

**THE BLECKLEY COUNTY-  
COCHRAN COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

**MARCH, 2011**

# **The Bleckley County – Cochran Comprehensive Plan**

## **Community Assessment**

A Comprehensive Plan for Bleckley County  
and the City of Cochran, Georgia  
in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989

Prepared By:

The Bleckley County Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

March, 2011

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

Bleckley County is a progressive county in Middle Georgia located south of Macon along U.S. Highway 23 and with access to I-16 at its northeast corner. It encompasses approximately 143,286 acres, or 224 square miles. The current (2010 estimated) population is about 13,006 for the County and 5,224 in the City of Cochran, an increase from the 2000 Census levels of 11,666 for the County and 4,455 for Cochran. The community can trace its origins to its yellow pine forests and turpentine production. Established in 1912 from portions of Pulaski and Laurens counties, Bleckley County is one of Georgia's youngest counties (145<sup>th</sup> in order of creation). It was named for Chief Justice Logan E. Bleckley of the Georgia Supreme Court, a Confederate veteran who served on the state's high court in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cochran was originally called Dykesboro to honor the wealthy landowner who owned the land upon which the city developed beginning in the early 1830s. After the Old Macon and Brunswick Railroad (later the Southern Railroad) was extended into the community, the city was renamed Cochran for Judge Arthur E. Cochran, a noted jurist and former president of the Old Macon and Brunswick Railroad. Judge Cochran was credited as being instrumental in the development of this section of Georgia, largely due to the economic and related population growth that accompanied the railroad's extension. The City of Cochran was incorporated in 1869 in then Pulaski County, but became the county seat of Bleckley County upon its creation in 1912. Today it is the home of Middle Georgia College, recognized as the oldest two-year college in the United States, and is close to Warner Robins and the Robins Air Force Base. Acuity Brands Lighting (formerly Lithonia Lighting) is the community's largest industrial employer. This employer was once much larger than it is now, but at this point does seem somewhat stable, and is potentially poised for future growth.

In 1920 the population of Bleckley County was 10,532; however, it declined significantly during the next decade to 9,133 in 1930. Some growth occurred in the 1930s with the population increasing to 9,655 by 1940, but by 1950, it had once again declined to 9,218. For the next 30 years, the county's population experienced slow, steady growth (1960-9,642; 1970-10,291;



1980-10,767) before again declining slightly in the 1980s by three (3) percent to 10,430 in 1990. Bleckley County did not reach its 1920 population of 10,532 until the 1990s, but then went on to far exceed it with 11,666 residents by 2000. The population continued to grow during the last decade reaching an estimated 13,006 by 2010. Bleckley County's population is expected to continue growing at a slow, steady pace due to its diversity of educational and employment opportunities, intertwined with an agricultural and forestry base, and its favorable location, all of which provide future opportunities for sustained growth.

## **Format**

The plan is organized by the two main components required by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs "Local Planning Requirements:" the *Community Assessment* and the *Community Agenda*. The plan does address the elements recommended for a comprehensive plan. The first component is an inventory and assessment to determine where the community is and has been, what are the current trends, and to help delineate and define issues and opportunities facing Bleckley County and the City of Cochran. The first component of the comprehensive plan, the *Community Assessment*, provides foundation and context to decide what the community desires for its future growth and development, and how it plans to achieve its vision.

This *Community Assessment* component and its examination of the community is organized by element and the requirements of the "Local Planning Requirements." It is an objective inventory and analysis to illustrate existing conditions, issues, needs and opportunities. It is written in executive summary format with accompanying detailed addendum to provide an overview of major findings, to illustrate current conditions and trends, and to help frame the context of identified issues and opportunities. The Executive Summary provides a concise and easily reviewed foundation for consideration by the community and its decision-makers as they proceed to develop the comprehensive plan's second, and truly most important section, the *Community Agenda*.

The *Community Agenda* will delineate an overall community vision as well as specific policies, implementation strategies for the community and its differing character areas. It outlines

the implementation program and activities which the community will utilize to achieve its vision and address identified issues and opportunities. It will specify the pathways for achieving the desired patterns of growth and development and realizing the community's vision of a better place to live, work, and recreate.

The *Community Assessment* Technical Addendum and Data Appendix provides supporting data and information uncovered in the staff level inventory and analysis. Most data tables can be found in this more detailed document. It contains more exhaustive background information similar to the detailed inventory and analysis of the old comprehensive plan. This data may be of potential interest to those wanting more specific information about the community and its jurisdictions. The reader can refer to the *Community Assessment* Executive Summary for a quick glance and summary of major findings and appropriate analysis of existing conditions. The Executive Summary also provides a listing of potential issues, needs and opportunities which the community may address.

## **Purpose**

*The Bleckley County-Cochran Comprehensive Plan* is a comprehensive plan prepared under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements) of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is a joint plan for Bleckley County and the City of Cochran. The plan was designed to meet the legislation's requirements for each local government to have a plan for its future growth and development in accordance with the state standards. It is a full update of the previous joint comprehensive plan first adopted in 1994, but is basically a new plan, prepared under new standards.

As a comprehensive plan, *The Bleckley County-Cochran Comprehensive Plan* is a critical self-examination of Bleckley County and the City of Cochran in the areas of population, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, housing, land use, intergovernmental cooperation, and service delivery; and a path for the community's future growth and development. The plan is truly a reflection of the community's concerns and desires for the future.

## Plan Development

As stated, *The Bleckley County-Cochran Comprehensive Plan* is being developed in accordance with the guidelines of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. The Bleckley County-Cochran Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee was comprised of local government appointed and elected officials resulting in only local government input at the *Community Assessment* stage as required. Those involved in this process included the Acting County Commissioner, Mayor of Cochran, and the County and City clerks with assistance from Regional Commission staff. This Executive Committee was responsible for policy direction and direct local government input and supervision. A Local Plan Coordination Committee will be formed to seek wide community stakeholder input and help develop the *Community Agenda*. It will be comprised of the Executive Committee members and other representatives from public and private agencies, entities, and stakeholders important to the planning process. Representatives are planned to include those from the Chamber of Commerce/Development Authority, school system, public agencies, environmental and cultural groups, social organizations, and other business and community leaders, as well as interested citizenry. This will allow for better coordination and a wider range of community input, both public and private, while insuring direct liaison and representation of a steering committee.

The public hearing required after the draft *Community Assessment* is prepared and prior to its submittal was held on a joint basis March 10, 2011 at the Cochran City Hall. The Plan Executive Committee met a number of times to review and help identify any potential issues and opportunities and to delineate potential character areas. There was extensive interaction. A final meeting to review the entire *Community Assessment* in draft was also held. The Community Participation Program was reviewed and identified additional planned public and community involvement.

Staff from the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission provided general technical assistance, guidance, synthesis, analysis, mapping, writing, and editing assistance in development of this plan. However, *The Bleckley County-Cochran Comprehensive Plan* is a plan being prepared by and for the people of Bleckley County and the City of Cochran in the true spirit and intent of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Ownership of this plan rests with the

citizens and governments of Bleckley County. The overriding concern throughout the plan's development is the idea, "What can be done to make our community a better place to live and work in the future?" It is the local citizenry who will benefit from plan implementation, and whose actions are necessary to carry out the plan and bring about their desired future.

# EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND LAND USE

## Existing Land Use

The existing land use patterns of Bleckley County and Cochran, or how the land is presently being used, were examined by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Geographic Information Systems staff in 2010 by analyzing previous land use studies, tax maps, and other available sources. A generalized land use map digitized as a layer to an existing digital base map meeting DCA requirements resulted. Standard land use classifications identified in the "Local Planning Requirements" were utilized as categories, except that "agriculture" and "forestry" were separated because of the dominance of these uses within Bleckley County. The descriptions of these land use classifications are defined as follows.

### Land Use Category Definitions

**Residential:** The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.

**Commercial:** This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

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

**Public/Institutional:** This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.

**Transportation/Communications/Utilities:** This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

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

**Agriculture:** This category is for land dedicated to farming, such as fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock/poultry production, etc., or other similar rural uses.

**Forestry:** Land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood production/harvesting or other woodland use.

**Undeveloped/Vacant:** This category is for lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.

The generalized land use maps were provided to the local governments for review and correction. The local governments utilized local knowledge by a number of staff and elected officials to note corrections to the initial GIS maps. RC GIS staff then revised the digital information. The resulting existing land use maps are shown on Map LU-1 for Bleckley County and Map LU-2 for the City of Cochran.

The GIS system is also able to determine acreages for the various land use classifications in each jurisdiction. Table LU-1 provides the existing land use acreages for Bleckley County and the City of Cochran. Combined, agriculture and forestry land uses account for over four-fifths (84.2 percent) of the land area of the county, with forestry accounting for about 50 percent of the land use by itself, and 12 percent in the City of Cochran. Agriculture and forestry land uses also constitute one-fourth (25 percent) of all the land area in the City of Cochran. Residential land use accounts for nearly half (49.3 percent) of the land area in Cochran. The dominance of Cochran as the center of intense commercial and other high-density uses can be seen in the “commercial” and “public/institutional” categories.

<b>TABLE LU-1</b> <b>Existing Land Use Distribution, 2010</b> <b>(Acres)</b> <b>Bleckley County and Cochran</b>						
				% of		% of
Land Use Category	Total County	% of Total County	Unincorporated County	Unincorporated County	Cochran	Cochran
Agriculture	50,476	35.2%	50,083	35.7%	393	13.2%
Forestry	70,199	49.0%	69,838	49.8%	361	12.1%
Residential	8,985	6.3%	7,512	5.4%	1,473	49.3%
Commercial	339	0.2%	238	0.2%	101	3.4%
Industrial	265	0.2%	184	0.1%	81	2.7%
Public/Institutional	894	0.6%	624	0.4%	270	9.0%
Park/Recreation/ Conservation	9,405	6.6%	9,376	6.7%	29	1.0%
Transportation/ Communications/Utilities	2,723	1.9%	2,444	1.7%	279	9.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143,286</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>140,299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,987</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## **Future Land Use Development**

Most significant current growth is concentrated in the Southern Bleckley/Cochran Growth Area adjacent to Cochran. There is now some growth northeast of Cochran in rural Bleckley County near the Cary Community, the Ocmulgee WMA, and Georgia Highway 112. As the number of retirees relocating to Cary continues to increase, the area has become a bedroom community for Bleckley/Cochran. Residential growth has been scattered across the county, but particularly concentrated south of Cochran with the development of several subdivisions, as well as the expansion of existing subdivisions. Commercial growth is concentrated in downtown Cochran along Dykes and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets. Industrial growth is concentrated in/near northeast Cochran near Ash Street, and along West Dykes Street, including an abandoned property where a small component of one of the largest manufacturers in the Region, Lithonia Lighting, was previously located.

Growth momentum in Bleckley County can trace its life to location along U.S. 23; close proximity to I-16 and Warner Robins and the Robins Air Force Base; availability of services and infrastructure; existing population base; quality of life; and land availability. These same factors will continue to spur future growth, as well as additional opportunities for growth including, existing available cultural resources; Middle Georgia College, the oldest two-year college in the nation; abundant natural resources and the Ocmulgee River; and the many historic buildings/areas that provide remembrances of the heritage of Bleckley County are also assets for desired growth. Future growth will likely continue to concentrate in the Southern Bleckley/Cochran Growth Area, and to a lesser extent along the Cochran Bypass.



## Areas Requiring Special Attention

Development can cause a substantial impact in the economy and the community that it directly affects. It is imperative that projected developments or significant areas are noted in order to provide guidance of future development. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has termed these areas of significant change, areas requiring special attention. These areas are categorized by evaluating the existing land use patterns and trends within the jurisdiction of the local government to identify any areas requiring special attention. The areas are categorized into one of seven areas, with the exception of resources that may contribute to more than one area.

The areas requiring special attention are defined by DCA as:

- Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development;
- Areas where rapid development or change of land use is likely to occur;
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation;
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors);
- Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated;
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites);
- Areas of significant disinvestments, level of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole.

The evaluation of the existing land use patterns and trends within Bleckley County and Cochran resulted in the following identification and analysis of areas requiring special attention in accordance with state guidelines. These areas were identified by the Bleckley County Joint Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee. The committee consisted of the Interim Sole County

Commissioner and the Clerk and the Mayor and Administrator of the City of Cochran. Committee members attended several meetings to decide what resources in the community were of significant importance and to determine to what area the resources contributed.

### ***Natural/Cultural Resources***

*Natural resources are any scenic areas, prime agricultural or forest lands, major parks, recreation and conservation areas that are of significance to the community. Cultural resources are identified as rural, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional or transportation resources, and community landmarks of historic, cultural or archeological significance. The community works to conserve and protect designated natural and cultural resources.*

### **Bleckley County**

Jordan Creek: Jordan Creek is a tributary of the Ocmulgee River in the Altamaha River basin; it extends along the southwest area of Bleckley County.

Georgia Highway 257 Area/West Chicken Road: This area was originally known for its scenic cypress trees and wetlands, and colorful heritage. The cypress trees and other timber were cleared for potential residential development; however, the project was never completed. There are currently no specific development plans; the land is located in the southern part of the county.

Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area: The Ocmulgee WMA extends along the eastern side of the Ocmulgee River and is situated on 20,650 acres of land in the northwest part of the county. The area is known to be one of the three locations in Georgia that is home to the black bear; it is estimated that 300 black bears inhabit the area.

Ocmulgee WMA Gum Swamp Creek Tract: The Ocmulgee WMA Gum Swamp Creek Tract is an addition to the Ocmulgee WMA. It is located on the southeast side of Bleckley County. The Gum Swamp Creek Tract is used for hunting; the tract is also designated as one of the few bird dog training areas in Georgia.

Ocmulgee Public Fishing Area: This area is located within the boundaries of the Ocmulgee WMA and offers a 106 acre lake in the southwest part of the county. The Ocmulgee PFA was completed in June, 2006. Its development has generated revenue for the local economy.

Ocmulgee River Corridor: The Ocmulgee River Corridor extends along the southwest border of the county; it is protected under the 1991 River Corridor Protection Act. In 1999, Bleckley County adopted the “Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit Ordinance. Due to its close proximity to the Ocmulgee WMA, black bears have been known to migrate to the area.

### ***Rapid Development/Change Likely***

*Designated locations where development or disturbance of land is expected. The development can be categorized as residential, commercial, industrial, public/institutional, agriculture/forestry, mixed use, transportation/communications/utilities, and/or park/recreation/conservation.*

I-16 Corridor Development: The I-16 corridor is located in the north part of the county; it is an ideal location for commercial or residential development. Interstate 16 is an intrastate interstate that stretches 166 miles from Macon to Savannah, Georgia. Appropriate development along the I-16 corridor would produce a continuous flow of developments along the I-16 area.

Limestone Road Residential Area: This area is south of Cochran. The close proximity of this location to the incorporated area makes it an ideal site for residential development. The site is projected for subdivision development.

Ash Street/Bypass Future Development (Residential/Commercial): This area is just north of Cochran and sits adjacent to a high traffic area, making it possible for commercial development. The commercial development will likely spur residential development in the area as well.

Georgia Highway 87 North Residential Area: This location is projected as a residential development area that will be sold by units of five (5) to 10 acre parcels. The area is located in the northwest part of the county and is in close proximity to the Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area.

Georgia Highway 112 Residential Area: Due to existing and planned subdivision developments in the area, it is projected that some residential development will continue along Georgia Highway 112. This area is located in the north part of the county.

Mac Thompson Road Residential Area Expansion: The Woods Golf Course and Subdivision attract development to the Mac Thompson Road area. Additional residential development is projected to spillover onto the remaining undeveloped areas. The area is located southeast of Cochran.

Future Recreation Area Expansion: Due to annual events held in Bleckley County, such as the Southeastern Cushman Meet, Biking Bleckley, etc., there is a need to expand the current recreation area. The projected expansion site is adjacent to the current recreation center, which is located just southwest of Cochran. Expanding the recreation facility will provide opportunity for additional activities/events and will allow current events to continue to grow. In addition to expanding the recreation area, a portion of the site has been considered for a possible Recreational Vehicle area.

### ***Infill Opportunities***

*These areas have existing infrastructure in place and help to reduce the disturbance of undeveloped land. Development of sites close to infill opportunities are strongly encouraged throughout the community; existing infrastructure may be available depending on proximity.*

Potential Infill Bypass/New Jail Area: Residential or commercial infill opportunities are available in this area. This is a high traffic location which makes it marketable for any type of development. Due to the site being located just north of the city, infrastructure will be available to all sites developed.

Limestone Road Residential Area: Limestone Road is a residential development area south of Cochran with infill opportunities for additional residential development. Existing infrastructure is available to residential sites developed in this area.

Potential Infill along Crest Drive: This area is surrounded by development; however, there are a few scattered lots vacant for infill development. Due to location, infrastructure will be available

to all sites developed along Crest Drive. The potential infill along Crest Drive is located northeast of the city.

### ***Concentration of Housing/Income Need***

*These locations are defined as significant areas of blight where low income or unemployment causes a higher level of poverty than the community as a whole. This results in a lack of investment and property maintenance.*

Georgia Highway 26 West Redevelopment Neighborhood: There are scattered areas of poverty and blight in Bleckley County; however, the majority has been confined to a residential neighborhood along Georgia Highway 26 West in the southwest part of the county. At this location there are three houses that are in need of rehabilitation or removal. While these three homes signify the majority of the blight along Georgia Highway 26 West, there are other areas of blight along this strip that need to be addressed as well in order to give this neighborhood the rural character associated with Bleckley County.

North Cochran Gateway: This area is one of the main entrances into Cochran via Macon/Bibb County, along U.S. Highway 129/U.S. Highway 23 and Georgia Highway 87. This is an area where redevelopment is necessary in order to improve the appearance and aesthetics of the county. The gateway needs to be upgraded so that it exemplifies the rural character atmosphere associated with Cochran and Bleckley County. The North Cochran Gateway is located just northwest of the city.

## **City of Cochran**

### ***Natural/Cultural Resources***

*Natural resources are any scenic areas, prime agricultural or forest lands, major parks, recreation and conservation areas that are of significance to the community. Cultural resources are identified as rural, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional or transportation resources, and community landmarks of historic, cultural or archeological significance. The community works to conserve and protect designated natural and cultural resources.*

Downtown Cochran: Cochran was incorporated on March 18, 1869 and named for the late Judge Arthur E. Cochran. Downtown Cochran is rich in cultural history. The downtown area is generally considered First and Third streets from Dyke Street to Ash Street. The community participates in the state Better Hometown Program through Cochran-Bleckley Better Hometown Inc. This program is dedicated to revitalizing and developing the downtown area. The organization is interested in nominating a local historic district that would encompass eligible downtown commercial buildings and possibly adjacent residential properties. The nearby Bleckley County Courthouse, Hillcrest House, and Cochran Auditorium, which houses the Cochran-Bleckley Chamber of Commerce, are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Middle Georgia College: Middle Georgia College was established in 1884, making it the oldest two year college in the United States. The college now offers a limited amount of four year degrees and is in the process of expanding those offerings. It is a unit of the University System of Georgia. The college is situated on 170 acres of land in southeast Cochran, with an enrollment of about 2,600.

Jordan Creek: Jordan Creek is a tributary of the Ocmulgee River; the creek has three branches that run into Cochran. The creek runs by the City's sewer treatment plant and is used for the discharge of treated waste water. Citizens of the City of Cochran refer to Jordan Creek as "The Big Ditch." Whenever there is a significant amount of rain, a portion of the creek floods causing a fountain of water shooting up reaching an estimated 10 feet, and the gathering of citizens to observe.

### ***Rapid Development/Change Likely***

*Designated locations where development or disturbance of land is expected. The development can be categorized as residential, commercial, industrial, public/institutional, agriculture/forestry, mixed use, transportation/communications/utilities, and/or park/recreation/conservation.*

Cook Road Residential Area: Wood Oak Subdivision is one of the newer residential developments in the city. The subdivision is expected to expand. With the upcoming expansion of Wood Oak Subdivision, it is projected that additional residential development will proceed on

Cook Road. This area is also located near Middle Georgia College and the new Bleckley County High School in the southeast vicinity of the city, which will likely spur additional residential development. Further infrastructure development, such as the paving of roads, is necessary to accommodate the desired growth.

Ash Street/Bypass Future Development (Residential /Commercial): This is currently an agriculture area located in the northern area of the city that is projected to develop for residential or commercial use. If this area were to be used for commercial development, a pump station would need to be installed to support the development.

Green USA Industrial Area: This 16 acre site is located in the northeast quadrant of the city. The former K-3 spec building and six acres were purchased by Green USA from Cochran Bleckley Industrial Development Authority. The company manufactures sake (rice wine). The remaining area is being redeveloped, and additional buildings will be constructed. A manufacture of chopsticks and tongue depressors is expected to locate at this site.

### ***Areas Needing Redevelopment***

*These areas are generally in need of treatment/rehabilitation to help restore structures/area back to a former state or to a better condition by means of repairs, remodeling, or demolishing the structure and building a new one. Redevelopment of these structures improves the aesthetics and appearance of the area, increasing the chances of growth.*

Old Shirt Factory Site: This industrial site was once a large employer for the people in the city of Cochran and Bleckley County. The old shirt factory site is located just south of Downtown Cochran. There were originally three structures located on the property, but one building has been removed. The remaining two structures will be removed in the future. A warehouse that was added to the shirt factory at a later date will remain due to the facility still being in adequate condition. This site is included in the Cochran Urban Redevelopment Plan.

Wayne's Gas Station: This site is currently used as a mechanical garage; however, there are concerns about the stability of the building. The building is in need of renovations; therefore, the Cochran-Bleckley Better Hometown Inc. has become involved with the rehabilitation of the site. Wayne's Gas Station sits adjacent to Downtown Cochran.

Residential Areas Adjacent to Old Shirt Factory: This is a residential area that needs rehabilitation in order to guide growth; the residential area is located south of Downtown Cochran. With the condition of the adjacent old shirt factory, there is hope for the area. The old shirt factory is currently being demolished, which addresses some of the problem in this area. If this site were rehabilitated, it would enhance the appearance of the area and could potentially bring in development for the entire area, including the old shirt factory.

### ***Large Abandoned Structures/Sites***

*These are areas with large structures/sites that have been deserted; due to the abandonment it is common for beautification treatment to be needed to improve appearance and aesthetics of the structures/sites. This includes sites that may be environmentally contaminated.*

Amoco Station: This facility has been abandoned for a number of years. Before becoming the Amoco Station, it was known as the “Beline Service Station.” With the site’s close proximity to Downtown Cochran, redevelopment of this property needs to be carefully examined so that it is compatible with existing development. The Amoco Station is located in northwest Cochran.

### ***Concentration of Housing/Income Need***

*These locations are defined as significant areas of blight where low income or unemployment causes a higher level of poverty than the community as a whole. This results in a lack of investment and property maintenance.*

Wynne Circle Neighborhood, located in southwest Cochran.

“Happy Hill” Neighborhood, located in north Cochran.

Residential Areas adjacent to Old Shirt Factory, located south of Downtown Cochran.

South Fifth Street/Crescent Street Areas, located in east Cochran.

Railroad Avenue Area, located in west Cochran.

Areas of poverty and blight in Cochran are generally confined to these five areas; which comprise a significant portion of the city. The areas consist of mobile homes and/or houses that are old and in need of rehabilitation. These areas usually result from low incomes and the



consequences of lack of investment and upkeep. The areas may be considered for potential Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). By utilizing CDBG grants and other housing rehabilitation efforts to enhance the appearance and aesthetics of the areas, these locations can add to the small town, rural character and appearance of Cochran. Cochran has an Unsafe Building Ordinance that was passed in 1994, but never fully utilized until recently. The ordinance was recently amended; it allows the City to demolish dilapidated houses that are considered unsafe. If the owner is not willing to cooperate with the City and the City has to pay for the structure to be removed, the owner or landlord of the property will be billed for the removal. This amended ordinance has resulted in invigorated efforts of removing dilapidated housing. Improvements are being accomplished at virtually no cost to Cochran, and are helping efforts to revitalize the community. Structures in Wynne Circle and “Happy Hill” neighborhoods have been demolished in compliance with the Unsafe Building Ordinance.

## **Recommended Character Areas**

The preliminary identified and recommended character areas (and subareas) include the following parts of the county and Cochran because of special areas of concern, their uniqueness, as well as differing expectations of, and stimuli for, growth and development. They are shown on Map LU-3 for Bleckley County and LU-4 for the City of Cochran.

### **Bleckley County**

**Ocmulgee River Corridor.** The Ocmulgee River which forms Bleckley County’s western boundary with Houston County, is protected under the 1991 River Corridor Protection Act. The Act provides for the maintenance of a natural vegetative buffer of 100 feet on each side of the river and regulations of uses infringing upon the required buffer. In 1999, Bleckley County adopted the “Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit Ordinance,” which provides for protection as required by DNR’s Part 5 Environmental Standards. There is one state-leased Wildlife Management Area located on the Ocmulgee River, Ocmulgee WMA, as well as one Public Fishing Area, Ocmulgee PFA. Principal land uses allowed in this character area should be conservation, forestry, and recreation with limited low density residential, commercial, public and transportation/compatible utility uses.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Conserve and protect the Ocmulgee River Corridor through enforcement of the locally adopted Environmental Conservation Ordinance and other means
- Capitalize on economic opportunities associated with natural resources, and seek to promote, develop, and cultivate additional compatible uses of these resources
- Seek additional development that is compatible with and supportive of existing development

**Ocmulgee WMA; Ocmulgee WMA (Gum Swamp Creek Tract); Ocmulgee PFA.** Georgia has more than 90 Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) throughout the state. These areas provide Georgians with over one million acres of land designated for hunting and the conservation of natural resources. There are two WMAs located in Bleckley County: Ocmulgee WMA and Ocmulgee WMA (Gum Swamp Creek Tract). The Ocmulgee WMA is located along the Ocmulgee River Corridor in the western part of the county and accounts for approximately 65 percent of the total land mass of the 32,000 acre WMA. Ocmulgee WMA extends into two additional counties, Twiggs and Pulaski. The WMA is one of three locations in Georgia where black bears are known to inhabit. The Ocmulgee WMA Gum Swamp Creek Tract is located in the eastern part of the county; it is centered around Gum Swamp Creek. The Ocmulgee PFA is located in neighboring Pulaski County; however, the main access point is located in Bleckley County.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Conserve and protect the wildlife management areas through community investment and appropriate regulations
- Pursue additional public and private outdoor recreation or nature venues

**I-16 Corridor.** With its ever increasing traffic, I-16 traverses the county from the west to the east for a short distance (approximately one (1) mile) is a significant asset for future growth by providing access to both residents and travelers, as well as businesses and industry. The county has one interchange along I-16, State Route 112 which is relatively undeveloped at present. Located at the northern tip of Bleckley County, this corridor character area is still primarily in forestry and agriculture use with some scattered residential, commercial, and industrial uses. It is

envisioned with more intense commercial and industrial uses, particularly around the I-16 interchange, and as an inviting gateway into Cochran with attractive mixed uses, including quality residential developments and likely, some continued forestry/agriculture uses as well.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Enhance gateway/entranceway through signage, landscaping/beautification and other means to exemplify the rural character of Bleckley County and Cochran
- Encourage appropriate infill development through planning, infrastructure location and regulation
- Seek and promote development which is compatible with, and supportive of, the rural character of Bleckley County

**Cochran Bypass.** The Cochran Bypass (U.S. Highway 23) is unique in that one side of the bypass is within the Cochran city limits, while the other side is in the county. The bypass is parallel to the Middle Georgia College campus and extends into the Southern Bleckley/Cochran Growth Area, an area of more residential development. The Cochran Bypass is an area of limited commercial and industrial development. Additional commercial, industrial, and/or residential development is expected to occur along the bypass.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Work to improve the appearance and aesthetics, including enhancing gateways/entranceways to bypass through landscaping/beautification and other means
- Guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired compatible and supportive patterns of growth
- Actively recruit new commercial/industrial development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, existing economy, and the natural environments of the community
- Extend water and sewer infrastructure as needed to support/encourage quality growth and development along the bypass

- Work to attract compatible commercial development to serve residents living in the area as well as travelers choosing to bypass downtown Cochran
- Explore the feasibility of annexation into the City of Cochran where appropriate and desired

**Southern Bleckley/Cochran Growth Area.** This area of predominant agriculture/forestry/rural land uses has experienced scattered residential development; it is poised to receive more in the near future due to the expansion and additional development of subdivisions. The area has been the principal location for recent residential growth in the county and will continue to attract residential development and limited commercial development.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Promote development that is compatible with existing development
- Utilize infrastructure location to guide growth
- Develop county-wide land use regulations to encourage compatible land utilization
- Encourage growth which preserves and protects its rural character and quality of life
- Explore the feasibility of annexation into the City of Cochran where appropriate and desired

**Bleckley-Cochran Industrial Park.** This 311 acre property is important to community and economic development, and thus it is essential to guide land use development within and surrounding this area. It is located just north of Cochran, with direct access to the Cochran Bypass.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Develop the necessary infrastructure and industrial park improvements to facilitate and accommodate desired commercial and industrial growth
- Actively recruit new industry and commercial development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing economy, and the natural environments of the community

- Enhance economic development marketing efforts through the Industrial Development Authority, Cochran-Bleckley Chamber of Commerce, and other regional/state agencies

**Airport.** The Cochran Municipal Airport will continue to be upgraded with improvements as necessary to enhance its very important contributions to the transportation and economic development of the community. The level II airport is located east of Cochran. Development close to the airport will be controlled and compatible with continued and enhanced airport functioning and will be enhanced, made more direct, and less disruptive of other nearby development. The area will be appropriately buffered and landscaped to lessen negative visual and other impacts on adjacent and transition uses.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Develop the necessary infrastructure improvements to facilitate and accommodate desired supportive commercial and industrial growth
- Maintain a modern airport through necessary infrastructure/equipment upgrades and maintenance

**Rural Bleckley County.** The vast majority of Bleckley County, with its stable forestry/agriculture/rural land uses, will be the largest character area. The many agricultural fields, the Ocmulgee River, Ocmulgee WMA, Ocmulgee WMA Gum Swamp Creek Tract and other natural and cultural assets offer attractions for residential growth to take advantage of the atmosphere, open spaces, and quality of life. There are also advantages and potentials for economic development in a broader sense including agriculture, forestry, tourism, recreational, and value added concerns. There is a need for supporting land use regulation, and for the community to proactively manage, guide, and direct growth and development, and to protect its landscape and natural and cultural resources. This could also be helped through careful, controlled community investment and location of facilities, including paved roads, as well as through appropriate, coordinated land use regulation.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Practice management/guidance/direction of growth and development to protect rural landscape and natural and cultural resources
- Support compatible development of natural and cultural resources
- Improve beautification and litter control efforts
- Control location and type of infrastructure development to encourage quality development in desired locations
- Develop county-wide land use regulations to encourage compatible land utilization

**Cary Community.** Established in the late 1800s, the unincorporated Cary Community is located in the northern part of the county at the intersection of GA Hwy. 112 and Willis Howell Road. The community was centered around three general stores and a school, the Old Cary School. Today the community is a growing area of residential development as well as limited commercial development, mainly due to retirees moving to the area. The Cary Community has become a bedroom community for Bleckley/Cochran. Several subdivisions, a general store, and a church are located in the community.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Encourage growth which preserves and protects its rural character and quality of life
- Control location and type of infrastructure development to encourage quality development in desired locations
- Develop the necessary infrastructure to facilitate and accommodate desired residential and commercial development

**City of Cochran**

**Cochran Urban Area (City Limits).** The City of Cochran is the center of urban activity and the economic engine for Bleckley County. The City of Cochran has a number of character areas. Recommended character areas include: Downtown Commercial; Tree Streets, Railroad Ave., Flower Streets, Happy Hill, and Beech & Cherry Street Residential Areas; Green USA, North

Ave., and Shirt Factory Sites; Middle Georgia College; Highway 26 Gateway Entrance; and Cochran-By-Pass.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Actively recruit new industry and commercial/retail development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing economy, and the natural environments of the county
- Encourage appropriate, compatible infill development through planning, infrastructure location and regulation
- Address substandard housing and concentrations of blight, including manufactured housing developments, and cooperatively upgrade their quality and appearance through rehabilitation, removal, and code enforcement
- Utilize infrastructure location to guide growth

**Downtown Commercial Area.** The downtown commercial area is a concentration of commercial, governmental, and institutional buildings, some of which are historic. The downtown area is generally considered First and Third streets from Dyke Street to Ash Street.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Maintain downtown Cochran as a vibrant, functioning commercial, governmental, and social center through an active Cochran Better Hometown and other programs
- Encourage infill development through planning, infrastructure location and regulation
- Support downtown revitalization and investment efforts to maintain it as the focus of the community
- Encourage public and private adaptive use/reuse of historic buildings, historic districts, and landmark structures
- Pursue designation of a local historic district and encourage use of historic preservation rehabilitation tax incentives

**Residential Areas.** These areas are generally in need of treatment/rehabilitation to help restore structures and/or the area back to a former state or to a better condition by means of repairs,

remodeling, or demolishing the structure and building a new one. These areas of disinvestment and poor property maintenance result in substandard housing and vacant properties.

Redevelopment of these structures improves the aesthetics and appearance of the area, increasing the chances of growth.

**Tree Streets Residential Area.** This area is located in the southern part of the city. It is adjacent to the Old Shirt Factory site. This area is bound by West Dykes, Pine, West Peter, and Maple streets.

**Railroad Ave. Residential Area.** This area is located in the southwestern part of the city and is adjacent to Cochran's downtown commercial area. This area is bound by North Avenue, Highway 87 North, just beyond NW Railroad Avenue, and Dohl Street Junction.

**Flower Streets Residential Area.** This area is located in the southern part of the city and is adjacent to Cochran's downtown commercial area. This area is bound by West Peter, West Dykes, Rose and South 2<sup>nd</sup> streets.

**Happy Hill Residential Area.** This area is located in the northern part of the city. It is adjacent to the Beech and Cherry Street residential area. This area is bound by Phillips Lane, just before East Beech Street, North 12 Street, and just beyond Dinah Street extending along MLK Jr. Drive.

**Beech & Cherry Street Residential Area.** This area is located in the northeastern part of the city. It is adjacent to the Happy Hill Residential Area. This area is bound by East Cherry, East Beech, 3<sup>rd</sup> and just beyond North 8<sup>th</sup> streets.

#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Work to improve appearance and aesthetics through the City's Unsafe Building Ordinance, code enforcement, and other means
- Address substandard housing and concentrations of blight, including manufactured housing developments, and cooperatively upgrade their quality and appearance through rehabilitation, removal, code enforcement and regulation
- Provide guidance to, and for location of, compatible housing development through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation



- Upgrade its appearance and the quality of its housing development through the use of coordinated construction codes, manufactured home regulations, subdivision regulations, zoning, and growth management tools as appropriate
- Utilize housing improvement programs such as, CDBG, CHIP, and others

**Green USA Site.** This area is located in the northeast quadrant of the city. The site consists of a sake (rice wine) manufacturer; a manufacturer of chopsticks and tongue depressors is expected to locate to the site. There are approximately 16 acres of land available for development at this location. The Green USA Site has been identified as one of three (3) sites included in the Cochran Urban Redevelopment Plan.

#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Enhance economic development marketing efforts through the Industrial Development Authority, Bleckley County Chamber of Commerce, and other regional/state agencies
- Actively recruit new industrial development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing industries and economy, and the natural environments of the community
- Guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired compatible and supportive patterns of growth
- Seek to establish the site as an Opportunity Zone under the Urban Redevelopment Law

**North Ave. Site.** This site is located in the northwest quadrant of the city; it is adjacent to the Railroad Avenue Residential Area, a potential CDBG target area. The North Avenue Site is a former sawmill site. It has been identified as one of three (3) sites included in the Cochran Urban Redevelopment Plan. Industrial development is expected to occur at this location.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Enhance economic development marketing efforts through the Industrial Development Authority, Bleckley County Chamber of Commerce, and other regional/state agencies
- Actively recruit new industrial development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing economy, and the natural environments of the community
- Guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired compatible and supportive patterns of growth
- Seek to establish the site as an Opportunity Zone under the Urban Redevelopment Law

**Shirt Factory Site.** The Old Shirt Factory Site is located in the southern part of the city; it is bound by South Dohl, Peach, West Dykes, and Pine streets. Two structures remain at the site; however, both structures will be removed at a later date. The Shirt Factory Site has been identified as one of three (3) sites included in the Cochran Urban Redevelopment Plan. Industrial development is expected to occur at this site in the future.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Enhance economic development marketing efforts through the Industrial Development Authority, Bleckley County Chamber of Commerce, and other regional/state agencies
- Actively recruit new industrial development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing economy, and the natural environments of the community
- Guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired compatible and supportive patterns of growth
- Seek to establish the site as an Opportunity Zone under the Urban Redevelopment Law

**Middle Georgia College.** Middle Georgia College was established in 1884 as part of the New Ebenezer Association, a predominately Baptist religious denomination. Middle Georgia College is a unit of the University System of Georgia and is the oldest two-year college in the nation. The school is currently being transformed into a four-year university; at this time a Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management is the only four-year program offered. Plans are underway to incorporate a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education/Special Education. The college is situated on 170 acres of land and currently has an enrollment of approximately 3,434 students. Middle Georgia College currently has two commuter campuses located in Dublin and Eastman. The college is located along Highway 87, one of the major thoroughfares into Cochran via Dodge (Eastman) County.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Pursue development that is compatible with and supportive of existing development
- Work to improve the appearance and aesthetics, including enhancing gateways/entranceways through landscaping/beautification and other means
- Seek to market Middle Georgia College and enhance student enrollment as an important component of the local economy

**Hwy. 26 Gateway Entrance.** The Highway 26 Gateway Entrance extends from the Cochran Bypass area into the city. The area is predominately in agricultural uses; however, commercial and/or residential development is expected to occur along the gateway.

*Suggested Development Strategies*

- Work to improve the appearance and aesthetics, including enhancing the gateway/entranceway through landscaping/beautification and other means
- Encourage appropriate, compatible infill development through planning, infrastructure location and regulation
- Guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired compatible and supportive patterns of growth

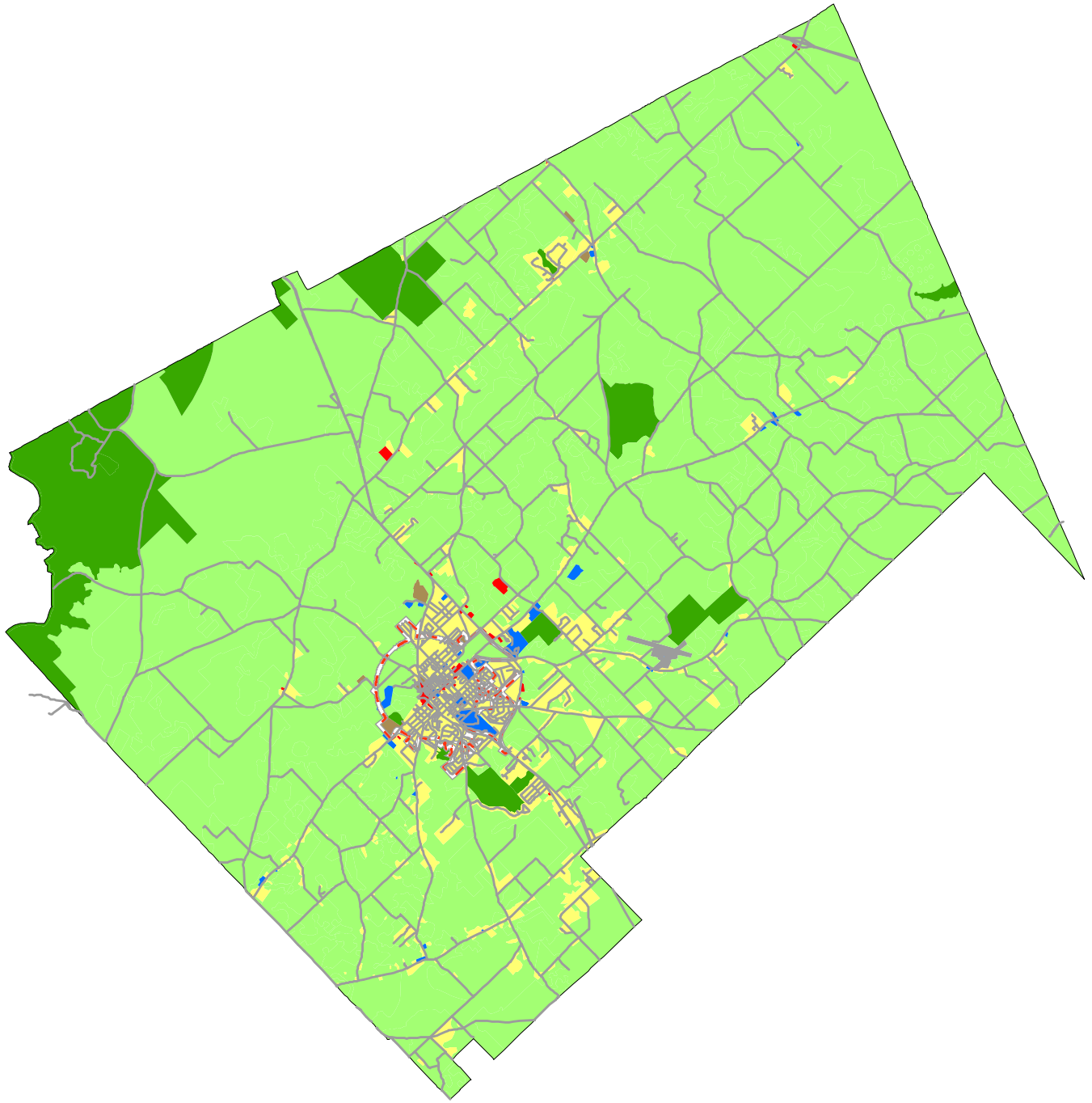
- Utilize local zoning ordinance or other appropriate regulations to guide entranceway's growth and acceptable/compatible land use

**Cochran Bypass.** The Cochran Bypass (U.S. Highway 23) character area is located north and east of the Cochran city limits. While there are mixed land uses currently along the bypass, consisting of residential, commercial, and public/institutional, there is ample undeveloped land available for possible development. The Cochran Bypass is unique in that one side of the bypass is within the Cochran city limits, while the other side is in the county. A small portion of the bypass area is presently served by public water and sewer, which would need to be extended to support and encourage quality growth. Highway-oriented commercial development and possible additional subdivisions are the expected primary uses within this character area.








#### *Suggested Development Strategies*

- Work to improve the appearance and aesthetics, including enhancing gateways/entranceways to bypass through landscaping/beautification and other means
- Guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired compatible and supportive patterns of growth
- Actively recruit new commercial/industrial development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, existing economy, and the natural environments of the community
- Extend water and sewer infrastructure as needed to support/encourage quality growth and development along the bypass
- Work to attract compatible commercial development to serve residents living in the area as well as travelers choosing to bypass downtown Cochran
- Explore the feasibility of annexation into the City of Cochran where appropriate and desired

# MAP LU-1 Bleckley County Existing Land Use



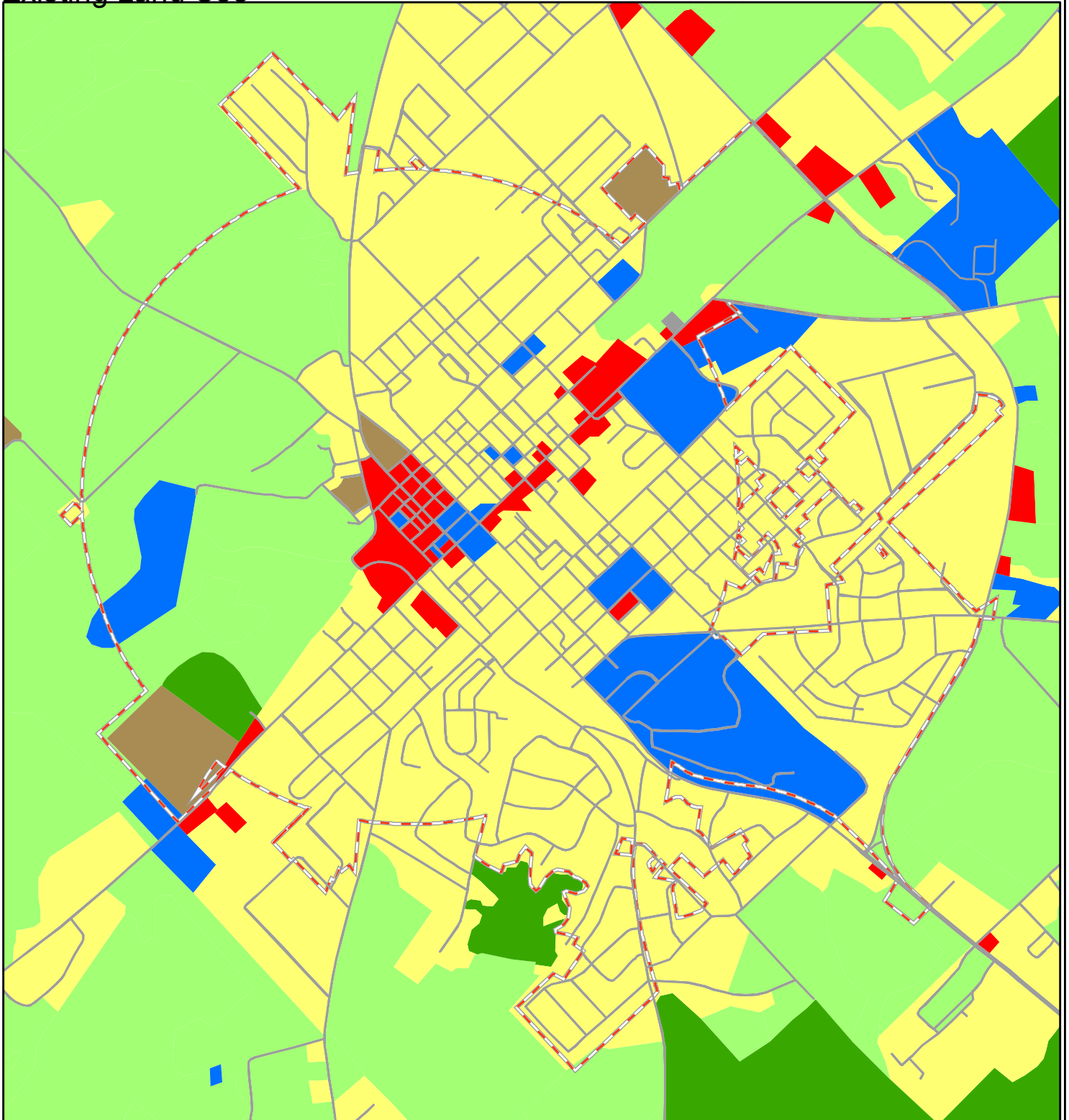
### Land Use

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Agriculture/Forestry |  Park/Recreation/Conservation            |
|  Residential          |  Public/Institutional                    |
|  Commercial           |  Transportation/Communications/Utilities |
|  Industrial           |   |



"The data sets represented here-in are presented to the user with the understanding that, because of the nature of some GIS datasets, there is no guarantee of completeness or accuracy. Conclusions drawn from, or actions taken on the basis of this data are the sole responsibility of the user."  
SOURCE: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2010

# MAP LU-2 City of Cochran Existing Land Use



### Land Use

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Agriculture/Forestry | Park/Recreation/Conservation            |
| Residential          | Public/Institutional                    |
| Commercial           | Transportation/Communications/Utilities |
| Industrial           |   |

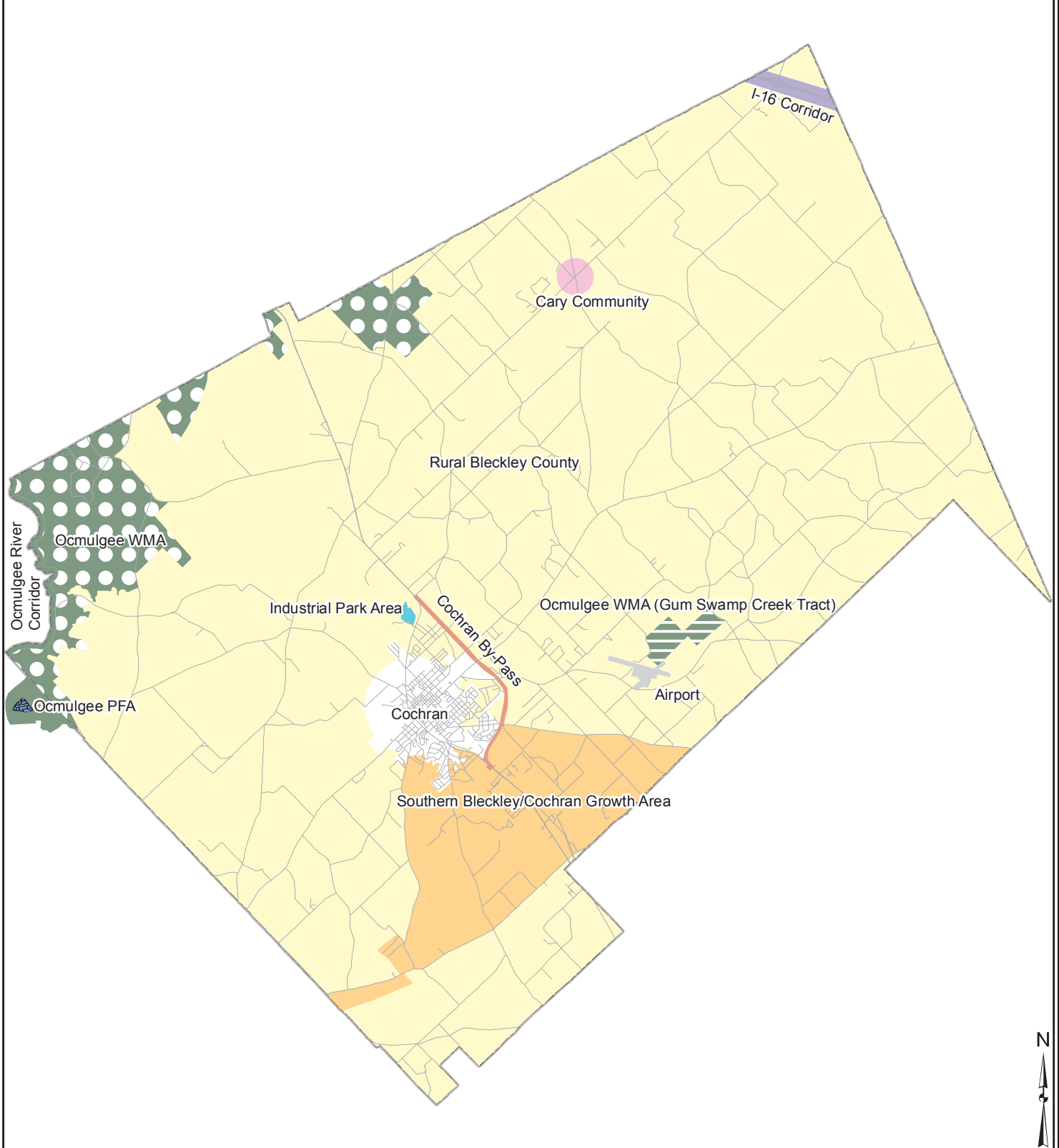


"The data sets represented here-in are presented to the user with the understanding that, because of the nature of some GIS datasets, there is no guarantee of completeness or accuracy. Conclusions drawn from, or actions taken on the basis of this data are the sole responsibility of the user."  
SOURCE: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2010

# MAP LU-3

Bleckley County

Recommended Character Areas



**Legend**

- County Boundary
- Cary Community
- Cochran
- Cochran By-Pass
- I-16 Corridor
- Industrial Park Area
- Ocmulgee River Corridor
- Ocmulgee WMA
- Ocmulgee PFA
- Ocmulgee WMA (Gum Swamp Creek Tract)
- Rural Bleckley County
- Southern Bleckley/Cochran Growth Area
- Airport

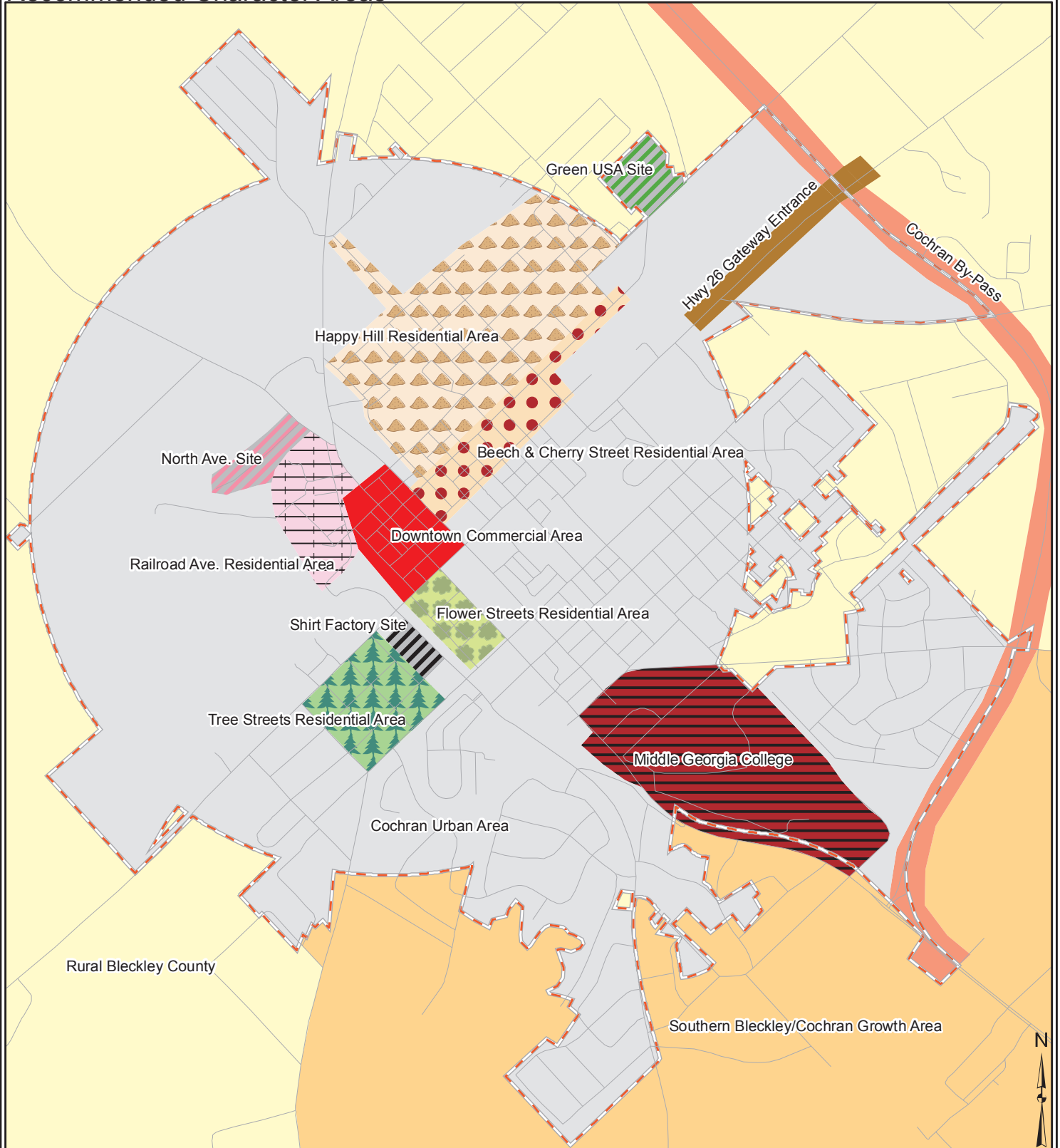


Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2010

# MAP LU-4

City of Cochran

Recommended Character Areas



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2010

### Legend

- Cochran By-Pass
- Cochran Urban Area
- Downtown Commercial Area
- Hwy 26 Gateway Entrance
- Rural Bleckley County
- Southern Bleckley/Cochran Growth Area

### Residential Areas

- Beech & Cherry Street Residential Area
- Flower Streets Residential Area
- Happy Hill Residential Area
- Railroad Ave. Residential Area
- Tree Streets Residential Area

### Urban Redevelopment Sites

- Green USA Site
- North Ave. Site
- Shirt Factory Site



# **ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES**

## **Introduction**

The Quality Community Objectives are guidance targets established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in the “Local Planning Requirements” in preparation and implementation of a local comprehensive plan. They further elaborate the identified Statewide Planning Goals. A local government is required to evaluate the consistency of their policies, activities, and development patterns with these goals and objectives.

In general, Bleckley County and Cochran’s policies, activities, and development patterns are supportive of and consistent with Statewide Planning Goals. Variation of the statewide goals were all espoused in the currently adopted joint comprehensive plan. The high incidence of poverty and relatively low incomes, the fact that population levels have grown steadily rather than rapidly, and the abundance of agricultural and forest lands have resulted in quality environments without much development threat. Location, the presence of Middle Georgia College, and the closeness to Robins Air Force base do foretell future growth. The lack of comprehensive, existing land use regulation, the contraction of the largest employer, Lithonia Lighting (now Acuity Brands), and the existing quality of life and location could pose threats and conflicts to continuation of desired growth patterns as more growth and development, including residential, is attracted to Bleckley County.

Consistency with the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs), which are elaborations of the Statewide Planning Goal, is more problematic since many do not seem to be applicable to a rural county, and since many also assume the existence of local land use regulation. DCA’s local assessment tool survey was utilized to evaluate Bleckley County and the City of Cochran in terms of progress toward achieving those QCOs which are applicable to them. The survey can also be utilized to stimulate discussion about the character and quality of growth desired. The responses to the survey follow.

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment*

<i>Development Patterns</i>			
<b>Traditional Neighborhoods</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.			
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.			
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.			
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.			
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.			
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.			
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.			
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.			
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.			
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.			

**Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment**

<b>Infill Development</b>			
<b>Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.			
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.			
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.			
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).			
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.			
<b>Sense of Place</b>			
<b>Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.			
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.			
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.			
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.			

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5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.			
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.			
<b>Transportation Alternatives</b>			
<b>Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.			
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.			
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.			
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.			
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.			
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.			
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.			
<b>Regional Identity</b>			
<b>Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.			

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2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.			
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).			
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.			
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.			
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.			
<b><i>Resource Conservation</i></b>			
<b>Heritage Preservation</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.			
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.			
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.			

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<b>Open Space Preservation</b>			
<b>New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.			
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.			
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.			
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.			
<b>Environmental Protection</b>			
<b>Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.			
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.			
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.			
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.			
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.			
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.			

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7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.			
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).			
<b><i>Social and Economic Development</i></b>			
<b>Growth Preparedness</b>			
<b>Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.			
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.			
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.			
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.			
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.			
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.			
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.			

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8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.			
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.			
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.			
<b>Appropriate Businesses</b>			
<b>The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.			
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.			
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.			
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.			
<b>Employment Options</b>			
<b>A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.			
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.			
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.			



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4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.			
<b>Housing Choices</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.			
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.			
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).			
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.			
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.			
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.			
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.			
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.			
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.			
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.			

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<b>Educational Opportunities</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.			
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.			
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.			
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.			
<b><i>Governmental Relations</i></b>			
<b>Regional Solutions</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.			
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.			
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.			

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4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.			
<b>Regional Cooperation</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.			
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.			
3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.			
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.			

## SUMMARY NEEDS ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The following analysis is based on the technical data and information contained in the Data Appendix. This analysis provides a summary of the most relevant information of the community's data, especially as it relates to the community's preliminary identification of Issues and Opportunities.

### Population

The 2009 Census estimated population of Bleckley County is 12,855 persons, while the City of Cochran's is 5,180 persons. Both the county and city have experienced an increase in population since 2000. The official 2000 Census population for Bleckley County and Cochran was 11,666 and 4,455, respectively. Bleckley County and Cochran have been growing faster than the U.S. since 1990; however, the county is growing at a rate slower than Georgia. Bleckley County's population is anticipated to continue to increase at a steady rate; in 2035 it is projected that the county's population will be nearly 17,150, a 33 percent increase from 2009.

Of the total population, racial composition in 2000 consisted of 73.8 percent white, 24.8 percent black, and 2.1 percent of some other race. The median age in Bleckley County (35.1) is slightly lower than the U.S. (35.3) and significantly higher than Georgia (33.4). The percentage of residents in Bleckley County (13.6 percent) 65 and older is higher than the U.S. (12.4 percent) and Georgia (9.6 percent).

### Economic Development

In 2000, the four largest sectors of employment in Bleckley County were manufacturing, educational, health, and social services, public administration, and construction; however, the largest sectors of employment in the state were educational, health and social services, manufacturing, retail trade, and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services. The four sectors account for 60 percent of employment in the county, and nearly 54 percent (53.81) of the state. There are approximately 5,099 persons (57 percent) actively in the labor force; 2,717 persons (53.3 percent) are male, 46.7 percent (2,382 persons)

are female. Bleckley County's unemployment rate continues to fluctuate; in 2001 the unemployment rate was 4.5 percent. Due to the closing of the major manufacturer in the city, Lithonia Lighting, the unemployment rate increased to 13.3 percent as of November, 2010, a 2.5 percent increase from 10.8 percent in November, 2009.

The top three employers in Bleckley County are the Bleckley County School System (450), Acuity Brands Lighting (400), and Middle Georgia College (375-400). Bleckley County's average weekly wages in 2008 (\$585) were approximately 80 percent of Georgia's and were lower than all of the surrounding counties, except Dodge (\$504) and Pulaski (\$584). The remaining surrounding counties, Houston (\$778), Laurens (\$637), Twiggs (\$696), and Wilkinson (\$740), had average weekly wages significantly higher than Bleckley County.

## **Natural and Cultural Resources**

Agriculture and forestry account for 84 percent of the county's primary land uses, approximately 120,675 acres. The county ranks 109<sup>th</sup> in the state for reported value of agricultural production and 44<sup>th</sup> in the state for total forestry and related products, as well as third in the state for goat production and ninth for pine straw. DNR's list of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities for Bleckley County lists four (4) animals and five (5) plants. Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area and its Gum Swamp Creek Tract are both in Bleckley County. Public access to the Ocmulgee Public Fishing Areas is in the county, while the actual PFA is located in adjacent Pulaski County.

DNR's Environmental Planning Criteria for Bleckley County include wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and the Ocmulgee protected river corridor. Fishing, hunting, and other recreational uses of the wetlands in Bleckley County are popular, especially around the Ocmulgee River, which forms the boundary with Houston County to the west. Groundwater is the major source of water for drinking and other purposes in Bleckley County; the Floridan/Jacksonian Aquifer System supplies most of the water used.

There are currently three (3) properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Bleckley County, including the Bleckley County Courthouse, the Cochran Municipal Building and School (auditorium, police department, Chamber of Commerce, arts organization), and

Hillcrest (Cedar Hall), all of which are located in Cochran. Cochran has a historic downtown and participates in the Better Hometown program.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

Transportation. Bleckley County has a good transportation system of county roads, city streets, state highways (GA. 26, 87, 112, 126, 257, 278), federal highways (US. 23 and 129 alternate) and Interstate 16. Norfolk Southern railroad serves Bleckley County. The Cochran Airport is in need of additional T-Hangars.

Water Supply and Treatment. The City of Cochran owns and operates its water system. There is a need for an additional water tower at the Industrial Park. The computer system at the various water tanks throughout the City need to be updated to a more technological advanced system. The county government does not operate a water supply system. Unincorporated residents rely mainly on individual wells for their water supply. The water is supplied primarily from the Floridan/Jacksonian Aquifer.

Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment. The City of Cochran owns and operates its municipal wastewater treatment and collections system. The wastewater treatment system needs to be expanded, including running a water main to the plant and aging lines are in need of replacement. EPA recently approved the City's need for an additional filter system. Since Bleckley County does not have a public sanitary sewerage system, individuals continue to use septic tanks in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Solid Waste. Bleckley County and Cochran utilize the Houston County Subtitle D Municipal Solid Waste Landfill to dispose of its solid waste. The facility currently has 9.88 years of permitted capacity; however, plans are underway for the expansion of the facility that would exceed 100 years of permitted capacity.

Public Safety. The Bleckley County Sheriff Department and Cochran Police Department work together to ensure the safety of all Bleckley County residents. There is a need for two (2) additional staff members at the sheriff's office as well as the jail. The Bleckley County Sheriff Department also needs to add computers in patrol vehicles, upgrade three (3) vehicles, and increase equipment to provide for a SWAT team. The Cochran Police Department is in need of two (2) tasers, three (3) handguns, shotguns and new vehicles. There are six (6) fire departments

located throughout Bleckley County. The fire departments are in need of a brush truck, equipment, turnout gear, and SCBA equipment.

There is a need for a new EMS facility; the current facility is a mobile home that is approximately 20 years old. There is a need for upgraded equipment, including 12 lead heart monitors, as well as additional Paramedics and First Responders. Continued training and additional equipment is needed in all public safety areas including policing, fire departments, and EMS to ensure that personnel are knowledgeable of the latest technological advances to provide the best quality service to the community.

Hospital and Other Public Health Facilities. Bleckley Memorial Hospital was built in 1969 and is in adequate condition. The hospital is in need of electronic medical records, upgrade of computer systems, radiology equipment, retention and recruitment of physicians, funding for indigent care patients, and scholarship loans for physicians. The Bleckley County Health Department is one of 10 health departments in the South Central Health District. There are three (3) personal care homes in Bleckley County and one (1) senior care facility.

Recreation. The Bleckley County Recreation Board of Directors oversees the Cochran Recreation Department. Regular maintenance to the recreational facilities is needed to ensure the safety of participants utilizing the equipment. The Cochran Recreation Department is in need of new restroom facilities, sidewalks, and repaving of walking areas. An increase of revenue from the City and County is needed to help with the funding of anticipated projects.

General Government. Bleckley County and Cochran have adequate government facilities and services; however, there are some facilities that are in need of rehabilitation. The Cochran Municipal Building is in need of restoration, which would ultimately become the new location of Cochran City Hall. The Bleckley County Courthouse is in need of cosmetic improvements. The County voting precinct is in need of cooling and heating upgrades. Several county workshops and buildings need to be replaced. The County is also in need of a Bleckley County Complex Center that would be centered around the courthouse.

Educational Facilities. The five (5) schools in Bleckley County are in good condition. As the number of students continues to increase additional schools and/or expansions of current facilities will be needed. A new Bleckley County Middle School was completed in December,

2010; construction of athletic facilities at the new school is expected to be completed by the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. Middle Georgia College, a two-year college, is located in Cochran. Several additional higher education opportunities are located within 60 miles of Bleckley County.

Library and Other Cultural Facilities. The Tessie W. Norris Bleckley County Library is located on North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. It is essential for the library to maintain full library status. The library provides various specialized programs, including preparation material for the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). The library is in need of funding for books, supplies, restroom facility upgrades, and additional personnel that would provide for extended service hours.

## **Housing**

In 2000, the number of housing units in Bleckley County was 4,866, a 24 percent increase since 1980. The number of housing units increased in both Bleckley County and Cochran from 1990 to 2000, from 4,268 to 4,866 in Bleckley County and 1,781 to 1,867 in the city. The majority of the housing units in Bleckley County are single-family site built structures (75.6 percent), considerably higher than the state (64.2 percent) and the nation (60.3 percent). Manufactured homes account for 24.4 percent of the housing units in Bleckley County; this percentage is significantly higher than the state (12.0 percent) and the nation (0.23 percent).

The median cost of a home in the county is \$66,500; this is higher than Cochran (\$63,400). The cost of a home in Bleckley County is significantly lower than that of the state (\$111,200) and the nation (\$119,600). Approximately 13.3 percent of the households are cost burdened. More than seven percent (7.3 percent) are cost burdened 30 to 49 percent; approximately six percent are cost burdened 50 percent and greater. Householders in Bleckley County were predominantly white (78.1 percent), with 20.3 percent black, and 0.6 percent Hispanic in 2000.

## **Intergovernmental Coordination**

Bleckley County and Cochran participate locally, regionally and on the state level with other governments to address common issues, such as provision of much needed services and infrastructure, economic development attraction, and coordinated planning/growth management.



There are no apparent service delivery conflicts identified between Bleckley County and Cochran. Coordinated efforts are needed among the two local governments in the area of land use planning and the establishment of any future land use regulations. The potential for possible service merger/consolidation should be explored as appropriate.

## **LIST OF POTENTIAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Economic Development**

- Local, regional, and state cooperation
- Retention of local graduates
- Education levels/job skills improvements
- Business/industry retention/expansion
- Attraction of new economic development
- Small business/entrepreneurial development
- Detailed Economic Development Strategy development
- Enhanced economic development marketing
- Downtown Cochran commercial area revitalization/Better Hometown Program
- Rural character/Quality of Life preservation
- Lack of local job diversification
- Infrastructure improvements, particularly in unincorporated county
- Jobs with wages of all levels
- Industrial Park improvements
- Transportation improvements
- Tourism development/promotion
- Community aesthetics/gateway improvements
- I-16 Corridor Development
- Growth management
- County-wide access to DSL/fiber optic
- Airport improvements
- Protection/promotion of agricultural/forestry uses
- U.S. 23/Cochran Bypass
- Cochran Urban Redevelopment Plan

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

- Compatible, supportive development
- Natural resources conservation/protection
- Wildlife management area/outdoor recreation development
- Compatible economic utilization/opportunities
- Historic resources preservation/utilization
- Growth management/regulation
- Community aesthetics/appearance improvements
- Rural agricultural character preservation
- Public fishing area

## **Housing**

- Improvement of housing quality
- Need for additional affordable housing
- Utilization of state/federal programs, including historic preservation rehabilitation tax incentives
- Growth management/nuisance/environmental/subdivision/mobile home regulation and code enforcement
- Improve substandard housing/eliminate blight
- Diversity of housing mix
- Loft apartments downtown

## **Land Use**

- Subdivision growth in rural areas
- Planning/growth management/nuisance/environmental regulation
- Building/codes enforcement
- Growth management/nuisance/environmental/subdivision/mobile home regulation and code enforcement in unincorporated county
- Rural character/Quality of Life preservation
- Infill development and location of use management
- Community appearance/aesthetics improvements
- Preserve existing residential areas within Cochran
- Utilization of infrastructure to guide growth
- Compatible/supportive development
- Utilization of future land use plan when reviewing planned development
- Preserve prime farmland and open space
- Annexation

## **Community Facilities and Services**

- Provision of adequate water/sewer service through capital improvements program
- Extension of water/sewer access as needed
- Highway improvements/upgrades
- Long-range capital improvement program for roadway improvements
- Education facilities/services improvements
- Park/recreational facilities improvements/funding
- Long-range Recreation Master Plan development
- Health care system improvements, including physician recruitment
- Public safety enhancements
- Fire service improvements
- Provision of adequate government facilities, including city administrative facility
- Solid Waste/Recycling service improvements
- Excess wastewater treatment capacity availability

- Adequate emergency medical services

**Intergovernmental Coordination**

- Local, regional, and state cooperation
- Services sharing/cooperation/consolidation
- Coordinated planning/growth management

**THE BLECKLEY COUNTY-  
COCHRAN COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT  
TECHNICAL ADDENDUM AND  
DATA APPENDIX**

**MARCH, 2011**

# POPULATION

**Table P-1**  
**TOTAL POPULATION**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1980-2009**

	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Bleckley</b>	10,767	10,430	11,666	12,855
<b>Cochran</b>	5,121	4,390	4,455	5,180

Source: United States Census Bureau (2000, 2009).

**Table P-2**  
**TOTAL POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISON**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**1990-2009**

	<b>Bleckley</b>	<b>Cochran</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>1990 Population</b>	10,430	4,390	6,478,216	248,709,873
<b>2000 Population</b>	11,666	4,455	8,186,453	281,421,906
<b>2009 Population</b>	12,855	5,180	9,829,211	307,006,550
<b>Increase in Population, 1990-2000</b>	1,236	65	1,708,237	32,712,033
<b>Growth between 1990 and 2000</b>	11.85%	1.48%	26.37%	13.15%
<b>Increase in Population, 2000-2009</b>	1,189	725	1,642,758	25,584,644
<b>Growth between 2000 and 2009</b>	10.19%	16.27%	20.07%	9.09%

Source: United States Census Bureau (1990, 2000, 2009).

**Key Findings:**

- Bleckley County’s population now estimated close to 13,000 (12,855 in 2009), up from c. 10,500 in 1990, and c. 12,000 in 2000
- Cochran shows significant growth since 1990
- Bleckley County was growing slower than Georgia and U.S. between 1990 and 2000; however, Bleckley County is growing faster than U.S. since 2000, but still slower than Georgia

**Table P-3**  
**POPULATION PROJECTIONS**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**2000-2035**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>
<b>Bleckley</b>	11,666	12,855	13,006	13,742	14,519	15,341	16,209	17,126
<b>Cochran</b>	4,455	5,180	5,224	5,433	5,699	5,978	6,271	6,578

Source: United States Census Bureau (2000, 2009); Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, (2010-2035), 2011.

**Key Finding:**

- Bleckley County’s population is projected to increase from current c. 13,000 to nearly 17,500 in 2035 (25.7 percent increase) from 2010 estimate.



**Table P-4**  
**AGE DISTRIBUTION**  
**Bleckley County And Cochran**  
**1980-2000**

<b>BLECKLEY COUNTY</b>			
	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>0-4 Years Old</b>	732	709	747
<b>5-13 Years Old</b>	1,452	1,558	1,750
<b>14-17 Years Old</b>	864	482	604
<b>18-20 Years Old</b>	1,132	714	804
<b>21-24 Years Old</b>	655	598	514
<b>25-34 Years Old</b>	1,390	1,512	1,396
<b>35-44 Years Old</b>	1,192	1,376	1,690
<b>45-54 Years Old</b>	1,096	1,136	1,449
<b>55-64 Years Old</b>	1,012	944	1,128
<b>65 And Over</b>	1,242	1,401	1,584

<b>COCHRAN</b>			
	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>0-4 Years Old</b>	312	318	298
<b>5-13 Years Old</b>	662	619	663
<b>14-17 Years Old</b>	366	176	203
<b>18-20 Years Old</b>	798	459	476
<b>21-24 Years Old</b>	296	242	217
<b>25-34 Years Old</b>	596	588	477
<b>35-44 Years Old</b>	450	503	567
<b>45-54 Years Old</b>	471	405	501
<b>55-64 Years Old</b>	484	361	368
<b>65 And Over</b>	686	719	685

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table P-5**  
**DETAILED AGE DISTRIBUTION**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	<b>BLECKLEY</b>	<b>COCHRAN</b>	<b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>UNITED STATES</b>
<b>Population</b>	11,666	4,455	8,186,453	281,421,906
<b>Percent below 18</b>	26.6	26.1	26.5	25.7
<b>Percent 18 to 24</b>	11.3	15.6	10.2	9.6
<b>Percent 25 to 44</b>	26.5	23.4	32.4	30.2
<b>Percent 45 to 64</b>	22.1	19.5	21.3	22.0
<b>Percent 65 and over</b>	13.6	15.4	9.6	12.4
<b>Median Age</b>	35.1	32.7	33.4	35.3

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Finding:

- Bleckley County's age structure is slightly younger than that of U.S. but significantly older than that of Georgia

**Table P-6**  
**RACIAL COMPOSITION TREND**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1980-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY			COCHRAN		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>White Alone</b>	8,297	8,000	8,544	3,345	2,690	2,464
<b>Black or African American Alone</b>	2,367	2,332	2,869	1,704	1,651	1,875
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native Alone</b>	19	6	11	7	1	4
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	33	79	112	20	46	63
<b>Other Race</b>	51	13	130	45	2	49

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table P-7**  
**RACIAL COMPOSITION COMPARISON PERCENT**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	<b>BLECKLEY</b>	<b>COCHRAN</b>	<b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>UNITED STATES</b>
<b>White Alone</b>	73.2	55.31	65.07	75.14
<b>Black or African American Alone</b>	24.6	42.09	28.70	12.32
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native Alone</b>	0.1	0.09	0.27	0.88
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	0.9	1.41	2.12	3.64
<b>Other Race</b>	0.5	1.10	3.84	8.03

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- Bleckley’s White population (73.2%) is slightly lower than U.S. (75.1%) and much greater than Georgia’s (65.1%)
- Bleckley’s Black population (24.6%) is less than Georgia’s (28.7%) and much greater than U.S. (12.3%)

**Table P-8  
HISPANIC TREND  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
1980-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY			COCHRAN		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Persons of Hispanic Origin</b>	107	43	107	72	16	44

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table P-9  
HISPANIC POPULATION COMPARISON  
Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.  
2000**

	BLECKLEY	COCHRAN	GEORGIA	UNITED STATES
<b>2000 Population</b>	11,666	4,455	8,186,453	281,421,920
<b>Hispanic Population</b>	107	44	435,227	35,305,818
<b>Percent Hispanic</b>	0.92	0.99	5.32	12.55

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- Bleckley’s Hispanic population (any race) has increased by nearly 149 percent since 1990 (from 43 in 1990 to 107 in 2000)
- Bleckley’s Percent of Hispanic population in 2000 (.92) still remains below that of Georgia (5.3) and that of the U.S. (12.6)

**Table P-10  
MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
1990-2000**

	1990	2000
<b>Bleckley</b>	\$29,439	\$42,148
<b>Cochran</b>	\$28,929	\$36,757

Source: United States Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

**Table P-11  
MEAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON  
Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.  
2000**

	<b>Bleckley</b>	<b>Cochran</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Income (\$)</b>	\$42,148	\$36,757	\$80,077	\$56,675

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Finding:

- Bleckley’s Mean Household Income in 2000 was \$42,148, about 74 percent of that of the U.S. (\$56,675) and only 53 percent of Georgia (\$80,077)

**Table P-12  
PER CAPITA INCOME  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
1990-2000**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Bleckley County</b>	\$10,775	\$15,934
<b>Cochran</b>	\$10,578	\$13,354

Source: United States Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

**Table P-13  
PER CAPITA INCOME  
Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.  
2000**

	<b>Bleckley County</b>	<b>Cochran</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Per Capita Income (\$)</b>	\$15,934	\$13,354	\$21,154	\$21,587

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Finding:

Bleckley’s Per Capita Income in 2000 was \$15,934, about 75 percent of that of Georgia (\$21,154) and 74 percent of that of the U.S. (\$21,587)

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Table ED-1  
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
1980-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY			COCHRAN		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Total Employed Civilian Population</b>	4,307	4,644	4,763	1,969	1,788	1,608
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting &amp; mining</b>	500	351	266	100	93	42
<b>Construction</b>	231	239	319	92	65	54
<b>Manufacturing</b>	1,077	1,167	1,086	537	435	381
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	100	87	69	37	34	20
<b>Retail Trade</b>	542	665	318		289	70
<b>Transportation, warehousing, and utilities</b>	101	260	180	60	56	70
<b>Information</b>	N/A	N/A	39	282	0	24
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	135	162	224	52	65	69
<b>Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services</b>	83	96	216	24	34	85
<b>Educational, health and social services</b>	680	775	893	139	388	411
<b>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services</b>	191	27	264	388	4	114
<b>Other Services</b>	122	254	307	57	108	119
<b>Public Administration</b>	545	561	582	201	217	149

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table ED-2**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	<b>BLECKLEY</b>	<b>COCHRAN</b>	<b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>UNITED STATES</b>
<b>Total Employed Civilian Population</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting &amp; mining</b>	5.58%	2.61%	1.39%	1.87%
<b>Construction</b>	6.70%	3.36%	7.94%	6.78%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	22.80%	23.69%	14.81%	14.10%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	1.45%	1.24%	3.86%	3.60%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	6.68%	4.35%	11.97%	11.73%
<b>Transportation, warehousing, and utilities</b>	3.78%	4.35%	6.02%	5.20%
<b>Information</b>	0.82%	1.49%	3.53%	3.08%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	4.70%	4.29%	6.54%	6.89%
<b>Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services</b>	4.53%	5.29%	9.44%	9.30%
<b>Educational, health and social services</b>	18.75%	25.56%	17.59%	19.92%
<b>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services</b>	5.54%	7.09%	7.15%	7.87%
<b>Other Services</b>	6.45%	7.40%	4.74%	4.87%
<b>Public Administration</b>	12.22%	9.27%	5.03%	4.79%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.



**Table ED-3  
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY  
Cochran  
1980-2000**

	COCHRAN		
	1980	1990	2000
<b>Total Employed Civilian Population</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting &amp; mining</b>	5.08%	5.20%	2.61%
<b>Construction</b>	4.67%	3.64%	3.36%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	27.27%	24.33%	23.69%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	1.88%	1.90%	1.24%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	0.00%	16.16%	4.35%
<b>Transportation, warehousing, and utilities</b>	3.05%	3.13%	4.35%
<b>Information</b>	14.32%	0.00%	1.49%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	2.64%	3.64%	4.29%
<b>Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services</b>	1.22%	1.90%	5.29%
<b>Educational, health and social services</b>	7.06%	21.70%	25.56%
<b>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services</b>	19.71%	0.22%	7.09%
<b>Other Services</b>	2.89%	6.04%	7.40%
<b>Public Administration</b>	10.21%	12.14%	9.27%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- In 2000, the four largest sectors of employment in Bleckley County were Manufacturing, Health, and Social Services, Public Administration, and Construction, Retail Trade, and Local Government.
- The largest sectors of employment by industry in Georgia in 2000 were Educational, Health, and Social Services, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Professional/Scientific/Management/Administrative/Waste Management Services.

**Table ED-4**  
**LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION TREND**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1990-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Total Males and Females</b>	8,032	8,948	3,416	3,456
<b>In Labor Force</b>	4,927	5,099	1,910	1,783
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	4,887	5,069	1,903	1,778
<b>Civilian Employed</b>	4,644	4,763	1,788	1,608
<b>Civilian Unemployed</b>	243	306	115	170
<b>In Armed Forces</b>	40	30	7	5
<b>Not In Labor Force</b>	3,105	3,849	1,506	1,673
<b>Total Males</b>	3,759	4,224	1,517	1,491
<b>Male in Labor Force</b>	2,670	2,717	971	868
<b>Male Civilian Labor Force</b>	2,643	2,697	964	863
<b>Male Civilian Employed</b>	2,530	2,553	909	794
<b>Male Civilian Unemployed</b>	113	144	55	69
<b>Male In Armed Forces</b>	27	20	7	5
<b>Male Not In Labor Force</b>	1,089	1,507	546	623
<b>Total Females</b>	4,273	4,724	1,899	1,965
<b>Female In Labor Force</b>	2,257	2,382	939	915
<b>Female Civilian Labor Force</b>	2,244	2,372	939	915
<b>Female Civilian Employed</b>	2,114	2,210	879	814
<b>Female Civilian Unemployed</b>	130	162	60	101
<b>Female In Armed Forces</b>	13	10	0	0
<b>Female Not In Labor Force</b>	2,016	2,342	960	1,050

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- The total of all males and females not in the labor force countywide in 2000 was somewhat higher than was the case in 1990 (1990 – 38.7% vs. 43%).

**Table ED-5**  
**LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF WORK TREND**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1990-2000**

	Bleckley County		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Total Population</b>	10,430	11,666	4,390	4,455
<b>Worked in State of Residence</b>	4,545	4,656	1,763	1,592
<b>Worked in County of Residence</b>	2,628	2,583	940	805
<b>Worked outside of County of Residence</b>	1,917	2,073	823	787
<b>Worked outside of State of Residence</b>	23	43	0	0

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Finding:

- During the 1990s, the percentage of Bleckley County residents commuting outside of the county for work increased by 8.1%, while those living and working in the county decreased by 1.7%.

**Table ED-6**  
**PERSONAL INCOME BY TYPE TREND**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1990-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Total Income</b>	\$112,342,729	\$184,271,500	\$45,708,128	\$59,987,100
<b>Aggregate wage or salary income for households</b>	\$84,026,849	\$128,726,300	\$32,785,799	\$38,680,500
<b>Aggregate other types of income for households</b>	\$1,529,228	\$3,519,900	\$640,786	\$1,393,800
<b>Aggregate self employment income for households</b>	\$7,378,732	\$10,723,300	\$3,984,488	\$3,901,500
<b>Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income</b>	\$5,253,180	\$12,817,900	\$2,211,653	\$3,205,200
<b>Aggregate social security income for households</b>	\$6,475,511	\$10,391,400	\$2,877,396	\$3,987,400
<b>Aggregate public assistance income for households</b>	\$1,153,607	\$2,906,700	\$704,023	\$1,618,900
<b>Aggregate retirement income for households</b>	\$6,525,622	\$15,186,000	\$2,503,983	\$7,199,800

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table ED-7**  
**PERSONAL INCOME BY TYPE COMPARISON**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, and Georgia**  
**2000**

	BLECKLEY	COCHRAN	GEORGIA
<b>Total Income</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Aggregate wage or salary income for households</b>	69.86%	64.48%	78.24%
<b>Aggregate other types of income for households</b>	1.91%	2.32%	1.70%
<b>Aggregate self employment income for households</b>	5.82%	6.50%	5.60%
<b>Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income</b>	6.96%	5.34%	5.27%
<b>Aggregate social security income for households</b>	5.64%	6.65%	4.04%
<b>Aggregate public assistance income for households</b>	1.58%	2.70%	0.00%
<b>Aggregate retirement income for households</b>	8.24%	12.00%	4.57%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Finding:

- The County's percentage of Transfer Payments to Households was higher than that of the state as a whole in 2000 (7.21% vs. 4.04%). The local percentage of total personal income derived from Wages and Salaries by Household (69.86%) was somewhat less than Georgia as a whole (78.24%).

**Table ED-8**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION (PERCENTAGE)**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY	GEORGIA	UNITED STATES
<b>Management</b>	23.5	32.7	33.6
<b>Service</b>	16.7	13.4	14.9
<b>Sales</b>	18.7	26.8	26.7
<b>Farming</b>	1.9	0.6	0.7
<b>Construction</b>	12.8	10.8	9.4
<b>Production</b>	26.5	15.7	14.6

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Finding:

- The top occupations countywide in 2000 were Production, Management, Sales, and Service (combined some 85% of the total). Georgia's and the nation's top occupation was Management.

**Table ED-9**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT TREND**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1980-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY			COCHRAN		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Less than 9th Grade</b>	1,765	1,224	926	902	624	418
<b>9th to 12th Grade (no diploma)</b>	1,380	1,316	1,102	640	479	422
<b>High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)</b>	1,611	2,023	2,574	539	723	829
<b>Some College (No Degree)</b>	644	866	1,178	335	319	382
<b>Associate Degree</b>		303	516		130	163
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	250	395	550	86	175	171
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	282	263	353	185	135	201

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table ED-10**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	<b>BLECKLEY COUNTY</b>	<b>COCHRAN</b>	<b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>UNITED STATES</b>
<b>Less than 9th Grade</b>	12.86%	16.16%	7.54%	7.55%
<b>9th to 12th Grade (no diploma)</b>	15.31%	16.32%	13.86%	12.05%
<b>High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)</b>	35.75%	32.06%	28.71%	28.63%
<b>Some College (No Degree)</b>	16.36%	14.77%	20.40%	21.05%
<b>Associate Degree</b>	7.17%	6.30%	5.19%	6.32%
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	7.64%	6.61%	16.01%	15.54%
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	4.90%	7.77%	8.30%	8.86%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- Close to one in three (28.17%) of the County's population age 25 and older in 2000 had less than a high school level education, while another 35.8 percent had only a high school level education.
- The County's percentage of those with a Bachelor's Degree (7.64%) was less than half that of Georgia in 2000 (16.01%).

**Table ED-11  
EMPLOYMENT AND AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES  
Bleckley County, Georgia, and Surrounding Counties  
2007 and 2008**

	EMPLOYMENT				AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES (\$)			
	2007	Rank	2008	Rank	2007	Rank	2008	Rank
<b>Bleckley County</b>	\$3,732	103	\$3,611	106	\$647	29	\$585	64
<b>Georgia</b>	\$4,076,363		\$4,029,673		\$811		\$819	
<b>Surrounding Counties</b>								
<b>Dodge</b>	\$6,454	78	\$6,236	81	\$487	137	\$504	133
<b>Houston</b>	\$56,419	14	\$56,395	14	\$755	7	\$778	8
<b>Laurens</b>	\$20,089	35	\$19,569	35	\$611	42	\$637	39
<b>Pulaski</b>	\$3,213	114	\$3,070	115	\$549	81	\$584	65
<b>Twiggs</b>	\$1,150	149	\$1,073	150	\$709	13	\$696	20
<b>Wilkinson</b>	\$3,002	115	\$3,126	114	\$713	11	\$740	11

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Employment and Wages, 2008 Averages, 2009.

Key Finding:

- Bleckley County's average weekly wages in 2008 (\$585) were approximately 71% of Georgia's and were lower than all of the surrounding counties, except Dodge (\$504) and Pulaski (\$584)

**Table ED-12  
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES  
Bleckley County, Georgia, and U.S.  
1990-2009**

	1990	2000	2004	2009	Dec. 2010
<b>Bleckley County</b>	5.5%	4.1%	5.90%	6.90%	13.40%
<b>Georgia</b>	5.20%	3.50%	4.70%	11.00%	10.20%
<b>U.S.</b>	5.60%	4.00%	5.50%	10.00%	9.40%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2011.

Key Finding:

- In 2009, Bleckley County's unemployment rate was significantly lower than Georgia and the U.S.; however, in December, 2010 Bleckley County's unemployment rate increased to 13.40%, compared to U.S. (9.40%) and Georgia (10.20%)



## Economic Resources

Bleckley County has a number of economic resources at its disposal, including location, transportation access, available sites and buildings, local post-secondary education facilities, active economic organizations, and general community support. The community has major four-lane highway access with U.S. Highway 23 including the Cochran Bypass, active rail service from Norfolk Southern and easy access to I-16 and I-75. These transportation routes also allow for access to barge service in Bainbridge, as well as deep water ports at Savannah, Jacksonville, and Brunswick.

Bleckley County has an active Cochran-Bleckley Chamber of Commerce ([www.Cochran-Bleckleychamber.org](http://www.Cochran-Bleckleychamber.org)) and Cochran-Bleckley Industrial Development Authority (IDA). Other local economic development agencies include the Hospital Authority of Bleckley County, Ocmulgee Regional Joint Development Authority (Bleckley, Dodge, Telfair, and Wilcox counties), and the Joint Development Authority of Bleckley and Dodge Counties. The county is a Tier 2 community, as designated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, with available tax credits of up to \$2,500 per job created. Bleckley County also has full freeport inventory tax exemption at the 100% level, and the ability for qualified projects to apply for Foreign Trade Zone designation as a sub-zone of Free Trade Zone 144.

The community has 301 available acres in its existing industrial park, Bleckley-Cochran Industrial Park. Several available industrial buildings and sites also exist. The City of Cochran has recently developed an Urban Redevelopment Plan that will seek to establish an opportunity zone in an existing industrial site, potentially providing maximum job tax credits of \$3,500 per job created.

Middle Georgia College is headquartered in Cochran, with an Aviation Campus located in neighboring Eastman at the Heart of Georgia Regional Airport, and a satellite campus at the Dublin Center University System. The college serves the surrounding South Georgia area and is the only higher education institution of aviation in the state. The Cochran campus has many programs essential in preparing a more skilled and educated workforce, and the ability to train workers with skills for particular jobs. Training for new and expanding businesses is available through Georgia's Quick Start and Work Ready programs. The community also participates in the One-Stop Program for Georgia's Region 9 Workforce Investment Act program.

Ongoing economic trends locally within the last decade include the continuing development of the County's industrial park and sites; continuing highway transportation improvements, including the Cochran Bypass; the transitioning of Middle Georgia College, a two-year multi-campus residential institution, to a four year university and the establishment of the Middle Georgia College Aviation Campus at Heart of Georgia Regional Airport in neighboring Eastman; loss of manufacturing jobs (including approximately 400 at the largest employer, Lithonia Lighting, although some companies are expanding); ongoing continuation of local festivals and celebrations (Southeastern Cushman Club Spring Meet and Biking Bleckley Metric 100) and recreation facilities (Ocmulgee WMA and the Ocmulgee WMA Gum Swamp Tract) as a means of visitor attraction.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Bleckley County is rich in natural and cultural (historic and prehistoric) resources. (See selected NCR maps which follow.) Its significant wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and the Ocmulgee River Protected Corridor are addressed through a local environmental conservation ordinance as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Planning Criteria, which both the County and City of Cochran adopted in 1999. Bleckley County and Cochran utilize groundwater supplied primarily by the Floridan/Jacksonian Aquifer.

Agriculture (35.2 percent) and forestry (49 percent) are by far the county's major land uses, estimated at a total of approximately 84 percent based on the information collected during this plan's preparation. Roughly 72 percent of Bleckley County soils (Dothan-Tifton-Fuquay Association) are considered prime farmland. Bleckley County ranks 109<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for its reported value of agricultural production, with row/forage crops as the top commodity followed by forestry and related products, then livestock/aquaculture, poultry/eggs, ornamental horticulture, and vegetables. The county ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for wheat production and 17<sup>th</sup> for straw. Bleckley County is 44<sup>th</sup> in the state for total forestry and related products, ninth for pine straw, and 63<sup>rd</sup> for timber. The county also ranks third and seventh respectively, for its production of goats and beef cattle finished outside the county.

Four (4) animals and five (5) plants identified in Bleckley County are currently listed on DNR's list of Special Concern Animals and Plants. Only the Relict Trillium is identified as endangered on both federal and state lists; however, four (4) additional plants (the Marl Spleenwort, Ocmulgee Skullcap, Ovate Catchfly, and Sandhill Milk-vetch) and two (2) animals (Rafineque's Big-eared Bat and Southern Hognose Snake) have Georgia threatened or rare status.

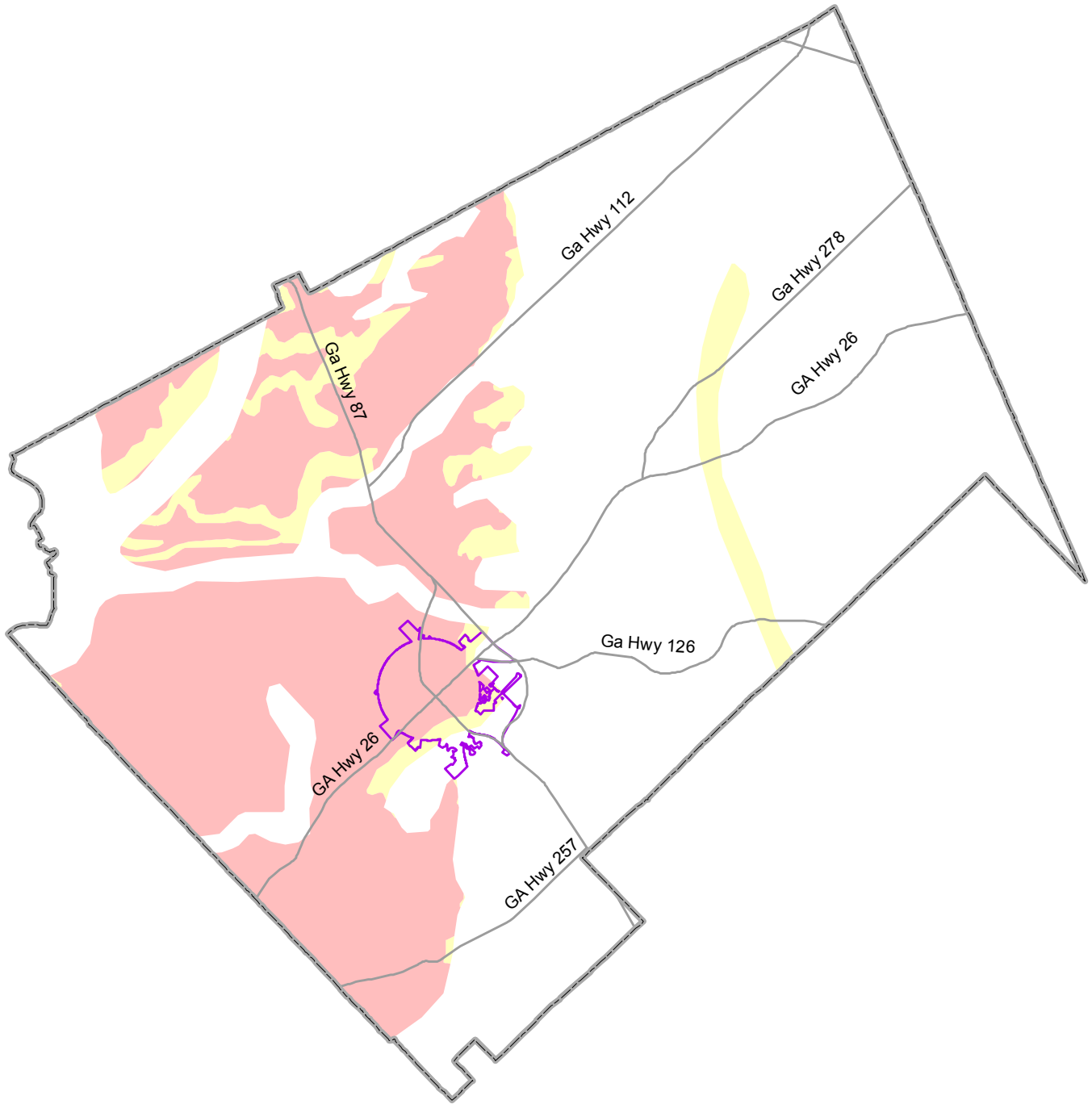
Bleckley County has three state recreation areas, the Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area, Ocmulgee WMA-Gum Swamp Creek Tract, and the Ocmulgee Public Fishing Area

(within the WMA and part in Pulaski County). There are also local parks, such as James Dykes Memorial Park, which also provides public access to the Ocmulgee River. Most of the county's scenic areas are associated with its natural resources and areas, such as the Ocmulgee River and the previously mentioned recreation areas.




The Bleckley County Courthouse, Cochran Municipal Building and School (houses city auditorium, Chamber of Commerce, arts council, and police department), and Hillcrest (Cedar Hall), all of which are located in Cochran, are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There are other eligible properties and historic districts elsewhere in Cochran and in the unincorporated county that have not yet been listed. Cochran also participates in the Better Hometown downtown revitalization program. In addition, there are archaeological sites county-wide presently recorded in the UGA State Archaeological Site File. A county-wide historic resources survey was completed in 1977 which documented approximately 135 historic properties; however, some of those properties are now gone, but many others are now considered historic (at least 50 years old).

As Bleckley County continues to grow, protection of its natural and cultural resources and the county's rural character is needed to maintain the community's overall quality of life now and in the future. This can best be achieved through controlled and planned growth and land use regulation designed to conserve these significant resources and encourage their sensitive development for compatible economic development, recreation, and tourism uses, as appropriate.

MAP NCR-1  
Bleckley County  
Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas



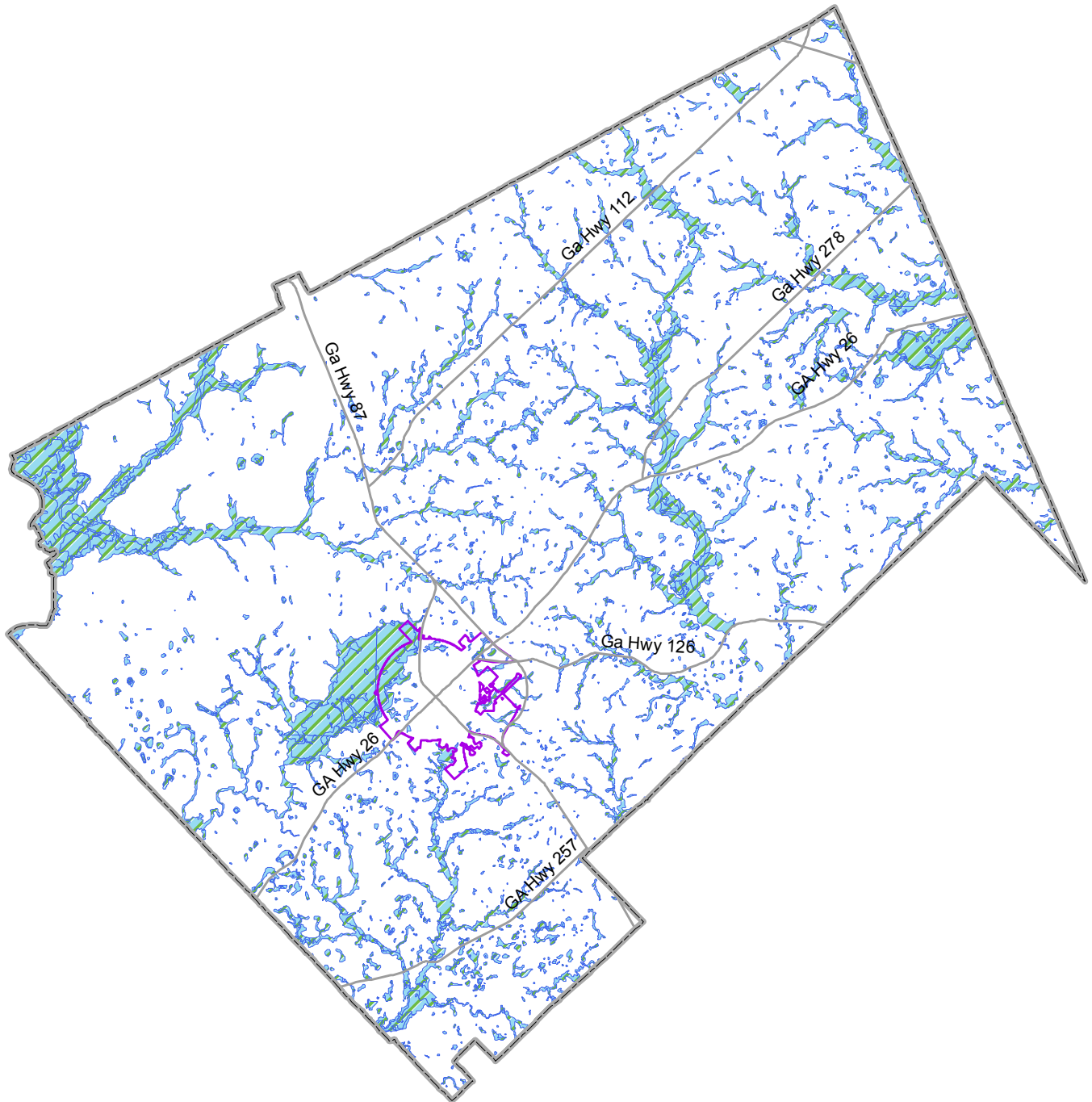
**Legend**

-  **County Boundary**
-  **Average Pollution Susceptibility**
-  **High Pollution Susceptibility**

Source: Hydrologic Atlas 18 of the Georgia Geologic Survey, 1989  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011



MAP NCR-2  
Bleckley County  
National Wetlands Inventory



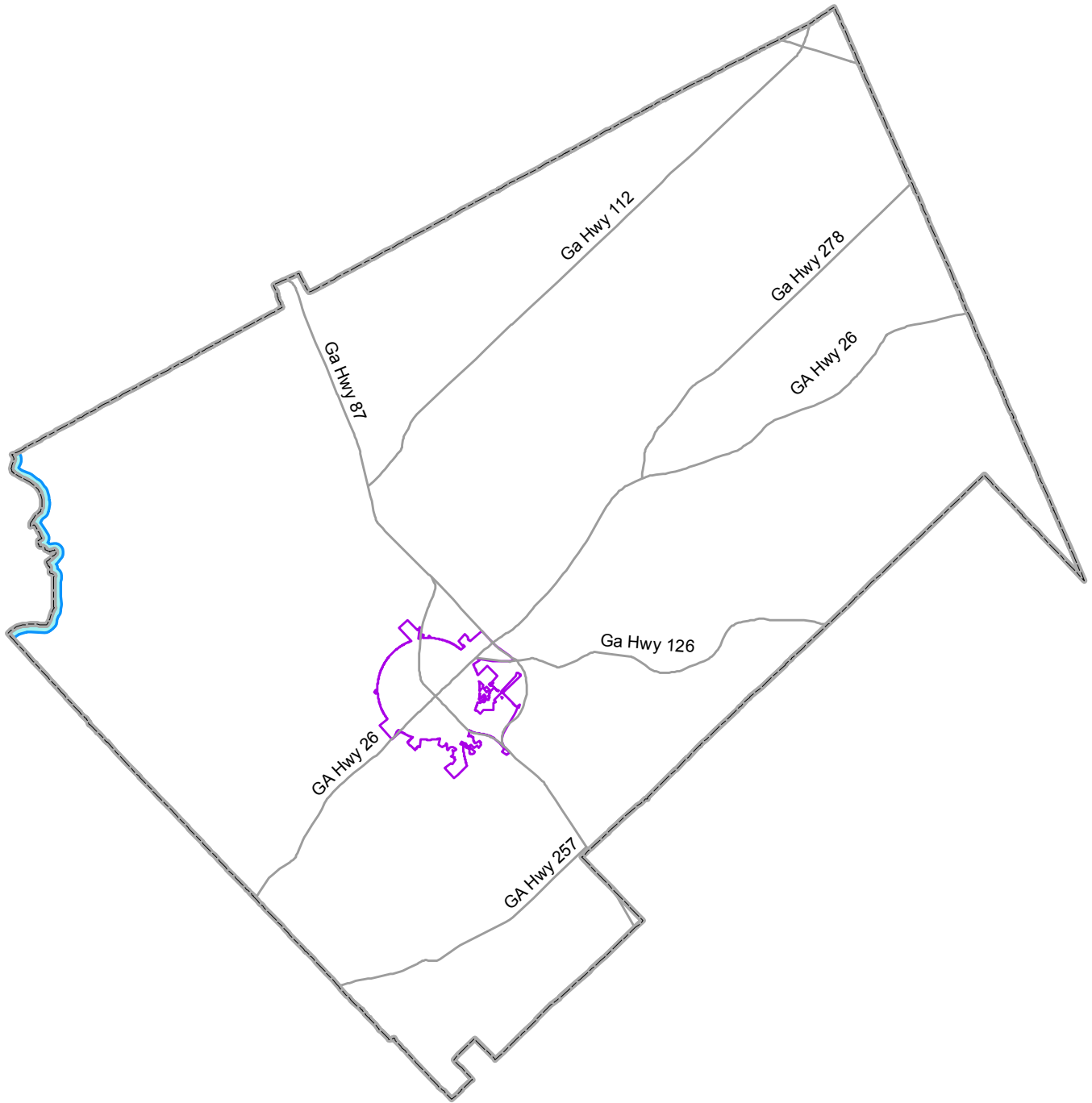
**Legend**

-  County Boundary
-  Wetlands



Source: Georgia GIS Clearing House  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011

MAP NCR-3  
Bleckley County  
Ocmulgee River Protected Corridor

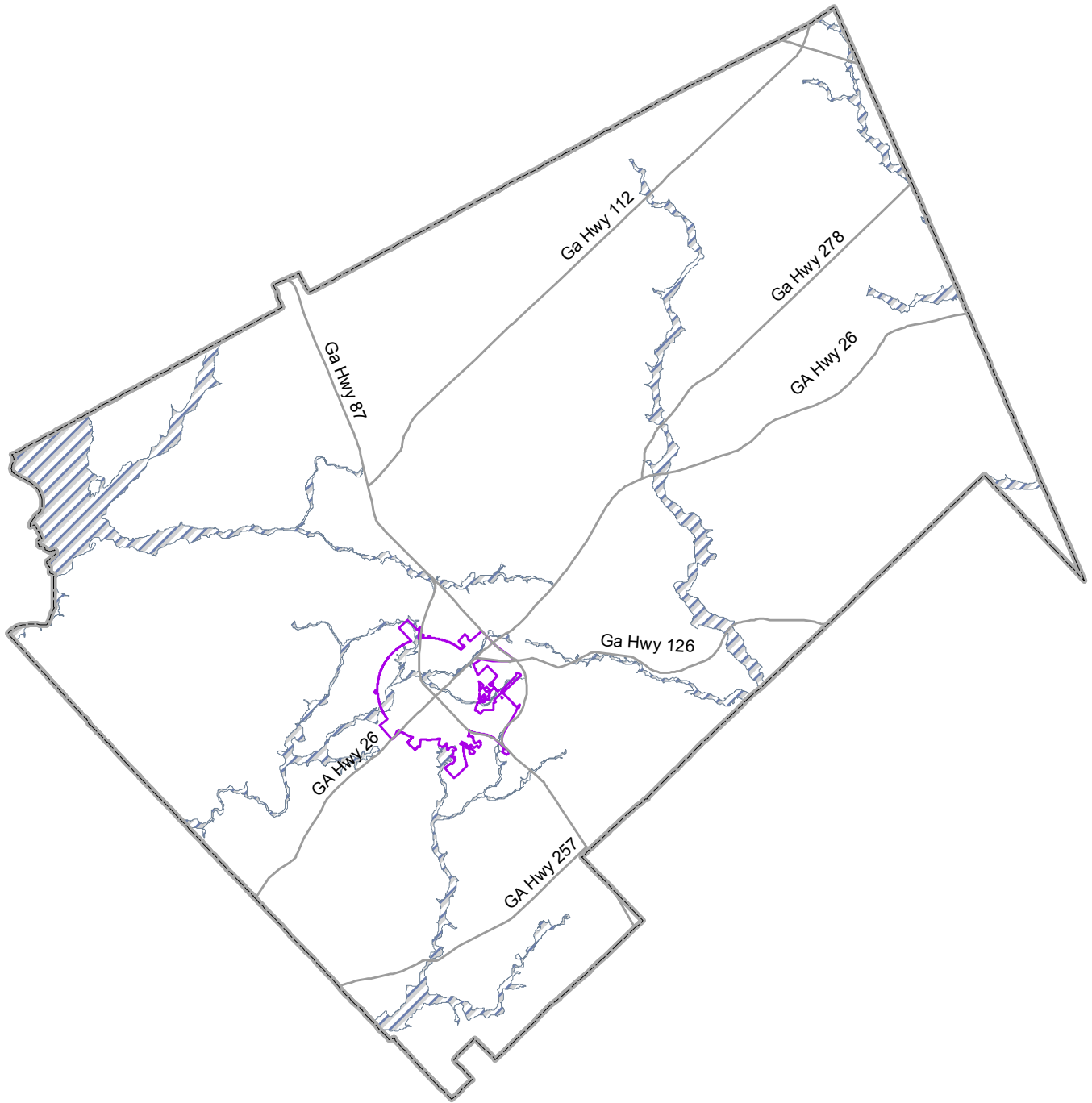


**Legend**



-  County Boundary
-  Ocmulgee River Protected Corridor



MAP NCR-4  
Bleckley County  
Flood Zones



**Legend**

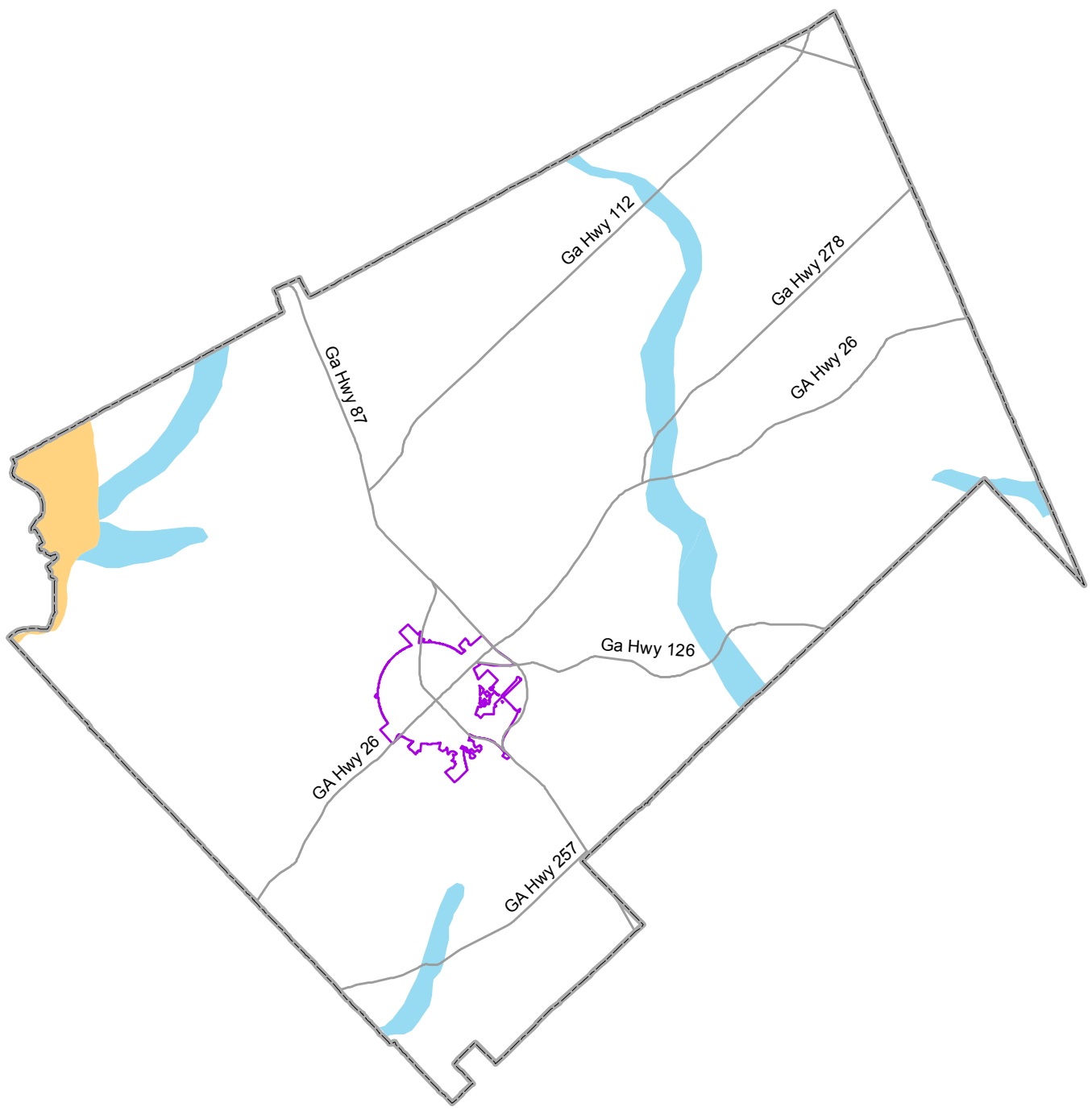
-  **County Boundary**
-  **Flood Zones**






Source: FEMA, National Flood Insurance Program  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011



MAP NCR-5  
Bleckley County  
Soils with Development Limitations



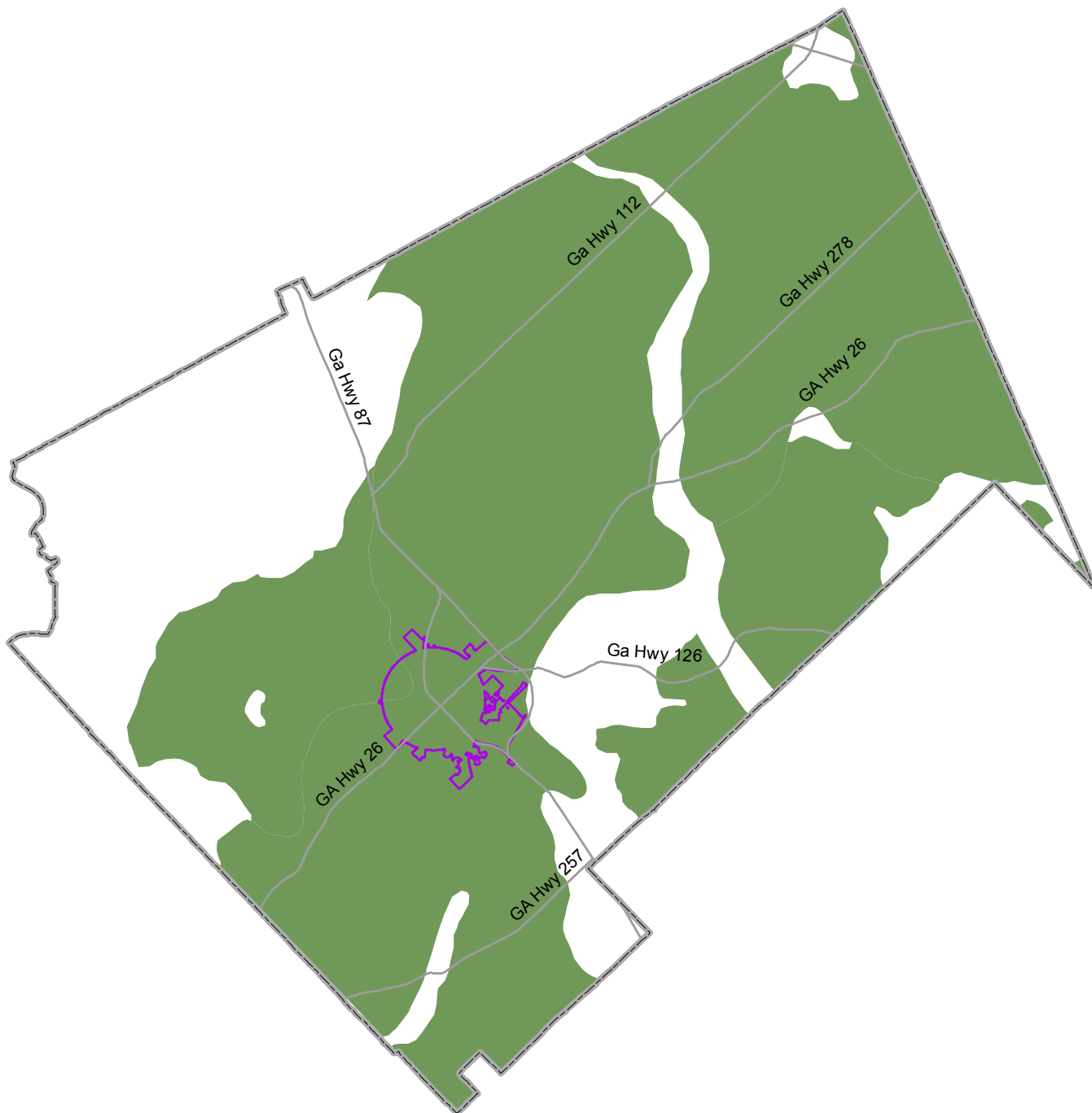
**Legend**

-  **County Boundary**
-  **Kinston-Bibb Soil Association**
-  **Tawcaw-Chastain Soil Association**



Source: Soil Survey of Bleckley, Dodge, and Telfair Counties, Georgia,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, 2003  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011



MAP NCR-6  
Bleckley County  
Prime Farmland



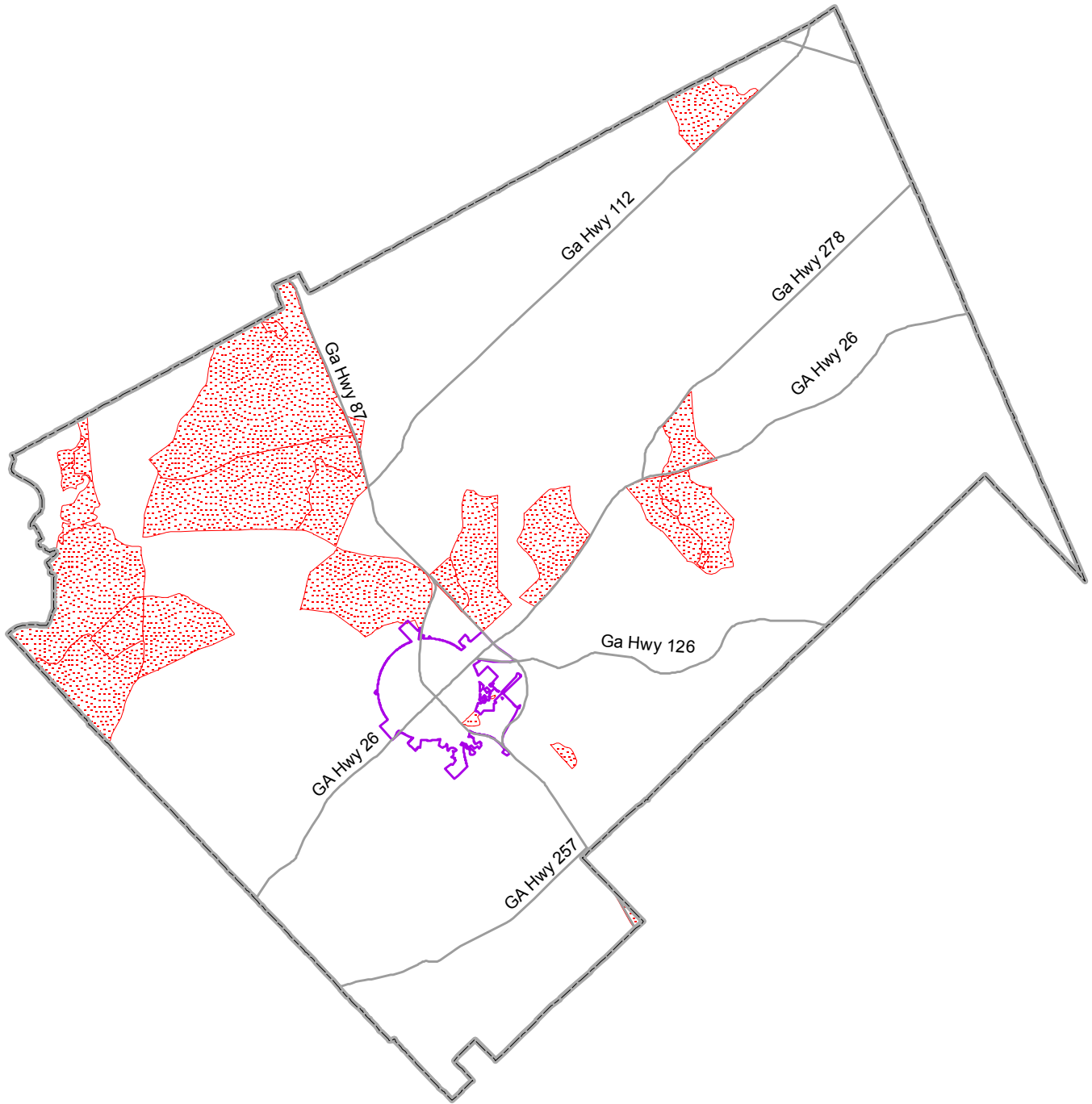
**Legend**

-  County Boundary
-  Dothan-Tifton-Fuquay Soil Association





Source: Soil Survey of Bleckley, Dodge, and Telfair Counties, Georgia,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, 2003  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011

MAP NCR-7  
Bleckley County  
Archaeological Resources



**Legend**

-  County Boundary
-  Archaeological Sites



Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Transportation**

Bleckley County and Cochran have a good transportation system consisting of county roads, city streets, state highways (GA 26, GA 87, GA 112, GA 126, GA 257, GA 278), federal highways (U.S. 23 and U.S. Alternate 129), and Interstate 16. Cochran has acquired funds from a Congressional Earmark Transportation Enhancement grant to fund sidewalk paving and streetscape improvements in the downtown area, from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to Middle Georgia College. The City is currently paving dirt roads in the S-Curb area, a location of industrial development adjacent to the K-3 building, through CDBG funds; this project is expected to be complete by Summer 2011. Restriping and public street sign names are being placed on county roads. There is a continuing need for paving dirt and connector roads, as well as resurfacing others. Norfolk Southern railroad serves Bleckley County. Old Milledgeville Road in the county is currently being resurfaced. The Level II Cochran Municipal Airport is owned by the City. Improvements need to the facility include a new beacon and additional hangars.

### **Water Supply and Treatment**

Cochran has a public water system. Water line extensions and upgrades may be needed within Cochran and in any adjacent growth areas to help facilitate further growth, as needed. Residents of unincorporated Bleckley County, who do not obtain water from the City of Cochran, rely mainly on individual private wells which tap into the Floridan/Jacksonian Aquifer. Cochran needs to update its computer system at existing water tanks. A water tower is needed at the industrial park. There are continuing needs to serve expected growth areas adjacent to Cochran.

### **Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment**

Cochran has a sewerage system; residents in unincorporated Bleckley County must rely on septic tank services. Cochran may need to add lines to serve future growth within its jurisdiction and/or extend/expand service in the future to accommodate growth in adjacent

growth areas. The wastewater treatment plant needs to be expanded; a water main also needs to be connected to the wastewater treatment plant. EPA has approved Cochran's proposal of an additional filter system. Existing sewer lines need to be replaced to prevent potential problems. There will be needs to provide upgrades and extensions to accommodate expected growth within areas adjacent to Cochran.

## **Solid Waste**

Bleckley County utilizes the Houston County Subtitle D Municipal Solid Waste Landfill, which has an estimated remaining capacity of 9.88 years in its current cells and room for future expansion. The County has a transfer station. Limited recycling programs currently exist in Bleckley County. The recently revised Bleckley County Solid Waste Management Plan provides more detailed information concerning all aspects of the community's solid waste and related program issues.

## **Public Safety**

### Law Enforcement

There are two local law enforcement agencies in Bleckley County: the Bleckley County Sheriff's Department and Cochran Police Department. The Bleckley County Sheriff's Department is responsible for patrolling the unincorporated areas of the county, serving the courts of Bleckley County, and operating and maintaining the jail. The staff consists of a sheriff, deputy sheriff, detention officers, investigator/detectives, and sergeants. The Cochran Police Department has a total of 14 employees, including one officer who is cross-trained as a firefighter. The department has two officers who are Police Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T) certified instructors. The department has 15 patrol cars, one (1) four-wheeler, one (1) travel trailer, and protection gear. There is a need for additional vehicles to replace older ones in constant need of repair, as well as two (2) tasers, three (3) handguns, and several shotguns. A new law enforcement facility was completed in October, 2008. The facility includes the Sheriff's office, jail administration and support services that consists of an intake/booking area, vehicular sally port, kitchen and laundry areas, medical, visitation, central control, first appearance hearing, evidence storage and lockers, and armory. The administration building site can support

future inmate housing expansion and includes two entrances, one for the jail and one for the Sheriff's office. The housing area is comprised of 2-bed and 4-bed cells as well as an area for trustees. One of the pods in the housing area has been designed for separation of female inmates.

### Fire Protection/EMS/EMA

The Cochran-Bleckley Fire Department has six volunteer fire departments located throughout Bleckley County and Cochran. There is one station located in Cochran, Station 1. The remaining five stations primarily serve the unincorporated areas. They are Limestone (Station 2), Union Hill/Airport (Station 3), Salem (Station 4), Cary (Station 5), and Porter Road (Station 6). The Cochran-Bleckley Fire Department has (8) full-time paid employees and approximately 45 volunteers and is the host agency for the Georgia Safe Kids Organization. Station 1 currently has an ISO rating of 6, while the remaining five (5) stations' ISO rating is 9. The Cochran-Bleckley Fire Department is in need of a brush truck, turnout gear, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) equipment, and protection equipment. The Cary station is in need of a new well and a new vehicle, as well as the installation of dry hydrants. Bleckley County EMS is operated by the County. The current facility is a 20 year-old mobile home located on Lewis Street in Cochran. There is a need for a new station capable of providing better living accommodations for more personnel. A station with enclosed climate controlled bays would protect both the crews and trucks during inclement weather. EMS presently uses three lead biphasic heart monitors that indicate cardiac rhythms. More advanced equipment such as lead heart monitors that provide enhanced cardiac rhythm interpretations that can be transmitted to the hospital prior to arrival is desired. There is a need for additional Paramedics and First Responders. The Cochran-Bleckley County EMA is located behind the Bleckley County Courthouse on the courthouse square in Cochran. The agency provides rapid recovery from any emergencies or disasters which affect the local jurisdiction.

### **Hospital and Other Public Health Facilities**

The Hospital Authority of Bleckley County operates the 25 bed Bleckley Memorial Hospital in Cochran. The facility is managed by Taylor Management Services of Hawkinsville; it was built in 1969. Bleckley Memorial Hospital is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on

Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Upgrade or replacement is needed to equipment and furnishings. Funding for indigent care patients, scholarship loans for physicians, and retention and recruitment of physicians are needed. The Bleckley County Health Department is one of 10 health departments within the South Central Health District. Approximately 14,311 visits were made to the health department in 2008. There are three (3) personal care homes in Bleckley County with a total of 48 beds and one (1) senior care facility with a total of 75 beds.

## **Recreation**

Recreation facilities in Bleckley County are operated by a Board of Directors; the day-to-day operations are overseen by the Recreation Director. There is one (1) recreation complex in Cochran. The Cochran Recreation Department is located on West Dykes Street and has four (4) baseball fields, a softball field, a t-ball field, a football/soccer field, gymnasium, and a central concession/restroom facility. The Cochran Recreation Department is in need of new restroom facilities, sidewalks, and repaving of walking areas.

## **General Government**

The two governments of Bleckley County work to ensure that the needs of their citizens are met. Each government offers services and maintains public facilities, which enhance the quality of life for their citizens. Necessary maintenance and upgrades to public facilities and infrastructure are conducted on an as needed basis and as funds are available. Bleckley County is one of eight (8) counties in Georgia that is governed by a Sole Commissioner. Among the services Bleckley County offers are public safety, court services, jail operation, solid waste collection, EMS, EMA, rural fire protection, and code enforcement. Authorities and boards in Bleckley County include Cochran-Bleckley Industrial Development Authority, Cochran-Bleckley Chamber of Commerce, Ocmulgee Regional Joint Development Authority, Joint Development Authority of Bleckley and Dodge Counties, Department of Family and Children Services, Tax Assessor Board, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, Cochran-Bleckley Recreation Commission, and Bleckley County Board of Education. The City of Cochran is governed by a mayor and six (6) member council. The City Clerk handles the day-to-day operations. The City of Cochran provides water and sewer services, police and fire protection, solid waste collection, code enforcement and zoning, street maintenance and repairs,

and beautification efforts. Authorities and boards in Cochran include the Library Board, Cochran-Bleckley Recreation Commission, Downtown Development Authority, Cochran-Bleckley Chamber of Commerce, Cochran-Bleckley Industrial Development Authority, Hospital Authority, Better Hometown, and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission.

The Cochran Municipal Building needs to be rehabilitated to replace the limited space of the city hall and to possibly consolidate City services to one location. The Cochran Municipal Building is a former school; it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The current city hall would possibly house other government agencies that also need additional space, such as the Bleckley-Cochran Chamber of Commerce. The County is interested in developing a Bleckley County Government Complex which would be located on the courthouse square. Demolition and rehabilitation to existing buildings located behind the courthouse would be completed on an as needed basis. Several county workshops are also in need of repairs.

## **Educational Facilities**

Bleckley County's school system has five (5) schools operated by the Bleckley County Board of Education. Two of the county's five schools are located in Cochran, Bleckley County Pre-K and Bleckley County Primary School. Bleckley County Elementary, Middle, and High Schools are located close to Cochran. A total of students 2,279 were enrolled for the 2009-2010 school year. The facilities are in adequate condition due to regular maintenance and upgrades. A new Bleckley County Middle School opened in January 2011. An additional phase, which consists of demolition of the old building and construction of athletic facilities, is expected to be complete by the start of the 2011-2012 school year. The Bleckley County School System is in need of technology upgrades and art and music programs for all schools.

A higher education facility, Middle Georgia College, is located in Cochran. Additional higher education facilities are located within 60 miles of Bleckley County: Middle Georgia College-Aviation Campus (Eastman), Heart of Georgia Technical College (Dublin), and the Dublin Center University System (Dublin). The Dublin Center University System provides classes through four University System of Georgia Colleges: Georgia Southern University, East Georgia College, Middle Georgia College, and Georgia College and State University.



## **Library and Other Cultural Facilities**

The Tessie W. Norris Bleckley County Library is part of the Ocmulgee Regional Library System. The library is located on North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. It was built in 1986 and is in adequate condition. The library staff consists of two (2) full-time and one (1) part time-staff members. The library offers programs for children and adults, summer reading programs, preparation material for the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), and genealogy material. The Cochran Auditorium is located in the National Register listed Cochran Municipal Building and School. The auditorium is located downtown adjacent to the Bleckley County Courthouse. The facility is available to the public for use. An open air cotton and peanut museum is located in downtown Cochran.

## **Consistency with Service Delivery Strategy**

Bleckley County and Cochran remain consistent with their Service Delivery Strategy in their provision of services and service areas as outlined in their current agreement signed by both jurisdictions in 1994. Any desired changes to the present Service Delivery Strategy will be negotiated between the two local governments in conjunction with a review of the entire Service Delivery Strategy as required as part of the full comprehensive plan update. Because service provision is relatively clearly divided between the City of Cochran and Bleckley County and intergovernmental cooperation and coordination is strong, no conflicts or inconsistency with the comprehensive plan are known or anticipated.

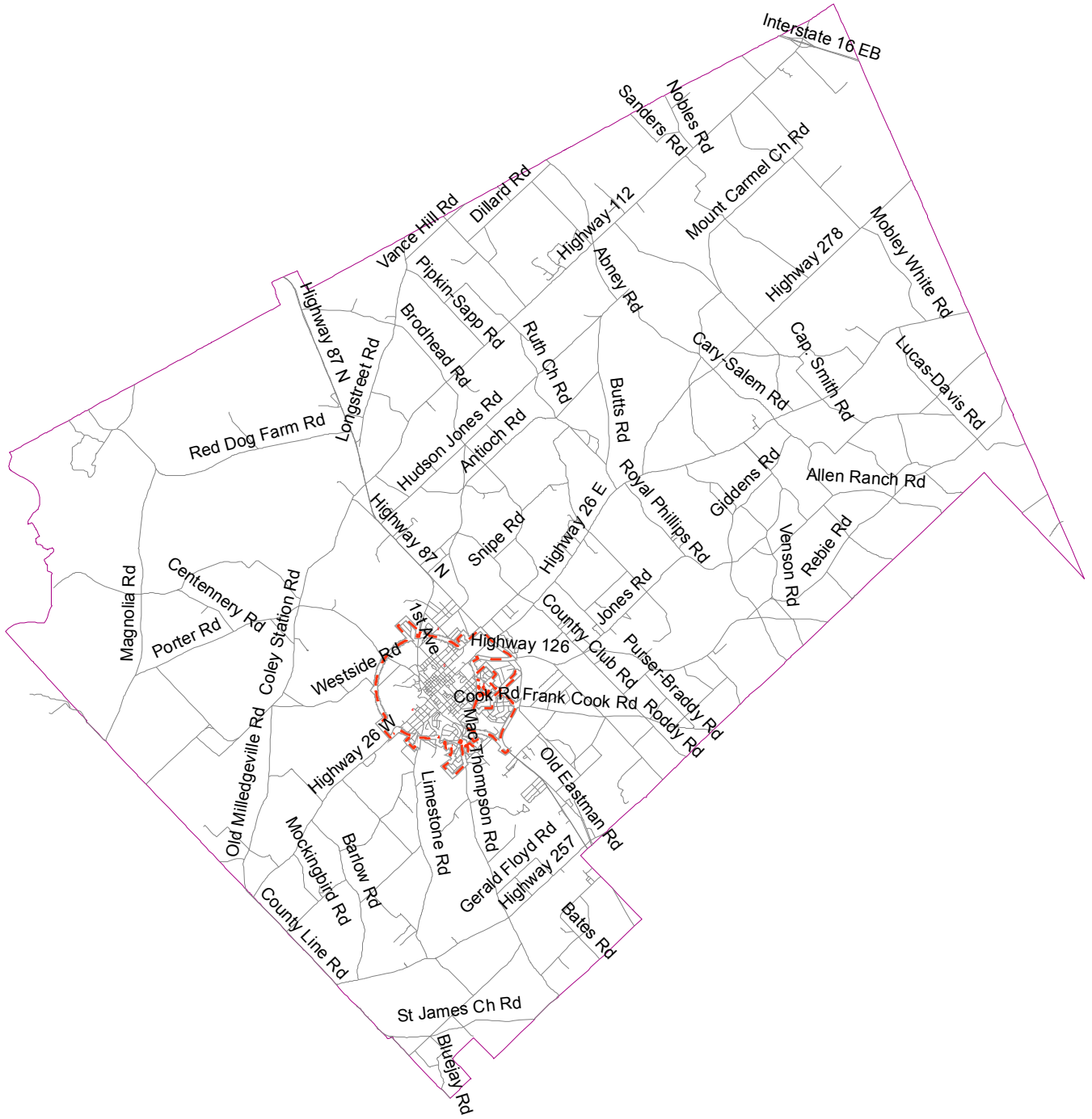
## **Intergovernmental Coordination**

Bleckley County recognizes the value of intergovernmental coordination on the local, regional, and state level with respect to coordinated planning/growth management, services sharing/cooperation/consolidation/joint delivery, economic development, and other areas. Bleckley County and Cochran have a particularly close relationship, working together for the betterment of the community and to ensure that there are no duplication of services. Both local governments are included in the countywide Service Delivery Strategy. The County and Cochran have several areas of on-going coordination and cooperation including: codes enforcement, economic development, E-911, fire protection, law enforcement, recreation, road/street




construction/maintenance, and voter registration. Bleckley County and Cochran work regionally together in conjunction with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, the Magnolia Midlands Tourism Region, a joint natural gas authority with Perry and Warner Robins, and the Region 9 Economic Development Academy. The County and Cochran further utilize solid waste disposal facilities in another county, Houston. Continued mutual cooperation between Bleckley County/Cochran, neighboring governments, the region, and state will be of major importance in the future as governments strive to do more with less and seek joint solutions for common problems.

Bleckley County and Cochran offer a wide variety of public facilities and infrastructure that are compatible with the steady growth of the community. Continuous upgrades and maintenance of the current facilities and improvements to services offered to the citizens of Bleckley County have aided in the efforts to support this growth and improve the local quality of life.

# MAP CFS-1 Bleckley County Roads



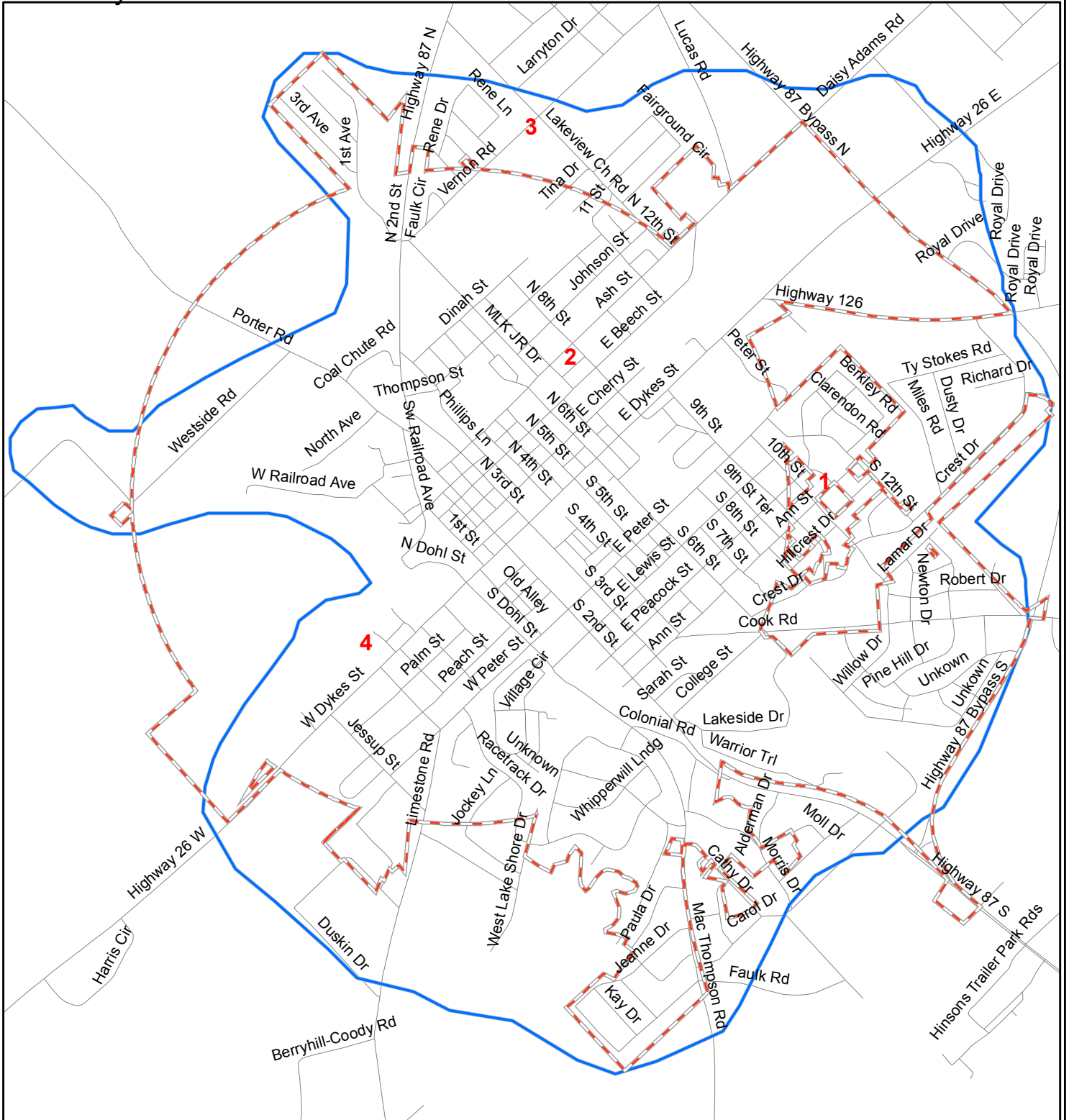
### Legend

-  Cochran City Limits
-  Roads
-  County Boundary

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011



# MAP CFS-2 City of Cochran Water System



### Legend

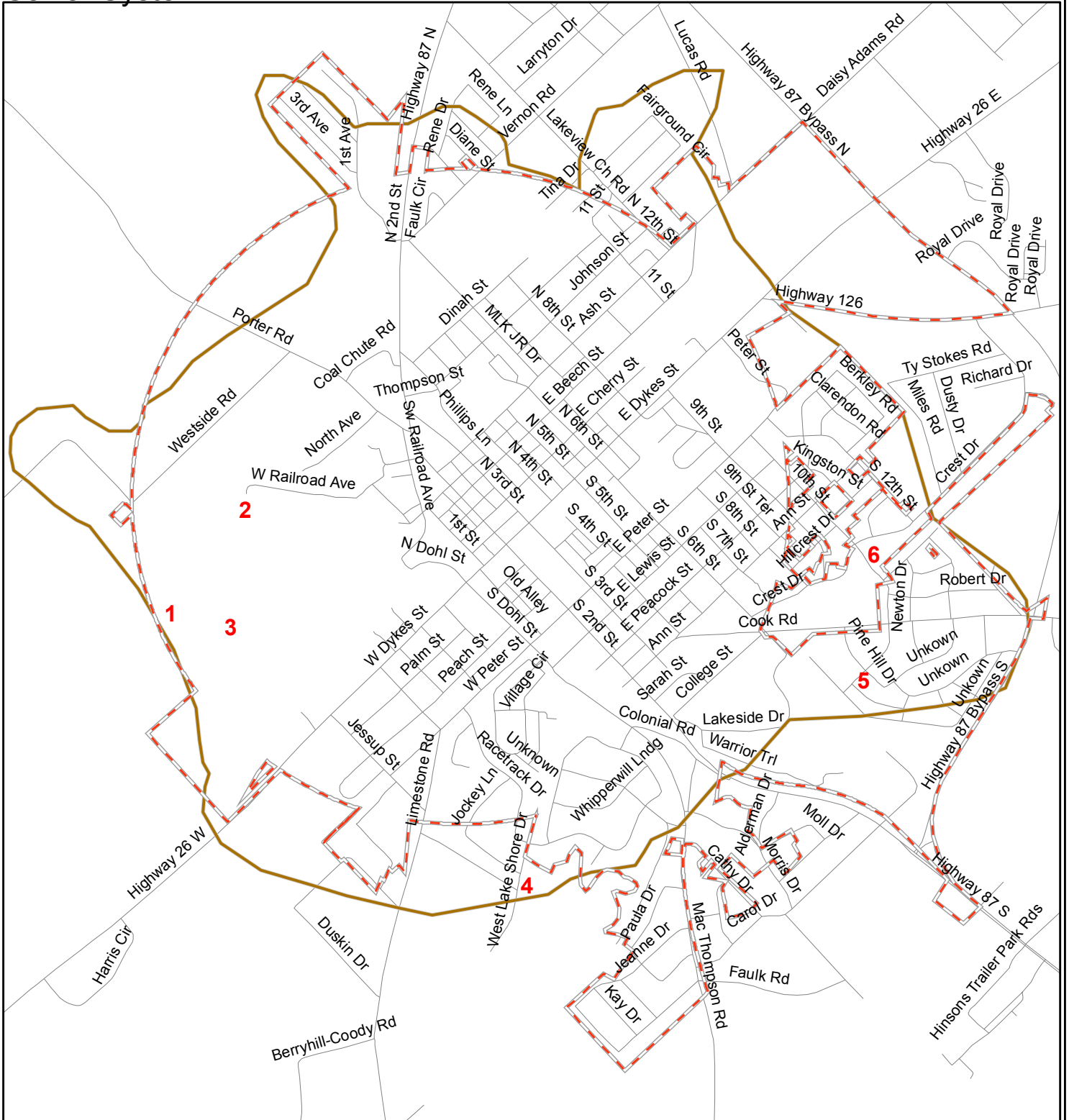
- Water Service Area
- Cochran City Limits
- Roads

1. Elevated Well & Water Tank
2. Elevated Well & Water Tank
3. Elevated Well & Water Tank
4. Elevated Well & Water Tank




Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011



# MAP CFS-3 City of Cochran Sewer System



### Legend

-  Sewer Service Area
-  Cochran City Limits
-  Roads

- 1. Wastewater Treatment Facility
- 2. Lift Stations
- 3. Lift Stations
- 4. Lift Stations
- 5. Lift Stations
- 6. Lift Stations

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2011



# HOUSING

**Table H-1**  
**NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1980-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY			COCHRAN		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Number of Households	3,552	3,816	4,372	1,617	1,580	1,632

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

## Key Finding:

- Households in Bleckley County (similar to Occupied Housing Units) increased by 556 units from 1990 to 2000 (14.6 percent). This compares to population percent increase (11.9 percent).

**Table H-2  
TYPES OF HOUSING  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
1980-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY			COCHRAN		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	3924	4268	4866	1750	1781	1867
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	3155	3015	3313	1390	1290	1293
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	53	28	17	48	17	7
<b>Double Units</b>	136	118	126	78	72	80
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	107	148	161	95	132	143
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	54	77	11	36	76	11
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>			44	0	0	44
<b>50 or more Units</b>	22		7	22	0	7
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	397	840	1187	81	177	282
<b>All Other</b>		42		0	17	0

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Key Findings:**

- Total Housing Units in Bleckley County increased by 598 from 1990 to 2000 (14 percent increase)
- Single Family Units increased by 298 from 1990 to 2000 (10 percent) while multi-family units increased by only 6 (1.7 percent) and mobile homes increased by 347 units (41.3 percent)

**Table H-3**  
**TYPES OF HOUSING**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	<b>BLECKLEY</b>	<b>COCHRAN</b>	<b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>UNITED STATES</b>
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	68.08%	69.26%	64.21%	60.28%
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	0.35%	0.37%	2.87%	5.56%
<b>Double Units</b>	2.59%	4.28%	2.75%	4.31%
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	3.31%	7.66%	9.32%	9.41%
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	0.23%	0.59%	3.94%	4.00%
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>	0.90%	2.36%	1.76%	3.34%
<b>50 or more Units</b>	0.14%	0.37%	2.97%	5.29%
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	24.39%	15.10%	12.03%	7.57%
<b>All Other</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.13%	0.23%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- Bleckley County's Housing Stock has more Single-Family Units (68.43 percent) than Georgia (67.1 percent) or the U.S. (65.8 percent)
- Bleckley County's Housing Stock has many more Mobile Homes (24.39 percent) than Georgia (12 percent) or the U.S. (7.6 percent)



**Table H-4  
AGE OF HOUSING UNITS  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
1990-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Built 1970-1979</b>	1,011	889	337	276
<b>Built 1960-1969</b>	820	816	333	385
<b>Built 1950-1959</b>	628	505	338	243
<b>Built 1940-1949</b>	304	269	177	207
<b>Built 1939 or earlier</b>	495	430	237	177

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table H-5  
AGE OF HOUSING UNITS  
Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.  
2000**

	BLECKLEY	COCHRAN	GEORGIA	UNITED STATES
<b>Built 1970-1979</b>	18.27%	14.78%	18.55%	18.50%
<b>Built 1960-1969</b>	6.77%	20.62%	12.68%	13.73%
<b>Built 1950-1959</b>	10.38%	13.02%	8.64%	12.69%
<b>Built 1940-1949</b>	5.53%	11.09%	4.39%	7.28%
<b>Built 1939 or earlier</b>	8.84%	9.48%	5.88%	15.00%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- Bleckley County’s Housing Stock is slightly newer than that of Georgia with 50.2% in Bleckley being built since 1980 compared to 49.9% in Georgia, but newer than that of U.S. where only 32.8 percent of the total has been built since 1980
- Still Bleckley County has 8.84% of its housing stock built in 1939 or earlier compared to 5.9% in Georgia and 15% in the U.S.
- Cochran’s housing stock is considerably older (more historic) than that of Bleckley County as a whole (approximately 54% built by 1970 or earlier in Cochran compared to just over 30% for county).

**Table H-6**  
**CONDITION OF HOUSING UNITS**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1990-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	4,268	4,866	1,781	1,867
<b>Complete Plumbing Facilities</b>	4,198	4,752	1,766	1,823
<b>Lacking Plumbing Facilities</b>	70	114	15	44
<b>Complete Kitchen Facilities</b>	4,235	4,741	1,764	1,803
<b>Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities</b>	33	125	17	64

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table H-7**  
**CONDITION OF HOUSING UNITS**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	BLECKLEY	COCHRAN	GEORGIA	UNITED STATES
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	4,866	1,867	3,281,737	115,904,641
<b>Complete Plumbing Facilities</b>	97.66%	97.64%	99.10%	98.85%
<b>Lacking Plumbing Facilities</b>	2.34%	2.36%	0.90%	1.15%
<b>Complete Kitchen Facilities</b>	97.43%	96.57%	99.03%	98.69%
<b>Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities</b>	2.57%	3.43%	0.97%	1.31%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- More of Bleckley County's Housing Stock lacks complete plumbing facilities (2.34%) than Georgia (0.9%) or the U.S. (1.2%)
- Approximately 2.6% of Bleckley County's Housing stock lacks complete kitchen facilities, more than double Georgia's rate (1%) or the U.S. (1.3%).

**Table H-8**  
**OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran**  
**1990-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	4,268	4,866	1,781	1,867
<b>Housing Units Vacant</b>	452	494	201	216
<b>Housing Units Owner Occupied</b>	2,866	3,328	1,039	1,075
<b>Housing Units Renter Occupied</b>	950	1,044	541	576

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table H-9**  
**OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	BLECKLEY	COCHRAN	GEORGIA	UNITED STATES
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Housing Units Vacant</b>	10.15%	11.57%	8.39%	8.99%
<b>Housing Units Owner Occupied</b>	68.39%	57.58%	61.84%	60.24%
<b>Housing Units Renter Occupied</b>	21.45%	30.85%	29.77%	30.77%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Key Finding:**

- Owner-Occupied Units are more prevalent in Bleckley County (68.4%) than in Georgia (61.8%) or the U.S. (60.2%)

**Table H-10  
HOUSING COST  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Median Property Value</b>	\$40,300	\$66,500	\$37,700	\$63,400
<b>Median Monthly Rent</b>	\$225	\$373	\$204	\$329

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table H-11  
HOUSING COST  
Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.  
2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY	COCHRAN	GEORGIA	UNITED STATES
<b>Median Property Value</b>	\$65,500	\$63,400	\$111,200	\$119,600
<b>Median Monthly Rent</b>	\$373	\$329	\$613	\$602

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Findings:

- Median Property Value in Bleckley (\$65,500) was much less than that of Georgia (\$111,200) or U.S. (\$119,600) in 2000
- Median Monthly Rent was also lower in Bleckley (\$373) in 2000 than in Georgia (\$613) or the U.S. (\$602)

**Table H-12  
COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS  
Bleckley County and Cochran  
1990-2000**

	BLECKLEY COUNTY		COCHRAN	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>30%-49%</b>	554	354	161	193
<b>50% and greater</b>		290		194
<b>Not computed</b>	178	172	78	43

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

**Table H-13**  
**COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS**  
**Bleckley County and Cochran, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	<b>BLECKLEY COUNTY</b>	<b>COCHRAN</b>	<b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>UNITED STATES</b>
<b>30%-49%</b>	7.27%	10.34%	12.13%	12.61%
<b>50% and greater</b>	5.96%	10.39%	8.48%	8.98%
<b>Not computed</b>	3.53%	2.30%	2.96%	2.67%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2000.

Key Finding:

- Housing Costs are less of a burden to Bleckley County households (13.2% of households spent more than 30 percent of income on housing in 2000) than in Georgia (20.6% of households >30 percent of income on housing) or than in the U.S. (21.6% of households similarly burdened)