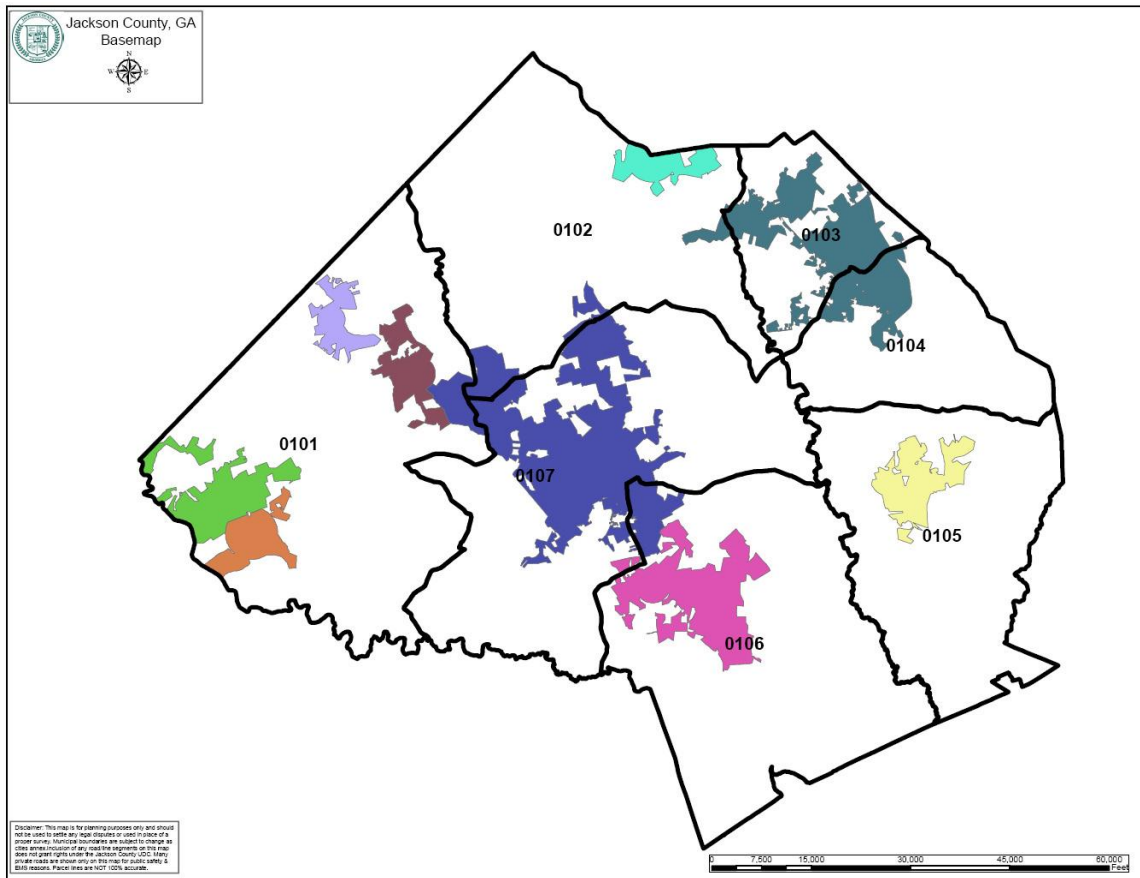
Year Effective	Total Acreage of Annexations Reported
2000	123.19
2001	0.06
2002	20.00
2003	96.21
2004	985.41
2005	728.02
2006	272.22
2007	109.96
2008	16.61
2009	8.02
Total	2,359.7

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2009.

As a city annexes land, its service population (including employees and residents) increases, and there is a change in service provision from the county to the city. The annexation of land can have a remarkable impact on public facility and service provision. Therefore, future annexations can be one of the more important considerations when planning for the long-term future of a municipality. Since future annexations cannot be predicted, it is difficult to plan ahead for them. One method of assisting with that uncertainty is to develop policies or a plan for future municipal expansion; such a plan, if prepared, cannot bring certainty to future population projections but could give the city a much better idea of what its future population, employment, and service needs will be. Therefore, one important issue arising from this analysis is whether Commerce should prepare an annexation plan or provide a future “sphere of influence” within which it is anticipated annexations will occur during the 20-year planning horizon.

Population by Subcounty Area (Census Tract)

In addition to understanding population trends within the city itself, it is also useful to look at the distribution of the population in the county via subareas or parts of the county surrounding the City of Commerce. This is accomplished by the U.S. Census Bureau with what is termed “Census Tracts,” for which detailed decennial statistics are compiled and available for the year 2000. A map of census tracts in 2000 in Jackson County is provided for reference. There are seven census tracts, numbered in a clockwise fashion starting in the southwestern part of the county. Three of these Census Tracts are relevant to Commerce. The largest portion of Commerce lies in Census Tract 103, and the southern part of the city is located in Census Tract 104. Commerce has also annexed into Census Tract 102.



Census Tracts, 2000, Jackson County, with Current Municipal Boundaries

Table 1.4 provides the distribution of population by relevant census tracts in 2000. An estimate of municipal versus unincorporated population as of 2000 is also provided. The tracts and their characteristics are further summarized below, as they relate to the City of Commerce.

Census Tract 102 includes only Maysville (part) and (now) small parts of Commerce and Jefferson. It is located in the northwestern part of the county. It abuts Banks County to the north. It had the least amount of city population of all seven tracts (575 in the Jackson County part of Maysville) in 2000. Only 10 percent of the county’s total population resided in this census tract in 2000.

Census Tract 103 is located in northernmost Jackson County abutting Banks County to the north. Approximately half or more of its land area is comprised of the City of Commerce (the northern two-thirds of the city). U.S. Highway 441 bisects this tract. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that about half of Commerce’s population in 2000 resided in this tract (see Table 4). Along with CT 104, this tract had one of the highest percentages of incorporated population (in Commerce).

Census Tract 104 is northeastern Jackson County and contains the southernmost one-third of Commerce. U.S. Highway 441 bisects this tract. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that about half of Commerce’s population in 2000 resided in this tract (see Table 4). Along with

CT 103, this tract had one of the highest percentages of incorporated population (in Commerce). However, this tract comprised the smallest share of total county population in 2000, at 9.7 percent.

**Table 1.4
Population by Selected Census Tract (CT), Jackson County, 2000**

	CT 102	CT 103	CT 104	County Total
Total Population in Tract	4,228	4,185	4,022	41,589
% of County Total Pop.	10.2	10.1	9.7	100%
Population in Households	4,221	3,917	4,022	40,780
Group Quarters Population	7	268	0	809
Est. Population within Cities	575	2,726	2,725	15,973
Est. Unincorporated Pop.	3,653	1,459	1,297	25,616
% Unincorporated Pop.	86.4	34.9	32.2	61.6

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

HOUSEHOLDS AND GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION

The total population is divided into those that live in households and those that live in group quarters. The vast majority of residents of Commerce resided in households in 2000, as indicated in Table 1.5. The group quarters population was 247 persons in 2000. Though group quarters populations can include those living in correctional institutions and college dormitories, among others, Commerce’s group quarters population in 2000 resided in nursing homes and other institutions (Census 2000, SF1, Table P37).

**Table 1.5
Household and Group Quarters Populations, 2000
City of Commerce**

Type of Population	2000	%
Household Population	5,045	95.3
Group Quarters Population	247	4.7
Total Population	5,292	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Table P16, P37.

A household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. Households are further classified as “family” households (i.e., related by blood or marriage) and “non-family” households (i.e., unrelated persons). The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as “a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.” The numbers and types of households are important because they reflect the needs for housing units and have implications for the appropriate types of housing to provide in the future.

Table 1.6 shows data that distinguish the household population and households between family and nonfamily types. More than two-thirds of the total household population in Commerce in 2000 was classified as family households. As is typically found, the size of family households in 2000 was significantly larger than non-family households in Commerce. In fact, the average

family size was more than twice the average size of a non-family household in Commerce in 2000, as indicated in Table 1.6. These figures, to the extent they continue into the future, are quite significant in terms of housing needs. While the vast majority of new home need to accommodate families (typically three or more persons), there is a significant share of future households (approximately 3 of 10 households) that will need units appropriate for one or two persons only.

**Table 1.6
Population, Households and Average Household Size
by Type of Household, 2000, City of Commerce**

Type of Household	Population	Households	% of Total Households	Average Household Size, 2000 (Persons per Unit)
Family	4,211	1,433	69.9	2.94
Non-family	834	618	30.1	1.35
Total	5,045	2,051	100.0	2.46

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Tables P15, P17, P26, P31, P32, P33,

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The City of Commerce’s comprehensive plan adopted in 1998 (part of a joint comprehensive plan with Jackson County) contains four alternative projections of population. Alternative “D” was the highest projection and used percent change between 1990 and 1994 to determine the projection. According to projection scenario “D,” the city’s population was projected to be 7,102 in the year 2005, 8,515 in the year 2010, and 10,175 in the year 2015. As noted previously, the Census Bureau’s most recent population estimate for Commerce is 6,394 persons in the year 2008. Therefore, Commerce’s current population falls well short of these maximum projections supplied in the 1998 comprehensive plan. The current population, however, exceeds the medium-high projections (Scenario “C”) provided in the 1998 comprehensive plan, which projected only 5,336 persons in the year 2015 in Commerce. Table 1.7 provides population projections to the year 2028 for Jackson County and the City of Commerce, which were prepared by Moreland Altobelli and Associates, Inc. as a part of the Countywide Roads Plan (July Draft, 2009). According to these projections, Commerce will witness significant population growth during the planning horizon.

**Table 1.7
Population Projections, 2008-2028
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Jurisdiction	2008	2013	2015	2018	2023	2028	2000 - 2028 Percentage Growth	2000 -2028 Average Annual Growth Rate
Commerce	6,575	7,161	7,431	7,836	8,511	9,186	73.58%	2.63%
Jackson County	61,620	68,980	72,531	77,858	86,736	95,614	129.90%	4.64%

Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. July 2009. Draft Countywide Roads Plan, Table 25.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age is among the most important dimensions of the population. There can be vast differences in the needs of children versus the elderly. Age has a relationship to the labor force – workers include the population ages 16 years and over through retirement age and sometimes beyond. Age has important relationships to housing and can help predict likely first-time homebuyers, renters, owners of second homes, etc. Age can also affect the political situation: for instance, in places where there is a large percentage of seniors, they sometimes vote down bond referendums for schools.

The relationship of the age of population to the needs for community facilities and services is also very important. For instance, a high senior population often translates into a need for health care and nursing and personal care homes. On the other hand, a city with many children signals a need for schools, day care centers, and playgrounds. Table 1.8 provides classifications of the population by sex by age in 2000 for the City of Commerce.

**Table 1.8
Population by Sex by Age Group, City of Commerce, 2000**

Age Group	Males	Females	Total Population	% of Total Population
Under 5 years	177	163	340	6.4
5 to 9 years	182	156	338	6.4
10 to 14 years	154	170	324	6.1
15 to 17 years	102	91	193	3.6
18 and 19 years	64	65	129	2.4
20 years	34	31	65	1.2
21 years	41	34	75	1.4
22 to 24 years	110	99	209	4.0
25 to 29 years	193	176	369	7.0
30 to 34 years	182	183	365	6.9
35 to 39 years	162	205	367	6.9
40 to 44 years	168	164	332	6.3
45 to 49 years	169	175	344	6.5
50 to 54 years	159	188	347	6.6
55 to 59 years	106	168	274	5.2
60 and 61 years	44	47	91	1.7
62 to 64 years	76	68	144	2.7
65 and 66 years	30	54	84	1.6
67 to 69 years	64	77	141	2.7
70 to 74 years	70	120	190	3.6
75 to 79 years	65	130	195	3.7
80 to 84 years	44	130	174	3.3
85 years and over	47	155	202	3.8
Total	2,443	2,849	5,292	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Table P12.

Table 1.9 provides a comparison of age distribution for Commerce in 2000 with Jackson County in 2000 and 2008. Municipal data are published by the Census Bureau for small cities like Commerce. The 2008 data for the county, however, reveal more general trends which may apply in Commerce.

In 2000, Commerce had a substantially higher percentage of its total population comprised of seniors (65 years and over) when compared with the county in 2000 and 2008. Given that elderly population has increased in Jackson County during the past decade, it is likely that about one in every five residents of Commerce is now retirement age.

**Table 1.9
Comparison of Age Distribution
Commerce 2000 and Jackson County 2000 and 2008**

Age Grouping	City of Commerce 2000	Jackson County 2000	Jackson County 2008
Under 5 Years	6.4%	7.3%	8.4%
5 to 13 Years	12.4%	13.7%	13.3%
14 to 17 Years	3.7%	5.6%	5.6%
18 to 24 Years	9.0%	8.7%	7.7%
25 to 44 Years	27.1%	31.8%	32.2%
45 to 64 Years	22.7%	22.5%	21.7%
65 Years and Older	18.7%	10.4%	11.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Selected Age Groups and Sex for Counties in Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008." Release Date: May 14, 2009. City data from Table 1.8.

Commerce in 2000 had significantly smaller percentages than the county as a whole in most of the other categories, including smaller shares than the county of high-school age population (14 to 17 years), and the prime labor force ages (25 to 44 and 45 to 64). Besides seniors, the only age group in Commerce that had a larger percent of total population than the county in 2000 was the 18 to 24 age group; these are young adults who are recent entries to the labor force and probably take on relatively low-wage jobs in the city, county and at Banks Crossing. In all, the year 2000 age distribution for Commerce indicates that the city had a higher "dependent" population in 2000 – that is, it had a higher ratio of non-working to working residents in 2000 than compared to Jackson County as a whole.

With regard to the anticipated age characteristics of future populations in the city and their implications, the availability of "starter" type housing built in Jackson County during the last decade has made the county attractive to first-time home buyers who are also starting families, thus bringing in their young children (0-5 years). Although that is not necessarily evident for Commerce as shown in the data above, this trend could affect enrollments at the Commerce public school system. The same is generally true for the 5 to 13 years age group; because Jackson County is attractive to first-time home buyers, many of whom have elementary and middle school-age children, there is every reason to believe that this age group will continue to increase in the future in Jackson County. However, again, whether those county trends hold are likely to hold Commerce in the future is unclear.

The age 14-to-17 and 18-to-24 age groups represent the high-school age population and the youngest segment of the labor force. Although retirement-age people are increasingly taking entry-level, lower-paying jobs, it is this segment of the population that will supply the labor force for retail and service jobs in the area. The absolute numbers of people in these age categories have increased in Jackson County from 2000 to 2008, but in terms of percentage of the total population, they have remained steady or decreased. Commerce has a smaller share than the county in the 14-to-17 age category but a larger share than the county in the 18-to-24 age category as of 2000. A decline in the percentage of total population in the 18-to-24 age group in the future would not be surprising, given that many persons in this age category will graduate from high school and go on to attend college somewhere outside the county. However, Commerce may retain its percent share in this category because of the significant number of jobs available in the vicinity, including Banks Crossing.

The 25 to 44 age group represents the prime working-age population. This demographic group includes first time home buyers, as well as, households that are upgrading housing for the first or second time. In Commerce, this group makes up a smaller proportion of total population than it did in the county in 2000. The trend in Jackson County has been toward an increase in the proportion of total population in this age category, but it is uncertain whether that has held true or will hold true for Commerce in the future.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1.10 shows the distribution of the total population by race for the year 2000 in Commerce and Jackson County. It also shows persons of Hispanic origin. Compared with Jackson County as a whole in 2000, Commerce’s population had a higher percentage of Black or African Americans (14.7 percent versus 7.8 percent for the county as a whole). The city also had a much lower percent of Hispanics and Latinos than the county as a whole in 2000 (1.6 percent in the city versus 7.7 percent for the county as a whole). The racial composition of future populations in Commerce is unlikely to change much; if any changes occur, it will probably be in the direction of a more homogeneous population (i.e., an increase in the percentage of white alone).

Table 1.10
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2000
City of Commerce and Jackson County

Race	City of Commerce		Jackson County	
	2000	% of Total	2000	% of Total
White alone	4,399	83.1%	37,506	90.2%
Black or African American alone	780	14.7%	3,257	7.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	8	0.2%	77	0.2%
Asian Alone	26	0.5%	417	1.0%
Other races and two or more races	79	1.5%	332	0.8%
Total	5,292	100%	41,589	100%
Hispanic Origin*	85	1.6%	3,201	7.7%

*Note: Hispanic origin is not a race, but an ethnic origin. It is therefore not included in the percentage of distribution by race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Table P3.

INCOME

Table 1.11 provides a comparison of Commerce, Jackson County and the state in 1999 in terms of various income measures. The median household income takes into account both family and non-family incomes. A median rather than “mean” is used as the reported average, since median numbers are not skewed by a few very large household incomes.

Table 1.11
Comparison of Income Measures, 1999
City of Commerce, Jackson County and State of Georgia

Income in 1999	City of Commerce	Jackson County	State of Georgia
Median Family Income	\$39,615	\$46,211	\$49,280
Median Household Income	\$33,897	\$40,349	\$42,433
Per Capita Income	\$19,270	\$17,808	\$21,154

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (SF3, P53, P77, P80), and *The 2002 Georgia County Guide* (21st Ed.). University of Georgia.

Households residing in Commerce in 1999 had significantly lower median family and median household incomes than Jackson County did, and Jackson County’s figures in turn were lower than the state as a whole. However, per capita income in Commerce was higher than the per capita income in 1999 for the county as a whole; this reflects smaller household sizes in Commerce and apparently fewer income-producing persons within households in Commerce when compared with Jackson County. Table 1.12 provides comparison of households by income groupings in 1999 for the City of Commerce and Jackson County.

From Table 1.12, while many of the percentages for different household income groupings for Commerce and Jackson County are similar, there are some stark contrasts. In Commerce, more than one-third (37.8 percent) of the households in 2000 had incomes of less than \$25,000, whereas the corresponding figure for the county in 2000 was 30.9 percent. This means that in 2000 there was a significantly higher proportion of lower income households in Commerce than in the county as a whole. However, 9.3 percent of households in Commerce in 2000 had incomes of \$100,000 or more, and that percentage was significantly higher than the county (7.9 percent).

**Table 1.12
Households by Income Grouping, 1999
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Income Grouping in 1999	City of Commerce		Jackson County, 1999	
	Households	Percent of Total Households	Households	Percent of Total Households
Less than \$10,000	248	12.0%	1,623	10.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	193	9.3%	1,013	6.7%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	158	7.6%	1,008	6.7%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	184	8.9%	1,012	6.7%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	157	7.6%	1,031	6.9%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	116	5.6%	878	5.8%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	132	6.4%	871	5.8%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	110	5.3%	928	6.2%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	121	5.9%	884	5.9%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	198	9.6%	1,550	10.3%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	134	6.5%	1,718	11.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	121	5.9%	1,328	8.8%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	100	4.8%	584	3.9%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	25	1.2%	205	1.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	36	1.7%	227	1.5%
\$200,000 or more	34	1.6%	169	1.1%
Total Households	2,067	99.9%	15,029	99.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table P52.

POVERTY STATUS AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INCOME

Like with other statistics reported in this analysis, it can be useful to observe income, poverty, and public assistance conditions for various subareas of the county (i.e., Census Tract data). Table 1.13 provides comparisons of income measures in 1999 from the 2000 decennial census, along with data for poverty status and public assistance to households. Commerce had 12.9 percent of the total persons with poverty incomes in 1999 in Jackson County.

Census Tracts 103 and 104 (the Commerce area) had the lowest median household incomes in 1999 of all tracts in Jackson County. Of the persons in CT 103 and 104 with incomes below poverty level, residents of the City of Commerce comprised the majority of such persons (58.7 percent); however, this also means that the remainder (a substantial percentage of 42.3 percent) of impoverished persons resided in unincorporated areas in the two Census Tracts. Hence, poverty in 1999 was more than just a municipal issue. Also, a majority of the households with public assistance incomes in 1999 in Census Tracts 103 and 104 resided in the City of Commerce.

**Table 1.13
Poverty Status and Public Assistance Income in 1999
Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County**

Income in 1999	Commerce	CT 102	CT 103	CT 104	Jackson County
Persons with Income in 1999 Below Poverty Level	627	548	542	527	4,878
Households with Public Assistance Income in 1999	44	71	49	33	430

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Summary File 3. Tables P87 and P64.

SOURCES OF INCOME

Table 1.14 indicates the various sources of income of households in the City of Commerce in 1999. Households may obtain income from one, or more than one, source of income. More than one-fifth of all households in Commerce in 2000 had no earnings from any source, but more than three-quarters of all households had wage or salary income in 2000. The income sources are telling with regard to senior populations, which may live alone or may be living with their offspring or relatives. Almost one-third (30.8 percent) of the total households in Commerce in 2000 had income from social security. Retirement income was also significant (14.3 percent of all households in the city in 2000 with that income source).

**Table 1.14
Sources of Household Income, 1999
City of Commerce**

Source of Income in Past 12 Months	City of Commerce	
	Households, 1999	Percent of Total Households, 1999
No Earnings	425	20.6%
Wage or Salary Income	1,579	76.4%
Self-employment Income	239	11.6%
Interest, Dividends, or Net Rental Income	520	25.2%
Social Security Income	637	30.8%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	122	5.9%
Public Assistance Income	44	2.1%
Retirement Income	296	14.3%
Other Types of Income	347	16.8%
Total Households	2,067	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Summary File 3. Tables P58 through P66.

CHAPTER 2 HOUSING

PURPOSE

The housing analysis provides an inventory of the existing housing stock and an assessment of its adequacy and suitability for serving current and future populations. The assessment considers whether existing housing is appropriate to the needs of residents in terms of quantity, affordability, type and location, and, if not, what might be done to improve the situation.

The state of Georgia, through its local planning requirements, has established a housing goal “to ensure that all residents of the state have access to adequate and affordable housing.” It has also identified a “quality community objective” for “housing opportunities” which suggests that “quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.” This goal and quality community objective provide the policy basis under which the City of Commerce’s housing analyses, policies, and programs are prepared.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING ANALYSES

Local planning requirements require, at minimum, for the community assessment to include the following:

(c) Housing. Use the following factors to evaluate the adequacy and suitability of existing housing stock to serve current and future community needs. If applicable, check for consistency with the Consolidated Plan prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Housing Types and Mix. Evaluate the composition and quality of the community’s housing stock, how it has changed over time, recent trends in the types of housing being provided, and whether there is a good mix of types (including modular, mobile or stick-built), sizes, and multi-family vs. single family throughout the community.

Condition and Occupancy. Evaluate the age and condition of housing in the community as well as the proportion of units that are owner-occupied and renter occupied, plus vacancy rates for owners and renter units.

Cost of Housing. Evaluate the cost of housing in the community, both for owners and renters, in terms of affordability for residents and workers in the community.

Cost-Burdened Households. Evaluate the needs of households that are cost-burdened (paying 30% or more of net income on total housing costs) and severely cost-burdened (paying 50% or more of net income on total housing costs). Also evaluate the relationship of local housing costs and availability to the socioeconomic characteristics of these households, including income, income from social security or public assistance, employment status, occupation, household type, age of householder, household size, race, and unit type.

Special Housing Needs. Evaluate special housing needs in the community (e.g., housing needs of residents who are elderly; homeless; victims of domestic violence; migrant farm workers; persons with mental, physical, or developmental disabilities; persons with

HIV/AIDS; and persons recovering from substance abuse) using information obtained from local service providers on caseloads, waiting lists, etc.

Jobs-Housing Balance. Evaluate housing costs compared to wages and household incomes of the resident and nonresident workforce to determine whether sufficient affordable housing is available within the community to allow those who work in the community to also live in the community. Data on the commuting patterns of the resident and nonresident workforce may assist in determining whether there is a jobs-housing balance issue in the community. Also evaluate any barriers that may prevent a significant proportion of the community's nonresident workforce from residing in the jurisdiction, such as a lack of suitable or affordable housing, suitably zoned land, etc.

HOUSING UNITS

In 1990, Commerce had 1,724 total housing units (1998 comprehensive plan). Table 2.1 provides total housing units in Commerce, selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County in 2000. Commerce had 2,273 housing units as of 2000, comprising 14 percent of the county's total housing stock. This means that Commerce's housing stock increased by a total of 549 housing units during the 1990s. Census Tracts 103 and 104, within which the vast majority of the city limits is located, comprised more than 20 percent of the housing units in the county in 2000. For a map of Census Tracts, see Chapter 1 of this technical appendix.

**Table 2.1
Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County**

Geographic Area	Housing Units	Percent of County Total
City of Commerce	2,273	14.0%
Census Tract 102	1,599	9.9%
Census Tract 103	1,721	10.6%
Census Tract 104	1,770	10.9%
Jackson County	16,226	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF 1, Table H1.

As noted in Chapter 1, Commerce has annexed significant additional lands during the 2000s; therefore, it has a substantially higher number of housing units today than reflected in Table 2.1. The U.S. Census Bureau publishes annual estimates of housing units for counties, but housing unit estimates for municipalities are not available from the U.S. Census Bureau. In Jackson County, there has been a substantial increase in the number of housing units from 2000 to 2007. An estimated 7,117 housing units were added in Jackson County during that seven-year period, representing a 43 percent increase over the year-2000 housing stock. Clearly, Jackson County has witnessed one of the faster paces of homebuilding in Georgia in recent years.

TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS

In 1990, Commerce had 1,296 detached, single-family units, 203 mobile homes, and 225 multi-family housing units. Table 2.2 shows the year-2000 housing stock in Commerce and Jackson County by types of housing units: detached single-family, mobile or manufactured home,¹ and other units which include mostly duplexes and multi-family units. Of the total increase in housing units in Commerce from 1990 to 2000 (a total of 549 housing units), about half (275 units) were detached, single-family, 153 were mobile or manufactured homes, and less than 100 were attached or other (multi-family) housing types. As of 2000, Commerce's housing stock had higher percentages of single-family detached and attached/other unit types when compared with Jackson County's housing stock in 2000, but a significantly lower percentage of mobile or manufactured homes.

Table 2.2
Types of Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County

Geographic Area	Single-Family Detached	% Total	Mobile or Manufactured Home	% Total	Attached/Other Unit Types	% Total	Total Housing Units
City of Commerce	1,571	70.4	356	16.0	303	13.6	2,230
Census Tract 102	803	50.2	765	47.8	31	2.0	1,599
Census Tract 103	1,065	61.9	385	22.3	271	15.8	1,721
Census Tract 104	1,343	75.9	283	16.0	144	8.1	1,770
Jackson County	10,258	63.2	5,003	30.8	965	6.0	16,226

Note: The total housing units in this table does not match the 100 percent count in Table 1.2 due to sampling methods.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF 3, Table H30.

Types of housing units are not indicative, in and of themselves, of household tenure (owner or renter). That is to say, a manufactured home or detached dwelling may be owned or rented. Clearly, for-rent apartments are synonymous with renter-occupied homes, but some attached units can be owner-occupied condominiums.

OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY

Table 2.3 shows the number and percentage of occupied and vacant housing units in 2000 for Commerce, selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County. Commerce had a high vacancy rate in 2000, nearly approaching 10 percent. Of all Census Tracts (not all shown in the table), the highest vacancy rates in 2000 were in Census Tracts 103 and 104, reflecting the high housing unit vacancy rates in the City of Commerce.

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau still uses the term "mobile" home, which is now out of vogue. The more accepted term today is "manufactured" home. When referring to Census statistics, the term "mobile" is used but in other respects the preferred term "manufactured" home is used in this analysis.

**Table 2.3
Occupied and Vacant Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce, Selected Census Tracts, and Jackson County**

Census Tract	Occupied Units	% of Total	Vacant Units	% of Total	Total Units
City of Commerce	2,051	90.2	222	9.8	2,273
Census Tract 102	1,489	93.1	110	6.9	1,599
Census Tract 103	1,558	90.5	163	9.5	1,721
Census Tract 104	1,614	91.2	156	8.8	1,770
Jackson County	15,057	92.8	1,169	7.2	16,226

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF1, Table H3.

Local planning requirements indicate that communities should look at the vacancy rates for owner-occupied and renter-occupied homes. Data specific to those questions is not directly available via year-2000 census statistics but can be derived by cross-tabulating other available data (see Table 2.4). Both the homeowner and renter unit vacancy rates in Commerce were higher than for the county as a whole in 2000.

**Table 2.4
Owner and Renter Units and Vacancy Rates, 2000
City of Commerce and Jackson County
(Housing Units)**

	Total Owner-Occupied Units	Vacant For Sale	Total Owner Units	Owner Occupancy Vacancy Rate	Total Renter-Occupied Units	Vacant for Rent	Total Renter Units	Renter Occupancy Vacancy Rate
Commerce	1,325	45	1,370	3.3%	726	103	829	12.4%
Jackson Co.	11,276	250	11,526	2.2%	3,781	369	4,150	8.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF 1, rates calculated from summations of Tables H4 and H5.

It should be acknowledged here that some vacancy rate for housing units is desirable; if there were no vacant homes, there would be no mobility in terms of housing choice – people could not move into the community and those already in the community would not be able to change housing if they desired, when no homes are vacant. Therefore, it is healthy and appropriate to have some vacancy rates. The rental vacancy rate in Commerce in 2000, while apparently high, is not considered to be out of the ordinary.

TENURE

Tenure means the length of stay of a given household in a dwelling. Generally, owner-occupied households stay longer, while renter-occupied households are by their very nature considered to be shorter in duration. Table 2.5 provides the tenure of occupied housing units as of 2000 in Commerce and Jackson County. These figures indicate that about three of every four households in Jackson County in 2000 were owner occupied. In contrast, Commerce’s occupied housing stock in 2000 was only two-thirds owners and more than one-third renters.

**Table 2.5
Tenure of Occupied Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce and Jackson County
(Occupied Housing Units)**

Jurisdiction	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number of Units	% of Total Occupied Units	Number of Units	% of Total Occupied Units
City of Commerce	1,325	64.6%	726	35.4%
Jackson County	11,283	74.9%	3,774	26.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF1, Table H4.

AGE

Another consideration is the age of housing – if homes are too old, then it may not make good economic sense to upgrade them. Homes built in the 1960s and 1970s tend to be substantially smaller than those constructed in later decades. The age of homes is not in itself an indicator of poor condition. Older homes are sometimes better constructed than newer ones, and the overall condition of homes depends on the amount of upkeep and maintenance by the owners. As homes age, however, more upkeep is needed, and if occupancy goes to renter rather than owner-occupied status, maintenance tends to get deferred.

Table 2.6 provides the age of housing units in Commerce and shows how the age of Commerce’s housing stock compares with Jackson County and Georgia as of 2000.

**Table 2.6
Comparison of Age of Housing Units as of 2000
City of Commerce, Jackson County and State**

Year Structure Built	Commerce Housing Units	Commerce %	Jackson County %	Georgia %
Built 1999 to March 2000	113	5.1%	7.6%	4.0%
Built 1995 to 1998	145	6.5%	16.2%	12.5%
Built 1990 to 1994	177	7.9%	12.3%	11.3%
Built 1980 to 1989	225	10.1%	18.1%	22.0%
Built 1970 to 1979	394	17.7%	15.4%	18.6%
Built 1960 to 1969	326	14.6%	10.4%	12.7%
Built 1950 to 1959	202	9.1%	6.6%	8.6%
Built 1940 to 1949	292	13.1%	4.6%	4.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	356	15.9%	8.8%	5.9%
Total	2,230	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H34.

First, to the extent these sample statistics are accurate, there were 435 units, or about one-fifth of the housing stock in the City of Commerce that was built during the 1990s. Second, Commerce has a comparatively older housing stock than the county or state as a whole. Commerce has a high proportion (about 16 percent) of homes which were constructed in 1939

or earlier. This may mean that Commerce’s neighborhoods have significant potential for designation as residential historic districts. Finally, the older housing stock means that Commerce may witness an increasing number of demolition of older homes which are substandard, dilapidated, or perhaps obsolete due to size or configuration. The median year housing units were built in Commerce, as of 2000, was 1968, while for the county it was 1982 (Census 2000, SF3, Table H35).

CONDITION

Two typical measures of substandard housing conditions are the number of housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities and the number of units lacking complete kitchen facilities. Table 2.7 provides data on the structural and plumbing characteristics of the housing stock in 2000 for the City of Commerce and Jackson County. Generally, these statistics on housing conditions reveal that housing is overall in sound condition, in both the city and county.

**Table 2.7
Structural and Plumbing Characteristics of Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Jackson Co.	Total Housing Units	Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	% of Total Housing Units	Units Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	% of Total Housing Units
Commerce	2,206	24	1.1	9	0.4
Jackson Co.	16,226	194	1.2	176	1.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Tables H47 and H50.

OVERCROWDING

Overcrowding provides an occupancy measure of inadequate housing conditions. An overcrowded housing unit is one that has 1.01 or more persons per room. Severe overcrowding is considered to be occupancy by 1.51 or more persons per room. Table 2.8 shows overcrowded and severely overcrowded housing units in the City of Commerce in 2000 by tenure. This table shows that overcrowding was not a significant problem in Commerce in 2000.

**Table 2.8
Overcrowded Housing Units by Tenure, 2000, City of Commerce**

Occupants per Room	Owner-Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units	Total	Percent of Total Occupied Units
Total Occupied Housing Units	1,322	719	2,041	100%
1.01 to 1.5 occupants per room (overcrowded)	25	16	41	2%
1.51 or more occupants per room (severely overcrowded)	4	5	9	0.4%
Total Overcrowded or Severely Overcrowded Housing Units	29	21	50	2.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 SF3, Table H20.

COST

The cost of housing is one of the most important considerations in this housing analysis. The value and affordability for both renter and homeowner households is examined. First, Table 2.9 shows the range of value for owner-occupied housing units in Commerce and Jackson County in 2000. Percentage shares of each value range for the state’s housing stock are also provided for the year 2000.

Table 2.9
Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce, Jackson County and State

Range of Value (\$)	City of Commerce		Jackson County		Georgia
	Units	%	Units	%	%
Less than \$50,000	198	18.7%	671	9.5%	10.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	524	49.4%	2,494	34.2%	38.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	141	13.3%	1,608	25.8%	24.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	110	10.4%	937	13.3%	14.4%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	61	5.7%	597	10.2%	9.2%
\$300,000 or more	27	2.5%	203	7.0%	3.1%
Total	1,061	100%	6,510	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H74.

Note that the year 2000 statistics reported in Table 2.9 are for “specified” owner-occupied housing units, meaning that it is not the total number of owner-occupied units. More than two-thirds of Commerce’s specified owner-occupied housing units had values of less than \$100,000 in the year 2000. That figure is substantially higher than the county and the state. Commerce’s occupied housing stock as of 2000 also had much smaller percentage of mid-priced and higher priced housing than the county or the state as a whole.

Table 2.10 compares median values for Commerce, Jackson County, and the state in 2000 with regard to the median values of owner-occupied housing units and mobile homes.

Table 2.10
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units and Mobile Homes, 2000
City of Commerce, Jackson County and State

Geographic Area	Median Value for All Owner-Occupied Housing Units (\$)	Median Value for Mobile Homes (\$)
Commerce	\$74,000	\$17,200
Jackson County	\$89,900	\$53,100
Georgia	\$100,600	\$33,600

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Tables H85 and H82.

The median value of all owner-occupied housing units in 2000 was considerably lower than that of the county and state as a whole. Similarly, mobile home values in 2000 were very low.

Table 2.11 shows gross rents of the renter-occupied housing stock in 2000 for the City of Commerce and Jackson County.

**Table 2.11
Gross Rent, Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce, Jackson County and State**

Gross Rent (\$)	City of Commerce		Jackson County		Georgia
	Units	%	Units	%	%
Less than \$250	51	8.5%	360	11.5%	9.3%
\$250 to \$499	201	33.4%	1,195	38.3%	25.5%
\$500 to \$749	309	51.3%	1,325	42.4%	33.2%
\$750 to \$999	36	6.0%	197	6.3%	22.1%
\$1000 or more	5	0.8%	45	1.5%	9.9%
Total Cash Rent Units	602	%	3,122	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H62.

Of the 602 renter-occupied housing units in Commerce with cash rent in 2000, the majority rented for between \$500 and \$749; Commerce had a higher percentage of units in this gross rent range than the county or state in 2000. Commerce had a smaller proportion of rental units renting in the \$250 to \$499 category than Jackson County. Commerce also had slightly lower proportions of rental units in the highest rent range categories as of 2000. The median for renter-occupied housing units in Commerce was \$528, which was actually higher than the county but much lower than the state, as shown in Table 2.12.

**Table 2.12
Median Gross Rent, Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Geographic Area	Median Gross Rent, Renter-Occupied Housing Units (\$)
Commerce	\$528
Jackson County	\$501
Georgia	\$613

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H63.

COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

“Housing is affordable if a low- or moderate income family can afford to rent or buy a decent quality dwelling without spending more than 30 percent of its income on shelter....The increased availability of such housing would enable hard-working and dedicated people—including public servants such as police officers, firefighters, schoolteachers and nurses—to live in the communities they serve....Removing affordable housing barriers could reduce development costs by up to 35 percent; then, millions of hard-working American families would be

able to buy or rent suitable housing that they otherwise could not afford” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2005).²

It is useful to analyze and determine the extent to which owner and renter households are cost burdened or severely cost burdened with regard to housing. “Cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 30 percent of a household’s income for housing, and “severely cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 50 percent of a household’s income for housing. Table 2.13 provides such data for specified owner-occupied housing units in the county in 1999 and 2005-2007.

Table 2.13
Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999
City of Commerce and Jackson County
(Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units)

Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income	City of Commerce	%	Jackson County	%
30 to 49 percent (cost burdened)	48	4.5%	814	12.5%
50 percent or more (severely cost burdened)	206	19.4%	530	8.1%
Total cost burdened and severely cost burdened	254	23.8%	1,344	20.6%
Total Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1,061	100%	6,510	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H97.

Commerce had a higher percentage (23.8 percent) than Jackson County (20.6 percent) of cost burdened and severely cost burdened owner occupancy housing units in 2000. “Severe” cost burden is even more pronounced in Commerce; almost one of every five owner occupied housing unit had a household with a severe cost burden in 2000.

Table 2.14 provides the same type of analysis as 2.13, but for renter-occupied housing units. In Commerce in 2000, almost one of every three renter-occupied household was cost burdened or severely cost burdened. That was comparable but slightly higher than Jackson County.

Table 2.14
Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999 and 2005-2007
City of Commerce and Jackson County
(Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units)

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	City of Commerce	%	Jackson County	%
30 to 49 percent (cost burdened)	103	14.7%	516	14.3%
50 percent or more (severely cost burdened)	123	17.5%	496	13.8%
Total cost burdened and severely cost burdened	226	32.1%	1,012	28.1%
Total Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	703	100%	3,597	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H69.

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. February 2005. *“Why Not in Our Community?” Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing. An Update to the Report of the Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing.*

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Local planning requirements indicate that housing analyses should consider the special needs of the homeless, the elderly, migrant farm workers, persons with disabilities, and others. Data on the senior population and persons with disabilities are described in the population analysis of this technical appendix (see Chapter 1). Jackson County and the City of Commerce do not have significant populations of migrant farm workers. Data are generally not available with regard to specialized populations such as the homeless, the number of persons with HIV/AIDS and victims of domestic abuse.

Generally, there is a correlation between age and disabilities – as age increases, so too does the likelihood or occurrence of disabilities. The implications with regard to housing the senior population and persons with disabilities is fairly self-evident. Persons with significant mental, sensory, or physical disabilities need assistance within and outside the home. This places most of the housing needs for disabled persons in the area of “institutionalized” care.

Housing for the disabled is a very important housing and legal issue. State policy relative to fair housing has been articulated by the Georgia General Assembly in O.C.G.A. 8-3-200. Such state policy includes “safeguard all individuals from discrimination...in the provision of a dwelling because of that individual’s...disability or handicap...” Further, the state intends to “promote the protection of each individual’s interest in personal dignity and freedom from humiliation and the individual’s freedom to take up residence wherever such individual chooses...”

With regard to physical defects, the implication is that dwelling units need to be designed, or retrofitted for access by the disabled. In many instances, disabled persons live in small housekeeping units of 2 to 6 persons, with supervisors or caretakers. In Georgia, the “community living arrangement”³ is a relatively common and desirable form of housing. While living as any other household in a single-family detached dwelling is desirable, some communities regulate them as group homes and do not allow them outright as a permitted use in single-family zoning districts. Providing opportunities for compatible “community living arrangements” in single-family zoning districts is consistent with the state’s quality community objective for “housing choices.”

ANTICIPATED FUTURE TRENDS IN THE HOUSING MARKET⁴

The market for housing is influenced by many factors. These include the demographic characteristics of the population (such as age structure, patterns of family relationships, and the spatial distribution of the population), as well as economic determinants (such as incomes and the prices of land, dwellings/structures, transportation, and other factors) and institutional constraints (such as zoning restrictions).

As the existing population ages and preferences for fewer children prevail, a greater proportion of majority households will be without children. The landscape of traditional households no

³ See: Office of Regulatory Services, Georgia Department of Human Resources, Chapter 290-9-37 Rules and Regulations for Community Living Arrangements, effective November 13, 2002; revised February 12, 2008.

⁴ Excerpted verbatim from parts of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. February 2003. *Issue Papers on Demographic Trends Important to Housing*.

longer will be married couples with children—instead, households without children will be the more frequent household types, comprising nearly 40 percent of the population by 2025. Household size is shrinking. Married couples without children (in the home) and single-person households outnumber “traditional family” households nationally. The combination of longer life expectancies and the continuing preference for one or two children will make households without children even more numerous. Non-Hispanic white households will be of a smaller size than ever before, and a growing proportion of these households will be elderly.

The projected increase in the nation’s households will occur largely in the older, post-childrearing age groups. “Nonfamily” households are growing rapidly, and the majority of them consist of persons living alone. Single-person households are the nation’s second most numerous household type, accounting for over 25 percent of all households (nationally as of 2000). This is not surprising, considering that people ages 65 and older are the largest share of single-person households. Clearly, the traditional family household of married couples with children is common among households headed by someone under age 45. However, with population growth concentrated in older age groups, this household type is projected to account for only one in five households in 2025, or 30 percent of all family households.

Not too many years ago, housing professionals thought almost exclusively about the housing needs and preferences of families with children. (Indeed, houses were generally referred to as “family” houses.) Now they need to understand the needs and preferences of several different household types, not just for housing construction but also including preferences for refitting a current home to meet the needs of a new, post-child-rearing household configuration and avoid a move from a cherished home or valued neighborhood. One clear implication is a need to build flexibility into new or existing housing, to accommodate a variety of uses. Some builders are already designing spaces that can serve equally well as home offices or foster semi-independent living (for younger or older family members) before, after, or instead of housing children. Doing this effectively requires adapting basic processes—for instance, thinking through plumbing and other key structural features with an eye to potential modifications, either by the same or subsequent residents.

Homeownership rates across all household categories have increased dramatically in the past several years. Although the nation’s population continues to grow at all ages, the largest growth is in the population that has largely completed its child rearing. Other things equal, this shift should in itself increase the proportion of the population that owns, rather than rents, its housing.

INITIAL HOUSING ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Housing for the Disabled

People with mental illnesses and other disabilities are often released from institutions with nowhere to go. Land use regulations and neighborhood resistance can pose barriers to the development of community living arrangements, congregate living facilities and other arrangements to house such persons. Local zoning regulations need to be evaluated to ensure that they provide appropriate housing opportunities for disabled populations, without discrimination by other households in the neighborhood. The plan should establish policies and outline code revisions needed to accomplish the objectives of fair housing for the disabled.

Many Americans are living in homes that are not designed for people with disabilities. The increasing numbers of people with disabilities brought on by the increase in the number of seniors will likely worsen this situation. New homes continue to be built with basic barriers to use by the disabled, and this is unfortunate given how easy it is to build basic access in the great majority of new homes. One solution to the quandaries described above is a form of accessible housing design known as “visitability.” Visitability calls for all new homes (both single-family and multi-family) to be designed and built with basic level access. As the name suggests, a primary purpose of this design is to allow people with disabilities to independently access the homes of their non-disabled peers. The design also allows the non-disabled to continue residing in their homes should they develop a disability.⁵

Another opportunity worth exploring by the city is the notion of a “flexible house.” A flexible house is a type of design that makes the single family home more affordable by facilitating its adaptation to more and different types of households. This concept is already used in cases where existing homes with surplus space are converted into separate units or accessory apartments. However, the flexible house is different from such situations because conversion potential is specifically designed into the home so that only minor conversions are required to create or remove an accessory apartment. Provisions for flexible housing can provide an alternative for meeting the housing needs of a changing population.⁶

Accessory Housing Units

An accessory apartment or dwelling unit is a second dwelling unit that is added to the structure of an existing site-built single family dwelling, or as a new freestanding accessory building (e.g., residential space above a detached garage) on the same lot, for use as a complete, independent living facility for a single household, with provision within the attached accessory apartment for cooking, eating, sanitation and sleeping. Such a dwelling, whether attached or detached, is considered an accessory use to the principal dwelling.



Accessory Apartment, Detached
(Above Garage Shown)

Accessory dwelling units are increasingly used in other areas for housing elderly persons who wish to remain close to their families. Seniors are often reluctant to move out of their own unit because the environment is familiar and they are emotionally attached to their homes.⁷ For detached single-family units owned by single seniors, converting the unit to a principal dwelling with an accessory dwelling unit would allow seniors to stay in their unit while another household occupies previously unused portions of the home. As the homeowner, the senior has the option of living in either the apartment or primary dwelling. The added income and security of having another person close by can be a deciding factor in enabling a homeowner to age in place. Accessory apartments for the elderly also would permit seniors to have some independence while maintaining close proximity to one or more family members. Zoning ordinances can

⁵ Casselman, Joel. 2004. Visitability: A New Direction for Changing Demographics. *Practicing Planner*, 2, 4.

⁶ Howe, Deborah A. 1990. The Flexible House: Designing for Changing Needs. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 56, 1: 69-77.

⁷ Howe, Deborah A., Nancy J. Chapman, and Sharon A. Baggett. 1994. *Planning for an Aging Society*. Planning Advisory Service Report No. 451. Chicago: American Planning Association.

provide for the establishment of attached accessory units in existing single-family subdivisions as another method of meeting needs for affordable housing. Current regulations should carefully consider whether appropriate opportunities are provided for accessory apartments.

CHAPTER 3 LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMY

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ECONOMIC ANALYSES

Local planning requirements require, at minimum, for the community assessment to include the following:

(c) **Economic Development.** Identify trends and issues relating to the economic characteristics of the community, including:

Economic Base. Evaluate the various sectors or industries that constitute the community's economy in terms of their relative importance and impact, including the community's place in the larger economies of the state and the nation.

Labor Force. Evaluate characteristics of the community's labor force, including employment status, occupations, personal income, wages and commuting patterns.

Economic Resources. Evaluate the development agencies, programs, tools, education, training and other economic resources available to the community's businesses and residents.

Economic Trends. Evaluate economic trends that are ongoing in the community, including which sectors, industries or employers are declining and which are growing. Also evaluate any unique economic situations, major employers and important new developments for their impact on the community.

DATA LIMITATIONS

There is a wide variety of economic data published, but they usually do not extend to the level of municipalities, except for the 2000 decennial census. Where data for the city are not available, county information is presented. Also, in some cases such as employment and establishments, Zip Code data from the U.S. Census are provided to give some picture of the employment and business patterns around (and including) Commerce.

LABOR FORCE AND COMMUTING PATTERNS

Regional Labor Force and Economies

Jackson County is surrounded on three sides by MSAs: the Atlanta MSA to the south; Gainesville MSA to the west; and the Athens MSA to the east (U.S. Bureau of Census 2003). Jackson County is strategically located at the edge of these three major labor markets and job centers. Commerce, in the northern part of the county, is more remote from the Atlanta area and Gainesville MSAs, but is very close to Madison County within the Athens-Clarke County MSA and within convenient commuting distance to Athens-Clark County.

Table 3.1 provides annual average labor force and unemployment figures for Jackson County from 2003 to the first part of 2009. The civilian labor force in Jackson County has increased steadily in recent years, at least until 2006-2008, when it stabilized and declined slightly. Despite the recent slow growth and slight decline in the number of Jackson County labor force

participants from 2006 to 2008, employment of Jackson County’s working residents continued to increase during that time period.

In 2008, the unemployment rate for Jackson County’s resident workers increased significantly, and jumped to 9.5 percent in January 2009. Clearly, Jackson County has not escaped the effects of the national economic recession, as the number of unemployed resident workers in Jackson County more than doubled between 2007 and January 2009. The total number of employed residents of Jackson County decreased by more than 2,000 from 2008 to January 2009. The unemployment rate is above 10 percent in Jackson County as of about mid-year 2009.

**Table 3.1
Annual Average Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment, 2003-2009
Persons 16 Years and Older
Jackson County**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (Jan.)
Labor Force	22,687	23,990	25,551	26,805	26,863	26,059	28,171
Employed	21,686	22,964	24,375	25,721	25,743	27,746	25,498
Unemployed	1,001	1,026	1,176	1,084	1,120	1,687	2,673
Unemployment Rate	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.0	4.2	6.1	9.5

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Information and Analysis, Revised March 2009.

Commuting Patterns

Table 3.2 shows the counties where Jackson County’s working residents were employed in 2000.

**Table 3.2
Labor Force by Place of Work, 2000
Workers 16 Years and Older
Jackson County**

County of Work	Number of Residents Working in this County	Percentage of Total Jackson County Labor Force
Jackson County	7,960	41.6%
Clarke County	3,022	15.8%
Hall County	2,367	12.4%
Gwinnett County	2,261	11.8%
Barrow County	883	4.6%
Banks County	748	3.9%
Fulton County	459	2.4%
DeKalb County	312	1.6%
Other Counties	1,120	5.9%
Total Workers in Jackson County	19,132	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, as reported in Jackson County Area Labor Profile, Georgia Department of Labor.

Slightly more than 4 of every 10 working residents (41.6 percent) of Jackson County worked within the county in 2000. Stating the obverse, the vast majority of working residents of Jackson County commuted out of the county for work in 2000. The largest single location of jobs outside Jackson County for its working residents in 2000 was Athens-Clarke County, with almost 16 percent of all workers. Hall County and Gwinnett County also had significant shares in terms of attracting Jackson County’s working residents to work in 2000. Banks County, most likely the concentration of businesses at Banks Crossing (Interstate 85 and US Highway 441), attracted a small share of workers who live in Jackson County (most likely those residing in the Commerce area of Jackson County).

Table 3.3 provides important statistics as of 2000 for working residents of the municipalities in Jackson County. The City of Commerce was second only to Jefferson of all municipalities in the county, with nearly half (48.9 percent) of its resident labor force working in Jackson County. More than one-quarter of working residents of Commerce worked within the City of Commerce in 2000.

**Table 3.3
Place of Work by County and Place of Residence, 2000
Workers 16 Years and Older
City of Commerce and Jackson County**

Jurisdiction	Total Workers 16 Years and Over	Worked in County of Residence	% Working in County of Residence	Worked in Place of Residence	% Working in Place of Residence
City of Commerce	2,410	1,179	48.9%	635	26.3%
Jackson County	19,132	7,960	41.6%	1,322	6.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF 3, Tables P26 and P27.

The Georgia Department of Labor publishes an “Area Labor Profile” which lists the largest employers in the Jackson County area, which is defined generally as Jackson County and the abutting counties. The largest ten employers in the area are all outside of Jackson County, in Clarke County (University of Georgia, Athens Regional Medical Center, and Goldkist), Gwinnett County (Gwinnett Hospital System, WalMart, Publix, Kroger, and Scientific Games), and Hall County (Fieldale Farms and Northeast Georgia Medical Center). Note that three of the top ten largest employers in the Jackson area are in the health care industry, three are groceries and retail stores, and two are involved in poultry production.

Labor Force by Industry

Next, we look more closely at the labor forces of Jackson County and its two larger municipal labor forces – Commerce and Jefferson – in terms of within what industries they work. These data are shown in Table 3.4. Manufacturing employed about one of every five working residents in Jackson County (21.3 percent), Commerce (19.7 percent), and Jefferson (21.0 percent) in 2000. Manufacturing thus led all other industries in terms of employment of the local labor forces. This means that, at least as of 2000, Jackson County’s resident labor force (along with Commerce’s and Jefferson’s) was heavily reliant on a single industry for employment.

**Table 3.4
Employment by Industry, 2000
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson
(Place of Residence)**

Industry	Jackson County	% of Total	City of Commerce	% of Total	City of Jefferson	% of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	502	2.6	23	0.9	14	0.8
Mining	60	0.3	0	0	4	0.2
Construction	2,165	11.1	183	7.4	161	9.0
Manufacturing	4,154	21.3	487	19.7	376	21.0
Wholesale trade	876	4.5	83	3.4	73	4.1
Retail trade	2,394	12.3	355	14.4	173	9.7
Transportation and warehousing	769	3.9	101	4.1	40	2.2
Utilities	275	1.4	13	0.5	45	2.5
Information	378	1.9	53	2.1	71	4.0
Finance and insurance	571	2.9	65	2.6	46	2.6
Real estate and rental and leasing	300	1.5	52	2.1	33	1.8
Professional, scientific, and technical services	529	2.7	61	2.5	58	3.2
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative and support and waste management services	587	3.0	68	2.8	33	1.8
Educational services	1,566	8.0	249	10.1	202	11.3
Health care and social assistance	1,241	6.4	183	7.4	124	6.9
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	182	0.9	40	1.6	16	0.9
Accommodation and food services	1,232	6.3	226	9.2	138	7.7
Other services (except public administration)	984	5.0	97	4.0	85	4.9
Public administration	778	4.0	129	5.2	97	5.4
Total	19,542	100%	2,468	100%	1,789	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF 3, Table P49.

Retail trade was the second largest industry employer of Jackson County’s residents in 2000 (12.3 percent of the total labor force). Though also ranked second, retail trade was more significant for Commerce’s resident labor force in 2000, at 14.4 percent of the total resident labor force. Construction ranked third for Jackson County’s labor force in 2000, with an 11.1 percent share of total employment of the county’s labor force. Education, health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and other services had relatively equal shares of total employment (5-8 percent) of Jackson County residents in 2000. Several industry sectors had low percentages of Jackson County’s labor force in 2000 – utilities, information, real estate, professional and scientific services, and arts and entertainment all. On the basis of these industry figures alone, one would conclude that Jackson County’s labor force is heavily reliant on manufacturing and construction jobs – at first glance, one could characterize Jackson

County’s labor force as largely “blue collar” in nature; however, there is more to it than meets the eye, as noted below.

Labor Force by Occupation

The figures in Table 3.5 substantiate the prior conclusion that Jackson County’s labor force is largely blue collar in nature, but it also demonstrates the opposite in some respects. Grouping together certain “blue collar” occupations (construction, production, and transportation and material moving), as of 2000 more than one-third (37.2 percent) of Jackson County’s labor force was blue collar in nature. If one adds buildings and grounds cleaning and maintenance in the “blue collar” category, the total was more than 4 in 10 (41.5 percent) in 2000.

**Table 3.5
Employment by Occupation, 2000
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson
(Place of Residence)**

Occupation	Jackson County	% of Total	City of Commerce	% of Total	City of Jefferson	% of Total
Management, professional, and related occupations	4,405	22.5	544	22.0	542	30.3
Service: Health care support service	333	1.7	82	3.3	21	1.2
Service: Protective service	331	1.7	70	2.8	31	1.8
Service: Food preparation and serving	900	4.6	143	5.8	76	4.2
Service: Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	847	4.3	140	5.8	82	4.6
Service: Personal care and service	337	1.7	35	1.4	42	2.3
Sales and office	4,912	25.2	666	27.0	455	25.5
Farming, forestry, fishing	210	1.1	20	0.8	15	0.8
Construction, extraction and maintenance	2,849	14.6	266	10.8	192	10.7
Production occupations	2,959	15.1	393	15.9	227	12.7
Transportation and material moving	1,459	7.5	109	4.4	106	5.9
Total	19,542	100	2,468	100	1,789	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF 3, Table P50.

However, looking at the obverse, the vast majority of Jackson County’s working residents in 2000 worked in other-than-blue-collar occupations. One quarter of the labor force (25.2 percent) worked in sales and office positions, and 22.5 percent worked in management, professional, and related occupations. Though not substantiated in the above numbers, it could be that the large percent of labor force in professional-type positions is linked to the educational economy of the University of Georgia in Athens-Clarke County. Similarly, it should not be overlooked that “manufacturing” industries also employ significant numbers of managers and professionals of various types. Other types of service occupations (health care, food preparation, personal care, and protective services) collectively made up eight percent of the labor force occupations of Jackson County’s working residents in 2000 (Table 3.5).

The labor force division by occupation in Commerce as of 2000 is also provided in Table 3.5. If one adds together all of the service-related occupations, plus management and sales and service occupations, more than two-thirds (68.1 percent) of Commerce’s working residents in 2000 fell into the non-blue-collar category.

COMMUTING PATTERNS INTO JACKSON COUNTY

People employed in Jackson County may be residents of Jackson County, or they may reside outside the county. We look in this section at from where employers in Jackson County drew their labor force in 2000. Not surprisingly, a majority of the jobs in Jackson County in 2000 were filled by Jackson County residents. The most significant source of labor force outside Jackson County in 2000 for jobs in Jackson County was from Banks County, which is comparatively limited in terms of job opportunities except in the Banks Crossing area at Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 441. Employers in Jackson County in 2000 also drew significantly from the labor forces in adjacent Hall (8.0 percent), Clarke (6.3 percent), Madison (4.7 percent) and Barrow Counties (3.8 percent), as indicated in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6
Workers 16 Years and Older Working in Jackson County
by County of Residence, 2000**

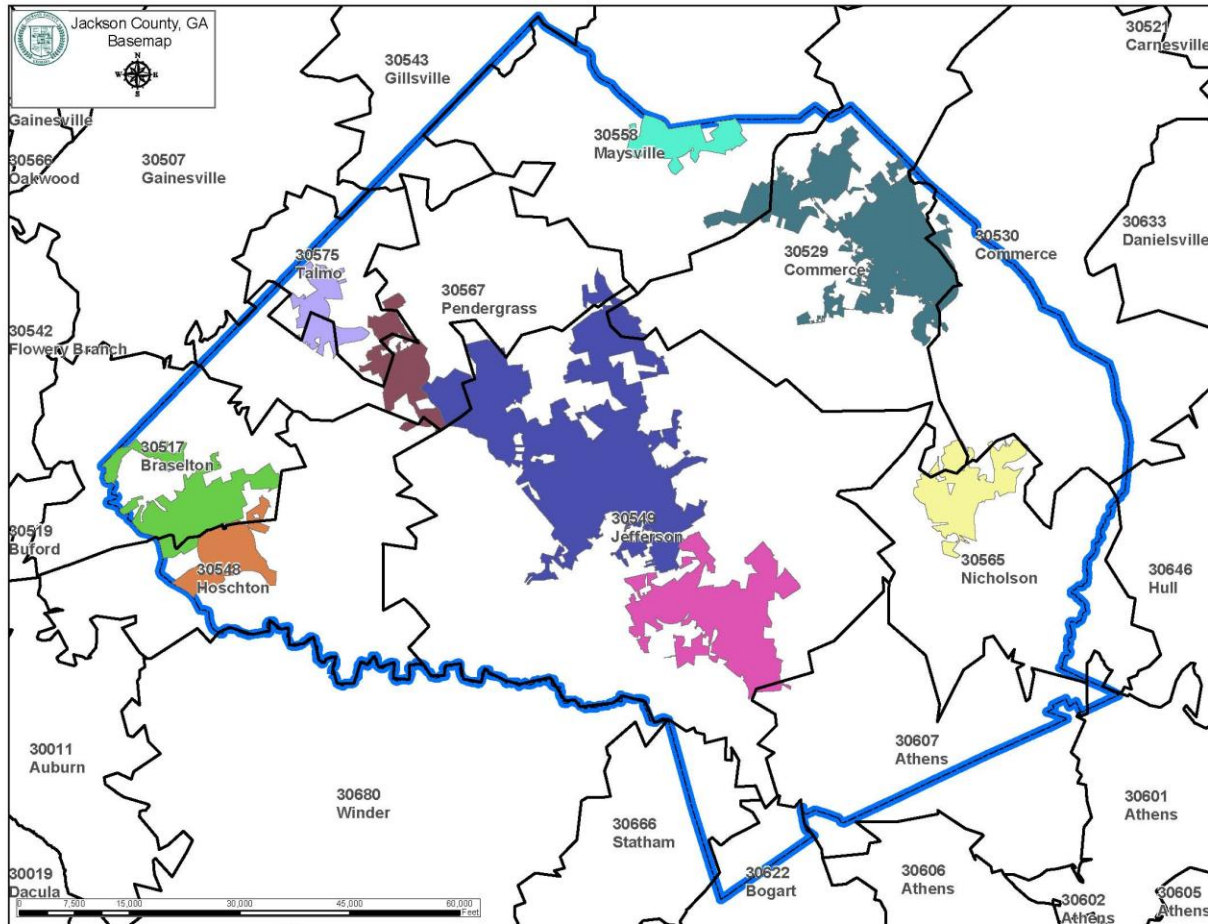
County of Work	Number of Residents Living in this County and Working in Jackson County	Percentage of Total Employment in Jackson County
Jackson County	7,960	52.8%
Banks County	1,386	19.2%
Hall County	1,205	8.0%
Clarke County	952	6.3%
Madison County	706	4.7%
Barrow County	567	3.8%
Gwinnett County	537	3.6%
Franklin County	385	2.6%
Other Counties	1,374	9.1%
Total Employed in Jackson County	15,072	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, as reported in Jackson County Area Labor Profile, Georgia Department of Labor.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN JACKSON COUNTY

Since employment data are generally not published for municipalities, the next best available source (an incomplete one at that) is to look at Zip Code Business Patterns. The most recent year data are available for is 2006. The U.S. Census Bureau’s Economic Censuses also provide some limited data for municipalities, but 2002 is the most recent year available since the 2007 economic censuses have not been released at the time of this writing. The data that are provided for cities do not provide total employment; hence, the economic censuses provide an incomplete picture for municipal employment, but an incomplete picture is better than no data at all.

A map of zip codes is provided in this section for reference. It is important to note that many of the zip codes do not correspond exactly or exclusively with Jackson County’s boundaries. Several zip codes go well outside the county; hence, the statistics need to be understood in that context.



Zip Codes Within and Partially Contained in Jackson County

The City of Commerce lies within two Zip Codes, 30529 and 30530, but does not encompass all the area of either Zip Code. The vast majority of economic activity in Zip Code 30529 is believed to be within Jackson County and is therefore considered mostly representative of Jackson County. The City of Commerce itself makes up only part of the geography of Zip Code 30529, yet probably has the vast majority of the economic activity in the Zip Code.

Table 3.7 shows establishments and employment in two Zip Codes including Commerce in 2006 (the most recent year for which data are available). Again, reporting employment by zip code helps to understand the geographic distribution of employment in Jackson County and the vicinity. Zip Code 30529 led all zip codes in (or partially contained in) Jackson County in 2006 in terms of the total number of establishments and total employment, with 428 and 6,090, respectively.

Table 3.7
Establishments and Employment by Commerce Area Zip Codes, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Establishments	Total Employment
30529	Commerce	428	6,090
30530	Commerce	48	390

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns, 2006.

Table 3.8 provides city-specific data for Commerce in 2002. As noted above, it is an incomplete picture. In Commerce, retail trade led all of the industries listed in Table 3.8 in terms of total employees. Commerce collectively had 45.3 percent of the total retail trade employment in Jackson County in 2002. The figures in Table 3.8 show that other industries in addition to retail trade make up significant percentages of total employment in the county. Commerce was home to 60 percent of the real estate and rental and leasing jobs in the county in 2002 and about 84 percent of all health care and social assistance jobs in the county in 2002. Commerce also was home to 29 percent of the county's jobs in the accommodation and food services industry in 2002.

Table 3.8
Employment For Week Including March 12 by Key Industry, 2002
Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson

Industry	Jackson County Employ-ees	%	City of Commerce			City of Jefferson		
			# Estab-lish-ments	Employ-ees	% County Total Employ-ees	# Estab-lish-ments	Employ-ees	% County Total Employ-ees
Manufacturing	4,338	29.3	10	546	12.6	12	642	14.8
Retail trade	2,941	19.9	113	1,331	45.3	27	278	9.5
Real estate and rental and leasing	175	1.2	14	105	60.0	6	17	9.7
Professional, scientific, and technical services	238	1.6	10	66	27.7	15	21	8.8
Administrative and support and waste management services	232	1.6	4	nr	--	13	142	61.2
Health care and social assistance	773	5.2	26	648	83.8	9	42	5.4
Accommodation and food services	1,193	8.1	23	346	29.0	9	144	12.1
Total Shown in Table	14,815	66.9*	200	3,042	20.5	91	1,286	8.7

* This percentage is the percentage of total employment in Jackson County that falls into the categories in this table.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *County Business Patterns* (2002) and 2002 Economic Census, Selected Statistics by Economic Sector.

Major Employers

Residents of other counties are attracted to Jackson County to work due to a variety of industries and manufacturing in the county, but the top five largest employers in Jackson County

according to the Department of Labor’s Area Labor Profile (2008) are: BJC Medical Center, Mission Foods-Jefferson, Home Depot, WalMart, and Wayne Poultry.

The local chamber of commerce also provides data on major employers, which presents a different perspective from the Department of Labor’s data. According to data were compiled by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc., as a part of the Countywide Road Plan, the largest employer in Jackson County is Wayne Farms, LLC, with 1,350 employees. The second largest employer is the Jackson County Board of Education with 825 employees. Major employers in Commerce are shown in Table 3.9.

**Table 3.9
Major Employers in Commerce**

Employer	Industry	Employees	Year Opened	Location
Baker & Taylor Books	Book Distributor	500	1967	251 Mount Olive Church Rd., Commerce, Georgia 30529
BJC Medical Center	Hospital	411	1960	70 Medical Center Dr., Commerce, Georgia 30529
Roper Pump Company	Pumps	200	1965	P.O. Box 269, Commerce, Georgia 30529
Southeast Toyota Distributors	Automobiles	163	1987	P.O. Box 89, Commerce, Georgia 30529
Huber Engineered Woods	Wood Products	150	1990	P.O. Box 670, Commerce, Georgia 30529

Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. July 2009. Countywide Roads Plan (Draft), Table 29.

The following sections present a brief discussion of employment by industry in the Commerce area of Jackson County. More detailed information for Jackson County as a whole is provided in the county’s community assessment, technical appendix.

Table 3.10 provides summaries of establishments and employment by industry for the two Commerce Zip Codes by Industry in 2006. Accompanying those data are summary analyses of the economic base of Jackson County, with emphasis on the Commerce area.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing employment in Jackson County totaled 4,247 in 2000 according to *County Business Patterns*, or 30 percent of total non-government employment. It increased steadily in total employment from 2000 to 2004, reaching a height of 4,880 in 2004, then declined to 4,554 in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns*. The Georgia Department of Labor’s statistics for 2003 and 2008 reveal a gain in manufacturing employment over a five-year period from, 4,043 in 2003 to 4,537 in the year 2008. It is difficult to reconcile the manufacturing employment totals from the two sources, except to say that the Department of Labor provides average monthly employment and the U.S. Census Bureau reports employment during the week of March 12th of each year. In terms of percent share of total employment, including government, manufacturing comprised 26.1 percent in 2003 and 24.7 percent in 2008 in Jackson County according to the Department of Labor. Regardless of the source of information

for manufacturing employment, it is evident that manufacturing is the largest employing industry in Jackson County. Major manufacturers in the Commerce area include Gold Kist, Inc. (poultry processing; 220 employees), Roper Pump Co. (industrial pumps and turbines; 178 employees), J. M. Huber Corp. (oriented strandboard, 150 employees), and Skaps Industries, Inc. (liners; 120 employees), according to the Georgia Manufacturer’s Directory.

**Table 3.10
Establishments by Industry for Commerce Zip Codes, 2006**

Zip Code	Industry	Total Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30529	Manufacturing	13	6	1	1	3	2
30530	Manufacturing	5	2	1	0	1	1
30529	Wholesale Trade	17	9	2	1	3	2
30530	Wholesale Trade	2	1	0	0	1	0
30529	Transportation/Warehousing	6	3	1	0	1	0
30530	Transportation/Warehousing	4	3	1	0	0	0
30529	Retail Trade	176	52	68	33	16	7
30530	Retail Trade	3	3	0	0	0	0
30529	Accommodation and Food Services	52	17	8	9	13	5
30530	Accommodation and Food Services	2	1	0	0	0	1
30529	Construction	28	20	6	1	1	0
30530	Construction	17	14	2	1	0	0
30529	Finance and Insurance	25	14	6	1	3	1
30530	Finance and Insurance	0	0	0	0	0	0
30529	Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	12	7	3	2	0	0
30530	Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	0	0	0	0	0	0
30529	Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	6	4	1	1	0	0
30530	Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	2	0	0	0	0
30529	Health Care and Social Assistance	34	14	9	8	1	1
30530	Health Care and Social Assistance	2	2	0	0	0	0
30529	Professional, Technical and Scientific Services	9	6	0	2	1	0
30530	Professional, Technical and Scientific Services	5	4	0	0	1	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary, 2006.

Wholesale Trade

Wholesale trade employment in Jackson County has remained relatively steady throughout the years, with employment of 1,025 in 2000 (*County Business Patterns*) and 1,076 in 2008 (Department of Labor). It reached a high of 1,349 in 2002 per the *County Business Patterns* data. Wholesale trade comprised about 7 percent of total non-government employment in Jackson County earlier in the decade, and as of 2008 comprised 5.9 percent of total employment (including government) according to the Department of Labor.

Transportation and Warehousing

This industry is one that has been among the fastest growing in Jackson County in terms of employment, with only 377 employees in 2000 and increasing (more than tripling) to 1,143 employees in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns*. The Georgia Department of Labor also reflects a substantial increase in transportation and warehousing employment from 206 in 2003 to 759 employees in 2008. Given the differences in numbers from the two different sources, there must be differences in how these industries are classified. Clearly, Jackson County has much potential to further develop this type of industry (transportation and warehousing), given its many miles of frontage along both sides of Interstate 85, as well as two important north-south US. Highways (129 and 441).

Retail Trade

After manufacturing, retail trade is the second most significant non-government industry in Jackson County. Retail trade employment increased from 2,400 in the year 2000 to 3,522 in 2006, according to *County Business Patterns*. It comprised from 17 percent to 22 percent of total nongovernment employment in Jackson County within the last decade. Georgia Department of Labor data, however, show a different picture, with employment in retail trade totaling only 2,994 in 2003 and declining some, to 2,880, in the year 2008. If the Department of Labor's data are more accurate, retail trade comprised 15.7 percent of total employment in Jackson County in 2008. Despite the big discrepancy between *County Business Patterns* and Georgia Department of Labor data, it is clear that retail trade is a very important sector in Jackson County, ranking second in terms of non-government employment. Further, it is clear that retail trade will grow substantially as the population in Jackson County continues to increase.

Table 3.11 provides more detail with regard to retail trade establishments in Jackson County in 2006. Incidentally, it also includes accommodation and food services employment data which are discussed in the next subsection.

Table 3.11
Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services
Establishments and Employment, 2006, Jackson County

Industry Code	Description	Employees	Establishments
44111	New car dealers	120	5
44131	Automotive parts and accessories	64	9
44132	Tire dealers	20-99	6
442	Furniture and home furnishings	532	17
4431	Electronics and appliances	55	7
4441	Building material supplies dealers	296	15
4442	Lawn and garden equipment and supplies	59	9
445110	Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience)	416	11
445120	Convenience	0-19	3
44611	Pharmacies and drug	116	9
4471110	Gasoline stations with convenience	170	37
447190	Other gasoline stations	146	5
4481	Clothing stores	532	52
448210	Shoe	140	15
4483	Jewelry, luggage, and leather goods	37	7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book and music	55	11
452	General merchandise	438	10
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	75	20
454	Nonstore retailers	173	6
721	Accommodation	520	12
722	Food services and drinking places	1,337	74

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Not surprisingly to residents who shop in Commerce, almost half (46.3 percent) of the total retail trade establishments in the 12 Zip Codes partially or wholly located in Jackson County in 2006 were located in Zip Code 30529, which includes “Banks Crossing,” the unincorporated part of Banks County at the junction of I-85 and U.S. Highway 441.

Accommodation and Food Services

Like with retail trade establishments, these establishments are concentrated most heavily in the 30529 (Commerce) Zip Code. According to *County Business Patterns*, employment in this industry has increased some, from 1,618 in the year 2000 to 1,817 in the year 2006. If one looks at the intervening years (2002 and 2004), it shows remarkable fluctuation (a drop to 1,193 employment in 2002). Using *County Business Patterns* data, one would conclude that accommodation and food services is the third most important industry in Jackson County after manufacturing and retail trade, comprising some 10-11 percent of all non-government jobs in the county. Department of Labor data show employment in the accommodation and food services industry sector was only 1,023 in the year 2003, rising to 1,143 in the year 2008. If the Department of Labor’s data are more accurate, then accommodation and food services industries comprised 6.2 percent of total employment (including government) in 2008 in Jackson County.

Construction

Depending on which source of employment data is consulted, construction is either third or fourth in terms of significance to Jackson County's economy. *County Business Patterns* indicates that construction employment has increased steadily but not remarkably from 929 in 2000 to 1,175 in 2006 (8.6 percent of total non-government employment). The Georgia Department of Labor reported construction employment at 1,239 in the year 2003, and it also indicates a substantial drop in construction employment to 995 in the year 2008. Clearly, the economic recession and crash in the housing market had a severe impact on construction employment in Jackson County during the last two years, dropping from 8 percent to 5.4 percent of total employment (including government). One might attribute the difference between the Census Bureau (*County Business Patterns*) and the Georgia Department of Labor construction employment data to differences in reporting practices – it may be that smaller construction firms are required to report to the state but are not captured in the U.S. Census Bureau's data.

Finance and Insurance

Finance and insurance establishments represent a relatively small, but growing, industry in Jackson County. Employment has increased from 332 in the year 2000 to 400 in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns*. The Georgia Department of Labor data show an increase in finance and insurance employment from 216 in the year 2003 to 341 in 2008. If the numbers from the two data sources are compatible and comparable, then finance and insurance witnessed some job losses in Jackson County between 2006 and 2008 (about 59 employees). Table 20 shows that the Commerce (30529), with the Jefferson, and Bogart Zip Codes led the way in 2006 in terms of the largest number of establishments in this industry. The vast majority of establishments in finance and insurance industries are very small employers.

Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

The overall contribution of this industry type to Jackson County's economy is comparatively small, at about one percent of total employment, and under 200 employees no matter which year is cited (2000 through 2008).

Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Service

This industry type is somewhat difficult to comprehend, as it appears to lump together service-related employment with some occupations that would be considered blue collar in nature. That difficulty is compounded further with the rather wild fluctuations and discrepancies among the employment data sources with regard to total employment in this industry. *County Business Patterns* data show employment in this industry was 842 in the year 2000 but then dropped to 232 in the year 2002 and rebounded part of the way to 484 employees in the year 2006. The Department of Labor's data appear to be consistent with *County Business Patterns* in the observation that there were 222 employees classified as within this industry in 2003. But the Department of Labor shows a major increase in the last five years of employment in this industry, rising to 759 employees (and 4.1 percent of total countywide employment including government) in 2008.

Health Care and Social Assistance

Again, total employment in this industry in Jackson County is hard to generalize, since the two sources of employment data paint relatively different pictures. According to *County Business Patterns*, health care and social assistance employment totaled 811 employees in 2000 and increased to 989 employees in 2006, representing 5.7 percent of total non-government employment in Jackson County in 2006.

The Georgia Department of Labor, on the other hand, reported only 404 employees in this industry in Jackson County in 2003, and an increase to 575 employees in 2008. While it is apparent that the health care industry has not suffered during the recent and ongoing economic depression generally, and that health care employment will continue rising, it is unclear why the two employment reporting sources show such vast differences in the total employment classified as health care and social assistance.

Of the 12 Zip Codes within or partially contained within Jackson County in 2006, Commerce (30529) led the way in terms of the total number of these types of establishments, with 34.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

This industry is comparatively less significant than most in terms of its contribution to total employment in Jackson County. *County Business Patterns* shows that employment more than doubled between 2000 and 2006, from 215 to 486 employees, respectively. The Georgia Department of Labor data are relatively comparable as of 2003, with an observation that there were 264 employees in this industry. That source also shows significant growth in this industry between 2003 and 2008, an increase of almost one-third (31 percent) in just five years. Commerce appears to be comparatively undersupplied or at least underrepresented with regard to professional, scientific and technical service establishments as of 2006.

Agriculture and Forestry

The aforementioned data sources would suggest that agriculture and forestry are not significant contributors to Jackson County. That would be a mistake to conclude, however. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts (April 2009), reveals that in 2007, Jackson County had 1,083 persons employed on farms. That is a slight decrease from the 1,124 persons employed on farms in 2006, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Government

While not covered under *County Business Patterns*, the Georgia Department of Labor data suggest that as of 2008, government is the second most significant industry in Jackson County, comprising almost one-fifth (19.9 percent) of total employment in the county. The Labor Department data indicate that government (local, state, and federal) employment has increased by 909 jobs from 2003 to 2008, a 33 percent increase. The 2008 figures reported by the Georgia Department of Labor do not appear to reflect the full effect of government downsizing during the past two years, where state government has been in a more-or-less constant budget-cutting mode, and local governments have delayed filling vacant positions and in many instances laid off government employees. It is clear, however, that government employment is witnessing a significant, upward trend, as various facilities and services are added to meet the county's burgeoning population. While generally not thought of as an industry, it should be

recognized that government employment is the second most significant in Jackson County as of 2008, surpassing retail trade employment sometime after the year 2003, according to the Georgia Department of Labor.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (April 2009) also provides employment statistics for government. Government employment as of 2007 in Jackson County was mostly local (3,243), with more limited amounts employed by the federal government (131), military (180), and state government (158).

JOB AND LABOR FORCE COMPARISON

Jackson County had, as of 2000, about 5,363 fewer jobs than it would need if it put all of its resident work force to work inside the county. That is a significant finding in itself – that there would clearly be quality of life benefits to Jackson County’s labor force if more jobs could be created. But in which industries?

Industries With More Workers than Jobs in Jackson County

- **Educational Services:** The largest deficit in terms of jobs for Jackson County’s residents is in the educational services industry. The short answer is that a whole bunch of Jackson County workers go into Athens for work at the University of Georgia.
- **Construction:** Jackson County in 2000 could support a whole lot more construction jobs, given the large number of construction workers who resided in Jackson County at that time.
- **Health Care Services:** Another large deficiency in terms of jobs in Jackson County and jobs filled by Jackson County’s residents is in the health care field. One has to consider that three of the top ten largest employers in the Jackson County *area* (in adjacent counties of Clarke, Hall, and Gwinnett) are in the health care industry.
- **Transportation and Warehousing:** There are more transportation and warehousing workers that lived in Jackson County in 2000 than there were jobs in that industry in Jackson County in 2000. The good news is that this is an industry that has vast potential in Jackson County.

Industries with About the Right Mix in 2000: Retail Trade and Manufacturing

As of 2000 Jackson County had almost exactly the same amount of retail trade jobs as it had resident labor force participants working in that industry. This doesn’t suggest, however, that almost every retail trade job in Jackson County was filled by a Jackson County working resident. Similarly, the manufacturing industry was close to optimal in 2000, in terms of the number of jobs in Jackson County and the number of Jackson County resident laborers working in manufacturing industries. There was a slight surplus in 2000, but that is not to suggest that Jackson County should stop recruiting industry – rather, it should be taken to mean Jackson County has been successful in recruiting the right amount of industry to the best advantage of its resident labor force. Further, one has to consider the tax base advantages of continuing to recruit industry, which is beneficial whether or not it will keep resident workers inside the county for work.

Industries with Job Surpluses as of 2000

Accommodation and food services and administrative and support and waste management services fall into a category of “more jobs available than resident workers in the county.” Food service workers and jobs in the lodging industries bring comparatively lower wages, and as such, it may be that people are available to work in these industries but elect not to work in them, in favor of higher paying jobs in other industries. Due to comparatively low pay and the observation that as of 2000 there were more jobs in these industries than workers in Jackson County, there appears to be no compelling reason to recruit establishments in those industries, at least as a formal economic development strategy.

WAGES

Annual average wages per job for recent years in Jackson County, MSAs, surrounding counties, and the state are provided in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12
Annual Average Wages per Job, 2005-2007
Jackson County and Selected Geographies
(\$ Dollars)

Geographic Area	2005	2006	2007
Banks County	\$22,729	\$23,312	\$24,671
Barrow County	\$30,600	\$31,439	\$31,455
Clarke County	\$32,771	\$33,713	\$34,353
Gwinnett County	\$42,447	\$44,544	\$45,397
Hall County	\$35,053	\$36,100	\$36,710
Jackson County	\$29,755	\$30,961	\$31,102
Madison County	\$26,428	\$27,578	\$28,314
Athens-Clark County, GA, MSA	\$31,761	\$32,723	\$33,424
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA, MSA	\$44,423	\$45,781	\$47,715
Gainesville, GA, MSA	\$35,053	\$36,100	\$36,710
Nonmetro Georgia	\$27,267	\$28,238	\$29,203
State of Georgia	\$38,653	\$39,975	\$41,574

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, April 2009.

Wages are highest in the Atlanta area MSA. Average wages per job are higher in the Gainesville MSA than they are in the Athens-Clarke County MSA. Only the Atlanta area MSA had average wages per job higher than the state as a whole, however. Of the surrounding and nearby counties, Gwinnett County had the highest average wage per job. Jackson County had higher average wages per job in 2005, 2006, and 2007 than nonmetropolitan Georgia, but Jackson County’s average was well below that earned in abutting Barrow, Clarke, and Hall Counties.

These lower average wages per job in Jackson County shed more light on the previous analysis regarding matching of jobs by industry in the county with labor force by industry of Jackson County’s residents. Even if a perfect match of jobs was available inside Jackson County to accommodate Jackson County’s resident labor force, the higher wages available outside the county may entice workers to commute outside Jackson County for better-paying jobs.

Wages by industry are provided in Table 3.13, for the years 2003 and 2008 in Jackson County. Data from some industry types are not available, but for those shown, wholesale trade paid the highest wages in 2008. In 2003, it was arts, entertainment and recreation which led all industries in terms of average weekly wages, and transportation and warehousing also paid higher wages than wholesale trade.

Table 3.13
Average Weekly Wages by Industry, 2003 and 2008
Jackson County
(\$ Dollars)

Industry	2003	2008
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	n/a	\$543
Mining	n/a	n/a
Construction	\$561	\$662
Manufacturing	\$592	\$709
Wholesale trade	\$649	\$883
Retail trade	\$394	\$507
Transportation and warehousing	\$797	\$679
Utilities	n/a	n/a
Information	\$643	\$593
Finance and insurance	\$625	\$823
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$500	\$530
Professional, scientific, and technical services	\$595	\$765
Management of companies and enterprises	n/a	n/a
Administrative and support and waste management services	\$380	\$520
Educational services	\$597	\$285
Health care and social assistance	\$516	\$543
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$992	\$599
Accommodation and food services	\$223	\$212
Other services (except public admin.)	\$426	\$522
Total – Private Sector	\$519	\$625
Government	\$530	\$594
All Industries	\$521	\$619

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Employment and Wages, 2003 and 2008.

Most of the industries have shown increases in average weekly wages over time, from 2003 to 2008. However, there are exceptions. Average weekly earnings have declined in Jackson County from 2003 to 2008 for transportation and warehousing, educational services, and arts, entertainment and recreation. Furthermore, already the lowest paying industry, the accommodation and food services employers dropped their wages further in Jackson County, from \$223 in the year 2003 to \$212 in the year 2008. Overall, wages have increased significantly. Where government employees on average had higher wages in 2003 than private sector employees, private sector jobs paid higher on average than government did in 2008 in Jackson County.

COUNTY EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

Total employment in Jackson County was forecasted as a part of the 2003 update of the land use element of the comprehensive plan. That forecast indicated employment of 33,603 in the year 2009, 43,855 in the year 2015, and 66,195 in the year 2025. That forecast used Georgia Department of Labor historic data for a base line and utilized an “employees per capita” methods which assumes a continuing and steady interrelationship between population and employment.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

This section describes existing economic development resources. It draws almost verbatim on work by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. in its I-85 Corridor Study Report for Jackson County, which in turn reflects extensive discussions with the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce. Credit goes to Moreland Altobelli for compiling the information the paragraphs which follow, again with the Chamber being the primary source of data.

Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce

The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is the central entity focused upon economic development within the greater Jackson County area. The Chamber is ultimately responsible to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. Economic development in Jackson County began with the formation of the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce about 30 years ago. About 15 years ago, the economic development function was transferred from the Chamber to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners’ staff, but lasted only a few years and was then transferred back to the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, where it has remained for the last 12 years.

Two critical Chamber committees are the Economic Development Council (EDC) and the Economic Development Alliance (EDA) and is headed by the Chairman of the EDA and the Alliance’s Steering Committee. The Steering Committee coordinates between the Existing Industry Committee, Workforce Development, the Tourism Council, and the Special Projects Committee.

It is very important to have a single point of contact to facilitate success in recruitment of new employers to a particular community. The Chamber serves that role and coordinates between the Jackson County government, the Jackson County Industrial Authority, the Jackson County Economic Development Council (EDC), and the local business community.

The EDC was established in 2005 and has the primary purpose to meet and discuss sensitive economic development issues and to review new business proposals for industrial developments desiring to locate within the county. The EDC is composed of the key political leaders within the county.



Source: Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, 2009. In Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc., I-85 Corridor Study Report for Jackson County (July 2009 Draft).

Jackson County Industrial Development Authority

The Chamber has a very close working relationship with the Jackson County Industrial Development Authority. The Jackson County Industrial Development Authority does not currently have any staff but primarily utilizes the Chamber to serve their administrative needs. The Authority primarily focuses upon bond financing and has a few remaining acres for industrial development in two industrial parks.

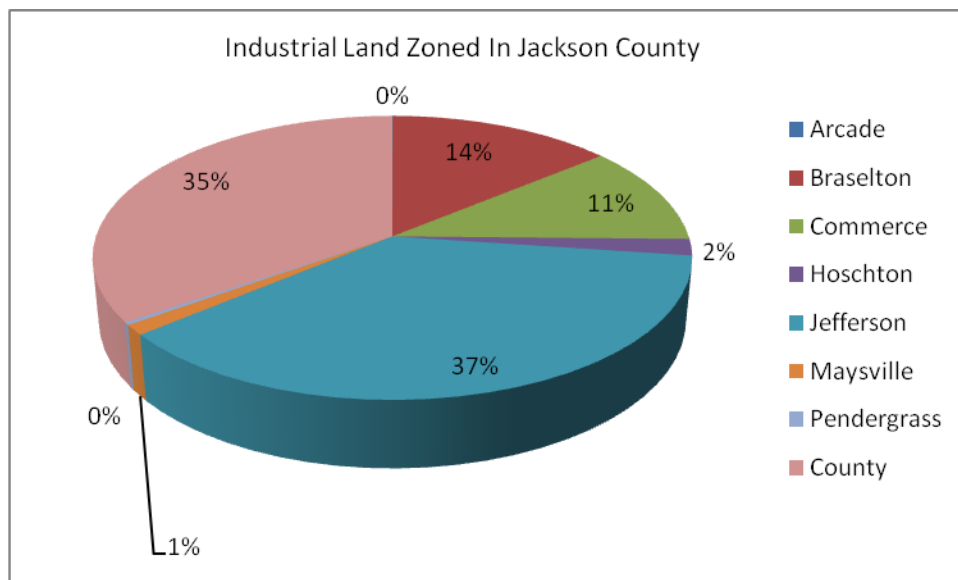
Area Attractions

As a part of the countywide road plan, Moreland-Altobelli Associates, Inc. compiled area attractions from information supplied by the Chamber of Commerce. According to the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, Jackson County has an abundance of attractions that attract people from all over the state. Listed below are significant attractions in the county. They bring visitors into Jackson County and can therefore be considered vital to future economic development efforts. These including racing venues, heritage sites and museums, golf courses, other recreation facilities, commercial recreation centers, and shopping (flea markets and outlet mall). In the Commerce area, attractions include the following:

- Atlanta Dragway, Commerce
- Double Oaks Golf Club, Inc., Commerce
- Funopolis Family Fun Center, Commerce
- Tanger Factory Outlet, Commerce

Land Available for Industry

Zoning in the county and the various cities within Jackson County establishes a constraint, or opportunity, with regard to establishing future manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and other business and industry opportunities. An analysis of industrial zoning was completed by the county’s GIS manager. Countywide (including municipalities), there are 10,851 acres of land zoned for industrial use. That constitutes almost 5 percent (4.93%) of the total county land area. With regard to the county’s land use plan, it designated 9,409 acres, or 4.28 percent of the unincorporated land area, for industrial development. Counting the land use plan for unincorporated areas and the existing industrial zoning within municipalities, there is some 7.5 percent of the total land area in Jackson County that is now available or planned for industrial development.



The pie chart below shows industrial land use planned in unincorporated Jackson County and industrial land zoned by municipalities in Jackson County. The City of Jefferson has the largest proportion of land zoned and/or planned for industrial land uses, at 37 percent of the total. However, unincorporated Jackson County a comparable proportion (35 percent). Braselton is third, with 14 percent of total industrial land available, followed by Commerce in fourth position with 11 percent. These figures suggest there are already ample opportunities for substantial growth in manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and other related industrial-type employers.

Existing Industrial Parks and Sites

Jackson County is home to a number of industrial parks, most of which are located along the I-85 corridor. Two of these have rail access: Walnut Fork Industrial Park and Commerce 85 Business Park (Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. June 2009. I-85 Corridor Study).

There are reportedly industrial sites located within Jackson County with an aggregate of about 3.6 million square feet of floor space. Detailed descriptions of those sites are omitted here but are available from the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce and are also provided in the I-85 Corridor Study by Moreland Altobelli (July 2009 draft).

Universities, Colleges, and Technical Schools

Jackson County is located in close proximity to a number of technical schools and universities. These include the University of Georgia and Athens Technical College (both located in Athens-Clarke County), Brenau University (Gainesville), Gainesville State College (Oakwood), and Lanier Technical College (a campus is located in Commerce), Gwinnett Technical College, and Georgia Gwinnett College.

Economic Development Bond Program

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners in 2004 established a Bond Program for roads and sanitary sewer systems in order to promote economic development. These investments are expected to facilitate industrial and business development primarily in the I-85 corridor. For more information, see Jackson County Board of Commissioners, Economic Development Bond Program 2004, Roads and Sanitary Sewer System, Final Summary (August 2007) and 2008 (November 2007).

Commerce Downtown Development Authority

Commerce's Downtown Development Authority is a key player in terms of economic development in the city's downtown. The DDA operates a number of programs and has facilities including a downtown office, public parking lots, and a business information center. The boundaries of the DDA are shown on the following map.



CHAPTER 4 NATURAL RESOURCES

This analysis summarizes information from the city's prior comprehensive plan (adopted 1998), the natural resources element of the regional comprehensive plan for the Northeast Georgia Region (2004), and other sources, with regard to the natural resources within the City of Commerce.

Commerce's location is one of the least susceptible to environmental degradation due to impacts on natural resources. The city's location is one where it is far away from major water resources, with some exceptions. A map of "developable soils" in the 1998 comprehensive plan shows that the vast majority of the land area in Commerce has soils that do not pose significant development limitations. However, the 1998 information is now outdated, as Commerce has expanded its city limits significantly. Therefore, a new look at the environmental limitations of the city, taking into account an expanded land area, is warranted.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Environmental Planning Criteria were promulgated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources immediately following adoption of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The original set of criteria included water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands. Pursuant to the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act of 1991, protected mountains and protected river corridors were added as components to the environmental planning criteria. The details of these criteria are summarized in this assessment in sections that follow.

WETLANDS

Defined

Wetlands are areas that are flooded or saturated by surface or groundwater often and long enough to grow vegetation adapted for life in water-saturated soil. A wetland does not have to be flooded or saturated for more than one week of the year in order to develop the vegetation and soil characteristics that qualify it as a wetland.

Functions and Importance

Wetlands serve many functions and have a number of values. Wetlands temporarily store flood waters, thereby preventing flood damage, and they can also protect lands from erosion by reducing the velocity of water currents. They serve as pollution filters by helping to remove sediment, absorb chemicals and nutrients, and produce oxygen. Wetlands have important environmental values including improving water quality by intercepting stormwater runoff, preventing eutrophication of natural waters, and supporting delicate aquatic ecosystems (nutrient retention and removal, food chain support, migratory waterfowl usage, providing other wildlife habitat, etc.). Many wetlands are areas of groundwater recharge, and they also can provide a source of recreation (hunting and fishing), aesthetics, and scientific research.

Inventory

The prior inventory of wetlands, supplied via maps in the 1998 comprehensive plan, reveals that there are no wetlands in Commerce. However, through expansion of territory and perhaps

refinement of the data bases available, there are some wetlands in Commerce as shown on the accompanying map. These areas are summarized as follows:

- Along a tributary of the North Oconee River, in an area of future industrial development.
- At the edge of the northern part of the city, north of I-85, near the outlet mall.
- East of U.S. Highway 441, along Old Carnesville Road.
- Other scattered locations, mostly associated with ponds in the city.

Wetland Regulation

Wetland regulatory approaches are generally designed to require an evaluation of a proposed use in order to permit those uses which will not adversely alter the wetland resources and to deny uses which will have a significant adverse effect. In light of the particularity of different wetland environments, this will require identification of the values inherent in specific wetlands, the potential effect of a proposed activity upon those values, and the alternative available to mitigate or prevent the adverse consequences of the proposed use.

The primary regulatory tool used to protect and preserve wetlands is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' §404 program. Current §404 regulatory policy focuses on wetland restoration and creation as the primary means of compensating for unavoidable wetland impacts. However, most wetland restoration and creation projects are inefficient; restoration efforts are often expensive, confined to small parcels, not coordinated with regional conservation plans, and of questionable functional value. In contrast, preserving existing wetlands is a cost-effective means of maintaining and enhancing a wide variety of aquatic ecosystem function, and can be more easily directed within the framework of a statewide resource protection plan (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

In addition to the §404 program, the Georgia Forestry Commission developed Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect and enhance important wetland functions on most sites while permitting silvicultural operations. The functions of wetlands include: water quality, timber production, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, education, research and scenic beauty. More specifically, these BMPs are designed for silvicultural operations where sustained timber production is anticipated. However, it is acknowledged that some wetland sites are not suitable for commercial timber production and that on extremely sensitive sites more stringent measures may be required (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

Wetlands are supposed to be protected under Georgia's *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* and a local implementing ordinance that meets this state mandate. Protection ordinances are only supposed to allow those land uses that will not impair the wetland function long-term, such as: timber production and harvesting, wildlife and fisheries management, wastewater treatment, recreation, natural water quality treatment or purification, or other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Specifically, the following criteria for alteration of wetlands are supposed to be integrated into local comprehensive plans:

Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):

- Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
- Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
- Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
- Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
- Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
- Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.

Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.

Impacts on Wetlands and Additional Regulatory Efforts

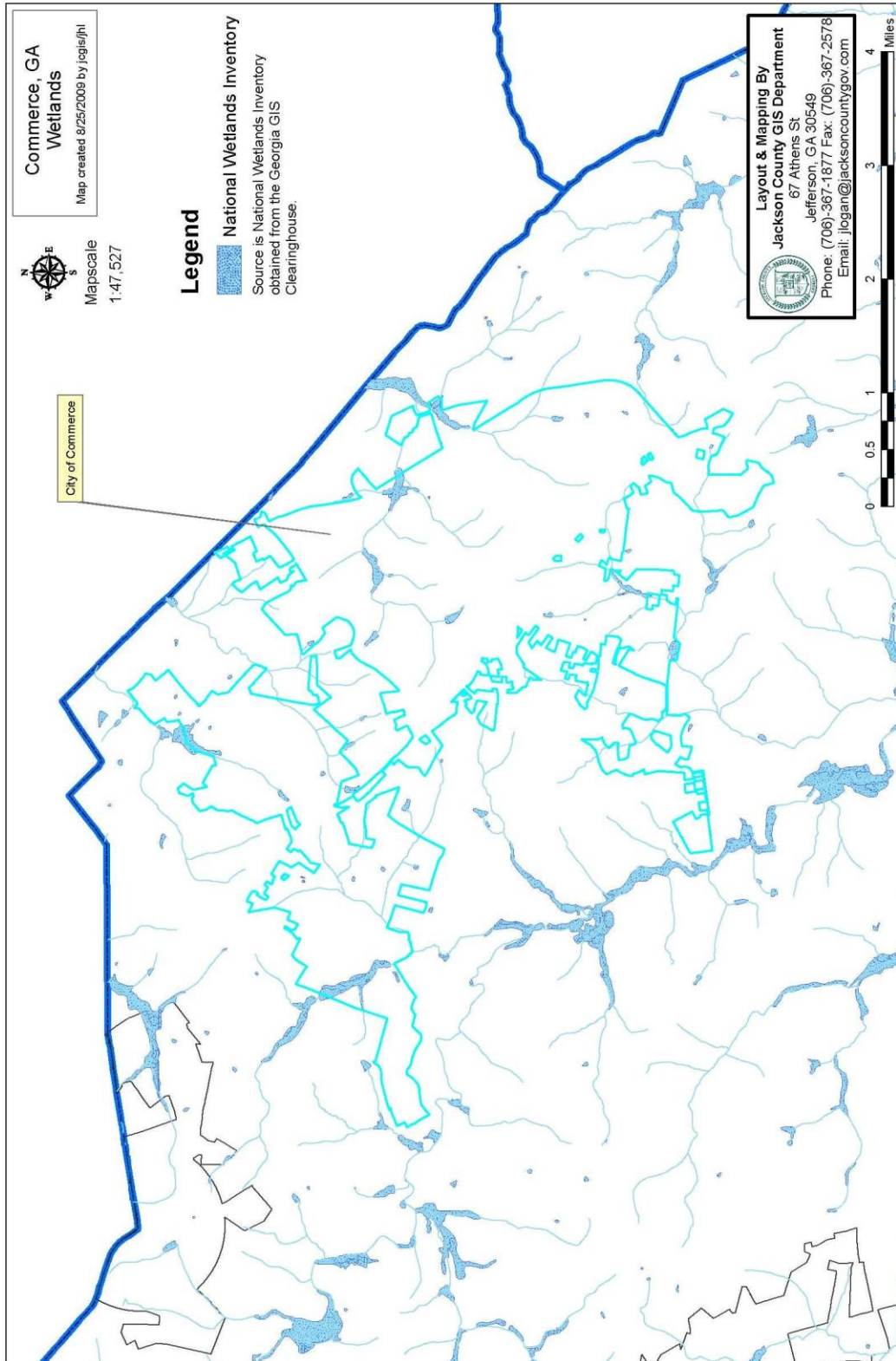
In the northeast Georgia region, there has been relatively little impact on wetlands due to urban development. Most conversion of wetlands in the past is probably attributable to agricultural activities. However, wetlands can be threatened in the future by increasing development pressures, a general disregard for natural resources protection, and failure to utilize the comprehensive plan in zoning decisions. The Regional Plan recommends public education on wetland issues and stricter than minimum regulatory controls on wetlands (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

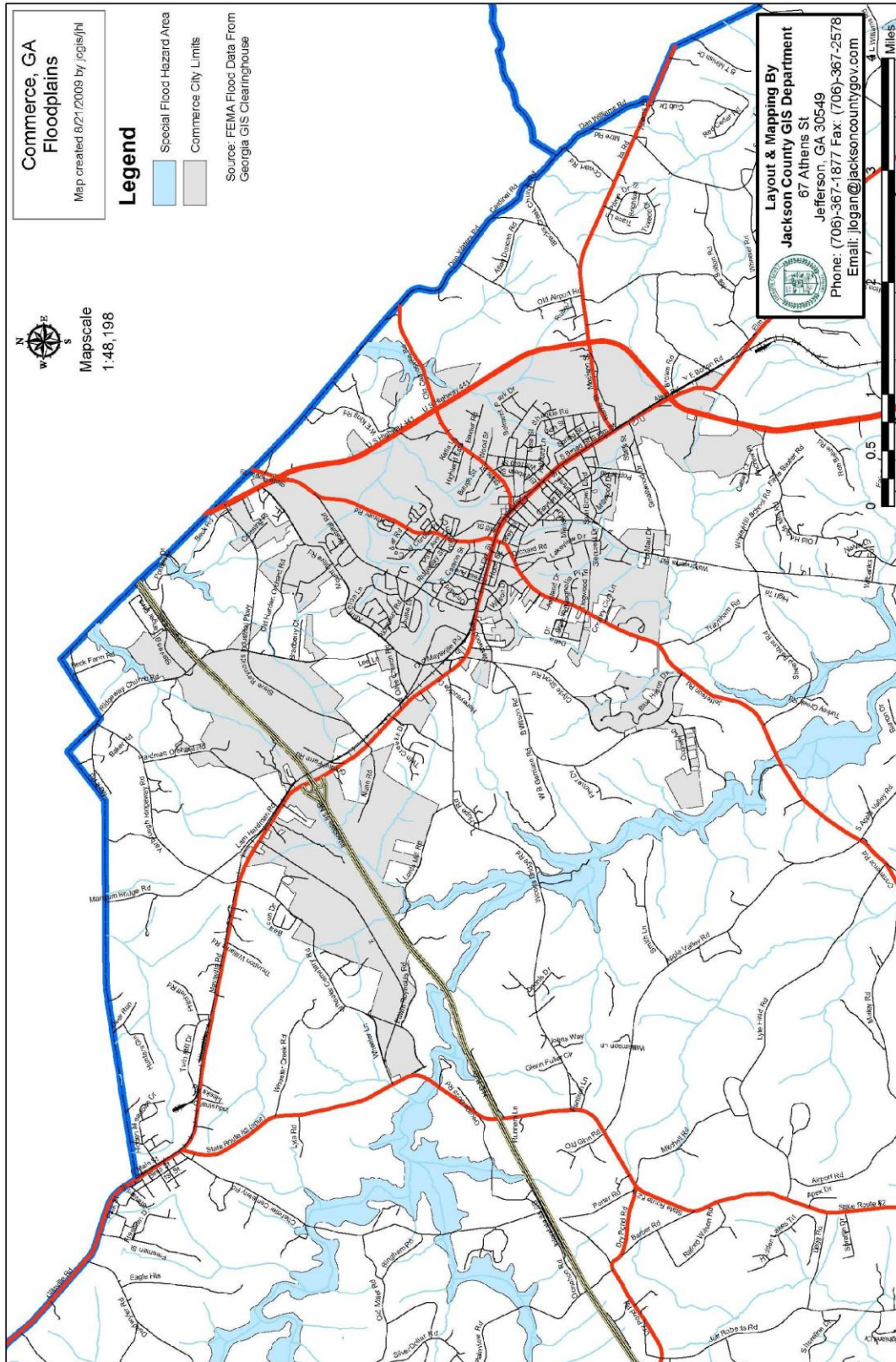
Wetland Mitigation Banks

Wetland mitigation banks are an alternative method to restoring or maintaining wetlands. They allow developers to replace wetlands in one location with wetlands that are bought through credits from another person or agency on another site. In principle if not in practice, a wetland in a mitigation bank is supposed to equal the wetland that has been lost or damaged, thus meeting federal policy that there should be no net loss of wetlands (reference, Clean Water Act, Sec. 404).

FLOOD PLAINS

Commerce, unlike most cities, has a superior location from an environmental standpoint, and is virtually free of flood plains. A map of floodplains shows only a small section of flood plain exists in Commerce, and that is in the extreme eastern part of the city along Old Carnesville Road. Flood plains therefore pose very few, if any, significant limitations on development in Commerce.





GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

The Environmental Planning Criteria for groundwater recharge areas established state policy for protecting significant groundwater recharge areas. In support of those criteria, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) produced a map titled “Hydrologic Atlas 18,” that shows significant groundwater recharge areas in the state. The atlas maps each area according to its pollution susceptibility potential. None of the significant groundwater recharge areas identified by the state exist within the City of Commerce; therefore, these criteria are inapplicable within Commerce.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

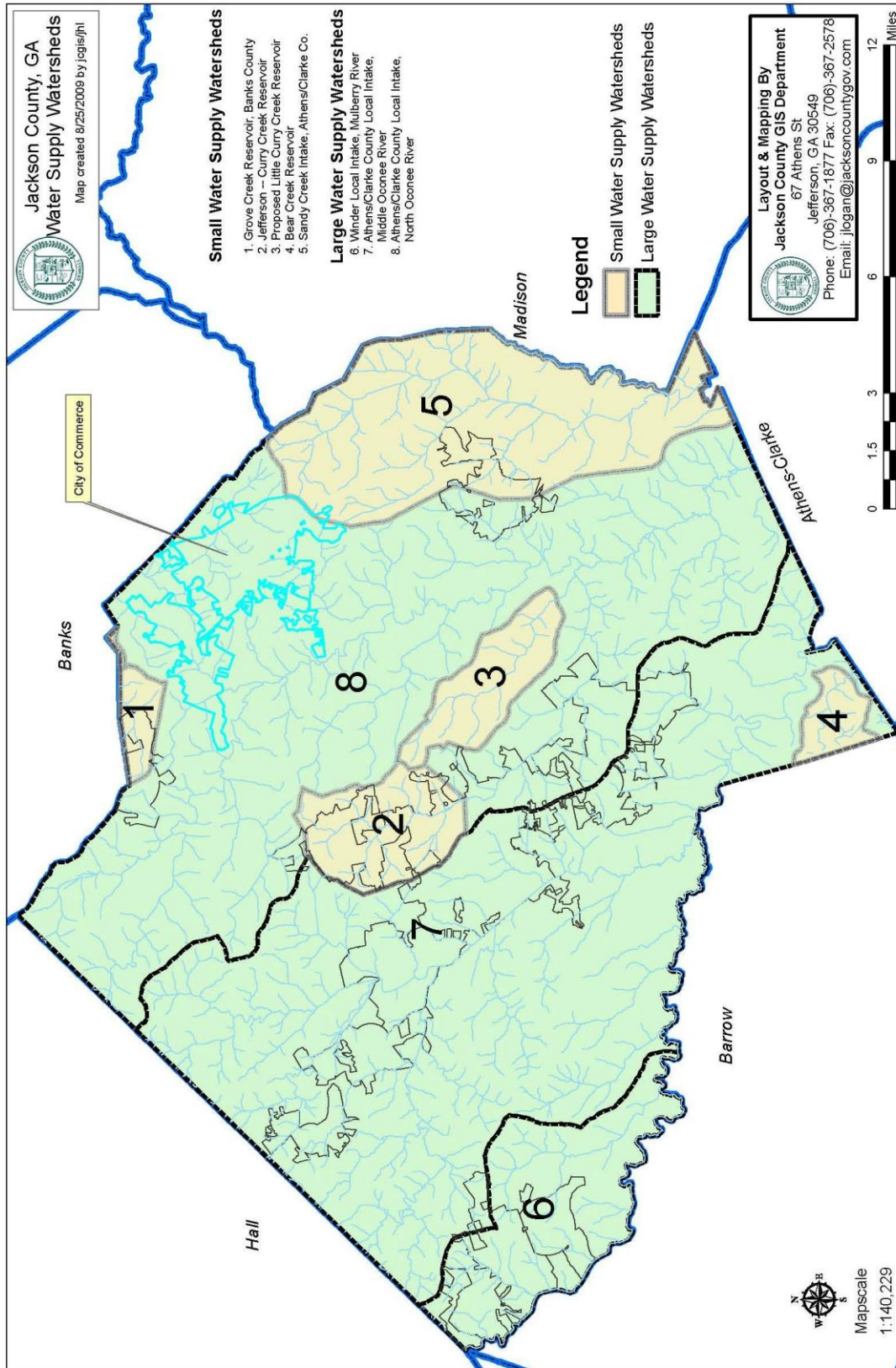
Commerce lies within two major river basins, the Savannah River, and the Oconee River. The City of Commerce lies well east of the North Oconee River, which flows generally north to south through Jackson County, but the western part of the city drains into it. Generally Commerce was located along a high point, a ridgeline separating these two major river watersheds. Only the most upper reaches of various streams and tributaries are located within the original city of Commerce. There are no “protected rivers” in Commerce according to DNR Part “V” criteria.

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has established minimum watershed protection criteria for watersheds associated with municipal drinking water intakes or reservoirs. The criteria differentiate between large watersheds (greater than 100 square miles) and small watersheds (less than 100 square miles). In a large water supply watershed, the perennial streams seven miles upstream of a reservoir are protected through maintenance of a 100-foot vegetative buffer, limitation of impervious surfaces, and restricted location of septic tanks and their drain fields. No restrictions are placed on land beyond seven miles. Within a small water supply watershed the criteria require maintenance of a 100-foot vegetative buffer, a prohibition on impervious surfaces within 150 feet of the streams and septic tank drain fields. Beyond the seven-mile limit, a 50-foot vegetative buffer is required and impervious surfaces, and septic tank drain fields are prohibited within 75 feet of the stream. The criteria require local governments to identify existing and future water supply watersheds and adopt water supply watershed protection plans as part of their planning process (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

The North Oconee River watershed is a “large” water supply watershed serving Athens-Clarke County (see map). Since Commerce is partially in this water supply watershed, but further than seven miles upstream of the Athens-Clarke County water intake, there are no state-mandated regulations to be imposed.

The Sandy Creek small water supply watershed serving Athens-Clarke County extends into the southern part of the city limits of Commerce (see map). Since Commerce is partially in this water supply watershed, but further than seven miles upstream of the Athens-Clarke County water intake, there are minimal requirements for watershed protection (stream buffers and septic tank drian field setbacks from streams. Hence, the water supply watershed criteria have minimal application in Commerce.



SOILS

Detailed information about soils in Jackson County is available from the Soil Survey for Barrow, Hall, and Jackson Counties (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1977). Also, the 1998 comprehensive plan provides (Table 4-1) a detailed listing of soils, their extent of coverage (land area) in Jackson County, and whether they are prime farmland, contain steep slopes, or pose limitations for on-site septic tanks. There is no requirement to reiterate that table here, but the analysis of soils and their relationship to these topics is provided in this assessment under other sections.

PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Prime agricultural lands are high quality farming soils, those best suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. In Jackson County, there are six specific soil types that are considered prime farmland: Altavista sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (AIB) (960 acres); Appling sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (ApB) (2,690 acres); Cecil sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (CeB) (24,390 acres); Hiwassee loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (HsB) (780 acres); Madison sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (MdB) (1250 acres); and Wickham sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (WhB) (1720 acres) (Table 4-1, 1998 comprehensive plan). Collectively, these prime farmland soil types comprise approximately 13.2 percent of the total county land area.

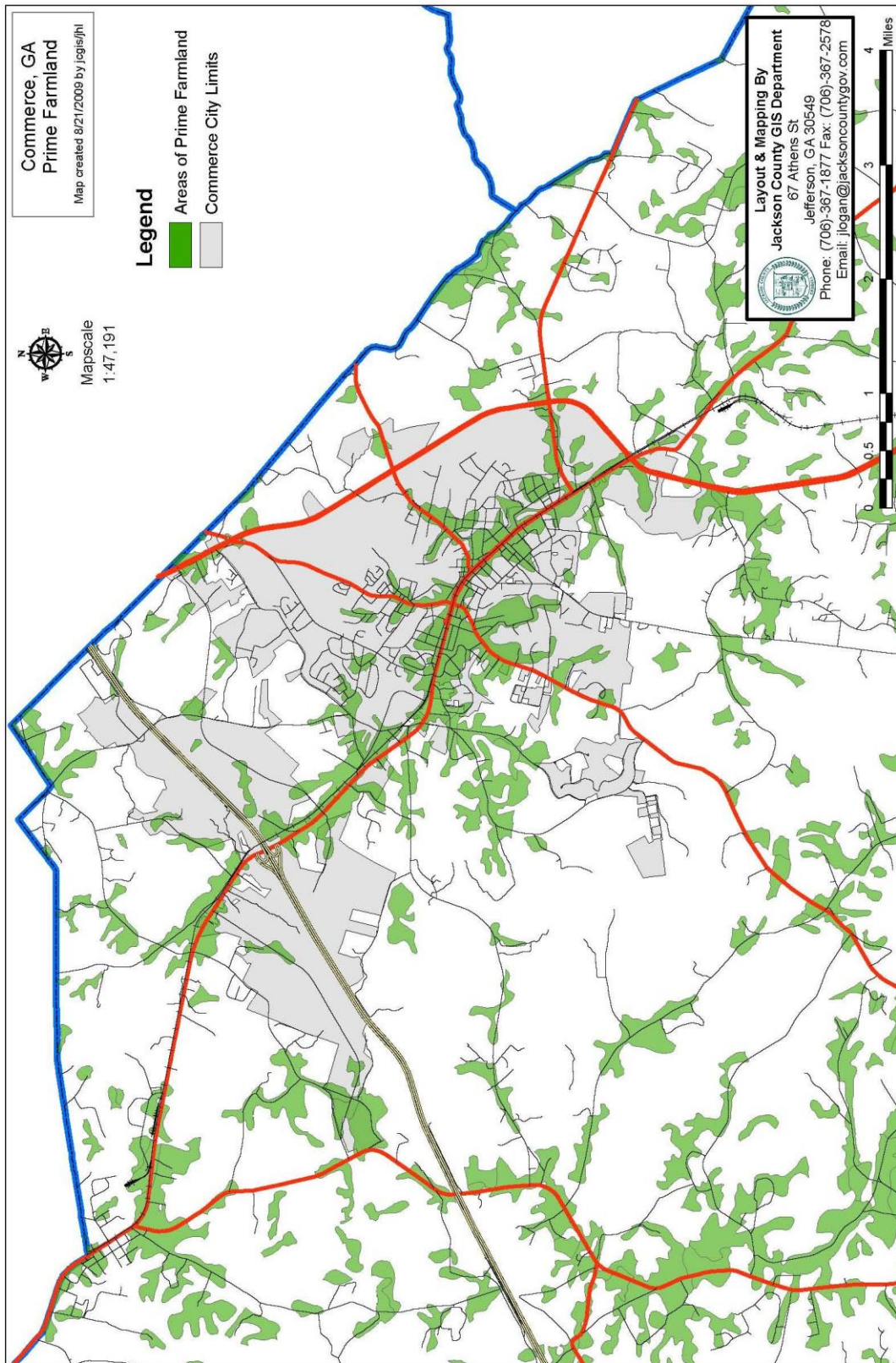
Commerce has soils that fit the description of prime agricultural soils (see map). In fact, the central route through Commerce (SR 98 and US 441 Highway Business) is comprised of prime agricultural soils. However, Commerce is an urbanized area, and there is little expectation of pursuing farming in the city. Therefore, this resource is largely dismissed in future planning efforts.

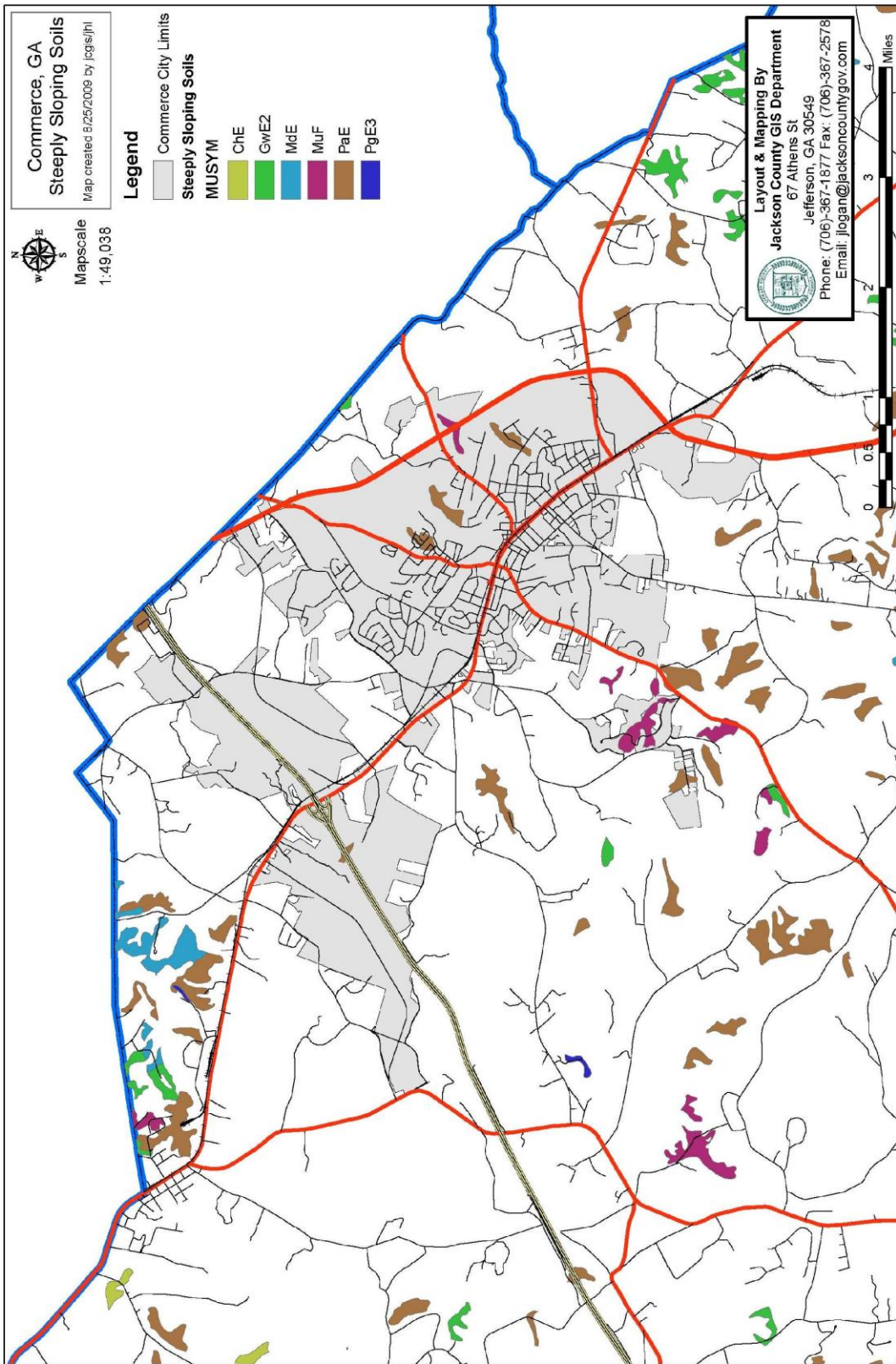
STEEP SLOPES

Steep slopes can be determined on the basis of the published soil survey. From the 1998 comprehensive plan (Table 4-1), there are eight soil types that correspond with steep slopes. These steeply sloping soils are mapped here in this community assessment, technical appendix. Steep slopes typically require substantial alteration for building development and pose severe limitations to septic tank drain fields. Alterations of steep slopes also changes the natural landform and character of the area and can create serious erosion problems (1998 comprehensive plan). However, there are few significant areas of steeply sloping soils in Commerce (see map).

OPEN SPACES AND SCENIC RESOURCES

The previous (1998) comprehensive plan contained a map of scenic views and corridors throughout Jackson County. It did not indicate any such resources within or near the City of Commerce, except that it identified the SR 334 corridor southeast of Commerce as a scenic road corridor. That scenic corridor designation (1998) appears to begin just past the industrial properties within Commerce on SR 334; therefore, it is not applicable to the current city limits and there is generally no expectation that Commerce would annex further into this rural and scenic area along SR 334. There are therefore no scenic resources or significant open spaces within Commerce that are especially critical to preserve.





CHAPTER 5 HISTORIC RESOURCES

HISTORIC NARRATIVE

The first occupants of what is Commerce today were Indians. The Locoda Trail, passing through Center, Nicholson, Commerce, and Maysville, was a historic Indian trail. The settlement of Harmony Grove (see historic map), now Commerce, dates back to 1810. The central business district did not form until the 1850s, when business was centered along State and Cherry Streets, known as the Athens and Clarkesville Road. The Northeastern Railroad Company laid tracks through Harmony Grove from Lula connecting with Athens 18 miles to the south in 1876. With the building of the railroad through Harmony Grove (also shown on the historic map), Harmony Grove flourished as a cotton market from 1880 to 1910, receiving cotton from Jackson, Banks, Madison and Franklin Counties.



Jackson County, 1883
Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia

Harmony Grove was not incorporated until 1884. The incorporation of the Harmony Grove Mill in 1893 enhanced the community's status and economy. Commerce had an independent city school system created by the legislature in 1902. By 1904, the name of Harmony Grove was changed to "Commerce" to reflect the prosperity of the community. A slightly more detailed historical narrative is published on the City's web page along with a walking tour map.

SURVEY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

In 1976, Jackson County's historic buildings were surveyed to identify properties that appeared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The survey was sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources. Information on each surveyed building includes an estimated date of construction, description of architectural features, and condition of building. In Commerce, 53 buildings were surveyed. A more voluminous survey of historic resources was undertaken for historic buildings in the City of Commerce in 1993.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Overview

The National Register of Historic places is our country's list of historic resources that are worthy of preservation. The list is maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Park Service. In Georgia, the National Register program is administered by the Historic

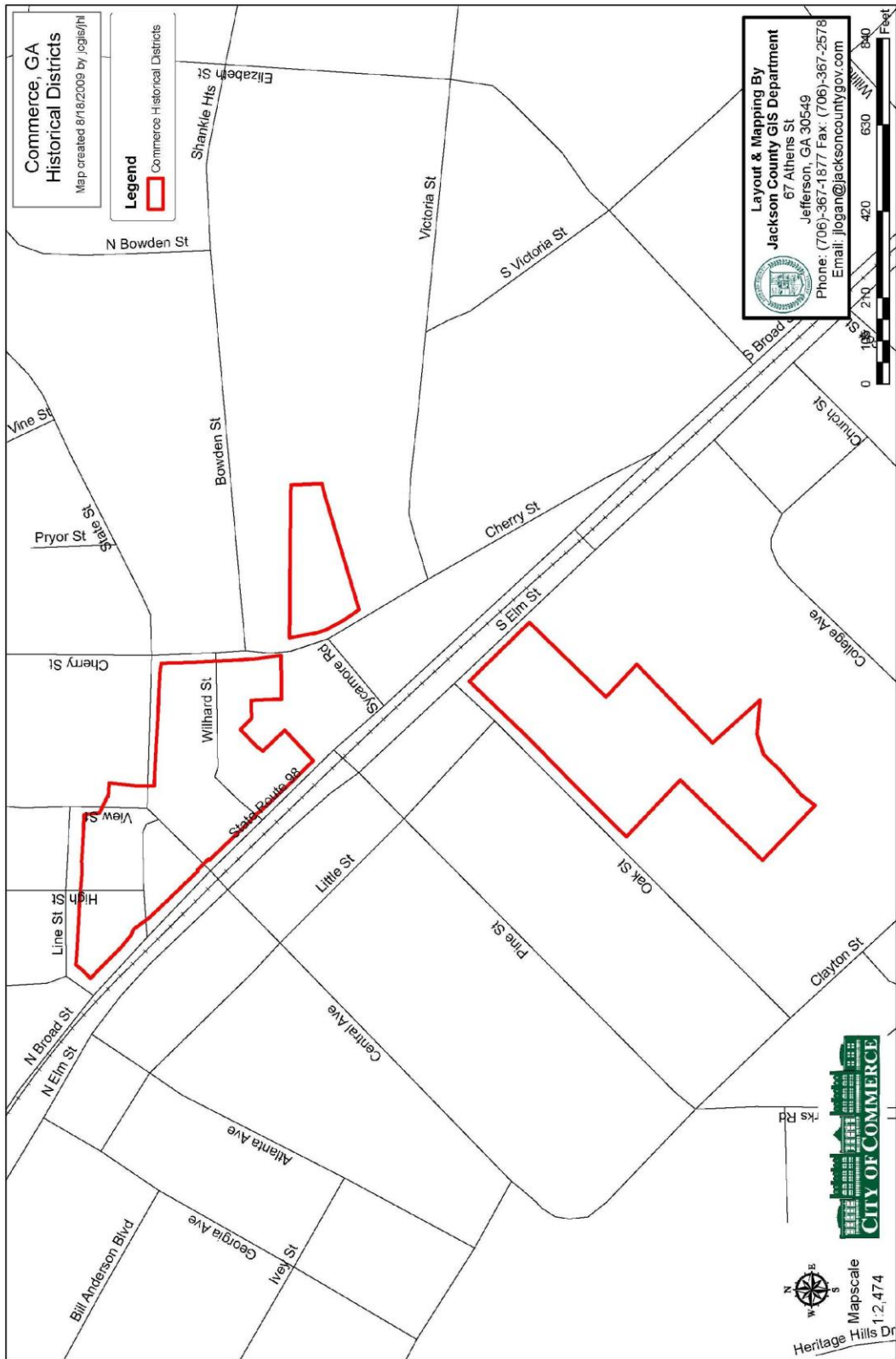
Preservation Division (HPD) of the Department of Natural Resources. To be listed in the National Register, a property must meet the National Register criteria for evaluation. These criteria require that a property be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and that it still look and appear as it did in the past. In addition, the property must (a) be associated with events, activities, or developments that were important in the past; or (b) be associated with the lives of people who were important in the past; or (c) be significant in the areas of architectural history, landscape history, or engineering; or (d) have the ability to yield information through archaeological investigation that would answer questions about our past.

Listing on the National Register does not place obligations or restrictions on the use or disposition of and individual property. National Register listing is not the same as local historic district zoning or local landmark designation that protects listed properties with design review. Properties listed in, or eligible for, the National Register are subject to an environmental review for projects using federal funds--regardless of the amount. National Register listing does not encourage public acquisition of or access to property. Properties listed in the National Register qualify for both state and federal grant programs. These programs offer financial incentives for the repair and rehabilitation of listed properties.

National Register Listings

In Commerce, the following historic resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Following the name of each property is a brief description of the property and related information. Historic districts are shown on a map on the following page.

1. **Seaborn M. Shankle House** (Commerce) is a building originally constructed in 1840 and enlarged in the 1970s. The property includes the Shankle family cemetery and an outbuilding. The house was constructed by Seaborn Shankle who operated a mercantile business in the area until his death in 1885 and remained a prominent member of the Harmony Grove Community (later named Commerce). The Seaborn M Shankle House was the first property in Jackson County listed in the National Register (November 29, 1979) and included 1.3 acres of land.
2. **Gov. L. G. Hardman House** (Commerce) is a two-story brick house constructed in 1921 and Mediterranean or Mission architectural style. The house was the home of Dr. Hardman, who was a noted physician, successful businessman, and politician--serving in the Georgia House of Representatives and as the Governor of Georgia. The property includes five acres of land and was listed on June 16, 1988.
3. **Commerce Commercial Historic District** (Commerce) comprises late 19th and early, 20th-century buildings covering approximately nine acres in downtown Commerce. This district is situated along the ridge which is followed by the railroad and is the dividing watershed for three rivers. The irregular street pattern is due to the city being at the site of a confluence of several wagon roads which were later intersected by the railroad. Most of the buildings are of brick construction and several with cast iron storefronts. The district was listed in the National Register on January 19, 1989.



HISTORIC RESOURCES

Prior study has revealed the following historic resources, in addition to those properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

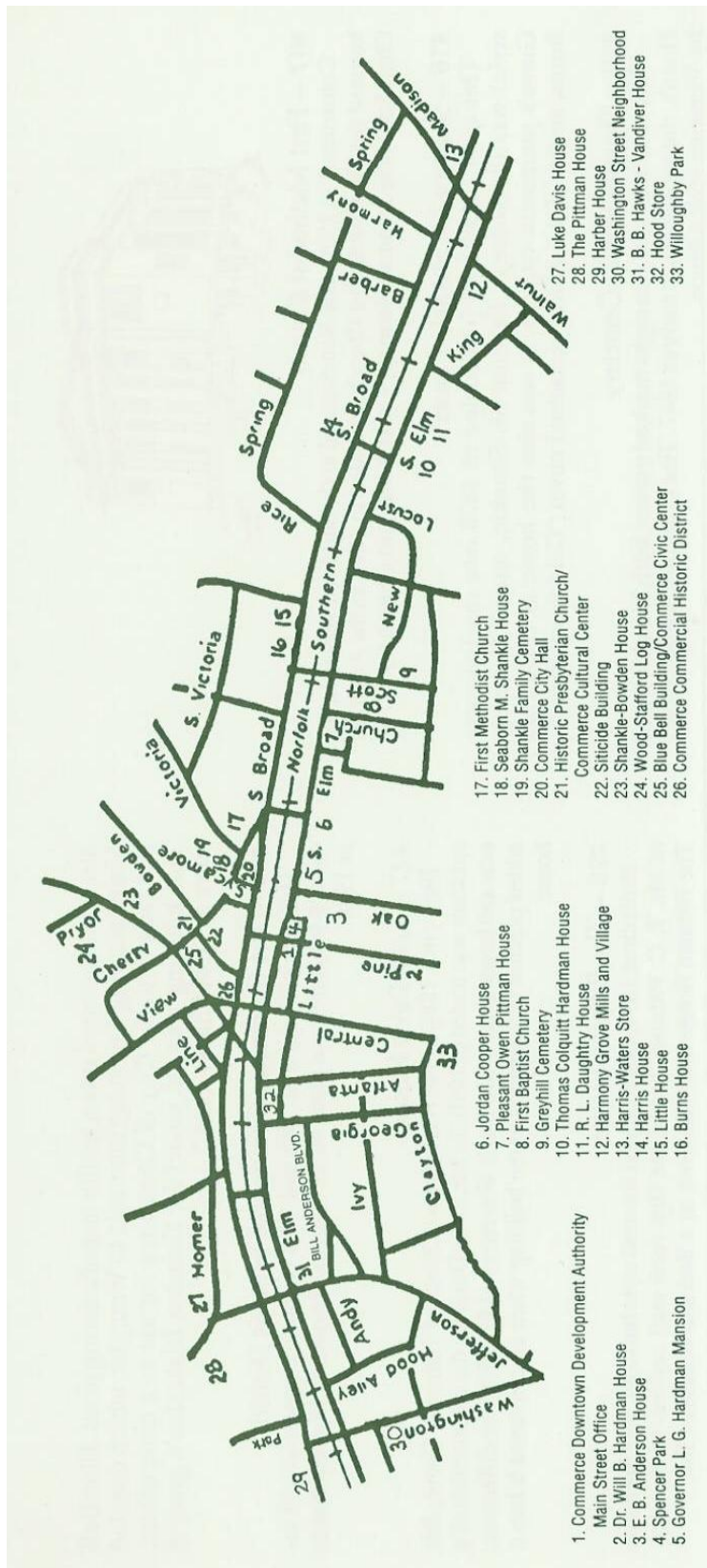
1. **Shankle Heights Historic District:** Located on Victoria and Elizabeth Streets and comprised of c. 1920-1942 residential buildings with several Neoclassical homes.
2. **Old Broad Street Historic District:** Comprised of several historic buildings located near the L. G. Hardman House. These properties could be individually listed or included in a district.
3. **Broad Street Properties:** Several buildings dating to c. 1894 are located on Broad Street and Elm Street. These buildings may be eligible for individual National Register nominations.

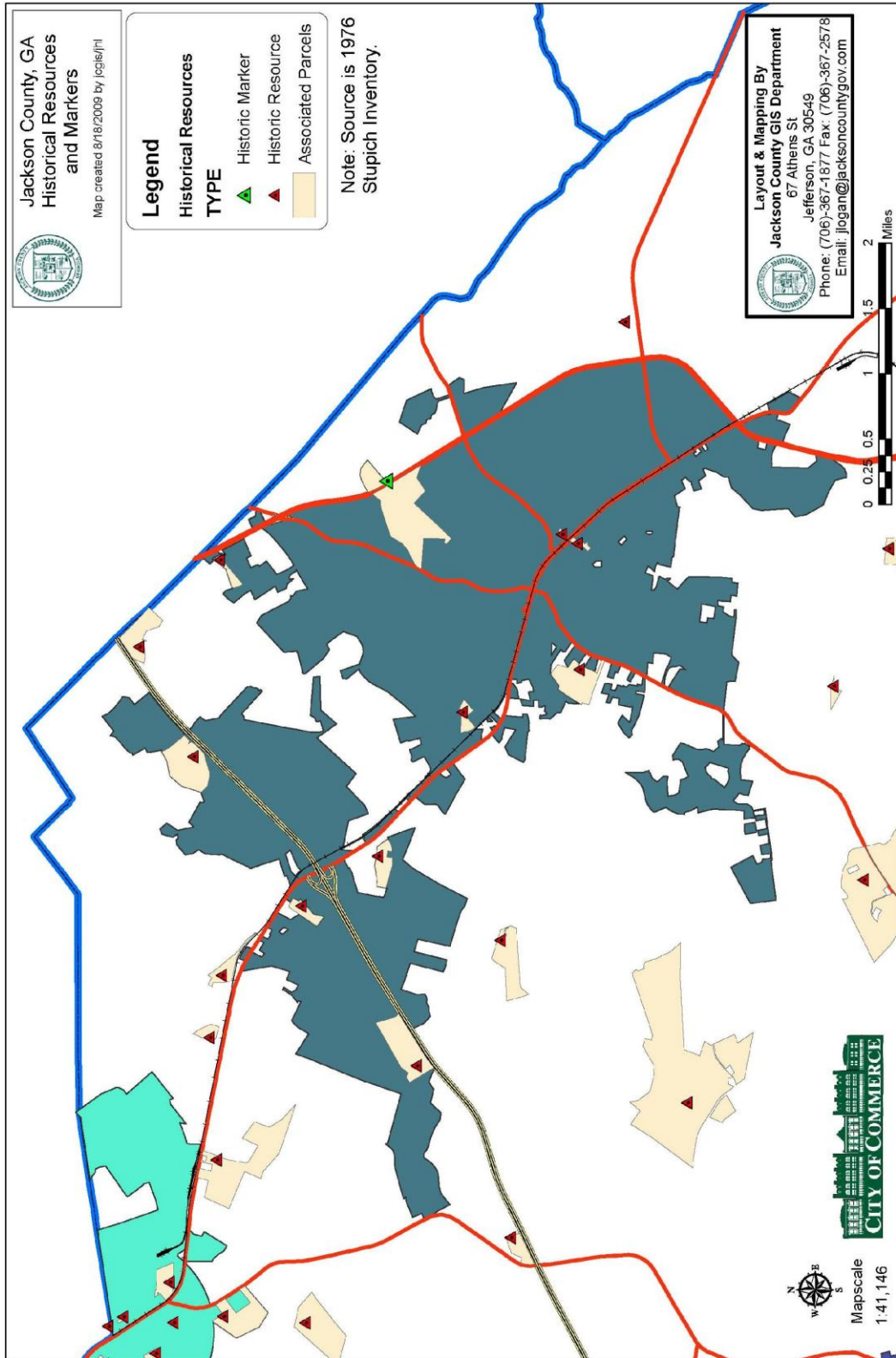
Locally, Commerce has prepared a walking tour of attractions in the downtown area, including historic resources. As noted above, Commerce's place in history deserves a comprehensive undertaking with regard to identifying the historic resources of the city, as called for in the next section.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Commerce has significant numbers of historic resources remaining, but to date the city has not given sufficient attention to protect its historic resources. Commerce does not have an updated historic resources inventory, but it should program for a thorough assessment of its historic resources, not only those known in the downtown area, but for its older residential neighborhoods and outlying parts of Commerce that have been added through annexation. There are sufficient existing historic resources in Commerce now, without conducting such a survey, that it should strongly consider the alternatives for policies, regulations, and programs to protect historic resources in Commerce. Therefore, policy making and program initiation for historic preservation should not wait for the preparation of a historic resources inventory.

Specifically, the Community Agenda should call for preparation of a comprehensive historic survey, assess its current regulations and policies (including a demolition ordinance), establish institutional capacity for historic preservation efforts (possibly with assistance from Jackson County), and consider the merits and potential drawbacks (e.g., intrusion on property rights) of establishing a local historic preservation commission and historic preservation ordinance. These are steps that are needed in the short-term, in order to ensure history remains in its proper context and resources are preserved.





CHAPTER 6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The quality of life in a given community depends on maintaining existing facilities and adding facility and service capacity in order to continue growing and developing. Without adequate facilities, such as roads, water, sewer, schools, parks, etc., private development will not be possible. The provision of facilities is understandably complex, and the provision of facilities can take several years to plan, design, construct, and operate.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an inventory of the community facilities and services serving the City of Commerce and assess their adequacy. The information contained in this chapter will assist the city in coordinating the planning of public facilities and services with new development and as the population and employment of the city increases.

In this assessment, facilities and services are grouped generally into eight categories. There is some overlap among the categories in some instances, and arguments could be made that one particular facility or service belongs under a different category than the one assigned. However, the classifications represent typical organizational arrangements by municipal departments.

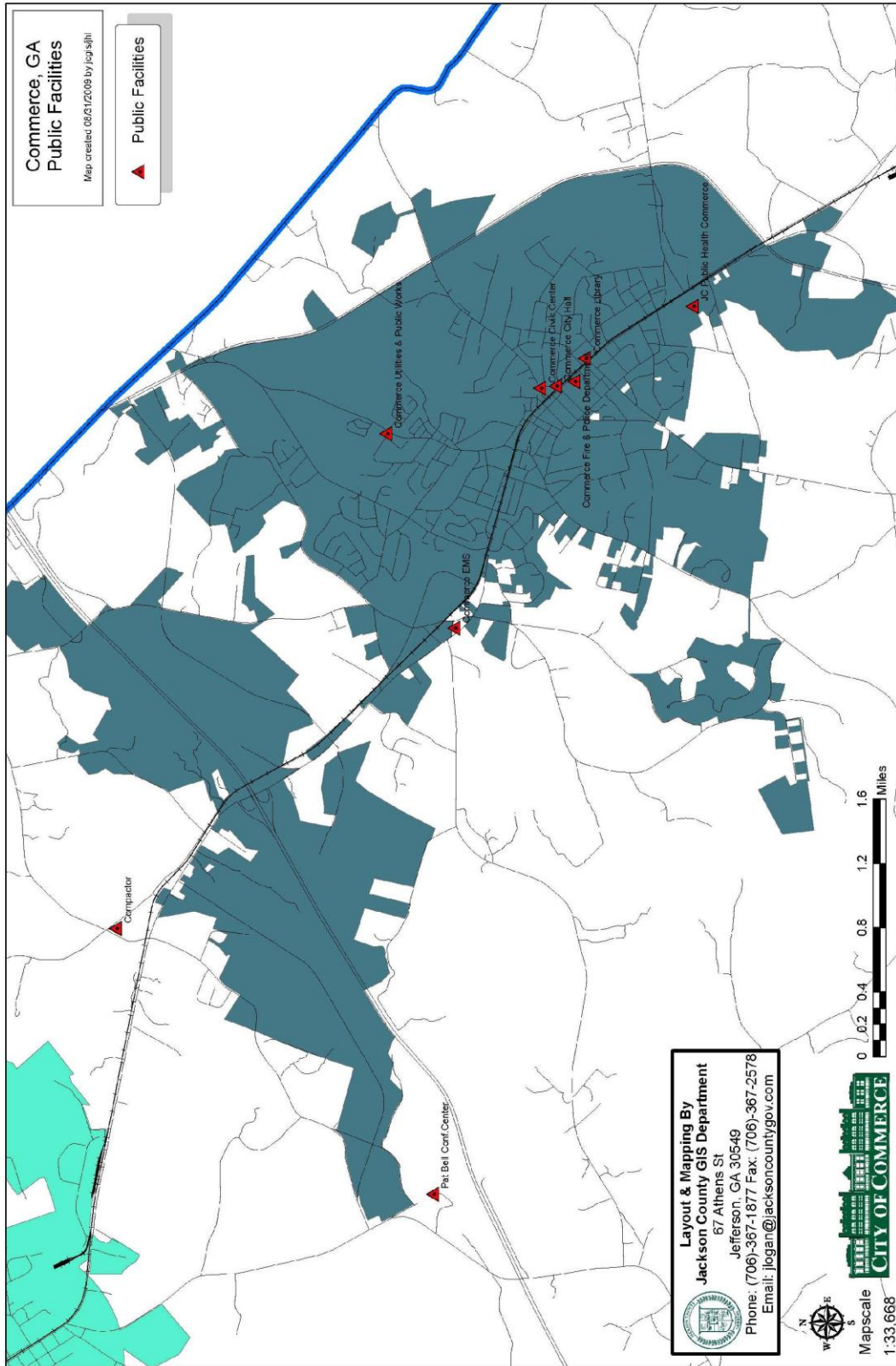
1. Public Safety Facilities and Services
2. Utility-Type Operations
3. Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Facilities
4. General Administrative Facilities and Services
5. Grounds, Public Works, and Transportation
6. Planning and Zoning-Related Functions
7. Health, Education, Welfare and Social Services
8. Economic and Community Development

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Police Department and Corrections

Commerce operates its own police department, which operates out of a building located at 1491 South Elm Street. The Commerce Police Department is a full service law enforcement agency, divided generally into an operations division and criminal investigations division. Staffing consists of the Chief, Captains, Lieutenants, Sergeants, Corporals, School Resource Officer, K-9 Officer, Patrol Officers, Detectives, Reserve Officers, Animal Control Officer, Clerk of Court and Administrative Clerks. Commerce sponsors a Boy Scout Explorer Program, participate in numerous civic activities and plan to host a Citizens Police Academy. It is a community-oriented Police Department that prides itself on the formation of a close community partnership (Source: City of Commerce web page).

Jackson County provides jail services on a countywide basis. The Sheriff's Department operates the county jail. All municipalities in Jackson County send their prisoners to the Jackson County Jail. Municipalities pay lodging fees as appropriate per housing and booking contracts (last revised in 2003), and Jackson County has such a contracts with Commerce.



Fire and Rescue

The City of Commerce Fire Department serves the city limits of Commerce and also the unincorporated areas in the East Jackson Fire District. It is co-located with the Police Department at 1491 South Elm Street and consists of approximately 9,300 square feet.

The Commerce Fire Department maintains a Class 4 ISO within the city limits. The department is manned by 30 trained volunteer firefighters of which seven are National Registry EMTs. The department is led by the Chief, one Asst. Chief, two Captains, two Lieutenants, and a training coordinator. The department's equipment consists of three class A pumpers (two 1,250 gpm and one 1,000 gpm), one 75-foot ladder truck with a 1,500 gpm pump, two fully equipped service trucks, one 1,500 gallon tanker, one 300 gallon four-wheel drive brush truck, and one command vehicle. The department provides fire prevention and education programs which have reportedly lowered the number of actual fire calls over the past years (Source: City of Commerce web page).

Jackson County has constructed a Fire Service Training Center which is available to all fire district personnel for regular training.

Emergency Medical Services

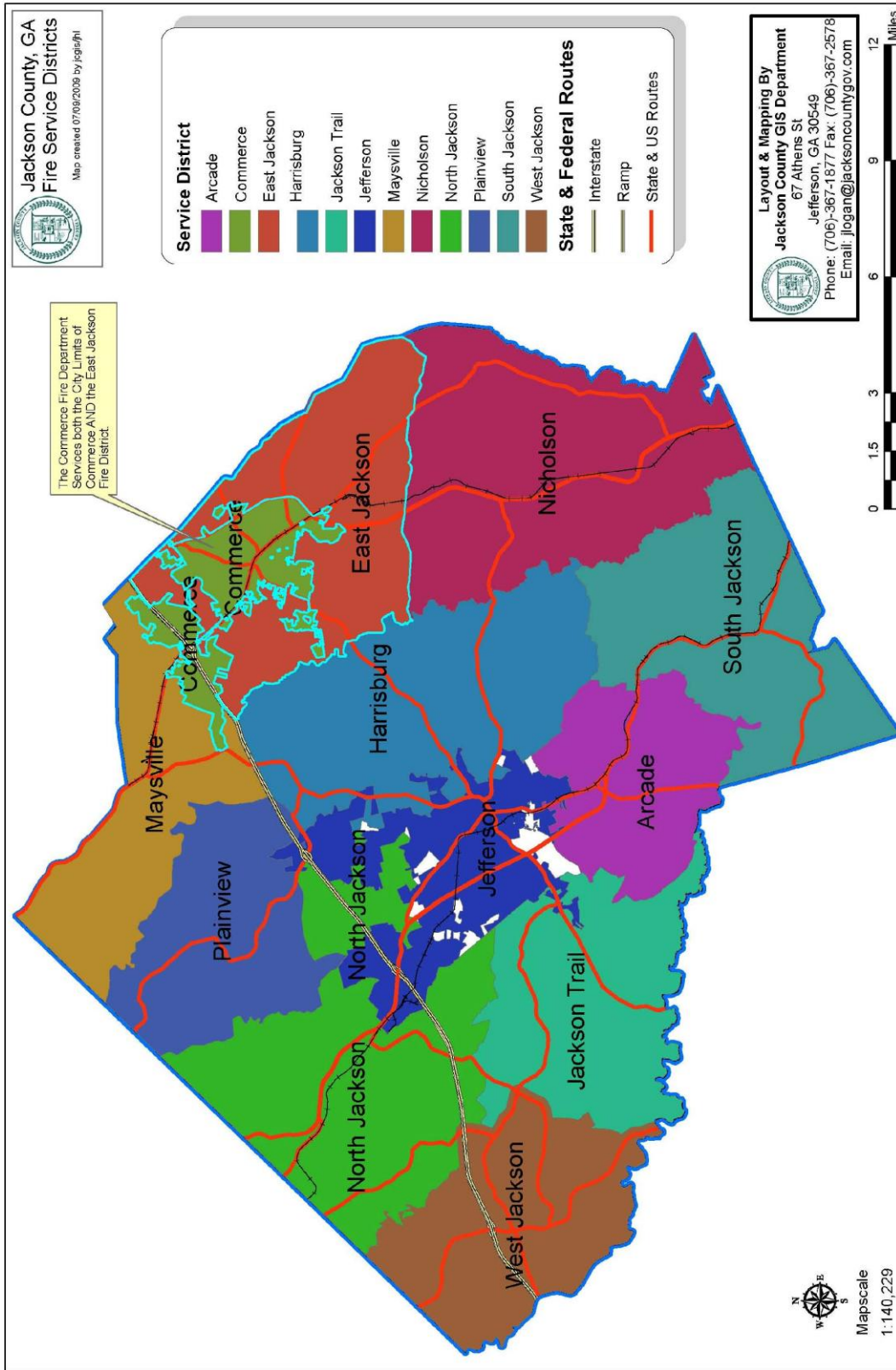
Emergency Medical Services in Jackson County are provided by six full-time stations on a countywide basis, including all municipalities. A rescue truck from the Jackson County Emergency Services is housed at the Commerce Fire Station. That truck is manned by volunteer EMTs and first responders who answer emergency calls in East Jackson County. EMS is responsible for the provision of First Responder programs and Advanced Life Support (ALS) patient treatment/transport throughout the county. Jackson County hosts an Emory Flight base at the Jackson County Airport where an aircraft is stationed and staffed with a pilot, paramedic, and nurse.

911 Communications Center/Services

This is a countywide service. The Jackson County Public Safety Communications Center was established in 1991 by referendum to the voters of Jackson County. The center serves as central dispatch for all public safety units within Jackson County. All communications of public safety agencies are directed through Jackson County's primary public safety answering point, thus serving the Sheriff, municipal police departments, volunteer fire departments, volunteer rescue units, emergency medical services, animal control, and the county marshal. In 2006, the Board of Commissioners approved an upgrade of equipment in the communications center, the first major upgrade since 1991.

E-911 Addressing Services

Jackson County provides this service countywide, including all municipalities.



Emergency Management and Homeland Security

Jackson County's Emergency Management Agency is responsible for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to emergencies and disasters throughout Jackson County and its municipalities. Volunteer rescue units, a dive team, and other specialized response units are under the direction of this agency. Homeland security is provided on a countywide basis by the Jackson County Emergency Management Agency, and Jackson County is the lead agency for homeland security. Work of the agency includes identification of critical infrastructure and possible targets of terrorism. Emergency management also has an EMT flight building at the Jackson County Airport, constructed in 2005 and consisting of 13,260 square feet.

Animal Control

As noted above under police, the police department employs an animal control officer. Jackson County also provides animal control services to the unincorporated areas of Jackson County and in some of the cities in Jackson County to differing degrees based on service agreements. The semi-limited service agreement between Jackson County and Commerce should be periodically evaluated for adequacy.

Courts

On a countywide basis, Jackson County provides Superior Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, Probate Court and Juvenile Court to all citizens of Jackson County including the municipalities. County court facilities are housed in the Jackson County Courthouse, constructed in 2004 with 134,304 square feet. Commerce has its own municipal court, and the clerk of municipal court is housed in the Commerce Police Department.

UTILITY-TYPE OPERATIONS

Water

The City of Commerce is permitted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to operate a water supply reservoir, a drinking water treatment plant, a water distribution system, three wastewater treatment facilities, and a sewer collection system.

Commerce owns and maintains a 325-acre watershed lake, known as the Grove River Reservoir, which is located in the southern part of Banks County. The lake is fed by the Grove River and its tributaries that extend to eastern Hall County. The drainage basin for the reservoir covers 37 square miles. This lake is the supply for the city's drinking water system. Public use is allowed; however, there are rules and regulations that must be followed. These are enforced by the City of Commerce and the Department of Natural Resources. The city has adopted ordinances for watershed protection and reservoir management. Commerce also prepared and adopted a drought contingency plan, which was updated in November, 2007 to more closely comply with the EPD-mandated water restrictions.

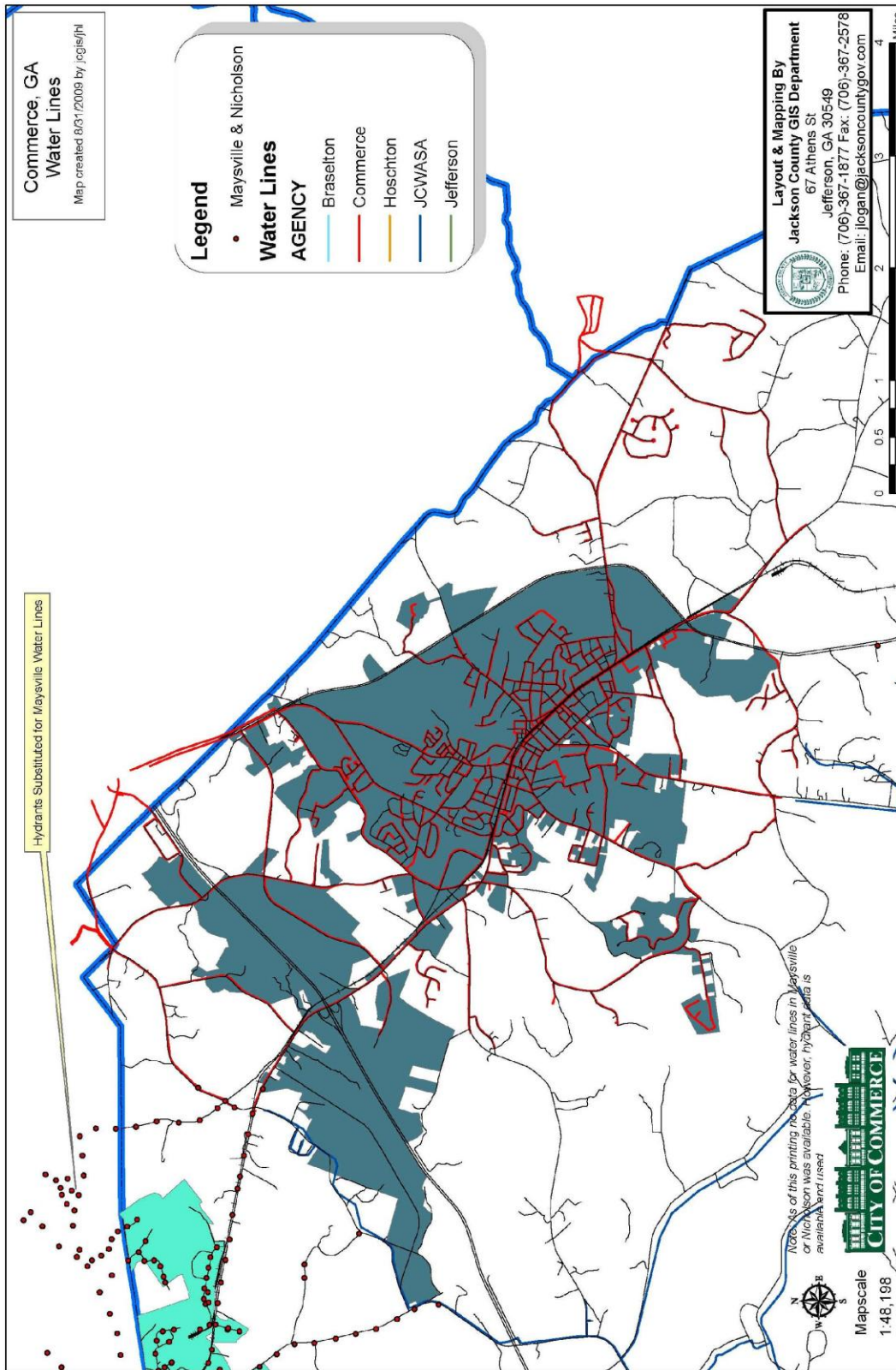
A feasibility study to modify the dam structure at the reservoir to increase storage capacity was completed in January 2009 by Schnabel Engineering, LLC. These modifications to the dam to raise the normal full pool by four feet will increase the area to 380 acres and double the storage capacity of the reservoir. The timing of this project will be dependent on the increased water demand.

Commerce operates the water plant in accordance with Withdrawal Permit No. 006-0106-01 issued by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and Operational Permit No. CS157001. The water plant was originally placed in service in 1970, with a treatment capacity of 2.2 MGD. This plant is a conventional filter plant with sedimentation basins and dual media filters. The most recent upgrade was completed in 2000, which increased the treatment capacity to 4.5 MGD. The plant can pump 3,125 Gallons per Minute (GPM) into the distribution system at a pressure of 130 PSI. Future increases in treatment capacity will require building additions and new treatment facilities.

The City produces an annual report known as the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) which outlines the parameters for water quality in the system.

The water and sewer service area is defined in the Jackson County Service Delivery Strategy as approved by the Department of Community Affairs. The service areas include the city limits of Commerce as well as adjoining unincorporated areas of Jackson, Banks, and Madison Counties.

Commerce's water distribution system consists of four elevated storage tanks with a capacity of 1.6 million gallons. There are 118 miles of water mains ranging in size from 16 inch to 6 inch and 760 fire hydrants. The system is basically looped within the service territory with the exception of a few dead ends. Water system expansion for new subdivisions and commercial projects is funded by developers and subdividers. Those projects are reviewed by city staff and city engineers under a delegation of review agreement with the Georgia EPD.



Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The City of Commerce is permitted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to operate three wastewater treatment facilities and a sewer collection system. The Northside Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP), National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. GA0026247, is located off W.E. King Road.

Commerce's W.E. King plant has a permitted capacity of 1.05 MGD. The discharge from this facility flows to Beaver Dam Creek, a tributary in the Savannah River Basin.

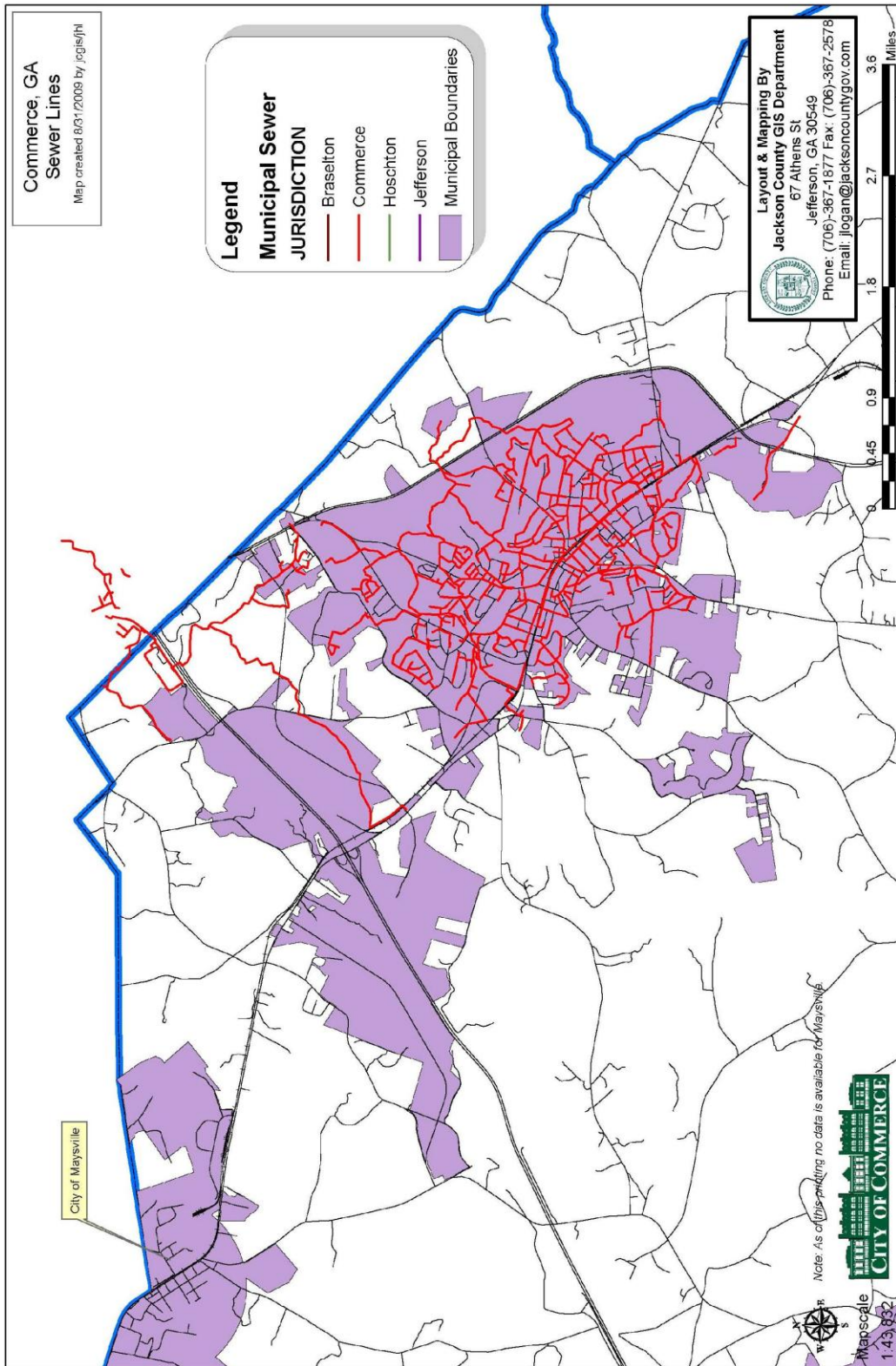
The Davis House WPCP, NPDES Permit No. GA0032646, is located off Eisenhower Drive at Banks Crossing. This oxidation pond has a permitted capacity of 0.067 MGD. The discharge from this facility flows to Crooked Creek, a tributary in the Savannah River Basin.

The Holiday Inn WPCP, NPDES Permit No. GA0032638, is located behind the Holiday Inn located on U.S. Highway 441 at Banks Crossing. This oxidation pond has a permitted capacity of 0.041 MGD. The discharge from this facility flows to Crooked Creek, a tributary in the Savannah River Basin.

The Northside WPCP has completed an expansion that increases the capacity to 2.1 MGD as well as complies with the new Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements for water quality. The average daily flow for 2008 was 0.850 MGD. It is projected that the plant will reach 80 percent capacity by 2025.

Commerce's sewer collection system consists of 98 miles of sewer lines ranging in size from 21 inches to 6 inches in diameter with 1,185 manholes. There are 7 pump stations and 5 miles of force mains. Sewer system expansion to new residential and commercial developments is funded by developers.

The water and sewer service area is defined in the Jackson County Service Delivery Strategy as approved by the Department of Community Affairs. The service areas include the city limits of Commerce as well as adjoining areas in unincorporated Jackson, Banks, and Madison Counties.



Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

Jackson County does not operate a landfill, but it has one transfer station at 100 Landfill Drive in Jefferson. Jackson County also operates two compactor sites; one is in the Commerce area at 232 Yarbrough Ridgeway Road. Solid waste is disposed of at the R & B Landfill operated by Waste Management in Banks County. Long-term contracts are in place, and Waste Management has provided the County with a Letter of Capacity Assurance until 2013.

Cities in Jackson County are individually responsible for arranging for the collection of municipal solid waste. However, most jurisdictions allow for the private market to provide for collection services. Jackson County provides a clean community program through Keep Jackson County Beautiful as an umbrella program involving cities, schools, civic organizations, nonprofit groups, and neighborhood associations. Programs include Adopt-A-Highway, Bring One for the Chipper, Recycling and Litter education, and Great American Cleanup.

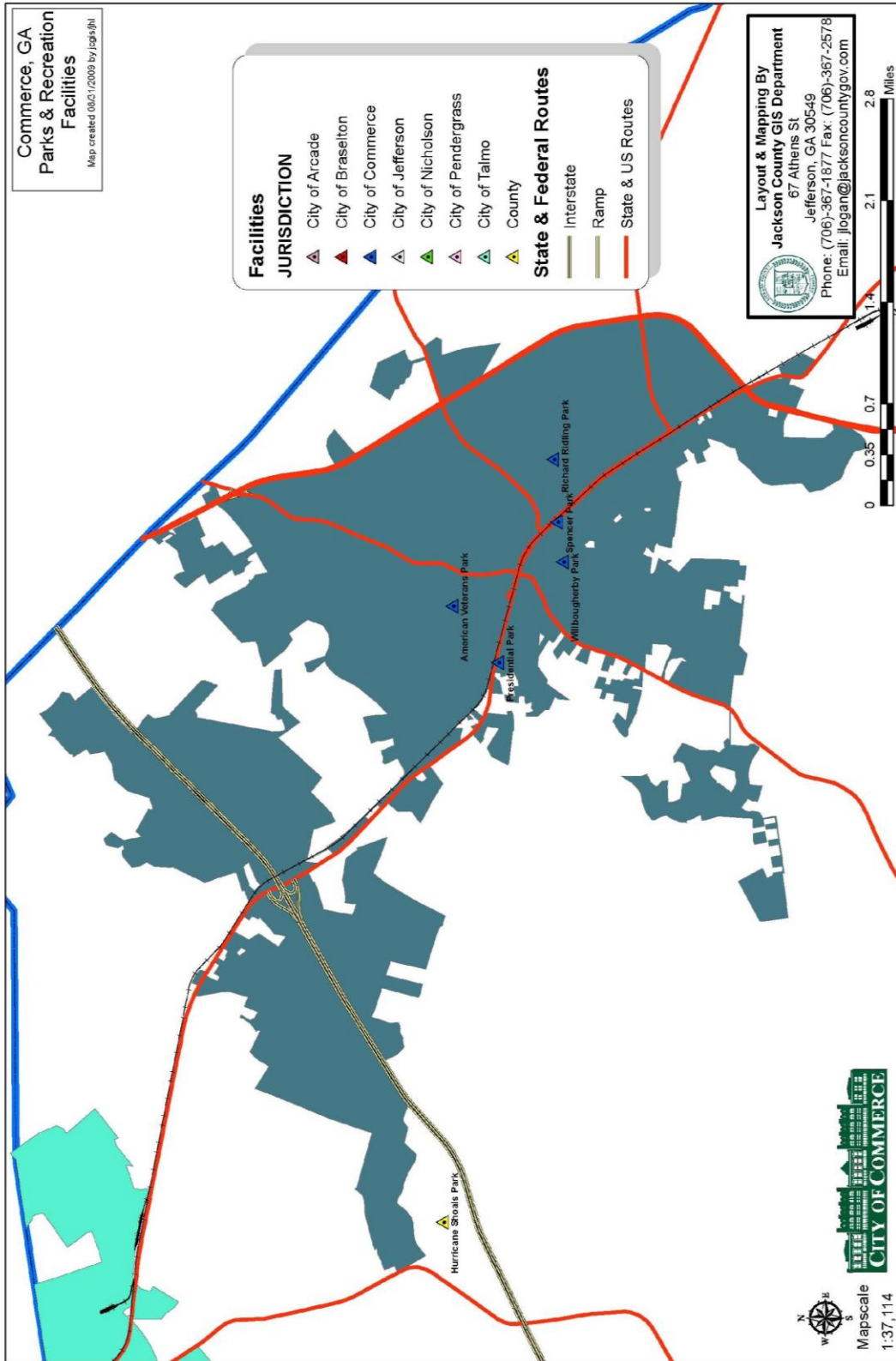
Jackson County currently operates a drop-off program to collect recyclables at the County transfer station and the two staffed compactor sites. The transfer station and drop-off sites have collection containers for aluminum cans, newspaper, and cardboard.

The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 requires local governments to develop a plan for reducing the amount of solid waste going into landfills and other disposal facilities. Such reductions may be accomplished by many techniques, including recycling materials such as plastic, aluminum, and newspaper and the diversion of yard waste from disposal facilities into backyard and other composting operations. The county has participated in a regional solid waste management plan, prepared by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

Parks and Recreation

Commerce's Recreation Department cooperates with the Commerce School System for joint use of recreational facilities. Commerce has a full-time Parks and Recreation Department staff that operates and maintains the recreational facilities and operates programs within the city. Services provided to Commerce citizens fall into two basic areas: parks and inclusive facilities and leisure activities which are scheduled within the parks. The Parks and Recreation Department cooperates with the Commerce School System in sharing facilities when possible. Some Parks and Recreation Department activities take place in school facilities when such facilities are lacking in city parks (Source: City of Commerce web page). Parks operated by Commerce include those identified in Table 6.1.



**Table 6.1
Parks and Recreation Facilities in Commerce**

Facility Name	Location (Address)	Acreage	Facilities Provided
American Veterans Memorial Park	204 Carson Street	26	Ball fields (3); Playground; Tennis Courts (4); Swimming Pool; Concession Stand; Restrooms; Open Lawn Areas; Parking; Department Headquarters (Office); and Community Room
Willoughby Park	Clayton Street	5	Passive Park Facilities; Picnic Shelter; Gazebo; Parking; Restrooms; Boy and Scout Building
Richard Ridling Park	Shankle Heights	9	Ball fields (2); Concession Stand; Restrooms; Maintenance Building; and Parking

Source: City of Commerce web page, 2009.

Commerce Civic Center

The Commerce Civic Center is a good example of the city's commitment to revitalize the downtown area. Once the site of the historic Blue Bell Factory, the building was purchased by the city in 1988. It now provides meeting space for groups from 10 to 1,000 (Source: City of Commerce web page).

Commerce Cultural Center

The city operates a cultural center which contributes to the dynamics of public facilities located in the downtown area.

Senior Center

Jackson County provides senior center services on a countywide basis. It operates one senior center located at 219 Darnell Road; the building was constructed in 1981 and consists of 11,220 square feet. In 2008, a CDBG grant was received to completely renovate the senior center. One complication with the renovation is it will cause temporary displacement. The I W Davis Facility, which was recently purchased by Jackson County, may be used for a temporary home for the senior center.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Commerce has a City Hall (27 Sycamore Street) which was originally constructed in 1936 and was used as the city's post office. Commerce purchased the building in 1997 and renovated it for use as a City Hall.

GROUNDS, PUBLIC WORKS, AND TRANSPORTATION

The City's Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of all city streets, rights-of-ways, and city cemeteries. Facilities are located at 210 Waterworks Road in Commerce.

PLANNING AND ZONING-RELATED FUNCTIONS

Land Use Planning

In 1998, Jackson County was lead agency for preparing a comprehensive plan for the county and all municipalities with the exception of Maysville, which is assigned to the Georgia Mountains region and plans with Banks County. Since that time, the county and each municipality has prepared their own respective land use/comprehensive plans.

Although the municipalities conduct their own long-range planning activities, the need for countywide coordination has not diminished. Efforts have been made in this comprehensive plan to provide a countywide perspective, including all municipalities and parts of municipalities located in Jackson County. However, additional and regular coordination is paramount to the success of any countywide growth management strategies.

Planning Commissions, Zoning Administration and Development Plan Review

Commerce has an appointed Planning Commission. Zoning administration and development plan review are provided by the Planning and Development Department which is housed in a building shared with the Utilities Department, located at 545 Cedar Drive.

Geographic Information Systems

At the time the Service Delivery Strategy was most recently revised (2006), there was no arrangement for countywide provision of GIS services. Jackson County has a GIS Division which serves the mapping needs of all county departments, especially the tax assessor, as well the municipalities in Jackson County. The City of Commerce also has a GIS system, but Jackson County's GIS Department has assisted with the mapping of annexations, zoning map updates, and this comprehensive planning effort.

Building Inspections

Commerce provides building inspections in its incorporated area. Building inspections functions are provided by the Department of Planning and Zoning.

HEALTH, EDUCATION, WELFARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Public and Environmental Health

The Jackson County Health Department provides services on a countywide basis. There are two public health facilities. The primary health department office is located in the Jefferson area (275 General Jackson Drive) and consists of 7,140 square feet in a single building constructed in 1991. A second public health office is located in the "Jackson Campus," a shopping center within the city limits of Commerce (623 South Elm Street) which was purchased by Jackson

County (it consists of 67,349 square feet). These two health clinics provide the following basic services: health checkups, immunizations, WIC Supplemental Food Program, nutrition education, family planning, and screening for STDs, HIV, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B. The Health Department also has a separate Environmental Health office located at 260 Lee Street in Jefferson.

Hospitals

BJC Medical Center is located in Commerce. BJC Medical Center consists of 90 licensed hospital beds, 167 nursing facility beds, and a staff of over 400 medical professionals that provide a range of in-patient, out-patient and long-term nursing care services including 24-hour emergency services, surgical services, obstetric services, laboratory services, radiology services, physical therapy services, outpatient clinics, and other services.

Public Schools

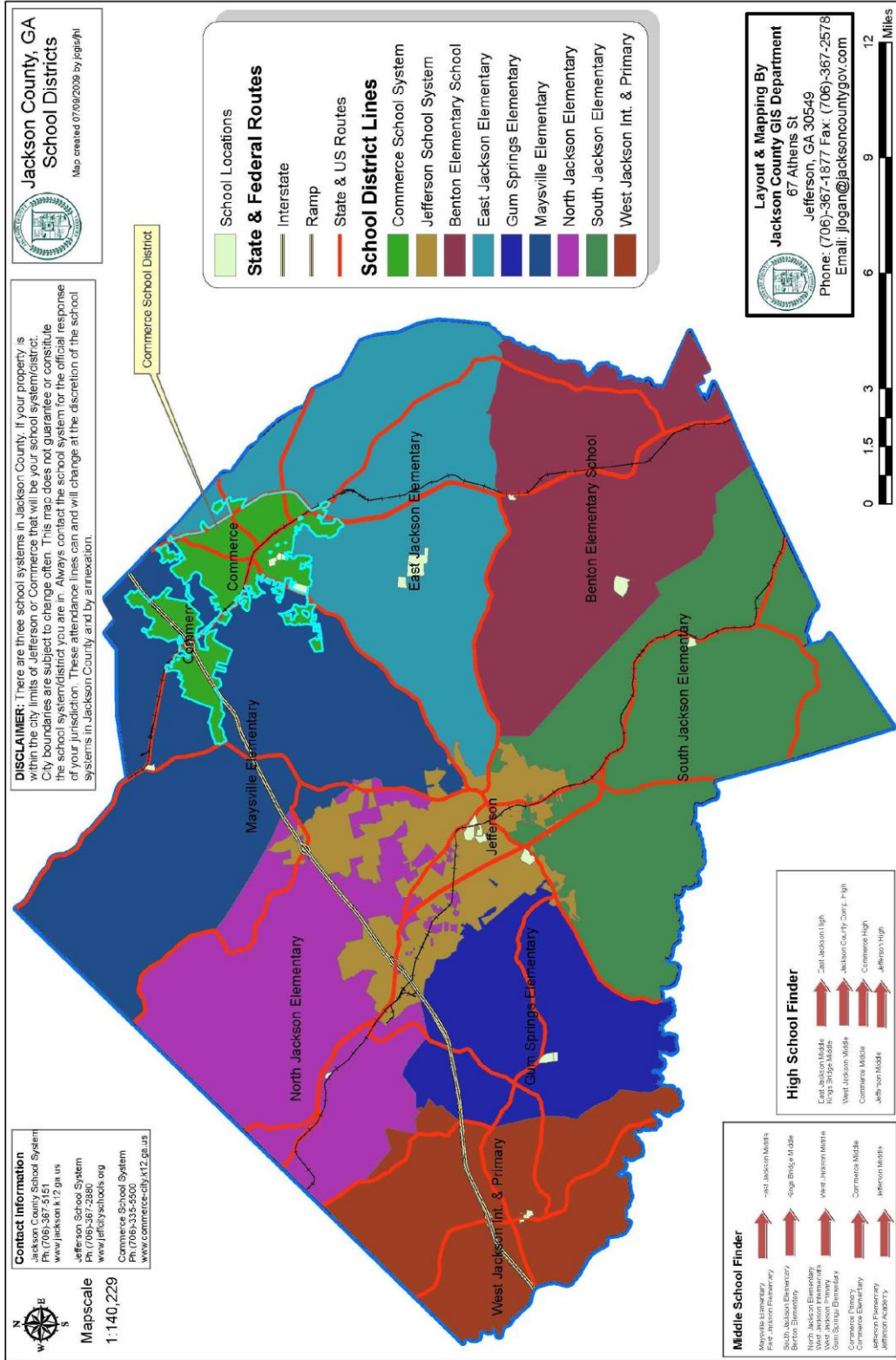
Unlike most counties that have countywide public school systems, there are three independent public school systems in Jackson County: the county system, and city school systems in Commerce and Jefferson. Table 6.2 provides the individual student enrollments for the past three years for the Commerce school system.

**Table 6.2
Public School Enrollment by System by Grade, FY 2007 to FY 2009
Commerce Public School System**

Grade	City of Commerce		
	2007	2008	2009
Pre-k	44	53	51
Kindergarten	144	140	151
1 st grade	108	132	105
2 nd grade	118	108	136
3 rd grade	124	122	101
4 th grade	113	124	112
5 th grade	107	121	118
6 th grade	123	106	105
7 th grade	116	109	101
8 th grade	120	116	116
9 th grade	118	120	112
10 th grade	113	109	117
11 th grade	81	102	94
12 th grade	83	64	88
Total	1512	1526	1507

Source: Georgia Department of Education, Data Collection System.

Enrollment in Commerce’s school system has remained relatively steady in recent years.



**Table 6.3
City of Commerce School Enrollment by School, FY 2007 to FY 2009**

School, City of Commerce School System	FY 2007 Enrollment	FY 2008 Enrollment	FY 2009 Enrollment
Commerce Primary (pre-k through 2 nd grade)	414	433	443
Commerce Elementary (3rd and 4th grade)	237	246	213
Commerce Middle (5 th through 8 th grade)	466	452	440
Commerce High (9 th through 12 th grade)	395	395	411
Total	1,512	1,526	1,507

Source: Georgia Department of Education, Data Collection System.

Libraries

The Piedmont Regional Library System provides library services to Banks, Barrow, and Jackson Counties. All of the libraries in Jackson County are affiliated with the regional system in what is considered a loose confederation. While operating under a loose confederation within the Piedmont Regional Library System, the seven libraries of Jackson County are independent of each other. Unlike most other library systems in Georgia, the Regional Agency does not have direct line authority over the seven libraries in Jackson; instead, the libraries report directly to their individual city governments.

The Regional System provides access to PINES, courier service to share materials across the system and the state, cataloging and processing of books and other materials, administration of state funds (including construction funds), operating extension services, and other services. Additionally, the Regional System also does most of the acquisition and selection of books, a time-consuming task that requires much professional judgment, especially on limited budgets.

There is one library in Commerce, located at 1344 South Broad Street. Table 6.5 provides an inventory of the square footage of Commerce’s library, as well as planned expansions.

**Table 6.4
Current Library Stock and Existing and Planned Building Inventory, 2009
Commerce Library**

Municipal Library	Print and Audio Visual (AV) Materials	Existing Building Square Footage	Additional Building Square Footage Planned
Commerce	31,290	9,000	5,000

Source: Piedmont Regional Library System, August 2009.

The libraries in Jackson County are supported primarily by their individual cities, with some support by the county, mostly through in-kind payment of regional membership fees. As funding has continued to grow over the years from the municipalities, the county levels have not increased. County funding distribution is based on the following formula: one-third is divided evenly amongst the seven libraries and the remaining two-thirds are based on the size of the

local budgets. Therefore, cities that support their libraries more aggressively receive more county funding.

None of the existing libraries in Jackson County is sized for the next 15 years of county growth, according to the Regional Library Director, Alan Harkness. And there is no county-wide library strategic plan to address those future growth needs. .

**Table 6.5
Library Level of Service and Projected Populations
City of Commerce Library**

Jurisdiction	Population 2008	Existing Building Square Footage	Level of Service (Square Feet Per Capita)	Projected Population 2028
Commerce	6,575	9,000	1.37	9,186

Housing Authority

Commerce has a housing authority which provides low-income public housing to residents who qualify for government-subsidized housing. Commerce has two projects, Willoughby Homes and Bellview, with a total of 50 units.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development functions are described also in the chapter on Labor Force and Economy, which is a part of this community assessment technical appendix.

Chamber of Commerce

The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce is the primary coordinator and promoter of economic development. It is described further in another chapter of this community assessment technical appendix.

Downtown Development Authority

Commerce has established a downtown development authority (see also chapter 3).

CHAPTER 7 TRANSPORTATION

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Jackson County operates its own airport and has an airport department and airport manager to oversee the airport. The overall mission is to “provide safe and adequate aviation facilities to support community requirements for access to the nation’s air traffic system and support general aviation as a viable part of the community’s transportation network” (FY 2009 Budget). The airport also intends to promote the growth of aviation commerce through the aggressive development of an Airport Master Plan that maximizes benefits to the community within acceptable geographical and environmental limits.

Jackson County received an AIRGeorgia grant for \$2,927,923 to complete a 5,000-foot runway expansion in order to accommodate larger aircraft such as corporate jets. That \$6.1 million project was considered vital to sustain economic viability and competitiveness for Jackson, Banks, and Madison Counties in the Northeast Georgia Region as corporate businesses are seeking out this area for their facilities. Plans have also been readied for the addition of parallel taxiway that is essential for improving safety during takeoff and landings. A new Airport Master Plan is being completed as part of the Runway Extension Project.

The proposed runway extension to 5,000 feet will dramatically increase the number of based aircraft and the demand for additional aircraft hangar space at the airport. As a result of that expansion and for other reasons, the airport has a number of other capital project needs in addition to the runway expansion being completed.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

Commerce does not have any ports or other water transportation modes.

RAILROADS

Jackson County is served by two railroads; one of these runs through Commerce. Norfolk Southern has a line extending from Lula to Athens that passes through the east side of Jackson County. The Commerce-Center segment is a portion of a longer railroad line, and part of it is inactive. Part of it is operated by The Athens Line. The line travels through the center of Commerce, with streets on both sides and numerous crossings. This area is relatively dense, with residential and commercial uses. (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, June 2008. “Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia”). The railroad has light traffic density and serves local industries. The Commerce 85 Business Park has rail access (Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.).

TRUCKING FACILITIES

A number of trucking facilities are located primarily within the Interstate 85 corridor. These are inventoried in the I-85 Corridor Study prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Jackson County's Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program has been included within the General Fund as a department of the Health and Welfare function. It continues to experience increases in demands. In FY 2009, Jackson County shifted one part-time driver to full-time status based on high demand for the service. The mission of the Jackson County Transport System is to provide a low cost transportation alternative to the citizens of Jackson County. The department has three full-time positions (FY 2009 Budget).

The program logged 5,200 hours of bus service operation in 2007 and expects that number to increase to 5,400 in FY 2009. It served 9,284 passengers in 2007 and that number is expected to increase to 9,800 in FY 2009. Jackson County recently agreed to prepare a public transportation plan to be spearheaded by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

Presently, Jackson County does not have any park and ride lots. However, as the county continues to grow, local efforts to plan for specific park and ride locations and construct such facilities will be strongly advisable if not necessary.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION

Bicycling and walking are the most basic and efficient forms of transportation and were once perceived as an important mode of transportation. Both are healthy, low-impact modes of travel that provide low-cost transportation alternatives for all segments of society, including financially disadvantaged, children, elderly, and disabled populations. Many of the trips people make on a daily basis are short enough to be accomplished on a bicycle, on foot, or by wheelchair.

Despite the importance of pedestrian and bicycle travel, the overwhelming majority of transportation improvements are dominated by auto-centric projects. Today, motor vehicles dominate the transportation system, and cycling and walking have been largely relegated to recreational status. Because of this increased automobile dependency, bicycling and walking are now perceived as an increasingly dangerous mode of transportation.

Increased use of bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation requires concentrations of populations within proximity to major trip generators. The majority of development in the northeast Georgia region, outside of Athens, has been low-density, single-family residential development that has been constructed in isolation from the types of uses (schools, employment, shopping) that generate bicycle and pedestrian activity (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005. Northeast Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan).

Existing Facilities

Existing sidewalks are limited mostly to the downtown and a few highway corridors leading out of the downtown area. It is anticipated that a thorough inventory of the sidewalk system will be conducted and recommendations for new sidewalks will be made as a part of the planning process.

Northeast Georgia Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan

This plan determines several routes suitable for bicycle facilities, and identifies several corridors that could potentially support shared use paths, on a county-by-county basis. Proposed projects in Jackson County are shown on the following map.

PARKING FACILITIES

The Downtown Development Authority and the City of Commerce have public parking provided on streets and within public parking lots in the downtown. An inventory of the available public and private parking was conducted by the Downtown Development Authority; total spaces are provided in Table 7.1 below. The information is divided into four zones of the downtown. Zone 1 includes properties south of the railroad and west of Central Avenue. Zone 2 is south of the railroad and east of Central Avenue. Zone 3 is north of the railroad and east of State Street. Zone 4 is north of the railroad and west of State Street.

**Table 7.1
Inventory of Parking Spaces in the Downtown by Zone**

Zone	On-street Parking	Public Parking	Private Parking	Total
1	38	59	169	266
2	15	71	10	96
3	44	93	28	165
4	36	120	66	222

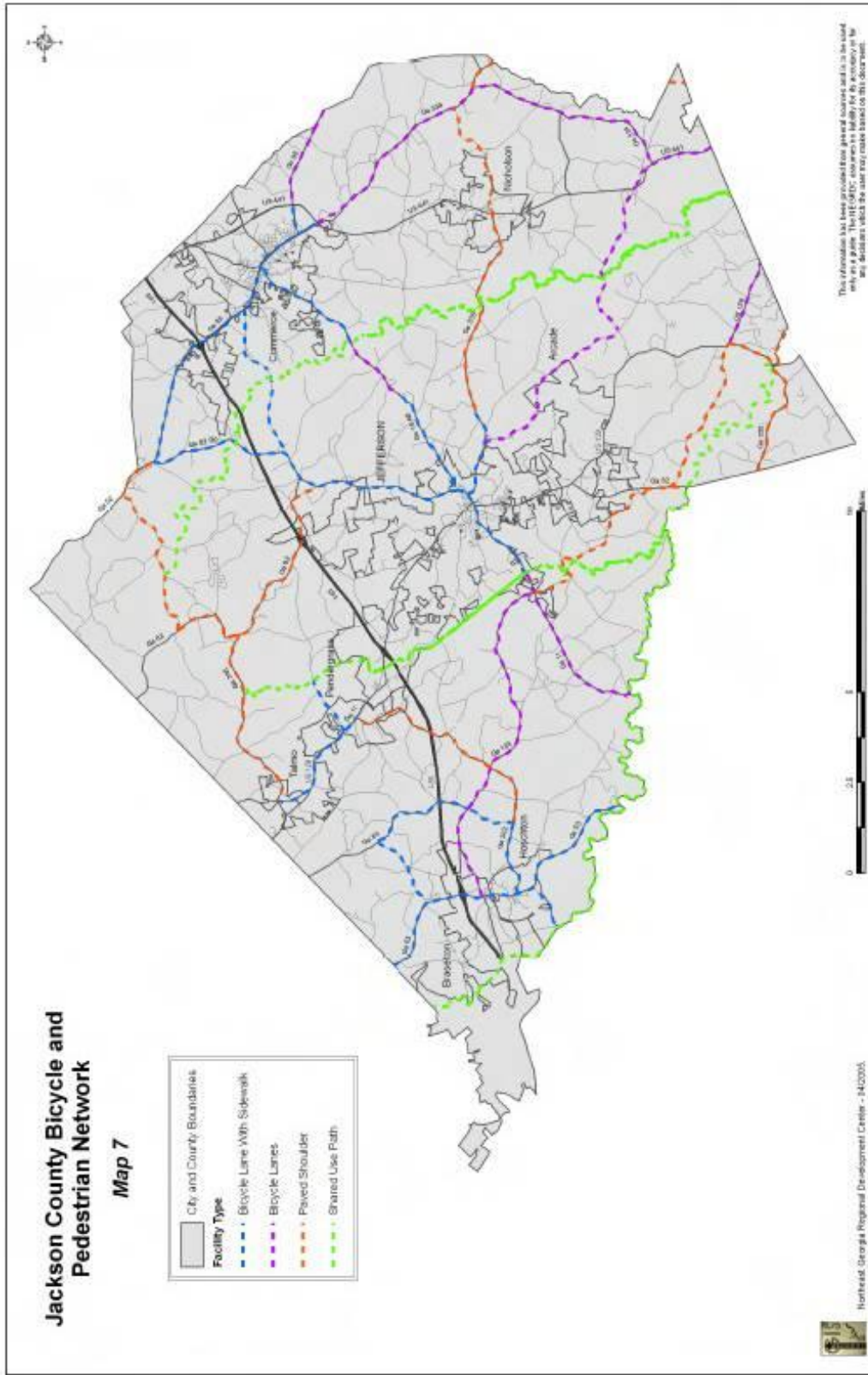
Source: Commerce Downtown Development Authority, 2009.

The Downtown Development Authority has identified a number of improvements needed to public parking lots in downtown Commerce. The inventory of parking will be reassessed in light of existing conditions and potential plans for future development, in order to assess the adequacy of supply over the longer term.

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE CONNECTIONS

Transportation projects can act as stimuli to further land use changes, which may be desirable or undesirable. Land use changes can stimulate the need for transportation improvement projects.

The Countywide Roads Plan delves into several important relationships between transportation and land use. That plan took into account population projections, major land use generators, and future land use policies, among many other considerations.



DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR ROADS

Interstate 85

Interstate 85 is functionally classified as a Rural Interstate Principle Arterial. In Jackson County, Interstate 85 runs for some 21.7 miles. The approximate annual average daily traffic on I-85 in Jackson County was 52,500 in 2006. Commerce has annexed property surrounding the Interstate 85 interchange with SR 98 (Maysville Road). Some of the traffic from I-85 into Commerce is also via the Banks Crossing interchange (U.S. Highway 441), which lies just north of the county, in Banks County.

I-85 at the had the following 2008 AADT at SR 98/Maysville Road: Northbound off-ramp, 2,554 vehicle trips; Northbound on-ramp, 1,304 vehicle trips; Southbound off-ramp, 798 vehicle trips; and Southbound on-ramp, 2,543 vehicle trips.

U.S. Highways

U.S. Highway 441 connects Commerce to Athens and beyond going south. It is functionally classified as an Urban Principal Arterial. Going north, the highway runs into Banks and Habersham Counties. U.S. Highway 441 has been improved to four lanes with a median dividing the directions of travel, throughout Commerce and beyond. It traverses the east side of Commerce; the city has annexed up to U.S. Highway 441 and in a few cases has annexed beyond it.

- U.S. 441 between Mount Olive Road and the Banks County line had a 2008 AADT of 14,459 vehicle trips and operated at a Level of Service "A."
- U.S. 441 between SR 326 and SR 15 Alt. had a 2008 AADT of 14,459 vehicle trips and operated at a Level of Service "A."
- U.S. 441 between SR 98 and SR 326 had a 2008 AADT of 12,092 vehicle trips and operated at a Level of Service "A."

U.S. Highway 441 Business is the original route of U.S. Highway 441, before it was improved to four lanes. It is functionally classified as an Urban Principal Arterial. It extends through downtown Commerce, following Homer Road (SR 15 Alt) into downtown, then crossing the railroad tracks and running with SR 98 southeast through Commerce until it meets with U.S. Highway 441 at the southernmost part of the city.

SR 15 ALT.

SR 15 Alt. runs generally north-south through the center of Commerce. It connects Commerce to downtown Jefferson in a more or less direct route. South of U.S. Highway 441 Bus./ SR 98, SR 15 Alt. is functionally classified as an Urban Minor Arterial. North of SR 98, SR 15 Alt. is also known as Homer Road and U.S. Highway 441 Bus.; this section north of SR 98 is the same as U.S. Highway 441 Bus. and is classified as an urban Principal Arterial.

- SR 15 Alt. between Hospital Road and U.S. Highway 441 had a 2008 AADT of 8,169 vehicle trips, and this segment operated at a Level of Service "C."
- SR 15 Alt. between SR 98 and SR 15 (U.S. Highway 441) had a 2008 AADT of 8,960 vehicle trips, and this segment operated at a Level of Service "C."

- SR 15 Alt. between Sheep Pasture Road and Blue Heron Drive has a 2008 AADT of 3,353 vehicle trips.

SR 98

SR 98 approaches downtown Commerce from the northwest, extending from Maysville (and further into Banks County) through downtown Commerce and beyond. Where it crosses SR 15 Alt, SR is also U.S. Highway 441 Bus. SR 98 turns eastward southeast of downtown Commerce and extends across U.S. Highway 441 into Madison County. The section west of I-85 is classified as a Rural Minor Arterial. Between I-85 and U.S. Highway 441 Business, SR 98 is functionally classified as an Urban Minor Arterial. SR 98 once it joins U.S. Highway 441 Bus. in Commerce is functionally classified as an Urban Principal Arterial. As it turns north from U.S. 441 Bus., it is classified as an Urban Minor Arterial until it reaches U.S. Highway 441. East of U.S. Highway 441, SR 98 is functionally classified as a Rural Minor Arterial to the Madison County line.

- SR 98 from Old Maysville Road to I-85 had a 2008 AADT of 8,931 vehicle trips and this segment operated at a level of service “C.”
- SR 98 from King Road to Woods Bridge Road had a 2008 AADT of 8,124 vehicle trips and it operated at a level of service “C.”
- SR 98 from South Elm Street to US 441/SR 15 had a 2008 AADT of 4,514 vehicle trips and this segment operated at a level of service “C.”
- SR 98 from SR 15 Alt. to Waterworks Road had a 2008 AADT of 10,358 vehicle trips and this segment operated at a level of service “C.”
- SR 98 from U.S. 441 to SR 15 Alt. had a 2008 AADT of 11,752 vehicle trips and this segment operated at a level of service “C.”
- SR 98 from U.S. 441/SR 15 to Blacks Creek Church Road had a 2008 AADT of 9,870 vehicle trips and this segment operated at a level of service “C.”
- SR 98 from Waterworks Road to SR 326 had a 2008 AADT of 7,201 and operated at a level of service “C.”

SR 326

SR 326 provides access directly into downtown Commerce from Madison County, running in a northeast direction and crossing U.S. Highway 441. Once SR 326 crosses U.S. 441 to the east, it is outside the city limits of Commerce. All of SR 326 in Jackson County is functionally classified as an Urban Minor Arterial.

SR 59

SR 59 runs generally north south at the Jackson-Banks County line and once in Jackson County it intersects with U.S. Highway 441 at the intersection where SR 15 Alt. (U.S. 441 Bus. And Homer Road) runs south into downtown Commerce. Presently, SR 59 in Jackson County is unincorporated. SR 59 in Jackson County is believed to be classified as an Urban Minor Arterial.

SR 334

SR 334 runs southeast of Commerce, connecting to U.S. Highway 441 where U.S. Highway 441 Bus. meets U.S. Highway 441, and extends toward downtown. Commerce has annexed some land down the south side of SR 334, including industrial development, and that segment of the highway is functionally classified as an Urban Minor Arterial. Southeast of Commerce, SR 334 runs into pristine farmland, forming an alternative scenic loop to U.S. Highway 441, well below the City of Nicholson; that segment of SR 334 is functionally classified as a Rural Major Collector.

- SR 334 from Allen Road to U.S. 441 had a 2008 AADT of 4,404 and operated at a level of service “C” in 2008.
- Beyond that point, SR 334 operated at a Level of Service “B” with 2,465 vehicle trips in 2008.

Steve Reynolds Industrial Boulevard

This road was built by Jackson County using bonds, in order to spur economic development in the Interstate 85 corridor. It runs north south, generally paralleling I-85 in a curvilinear fashion on the east side. It connects SR 98, just east of I-85, with U.S. Highway 441 within Jackson County but very close to where U.S. Highway 441 extends into Banks County and the Banks Crossing area. This is a four-lane road and alongside most if it consists of undeveloped lands. However, the Major Roads Plan for Jackson County assigns an Urban Local Street functional classification to Steve Reynolds Industrial Parkway, based on the observation that it currently only carries 1,065 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) between Ridgeway Church Road and SR 98.

Steven Tanger Boulevard

This road extends from unincorporated Jackson County, between outlet mall stores and I-85, from U.S. Highway 441 south to Ridgeway Church Road. It is undeveloped along the part which is in the city limits of Commerce. It has a 2008 AADT of 6,077 vehicle trips (a level of service “C”) at the main mall entrance and 1,483 vehicle trips at the entrance drive south of Nike Store (LOS “A.”).

Bana Road

This road is proposed to parallel I-85 on the north side between SR 82 Spur and SR 98. It is a part of the parallel road system planned by Jackson County for purposes of economic development. Commerce has annexed the lands alongside this proposed road and zoned it for light and heavy industrial development. It does not yet have a functional classification assigned to it, and it is not yet fully constructed.

Hospital Road

The southern point of Hospital Road lines west of downtown Commerce, ending at Old Maysville Road on the north side of the railroad tracks. Hospital Road runs generally north-south, paralleling Homer Road (SR 15 Alt./U.S. 441 Bus.), then intersects with Homer Road (SR 15 Alt./U.S. 441 Bus.) just south of U.S. 441. It is functionally classified as an Urban Minor

Arterial. Hospital Road provides an important north-south route through the northern part of Commerce. It also is aptly named, providing access to the BJC Medical Center about midway between Old Maysville Road and U.S. 441.

According to the Countywide Roads Plan (draft), there is a need to improve sight distance at the intersection of Hospital Road and Old Maysville Road.

Mount Olive Road

Like Hospital Road, and paralleling it to the west, this local road connects Old Maysville Road and U.S. Highway 441, providing yet another alternative north-south route through Commerce. It is also functionally classified as an Urban Minor Arterial. It has a combination of industrial and residential development alongside it, and parts of lands on the northwest side of the road are unincorporated.

According to the Countywide Roads Plan (draft), there is a need to improve sight distance at the intersection of Mt. Olive Road and Ridgeway Church Road.

Woods Bridge Road

This county road is not within Commerce but provides connecting access from SR 82 Spur to SR 98 (Maysville Road) between Interstate 85 and downtown Commerce. It provides another means of access between Commerce and Jefferson, by joining SR 82 and then going due south into Jefferson. It is functionally classified as a Rural Major Collector. Presently, almost all of this local road corridor is rural in character. Woods Bridge Road between Hope Road and Glenn Fuller Circle had a 2008 AADT of 1,233 vehicle trips.

Waterworks Road

Waterworks Road runs north-south and connects SR 335 just west of the City of Nicholson and extends into south-central Commerce. It provides an alternative (county) road to U.S. Highway 441. This road is classified as a Rural Minor Collector. Waterworks Road from Hoods Mill Road to Cabin Creek Road had a 2008 AADT of 1,122 vehicle trips.

Ridgeway Church Road

Ridgeway Church Road runs through northwest Commerce, connecting Mount Olive Road just north of Old Maysville Road, crossing Steve Reynolds Industrial Parkway, running underneath I-85 (no interchange), and connecting with Yarbrough Ridgeway Road at the Jackson County and Banks County line. Most of the land alongside this road corridor is undeveloped, but it is slated for commercial and industrial development near I-85 and Steve Reynolds Industrial Parkway. Further south, land uses along Ridgeway Church Road are rural/transitional in nature. Presently, Ridgeway Church Road is functionally classified as a Rural Local Road. Ridgeway Church Road between Steve Reynolds Industrial Boulevard and I-85 had a 2008 AADT of 2,215 vehicle trips. According to the Countywide Roads Plan (draft), there is a need to improve sight distance at the intersection of Mt. Olive Road and Ridgeway Church Road.

Basic Operational Safety Considerations

The following considerations were accounted for in the Countywide Roads Plan:

Blind hill	Offset intersections
Blind curve	Poor sight distance at street intersection
Bridge width too narrow	Road intersection located in a curve
Bridge condition seems structurally unsafe	Shoulder width too narrow
Stormwater drainage flows over the roadway	Shoulder is eroded
Improper driveway spacing	Skewed intersection angle
Improper intersection spacing	Very poor driving surface condition
Travel lane width too narrow	

Identified Road Improvement Needs

1. Commerce has determined there is a need to realign the intersection of King Road and Old Maysville Road so that it directly connects with King Road, which receives significant traffic due to general traffic flow patterns in the area and the existing grocery store and other retail uses located at SR 98 between B. Wilson Road and Westview Road. A new railroad crossing needs to be installed with a guarded signal at King Road.
2. Old Maysville Road needs to be widened to three lanes and straightened prior to the curve along Roper’s south side in order to tie into the proposed realigned King Road. There are high traffic volumes along Mt. Olive Road and Old Maysville Road, and Old Maysville Road has a high percentage of trucks.
3. A traffic signal is needed at the intersection of B. Wilson Road and SR 98. There is a federally funded project planned for this same intersection.

Identified Road Maintenance Needs

1. W.E. King Road from SR 326 to U.S. 441 (Commerce Bypass) needs resurfacing and proper striping and signage.
2. Smallwood Drive between Waterworks Road and Stark Street needs repair of uneven shoulders between pavement and dirt.
3. Waterworks Road needs guardrails installed at the creek crossing near Lakeview Drive and all other creek crossing locations.
4. B. Wilson Road between Westwood Road and SR 98 needs shoulders and ditch lines repaired.
5. Ocone Lane from B. Wilson Road to the beginning of the new subdivision phase needs base repair and resurfacing.
6. Westwood Road needs base repair and resurfacing from B. Wilson Road to Westview Road, and the section from Westview Road to SR 98 needs resurfacing.
7. Westview Road needs resurfacing and proper drainage, and the right of way needs to be maintained from Westwood Road to SR 98.
8. Lathan Road needs drainage problems repaired, and the road resurfaced for both sections situated in the county, beginning at Westwood Road.

9. King Road between SR 98 and Old Maysville Road needs to be resurfaced and proper signing installed.
10. Wofford Drive between SR 98 and King Road needs to be resurfaced and proper striping installed.
11. Blue Heron Drive extending from B. Wilson Road needs a deep patch installed to repair the base and then resurfaced or, possibly, totally reconstructed.
12. Cedar Trail between Blue Heron Drive and Lake Vista Lane needs a deep patch installed to repair the base and then resurfaced or, possibly, totally reconstructed.

The county's Major Road Plan contains a review of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Construction Work Program to identify those projects planned for the Commerce area of Jackson County. GDOT construction projects include the following (for more detail, please see County Major Roads Plan):

1. SR 98 @ CR 286/B WILSON & CR 536/KING ROAD (Intersection improvement)
2. SR 98 @ NS #717696D (railroad crossing)
3. SR 15 @ 3 LOCS & SR 11BU @ 1 LOC (signals)
4. JACKSON COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARK - LOCAL ACCESS ROAD (widening)
5. SR 15 ALT @ NS #717706G|SR 98WE and NS #717707N|SR 326@NS #717703L (Railroad Crossing Warning Devices)
6. I-85 @ 7 Locations IN BANKS & JACKSON - BRIDGE REHABILITATION
7. HOODS MILL RD @ WATERWORKS RD (intersection improvements)
8. GA18X024 5311 RURAL JACKSON CAPITAL (transit projects)

Concerns and Issues with Roads in Commerce

- Need to complete the parallel roads to I-85 near the City of Commerce to enhance economic development in the county. Particularly, it was noted that Bana Road between Spur 82 and SR 98 needs to be extended east and west as part of the proposed parallel road system.
- County needs more active approach to maintaining all roads and streets that transverse into municipal limits, including mowing of rights-of-way. Municipalities typically mow urban streets on a weekly basis vs. a monthly schedule on rural county roads.
- Improving intersection visibility with minor sight distance maintenance improvements at Hospital Road (Old Maysville Road) and Ridgeway Road (Mt. Olive Road).

CHAPTER 8 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

The intergovernmental coordination element identifies existing coordination mechanisms and further opportunities for such coordination. More and more, effective planning efforts for community facilities, environmental protection, transportation, and land use are increasingly beyond the abilities of individual jurisdictions. This chapter identifies areas where intergovernmental coordination is ongoing or lacking, as well as, issues that may require intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIES

In 1997, the State passed the Service Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). This law mandates the cooperation of local governments with regard to service delivery issues. Each county was required to initiate development of a service delivery strategy between July 1, 1997, and January 1, 1998. Service delivery strategies must include an identification of services provided by various entities, assignment of responsibility for provision of services and the location of service areas, a description of funding sources, and an identification of contracts, ordinances, and other measures necessary to implement the service delivery strategy.

Changes to service arrangements described in a service delivery strategy require an update of the service delivery strategy and an agreement by all parties. Because of this provision, it is likely that the need for intergovernmental coordination with regard to service delivery strategies will continue into the future. In addition, service delivery strategies must be updated every ten years. The Service Delivery Strategy Act also mandates that land use plans of different local governments be revised to avoid conflicts.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES

Annexation

In 1997, the Georgia General Assembly enacted the Local Government Services Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). This bill was created to limit competition and duplication among local governments and authorities providing local services and also establishes processes to resolve disputes when a County objects to a municipal annexation. It is important to have legislation of this nature due to the past problems that have arisen when Cities and Counties were in dispute over cities annexing unincorporated lands.

U.S. Highway 441 Corridor

The city's plan update and this community assessment identify the U.S. Highway 441 corridor between Banks Crossing and SR 334 as an area expected to undergo rapid land use change, with highway commercial along the highway frontage and residential development behind the commercial development. It should be noted that Commerce's city limits do not encompass the entire corridor and that, therefore, both Jackson County and Commerce will regulate this corridor. To ensure that development standards are consistent, there should be a coordinated strategy between Commerce and Jackson County toward U.S. Highway 441 development.

Water and Sewer

The Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority has the ability to, and does from time-to-time, purchase treated water from the City of Commerce in northeast Jackson County. This is done mainly in response to high demands on the system such as water main breaks, severe drought, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Maysville's community agenda indicates that the proposed expansion of sewage treatment capacity by the City of Commerce provides Maysville with the chance to coordinate systems and provide near complete coverage of sewer service within the area.

Fire Services to Maysville

The Town of Maysville has an agreement with the City of Commerce in the event outside support is needed for an emergency.

GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS

The following terms have been defined to increase reader understanding of this document. With regard to some terms, there is not a consensus in the planning profession on how they can be defined.

Affordable Housing: Housing that has a sale price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that may occupy middle-, moderate-, or low-income housing. In the case of for-sale units, housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance and condominium or association fees, if any, constitute no more than 28 (or 30) percent of such gross annual household income for a household of the size which may occupy the unit in question. In the case of dwelling units for rent, housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of such gross annual income for a household of the size that may occupy the unit in question.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.

Buildout: A theoretical condition or imagined future that assumes development occurs on all available vacant lands at densities and intensities according to the future land use plan map, or allowed by current zoning, or both. Buildout is typically quantified by assigning a land use to each vacant parcel to be developed and multiplying the acreage of vacant land by the units per acre (residential) or floor-area ratio to determine additional housing units and square footage of non-residential development.

Capital Improvement: An improvement with a useful life of ten years or more, by new construction or other action, which increases the service capacity of a public facility.

Capital Improvements Element: A component of a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq. which sets out projected needs for system improvements during a planning horizon established in the comprehensive plan, a schedule of capital improvements that will meet the anticipated need for system improvements, and a description of anticipated funding sources for each required improvement.

Character Area: A specific geographic area within the community that: has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor; has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern); or requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.). Each character area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community vision.

Character Area Map: A map showing character areas. Local planning requirements require a “preliminary” character area map be provided in the community assessment report. The Community Agenda is required to contain a character area map, which is a version of the preliminary character area map that is refined during the community participation program implementation process.

Community Agenda: The portion of the comprehensive plan that provides guidance for future decision-making about the community, prepared with adequate input from stakeholders and the general public. It includes: (1) a community vision for the future physical development of the community, expressed in the form of a map indicating unique character areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns; (2) a list of issues and opportunities identified by the community for further action; and (3) an implementation program that will help the community realize its vision for the future and address the identified issues and opportunities.

Community Assessment: The portion of the comprehensive plan that is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the community prepared without extensive direct public participation. It includes: (1) a list of potential issues and opportunities the community may wish to take action to address, (2) evaluation of community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with Quality Community Objectives; (3) analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development of the community; and (4) data and information to substantiate these evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities. The product of the Community Assessment must be a concise and informative report (such as an executive summary), to be used to inform decision-making by stakeholders during development of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a formula basis for entitlement communities, by the state Department of Community Affairs for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Community Participation Program: The portion of the comprehensive plan that describes the local government’s program for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

Comprehensive Plan: A 20-year plan by a county or municipality covering such county or municipality and including three components: a Community Assessment, a Community Participation Program, and a Community Agenda. The comprehensive plan must be prepared pursuant to the local planning requirements for preparation of comprehensive plans and for implementation of comprehensive plans, established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in accordance with O.C.G.A 50-8-7.1(b) and 50-8-7.2.

Corridor: An area of land, typically along a linear route, containing land uses and transportation systems influenced by the existence of that route.

Infill: Development that occurs on vacant, skipped-over, bypassed, or underused lots in otherwise built-up sites or areas.

Local Historic Preservation Ordinance: An ordinance that identifies procedures for creating local historic districts and administering the review of building renovations or alterations to properties located within the district. It typically establishes a historic preservation commission that is charged with the review of development proposals within historic districts.

Mixed-Income Housing: Housing for people with a broad range of incomes on the same site, development, or immediate neighborhood.

Overlay District: A defined geographic area that encompasses one or more underlying zoning districts and that imposes additional requirements above those required by the underlying zoning district. An overlay district can be coterminous with existing zoning districts or contain only parts of one or more such districts.

Projection: A prediction of future conditions that will occur if the assumptions inherent in the projection technique prove true.

Qualified Local Government: A county or municipality that: adopts and maintains a comprehensive plan in conformity with the local planning requirements; establishes regulations consistent with its comprehensive plan and with the local planning requirements; and does not fail to participate in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' mediation or other means of resolving conflicts in a manner in which, in the judgment of the Department, reflects a good faith effort to resolve any conflict.

Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria: Those standards and procedures with respect to natural resources, the environment, and vital areas of the state established and administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, including, but not limited to, criteria for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains and protected river corridors.

Service Delivery Strategy: The intergovernmental arrangement among city governments, the county government, and other affected entities within the same county for delivery of community services, developed in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy Law. A local government's existing Strategy must be updated concurrent with the comprehensive plan update. To ensure consistency between the comprehensive plan and the agreed upon Strategy: (1) the services to be provided by the local government, as identified in the comprehensive plan, cannot exceed those identified in the agreed upon strategy and (2) the service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by the local government must be consistent between the plan and Strategy.

Stakeholder: Someone (or any agency or group) with a "stake," or interest, in the issues being addressed.

State Planning Recommendations: The supplemental guidance provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to assist communities in preparing plans and addressing the local planning requirements. The plan preparers and the community must review these recommendations where referenced in the planning requirements in order to determine their applicability or helpfulness to the community's plan.

Short-Term Work Program: That portion of the Implementation Program that lists the specific actions to be undertaken annually by the local government over the upcoming five years to implement the comprehensive plan.