



Decatur County

Joint Comprehensive Plan
2007-2027

Attapulgus • Brinson • Climax

Community Assessment

*I love living in Decatur County because my son is
free to explore all that it has to offer - Erika Pemberton, Bainbridge*
Art Contest Winner

Prepared with assistance from the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center

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Introduction

In May 2005, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) established the “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.” Within these Standards and Procedures is the need for a local government to create a Comprehensive Plan. Drafting a Comprehensive Plan is necessary for a government to maintain the status of a “Qualified Local Government”, which allows the community eligibility and access to various types of state and federal funding sources. This plan will include the County and the incorporated areas of Attapulcus, Brinson and Climax.

The Comprehensive Plan is a fundamental tool that aids government officials and citizens in planning for the future of their communities both physically and financially. The plan should serve as the local governments’ guide for assessing development proposals, including rezoning applications and redevelopment plans. The plan provides insight into what types of land uses and development are appropriate at various locations throughout the city and county. The plan can also prove to be valuable in ensuring the financial ability of the community to translate their desires for the future into on the ground realities.

The first of three components that make up the Comprehensive Plan is the Community Assessment. The nature of this assessment is to be objective; therefore it is composed exclusively in a professional manner without exhaustive public input. The Assessment is a broad review of what development is currently taking place on the ground. More specifically, the assessment will include:

1. A list of potential issues and opportunities the community may wish to take action to address;
2. Evaluation of community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with the Quality Community Objectives;
3. Analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development of the community; and
4. Data and information to substantiate these evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities.

Once the assessment is complete, it will be reviewed by the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) and submitted to the DCA for approval along with the second component of the plan, the Community Participation Program. Upon approval of both documents, work on the third component, the Community Agenda, will commence. The Community Agenda 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.

Decatur County’s previous Comprehensive Plan was composed by the RDC and adopted in 1992. The complete Comprehensive Plan Update will be adopted in August 2007 ahead of the final deadline of October 2007.

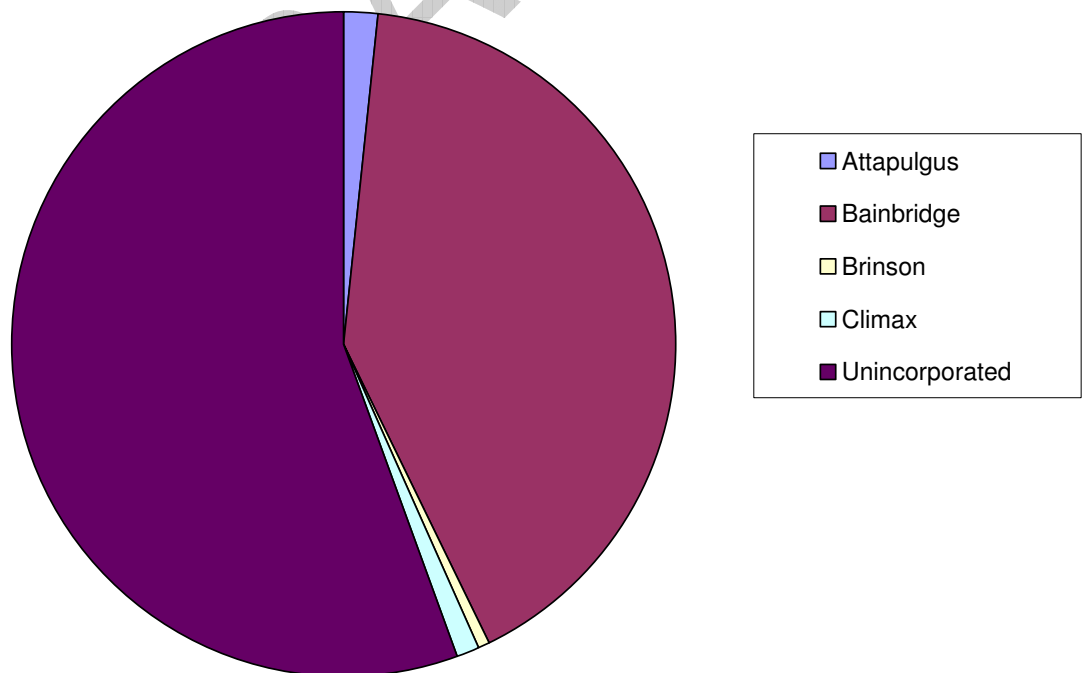
Community Profile

Decatur County is located in Southwest Georgia and is a member of the 14-county Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center (SWGRDC) region. Decatur County borders Gadsden County in Florida to the south, Grady County to the east, Mitchell, Miller and Baker Counties to the north, and Seminole County to the west. The largest neighboring city is Tallahassee, Florida (population 153,000), located about forty miles southeast.

Decatur County has a total of four municipalities within its borders, including Attapulgus, Climax, Bainbridge, and Brinson. Decatur County encompasses approximately 623 square miles; 13th largest county in the state of Georgia and the largest county by area in the Southwest Georgia Region. Bainbridge, the county seat, is the economic center for the area.

The population for Decatur County in the year 2000 was 28,240 according to the U.S. Census, the fifth largest by population among the SWGRDC member counties behind Dougherty County (95,681), Thomas County (44,692), Colquitt County (43,765) and Lee County (29,913). Statewide, Decatur County is the 55th most populous county.

Decatur County Population



Potential Issues and Opportunities

As mentioned earlier, the Comprehensive Plan is a tool to be used in planning and meeting the future goals of a community. Recognizing the potential issues and opportunities facing the communities of Decatur County is of the utmost importance in the planning process. We cannot decide where we want to go, if we don't first assess where we've been and where we are and what successes and failures we've encountered along the road. Once these issues and opportunities are identified, strategies can be created to address them. This Community Assessment aids in finding the potential issues and opportunities. They are categorized by population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, land use, community facilities, intergovernmental coordination, and transportation.

This list is not absolute and will be explored by government officials and the public during the public participation phase. The issues and opportunities identified under the "Decatur County" heading include issues and opportunities for the smaller municipalities of Attapulgus, Brinson and Climax along with those belonging to the unincorporated County. Once a final catalog of the issues and opportunities is made, a course of action will be composed in the Community Agenda, which is the final component of the plan.

DRAFT

When I think of Decatur County I think of an emerging area in the midst of a growth spurt; recognizing the challenges associated and fostering the will to respond. – Joyce Barr, Bainbridge

POPULATION



Joint

Issues

- The State of Florida is projected to increase to 20,710,000 residents by 2025 – an increase of 27% from 2005 (16,279,000). This will likely have an influence on Decatur County’s population and economy. Metropolitan Tallahassee (Leon County) has experienced more than 21% growth since 1990 putting pressure on the bordering Georgia counties including Decatur.
- The trend nationally is a shift to an older population, which will require specialized services and more specialized housing options.
- Because population growth is expected to occur during the next 20 years, cities and county must plan for additional staff and services to support all residents.

Opportunities

- Steady growth at a moderate rate is predicted in Decatur County for the next 20 years.
- Due to increasing numbers of Latinos migrating to the area, there is an opportunity to offer services that help them adjust to their new homes.
- The community’s proximity to Florida could allow it to be marketed to the elderly population migrating away from Florida and into the upper southern states.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Decatur County</u></p> <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to coordinate utility and infrastructure expansion plans, especially water and sewer with economic initiatives, to better support and direct development. • Opportunities for industrial development in appropriate areas throughout the county should be increased. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote outdoor activities, especially hunting and fishing. • Workforce training programs could be implemented in order to ensure that residents have the skills to match future growth industries and the needs of existing businesses. • There are a number of large land holdings around Bainbridge suitable for the development of an additional industrial park. • The region has Georgia's only inland port, creating potential for economic development in commercial waterfront industries. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Attapulqus</u></p> <p>Issues & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to attract additional small businesses such as a grocery store and a diner. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Joint</u></p> <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to allow for continued economic growth, ensure that sufficient capacity of public facilities is in place to meet future demand. • Increase communication and support between government agencies and private sector entities involved in economic development. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support continued business recruitment and retention efforts of the Chamber of Commerce. • Expand on Chamber of Commerce's tracking of existing business activity and business needs. • In order to capitalize on the area's unique identity, create a coordinated economic development and marketing campaign to focus on promoting the historical, cultural and other resources of the area that have been identified as having the potential to increase the tourist trade within Decatur County. • Utilize innovative economic development tools such as business incubators and tax abatements in order to foster growth. • Create a database of vacant properties in order to market them for redevelopment purposes.
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Brinson</u></p> <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and expand access to services such as cable TV and DSL. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract new commercial and residential development. 	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Climax</u></p> <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no financial institutions that service the immediate area. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant stores downtown could be used to attract small business to the area. 	

HOUSING

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Decatur County</u></p> <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New housing developments in Decatur County have tended to be wholly suburban detached single family residential or manufactured housing. • Maintain and expand code enforcement efforts to ensure the county housing stock does not deteriorate and that the residential areas are well maintained. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional regulation of manufactured housing could help maintain stable residential areas and encourage high quality housing. • Strengthened code enforcement could encourage maintenance of homes and preserve the vitality of older neighborhoods. • Some existing housing stock could be rehabilitated rather than demolished. • Create incentive programs such as tax credits and density bonuses to encourage the development of innovative and varied affordable housing types. • Create and maintain a database of tax delinquent and dilapidated properties for the purpose of identifying redevelopment opportunities. • Regulate the quality, type, and style of new residential construction in the county. • Incorporate greenspace requirements into new subdivisions to preserve the natural beauty of the county. • Maintain and expand code enforcement efforts to ensure the county housing stock does not deteriorate and that the residential areas are well maintained. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Attapulqus</u></p> <p>Issues & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of housing options in the city which has contributed to a loss of population over the years. • Old and vacant houses need to be rehabilitated or removed. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Joint</u></p> <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the provision of housing for special needs populations such as the elderly and disabled. • Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing in order to allow residents to live near their place of employment. • Encourage new developments to reserve a portion of new units for affordable housing. • There is a lack of quality affordable housing. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage innovative housing developments such as neighborhood development, conservation subdivisions, and mixed use buildings. • Create programs to promote maintenance, rehabilitation, and enhancement of existing housing.
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Brinson</u></p> <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The older housing stock is dilapidated and in need of repair. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase quantity and quality of housing, especially through private investment in the older housing stock. 	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Climax</u></p> <p>Issues & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to improve the housing conditions in certain areas of the city. 	

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Decatur County

Issues

- Additional recreational land including parks, trails, and other greenspace is needed.
- There is no comprehensive land use regulation to help protect the natural environment.
- Implement a conservation easement program.

Opportunities

- Natural resources and water quality along the Flint River should be considered when establishing appropriate areas for future development and when making development related decisions.
- There is no endorsed public education program about resource conservation and protection for the public, elected officials or developers.
- Preservation of open space through conservation subdivision design.

Joint

Issues

- It would be beneficial for the cities and county to adopt the appropriate Part V environmental ordinances.

Opportunities

- There are opportunities for the cities and county to work toward creating a combined parks network with a trail system that extends into the unincorporated county.

Attapulqus

Issues

- The city needs an ongoing community clean-up initiative.

Opportunities

- The city could develop a community beautification program in order to improve declining areas of town and maintain stables ones.

Brinson

Issues

- Increased recreational opportunities along the river are needed.
- The city needs an ongoing community clean-up initiative.

Opportunities

- The city could develop a community beautification program in order to improve declining areas of town and maintain stables ones.

Climax

Issues

- The city needs an ongoing community clean-up initiative.

Opportunities

- The city could develop a community beautification program in order to improve declining areas. of town and maintain stables

LAND USE

Decatur County

Issues

- The current leapfrog development pattern is resulting in scattered, difficult to sustain development patterns.
- The county does not require new development to have more than one entry/exit nor does it require sidewalks.
- Agricultural and forestry industries are not protected from scattered housing development.

Opportunities

- Land use regulations such as zoning could be considered to protect property owners' investments and preserve the rural character of Decatur County.
- Higher density development could be focused into nodes to preserve rural areas and lower the costs associated with infrastructure expansion and the provision of utilities.

Attapulqus

Issues & Opportunities

- Development has been inhibited in some parts of the city due to large land holdings.

Brinson

Issues & Opportunities

- Existing farmland should be protected .

Climax

Issues & Opportunities

- Land use regulations are needed.

Joint

Issues

- Maintaining aesthetics along commercial corridors (cities and county) is a growing concern as development expands and existing development ages.
- Commercial/activity nodes do not connect to residential areas and are not pedestrian friendly.

Opportunities

- Maintain sign ordinances that regulate and standardize the desired aesthetics of new signage.
- Vacant commercial buildings could be prioritized for reuse.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Decatur County

Issues

- There will be a need for Decatur County to plan for expansion of sheriff and jail facilities within the next five years.
- Consider the development of a sewer master plan to accommodate future growth.
- Quality healthcare facilities are not conveniently located for county residents.
- There are few recreational opportunities for county residents.

Opportunities

- Better promote (especially to minorities) the Decatur County Gilbert H. Gragg Library Services.
- Expand the library's children's area.
- The construction of youth centers could provide various mentoring programs to positively impact high school dropout and graduation rates in the County.
- With the potential for an influx of elderly persons migrating from Florida, Decatur County should look at the services currently offered to seniors and how they could be improved or expanded upon.
- Address growing drug use through drug awareness programs tailored to the specific drugs becoming increasingly popular in the area (i.e. methamphetamine and crack cocaine use).

Attapulqus

Issues & Opportunities

- Investment in city infrastructure is needed to improve sidewalks, streets, drainage and water supply issues throughout the community.
- There is a need for additional recreational facilities.
- There are portions of the city and surrounding county that are severely underserved by EMS and fire protection.

Brinson

Issues & Opportunities

- There is a need for additional recreational facilities.

Climax

Issues & Opportunities

- The water system needs improvements.
- Sidewalks and additional street lighting are needed in some parts of the city.
- The community is inadequately serviced by EMS and fire protection services.
- There is a need for additional recreational facilities, especially for seniors.

Joint

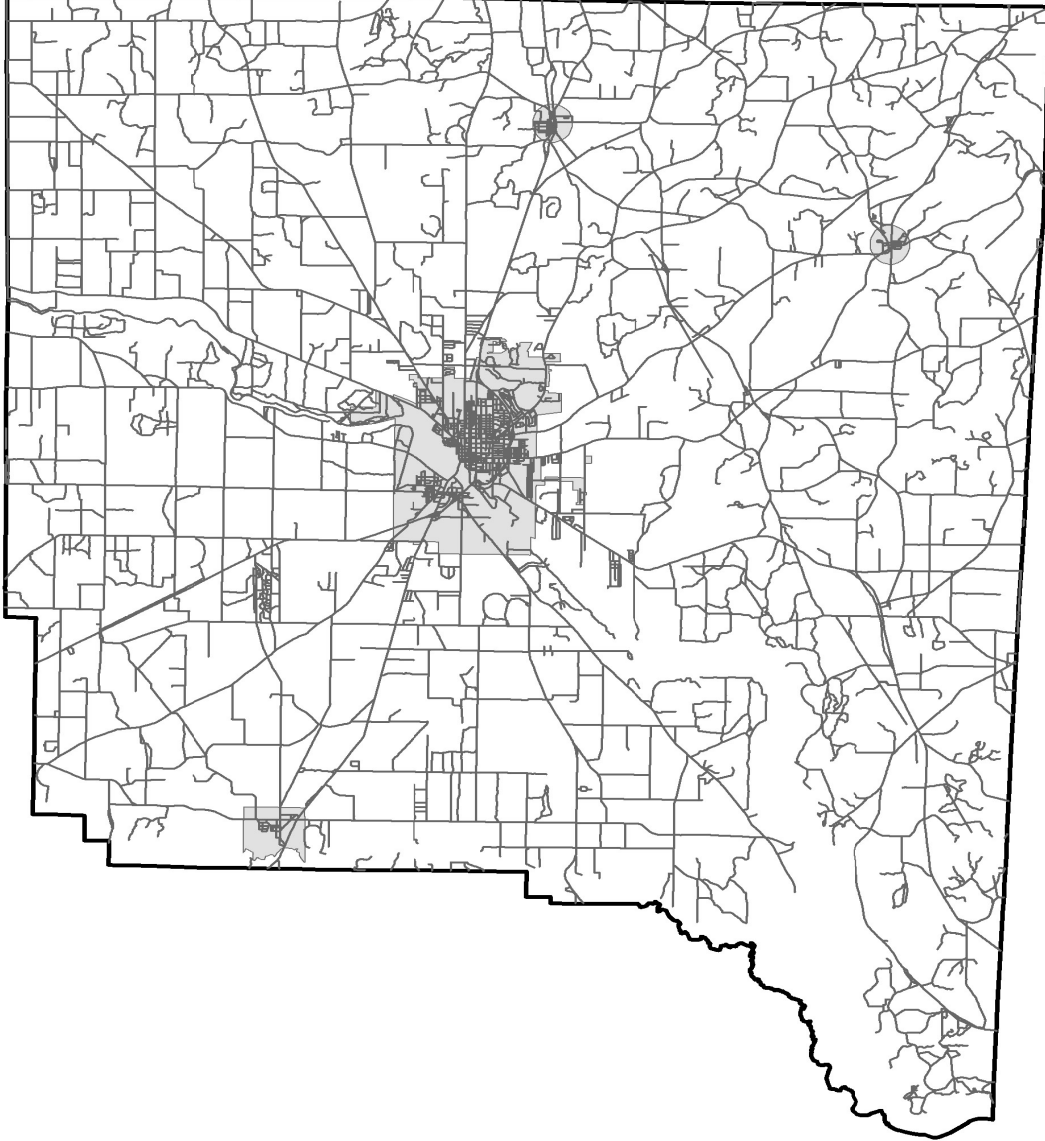
Issues

- There is a need for improved EMS services in outlying areas of the county.
- It is extremely important that sanitary sewer extension be carefully considered in conjunction with an overall growth management strategy for the urban service area around Bainbridge; priority areas for extension of sanitary sewer service should be designated and planned carefully in order to prevent conflicts and inefficiencies.

Opportunities

- Leaders should consider whether greater marketing or expansion of existing adult literacy programs is warranted.
- The cities and county should evaluate and determine whether existing victim programs (child abuse, battered women, etc.) are adequately serving the community and plan for modifications or additional services as needed.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CO-ORDINATION



Joint

Issues

- There is a need for improved EMS services in outlying areas of the county.
- It would be beneficial for the cities and county to adopt the appropriate Part V environmental ordinances.
- Develop an equitable intergovernmental funding mechanism to finance road projects.

Opportunities

- There is no comprehensive land use regulation to help protect the natural environment.
- It would be beneficial if all of the incorporated communities and county would adopt the appropriate Part V environmental ordinances.
- Work with the counties that border Lake Seminole to create a development plan.
- Consider the development of a board to discuss the increasing costs of providing services in the smaller municipalities.
- Consider holding quarterly meetings to discuss issues.

TRANSPORTATION



Decatur County

Issues

- Roadway and bridge conditions need improvement across much of the county.
- There is a need to identify roadway safety hotspots.
- The county has a very limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Although there are some walkable areas, pedestrian facilities are not provided to link the residential areas to the activity areas within the cities.
- Many rural roads have narrow or no shoulders making bicycling hazardous.
- There are over 500 miles of roads in the county that are not paved.

Opportunities

- Decatur County could benefit from the “Paving the Way Home” initiative, which will offer \$234 million in state motor fuel tax funds to local governments for paving roadways across the state.
- Designate and preserve scenic dirt roads.
- Install bike and pedestrian facilities in new developments and road projects.

Brinson

Issues & Opportunities

- Some of the city’s intersections are unsafe and in need of improvement.

Joint

Issues

- Adopt an access management plan for roadways serving commercial/business areas to maintain vehicular movement, by controlling design and frequency of access locations.

Opportunities

- County and cities should take action to identify innovative funding mechanisms to support infrastructure development.
- Consider requiring sidewalks in all new subdivisions.

Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

Future development for a community is sensitive to its historical development. This section provides a brief synopsis of the historic development of Decatur County , Attapuligus, Brinson, Climax and the existing development found within them. Also referenced in this analysis are areas that require special attention and recommended character areas. These are areas that have development, economic, or preservation potential or are of concern for reasons such as vacancies, blight, or environmental issues.

Historic Development Factors

Decatur County

Decatur County was created in 1823 from portions of Early County, and named in honor of Commodore Stephen Decatur who defeated the Barbary Coast pirates at Tripoli in 1815. The area was the site of several battles between Indians and early settlers. In the early 1700s, both the Spanish and English fought with Creek Indians. In 1818, General Andrew Jackson led troops from Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia to victory over the Seminole Indians.

Attapuligus

Attapuligus was first known as the borough of Pleasant Grove, named after the Pleasant Grove Academy which was established in 1836. In 1839 the name of Pleasant Grove Academy was changed to Attapuligus Academy based on the Native American name for the area, "Attapulgas" which means "Dogwood," because of the many dogwood trees that grow in the area. The town also appeared on some maps as "Hack." The town of Attapuligus was officially incorporated in 1866.

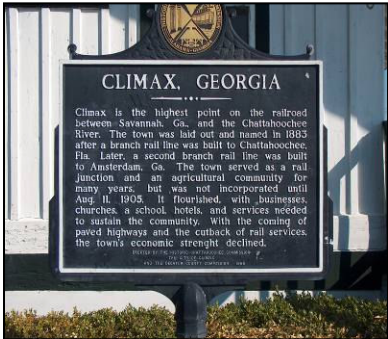


Brinson

Brinson, 12 miles west of Bainbridge, has existed since 1889 and was first known as the Mount Zion community. For many years Brinson prospered because of several large saw mills, but now the primary industry in the area is agricultural.

Climax

Climax is eight miles east of Bainbridge, and is so named because it is the highest point (283 feet above sea level) on the railroad line that passes through the area between the Chattahoochee River and Savannah. The city was originally called Bainbridge Junction but in 1883 the name was changed. The city was officially incorporated in 1905.



When I think of Decatur County I think of a friendly low stress place to live. – Ben Fuller, Bainbridge

Existing Land Use

Agriculture/Forestry

Definition: Agricultural land is used for farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.) or other similar rural uses. Forestry land includes land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting and woodlands not in commercial use.

Decatur County is predominantly wooded and agricultural. The principal row crops grown in the county, in order of their value are: peanuts, cotton, corn and hay. The Agriculture/Forestry land use is the largest land use, and accounts for most of the county's total land area. The large land holdings (plantations) in the county are included in the Agriculture/Forestry land use area as are tree farms and undeveloped wooded areas.

Residential

Definition: The existing residential land use category has been subcategorized according to the following classifications:

- *Single-Family Residential - typically includes single family detached homes developed at a low density.*
- *Multi-family Residential - includes apartments, condominiums, and town houses.*
- *Manufactured Homes - includes areas that have been developed for single-family manufactured homes. Trailers or mobile homes generally refer to units constructed prior to 1976; however, all references to manufactured housing herein will encompass all factory-built or modular housing units constructed to federal standards after 1976. When widely dispersed, manufactured homes may be mapped within other residential classifications.*

Single-family Residential

A large portion of housing in Decatur County consists of a variety of styles of detached single-family dwellings. In suburban areas, especially in southeast and southwest Bainbridge, the single-family homes include higher-priced "estate residences." Housing conditions vary throughout the county. The newer housing construction appears to be well built and well maintained; however, large portions of the county are dominated by isolated homes or small clusters of homes built in the 1970s or earlier. Manufactured homes, or mobile homes built prior to 1976, are often found in various states of disrepair.

Manufactured and Modular Housing

There is a proliferation of manufactured housing in unincorporated Decatur County. These homes are found in subdivisions, in mobile home parks, and mixed in with site-built homes throughout the county.

Apartment Complexes

There are few, if any, apartment complexes in the unincorporated areas of Decatur County and smaller cities.

Public/Institutional

Definition: This category includes community facilities, certain state, federal, or local government uses and institutional land uses. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, schools, churches, cemeteries, and hospitals. Government uses in this category include city halls or government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, and military installations.

Public/Institutional

Public-Institutional land use in Decatur County is concentrated within the Bainbridge city limits and includes Memorial Hospital, Bainbridge College, and administrative offices.

Schools

The Decatur County School system has a total of ten schools: six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. There is also a private school called the Grace Christian academy that teaches kindergarten through 12th grade. The schools are located in Bainbridge, with the exception of an elementary school in Attapulcus.

Government Uses

Government land uses are found mainly within the city limits of Bainbridge and include both Decatur County and city of Bainbridge municipal buildings and offices. There are also two jails in the county that house 350 prisoners, a new landfill located near Attapulcus, the old county landfill, and an industrial air park located northwest of Bainbridge.

Churches and Religious Institutions

There are numerous churches located throughout rural Decatur County, often at crossroads or near clusters of rural homes.

Commercial

Definition: Retail and entertainment oriented uses which may be grouped into a shopping center or stand-alone outlets. For land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, this category includes retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

U.S. Highways 84 and 27 are major highway corridors lined with commercial uses. While portions of these commercial areas are located within city limits, the businesses also serve portions of the regional community. There are scattered commercial uses along U.S. Highway 27 south of Bainbridge. Outside of commercial corridors, commercial businesses are typically found in small nodes within residential areas or at rural crossroads.

Industrial

Definition: This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction facilities or other similar uses.

Industry is located in several concentrations in Decatur County. Much of the industry is located in the Decatur County Industrial Park and in the Commodore Decatur Industrial Park in western Bainbridge where there is access to the railroad. There is an active mining area in the southern portion of Decatur County where Attapulgitite or Fuller's Earth, a claylike material, is extracted from open pits and processed. Georgia is a leading producer of Attapulgitite within the United States.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities (TCU)

Definition: This category encompasses various land use types associated with transportation, communication, and utilities. It includes major transportation routes, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, airports, water authority facilities and similar uses.

Roads, railroads and utility lines are located throughout the county and collectively make up the greater part of land used in the TCU category. These uses and many additional small TCU parcels are found in various locations throughout Decatur County. These include electrical substations, water utilities, and other utilities within this category. The Decatur County Industrial Air Park services transient private and corporate aircraft, is home to an agricultural flight school, houses private planes and has a recently constructed modern terminal.

Decatur County is well served by a variety of transportation modes: Brinson, Bainbridge and Climax are all situated on a major rail corridor. There is also a rail line that runs through Bainbridge from north to south, and passes just to the west of Attapulgitus. Highways 27 and 84 are both modern four-laned routes that allow for the efficient movement of vehicular traffic. The city of Bainbridge can also accommodate barge freight from the Flint River. The Industrial Air Park, the airfield northwest of Bainbridge, and the Corps of Engineers Airport in the extreme southwest of the county round out the transportation options.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation

Definition: This category is 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, and similar uses.



Many of the parks and recreational resources available to county residents are found within the city of Bainbridge. The highlights include the Bainbridge-Decatur County YMCA, two golf courses, the Earle May Boat Basin Park, the Cheney Griffin Park, the Bainbridge Aquatic Center, Centennial Field and the Bill Reynolds Sports Park Tennis Complex, and a county golf course near the county industrial park. A marina is currently under construction in Bainbridge. Some residential communities in the county may have small-scale, private

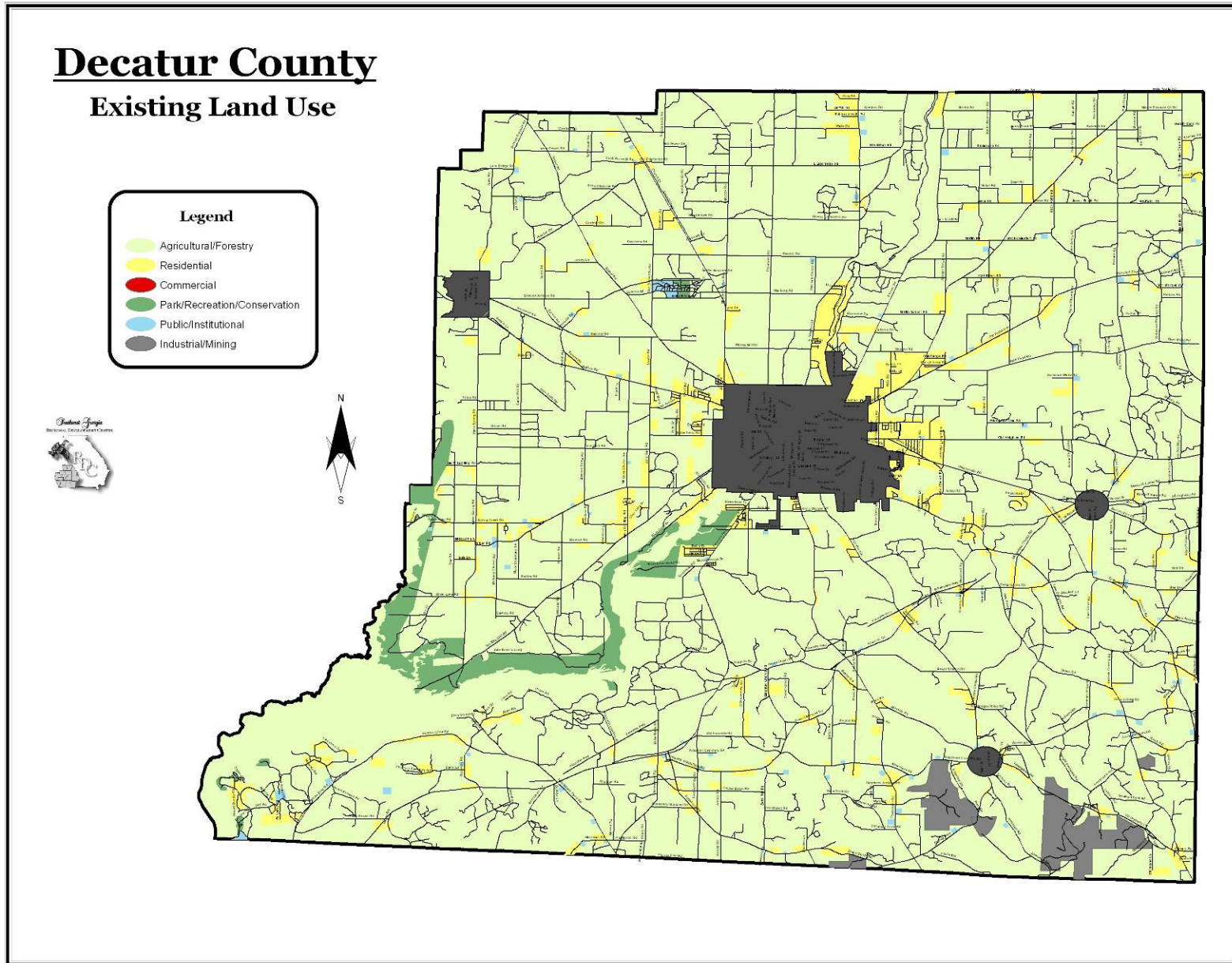
recreational and open spaces.

Outside Bainbridge many of the area's recreational opportunities are provided by Lake Seminole, a 37,500 acre man-made lake that is said to be the fifth best bass fishing lake in the nation, and attracts more than one million visitors per year. The surrounding land includes 24,000 acres of wildlife management area.

Vacant/Undeveloped

Definition: Land in this category currently does not have any development occurring on it, nor is development expected to take place in the near future.

There are a number of large tracts of vacant or undeveloped land in Decatur County. Since the year 2000, numerous sites adjacent to the Bainbridge city limits have been developed, often for residential uses.



Areas Requiring Special Attention

These particular areas are defined as being areas that in the future may enhance or inhibit new development and re-development, may address environmental benefits or hazards, and/or may promote positive or negative impact. Addressing the areas in this section will help to develop Future Development Maps included in the Community Agenda.

Areas of Significant Natural and Cultural Resources

The Flint River is a source of natural and scenic beauty within Decatur County. It winds through the County from roughly the middle of its northern border to the southwestern corner of the county where it flows into Lake Seminole. Its natural and aesthetic qualities have allowed this area to become a prime location for recreation and tourist attractions, and hosts bass fishing tournaments and other water recreational sports throughout the year. The major threats facing the Flint River include point source and non-point source pollution, riparian destruction, and stream flow alteration. There are large floodplains and significant undeveloped lands around it that should remain protected or significantly buffered from development. Such wetlands provide natural habitats for a wealth of species, including bald eagles and wood storks.



Areas Where Rapid Development or Change of Use is Likely to Occur

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of homes along the Flint River southwest of the city of Bainbridge, especially in the River Oaks Drive area. The county needs to carefully monitor this growth to minimize potential environmental impacts along the Flint River corridor, and the possible damage to the views along the Flint River. Some of the soils in this area are not particularly well-suited for septic tanks.

Areas Outpacing Availability of Facilities and Services

Water and sewer are the primary variables controlling where development will occur, but roads and other community services must also be taken into consideration. There are many unpaved roads within unincorporated areas that pose potential difficulty in the provision of services, especially those related to public safety. The location and supply of infrastructure and county services must be addressed and carefully planned in order to ensure that demand created by new development does not outpace availability. Good planning is also necessary to minimize the fiscal impacts of sprawling development patterns.

Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Aesthetic Improvement

Redevelopment or aesthetic improvement within the county should be largely focused on housing and commercial areas. The appearance of highway commercial corridors could be greatly improved with the introduction of regulations that establish uniform building setbacks, limit points of access from the highway, and recommend standard signage controls.

Abandoned Structures or Sites

Throughout the county in rural agricultural areas there are dilapidated structures such as barns or old homes that are not considered a major issue at this time.



Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities

There is potential for infill development within the urban areas. Developers often seek the most readily available land, which is often farther out in the county, in many cases ignoring underutilized properties within the city. Many of these properties should be considered prime locations for a variety of infill development projects.

Recommended Character Areas

As stated in the DCA Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning-Local Planning Requirements, the definition of a character area is a specific geographic area within the community that: a) has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced; b) has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation; and c) requires special attention due to unique development issues.

The following section will explore the Character Areas within Decatur County and its communities. They are broken down by geographic regions and planning interests. Through the community participation process the boundaries of these areas will be modified and fine-tuned for inclusion in the Community Agenda. The Agenda will contain Future Land Use maps delineated from these areas.

Decatur County Character Areas

Flint River, Spring Creek, Lake Seminole Conservation Area and Greenspace
 Industrial Air Park Area
 Rural Highway Commercial Corridor
 Crossroad Communities
 Faceville, Fowlstown, Recovery, Vada, McRaeville
 Agricultural/Forested
 Jinks Hills

Attapulqus Character Areas

Stable Traditional Neighborhood
 Declining Traditional Neighborhood
 Wooded Residential Area
 Wooded Mixed Use Area
 Undeveloped Agricultural Area
 Town Center

Brinson Character Areas

Stable Traditional Neighborhood
 Declining Traditional Neighborhood
 Wetland
 Forested/Agricultural Area
 U.S. 84 Major Highway Corridor

Climax Character Areas

Rural Residential Area
 Rural Village
 U.S. 84 Major Highway Corridor
 Undeveloped

When I think of Decatur County I think of the beautiful springtime flowers and dogwoods that are such an asset to this area. – Doris Gay, Attapulqus

Decatur County Character Areas

Flint River /Lake Seminole/Spring Creek Conservation Area and Greenspace

The Flint River Basin Character Area consists of a narrow strip of land generally at least 150 feet, along both sides of the Flint River and extends down into Lake Seminole. The lush brush and forest growth found here characterizes this area. This area also serves as a recreational hub for fishing and other water sports within the County. In order to emphasize the importance of protecting the river as a natural and recreational resource, the Flint River Corridor is identified as a unique character area.



Industrial Air Park Area

The Industrial Air Park Area is located five miles northwest of the Bainbridge city limits on U.S. Highway 27, and includes about 2,000 acres with 700 acres available for development. It is owned by Decatur County and provides ample electrical, water sewer

and natural gas. There is also rail service, corporate air transportation, and access to highway transportation: I-10 (within 40 minutes), U.S. 84 (within 4 miles), and U.S. 27 (immediately accessible from the industrial park).



Rural Highway Commercial Corridor

The Rural Highway Commercial Corridor is limited to the strips facing Highways 84 and 27 outside the city limits of Bainbridge. The businesses within it cater to automobile and truck traffic both in the services offered and the design of the lots. Between the large tracts of undeveloped land the businesses that characterize this corridor include small local gas stations and convenience stores, with large parking lots adjacent to the road and significant building setbacks.

Crossroad Communities

Typically centered on the intersection of two roads or highways, this character area corresponds to small commercial nodes and/or clusters of homes within the county's rural areas. These communities are characterized by services that are locally owned and operated and unique to their area. While the focus of these communities is heavily centered around automotive or agricultural services, other small businesses in these

When I think of Decatur County I think of safe small communities with friendly people. – Marjorie Jones, Climax

rural communities serve highway travelers and its surrounding local population with gas stations and repair shops, offices, restaurants and other services. The crossroad communities in Decatur County are: Faceville, Fowlstown, Recovery, Vada and McRaeville.



Fowlstown



Faceville



McRaeville



Recovery



Vada

Agricultural/Forested Area

Almost half of all land in Decatur County is used for agriculture. Current ownership patterns favor large landholdings that are used for growing a variety of agricultural products or trees. Row crops including cotton, peanuts and corn are grown throughout the county. Farmland and related structures such as storage barns, farm homes, silage structures, and center pivot irrigation sprinklers are conspicuous features on the landscape, and serve as identification makers for this area.



Forested land along with agricultural land comprises roughly 90 percent of the land use in Decatur County. Much of the area is covered in planted pines, but significant stands of native longleaf pines remain in the southern part of the county. This area also includes a significant amount of wetland areas with stands of species such as cypress and tupelo.

Rural Residential Area

The Rural Residential Character areas are predominantly in the incorporated areas within the county. Outside of the crossroads communities, residential development in the county is scattered and largely confined to individual lots bordering county roads. There are an increasing number of subdivisions in the unincorporated areas; however, these are distinguished from the urban residential character areas by their larger lot sizes and scattered locations.

Jinks Hills

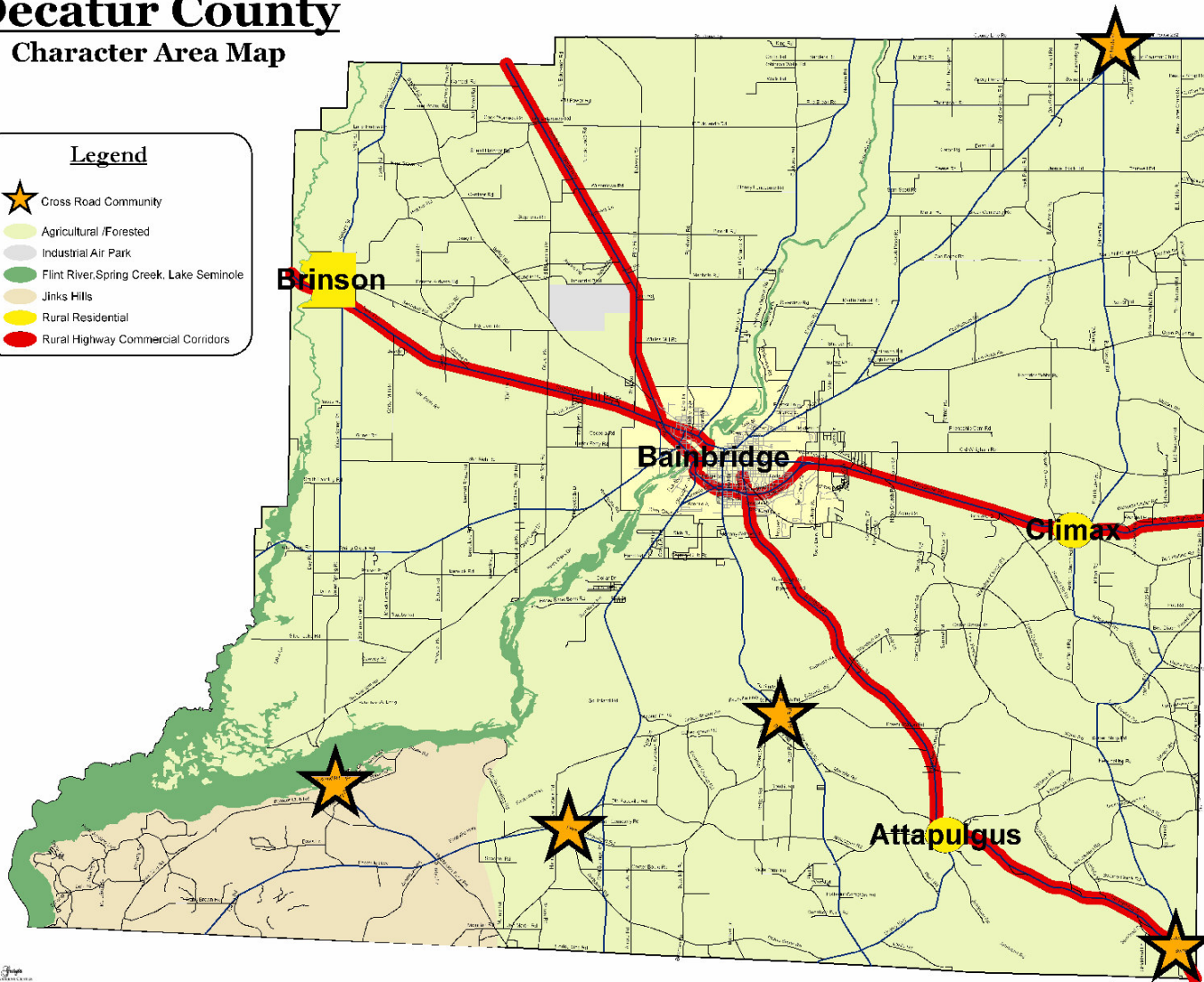
The Jinks Hills character area is the scenic region just south of Lake Seminole. Slopes of up to 25% make the area less suitable for agriculture. Accordingly, a variety of wildlife and significant stands of Longleaf Pine and Wiregrass habitat still exist. The native vegetation, scenic vistas overlooking Lake Seminole, environmental sensitivity and the increased development pressure this area will face through the planning period, demand that protective measures are put in place to preserve this area.



Decatur County Character Area Map

Legend

- ★ Cross Road Community
- Light Green Agricultural /Forested
- Light Blue Industrial Air Park
- Dark Green Flint River, Spring Creek, Lake Seminole
- Light Orange Jinks Hills
- Yellow Rural Residential
- Red Rural Highway Commercial Corridors

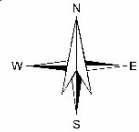


Brinson

Bainbridge

Climax

Attapulugus



Attapulqus Character Areas

Stable Traditional Neighborhood

Home to most of Attapulqus' original housing stock, this area is characterized by relatively well maintained stick-built homes. Lot sizes are larger, as is common in smaller communities, and the homes are typically set back from the road. There are no sidewalk provisions in these areas as they are distributed mostly along roads with faster moving traffic.



Declining Traditional Neighborhood

This area includes some of the community's original housing stock, as well as the more recent residential development. The homes include both stick built and manufactured construction and are in fair condition, with some bordering on the line of dilapidated. The lot sizes vary, with some resembling those common to older grid pattern development and others typical of newer curvi-linear design. The homes in this area are becoming increasingly popular among migrant workers, as the floor plans for these



homes are often conducive to housing many people if necessary. This area would benefit immensely from regulations regarding yard maintenance and clutter.

Wooded Residential Area

Comprised mostly of wooded undeveloped land, this is a prime area for future housing development activities. While residential uses can be found in this area, they are scattered throughout the community. The density of these homes is very low and typically abuts the nearest road.

Wooded Mixed Use Area

While predominantly wooded, this area has agricultural, industrial and institutional uses including local churches and cemeteries. There is little pressure for development of any nature on this area.

**Undeveloped Agricultural Area**

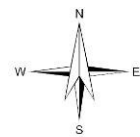
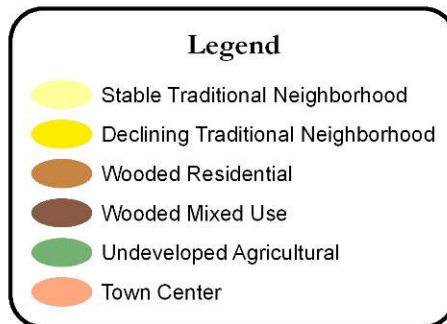
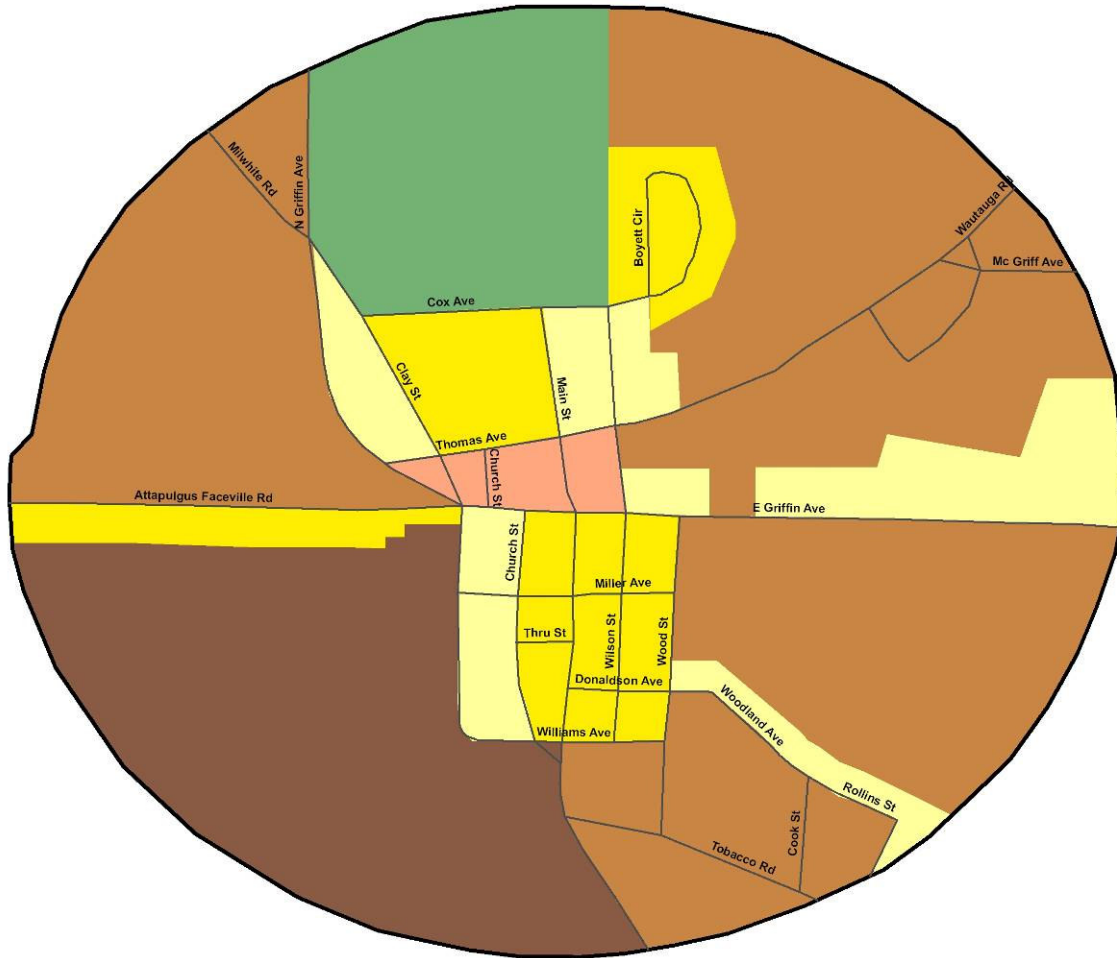
This area consists mainly of two large land holdings that were at one time used for agricultural purposes, but have been uncultivated for many years and now lie vacant. There are a few old barn structures and homes that border the edge of this area.

Town Center

Located in the heart of Attapulgus, the town center is the focal point for institutional, retail and other services. While there are still some businesses operating downtown, the town center has seen significant disinvestment within the last 20 years, with commercial interests relocating to Bainbridge or other areas. Accordingly, some buildings have been taken over by city services while others are gradually falling into disrepair.



Attapulgus



Brinson Character Areas

Stable Traditional Neighborhood

The characteristics found within these neighborhoods vary from older historical homes with large porches and gardens to architectural styles and design seen in 60's era housing. The homes sit on large lots with a great degree of spatial separation between them. The exterior of these homes appears to be in good condition, and the yards are well maintained. While the area is likely to continue in its current state over the course of this plan, its aesthetic could be threatened by out-of-town home owners who are failing to maintain their property and refuse to sell it or have it maintained by the city or any other person or entity.



Declining Traditional Neighborhood

This area includes an older housing stock that is beginning to show signs of exterior deterioration. The homes vary in size and include stick built as well as manufactured construction. The homes have large backyards, but were built more closely together than the Stable Neighborhood. While there are families that currently call these houses home, the living conditions of these houses may become questionable in the near future if not addressed now.





Wetland

On the western border of Brinson, you can find the southern flowing Spring Creek. While much of the land in Brinson that borders this tributary is being used for agricultural purposes, this character area covers the only remaining section of undeveloped land. Consisting of native pine trees and other vegetation typical to a wetland area, this area is likely to remain untouched as there are limited development pressures in this area and current development is taking place elsewhere in the City. This area however, may be susceptible to contamination from the chemicals used in the adjacent agricultural

areas.

Forested/Agricultural Area

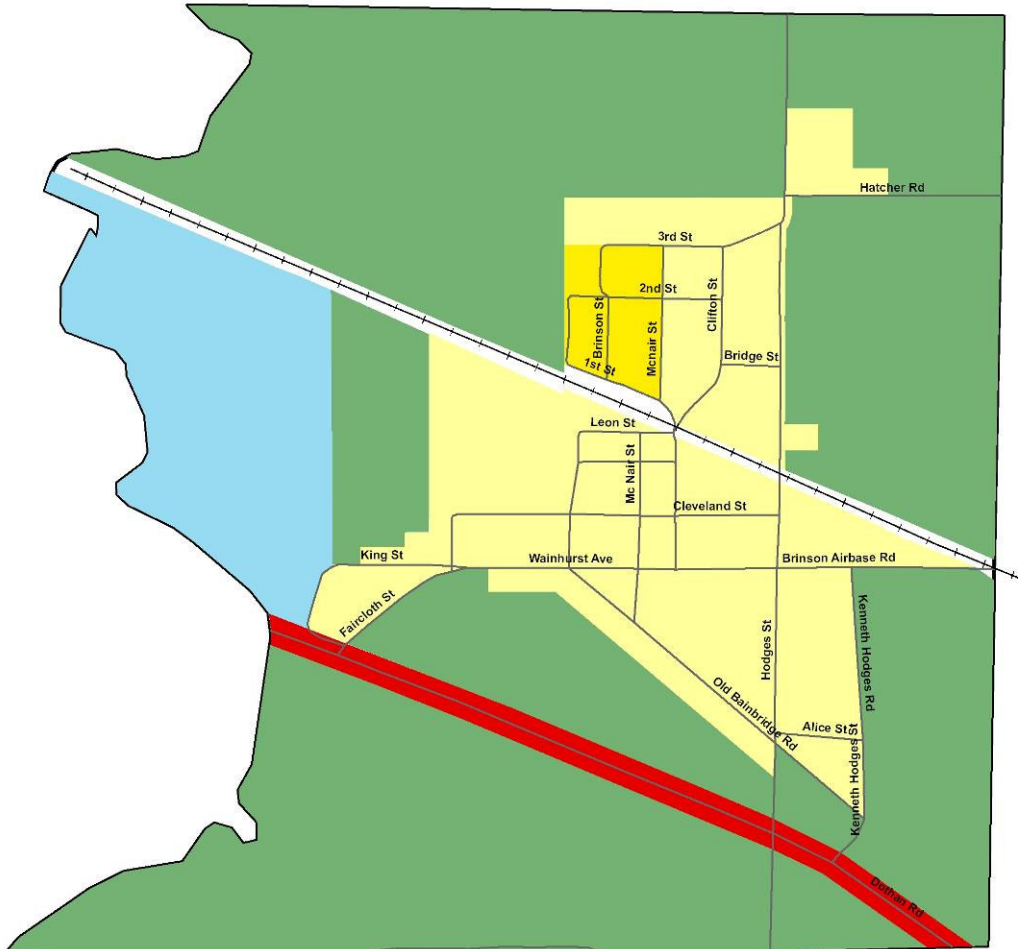
This area is used for the cultivating of pecans, cotton, and pine trees. This area accounts for most of the community and speaks to its agricultural heritage.



U.S. 84 Major Highway Corridor

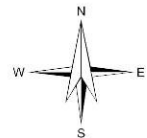
This corridor is the northwestern portion of U.S. highway 84, which bisects the County from east to west. It serves as the artery that provides access to the adjacent county (Seminole) to the west. The land on both sides of this corridor is currently undeveloped and remains heavily wooded or cleared for agricultural purposes.

Brinson



Legend

- Stable Traditional Neighborhood
- Declining Traditional Neighborhood
- Wetland
- Agricultural/Forested
- U.S. 84 Major Hwy Corridor



Climax Character Areas



Rural Residential Area

The housing in this area includes all of the residential settlements within this community. The homes vary; with larger historical and medium sized stick built homes dominating the northern portion of the city, and manufactured housing dominating the southern portion.

Regardless of construction type, the exterior of the majority of the homes and there



yards are well maintained. While there are homes that are either dilapidated and/or abandoned or have yards with extensive clutter, they are few in number and their locations are scattered and do not represent the state of housing in the community as a whole. Even though these homes represent a minute portion of the housing stock in Climax, these homes are going to need further attention in the very near future as some homes have become eyesores and could potentially affect adjacent land values.



Rural Village

Bordering U.S. Highway 84, this area is the remains of what was once the community and commercial hub of Climax and includes a small variety of commercial, institutional and civic uses. Consisting of a few local commercial endeavors including a gas station and hardware store; this area also includes the post office and "The Depot", which is a community park used for a variety of community and civic events. This area does contain some abandoned homes and commercial buildings that serviced the railway that was once a major contributor to the local

economy. However, while some of these buildings are being used to house city services, many still lie vacant. The vacant buildings that face Highway 84 could be used in the future for small roadside commercial development.



Undeveloped Land

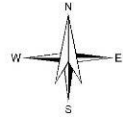
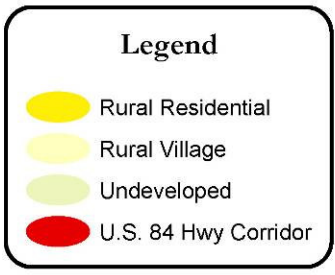
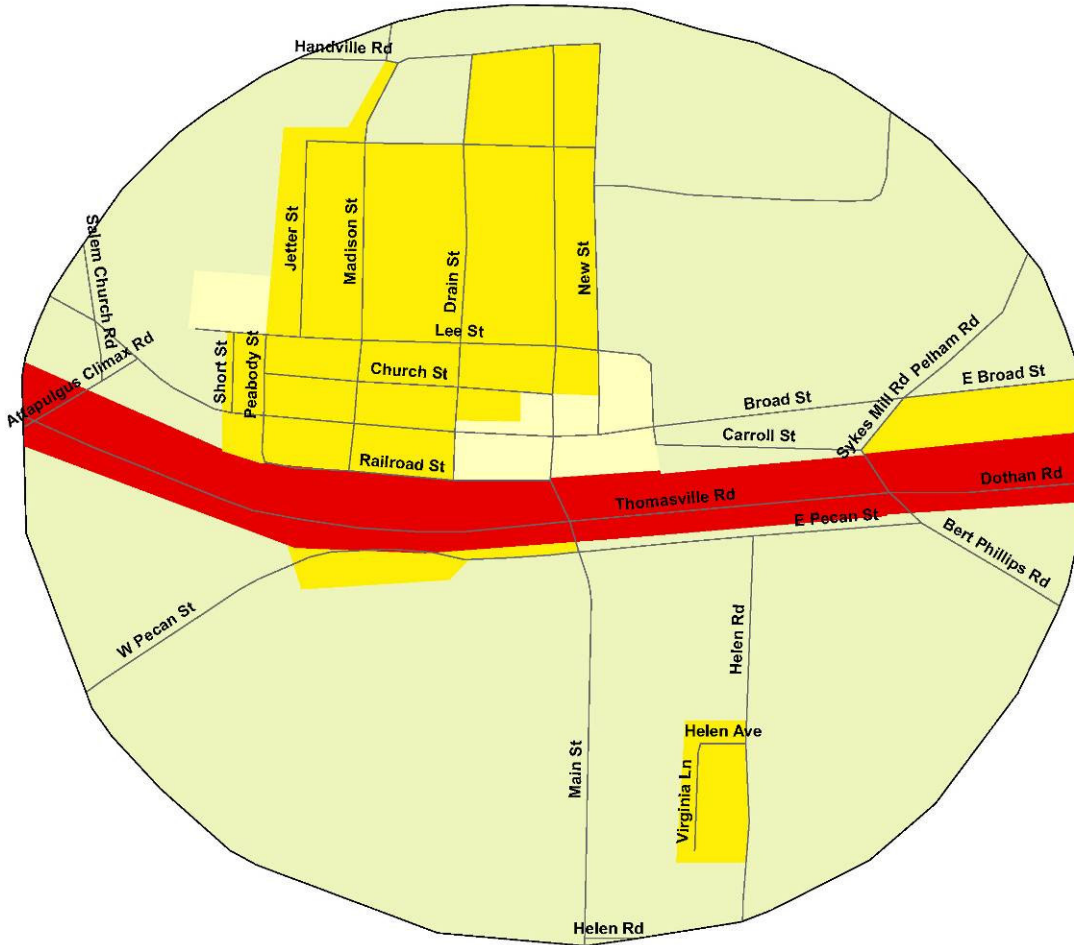
As the name of this area indicates, this area represents the portion of the community that still remains untouched by development. The area is predominantly open field with a few pockets of pine trees scattered within it. It may experience increased development pressure in the near future from migrating Floridians.

U.S. 84 Major Highway Corridor

This corridor is the Southeastern portion of U.S. highway 84 and provides access to the adjacent County (Grady) to the east. Similar to the section of this highway that is found in Brinson, the land on both sides of this corridor is currently undeveloped and remains heavily wooded. It is highly susceptible to roadside strip development as more Floridians move into the southern portions of the county surrounding Climax; increasing the traffic on this road and the services needed for those travelers.



Climax



Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

In 1999 the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to its fullest potential.

The Quality Community Objectives are broken into four areas of community development:

- 1) Development Patterns
- 2) Resource Conservation
- 3) Social and Economic Development
- 4) Governmental Relations

Staff has evaluated the community's current policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with these objectives. This analysis was used to identify additional issues and opportunities for adapting local activities, development patterns and implementation practices to the Quality Community Objectives. These issues and opportunities were added to the above list of potential issues and opportunities.

Development Patterns

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

Assessment:

- The Brinson zoning ordinance separates commercial and residential uses in every district.
- Decatur County and the cities of Attapulgus and Climax do not have zoning ordinances, although Decatur County has adopted Subdivision Regulations.

Recommendations:

- Consider amending all existing zoning and land-use ordinances to allow for mixed-use developments and planned developments as a matter of right. This amendment would increase options for new development while also encouraging in-fill development. For those communities that do not have land use regulation, they should consider alternatives to zoning such as land development codes or subdivision regulations.
- The communities of Decatur County, who have not already done so, should consider adopting a tree ordinance that discourages tree-cutting and encourages shade tree planting in new and existing developments. A tree planting program helps beautify the community.

When I think of Decatur County I think of a County that strives to do whatever it can to meet the needs of every citizen, no matter what color or national origin they belong to. – Kelvin Bouie, Attapulgus

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

Assessment:

- No community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment or infill development.
- No community is working toward nodal development, brownfield or greyfield areas.

Recommendations:

- Communities should encourage redevelopment of brownfield and greyfield areas.
- An inventory of vacant sites and buildings and a housing assessment of the current housing stock would assist in any redevelopment or infill development.
- Zoning ordinances should be reviewed to consider smaller lot development in appropriate areas.

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

Assessment:

- There are a number of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The properties include: the Bainbridge Commercial Historic District, the Bainbridge Residential Historic District, the Callahan, J. W., House, the Curry Hill Plantation, the Decatur County Courthouse, the First African Missionary Baptist Church, the Brinson Family Historic District, and the Allen Mercantile Company.

Recommendations:

- Additional sites could be considered for placement in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Local governments without historic preservation ordinances should consider adopting one.
- Review the history of enforcement of ordinances and make changes if enforcement has been inconsistent or nonexistent.

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

Assessment:

- Many places within Decatur County towns are traveled to by foot, although most places do not encourage walking or are unsafe for pedestrians. Many areas lack sidewalks, crosswalks and traffic-calming measures.
- Where there are sidewalks, they are often inadequate in many areas. There is no requirement for sidewalk construction in new developments.
- Some schools are not close to the person they serve, which discourages walking and biking to school.

Recommendations:

- Efforts should be made to ensure or enhance the walkability of sidewalks in each community and place sidewalks where needed. Emphasis should be placed on making walking and biking to school a common and safe option.
- A Safe Routes to School program could be implemented within the Decatur County School System.

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

Assessment:

- Decatur County boasts some of the most distinctive and attractive scenery in Southwest Georgia. From the southern region with its red clay hills, Spanish moss covered Live Oaks and canopy roads, Lake Seminole, Bainbridge’s Willis Park and restored homes, the character of Decatur County is unmatched by other counties in the region.
- Promotion of tourism based on the unique characteristics of the region is limited.

Recommendations:

- Plans for gateways into each community could be developed.
- Local governments and the Decatur County Chamber of Commerce should support businesses that create products that draw on regional heritage.
- Decatur County should participate in the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s regional tourism partnership.

Resource Conservation

A. 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.*

Assessment:

- There is no active historic preservation commission in the county or in the smaller cities.
- Ordinances to ensure new development complements historic development is either limited, nonexistent, or not enforced well enough outside of Bainbridge.
- None of the communities in Decatur County participate in the Main Street Cities program under the Better Hometown Cities program.

Recommendations:

- A Countywide Historic preservation commission should be established.
- Ordinances should be adopted or better enforced.

B. 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 other forms of conservation.*

Assessment:

- Decatur County, Attapulgus, and Climax lack zoning regulations or land use ordinances to protect natural resources.

Recommendations:

- Communities should take an inventory of their natural resources and take steps to ensure that those resources are protected.
- The Decatur County Subdivision Regulations should be revised to include open space requirements for new developments.
- Decatur County, Attapulgus, and Climax should consider adopting zoning regulations.

C. Environmental Protection: *Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, especially 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 the area should be preserved.*

Assessment:

- Communities lack tree-replanting ordinances for new developments.
- Neither the County nor any communities have requirements for tree protection during new construction.
- Decatur County has some protections for water resources included in their subdivision regulations.

Recommendations:

- Stormwater best management practices should be used in new developments.
- Tree-replanting ordinances and preservation ordinances should be considered.
- Decatur County, Attapulgus, and Climax should consider adopting zoning regulations.
- Communities should review their ordinances to ensure that they have passed all the “Part V” environmental ordinances.

Social and Economic Development

A. 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 and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.*

Assessment:

- Local media keep the public informed of land use issues, zoning decisions and proposed new developments.
- County communities do not use population projections when making decisions on infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- Communities with land use regulations should periodically review them to see if the regulations continue to meet their needs.
- Staff and elected officials should consider attending continuing education courses offered by the Georgia Municipal Association, the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) and other organizations to stay abreast of current economic development issues.
- Communities should develop capital improvement programs and consider population changes when developing those programs.
- Decatur County, Attapulgus, and Climax should consider adopting zoning regulations.

B. Appropriate Businesses: *The businesses and industries that are 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.*

Assessment:

- The Development Authority has considered the community's strengths and weaknesses, and attempts to recruit compatible businesses or industries.
- Compared to other counties in the region, Decatur County has a diverse jobs base.
- The Chamber of Commerce actively promotes the county and the many benefits of doing business in Decatur County.

Recommendations:

- Decatur County should continue to support the efforts of the Development Authority.
- Decatur County should continue to support the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce.

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

Assessment:

- The county has an entrepreneur support program through the Chamber of Commerce.
- The community would benefit from having a greater number of skilled, managerial and professional jobs.

Recommendations:

- Continue support of the Chamber of Commerce.

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

Assessment:

- Zoning ordinances do not generally encourage neo-traditional development. Where lofts are allowed they are not common.
- Decatur County has not been able to stimulate development of homes for low and moderate income families.
- Generally, there is a lack of housing for low to moderate income families.
- There are areas that allow houses on very small lots.
- There are few housing programs in the county.

Recommendations:

- For communities with zoning, the zoning ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that neo-traditional development is allowed and encouraged.
- An overall housing strategy with an emphasis on low to moderate income housing should be pursued by local governments.
- Consideration should be given to inclusionary housing strategies including requirements in development regulations.

E. 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.*

Assessment:

- Bainbridge College provides opportunities for higher education locally.
- There is a relative lack of professional jobs for recent college graduates.
- The Georgia Department of Labor Bainbridge Career Center offers a wide range of services to both job seekers and employers, including training and education information and referral.

Recommendations:

- Recruitment of businesses that could hire local graduates should be expanded.

Governmental Relations

A. Regional Solutions and Cooperation: *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. 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 or development of a transportation network.*

Assessment:

- All communities are currently satisfied with the service delivery strategy.
- There is some interaction among jurisdictions.
- The Decatur County Library System is part of the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System and is a member of PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services).
- There is a regionally administered program to provide rides for residents of Decatur County.

Recommendations:

- All governments should regularly review the Service Delivery Strategy.
- Decatur County should strive to include Attapulgus, Climax and Brinson in their interactions.

DRAFT



**DECATUR COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
ATTAPULGUS BRINSON CLIMAX
2007-2027
SUPPORTING DATA AND INFORMATION**

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1. INTRODUCTION

SUPPORTING DATA AND INFORMATION

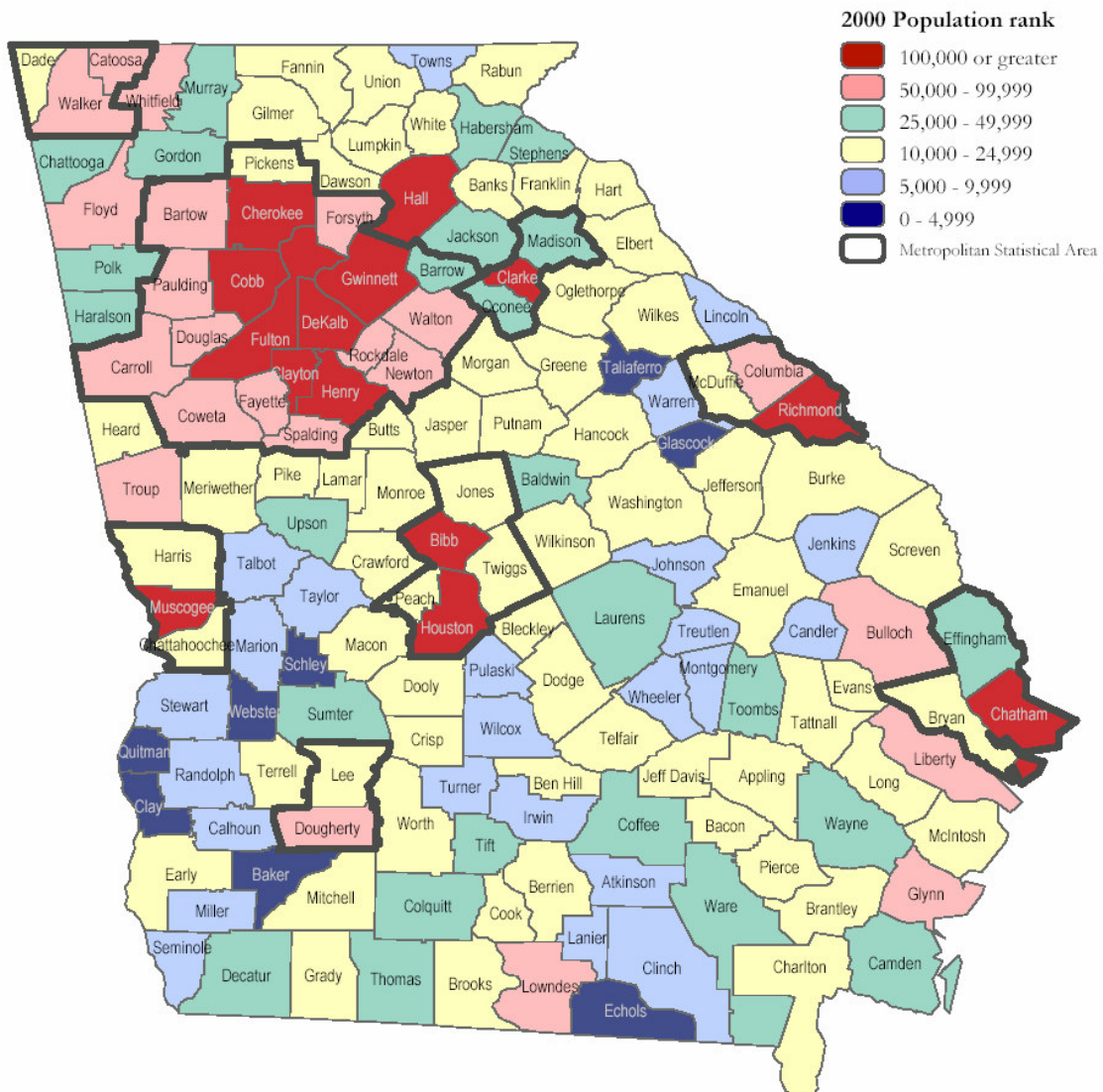
This document contains information used to determine whether:

- The information verified potential issues or opportunities identified in the assessment,
- The information uncovered new issues or opportunities not previously identified,
- The information indicated significant local trends that need to be brought to the attention of decision-makers, and
- The information suggested adjustment of recommended character areas (e.g., to avoid intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas, etc.).

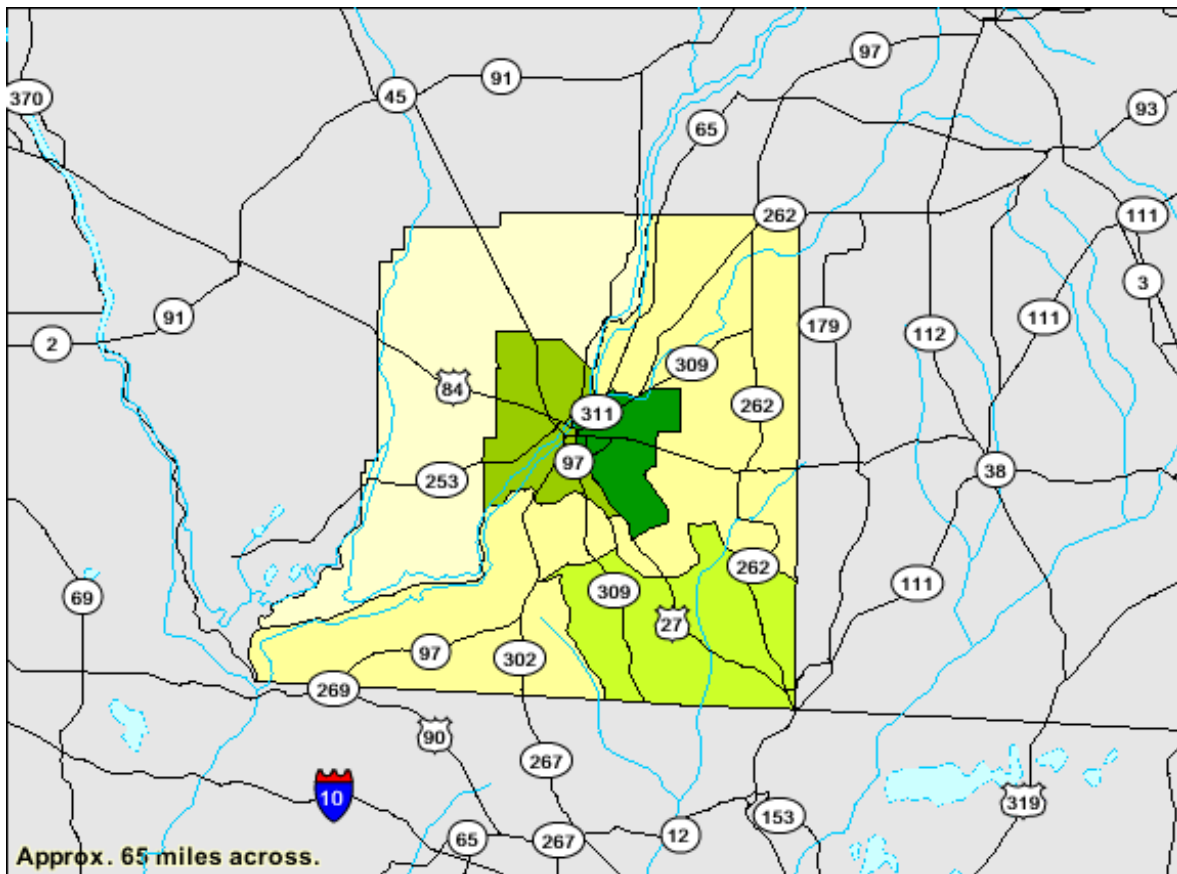
1. Population
2. Economic Development
3. Housing
4. Natural and Cultural Resources
5. Community Facilities and Services
6. Intergovernmental Coordination
7. Transportation Systems

2. Population

County Population in Georgia



The map above shows that in 2000 Decatur County was one of the most populated counties in the Southwest Georgia Region.



Population Distribution, 2000 Census

The above map shows the population of Decatur County by census tract. The county's population is concentrated in and around the city of Bainbridge as shown by the dark green on the map above. The older portion of Bainbridge on the east side of the Flint River is the most densely settled.

Outside of Bainbridge and its environs, the southeast portion of the county around the city of Attapulgus is the next most densely settled portion of Decatur County.

The western portion of the county west of the Flint River which is mostly agricultural, is the least most populated.

Data Classes

Persons/Sq Mile	
17 - 17	(Lightest yellow)
20 - 23	(Light yellow)
34 - 34	(Yellow-green)
155 - 155	(Light green)
341 - 390	(Darkest green)

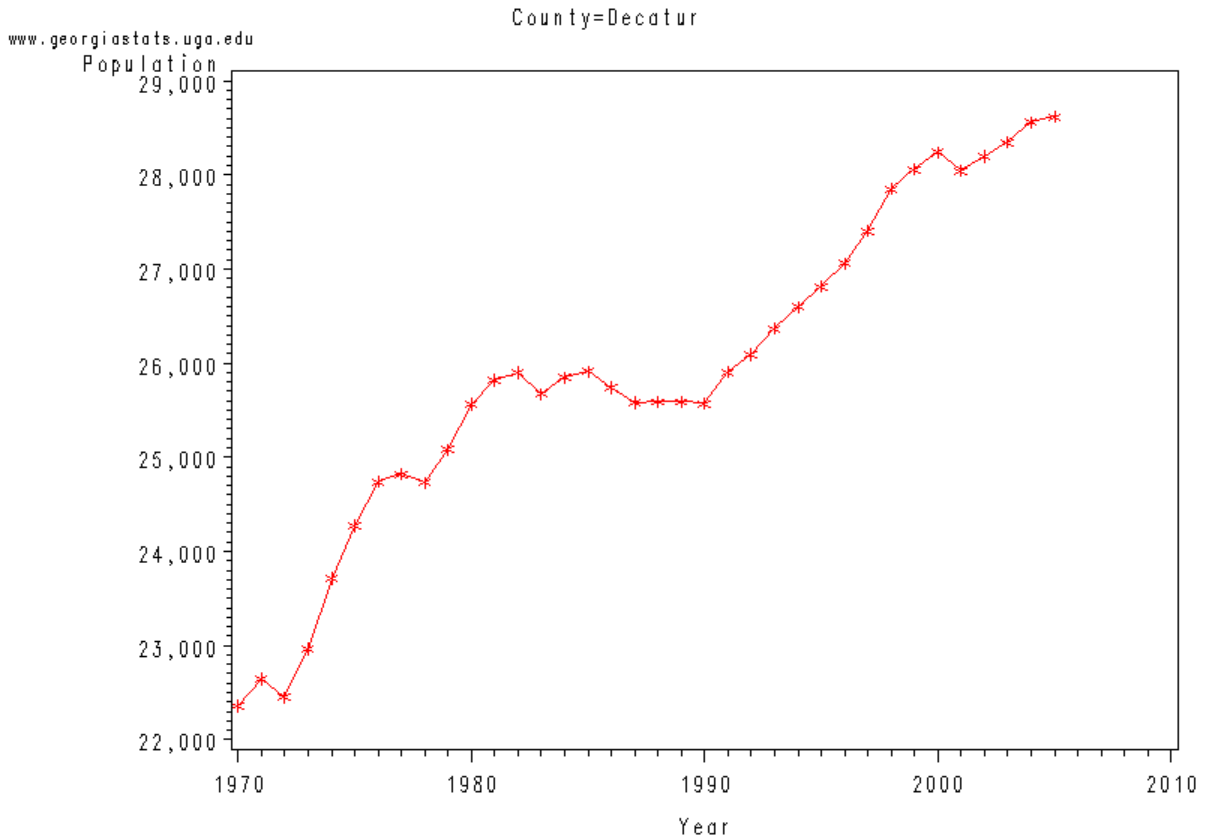
Features

Major Road	(Thick black line)
Street	(Thin black line)
Stream/Waterbody	(Light blue area)
Stream/Waterbody	(Blue line)

Items in graytext are not visible at this zoom level

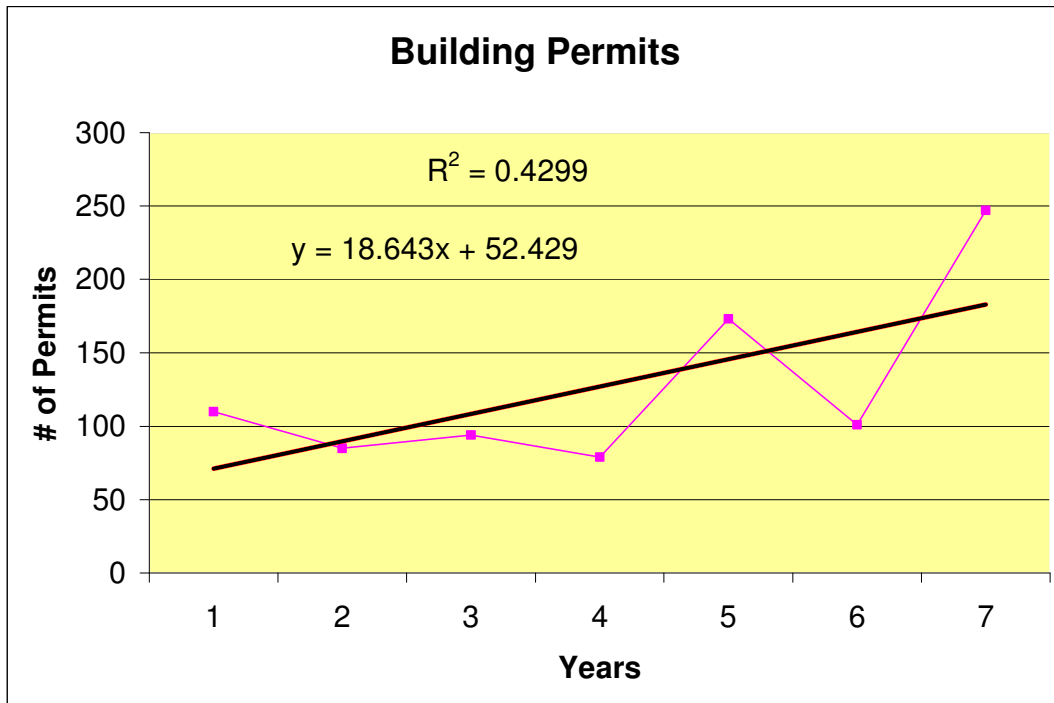
Total Population

Decatur County: Population											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total population	25,495	25,503	25,511	26,876	28,240	28,926	29,613	30,299	30,985	31,671	32,358



Decatur County grew about 9% from 1990 to 2000, less than the state of Georgia, which grew over 26% in the same time period.

The population of Decatur County is expected to continue to grow at a modest rate as the above table and graph illustrate. By the year 2020 the population of Decatur County is expected to be 30,985, an increase of almost 10% over the population in 2000.



A look at the number of building permits issued (according to the Georgia County Guide) in Decatur County from 1998 to 2004 shows an increase of approximately 19% new housing units per year. The data, illustrated in the graph above, is a rough approximation because of the small sample size and relatively low R-squared value, but it does suggest population growth in Decatur County.

There were, according to the U.S. Census, 10,380 households in Decatur County in 2005. The average number of building permits issued in the County from 1998-2004 was 127 per year, suggesting an overall increase in population of about 1.2% per year, above the U.S. Census data which predicts a rate of growth of about .5% per year.

Year	Population (.55% Annual Growth- Census)	Population (1.2% Annual Growth- Building Permits)
2005	28,926	28,926
2006	29,085	29,273
2007	29,244	29,620
2008	29,403	29,967
2009	29,562	30,314
2010	29,721	30,661
2011	29,880	31,008
2012	30,039	31,355
2013	30,198	31,702
2014	30,357	32,049
2015	30,516	32,396
2016	30,675	32,743
2017	30,834	33,090
2018	30,993	33,437
2019	31,152	33,784
2020	31,311	34,131
2021	31,470	34,478
2022	31,629	34,825
2023	31,788	35,172
2024	31,947	35,519
2025	32,123	35,945

The table above shows projected growth for the Census rate of .55%, and projected growth based on building permits issued in recent years. The higher growth scenario would result in an additional 3,822 people in Decatur County by the year 2025.

Using this method of projecting population growth, by the year 2020 the population of Decatur County is expected to be 30,985, an increase of almost 21% over the population in 2000.

Attapulgus city: Population											
Category	Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total population	Total population	623	502	380	436	492	502	512	515	518	518

Bainbridge city: Population											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total population	10,553	10,633	10,712	11,217	11,722	12,014	12,307	12,599	12,891	13,183	13,476

Brinson town: Population											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total population	274	256	238	232	225	220	215	213	211	210	210

Climax city: Population											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total population	407	317	226	262	297	294	292	291	291	291	291

The city of Bainbridge, grew from 10,712 people in 1990 to 11,722 in 2000, an increase of about 9%, and is about the same rate of growth as the entire county. At the current rate of growth, Bainbridge can expect to have 12,891 people by 2020.

The growth rates of Attapulgus, Brinson and Climax, as the tables above illustrate, are expected to remain relatively flat over the planning period.

Age Distribution

Decatur County: Population by Age											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0 – 4 Years Old	2,231	2,078	1,925	2,045	2,164	2,147	2,131	2,114	2,097	2,080	2,064
5 – 13 Years Old	4,246	4,273	4,299	4,411	4,523	4,592	4,662	4,731	4,800	4,869	4,939
14 – 17 Years Old	2,043	1,710	1,376	1,376	1,375	1,208	1,041	874	707	540	373
18 – 20 Years Old	1,302	1,255	1,207	1,191	1,175	1,143	1,112	1,080	1,048	1,016	985
21 – 24 Years Old	1,743	1,556	1,369	1,375	1,381	1,291	1,200	1,110	1,019	929	838
25 – 34 Years Old	3,615	3,775	3,935	3,834	3,732	3,761	3,791	3,820	3,849	3,878	3,908
35 – 44 Years Old	2,423	2,977	3,530	3,853	4,175	4,613	5,051	5,489	5,927	6,365	6,803
45 – 54 Years Old	2,477	2,423	2,368	2,962	3,555	3,825	4,094	4,364	4,633	4,903	5,172
55 – 64 Years Old	2,341	2,272	2,202	2,310	2,417	2,436	2,455	2,474	2,493	2,512	2,531
65 and over	3,074	3,187	3,300	3,522	3,743	3,910	4,078	4,245	4,412	4,579	4,747

Decatur County: Population by Age			
Category	1980	1990	2000
0 – 4 Years Old	2,231	1,925	2,164
5 – 13 Years Old	4,246	4,299	4,523
14 – 17 Years Old	2,043	1,376	1,375
18 – 20 Years Old	1,302	1,207	1,175
21 – 24 Years Old	1,743	1,369	1,381
25 – 34 Years Old	3,615	3,935	3,732
35 – 44 Years Old	2,423	3,530	4,175
45 – 54 Years Old	2,477	2,368	3,555
55 – 64 Years Old	2,341	2,202	2,417
65 and over	3,074	3,300	3,743

Attapulugus city: Population by Age			
Category	1980	1990	2000
0 – 4 Years Old	59	31	29
5 – 13 Years Old	133	74	89
14 – 17 Years Old	51	28	23
18 – 20 Years Old	22	20	19
21 – 24 Years Old	30	22	26
25 – 34 Years Old	103	48	65
35 – 44 Years Old	45	47	70
45 – 54 Years Old	57	29	56
55 – 64 Years Old	53	28	44
65 and over	70	53	71

Bainbridge city: Population by Age			
Category	1980	1990	2000
0 – 4 Years Old	838	831	966
5 – 13 Years Old	1,626	1,685	1,802
14 – 17 Years Old	785	539	519
18 – 20 Years Old	477	468	535
21 – 24 Years Old	667	583	626
25 – 34 Years Old	1,387	1,587	1,583
35 – 44 Years Old	952	1,443	1,570
45 – 54 Years Old	1,065	944	1,360
55 – 64 Years Old	1,103	944	891
65 and over	1,653	1,688	1,870

Brinson town: Population by Age			
Category	1980	1990	2000
0 – 4 Years Old	29	7	10
5 – 13 Years Old	40	38	33
14 – 17 Years Old	14	14	13
18 – 20 Years Old	14	9	6
21 – 24 Years Old	23	7	7
25 – 34 Years Old	39	41	20
35 – 44 Years Old	22	31	45
45 – 54 Years Old	25	20	36
55 – 64 Years Old	28	20	19
65 and over	40	51	36

Climax city: Population by Age			
Category	1980	1990	2000
0 – 4 Years Old	35	8	23
5 – 13 Years Old	63	36	52
14 – 17 Years Old	29	14	14
18 – 20 Years Old	11	4	12
21 – 24 Years Old	19	13	13
25 – 34 Years Old	61	25	35
35 – 44 Years Old	33	28	32
45 – 54 Years Old	34	25	37
55 – 64 Years Old	54	24	28
65 and over	68	49	51

The age distribution tables above show a general increase in the number of senior citizens in the county's population, and the outflow of many of the county's young adult population.

The tables for the smaller communities are best viewed from a distance because of their small sample sizes.

Decatur County: Racial Composition											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
White alone	15,498	15,363	15,228	15,677	16,126	16,283	16,440	16,597	16,754	16,911	17,068
Black or African American	9,921	9,996	10,070	10,670	11,270	11,607	11,945	12,282	12,619	12,956	13,294
American Indian alone	24	45	66	67	68	79	90	101	112	123	134
Asian	42	42	41	72	103	118	134	149	164	179	195
other race	10	58	106	390	673	839	1,005	1,170	1,336	1,502	1,668

C. Race and Ethnicity

Decatur County: Racial Composition			
Category	1980	1990	2000
White alone	15,498	15,228	16,126
Black or African American alone	9,921	10,070	11,270
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	24	66	68
Asian or Pacific Islander	42	41	103
other race	10	106	673

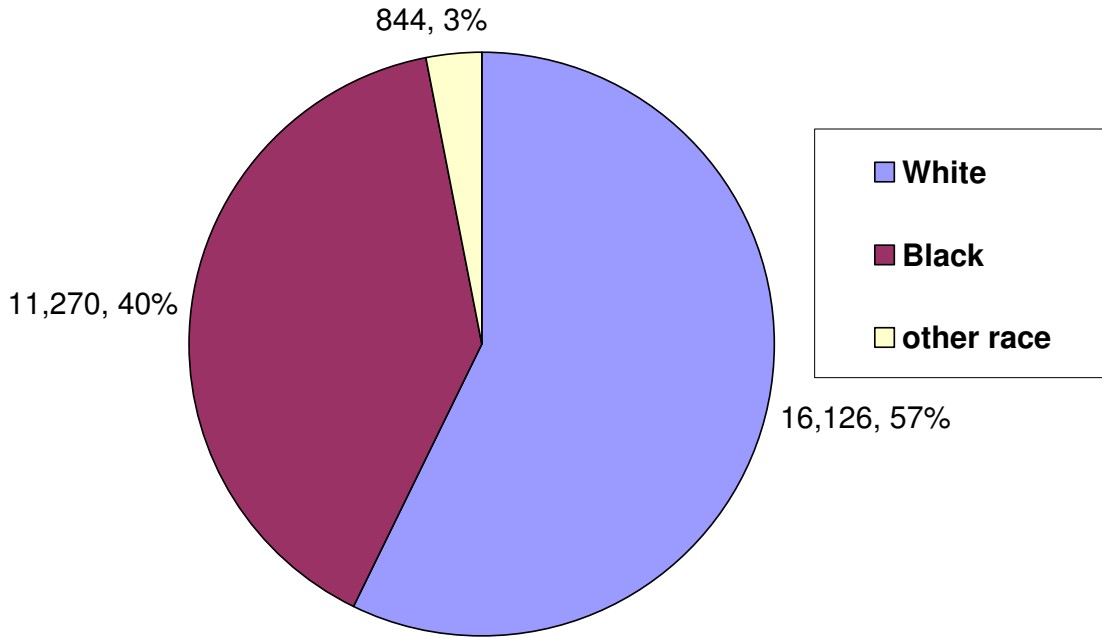
Attapulugus city: Racial Composition			
Category	1980	1990	2000
White alone	405	222	212
Black or African American alone	203	154	246
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	15	4	2
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0
other race	0	0	32

Bainbridge city: Racial Composition			
Category	1980	1990	2000
White alone	6,152	5,612	5,566
Black or African American alone	4,387	5,032	5,901
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	6	23	14
Asian or Pacific Islander	7	18	77
other race	1	27	164

Brinson town: Racial Composition			
Category	1980	1990	2000
White alone	183	154	164
Black or African American alone	91	81	53
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	2	2
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	1	0
other race	0	0	6

Climax city: Racial Composition			
Category	1980	1990	2000
White alone	239	179	169
Black or African American alone	168	47	122
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0
other race	0	0	5

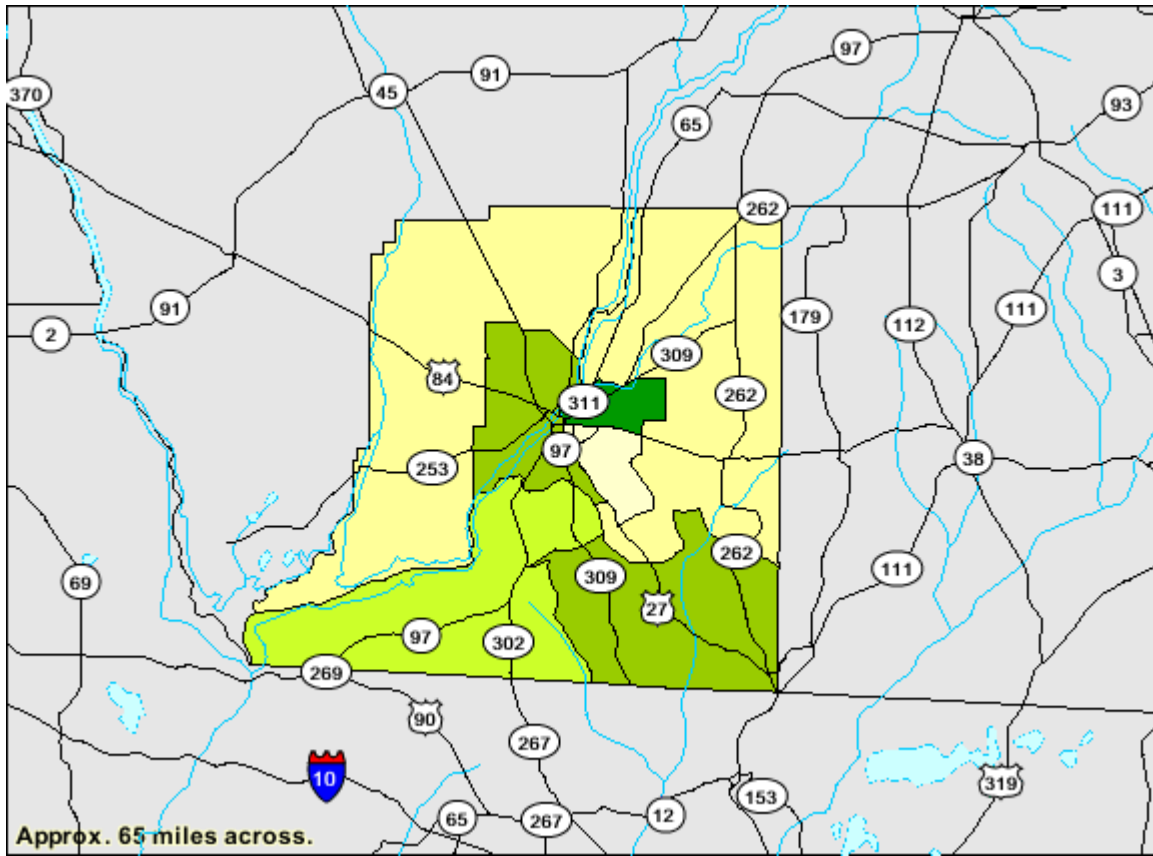
Decatur County Racial Composition



The most significant change in the racial composition of Decatur County in recent years has been the increase in the number of Latinos. The number of Latinos in Decatur County has increased by an estimated 21.4 % from 2000 to 2004, and reflects a national trend. Latinos are now the largest minority in the United States, and continue to grow in numbers.

The ratio of Blacks to Whites within the city of Bainbridge reversed from the 1990 to 2000 Census. In 1990 the city was 47.3% Black and 52.3% White, and in 2000 the city was 51.5% Black and 48.5% White.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Poverty Levels, 2000 Census

The above map displays the general distribution of impoverished households by census tract in Decatur County.

Data Classes

Percent	
12.3 - 12.3	Lightest Yellow
14.8 - 15.1	Yellow
16.9 - 16.9	Light Green
19.7 - 22.5	Green
31.7 - 31.7	Darkest Green

Features

- Major Road
- Street
- Stream/Waterbody
- Stream/Waterbody

Items in graytext
are not visible
at this zoom level

Georgia: Per Capita Income (in dollars)			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Per Capita Income	NA	13,631	21,154

Decatur County: Per Capita Income (in dollars)											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Per Capita Income	4,929	7,088	9,246	12,155	15,063	17,597	20,130	22,664	25,197	27,731	30,264

Decatur County: Household Income Distribution		
Category	1990	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Income less than \$9999	25.0%	16.2%
Income \$10000 - \$14999	12.6%	11.3%
Income \$15000 - \$19999	10.4%	8.4%
Income \$20000 - \$29999	20.6%	15.7%
Income \$30000 - \$34999	7.0%	7.4%
Income \$35000 - \$39999	5.1%	5.6%
Income \$40000 - \$49999	8.8%	9.7%
Income \$50000 - \$59999	3.7%	7.2%
Income \$60000 - \$74999	3.5%	8.1%
Income \$75000 - \$99999	1.8%	5.1%
Income \$100000 - \$124999	0.5%	2.7%
Income \$125000 - \$149999	0.4%	0.8%
Income \$150000 and above	0.4%	1.8%

Attapulgus city: Household Income Distribution		
Category	1990	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Income less than \$9999	15.4%	15.5%
Income \$10000 - \$14999	17.1%	9.4%
Income \$15000 - \$19999	7.3%	9.4%
Income \$20000 - \$29999	24.4%	19.9%
Income \$30000 - \$34999	4.9%	10.5%
Income \$35000 - \$39999	5.7%	6.1%
Income \$40000 - \$49999	11.4%	9.9%
Income \$50000 - \$59999	1.6%	7.7%
Income \$60000 - \$74999	9.8%	5.5%
Income \$75000 - \$99999	0.0%	4.4%

Income \$100000 - \$124999	2.4%	1.7%
Income \$125000 - \$149999	0.0%	0.0%
Income \$150000 and above	0.0%	0.0%

Bainbridge city: Household Income Distribution		
Category	1990	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Income less than \$9999	31.2%	19.9%
Income \$10000 - \$14999	11.5%	12.8%
Income \$15000 - \$19999	9.6%	10.0%
Income \$20000 - \$29999	19.0%	13.3%
Income \$30000 - \$34999	5.5%	6.7%
Income \$35000 - \$39999	5.2%	5.5%
Income \$40000 - \$49999	8.9%	7.5%
Income \$50000 - \$59999	2.8%	5.6%
Income \$60000 - \$74999	2.7%	7.7%
Income \$75000 - \$99999	1.8%	4.4%
Income \$100000 - \$124999	0.6%	3.4%
Income \$125000 - \$149999	0.4%	1.1%
Income \$150000 and above	0.6%	2.1%

Brinson town: Household Income Distribution		
Category	1990	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Income less than \$9999	9.5%	10.6%
Income \$10000 - \$14999	19.0%	14.1%
Income \$15000 - \$19999	15.9%	8.2%
Income \$20000 - \$29999	20.6%	25.9%
Income \$30000 - \$34999	9.5%	5.9%
Income \$35000 - \$39999	9.5%	1.2%
Income \$40000 - \$49999	12.7%	9.4%
Income \$50000 - \$59999	0.0%	11.8%
Income \$60000 - \$74999	0.0%	9.4%
Income \$75000 - \$99999	0.0%	2.4%
Income \$100000 - \$124999	3.2%	0.0%
Income \$125000 - \$149999	0.0%	1.2%
Income \$150000 and above	0.0%	0.0%

Climax city: Household Income Distribution		
Category	1990	2000
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Income less than \$9999	23.5%	5.3%
Income \$10000 - \$14999	7.4%	13.3%
Income \$15000 - \$19999	14.8%	21.2%
Income \$20000 - \$29999	19.8%	15.9%
Income \$30000 - \$34999	9.9%	9.7%
Income \$35000 - \$39999	3.7%	8.0%
Income \$40000 - \$49999	9.9%	10.6%
Income \$50000 - \$59999	4.9%	4.4%
Income \$60000 - \$74999	3.7%	6.2%
Income \$75000 - \$99999	2.5%	4.4%
Income \$100000 - \$124999	0.0%	0.9%
Income \$125000 - \$149999	0.0%	0.0%
Income \$150000 and above	0.0%	0.0%

The increase in household incomes in Decatur County has generally surpassed rates of inflation. Many households, however, probably have less disposable income because the increase in the average cost of housing has surpassed inflation rates.

Economic Base

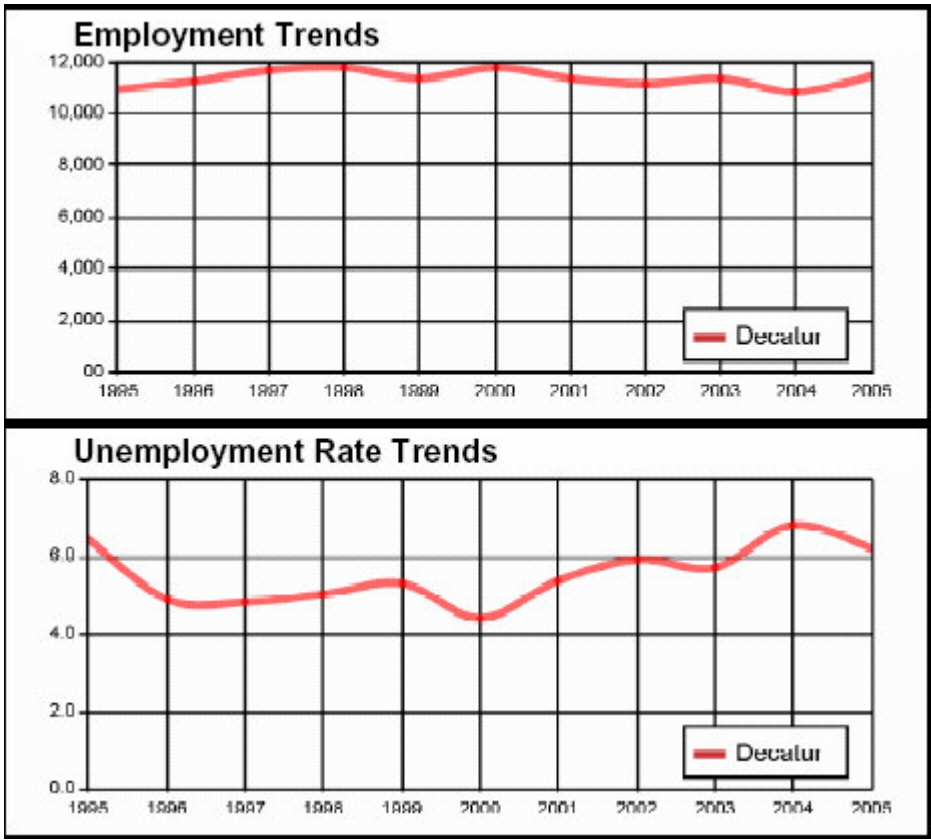
Decatur County: Employment by Industry											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Employed Civilian Population	10,107	10,273	10,438	10,892	11,346	11,656	11,966	12,275	12,585	12,895	13,205
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	964	983	1,002	847	691	623	555	486	418	350	282
Construction	707	661	615	697	778	796	814	831	849	867	885
Manufacturing	3,154	2,995	2,835	2,627	2,418	2,234	2,050	1,866	1,682	1,498	1,314
Wholesale Trade	428	462	496	474	451	457	463	468	474	480	486
Retail Trade	1,485	1,474	1,462	1,466	1,469	1,465	1,461	1,457	1,453	1,449	1,445
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	432	464	496	443	390	380	369	359	348	338	327
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	146	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	314	293	271	341	410	434	458	482	506	530	554
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	200	222	244	377	509	586	664	741	818	895	973
Educational, health and social services	1,433	1,693	1,953	2,124	2,294	2,509	2,725	2,940	3,155	3,370	3,586
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	353	207	60	371	681	763	845	927	1,009	1,091	1,173
Other Services	283	463	643	582	520	579	639	698	757	816	876
Public Administration	354	358	361	475	589	648	707	765	824	883	942

Attapulugus city: Employment by Industry											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Employed Civilian Population	195	187	179	182	184	181	179	176	173	170	168
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	20	29	37	28	19	19	19	18	18	18	18
Construction	32	24	15	12	9	3	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	76	55	33	37	41	32	24	15	6	0	0
Wholesale Trade	4	3	1	7	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
Retail Trade	14	27	40	33	26	29	32	35	38	41	44
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	18	13	7	8	8	6	3	1	0	0	0
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	7	5	3	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	4	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Educational, health and social services	18	24	29	28	26	28	30	32	34	36	38
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1	1	0	3	6	7	9	10	11	12	14
Other Services	0	6	12	14	16	20	24	28	32	36	40
Public Administration	1	1	0	5	9	11	13	15	17	19	21

Bainbridge city: Employment by Industry											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Employed Civilian Population	4,275	4,173	4,071	4,296	4,521	4,583	4,644	4,706	4,767	4,829	4,890
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	165	167	169	155	141	135	129	123	117	111	105
Construction	261	243	224	255	286	292	299	305	311	317	324
Manufacturing	1,294	1,160	1,026	963	899	800	702	603	504	405	307
Wholesale Trade	131	160	188	175	161	169	176	184	191	199	206
Retail Trade	734	670	606	572	538	489	440	391	342	293	244
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	156	154	151	122	92	76	60	44	28	12	0
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	48	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	151	145	138	154	169	174	178	183	187	192	196
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	129	96	63	154	244	273	302	330	359	388	417
Educational, health and social services	780	859	938	1,047	1,155	1,249	1,343	1,436	1,530	1,624	1,718
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	177	109	40	160	280	306	332	357	383	409	435
Other Services	157	266	375	295	214	228	243	257	271	285	300
Public Administration	140	147	153	224	294	333	371	410	448	487	525

Brinson town: Employment by Industry											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Employed Civilian Population	139	111	83	91	99	89	79	69	59	49	39
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	17	18	18	12	6	3	1	0	0	0	0
Construction	11	7	2	3	4	2	1	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	49	40	31	22	12	3	0	0	0	0	0
Wholesale Trade	10	7	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Retail Trade	16	11	6	9	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	4	3	1	5	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	7	6	4	6	8	8	9	9	9	9	10
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	3	2	0	3	6	7	8	8	9	10	11
Educational, health and social services	12	9	5	11	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	2	1	0	7	14	17	20	23	26	29	32
Other Services	4	6	8	6	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Public Administration	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9

Climax city: Employment by Industry											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Employed Civilian Population	167	125	83	99	114	101	88	74	61	48	35
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	12	12	11	9	6	5	3	2	0	0	0
Construction	8	6	4	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Manufacturing	40	31	21	28	34	33	31	30	28	27	25
Wholesale Trade	9	5	0	5	10	10	11	11	11	11	12
Retail Trade	17	14	10	13	16	16	16	15	15	15	15
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	7	7	6	5	4	3	3	2	1	0	0
Information	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	13	8	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	4	4	4	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Educational, health and social services	33	22	11	14	17	13	9	5	1	0	0
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	15	8	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Services	2	6	10	7	3	3	4	4	4	4	5
Public Administration	7	6	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	0	0



Rates of unemployment in Decatur County over the past 10 years have remained fairly steady and averaged between 5% and 6%.

Industry Mix - 2005

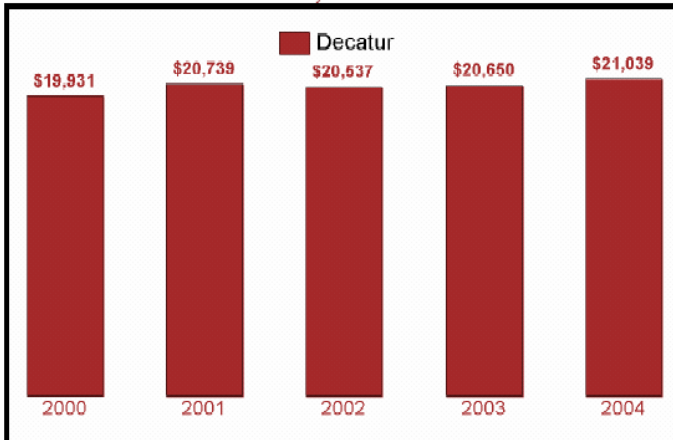
INDUSTRY	Decatur				Decatur Area			
	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE	NUMBER OF FIRMS	EMPLOYMENT NUMBER	PERCENT	WEEKLY WAGE
Goods-Producing	135	2,823	26.4	559	455	10,087	32.6	475
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	36	678	6.3	347	159	2,352	7.6	427
Mining	3	318	3.0	1,107	7	318	1.0	277
Construction	62	354	3.3	502	195	1,054	3.4	443
Manufacturing	34	1,473	13.8	552	94	6,364	20.5	459
Manufacturing	6	172	1.6	615	10	3,448	11.1	518
Food Manufacturing	6	172	1.6	615	10	3,448	11.1	518
Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing	1	*	*	*	3	15	0.0	388
Textile Mills	2	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Wood Product Manufacturing	1	*	*	*	9	472	1.5	383
Printing and Related Support Activities	2	*	*	*	4	42	0.1	459
Petroleum & Coal Products Manufacturing	2	*	*	*	2	*	*	*
Chemical Manufacturing	2	*	*	*	5	76	0.2	1,110
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Mfg	1	*	*	*	6	25	0.1	213
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	4	34	0.3	497	15	655	2.1	491
Machinery Manufacturing	3	91	0.9	746	6	228	0.7	500
Computer and Electronic Product Mfg	1	*	*	*	1	*	*	*
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1	*	*	*	7	307	1.0	325
Furniture and Related Product Mfg	5	32	0.3	398	13	69	0.2	271
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	3	*	*	*	5	33	0.1	301
Service-Providing	515	5,009	46.9	420	1,519	13,650	44.1	427
Utilities	2	*	*	*	7	221	0.7	916
Wholesale Trade	45	331	3.1	514	135	1,236	4.0	461
Retail Trade	132	1,656	15.5	356	411	4,030	13.0	315
Transportation and Warehousing	21	393	3.7	449	73	717	2.3	509
Information	11	113	1.1	540	23	178	0.6	551
Finance and Insurance	56	326	3.1	656	133	870	2.8	604
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	20	123	1.2	541	65	311	1.0	399
Professional and Technical Services	34	108	1.0	517	98	507	1.6	533
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4	99	0.9	1,014	11	170	0.5	805
Administrative and Waste Services	23	374	3.5	342	54	811	2.6	371
Educational Services	1	*	*	*	5	*	*	*
Health Care and Social Assistance	54	483	4.5	563	164	2,211	7.1	480
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4	27	0.3	192	13	*	*	*
Accommodation and Food Services	38	611	5.7	177	112	1,524	4.9	181
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	66	322	3.0	349	203	727	2.3	363
Total - Private Sector	650	7,832	73.3	490	1,974	23,737	76.6	451
Total - Government	54	2,856	26.7	565	202	7,247	23.4	610
State Government	23	640	6.0	480	86	1,392	4.5	551
Local Government	20	2,153	20.1	481	73	5,592	18.0	501
Federal Government	11	63	0.6	735	43	263	0.8	778
ALL INDUSTRIES	704	10,688	100.0	475	2,176	30,986	100.0	462
ALL INDUSTRIES - Georgia					256,787	3,931,719		752

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

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

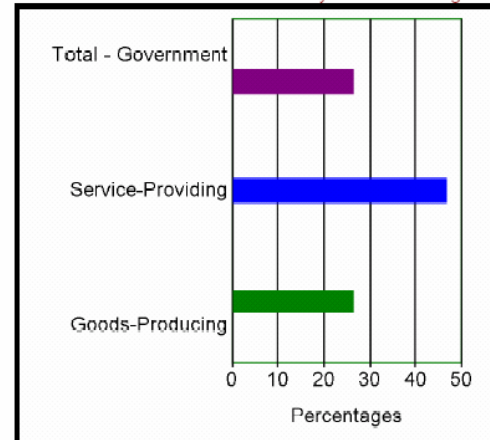
Per Capita Income

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Decatur Industry Mix 2005

Source: See Industry Mix data on Page 2.



Top Employers - 2005

FIVE LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Decatur County

American Fibers And Yarns Company
 ATG Holding Company Inc
 Propex Fibers Inc.
 Wal-Mart Associates Inc
 Workforce Management Services Inc

Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state college and universities. Data shown for Fourth Quarter 2005. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

TEN LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Decatur Area

Employer	COUNTY
Propex Fibers Inc.	Decatur
ATG Holding Company Inc	Decatur
American Fibers And Yarns Company	Decatur
Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Decatur
The Torrington Company	Grady
Wight Nurseries	Grady
Cagle Foods Jv LLC	Mitchell
Mitchell County State Prison	Mitchell
Memorial Hospital	Mitchell
Donalsonville Hospital Inc	Seminole

Commuting Patterns

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS OF

Decatur

COUNTY WHERE EMPLOYED	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Decatur, GA	8,634	77.9
Leon County, FL	507	4.6
Gadsden County, FL	411	3.7
Grady, GA	298	2.7
Thomas, GA	184	1.7
Mitchell, GA	163	1.5
Dougherty, GA	135	1.2
Miller, GA	131	1.2
Other	620	5.6
Total Residents:	11,083	100.0

PERSONS WORKING IN

Decatur

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Decatur, GA	8,634	74.3
Seminole, GA	909	7.8
Miller, GA	521	4.5
Grady, GA	354	3.0
Early, GA	169	1.5
Mitchell, GA	160	1.4
Gadsden County, FL	154	1.3
Leon County, FL	82	0.7
Other	635	5.5
Total Residents:	11,618	100.0

Occupational Profile for Residents of Decatur County

	Decatur		Decatur Area	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Total Civilian Labor Force	12,099	100.0	41,052	100.0
Management, Business and Financial Workers	1,026	8.5	3,683	9.0
Science, Engineering and Computer Professionals	262	2.2	565	1.4
Healthcare Practitioner Professionals	275	2.3	984	2.4
Other Professional Workers	988	8.2	3,308	8.1
Technicians	380	3.1	948	2.3
Sales Workers	1,255	10.4	4,144	10.1
Administrative Support Workers	1,483	12.3	5,220	12.7
Construction and Extractive Craft Workers	479	4.0	1,949	4.7
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Craft Workers	748	6.2	2,356	5.7
Production Operative Workers	1,605	13.3	5,328	13.0
Transportation and Material Moving Operative Workers	633	5.2	2,644	6.4
Laborers and Helpers	1,060	8.8	3,558	8.7
Protective Service Workers	260	2.1	929	2.3
Service Workers, except Protective	1,526	12.6	5,011	12.2
Unemployed, No Civilian Work Experience Since 1995	119	1.0	425	1.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2000 Decennial Census.(EEO Data Tools)

Decatur County

Yearly Average, 2005

	Average Number of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Goods Producing	132	2,823	\$ 559
Agriculture, forestry, & fishing	35	678	347
Mining	3	318	1,107
Construction	61	354	502
Manufacturing	33	1,473	553
Food manufacturing	6	172	615
Beverage & tobacco mfg	*	*	*
Textile mills	*	*	*
Wood product manufacturing	*	*	*
Printing and related activities	*	*	*
Petroleum and coal products mfg	*	*	*
Chemical manufacturing	*	*	*
Nonmetallic mineral product mfg	*	*	*
Fabricated metal product mfg	4	34	501
Machinery manufacturing	3	91	745
Computer & electronic product mfg	*	*	*
Transportation equipment	*	*	*
Furniture and related product mfg	5	32	393
Miscellaneous mfg industries	*	*	*
Service Producing	506	5,007	420
Wholesale trade	43	331	515
Retail trade	130	1,656	356
Transportation and warehousing	22	393	448
Utilities	*	*	*
Information	11	113	539
Finance and insurance	55	326	656
Real estate and rental and leasing	21	123	542
Professional, scientific/tech svcs	35	108	518
Management: companies/enterprises	4	99	1,009
Administrative and waste svcs	21	374	342
Educational services	*	*	*
Health care and social services	53	483	563
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4	27	195
Accommodation and food services	38	611	177
Other services (except government)	67	322	348
Unclassified - industry not assigned	*	*	*
Total - Private Sector	641	7,832	470
Total - Government	54	2,856	486
Federal government	11	63	737
State government	23	640	480
Local government	20	2,153	481
All industries	695	10,688	475

Labor Force

Decatur County: Labor Force Participation		
Category	1990	2000
Total Males and Females	18,797	21,071
In labor force:	11,159	12,143
Civilian Labor force	11,081	12,133
Civilian Employed	10,438	11,346
Civilian unemployed	643	787
In Armed Forces	78	10
Not in labor force	7,638	8,928
Total Males	8,863	9,817
Male In labor force:	6,010	6,329
Male Civilian Labor force	5,988	6,319
Male Civilian Employed	5,700	5,953
Male Civilian unemployed	288	366
Male In Armed Forces	22	10
Male Not in labor force	2,853	3,488
Total Females	9,934	11,254
Female In labor force:	5,149	5,814
Female Civilian Labor force	5,093	5,814
Female Civilian Employed	4,738	5,393
Female Civilian unemployed	355	421
Female In Armed Forces	56	0
Female Not in labor force	4,785	5,440

Attapulugus city: Labor Force Participation		
Category	1990	2000
Total Males and Females	301	359
In labor force:	188	202
Civilian Labor force	188	202
Civilian Employed	179	184
Civilian unemployed	9	18
In Armed Forces	0	0
Not in labor force	113	157
Total Males	130	160
Male In labor force:	100	108
Male Civilian Labor force	100	108
Male Civilian Employed	97	99
Male Civilian unemployed	3	9
Male In Armed Forces	0	0
Male Not in labor force	30	52
Total Females	171	199
Female In labor force:	88	94
Female Civilian Labor force	88	94
Female Civilian Employed	82	85
Female Civilian unemployed	6	9
Female In Armed Forces	0	0
Female Not in labor force	83	105

Bainbridge city: Labor Force Participation		
Category	1990	2000
Total Males and Females	8,002	8,692
In labor force:	4,440	4,875
Civilian Labor force	4,371	4,865
Civilian Employed	4,071	4,521
Civilian unemployed	300	344
In Armed Forces	69	10
Not in labor force	3,562	3,817
Total Males	3,595	3,884
Male In labor force:	2,271	2,378
Male Civilian Labor force	2,258	2,368
Male Civilian Employed	2,106	2,199
Male Civilian unemployed	152	169
Male In Armed Forces	13	10
Male Not in labor force	1,324	1,506
Total Females	4,407	4,808
Female In labor force:	2,169	2,497
Female Civilian Labor force	2,113	2,497
Female Civilian Employed	1,965	2,322
Female Civilian unemployed	148	175
Female In Armed Forces	56	0
Female Not in labor force	2,238	2,311

Brinson town: Labor Force Participation		
Category	1990	2000
Total Males and Females	175	185
In labor force:	87	109
Civilian Labor force	87	109
Civilian Employed	83	99
Civilian unemployed	4	10
In Armed Forces	0	0
Not in labor force	88	76
Total Males	84	99
Male In labor force:	43	69
Male Civilian Labor force	43	69
Male Civilian Employed	41	65
Male Civilian unemployed	2	4
Male In Armed Forces	0	0
Male Not in labor force	41	30
Total Females	91	86
Female In labor force:	44	40
Female Civilian Labor force	44	40
Female Civilian Employed	42	34
Female Civilian unemployed	2	6
Female In Armed Forces	0	0
Female Not in labor force	47	46

Climax city: Labor Force Participation		
Category	1990	2000
Total Males and Females	150	201
In labor force:	83	116
Civilian Labor force	83	116
Civilian Employed	83	114
Civilian unemployed	0	2
In Armed Forces	0	0
Not in labor force	67	85
Total Males	58	90
Male In labor force:	39	69
Male Civilian Labor force	39	69
Male Civilian Employed	39	67
Male Civilian unemployed	0	2
Male In Armed Forces	0	0
Male Not in labor force	19	21
Total Females	92	111
Female In labor force:	44	47
Female Civilian Labor force	44	47
Female Civilian Employed	44	47
Female Civilian unemployed	0	0
Female In Armed Forces	0	0
Female Not in labor force	48	64

4. Housing

Decatur County: Types of Housing											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
TOTAL Housing Units	9,065	9,593	10,120	11,044	11,968	12,694	13,420	14,145	14,871	15,597	16,323
Single Units (detached)	7,152	6,985	6,818	7,271	7,723	7,866	8,009	8,151	8,294	8,437	8,580
Single Units (attached)	52	71	90	99	107	121	135	148	162	176	190
Double Units	353	371	388	387	386	394	403	411	419	427	436
3 to 9 Units	319	433	546	603	659	744	829	914	999	1,084	1,169
10 to 19 Units	151	121	91	68	44	17	0	0	0	0	0
20 to 49 Units	8	4	0	27	54	66	77	89	100	112	123
50 or more Units	66	33	0	49	98	106	114	122	130	138	146
Mobile Home or Trailer	964	1,518	2,072	2,463	2,853	3,325	3,798	4,270	4,742	5,214	5,687
All Other	0	58	115	80	44	55	66	77	88	99	110

Bainbridge city: Types of Housing											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
TOTAL Housing Units	3,970	4,214	4,457	4,726	4,994	5,250	5,506	5,762	6,018	6,274	6,530
Single Units (detached)	3,279	3,289	3,298	3,512	3,725	3,837	3,948	4,060	4,171	4,283	4,394
Single Units (attached)	46	50	53	55	57	60	63	65	68	71	74
Double Units	256	295	333	324	315	330	345	359	374	389	404
3 to 9 Units	224	370	515	522	528	604	680	756	832	908	984
10 to 19 Units	83	80	76	50	24	9	0	0	0	0	0
20 to 49 Units	8	4	0	27	54	66	77	89	100	112	123
50 or more Units	18	9	0	46	92	111	129	148	166	185	203
Mobile Home or Trailer	56	101	145	172	199	235	271	306	342	378	414
All Other	0	19	37	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5. Environmental Planning Criteria

In order to provide local governments with guidelines to use in preparing their comprehensive plans, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 called for the Georgia Departments of Community Affairs and Natural Resources to develop a set of minimum requirements to be met in each local plan. The *environmental planning criteria* that follow are the part of the Minimum Planning Standards that deals specifically with the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors, and mountains. These criteria were developed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as mandated in Part V of the Georgia Planning Act and in the Mountains and River Corridors Protection Act.

It is important to keep in mind that these are not mandatory regulations, but they must be taken into account in the development of each local government's comprehensive plan. In order for a comprehensive plan to meet the Minimum Standards, it must identify whether any of these environmentally sensitive areas exist within the local government's jurisdiction and, if so, assess whether all or part of these minimum criteria should be implemented locally. Also keep in mind that these environmental planning criteria are "minimums" – local governments will likely want to not only incorporate these minimums into their comprehensive plans, but go beyond them in the interest of protecting these important natural resources.

391-3-16-.01 Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds

391-3-16-.02 Criteria for Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas

391-3-16-.03 Criteria for Wetlands Protection

391-3-16-.04 Criteria for River Corridor Protection

391-3-16-.05 Criteria for Mountain Protection

Water Supply Watersheds

Decatur County is not located within a Water Supply Watershed as defined or designated by the State of Georgia. There are no public water supplies in Decatur County that obtain water from surface water sources.

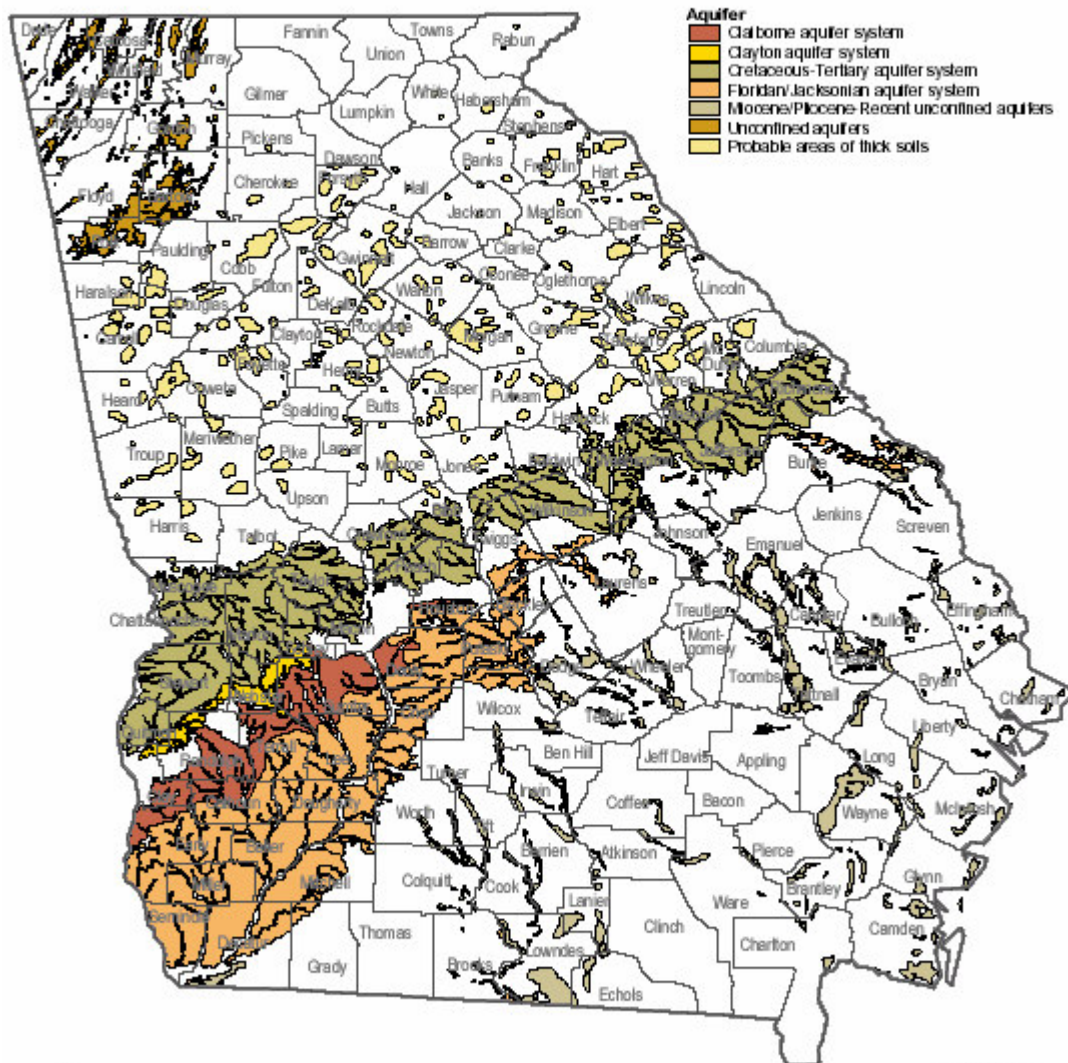
Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas

A dominant physiological feature of Southwest Georgia is the Floridan Aquifer system. The areas directly underlain by the aquifer are areas of significant groundwater recharge and are supplied with readily available groundwater. Decatur County, as seen in the graphic below, lies in an area where the Floridan Aquifer system is unconfined and is a significant groundwater recharge area.

Groundwater is Decatur County's water supply source, which indicates the importance of establishing protection for the groundwater supply. The geology of the county makes the groundwater supply highly susceptible to pollution. The direct connection to the groundwater system created by karst topography is indicative of the level of attention that must be directed toward preserving Decatur County's water resources. Groundwater is especially susceptible to pollution created by human land uses such as urban development and agriculture.

It appears that the county has not adopted the Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds. This plan recommends that the county consider the formal adoption of the Criteria for the protection of its groundwater resources.

Georgia's Groundwater Recharge Areas



Data Source: Georgia Geologic Survey
 Produced by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs



Wetlands Protection

Wetlands are an integral part of the Decatur County landscape as they play a crucial role in the natural cycle and serve humans by providing breeding ground and habitat for animals that are actively hunted in this region. The provision of natural habitats in and around wetlands is a key to the proliferation of the naturally occurring species, some of which may be endangered or threatened.

Wetlands are areas that are flooded or saturated by surface or groundwater often and long enough to grow vegetation adapted for life in water-saturated soil. Wetlands provide many important benefits including flood control, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, and recreation. Wetlands aid in flood control by acting as natural sponges, they absorb and gradually release water from rain to groundwater and streams, and also often provide buffers along waterways that protect adjacent lands from flooding. Wetlands improve water quality by acting as natural filters; they remove sediment, nutrients and pollution from runoff. Groundwater recharge occurs through wetlands as water migrates downward and filters through permeable layers to maintain groundwater levels. Wetlands are also viable recreation areas; many recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, birding, and photography take place in and around wetlands.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria direct local governments to acknowledge the importance of wetlands for the public good in the land use planning process and to take the potential impacts to these environmentally sensitive areas into consideration when planning for future development. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs have determined that each local government with classified wetlands located in its jurisdiction must adopt a wetlands protection ordinance under the requirements of House Bill 215, Georgia's 1989 Growth Strategies Legislation and the rules promulgated there under.

The Decatur County Land Development and Construction Regulations offer some protection to wetland areas under the requirements outlined in Chapter Five, entitled Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance.

The Bainbridge Land Subdivision and Development Regulations also contain sections entitled Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, Stormwater Management and Flood Protection, and Groundwater Protection in their subdivision regulations. Additionally, the Bainbridge Code of Ordinances contains a Groundwater Protection, a Groundwater Recharge Protection, a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and a Stormwater Management component to help protect the county's water resources.

River Corridor Protection

Chapter Eight of the Decatur County Land Development and Construction Regulations entitled Flint River and Spring Creek Corridor Protection Ordinance offers similar protections to those found in 391-3-16-.04 Criteria for River Corridor Protection.

6. Decatur County Community Assessment Survey Results

This survey is part of the information gathering process for the development of the Decatur County Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan acts as a road map for future development within your community. Your answers will be entirely confidential, and will be part of the answer to the question “Where do we want to be in 20 years time?” If you have any questions about this survey or the Comprehensive Plan process, contact Shane Kelsey or Lauren Miller at (229) 522-3552.

1. Do you live in Decatur County?

96.4%-Yes 1.4%-No 2.3%-No Response

If so, where?

9.0%- Attapulgus 54.3%-Bainbridge 16.3%-Brinson 5.4%-Climax
13.6%-No Response 1.4%-County

Nearly all respondents live in the county, and over half live in the city of Bainbridge.

2. Do you work in Decatur County?

54.8%-Yes 34.4%-No 5.9%-No Response
5.0%-Retired

Over half of the respondents work in Decatur County and over a third work outside the county.

3. What aspect or service from local and county government are you most satisfied with?

Government Services People Are Most Satisfied With:	
Schools	16.7%
Roads	14.5%
Emergency services (i.e. police, fire, ambulance)	14.5%
All of the Above	10.9%
Water	6.3%
Bridges	5.4%
Social Services	4.5%
Inspections	4.1%
Recreation	4.1%
None	3.2%
Schools/Emergency Services/Bridges	2.7%
Other	2.3%
Emergency Services/Recreation	2.3%
Water/Sewer	1.8%
Roads/Emergency Services/Bridges	1.8%

Schools/Emergency Services/Water	1.4%
Roads/Schools	0.9%
Schools/Emergency Services	0.9%
Roads/Bridges	0.5%
Schools/Bridges	0.5%
Bridges/Water/Sewer	0.5%
Sewer	0.5%
TOTAL	100%

4. What do you think local and county government could do better?

What Needs to be Done Better:	
Economic Diversification	20.8%
Housing Provision	16.7%
Law Enforcement	12.7%
Adult and At-risk Education	12.7%
All of the above	12.2%
Other	5.0%
Code Enforcement	4.5%
No Response	4.1%
Economic/Housing/Education/Law and Code Enforcement	4.1%
Economic and Housing	2.3%
None	1.8%
Recreation	0.5%
Police	0.5%
Money Management	0.5%
Medical	0.5%
Industry	0.5%
Factory	0.5%
DSL	0.5%
TOTAL	100%

5. What do you think is the most significant threat to the economy of Decatur County and the cities?

The Most Significant Threat:	
Other	24.0%
Competition from other areas	13.1%
Limited range of economic activities	12.2%
Poor education	10.0%
All of the above	10.0%
Lack of recreational opportunities	5.9%
No Response	5.4%
Not enough housing	4.5%
Decline of agricultural employment	3.6%
Limited transportation resources	2.7%
Competition/Limited range of economic activities	1.4%
Limited Range/Poor Education	1.4%
Lack of faith in Government	.5%
Lack of Industry	.5%
Competition from other areas/Not enough housing	.5%
High school drop out rate	.5%
Competition from other areas/Poor education	.5%
County	.5%
DSL	.5%
Internet	.5%
Job	.5%
Jobs	.5%
Poverty	.5%
Wages	.5%
Water	.5%
TOTAL	100%

6. Do you think your community needs more or less of the following types of housing? Place an X in the appropriate box.

	More	Less	Don't know	No Response	TOTAL
Single Family Residential	49.8%	3.6%	10.0%	36.6%	100%
Apartments	37.6%	11.8%	8.1%	42.5%	100%
Town Homes/ Condominiums	28.5%	29.9%	20.4%	21.3%	100%
Mixed Use Residential	29.4%	16.7%	28.5%	25.3%	100%

7. How much of a priority do you feel the following issues are for your community? Place an X in the appropriate box.

	High Priority	Priority	Low Priority	Not a Priority	No Response
Community Character	45.7%	30.3%	6.3%	5.4%	12.2%
Downtown Revitalization	26.2%	38.5%	14.5%	8.6%	12.2%
Historic Preservation	24.0%	38.5%	20.8%	5.4%	11.3%
Availability of Cultural Resources	20.4%	40.3%	18.1%	5.4%	15.8%
Alternative Transportation	26.7%	28.5%	24.4%	7.2%	13.1%
Development Regulations	22.6%	40.7%	14.9%	5.0%	16.7%
Neighborhood Commercial Development	23.1%	32.6%	23.1%	6.8%	14.5%
Neighborhood Revitalization	27.1%	37.1%	15.8%	4.5%	15.4%
Environmental Protection	34.8%	34.4%	9.5%	3.6%	17.6%
Recreation	30.8%	35.7%	15.4%	3.2%	14.9%
Community Policing	46.6%	27.6%	7.7%	3.6%	14.5%
Educational opportunities	48.9%	29.0%	7.2%	1.8%	13.1%
Retention of Young People	43.4%	26.7%	8.6%	5.4%	15.8%
Affordable Housing	44.8%	25.3%	10.4%	5.9%	13.6%
Few Employment Opportunities	51.6%	19.9%	10.9%	5.4%	12.2%
Access to health care	43.9%	27.1%	10.9%	3.6%	14.5%
Better Roads	43.9%	29.4%	10.0%	3.2%	13.6%

8. Comments

Additional Comments:	
A county code needs to be established	.5%
Better education in schools/data centers	.5%
Capitalization is the key Bainbridge needs	.5%
Commissioners need to work together	.5%
Commissioners who want to serve the county better	.5%
Decentralization in EMS is high priority	.5%
Diversity in planning/User friendly city	.5%
DSL Internet Services available to all citizens	.5%
Encourage fine arts in school	.5%
Enforce cleaner environment	.5%
Housing for independent living/industries	.5%
Improve high school drop out rate	.5%
Improve independent living/bring in industries	.5%
Improve land usage and careful development	.5%
Improve shopping areas in county	.5%
Include surrounding counties in planning	.5%
Increase Impact Assessments before building	.5%
Increase job retention	.5%
Increase technical education/law personnel	.5%
Keep track of sex offenders that aren't registered	.5%
Lack of jobs/Enforce leash law	.5%
More concern for the citizens than appearance	.5%
More information on animal control	.5%
More planning for lower economic group	.5%
Need county to protect the rights of home owners	.5%
Need sewers in the area, and governments need to manage money better	.5%
No sewers in the area/more bids on contracts	.5%
Pavement of roads/police wasting gas 12 miles away	.5%
Placement of road from Albany to Bainbridge	.5%
Recycling program/alternative fuels	.5%

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

This chapter addresses intergovernmental coordination by noting existing coordination mechanisms and further opportunities for such coordination. Although intergovernmental coordination efforts can occur in the areas of environmental protection, transportation, and land use among others, the primary issues center on the delivery of community facilities and services. This chapter identifies areas where intergovernmental coordination is ongoing, as well as issues that may require intergovernmental cooperation in the future. The examples of possibilities for intergovernmental coordination are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. Decatur County and the cities should continue to look for ways to increase the levels of cooperation in all functional areas. This section also describes the existing Service Delivery Strategy Agreement and identifies any inconsistencies that need to be resolved in the Community Agenda.

Service Delivery Strategies (SDS) Agreement

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

Local Government Coordination

Various community facilities and services are provided on a countywide basis and require communication and coordination between Decatur County and its municipalities. The agreements included in the Service Delivery Strategy are shown in the table below:

Countywide Service	Addressed in Adopted Service Delivery Strategy?	Adequate? (If Addressed)
Airport	Yes	Yes
Animal Control (Humane Society)	Yes	Yes
Cemetery	Yes	Yes
Code Enforcement	Yes	Yes
Coroner	Yes	Yes
Correctional Institution	Yes	Yes
Courts	Yes	Yes
Development Authority	Yes	Yes
E-911	Yes	No
Elections	Yes	Yes
Emergency Management	Yes	Yes
Emergency Medical Services	Yes	No
Fire Protection	Yes	No
Garbage Collection	Yes	Yes
Indigent Defense	Yes	Yes
Indigent Healthcare	Yes	Yes
Keep America Beautiful	Yes	Yes
Parks	Yes	Yes
Police Department	Yes	Yes
Public Health	Yes	Yes
Public Housing	Yes	Yes
Public Safety	Yes	Yes
Public Utilities	Yes	Yes
Public Library	Yes	Yes
Recreation	Yes	Yes
Road Bridge Maintenance	Yes	Yes
Sheriff's Department	Yes	Yes
Tax Assessment	Yes	Yes
Tax Commissioner	Yes	Yes
Welfare	Yes	Yes

Coordination with Local School Systems

Issues to be addressed in the community agenda may include:

1. The extent to which school facilities are integrated into emergency operations plans as emergency shelters
2. The adequacy of existing intergovernmental agreements with regard to the sharing of use or joint development of school-cities-county recreational facilities.
3. The adequacy of pedestrian and bicycle facilities from residential neighborhoods and commercial areas to area schools
4. Possible shared parking arrangements.

Sanitation/Landfill

Decatur County operates a sanitary landfill for the benefit of all local governments in the county.

Recycling

Decatur County provides portable recycling drop off centers to the municipalities within Decatur County.

Planning and Zoning

There has been some early informal discussion between Decatur County and the city of Bainbridge to better formalize and coordinate their arrangement.

Dispute Resolution

The Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center is responsible, in part, for determining the compatibility of proposed land use plans and comprehensive plans with other affected local governments. Each local government is required to have and follow a dispute resolution procedure for annexations and land use changes.

Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs)

Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) assess developments that are likely to have effects outside of the local government jurisdiction in which they are developed. The DRI process improves communication between affected governments and provides a means of assessing potential impacts and conflicts the development may create.