

**PIERCE COUNTY**  
**City of Blackshear**  
**City of Patterson**

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**JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**2025 EDITION**

**Community Agenda**

**Population**  
**Economic Development**  
**Natural Resources**  
**Facilities & Services**  
**Intergovernmental Coordination**  
**Land Use**  
**Transportation**  
**Housing**

Prepared in Compliance with the  
Georgia Comprehensive Planning Act of 1989

**Governmental Consulting Unlimited, Inc.**  
July 5, 2007

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## SECTION I

### Community Agenda Overview

The Community Agenda provides vision and policy for future development and protection of vital resources. It is therefore a policy document to be used by not only the Pierce County Board of Commissioners and the City Councils of Blackshear and Patterson but also by all other advisory bodies, investors in the community, and the general public. The Community Agenda represents the actual plan that must be adopted by a local government, which contains the identification of the priority issues that are based on the Community Assessment.

The Community Agenda establishes a clear connection in public policy for the inter-relationships between land use, economic development, housing, transportation, natural resources, and public facilities and services. It is the road map for each community's future that is developed through a public process, which involves community leaders and stakeholders where key decisions are made.

As stated, the Community Agenda is the most important part of the plan for it not only includes the community's vision for the future and the key issues and opportunities it chooses to address during the planning period but also its implementation program for achieving this vision. The Community Agenda is intended to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community, thereby making citizens want to ensure that the plan is implemented. To prepare for this document a Community Assessment was developed that evaluated background, demographic and forecast data to identify important issues within the community.

Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson understand that using the Community Assessment and the Community Agenda together will be a highly effective marketing tool. When investors look at a community, often the first document they obtain is its comprehensive plan. Investors know that the plan will have, a) existing population data that can be used as a basis for market research; b) growth trend analysis documenting likely development scenarios; c) employment and income data; and other valuable quantitative information on the community. The plan also provides investors with information about public policy that can be vitally important in planning the form and location of new development.

### Scope

This document was prepared following the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Chapter 1110-12-1-.05, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, "Local Planning Requirements," effective May 1, 2005. It includes the three basic requirements for a Community Agenda:

- (1) A Community Vision that is comprised of a vision statement and Future Development Map;
- (2) A list of the Issues and Opportunities that the community intends to address over the next 20 years; and
- (3) An implementation program for achieving that vision, the heart of which is a Short-term Work Program that identifies specific actions the community will take over the next five (5) years.

There are three major steps to the completion of the updated joint Comprehensive Plan for Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson. These steps include the following:

**Step 1: Public Participation Plan**

The Public Participation Plan is developed in the beginning of the process, which outlines how the public will be involved in the development of their comprehensive plan. The main purpose of this document is to outline a clear process to involve all interested individuals and groups of the community during the creation of an overall vision to guide these communities into the future and the development of a plan that represents that vision.

Public participation tools that were used during the planning process including stakeholder meetings and public awareness of the planning process through mailings to stakeholders and advertisements in the local newspapers of all public meetings to try to enhance the public’s involvement in the process and to reach as many citizens and businesses as possible. More specific information can be found in the “Comprehensive Plan 2025 Public Participation Plan in the Community Assessment section of this plan.

**Step 2: Inventory and Assessment, Preliminary Issue Identification**

In order to plan for the future, a community must know and understand its existing conditions. This step answers the questions “What do we have?” and “What is good or bad about our community?” Once completed, this step provides a picture of the existing conditions and preliminary issues within a community that are clearly stated in the “Community Assessment”.

**Step 3: Implementation Strategy**

Based upon the Community Assessment, existing community needs are identified and are the guiding principles for future growth and development. These goals provide guidance for the community and the framework from which detailed policies and recommendations are developed. This step of the planning process answers the first question, which is “Where do we want to go?”

The second question is “How are we going to get there?” The answer to this question is accomplished through a combination of all of the plan’s recommendations and describes how they will be implemented.

The Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures also require that a Short Term Work Program be prepared as part of the Implementation Strategy. The Short Term Work Program is a listing of specific actions that each local government anticipates taking over the next five (5) years to implement its plan. The Implementation Strategy and its Short Term Work Program ensure that the plan will become a vital tool for decision making. The outcome in this step results in the Community Agenda portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Community Vision

Pierce County was created from parts of Appling and Ware Counties. Georgia's 119th county was named for Franklin Pierce, 14th President of the United States. Since its creation Pierce County has become a growing and dynamic community. Pierce County is now entering another important era of transition, with growth expected to increase by approximately 30% over the next 20 years. Proper planning for the future requires careful consideration of basic assumptions concerning anticipated population growth, expected employment patterns, and likely housing trends. From these assumptions come projections that tell us what the County might expect between now and 2025.

There are several important benefits to the entire community that resulted from the planning process:

1. Quality of life is maintained and improved.
2. There is a vision, clearly stated and shared by all, that describes the future of the community.
3. Private property rights are protected.
4. Economic development is encouraged and supported.
5. There is more certainty about where development will occur, what it will be like, when it will happen, and how the costs of development will be met.

The nucleus of the Vision Statement is for the community to remain friendly, continue to have that home town feel, be a safe place to live both physically and environmentally safe while encouraging growth and economic development. One of the main issues was the preservation of rural areas and rural character while at the same time allowing the partially developed portions of the County to fill out in ways that discourage urban sprawl and foster a sense of place.

Specific character areas were defined as they relate to:

- Having unique or special characteristics.
- Having potential to evolve into a unique area when provided with specific and intentional guidance.
- Requiring special attention because of unique development issues.

### ***Pierce County/Blackshear/Patterson Vision through 2025***

- **Foster community pride and community ownership;**
- **Continue efforts for a higher quality of life for all the citizenry;**
- **Promote not only economic stability but also economic growth;**
- **Foster a safe and secure environment for all the community.**

To Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson, this vision means:

- (1) having distinct character areas that reflect the community's unique identity;
- (2) being a community where new development and/or redevelopment is a high priority, both of which will be approached from a standpoint of flexibility;
- (3) being a community where all natural environment is respected and embraced. Opportunities to provide additional greenways, parkland and other open space features will be sought as new development is integrated into the community;
- (4) having adequate facilities to properly educate all children within Pierce County;
- (5) ensuring recreation facilities are available for all citizens of Pierce County;
- (6) having provision in place for saving Pierce County's natural resources which include but are not limited to agricultural/forestry land and its watershed (Satilla, Little Satilla and Alabama Rivers; and
- (7) providing infrastructure and services in a cost-effective manner in order to maintain a high quality of life.

### **Character Areas**

The Future Development Map is a representation of the Plan's goals and policies and indicates character areas where various types of land uses are permitted. The map designations indicate predominant types of land uses, which are described below. The Future Development Map was developed to illustrate the most desirable pattern of land use in Pierce County as a whole. It takes into consideration the land use patterns illustrated on the Existing Land Use Map, which is based on information from the Pierce County Assessors Office that is presented below.

The Future Development Map and its character areas were developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Guide future rezoning, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the County.
- Be used as a tool for identifying future public and private actions leading to development and redevelopment.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.
- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.

Below is a summary of each land use category as defined in the Department of Community Affairs "**Local Planning Requirements**".

### **Residential**

The predominant use of land for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities. New growth is concentrated primarily in areas along the south and southwest borders of Pierce and Ware County more specifically in the Oak Ridge area, Okefenokee Golf and Country Club area and in Hacklebarney.

### **Agricultural/Forestry**

This category is for land dedicated to farming, including crop cultivation or livestock operations, or commercial timber production and harvesting. Pierce County is beginning to lose some of this prime land to development and is considering adopting policies and ordinances in order to reduce the amount of development that will occur on agricultural lands over the next 20 years.

### **Industrial**

Land used for manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities. Pierce County currently has a very large industrial park area that is not fully developed. All applicable public infrastructure will need to be in place, if industry is to locate within this park. Without adequate infrastructure, industries may not be interested in locating in Pierce County. No additional land for industrial use will be needed within Pierce County over the next 20 years.

### **Commercial**

Land used for non-industrial purposes such as strip malls, small retailers, restaurants, convenience stores and office buildings. Most of this development has occurred within the city limits of Blackshear. It is anticipated that this trend will continue in the future.

### **Parks/Recreation/Conservation**

This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.

The Okefenokee Golf and Country Club along with the Lakeview Golf Club are both located in Pierce County. Both are privately owned and operated. There is 298 acres of parks/recreation/conservation in Pierce County, which includes the 10 acres located in Patterson. During meetings with stakeholders throughout the planning process, many raised the issue of a lack of parks and recreation for the citizens throughout Pierce County. It is anticipated that efforts will be made to make use of existing publicly owned and even the purchase of additional land for parks, recreation and conservation purposes.

### **Public/Institutional**

This is land dedicated for community facilities (except utilities), general government, and institutional uses including schools, public safety stations, city halls, courthouses, jails, health facilities, churches and libraries.

### **Transportation/Communication/Utilities**

Land used for streets systems, cell towers, sewer treatment plant, water towers, and water treatment facilities.

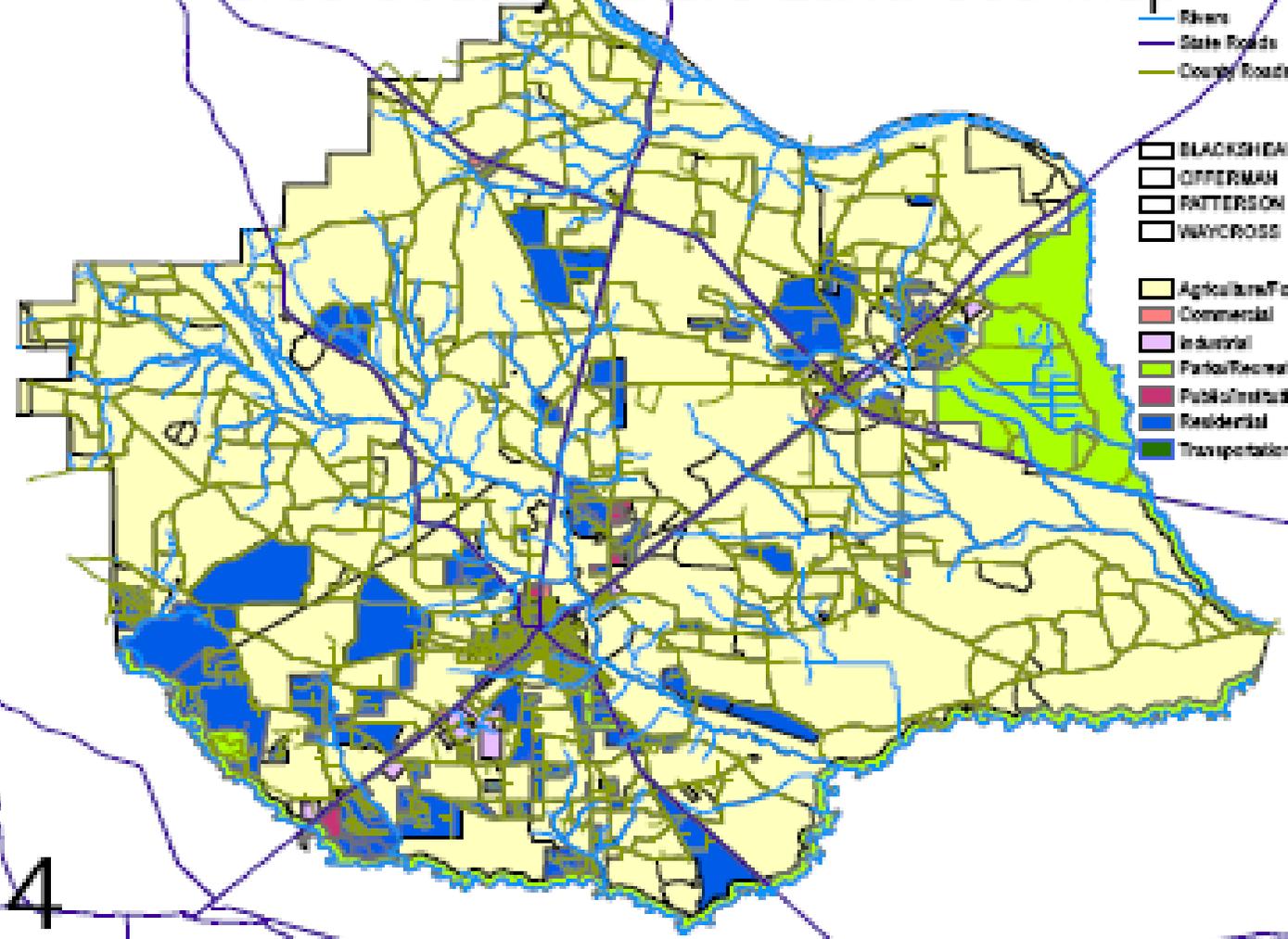
### **Undeveloped/Vacant**

Land described as no active use including property improved for real estate sale (cleared and graded) and property with vacant or abandoned structures with which no employment or residence can be associated.

# Pierce County Future Land Use Map

Legend

- Rivers
- State Roads
- County Roads
- BLACKHEAR
- OPPERMAN
- PATTERSON
- WAYCROSS
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities



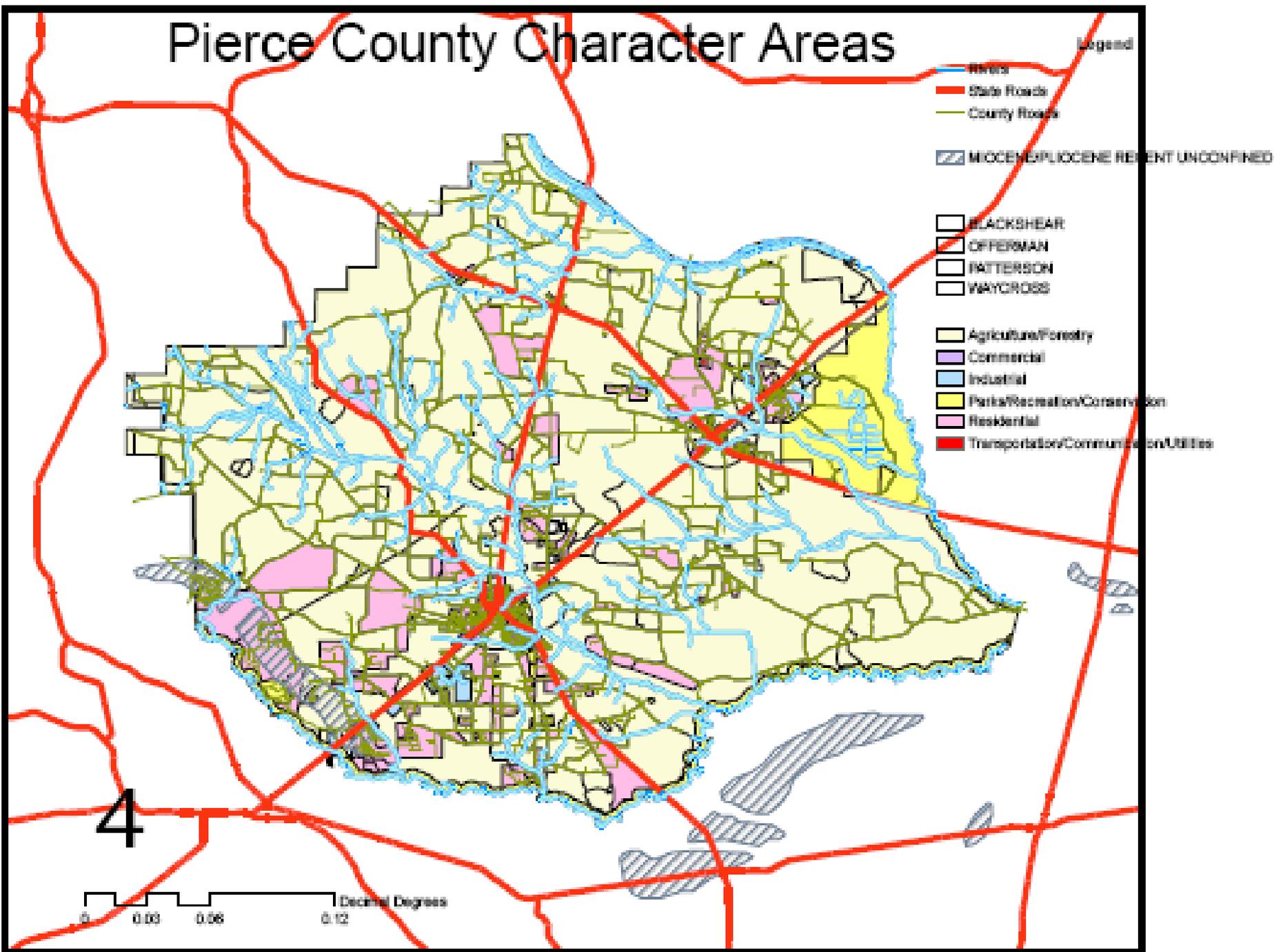


# Patterson Future Land Use Map

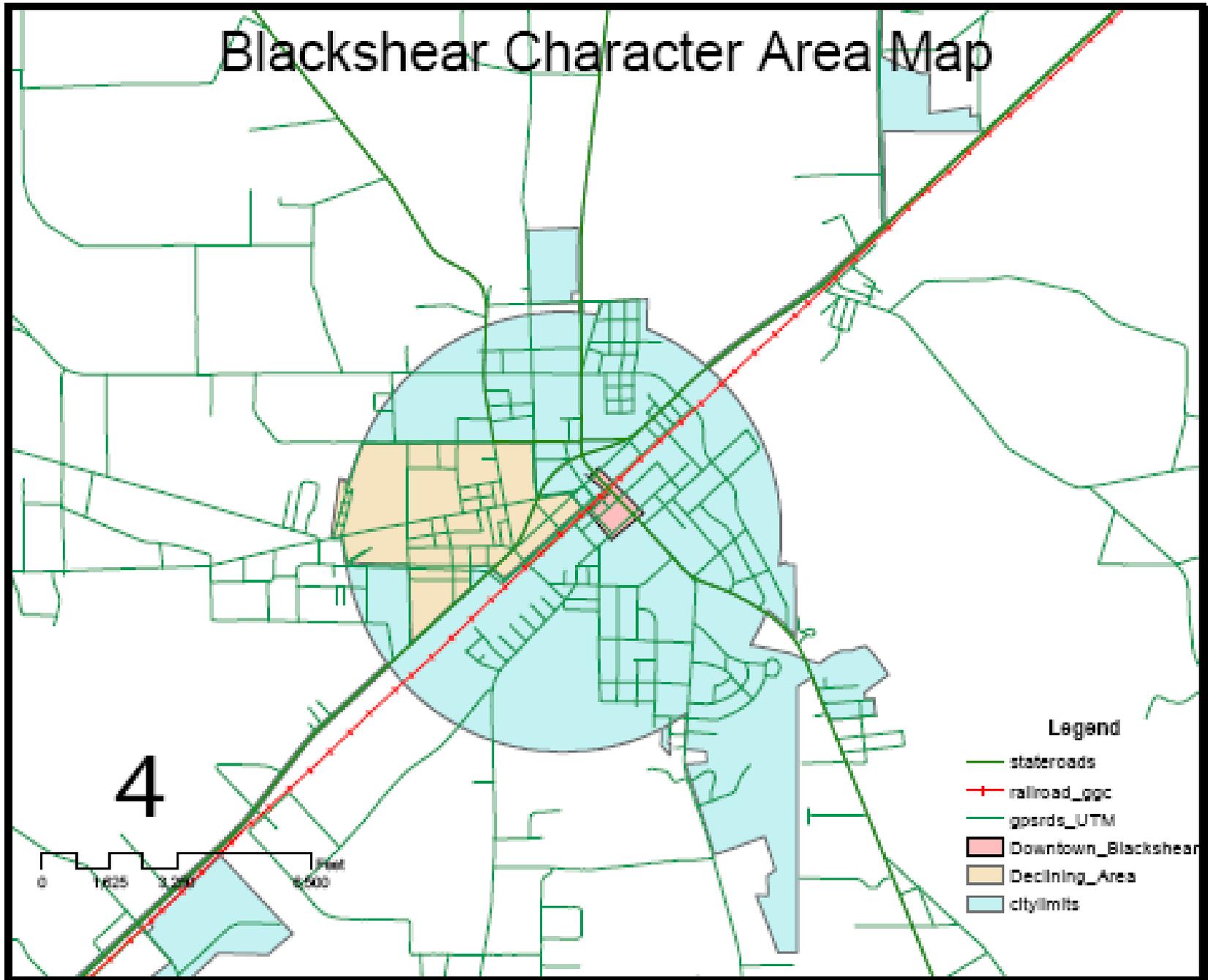


NAME	
	PATTERSON
LEVEL2	
	Agriculture/Forestry
	Commercial
	Industrial
	Parks/Recreation/Conservation
	Public/Institutional
	Residential
	Transportation/Communication/Utilities
	gpcds_UTM
	railroad_gpc
	ProtectedRiverDCA_Plane
	river_gpc
	stateroads
	gpcds_UTM

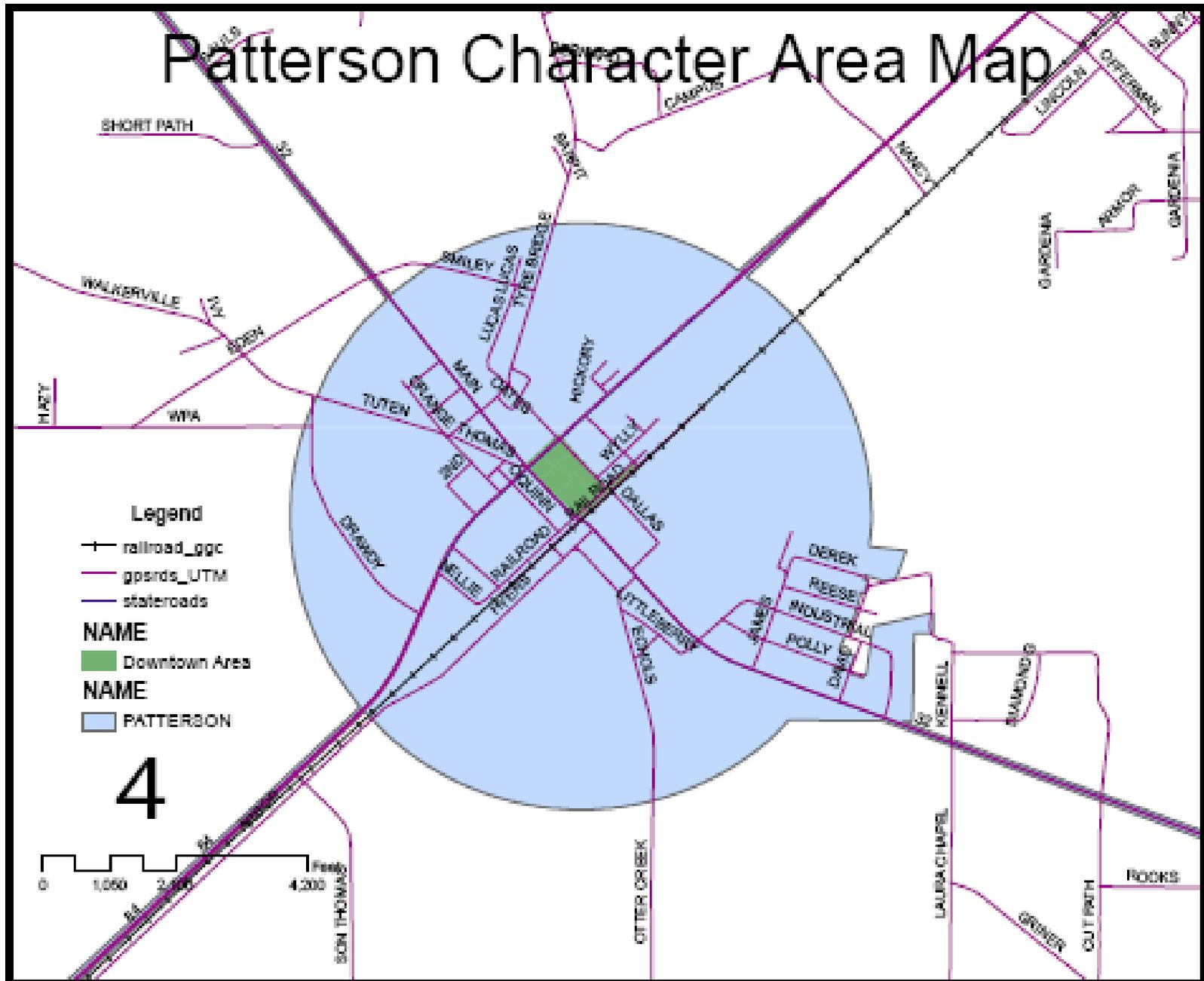
# Pierce County Character Areas



# Blackshear Character Area Map



# Patterson Character Area Map



## **Character Area Narrative, Policies and Implementation**

The following are the required defining narratives for each of the county and city character areas. The narratives include a specific vision for each area, which is a part of and complementary to the general community vision. They also include a description of recommended development patterns, a listing of appropriate, specific land uses which would be allowed, a listing of the state's Quality Community Objectives selected to be pursued as appropriate, as well as identification of implementation measures planned to help achieve the desired development patterns and community vision.

### **EMPLOYMENT CENTER – INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER AREA**

#### **Land Use Description:**

There are three (3) industrial parks in Pierce County. Two (2) of these three (3) parks are fully developed and have only small lots (2-5 acres) that are available for existing industries to expand or for potential industries that are looking to locate in the area. Pierce County and the City of Blackshear acquired large tracts of land and had begun the development of a new industrial park. The park has water to some sections that serve three (3) industries and some of the roadways within this park are paved; however, large sections of the park are not served by public water and there is no sewer or rail access within the park.

**Vision/Goal** Promote economic development in Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson by enhancing the diversification of the current economic base. Business sector expansion, the support and retention of existing businesses and the attraction of new business will be the focus of future economic development endeavors. Priority will be given to the full development of the industrial park and educating the existing and future labor force that will better enable the community to attract more diverse industries into the community.

#### **Quality Community Objectives**

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

- Pierce County has little diversity within its current economic base. However, there is a limited skilled labor force for higher paying job opportunities, which perpetuates the outflow of daily commuters and the exodus of current and future graduates.
- Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson, along with both Authorities (Pierce and OADA) have determined that having an industrial park that is not fully developed (water, sewer, paved streets and rail service) is a major weakness when trying to attract new industry.

**Employment Options Objective** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

- There is a limited portion of the current labor force that is considered to be skilled labor, thus one of the reasons that the community cannot attract industries that require a large number of skilled personnel.

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

- Okefenokee Technical College provides work-force training options and programs to provide the citizens with skills for jobs that are currently available in the community. The citizens are close to communities that offer higher education.

**Growth Preparedness Objective** Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

- Pierce County, the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson, the Pierce County Development Authority and the Okefenokee Area Development Authority will combine their efforts to identify and put into place a prerequisite for the types of economic diversification that will afford new and better job opportunities to its current and future work force.

**Regional Cooperation Objective** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions; particularly where it is critical to the success of a venture such as protection of shared natural resources

### **Implementation Measures**

1. Analyze local economy composition and industry contribution, to determine whether the community depends on a few industries, how local businesses are performing, what opportunities exist for the local economy and what gaps in the industry mix could be filled to enhance the local economy.
2. Establish a process for identifying businesses that best suit the community.
3. Find and/or create the training resources that are needed by the local workforce. These should include formal educational institutions, private providers, and specialized programs from a department of labor. Such training resources are especially critical in the area of technology.
4. Explore incorporating capital improvements programs
5. Evaluate various financing methods for new infrastructure.

### **Primary Land Uses**

- Heavy and light industries
- Warehouse/distribution
- Wholesale trade
- Residential use of any form or density is not appropriate.

## **EMPLOYMENT CENTER – COMMERCIAL/OFFICE CHARACTER AREA**

### **Land Use Description**

The Commercial/Office Employment Center designation appears in a number of places within the county, primarily in the City of Blackshear along the Highway 84 Corridor and Main Street, with some greenfield development. These type centers provide opportunities to expand the County's economic base. However, this is not the case in the downtown area of the City of Patterson, where a majority of the buildings are vacant and in poor condition.

**Vision/Goal** Continue to promote commercial development in and around the downtown area(s) of Blackshear and Patterson, thus enhancing the diversification of the current economic base and generate new revenues.

### **Quality Growth Objective**

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

- Pierce County has little diversity within its current economic base. Commercial shopping centers and available office space will appeal to commercial companies looking to locate within smaller communities.
- Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson, along with Development Authority should promote these type industries into the community. These centers provide opportunities to expand the County's economic base and employers who will provide high-paying professional job opportunities to the current and future work force.

**Employment Options Objective** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

- There is a limited portion of the current labor force that is considered to be skilled labor, thus one of the reasons that the community cannot attract industries that require a large number of skilled personnel; however, there is an office complex that has just been constructed within the city limits of Blackshear that has created high paying professional jobs for the community.
- Pierce County and the City of Blackshear should continue to promote this type industrial development within the community.

**Growth Preparedness Objective** Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

- Pierce County, the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson, the Pierce County Development Authority will combine their efforts to identify and put into place a prerequisite for the types of economic diversification that will afford new and better job opportunities to its current and future work force.

**Regional Cooperation Objective** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions; particularly where it is critical to the success of a venture such as protection of shared natural resources

**Implementation Measures**

1. Develop and enforce zoning and land development regulations for high-intensity uses, to reduce sprawl and enable local governments to better manage future development.
2. Organize county-wide recruiting efforts to attract appropriate employers based on the high quality of life in Pierce County.
3. Require traffic studies for new development in known congested areas
4. Consider land use transitions to adjacent uses.
5. Require aesthetic and building material standards for buildings, signs and landscaping.

**Primary Land Uses**

- Retail space
- Office
- Mixed-use development
- Residential uses over storefront space

**DOWNTOWN CHARACTER AREAS**

**Land Use Description**

Many years ago the downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson flourished, with all the stores being occupied with merchants; however, there are vacant buildings that are in poor to fair condition that could be utilized to bring new small businesses into the area.

The downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson are not located on a major highway; therefore, tourism into these areas is virtually nonexistent. This coupled with the fact that many of the stores, especially in Patterson are vacant and in very poor condition has resulted in a lack of economic development in these areas.

**Vision/Goal** Have thriving downtown areas that will continue the hometown feel of the community. This can only be accomplished by providing incentives to local businesses and also outside entrepreneurs to locate within the cities. This action would assist in generating taxes, which are now going to other areas such as Waycross, Brunswick, and Jacksonville Florida.

### **Quality Growth Objective**

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

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

**Regional Identity** or regional sense of place should be promoted and preserved, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

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

### **Implementation Measures**

1. Look for funding avenues that will assist both cities in providing incentives to local and outside entrepreneurs to expand or located in the downtown areas.
2. Require aesthetic and building material standards for buildings, signs and landscaping for commercial properties, office space and shopping centers.
3. Continue to work on the National Register nomination process for the downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson.
4. Consider developing zoning techniques for mixed-use zoning that allows different types of use, such as housing commercial and office, to locate within the downtown areas, provided that the uses are reasonably compatible.

### **Primary Land Uses**

- Retail space
- Office
- Mixed-use development
- Residential uses over storefront space

## AGRICULTURAL-FORESTRY CHARACTER AREA

### Land Use Description

Land specified as Agriculture/Forestry land make up approximately 88% of all the land in Pierce County. This also includes agriculture/forestry land within the corporate limits of the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson.

Often, as development pressures increase, prime farmland is eaten up by subdivisions. Property values rise so high that it becomes economically not feasible for farmers to continue to farm their property, which is the situation in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County. Currently the area in close proximity to the Pierce/Ware County line is developing quickly. Much of this area was at one time agriculture/forestry land use but with the rapid development of this area, the land use will continue to change over the next 20 years

**Vision/Goal** Promote conservation of agricultural/forestry land to ensure that current and future generations will have an opportunity to continue agro-business production in Pierce County.

### Quality Community Objectives

**Environmental Protection Objective:** Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

- Each county within the State of Georgia is served through the Department of Agriculture's Office of Soil Conservation, which assess and reviews all projects where more than 1-acre of land will be disturbed and potential development that could occur in a wetland or floodplain area; however, Pierce County will need to have more innovative solutions for preserving agricultural lands.

**Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside for development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.

- Pierce County will need to develop new and more stringent zoning ordinances and regulations, which will ensure that future development will be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed and that open space is set aside for development for public use.

**Heritage Preservation Objective:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

- Currently Pierce County does not have specific ordinances to ensure that new development complement the traditional characteristics of the County as a whole.

**Regional Identity Objective:** Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

- Pierce County is connected to the surrounding regional for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.
- Pierce County encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage of agriculture.

### **Implementation Measures**

1. Enforce large-lot zoning (minimum 10-acre lots) except for approved conservation subdivisions.
2. Employ a conservation subdivision ordinance consistent with policy for this area.
3. Use as a receiving area for a wetland mitigation bank.
4. Enforce Best Management Practices (BMP) for **any** land disturbance activities associated with new development, including tree harvesting and utility construction.
5. Prohibit junkyards and equipment storage in areas that would be visible from the highway.
6. Develop and enforce strict ordinances for the development of mobile home parks.
7. Develop and enforce strict ordinance to the installation of single family manufactured homes, which are not located in a mobile home park.
8. Discourage extension of public utilities in these areas.
9. Prepare "right-to-farm" ordinance.
10. Allow limited land splits for heirs.

### **Primary Land Use**

- Conservation and natural areas
- Agriculture and/or forestry
- Raising or breeding animals
- Estate residential on lots of no less than 10 acres

## **CONSERVATION CHARACTER AREA**

### **Land Use Description**

Primary undeveloped natural lands environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development, such as scenic views, steep slopes floodplains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife areas and other environmentally sensitive areas. These character areas include the Little Satilla and Satilla Rivers and the recharge areas(s) in Pierce County.

Approximately 50% of Pierce County lies within watershed boundaries of the Little Satilla River, while the remaining 50% of the county lies within the watershed boundaries of the Satilla River. The Little Satilla Rivers is one (1) of the main tributaries for the Satilla River. Development has and is expected to continue to occur in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County that will continue to encroach on these three (3) vitally important environmentally sensitive areas.

It should also be noted that the most significant groundwater recharge area in Pierce County is located in the south-west quadrant of the county. Pierce County should conduct an evaluation to determine the effects that a large number of private septic tank systems and the sewage treatment facility, which is owned and operated by the City of Waycross, are having or will have on this vitally important natural resource.

**Vision/Goal** Continue and revise new methods to protect its rivers, groundwater recharge and other environmentally sensitive areas within the county to ensure a better quality of life of the present and future population of the county as a whole. As Pierce County continues to grow in future years, it will become increasingly important to protect conservation areas, areas designated as greenspace, watersheds, and environmentally sensitive areas such as recharge areas, wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, and park/recreation areas.

### **Quality Growth Objective**

**Environmental Protection Objective:** Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

- Pierce County has identified defining natural resources and understand the importance of taking measures to better protect these important rivers to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to enjoy fishing, boating and other related water sports that will disappear if environmental protection objectives for this character area are not addressed.
- Pierce County is served through the Department of Agriculture's Office of Soil Conservation, which assess and reviews all projects where new development is to occur. However, the County must develop, adopt and enforce more stringent ordinance(s) that will ensure potable water that is not contaminated through new development in areas that could negatively impact the only known groundwater recharge area of Pierce County.

**Heritage Preservation Objective:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

- Pierce County should discourage new development along its rivers to ensure the traditional character of the rivers and their surroundings reflect the rural traditions and a sense of place.

### **Implementation Measures**

1. Adopt a River Corridor Protection ordinance to designate the Little Satilla River, the Alabama River and the Satilla River as protected rivers.
2. Adopt a Groundwater Recharge Area Protection ordinance consistent with the Environmental Planning Criteria to ensure more control over new development.
3. Adopt a Water Supply Watershed Protection ordinance consistent with Georgia's Environmental Planning Criteria limiting imperviousness within the watershed to no less than 25 percent.
4. Identify appropriate areas and funding sources for fee simple acquisition.
5. Require open space conservation subdivisions to incorporate designated greeways and trails.
6. Enforce BMPs for any land disturbance activities, including utility construction.
7. Perform a study of infrastructure network to determine the cost feasibility and joint county/city participation in infrastructure network.

### **Primary Land Uses**

- Conservation and natural areas.
- Recreation features of minimal impact such as trails or paths.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD (DECLINING) CHARACTER AREA**

### **Description**

Neighborhoods that have declined sufficiently that housing conditions are bad, there may be large areas of vacant or dilapidated, unoccupied structures, specifically describes (1) one major area within the jurisdictional area of the City of Blackshear.

The area is in the western quadrant of the City of Blackshear where many of the once occupied homes were filled with families are now vacant. Many of the homes within this area that are still occupied are in very poor condition. This area of Blackshear is predominately inhabited by very low to low income families that are in need of housing assistance of one type or another, which could include housing rehabilitation, housing reconstruction or down-payment assistance for first time home buyers.

**Vision/Goal** Seek and promote new and innovative opportunities for families residing in the declining neighborhoods to live in affordable, standard housing in neighborhoods that are free from slums in blight, thus ensuring a better quality of life for the overall community.

### **Quality Growth Objective**

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

- Currently, there are now type local plan in place to promote infill development any where in Pierce County. The infill development would not only have a positive impact on identified declining neighborhood(s) but would also enable the community to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land.

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

**Heritage Preservation Objective:** The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

- Housing development within existing neighborhoods should maintain the traditional characteristics of each individual neighborhood. Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson should have ordinances in place to ensure that new development in existing neighborhoods not compromise the original integrity of said neighborhood.

### **Implementation**

1. Establish a redevelopment strategy for identified declining areas in the City of Blackshear, which focus on preserving and rehabilitating the original housing stock, while rebuilding on the remaining land new, attractive neighborhoods following the principles of traditional neighborhood development.
2. Develop strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shop, and other designations in the area.
3. Seek state and federal funding for redevelopment in declining areas that will allow affordable housing to low and moderate income families.
4. Promote homeownership to low and moderate income families through housing programs such as CDBG and CHIP programs.
5. Establish a historic preservation when applicable.

### **Primary Land Uses**

- Single-family residences on small lots.
- Adaptively reused existing buildings.
- Parks and recreation.
- Mixed-use buildings.
- Neighborhood commercial.

## **RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA**

### **Land Use Description**

Rural, undeveloped land likely to face development pressures for lower density (one unit per two+ acres) residential development. Typically will have low pedestrian orientation and access, very large lots, open space, pastoral views and high degree of building separation and are more likely than not to be located in areas which have few if any public infrastructure.

The above definition well describes what is now occurring in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County. Development is occurring all over the unincorporated areas of Pierce County; however, the majority of this new development is occurring along Highway #84 behind Farr's Fine Furniture and in and around the Okefenokee Golf Club. Most of this new development has begun to deplete some of the agricultural/forestry area(s), encroach on the Little Satilla River and the Satilla River and none of this development is supported by public infrastructure.

**Vision/Goal** Promote and encourage new development in areas of the unincorporated areas that are in close proximity to existing public infrastructure to ensure that the natural resources of the community are not depleted and/or negatively impacted, thus providing a better quality of life for all the citizens of the community.

### **Quality Growth Objectives**

**Environmental Protection Objective:** Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

- As stated in other sections of the Quality Growth Objectives, Pierce County nor the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson have ordinances in place to protect the rivers or the groundwater recharge area. The local leaders realize that these are important issues that must be addressed quickly, if they are to properly protect the local natural resources that are vital to the quality of life for the residents and the wildlife habitat.

**Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside for development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.

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

- Currently Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson have some zoning regulations and ordinances in place; however, many are not stringent enough nor are there any incentives available to developers, such as small impact fees that would direct developers to areas of the community that are in close proximity to existing public infrastructure, especially water and sewer.

**Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing sizes, 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.

### **Implementation**

1. Permit rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporate significant amounts of open space.
2. Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character, and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
3. Develop ordinances that will encourage new development in areas that are in close proximity to reduce sprawl.
4. Develop zoning ordinances to reduce the types and numbers of mobile home parks that are created.
5. Promote areas for new development that are in close proximity to public infrastructure, i.e. water and sewer.

### **Primary Land Uses**

- Single-family residences on larger lots.
- Parks and recreation

## **TRANSPORTATION CHARACTER AREA**

### **Land Use Description**

There are three (3) major highways that intersect at one point or another in Pierce County. These main thoroughfares are US Highways 84/SR38; State Route 15/121 and State Route 32, all of which currently adequately meet the current traffic demands, with the exception of the intersections along US Highway 84 at the 5-points area and at Lairsey’s Auto Sales and Ace Pole Company. These areas are becoming more congested with each new development such as the Cotton Exchange Complex.

**Vision/Goal** – Provide adequate ingress/egress in areas of high congestion that will not only ensure public safety but will enhance potential problem areas in order to continue attracting new shopping complexes, commercial office centers, etc. into the area.

### **Quality Growth Objectives**

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

- Currently there are no proper measures to manage potential new development that is coming into the two (2) specific areas described above.
- Currently Pierce County nor the City of Blackshear have any type traffic flow design ordinances or specification to better ensure safety in densely settled areas.

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

- Pierce County does have a rural transit system; however, this system only operates between the hours of 6:00 am and 6:00 pm., Monday through Friday.
- Pierce County lacks alternative transportation facilities, i.e. bicycle/pedestrian.

**Environmental Protection Objective:** Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

**Growth Preparedness Objective:** Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

### **Implementation**

1. Work closely with Georgia DOT and others in developing corridor congestion management plan with functional classifications to determine curves, cuts and access points along Highway 84 where potential congestion will occur.
2. Develop and adopt a rights-of-way ordinance for future development, including commercial, industrial and residential development.
3. Promote street design that fosters alternative means of transportation through the creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
4. Continue to identify road intersections that are a threat to public safety; organize a system for upgrading and modifying road design in order to increase public safety.

### **Primary Land Uses**

Commercial  
Industrial  
Residential

## SECTION II

### Quality Community Objectives

This section is a review of the State of Georgia’s planning objectives and the effectiveness of current policy of Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson in meeting these objectives. These objectives were established by the State of Georgia and are to be used by each community as they develop their comprehensive plan.

**Traditional Neighborhood Objective:** Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged; including use of more human-scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

<b>Quality Community Objective</b>	<b>Status</b>
If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district	Zoning is primarily single use in the county and both cities.
Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional ‘By Right’ so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	No
We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	No
Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in summer.	Yes, City of Blackshear
We have a program to keep our public areas clean and safe.	Yes
Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	Yes
In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	Yes
Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	Yes
Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	Yes
Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	Yes

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

<b>Quality Community Objective</b>	<b>Status</b>
Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development	No
Our community is actively working to promote Brownfield development	No
Our community is actively working to promote Greyfield development	No
We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development.	No
Our community allows small lot development for some uses.	Yes

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

<b>Quality Community Objective</b>	<b>Status</b>
If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he/she would know immediately where he/she was, based on our district characteristics.	No
We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage and have taken steps to protect them. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	Yes, in Blackshear and Patterson  No
We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	Yes
If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.	Depends on Existing Zoning

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

<b>Quality Community Objective</b>	<b>Status</b>
We have public transportation in our community.	Yes
We require that new development connects with existing development through street network, not a single entry/exit.	No
We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	Yes, in Blackshear and Patterson
We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	Yes, in Blackshear
We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks where ever possible.	Yes, in Blackshear
We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	Yes, part of regional plan
We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas where ever possible.	Yes

**Regional Identity** or regional sense of place should be promoted and preserved, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

Quality Community Objective	Status
Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural style and heritage.	Yes
Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	Yes
Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage.	Yes
Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	No
Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	Yes, in Blackshear
Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local, culture, commerce entertainment and education.	Yes

## **RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

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

Quality Growth Objective	Status
We have designated historic districts in our community.	No
We have an active historic preservation commission.	No
We want new development to complement our historic development, and have ordinances in place to ensure that happening	No

**Open Space Preservation:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.

Quality Growth Objective	Status
Our community has a greenspace plan.	No
Our community is actively preserving greenspace-either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	No
We have a local land conservation program, or, we work with state or natural land conservation programs to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	Yes
We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development.	Yes

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

Quality Growth Objective	Status
Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	No
We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	No
We have identified our defining natural resources and have taken steps to protect them.	No
Our community has passed the necessary Part V Environmental Ordinances, and we enforce them.	No
Our community has and actively enforces a tree preservation ordinance.	No
Our community has a tree-planting ordinance for new development.	No
We are using storm water best management best practices for all new development.	Yes
We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community.	Only those through DNR

## **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Growth Preparedness:** Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

Quality Growth Objective	Status
We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	Yes
Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.	No
We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	No
We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth. These areas are based on the natural resources inventory of our community.	No
Local elected officials understand the land-development process in our Community.	They are beginning to better understand
We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	Some what, beginning to be developed
We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions and proposed new development.	Yes
We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process	No

**Appropriate Businesses:** The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

Quality Growth Objective	Status
Our economic development organization has considered our community's strength, assets and weaknesses and has created a business development strategy based on them.	No
Our ED organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community and has a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible.	Yes
We recruit businesses that provide/create sustainable products.	Yes
We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple us.	No

**Employment Options:** A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

Quality Growth Objective	Status
Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	Some
Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	Some, but not enough
Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	Yes
Our community has professional and managerial jobs	Some, but not enough

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

Quality Growth Objective	Status
People who work in the community can also afford to live in the community.	Yes
Our community allows accessory units like garden apartments or mother-in-law units.	Yes
Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above average).	No
We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.	Yes
We have options available for loft living, downtown living or neo-traditional development.	Not at this time
We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing	No
We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	Yes
We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	Yes

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

Quality Growth Objective	Status
Our community provides work-force training options for citizens.	Yes
Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	Yes, but not at competitive wages
Our community has higher education opportunities or is close to a community that does.	Yes, within a 30 mile radius
Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so our children may live and work here, if they so choose.	Very limited in number and wages.

**Regional Cooperation:** Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.

Quality Growth Objective	Status
We plan jointly with our cities and county for Comprehensive Planning purposes.	Yes
We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategies.	Yes
We cooperate with at least one local government to provide or share services.	Yes
We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our Region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft region-wide strategies.	Yes
We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections and discuss issues of regional concern.	Yes through RDC

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

Quality Growth Objective	Status
We participate in regional economic development organizations.	Yes
We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quality issues	Yes
We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	Yes
Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	Yes

## **SECTION III**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

To translate a future vision for the community into an implementation plan first requires goal setting and an identification of the issues and opportunities that will likely be faced in making the plan a reality. The overarching goal is to develop a plan that best manages the anticipated growth in the community; therefore, projected growth is the key to identifying the issues and opportunities for the community as a whole.

### **I. Population**

#### **Issues**

Projections show that the City of Blackshear will only have a slight increase in population over the next 20 years, while the City of Patterson began losing population as early as 2005, with the most significant population loss occurring between 2015 and 2025.

The population growth in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County is expected to continue through 2025, with the largest increase occurring between 2000 and 2010. The projections of growth in Pierce County between 2005 and 2025 will be 22.9%.

#### **Opportunities**

Pierce County has the opportunity to develop and enforce new zoning and codes to ensure a better quality of life for all its citizens.

### **II. Economic Development**

#### **Issues**

1. There is a lack of available employment opportunities in Pierce County for the expanding labor force.
2. There is a limited skilled labor force for higher paying job opportunities in the Pierce County area perpetuating the outflow of daily commuters and the exodus of graduates.
3. The county has a limited amount of economic activity outside of a few individual industrial sectors and the governmental sector which will eventually increase the tax burden on homeowners.
4. Business recruitment has not been successful.

#### **Opportunities**

1. Carefully evaluate which industries, sectors, and clusters are the most compatible with the county and develop a program to attract them. The local governments must become more aggressive in pursuing an employment base of regional-scale employers that will attract a full range of complementary jobs to Pierce County.
2. Focus economic recruitment initiatives on business and industry matching the skill-sets of the local labor force and requiring minimal infrastructure needs.
3. Develop and promote the existing industrial park area in order to attract new industry.
4. Encourage and collaborate on continued expansion of local job training programs.
5. Expand continuing education opportunities. Pierce County needs additional institutions for higher learning, including a local library which provides adequate services to all residents of Pierce County. The County is taking the necessary steps to obtain funding for a new library that will meet the needs of its citizenry.
6. Enhance the quality of the built and natural environment of Pierce County in order to attract new residents to the area, which could in turn help in attracting new industries, which follow population growth to the area.

### **III. Housing**

#### **Issues**

1. Residential development in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County increases the investment required for public services and infrastructure expenditure (roads, schools, public safety), especially cluster mobile home development for rental purposes.
2. The majority of housing is moderately priced; however, 33.6% are mobile homes. Depreciation of the value of these homes (owner or renter) reduces the taxable revenue accrued from residential development and places financial burdens on local governments to provide the necessary services.
3. There is a lack of diversity in the housing supply limiting options for low-to-moderate income and elderly households.
4. Historic neighborhoods within the City of Blackshear are becoming blighted and are in need of revitalization and upgrade.

#### **Opportunities**

1. Promote development in areas of the county that is in close proximity to municipalities where water and sewer are available to reduce the number of septic tanks being installed within the county.
2. Evaluate the tax structure on mobile homes and try to structure it in such a way that it becomes more equitable for all Pierce County taxpayers.
2. Continue to update ordinances and codes to protect against insufficient and poor quality in residential development.
3. Explore establishment of impact fee system and public/private shared costs proposals in preparation for future speculative housing development.
4. Coordinate efforts of Planning Commissions in ordinance compliance and development of compatible uses and design criteria in historic districts and neighborhoods.
5. Promote redevelopment efforts in declining areas of the City of Blackshear, where housing conditions are worsening due to low rate of homeownership and neglect of property maintenance. The City of Blackshear should develop a Redevelopment Plan for these areas in order to obtain possible funding for housing opportunities to attract some of the projected growth, thus ensuring neighborhoods that are more stable with a large percentage of owner-occupied housing.
6. Support dispersion of assisted housing through the community in order to diversify neighborhoods and eliminate pockets of poverty.

### **IV. Natural Resources**

#### **Issues**

1. Preservation of agricultural resources and open space/greenspace.
2. Water quality degradation in the watersheds as development increases.
3. Protect all groundwater recharge areas
4. Uniform enforcement of Environmental Ordinances by all jurisdictions.
5. Massive amount of unpaved roadways that lack adequate drainage to assist in eliminating erosion, sedimentation and storm water runoff.

#### **Opportunities**

1. Prioritize areas for additional greenspace acquisition/designation.
2. Focus on a Service Delivery Strategy agreement between the county and cities to extend water and sewer services into areas where septic failures are suspected that will assist in protecting the area's groundwater recharge area and the watershed(s).

3. Protect the principal groundwater recharge areas for the Miocene-Pliocene Aquifer, which is located in the southwest section of Pierce County. A large amount of development has occurred in and around this site including the construction of the Waycross city sewage treatment plant.
4. The county and both cities should make every effort to comply with the Rules of the Environmental Planning Criteria through:
  - (a) Adoption of a Groundwater Recharge Area protection ordinance consistent with the Environmental Planning Criteria to ensure more control over new development;
  - (b) Adoption of a River Corridor Protection ordinance to designate the Little Satilla River, the Alabaha River and the Satilla River as protected rivers;
  - (c) Adopt a Water Supply Watershed Protection ordinance consistent with Georgia's Environmental Planning Criteria limiting imperviousness within the watershed to no less than 25 percent.
5. Make efforts to have set-asides for road paving and drainage project and seek funds through the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to assist with these efforts.
6. Encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.
7. Promote the development of infrastructure networks to steer new development away from sensitive natural resource areas.
8. Promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

## **V. Cultural Resources**

### **Issues**

1. It has been determined that neither the county nor either city has an inventory of their cultural resources.
2. A significant number of historic properties are not being improved and are unused and deteriorating.
3. Management plans and feasibility studies for historic properties are needed to determine potential uses and rehabilitation costs.

### **Opportunities**

1. Develop avenues through the RDC and others to develop an inventory of the cultural resources throughout Pierce county, which includes the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson.
2. Create and/or participate in formal programs to promote cultural resources and increase cultural tourism.
3. Promote the use of state, federal, and local financial incentives for rehabilitating historic properties by private owners.
4. Promote the development of heritage education programs of the varied cultures which make up the county.

## **VI. Community Facilities and Services**

### **Issues**

1. All new development in the unincorporated areas of the county is anticipated to utilize septic tanks for on-site wastewater treatment, which increases the potential for tank failure and environmental degradation.
2. Projected age distribution of the population illustrates a continued decrease in school-aged children, which will reduce revenues and create potential costs burdens to the cities and county.
3. Emergency Services and Public Safety continues to require additional personnel, equipment and improved facilities to meet current levels of need.
4. Large amount of dirt roads within the county lack adequate drainage.
5. Provision of public facilities is not used to guide development to desired locations.

### **Opportunities**

1. Explore inter-jurisdictional and inter-agency opportunities for infrastructure expansion maximizing the efficiency of financial investment.
2. Evaluate current water distribution to determine and correct deficiencies in order to maximize water flow, pressure and fire protection to future growth areas.
3. Evaluate current sewage collection systems to determine possible areas of infiltration and make needed corrections to maximize sewer capacity for future growth areas.
4. Continue local enforcement of state guidelines related to septic tank usage and drain field requirements.
5. Explore areas where impact fee requirements would facilitate expedited infrastructure improvements.
6. Secure property and assist in recreational facilities planning for centralized facilities, as well as evaluate opportunities to create smaller neighborhood facilities.
7. Develop a strategic implementation plan for Emergency Services, Public Safety and Codes Enforcement which is based on anticipated growth trends and targeted to high growth areas.
8. Better communication and collaboration between local governments and Board of Education on present and future education needs of children within the community.

## **VII. Transportation**

### **Issues**

1. Approximately 58.8% of all roadways throughout the county are unpaved.
2. Potential increase in vehicular traffic at 5-Points on Highway 84 due to the development of the Cotton Exchange strip mall.
3. As stated above, the widening of State Highway 84 has increase the development along with corridor. Without proper measure to manage new development, the potential for the cost of community services for this area may become more of a financial burden to the city of Blackshear and Pierce County than the financial benefits associated with new development.
4. Pierce County does have a rural transit system; however, this system only operates between the hours of 6:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday through Friday, with no service available on the week-ends to the overall public but is available up to 11:00 pm for emergency calls for at-risk children.
5. U.S. Highway 32 four-lane through Bristol will afford opportunities for development and make the area more easily accessible for truck traffic for agricultural products.
6. A lack of alternative transportation facilities, i.e. bicycle/pedestrian.

### **Opportunities**

1. Work closely with Georgia DOT in developing plans for paving dirt roads in high density areas.
2. Develop a corridor congestion management plan with functional classifications to determine curve, cuts and access points along Highway 84 along with development and adoption of a rights-of-way ordinance for future development in this area and all future commercial, industrial, and residential development.
3. Promote the existing rural transit system and seek additional funds in order to operate the system 7 days per week.
4. Promote street design that fosters alternative means of transportation through the creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.
5. Work toward improvement of traffic flow designs and operations, specifically in densely settled areas.
6. Identify road intersections that are a threat to public safety; organize a system for upgrading and modifying road design in order to increase public safety.

## **VIII. Intergovernmental Coordination**

### **Issues**

1. Lack of sharing information between local governments and other local agencies such as the Board of Education.
2. Lack of coordination between local governments and other government agencies.
3. Lack of coordination between local governments in Pierce County and governments in the surrounding areas of the region.

### **Opportunities**

1. Pierce County joined with Ware County in creating the Okefenokee Area Development Authority in order to be able to offer more incentives to potential industries looking to locate in the area.
2. Possible future intergovernmental coordination with the City of Waycross and/or the City of Blackshear may be required in order to provide adequate infrastructure to accommodate the projected growth in the county.
3. Seek opportunities to share services and facilities with other neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
4. Engage cooperative planning between the local government and local school board in regard to the appropriate location and use of schools as community facilities.

## **IX. Land Use**

### **Issues**

1. New development is occurring within the unincorporated areas disconnected from existing municipalities, and available infrastructure and services.
2. Residential development is encroaching into active agricultural areas increasing potential conflicts between farms and subdivisions.
3. Commercial and industrial interests are locating within classified low density residential and agricultural areas away from public infrastructure and main access points.
4. Potential loss of community character and uniqueness.
5. Lack of development and ordinances in down town areas of Blackshear and Patterson that lend to unattractiveness of the town centers as a whole.

### **Opportunities**

1. Develop ordinances and standards that will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
2. Encourage reinvestment and redevelopment opportunities within existing municipalities, especially where in-fill development is feasible.
3. Reserve land for commercial/industrial growth on the Future Land Use map in areas with sufficient infrastructure and access to accommodate economic development initiatives.
4. Create public/private partnerships that identify financially feasible opportunities for preserving agricultural land and greenspace.
5. Encourage traditional neighborhood development.
6. Encourage the development of greenways and pedestrians trails, as well as providing more Sidewalks within the cities and requiring developers to pave streets and provide sidewalks within new developments.
7. Decisions on new development will contribute to, not take away from, our community's character and sense of place.
8. Encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve overall attractiveness and local quality of life.
9. Review and access land planning and development concepts from other communities that may be new to our area but are successful in other places.

**SECTION IV**

**Implementation Program**

**Report of Accomplishments**

The Report of Accomplishments reviews the previous Short Term Work Program and its implementation since adoption by Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson.

**Pierce County  
Report of Accomplishments  
2000-2006**

<b>HOUSING</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Work with public and private institutions to increase housing opportunities for incoming residents.	On Going	County's CHIP is on going and is available to all residents of the County.
Eliminate blight areas throughout the county through condemnation, demolition and rehabilitation projects.	Underway	Pierce County has a CHIP that is being used to assist with some of these issues.
Evaluate the tax structure on mobile homes and try to structure it in such a way that it becomes more equitable for all Pierce County tax payers.	On Going	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to upgrade industrial park infrastructure.	On Going	Pierce County and the City of Blackshear are looking at all types of avenues to address this issue.
Continue to provide infrastructure for industrial and residential development.	On Going	
Continue to support regional economic development through funding of OADA.	On Going	
Continue to participate in the Pierce County/City of Blackshear Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development.	On Going	
Develop programs in conjunction with the Pierce County/City of Blackshear Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to market the area in order to expand the business base for economic development purposes.	On Going	
<b>NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to work towards the establishment of a Historic District and the creation of Historic Resources Commission.	On Going	
Establish historic resources protection ordinances within county.	On Going	

<b>LAND USE</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to support the Pierce County/City of Blackshear/City of Patterson Joint Planning Commission.	On Going	
Continue to work with the RDC planning staff to update existing zoning ordinances and zoning maps in an environmentally sensitive format that will be administered through Pierce County/City of Blackshear/City of Patterson Joint Planning Commission.	On Going	
<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Remodel old public buildings for community centers and public recreational uses.	On Going	Portions of this project are complete with the renovation of the Court House at a cost of \$2.5 m. Plans of other activities will be shown in the SWP.
Continue to upgrade fire equipment in the Pierce County/Blackshear Volunteer Fire Department, including vehicles, breathing gear, turnout gear, and other fire fighting equipment.	On Going	
Continue to improve recreational programs and facilities within the county.	On Going	
Continue to study the feasibility of the consolidation of law enforcement and other services in Pierce County.	On Going	
Move the Board of Education to a central location in the City of Blackshear	Complete	This project has been completed at a cost of \$2 m
Continue to support cultural activities in the county and cities, including the Fall Harvest Festival and the Southeast Forest Festival.	On Going	
Raze old jail and pave site for parking of new jail currently under construction.	Complete	
Provide public water to portions of the new industrial park area.	Complete	City of Blackshear accomplished through the local, state and federal funds.
Continue to support the development of public infrastructure project that improves drainage and transportation systems in specifically identified areas in Pierce County.	On Going	Pierce County applied for 2006 CDBG assistance to help with specific areas within each community.

**City of Blackshear  
Report of Accomplishments  
2000-2006**

<b>HOUSING</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to work with public/private institutions to increase quality rental housing stock for incoming residents.	On Going	Working with developers who are interested in rental housing development.
Continue to eliminate blight areas through condemnation, demolition and rehabilitation projects.	On Going	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to upgrade industrial park infrastructure.	On Going	Pierce County and the City of Blackshear are looking at all types of avenues to address this issue.
Continue to provide infrastructure for industrial and residential development.	On Going	
Continue to support regional economic development through funding of OADA.	On Going	
Continue to participate in the Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development.	On Going	
Develop programs in conjunction with the Pierce County/City of Blackshear Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to market the area in order to expand the business base for economic development purposes.	On Going	
<b>NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to work towards the establishment of a Historic District and the creation of Historic Resources Commission.	On Going	
Establish historic resources protection ordinances within county.	On Going	
Continue to work on the National Register nomination process for the downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson.	On- Going	
<b>LAND USE</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to support the Pierce County/City of Blackshear/City of Patterson Joint Planning Commission.	On Going	
Continue to work with the RDC planning staff to update existing zoning ordinances and zoning maps in an environmentally sensitive format that will be administered through Pierce County/City of Blackshear/City of Patterson Joint Planning Commission.	On Going	

## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Activity	Status	Explanation
Remodel old public buildings for community centers and public recreational uses	On Going	
Continue to improve recreational programs and facilities.	On Going	
Continue to support the development of public infrastructure project that improve drainage and transportation systems in specific area of the City of Blackshear.	On Going	Applied for funding of a drainage project in 2006 and 2007 in a low and moderate income area of the City.
Continue to work with the county to update the Blackshear/Patterson/Offerman Pierce County Volunteer Fire Department master plans.	On Going	
Install 1,000 GPM well and pump and 500,000 gallon storage tank to be located at the Industrial Park and tied in to the present system.	Completed	
Continue to study the feasibility of the consolidation of law enforcement and other services in Pierce County.	Underway	
Continue to upgrade fire equipment in for the fire departments throughout Pierce County, including those in Blackshear, Patterson and Offerman.	On Going	
Continue to support cultural activities, including the Fall Harvest Festival and the Spirit of Liberty and Spirit of Christmas celebration.	On Going	

**City of Patterson  
Report of Accomplishments  
2000-2006**

<b>HOUSING</b>		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to work with public and private institutions to increase quality rental housing stock for incoming residents.	On Going	
Continue to eliminate blight areas through condemnation, demolition and rehabilitation projects.	On Going	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to upgrade industrial park infrastructure.	On Going	
Continue to provide infrastructure for industrial and residential development.	On Going	
Continue to support regional economic development through funding of OADA.	On Going	
Continue to participate in the Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development.	On Going	
Develop programs in conjunction with the Pierce County/City of Blackshear Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to market the area in order to expand the business base for economic development purposes.	On Going	
<b>NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to work towards the establishment of Historic District(s) and the creation of Historic Resources Commission.	On Going	
<b>LAND USE</b>		
Activity	Status	Explanation
Continue to support the Pierce County/City of Blackshear/City of Patterson Joint Planning Commission.	On Going	
Continue to work with the RDC planning staff to update existing zoning ordinances and zoning maps in an environmentally sensitive format that will be administered through Pierce County/City of Blackshear/City of Patterson Joint Planning Commission.	On Going	

**PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Remodel old public buildings for community centers and public recreational uses	On Going	
Continue to improve recreational programs and facilities.	On Going	
Continue to support the development of public infrastructure project that improve drainage and transportation systems in specific area of the City of Patterson.	On Going	Applied for funding of a drainage project in 2004 in a low and moderate income area of the City.
Continue to work with the county to update the Blackshear/Patterson/Offerman Pierce County Volunteer Fire Department master plans.	On Going	
Continue to study the feasibility of the consolidation of law enforcement and other services in Pierce County.	Underway	
Continue to support cultural activities in the city and county, including the Pecan Harvest Festival and the Southeast Forest Festival.	On Going	

**Joint Pierce County/Blackshear/Patterson Short-Term Work Programs**

The following Implementation Program addresses the issues and opportunities raised in Chapter IV. Action items are identified, along with responsible parties for the implementation and a projected timeframe for implementation. This timeframe is expressed either as On-going or Short-term Range (1 to 5 years).

<b>HOUSING</b>				
<b>Description/Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Continue to work with public/private institutions to increase affordable standard housing opportunities for low and moderate income families through Pierce County.	County Cities	N/A	CDBG CHIP USDA	2007-2012
Continue to eliminate blight areas throughout the county through condemnation, demolition, and rehabilitation projects.	County Cities	N/A	Local CDBG	2007-2012
Permit rural cluster or conservation sub-division design that incorporate significant amounts of open space.	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character, and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.	County	Staff time	Local	2007- 012
Develop ordinances that will encourage new development in areas that are in close proximity to reduce sprawl.	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Develop zoning ordinances to reduce the types and numbers of mobile home parks that created.	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Promote areas for new development that are in close proximity to public infrastructure, i.e. water and sewer.	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Continue to update ordinances and codes to protect against insufficient and poor quality in residential development.	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Coordinate efforts of Planning Commissions in ordinance compliance and development of compatible uses and design criteria in historic districts and neighborhoods.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Develop strong pedestrian/bicycle connections to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shop, and other designations in the area.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local DOT	2007-2012
Establish a redevelopment strategy for identified declining areas in the City of Blackshear, which focus on preserving and rehabilitating the original housing stock, while rebuilding on the remaining land attractive new neighborhoods following the principles of traditional neighborhood development.	Blackshear	2,000	Local	2007-2012

<b>HOUSING (continued)</b>				
<b>Description/Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Develop a Redevelopment Plan for declining areas within the City of Blackshear to obtain possible funding for housing opportunities to attract some of the projected growth, thus ensuring neighborhoods that are more stable with a large percentage of ownership.	Blackshear	2,000	Local	2007-2012
Seek state and federal funding for redevelopment in declining areas that will allow affordable housing to low and moderate income families.	Blackshear	N/A	USDA CHIP CDBG	2007-2012
Promote redevelopment efforts in declining areas of the City of Blackshear, where housing conditions are worsening due to low rate of homeownership and neglect of property.	Blackshear	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Promote homeownership to low and moderate income families through state and federal housing programs	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Establish historic preservation where applicable.	County Cities	Staff Time		2007-2012

<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>				
<b>Description/Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Continue to provide infrastructure for industrial and residential development.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local CDBG EDA USDA GEFA	2007-2012
Continue to fully development the industrial park, water, sewer, paved streets, drainage, lighting, etc.	County Cities	2 million	Local EDA USDA One GA CDBG	2007-2012
Continue to participate in the Pierce County/ Blackshear/Patterson Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce and OADA to promote economic development.	County Cities	110,519	Local	2007-2012
Continue to develop programs in conjunction with Pierce County/City of Blackshear Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to market the area in order to expand the business base for economic development.	County	Staff Time	Local	2007-2012
Organize county-wide recruiting efforts to attract appropriate employers based on the high quality of life in Pierce County.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Description/Activity	Responsible Parties	Costs	Funding Source	Timeframe
Analyze local economy composition and industry contribution to determine whether the community depends on a few industries, how local businesses are performing, what opportunities exist for the local economy and what gaps in the industry mix could be filled to enhance the local economy.	Authority OADA County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Establish a process for identifying businesses that best suit the community.	Authority OADA County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Find and/or create the training resources that are needed by the local workforce including formal educational institutions, and specialized programs.	County BOE Cities	Staff time	DOL OTC Wayx College	2007- 2012
Explore incorporating capital improvements programs.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Evaluate various financing methods for new infrastructure.	County Authorities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Develop and enforce zoning and land development regulations for high-intensity uses, to reduce sprawl and enable local governments to better manage future development.	County Cities	Not know at this time	Local RDC	2007-2012
Require traffic studies for new development in known congested areas.	County Cities	10,000	Local DOT	2007-2012
Consider land use transitions to adjacent uses.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Require aesthetic and building material standards for buildings, signs and landscaping for commercial properties, office space and shopping centers.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Evaluate which industries, sectors, and clusters are the most compatible with the county and develop a program to attract them.	County Authorities	Staff Time	Local	2007-2012
Seek funding avenues that will assist the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson in providing local and outside entrepreneurs to expand or locate in the downtown areas.	County	N/A	EIP RLF DDF	2007-2012
Continue to work on the National Register nomination process for the downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson.	Cities	N/A	Local	2007-2012
Develop zoning techniques for mixed-use zoning that allows different type of use, i.e. housing, commercial and office, to locate within the downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson	Cities DDA	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012

## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Description/Activity	Responsible Parties	Costs	Funding Source	Timeframe
Continue remodeling old public building for community centers and public recreational uses.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local CDBG DNR	2007-2012
Continue to improve recreational programs and facilities within the county.	County Blackshear	100,000	Local LDF DNR	2007-2012
Continue to support the development of public infrastructure project that improve drainage and transportation systems in specific area of Pierce County.	County Cities	N/A	Local DOT CDBG	2007-2012
Continue to update the Blackshear/ Patterson/Pierce County Volunteer Fire Department Master Plans.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Continue to upgrade fire equipment in the Pierce County, Blackshear, Patterson and Offerman Volunteer Fire Department, including vehicles, breathing gear, turnout gear, and other fire fighting equipment.	County Cities	650,000	Local State Federal	2007-2012
Continue to study the feasibility of the consolidation of law enforcement and other services in Pierce County.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Continue to support cultural activities in the city and county, including the Pecan Festival, the Spirit of Liberty and the Spirit of Christmas celebrations.	County Blackshear Patterson	10,000 3,500 3,500	Local	2007-2012
Continue to support the Pierce County/Cities of Blackshear and Patterson Joint Planning Commission.	County	24,500	Local	2007-2012
Continue to work with the RDC and others to update existing zoning ordinances and zoning maps in an environmentally sensitive format that will be administered through the Joint Planning Commission.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Work closely with GA DOT and other in developing corridor congestion management plan with functional classifications to determine curves, cuts and access points along Highway 84 where potential congestion will occur.	County Blackshear	Not known at this time	Local DOT	2007-2012
Develop and adopt a rights-of-way ordinance for future development, including commercial, industrial and residential.	County Cities	Not know at this time	Local	2007-2012
Promote street design that fosters alternative means of transportation through the creation of a community-wide pedestrian/bike path network.	County Cities	Not know at this time	Local DOT	2007-2012

## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE (continued)

Description/Activity	Responsible Parties	Costs	Funding Source	Timeframe
Continue to identify road intersections that are a threat to public safety; organize a system for upgrading and modifying road design in order to increase public safety.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Develop a corridor Congestion Management Plan with functional classification to determine curve, cuts and access points along Highway 84.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local DOT	2007-2012
Work towards improving traffic flow designs and operations, specifically in densely settled areas.	County Cities	Not know at this time	Local DOT	2007-2012
Promote the existing rural transit system and seek additional funds in order to operate the system 7-days per week.	County Cities	Not know at this time	Local	2007-2012
Assist to maintain drainage/reconstructing drainage canals in the Cities of Blackshear, Patterson, and Offerman.	County Cities	N/A	Local DOT CBDG	2007-2012
Construct a new library within Pierce County for all residents of this community	County	2.4 m	Local USDA State Library	2007-2012
Explore inter-jurisdictional and inter-agency opportunities for infrastructure expansion, maximizing the efficiency of financial investment.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 -2012
Evaluate current water distribution to determine and correct deficiencies in order to maximize water flow, and fire protection to future growth areas.	Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 -2012
Evaluate current sewage collection systems to determine possible areas of infiltration and make needed corrections to maximize sewer capacity for future growth areas.	Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 -2012
Explore areas where impact fee requirements would facilitate expedited infrastructure improvements.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 -2012
Develop a strategic implementation plan for Emergency/ Public Safety and Code Enforcement which is based on anticipated growth and targeted to high growth areas.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 -2012
Better communication/collaboration between local governments and Board of Education on education needs of children within the community.	County Cities BOE	Staff time	Local	2007 -2012
Develop plans for paving dirt roads in high density areas	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local CDBG DOT	2007-2012
Continue local enforcement of state guidelines related to septic tank usage and drain field requirements.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 -2012

## NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Description/Activity	Responsible Parties	Costs	Funding Source	Timeframe
Continue to work towards the establishment of a Historic District and the creation of Historic Resources Commission.	County Cities	Staff time	Local RDC	2007-2012
Continue to establish historic resources protection ordinances within the county.	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Continue to work on the National Register nomination process for the downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson.	Cities	Staff time	Local DDA	2007-2012
Adopt a Groundwater Recharge Area Protection ordinance consistent with the Environmental Planning Criteria to ensure more control over new development.	County Cities	1,000 2,000	Local	2007-2009
Adopt a River Corridor Protection ordinance to designate the Little Satilla River and the Satilla River as protected rivers.	County Cities	1,000 2,000	Local	2007-2009
Adopt a Water Supply Watershed Protection ordinance consistent with Georgia's Environmental Planning Criteria limiting imperviousness within the watershed to no less than 25 percent.	County Cities	1,000 2,000	Local	2007-2009
Identify appropriate areas and funding sources for fee simple acquisition.	County Cities	5,000	Local	2007-2012
Require open space conservation subdivisions to incorporate designated greenways and trails.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Enforce Best Management Practices (BMP) for <u>any</u> land disturbance activities associated with new development, including tree harvesting and utility construction.	County Cities	Staff time	Local DNR	2007-2012
Perform study of infrastructure network to determine cost feasibility and joint county, city participation in infrastructure network	County Cities	25,000	Local	2007-2012
Enforce large-lot zoning (minimum 10-acre lots) except for approved conservation subdivision to preserve the economic function of agriculture, livestock, and forestry in Pierce County.	County	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Employ a conservation subdivision ordinance consistent with policy.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007- 2012
Prohibit junkyards and equipment storage in areas that would be visible from the highway.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Develop and enforce strict ordinances for the development of mobile home parks.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Develop and enforce strict ordinance for installing single family manufactured home homes, which are not located in a mobile home park.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Discourage extension of public utilities in environmentally sensitive areas.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012

## NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES (continued)

Description/Activity	Responsible Parties	Costs	Funding Source	Timeframe
Enforce illegal dumping ordinance	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Prepare "right-to-farm" ordinance.	County	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Allow limited land splits for heirs.	County	N/A	Local	2007-2012
Prioritize areas for additional greenspace acquisition/designation	County	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Promote the use of state, federal and local financial incentives for rehabilitation of historic properties by private owners, with an emphasis on the downtown areas of Blackshear and Patterson.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Require, with minor exception, residential subdivisions to use compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Promote use of conservation easements by land owners.	County	Staff time	Local	2007-2012

## LAND USE

Description/Activity	Responsible Parties	Costs	Funding Source	Timeframe
Continue working with the RDC to update existing zoning ordinances and zoning maps in an environmentally sensitive format that will be administered through the Joint Planning Commission.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Continue working on ordinances of environmentally sensitive areas, including but not limited to agricultural and forestry land.	County Cities	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Develop ordinances and standards that will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.	County	Not known at this time	Local	2007-2012
Encourage reinvestment and redevelopment opportunities within existing municipalities, especially where in-fill development is feasible.	Cities	Not known at this time	Local CDBG USDA EIP	2007-2012
Reserve land for commercial/industrial growth in areas with sufficient infrastructure and access to accommodate economic development initiatives.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Create public/private partnerships that identify financially feasible opportunities for preserving agricultural land and greenspace.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Encourage traditional neighborhood development.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012

<b>LAND USE (continued)</b>				
<b>Description/Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Encourage the development of greeways and pedestrian trails, as well as providing more sidewalks within the cities and require developers to pave streets and provide sidewalks within all new development.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Make decision on new development, which will contribute to, not take away from, the community's character and sense of place.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Encourage the development of downtown as a vibrant center of the community in order to improve the overall attractiveness and local quality of life.	Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Review and access land planning and development concepts from other communities that may be new to Pierce County but are successful in other places.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Ensure that information on new zoning laws and ordinances are provided to the public through Public Awareness measures.	County Cities	5,000	Local	2007-2012
Continue to support the Pierce County/Blackshear/Patterson Joint Planning Commission	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012

<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION</b>				
<b>Description/Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Work more closely with the Board of Education on information for decision making issues.	County Cities Board	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Continue to work all local agencies to have a better understanding of state, federal and local laws, rules and regulations that govern all agencies.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 - 2012
Consider future intergovernmental coordination with the City of Waycross and/or City of Blackshear in order to provide adequate infrastructure to accommodate the projected growth in the county.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007-2012
Seek opportunities to share services and facilities with other neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 - 2012
Encourage cooperative planning between the local government and local school board in regard to the appropriate location and use of schools as community facilities.	County Cities	Staff time	Local	2007 - 2012

## **POLICIES**

### **II. Economic Development**

***1. There is a lack of available employment opportunities in Pierce County for the expanding labor force.***

- We will carefully evaluate which industries, sectors, and clusters are the most compatible with the county and develop a program to attract them.
- We will become more aggressive in pursuing an employment base of regional-scale employers that will attract a full range of complementary jobs to Pierce County.
- We will consider the employment needs and skill levels of our existing population in making decisions on proposed economic development projects.
- We will aggressively pursue an employment base of regional scale employers that will attract a full range of complementary jobs for pierce County

***2. There is a limited skilled labor force for higher paying job opportunities in the Pierce County area perpetuating the outflow of daily commuters and the exodus of graduates.***

- We will focus economic recruitment initiatives on business and industry matching the skill-sets of the local labor force and requiring minimal infrastructure needs; and also encourage and collaborate on continued expansion of local job training programs.
- We will make efforts to expand continuing education opportunities. Pierce County needs additional institutions for higher learning, including a local library which provides adequate services to all residents of Pierce County.

***3. The county has a limited amount of economic activity outside of a few individual industrial sectors and the governmental sector which will eventually increase the tax burden on homeowners.***

- We will promote the enhancement of the quality of the built and natural environment of Pierce County in order to attract new residents to the area, which could in turn help in attracting new industries, which follow population growth to the area.

***4. Business recruitment has not been successful.***

- We will develop and promote the existing industrial park area in order to attract new industry.
- We will carefully consider costs as well as benefits in making decisions on proposed economic development projects

### **Housing**

***1. Residential development in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County increases the investment required for public services and infrastructure expenditure (roads, schools, public safety), especially cluster mobile home development for rental purposes.***

- We will promote development in areas of the county that is in close proximity to municipalities where water and sewer are available to reduce the number of septic tanks being installed within the county.
- We will explore establishment of impact fee system and public/private shared costs proposals in preparation for future speculative housing development.

2. ***The majority of housing is moderately priced; however, 33.6% are mobile homes. Depreciation of the value of these homes (owner or renter) reduces the taxable revenue accrued from residential development and places financial burdens on local governments to provide the necessary services.***
  - We will evaluate the tax structure on mobile homes and try to structure it in such a way that it becomes more equitable for all Pierce County taxpayers.
  - We will continue to update ordinances and codes to protect against insufficient and poor quality in residential development.
  
3. ***There is a lack of diversity in the housing supply limiting options for low-to-moderate income and elderly households.***
  - We will support dispersion of assisted housing throughout the community in order to diversify neighborhoods and eliminate pockets of poverty.
  - We will encourage housing policies, choices and patterns that move people upward on the housing ladder from dependence to independence (home-ownership).
  
4. ***Historic neighborhoods within the City of Blackshear are becoming blighted and are in need of revitalization and upgrade.***
  - We will coordinate efforts of Planning Commissions in ordinance compliance and development of compatible uses and design criteria in historic districts and neighborhoods.
  - We will promote redevelopment efforts in declining areas of the City of Blackshear, where housing conditions are worsening due to low rate of homeownership and neglect of property maintenance. The City of Blackshear will develop a Redevelopment Plan for these areas in order to obtain possible funding for housing opportunities to attract some of the projected growth, thus ensuring neighborhoods that are more stable with a large percentage of owner-occupied housing

#### **Community Facilities and Services**

1. ***All new development in the unincorporated areas of the county is anticipated to utilize septic tanks for on-site wastewater treatment, which increases the potential for tank failure and environmental degradation.***
  - We will continue local enforcement of state guidelines related to septic tank usage and drain Field requirements.
  - Explore inter-jurisdictional and inter-agency opportunities for infrastructure expansion maximizing the efficiency of financial investment.
  
2. ***Projected age distribution of the population illustrates a continued decrease in school-aged children, which will reduce revenues and create potential costs burdens to the cities and county.***
  - Better communication and collaboration between local governments and Board of Education on present and future education needs of children within the community.
  
3. ***Emergency Services and Public Safety continues to require additional personnel, equipment and improved facilities to meet current levels of need.***
  - We will develop a strategic implementation plan for Emergency Services, Public Safety and Codes Enforcement which is based on anticipated growth trends and targeted to high growth areas.

**4. Large amount of dirt roads within the county lack adequate drainage.**

- Work closely with Georgia DOT and DCA in developing plans for paving roads in high density areas.

**5. Provision of public facilities is not used to guide development to desired locations.**

- We will explore areas where impact fee requirements would expedite infrastructure improvements.
- Evaluate current water distribution to determine and correct deficiencies in order to maximize water flow, pressure and fire protection to future growth areas.
- Evaluate current sewage collection systems to determine possible areas of infiltration and make needed corrections to maximize sewer capacity for future growth areas.
- Secure property and assist in recreational facilities planning for centralized facilities, as well as evaluate opportunities to create smaller neighborhood facilities.

**Natural and Cultural Resources**

**1. Preservation of agricultural resources and open space/greenspace.**

- We will prioritize areas for additional greenspace acquisition/designation.

**2. Water quality degradation in the watersheds as development increases.**

- We will focus on a Service Delivery Strategy agreement between the county and cities to extend water and sewer services into areas where septic failures are suspected that will assist in protecting the area's groundwater recharge area and the watershed(s).

**3. Protect all groundwater recharge areas.**

- We will protect the principal groundwater recharge areas for the Miocene-Pliocene Aquifer, which is located in the southwest section of Pierce County through the promoting the development of infrastructure networks to steer new development away from this sensitive natural resource.
- We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or valuable historic, archaeological or cultural resources from encroachment.

**4. Uniform enforcement of Environmental Ordinances by all jurisdictions.**

- We will make every effort to comply with the Rules of the Environmental Planning Criteria through:
  - (d) Adoption of a Groundwater Recharge Area protection ordinance consistent with the Environmental Planning Criteria to ensure more control over new development;
  - (e) Adoption of a River Corridor Protection ordinance to designate the Little Satilla River and the Satilla River as protected rivers;
  - (f) Adopt a Water Supply Watershed Protection ordinance consistent with Georgia's Environmental Planning Criteria limiting imperviousness within the watershed to no less than 25 percent.

**5. Massive amount of unpaved roadways that lack adequate drainage to assist in eliminating erosion, sedimentation and storm water runoff.**

- We will make efforts to have set-asides for road paving and drainage project and seek funds through the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to assist with these efforts.

6. *Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson do not have an inventory of their cultural resources.*

- We will develop avenues through the RDC and others to develop an inventory of the cultural resources throughout Pierce county, which includes the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson.
- We will create and/or participate in formal programs to promote cultural resources and increase cultural tourism.
- We will promote the development of heritage education programs of the varied cultures which make up the county.

2. *A significant number of historic properties are not being improved and are unused and deteriorating.*

- We will make efforts to develop a management plans and feasibility studies for historic properties are needed to determine potential uses and rehabilitation costs.
- Promote the use of state, federal, and local financial incentives for rehabilitating historic properties by private owners.

## Appendix

### **PREPARATION OF COMMUNITY AGENDA**

Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson have been working on the Comprehensive Plan and Solid Waste Management Plan since March 2006.

Information was distributed via newspaper, mail, telephone, fax and email throughout the planning process and stakeholder meetings were held at all three (3) local governments to ensure that individuals from each community had the opportunity to attend the said meetings. Surveys were mailed to all identified stakeholders and were posted at all the local governments and the local library. A copy of the memorandums and survey that was mailed is included in this section.

When asked what their vision was for Pierce County in 2025, most folks stated that they still wanted a community that had that “Home Town” feel that is friendly and has a low crime rate. They also want more industry and jobs that have a decent pay scale and a benefit package where individuals can live and work in Pierce County.

Many tools were used in determining the “Vision Statement”, which include a list of character areas that the community needed to address. The character of developed areas was determined by looking at several typical characteristics. The following characteristics were used to identify areas within developed parts of the community:

- Site and configuration of lots;
- Site design features, such as degree and location of landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures, storm water facilities, and other features;
- Street design;
- Intensity of development;
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation;
- Types and quantities of natural features;
- Location, extent, and type of civic buildings and public spaces; and
- Interactions among uses within the area.

The community as a whole is familiar with defining areas based on character, even if the areas are not labeled as “character areas.” Downtowns and historic districts were identified because of the form, pattern, and character of the area, rather than the array of individual land uses.

In addition to examining existing characteristics, the community identified future development patterns based on current growth areas and data from the Community Assessment. Areas such as declining neighborhoods were also identified and the need for redevelopment within these areas was acknowledged.

Other character areas that were identified were based on environmental characteristics. The community identified significant natural features for protection, which form an important part of the overall character of the community and give shape to the community. Character areas that were reviewed and discussed are listed as follows:

- Greenways or green corridors;
- Bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers and streams;
- Wetlands;
- Floodplains and floodways;
- Habitats;
- Aquifer recharge areas.

Issues related to the above-mentioned character areas were discussed in much detail. Many individuals within the community are concerned about the future existence of the 16,934 acres in the Little Satilla Wildlife Management Area, which is located in portions of Brantley, Pierce, Wayne Counties. There is rumor that Rayonier may want to sell this land, which could possibly result in the loss of greenways and habitats within this area; however, there is no actual proof that this action will take place. The community discussed the possibility of maybe purchasing some of the land that would help in maintaining at least a portion of this pristine land for future generations to enjoy. All of this is sheer speculation but the community will be keeping a close eye on what transpires with this issue and will try to take steps to ensure that at least of portion of this land remains in its natural state.

Last but not least is the three (3) character areas listed below. These areas are significant when planning for a county. Sprawling development is beginning to take place in many areas of Pierce County that; if not controlled, could negatively effect the environment in that these developments are occurring in close proximity to the groundwater recharge area and the rivers located within the county. Existing agricultural land is being used for much of this development. If some type incentives such as impact fees are made available to developers for water and sewer service so that more homes can be constructed on smaller lots, there is a fear that a large portion of the agricultural land will be lost within the next 50 years. The community is going to have a cost feasibility study and legal analysis performed within the next five (5) years or less to see if an impact fee for new development is one (1) of the answers to the issue of sprawling development. **If the community decided to charge impact fees for new development, the existing Comprehensive Plan will be revised to include this provision. The community will use DCA's Development Impact Fees tool, which includes step-by-step guides for implementation, considerations about costs, administrative requirements, and example ordinances or similar materials for putting approaches into practice.**

- Agricultural production;
- Open space; and
- Future development areas.

Another tool that was used in the planning for the Community Agenda was a three (3) page flyer that is called "Issues Affecting Your Community". This is an excellent tool in getting individuals within the community to actually identify issues that affect "their" community. As we all know, none of us have exactly the same ideas about what positively or negatively affects the community as a whole but we sure have our individual opinions on this subject. The flyer is shown on the following pages.

## Issues Affecting Your Community

Check the box to the left of each issue that applies to your community.



### Development Patterns

- Development patterns that don't encourage interaction with neighbors
- No clear boundary, where town stops and countryside begins
- No mix of uses (like corner groceries or drugstores) within neighborhoods
- Too many manufactured homes or mobile home parks
- Too much land dedicated to parking or other paved areas
- Unattractive commercial or shopping areas
- Unattractive new subdivisions
- Unattractive sprawl development/visual clutter along roadways
- Undeveloped vacant sites close in to town

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### Mobility

- No alternatives to using a car to get places
- No public transit
- Not enough sidewalks and bike trails
- Not pedestrian or bike friendly
- Traffic problems





### Community/Sense of Place

- Development patterns that don't encourage interaction with neighbors
- No mix of housing sizes, types, and income levels within neighborhoods
- No mix of uses (like corner groceries or drugstores) within neighborhoods
- No pleasant community gathering spaces
- No sense of place - visitors do not know when they've arrived
- Not enough affordable housing
- Not enough greenspace or parkland
- Not enough neighborhood centers to serve adjacent neighborhoods
- Not enough on-street parking
- Not enough parking available in busy activity centers
- Not enough places for arts activities and performances
- Schools not located in neighborhoods, so children can't walk to school
- Some areas/neighborhoods in need of revitalization
- Unattractive commercial or shopping areas
- Unattractive or declining town center

### Preservation, Protection & Conservation

- Abandoned or Contaminated Properties
- Disappearing rural scenery
- Environmental pollution problems (water bodies, air, etc.)
- Inadequate protection of historic resources
- New development locating in areas that should not be developed - such as farmland or environmentally sensitive areas
- Not enough greenspace or parkland
- Too many trees lost to new development





### Economic Development

- Imbalance between location of available housing and major employment centers
- Not enough affordable housing
- Not enough innovative economic development taking place
- Not enough jobs or economic opportunities for local residents

### Finance

- Excessive cost of providing public services/facilities for new development
- Financial Institutions resistant to new development ideas
- Inadequate public facility capacity for attracting new development



### Zoning Process/Government Regulations

- Developers complaining about local development approval process, especially for innovative projects
- Local officials resistant to new development ideas
- Neighborhood opposition to higher density
- Neighborhood opposition to new/innovative developments
- Opposition to zoning
- Regional and Multi-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation

This instrument along with other documents, maps and surveys were used that provided information to the stakeholders and others that was needed in order to establish the community vision. This tool along with other documents, maps and surveys were necessary in order to obtain input from the community before the development of the “Vision Statement” could be accomplished.

The community also had the opportunity to review and make comment on the Quality Community Objectives. This allows individuals and the community to realize that there is much work to be done in Pierce County as a whole and understands that this work cannot all be completed in a day. It takes time and ongoing planning to ensure that this community meets the Quality Community Objectives.

Last but not least was the review and comment periods on the proposed implementation schedule that was ed, based on all the information that was collected and the vision statement that was established for the community.

### **Conclusion**

Vision without planning is just that, a “Vision”. Planning is nothing without implementation. You can plan all day or all year, but if you never implement any of the plans that were the foundation for the vision then the vision will be lost. The implementation schedule within this Plan is feasible and practical and will ensure that the future “Vision” of Pierce County has a whole will come to fruition; thus, providing a better quality of life for all who live and visit this great community.

July 1, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: All Interested Parties**

**FROM: Linda Carroll, Planning Advisor**

**Up Coming Planning for the Joint Pierce County/Blackshear/Patterson Comprehensive Plan**

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The Cities of Blackshear and Patterson and Pierce County have selected you to participate in planning sessions for the update of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. We are at the juncture of the Plan that is the most important, for it includes the community's vision for the future as well as its strategy for achieving this vision. Because the Community Agenda provides guidance for future decision-making about the community, it must be prepared with adequate input from stakeholders and the general public.

The questions that need to be addressed are: **(1) Where are we now? (2) Where are we going? and (3) How do we get there?** As a citizen of Pierce County these are the questions that need to be answered in order for the community to move forward in a productive, progressive manner. Growth in a community is great, if the community is ready. The population projections for Pierce County over the next 20 years show:

- (1) There are two (2) groups that will have decreases in population, with the most significant one being age group 14-17 at (-37.7%).
- (2) The other significant shifts will occur in age groups 35-54, when combined will be an increase of 41.2% over the next 20 years.
- (3) The elderly population, age 65 and over will continue to increase over the next 20 years at an expected rate of 29.9%.

Decreases in the school age group have some significance in that "Will be County have enough children to support the County's current school systems?" How will the decrease in this population impact on Pierce County?

Increase in work force age population. The most significant change will be in age groups 35 to 54. Will there be adequate jobs to accommodate the needs to these individuals? How should Pierce County address this issue? Ideas and suggestions are what the local governments need from you.

July 1, 2006  
Page 2

Public facilities such as water, sewer, drainage, paved roads, emergency services, etc. are also issues of concern to many residents of Pierce County. The County and both Cities have what is known as a Service Delivery Plan that identifies each service and what jurisdiction will be responsible for said service. This ensures that there are no over lapping services provided by two (2) governments. What are your thoughts and comments on water and sewer in cities but not in the county? What about fire protection services?

Next is the issue of land use. Land is beginning to become scarce in many rural areas of Georgia. What are your thoughts and ideas as to land conservation and greenspace? Should this issue be ignored or should initiatives and policies be set to preserve specific types of land, such as agricultural areas and development (housing or commercial) in areas in close proximity to some of the County's natural resources such as the Satilla River, Little Satilla and/or the Alabaha River? Should policies and codes be established for all development no matter the area?

What about cluster mobile homes? What are your thoughts and comments on this issue? It should be known that 33.6% of the housing stock in Pierce County are mobile homes, most of which are in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County. What policies and other actions should Pierce County take to address this issue?

I have enclosed a questionnaire for you to complete. This is a very important document that will assist both the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson and Pierce County in making some decision about the future of Pierce County as a whole for the next 20 years.

I have also enclosed a copy of the proposed scheduled meetings that will need to be held in order for all the local governments to receive additional input from you on the up coming plan. Time is of the essence in developing this final stage of the Comprehensive Plan, so please submit the questionnaire back to me as soon as possible and also let me know if you will be in attendance at any or all of the proposed meetings that have been tentatively set for the development of this very important document.

Thank you in advance for your assistance for this very important planning process. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at (912) 285-1976.

1. List 3 things that you like most about Blackshear, Patterson and/or Pierce County

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2. List 3 things that you dislike most about Blackshear, Patterson and/or Pierce County

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3. List 3 things that need to be done in the next 2 to 10 years

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4. List 3 things that could be our biggest stumbling blocks in the next 2 to 10 years

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5. What is your ideal vision for Pierce County as a whole?

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## 6. Comments and Ideas and Suggestions

Please rank from 1 – 10 (with 10 being the highest) the following, in importance to you and add your comments in the space below each item

- Economic Development
- Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources
- Water, Sewer and Solid Waste
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Schools
- Services for Elderly
- Housing
- Recreation
- Roads and Maintenance of Infrastructure
- Government – Accountability and Responsiveness to Citizens
- Health Care
- Public Safety
- Population

Additional Comments:

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Thank you for participating in our survey.

Mail or fax to: GCU, Inc. – 582 Smith Road – Waycross, GA 31503

Office # (912) 285-1976      Fax (912) 285-1913

## **Development of Community Agenda**

Stakeholders Meeting	July 12, 2006
Stakeholders Meeting	July 14, 2006
Stakeholders Meeting	July 17, 2006
Stakeholders Meeting	July 19, 2006
Stakeholders Meeting	August 14, 2006
Stakeholders Meeting	August 28, 2006

All above-mentioned meetings will be held at the Pierce County Board of Commissioners Meeting Room. Meetings will begin promptly at 6:30 pm.

In order to adequately prepare the Community Agenda, additional meetings may be required. This will be decided by the local elected officials and other stakeholders who have participated in this planning effort.

August 1, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: All Interested Parties and Stakeholders**

**FROM: Linda Carroll, Consultant**

**RE: Development of the Community Agenda Additional Planning Meetings**

As you know, the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson and Pierce County selected you to participate in planning sessions for the update of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. You were mailed a letter on dates and times of meetings that would be held for the planning and development of the Community Agenda. As stated in the last letter, we are at the juncture of the Plan that is the most important, for it includes the community's vision for the future as well as its strategy for achieving this vision.

Because the Community Agenda provides guidance for future decision-making about the community, it must be prepared with adequate input from stakeholders and the general public. To date there have been four (4) planning meetings that have been held in conjunction with the development of the Community Agenda; however, it has been determined that at least two (2) additional meetings, not including the public hearing should be held to ensure that the public has ample time to make comments and recommendations to the Community Agenda before the final public hearing is held.

In order for you to have a better understanding of what has transpired during and since the last four (4) meetings, I felt that it was important to give each of you a basic overview of this planning and development process so that you can be better prepared to make comments and have input at the next two (2) meetings. These meetings will be held at 6:00 pm on August 14, and 6:00 pm on August 28, 2006 at the Pierce County Board of Commissioners Office located at 312 Nicholls Street in Blackshear Georgia.

I will begin by providing you with the purpose of the Community Agenda, then the State's requirements for Pierce County and the three (3) components of the Community Agenda, which are the Community Vision, Community Issues and Opportunities and Implementation Program.

**(1) Purpose.** The purpose of the Community Agenda is to lay out a road map for the community's future, developed through a very public process involving community leaders and stakeholders who will make key decisions about the future of the community. The Community Agenda is the most important part of the plan, for it includes the community's vision for the future, key issues and opportunities it chooses to address during the planning period, and its implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities. The Community Agenda is intended to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community, thereby making citizens wish to ensure that the plan is implemented.

**(2) Requirements for Pierce County.** The Community Agenda requires a Basic planning level. It must include the three required components listed below, all prepared with adequate public and stakeholder involvement as laid out in the Community Participation Program. The result must be a concise, user-friendly document usable for day-to-day decision-making by community leaders as they work toward achieving the desired future of the community.

**(a) Community Vision.** The Community Vision is intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction. It includes the following components:

**(i) General Vision Statement (optional).** Include a general statement of the overall goals and desired future the community seeks to achieve.

**(ii) Future Development Map (required).** Prepare a Future Development Map for the community by delineating boundaries of major character areas covering the entire community. The planning of the update to the Joint Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson Comprehensive Plan began by stakeholders and others assessing the State's Recommended Character Areas and the Character Areas that were identified in the Community Assessment. Character areas were adjusted, modified, added or subtracted based on stakeholder perspectives about desired future development patterns.

**(iii) Defining Narrative (required).** While preparing the Future Development Map, specific visions were defined on each character area. The defining narrative is now being developed based on decisions that were made during portions of the planning process. A copy of future land use maps along with a narrative, proposed implementation measures that are being used to achieve the desired development patterns for the area can be reviewed at all three (3) local governments on or before August 7, 2006. These documents are based on the State's Planning Recommendations.

**(b) Community Issues and Opportunities.** This is the list of issues and opportunities the community intends to address, which started with the potential issues and opportunities identified in the Community Assessment. During the past four (4) meetings, there may have been modification, additions or subtractions made to the original list of issues and opportunities, which are based on stakeholder knowledge of the community and interpretation of the Community Assessment report. Each of these issues or opportunities must be followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Implementation Program.

**(c) Implementation Program.** The implementation program is the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision and for addressing each of the Community Issues and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures to be undertaken by the community to implement the plan. When planning for the development of this section of the Community Agenda, the State Planning Recommendations were used to assist in identifying implementation measures that may be suitable for the community. The Implementation Program includes the following components:

**(i) Short Term Work Program (required).** Specific implementation actions the local government, or other entities, intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period have been developed and are ready for review. This includes any ordinances, administrative systems (such as site plan review, design review, etc.), community improvements or investments, financing arrangements, or other programs or initiatives to be put in place to implement the plan. The Short Term Work Program includes:

1. Brief description of the activity;
2. Timeframe for undertaking the activity;
3. Responsible party for implementing the activity;
4. Estimated cost (if any) of implementing the activity; and
5. Funding source(s), if applicable.

A tool that was used in developing the Short Term Work Program was found on the Georgia Department of Community Affairs website.

**(ii) Long-Term and Ongoing Activities (optional).** Proposed specific long-term or ongoing implementation activities to be undertaken beyond the first five-year time frame of the planning period have been developed and are available for review and comments.

**(iii) Policies (required).** Proposed policies that the local governments will adopt in order to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Vision or addressing Community Issues and Opportunities that are also listed in the “” Community Agenda.

As you can see from the information above, there is a large amount of information that has already been discussed and collected to date, which is being used in the development of the three (3) components of the “” Community Agenda. There was not enough time to finalize even a rough of the components that need to be reviewed and comments made before the final is actually ready for full review; thus, the reason for the two (2) additional meetings that will be held this month before the final public hearing is held in early September 2006.

The meeting on August 14, 2006 will be to review, discuss and revise, if applicable the Community Vision Statement that will include an additional review of the future land use maps, identified character areas, narrative, proposed implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns for the area, which were based on the State’s Planning Recommendations and policy statements for each character area. Information and documents related to this component of the Community Agenda will also be available for review and comments on August 7, 2006 at all three (3) local governments.

The meeting on August 28, 2006 will be to review, discuss and revise, if applicable, the proposed Community Issues and Opportunities and Implementation Program, which are the second and third components of the Community Agenda. Information and documents on these issues will be available for review and comments at all three (3) local governments.

Again, your participation in the planning process for the development of the Community Agenda is very important to the community as a whole and I look forward to seeing each of you at the next two (2) meetings. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at (912) 285-1976.

# **Public Notice**

Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson will jointly hold a Public Hearing on September 19, 2006 at 6: 00 pm at the Pierce County Commissioners Office located at 312 Nicholls Street, Blackshear Georgia. The hearing is to discuss the transmittal of the draft Community Agenda to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review and approval. The public is invited to attend and make comment during this time.

This public hearing is also to discuss the draft joint Pierce County, Blackshear and Patterson Solid Waste Management Plan.

A copy of the draft Community Agenda and the Solid Waste Management Plan are available for public review at the Pierce County Commissioners Office and the City Halls of Blackshear and Patterson.

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language should contact Nichole Wood at (912) 449-2023 prior to August 19, 2006. Ms. Wood is located at the address listed above. Persons with hearing disabilities can contact the Georgia Relay Service at (TDD) 1-800-255-0056 or (Voice) 1-800-255-0135.

**Transmittal Resolution: Community Agenda**

**PIERCE COUNTY**

**RESOLUTION TO TRANSMIT**

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson have completed the Community Agenda Plan documents as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of commissioners along with the Cities of Blackshear and Patters have also completed the update to their Solid Waste Management Plan; and

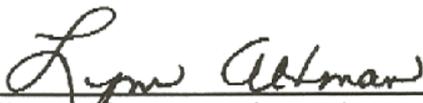
**WHEREAS**, these documents were prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners certifies that the no less than the minimum participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing Community Agenda and the Solid Waste Management Plan; and

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners does hereby transmit the Community Agenda portion of the joint Comprehensive Plan update and the Solid Waste Management Plan to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

Adopted this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of January 2007.

BY:   
Jim Dennison, Chairman Pierce County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:   
Lynn Altman, Assistant County Clerk

RESOLUTION 2007-01

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BLACKSHEAR CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLACKSHEAR, GEORGIA AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF THE COMMUNITY AGENDA FOR THE PIERCE COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; AND PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson have completed the Community Agenda Plan documents as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Blackshear and Patters have also completed the update to their Solid Waste Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, these documents were prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BLACKSHEAR CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLACKSHEAR, GEORGIA, THAT:

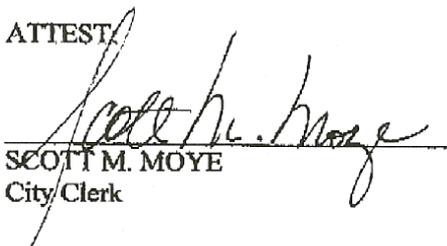
SECTION ONE. The City of Blackshear certifies that the no less than the minimum participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing Community Agenda and the Solid Waste Management Plan; and

SECTION TWO. The City of Blackshear does hereby transmit the Community Agenda portion of the joint Comprehensive Plan update and the Solid Waste management Plan to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

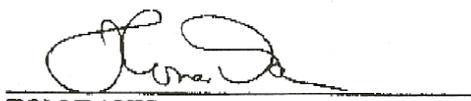
SECTION THREE. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.

ADOPTED this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 2007.

ATTEST:

  
SCOTT M. MOYE  
City Clerk

CITY OF BLACKSHEAR

  
TOM DAVIS  
Mayor

**Transmittal Resolution: Community Agenda**

**CITY OF PATTERSON**

**RESOLUTION TO TRANSMIT**

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson have completed the Community Agenda Plan documents as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Blackshear and Patters have also completed the update to their Solid Waste Management Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, these documents were prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Patterson certifies that the no less than the minimum participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing Community Agenda and the Solid Waste Management Plan; and

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the City of Patterson does hereby transmit the Community Agenda portion of the joint Comprehensive Plan update and the Solid Waste Management Plan to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

Adopted this 18 day of January, 2007.

BY: Sammie June Thomas  
Sammie June Thomas, Mayor

ATTEST: Wendy Kucklichter  
Wendy Kucklichter, City Clerk

This is the second public hearing that was held for the Community Agenda. Due to revisions that were made to the Community Agenda, an additional public hearing was required. The date the notice was published in the local newspaper was July 18, 2007.

## Public Hearing Notice

Pierce County and the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson will hold a joint Public Hearing on August 1, 2007 at 5:30 pm at the Pierce County Commission Office located at 312 Nichols Street in Blackshear, Georgia. The hearing is to discuss transmittal of the draft Community Agenda to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Department of Community Affairs for review and comments. The public is invited to attend and make comments during this time.

A copy of the draft Community Agenda is available for public review at the Pierce County Commission Office and the City Halls of Blackshear and Patterson.

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language should contact Mollie Howard at (912)449-2023 prior to August 1, 2007. Ms Howard is located at the address listed above. Persons with hearing disabilities can contact the Georgia Relay Service at (TDD) 1-800-255-0056 or (Voice) 1-800-255-0135.

**Transmittal Resolution: Agenda**

**PIERCE COUNTY**

**RESOLUTION TO TRANSMIT**

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Blackshear and Patterson have completed the Community Agenda documents as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update; and

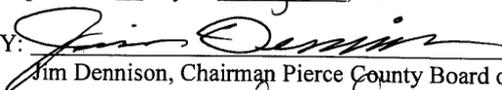
**WHEREAS**, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

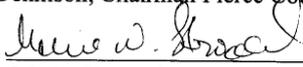
**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners does hereby transmit the Community Agenda portion of the joint Comprehensive Plan update to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners certifies that the no less than the minimum participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing this draft document of the Joint Comprehensive Plan update; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners hereby authorize this draft document of the Comprehensive Plan Update to be submitted to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community affairs for official review.

Adopted this 7 day of August, 2007

BY:   
Jim Dennison, Chairman Pierce County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:   
Mollie Howard, County Clerk

**Transmittal Resolution: Agenda**

**THE CITY OF PATTERSON**

**RESOLUTION TO TRANSMIT**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Patterson along with the City of Blackshear and Pierce County have completed the Community Agenda documents as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update; and

**WHEREAS**, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and Council of the City of Patterson do hereby transmit the Community Agenda portion of the joint Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and Council of the City of Patterson certifies that the no less than the minimum participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing this draft document of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Update; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and Council of the City of Patterson hereby authorize this draft document of the Comprehensive Plan Update to be submitted to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community affairs for official review.

Adopted this 7 day of August, 2007

BY: Sammie June Thomas  
Sammie June Thomas, Mayor

ATTEST: Wendy Wicklighter  
Wendy Wicklighter, City Clerk

**RESOLUTION NO. 2007-26**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BLACKSHEAR CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLACKSHEAR, GEORGIA AUTHORIZING THE DRAFT DOCUMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE SOUTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS FOR OFFICAL REVIEW, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the City of Blackshear, along with the City of Patterson and Pierce County, have completed the Community Agenda documents as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BLACKSHEAR CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLACKSHEAR, GEORGIA, THAT:

SECTION 1. The Mayor and the Blackshear City Council hereby transmit the Community Agenda portion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

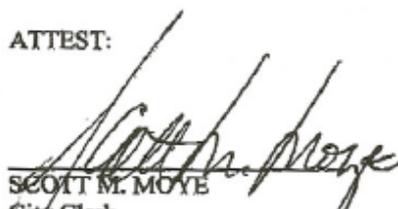
SECTION 2. The Mayor and The Blackshear City Council certify that the no less than minimum participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing this draft document of the Joint Comprehensive Plan update.

SECTION 3. The Mayor and City Council of Blackshear hereby authorizes this draft document of the Comprehensive Plan Update to be submitted to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

SECTION 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.

ADOPTED this 14<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2007 with a quorum present and voting.

ATTEST:

  
SCOTT M. MOYE  
City Clerk

  
TOM DAVIS  
Mayor