



# **A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay 2004 – 2025**

Adopted: October 2004

Prepared by:  
The North Georgia  
Regional Development Center

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# Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	vi
List of Tables .....	viii
List of Acronyms .....	xi
Introduction .....	xii

<b>The Vision</b> .....	xiv
-------------------------	-----

## **Element 1: Population**

1.1. Inventory of Existing Conditions .....	1-1
1.1.1. Total Population .....	1-1
1.1.2. Households .....	1-4
1.1.3. Age Distribution .....	1-6
1.1.4. Racial Composition .....	1-9
1.1.5. Educational Attainment .....	1-10
1.1.6. Income .....	1-13
1.1.6.1. Per Capita Income .....	1-13
1.1.6.2. Household Income .....	1-14
1.1.6.3. Household Income Distribution .....	1-15
1.1.6.4. Poverty Level .....	1-15
1.2. Assessment .....	1-18

## **Element 2: Economic Development**

2.1. Inventory of Existing Conditions .....	2-2
2.1.1. Economic Base .....	2-2
2.1.1.1. Employment .....	2-2
2.1.1.2. Earnings .....	2-5
2.1.1.3. Weekly Wages .....	2-6
2.1.1.4. Personal Income .....	2-7
2.1.1.5. New or Planned Economic Activities .....	2-9
2.1.1.6. Special or Unique Economic Activities .....	2-10
2.1.2. Labor Force .....	2-13
2.1.2.1. Employment by Occupation .....	2-13
2.1.2.2. Employment Status .....	2-14
2.1.2.3. Unemployment Rates .....	2-15
2.1.2.4. Commuting Patterns .....	2-16
2.1.3. Local Economic Development Resources .....	2-17
2.1.3.1. Agencies .....	2-17
2.1.3.2. Programs .....	2-18
2.1.3.3. Education and Training .....	2-18
2.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	2-20
2.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program .....	2-22
2.3.1. Community Vision .....	2-22
2.3.2. Economic Development Goal, Policies, and Action Items .....	2-23

### Element 3: Housing

3.1. Inventory of Existing Conditions .....	3-1
3.1.1. Types of Housing .....	3-1
3.1.1.1. General .....	3-1
3.1.1.2. Manufactured Housing .....	3-4
3.1.1.3. Elderly Housing .....	3-4
3.1.1.4. Multi-Family Housing .....	3-4
3.1.2. Age and Condition of Housing .....	3-5
3.1.3. Owner and Renter Units .....	3-6
3.1.4. Cost of Housing .....	3-8
3.1.5. Cost Burden of Owner and Renter Units .....	3-9
3.1.6. Housing and Community Characteristics .....	3-10
3.1.6.1. Population Characteristics Impacting Housing Needs .....	3-10
3.1.6.2. Special Housing Needs .....	3-10
3.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	3-13
3.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program .....	3-18
3.3.1. Community Vision .....	3-18
3.3.2. Housing Goal, Policies, and Action Items .....	3-19

### Element 4: Natural and Cultural Resources

4.1. Inventory– Natural Resources .....	4-1
4.1.1. Public Water Supply Sources .....	4-2
4.1.2. Water Supply Watersheds .....	4-3
4.1.3. Groundwater Recharge Areas .....	4-7
4.1.4. Wetlands .....	4-7
4.1.5. Protected Rivers .....	4-9
4.1.6. Coastal Resources .....	4-12
4.1.7. Flood Plains .....	4-12
4.1.8. Topography and Steep Slopes .....	4-14
4.1.9. Protected Mountains .....	4-15
4.1.10. Geology and Soil Types .....	4-18
4.1.11. Farms and Farmland .....	4-20
4.1.12. Forest Land .....	4-23
4.1.13. Plant and Animal Habitats .....	4-24
4.1.14. Major Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas .....	4-27
4.1.15. Scenic Views and Sites .....	4-29
4.1.16. Governor’s Greenspace Program .....	4-30
4.2. Inventory – Cultural Resources .....	4-32
4.2.1. Residential Resources .....	4-32
4.2.2. Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Resources .....	4-36
4.2.3. Transportation Resources .....	4-36
4.2.4. Rural Resources .....	4-37
4.2.4.1. Barns .....	4-37
4.2.4.2. Crossroad Communities .....	4-38
4.2.4.3. Agricultural Practices .....	4-38
4.2.5. Other Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources .....	4-38
4.2.5.1. Community Landmarks .....	4-38
4.2.5.2. Archaeological Sites .....	4-39
4.2.5.3. Battlegrounds .....	4-40
4.2.5.4. Tabby Ruins .....	4-40
4.2.5.5. Gardens .....	4-40
4.2.5.6. Parks .....	4-40
4.2.5.7. Views .....	4-40
4.2.5.8. Cemeteries and Burial Grounds .....	4-40

4.2.5.9. Festival Locations and Gathering Places .....	4-41
4.2.5.10. Historically Significant Districts .....	4-42
4.2.5.11. National Register Properties .....	4-42
4.3. Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	4-44
4.4. Community Goals and Implementation Program .....	4-45
4.4.1. Community Vision .....	4-45
4.4.2. Natural and Cultural Resources Goal, Policies, and Action Items .....	4-46

## **Element 5: Community Facilities and Services**

5.1. Inventory of Existing Conditions .....	5-1
5.1.1. Transportation Network .....	5-1
5.1.2. Water Supply and Treatment .....	5-1
5.1.2.1. Operational Responsibility .....	5-1
5.1.2.2. CIE: Projection of Needs .....	5-2
5.1.2.3. CIE: Service Levels .....	5-5
5.1.2.4. CIE: Service Area .....	5-6
5.1.2.5. CIE: Schedule of Improvements and Funding Sources .....	5-7
5.1.2.6. Additional Information .....	5-7
5.1.3. Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment .....	5-4
5.1.3.1. Operational Responsibility .....	5-8
5.1.3.2. CIE: Projection of Needs .....	5-8
5.1.3.3. CIE: Service Levels .....	5-10
5.1.3.4. CIE: Service Area .....	5-11
5.1.3.5. CIE: Schedule of Improvements and Funding Sources .....	5-12
5.1.4. Solid Waste Management .....	5-13
5.1.5. Public Safety – Law Enforcement .....	5-15
5.1.6. Public Safety – Fire Protection and Emergency Management .....	5-17
5.1.7. Hospitals and Other Public Health Facilities .....	5-20
5.1.8. Recreation Facilities .....	5-22
5.1.9. General Government .....	5-24
5.1.10. Education Facilities .....	5-25
5.1.10.1. Gilmer County Public School System .....	5-25
5.1.10.2. Higher Education .....	5-26
5.1.10.3. Vocational Training .....	5-26
5.1.11. Library and Other Cultural Facilities .....	5-27
5.1.11.1. Library .....	5-27
5.1.11.2. Senior Center .....	5-28
5.1.11.3. Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association .....	5-28
5.1.12. Other Public Facilities .....	5-30
5.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	5-31
5.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program .....	5-34
5.3.1. Community Vision .....	5-34
5.3.2. Community Facilities and Services Goal, Policies, and Action Items .....	5-35

## **Element 6: Land Use**

6.1. Inventory .....	6-1
6.1.1. Residential Land Uses .....	6-5
6.1.2. Commercial Land Uses .....	6-5
6.1.3. Industrial Land Uses .....	6-6
6.1.4. Public and Institutional Land Uses .....	6-6
6.1.5. Transportation, Communication, and Utilities Land Uses .....	6-7
6.1.6. Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Land Uses .....	6-7
6.1.7. Agriculture Land Uses .....	6-7
6.1.8. Forestry Land Uses .....	6-7
6.1.9. Vacant or Undeveloped Land Uses .....	6-7

6.2.	Assessment of Existing Land Use .....	6-8
6.3.	Projection of Future Land Use Needs .....	6-11
6.3.1.	Residential Land Use Needs .....	6-12
6.3.2.	Commercial and Industrial Land Use Needs .....	6-12
6.3.3.	Other Land Use Needs .....	6-12
6.4.	Community Goals and Implementation Program .....	6-13
6.4.1.	Future Land Use Map .....	6-13
6.4.2.	Future Land Use Narrative .....	6-16
6.4.3.	Goal, Policy, and Action Items .....	6-19

## **Element 7: Intergovernmental Coordination**

7.1.	Inventory of Existing Conditions .....	7-1
7.1.1.	Coordination with Governmental and Public Entities .....	7-1
7.1.1.1.	Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay .....	7-1
7.1.1.2.	Surrounding Counties .....	7-3
7.1.1.3.	Gilmer County School Board .....	7-4
7.1.1.4.	Constitutional Officers .....	7-4
7.1.1.5.	Independent Special Districts and Development Authorities .....	7-4
7.1.1.6.	Utilities .....	7-5
7.1.1.7.	Other Joint Planning Efforts .....	7-5
7.1.2.	Coordination with State Programs and Activities .....	7-6
7.1.2.1.	Service Delivery Strategy .....	7-6
7.1.2.2.	Governor's Greenspace Program .....	7-6
7.1.2.3.	Appalachian Regional Commission Program .....	7-6
7.1.2.4.	Regional Water Supply/Water Quality Protection Plans .....	7-6
7.2.	Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	7-9
7.3.	Community Goals and Implementation Program .....	7-11
7.3.1.	Community Vision .....	7-11
7.3.2.	Intergovernmental Coordination Goal, Policies, and Action Items .....	7-12

## **Element 8: Transportation**

8.1.	Inventory .....	8-2
8.1.1.	Streets, Roads, and Highways .....	8-2
8.1.1.1.	Roadway Network and Functional Classification .....	8-2
8.1.1.2.	City Streets .....	8-4
8.1.1.3.	Traffic Volumes .....	8-7
8.1.1.4.	Roadway Conditions .....	8-9
8.1.1.5.	Accident Data .....	8-10
8.1.2.	Bridges .....	8-11
8.1.3.	Signalization and Signage .....	8-14
8.1.4.	Parking Facilities .....	8-15
8.1.5.	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities .....	8-15
8.1.6.	Public Transportation .....	8-17
8.1.7.	Railroad .....	8-17
8.1.8.	Airport .....	8-19
8.2.	Assessment of Current and Future Needs .....	8-20
8.3.	Community and Implementation Program .....	8-22
8.3.1.	Community Vision .....	8-29
8.3.2.	Transportation Goal, Policies, and Action Items .....	8-30

## Element 9: Community Agenda

9.1	Short Term Work Programs .....	9-1
9.1.1.	Gilmer County Short Term Work Program .....	9-2
9.1.2.	Ellijay Short Term Work Program .....	9-4
9.1.3.	East Ellijay Short Term Work Program .....	9-5
9.2	Reports of Accomplishments .....	9-6
9.2.1.	Gilmer County Report of Accomplishments .....	9-6
9.2.2.	Ellijay Report of Accomplishments .....	9-10
9.2.3.	East Ellijay Report of Accomplishments .....	9-14
9.3.	Capital Improvements Element Update .....	9-17
9.4.	Public Participation Program.....	9-19
9.4.1.	Schedule for the Preparation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, the Joint Solid Waste Plan, and the Capital Improvements Element/ Short Term Work Program Update .....	9-19
9.4.2	Notices of Opportunities for Public Involvement .....	9-20
9.4.2.1.	Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Notices .....	9-20
9.4.2.2.	Solid Waste Management Plan Public Hearing Notices .....	9-21
9.4.2.3.	Capital Improvements Element/ Short Term Work Program Public Hearing Notices .....	9-22
9.4.3.	Transmittal Resolutions .....	9-22
9.4.3.1.	Gilmer County Transmittal Resolution .....	9-23
9.4.3.2.	Ellijay Transmittal Resolution .....	9-25
9.4.3.3.	East Ellijay County Transmittal Resolution .....	9-27
9.4.4.	Adoption Resolutions .....	9-29
9.4.3.1.	Gilmer County Adoption Resolution .....	9-30
9.4.3.2.	Ellijay Adoption Resolution .....	9-31
9.4.3.3.	East Ellijay County Adoption Resolution .....	9-32

# List of Figures

## Element 1: Population

1-A. Gilmer County Population .....	1-1
1-B. Population Growth in Gilmer County .....	1-2
1-C. Total Population in Gilmer County, Past and Projected .....	1-3
1-D. Persons per Household .....	1-5
1-E. Population by Age Groups: 2000 .....	1-6
1-F. Place of Birth of the Foreign Born Population: 2000 .....	1-9
1-G. Educational Attainment: 2000 .....	1-10
1-H. Drop-Out Rate of Students in Grades 9 to 12 .....	1-11
1-I. Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) Scores .....	1-11
1-J. American College Test (ACT) Scores .....	1-11
1-K. Per Capita Income Trends and Projections .....	1-13
1-L. Average Household Income Trends and Projections .....	1-14

## Element 2: Economic Development

2-A. 2002 Gilmer County Employment by NAICS .....	2-2
2-B. Sources of Household Income in 1999 .....	2-8
2-C. Total Farm Gate Value .....	2-10
2-D. Apple Farm Gate Value .....	2-11
2-E. Freeport Exemption in Nearby Counties .....	2-11
2-F. Persons in the Labor Force: 2000 .....	2-14
2-G. Unemployment Trends .....	2-15

## Element 3: Housing

3-A. Growth in the Number of Housing Units in Gilmer County .....	3-2
3-B. Types of Housing Placed in Gilmer County Between 1990 and 2000 .....	3-2
3-C. Mean Value of New Residential Construction: 2002 .....	3-3
3-D. Housing Occupancy in Gilmer County in 2000 .....	3-6
3-E. Elderly Population as a Percentage of Total Population .....	3-10

## Element 4: Natural and Cultural Resources

4-A. Gilmer and Nearby Counties .....	4-1
4-B. Water Supply Watersheds in Gilmer County .....	4-4
4-C. Wetlands in Gilmer County .....	4-9
4-D. Protected Rivers in Gilmer County .....	4-10
4-E. Flood Zones in Gilmer County .....	4-13
4-F. Flood Zones in Ellijay and East Ellijay .....	4-14
4-G. Protected Mountains and Steep Slopes in Ellijay and East Ellijay .....	4-16
4-H. Steep Slopes in Ellijay and East Ellijay .....	4-17
4-I. Gilmer County Soils .....	4-19
4-J. Prime Farmland in Gilmer County .....	4-22
4-K. Trout Streams in Gilmer County .....	4-26
4-L. National Forest, Wilderness Areas, and Wildlife Management Areas in Gilmer County .....	4-28
4-M. The Southern Highroads Scenic Highway .....	4-30
4-N. Greenspace Program Vision Map .....	4-31
4-O. Census Blocks with Archaeological Sites .....	4-39
4-P. Potential Historic Districts in Ellijay and East Ellijay .....	4-42



## Element 5: Community Facilities and Services

5-A. Water Connections and Gallons Billed in 2002 .....	5-3
5-B. Public Water Availability .....	5-6
5-C. Public Sewer Availability .....	5-11
5-D. Solid Waste Facilities .....	5-14
5-E. Public Safety Facilities .....	5-18
5-F. Number of Calls Received at the E911 Center .....	5-19
5-G. Student Enrollment in the Gilmer County Public School System .....	5-25
5-H. Colleges Near Gilmer County .....	5-26
5-I. Library Attendance and Circulation .....	5-27

## Element 6: Land Use

6-A. Gilmer County Existing Land Use .....	6-3
6-B. Ellijay and East Ellijay Existing Land Use .....	6-4
6-C. Gilmer County Future Land Use .....	6-15
6-D. Ellijay and East Ellijay Future Land Use .....	6-16
6-E. A Comparison of a Standard Subdivision and an Open Space Subdivision .....	6-18

## Element 8: Transportation

8-A. Functional Classification and the Relationship Between Access and Mobility .....	8-2
8-B. Functional Classification of Roads in Gilmer County .....	8-5
8-C. Select Traffic Count Stations .....	8-8
8-D. Alcohol and/or Drug Related Crashes in 2002 .....	8-11
8-E. Unsafe or Illegal Speed Related Crashes in 2002 .....	8-11
8-F. Signalized Intersections in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay .....	8-14
8-G. Sidewalks in Ellijay and East Ellijay .....	8-16
8-H. Rail Lines in Gilmer County .....	8-17
8-I. Georgia Rail System, January 2004 .....	8-18
8-J. Proposed Commuter Routes in Georgia.....	8-18
8-K. Gilmer County Airport Location .....	8-19
8-L. Year 2000 Levels of Service .....	8-22
8-M. Projected Level of Service in 2010 .....	8-24
8-N. Projected Level of Service in 2020 .....	8-26

# List of Tables

## Element 1: Population

1-A. Total Population .....	1-2
1-B. Growth in Total Population .....	1-3
1-C. Total Number of Households and Average Household Size .....	1-4
1-D. Average Household Size by Race: 2000 .....	1-5
1-E. Median Age of Residents: 2000 .....	1-6
1-F. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in Gilmer County .....	1-7
1-G. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in Ellijay .....	1-7
1-H. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in East Ellijay .....	1-8
1-I. Population by Race as a Percentage of Total Population .....	1-9
1-J. Highest Level of Educational Attainment .....	1-10
1-K. Percentage of Graduates Entering Georgia Public Colleges and Universities .....	1-12
1-L. Percentage of Graduates Entering Georgia Public Technical and Adult Schools .....	1-12
1-M. Per Capita Income .....	1-13
1-N. Average Household Income .....	1-14
1-O. Household Income Distribution .....	1-15
1-P. Families Below Poverty Level .....	1-15
1-Q. Types of Families Below Poverty Level .....	1-16
1-R. Poverty Status by Age .....	1-16
1-S. Gilmer County Food Stamp Recipients .....	1-17
1-T. Students Eligible to Receive Free or Reduced Price School Meals .....	1-17
1-U. Percentage of Households Requiring Energy Assistance in 2000 .....	1-17

## Element 2: Economic Development

2-A. Employment by Sector (NAICS) .....	2-3
2-B. Employment by Sector (SIC) .....	2-3
2-C. Projected Employment by Sector (NAICS) .....	2-4
2-D. Earnings by Employment Sector (SIC) .....	2-5
2-E. Projected Earnings by Employment Sector (SIC).....	2-5
2-F. Average Weekly Wages Paid by Employment Sector (SIC) .....	2-6
2-G. Average Weekly Wages Paid by NAICS: 2002 .....	2-7
2-H. Percent of Households Receiving Various Sources of Income .....	2-7
2-I. Sources of Personal Income: Projected .....	2-8
2-J. Major Employers in Gilmer County .....	2-9
2-K. Employment by Occupation .....	2-13
2-L. Employment Status .....	2-14
2-M. Unemployment Rates .....	2-15
2-N. Commuting Patterns .....	2-16
2-O. Average Travel Time to Work .....	2-16

## Element 3: Housing

3-A. Number and Types of Housing Units .....	3-1
3-B. New Residential Construction Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits .....	3-3
3-C. Manufactured Housing Permits Issued in Gilmer County .....	3-4
3-D. Age of Housing .....	3-5
3-E. Condition of Housing .....	3-5
3-F. Housing Tenure – Occupied Housing Units .....	3-6
3-G. Housing Tenure – Vacant Housing Units .....	3-7
3-H. Average Home Sale Price in 2000 .....	3-8

3-I. Cost of Housing .....	3-8
3-J. Percent of Housing Units Cost Burdened by Income Level .....	3-9
3-K. Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income .....	3-9
3-L. Adult and Child Protective Service Cases .....	3-11
3-M. Percentage of Persons with Disabilities .....	3-11
3-N. Gilmer County ADB Medicaid Recipients .....	3-11
3-O. Migrant Children in Gilmer County .....	3-12
3-P. Projected Number of Housing Units: Gilmer County .....	3-14
3-Q. Revised Projected Number of Housing Units: Gilmer County .....	3-14
3-R. Projected Number of Housing Units: Ellijay .....	3-15
3-S. Projected Number of Housing Units: East Ellijay .....	3-15

#### **Element 4: Natural and Cultural Resources**

4-A. Watershed Protection Criteria .....	4-5
4-B. Section 303(d) List of Impaired Streams in Gilmer County .....	4-6
4-C. Soil Associations and Soil Suitability for Land Uses in Gilmer County .....	4-19
4-D. Farms and Farmland in Gilmer County .....	4-21
4-E. Forest Acreage in Gilmer County by Ownership .....	4-23
4-F. Volume of Saw Timber and Growing Stock in Gilmer County .....	4-23
4-G. Rare and Protected Plants .....	4-24
4-H. Rare and Protected Animals .....	4-25
4-I. Governor’s Greenspace Program Proposal .....	4-31
4-J. Residential Historic Resources .....	4-33
4-K. Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Historic Resources .....	4-36
4-L. Transportation-Related Historic Resources .....	4-36
4-M. Historic Barns .....	4-37
4-N. Gilmer County Cemeteries .....	4-40

#### **Element 5: Community Facilities and Services**

5-A. Level of Service for Water Customers Using Base Meter Equivalent .....	5-3
5-B. Water Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon .....	5-5
5-C. Water Transmission and Distribution Capital Projects: 7/1/04 to 6/31/09 .....	5-7
5-D. Level of Service for Sewer Customers Using Base Meter Equivalent .....	5-9
5-E. Sewer Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon .....	5-10
5-F. Sewage Treatment, Collection, and Transmission Capital Projects: 7/1/04 to 6/31/09 .....	5-12
5-G. Waste Reduction Measures .....	5-15
5-H. Law Enforcement Facilities and Resources .....	5-16
5-I. Gilmer County Crime Statistics by Offense .....	5-16
5-J. Fire Protection and Emergency Management Resources .....	5-17
5-K. Average Annual Number of Health Department Clients/Patients .....	5-21
5-L. Gilmer County Public School System Facilities .....	5-25

#### **Element 6: Land Use**

6-A. Existing Land Use in Gilmer County .....	6-2
6-B. Projected Future Land Use Needs in Gilmer County .....	6-11
6-C. Projected Future Land Use Needs in Ellijay and East Ellijay .....	6-11

#### **Element 7: Intergovernmental Coordination**

7-A. Governor’s Greenspace Program Proposal .....	7-6
---	-----

**Element 8: Transportation**

8-A. Classification of Roads in Gilmer County ..... 8-3  
8-B. Ellijay City Streets ..... 8-4  
8-C. East Ellijay City Streets ..... 8-6  
8-D. Traffic Counts at Select Stations in Gilmer County ..... 8-7  
8-E. Growth in Traffic Volumes on Highway 515 ..... 8-9  
8-F. Highway Segments with the Greatest Average Annual Growth in Traffic Volumes ..... 8-9  
8-G. Lane Mileage of Public Roads by Surface Type in 2002 ..... 8-9  
8-H. Gilmer County Traffic Accident Data ..... 8-10  
8-I. Locally Owned Federal Aid Route Inspected Bridges in Gilmer County ..... 8-11  
8-J. 2004 – 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program and Selected  
Construction Work Program Projects for Gilmer County ..... 8-25  
8-K. Possible Future Roadway Improvements ..... 8-27

# List of Acronyms

ABD – Aged, Blind, or Disabled  
BMP – Best Management Practice  
COE – United States Army Corps of Engineers  
DCA – Georgia Department of Community Affairs  
DOT – Department of Transportation  
DNR – Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
EPD – Environmental Protection Division (of the Department of Natural Resources)  
DEMA – Dedicated Ellijay Merchants and Associates  
EDA – Economic Development Authority  
EPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency  
ETC – Ellijay Telephone Company  
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency  
GAHA – Gilmer County Arts and Heritage Association  
GEDA – Georgia Economic Development Association  
GNRR – Georgia Northeastern Railroad  
LOS – Level of Service  
MATS – Mountain Area Transportation System  
MGD – Million Gallons per Day  
MTPT – MultiModal Transportation Planning Tool  
NAICS – North American Industry Classification System  
NFIP – National Flood Insurance Program  
NGRDC – North Georgia Regional Development Center  
NRCS – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
RESA – North Georgia Regional Educational Services Agency  
SCS – Soil Conservation Service  
SDS – Service Delivery Strategy  
SIC – Standard Industrial Classification  
STIP – Statewide Transportation Improvement Program  
STWP – Short Term Work Program  
SWAP – Source Water Assessment Program  
SWCC – Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
SWPP – Source Water Protection Plan  
TMDL – Total Maximum Daily Load  
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture  
WMA – Wildlife Management Area  
WPCP – Water Pollution Control Plant  
WSA – Water and Sewerage Authority

# Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of this Joint Comprehensive Plan is to coordinate planning on interjurisdictional issues and provide a policy framework for guiding long range and day-to-day decision making for local government officials and administrators of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay. The plan represents participation in the coordinated planning process set forth by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 which requires that local governments prepare a local plan in order to retain their “Qualified Local Government” status. This status is needed for eligibility for state grants, loans, and permits.

The State’s Minimum Planning Standards require an inventory and assessment of characteristics related to population, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, housing, land use patterns, intergovernmental coordination, and transportation. Based upon this background information, communities are asked to assess current issues and project future needs, and develop policies and implementation strategies. Finally, the process requires the preparation of a work program of the specific implementation strategies that the local governments propose to achieve within the five year period after plan adoption.

In addition to being a blueprint for community development and long term growth, a comprehensive plan is used to guide the drafting of future regulations and will become the measure by which the courts judge local zoning decisions once land controls are adopted. Therefore, in order to meet legal challenges to its future growth management strategies, a community’s land development regulations must be consistent with the goals and policies in its comprehensive plan.

The local governments in Gilmer County adopted their first comprehensive plan per the Georgia Planning Act requirements in 1994. This Comprehensive Plan update is for the 2004 through 2025 planning period. It has been prepared in consideration of the State’s Quality community Goals and Objectives which have been adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

## The Public Process

The Georgia Planning Act strongly emphasizes public participation in the process of developing a comprehensive plan. For this plan, seven advisory groups were established to review and comment upon the various plan elements. Each group met to review the inventory and assessment sections and develop goals and objectives. The Land Use advisory group met two times, once to discuss existing land use and another time to review future land use. Following is a list of the public hearings and workshops which were held in conjunction with the preparation of this plan.

February 26, 2004 – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to present the purpose of the plan, the planning process and schedule, and the public participation program.

March 2, 2004 – Economic Development Workshop  
March 2, 2004 – Housing Workshop

March 16, 2004 – Natural and Cultural Resources Workshop  
March 16, 2004 – Community Facilities Workshop

March 30, 2004 – Land Use Workshop #1  
March 30, 2004 – Intergovernmental Coordination Workshop

April 20, 2004 – Land Use Workshop # 2  
April 20, 2004 – Transportation Workshop

June 18, 2004 – The complete draft plan was made available for public review in hardcopy format at the Gilmer County Library, Ellijay City Hall, East Ellijay City Hall, and the Gilmer County Commissioners Office.

July 1, 2004 – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to brief the community on the contents of the draft Comprehensive Plan; provide an opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions, or revisions; and to inform the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Development Center and Department of Community Affairs for review.

July 13, 2004 – City Council Meeting, City of East Ellijay. Resolution to approve transmittal of the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for review.

July 22, 2004 – County Commission Meeting, Gilmer County. Resolution to approve transmittal of the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for review.

July 26, 2004 – City Council Meeting, City of Ellijay. Resolution to approve transmittal of the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for review.

This plan update has been prepared by the North Georgia Regional Development Center with the substantial involvement and input from local elected officials from each jurisdiction, city and county staff, various public and private agencies and groups, and members of the general public.

# The Vision

A vision for the future of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay evolved out the planning process and is articulated as follows:

*In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:*

**Livability.** *We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.*

**Community Character.** *We recognize that our community’s abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.*

**Shared Direction.** *The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.*

The following images are intended to illustrate the desired characteristics of **livability** :

**Healthy Residential Neighborhoods:** including traditional single-family neighborhoods, multi-family developments, and “resort” communities





**Thriving Commercial Areas and Activity Centers:** including pedestrian-oriented and auto-oriented commercial development as well as places where the community can gather for special events



**Strong Agricultural Establishments:**



**Outstanding Public Facilities and Services:**



The positive aspects of the **community's character** can be illustrated with images of the area's abundant natural resources and rich history.



# 1

## Population

The Population Element of this Joint Comprehensive Plan provides an inventory and assessment of the growth trends and demographic characteristics of the populations of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay. It forms the framework for other elements of the Plan, and as such is used to identify current and future trends related to employment opportunities, housing and infrastructure needs, the provision of community services and facilities, and future land use needs.

### Element Outline:

#### 1.1. Inventory

- 1.1.1. Total Population
- 1.1.2. Households
- 1.1.3. Age Distribution
- 1.1.4. Racial Composition
- 1.1.5. Educational Attainment
- 1.1.6. Income

#### 1.2. Assessment

## 1.1. Inventory

### 1.1.1. Total Population

In terms of total population, Gilmer County ranked 68th out of the 159 counties in Georgia in the year 2000. Its population in that year according to the US Bureau of the Census was 23,456 persons. In that same year, the populations of Ellijay and East Ellijay were 1,578 and 797 persons respectively.

As illustrated in Figure 1-A to the right, the overall population of Gilmer County grew from 13,368 people in 1990 to 23,456 in 2000, an increase of just over 75%. Approximately 90% of this increase was due to migration rather than births.

Between 1990 and 2000, Gilmer County had the fourth highest growth rate of all counties in Georgia. As shown in Figure 1-B on the following page, Gilmer County outpaced the region and the state in terms of population growth. While the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay experienced population decline during the 1980s, their populations grew by 34% and 133%, respectively, during the 1990s.

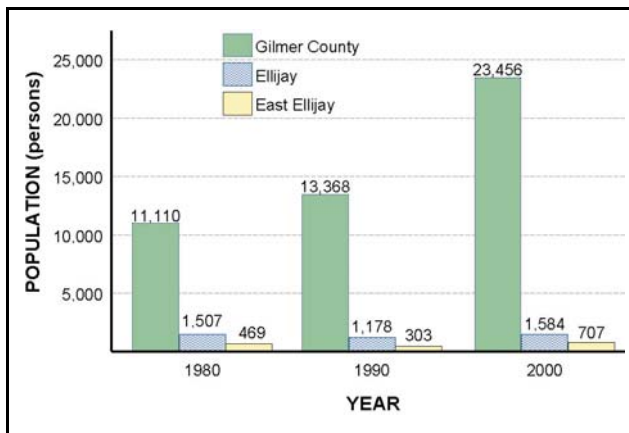
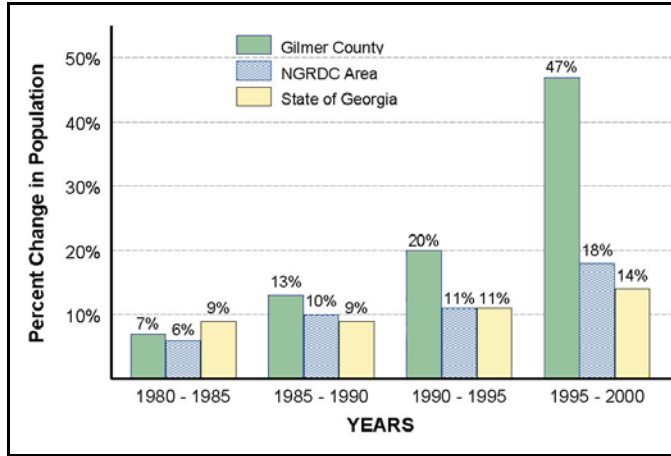


FIGURE 1-A. Gilmer County Population

Population projections for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay were prepared through the year 2025 and are shown in Table 1-A and Figure 1-C. These projections were developed by the North Georgia Regional Development Center utilizing a statistical model based upon the cohort survival-migration method, with 2000 as the base year. This method projects total population based upon the cumulative increase of specific age and sex groups (cohorts), with separate adjustments made for each of the three major components of population change:



**FIGURE 1-B. Population Growth in Gilmer County**

deaths, births, and net migration. Hence, the projected population equals the sum of natural aging of the base population, minus deaths, plus births, and plus or minus net migration of cohorts over time.

The population projection method used assumes no significant changes in county migration patterns, birth rates, and death rates through the year 2025.

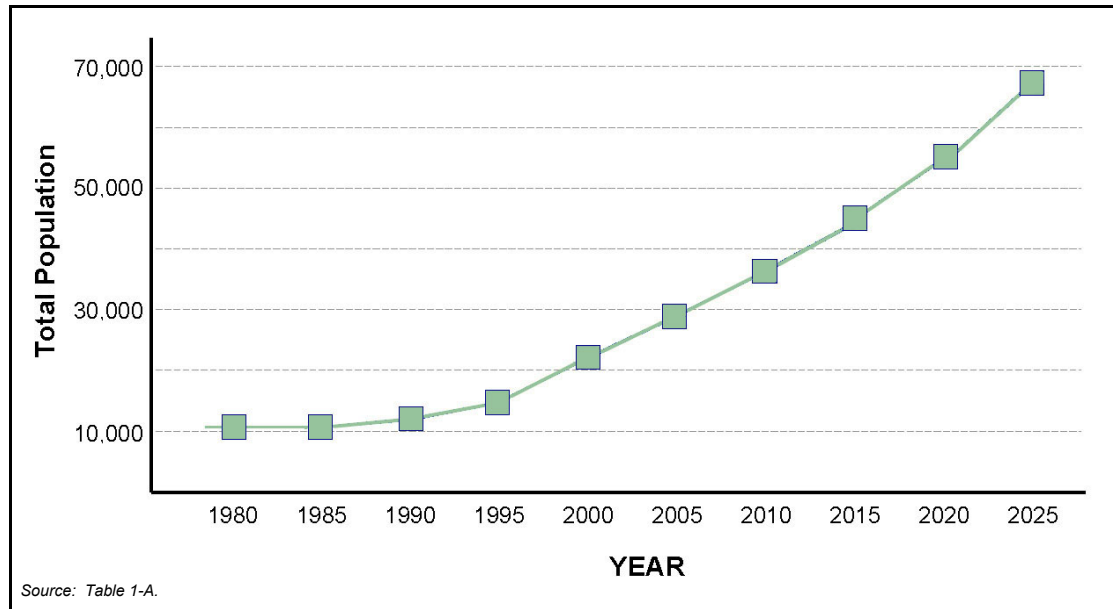
Population projections based upon the cohort survival-migration methodology can be used as a general indicator of future growth; however, because these projections are based upon past assumptions, such as death, birth, and migration rates, they do not account for certain local conditions. Some of the conditions which may lead to a different growth in population include the following:

- land and environmental policies dictating the type and amount of private development,
- the growth of local and regional economies that provide employment to the residents,
- access between employment centers and residential centers,
- the status of the regional real estate market,
- participation in federal and state programs to provide affordable housing, and
- municipal annexation policies.

**TABLE 1-A. Total Population**

Year	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Gilmer Co. Seasonal	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1980	11,110	1,507	469	460	122,984	5,462,982
1985	11,844	1,343	386	1,000	129,787	5,962,639
1990	13,368	1,178	303	2,182	142,401	6,478,216
1995	16,007	1,134	496	2,840	158,518	7,188,538
2000	23,456	1,584	707	3,692	186,268	8,186,453
2002	25,203	1,578	797	—	197,389	8,560,310
2003	26,297	1,590	828	—	—	8,560,620
2004	27,759	1,630	870	—	—	8,670,510
2005	29,171	1,670	912	—	—	8,895,580
2006	30,514	1,710	954	—	—	8,895,580
2007	31,915	1,750	996	—	—	9,008,670
2008	33,353	1,795	1,036	—	—	9,120,929
2009	34,855	1,842	1,078	—	—	9,234,586
2010	36,425	1,890	1,122	—	—	9,349,660
2015	45,119	2,010	1,332	—	—	9,940,380
2020	55,650	2,130	1,542	—	—	10,550,700
2025	68,241	2,250	1,752	—	—	11,185,100

Sources: 1990 Census CPH-2-12, Table 8; 2000 Census SF 1, Table P1; US Bureau of the Census, 2002 Population Estimates, Table T1; Others: NGRDC



**FIGURE 1-C. Total Population in Gilmer County, Past and Projected.**

**TABLE 1-B. Growth in Total Population**

Year	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Gilmer Co. Seasonal	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1980-1985	7%	-11%	-18%	117%	6%	9%
1985-1990	13%	-12%	-22%	118%	10%	9%
1990-1995	20%	-4%	64%	30%	11%	11%
1995-2000	47%	40%	43%	30%	18%	14%
2000-2005	24%	5%	29%	—	—	9%
2005-2010	25%	13%	23%	—	—	5%
2010-2015	24%	6%	19%	—	—	6%
2015-2020	23%	6%	16%	—	—	6%
2020-2025	23%	6%	14%	—	—	6%

Source: Table 1-A.

Gilmer County has a significant seasonal population. According to the 2000 Census, the seasonal population was 3,692 persons which was greater than the combined population of the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay (2,291). The seasonal population is expected to remain at or above recent levels throughout the planning period.

Because the County does not draw a large number of employees from surrounding counties, the daytime, work week population does not fluctuate significantly. Unless the County develops industries with jobs which are attractive to residents of neighboring areas, this characteristic will continue in the future.

### 1.1.2. Households

A household is defined by the Census Bureau as a group of people sharing the same housing unit, whether related or not. A household may or may not constitute a family. For example, a single person living alone in an apartment is considered to be a household, but not a family. A family is a household with two or more family members.

Table 1-C shows trends and projections for the total number of households and average household size for Georgia, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay. The number of households has increased steadily in all areas. Nationally, household size has declined over the past several decades. This trend holds true in Gilmer County; however, average household size increased in Ellijay and East Ellijay between 1990 and 2000.

Projections for the total number of households were derived by subtracting the projected group quarter population from the total projected population and dividing by the projected average household size.

**TABLE 1-C. Total Number of Households and Average Household Size (Persons)**

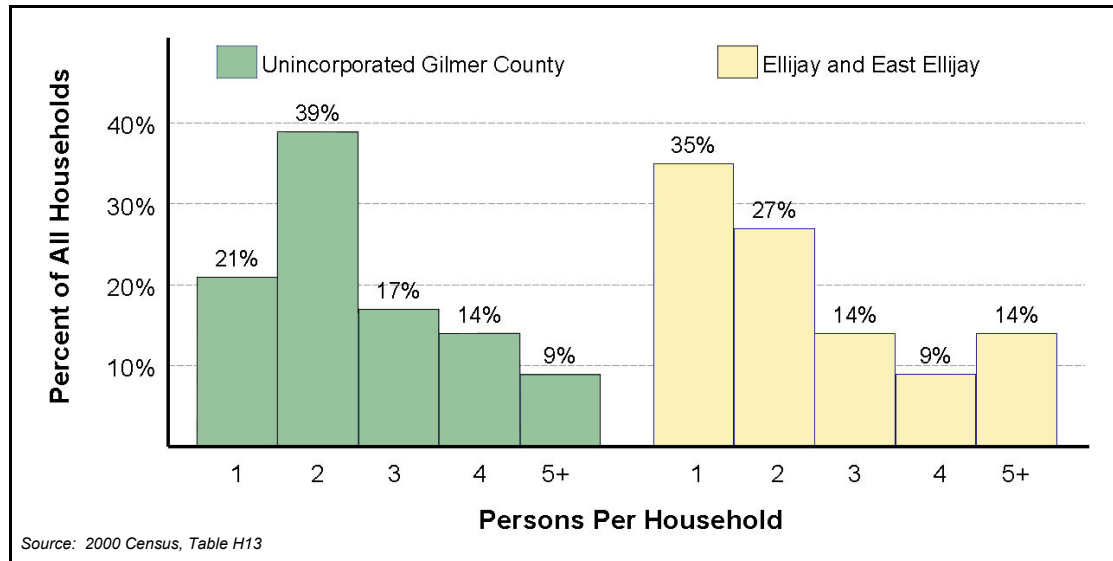
Year	Gilmer County		Ellijay		East Ellijay		Georgia	
	#	Size	#	Size	#	Size	#	Size
1980	3,937	2.77	568	2.41	180	2.61	1,871,652	2.84
1985	4,436	2.67	549	2.61	157	2.48	2,112,449	2.70
1990	5,072	2.60	516	2.24	133	2.28	2,366,615	2.63
1995	5,682	2.53	549	2.51	134	2.30	2,638,284	2.61
2000	9,071	2.57	593	2.49	251	2.82	3,006,369	2.65
2005	11,281	2.57	629	2.49	286	2.82	3,340,171	2.59
2010	14,150	2.56	762	2.48	362	2.81	3,555,004	2.58
2015	17,607	2.55	814	2.47	440	2.79	3,794,038	2.58
2020	21,815	2.54	866	2.46	519	2.77	4,042,414	2.57
2025	26,764	2.54	915	2.46	599	2.75	4,301,962	2.57

Sources: 1980 Census, PHC80-3-12, Table 1; 1990 Census STF 1, Table P0003; 2000 Census SF 1, Tables P15 and P17; Others: NGRDC

The increase in household size is due primarily to the influx of Hispanic and Latino residents into the cities. Many of the households of more recent immigrants contain either extended families or two or more unrelated families.

Figure 1-D on the following page illustrates that between 60% and 62% of all households in Gilmer County are 1-person or 2-person households. A greater percentage of the households in the cities are 1-person households, while more of the households in the unincorporated areas are 2-person households. Nearly 60% of the 1-person households in the cities contain individuals who are 65 years of age and over although this age group only accounts for 19% of the total population.

A larger percentage of households in the cities have five or more persons than in the unincorporated areas (14% vs. 9%).



**FIGURE 1-D. Persons Per Household in the Incorporated and Unincorporated Parts of Gilmer County: 2000**

As illustrated in Table 1-D, white, non-Hispanic households tend to have a smaller average size than do households of other races. The difference in household size by race is less distinct nationally than it is in Gilmer County and Georgia. For example, in Gilmer County, the average household size for Hispanic/Latino Household is 4.80 persons per household, whereas in the United States, the figure is 3.62 persons per household.

**TABLE 1-D. Average Household Size by Race: 2000**

	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	USA
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>2.59</b>
White, not Hispanic or Latino	2.47	2.06	2.29	2.50	2.43
Hispanic or Latino, any race	4.80	5.32	5.15	4.06	3.62
Black or African American only	*	*	*	2.81	2.73
American Indian only	*	*	*	2.68	2.99
Asian only	*	*	*	3.21	3.10

Source: 2000 Census SF2, PCT8  
 \*Data not available due to population size.

It is likely that after the immigrant population has been established in the area for a longer period of time, many of the individuals and families who are presently sharing homes will be able to purchase or rent their own homes or apartments.

### 1.1.3. Age Distribution

The median age of residents in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay is shown in Table 1-E. According to the 2000 Census, the median age of the total population in Gilmer County was 37.3 years. This was lower than that of white/non-Hispanic population (39.3 years), and substantially higher than the Hispanic population (23.2 years). In Ellijay and East Ellijay, the differences were even more noticeable.

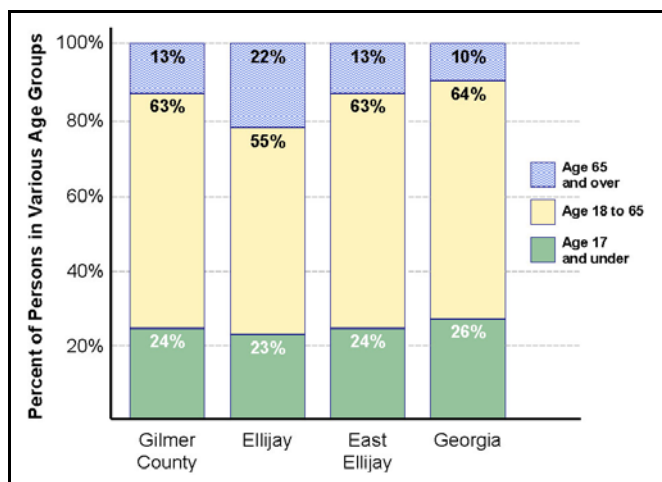
**TABLE 1-E. Median Age of Residents: 2000**

	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>30.5</b>
White, not Hispanic or Latino	39.3	49.1	38.5
Hispanic or Latino	23.2	23.2	23.9
Black or African American only	28.5	18.0	--
American Indian only	34.8	23.5	32.5
Asian only	30.2	29.5	--

Source: 2000 Census SF 3, P13, P13B, P13D, P13C, P13H, P13I

Figure 1-E provides a very generalized comparison of the age groups in Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Georgia. The age distribution of Gilmer County and East Ellijay is very similar to that of the state, while Ellijay has a more elderly population with 22% of persons being 65 years of age or over. Only 10% of residents throughout the state are 65 years of age or older.

Tables 1-F, 1-G, and 1-H on the following pages provide more detailed information on the age of the population by dividing it into smaller age groups. Also provided are projections of median age and age distribution.



**FIGURE 1-E. Population by Age Groups: 2000**

Nationally, the trend is toward an aging population. While the population projections prepared for Gilmer County reflect this trend, it is likely that if the influx of younger persons of Hispanic or Latino origin continues at the rate that it has over the past decade, the median age could remain the same or even decrease.

In terms of the ratio of males to females, most age groups have a fairly even split between the two sexes with the exception of two age groups: individuals who are 65 or older and those who are

between the ages of 20 and 29. As is typical throughout the United States, there are more women than men who are 65 years of age or over. This holds true in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay where 54%, 72%, and 68% of the residents who are 65 or older are women.

In the 20 to 29 year old age group a variation exists between what is typical throughout Georgia and what is found in Ellijay and East Ellijay. According to the 2000 Census, 51% of the residents of Georgia and 53% of the residents of Gilmer County in this age group were male. In Ellijay and East Ellijay, 69% and 63% of the residents were male. This statistic is reflective of the immigrant population found in both cities.



**TABLE 1-F. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in Gilmer County**

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>11,110</b>	<b>11,844</b>	<b>13,368</b>	<b>16,007</b>	<b>23,456</b>	<b>29,171</b>	<b>36,425</b>	<b>45,119</b>	<b>55,650</b>	<b>68,241</b>
0 to 4 years	# 781 % 7%	# 825 % 7%	# 863 % 6%	# 960 % 6%	# 1,679 % 7%	# 1,718 % 6%	# 1,965 % 5%	# 2,336 % 5%	# 2,921 % 5%	# 3,625 % 5%
5 to 14 years	# 1,763 % 16%	# 1780 % 15%	# 1,908 % 14%	# 2256 % 14%	# 3,085 % 13%	# 3,995 % 14%	# 4,757 % 13%	# 5,230 % 12%	# 6,079 % 11%	# 7,409 % 11%
15 to 24 years	# 1,823 % 16%	# 1832 % 15%	# 1,870 % 14%	# 2075 % 13%	# 2,927 % 12%	# 3,666 % 13%	# 4,300 % 12%	# 5,681 % 13%	# 6,800 % 12%	# 7,544 % 11%
25 to 34 years	# 1,624 % 15%	# 1785 % 15%	# 1,963 % 15%	# 2385 % 15%	# 3,196 % 14%	# 3,834 % 13%	# 4,424 % 12%	# 4,812 % 11%	# 5,595 % 10%	# 7,363 % 11%
35 to 44 years	# 1,374 % 12%	# 1517 % 13%	# 1,920 % 14%	# 2405 % 15%	# 3,488 % 15%	# 4,237 % 15%	# 5,106 % 14%	# 6,001 % 13%	# 6,853 % 12%	# 7,614 % 11%
45 to 54 years	# 1,144 % 10%	# 1299 % 11%	# 1,573 % 12%	# 2082 % 13%	# 3,228 % 14%	# 3,826 % 13%	# 5,135 % 14%	# 6,525 % 14%	# 7,818 % 14%	# 9,033 % 13%
55 to 64 years	# 1,151 % 10%	# 1265 % 11%	# 1,453 % 11%	# 1761 % 11%	# 2,771 % 12%	# 3,783 % 13%	# 5,009 % 14%	# 6,327 % 14%	# 8,384 % 15%	# 10,688 % 16%
65 to 74 years	# 934 % 8%	# 948 % 8%	# 1,069 % 8%	# 1277 % 8%	# 1,936 % 8%	# 2,579 % 9%	# 3,652 % 10%	# 5,364 % 12%	# 7,170 % 13%	# 9,066 % 13%
75 to 84 years	# 407 % 4%	# 473 % 4%	# 583 % 4%	# 636 % 4%	# 864 % 4%	# 1,179 % 4%	# 1,640 % 5%	# 2,263 % 5%	# 3,230 % 6%	# 4,800 % 7%
85+ years	# 109 % 1%	# 120 % 1%	# 166 % 1%	# 170 % 1%	# 282 % 1%	# 354 % 1%	# 437 % 1%	# 580 % 1%	# 800 % 1%	# 1,099 % 2%
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>40.5</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>45.7</b>

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Table 5, 1990 Census STF 1, Table P011, 2000 Census SF 1, Table P12, Others: NGRDC

**TABLE 1-G. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in Ellijay**

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>2,130</b>	<b>2,240</b>
0 to 4 years	# 103 % 7%	# 94 % 7%	# 84 % 7%	# 79 % 7%	# 107 % 7%	# 107 % 6%	# 112 % 6%	# 114 % 6%	# 118 % 6%	# 122 % 5%
5 to 14 years	# 200 % 13%	# 188 % 14%	# 181 % 15%	# 147 % 13%	# 187 % 12%	# 205 % 12%	# 216 % 11%	# 227 % 11%	# 238 % 11%	# 247 % 11%
15 to 24 years	# 222 % 15%	# 188.02 % 14%	# 156 % 13%	# 159 % 14%	# 235 % 15%	# 227 % 14%	# 234 % 12%	# 240 % 12%	# 248 % 12%	# 256 % 11%
25 to 34 years	# 243 % 16%	# 201.45 % 15%	# 165 % 14%	# 159 % 14%	# 212 % 13%	# 225 % 13%	# 243 % 13%	# 251 % 12%	# 260 % 12%	# 268 % 12%
35 to 44 years	# 146 % 10%	# 147.73 % 11%	# 148 % 13%	# 136 % 12%	# 184 % 12%	# 198 % 12%	# 230 % 12%	# 245 % 12%	# 256 % 12%	# 267 % 12%
45 to 54 years	# 159 % 10%	# 134.3 % 10%	# 107 % 9%	# 113 % 10%	# 159 % 10%	# 172 % 10%	# 212 % 11%	# 228 % 11%	# 245 % 12%	# 261 % 12%
55 to 64 years	# 134 % 9%	# 120.87 % 9%	# 115 % 10%	# 113 % 10%	# 153 % 10%	# 162 % 10%	# 203 % 11%	# 221 % 11%	# 232 % 11%	# 247 % 11%
65 to 74 years	# 167 % 11%	# 134.3 % 10%	# 97 % 8%	# 102 % 9%	# 151 % 10%	# 157 % 9%	# 185 % 10%	# 201 % 10%	# 223 % 10%	# 240 % 11%
75 to 84 years	# 109 % 7%	# 107.44 % 8%	# 105 % 9%	# 92 % 8%	# 109 % 7%	# 129 % 8%	# 157 % 8%	# 175 % 9%	# 194 % 9%	# 209 % 9%
85+ years	# 33 % 2%	# 26.86 % 2%	# 20 % 2%	# 34 % 3%	# 87 % 5%	# 88 % 5%	# 98 % 5%	# 108 % 5%	# 116 % 5%	# 123 % 5%
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>38.4</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>43.5</b>

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Table 5, 1990 Census STF 1, Table P011, 2000 Census SF 1, Table P12, Others: NGRDC

**TABLE 1-G. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in East Ellijay**

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>1,537</b>	<b>1,747</b>
0 to 4 years	# 37 % 8%	# 26 % 7%	# 20 % 7%	# 36 % 7%	# 54 % 8%	# 70 % 8%	# 79 % 7%	# 85 % 6%	# 92 % 6%	# 101 % 6%
5 to 14 years	# 68 % 15%	# 51 % 13%	# 35 % 12%	# 61 % 12%	# 92 % 13%	# 123 % 14%	# 151 % 14%	# 170 % 13%	# 184 % 12%	# 202 % 12%
15 to 24 years	# 84 % 18%	# 62 % 15%	# 33 % 11%	# 85 % 17%	# 140 % 20%	# 142 % 16%	# 160 % 14%	# 172 % 13%	# 191 % 12%	# 209 % 12%
25 to 34 years	# 68 % 15%	# 57 % 15%	# 45 % 15%	# 79 % 16%	# 113 % 16%	# 147 % 16%	# 179 % 16%	# 199 % 15%	# 213 % 14%	# 230 % 13%
35 to 44 years	# 47 % 10%	# 37 % 10%	# 31 % 10%	# 59 % 12%	# 96 % 14%	# 116 % 13%	# 135 % 12%	# 168 % 13%	# 207 % 13%	# 232 % 13%
45 to 54 years	# 41 % 9%	# 39 % 10%	# 34 % 11%	# 50 % 10%	# 69 % 10%	# 95 % 10%	# 122 % 11%	# 146 % 11%	# 168 % 11%	# 202 % 12%
55 to 64 years	# 60 % 13%	# 55 % 14%	# 44 % 15%	# 48 % 10%	# 53 % 7%	# 73 % 8%	# 96 % 9%	# 129 % 10%	# 164 % 11%	# 184 % 11%
65 to 74 years	# 34 % 7%	# 35 % 10%	# 36 % 12%	# 44 % 9%	# 46 % 7%	# 61 % 7%	# 88 % 8%	# 112 % 8%	# 138 % 9%	# 169 % 10%
75 to 84 years	# 18 % 5%	# 21 % 6%	# 22 % 7%	# 29 % 6%	# 37 % 5%	# 54 % 6%	# 73 % 7%	# 100 % 8%	# 126 % 8%	# 148 % 8%
85+ years	# 3 % 0%	# 3 % 0%	# 3 % 1%	# 5 % 1%	# 7 % 1%	# 26 % 3%	# 34 % 3%	# 46 % 3%	# 54 % 4%	# 70 % 4%
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>39.9</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>39.2</b>	<b>40.7</b>

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Table 5, 1990 Census STF 1, Table P011, 2000 Census SF 1, Table P12, Others: NGRDC

### 1.1.4. Racial Composition

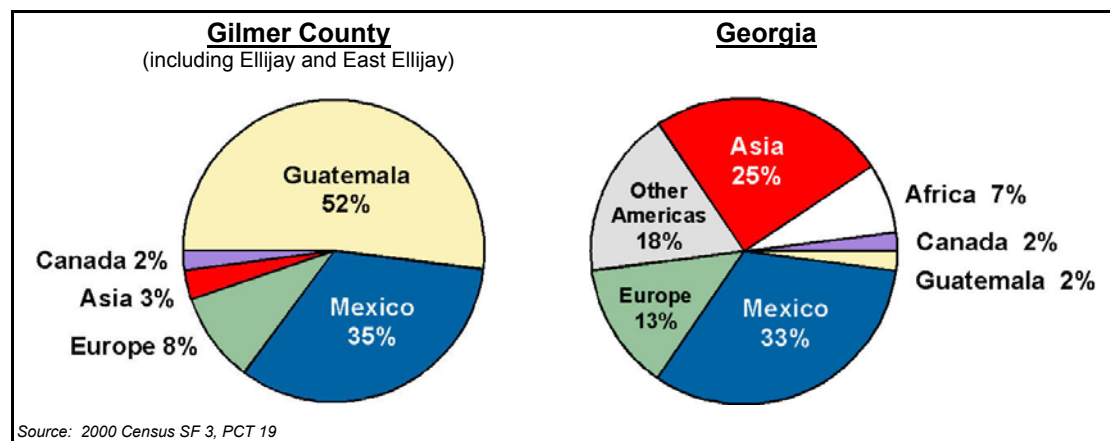
Gilmer County experienced little change in racial composition until the mid-1990s. Prior to that time, the county was predominantly white and non-Hispanic. Table 1-I provides a breakdown of population in terms of race.

**TABLE 1-I. Population by Race as a Percentage of Total Population**

Gilmer Co.	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
White, non-Hispanic	99.2%	98.7%	98.7%	98.2%	90.8%
Black, non-Hispanic	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Hispanic/Latino	0.4%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%	7.7%
Other	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.6%	1.3%
Ellijay	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
White, non-Hispanic	98.8%	99.2%	99.2%	97.1%	71.4%
Black, non-Hispanic	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%
Hispanic/Latino	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	25.2%
Other	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	2.1%
East Ellijay	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
White, non-Hispanic	100.0%	100.0%	99.3%	94.4%	64.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.4%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.1%	2.1%

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3A, Tables 3 and 4; 1990 Census STF 1, Tables P006 and P008; 2000 Census SF 1, P8; Others: NGRDC

As shown in Figure 1-F below, the majority of the foreign-born population in Gilmer County and its municipalities comes from Mexico or Guatemala. The foreign-born populations in Ellijay and East Ellijay are less ethnically diverse than those in Gilmer County and Georgia. For example, according to the 2000 census, 69% of the foreign-born population in East Ellijay was from Guatemala and 31% was from Mexico. In Ellijay, 79% of the foreign-born population was from Guatemala, 13% was from Mexico, 3% was from Europe, and 6% was from Asia.



**FIGURE 1-F. Place of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population in Gilmer County and Georgia: 2000**

## 1.1.5. Educational Attainment

### 1.1.5.1. Highest Level of Attainment

As shown in Table 1-J below, the level of educational attainment of adults over the age of 25 has continued to improve over the past several decades in Gilmer County. For example, in 1980, only 38% of Gilmer County's residents over the age of 25 had a high school diploma or better. By 2000, that figure had jumped to 65%. This figure is slightly higher than the regional rate of 64%, but significantly lower than the state's figure of 78%.

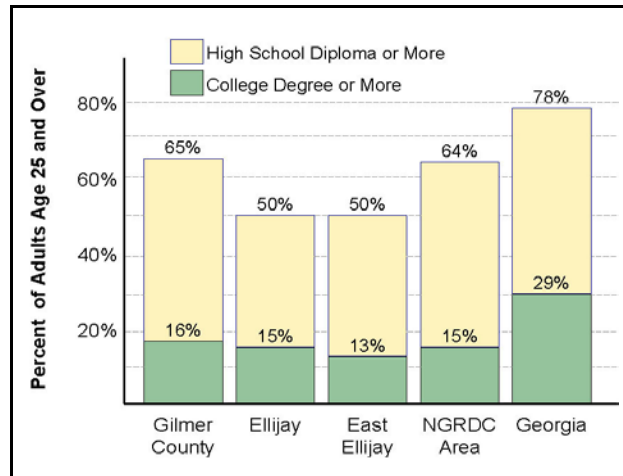


FIGURE 1-G. Educational Attainment: 2000

Figure 1-G provides a simplified illustration of the educational attainment of the population in 2000. In Ellijay and East Ellijay, only 50% of residents over the age of 25 had a high school diploma or better. This lower rate likely reflects the larger proportion of elderly and immigrant residents found in the cities.

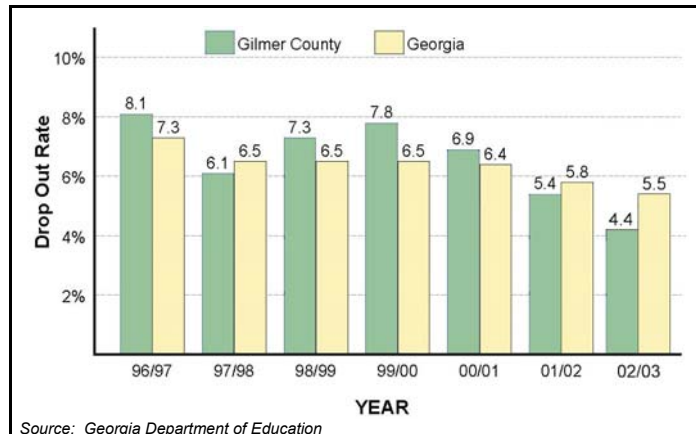
TABLE 1-J. Highest Level of Educational Attainment of Persons Age 25 and Older as a % of Population

1980	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Less than 9th Grade	45%	45%	50%	38%	24%
High School (No Diploma)	17%	18%	30%	21%	20%
High School Graduate	24%	20%	17%	25%	28%
College, No Degree	7%	7%	1%	9%	13%
College Degree or Higher	7%	11%	2%	8%	15%
1990	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Less than 9th Grade	24%	30%	37%	22%	12%
High School (No Diploma)	23%	23%	29%	21%	17%
High School Graduate	31%	23%	28%	30%	30%
College, No Degree	11%	12%	6%	13%	17%
College Associate Degree	2%	1%	0%	4%	5%
College Bachelor's Degree	6%	7%	0%	6%	13%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3%	5%	0%	3%	6%
2000	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Less than 9th Grade	14%	32%	35%	16%	8%
High School (No Diploma)	20%	19%	16%	19%	14%
High School Graduate	33%	23%	26%	32%	29%
College, No Degree	16%	12%	11%	17%	20%
College Associate Degree	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%
College Bachelor's Degree	8%	7%	5%	7%	16%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5%	4%	4%	4%	8%

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3, Table 50; 1990 Census STF 3, P057; 2000 Census SF 3, P37

### 1.1.5.2. Drop Out Rate

The drop out rate is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of students in grades 9 through 12 who drop out of school by the total number of students enrolled. Drop out rates in Gilmer County have fluctuated over the past several years, but have shown a general downward trend as illustrated in Figure 1-H.

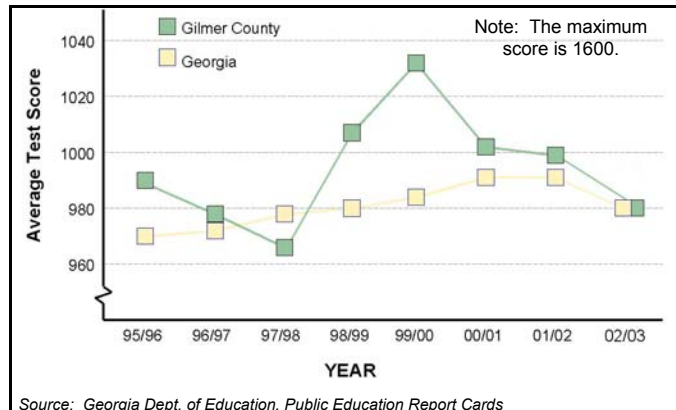


**FIGURE 1-H. Drop Out Rate of Students in Grades 9 to 12**

In recent years, the Gilmer County School system has received funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission for a two-part drop-out prevention program. One part of the program involves a summer session to assist students with their transition from middle school to high school. The second part of the program involves mentoring for at-risk students.

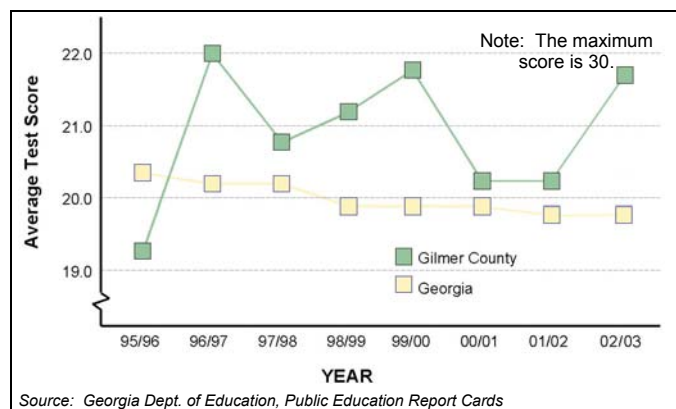
### 1.1.5.3. Standardized Achievement Test Scores

As illustrated in Figures 1-I and 1-J, scores on both the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) have fluctuated over the past several years, but Gilmer County's average scores have typically exceeded the state average.



**FIGURE 1-I. Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) Scores**

In the most recent school year for which data is available (2002/2003), SAT average scores for Gilmer County and Georgia were equal: 980. The average ACT score for Gilmer County students during that same school year was 21.7 compared to a statewide average score of 19.8.



**FIGURE 1-J. American College Test (ACT) Scores**

#### 1.1.5.4. Post-Secondary Education

Tables 1-K and 1-L show the percentage of Gilmer County students entering Georgia public colleges, universities, technical schools, and adult schools. The percentage of students entering Georgia Public Colleges and Universities is lower in Gilmer County than in Georgia. Also, the percentage requiring learning support when they enter college has been higher during recent years. For example, in the 2001/2002 school year, 26.4% of Gilmer County graduates required learning support upon entering Georgia Public Colleges and Universities compared with the state figure of 19.1%.

No significant trends are evident in the percentage of students entering technical schools and adult schools.

**TABLE 1-K. Percentage of Graduates Entering Georgia Public Colleges and Universities**

<b>Gilmer County</b>	<b>95/96</b>	<b>96/97</b>	<b>97/98</b>	<b>98/99</b>	<b>99/00</b>	<b>00/01</b>	<b>01/02</b>	<b>02/03*</b>
% Entering	12.0%	26.9%	34.4%	27.1%	26.9%	27.5%	36.3%	18.4%
% Requiring Learning Support	0.0%	28.1%	22.2%	21.1%	17.1%	28.2%	26.4%	17.3%
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>95/96</b>	<b>96/97</b>	<b>97/98</b>	<b>98/99</b>	<b>99/00</b>	<b>00/01</b>	<b>01/02</b>	<b>02/03*</b>
% Entering	12.0%	26.9%	38.8%	37.5%	37.3%	36.1%	36.1%	26.5%
% Requiring Learning Support	23.6%	23.3%	23.1%	22.1%	21.3%	20.0%	19.1%	18.7%

*Source: Georgia Department of Education, Public Education Report Cards. \*Data for the 2002/2003 school year was obtained from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement as this data was not yet included in the Report Cards at the time of publication of this plan.*

**TABLE 1-L. Percentage of Graduates Entering Georgia Public Technical and Adult Schools**

<b>Gilmer County</b>	<b>95/96</b>	<b>96/97</b>	<b>97/98</b>	<b>98/99</b>	<b>99/00</b>	<b>00/01</b>	<b>01/02</b>	<b>02/03*</b>
Current Year Graduates	22.3%	6.7%	35.9%	10.7%	5.4%	12.0%	11.6%	6.4%
Previous Year Graduates	0.0%	4.6%	16.8%	0.0%	10.7%	8.5%	9.2%	not avail.
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>95/96</b>	<b>96/97</b>	<b>97/98</b>	<b>98/99</b>	<b>99/00</b>	<b>00/01</b>	<b>01/02</b>	<b>02/03*</b>
Current Year Graduates	6.2%	7.1%	6.5%	6.5%	7.4%	8.8%	9.7%	5.7%
Previous Year Graduates	4.0%	3.7%	3.2%	0.6%	7.7%	8.4%	--	not avail.

*Source: Georgia Department of Education, Public Education Report Cards. \*Data for the 2002/2003 school year was obtained from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement as this data was not yet included in the Report Cards at the time of publication of this plan.*

## 1.1.6. Income

### 1.1.6.1. Per Capita Income

The US Census Bureau defines per capita income as the mean income computed for every person in a geographic area. Per capita income is calculated by dividing (a) the aggregate income of all people in an area who are 15 years of age or older by (b) the total population of an area.

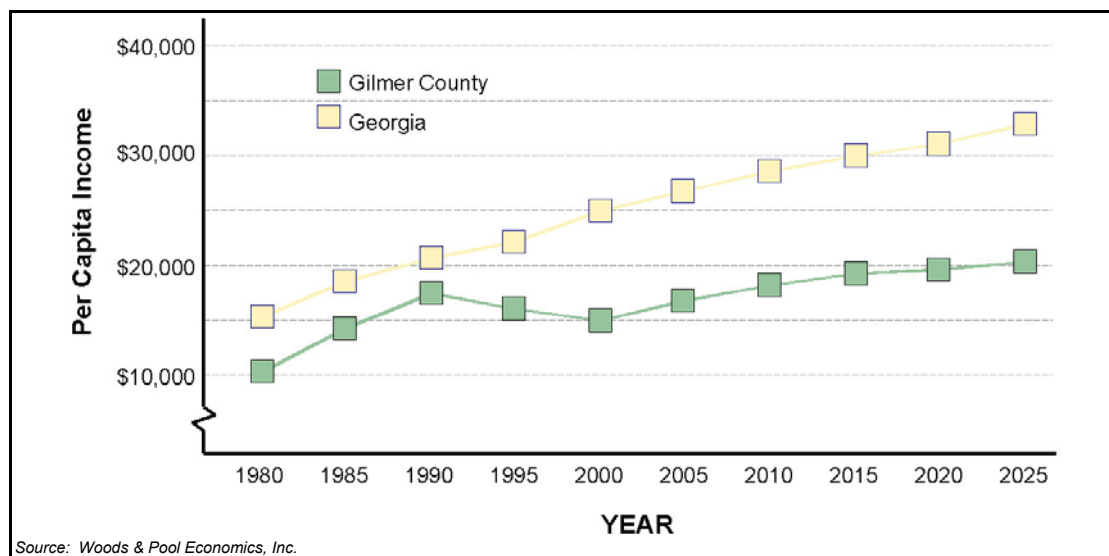
As shown in Table 1-M, per capita income in Gilmer County and its municipalities has consistently lagged behind that of the region and the state. Per capita income in 1999 was greater in Gilmer County than in Ellijay and East Ellijay.

**TABLE 1-M. Per Capita Income\***

Year		Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1979	\$	\$ 4,932	\$ 4,855	\$ 4,089	\$5,759	\$ 6,402
	% of GA \$	77%	76%	64%	90%	--
1989	\$	\$ 9,679	\$ 9,848	\$ 9,107	\$12,182	\$ 13,631
	% of GA \$	71%	72%	67%	89%	--
1999	\$	\$ 17,147	\$ 13,740	\$ 13,934	\$ 22,093	\$ 21,154
	% of GA \$	81%	65%	66%	104%	--

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3A, Table 75; 1990 Census STF 3, P114A; 2000 Census SF 3, P82  
\*Income dollars are in terms of the year the census was taken.

Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. has projected per capita income at five-year intervals for each county in Georgia. As illustrated in Figure 1-K below, the projections show growth in per capita income for Gilmer County. Income levels in Gilmer County are projected to continue to lag behind state levels.



Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

**FIGURE 1-K. Per Capita Income Trends and Projections (1996 \$)**

Note: The inconsistency of the per capita income data shown Figure 1-K with similar census data shown in Table 1-M is due to the use of an econometric model which estimates five-year intervals based upon historical trends for the county and state. In addition, Woods & Pool uses 1996 dollars throughout their projections, but census figures are for the dollar value in the year the census was taken.

### 1.1.6.2. Household Income

According to US Census Bureau definitions, household income is the sum of money income received in a calendar year by all household members who are 15 years of age and older. It includes wage income, salary income, retirement and investment income, pensions, social security income, public assistance payments, and all other income.

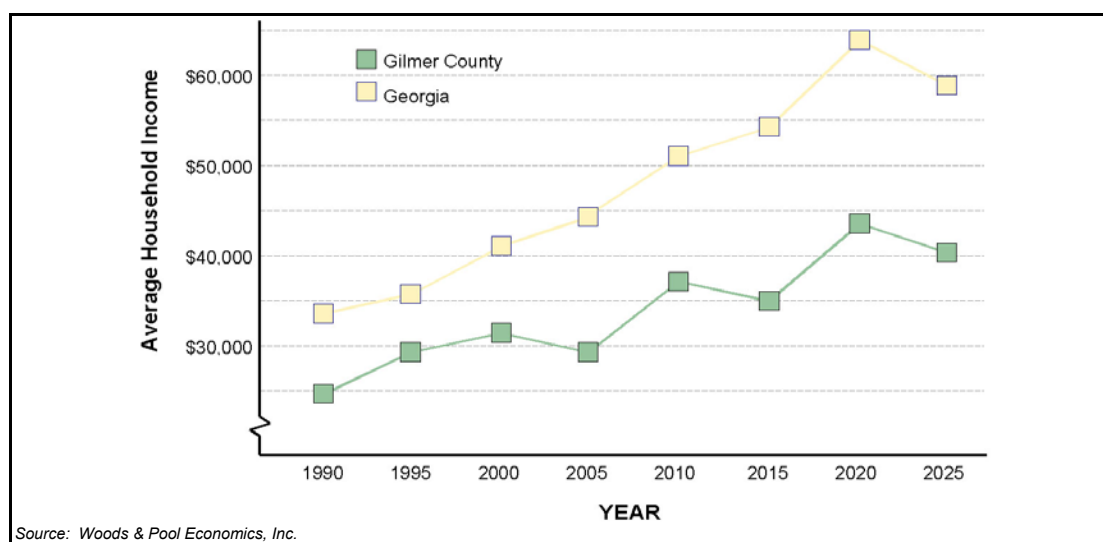
Household income in East Ellijay is much closer to the state average than per capita income. This is probably due to the fact that the average household size in East Ellijay is larger than the state average. With more persons per household, there are potentially more wage earners in the household; therefore, total household income should be greater.

**TABLE 1-N. Average Household Income\*: 1979 – 1999**

Year		Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1979	\$	\$ 11,205	\$ 9,450	\$ 9,250	\$ 15,783	\$ 15,033
	% of GA \$	75%	63%	62%	105%	--
1984	\$	\$ 16,308	\$ 12,732	\$ 11,209	\$ 23,206	\$ 22,027
	% of GA \$	74%	58%	51%	105%	--
1989	\$	\$ 21,410	\$ 16,014	\$ 13,167	\$ 30,629	\$ 29,021
	% of GA \$	74%	55%	45%	106%	--
1994	\$	\$ 28,275	\$ 19,067	\$ 24,521	\$ 34,192	\$ 35,727
	% of GA \$	79%	53%	69%	96%	--
1999	\$	\$ 35,140	\$ 22,120	\$ 35,875	\$ 37,754	\$ 42,433
	% of GA \$	83%	52%	85%	90%	--

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3A, Table 71; 1990 Census STF 3, P080A; 2000 Census SF 3, P53; others NGRDC  
 \*Income dollars are in terms of the year the census was taken.

Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. has projected average household income at five-year intervals for each county in Georgia (beginning with the year 1990). As illustrated in Figure 1-L below, the projections show a general growth trend in average household income for Gilmer County, but average household income will be lower than average levels for the state.



Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

**FIGURE 1-L. Average Household Income Trends and Projections (Current Year \$)**

Note: The inconsistency of the household income data shown Figure 1-L with similar census data shown in Table 1-N is due to the use of an econometric model which estimates five-year intervals based upon historical trends for the county and state.



### 1.1.6.3. Household Income Distribution

Household income distribution figures in Gilmer County are very similar to those for Georgia as shown in Table 1-O. Approximately 39% of households in Gilmer County have an income between \$35,000 and \$75,000 compared to 37% in Georgia. The percentage of households with incomes of \$75,000 or more in Gilmer County was 12%, compared to 23% in Georgia.

**TABLE 1-O. Household Income Distribution: 1999**

	Less than \$15,000	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 or more
<b>Gilmer County</b>	18%	16%	16%	20%	19%	6%	4%	2%
<b>Ellijay</b>	36%	16%	12%	13%	15%	7%	1%	2%
<b>East Ellijay</b>	18%	20%	11%	25%	17%	8%	1%	1%
<b>Georgia</b>	16%	12%	13%	17%	20%	10%	8%	5%

Source: 2000 Census, Table DP-3

### 1.1.6.4. Poverty Level

The US Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is considered to be poor or below the poverty level. In 1999, the poverty level for a family of four with two adults and two related children under the age of 18 was set at \$16,895. (Note: Although not considered to be a "family," the poverty level for a single householder age 65 or over was \$7,990.)

In Gilmer County, 9% of families were considered to be below poverty in 1999. (See Table 1-P.) This figure is slightly lower than the rate of 10% for Georgia. In Ellijay and East Ellijay on the other hand, greater percentages of families were classified as being below poverty level: 20% and 15% respectively.

**TABLE 1-P. Families Below Poverty Level: 1999**

Type of Family	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
Total number of families	6,695	320	185	2,126,360
Total number of families below poverty level	620	65	27	210,138
Percentage of all families below poverty level	9%	20%	15%	10%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3 Table P90

As illustrated in Table 1-Q on the following page, in Gilmer County and East Ellijay, families which were below poverty level were more likely to be married couple families, whereas in Ellijay and Georgia, they were more likely have a female householder with no husband present.

**TABLE 1-Q. Types of Families Below Poverty Level: 1999**

Type of Family	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
<b>Total number of families below poverty level</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>210,138</b>
<b>Married-couple family:</b>	64%	37%	59%	35%
With related children under 18 years	31%	25%	37%	21%
No related children under 18 years	33%	12%	22%	14%
<b>Male householder, no wife present:</b>	10%	6%	0%	8%
With related children under 18 years	7%	1%	0%	6%
No related children under 18 years	3%	5%	0%	2%
<b>Female householder, no husband present:</b>	26%	57%	41%	57%
With related children under 18 years	22%	48%	41%	50%
No related children under 18 years	4%	9%	0%	7%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3 Table P90

Table 1-R provides data on the poverty status of individuals rather than families. In 1999, Ellijay and East Ellijay had a greater percentage of persons below poverty level than Gilmer County and Georgia. The distribution of poverty among age groups in the county and municipalities is similar to the state with a few exceptions. In Gilmer County and Ellijay for example, the percentage of persons below poverty is greater for adults over 65 and less for children age 17 and below. This is due in part to the fact that, when compared to the state, a greater percentage of the populations in Gilmer County and Ellijay are of persons over age 65 and a smaller percentage are of persons age 17 and below. (Refer to Tables 1-F, 1-G, and 1-H, Population by Age Group on pages 1-7 and 1-8.)

In Gilmer County, the age group with the greatest percentage of persons living in poverty in 1999 was the 65 and older category, where 16% of all residents in this age group had an income below poverty level. In Ellijay, 29% of the persons age 17 and under had incomes below poverty level, and in East Ellijay, 24% of persons between the ages of 18 and 65 had incomes below poverty level.

**TABLE 1-R. Poverty Status by Age: 1999**

	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>23,220</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>7,959,649</b>
Persons with income in 1999 below poverty level	<b>2,892</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>1,033,793</b>
- as a percentage of total population	12%	28%	19%	13%
<b>Age 17 and under</b>	741	105	28	365,406
- as a percentage of persons below poverty level	26%	26%	20%	35%
- as a percentage of persons in this age group	13%	29%	16%	17%
<b>Age 18 to 65</b>	1,645	213	95	566,159
- as a percentage of persons below poverty level	57%	54%	69%	55%
- as a percentage of persons in this age group	11%	24%	21%	11%
<b>Age 65 and over</b>	506	79	14	102,228
- as a percentage of persons below poverty level	17%	20%	10%	10%
- as a percentage of persons in this age group	16%	23%	16%	13%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3 Table P87

Other indications of poverty include the number of persons receiving food stamps, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and the percentage of households requiring energy assistance. These figures are provided in Tables 1-S, 1-T, and 1-U.

The number of persons receiving food stamps in Gilmer County has increased over the past five years according to data from the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services.

**TABLE 1-S. Gilmer County Food Stamp Recipients**

	<b>Food Stamps</b> (avg. # of recipients per month)
<b>1999</b>	978
<b>2000</b>	901
<b>2001</b>	829
<b>2002</b>	987
<b>2003</b>	1,289

Source: [www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us](http://www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us)

**TABLE 1-T. Students Eligible to Receive Free or Reduced Price School Meals**

	<b>Gilmer County</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
<b>1998/1999</b>	43.6%	43.4%
<b>1999/2000</b>	44.1%	42.9%
<b>2000/2001</b>	43.6%	43.2%
<b>2001/2002</b>	47.3%	44.2%

Source: "KidsFirst" profile for Gilmer County, [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

As shown in Table 1-T, Gilmer County has had a greater percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch than has the state as a whole. In the 2001/2002 school year, almost half of the students were eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

In 2000, approximately 4% of households in Gilmer County required energy assistance compared with 2.6% of the households throughout Georgia. (See Table 1-U.)

**TABLE 1-U. Percentage of Households Requiring Energy Assistance in 2000**

	<b>Gilmer County</b>		<b>Georgia</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Households With Winter Energy Assistance	367	4.0%	77,623	2.6%
Households With Summer Energy Assistance	104	1.1%	27,292	0.9%
Total Number of Households	9,071		3,006,369	

Source: [www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us](http://www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us)

## 1.2. Assessment

The inventory of population presented in the previous section forms the framework for other elements of this Joint Comprehensive Plan. As such, the analysis of this information is presented, for the most part, within other plan elements and is used to determine appropriate economic development strategies, housing and community facility needs, land development patterns, etc. The assessment in this section simply answers the following question which was derived from the requirements in Section 110-12-1-.04(12)(a)ii of the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning:

*What significant trends exist in terms of the size and characteristics of the populations of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay, especially as compared with regional, state, and national trends?*

This question is answered in the following sections in terms of population growth, household size, age, racial composition, educational attainment, and income.

### 1.2.1. Population Growth

Population growth is a basic indicator of future demands for housing, schools, hospitals, and other community facilities and services.

In terms of total population, Gilmer County ranked 68th out of the 159 counties in Georgia in the year 2000, but it ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of population growth between 1990 and 2000. During this time it had a growth rate of 75.5%, which was much higher than the rates for the NGRDC region and the state. Approximately 90% of the population growth was due to net migration rather than natural increase (i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths), while just 66% of Georgia's population growth was due to net migration.

The area is expected to experience stable growth over the next decade, but at slightly lower rates than during the 1990s. This growth will continue to place a heavy demand on housing and community facilities and services.

### 1.2.2. Household Size

The average household size for the total population is similar to that of the state and nation. The average size of Hispanic or Latino households is somewhat larger than that of the state and nation.

### 1.2.3. Age

A "dependency ratio" is one way of characterizing an area's age distribution and is used to compare the number of persons receiving economic support to the number providing economic support. The dependency ratio is typically calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{\# of persons younger than 18} + \text{\# of persons age 65 or older}}{\text{\# of persons age 18 to 64 years}} = \text{dependency ratio}$$

A higher dependency ratio implies a greater demand for particular services and programs such as elderly housing and child or adult day care. Gilmer County's dependency ratio in 2000 was 59.9%, which is similar to the rates for the NGRDC region and Georgia, which were 59.7% and 56.5%, respectively. Because of the retirees entering the area, Gilmer County and the cities will continue to experience demand for services for the elderly. In addition, because of the influx of immigrants with young children, there will continue to be a heavy demand on schools and for children's services.

#### **1.2.4. Racial Composition**

The racial composition of Gilmer County's population is very different from that of Georgia. For example, according to the 2000 Census, in Georgia almost 29% of the population was African American, compared to less than 1% in Gilmer County. In addition, just over 5% of the population in Georgia was Hispanic or Latino while Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay had Hispanic or Latino populations of 8%, 25%, and 33%, respectively.

The recent influx of Hispanic and Latino immigrants into Gilmer County has had and will continue to have a great impact of community facilities and services, as will be discussed in more detail in other elements of this Plan. The Hispanic/Latino population will be significant in both Ellijay and East Ellijay in the future as it is now. The county-wide Hispanic/Latino population is expected to continue to grow during the planning period.

#### **1.2.5. Educational Attainment**

Education attainment in Gilmer County has increased steadily over the past 20 years. The percentage of persons in Gilmer County with high school diplomas or college degrees is very similar to the figures for the NGRDC region, but is still substantially lower than the figures for Georgia.

As education levels increase, Gilmer County will become more competitive in attracting industries that require a more skilled and educated labor force.

#### **1.2.6. Income**

Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay have consistently lagged behind the NGRDC region and the state in terms of per capita and household income. Gilmer County has a similar percentage of families below poverty level (9%) as compared to the state (10%), but the majority (64%) in Gilmer County are married couple families, whereas the majority (57%) in the state are families headed by a female with no husband present.

# 2

## Economic Development

The Economic Development Element of this Joint Comprehensive Plan provides the following:

- data regarding the economic trends in Gilmer County;
- an assessment of these trends to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats;
- an evaluation of the appropriateness of the existing economy given the County's population, housing availability, transportation network, natural resources, and community facilities;
- goals and strategies for achieving a growing and balanced economy; and
- implementation strategies to accomplish the County's desired economic goals and objectives.

### What is economic development?

The Georgia Economic Development Association (GEDA) defines economic development as the following:

*"a sustainable process of creating economic opportunity for all citizens, stimulating business investment, diversifying the public revenue base, and enhancing quality of life."*

(source: [www.geda.org](http://www.geda.org))

### Statistics: NAICS or SIC?

In January 1997, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system as the governmental standard for statistics on industry. The classification type used in the tables in the economic development inventory varies, depending upon the age and source of the data.

More information on the difference between NAICS and SIC can be found on the U.S. Small Business Administration website at <http://www.sba.gov/businessop/standards/faqs.html>.

### Element Outline:

#### 2.1. Inventory

##### 2.1.1. Economic Base

- Employment
- Earnings
- Weekly Wages
- Personal Income
- New or Planned Economic Activities
- Special or Unique Economic Activities

##### 2.1.2. Labor Force

- Employment by Occupation
- Employment Status
- Unemployment Rates
- Commuting Patterns

##### 2.1.3. Local Economic Development Resources

- Agencies
- Programs
- Education and Training

#### 2.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

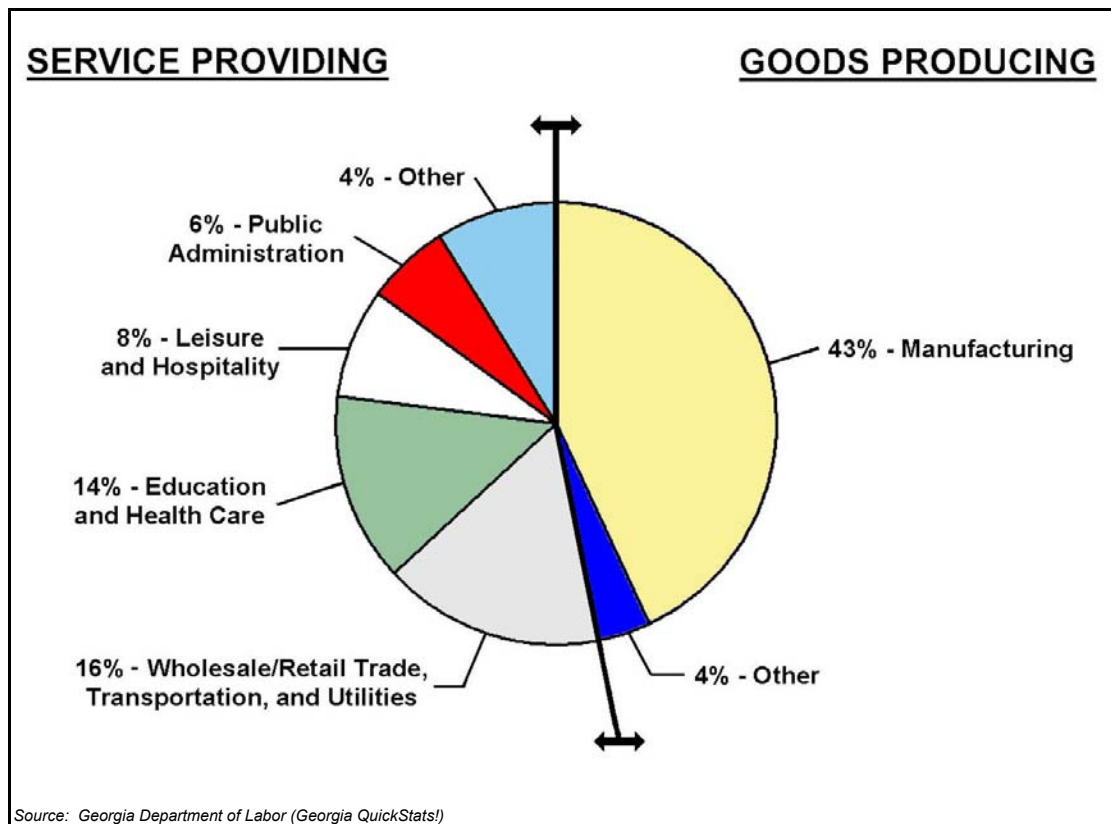
#### 2.3. Community Goal and Implementation Program

## 2.1. Inventory

### 2.1.1. Economic Base

#### 2.1.1.1. Employment

The division of employment between service-producing and goods-producing establishments is fairly even in Gilmer County, with 53% of the persons employed in the County providing services and 47% producing goods. As shown in Figure 2-A below, manufacturing establishments employed the greatest number of Gilmer County residents in 2002.



**FIGURE 2-A. 2002 Gilmer County Employment by NAICS**

Table 2-A provides historical data on the number and distribution of employees by sector in Gilmer County. This data represents persons employed in Gilmer County and not necessarily residing there.

In Gilmer County, the total number of employees has increased in both goods-producing and service-providing employment sectors. The percentage of all employees in goods-producing jobs has decreased slightly from 46% to 44%, while the percentage in service-providing jobs has increased slightly from 38% to 40%. Historically, Gilmer County has had a larger proportion of its workforce employed in manufacturing industries, while the state has had a larger proportion in service industries.

Table 2-B compares the county with state percentages of employment by sector. Note that Table 2-A uses the NCAIS, while Table 2-B uses the SIC.

**TABLE 2-A. Employment by Sector (NAICS)<sup>1</sup>**

Employment Sector	1990		1995		2000	
	# <sup>3</sup>	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Goods Producing</b>	<b>2,365</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>2,800</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>3,103</b>	<b>44%</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing <sup>2</sup>	19	0%	48	1%	20	0%
Mining	72	1%	125	2%	78	1%
Construction	164	3%	252	4%	207	3%
Manufacturing	2,110	41%	2,375	40%	2,798	40%
<b>Service Providing</b>	<b>1,989</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>2,347</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>2,827</b>	<b>40%</b>
Wholesale Trade	101	2%	173	3%	110	2%
Retail Trade	605	12%	671	11%	817	12%
Transportation and Warehousing	4	0%	43	1%	16	0%
Utilities	56	1%	63	1%	50	1%
Information	18	0%	17	0%	119	2%
Finance and Insurance	209	4%	165	3%	205	3%
Real Estate and Rental/Leasing	130	3%	84	1%	76	1%
Professional, Scientific/Technical Services	80	2%	68	1%	148	2%
Management	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Administrative/Waste Services	60	1%	10	0%	127	2%
Educational Services	0	0%	15	0%	34	0%
Health Care and Social Services	346	7%	496	8%	431	6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9	0%	11	0%	7	0%
Accommodation and Food Services	188	4%	351	6%	401	6%
Other Services	183	4%	180	3%	286	4%
Unclassified or Undisclosed	10	0%	4	0%	6	0%
<b>Total: Private Sector</b>	<b>4,364</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>5,151</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>5,936</b>	<b>85%</b>
Federal Government	55	1%	58	1%	88	1%
State Government	638	12%	647	11%	824	12%
Local Government	122	2%	113	2%	144	2%
<b>Total: Government</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>All industries</b>	<b>5,179</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,969</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,992</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Georgia Department of Labor and NGRDC

<sup>1</sup>This data represents jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

<sup>2</sup>This data does not include self-employed farmers, apple growers, or migrant workers.

<sup>3</sup>Average monthly number of employees

**TABLE 2-B. Employment by Sector (SIC)**

Employment Sector	1990		1995		2000	
	Gilmer	Georgia	Gilmer	Georgia	Gilmer	Georgia
Farm	6%	2%	4%	2%	3%	1%
Agricultural Services, Other	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Mining	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Construction	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%
Manufacturing	34%	16%	34%	14%	34%	13%
Transportation/Communication/Public Utilities	2%	6%	3%	6%	2%	6%
Wholesale Trade	1%	6%	2%	6%	2%	6%
Retail Trade	15%	16%	17%	17%	17%	17%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	8%	7%	5%	6%	5%	7%
Services	13%	24%	15%	27%	16%	29%
Government	13%	16%	11%	15%	11%	14%

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. (DCA Data Views®)



As shown in Table 2-C below, the total number of jobs in Gilmer County is expected grow in the future, while the split between goods-producing and service-providing jobs is expected to remain fairly unchanged. The manufacturing sector is expected to continue to provide the greatest number of jobs in the area.

**TABLE 2-C. Projected Employment by Sector (NAICS)<sup>1</sup>**

Employment Sector	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Goods Producing</b>	<b>3,911</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>4,468</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>5,025</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>5,582</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>6,139</b>	<b>47%</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	13	0%	14	0%	15	0%	16	0%	17	0%
Mining	84	1%	75	1%	66	1%	56	0%	47	0%
Construction	275	3%	311	3%	346	3%	382	3%	418	3%
Manufacturing	3,539	43%	4,069	43%	4,598	43%	5,127	43%	5,657	44%
<b>Service Providing</b>	<b>3,269</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>3,751</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>4,232</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>4,714</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>5,195</b>	<b>40%</b>
Wholesale Trade	177	2%	195	2%	214	2%	232	2%	251	2%
Retail Trade	940	11%	1,075	11%	1,209	11%	1,343	11%	1,477	11%
Transportation/Warehousing	31	0%	32	0%	34	0%	36	0%	37	0%
Utilities	31	0%	32	0%	32	0%	33	0%	33	0%
Information	168	2%	229	2%	290	3%	351	3%	413	3%
Finance and Insurance	176	2%	172	2%	167	2%	163	1%	159	1%
Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	51	1%	45	0%	39	0%	33	0%	27	0%
Prof., Scientific, Tech. Services	172	2%	210	2%	248	2%	287	2%	325	3%
Management	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Administrative/Waste Services	89	1%	116	1%	142	1%	169	1%	195	2%
Educational Services	42	1%	52	1%	62	0.01%	72	1%	82	1%
Health Care/Social Services	569	7%	671	7%	773	7%	875	7%	977	8%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	7	0%	6	0%	5	0%	4	0%	3	0%
Accommodation/Food Services	576	7%	695	7%	814	8%	933	8%	1,052	8%
Other Services	240	3%	220	2%	201	2%	182	2%	162	1%
Unclassified	9	0%	10	0%	10	0%	11	0%	11	0%
Undisclosed	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	2	0%
<b>Total: Private Sector</b>	<b>7,191</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>8,230</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>9,269</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>10,308</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>11,346</b>	<b>88%</b>
Federal Government	90	1%	104	1%	118	1%	133	1%	147	1%
State Government	899	11%	1,001	11%	1,104	10%	1,206	10%	1,309	10%
Local Government	137	2%	143	2%	149	1%	154	1%	160	1%
<b>Total: Government</b>	<b>1,127</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1,371</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1,493</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1,616</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>All industries</b>	<b>8,317</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,478</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10,640</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,801</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,962</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Georgia Department of Labor and NGRDC

<sup>1</sup>This data represents jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

### 2.1.1.2. Earnings

As would be expected, the trends in earnings in Gilmer County are similar to the trends presented in the previous section on employment. Historical and projected earnings are presented in Tables 2-D and 2-E. In 2000, total earnings in manufacturing were greater than in any other sector in Gilmer County at \$74 million or just over 34%. By contrast, only 15% of total earnings in the state were from manufacturing jobs. In Georgia, 27% of earnings came from service jobs compared to 14% in Gilmer County.

**TABLE 2-D. Earnings by Employment Sector (SIC)**

Employment Sector	1990		1995		2000	
	Gilmer	Georgia	Gilmer	Georgia	Gilmer	Georgia
Farm	11%	1%	12%	1%	9%	1%
Agricultural Services, Other	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Mining	3%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Construction	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%
Manufacturing	35%	18%	34%	17%	34%	15%
Transportation, Public Utilities	3%	9%	4%	9%	4%	10%
Wholesale Trade	2%	9%	1%	8%	3%	8%
Retail Trade	10%	9%	11%	9%	11%	9%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6%	6%	4%	7%	4%	8%
Services	11%	22%	13%	24%	14%	27%
Government	15%	20%	13%	17%	13%	15%
Total County Earnings (1996 \$)	\$ 143,380,000		\$ 171,188,000		\$ 218,555,000	

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. (DCA Data Views®)

While total earnings in Gilmer County are projected to grow over the next twenty years, little change is anticipated in the distribution of earnings between employment sectors. For example, in Gilmer County, earnings in manufacturing should remain at about 35% of total earnings while service jobs should contribute between 14% and 16% of total earnings.

**TABLE 2-E. Projected Earnings by Employment Sector (SIC)**

Employment Sector	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA
Farm	8%	1%	8%	1%	8%	1%	8%	1%	8%	1%
Agricultural Services, Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Mining	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Construction	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Manufacturing	35%	14%	35%	14%	35%	14%	35%	13%	35%	13%
Transportation, Public Utilities	4%	10%	4%	10%	4%	10%	4%	10%	4%	10%
Wholesale Trade	3%	8%	3%	8%	3%	8%	3%	8%	3%	8%
Retail Trade	11%	9%	11%	9%	11%	9%	11%	9%	11%	9%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	4%	8%	4%	8%	4%	8%	4%	8%	4%	8%
Services	14%	28%	14%	29%	15%	30%	15%	32%	16%	34%
Government	13%	15%	14%	15%	14%	15%	14%	14%	14%	13%
Total County Earnings (1996 \$)	\$253,581,000		\$289,097,000		\$324,199,000		\$357,867,000		\$389,238,000	

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. (DCA Data Views®)

### 2.1.1.3. Weekly Wages

As shown in Table 2-F, average weekly wages in Gilmer County have historically been lower than the average weekly wages for the entire state of Georgia. The greatest variation in 1999 was in the wholesale trade industry where workers in Gilmer County made, on average, \$386 or 49% of the statewide average weekly wage. The average wage in all industries in Gilmer County was \$389 in 1999, or 63% of the statewide average of \$622. The manufacturing industry, which employs the largest number of Gilmer County residents, had an average weekly wage of \$386 compared to the state average of \$683.

**TABLE 2-F. Average Weekly Wages Paid By Employment Sector (SIC)<sup>1</sup>**

	1990			1995			1999		
	<u>Gilmer County</u>	GA		<u>Gilmer County</u>	GA		<u>Gilmer County</u>	GA	
	\$	% of GA	\$	\$	% of GA	\$	\$	% of GA	\$
<b>All Industries</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>622</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	458	166%	276	--	--	322	--	--	389
Construction	284	65%	434	351	69%	508	444	71%	621
Manufacturing	295	66%	449	335	60%	555	386	57%	683
Transportation, Public Utilities	538	89%	603	580	79%	737	729	81%	895
Wholesale	442	73%	603	319	44%	729	453	49%	932
Retail	193	82%	236	233	85%	275	267	80%	334
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	256	47%	543	371	54%	693	484	53%	907
Services	322	78%	414	426	85%	501	415	68%	612
Federal Government	474	87%	543	609	91%	666	648	80%	808
State Government	472	105%	450	494	100%	493	559	97%	576
Local Government	288	75%	386	347	79%	440	411	78%	524

Source: Georgia Employment and Wages Averages, Georgia Department of Labor, 1990, 1995, 1999

<sup>1</sup>This data represents jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

-- means data could not be provided for privacy reasons.

In 2002, the most recent year for which data is available, Gilmer County workers continued to make less than the state's average wage for all employment sectors. For example, persons in goods-producing industries made, on average, 61% of the Georgia average weekly wage. Workers in service-producing industries made even less, just 59% of the state average. Wages of government employees were approximately 81% of the state average.

Note that employment classifications in Table 2-F area based on the SIC while Table 2-G uses the NAICS. In addition, only jobs covered by unemployment insurance laws are included in the statistics of both tables.

**TABLE 2-G. Average Weekly Wages Paid by NAICS: 2002<sup>1</sup>**

2001	Gilmer County		Georgia
	\$	% of GA \$	\$
<b>Goods Producing</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>708</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	465	113%	410
Construction	524	76%	693
Manufacturing	418	57%	728
<b>Service Producing</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>688</b>
Wholesale Trade	338	33%	1,018
Retail Trade	395	90%	440
Transportation and Warehousing	421	51%	828
Information	809	74%	1,098
Finance and Insurance	632	58%	1,082
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	344	49%	697
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	514	47%	1,089
Administrative/Waste services	365	75%	485
Educational Services	173	30%	581
Health Care and Social Services	476	70%	678
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	171	29%	586
Accommodation and Food Services	204	79%	259
<b>Total Private Sector</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>693</b>
<b>Total Government</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>660</b>

Source: Georgia Employment and Wages Averages, 2002

<sup>1</sup>This data represents jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws is based upon place of employment, not place of residence.

#### 2.1.1.4. Personal Income

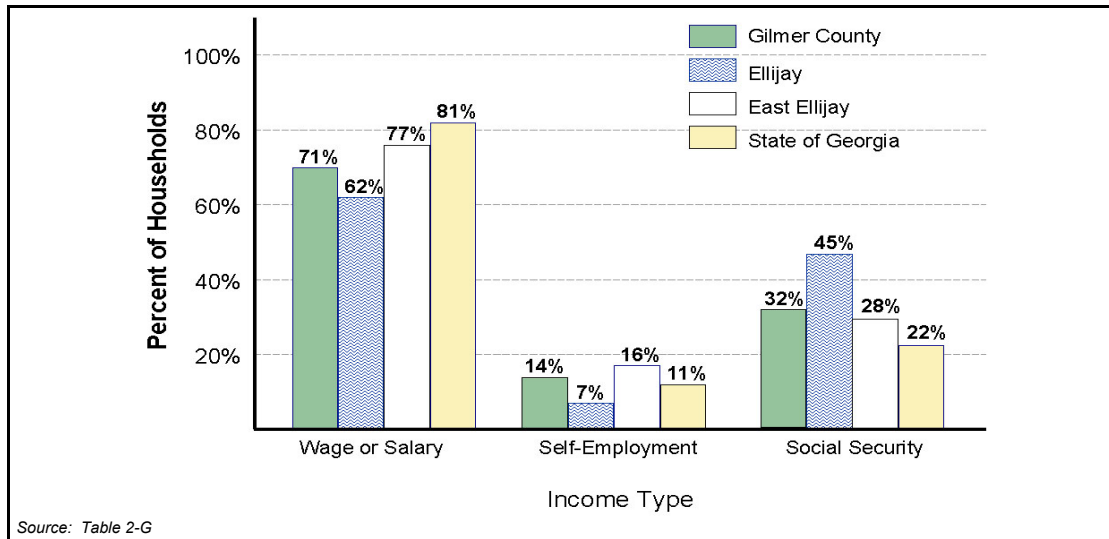
Table 2-H provides census data on sources of household income in 1989 and 1999. Few changes occurred during this decade, with the majority of households receiving wage and salary income. The most noticeable changes included a decline in Social Security income in East Ellijay (from 49% to 28%) and a decline in public assistance income in Ellijay (from 20% to 4%).

**TABLE 2-H. Percent of Households Receiving Various Sources of Income**

Source of Income	1989				1994				1999			
	Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA
Wage or Salary Income	74%	59%	68%	81%	72%	60%	72%	81%	71%	62%	77%	81%
Self-Employment Income	16%	12%	4%	13%	15%	9%	10%	12%	14%	7%	16%	11%
Interest, Dividend, or Net Rental Income	27%	23%	20%	31%	26%	22%	23%	24%	26%	22%	27%	29%
Social Security Income	29%	40%	49%	23%	30%	42%	38%	22%	32%	45%	28%	22%
Supplemental Security Income	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5%	11%	6%	4%
Public Assistance Income	9%	20%	13%	1%	6%	12%	8%	8%	2%	4%	4%	3%
Retirement Income	12%	15%	3%	13%	14%	14%	9%	14%	16%	14%	15%	14%
Other Type of Income	10%	8%	10%	10%	11%	10%	12%	11%	11%	12%	14%	12%

Sources: 1990 Census STF 3, Tables P090 – P097; 2000 Census SF 3, Tables P58 – P66; others NGRDC

\* Note: Percent totals may exceed 100% due to households receiving more than one type of income.



**FIGURE 2-B. Sources of Household Income in 1999**

In 1999, differences between sources of household income in Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Georgia were most noticeable in three categories of income: wage or salary, self-employment, and social security. These differences are highlighted in Figure 2-B to the right.

Ellijay had the lowest percentage of households with wage or salary income, just 62% compared to 81% for Georgia. It also had the highest percentage of households with Social Security income: 45% compared to 22% in Georgia.

Projections of sources of personal were prepared by Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. and are shown below in Table 2-I. Little change in the sources of personal income is anticipated in Gilmer County or Georgia over the next twenty years.

**TABLE 2-I. Sources of Personal Income: Projected**

Source of Income	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA	Gilmer	GA
Wage or Salary Income	38%	61%	38%	61%	38%	61%	37%	61%	37%	61%
Other Labor Income	4%	7%	4%	7%	4%	6%	4%	6%	4%	6%
Proprietors Income	16%	9%	16%	8%	16%	8%	15%	8%	15%	8%
Dividends, Interest, & Rent	18%	17%	18%	17%	18%	17%	18%	16%	19%	16%
Transfer Payments	22%	11%	23%	11%	24%	12%	25%	12%	26%	12%

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. (DCA Data Views®)

### 2.1.1.5. New or Planned Economic Activities

**Major Employers.** Table 2-J lists the major employers in Gilmer County.

**TABLE 2-J. Major Employers in Gilmer County**

Company	Product/Service
Gold Kist, Inc.	poultry processing
Gilmer County School System	education services
Regal Ellijay	bath mat sets and rugs
Blue Ridge Commercial Carpet	tufted carpets
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.	retail sales
Gilmer County Government	county government
North Georgia Medical Center	health services
White Path Fab Tech, Inc.	wire harness assemblies
Ellijay Telephone Company	telephone utility
Gilmer County Bank	banking
Blue Ridge Mountain Woodcrafters	wooden trophy parts
McDonald's	fast food restaurant
Gilmer Textiles, Inc.	pillowcases, shams, shop aprons, utility packs, etc.
Courier Dyeing & Printing, Inc.	carpet dyeing and printing

**Airport Redevelopment.** Gilmer County has one airport, located south of Ellijay, off Highway 382. In the 2003, the Federal Aviation Administration awarded Gilmer County a \$450,000 grant to renovate and upgrade the airfield. The grant will fund 90% of the renovation project with the remaining funds coming from the State Department of Transportation Aviation Program (\$25,000) and Gilmer County (\$25,000).

Because the length of the runway precludes its use by jets, it is expected that the airport will continue to serve as a peripheral amenity to the community.

The airport is discussed in further detail in Section 8.1.6.

**Business and Technology Park.** One of Gilmer County's greatest disadvantages in terms of attracting new business and industry to the area is the lack of an industrial or business and technology park. To remedy this situation, a new business and technology park is in the preliminary planning stages. The proposed location is along Clear Creek Road, just over four miles from Highway 515. Access from GA 515 will be more direct when the Eller Road Extension is completed.

**Hospital.** The North Georgia Medical Center is in the process of planning for a new hospital. The existing hospital facility will be renovated to incorporate an expansion of the nursing home.

### GA Highway 515 (Appalachian Highway/Technology Corridor).

Development along Highway 515 is predominantly auto-oriented, commercial strip development. Recent development includes a new Wal-Mart, Lowe's, Goody's, and typical fast-food restaurants located on out-parcels. Future development possibilities include a hotel, an outlet mall, and residential development. The Georgia DOT owns and manages access rights to Highway 515.



The Highlands Shopping Center is the most recent commercial development on Highway 515.

Growth along this corridor is expected to continue into the future. Gilmer County and the City of East Ellijay need to be proactive in terms of planning for the type and style of development that occurs along this corridor. Design guidelines, created through a collaborative effort of government officials, land owners, and developers should be developed to manage the appearance of development along the corridor to maintain the areas scenic beauty. Without proper planning, Highway 515 in Gilmer County will quickly evolve into a generic, suburban strip commercial corridor.

### 2.1.1.6. Special or Unique Economic Activities

**Agriculture.** In 2002, Gilmer County ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the State in terms of total farm gate value (\$187,020,050). Agricultural production has increased steadily over the past several years as shown in Figure 2-C.

Although apples typically come to mind when one thinks of Gilmer County agriculture, the poultry industry is the greatest dollar value contributor to the agricultural economy.

**Poultry.** In 2002, the total farm gate value of poultry/egg products in Gilmer County was \$167,738,672 or 89.7% of the total farm gate value for the County. Gilmer ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the State in terms of the production value of poultry/egg products.

**Apple Production.** Sixty percent of the apple trees in Georgia are in Gilmer County. Known as "Georgia's Apple Capital," local orchards can produce over 600,000 bushels of apples per year. (Source: Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce). Apple houses also sell other projects such as homemade apple butter, fried apple pies, and apple cider.

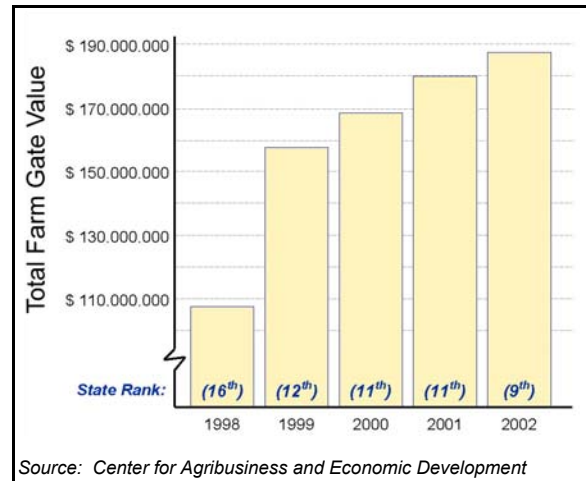
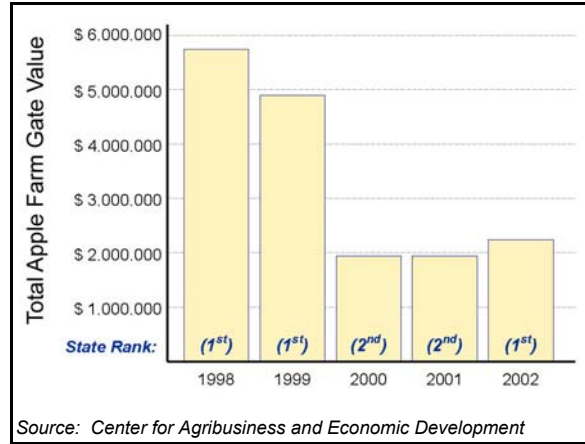


Figure 2-C. Total Farm Gate Value (unadjusted \$)

The apple season begins in late August and runs through December. The Chamber of Commerce coordinates the annual “Apple Festival” in October, featuring crafts, entertainment, parades, and country cooking. The apple season and Apple Festival are major attractions for visitors to Gilmer County. Since the Apple Festival occurs in the fall, the changing of the leaves adds another incentive to visit the area.

Although Gilmer County has ranked either first or second in the State in terms of total value of apple products, the wholesale apple industry has been declining. (See Figure 2-D.) The industry in general has shifted from wholesale (pack and ship) to retail and associated “entertainment” and spin-off businesses such as



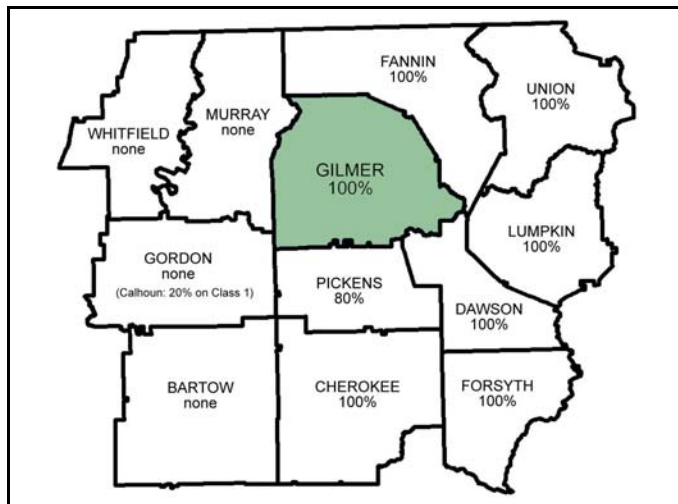
**Figure 2-D. Apple Farm Gate Value** (unadjusted \$)

**Freeport Exemption.** The governing authority of any county or municipality in Georgia may elect, with the approval of the voters, to exempt the following types of tangible personal property:

- **Class 1:** Inventory of goods in the process of being manufactured or produced including raw materials and partly finished goods;
- **Class 2:** Inventory of finished goods manufactured or produced within this State held by the manufacturer or producer for a period not to exceed 12 months;
- **Class 3:** Inventory of finished goods on January 1 that are stored in a warehouse, dock, or wharf which are destined for shipment outside this State for a period not to exceed 12 months.

The percentage of exemption can be set at 20, 40, 60, 80 or 100 percent of the inventory value. (source: Georgia Department of Revenue)

Gilmer County and the City of Ellijay voters have elected to provide a 100% exemption to all three classes of commercial and industrial inventory. Not all surrounding and nearby counties have elected freeport exemption as shown in Figure 2-E to the right.



**FIGURE 2-E. Freeport Exemption in Nearby Counties.**



**Ellijay Telephone Company (ETC).** ETC is a local, independent telecommunications company that has served North Georgia since 1903. The company offers a full line of telecommunications products, cable television, a local television station, directory and cable advertising, high-speed internet, and security systems. ETC is one of the few family-owned operations left in Georgia today. According to ETC, the number of cable and telephone access lines in the community has doubled since 1999.

**Tourism and Eco-Tourism.** The primary responsibility for promoting tourism in the area currently lies with the Chamber of Commerce. The 2002 Economic Impact of Domestic Travel in Georgia published by the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism states that in 2002, domestic travel (tourism) expenditures totaled \$19.47 million in Gilmer County.

Currently, tourism in Gilmer County isn't characterized by hotels, motels, restaurants, and shopping, but by weekly cabin rentals, vacation homes, and eco-tourism. The natural beauty of the area is what attracts many visitors.



**The Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce uses its web site to promote tourism in the area. See [www.gilmerchamber.com](http://www.gilmerchamber.com) for more information.**

Ellijay is one of four “gateway cities” to the historic Chieftains Trail, designated by the Georgia General Assembly in 1998 as part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Trail of Tears. Encircling Northwest Georgia, the trail tells the story of the Native Americans who once lived in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

Ellijay is one of the few remaining towns that has a town square. The square has a memorial statue as its centerpiece and is framed by the historic courthouse and several businesses. Recent streetscaping projects have greatly enhanced the attractiveness of the downtown area.

## 2.1.2. Labor Force

### 2.1.2.1. Employment by Occupation

Table 2-K compares employment by occupation of Gilmer County residents with state and national averages. Significant differences occur in several occupational categories. Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are substantially below state and national averages in the “white collar” categories such as professional and technical specialty occupations. Conversely, the county and its municipalities have higher percentages of workers in “blue collar” occupations such as machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors.

A comparison of 1990 and 2000 data shows percentage increases certain in white collar occupations. For example, employment in “professional and technical specialty” occupations increased in Gilmer County from 6% to 12% and in Georgia from 12% to 19%. Employment in most of the other categories remained at fairly consistent percentages. Due to changes in occupational categories from the 1990 Census to the 2000 Census, detailed evaluations of changes in employment by occupation are not possible.

**TABLE 2-K. Employment by Occupation**

Occupation		1990					2000				
		Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	US	Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	US
<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>#</b>	6,073	429	125			10,447	579	359		
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial (not Farm)	#	467	33	5			1,173	50	24		
	%	8%	8%	4%	12%	12%	11%	9%	7%	14%	13%
Professional and Technical Specialty	#	383	46	4			1,223	50	40		
	%	6%	11%	3%	12%	14%	12%	9%	11%	19%	20%
Technicians & Related Support	#	150	4	0							
	%	2%	1%	0%	4%	4%	–	–	–	–	–
Sales	#	608	63	9			1,054	76	17		
	%	10%	15%	7%	12%	12%	10%	13%	5%	12%	11%
Clerical and Administrative Support	#	669	39	20			1,076	49	24		
	%	11%	9%	16%	16%	16%	10%	8%	7%	15%	15%
Private Household Services	#	8	0	1							
	%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	–	–	–	–	–
Protective Services	#	105	5	2							
	%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	–	–	–	–	–
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	#	399	39	10			1,046	74	41		
	%	7%	9%	8%	10%	11%	10%	13%	11%	13%	15%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	#	353	15	5			179	2	10		
	%	6%	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	#	1,042	62	22			1,617	54	26		
	%	17%	14%	18%	12%	11%	15%	9%	7%	11%	9%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	#	1,070	60	17			2,083	184	135		
	%	18%	14%	14%	9%	7%	20%	32%	38%	9%	8%
Transportation & Material Moving	#	470	23	11			996	40	42		
	%	8%	5%	9%	5%	4%	10%	7%	12%	7%	6%
Handlers, Equip. Cleaners Helpers & Laborers	#	349	40	19							
	%	6%	9%	15%	4%	4%	–	–	–	–	–

Sources: 1990 Census STF 3, Table P078; 2000 Census SF 3, Table P50

“–” means data is not available because the classification was no longer included in the Census.

### 2.1.2.2. Employment Status

Employment status pertains to the composition of the labor force, including civilian and military employment and employment by sex. Figure 2-C shows that Gilmer County and Ellijay have smaller percentages of persons over the age of 16 in the labor force than do East Ellijay, Georgia, and the United States. One reason for this difference is the variation in median age between the jurisdictions. Both have median ages above 37 years. This implies that a greater percentage of persons are retired and therefore not included in the labor force.

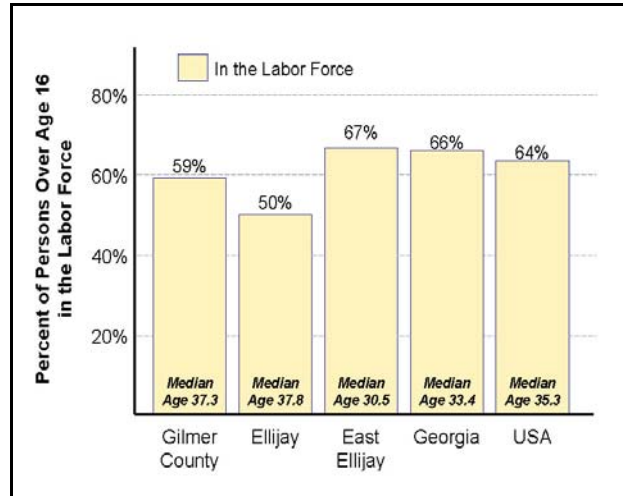


FIGURE 2-F. Persons in the Labor Force in 2000

A second reason for this difference is detailed in the bottom half of Table 2-L below. The percentage of women in Gilmer County and Ellijay who are in the labor force is 49% and 36%, respectively. This is compared to figures for East Ellijay, Georgia, and the United States of 54%, 59%, and 58%. This implies that fewer women in Gilmer County are in the labor force, either because they are retired or are otherwise not seeking employment outside the home.

TABLE 2-L. Employment Status

	1990					2000				
	Gilmer	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	US	Gilmer	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	US
<b>All Persons Age 16+</b>	<b>10,442</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>261</b>	--	--	<b>18,366</b>	<b>1,244</b>	<b>559</b>	--	--
In Labor Force	6,409	451	133	--	--	10,902	620	373	--	--
% of all persons	61%	51%	51%	68%	65%	59%	50%	67%	66%	64%
▪ Civilian Labor Force	6,404	451	133	--	--	10,902	620	373	--	--
% of labor force	61%	51%	51%	66%	64%	59%	50%	67%	65%	63%
Employed	6,073	429	125	--	--	10,447	579	359	--	--
% of civ. labor force	58%	49%	48%	63%	60%	57%	47%	64%	61%	60%
Unemployed	331	22	8	--	--	455	41	14	--	--
% of civ. labor force	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%
▪ Armed Forces	5	0	0	--	--	0	0	0	--	--
% of labor force	0%	0%	0%	1.5%	0.9%	0%	0%	0%	1.1%	0.5%
Not in Labor Force	4,033	429	128	--	--	7,464	624	186	--	--
% of all persons	39%	49%	49%	32%	35%	41%	50%	33%	34%	36%
<b>All Females Age 16+</b>	<b>5,339</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>135</b>	--	--	<b>9,135</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>233</b>	--	--
In Labor Force	2,607	185	46	--	--	4,476	248	125	--	--
% of all females	49%	37%	34%	60%	57%	49%	36%	54%	59%	58%
▪ Civilian Labor Force	2,607	185	46	--	--	4,476	248	125	--	--
% of labor force	49%	37%	34%	60%	57%	49%	36%	54%	59%	57%
Employed	2,442	176	44	--	--	4,212	224	121	--	--
% of civ. labor force	46%	35%	33%	56%	53%	46%	32%	52%	56%	54%
Unemployed	165	9	2	--	--	264	24	4	--	--
% of civ. labor force	3%	2%	1%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%
▪ Armed Forces	0	0	0	--	--	0	0	0	--	--
% of labor force	0%	0%	0%	0.3%	0.2%	0%	0%	0%	0.3%	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	2,732	321	89	--	--	4,659	443	108	--	--
% of all females	51%	63%	66%	40%	43%	51%	64%	46%	41%	42%

Sources: 1990 Census STF 3, Table P070; 2000 Census SF 3, Table P43

### 2.1.2.3. Unemployment Rates

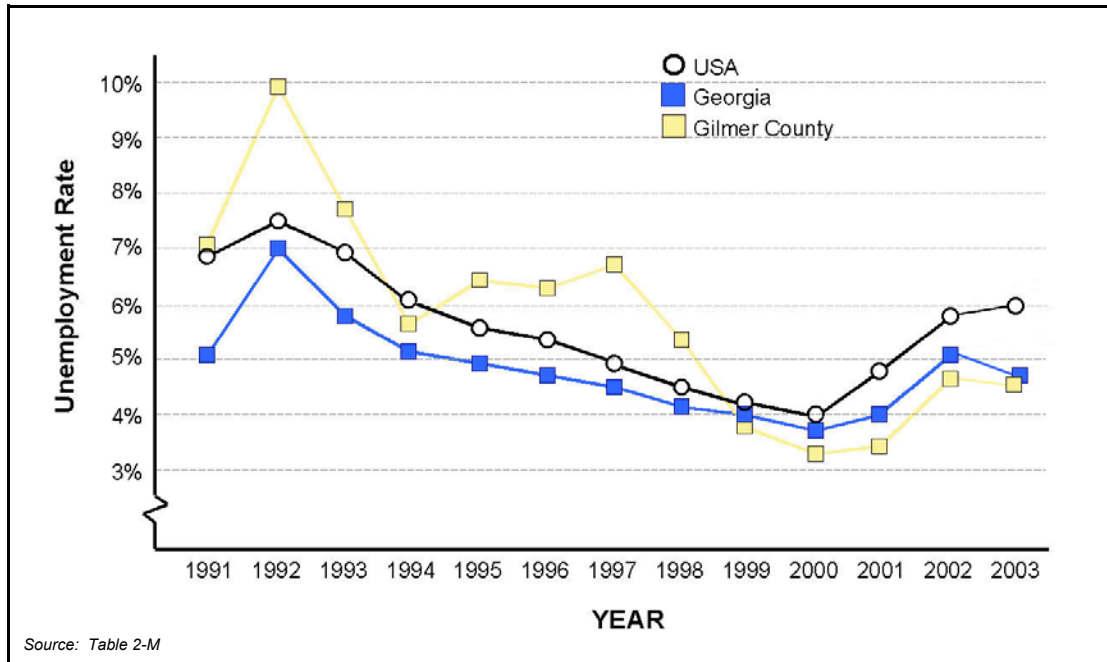
The unemployment rate is the percentage of unemployed persons in the civilian labor pool. Individuals such as students, unpaid volunteers, or retirees are not considered to be in the civilian labor force, and are therefore not included in the calculation.

As shown in Table 2-M to the right, prior to 1999, Gilmer County had unemployment rates that were higher than rates in the NGRDC area, Georgia, and the United States. Beginning in 1999, rates in Gilmer County dropped below those of Georgia and the United States and remained below through 2002. This is graphically illustrated in Figure 2-G below. Gilmer County's unemployment rates have typically been higher than the rates for the NGRDC area.

**TABLE 2-M. Unemployment Rates**

	Gilmer County	NGRDC Area	Georgia	US
1991	7.1%	6.4%	5.0%	6.8%
1992	9.9%	7.3%	7.0%	7.5%
1993	7.6%	5.3%	5.8%	6.9%
1994	5.6%	4.3%	5.2%	6.1%
1995	6.4%	4.9%	4.9%	5.6%
1996	6.2%	4.7%	4.6%	5.4%
1997	6.6%	4.9%	4.5%	4.9%
1998	5.3%	3.7%	4.2%	4.5%
1999	3.7%	3.0%	4.0%	4.2%
2000	3.3%	3.2%	3.7%	4.0%
2001	3.4%	3.9%	4.0%	4.8%
2002	4.7%	4.1%	5.1%	5.8%
2003	4.6%	3.9%	4.7%	6.0%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Georgia Department of Labor



**FIGURE 2-G. Unemployment Trends**

### 2.1.2.4. Commuting Patterns

As shown in Table 2-N, commuting patterns in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay did not change drastically between 1990 and 2000. Almost all residents in the area worked in Georgia and the majority worked in Gilmer County. As would be expected, a greater percentage of the residents of Ellijay and East Ellijay worked in Gilmer County than did residents of the county as a whole.



Commuting patterns in Gilmer County did not change drastically between 1990 and 2000.

TABLE 2-N. Commuting Patterns

	Total Resident Workers	Residents Working in Georgia		Residents Working in Gilmer County	
	#	#	%	#	%
<b>1990</b>					
Gilmer County	5,977	5,914	99%	4,127	69%
Ellijay	118	112	95%	95	81%
East Ellijay	418	418	100%	355	85%
<b>2000</b>					
Gilmer County	10,213	10,045	98%	6,324	62%
Ellijay	563	548	97%	434	77%
East Ellijay	344	335	97%	280	81%

Sources: 1990 Census STF 3, Table P045; 2000 Census SF 3, Table P26

As shown in Table 2-O below, residents in Ellijay and East Ellijay had shorter commuting times than did residents county-wide. In 2000, only 28% of Gilmer County residents had a commute to work of less than 15 minutes, while 55% of Ellijay residents and 69% of East Ellijay residents commuted for less than 15 minutes. When compared to the state of Georgia, Gilmer County has a very similar distribution of commuting times.

TABLE 2-O. Average Travel Time to Work

Travel Time to Work	1990				2000			
	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA
Worked at Home	4%	4%	0%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Less than 5 minutes	5%	14%	16%	3%	3%	7%	7%	2%
5 to 14 minutes	26%	<b>58%</b>	<b>47%</b>	26%	25%	<b>48%</b>	<b>62%</b>	22%
15 to 29 minutes	<b>44%</b>	12%	22%	<b>51%</b>	<b>28%</b>	17%	12%	<b>34%</b>
30 to 59 minutes	11%	5%	8%	13%	25%	16%	12%	29%
60 minutes or more	12%	8%	8%	5%	15%	10%	5%	9%

Sources: 1990 Census STF 3, Table P050; 2000 Census SF 3, Table P31

## 2.1.3. Local Economic Development Resources

### 2.1.3.1. Agencies

**Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce.** The Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in 1979 and currently has a staff of three paid employees and four volunteers. It is governed by a sixteen member board. The mission of the Chamber is to promote and encourage the economic well-being and quality of life for every citizen.



Programs conducted by the Chamber include economic development, business support and recruitment services, tourism promotion, legislative lobbying, and Leadership Gilmer. Chamber staff pursues numerous grants to assist in funding of community projects. The Chamber also sponsors a number of community events including the Apple Festival, the Memorial Day Car Show, and the Fourth of July fireworks show.

The Chamber's current facility is small and not very visible. As a result, the Chamber is looking to build a new facility in the near future. A possible location is along Highway 515 near the Highlands Center. A 2,600 square foot facility in a very visible location would be ideal.

**Gilmer County Economic Development Authority.** The Economic Development Authority was incorporated in 1990 and consists of nine members appointed by the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners. The current focus of the EDA is the development of a business and technology park in Gilmer County.

**Dedicated Ellijay Merchants and Associates.** Dedicated Ellijay Merchants and Associates (DEMA) is an organization which was formed in 1994 as the Downtown Ellijay Merchants Association. Its name was later changed to expand membership to more people. Current membership includes 56 merchants and 7 associates. DEMA's purpose is to promote the



downtown as a viable economic center for retailing, cultural activities, and tourism by enhancing its historic qualities, improving its appearance, and sponsoring family oriented events throughout the year. The most visible projects completed by DEMA are the addition of the clock on the square and installation of pavers on the sidewalk. DEMA is presently working on adding permanent flowers baskets around town. Annual community projects include the Fourth of July Parade and Duck Race, Apple Arts on the Square during Apple Festival, and the Halloween candy give away by merchants in Downtown.

To expand opportunities in the downtown area, DEMA would like to have events every month, but the lack of manpower prevents that from happening. The addition of a professional Downtown Development staff person, hired by the city, would be an excellent way to make living, working, and shopping in downtown Ellijay an attractive, viable alternative for residents and visitors. This staff person could focus on efforts to diversify the retail base, improve the appearance and functionality of the downtown, and promote events to draw visitors.

### 2.1.3.2. Programs

**Quality Growth - Design Guidelines.** In 2003, the City of Ellijay received a Quality Growth Grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to develop design guidelines for the City. It is believed that conscientious application of the guidelines will help to accomplish the following:

- protect and stabilize property values,
- preserve and promote a residential ambience characteristic of historic Ellijay,
- prevent blight caused by neglect and insensitive development,
- promote an atmosphere encouraging reinvestment and economic revitalization, and
- provide a guide and focus for capital improvements.

**Downtown Ellijay: Vision 2003.** In 1998, the Georgia Municipal Association Office of Downtown and Economic Development Services facilitated a "Downtown Ellijay Action Planning Process" to demonstrate the process of developing a downtown vision and action plan that guides community action and policy-making. Several project proposals came out of the process including the provision of public restrooms, improved storefronts, improved parking, streetlights and traffic lights, and trees and sidewalks.

**Economic Development Feasibility Study.** The Chamber of Commerce will be approaching the Georgia Tech Economic Development Institute to conduct an economic development feasibility study for Gilmer County. This study would include assessments of items such as workforce development, entrepreneur readiness, technology opportunities, retirement needs, and existing business and industry support.

### 2.1.3.3. Education and Training

**Vocational Training.** Appalachian Technical College, located in Jasper, is a public, two-year postsecondary institution that operates as a unit of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. It provides a comprehensive range of technical and adult education programs. The college specializes in programs in the areas of health, personal, industrial, and public services. More information can be obtained at <http://www.pickens.tec.ga.us>.

**Adult Education.** The Gilmer Adult Learning Center provides a variety of education services including (1) full academic assessment and preparation for GED or college entrance exams, (2) academic remediation for all levels of reading, math, and English, and (3) a full range of English as a Second Language (ESL) services.

The Center is a community-based non-profit organization staffed with Appalachian Technical College teachers and assistants. A total of six paid employees operate the center thirteen and a half hours a day, Monday through Thursday. On a typical day, 50 to 70 students will operate personalized, computer-based curriculum during open entry/open exit scheduling. This allows students to come and go as their schedules permit. During the current year, the Center has seen a 20% increase in the overall number of students and attendance time. Daily attendance is twice the average attendance figure of barely three years ago. The predicted annual student count for the year ending June 2004 is 460.

The building that houses the Center is Gilmer County property. The 501-C3 is supported via local donations. Individual grants have been obtained in the past for specialized programs operated by the Center that included after school help programs for K-12 students and a Family Literacy program that operated for three years. The Center is in the midst of upgrading the entire computer curriculum delivery unit. The last group of ten computers of thirty total will be upgraded by the end of March 2004. This has been accomplished during the past 14 months via local community donations provided specifically for the purpose.

Federal Adult Literacy funding for support has not kept pace with the increase in demand for services at the Center, however the community has responded agreeably to requests for special project support.

**Job Training.** Burnt Mountain Center in Jasper and Mountain Springs Center in Fannin County provide a variety of services to adults with disabilities including sheltered workshops, supportive employment, and vocational rehabilitation. On average, the Burnt Mountain Center assists 60 individuals, with over one third coming from Gilmer County.

Goodwill Industries of North Georgia, Inc., Vocation Transitions Division, also provides vocational services to assist individuals in going to work organization. It does this through contracts with the Division of Rehabilitation Services, Northwest Georgia Mental Health/Mental Retardation Regional Board, and local education agencies.



## **2.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs**

The assessment of current and future economic development needs involves an analysis of the data provided in Section 2.1. in terms of its significance to the community and its relevance to other plan elements.

This assessment can be completed by answering the following questions which were derived from Section 110-12-1-.0 4(12)(b)2.(ii) of Georgia's Minimum Local Planning Standards.

- Which economic sectors are growing, which are declining, and which should be encouraged to develop in order to diversify the existing economic base?
- Are available jobs appropriate for the residents of the community in terms of skill and education levels required, commuting patterns, wages paid, etc.?
- Are existing local economic development programs and tools sufficient to foster economic development?
- How do regional assets affect economic development in the community and vice versa?

These questions are answered in Section 2.2.1. through 2.2.4.

### **2.2.1. Which economic sectors are growing, which are declining, and which should be encouraged to develop in order to diversify the existing economic base?**

The service and retail sectors are growing in Gilmer County, while the manufacturing sector is declining. Economic development interests should focus on program and projects which will (1) support existing industries in the area and (2) attract new technology and specialty manufacturing businesses to the area. Other sectors which should be encouraged include the tourism, health care, and retirement industries.

### **2.2.2. Are available jobs appropriate for the residents of the community?**

Job growth has not kept pace with population growth in Gilmer County. One way to evaluate this is to examine the jobs to housing balance. An ideal jobs to housing balance would be an equal number of jobs to housing units in a jurisdiction. This would minimize vehicle miles traveled to and from work, reducing community costs for employees, and reduce traffic congestion. In 1990, the jobs to housing balance in Gilmer County (excluding seasonally vacant homes) was 1.01. By 2000, the ratio had dropped to 0.69 jobs per housing unit. The recommended target range is 1.3 to 1.7 jobs per housing unit.

Another way to evaluate job availability is to examine the jobs to employed residents ratio. In 1990, this ratio was 0.98 jobs per employed resident. By 2000, this ratio had dropped to 0.67:1. The ideal ratio would be 1:1.

In terms of the type of jobs which are available, many employment opportunities exist in minimum wage wage jobs, particularly in the retail and service industries. Because of a lack of professional and technical jobs in the community, some residents commute for higher-paying jobs. For this reason, new efforts should be made to attract technology and specialty manufacturing business to the area as jobs associated with these sectors tend to provide employees with better incomes and benefits.

In the past, the labor force of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay lacked sufficient skills and education to attract high technology and capital intensive industries. Efforts have been made to improve education levels in the community and these efforts should continue. In addition, while the technical colleges in nearby counties are valuable assets to the community, enrollment in more traditional, 4-year baccalaureate programs should also be encouraged.

### **2.2.3. Are existing local economic development programs and tools sufficient to foster economic development?**

Gilmer County would benefit greatly from the establishment of an economic development program headed by a professional staff person. This program would focus on business recruitment and development efforts not related to tourism. The Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce does not have the staff necessary to support both tourism and economic development efforts.

In addition, tourism opportunities need to be more fully developed and marketed. An inventory of all potential tourist attractions should be developed so that an effective strategy can be prepared to capitalize on the community's many assets.

Business and industrial parks are an essential tool to facilitate economic expansion within an area. In order to be competitive in attracting business and industry, such parks need to be fully developed with all utilities and ready for immediate occupancy. To be competitive, Gilmer County must develop a full service business and technology park or a full service industrial park, or both. The process of developing a business and technology park off of Clear Creek Road has begun and should be vigorously pursued. A park which is suited to heavier industry should also be developed in the future; however, due to the lack of available resources, the establishment of the business and technology park should be the primary focus in the near future.

### **2.2.4. How do regional assets affect economic development in Gilmer County and vice versa?**

The abundant natural resources in Gilmer and surrounding counties make the area appealing to residents, tourists, and second home buyers. Protecting these natural resources is important if the county is to retain its attractiveness.

Highway 515 provides convenient access to and from Gilmer County. Development along this corridor in Pickens, Gilmer, and Fannin Counties is occurring rapidly and is leading to congestion along several segments of the road. Much of the development is of a strip commercial nature, with little design control. While new development should be encouraged, design guidelines should be developed to offset the potential negative visual impact of the development and well as the impact the development could have upon natural resources.

Carter's Lake, and the Ellijay, Cartecay, and Coosawattee Rivers provides tourism opportunities and serve as sources of drinking water for Gilmer and nearby counties. Carter's Lake may serve as a source of drinking water for a regional water authority in the future. Maintaining water quality in the lake and rivers is of vital importance to the area.

## 2.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that set forth a plan for economic development in terms of the following:

- how much growth is desired,
- what can be done to support retention and expansion of existing businesses,
- what types of new business and industries will be encouraged to locate in the community,
- what incentives will be offered to encourage economic development,
- will educational and or job training programs be initiated or expanded, and
- what infrastructure improvements need to be made to support economic development goals during the planning period.

The implementation program must support the Community Vision and include actions which should be undertaken to achieve the Community Vision.

### 2.3.1. Community Vision

In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

**Livability.** We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.

**Community Character.** We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.

**Shared Direction.** The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.

### 2.3.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following economic development goal and associated policies and action items:

<p><b>Goal:</b> A healthy economy which is diversified among both the industrial and commercial sectors, which enhances the quality of life for all of our citizens, and which prudently manages the community's resources.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 1: Growth Preparedness.*</b> Establish and support an on-going, effective, and coordinated economic development program which will promote Gilmer County throughout the state and nation.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek funding for a full-time, paid staff position of "Economic Development Director" through a cities/county partnership.</li> <li>a.1. Develop a web site which will promote the area as a prime location for business and technology interests.</li> <li>a.2. Expand and maintain a community marketing and promotion package including web site, community profile data, available buildings and sites, labor force profile, and other characteristics which make Gilmer County unique.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 2: Regional Identity.*</b> Refine and promote the community's identity to take advantage of the unique aspects of its character.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to promote the area as an apple capital and seek ways to extend the tourist season associated with apples.</li> <li>b. Through a committee of local officials, developers, and interested citizens, develop design guidelines for the Highway 515 corridor which will promote a positive visual image of the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 3: Appropriate Business and Employment Options.*</b> Support the retention and expansion of existing business and industry and attract and recruit businesses and industries which are compatible with the community's long-term goals and which provide quality jobs for our citizens.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism to promote the community to statewide development interests.</li> <li>b. Work with the Georgia Tech Economic Development Institute to prepare an Economic Development Feasibility Study for Gilmer County.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 4: Educational Opportunities.*</b> Provide a more skilled and educated labor force to attract business and industry to the area.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue programs at the schools to improve educational levels.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 5: Adequate Infrastructure.</b> Promote new growth in areas where necessary infrastructure is already in place or is planned in the future.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Pursue the development of a business and technology park, including adequate infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 6: Downtown Development.</b> Promote downtown Ellijay as a center for retail and tourist activities and implement measures which will enhance the charm and the value of the downtown area.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek funding to develop a downtown master plan for the City of Ellijay to address traffic, parking, landscaping, signage, historic preservation, pedestrian facilities, and housing. This plan should address both residential and commercial development in downtown.</li> <li>b. Address the issues of building maintenance, vacancies, and retail diversification among downtown retailers and property owners.</li> <li>c. Investigate the establishment of a Downtown Development staff position within the City of Ellijay or as a function of the Economic Development Director.</li> <li>d. Continue to expand the streetscape program in Ellijay.</li> </ul>

\* A DCA "Quality Communities" Objective

# 3

## Housing

The Housing Element of the Gilmer County Comprehensive Plan provides the following:

- an inventory of the existing housing stock in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay, including its condition, occupancy, and affordability characteristics;
- an assessment of the adequacy and suitability of the housing stock for serving current and future population and economic development needs; and
- an expression of community housing goals and an associated implementation program for the adequate provision of housing for all sectors of the population.

### Element Outline:

#### 3.1. Inventory

- 3.1.1. Types of Housing
- 3.1.2. Age and Condition of Housing
- 3.1.3. Owner and Renter Units
- 3.1.4. Cost of Housing
- 3.1.5. Cost Burden of Owner and Renter Units
- 3.1.6. Housing and Community Characteristics

#### 3.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

#### 3.3. Community Goal and Implementation Program

### 3.1. Inventory

#### 3.1.1. Types of Housing

##### 3.1.1.1. General

According to the US Census, the total number of housing units in Gilmer County grew by 4,938 units between 1990 and 2000, representing an increase of approximately 71%. (See Table 3-A.) In Ellijay, the total number of units did not change although there was a decrease in the number of mobile homes and an increase in the number of multi-family units. In East Ellijay, the total number of units increased by 98 units or 56%. Most of the new units in East Ellijay were multi-family units.

**TABLE 3-A. Number and Type of Housing Units**

	Gilmer County			Ellijay			East Ellijay		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>6,986</b>	<b>11,924</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>273</b>
Single Family	3,264	4,918	8,277	416	379	376	133	131	157
% of Total	75%	70%	69%	67%	59%	57%	74%	75%	58%
Multi-Family	259	239	566	125	178	228	6	10	85
% of Total	6%	3%	5%	20%	28%	34%	3%	6%	31%
Mobile Home <sup>1</sup>	856	1,761	2,705	76	80	37	41	32	31
% of Total	20%	25%	23%	12%	12%	6%	23%	18%	11%
Other <sup>2</sup>	0	68	376	0	4	21	0	2	0
% of Total	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	0%

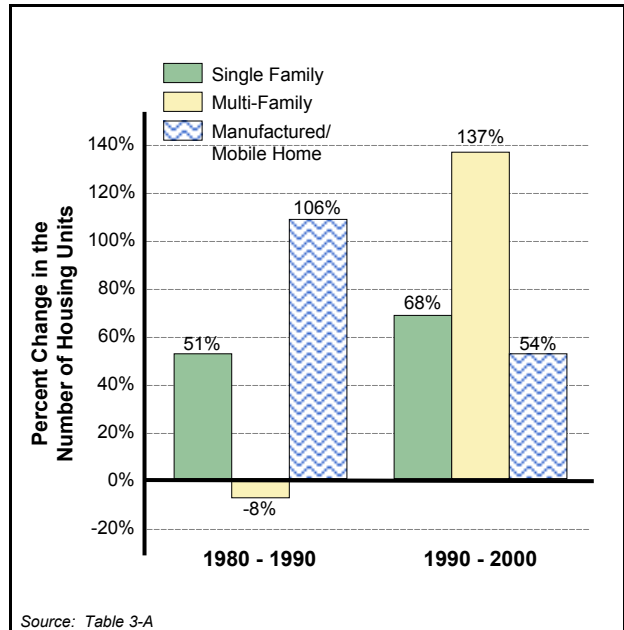
Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Table 7; 1990 Census, STF3, Table H020; 2000 Census, SF3, Table H30

<sup>1</sup> In this instance, "mobile home" may or may not also mean manufactured home.

<sup>2</sup> For the City of Ellijay in the year 2000, "Other" includes 21 units. This is the difference between the total number of housing units based upon 100% data and the total number of units based upon sample data. Data for type of unit is based upon sample data.

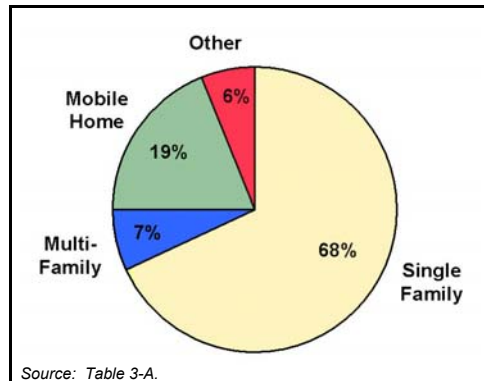
Figure 3-A illustrates growth in the total number of single family units, multi-family units, and manufactured homes in Gilmer County. Although multi-family housing grew by 137% between 1990 and 2000, this type of housing represented just 5% of the total housing stock in Gilmer County in 2000. The majority (69%) of housing in Gilmer County was, and still is, single family. Mobile homes made up 23% of the housing stock according to the 2000 Census, with multi-family and other types of housing comprising the remaining 8%.

In Ellijay and East Ellijay in 2000, slightly more than half of the residential units were single family in nature, while 36% of the units in Ellijay and 31% of the units in East Ellijay were multi-family units.



Source: Table 3-A

**FIGURE 3-A. Growth in the Number of Housing Units in Gilmer County**



Source: Table 3-A.

**FIGURE 3-B. Types of Housing Placed in Gilmer County Between 1990 and 2000**

Using the census data in Table 3-A, Figure 3-B provides an illustration of how much of the new housing in Gilmer County is single family and how much is other types. As the chart shows, over two thirds of the new housing is single family.

Much of the new single family housing in Gilmer County is being built as vacation homes or second homes. Many of the owners of these homes are from the metro Atlanta area, Gordon and Whitfield Counties, and Florida. These owners are attracted to the area primarily because of its natural beauty and affordability. The availability of low mortgage rates in recent years has greatly influenced construction in the area.

According to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia, the mean value of new residential construction in Gilmer County in 2003 was \$93,109, a 0.8% increase from the 2002 figure of \$92,358. Table 3-B provides a comparison of the average value of new residential construction in Gilmer County and Georgia. (Note: These values are based upon building permit data, not selling price.) The value of residential construction per unit in Gilmer County is generally lower than the cost statewide. A variety of factors attribute to this difference including the cost of labor and the size of home being built.

**TABLE 3-B. New Residential Construction Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits: 1992 – 2002**

	Single Unit			Multiple Unit			
	Gilmer County		Georgia	Gilmer County			Georgia
	Buildings	Mean Value	Mean Value	Buildings	Units	Mean Value	Mean Value
1992	455	\$ 50,022	\$ 80,993	3	22	\$ 31,636	\$ 35,769
1993	487	\$ 50,000	\$ 85,247	4	25	\$ 31,520	\$ 38,864
1994	532	\$ 50,000	\$ 88,092	12	48	\$ 31,667	\$ 37,916
1995	341	\$ 80,562	\$ 89,112	0	0	--	\$ 39,371
1996	375	\$ 60,870	\$ 91,406	6	12	\$ 35,589	\$ 41,739
1997	817	\$ 89,773	\$ 96,429	1	2	\$ 25,000	\$ 45,909
1998	452	\$ 138,881	\$ 104,501	2	7	\$ 89,286	\$ 43,702
1999	596	\$ 75,008	\$ 109,901	0	0	--	\$ 49,204
2000	478	\$ 81,056	\$ 110,182	7	56	\$ 41,071	\$ 49,461
2001	584	\$ 96,045	\$ 115,559	1	8	\$ 62,500	\$ 55,539
2002	612	\$ 92,358	\$ 116,913	2	8	\$ 75,000	\$ 55,252

Source: Selig Center for Economic Growth, Terry College of Business, UGA. <http://www.selig.uga.edu/housing/housingmain.htm>

Average construction values for 2002 for surrounding and nearby counties are shown in Figure 3-C. Based upon data from residential building permits in 2002, the mean value of new residential construction in Gilmer County is between 9% and 40% less than that of the counties illustrated.

One possible reason for the large difference between the value of new residential construction in Pickens and Gilmer County is that more primary residences are being built in Pickens County. The difference between the two counties is expected to become smaller in the future.



Source: Selig Center for Economic Growth

**FIGURE 3-C. Mean Value of New Residential Construction in Gilmer and Surrounding Counties: 2002**

### 3.1.1.2. Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing is a popular alternative to conventional stick built housing in Gilmer County as it is in most parts of the country. Over the short term, it is less expensive than conventional housing. In addition, many manufactured homes can be finished on a site in one to three weeks, whereas it can take six to twelve months to build a conventional home. Table 3-C provides recent data on the number of manufactured housing permits issued in Gilmer County.

**TABLE 3-C. Manufactured Housing Permits Issued in Gilmer County**

Year	Number of Permits
2001	214
2002	180
2003	159
Average	184

*Source: Gilmer County Planning Commission*

### 3.1.1.3. Elderly Housing

There are few housing developments in Gilmer County for elderly. One newer facility is Brooks Hill which contains a total of 44 units, approximately 90% of which are used by for elderly individuals. There is a one year waiting list for all units. The Ellijay Housing Authority also has some units which are available to elderly, low-income residents.

While some elderly residents may move in with relatives when they find they can no longer maintain their own home, more alternatives are needed for the community's aging population.

### 3.1.1.4. Multi-Family Housing

The multi-family housing found in Gilmer County is generally of the townhouse variety illustrated in the photograph to the right. The county does not contain any high density or high-rise multi-family developments.



**An example of newer multi-family housing in Gilmer County.**

According to individuals who work in the banking, housing, and public service fields, there is not enough rental housing in Gilmer County or the cities, particularly for low and moderate income families. Often what is available is substandard.



**One of the Ellijay Housing Authority's Properties**

### 3.1.1.5. Public Housing

The Ellijay Housing Authority manages 110 public housing units: 50 one-bedroom, 40 two-bedroom, 10 three-bedroom, 8 four-bedroom, and 2 five-bedroom. Of those units, 44 are designated for the elderly. The units are between 22 and 44 years of age. The Housing Authority maintains a waiting list for all units.



### 3.1.2. Age and Condition of Housing

As shown in Table 3-D below, the median age of homes in Gilmer County is 13 years, substantially less than the Georgia average of 20 years. Nearly half of the homes in Gilmer County in 2000 were less than ten years old. Again, this figure is substantially less than Georgia's figure of 28%. The city of Ellijay has a fairly large percentage of older homes, with 34% of its homes being older than 40 years. The age of East Ellijay's housing stock is closer to that of Gilmer County than Ellijay with 18% over 40 years old and 31% less than 10 years old.

**TABLE 3-D. Age of Housing**

1980	Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>46,772</b>	<b>2,013,839</b>
Median Age	17	24	30	15	15
Age over 40 years % of Total	657 15%	115 19%	61 34%	6,139 13%	296,662 15%
Age less than 10 years % of Total	1,487 34%	130 21%	51 28%	16,548 35%	670,104 33%
1990	Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>6,986</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>60,791</b>	<b>2,641,418</b>
Median Age	14	24	24	16	17
Age over 40 years % of Total	750 11%	156 24%	47 27%	14,615 24%	381,827 14%
Age less than 10 years % of Total	2,830 40%	142 22%	33 19%	20,450 34%	847,309 32%
2000	Gilmer Co.	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>11,924</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>78,787</b>	<b>3,281,737</b>
Median Age	13	28	17	18	20
Age over 40 years % of Total	1,394 12%	223 34%	48 18%	21,499 27%	620,460 19%
Age less than 10 years % of Total	5,241 44%	91 14%	82 31%	25,940 33%	915,130 28%

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Tables 1 and 16; 1990 Census, STF 3 Tables H003, H025, and H025A; 2000 Census SF 3 Tables H3, H34, H35

The condition of housing is typically measured in terms of the adequacy of plumbing and kitchen facilities. As shown in Table 3-E, only 1% of the housing units in Gilmer County lacked complete plumbing in 2000. This represents a steady decline from 10% in 1980 and 5% in 1990.

Units lacking complete kitchen facilities has also declined from 5% in 1980 to 2% in 2000. This figure is slightly higher than the Georgia figure of less than 1%.

The cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay had similar percentages of units lacking complete plumbing and kitchen facilities.

**TABLE 3-E. Condition of Housing: 1980 – 2000**

	Units Lacking Complete Plumbing (%)			Units Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities (%)		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Gilmer County	10%	5%	1%	5%	3%	2%
Ellijay	9%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
East Ellijay	8%	0%	1%	4%	1%	0%
NGRDC Area	5%	2%	1%	4%	1%	1%
Georgia	4%	1%	1%	4%	1%	<1%

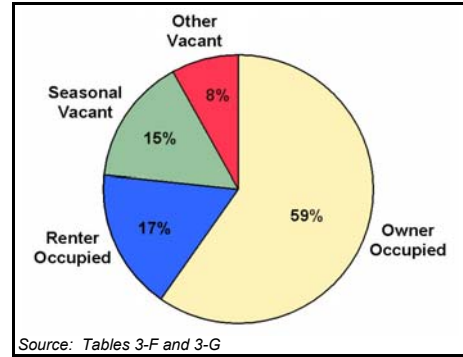
Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Tables 15 and 16; 1990 Census, STF 3 Tables H042 and H064; 2000 Census SF 3 Tables H47 and H50

### 3.1.3. Owner and Renter Units

As shown in Figure 3-D to the right, approximately 76% of all housing units in Gilmer County were occupied at the time of the 2000 Census. This is significantly lower than the regional and Georgia figures of 88% and 92%. This is due to the large number of second homes (seasonally vacant) in Gilmer County.

Table 3-F below and Table 3-G on the following page illustrate other variations from regional and state and regional averages. For instance, according to the 2000 Census, approximately 78% of the occupied housing units in Gilmer County in 2000 were owner-occupied. In Georgia, only 67% were owner-occupied while in Ellijay and East Ellijay, the figures were 42% and 47%, respectively.

In the year 2000, Gilmer County had a much greater owner to renter ratio for occupied housing units than did Ellijay, East Ellijay, the NGRDC area, and the state. For every renter-occupied unit in Gilmer County, there were 3.57 owner-occupied units. Statewide, by contrast, there were 2.08 owner occupied units for every renter-occupied unit.



**FIGURE 3-D. Housing Occupancy in Gilmer County in 2000**

**TABLE 3-F. Housing Tenure – Occupied Housing Units**

	1980	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
<b>Total Housing Units</b>		<b>4,379</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>46,772</b>	<b>2,013,839</b>
Total Occupied Housing Units		3,937	585	162	42,625	1,871,652
% of Total		90%	95%	90%	91%	93%
Owner Occupied		3,044	309	120	31,334	1,216,432
% of Occupied Units		77%	53%	74%	74%	65%
Renter Occupied		893	276	42	15,438	655,220
% of Occupied Units		23%	47%	26%	36%	35%
Owner : Renter Ratio		3.41 : 1	1.12 : 1	2.86 : 1	2.03 : 1	1.86 : 1
	1990	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
<b>Total Housing Units</b>		<b>6,986</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>60,791</b>	<b>2,638,418</b>
Total Occupied Housing Units		5,072	516	133	53,014	2,366,615
% of Total		73%	80%	76%	87%	90%
Owner Occupied		4,079	258	90	38,686	1,536,759
% of Occupied Units		80%	50%	68%	73%	65%
Renter Occupied		993	258	43	14,328	829,856
% of Occupied Units		20%	50%	32%	27%	35%
Owner : Renter Ratio		4.11 : 1	1.00 : 1	2.09 : 1	2.70 : 1	1.85 : 1
	2000	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
<b>Total Housing Units</b>		<b>11,924</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>78,787</b>	<b>3,281,737</b>
Total Occupied Housing Units		9,071	593	251	69,071	3,006,369
% of Total		76%	90%	95%	88%	92%
Owner Occupied		7,085	252	118	51,002	2,029,154
% of Occupied Units		78%	42%	47%	74%	67%
Renter Occupied		1,986	341	133	18,069	977,215
% of Occupied Units		22%	58%	53%	26%	33%
Owner : Renter Ratio		3.57 : 1	0.74 : 1	0.89 : 1	2.82 : 1	2.08 : 1

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Tables 3 and 4; 1990 Census, STF 1 Tables H001 and H003; 2000 Census, SF 1 Tables H1 and H4

A substantial number of homes in Gilmer County are second homes or vacation rentals. In terms of vacant housing units, the percentage of units which were seasonally vacant in Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Georgia were 65%, 10%, 7%, and 18% respectively. In 2000, the total number of seasonally vacant homes was 1,846 or 15.5% of the total number of housing units. By comparison, 6.2% of the housing units in the NGRDC area and 1.5% of the housing units statewide were seasonally vacant.

**TABLE 3-G. Housing Tenure – Vacant Housing Units**

<b>1980</b>	<b>Gilmer County</b>	<b>Ellijay</b>	<b>East Ellijay</b>	<b>NGRDC Area</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>46,772</b>	<b>2,013,839</b>
Total Vacant Units	442	32	18	4,147	142,187
% of Total	10%	5%	10%	9%	7%
Owner Vacant	20	5	6	400	19,568
% of Vacant	5%	16%	33%	10%	14%
Rental Vacant	56	12	2	850	56,104
% of Vacant	13%	38%	11%	20%	39%
Seasonal Vacant	222	1	2	1,230	17,487
% of Vacant	50%	3%	11%	30%	12%
Other Vacant	144	14	8	1,667	49,028
% of Vacant	33%	44%	44%	40%	34%
<b>1990</b>	<b>Gilmer County</b>	<b>Ellijay</b>	<b>East Ellijay</b>	<b>NGRDC Area</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>6,986</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>60,791</b>	<b>2,638,418</b>
Total Vacant Units	1,914	126	41	10,776	271,803
% of Total	27%	20%	24%	18%	10%
Owner Vacant	134	16	7	800	38,816
% of Vacant	7%	13%	17%	7%	14%
Rental Vacant	181	53	9	1,530	115,115
% of Vacant	9%	42%	22%	14%	42%
Seasonal Vacant	1,091	14	4	2,999	33,637
% of Vacant	57%	11%	10%	28%	12%
Other Vacant	508	43	21	5,447	84,235
% of Vacant	27%	34%	51%	51%	31%
<b>2000</b>	<b>Gilmer County</b>	<b>Ellijay</b>	<b>East Ellijay</b>	<b>NGRDC Area</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>11,924</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>78,787</b>	<b>3,281,737</b>
Total Vacant Units	2,853	69	14	9,716	275,368
% of Total	24%	10%	5%	12%	8%
Owner Vacant	213	14	3	821	38,440
% of Vacant	7%	20%	21%	8%	14%
Rental Vacant	211	23	3	1,465	86,905
% of Vacant	7%	33%	21%	15%	32%
Seasonal Vacant	1,846	7	1	4,909	50,064
% of Vacant	65%	10%	7%	51%	18%
Other Vacant	583	25	7	2,521	99,959
% of Vacant	20%	36%	50%	26%	36%

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Tables 3 and 4; 1990 Census, STF 1 Tables H001 and H005; 2000 Census, SF 1 Tables H1, H5

### 3.1.4. Cost of Housing

According to data provided by the DCA, the average home sale price in 2000 was \$116,903 for new construction and \$105,737 for existing structures. As shown in Table 3-H, these figures are substantially lower than the averages for the DCA North Utility Region.

**TABLE 3-H. Average Home Sale Price in 2000**

	Gilmer County	DCA North Utility Region
New Construction	\$ 116,903	\$ 190,284
Existing Structures	\$ 105,737	\$ 145,198

Source: DCA, 2000 Data Analysis, County Home Sales in Georgia  
<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/>

According to the 2000 Census, the median value of owner-occupied homes in Gilmer County was \$95,700, slightly more than the NGRDC area median of \$93,728, but lower than the Georgia median of \$111,200. Median values of units in Ellijay and East Ellijay were 12% and 15% less than the county average. Trends in the cost of housing are shown in Table 3-I.

The median gross rent and contract rent in Gilmer County were substantially less than the median for Georgia. The median rents in Ellijay and East Ellijay were even lower. For example, in 2000 the median gross rent in Gilmer County was \$482. In Georgia it was \$613, while in Ellijay and East Ellijay it was \$330 and \$399, respectively.

**TABLE 3-I. Cost of Housing**

1980	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Median Value <sup>1</sup>	\$ 26,600	\$ 35,000	\$ 19,300	\$ 30,243	\$ 36,900
Median Gross Rent	\$ 155	\$ 145	\$ 135	\$ 228	\$ 211
Median Contract Rent <sup>2</sup>	\$ 91	\$ 84	\$ 67	--	\$ 153
1990	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Median Value	\$ 56,800	\$ 59,400	\$ 36,700	\$ 57,574	\$ 71,300
Median Gross Rent	\$ 295	\$ 207	\$ 347	\$ 290	\$ 433
Median Contract Rent	\$ 197	\$ 153	\$ 196	--	\$ 344
2000	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Median Value	\$ 95,700	\$ 83,800	\$ 80,900	\$ 93,728	\$ 111,200
Median Gross Rent	\$ 482	\$ 330	\$ 399	\$ 468	\$ 613
Median Contract Rent	\$ 376	\$ 253	\$ 316	--	\$ 505

Sources: 1980 Census, PHC80-3-12, Tables 2 and 5; 1990 Census, STF1, Tables H023B and H032B; STF 3, Table H043A; 2000 Census, SF 3, Tables H56, H63, H76

<sup>1</sup> Median value is for owner-occupied units.

<sup>2</sup> Contract rent is the rent asked for and agreed to regardless of whether or not furniture, utilities, fees, etc. are included.

### 3.1.5. Cost Burden of Owner and Renter Units

A cost burdened household is one which pays more than 30% of its gross income toward housing, including utility costs. Table 3-J provides data on housing units which were cost burdened in 1989 and 1999 based upon census data. As would be expected, the lower the household income, the more likely a household was to be cost-burdened. For example, in Gilmer County, 64% of households with incomes below \$10,000 were cost burdened while only 6% of households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$99,999 were cost burdened.

**TABLE 3-J. Percent of Housing Units Cost Burdened by Income Level**

1989 Household Income Level	Owner-Occupied Units Spending 30% or More of Gross Income on Housing Costs				Renter-Occupied Units Spending 30% or More of Gross Income on Housing Costs			
	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
Less than \$10,000	41%	49%	43%	56%	65%	59%	64%	70%
\$10,000 to \$34,999	17%	10%	0%	21%	21%	20%	30%	34%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	2%
\$50,000 to or more	2%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	1%
1999 Household Income Level	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
Less than \$10,000	64%	54%	85%	66%	58%	56%	64%	66%
\$10,000 to \$34,999	43%	43%	18%	45%	34%	34%	30%	50%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13%	13%	11%	25%	2%	0%	0%	9%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	6%	6%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	2%
\$100,000 or more	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Sources: 1990 Census, STF 3, Tables H050 and H059; 2000 Census, SF 3, Tables H73 and H97

A severely cost burdened household pays more than 50% of its gross income toward housing, including utility costs. 1999 data on severely cost burdened households is only available for renter-occupied units and is provided in Table 3-K.

**TABLE 3-K. Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (1999)**

% of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
Less than 10%	10.5%	10.8%	13.7%	6.5%
10% to 29%	44.2%	45.9%	55.0%	49.4%
30% to 49%	17.7%	22.8%	12.3%	18.9%
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	10.3%	12.9%	9.2%	16.5%
Not Computed	17.5%	7.7%	9.9%	8.6%
<b>Median % of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>24.9%</b>

Source: 2000 Census, SF3, QT-H13

In 1999, 10.3% of renters in Gilmer County spent 50% or more of their total household income on housing costs, including utilities. In Ellijay and East Ellijay, 12.9% and 9.2% of households were severely cost burdened.

Gilmer County renters spent, on average, 22% of their household income on housing in 1999. Figures for Ellijay and East Ellijay were 25.6% and 18.3%, respectively for the same year.

### 3.1.6. Housing and Community Characteristics

#### 3.1.6.1. Population Characteristics Impacting Housing Needs

Future housing needs in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be shaped by changing demographics: a growing immigrant population, a growing elderly population, and an influx of vacation home owners and retirees.

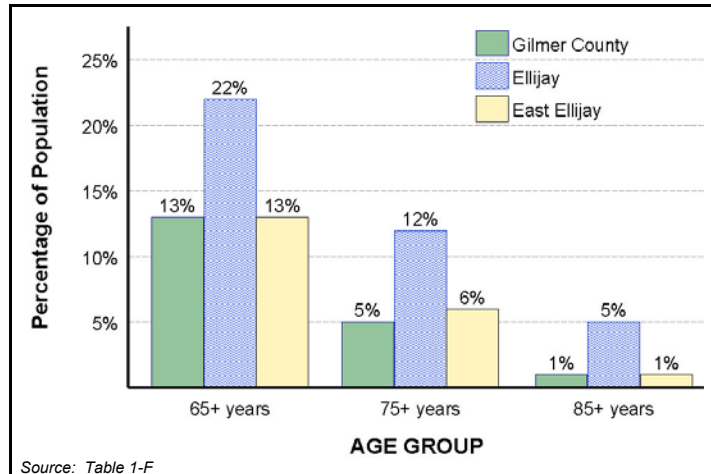
The immigrant population currently needs homeowner housing in the \$75,000 to \$100,000 range as well as affordable rental housing. Currently, the immigrant market is purchasing homes in the \$50,000 range rather than in the \$100,000 range. It is estimated that in 2-3 generations, this will no longer be the case, and that the Latino market will be equal to the Anglo market in terms purchasing power.

Low interest rates are currently having a great impact in housing starts in the community. Many speculative homes and second homes are being built.

#### 3.1.6.2. Special Housing Needs

**Elderly.** Figure 3-E illustrates that 13% of the population in Gilmer County was 65 years of age or over. In Ellijay and East Ellijay, the figures were 22% and 13%. As discussed in Section 3.1.1.3, there are few housing developments designed as housing for the elderly Gilmer County.

Currently, there is approximately 1 elderly housing unit (excluding nursing home beds) per 60 persons over the age of 65. Assuming this ratio is adequate to serve the needs of future populations (an assumption which is questionable given the current waiting lists for such housing), by 2025, at least 200 additional elderly housing units will be needed.



**FIGURE 3-E. Elderly population as a percentage of total population in 2000**

**Victims of Domestic Violence.** Currently the closest shelter for victims of domestic violence in Gilmer County is in Fannin County. This shelter can accommodate three families. A tri-county shelter for child abuse victims is currently planned for Pickens County; however it would be very beneficial to have a shelter in Gilmer County as well. This would enable children who are victims of abuse to stay in the same school rather than having to enroll in a different school system.

The number of police actions taken on family violence in 1998, 1999, and 2000 were 11, 29, and 62, respectively. The number of protective service cases handled by the Department of Family and Children Services has declined in recent years for adults, but has steadily increased for children as shown in Table 3-L.

**TABLE 3-L. Gilmer County Adult and Child Protective Service Cases Handled by the Georgia Division of Child and Family Services**

	Average Number of Cases Per Month				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Adult Protective Service Cases	9	12	10	2	3
Child Protective Services Cases	34	44	62	75	98

Source: <http://www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us>

Note: Adult Protective Services Cases relate to elderly or disabled adults who cannot care for themselves.

**Disabled Persons.** Table 3-M provides data on persons in Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Georgia having one or more sensory, physical, or mental disabilities.

**TABLE 3-M. Percentage of Persons With Disabilities in 2000**

	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
<b>Age 5 to 15 Years</b>				
% with one or more disabilities	6%	12%	0%	6%
% with self-care disability	2%	1%	0%	1%
<b>Age 16 to 64 Years</b>				
% with one or more disabilities	23%	27%	19%	19%
% with self-care disability	2%	4%	3%	2%
% with go-outside-home disability	6%	6%	4%	7%
% with employment disability	16%	18%	11%	13%
<b>Age 65 Years and Older</b>				
% with one or more disabilities	14%	22%	14%	12%
% with self-care disability	25%	43%	27%	24%
% with go-outside-home disability	52%	33%	50%	52%
<b>Total Population</b>				
% with one or more disabilities	24%	32%	21%	20%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3 Table P41

Self-care disability: difficulty dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home

Go-outside home disability: difficulty going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office

Employment disability: difficulty working at a job or business

The number of Medicaid recipients in Gilmer County is one type of trend data that is available on persons with disabilities. As shown in Table 3-N, the number of persons in Gilmer County receiving Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) Medicaid has risen each year since 1999. In 2003, the number of person receiving ABD was 450 or 1.7% of the estimated 2003 total population. (ABD Medicaid is available for persons who are not eligible for Social Security.)

**TABLE 3-N. Gilmer County ABD Medicaid Recipients**

	Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) Medicaid (average # of recipients per month)
<b>1999</b>	297
<b>2000</b>	388
<b>2001</b>	399
<b>2002</b>	442
<b>2003</b>	450

Source: <http://www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us>. ABD Medicaid is medical assistance for aged, blind, or disabled individuals who are not eligible for Social Security.

There are no dedicated housing facilities for the disabled in Gilmer County.

**Migrant Workers.** The poultry processing industry is the primary employer of migrant workers in Gilmer County. The apple orchards also employ migrant workers, but on a much smaller scale. Migrant workers are responsible for obtaining their own housing.

The majority of migrant workers live in trailer parks. Much of the housing used by migrant workers is substandard, with inadequate plumbing and electricity.

Table 3-O shows a growing trend in the number of children of migrant workers in Gilmer County.

**Other Special Needs Populations: Homeless, HIV/AIDS, Substance Abuse.** There are no shelters or dedicated housing facilities in Gilmer County for the homeless, HIV/AIDS patients, or substance abuse patients.

**TABLE 3-O. Migrant Children\* in Gilmer County**

Academic Year	Number of Children
Sept. 2003 – March 2004	306 (7 months)
Sept. 2002 – August 2003	344
Sept. 2001 – August 2002	data not available
Sept. 2000 – August 2001	264
Sept. 1999 – August 2000	255

*Source: Georgia Department of Education, Migrant Education Database. "The term "migrant child" is a very specific definition used by the Department of Education. It includes individuals from birth to age 22 with no high school diploma or GED, traveling with parent or guardian for the purpose of temporary or seasonal employment in fishing and agriculture, and having moved in the last 36 months. Additional criteria apply and can be obtained from the Georgia Department of Education.*



## 3.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

An assessment of current and future housing needs can be made by answering the following questions which were derived from the Minimum Local Planning Standards (Section 110-12-1-0 4(12)(c)2.(ii)(I) and (II)).

- Does the housing stock meet the community's current needs, including those of persons with special needs?
- Based on projected growth, what quantity, quality, and types of housing units will be needed in the future?
- Do barriers exist that may prevent a significant proportion of the community's nonresident workforce from residing in the area?
- How does the cost of housing compare to the wages and income of the resident and non-resident workforce and how does it relate to the prevalence of cost-burdened and overcrowded households?
- Is the cost of housing impacted by special circumstances?
- What problems with the existing local housing market can be addressed by the local government(s)?

These questions are answered in Section 3.2.1. through 3.2.7.

### 3.2.1. Does the housing stock meet the community's current needs, including those of persons with special needs?

In Gilmer County, there is a need for housing for low and moderate income families. To help address this need, Gilmer County Family Connection, GoldKist, United Community Bank, and the UGA Extension Service have been working together to provide new housing opportunities for Gilmer County residents.

Also needed are affordable rental housing units for the elderly; for older, single ladies who are raising grandchildren; and for large families.

### 3.2.2. Based on projected growth, what quantity, quality, and types of housing units will be needed in the future?

The following assumptions were made in the preparation of the housing unit projections:

- Vacancy rates will remain constant throughout the planning period and will be the same as those reported in the 2000 Census. Naturally, there will be some variation in these rates over time.
- The distribution of the population among housing types (single family, multi-family, etc.) and housing tenure (owner vs. renter) will remain constant throughout the planning period and will be the same as those reported in the 2000 Census.
- Household size will follow the projections made in Table 1-C.

Based on these assumptions, and as presented in Table 3-P, the total number of units needed to accommodate the projected population in 2025 will be 35,182 units, a 195% increase from the 2000 figure of 11,924. This represents an increase of approximately 930 units per year.

**TABLE 3-P. Projected Number of Housing Units: Gilmer County**

Type of Housing Unit	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>ALL UNITS</b>	<b>11,924</b>	<b>14,829</b>	<b>18,600</b>	<b>23,145</b>	<b>28,676</b>	<b>35,182</b>
<b>Occupied Units</b>	<b>9,071</b>	<b>11,281</b>	<b>14,150</b>	<b>17,607</b>	<b>21,815</b>	<b>26,764</b>
<b>Owner Occupied Units</b>						
Single Family	5,329	6,627	8,313	10,344	12,816	15,723
Multi-Family	31	39	48	60	75	91
Mobile Home	1,663	2,068	2,594	3,228	3,999	4,907
Other	57	71	89	111	137	168
<b>Renter Occupied Units</b>						
Single Family	824	1,025	1,285	1,599	1,982	2,431
Multi-Family	472	587	736	916	1,135	1,393
Mobile Home	687	854	1,072	1,333	1,652	2,027
Other	8	10	12	16	19	24
<b>Vacant Units (including seasonal)</b>						
Single Family	2,124	2,641	3,313	4,123	5,108	6,267
Multi-Family	63	78	98	122	152	186
Mobile Home	355	441	554	689	854	1,047
Other	311	387	485	604	748	918
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>

Given that the average number of residential permits issued between 2001 and 2003 was 790 per year, a growth rate of 930 units per year is probably too high. If the number of units built per year is revised to 790, then the total number of units in 2025 would be 31,674. Keeping the number of occupied units the same as in the previous table would require occupancy rates to increase from 76% to 84%. (See Table 3-Q.)

**TABLE 3-Q. Revised Projected Number of Occupied Housing Units: Gilmer County**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	11,924	15,874	19,824	23,774	27,724	31,674
<b>Occupied</b>	9,071	11,281	14,150	17,607	21,815	26,764
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>16%</b>

If the population in Ellijay grows as projected, and if the average household size follows the estimates provided in the population element, then 989 residential units will be needed in Ellijay by 2025. This represents an increase of 359 units. Of those 359 units, it is projected that 209 or 58% will be single family dwellings. (See Table 3-R.)

**TABLE 3-R. Projected Number of Housing Units: Ellijay**

Type of Housing Unit	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>1,021</b>
<b>Occupied</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>915</b>
<b>Owner Occupied Units</b>						
Single Family	225	239	289	309	329	347
Multi-Family	5	5	7	7	8	8
Mobile Home	14	15	19	20	21	22
<b>Renter Occupied Units</b>						
Single Family	116	123	149	159	169	178
Multi-Family	209	221	268	286	305	322
Mobile Home	14	15	19	20	21	22
<b>Vacant (including seasonal)</b>						
Single Family	48	50	61	65	69	73
Multi-Family	22	23	28	30	32	33
Mobile Home	9	10	12	13	14	14
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>

If the population in East Ellijay grows as projected, and if the average household size follows the estimates provided in the population element, then 632 residential units will be needed by 2025. This represents an increase of 367 units. Of those 367 units, it is projected that 210 or 57% will be single family dwellings. (See Table 3-S.)

**TABLE 3-S. Projected Number of Housing Units: East Ellijay**

Type of Housing Unit	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>632</b>
<b>Occupied</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>599</b>
<b>Owner Occupied Units</b>						
Single Family	96	109	139	168	199	229
Multi-Family	6	7	8	10	12	14
Mobile Home	18	21	27	32	38	44
<b>Renter Occupied Units</b>						
Single Family	47	53	67	82	96	111
Multi-Family	72	82	104	126	149	171
Mobile Home	12	13	17	20	24	28
<b>Vacant (including seasonal)</b>						
Single Family	10	11	14	17	20	23
Multi-Family	5	6	7	9	10	12
Mobile Home	0	0	0	0	0	0

**3.2.3. Do barriers exist that may prevent a significant proportion of the community's nonresident workforce from residing in the area?**

Housing is fairly inexpensive when compared with neighboring counties, so housing price is not a significant reason why portions of the workforce reside in other counties.

In 2000, the jobs to housing balance in Gilmer County (excluding seasonally vacant homes) was 0.69 jobs per housing unit which implies that there is more housing in Gilmer County than there are jobs.

**3.2.4. How does the cost of housing compare to the wages and income of the resident and non-resident workforce and to the prevalence of cost-burdened and overcrowded households?**

There is an adequate supply of higher-end housing for vacation home/retiree market; however, any residents are of low to moderate income, and the supply of housing for this income range is limited. As illustrated in Figure 3-C on page 3-3, the cost of new housing in Gilmer County is less than that of surrounding counties.

**3.2.5. Is the cost of housing impacted by special circumstances?**

The topography of Gilmer County makes site preparation costs prohibitive for most types of affordable housing. In addition, the second home/vacation home market is more lucrative for builders and developers than the affordable housing market.

Low interest rates have also had a great impact in recent years on housing construction, particularly in the second home/vacation home market.

**3.2.6. What problems with the existing local housing market can be addressed by the local government(s) and how do land use patterns, zoning, subdivision regulations, taxes, etc. impact housing needs, availability, affordability, and mix?**

The provision of infrastructure is one of the primary ways the local governments can assist developers of affordable housing. Local governments should seek CDBG funding to supplement the infrastructure in targeted areas.

As part of a downtown master plan, the City of Ellijay should undertake a housing assessment to identify areas for possible CDBG funding of housing rehabilitation. In conjunction with the assessment, a vacant lot survey should be performed to identify areas that would be suitable for infill development.

Educational programs such as the one being conducted by Gilmer Family Connection, GoldKist, and United Community Bank have been successful in helping individuals and families obtain housing. Expansion of such programs would be beneficial.

In older residential areas, parking is a problem. Homes in these areas were built for single families with one or two vehicles. In recent years, multiple families have been living in the homes. Each family has one or two vehicles and these vehicles end up being parked in the front and rear yards. The City of Ellijay has recently adopted parking regulations to address this issue. Enforcement of the regulations may be problematic.

Currently, there is no recourse for renters who live in substandard housing. Although many renters of substandard housing are illegal aliens and therefore unlikely to report such a matter to the authorities, there should be a government office handling such matters.

Zoning did not exist in unincorporated Gilmer County prior to 2004; therefore, it has not had an impact on housing availability outside the cities. Housing construction tends to be developer and builder-driven in Gilmer County; therefore, what is built is impacted by developers and builders more so than by government regulation.

### 3.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that sets forth the local government's housing policies, programs for future housing development, and other housing-related initiatives.

The implementation program must support the Community Vision and include actions which should be undertaken to achieve the Community Vision.

#### 3.3.1. Community Vision

In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

**Livability.** We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.

**Community Character.** We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.

**Shared Direction.** The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.

### 3.3.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following housing goal and associated policies and action items:

<b>Goal:</b> Adequate and affordable housing for all citizens.	
<b>Policy 1: Quality Housing.</b> Promote quality housing construction and subdivision development.	<b>Action Items:</b> a. Continue to enforce building codes and subdivision regulations. b. Periodically review subdivision standards to ensure adequacy.
<b>Policy 2: Housing Opportunities.*</b> Promote the development of housing in a wider range of prices and types to insure that all who work in the community have a viable option for living in the community. Affordable housing that is designed for long-term sustainability and stable value should be encouraged.	<b>Action Items:</b> a. Participate in and support housing education programs. b. Investigate and support public/private partnerships for providing quality, affordable housing. c. Investigate opportunities for elderly housing or assisted living facilities.
<b>Policy 3: Infill Housing and Neighborhood Preservation.</b> Stimulate infill housing in existing neighborhoods.	<b>Action Items:</b> a. Seek funding to conduct a housing assessment and vacant lot inventory in the City of Ellijay. b. Using the housing assessment as a guide, apply for CDBG funding for housing rehabilitation in targeted areas. c. Seek funding to develop a downtown master plan for the City of Ellijay to address traffic, parking, landscaping, signage, historic preservation, pedestrian facilities, and housing. This plan should address both residential and commercial development in downtown.

\* A DCA "Quality Communities" Objective

# 4

## Natural and Cultural Resources

The Natural and Cultural Resources Element of this plan provides the following:

- an inventory of Gilmer County's natural and cultural resources;
- an assessment of current and future needs for the protection, management, and use of these resources; and
- goals and strategies for the appropriate protection, management, and use of these resources.

### 4.1. Inventory – Natural Resources

Gilmer County contains 275,753 acres. As shown in Figure 4-A below, it is bounded on the west by Murray and Gordon Counties, on the north and east by Fannin County, and on the south by Pickens and Dawson Counties. There are two incorporated cities in Gilmer County: Ellijay, the county seat, and East Ellijay.



FIGURE 4-A. Gilmer and Nearby Counties

The climate of Gilmer County is moderate with an average annual rainfall of 53.6 inches and average temperature of 59.9 degrees Fahrenheit.

The following discussion provides information on the types of natural resources found in Gilmer County. For each resource, an inventory, a description of the resource's vulnerability, and a discussion of existing protection measures is provided. Where existing protection measures could be improved, additional protection measures are recommended.

#### Element Outline:

##### 4.1. Inventory – Natural Resources

- 4.1.1. Public Water Supply Sources
- 4.1.2. Water Supply Watersheds
- 4.1.3. Groundwater Recharge Areas
- 4.1.4. Wetlands
- 4.1.5. Protected Rivers
- 4.1.6. Coastal Resources
- 4.1.7. Floodplains
- 4.1.8. Topography and Steep Slopes
- 4.1.9. Protected Mountains
- 4.1.10. Geology and Soil Types
- 4.1.11. Farms and Farmland
- 4.1.12. Forest Land
- 4.1.13. Plant and Animal Habitats
- 4.1.14. Major Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas
- 4.1.15. Scenic Views and Sites
- 4.1.16. Greenspace Program

##### 4.2. Inventory – Cultural Resources

- 4.2.1. Residential Resources
- 4.2.2. Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Resources
- 4.2.3. Transportation Resources
- 4.2.4. Rural Resources
- 4.2.5. Other Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources

##### 4.3. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

##### 4.4. Community Goals and Implementation Program



#### 4.1.1. Public Water Supply Sources

**Resources and Facilities.** The Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority operates three water intakes: one on the Ellijay River, one on the Cartecay River, and one at Joyce Spring. (The intake at Joyce Spring only serves 20 homes.) The intake locations are shown in Figure 5-A in section 5.1.2. “Water Supply and Treatment.”

In addition to these water supply sources, the Chatsworth Water Works Commission operates a water intake and treatment plant on Carter's Lake. Portions of Carter's Lake are in Gilmer County, but the water intake and treatment plant are in Murray County. The Walnut Mountain Subdivision-Bakwa Lake intake is a private water supply source.

**Resource Vulnerability.** See Section 4.1.2. “Water Supply Watersheds” and Section 5.1.2. “Water Supply and Treatment.”

The US Environmental Protection Agency requires that all states perform source water assessments for each drinking water intake and develop a comprehensive Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP). The assessments identify potential pollution sources, analyze the risk to public health, and provide data and analyses for the creation of Source Water Protection Plans (SWPPs).

The Georgia EPD contracted with the NGRDC to perform source water assessments on three water intakes in Gilmer County: Walnut Mountain Subdivision-Bakwa Lake Intake, Cartecay River Intake, and Ellijay River Intake. The assessments include five milestones:

1. mapping each watershed around the water intakes,
2. collecting data currently available on each intake,
3. conducting an inventory of all potential pollutants and hazards in the area that feed the intakes,
4. assessing the severity of the pollutants and hazards, and
5. developing a plan to communicate the results to the public.

The NGRDC completed Milestone 4 in the summer of 2003 for the intakes in Gilmer County. The NGRDC used the Georgia EPD's methodology for classifying a source water supply's susceptibility to potential contaminants. Determining the “release potential” and the “risk potential” from inventoried sources within the watershed established the susceptibility of a drinking water intake to pollution.

“Release Potential,” as outlined in the EPD's SWAP guidance, is the potential for a contaminant to reach source water and eventually the surface water intake. Release potential factors include distance to surface water, volume of release, duration of release, and ease of travel. “Risk Potential” involves assessing the level of harm that would result should contamination occur. Risk potential factors include distance to surface water supply and toxicity.

The Bakwa Lake Intake was found to have a low overall susceptibility rating. This low rating is not an indication of current water quality, but relates to the possibility of pollution contamination.

The Cartecay River Intake was found to have high overall susceptibility rating. This rating is based upon several factors which are listed in the illustration to the right.

The Ellijay River Intake was found to have an overall susceptibility rating of medium/high. Potential pollution sources of concern include the closed landfill, 3 mines, 43 railroad crossings, a number of farms, and a high percentage of impervious services.

		Release Potential		
		Low	Medium	High
Risk Potential	High	4 Dairy Farms (IMZ) 5 Fuel Facilities (IMZ)	Primary Road Crossings (IMZ) Secondary Road Crossings (IMZ) 4 Fuel Facilities (IMZ) 2 Mines (IMZ) 1 NPDES (IMZ) 14 Sewer Crossings (IMZ) 2 Dairies (OMZ) Non-point Urban (OMZ)	Primary Road Crossings (IMZ) Non-point Agriculture (IMZ) Non-point Urban (IMZ) Non-point Agriculture (OMZ)
	Medium		Mine (IMZ) Secondary Road Crossings (OMZ) Non-point Forestry (OMZ)	Non-point Forestry (IMZ)
	Low			

This matrix shows the release potential and risk potential factors for the Cartecay River Intake. (IMZ or OMZ = Inner or Outer Management Zone)

**Existing Protection Measures.**

See Section 4.1.2. “Water Supply Watersheds” and Section 5.1.2. “Water Supply and Treatment.”

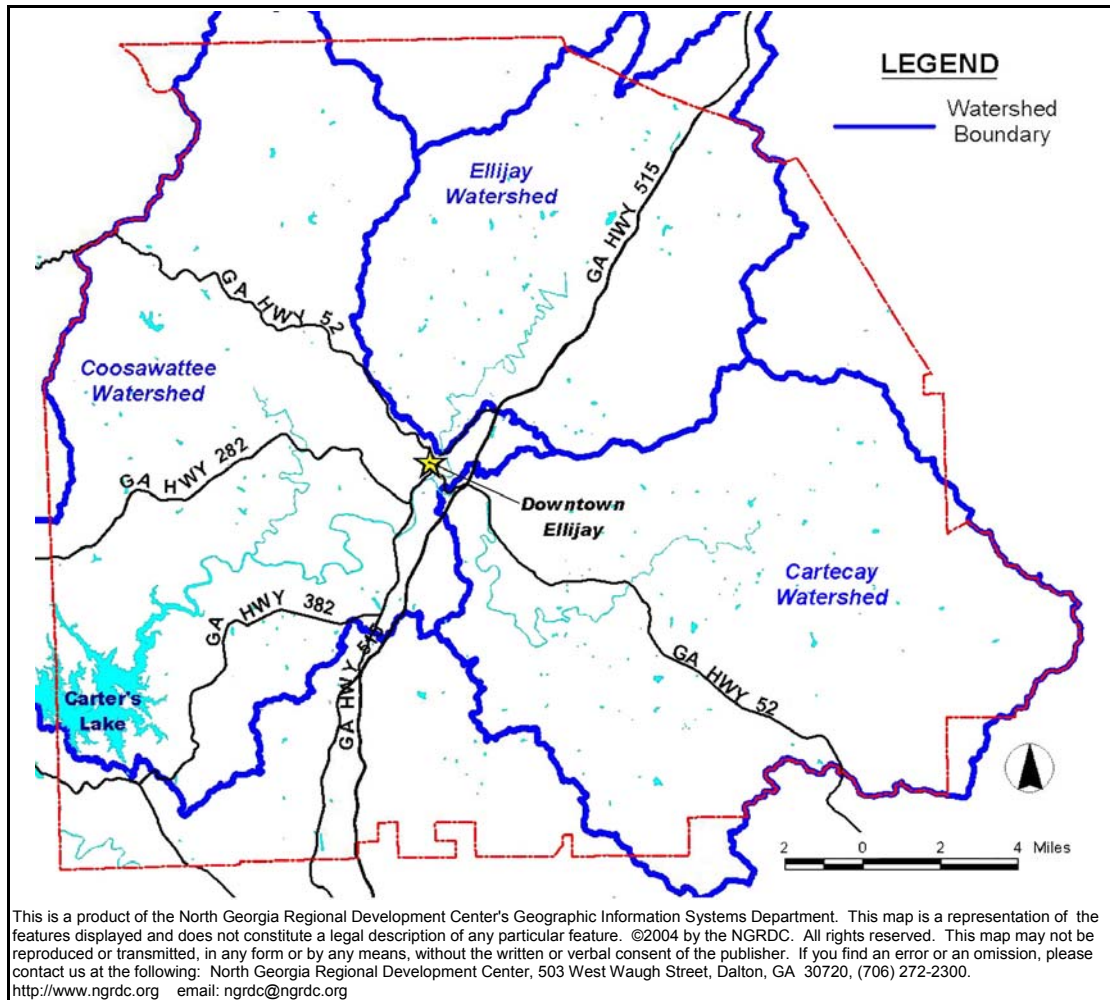
### 4.1.2. Water Supply Watersheds

**Definition.** A watershed is a drainage area or basin in which all precipitation that falls within its boundaries flows to a central collector, such as a stream or a lake, at some lower elevation. Water supply watersheds are defined by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as the areas of land upstream of governmentally owned public drinking water intakes or water supply reservoirs.

**Water Supply Watershed:** The areas of land upstream of governmentally owned public drinking water intakes or water supply reservoirs.  
  
(GA Dept. of Natural Resources)

Land cover, slope, soil type, and the intensity and duration of rainfall all affect the rate of water absorption by soils. The water that is not absorbed by the soil runs off the land as overflow or surface runoff. Water released through soil added to this overflow forms total runoff. As runoff flows into lower elevations, it organizes into drainage basins, the boundaries of which form watersheds. The runoff from a watershed accumulates in streams which serve to move water out of the watershed to lower elevations.

**Resource Inventory.** The Water Supply Watershed Protection District comprises roughly all of the land areas that drain to the public water supply intakes of Gilmer County and Chatsworth. The Cartecay and the Coosawattee Water Supply Watersheds are large water supply watersheds (>100 square miles), while the Ellijay Water Supply Watershed is a small water supply watershed (<100 square miles). The boundaries of the watersheds are shown in Figure 4-B.



**FIGURE 4-B. There are three water supply watersheds in Gilmer County: Ellijay, Cartecay, and Coosawattee.**

**Resource Vulnerability.** Land development within water supply watersheds may affect the quantity and quality of raw water which flows into reservoirs or public water intakes. The potential problems in water supply watersheds include (1) point and non-point sources of pollution and (2) increases in impervious surfaces from development such as buildings, roads, and parking lots. Point sources of pollution include municipal sewage discharges, industrial waste water, septic tanks, accidental spills of hazardous material, and leachates from landfills or chemical waste dumps. Non-point source pollution consists of contaminants which are generated over large areas such as run-off from cropland, managed forests, paved surfaces, and construction activities.

Removing vegetation from stream channels and paving over the soil increases the volume and rate of surface runoff which, in turn, increases the potential for erosion, flooding, and sedimentation (pollution) of the stream. A significant amount of vacation home development is occurring along the rivers and streams in the watersheds in Gilmer County. This development activity is contributing sediment and other runoff pollutants to the streams. This development pattern is expected to continue in the future and over time may lead to diminished water quality. The Water and Sewerage Authority reports that the amount of silt that must be removed from the community's water supply sources has quadrupled since 1998.

**Existing Protection Measures.** To protect drinking water supplies, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has established buffer requirements and impervious surface limitations to be applied to watersheds as follows:

- Within a seven mile radius upstream of a public water intake, a buffer 100 feet wide must be maintained on both sides of the stream and no impervious surfaces may be constructed nor septic tanks located within 150 feet of either side of the stream.
- Beyond seven miles, a 50 foot buffer must be maintained and no impervious surfaces may be constructed nor septic tanks located within 75 feet of the stream.
- A 150 foot buffer must be maintained around water supply reservoirs.
- New development must not be covered by more than 25% impervious surface.

**Note:** Watersheds that are greater than 100 square miles in size are exempt from these requirements. (See Table 4-A. Watershed Protection Criteria below.)

**TABLE 4-A. Watershed Protection Criteria**

Watershed Size Sq. Mi.	Reservoir (Y/N)	Reservoir Buffer (Feet)	Perennial Stream Buffer (feet)		Perennial Stream Setback (feet)		Watershed Impervious Surface Density
			within 7 mile radius	outside radius	within 7 mile radius	outside radius	
>100'	No	None	None	None	None	None	None
>100'	Yes	150'	100'	None	150'	None	None
<100'	No	None	100'	50'	150'	75'	25% or less
<100'	Yes	150'	100'	50'	150'	75'	25% or less

Source: Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds; [http://www.dca.state.ga.us/planning/ocp\\_rules/env1.html](http://www.dca.state.ga.us/planning/ocp_rules/env1.html)

Utilities, forestry, and agriculture are exempt from protection criteria, provided they meet stipulated conditions, including not impairing drinking water stream quality. Pre-existing uses and mining permitted by DNR are allowed. New facilities handling hazardous waste must perform operations on impervious surfaces and in conformance with federal and Standard Fire Prevention Code regulations.

All local governments have implemented the minimum planning criteria developed by the DNR and enforce the requirements through land development regulations.

Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act requires that Georgia periodically prepare a list of all surface waters in the state for which beneficial uses of the water (e.g. drinking, recreation, aquatic habitat, and industrial use) are impaired by pollutants. Table 4-B on the following page provides a list of the water bodies in Gilmer County which have been designated in Georgia's 2004 (draft) Section 303(d) list as either partially supporting or not supporting designated water uses.

Waters placed on the 303(d) list require the preparation of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The Georgia EPD, in its brochure entitled "Watershed Wisdom," defines a TMDL as follows:

*"A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a river, stream, or lake can receive and still be safe and healthy. It is essentially a prescription designed to restore the health of a polluted water body by indicating the amount of pollutants that may be present in the water and still meet water quality standards."*

**Table 4-B. Section 303(d) List of Impaired Streams in Gilmer County (2004 Draft)**

Basin or Stream (length in miles)	Partially Supporting Designated Uses		Not Supporting Designated Uses	
	Water Use Classification	Criterion Violated (evaluated causes)	Water Use Classification	Criterion Violated (evaluated causes)
<b>Cartecay River (3)</b> (Owltown Creek to Coosawattee River)	--	--	Fishing	Fecal Coliform Bacteria (non-point source)
<b>Coosawattee River (9)</b> (Ellijay River to Mountaintown Creek)	--	--	Fishing	Fecal Coliform Bacteria (urban runoff)
<b>Cox Creek (3)</b>	Fishing	Fecal Coliform Bacteria (urban runoff)	--	--
<b>Ellijay River (2)</b> (upstream Coosawattee River)	Fishing	Fecal Coliform Bacteria (urban runoff)	--	--
<b>Flat Creek (1)</b> (upstream Coosawattee River)	--	--	Fishing	Fecal Coliform Bacteria (non-point source)
<b>Mountaintown Creek (5)</b> (Hwy. 282 to Coosawattee River)	--	--	Fishing	Fecal Coliform Bacteria (non-point source)
<b>Tails Creek (3)</b> (Hwy. 282 to Carters Lake)	Fishing	Fecal Coliform Bacteria (non-point source)	--	--

Source: <http://www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/environ/>

After TMDLs are established for a water body, a TMDL implementation plan is developed and then put into effect. An implementation plan details the types of pollution control measures needed to remediate the impaired water body. Once fully implemented, the plan should result in the previously impaired water achieving a "fully supporting" status.

TMDLs have been established for the seven water bodies listed in Table 4-B above. TMDL implementation plans have been completed for the Coosawattee River, the Ellijay River, Flat Creek, and Mountaintown Creek. Implementation plans are currently being developed for the Cartecay River and Tails Creek by the North Georgia Regional Development Center. An implementation plan for Cox Creek needs to be developed.

Public education is an important way to improve water quality in the county and various agencies in the community are involved in such efforts. A recent public education project involved an on-site agricultural best management practices (BMP) workshop co-sponsored by the Gilmer County Cooperative Extension Service, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and the NGRDC. This workshop was an opportunity for local farmers to see first hand a variety of BMPs designed to keep cattle waste out of streams.



**This cattle watering ramp was one of the BMPs exhibited at a May 2004 public workshop in Gilmer County.**

As part of an Environmental Protection Agency grant project, two poultry waste stack houses have been built in Gilmer County. A stack house is a building where poultry waste is stored and allowed to dewater and compost before it is sold or spread in fields. This mechanism causes the bacteria to die so it will not enter streams as pollution. A workshop is scheduled to provide information to the public on poultry BMPs such as stack houses.



**This straight pipe discharged household sewage directly into a stream. A new septic system was installed as part of a voluntary grant program.**

Another effort to improve water quality on Gilmer County's streams involves a small grant program administered by the NGRDC and the Gilmer County Environmental Health Office. This program funds septic system repairs where failing systems may be contributing to fecal coliform pollution in streams. The grant will fund approximately twelve septic system repair projects.

**Additional Recommended Protection Measures.** Depending upon the future density and proximity of development along these river corridors, adopted buffers may not be adequate to insure water quality indefinitely; therefore, development activity and stream quality should be monitored regularly.

Consideration should be given to extending some form of watershed protection criteria to all watersheds, regardless of the size. The regulations should be phased in to give property owners adequate time to adjust.

#### **4.1.3. Groundwater Recharge Areas**

**Definition.** A groundwater recharge area is a surface land area where precipitation infiltrates the soil and percolates downward to replenish an aquifer or underground reservoir. The contaminants in the soil and air affect the overall quality of the water that reaches an aquifer. While vegetation biologically cleans the water as it infiltrates the soil, some contaminants are still conveyed to the groundwater. Once polluted, a groundwater source is nearly impossible to clean up.

**Resource Inventory.** According to data from the Georgia DNR, there are no significant ground water recharge areas present in Gilmer County or the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay.

#### **4.1.4. Wetlands**

**Definition.** The US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) defines freshwater wetlands as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." Generally, wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

**Resource Inventory.** There are approximately 740 acres of isolated, but not significantly large, wetland areas in Gilmer County (excluding Carter's Lake and the Coosawattee River). The locations of these wetlands are shown in Figure 4-C.

**Freshwater Wetland:** *Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. (Corps of Engineers)*

**Resource Vulnerability.** Under natural conditions, wetlands help maintain and enhance water quality by filtering out sediments and associated non-point source pollutants from adjacent land uses. They also store water, thereby stabilizing dry weather stream flows and reducing flood hazards. In addition, wetlands serve as fish, wildlife, and plant habitats.

**Existing Protection Measures.** In an effort to protect and manage the nation's freshwater wetlands, the EPA and the COE have adopted the Section 404K program of the Clean Water Act. The EPA and COE share the primary responsibility for enforcement. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources adopted the Section 404 program standards into their Environmental Planning Standards and local governments have implemented these standards through wetlands ordinances.

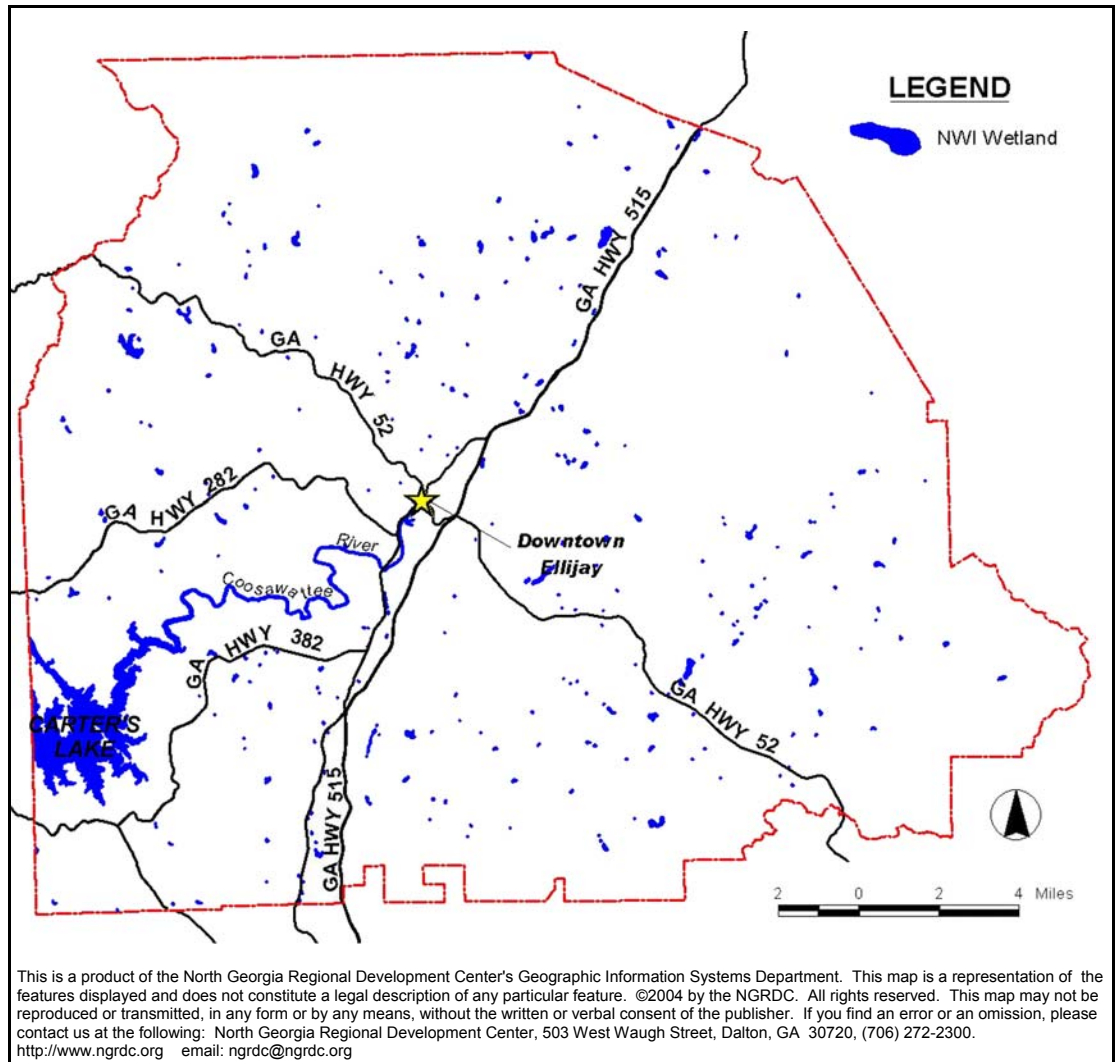
A Wetlands Protection District corresponds to all lands within Gilmer County that are mapped as wetlands by the US Fish and Wildlife Service on their National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps. If an area proposed for development is located within 50 feet of the Wetlands Protection District boundary, a COE determination is required. If the COE determines that wetlands are present, a local development permit will not be granted until a Section 404 Permit or Letter of Permission is issued.

Certain uses are generally allowed by right within the Wetlands Protection District provided they do not require structures, grading, fill, draining, or dredging. These include the following:

- soil, water, vegetation, fish, and wildlife conservation;
- passive recreation activities;
- forestry in accordance with best management practices (BMPs);
- cultivation of agricultural crops and pasturing of livestock, subject to BMPs; and
- education, scientific research, and nature trails.

Hazardous or sanitary waste landfills and receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste are prohibited in the Wetlands Protection District.

The Department of Natural Resources has made satellite photography of wetlands and forest land available to the public. These maps are not accurate at the site level, but do provide valuable information which could be used to alert building inspectors and other local enforcement personnel when development appears to be occurring in violation of 404 permitting regulations.



**FIGURE 4-C. Wetlands in Gilmer County**

#### 4.1.5. Protected Rivers

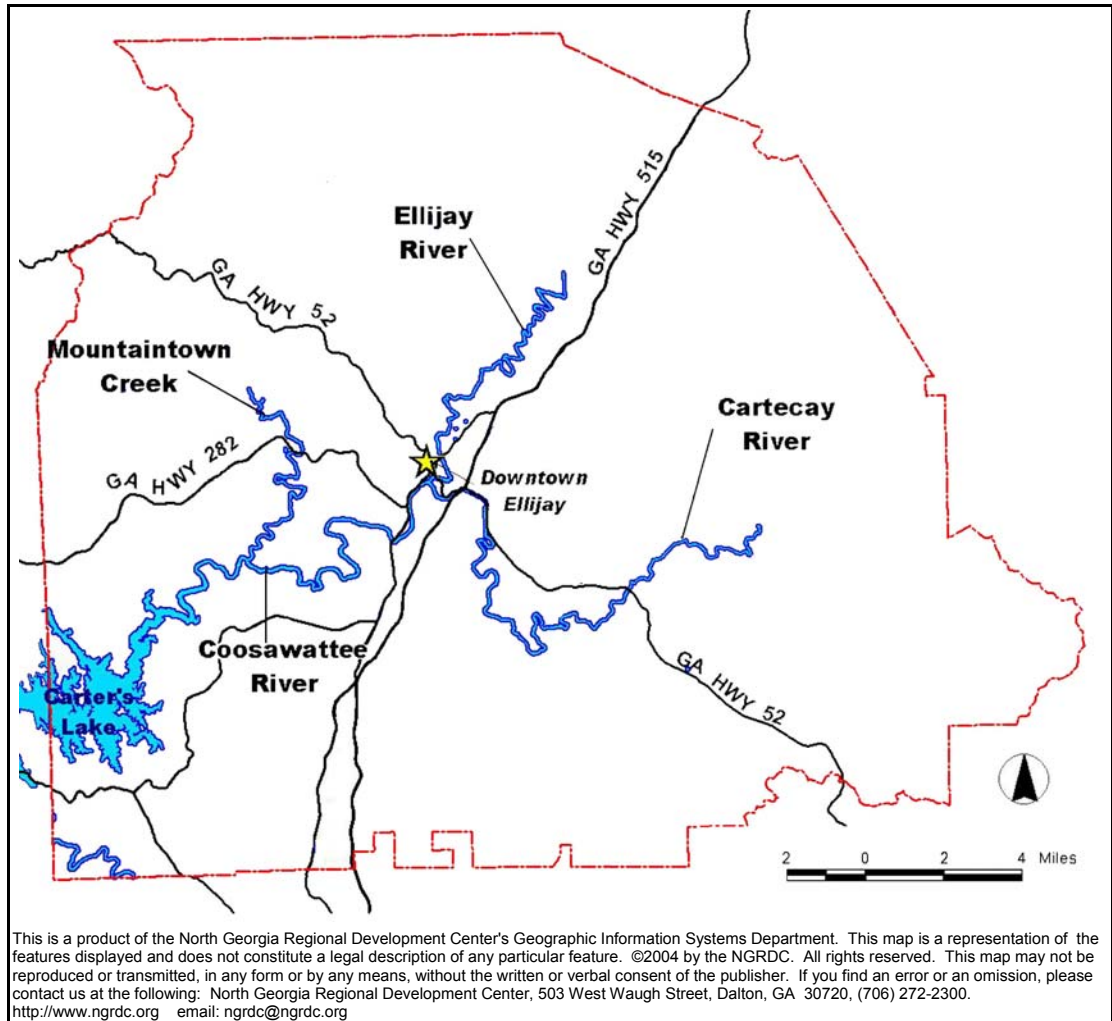
**Definition.** A protected river is defined under the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria as any perennial river or water course with an average annual flow of at least 400 cubic feet per second.

**Resource Inventory.** The Coosawattee River, starting from the confluence of the Ellijay and Cartecay Rivers in Ellijay and ending at Carter's Lake, meets the criteria for river protection. (See Figure 4-D.) The Department of Natural Resources has deemed rivers of this size to be of vital importance to Georgia in that they help serve as habitat for wildlife, a site for recreation, and a source for clean drinking water. River corridors also allow the free movement of wildlife from area to area within the state, help control erosion and river sedimentation, and help absorb flood waters.

The Coosawattee River is the primary tributary to Carter's Lake, a major recreation area and public water source for Murray County and other adjacent counties. Maintaining its water quality is of vital importance to a number of government jurisdictions. The Coosawattee River has been nominated by the North Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia



Department of Community Affairs as a "Regionally Important Resource" because of its significance as a source of drinking water, recreational and tourism opportunities, and habitat for rare plant and animal species, in addition to its aesthetic and scenic qualities.



**FIGURE 4-D. Of the three rivers in Gilmer County, only the Coosawattee is classified as protected.**

**Resource Vulnerability.** The environmental quality of the Coosawattee River corridor is vulnerable to unregulated development and other intensive uses of the adjacent land. Development and forestry activities in the immediate vicinity of the river increase storm water runoff that can contain sediment and other contaminating pollutants which can destroy water quality and plant and animal habitat. Development along stream banks can infringe on the recreational aspects of the river corridor by limiting access to the river by the public. Such development will also remove vegetation and destroy the scenic and aesthetic attributes of the river corridor that add to the quality of life in the county.

**Protected River:** A perennial river or water course with an average annual flow of at least 400 cubic feet per second.

A vast majority of the recent subdivision activity in Gilmer County has occurred within the drainage basin of the Coosawattee River, with many lots being developed up to or near the river's edge. It is anticipated that many of these lots will be developed within the planning period. Such development will be incremental and cumulative over the planning period, with adverse impacts, unless mitigation measures are in place.

A portion of the Coosawattee River also passes through urbanized areas of the City of Ellijay. Although much of the area along the river is already developed, there still remain sizable vacant tracts which are likely to develop in the future.



**The Coosawattee River meets the criteria for protected river status.**

#### **Existing Protection Measures.**

Both the City of Ellijay and Gilmer County are currently certified by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of DNR to enforce the State Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Act, which requires sediment control measures during construction activities. Because

exemptions exist for timber harvesting and for single family residential construction by individual lot owners, there do not appear to be sufficient safeguards for riverfront development. Furthermore, the erosion and sedimentation requirements do not limit the type or density of uses. As a result, these regulations have no actual long-term benefit toward minimizing or preventing the effects of non-point source pollution that are caused by development.

The City and County's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinances likewise do not limit the type or density of development occurring in the river corridor except for that area that falls within the floodway (the width of the river where the volume and velocity of flood conditions is the greatest). The regulations simply require that any development occurring in the floodplain be elevated above the 100 year flood level. Therefore, the flood regulations do not provide adequate protection against the potential adverse affects of development.

**Additional Recommended Protection Measures.** Based upon an assessment of the regulations described above and the likelihood of adverse impacts upon the river from future development activity, it is recommended that both Gilmer County and Ellijay implement the additional protection measures offered by the State Minimum Environmental Planning Criteria for river corridors. (Note: The DCA has asked the local governments to temporarily postpone adoption of these criteria.)

The measures drafted by the DNR include the establishment of a 100 foot vegetation buffer area measured horizontally from each river bank. No development or other land disturbing activity would be allowed to occur within a 100 foot buffer except for the following:

- a. single family dwellings, provided each dwelling is located on at least two acres and the septic tank drainfield is located outside of the 100 foot buffer area;
- b. any industrial or commercial uses existing prior to the adoption of local protection ordinances, provided they do not impair the drinking quality of water and meet all other federal environmental regulations;
- c. road and utility crossings, provided the construction of these crossings meet the requirements of the Erosion and Sedimentation Act;

- d. timber production and harvesting, provided it is consistent with the Best Management Practices established by the Georgia Forestry Commission, and does not impair the drinking quality of the water;
- e. agricultural production, provided it is consistent with the best management practices established by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and all other state and federal regulations, and does not impair the drinking quality of the water;
- f. wildlife and fisheries management activities;
- g. natural water quality treatment or purification;
- h. wastewater treatment; and,
- i. recreational usage consistent with the maintenance of a natural vegetative buffer or with river dependent recreation.

Local governments may also allow the following uses within the protected river corridor:

- all land uses existing prior to the adoption of local protection ordinances;
- mining activities, if permitted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources;
- utilities that cannot be feasibly located outside the buffer area; and,
- specific agricultural and forestry activities not covered by the provisions above.

Whenever any of the above permitted development does occur, the natural vegetative buffer must be restored as quickly as possible. Uses specifically prohibited in the river corridor by state mandate include handling areas for receiving and storing hazardous wastes, solid waste landfills, and any other uses specifically unapproved by local governments.

#### **4.1.6. Coastal Resources**

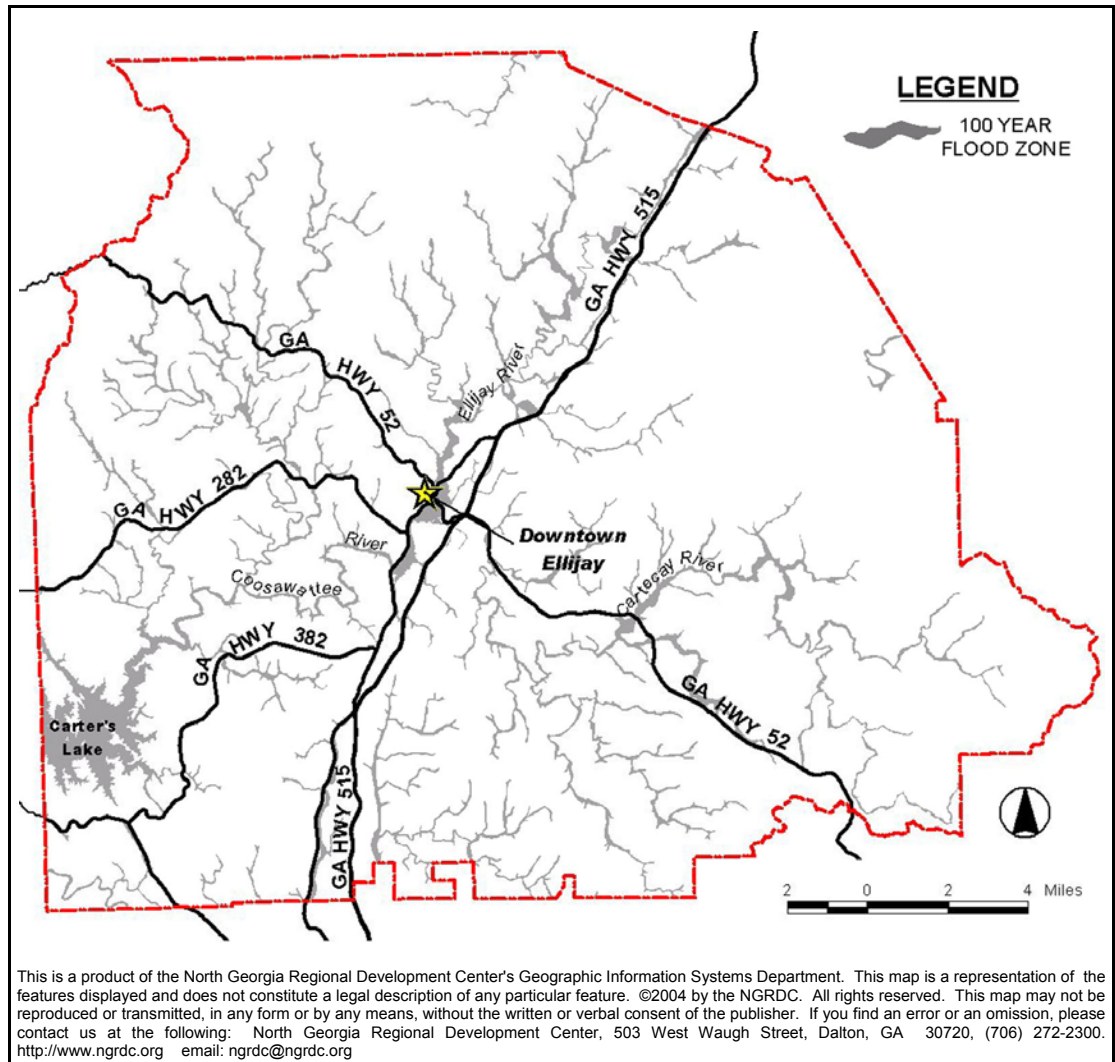
Gilmer County is land-locked and consequently has no coastal resources.

#### **4.1.7. Floodplains**

**Definition.** Flooding is the temporary covering of soil with water from overflowing streams and by runoff from adjacent slopes. Water standing for short periods after rainfall is not considered flooding, nor is water in swamps. Flooding is rated in terms which describe the frequency and duration of floods and the time of year when flooding is most likely to occur. In compliance with requirements under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified and mapped areas which are prone to flooding. The 100-year flood level is the national standard on which the floodplain management and insurance requirements of the NFIP are based.

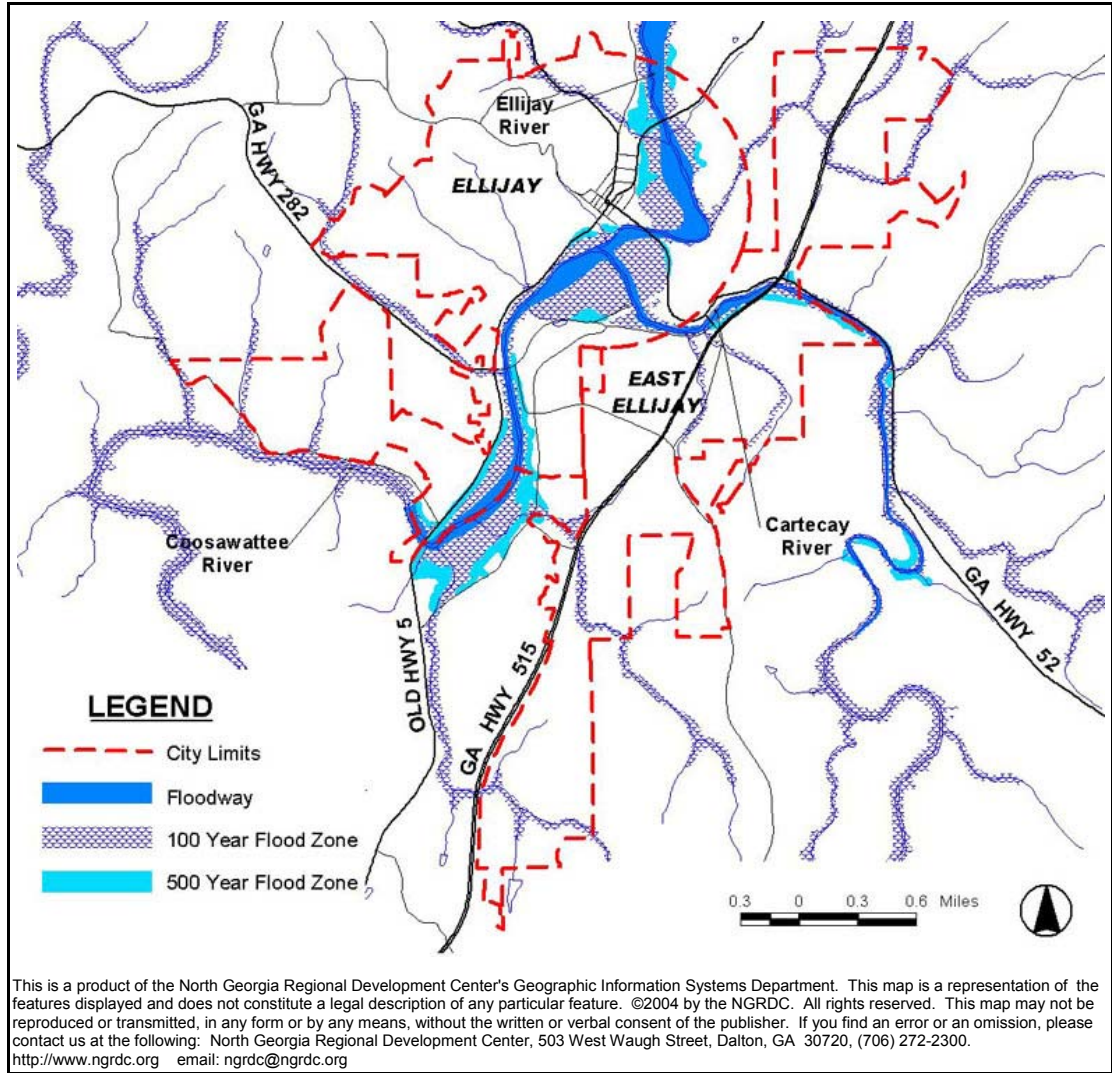
**Resource Inventory.** The 100-year flood zones in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are identified in Figures 4-E and 4-F.

**Resource Vulnerability.** Floodplains in their natural or relatively undisturbed state are important water resource areas. They serve three major purposes: natural water storage and conveyance, water quality maintenance, and ground water recharge. Unsuitable development can destroy their value. For example, any materials in the floodplain eliminate essential water storage capacity, causing water elevation to rise and resulting in the flooding of previously dry land.



**FIGURE 4-E. Flood Zones in Gilmer County**

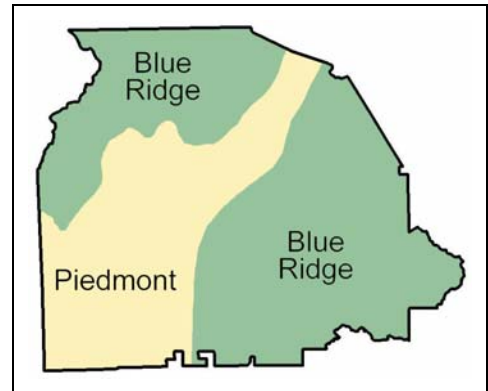
Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is a federal program that allows property owners within communities that participate in the program to purchase federally backed flood insurance. To implement the requirements of the program, provisions for flood control have been incorporated into subdivision regulations. Areas which are prone to flooding should not be planned for intensive land development.



**FIGURE 4-F. Flood Zones in Ellijay and East Ellijay**

#### 4.1.8. Topography and Steep Slopes

**Resource Inventory.** Gilmer County consists of 431 square miles located in two physiographic provinces: the Blue Ridge and the Piedmont. The northwestern corner and the county's east side are part of the Blue Ridge Province. The topography of this area is generally steep and rugged with a few valleys which have been produced by headwater tributaries of flowing streams. Elevations here range from 1,700 feet to over 4,000 feet above sea level. The majority of this area is characterized by slopes which are 25% or greater. A few exceptions occur within the valley areas where slopes generally fall within the 8% to 25% category.



**Gilmer County is located in two physiographic provinces**

The central and southwestern portions of the county are within the Piedmont Province. The topography here consists of rough, hilly surfaces with elevations ranging from 1,300 to 1,700 feet above sea level. Slope characteristics vary considerably, from less than 8% in the valley areas to 25% or greater in the mountains.

There are significant steep slope areas throughout Gilmer County. Maps of these areas are included in Section 4.1.9. "Protected Mountains."

**Resource Vulnerability.** Steep slopes generally have more shallow soil coverings which are more vulnerable to erosion and vegetative loss. Refer to the discussion provided in Section 4.1.9. "Protected Mountains," for specifics.

**Existing Protection Measures.** Refer to the discussion provided in Section 4.1.9. "Protected Mountains."

#### 4.1.9. Protected Mountains

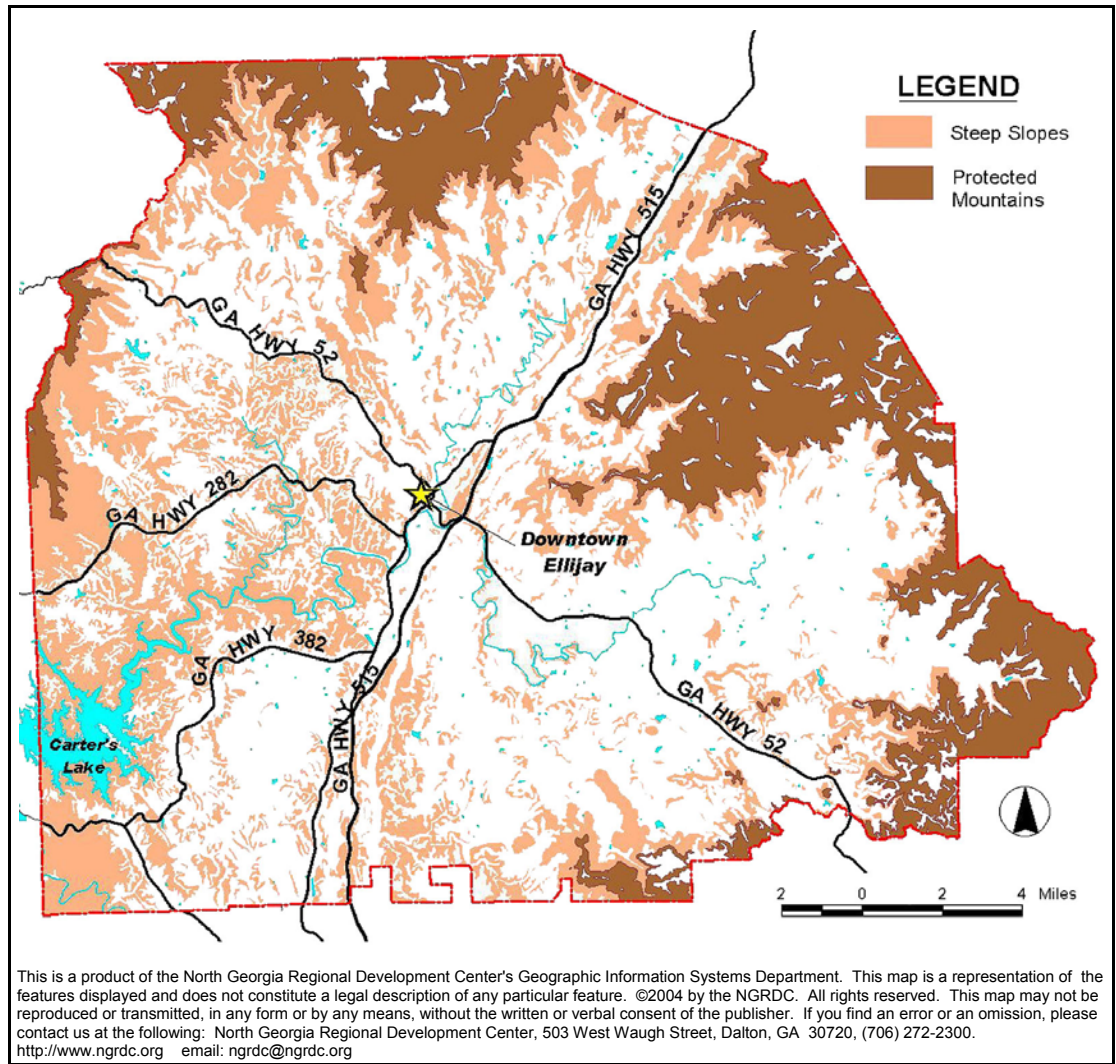
**Definition.** A protected mountain is defined under the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria as all land area 2,200 feet or more above mean sea level that has a percentage slope of 25% or greater for at least 500 feet horizontally. It also includes crests, summits, and ridge tops which lie at elevations higher than any such area.

**Resource Inventory.** As illustrated in Figure 4-G, much of Gilmer County meets the criteria for protected mountain. These areas are found primarily in the north and north east sections of the county. Coincidentally, most of the higher elevation, steep sloped area falls within the jurisdiction of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Although there are steep slope areas in the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay, no areas meeting the criteria for protected mountain occur there. (See Figure 4-F.)

**Resource Vulnerability.** Much of the terrain within Gilmer County is of a steeply sloped nature. Although significant portions of the higher elevation areas (above 2,200 feet) fall under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Forest Service and therefore are protected from development activity, a great deal of steeply sloped land is in private ownership. In recent years, these mountainous areas have been developed for second home or vacation home types of development. This is expected to continue into the future because steep mountain slopes typically offer scenic vistas and, thus, are often the most desirous sites for home building.

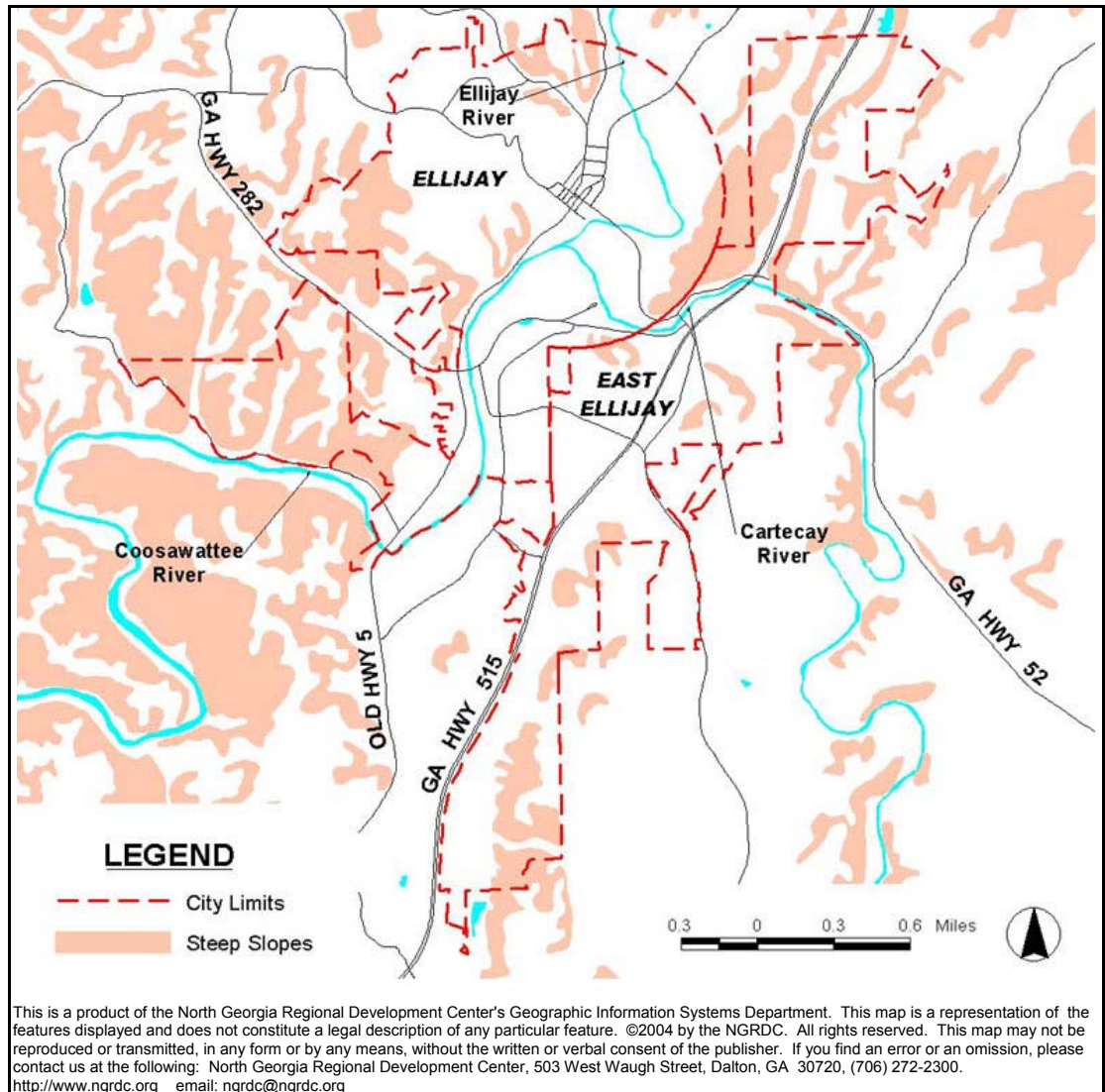


**The mountains in Gilmer County are part of its unique character.**



**FIGURE 4-G. Protected Mountains and Steep Slopes in Gilmer County**

Soil destabilization due to the grading of building sites has a detrimental impact upon vegetation and the water quality of small streams and lakes. Disturbance on mountain ridges can also destroy an area's aesthetic and scenic resources, which attract residents and tourists. Unregulated development has the potential to permanently destroy scenic vistas that give Gilmer County its unique character.



**FIGURE 4-H. Steep Slopes in Ellijay and East Ellijay**

**Existing Protection Measures.** Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay have adopted soil erosion and sediment control ordinances which are administered and enforced with local personnel. These ordinances require on-site sediment control measures to be put in place during development activity. These rules exempt both single family residential construction activity and timber harvesting activity. Furthermore, these rules do not limit the type or density of development in any given area.

Gilmer County also administers subdivision regulations. These regulations govern the development of streets, the division of land into lots, and the provision of water, drainage, and other improvements. While subdivision regulations do assure that adequate improvements are installed when development occurs, they do not regulate the type of development (height, structural characteristics, etc.) that occurs once an area is subdivided. In addition, while these existing regulations do afford some degree of protection from development activity, they do not adequately make provisions for such issues as tree preservation, preservation of scenic views, and other aesthetic considerations.



To address those issues, local governments have implemented the protection measures contained in the State's Minimum Environmental Planning Criteria for steep sloped mountainous areas. These protection criteria are the minimum standards contained in the State's Mountain Protection Act and include the following:

- The Mountain Protection District comprises all land that is 2,200 feet or more above sea level, and has a slope of 25% or greater for at least 500 horizontal feet.
- Land disturbing activities must meet requirements of the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975.
- Septic tanks must meet local requirements.
- Wells must conform to the Well Standards Act of 1985.
- Sewage treatment other than individual septic tanks must meet requirements of the Georgia Water Quality Control Act.
- Public water supply must meet requirements of the Georgia Safe Drinking Water Act of 1977.
- Single family dwellings standing on a minimum lot of one acre, except for lots of record, are permitted.
- Multi-family dwellings are limited to four per acre in the absence of public water and sewer. Six dwellings per acre are permitted if public water and sewer are available.
- No structure is to be more than 40 feet high, with certain exemptions.
- Landscaping plans identifying trees over eight inches in diameter at four and a half feet above ground, and containing a replacement plan for any such trees removed must accompany building permit applications.
- No more than 50% of trees of greater than eight inches in diameter at four and a half feet above ground may be removed from the site in the course of land disturbing activities, except upon filing a reforestation plan developed by a registered forester.
- Handling and storage of hazardous materials is prohibited.
- Roads must be constructed to minimize the danger of landslides and erosion.

Local ordinances detail information to be included on site plans and give the specifics of administration.

**Additional Recommended Protection Measures.** Given the anti-regulatory climate in Gilmer County, public education may be the most effective means of providing additional protection for steep slopes. BMP workshops for single family development could be conducted to help homeowners, builders, and others learn about how to protect steep slope areas and prevent or minimize erosion.

#### 4.1.10. Geology and Soil Types

**Geology.** Gilmer County is underlain by acide crystallic and metamorphic formations in both the Blue Ridge and Piedmont Provinces. The formations consist mainly of amphibolite, mica schist, slate, quartzite, and conglomerate.

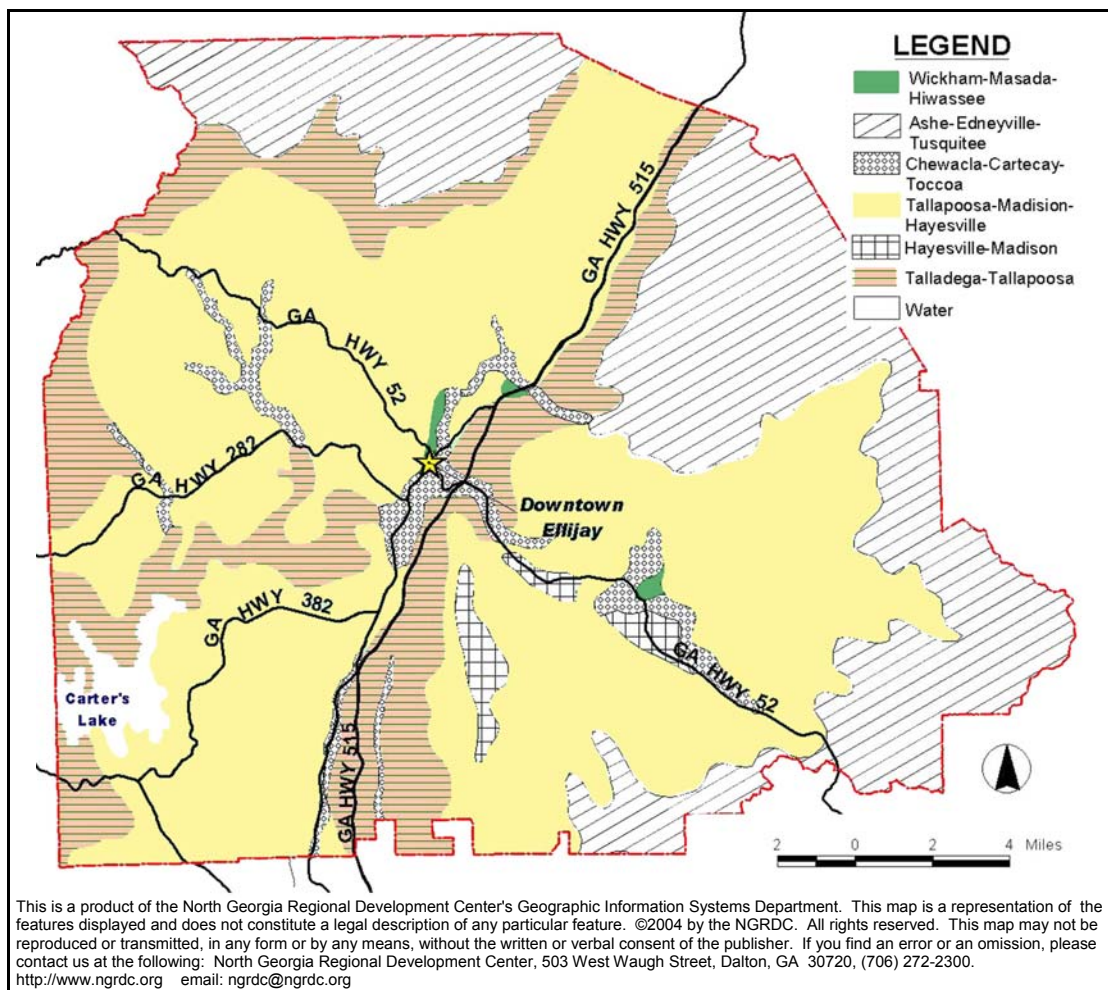
Metamorphic rocks generally have very low permeability, but should not be discounted as aquifers of limited productivity. These formations are generally located in mountainous areas making it necessary to practice special site design measures in many heavy industrial and mining activities in order to prevent leachate contamination of watershed areas.

**Soils.** The soils of North Georgia, including Gilmer County, are closely related to the physiographic and geologic formations of the area, which are the red-yellow padzolic group, described as moderately deep to shallow soils on sloping uplands, with adequate to poor draining properties. According to the *Soil Survey of Cherokee, Gilmer, and Pickens Counties (1973)*, there are six major soil associations in Gilmer County. These are listed in Table 4-C and illustrated in Figure 4-I.

**TABLE 4-C. Soil Associations and Soil Suitability for Land Uses In Gilmer County**

Soil Association	Description	Soil Suitability			
		residential on sewer	residential on septic	light industry	agriculture
Talladega-Tallapoosa (13)	Chiefly steep and very steep, shallow, channery and cobbly soils with a yellowish-red, loamy subsoil; on hills and low mountains.	severe	severe	severe	severe
Ashe-Edneyville-Tusquitee (16)	Mainly steep, stony soils with a yellow-brown to dark yellowish-brown, loamy subsoil; on mountain edge tops, in coves, and at base slopes.	severe	severe	severe	severe
Tallapoosa-Madison-Hayesville (17)	Chiefly steep to very steep, cobbly soils that have a yellowish-red to red, loamy and clayey subsoil; on upland hillsides.	severe	severe	severe	severe
Chewacla-Cartecay-Toccoa (18)	Somewhat poorly well-drained soils on low bottom land.	severe	severe	severe	moderate
Wickham-Masada-Hiwassee (19)	Well drained soils that have a yellowish-brown to dusky red, loamy and clayey subsoil; on terraces and benches.	slight	slight	moderate	slight
Hayesville-Madison (20)	Well-drained soils that have a yellowish-red clayey and loamy subsoil; on narrow ridge tops or uplands.	slight	moderate	moderate	moderate

Source: Soil Survey of Cherokee, Gilmer, and Pickens Counties, Georgia; USDA



**FIGURE 4-I. Gilmer County Soils.** (Source: 1973 Soil Survey of Cherokee, Gilmer, and Pickens Counties)

Various properties of soils are important in determining how land can be used safely and economically. Slope conditions affect lot size and density of development, and in some instances, may prevent certain types of development due to unavailability of sewer and other public services. Soil erosion is particularly problematic in certain areas of Gilmer County which offer a combination of both shallow soils and steep terrain. Knowledge of these conditions is helpful in the preparation of land use plans, zoning, and subdivision standards.

The relative suitability of soils for select land uses is based upon a variety of site characteristics, such as erosion control, drainage, percolation, etc. In Gilmer County, soil suitability for most development is generally poor due to a shallow soil depth and steep slopes. Unfortunately, the majority of suitable soils occur within flood and drainageways, where a majority of development and land clearing has occurred. Additionally, over time, a tremendous amount of soil erosion has occurred throughout the north Georgia region due to poor farming and forestry practices. Soil suitability is subdivided into three classifications: slight, moderate, and severe.

**Slight.** Soil associations included in this classification can be expected to impose only slight limitations on particular uses. Difficulties or hazards in construction or maintenance due to soil conditions can be readily or economically overcome.

**Moderate.** Soil associations included in this classification can be expected to impose moderate limitations on particular uses. Difficulties or hazards in construction or maintenance due to soil conditions can be corrected only with minor economic expenditure.

**Severe.** Soil associations included in this classification can be expected to impose severe limitations on particular uses. Difficulties or hazards in construction or maintenance due to soil conditions will often be too costly or impractical to overcome.

**Existing Protection Measures.** In 1975 the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act was established to minimize the impacts of soil erosion upon the water quality of streams and other surface waters throughout the state. The Act requires that all land disturbing activities, including land clearing, dredging, grading, excavating, transporting, and filling, not be undertaken until an erosion and sedimentation control plan is completed and submitted to the proper authority.

The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Department of Natural Resources is charged with administering the permit conditions and authorizes local governments to enforce these rules through locally adopted legislation. The Gilmer County Land Development Officer is the local permitting officer who administers the requirements of Georgia Soil and Sedimentation Act.

#### 4.1.11. Farms and Farmland

**Resource Inventory.** According to the Census of Agriculture, the acres of farmland in Gilmer County decreased from 27,498 acres in 1987 to 23,053 acres in 1997, while the amount of harvested cropland increased from 2,418 acres to 3,178 acres during the same time period. (See Table 4-D on the following page.)

Agriculture obviously contributes to the county economically, but it also helps to preserve the community's traditional rural appearance. Of course, farming within environmentally sensitive areas can produce chemical pollutants which have more negative impacts on water quality than other types of development might have. Therefore, as development in rural areas occurs, land use policies and controls should promote the continuance of farming where environmentally appropriate and compatible with future land use goals.



**In 1997, there were 267 farms in Gilmer County**

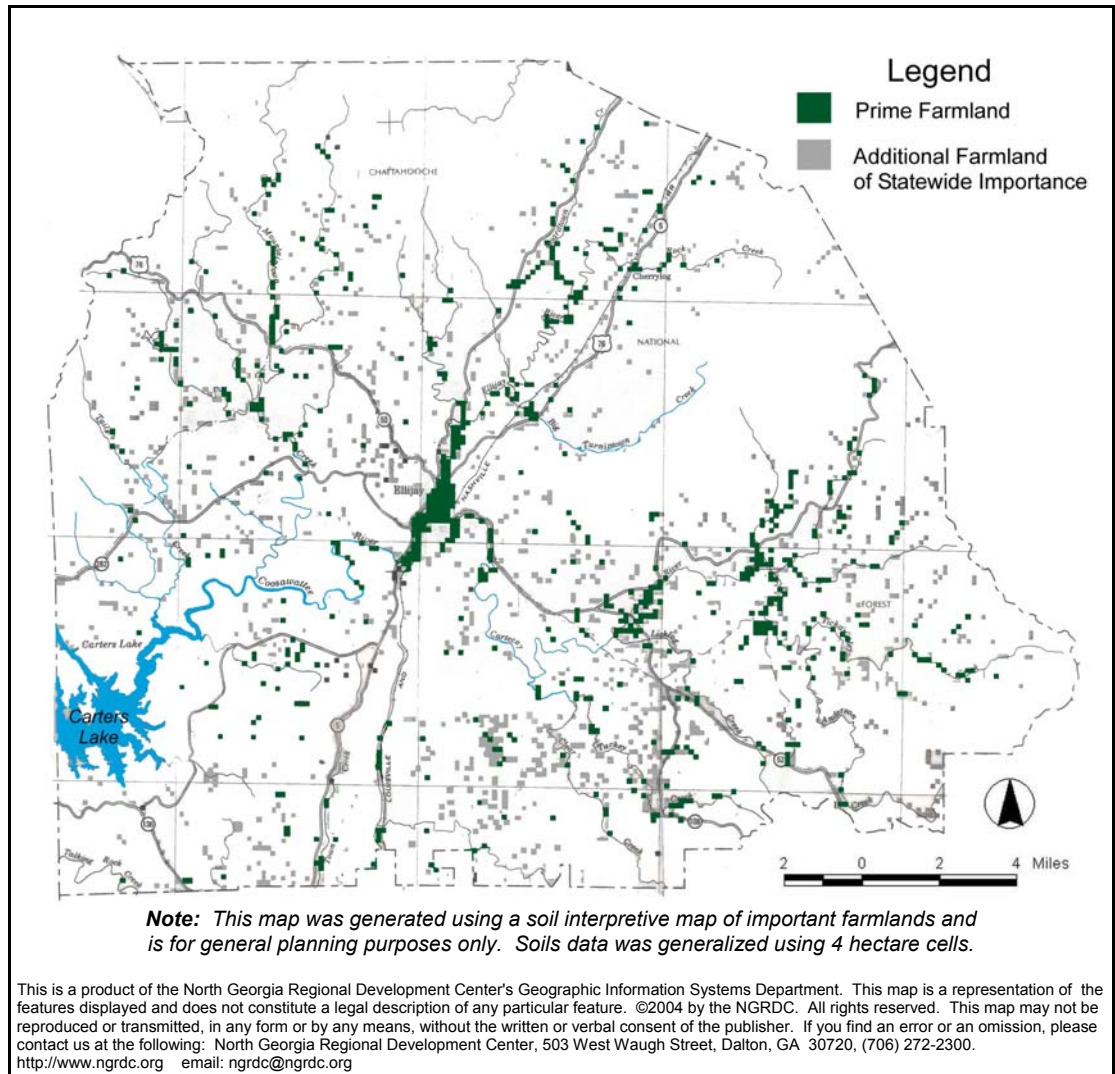
Prime farmland, or areas with soil types that are most suitable and productive for agricultural purposes, was interpreted and mapped by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1978 for Gilmer County. There are 7,526 acres considered to be of prime significance and an additional 20,515 acres considered to have secondary importance in the county. Land which is classified as prime farmland is not necessarily used for farming purposes.

**TABLE 4-D. Farms and Farmland in Gilmer County**

	1974	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	Average Annual Change
Number of farms	286	244	272	248	252	267	-1 farm
Average Farm Size (acres)	141	145	116	111	101	86	
Percent of Gilmer County total land area in farms	14.6%	12.8%	11.4%	10.1%	9.3%	8.4%	
<b>Land in farms (acres)</b>	<b>40,817</b>	<b>35,384</b>	<b>31,515</b>	<b>27,498</b>	<b>25,376</b>	<b>23,053</b>	-772 acres
Cropland (acres)	<b>10,691</b>	<b>9,974</b>	<b>9,022</b>	<b>8,291</b>	<b>9,652</b>	<b>8,942</b>	-76 acres
Harvested, excl. orchards	2,521	2,704	2,552	2,418	1,916	3,178	
Orchards	1,072	987	1,351	903	792	488	
Pasture or grazing	5,420	5,495	4,198	4,083	5,997	4,657	
Other	1,678	788	921	887	947	619	
Woodlands (acres)	<b>23,921</b>	<b>22,370</b>	<b>16,097</b>	<b>14,758</b>	<b>12,804</b>	<b>9,237</b>	-638 acres
Pasture or grazing	--	6009	2395	2,120	1,644	1,484	
Not pastured	--	16361	13702	12,638	11,160	7,753	
Other (acres)	<b>6,205</b>	<b>3,040</b>	<b>6396</b>	<b>4,449</b>	<b>2,920</b>	<b>4,874</b>	-58 acres

Sources: Census of Agriculture, 1974, 1978, 1987, 1992, and 1997

As shown in Figure 4-J, prime and important farmlands generally conform to major alluvial drainage areas along the Cartecay and Ellijay Rivers, as well as Mountaintown Creek. Much of this land has already been developed for purposes other than agriculture.



**FIGURE 4-J. Prime Farmland in Gilmer County**

**Resource Vulnerability.** Due to tremendous growth in North Georgia, the value of agricultural land will become increasingly inflated with respect to residential development demand, resulting in a continual loss of agricultural property and open space. Because much of the prime farmland is located in low, buildable areas along major transportation routes, it is especially vulnerable to loss.

**Other Possible Protection Measures.** One method to protect prime farmland is to adopt a land use regulation system. The difficulty with any new land regulation system is achieving a proper balance between private property rights and public benefits.

Other preservation techniques include (1) open space zoning, which enables farmers to cluster development on marginally productive uplands, or (2) the dedication of conservation easements, which would restrict land to agricultural activities while providing property tax relief. Tax assessment adjustments may also be used in conjunction with open space zoning to relieve development pressures that encourage farmers to sell their properties.

#### 4.1.12. Forest Land

**Resource Inventory.** Forests constitute the largest natural resource in Gilmer County. Forest coverage in Gilmer County is shown on the existing land use map in Element 6, "Land Use."

As shown in Table 4-E, 225,300 acres of the total land area of Gilmer County in 1997 was forested, which is a reduction of 2.8% since 1989. Current ownership includes federal, state, and county agencies, as well as individual and corporate groups. While federal ownership dropped 6.4% during this time period, and corporate ownership fell 29.9%, private ownership increased by 17.7%

**TABLE 4-E. Forest Acreage in Gilmer County by Ownership**

	1972	1983	1989	1997	Change 1972 to 1997		Average Annual Change
					Net	Percent	
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>246,400</b>	<b>248,891</b>	<b>231,727</b>	<b>225,300</b>	<b>-21,100</b>	<b>-8.6%</b>	<b>-844</b>
Federal	56,300	56,246	47,973	44,900	-11,400	-20.2%	-456
State, City, County	100	17	35	100	0	0.0%	0
Forest Industry	18,400	16,729	13,124	12,800	-5,600	-30.4%	-224
Non-Industrial Private							
Corporate	18,000	20,694	37,910	11,300	-6,700	-37.2%	-268
Individual (incl. farmer)	112,500	155,205	132,685	156,200	43,700	38.8%	1748

Source: Forest Statistics for Georgia, 1972, 1983, 1989, and 1997, USDA, [http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/rb/rb\\_srs036.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/rb/rb_srs036.pdf)

Although approximately 6,427 acres were diverted to some other land use between 1989 and 1997, the volume of both sawtimber and growing stock in Gilmer County increased considerably during the 1990s. Sawtimber stock consists of mature trees available for harvest, while growing stock represents replacement trees. As shown in Table 4-F below, the sawtimber inventory increased by 42.6% while growing stock increased by 18.6%.

**TABLE 4-F. Volume of Saw Timber and Growing Stock in Gilmer County**

	SAW TIMBER (Thousand board feet)				GROWING STOCK (Thousand cubic feet)			
	Total	Pine & Softwood	Soft Hardwood	Hard Hardwood	Total	Pine & Softwood	Soft Hardwood	Hard Hardwood
1989	1,259,741	503,165	304,953	572,293	405,424	109,002	103,170	193,252
1997	1,796,700	667,500	296,100	833,100	480,700	150,500	94,800	235,400
Net Change	+536,959	+164,335	-8,853	+260,807	+75,276	+41,498	-8,370	+42,148
% Change	+42.6%	+74.5%	-2.90%	+45.5%	+18.6%	+38.1%	-8.1%	+21.8%

Source: Forest Statistics for Georgia, 1989 and 1997, USDA; [http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/rb/rb\\_srs036.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/rb/rb_srs036.pdf)

**Existing Protection Measures.** Timber harvesting in the Chattahoochee National Forest is regulated under the policies and procedures of the National Forest Service Environment Impact Statement (EIS) which includes Best Management Practices guidelines. Aside from enforcement of the Soil Erosion Act, Gilmer County has very little impact upon commercial forestry on private property.

### 4.1.13. Plant And Animal Habitats

**Definitions.** The listing of plants and animals in this section were identified for Gilmer County by the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Freshwater and Wildlife Inventory Program, pursuant to the Georgia Wildlife Preservation Act of 1973 and the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973. "Protected species" means those species of plant and animal life which the DNR has designated and made subject to the protection under these acts. The degree of protected status is described as follows:

1. Endangered species - any resident species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
2. Threatened species - any resident species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
3. Rare species (state only) - any resident species which, although not presently endangered or threatened as previously defined, should be protected because of its scarcity.
4. Unusual species (state only) - any resident species which has special or unique features and because of these features deserves special consideration in its continued survival.

**Rare Plants.** Table 4-G lists the rare and protected plants which are known to exist in Gilmer County.

**TABLE 4-G. Rare and Protected Plants**

Common Name	Latin Name	State Status	Federal Status
Moccasin Flower, Pink Ladyslipper	Cypripedium acaule	unusual	none
Golden Slipper, Yellow Ladyslipper	Cypripedium calceolus	unusual	none
Goldenseal	Hydrastis canadensis	endangered	none
Small Whorled Pogonia, Lesser Five-Leaves	Isotria medeoloides	threatened	threatened
Star-Flower	Trientalis borealis	endangered	none
Green Pitcherplant, Flytrap	Sarracenia oreophila	endangered	endangered
Manhart Sedge	Carex manhartii	threatened	none

Source: "Protected Plants of Georgia," Georgia Department of Natural Resources and <http://gergiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us>

**Rare Animals.** Common mammalian species in Gilmer County include rabbits, squirrels, deer, raccoon, opossum, muskrat, beaver, mink, fox, bat, and an occasional bear. Small game species can adapt more easily to habitat encroachment than larger animals such as deer. Deer range in a variety of habitats, even heavily urbanized areas, but specific habitat is required for escapes, fawning areas, and winter food supply. Doves, quail, and waterfowl are the primary game birds in the area. Other birds include hawks, owls, crows, and a wide variety of song birds.

Table 4-H lists rare and protected animals which are known to exist in Gilmer County or whose range includes Gilmer County.

**TABLE 4-H. Rare and Protected Animals**

Common Name	Latin Name	State Status	Federal Status
<b>Mammals</b>			
Appalachian Cottontail	Sylvilagus obscurus	rare	not listed
Eastern Cougar	Felis concolor cougar	endangered	endangered
Rafinesque's Big-Eared Bat	Corynorhinus rafinesquii	rare	not listed
<b>Birds</b>			
Bald Eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	endangered	threatened
<b>Reptiles</b>			
Alabama Map Turtle	Graptemys pulchra	rare	not listed
Bog Turtle	Clemmys muhlenbergii	threatened	threatened
<b>Amphibians</b>			
Hellbender	Cryptobranchus alleganiensis	rare	not listed
<b>Fishes</b>			
Amber Darter	Percina antesella	endangered	endangered
Coldwater Darter	Etheostoma ditrema	threatened	not listed
Dusky Darter	Percina sciera	rare	not listed
Goldline Darter	Percina aurolineata	threatened	threatened
Holiday Darter	Etheostoma brevirostrum	threatened	not listed
Muscadine Darter	Percina p. cf. macrocephala	rare	not listed
Olive Darter	Percina squamata	threatened	not listed
Tangerine Darter	Percina aurantiaca	threatened	not listed
Bigeye Chub	Hybopsis amblops	rare	not listed
Blotched Chub	Erimystax insignis	threatened	not listed
Blue Shiner	Cyprinella caerulea	endangered	threatened

Source: "Protected Animals of Georgia," Georgia Department of Natural Resources and <http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us>

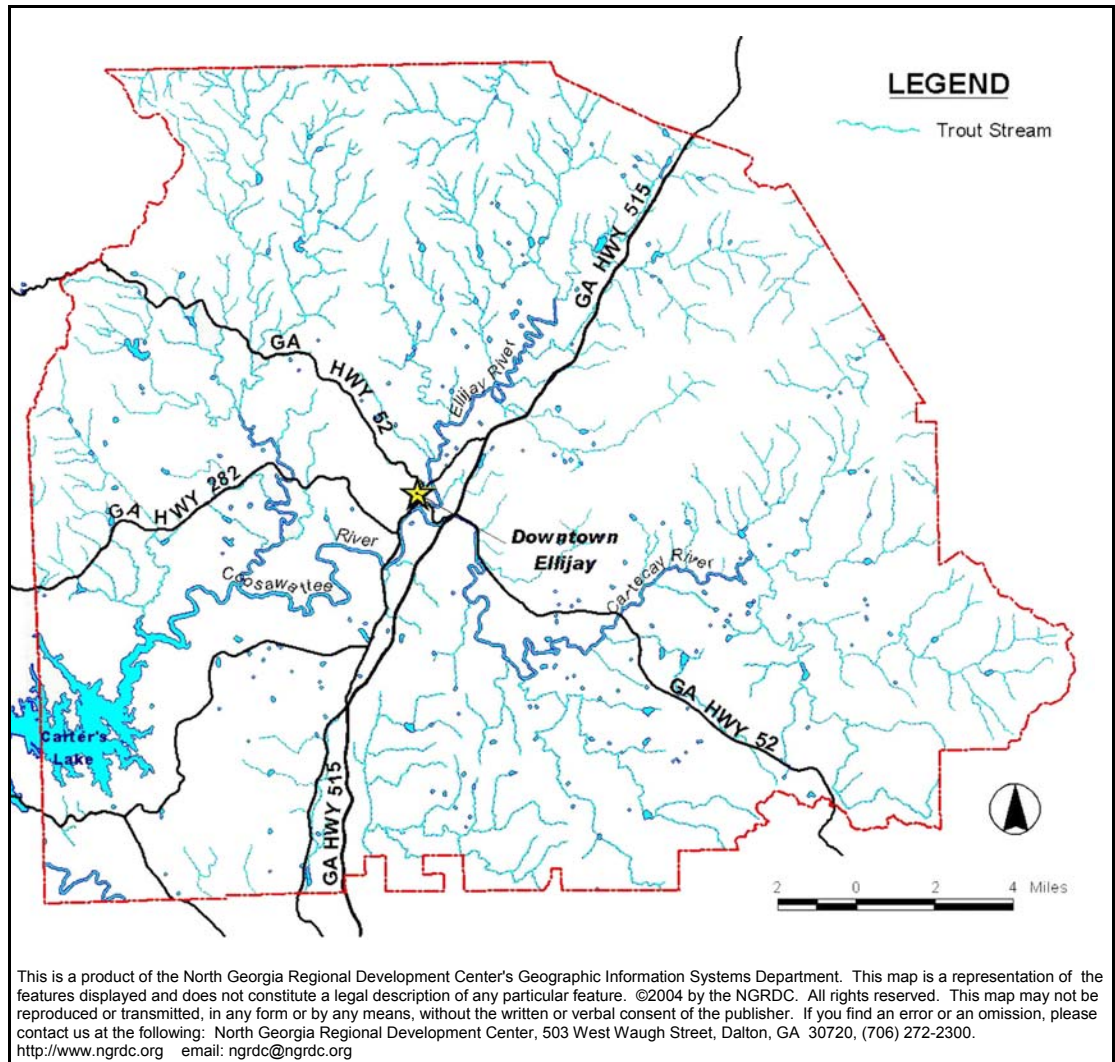
**Trout Streams.** Gilmer County contains numerous trout streams which are designated under the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act as Trout Stream Protection Areas. These streams are illustrated in Figure 4-K and listed below. The Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division and the US Fish and Wildlife Service stock streams with rainbow, brown, and brook trout from early April through mid-September. Streams on public land are stocked more often and with greater numbers of trout. More information on trout fishing in Gilmer County and throughout Georgia can be found at <http://www.georgiaoutdoors.com>.

Streams are classified as either having primary or secondary significance. A primary stream indicates a year-round habitat capable of supporting reproduction; a secondary stream indicates an intermittent habitat.

**Primary Streams.** Primary streams include the following:

- Cartecay River watershed upstream from the mouth of Clear Creek
- Clear Creek watershed upstream from Gilmer County Road 92
- Conasauga River - Jacks River watershed
- Ellijay River watershed upstream from the mouth of Kells Creek
- Mountaintown Creek watershed upstream from US Highway 76
- Harris Creek watershed
- Johnson Creek watershed
- Tails Creek watershed upstream from Georgia Highway 282
- Toccoa River - Fightingtown Creek watershed





**FIGURE 4-K. Trout Streams in Gilmer County**

**Secondary Streams.** Secondary streams include all streams or sections thereof except the Coosawattee River downstream from the GA Highway 5 bridge, Seven Mile Creek watershed, Talking Rock Creek (not including tributaries), and those classified as primary.

**Resource Vulnerability.** Increasing development in Gilmer County and throughout North Georgia will impact both local and regional ecosystems as natural habitats are gradually diminished.

**Existing Protection Measures.** The USDA Forest Service has adopted management protection strategies relative to the needs of each of the species listed. The Georgia DNR is directly involved in the protection of these species as it administers rules pursuant to the Georgia Wildflower Preservation and Endangered Species Acts, adopted in 1973. In addition, much of the land in Gilmer County is contained in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Consequently, unique plant and animal species and habitats occurring in those areas receive some protection by virtue of that designation.

Trout streams in the North Georgia Appalachian Uplands are considered especially vulnerable due to the effects of soil erosion and pollutant discharge from forestry and agricultural practices. Consequently, under the scope of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act, the DNR has adopted development criteria which prohibits land disturbing activities within 100 feet of all designated trout streams. The enforcement of this requirement in Gilmer County is through the land development office.



**Trout streams are an important natural resource in North Georgia.**

**Additional Recommended Protection Measures.** Other measures for protecting trout streams are discussed under Section 4.1.2. “Water Supply Watersheds” and 4.1.5. “Protected Rivers.”

#### **4.1.14. Major Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas**

**Park and Recreation Facilities.** The Gilmer County River Park is the only park and recreation facility that is owned and operated by Gilmer County. The park is located along the Coosawattee River, just south of downtown Ellijay. The River Park is fully described in Section 5.1.8. “Recreation.”

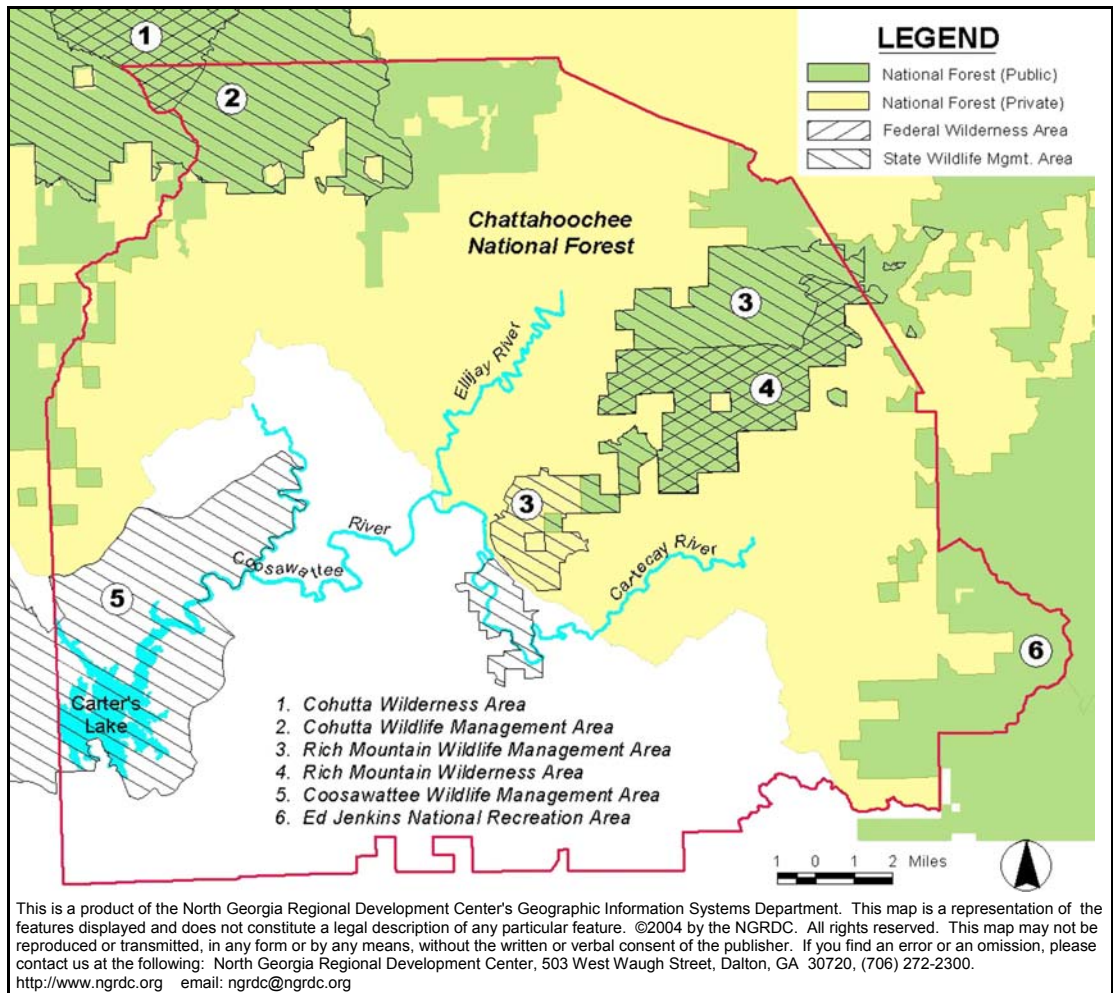
**Chattahoochee National Forest.** The Chattahoochee National Forest covers 749,690 acres in North Georgia. (See Figure 4-L.) Approximately 54,718 acres are in Gilmer County, which is roughly 19% of total land area in the county. National Forest lands within Gilmer County fall in the Cohutta and Toccoa Ranger Districts and are under direct supervision of the Forest Supervisor’s Office in Gainesville. A large portion of the Chattahoochee National Forest is managed as a multi-use resource in compliance with the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960. Uses include timber production, preservation, general recreation, and other public use. The US Forest Service has conducted an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with its Land and Management Plan for the Chattahoochee Forest. This document was adopted in 1985 and covers general resource policies for the next 50 years and specific management strategies for select areas, including wildlife protection, timber management practices, recreation improvements, land acquisition, roads, and other facility improvements.

According to the USDA Forest Service Fact Sheets, in North Georgia, the Chattahoochee National Forest provides 25% of the timber volume for local mills, with some mills depending on National Forest timber for 90% of their volume. Approximately 63% of the Chattahoochee-Oconee Forest is classified as suitable for timber production. (Source: <http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/facts1/htm>)

A small portion of the Ed Jenkins National Recreation Area lies within Gilmer County. This recreation area is part of the Chattahoochee National Forest and was designated in 1991. The purpose of the designation is to ensure “the protection of certain natural, scenic, fish and wildlife, historic and archaeological, wildland, and watershed values, and providing for the enhancement of the recreation opportunities associated with these values.” (Source: US Code Title 16, Chapter 1, Subchapter CXVIII, Section 460ggg-1)

**Federal Wilderness Areas.** Within the Chattahoochee National Forest are two federal wilderness areas: the Cohutta Wilderness Area and the Rich Mountain Wilderness Area. Both are managed by the USDA Forest Service and were established under the authority of the Eastern Wilderness Act for wilderness preservation, public recreation, and controlled hunting. Lands under the wilderness designation are protected from many development activities permitted on other National Forest lands.

The Cohutta Wilderness Area consists of approximately 35,268 acres and spans Murray, Fannin, and Gilmer Counties in Georgia. An additional 1,709 acres are in Tennessee. It is the largest federally designated wilderness area in the National Forest System in the Southeast. The Rich Mountain Wilderness Area is 9,476 acres in size with 9,466 acres in Gilmer county and 10 acres in Fannin County. (Source: <http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/facts1/htm>)



**FIGURE 4-L. National Forest, Wilderness Areas, and Wildlife Management Areas**

**State Wildlife Management Areas.** The Georgia DNR administers three Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) in Gilmer County: Coosawattee, Rich Mountain, and Cohutta. The DNR maintains contractual agreements with the land owners making the land available for public use as a game reserve for hunting and general recreational use, such as hiking and primitive camping. The agreements are renewed on an annual basis.

The Coosawattee/Talking Rock WMA, lies in southwestern Gilmer County, as well as in Murray, Pickens, and Gordon Counties. Until recently, this WMA was owned primarily by Bowater Timber Company and the US Army Corps of Engineers. In May 2003, Bowater sold their holdings, all of which were in Murray County, to Wachovia. Wachovia has not disclosed its plans for the property, but it is likely that it will be developed for residential or other uses. The portion of the WMA in Gilmer County is owned by the Corps of Engineers and is under a lease agreement to the DNR. The Rich Mountain WMA is under a long-term lease with Georgia Power. The Cohutta WMA, located in the northwest corner of the county, is almost exclusively on National Forest lands. The Rich Mountain and Cohutta WMAs exist under a joint agreement between state and federal agencies.

**Resource Vulnerability.** Wildlife Management Areas under temporary contractual arrangements are never as effective as land preserved under public ownership. The Department of Natural Resource expects to lose much of the privately owned WMA acreage in North Georgia to development or alternative land uses, in the absence of any specific local strategy for maintaining and promoting WMAs.

**Existing Protection Measures.** WMAs provide an important habitat for breeding, hiding, and foraging for many of the regional animal species. However, because lease agreements are subject to cancellation, reserves on private lands cannot be classified as a permanent protective wildlife habitat. In addition, although there are substantial property tax reductions available to participating private and corporate land owners, the benefits are offset by the loss of other economic uses. Thus, the security of the habitat in private lands will be largely decided by the demand for commercial use or other development demands. The *Chattahoochee-Oconee Land and Resource Management Plan* (January 2004) governs the future of the Rich Mountain and Cohutta WMAs.

#### 4.1.15. Scenic Views and Sites

Exceptional views of all types exist in Gilmer County and range from broad, panoramic mountain vistas to site specific views. Site specific views tend to occur along rivers and creeks and in the small valley areas. Long, narrow valleys also form attractive views.

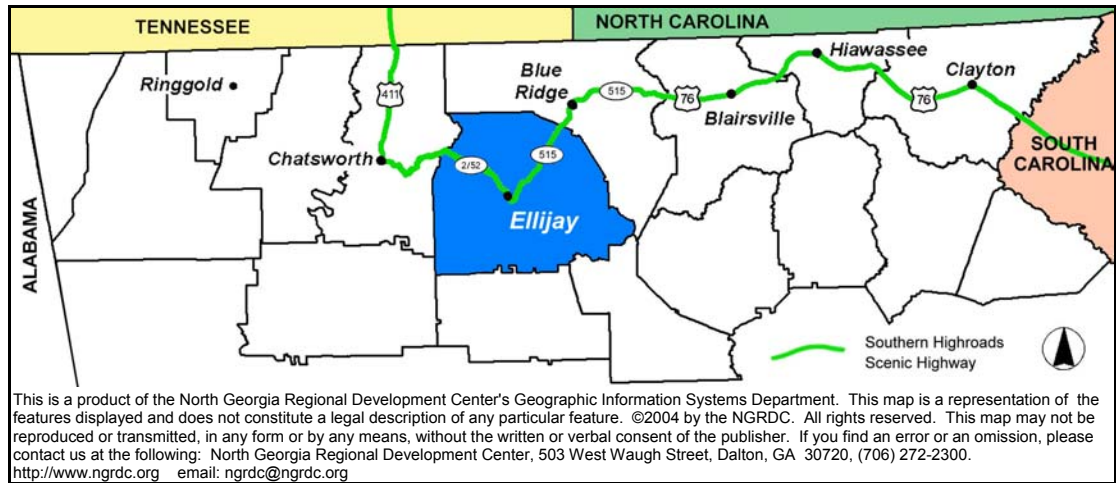
**Resource Vulnerability.** The greatest threat to the preservation of natural scenic views is the extensive amount of development currently taking place in Gilmer County and throughout North Georgia.

**Existing Protection Measures.** The protection, conservation, and enhancement of scenic resources requires attention on many fronts. These include publicizing and promoting the value of scenic and natural resources. This can be achieved by designation of scenic byways and highways. Scenic byways are specially designated highway routes offering travelers access to both beautiful scenery and the cultural features of a particular area. Official designation of scenic byways brings attention to the resource and begins a process to educate local governments on the importance of managing development within scenic corridors. Currently, there is one designated scenic highway located in Gilmer County: the Southern Highroads Scenic Highway illustrated in Figure 4-M. The Southern Highroads Scenic Highway was designated in 1996 by the Georgia Legislature.

The Southern Highroads Development Association is an organization whose membership consists of local governments; USDA Forest Service; Tennessee Valley Authority; Appalachian Regional Commission; Chambers of Commerce; Georgia, Tennessee,

*More information on the Southern Highroads Scenic Highway can be found at:*  
<http://www.SouthernHighroads.org>.

North Carolina, and South Carolina Departments of Transportation; the North Georgia Regional Development Center; and others. Its mission is to create scenic view awareness, promote these views as tourist attractions, and educate citizens and local officials on the value of preserving unique views. Official designation and recognition of the Southern Highroads Scenic Highway is its greatest achievement. Efforts are also underway to work with local governments by educating them on the tools available for scenic view protections.



**FIGURE 4-M. The Southern Highroads Scenic Highway**

**Additional Recommended Protection Measures.** In Georgia, a scenic byway (as opposed to a scenic highway) is a road that has been designated as such by the Board of the Georgia DOT and has been approved through the Georgia Scenic Byways Program. This is a well-defined designation process which includes an application, review by the Georgia DOT, and the development of a Corridor Management Plan. There are five primary benefits to scenic byways designation: recognition, interpretation assistance, planning, promotion and marketing, and training and technical assistance.

Development regulations can also play a role in preserving views during the development process by using techniques such as open space preservation concepts, tree preservation measures, controlling density of development, signage control, etc.

*More information on the Georgia DOT Scenic Byways Program can be found at: [http://www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/plan-prog/planning/projects/scenic\\_byways/index.shtml](http://www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/plan-prog/planning/projects/scenic_byways/index.shtml).*

Conservation of scenic resources, including natural as well as the historic and cultural resources is important to Gilmer County not only because of their intrinsic value, but because they also generate economic benefits for the community. By protecting scenic resources, Gilmer County and the North Georgia region can preserve community character, enhance quality of life, and create the potential for increased economic development through tourism.

#### **4.1.16. Governor's Greenspace Program**

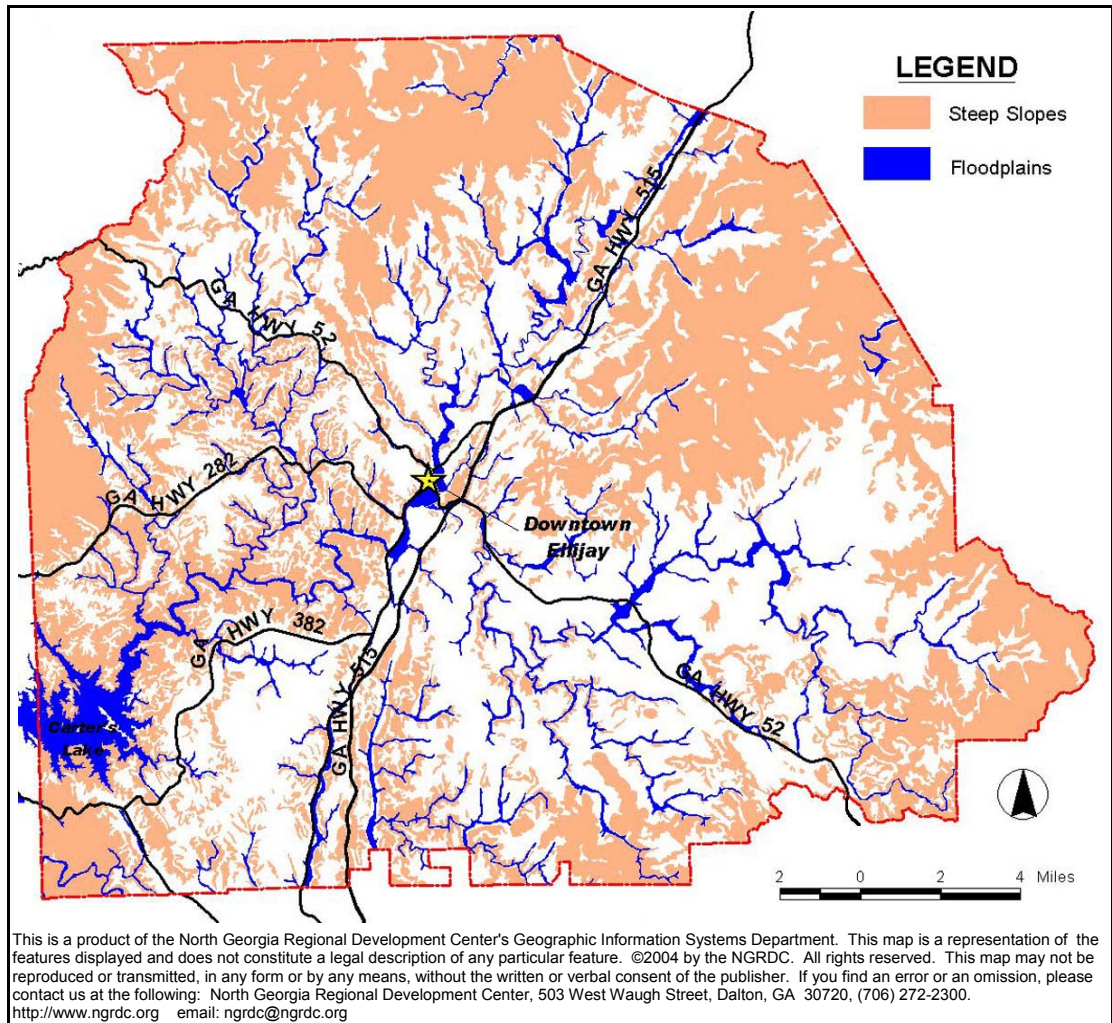
Gilmer County and the City of Ellijay participate in the Governor's Greenspace program. Together, they proposed to protect 5,495 acres of land. This is in addition to the 54,718 acres of the Chattahoochee National Forest which are presently owned by the federal

government. The land type, estimated acreage, and tools for protection which are proposed in the community's Greenspace Program are shown below in Table 4-I.

**TABLE 4-I. Governor's Greenspace Program Proposal**

Land Type	Estimated Acreage	Tools for Protection	
		Permanent	Temporary
Floodplain	4,950	conservation easements restrictive covenants	Part V Minimum Environmental Standards
Archaeological Sites	50	fee simple acquisition conservation easements	archaeological/conservation overlay zones, agricultural zoning
Steep Slopes	495	conservation easements	Part V Minimum Environmental Standards

The estimated cost of protecting the acreage listed above is \$3,717,815. The Greenspace Program Vision Map, which includes steep slope and floodplains in the county, is shown in Figure 4-N below.



**FIGURE 4-N. Greenspace Program Vision Map**

## 4.2. Inventory – Cultural Resources

During the winter and spring of 1996, historic preservation consultant Catherine Wilson-Martin, sponsored by Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association and the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia DNR, compiled a survey of Gilmer County's historic resources in both incorporated and unincorporated areas. The Gilmer County Historic Resource Survey, herein incorporated by reference, identified approximately 600 properties as potentially historic, including houses, commercial buildings, schools, churches, outbuildings, landscapes, and sites.



**There are numerous historic structures in the area, including this barn built in 1923.**

Each resource surveyed was recorded on a form provided by the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) and assigned an identifier consisting of the notation "GI" for Gilmer County and, if located in an incorporated area, followed by "EL" for Ellijay, and "EE" for East Ellijay, and finally a number. For example, GI-EE-12 identifies the West-Week House in East Ellijay, Gilmer County.



**The Perry House, built in 1902 using timbers from the old Ellijay Hotel, will either be moved or demolished to allow for the construction of the new County Courthouse.**

Survey forms record a resource's location (including a small map), date of construction, architect, architectural description, alterations, landscaping features, and other information, including what is known, or can be discovered of the resource's history. Much of the information is supplied by local informants. The location of each surveyed resource is plotted on a United States Geological Survey Map, with its identifier indicated, to key it to the survey form. Copies of the Gilmer County Historic Resource Survey are housed with the HPD, and in the Offices of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association.

The following sections provide lists of those historic resources judged by the surveyor as likely to have sufficient historic integrity and significance to warrant nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, a list maintained by the National Park Service

recognizing properties judged worthy of recognition as historic by the federal government. The resources are divided into four categories: residential, commercial/industrial/institutional, transportation, and rural.

### 4.2.1. Residential Resources

Table 4-J, which begins on the following page, provides a list of residential historic resources located in Ellijay, East Ellijay, and the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County.

**TABLE 4-J. Residential Historic Resources**

Survey #	Ellijay Name and Location	Use
GI-EL-17	Teem-Dr. Goss-Waters House, 128 River Street	dwelling
GI-EL-18	Johnny Ray House, 111 River Street	dwelling
GI-EL-22	W.A. Kelley House, 85 River Street	dwelling
GI-EL-35	235 Spring Street	dwelling
GI-EL-38	17 Spring Street	dwelling
GI-EL-41	W.B. James House, 270 Spring Street	dwelling
GI-EL-49	Tabor-Foote House, Spring Street	dwelling
GI-EL-53	90 Spring Street	dwelling
GI-EL-62	Watkins House, Corbin Hill	dwelling
GI-EL-70	9 Kell Street	dwelling
GI-EL-72	114 Kell Street	dwelling
GI-EL-73	128 Kell Street	dwelling
GI-EL-82	77 Kell Street	dwelling
GI-EL-88	B.C. Logan House, 321 Dalton Street	dwelling
GI-EL-89	H.C. Cool House, 65 Dalton Street	dwelling
GI-EL-93	Perry House, 54 Broad Street	originally a dwelling, now offices
GI-EL-94	Howard Perry House, 51 Broad Street	originally a dwelling, now offices
GI-EL-96	College Street	dwelling
GI-EL-98	Henry Penland House, 46 Dalton Street	dwelling
GI-EL-105	5 Oak Street	dwelling
GI-EL-108	18 Tabor Street	dwelling
GI-EL-109	121 N. Main Street	dwelling
GI-EL-118	N. Main Street	dwelling
GI-EL-123	Bob Pinson House, Old Blue Ridge Rd.	dwelling
GI-EL-127	Paul Wilson House, 27 North Avenue	dwelling
Survey #	East Ellijay	Use
GI-EE-9	Fowler Street	dwelling, vacant & deteriorating
GI-EE-14	Mulberry Street	dwelling
GI-EE-42	Eva Simmons House, First Avenue	dwelling
GI-EE043	Hipp House, 115 Hipp Street	originally a dwelling, now tattoo parlor
Survey #	Rural Area and Unincorporated Towns	Use
GI-3	Nole Silvers House, Highway 136, Carter's Lake (vic.)	dwelling
GI-4	Priest-William-Hall House, Highway 136, Carter's Lake (vic.)	dwelling
GI-8	Lloyd Easley House, Round Top Road, Carter's Lake (vic.)	dwelling
GI-15	Mary Goble House, no name road, Flat Creek Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-23	Roundtree Road, Round Top (vic.)	dwelling
GI-30	Ellijay Road Highway 5, Wild Cat Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-33	Ray-Burns House, 4088 Old Highway 5 South, Town Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-34	Ellijay Road Highway 5, Town Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-36	Sutton-Thompson-Robertson House Ellijay Road Highway 5 South, Town Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-39	Ellijay Road Highway 5 South, Town Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-40	Ellijay Road Highway 5, R.E.S.A. (vic.)	dwelling
GI-43	Ellijay Road Highway 5, R.E.S.A. (vic.)	dwelling
GI-54	Ellijay Road Highway 5, Kiker (vic.)	dwelling
GI-55	Webb(?) House, Ellijay Road Highway 5, Kiker (vic.)	dwelling
GI-61	Cochran-Hensley House, Talona Road, Talona (vic.)	dwelling
GI-67	Whitestone Baptist Church, near the main street in Whitestone	dwelling
GI-71	Goble Place, Whitestone Road, Whitestone (vic.)	dwelling
GI-73	Wilson Bramblett House, Yukon Road, East Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling, vacant & deteriorating
GI-84	John Teem House, 1865 Yukon Road, Yukon (vic.)	dwelling
GI-88	Orchard Road, Yukon (vic.)	dwelling



**TABLE 4-J. Residential Historic Resources (continued)**

Survey #	Rural Area and Unincorporated Towns (continued)	Use
GI-95	Smalley-Reece House, 518 Yukon Road, Pleasant Valley Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-97	John Chastain House, Pleasant Valley Road, Pleasant Valley Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-101	Orchard Road, Pleasant Valley Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-105	Tidwell House, Burch Mountain Road	dwelling
GI-107	Kennemur House, Kennemur Road, Dyke (vic.)	dwelling, overgrown with vegetation
GI-107B	Reece House, Kennemur Road, Dyke (vic.)	dwelling
GI-109	Clear Creek Road, Dyke (vic.)	dwelling
GI-110	Clear Creek Road, Dyke (vic.)	dwelling
GI-117	Johnson House, Johnson Mill Road, Yukon (vic.)	dwelling
GI-118	Lower Cartecay Road, Oak Hill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-119	Lower Cartecay Road, Oak Hill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-120	Lower Cartecay Road, Oak Hill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-122	Farist House-West Cabin, Lower Cartecay Road, Oak Hill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-123	4667 Highway 52, Oak Hill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-126	Highway 52, Oak Hill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-128	United Methodist Church of Cartecay, 7629 Hwy 52 East, Cartecay (vic.)	church
GI-132	Cantrell's Rainbow Farms, 6371 Highway 52, Ebenezer Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-133	West House, Highway 52, Ebenezer Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-134A	Arthur West House, South Piney Spur, Ebenezer Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-135	Western West House, South Piney Spur, Ebenezer Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-141	Old Bucktown Road, Quill-Marion (vic.)	dwelling
GI-142	McClure House, Old Bucktown Road, Marion (vic.)	dwelling
GI-143	Old Bucktown Road, Marion (vic.)	dwelling
GI-144	Henry Franklin Weaver House, 85 Quill Circle, Marion (vic.)	dwelling
GI-145	Amodus Newton Weaver House, Quill Circle, Marion (vic.)	dwelling
GI-147	Will Stover House, off Old Bucktown Road, Quill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-150	Highway 52, Ebenezer Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-155	James Weaver House, Roy Road, Quill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-156A	Lowman House, 88 Lowman Road, Quill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-156C	Strickland-Lowman House, 89 Lowman Road, Quill (vic.)	dwelling
GI-157	2418 Roy Road, Roy (vic.)	dwelling
GI-158	Clayton-Southern House, 2212 Macedonia Road, Roy (vic.)	dwelling
GI-162	Wilson-Anderson House, Anderson Road, Roy (vic.)	dwelling
GI-163	Ernest-Forrester-Page House, 4156 Roy Road, Diamond (vic.)	dwelling
GI-170	Ed Forrester Farm, 5838 Roy Road, Roy (vic.)	dwelling
GI-172	Grady Beula Allen House, 7492 Roy Road, Roy (vic.)	dwelling
GI-181	Ora McClure House, 1408 Fowler Road, Rolston (vic.)	dwelling
GI-190	Homer Stanley, 610 Pisgah Road, Pisgah (vic.)	dwelling
GI-192	Cicero Holden House, Big Creek Road, Pisgah (vic.)	dwelling, abandoned
GI-194	John Woody-Tucker House, Woody Road at Big Creek Road, Pisgah (vic.)	dwelling
GI-201	Page House, Pole Coffee Road, Rolston (vic.)	dwelling, abandoned
GI-208	Plemons-Garland House, Big Creek Road, Rolston (vic.)	dwelling
GI-209	Anderson House, Big Creek Road, Rolston (vic.)	dwelling
GI-210	George Rolston/Ralston House, Big Creek Road, Rolston (vic.)	dwelling
GI-212	Ben Rolston/Ralston House, 44 Rolston Road, Rolston (vic.)	dwelling
GI-214	Joe Shadwick House, off Big Creek Road, Rolston (vic.)	dwelling
GI-221	Pettit-Parks-Garrett House, Big Creek Road, Scrougetown Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-225	off Rackley Road, Cartecay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-227	off Highway 52, Cartecay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-228	Tabor-Hudson House, Tabor Road, Cartecay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-229	Holt House, Big Creek Road, Flint Hill Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-232	Davenport-Long House, Turniptown Road, East Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-233	Turniptown Road, East Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling, abandoned

**TABLE 4-J. Residential Historic Resources (continued)**

Survey #	Rural Area and Unincorporated Towns (continued)	Use
GI-238	Pritchett Sisters, Turniptown Road, Walnut Mountain (vic.)	dwelling
GI-246	Hice House, Old Highway 5, Cherry Log (vic.)	dwelling, abandoned
GI-248	Rock Creek Road, Cherry Log (vic.)	dwelling
GI-271	Elisha Ledford House, Lucius Road, Burnett (vic.)	dwelling
GI-277	1626 Goose Island Road, Goose Island (vic.)	dwelling
GI-284	White Path Road, Goose Island (vic.)	dwelling
GI-292	Northcutt House, 63 Old Northcutt Road, Northcutt (vic.)	dwelling
GI-294	Holt-Harper House, 1124 Old Northcutt Road, Northcutt (vic.)	dwelling
GI-296	Old House Antique, Old Highway 5, Ellijay (vic.)	formerly a dwelling, then a store, now closed
GI-299	Bessie Woodard House, 30 James Drive, Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-300	H. T. James House, 120 James Drive, Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-302	John Miller House, 8683 Boardtown Road, Mt. Pleasant Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-305	Linn Parks House, 517 N. Jones Mill, Salem Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-311	Kellcreek Farm, Old Flat Branch Road, Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-313	Jessie Harper House, 1150 Wolf Pen Gap Road, Flat Branch Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-319	Logan House, 909 Boardtown Road, Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-320	Holloway House, 725 Boardtown Road, Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-321	R. Jones House, 322 Old Flat Branch Road, New Hope (vic.)	dwelling
GI-325	Gates Chapel Road, New Hope (vic.)	dwelling
GI-327	619 Zion Hill Road, Mountaintown (vic.)	dwelling
GI-328	Zion Hill Road, Zion Hill Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-331	Wolf Pen Gap Road, Zion Hill Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-334	Peter Gates-Ed Gates House, Gates Chapel Road, Gates Chapel Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-338	Painter House, 70 Painter Gap Road, Gates Chapel Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-341	Highway 2, New Hope (vic.)	dwelling
GI-346	Jim Parks House, Mountaintown-Pleasant Hill Road, Mountaintown (vic.)	dwelling
GI-347	Starks-Parks House, Mountaintown-Pleasant Hill Road, Mountaintown Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-350	Mountaintown-Pleasant Hill Road, Mountaintown Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-353	Parks House, off Highway 2, Mountaintown Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-354	Henson House, off Gates Chapel Road, Gates Chapel Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-355	Miller-Hill House, off Gates Chapel Road, Gates Chapel Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-356	John Craig House, 2192 Craigtown Road, Mountaintown Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-357	P.J. Withrow House, 129 Craigtown Road, Mountaintown (vic.)	dwelling
GI-358	Gudger House, 3917 Craigtown Road, Mountaintown (vic.)	dwelling
GI-365	off Highway 282, Tails Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-366	off Highway 282, Tails Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-368	"Doodle Pole Hunting Club," Ridgeway Park Road, Cross Roads Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-371	Highway 282, Tails Creek (vic.)	dwelling
GI-372	Penland House, off Highway 282, Elders (vic.)	dwelling
GI-374	Highway 282, Elders (vic.)	dwelling
GI-376	Highway 282, Elders (vic.)	dwelling
GI-377	Highway 282, Elders (vic.)	dwelling
GI-386	Highway 282, Roosevelt (vic.)	dwelling
GI-388	off Highway 282, Pleasant Grove Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-389	Highway 282, Pleasant Grove Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-391	Stillwell House, off Highway 282, Pleasant Grove Church (vic.)	dwelling
GI-393	Craigtown Road, Gospel Temple (vic.)	dwelling
GI-401	Highway 282, Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling
GI-404	Old Highway 5, Cherry Log (vic.)	dwelling
GI-406	Possum Hollar, off Highway 52, East Ellijay (vic.)	dwelling

## 4.2.2. Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Resources

Commercial, industrial, and institutional historic resources are listed below in Table 4-K.

**TABLE 4-K. Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Historic Resources**

Survey #	Ellijay Name and Location	Use
GI-EL-12	Penland Store, River Street	store
GI-EL-13	Ellijay Toggery-Post Office-Times Courier, River Street	store/post office/office
GI-EL-14	Western Auto-Bill Reilly Attorney at Law, River Street	store
GI-EL-129	City Barber Shop, Main Street	shop
GI-EL-136	Jewel's Grocery (Smitty's Engraving), 118 North Main Street	store
GI-EL-119	Hampton Carpet Mills, 174 N. Main Street	mill
	Gilmer County Courthouse	courthouse
GI-EL-34	Good Samaritan Catholic Church, 25 Church Street	church
GI-EL-65	Women's Club, Secondary Street	club/school
Survey #	East Ellijay	Use
	None identified	
Survey #	Rural Area and Unincorporated Towns	Use
GI-112	Osburne Store, Corner of Bureson and Clear Creek Roads, Dyke (vic.)	store
GI-130	Mulkey Store-Crossroads Store, Roy Road, Cartecay (vic.)	store
GI-140A	Parker-Lowman Store, Roy Road, Quill (vic.)	store, abandoned
GI-153	Quill Post Office & Outhouse, Roy Road, Quill (vic.)	post office/outhouse, abandoned
GI-164	Diamond Post Office & Store, Roy Road, Diamond (vic.)	post office/store, abandoned
GI-220	Apple House and Market, Big Creek Road, Scrougetown Church (vic.)	market, abandoned
GI-265	Holloway Store, Lucius Road, Burnett (vic.)	store, abandoned
GI-128	United Methodist Church of Cartecay, 7629 Hwy 52 East, Cartecay (vic.)	church
GI-166	Greenhorn School, Doublehead Gap Road, Diamond (vic.)	school
GI-193	Pisgah Church of Christ, 5453 Big Creek Road, Pisgah (vic.)	church
GI-207	Big Creek Community Gospel Church, The Jesus Church Big Creek Road, Rolston (vic.)	church
GI-364	Ridgeway Baptist Church, off Highway 282, Murray County Line (vic.)	church
GI-382	Dover Chapel Church, off Highway 282, Roosevelt (vic.)	church

## 4.2.3. Transportation Resources

Transportation-related historic resources are listed below in Table 4-L.

**TABLE 4-L. Transportation-Related Historic Resources**

Survey #	Ellijay Name and Location	Use
GI-EL-25	Ellijay Depot, 56 Depot Street	formerly a train depot, now offices
GI-EL-27	Railroad Trestle, Behind Gilmer County Bank & Post Office	trestle
Survey #	Rural Area and Unincorporated Towns	Use
GI-293	Trestle, Old Northcutt Road, Northcutt (vic.)	trestle

## 4.2.4. Rural Resources

For historic structures other than barns, refer to Tables 4-J, 4-K, and 4-L, above.

### 4.2.4.1. Barns

There are numerous historic barns in Gilmer County. They are listed below in Table 4-M.

**TABLE 4-M. Historic Barns**

Name and Location	Description
Barney Bates Barn Bates Road in Cherry Log	This barn was on the land when Mr. Bates bought the land in 1929 and an addition was made shortly after Mr. Bates purchased the property. The original barn is a pitched roof with covered side sheds.
Harley and Ruby Barnes Estate 220 Roundtop Road, Ellijay	Gabled roof barn built about 1936.
Mooney Family Barns 1726 Tickanetley Road, Ellijay	Three pitched roof barns built about 1929 and before.
Old Log Barn, Bucktown Road	Believed to be as much as 150 years old.
Charles Holverstott Barn Tails Creek Church Road	Built in 1970 by Noah Corbin and Mr. Holverstott. Two story crib barn (drive through).
Dilbert Jones Barn, Big Creek Road (dirt road part- barn stands nearly in the middle of the road).	Built in 1905. Two story crib barn.
Ed Forrester Barn 4198 Roy Road	Built about 1950. Gabled roof crib barn with open covered sheds on either side.
Bart Lowman Barn 1927 East New Hope Road	Gabled roof crib barn with open covered sheds on either side.
Howard "Babe" Reece Family Barn East New Hope Road	Built about 1949. Gabled side shed crib barn.
Crib barn Corner of Pike Road and Big Creek Road	Date and name yet to be determined.
Martin Family Barn, 675 Hudson-Martin Road.	Built by L. U. Martin in about 1905. Large Dutch gambrel style barn, with a newer addition built on about 1920. This barn is nearly three stories tall.
McClure Family Barn, 1408 Fowler Road at the corner of New Liberty Church and Fowler Roads	Built about 1940. Pitched roof crib barn with covered sheds on either side.
The Lester Reece Estate Barn, Near Ebenezer church off South Piney Spur on Hwy 52 East	Built by Lester Perry Reece and his wife Lettie West Reece between 1898 and 1900. Pitched roof crib barn with covered sheds on either side.
Bob Pinson Barn McCutchen Road	Large Dutch gambrel roofed barn that could be driven through, stands nearly three stories tall. Built in 1923. It has a covered shed on one side only.
Stover Barn 1223 Macedonia Road	Built by John E. and Beulah Stover in about 1930. Pitched roof crib barn with one enclosed shed and another open covered shed on either side.
Pettit Family Barn Big Creek Road	A banked gable roof barn. Banked barns were built so that the second story could be reached by driving around the barn and up to a parallel ramp that was banked against a hill near the roadway. Construction date not yet determined.
McHan Barns (2) Eugene Anderson property	Probably built around 1910. There are two barns on the property. One is a pitched crib barn with a covered enclosed shed and the other is a gabled crib barn with covered sheds.
Hyatt Family Barns (3) Tails Creek Road	Built between 1945 and 1953 by Seth and Mattie Lee Hyatt. A crib barn, a gabled barn with one covered shed, and a pitched roof barn.
Stanley Family Barn, Pisgah Road	Built circa 1950.
Barn at the intersection of Bumpy Hollow and Roy Roads	Built circa 1940.
Unnamed Barn, Scrougetown Road	Built circa 1940. Shed barn.
Unnamed Barn, end of Scrougetown Road	Built circa 1920. Shed barn.
Unnamed Barn, Ray Mountain Road at Tumiptown Road.	Built circa 1950. Pitched roof barn.
Unnamed Barn, Hudson-Martin at Rackley Road.	Built circa 1950.
Unnamed Barn, Parks Road.	Built circa 1950. Pitched roof with sheds.
Unnamed Barn, Hudson-Martin Road	Built circa 1960. Pitched roof crib barn with sheds.
Unnamed Barn, Lower Cartecay Road	Shed barn attached to a pitched roof barn.

#### 4.2.4.2. Crossroad Communities

There still remain a number of crossroad communities in Gilmer County. Among them are Mountaintown, Boardtown, Cartecay, Cherry Log, New Hope, Oakland, and Tails Creek. Most are centered around a church and/or fire station. Some also have small convenience stores. The character of these communities is at risk of being lost due to development pressures.

#### 4.2.4.3. Agricultural Practices

While agriculture in Gilmer County is generally associated with apples, the County's primary agricultural commodity is poultry and poultry products. According to the 1997 US Census of Agriculture, the value of poultry commodities sold in that year amounted to \$71,861,000, or 93% of the total agricultural sales. The value of fruits (including apples), nuts, and berries sold totaled \$710,000, less than 1% of the total agricultural sales.

The most common crop produced is hay, with a total of 2,607 acres dedicated to its production in 1997. Orchards accounted for 488 acres. Given that the total cropped acreage is 8,942, or 3% of the County, and that timberland accounts for some 225,300 acres, or 80% of the county, a rural cultural landscape in Gilmer County is more likely to be forested, or have chicken houses, rather than apple orchards or cultivated fields.

### 4.2.5. Other Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources

#### 4.2.5.1. Community Landmarks

**Downtown Ellijay.** The historic core of the City, the square, is lined with historic buildings, antique, craft, and gift shops, and restaurants of all kinds. Directly on the square is the former Hyatt Hotel, now the Gilmer County Courthouse. Nearby are the Perry House, the Tabor House (an old boarding house), and the Dr. Watkins Residence.

**Gilmer County Courthouse.** See National Register Sites, below.

**The Perry House.** John Philip Perry, a graduate in the first class of the University of Georgia Law School, developed the Perry House property.

Perry served Gilmer County in the House of Representatives and was Mayor of Ellijay. The present structure incorporates hand hewn timbers from the Ellijay Hotel which had formerly stood on the site. The State Historic Preservation Office has deemed the Perry House eligible for National Register listing. The structure will either be moved or demolished to allow for the construction of the new County Courthouse.

**The Tabor House.** This house is a two-story, wood-framed I-house, dating from about 1880, with exterior end brick chimneys and a two-tiered front porch with jigsaw trim.



**The square in downtown Ellijay is a community landmark.**

**The Dr. Watkins Residence.** This brick veneer structure, located on the square in Ellijay, was the home of a prominent physician.

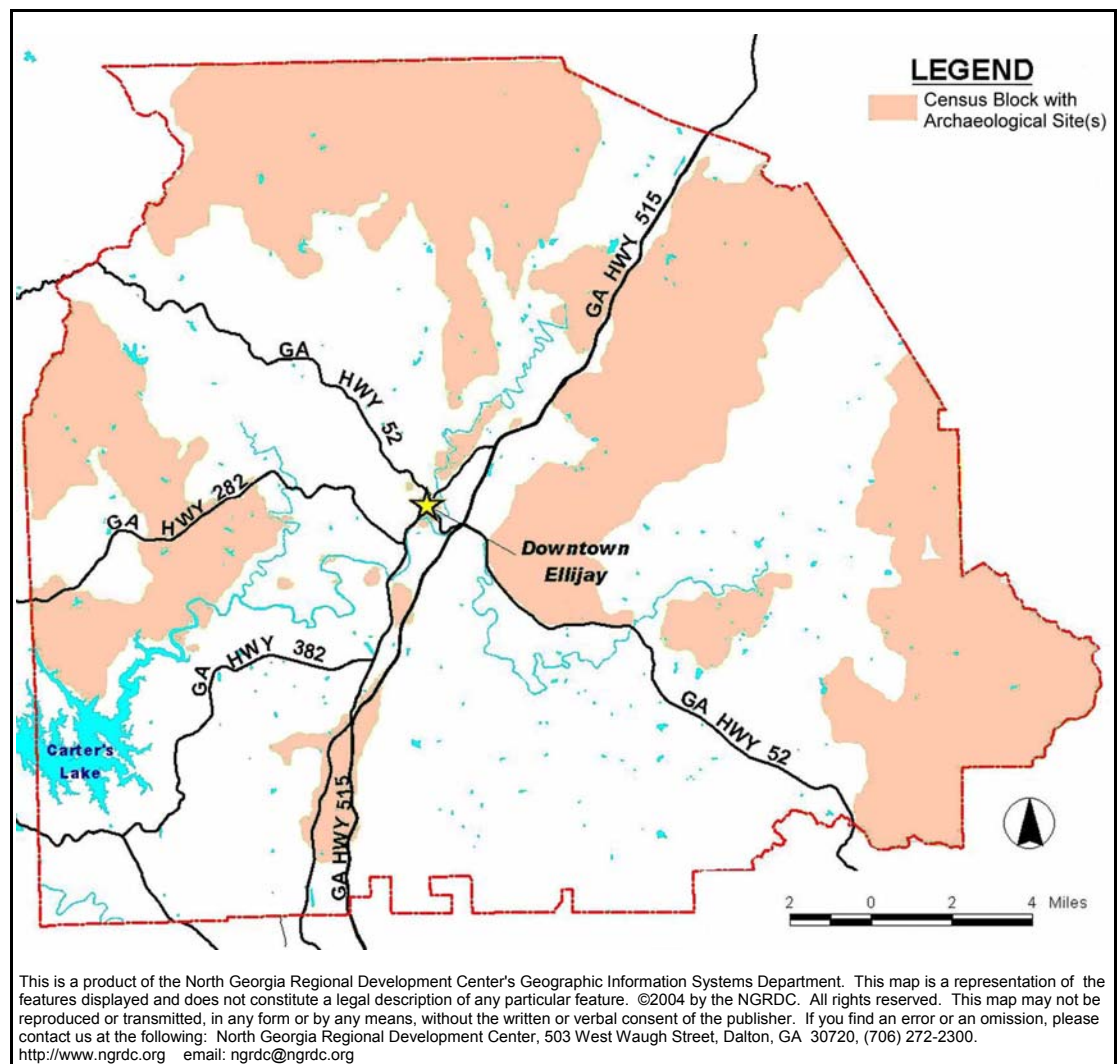
**Ellijay City Cemetery.** The cemetery is located south of the square in Ellijay and offers panoramic views of the city, valley, and mountains.

**Old Cartecay United Methodist Church.** See Section 4.2.5.9. National Register Properties.

**Kell Farm.** Built in 1867 by James Kell, the farm is occupied by his descendants. A marker in the cemetery commemorates Kell's Revolutionary War exploits.

#### 4.2.5.2. Archaeological Sites

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs "Planbuilder Mapviews" was used to map census blocks with known archeological sites. These are shown in Figure 4-O on the following page. Gilmer County contains a wealth of archaeological resources related to Cherokee Heritage.



**FIGURE 4-O. Census Blocks with Archaeological Sites** (Source: DCA's PlanBuilder MapViews)

#### 4.2.5.3. Battlegrounds

There are no known battlegrounds in Gilmer County.

#### 4.2.5.4. Tabby Ruins

There are no tabby ruins in Gilmer County.

#### 4.2.5.5. Gardens

There are no public gardens in Gilmer County.

#### 4.2.5.6. Parks

There are no “historical” parks in Gilmer County; however, the Gilmer County River Park is a community landmark and gathering place. This park is fully described in Section 5.1.6. “Recreation Facilities.”

#### 4.2.5.7. Views

Gilmer County is known for its scenic beauty. Views of the mountains and valleys can be seen from numerous points throughout the county. More information on scenic views can be found in Section 4.1.15. “Scenic Views.”

#### 4.2.5.8. Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

Cemeteries in Gilmer County are listed in Table 4-N.

**TABLE 4-N. Gilmer County Cemeteries**

CEMETERY NAME	USGS Quad	CEMETERY NAME	USGS Quad
Boardtown Cemetery	Cashes Valley	Nebo Cemetery	Dyer Gap
Cartecay Cemetery	Ellijay	New Hope Cemetery	Webb
Cashes Valley Cemetery	Cashes Valley	Pisgah Cemetery	Tickanetley
Chapman Cemetery	Cashes Valley	Pleasant Hill Cemetery	
Clear Creek Cemetery	Dyke	Rock Creek Baptist Church Cemetery	Cherry Log
Cohutta Cemetery		Riverhill Baptist Church Cemetery	Ellijay
Ebenezer Cemetery	Ellijay	Scrougetown Cemetery	Tickanetley
Ellijay City Cemetery	Ellijay	Sharp Cemetery	Cashes Valley
Flat Creek Cemetery	Webb	Tails Creek Baptist Church Cemetery	Webb
Johnson Cemetery	Cashes Valley	Turniptown Cemetery	Ellijay
Jones Cemetery	Cashes Valley	Underwood Cemetery	Cashes Valley
Macedonia Cemetery	Tickanetley	Upper Cherry Log Cemetery	Cherrylog
Mt. Pleasant Cemetery	Tickanetley		

Source: <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ga/county/gilmer/Cemeteries.html>

#### 4.2.5.9. Festival Locations and Gathering Places

Numerous festivals and fairs are held in Gilmer County throughout the year. Most are held in downtown Ellijay, the Riverfront Park, and the Lions Club Fairgrounds adjacent to Riverfront Park. Following is a list of festivals which are held annually in Gilmer County.

**July 4th Old Fashioned Celebration.** Food, family entertainment, a parade, a duck race, and fireworks are some of the highlights of this festival.

**Appalachian Regional Fair.** In August, the Ellijay Lions Club presents a yearly Old Timey County Fair, complete with midway rides, food, display booths, contests, vegetables, crafts, farmers market, flower show, livestock, and local and regional talent.

**Apple Pickin' Jubilee.** In September, pick your own apples, wagon rides, pig races, moonshine museum, entertainment, food, corn maze, petting farm, and pony rides are all available at Hillcrest Orchards, located on Highway 52 East.

**Cherry Log Festival.** For four weekends each October, the community of Cherry Log, just north of Ellijay, celebrates the harvest with the Cherry Log Festival.

**Georgia Apple Festival.** People from all over the nation come to Ellijay during the second and third weekends of October to visit the "Apple Capital" and celebrate the apple. Handmade arts and crafts and homegrown entertainment combine with every apple product imaginable to make this Gilmer County's largest festival. Sponsored by the Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce and the Ellijay Lions Club, the festivities include a car show and a parade.



**The annual apple festival attracts visitors from all over the Nation.**

**Art & Crafts on the Square.** This October festival is sponsored by the Dedicated Ellijay Merchant and Associates and features food vendors, artists, and craft vendors in downtown Ellijay.

**Trick-or-Treat on the Square.** Sponsored the Dedicated Ellijay Merchant and Associates, this downtown celebration, held on October 31, features costume and jack O'lantern contests.

**Light Up Ellijay.** The holiday season begins with a downtown celebration the first Saturday in December. The merchants stay open late, carolers stroll the streets, a live nativity scene occupies a downtown lawn, and hand bells ring from the churches. While the library hosts a Festival of Trees, Santa and Mrs. Claus greet children. This event is sponsored by the Gilmer Arts & Heritage Association and the Dedicated Ellijay Merchant and Associates.

**Festival of Trees.** The Festival of Trees is held during the month of December at the Gilmer County Library. This community event is organized and hosted by Friends of the Library. Local businesses and civic organizations provide and decorate theme trees for viewing by the public. An opening night celebration is held during the first week of December.



#### 4.2.5.10. Historically Significant Districts

Much of the fabric of the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay is historic, and there are potential National Register districts as indicated in Figure 4-P below. More specific boundaries, as well as a description of the resources within those boundaries, can be found in the 1996 Gilmer County Historic Resources Survey.

Currently, there are no National Register historic districts or local historic districts in Gilmer County.

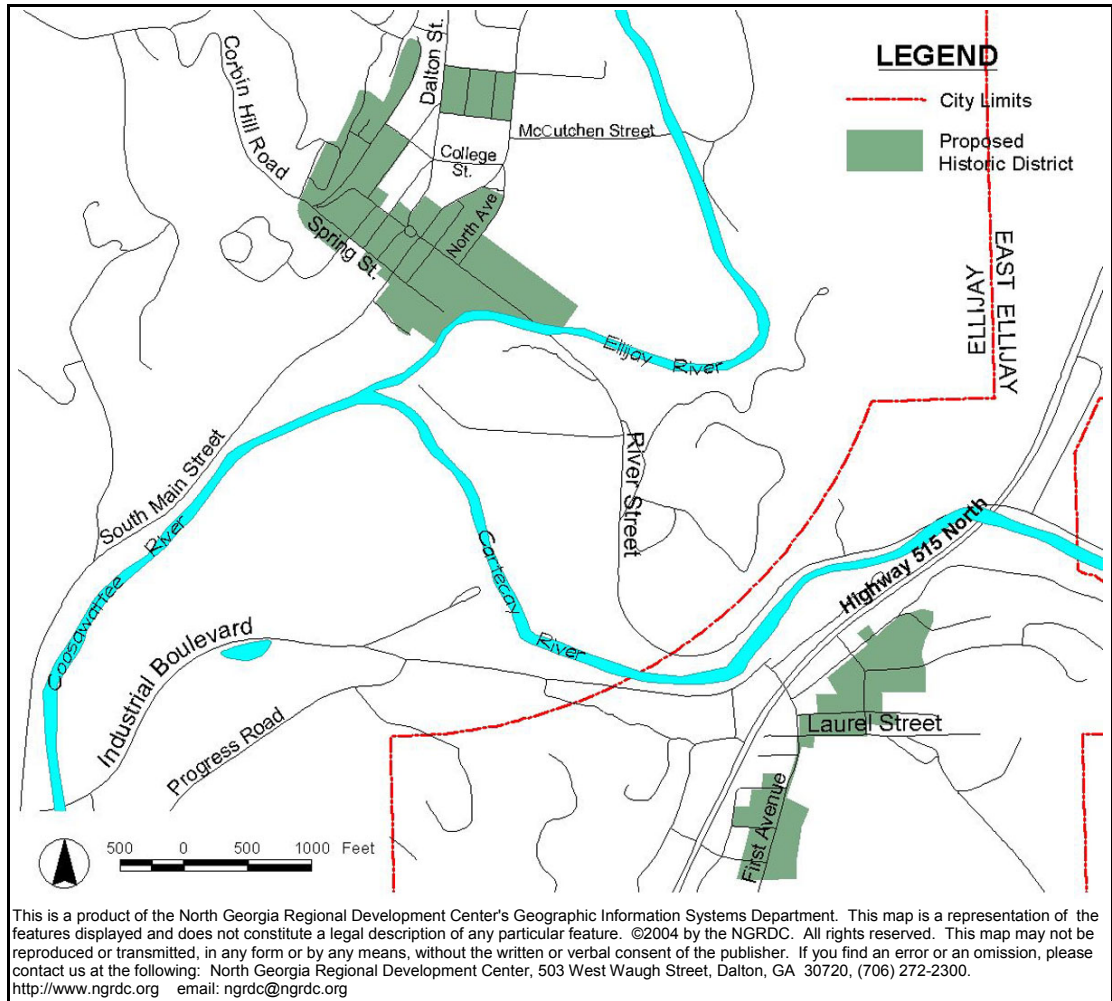


FIGURE 4-P. Potential Historic Districts in Ellijay and East Ellijay.

#### 4.2.5.11. National Register Properties

Two properties in Gilmer County are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Gilmer County Courthouse and Old Cartecay United Methodist Church.

Built of brick in 1898, the Hyatt Hotel was converted to courthouse use in 1934, at which time the front and side porticoes were added, creating a neo-classical appearance. The courthouse was listed on the Register in September of 1980 at the state level of significance as part of a multiple property nomination for historic courthouses in Georgia.

Cartecay Church, located on Highway 52 East at its intersection with Roy Road, was built of virgin pine in 1859. Timbers for the vernacular structure were hand hewn and planed on site. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a local craftsman applied a faux bois finish to the interior walls and ceiling. The church and cemetery were listed on the National Register in 2001 at a local level of significance, and are considered an excellent example of an intact rural church with a cemetery.



**Cartecay Church, built in 1859, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**

## 4.3. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

In Section 4.1, an inventory of the natural and cultural resources in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay was provided. The following assessment considers whether or not existing policies and programs are adequate to wisely and responsibly utilize, develop, manage, and/or preserve valuable resources for the maximum long-range benefits to the community.

This assessment can be completed by answering the following questions which were taken derived from Section 110-12-1-.0 4(12)(d)2.(ii) of Georgia's Minimum Local Planning Standards.

- Which of the community's natural and cultural resources are potentially vulnerable to land development and other human activities?
- Which resources need the attention of the local government due to encroachment of human activities, unintended land use conflicts, physical disturbance, or rapid physical deterioration?

These questions are answered in Section 5.2.1. and 5.2.2.

### 4.3.1. Which of the community's natural and cultural resources are potentially vulnerable to land development and other human activities?

Gilmer County's natural resources are some of its greatest assets. Those resources which are potentially vulnerable include the following:

- water supplies and watersheds;
- rivers, trout streams, and creeks;
- steep slopes and protected mountains; and
- farm land and forest land.

Potential protection measures for these resources are described in Section 4.1.

The community's cultural resources are vulnerable as well. Forty historic structures have been demolished in the past six years. Irreplaceable archaeological resources relating to Cherokee history are also vulnerable to development.

### 4.3.2. Which resources need the attention of the local government due to encroachment of human activities, unintended land use conflicts, physical disturbance, or rapid physical deterioration?

The resources listed in Section 4.3.1. need the attention of the local governments. In Gilmer County, two of the most effective ways to protect the area's valuable resources will be through (1) the enforcement of existing regulations and (2) public education. Currently, offices with enforcement responsibilities for environmental regulations are understaffed and until this situation is remedied, little change can be expected.

Recent efforts at public education, including workshops, BMP demonstration projects, and grants to remediate problems have been effective at bringing attention to ways of mitigating the negative aspects of development.

## 4.4. Community Goals and Implementation Program

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that sets forth the local government's policies, programs, and regulations for the preservation, protection, redevelopment, and/or promotion of natural and cultural resources.

The implementation program must support the Community Vision and include actions which should be undertaken to achieve the Community Vision.

### 4.4.1. Community Vision

In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

**Livability.** We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.

**Community Character.** We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.

**Shared Direction.** The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.

#### 4.4.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following goal and associated policies and action items for natural and cultural resources:

<b>Goal: To conserve, protect, and wisely manage the area’s environmental, natural, and historic resources.</b>	
<b>Policy 1: Open Space.*</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 buffers, parks, greenbelts, or wildlife corridors.	<b>Action Items:</b> a. Pursue the acquisition and development of new parks and open space areas. b. Investigate the effectiveness and applicability of open space subdivision design and consider this type of design in any housing projects in which local governments participate.
<b>Policy 2: Environmental Protection.*</b> Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.	<b>Action Items:</b> a. Seek ways to fund additional staff positions for environmental enforcement and public education, specifically in the planning and environmental health departments. b. Continue source water assessment initiatives for water supply intakes. c. Complete and/or update TMDL implementation plans and put those plans into effect. d. Pursue public education and BMP demonstration projects to improve the environment and increase environmental awareness.
<b>Policy 3: Regional Cooperation.*</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 the protection of shared natural resources.	<b>Action Items:</b> a. Pursue the creation of a Coosawattee River Basin group, made up of local officials, citizens, State agencies, and others who are interested in preserving water quality. b. Investigate multi-jurisdictional use of regional water supply sources including Carters Lake.
<b>Policy 4: Heritage Preservation.*</b> The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas, encouraging new development that is compatible with traditional features, and protecting other scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community’s character.	<b>Action Items:</b> a. Seek ways to protect the historic fabric of downtown Ellijay through methods such as design guidelines or a preservation commission. b. Pursue public awareness and education of the ethnic culture of the Cherokee Indians of North Georgia. c. Through a committee of local officials, developers, and interested citizens, develop design guidelines for the Highway 515 corridor which will promote a positive visual image of the community.

\* A DCA “Quality Communities” Objective

# 5

## Community Facilities and Services

This element provides an inventory of existing public facilities and services, and an assessment of their capacity for serving the future population and economic needs of Gilmer County and the incorporated cities. This assessment forms the framework for the formulation of goals and policies and the development of strategies for accomplishing capital improvements under the Five Year Work Program.

The purpose of this element is to assist local governments in coordinating the planning of public facilities and services in order to make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure and to efficiently and effectively plan for future investments and expenditures for capital improvements and long-term operation and maintenance costs.

### 5.1. Inventory

#### 5.1.1. Transportation Network

Gilmer County's transportation network is addressed in Element 8: Transportation.

#### 5.1.2. Water Supply and Treatment

##### 5.1.2.1. Operational Responsibility

The Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority (WSA) is responsible for water supply, treatment, and distribution in Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County. The WSA was approved by legislature in March 1987 and is governed by a five-member board of directors which meets monthly. Three members of the board are appointed by the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, one member is appointed by the City of East Ellijay, and one member is appointed by the City of Ellijay.

**Growth and Development Fees.** In 2000, a Water and Sewerage Rate Design Study was conducted to address ongoing financial requirements and alternatives for future capital funding. The study recommended growth and development fees (impact fees) to support infrastructure improvements. The impact fees would be directly linked to water meter sizes and types of accounts (e.g. residential, commercial, etc.). In March 2001, Gilmer County

#### **Element Outline:**

##### **5.1. Inventory**

- 5.1.1. *Transportation Network*
- 5.1.2. *Water Supply and Treatment*
- 5.1.3. *Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment*
- 5.1.4. *Solid Waste Management*
- 5.1.5. *Public Safety – Law Enforcement*
- 5.1.6. *Public Safety – Fire Protection and Emergency Management*
- 5.1.7. *Hospitals and Other Public Health Facilities*
- 5.1.8. *Recreation*
- 5.1.9. *General Government Facilities*
- 5.1.10. *Education Facilities*
- 5.1.11. *Libraries and Other Cultural Facilities*
- 5.1.12. *Other Public Facilities*

##### **5.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs**

##### **5.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program**

adopted a water and sewerage Growth and Development Fee Ordinance. Collection of impact fees began in October 2001.

Because the WSA utilizes impact fees for water and sewer capital facilities, this comprehensive plan must include a Capital Improvements Element (CIE) for both water and sewer facilities. A CIE is required to contain the following five components:

1. Projection of Needs
2. Service Area
3. Levels of Service
4. Schedule of Improvements
5. Funding Sources

The components as they pertain to the CIE for water supply and treatment are provided in the sections which follow.

#### **5.1.2.2. CIE: Projection of Needs**

According to the DCA's publication *Impact Fees: Georgia's Comprehensive Requirements, Volume Two*, the projection of needs should be based upon the population projections and employment forecasts presented in the population and economic development elements of this plan. It should indicate system improvements that will be required to serve growth and should consider the impact of extending or upgrading services to various areas within the county might affect the local economy; the rate direction and quality of development; and natural and historic resources.

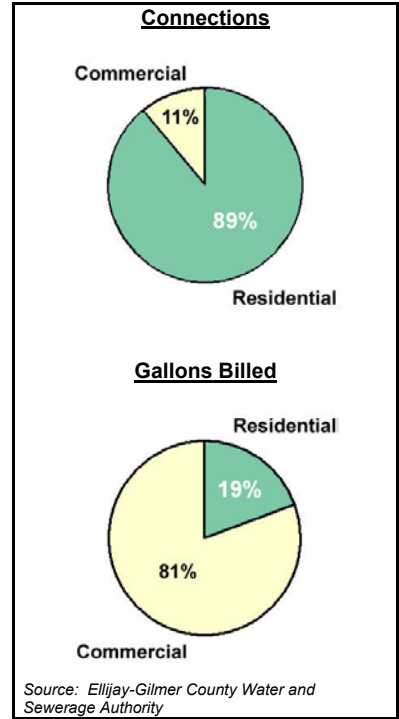
As discussed previously in the population, economic development, and housing elements, Gilmer County has been experiencing significant growth over the past decade and this rate is expected to continue in the future. This growth has had and will continue to have a significant impact on community facilities and service and will require a significant investment on the part of public service providers, including the WSA, in terms of capital and other resources. The WSA has determined that a way to support infrastructure improvements was to implement impact fees.

**Current Level of Service.** The WSA has three raw water supplies: the Cartecay River, the Ellijay River, and Joyce Spring. Raw water from these sources is collected and treated chemically before being piped into the water supply system. The WSA has eleven storage tanks with a total storage capacity of 1,815,000 gallons. Its distribution system contains eight booster pumping stations and 344 miles of water lines.

In 1998, the WSA upgraded their Cartecay Water Treatment Plant from a permitted capacity of 4.0 MGD to 5.5 MGD of water. As of January 2004, withdrawal from the Cartecay River was 4.0 MGD. The WSA has applied for an additional withdrawal of 1.5 MGD from the Ellijay River. Given these figures, the current water treatment level of service can be quantified as 4.0 MGD (monthly average).

In 2002, the WSA had 3,167 residential/household connections with 224,251,800 total gallons billed and 393 commercial connections with 923,555,100 total gallons billed. (See Figure 5-A.) Approximately 45% of the WSA's water customers are in Gilmer County, 45% are in Ellijay, and 10% are in East Ellijay. Gold Kist Company is the largest water customer and uses about 40% of the total consumption.

The level of service index for water service is established in the WSA's *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis*. Because of the unique nature of water demand in Gilmer County (approximately 40% of the total demand being used by one customer), a "Base Meter Equivalent" (BME) is used as the measure of level of service. The base meter is a ¾" meter, which is the standard for a residential unit and has a maximum rated capacity of 18 gallons per minute. A conversion factor is calculated for each larger size meter by dividing the capacity of the base meter into the capacity of the larger meter. For instance, the rated maximum capacity of a 1" meter is 50 gpm. Fifty gpm divided by 18gpm yields a factor of 2.78. In other words, a 1" meter has a capacity 2.78 times that of a ¾" meter and thus is the equivalent of 2.78 base meters. BMEs are calculated for each meter size in the system.



**Figure 5-A. Water Connections and Gallons Billed in 2002**

The intent of the BME calculation is to determine the average flow for an average water customer. The vast majority of customers in the county are on ¾" meters. Individual customers that use large amounts of system capacity can skew the flow calculations and this has been factored into the BME calculation. (Details on the specifics of the BME calculations can be found in the appendix of the *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis*.)

Table 5-A shows the service levels using the BME method. The level of service for residential development is established at 492 gallons per day (gpd) while service levels for non-residential development are established by base meter equivalent.

**Table 5-A. Level of Service for Water Customers Using Base Meter Equivalent**

Development Type	Meter Size	BME	Average Daily Flow (gpd)
Residential Development	¾"	1	492
Non-Residential Development	¾"	1	492
	1"	2.78	1,368
	1 ½"	5.56	2,736
	2"	8.89	4,374
	3"	16.67	8,202
	4"	33.33	16,398
	6"	55.56	27,336
	8"	88.89	43,734
	10"	127.78	62,868

Source: *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis, 2004*



**Adequacy of Existing Service.** The water treatment plant is utilizing its full permitted withdrawal of 4.0 MGD but not its full treatment capacity of 5.5 MGD. It has applied for an additional withdrawal of 1.5 MGD. If this permit is obtained, the treatment plant will be operating at its full permitted capacity of 5.5 MGD.

Current system deficiencies include limited fire protection in the Coosawattee River Resort and a lack of storage tanks. Offstream storage is needed for drought situations.

In addition, approximately 10,000 feet of Transite (asbestos cement) pipe along Main Street and River Street leading into Ellijay needs to be replaced. Replacing this line will not increase capacity.

**Variations in and Limitations on Current Service.** Public water lines only exist in certain parts of the county, primarily near in and near the limits of the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay. (See Figure 5-A.) All meters tied into the WSA system receive the same level of service using the base meter equivalent measurement presented earlier. Other measurements of service levels, such as system pressure, may vary depending upon location. Considering the steep topography in portions of Gilmer County, it is not surprising that users at high elevations will have a lower system pressure than those at lower elevations.

Additionally, the fact that inadequately sized lines exist throughout portions of the Coosawattee River Resort has prevented the provision of fire hydrants in all parts of the resort, even though public water service is available to all housing units.

**Areas of Need for New Capital Facilities or Infrastructure.** Two primary areas will be in need of new capital facilities to support future land use goals: the Highway 515 corridor in the area of the Highlands development and Clear Creek Road at and surrounding the new public school campus and proposed business and technology park. These two areas are discussed in the land use element on page 6-16.

**Inventory Data and Projection Methodologies.** The projection methodologies in the 2001 capital improvements plan and the subsequent *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* were based upon population and employment projections made by the NGRDC in 2000. This element uses the new projection figures for housing and economic development found in this 2004-2025 plan. These projections formed the basis for developing water facility needs through 2025. (Note: Infrastructure needs were found to be essentially the same as the "high residential/moderate industrial growth" scenario presented in the 2001 capital improvements plan. Project completion time frames have been modified.)

**Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon.** To meet the demand for future water services, as well as the need for additional storage capacity, expansion of capital facilities will be needed. These needs can be best described in terms of the demand that can be met upon completion (total capacity) and are shown below in Table 5-B.

**Table 5-B. Water Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon**

Total Capacity (MGD Average Weekday Demand)	Estimated Time Frame	Water Supply and Treatment Projects	Water Transmission and Distribution Projects	Estimated Cost to Increase to Capacity Level
5	2004-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raw Water Line from Ellijay PS to Cartecay WTP</li> <li>▪ Expand WTP to 5.5 MGD</li> <li>▪ Expand Ellijay River PS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 Water Storage Tanks</li> <li>▪ Line Replacement</li> <li>▪ New Water Mains (6", 8", and 10")</li> <li>▪ Misc. New Water Lines</li> <li>▪ 1 Booster Pumping Station</li> </ul>	\$ 8.8 Million
7.5	2011-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carter's Lake Intake and PS</li> <li>▪ Coosawattee WTP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coosawattee Transmission Main (24")</li> <li>▪ 2 Water Storage Tanks</li> <li>▪ Misc. New Lines</li> <li>▪ 2 Booster Pumping Stations</li> </ul>	\$ 21.6 Million
10	2016-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand Carter's Lake PS</li> <li>▪ Expand Coosawattee WTP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 Water Storage Tanks</li> <li>▪ Misc. New Lines</li> <li>▪ 2 Booster Pumping Stations</li> </ul>	\$ 13.4 Million
15	2021-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand Carter's Lake PS</li> <li>▪ Expand Coosawattee WTP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 Water Storage Tanks</li> <li>▪ Misc. New Lines</li> <li>▪ 2 Booster Pumping Stations</li> </ul>	\$ 27.9 Million

Source: WSA

Table 5-C on page 5-7 lists the specific water system improvement projects to be undertaken between 2004 and 2009.

### 5.1.2.3. CIE: Service Levels

**Designation and Description of Future Service Levels.** Future service levels are designated in the same manner as the existing levels of service. Design capacity is based on an allocation of 492 gpd per BME. (Note that not all customers will utilize the full design capacity and that demand can vary significantly depending upon the time of day and day of the week.) The need for capital projects is based upon projected demand which is derived from economic development and housing projections.

**Varying Service Levels.** Service levels for the provision of water treatment and distribution will be uniform throughout the service area. In reality, the service demand place on the system by individual users will vary greatly.

**Excess Service Capacity and Recovery of Costs.** Excess Service Capacity and Recovery of Costs. The *2004 Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* prepared for the WSA establishes excess system capacity for the water system of 1.05 MGD. (4.0 MGD total capacity less 2.95 MGD average daily flows.) This figure was then used to calculate the project cost amount that can be recouped from new growth. The net present value of the excess capacity is \$ 449,045.

#### 5.1.2.4. CIE: Service Area

There is one service area for public water. It includes Ellijay, East Ellijay, and all of the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County. Figure 5-B illustrates where public water is currently available in the service area. While much of the residential development outside Ellijay and East Ellijay uses individual wells, water service is available in several of the county's residential developments.

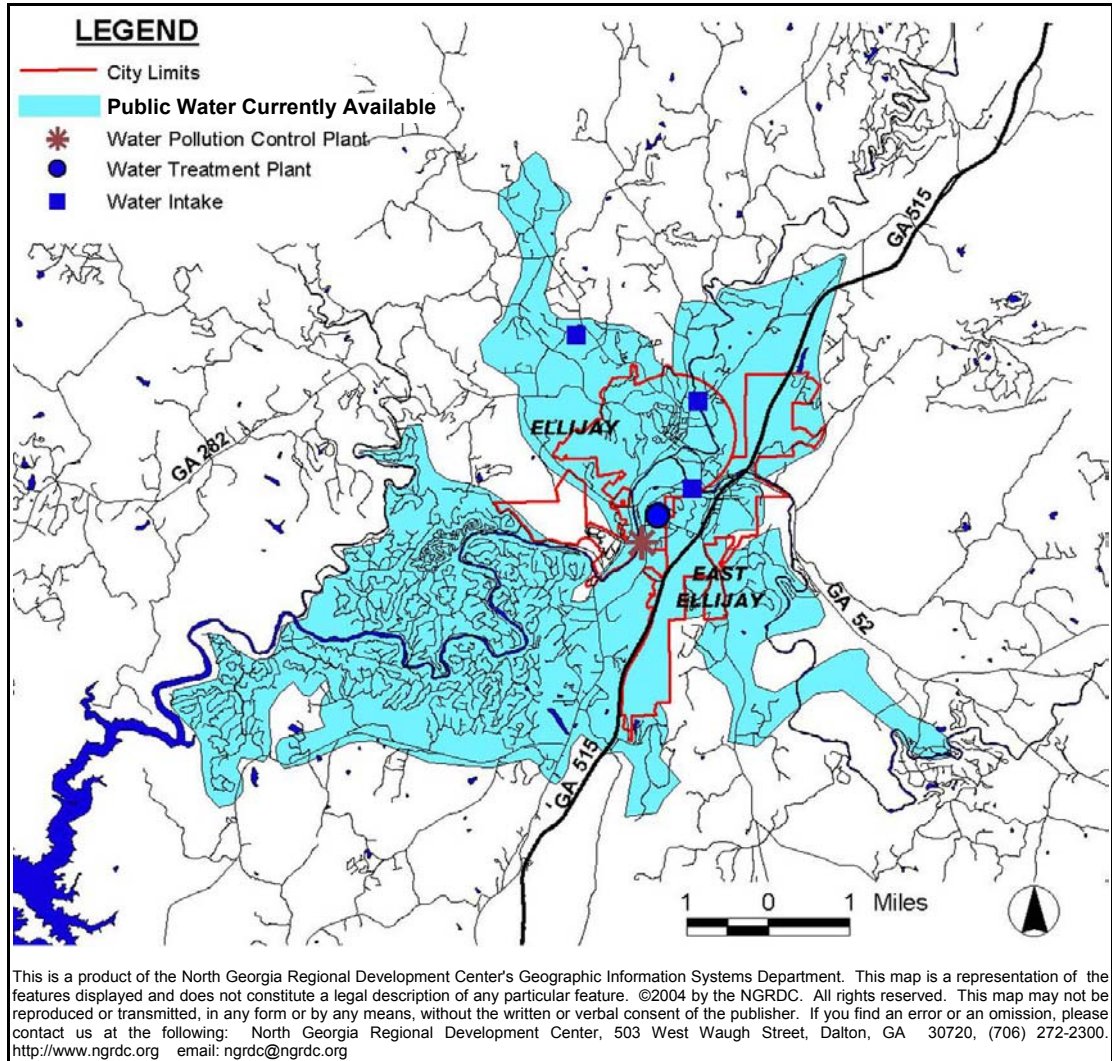


Figure 5-B. Public Water Availability in Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County

### 5.1.2.5. CIE: Schedule of Improvements and Funding Sources

Table 5-C below presents all impact fee-related capital improvements to be undertaken from 2004 to 2009. All projects are assigned to the county-wide service area. These projects are not required to upgrade service levels for existing development. The percentage of each project's total cost that is directly attributable to adding capacity to serve new development is listed in the column entitled "Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees."

**Table 5-C. Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority  
Water Transmission and Distribution Capital Projects: 7/1/04 to 6/31/09**

Project Number and Description	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Estimated Cost	Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees	Other Funding Sources
WD 13, Water Tank, location to be determined	2004	2005	\$600,000	55%	ARC
WD 35, Calhoun Transmission Main	2004	2005	\$1,800,000	33%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 36, Water Tank, to be located @ Victory Circle	2005	2006	\$750,000	100%	--
WD 37, Water Tank, to be located @ Victory Circle	2006	2007	\$750,000	100%	--
WD 38, Miscellaneous New Mains, 6 thru 8-inch	2004	2009	\$1,151,160	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 43, Miscellaneous Mains, 8 thru 10 inch	2004	2009	\$1,216,978	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 44, Miscellaneous Mains, 12-16 inch.	2004	2009	\$1,288,000	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 47, Booster Pumping Station, location to be determined	2004	2005	\$105,000	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:</b>			<b>\$ 7,661,138</b>		

Source: Ellijay-Gilmer Water and Sewerage Authority (EGCWSA)  
ARC – Appalachian Regional Commission, GEFA - Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority

### 5.1.2.6. Additional Information

**Staffing.** The WSA has 33 full-time employees. Its Administrative Services Division includes management, administration, human resources, customer relations, regulatory liaison, accounting, and billing personnel. Because the WSA's present office space is small and does not have handicap access, a drive-thru payment window, or a conference room, the Authority purchased a building and property on Progress Road in November 2003. When the renovations of the building are complete, the Administrative Services Division will move its operations to that location.

**Recent Programs and Accomplishments.** To better serve its customers, the Authority has implemented the following programs:

- Developed a customer confidences report in June 1999 entitled "Water Life Lines."
- Made improvements to the Cartecay Water Treatment Plant through grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).
- Developed a Capital Improvement Plan to define line extensions and funding.
- Became a member of the North Georgia RDC source water assessment program.
- Approved a Meter Replacement Policy which will replace 50 meters per month.
- Developed the first entire water system map.
- Developed a financial plan in April 2000.

The Authority implemented a water conservation plan in 2003 with guidelines in the following areas: water loss, water demand management, treatment plant management, a rate making policy, plumbing ordinance/codes, conservation education programs, water use reports, and long term planning. This plan was required by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

### **Assessment: Water Supply and Treatment**

As shown earlier in Table 5-B, the continued growth in population and the economy will require approximately \$72 million in water infrastructure improvements in the next twenty years. It is expected that these improvements will be funded through growth and development fees, state and local bonds, and federal and state grants.

## **5.1.3. Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment**

### **5.1.3.1. Operational Responsibility**

In addition to providing water service, the Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewer Authority is responsible for the gathering and treatment of residential, commercial, and industrial wastewater.

As stated previously, the WSA implemented impact fees in 2001 for the provision of water supply and treatment and the provision of wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal. As such, this comprehensive plan must include a Capital Improvements Element for the

The required five components are provided in the following sections.

### **5.1.3.2. CIE: Projection of Needs**

**Current Level of Service.** The Authority operates the Ellijay Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) sewerage treatment facility which is located on the southwest side of Ellijay. After treatment at this facility, sewerage is discharged into the Coosawattee River. The maximum wastewater treatment capacity is designed at 2.5 MGD and the present sewerage flow to the plant is approximately 2.3 MGD, average 7 day flow.

Demands on the WPCP have caused the Authority to require large industrial users to pre-treat their industrial wastes before they are discharged to the wastewater treatment plant. Currently, the largest sewerage customer is the Gold Kist Company which utilizes between 50% and 60% of the treatment plant capacity daily flows.

As with water service, the level of service index for sewer service is established in the WSA's *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* using a "Base Meter Equivalent" (BME).

Table 5-D shows the service levels using the BME method. The level of service for residential development is established at 391 gallons per day (gpd) while service levels for non-residential development are established by base meter equivalent.

**Table 5-D. Level of Service for Sewer Customers Using Base Meter Equivalent**

Development Type	Meter Size	BME	Average Daily Flow (gpd)
Residential Development	¾"	1	391
Non-Residential Development	¾"	1	391
	1"	2.78	1,087
	1 ½"	5.56	2,174
	2"	8.89	3,476
	3"	16.67	6,518
	4"	33.33	13,032
	6"	55.56	21,724
	8"	88.89	34,756
	10"	127.78	49,962

Source: *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis, 2004*

**Adequacy of Existing Service.** Existing facilities meet current needs; however, the current sewerage treatment plant is operating near capacity.

**Variations in Current Service.** All meters tied into the WSA system receive the same level of service using the base meter equivalent measurement presented earlier.

**Limiting Engineering, Economic, or Environmental Factors.** The primary limitations involve steep slopes and the distance to the existing treatment plant. For example, the new school campus and proposed business and technology park on Clear Creek Road is located in a different drainage basin from the existing plant. For this reason, a pump system will be needed, substantially increasing the cost of providing sewer service to this project.

**Areas of Need for New Capital Facilities or Infrastructure.** Two primary areas will be in need of sewer facilities to support future land use goals: the Highway 515 corridor in the area of the Highlands development and (2) Clear Creek Road surrounding the new public school campus and future business and technology park. These two areas are discussed in the land use element on page 6-16.

**Inventory Data and Projection Methodologies.** The projection methodologies in the 2002 capital improvements plan and the subsequent *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* were based upon population and employment projections made by the NGRDC in 2000. This element uses the new projection figures for housing and economic development found in this 2004-2025 plan. These projections formed the basis for developing sewer facility needs through 2025. (Note: Infrastructure needs were found to be essentially the same as the "high residential/moderate industrial growth" scenario presented in the 2002 capital improvements plan. Project completion time frames have been modified.)

**Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon.** To meet the demand for future sewer services, as well as the need for additional storage capacity, expansion of capital facilities will be needed. These needs can be best described in terms of the demand that can be met upon completion (total capacity) and are shown below in Table 5-E.

**Table 5-E. Sewer Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon**

Total Capacity (MGD Average Weekday Demand)	Estimated Time Frame	Sewerage Treatment Projects	Collection and Transmission Projects	Estimated Cost to Increase to Capacity Level
5	2004-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WPCP Expansion to 4 MGD</li> <li>▪ Biosolids Treatment Facility</li> <li>▪ WPCP expansion to 5 MGD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lift Station - 1 MGD ADWF</li> <li>▪ Multiple 8" to 30" sewers</li> </ul>	\$ 24.6 million
7.5	2011-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phase 4 WPCP Expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lift Station - 1 MGD ADWF</li> <li>▪ Multiple 8" to 30" sewers</li> </ul>	\$ 20.6 million
10	2018-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phase 1, South Area WPCP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lift Station - 1 MGD ADWF</li> <li>▪ Multiple 8" to 30" sewers</li> </ul>	\$ 22.4 million

Source: WSA

Table 5-F on page 5-12 lists the specific sewer system improvement projects to be undertaken between 2004 and 2009.

### 5.1.3.3. CIE: Service Levels

**Designation and Description of Future Service Levels.** Future service levels are designated in the same manner as the existing levels of service. Design capacity is based on an allocation of 381 gpd per BME. (Note that not all customers will utilize the full design capacity and that demand can vary significantly depending upon the time of day and day of the week.) The need for capital projects is based upon projected demand which is derived from economic development and housing projections.

**Varying Service Levels.** Service levels for the provision of wastewater treatment, collection, and transmission, will be uniform throughout the service area. In reality, the service demand place on the system by individual users may vary greatly.

**Excess Service Capacity and Recovery of Costs.** The *2004 Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* prepared for the WSA establishes excess system capacity for the water system of 0.63 MGD. (3.0 MGD total capacity less 2.37 MGD average daily flows.) This figure was then used to calculate the project cost amount that can be recouped from new growth. The net present value of the excess capacity is \$ 864,058.

### 5.1.3.4. CIE: Service Area

There is one service area for public sewer. It includes Ellijay, East Ellijay, and all of the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County. Sewerage service is presently limited to areas within the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay as shown in Figure 5-C.

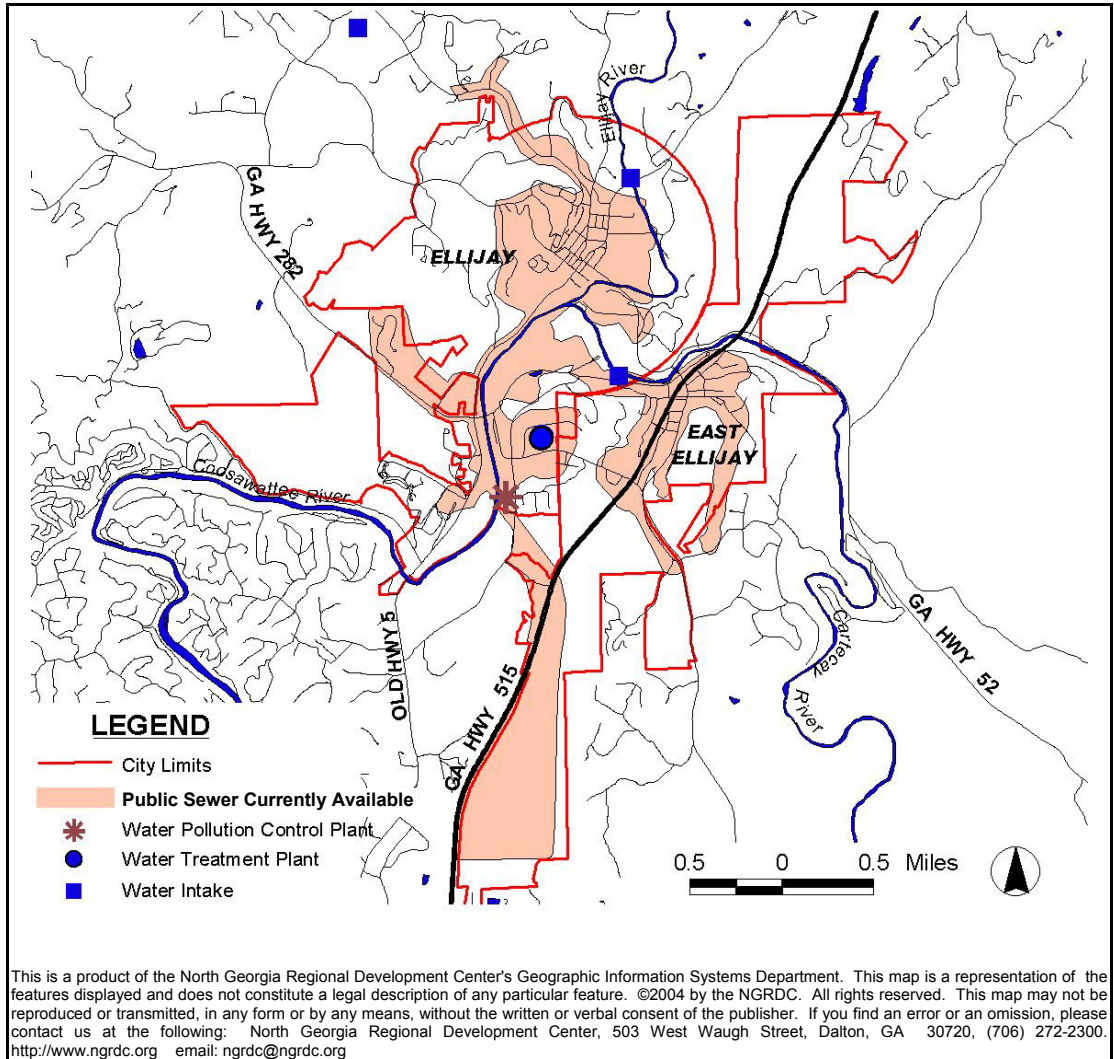


Figure 5-C. Public Sewer Availability in Ellijay and East Ellijay



### 5.1.3.5. CIE: Schedule of Improvements and Funding Sources

**Table 5-F. Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority  
Sewage Treatment, Collection, and Transmission Capital Projects: 7/1/04 to 6/31/09**

Project Number and Description	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Estimated Cost	Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees	Other Funding Sources
ST 9, Phase 3 WPCP Expansion to 4 MGD	2005	2006	\$4,500,000	10%	GEFA, WSA
SC 13, Miscellaneous 8-inch Sewer Mains	2004	2008	\$191,100	80%	GEFA, WSA
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:</b>			<b>\$4,691,100</b>		

Source: WSA  
GEFA – Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority

### Assessment: Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment

As shown previously in Table 5-E, \$67.6 million in infrastructure improvements will be needed to accommodate anticipated growth over the next 20 years.

Gilmer County will continue to issue septic tank permits for residential and commercial developments; therefore, the sewer service should not be strained by such developments in the County.

### 5.1.3. Solid Waste Management

#### **Collection and Disposal: Gilmer County.**

Gilmer County presently does not provide streetside garbage collection services. Solid waste management activities are handled through collection facilities or “convenience centers.” The main convenience center is located at 456 Tower Road. The County operates six additional centers at the following locations: Cartecay, Tails Creek, White Path, Whitestone, Yukon, and Coosawattee. The newest facility is the Coosawattee convenience center which opened in August 2003. The locations of these facilities are shown in Figure 5-D. The useful life of the convenience centers is virtually unlimited because there is no landfilling, just waste compacting and transfer.



**“Convenience Centers” are used throughout Gilmer County for solid waste disposal.**

All waste collected at the convenience centers is contracted to a private hauler. The contract is reviewed annually, in accordance with County contractual policy. The current hauler is Appalachian Waste Systems (AWS).

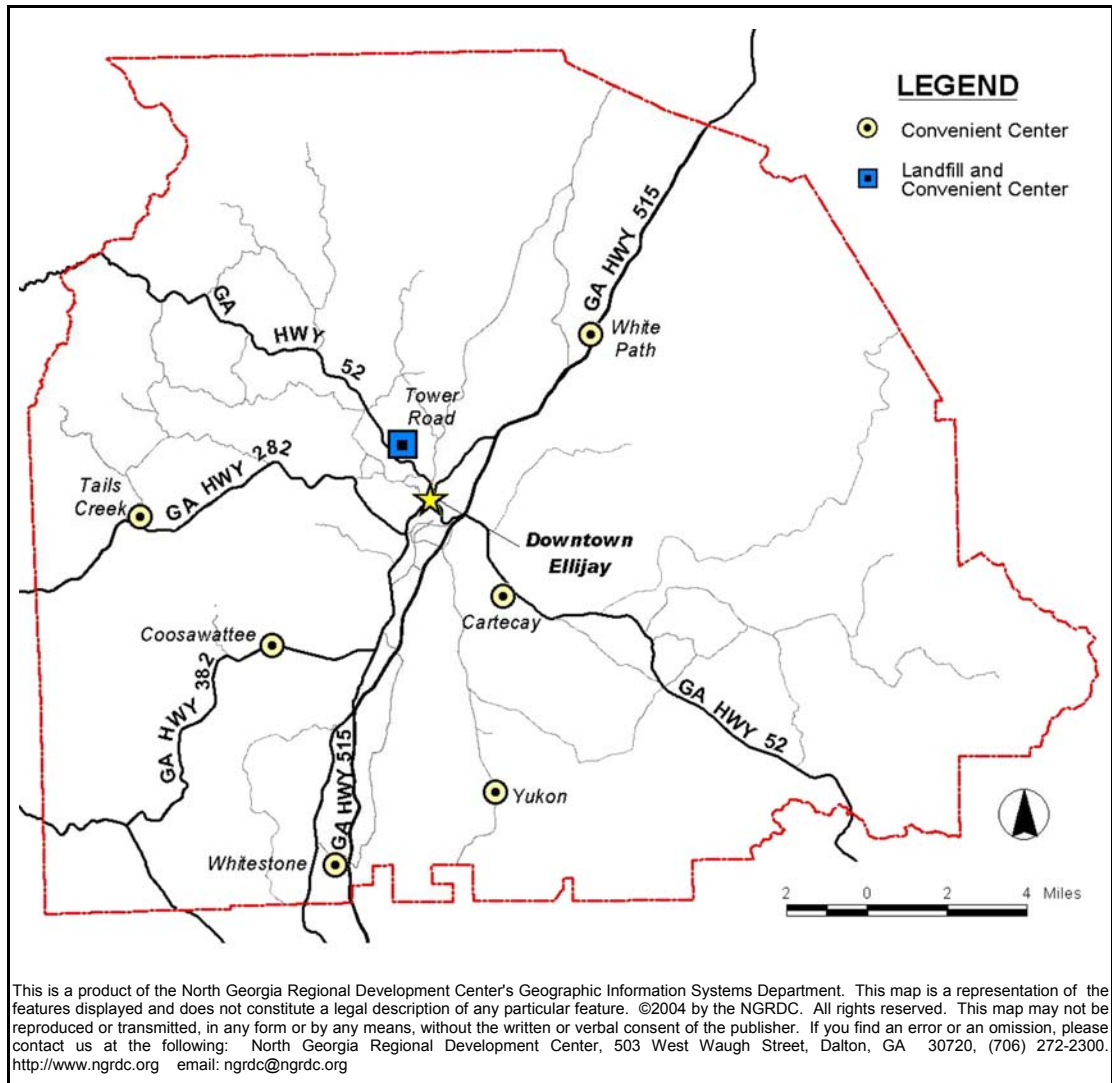
A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) has been completed for the closed Old Tower Road Landfill and this plan has been submitted to the Georgia EPD Solid Waste office. The CAP includes improvements to the leachate management system with a new and enlarged sewer line connection, and the installation of a methane venting system.

The County presently does not intend to permit or construct a new “municipal” solid waste landfill. Instead, the County realizes the efficiency of regionalized landfills as being in the current best interest of the County.

The County operates an inert facility at its Public Works property off of Highway 52 East. This facility accepts landscape debris, but is expected to reach its capacity in the next year. The county does not plan to open another inert landfill as a private inert landfill (the K & M inert landfill) has recently opened near the Gilmer/Pickens County line.

**Collection and Disposal: Ellijay.** The City of Ellijay contracts with Cantrell Sanitation to provide curbside trash collection for residential properties in Ellijay. Collection occurs once a week at a cost of \$10 per month to the residential customer and \$9.86 to the City. The City of Ellijay does not provide curbside collection to commercial or industrial properties. Commercial waste is handled by private contractors on a subscription basis.

**Collection and Disposal: East Ellijay.** The City of Ellijay contracts with Sanford Garbage Service to provide curbside trash collection for residential properties in East Ellijay. Residents are not billed directly for this service which costs the City approximately \$24,000 per year, plus certain expenses such as the provision of a dump truck to Sanford. Commercial waste is handled by private contractors on a subscription basis.



**Figure 5-D. Solid Waste Facilities**

**Waste Generation and Reduction.** Gilmer County generates approximately 725 tons of waste per month (8,700 tons per year) from all of the convenience centers and the Tower Road collection facility. This is a 29% reduction from the 1993 figure of 12,229 tons per year. All waste is contracted to private regional landfill facilities.

Table 5-G shows some of the sources of the reduction in the volume of waste generated. Much of the reduction comes from the fact that farmers can no longer dispose of dead chickens through the County centers; they must be composted or disposed of by other means. In addition, the County operates an inert landfill which primarily accepts yard waste and tree debris. This waste is ground into mulch, and on average, one fourth of the mulch is given away. The inert facility handles approximately 670 tons per year.

**Table 5-G. Waste Reduction Measures**

Source of Reduction (tons)	1998	1999	2000
Composting of dead chickens on farms	1,601	1,890	2,018
Mulched inert waste	168	164	165
Recycled metals	780	790	800
Recycled tires	108	110	112
Recycled newspaper	--	--	149
<b>Total Tons</b>	<b>2,657</b>	<b>2,954</b>	<b>3,244</b>

**Recycling.** Special containers for the recycling of newspaper, magazines, and aluminum are provided at the county convenience centers. Refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, air conditioners, and compressors are collected and processed at the Tower Road facility. Freon is carefully removed from non-salvageable compressors and recycled. Appliances which can be safely reconditioned are offered to needy or disadvantaged families as available.

Gilmer County is now processing roughly 500 used tires per month. These are sent to tire recycling facilities in the Georgia and this program has resulted in the efficient removal over 15,000 used car and truck tires from across the county.

**Assessment: Solid Waste Management**

The Gilmer County Solid Waste Department will continue to expand and improve its convenience centers and will add new centers in growth areas as needed. The County will be expanding its primary waste collection convenience center at Tower Road by adding capacity for two large roll-off container collection bins with expansion of the bin access ramp for non-putrescible household rubbish and/or construction debris.

Detailed information on solid waste management in Gilmer County can be found in the Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay *Joint Solid Waste Management Plan*, which is being prepared concurrently with this comprehensive plan.

**5.1.5. Public Safety – Law Enforcement**

**Operational Responsibility and Service Area.** The Gilmer County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement to the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County. The Ellijay Police Department and the East Ellijay Police Department provide law enforcement services in their respective municipalities.

**Facilities and Resources.** Law enforcement facilities and resources are listed below in Table 5-H. The locations of the various facilities are shown in Figure 5-E.

**Table 5-H. Law Enforcement Facilities and Resources\***

Resources	Gilmer County Sheriff's Department	Gilmer County Detention Center	Ellijay Police Department	East Ellijay Police Department
Current Base Location	Highway 52 East	Highway 52 East	Ellijay City Hall	East Ellijay City Hall
Personnel	1 sheriff 23 full-time deputies 6 investigators 2 school resource officers 6 other staff positions	25 staff	1 police chief 9 full-time officers 1 records clerk	1 police chief 5 officers 2 city clerks assist with paperwork
Vehicles/Fleet	32 vehicles	2 vehicles	6 patrol vehicles	6 patrol vehicles

Sources: \*As of January 2004.

The Gilmer County Detention Center is operated by the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department. It can accommodate a maximum of 144 inmates (116 males and 28 females). In May 2004, the facility housed 102 male and 24 female inmates. The inmates were from Gwinnett County (16), Dawson County (2), East Ellijay (6), Ellijay (7), and Gilmer County (95).

**Demand for Service.** In 2003, the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department averaged 2,000 calls per month, while the Ellijay and East Ellijay Police Departments averaged 410 and 456 calls per month, respectively. Crime statistics as reported by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation are shown below in Table 5-I.

**Table 5-I. Gilmer County Crime Statistics by Offense**

	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Vehicle Theft
1997	1	1	1	4	53	62	14
1998	0	2	9	4	92	65	23
1999	1	0	1	10	109	64	31
2000	1	0	1	1	105	112	39
2001	1	1	2	14	175	115	31
2002	1	0	0	6	90	114	19

Source: Georgia Bureau of Investigation <http://www.ganet.org/gbi/gbistate1.html>

Gilmer County is facing a growing rate of drug-related activity, particularly related to methamphetamines. Family violence is also common in the county. The City's of East Ellijay's police department deals with more business-related crimes (e.g. counterfeiting, shoplifting, fraud) because of the number of business located within its boundaries. The City of Ellijay has more gang activity than East Ellijay or the unincorporated county.

### Assessment: Law Enforcement

**Gilmer County Sheriff's Department.** The patrol division of the County Sheriff's Department has a shortage of officers. Currently, two officers patrol the county during each shift, but the normal workload requires four officers per shift. Adding two patrol officers per shift would bring the total number of deputies/officers/investigators to 37. This equates to a level of service of 1 officer per 750 citizens using 2004 population estimates.

Based on future population projections, by 2015, the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department will need at least 60 deputies/officers/investigators to achieve the level of service provided by adding 2 patrol officers per shift. By 2025, it will need a total of 98 to maintain the same ratio.

**City of Ellijay Police Department.** Plans are being developed for a new public facility to be built next to the existing Ellijay City Hall. This facility will house both the Ellijay Police Department and the Ellijay Fire Department, with the departments sharing certain resources such as a kitchen, fitness room, training room, etc. Constructing a shared facility should be very cost-effective for the City of Ellijay. In 2003, the department replaced its 40-year-old base communication system. The new system will be adequate for the planning period. Vehicles are replaced on an as-needed basis, usually one per year.

Based on future population projections, by 2025, the City of Ellijay will need at least 13 officers to maintain the current ratio of 1 officer per 176 citizens.

**City of East Ellijay Police Department.** Currently, the department would be better able to serve the community with the addition of 2 or 3 more officers. By 2025, the department will need at least 13 police officers to maintain the current ratio of 1 officer per 141 citizens. (Given that the City of East Ellijay Police Department handles more business-related crime, and given the rapid rate at which commercial development is occurring in the City, it is possible that even more officers will be needed by 2025 than is estimated.)

### 5.1.6. Public Safety – Fire Protection and Emergency Management

**Operational Responsibility and Service Area.** The Gilmer County Fire Department provides fire protection services to all areas of the county, including the City of East Ellijay, while the City of Ellijay Fire Department serves the City of Ellijay. The Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) provides emergency management services to all areas of the county. The Gilmer County E911 Center provides emergency dispatching services service to all of Gilmer County.

**Facilities and Resources.** Fire protection and emergency management resources are listed below in Table 5-J. The locations of the facilities are shown in Figure 5-E.

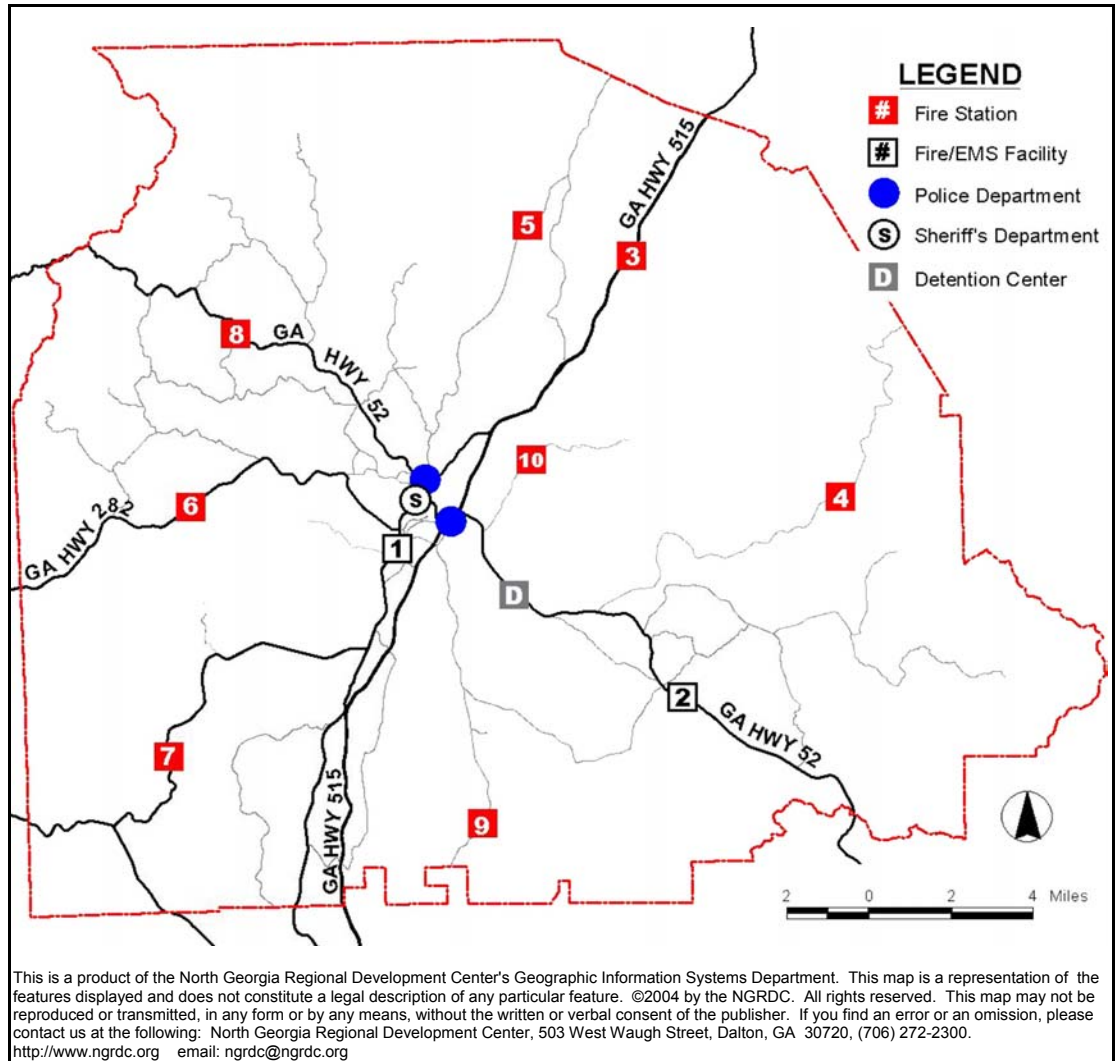
**Table 5-J. Fire Protection and Emergency Management Resources**

Resources	Gilmer County Fire Department	Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency	Ellijay Fire Department
Number of Stations	10	2	1
Primary Service Area	Gilmer County and East Ellijay	Gilmer County	City of Ellijay
Mutual Aid Area	Murray, Pickens, and Dawson Counties	--	Fannin, Murray, Pickens, and Dawson Counties
Personnel	3 full-time career firefighters 3 part-time career firefighters 80 volunteer firefighters 2 certified arson investigators	17 full-time and 10 part-time paramedics and EMTs, and numerous volunteer search and rescue personnel	1 Chief 3 full-time career firefighters 20 volunteer firefighters
Vehicles/ Fleet	8 Class A Pumpers 6 Brush Trucks 3 Rescue Vehicles 4 Tankers	4 ambulances 2 rescue boats 4 four-wheel drive vehicles	2 Engines 1 Eighty-Five Foot Platform
State Insurance Office (ISO) Rating	East Ellijay: 7 Gilmer County locations within 1000' of a fire hydrant: 7 Gilmer County locations more than 5 miles from a fire station: 9	n/a	Ellijay: 5

Sources: Gilmer County and Ellijay Fire Departments

**Gilmer County Fire Department.** The Gilmer County Fire Department headquarters is located at 1561 South Main Street. The facility includes equipment bays, living quarters, and offices. Shifts operate 24 hours on/48 hours off.

The fire department has nine additional fire stations at locations throughout Gilmer County as shown in Figure 5-E. The newest station is Station 10 in Turniptown which opened in November 2003. The fire department has a target response time of 8-10 minutes.



**Figure 5-E. Public Safety Facilities**

**Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency (EMA).** The Gilmer County Fire Department manages the EMA. The EMA facility is located at 1561 South Main Street and includes 8 bays for equipment, living quarters for eight employees, and multiple offices. All EMA personnel meet the annual state recertification requirements and also perform firefighting and rescue operations. Personnel are trained in ground search and rescue and swift water rescue. The EMA also has a dive team. Ambulances are located at the EMA facility and at Fire Station #2 in Cartecay.

**Ellijay Fire Department.** Historically, the City of Ellijay has relied on the Gilmer County Fire Department for fire protection, prevention, and safety services. Because of growth in Ellijay and Gilmer County, the City of Ellijay decided to form its own fire department. It was officially certified by the State of Georgia on February 21, 2002, and began responding to calls in July 2002.

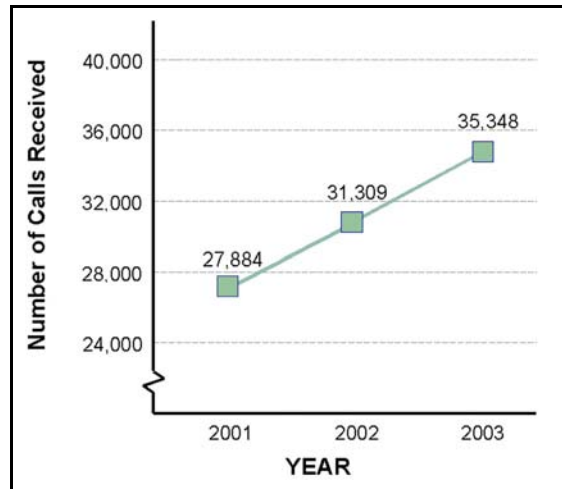


**The City of Ellijay Fire Department began operations in 2002.**

**Gilmer County E911.** The E911 Center is located in a 2,800 square foot facility at 1561 South Main Street. It is staffed by a director, nine full-time dispatchers, two to three part-time dispatchers and two addressing/mapping personnel. Dispatchers work in twelve hour shifts, with 2 personnel minimum in each shift. Part-time personnel are used to provide a third operator on duty during peak hours.

Dispatchers have the capability of providing radio communications with all personnel in fire, EMS, search and rescue, ambulance, city police departments, county sheriff's department, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and Georgia State Patrol. Other responsibilities of the E911 center include providing addresses for all structures in the county, maintaining an accurate addressing database for use in the enhanced 911 system, placing all street signs at intersections on county roads, and working with the tax assessor's department in keeping the county maps up-to-date.

**Demand for Service.** For the past three years, the Gilmer County Fire department has responded to an average of 1,200 calls per year. EMS has responded, on average, to 4,000 calls per year. Between 2001 and 2003, calls received at the 911 center increased by 26.7% as illustrated in Figure 5-F.



**Figure 5-F. Number of Calls Received at the E911 Center**

**Assessment: Fire Protection and Emergency Management**

**Gilmer County Fire Department.** Currently, the Fire Department is operating with 1 ½ staff persons per shift at each station. For optimum operations, four full-time persons are needed per station per shift.

Due to population growth in the outlying county area, future plans call for establishing two more fire stations with 4 full time people rotating each shift. A station in Whitestone is planned for 2004 and one more station is planned for the near future. The construction cost (excluding land cost) is estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$75,000.



The department has plans to upgrade communications, add personnel and equipment, and upgrade training requirements for all personnel. In addition, the department plans to upgrade and expand its efforts in promoting fire prevention through education, inspection, code enforcement, and investigation. Funding for this would come from grants and local funds.

A high priority need is a new, fully-equipped fire department headquarters. The current location on South Main Street has problems with ingress and egress, particularly during the AM and PM peak hours. Three acres of property have been donated for a new fire station on Highway 515, just south of the Highlands Center. Ideally, the new facility would be a combination Fire/EMS Station with administrative space and living quarters.

**Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency.** The EMA needs a hazardous warning system which includes the installation of 20 sirens to notify citizens of emergency situations such as tornado warnings. The county also needs to construct an emergency operations center containing a classroom for emergency operations training and a room to house citizens in emergency disaster situations. Potential sources of funding include federal grant programs.

To accommodate the growing county population, future plans for the EMA call for expansion of office facilities, and the addition of two or three units at key spots in the county. Potential locations include the north end of the county or the southwest corner of the county.

**Ellijay Fire Department.** Currently, the fire department's equipment is housed in a metal building behind City Hall that has been retrofitted to house fire trucks. This building was initially intended to serve as the City maintenance and storage facility. Because this space is inadequate, the City of Ellijay plans to build a new, two story fire department building. The building, which will be shared with the Ellijay Police Department, will contain three bays for fire trucks, an apparatus/equipment storage area, training room, physical fitness room, offices, and sleeping quarters.

Additional equipment will be needed in the future as the population grows and more businesses locate in the area. The City of Ellijay Fire Department will continue to improve operations, which will lead to lower ISO classifications in future years.

### 5.1.7. Hospitals and Other Public Health Facilities

**Operational Responsibility.** The North Georgia Medical Center, the Gilmer County Health Department, and Highland Rivers provide public health services in Gilmer County.

**North Georgia Medical Center.** The North Georgia Medical Center, located on South Main Street in Ellijay, is owned by SunLink Healthcare, Inc. The Medical Center provides a variety of services to Gilmer County residents and its primary facility is a 58-bed hospital, staffed by 15 physicians and 20 nurses. The hospital is also equipped with a 5-bed intensive care unit and a new emergency room with ER physician coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Medical Center also operates a 100-bed nursing home for the elderly in Gilmer County. Currently the Gilmer Nursing Home has a staff of 10 registered nurses, 21 licensed practiced nurses, and 51 certified nursing assistants. The nursing home has a waiting list of 100 applicants.



**The North Georgia Medical Center provides a variety of medical services to area residents.**

In September 2003, the Gilmer Nursing Home was awarded the American Health Care Association's National Quality Award for demonstrating its commitment to the highest quality standards. It is the first hospital-based nursing home in Georgia to receive this award.

Another facility operated by the Medical Center is the specialty outpatient clinic, which offers special medical services to local patients. The clinic contracts with medical physicians such as cardiologists, urologists, vascular surgeons, gastrologists, and physical therapists from Atlanta and other areas to visit patients on a scheduled basis.

**Gilmer County Health Department.** The Gilmer County Health Department has a clinic that provides services such as immunization, family planning, cancer detection, blood pressure, diabetes detection, pediatric dental services, flu shots, scoliosis, and tuberculosis testing. The clinic is located at 28 Southside Church Street in Ellijay.

The Health Department is overseen by the Board of Health which is comprised of the Chairman of the County Commission; a licensed, practicing physician; a consumer or consumer advocate; a consumer representing the needy, underprivileged, or elderly; the superintendent of schools; the Mayor of Ellijay; and a person interested in promoting public health who is a consumer or a licensed nurse.

As of January 2004, the Health Department had a staff of 12, including a director, two registered nurses, one licensed practical nurse, one part-time nurse practitioner, two full-time interpreters (who also serving in other capacities), one "Women with Infants and Children" (WIC) clerk, several clerical positions, and an office manager.

The Health Department currently has 1,150 WIC clients, of whom approximately 40% are Hispanic/Latino. It also has a large family-planning clientele. The department offered 31 offsite flu shot clinics in 2003 and also participated with several local industries in offering health screening programs. The number of clients served by the Health Department over the past several years is shown in Table 5-K.

**Table 5-K. Average Annual Number of Health Department Clients/Patients**

	WIC	Family Planning	Child Health*	Adult Health**
1998	--	784	2,072	2,359
1999	824	824	2,103	3,186
2000	900	800	2,355	2,125
2001	1,013	796	2,158	3,627
2002	1,095	785	1,697	4,103
2003	1,150	858	1,514	3,757

Source: Gilmer County Health Department

\* The number of child health clients has declined due to a new local pediatrician offering immunizations.

\*\* Beginning in 2002, lab services were no longer available to the general public through the Health Department. The increase in adult health services reflects an increase in population-based programming and an increase in the number of flu shots given in the community.

Other programs offered by the Health Department include the following:

- perinatal case management
- hearing and vision screening
- well child check-ups
- population-based programs in local industries
- car seat fitting clinics and classes
- provision of car seats to anyone unable to purchase seats (funding from a Department of Highway Safety grant program)

**Highland Rivers.** Highlands Rivers Community Service Board is a mental outpatient health facility which provides programs for residents in counseling, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, psychiatric consultation, social work, mental retardation, and childhood and adolescent counseling.

## Assessment: Hospitals and Public Health Facilities

**North Georgia Medical Center.** The Medical Center has made vast improvements such as the opening of their new state-of-the-art Emergency Room in January 2003. This facility contains seven treatment rooms, nine beds, two pediatric beds, two trauma rooms and an isolation room for communicable diseases or biohazards. In addition, a new, outpatient surgery center opened in November 2003.

The number of persons served by the hospital has continued to increase. As a result, plans are to break ground for a new 75 to 90 bed hospital in the next three to five years. The existing hospital would be renovated to include an additional 100 beds for the nursing home.

**Gilmer County Health Department.** Due to State budget cuts, the Gilmer County Health Department has reduced programs and staff.

Although the current facility is only ten years old, it is already overcrowded. The size of the waiting room is inadequate and maintaining client confidentiality is difficult because the rooms and waiting areas must serve multiple functions. The facility also lacks adequate program-specific rooms, so staff members must conduct education programs at off-site locations.

A new or expanded facility is needed to serve their growing population. This new facility would provide a meeting room as well as specialized rooms to maintain clients' privacy. Funding for such a facility would likely come from grants.

Because of the area's high teen pregnancy rate, the Health Department would like to offer teen parenting classes in the future. It would also like to offer well-child checkups in school.

**Highlands Rivers.** Due to budget cuts in programming, the Highlands Rivers Community Service Board has reduced their mental health services.

### 5.1.8. Recreation Facilities

**Operational Responsibility.** A five member Recreation Commission under the appointment of the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners provides policy direction to the Gilmer County Recreation Department. The Recreation Department is responsible for the day-to-day management of recreation activities.

**Gilmer County River Park.** The Recreation Department administers Gilmer County River Park and organizes recreation activities for county residents on a year-round basis. In addition, the Recreation Department has an agreement with the Gilmer County School Board for public use of school facilities for general and organized recreational use.



**The Gilmer County River Park is an outstanding community amenity.**

The majority of the Gilmer County River Park is located within the city limits of Ellijay, south of Highway 382 along the Coosawattee River. It is currently the only park and recreation facility that

is operated by Gilmer County and serves the entire county population including the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay.

The River Park is approximately 50 acres, of which approximately 14 are leased from Georgia Power Company. Six of the 50 acres are located on the east side of the Coosawattee River and were donated by Gold Kist in 2003. The park contains the following facilities:

- five lighted baseball/softball fields
- two tee ball fields
- two soccer fields
- four lighted tennis courts
- one sheltered pavilion with rest room facilities
- two sheds with grills and picnic tables
- two playgrounds with equipment
- one swimming pool
- two paved parking areas
- a director's office which also provides public rest room facilities
- 4,000 linear foot walking/jogging trail
- one restroom facility at the soccer fields

The River Park functions as more than just a recreation facility. It is the site for numerous community events. For example, every year in October the Apple Festival occurs, attracting 50,000 visitors to the Gilmer County Fairgrounds which are located adjacent to the park. The park, trail, and parking areas are used extensively by visitors to the festival.

**White Path Golf Course.** White Path Golf Course, owned by Gilmer County, is an 18 hole course located north of Ellijay. It is open to the public and also offers memberships.



**White Path Golf Course is open to the public.**

**Trails.** There are numerous hiking trails in Gilmer County including the 6.7 mile Bear Creek Trail and the 5.6 mile Mountaintown Creek Trail. The Bear Creek Trail and the Mountaintown Creek Trail are located in the northwest portion of the county off Gates Chapel Road. More information on the trails can be found at [www.theblueridgehighlander.com/hiking\\_trails/north\\_georgia/gilmer.html](http://www.theblueridgehighlander.com/hiking_trails/north_georgia/gilmer.html).

**Ellijay City Square.** A small park is located in the middle of the square in downtown Ellijay. (See photo on page 4-38.) The City of Ellijay maintains this park which contains sidewalks, benches, landscaping, and flag poles. The City of Ellijay also sponsors the Fourth of July fireworks and the Christmas tree on the square. In the past, the City has provided funding for special recreation projects such as the resurfacing of the tennis courts at the County River Park.

### **Assessment: Recreation Facilities**

According to the park standards established by the National Recreation and Park Association, every community should have a park system of 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 persons. To meet this standard, in 2000 Gilmer County should have had between 126 and 246 acres of parks. By 2025, the County would need between 426 and 716 acres of parks.

The current recreation park does not contain enough space to serve the growing population, therefore more recreation sites need to be developed. Potential sites for new recreation areas

include White Path, near the entrance to the existing public golf course, and Clear Creek, on the new school campus. Smaller, passive recreation sites or “pocket parks” are also desirable. A small park in the downtown area or close to the Elementary and Primary Schools on McCutchen Street would be beneficial.

A long range planning committee has been established to develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan. A preliminary evaluation shows that the following recreation facilities are needed in the county in next ten years:

- three to four satellite parks at locations throughout the county,
- a multi-purpose building that would house a gymnasium, classrooms, and office space,
- a separate football complex, and
- two, stand alone soccer complexes.

### **5.1.9. General Government Facilities**

**Gilmer County.** Gilmer County government offices are located in several places in downtown Ellijay including the Courthouse and the Perry House. Several offices are located in temporary facilities until the new courthouse is complete.

**Ellijay.** Ellijay City Hall is located on North Main Street. The building houses the office of the mayor, the city clerk, and council chambers.

**East Ellijay.** East Ellijay City Hall is located on Oak Street and houses all city offices including the East Ellijay Police Department.

For a number of years, the City of East Ellijay has been setting aside funds to construct a new municipal building. In the summer of 2004, construction of a new city hall will begin. The new building will include offices for the mayor, city clerk, court clerk, building inspector, and codes enforcement officer as well as a courtroom, judge’s chamber, and space for the police department. When construction of the new facility is complete, the old building will be torn down and replaced with a parking lot.

#### **Assessment: General Government Facilities**

**Gilmer County.** Gilmer County is in the process of constructing a new 45,500 square foot, three story courthouse on Broad Street, just off the square in downtown Ellijay. The first floor will include offices for the probate judge, juvenile court, magistrate court, a shared courtroom, and sheriff’s office. The clerk of court’s office and district attorney will be located on the second floor. The third floor will house offices for superior court judges, two courtrooms, jury assembly room, holding cells for prisoners, jury rooms, and offices for superior court staff. Funding for the new courthouse will come from the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax which was passed by a referendum in 2003.

**Ellijay.** The current City Hall is expected to meet the needs of the community during the planning period.

**East Ellijay.** The new City Hall should serve the needs of East Ellijay throughout the planning period.

## 5.1.10. Education Facilities

### 5.1.10.1. Gilmer County Public School System

**Operational Responsibility and Service Area.** The Gilmer County School System is governed by an elected board of education of five members with an appointed superintendent. The school system services all of Gilmer County.

**Staff and Enrollment.** At the beginning of the 2003/2004 school year, the Gilmer County school system had a total of 580 employees and 3,940 students. The student enrollment has increased at a steady rate over the past several years as illustrated in Figure 5-F on the following page.

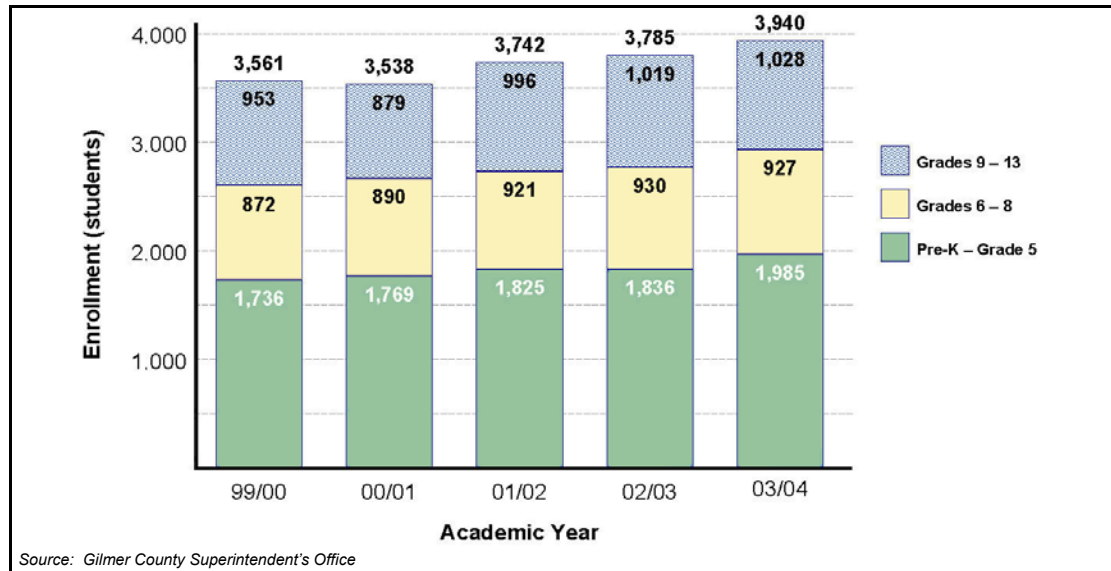


Figure 5-G. Student Enrollment in Gilmer County Public School System

**Facilities and Capacity.** The Gilmer County Public School system facilities are listed in Table 5-L below.

Table 5-L. Gilmer County Public School System Facilities

School	2003/2004 Enrollment	Capacity	% over or under capacity
Ellijay Primary School (Pre K - 2)	653	650 <sup>1</sup>	+ 0.5%
Oakland Elementary School (Pre K - 5)	307	350 <sup>1</sup>	- 12.3%
Mountain View Elementary (Pre K - 5)	547	650 <sup>1</sup>	- 15.8%
Ellijay Elementary School (Grades 3 - 5)	534	650	- 17.8%
Gilmer Middle School (Grades 6 - 8)	920	900	+ 2.2%
Gilmer High School (Grades 9 - 12)	1069	1200	- 10.9%
Crossroads Alternative School (Grades 6-12)	*70		

Source: Gilmer County School Superintendent's Office \*Enrollment in included in middle school and high school figures.

<sup>1</sup>Pre-K students will be moved to a different facility in 2004/2005. This involves 60 students from Ellijay Primary, 40 from Oakland Elementary, and 40 from Mountain View Elementary.

**Transportation.** The school system has 44 buses for transporting students from home to school. Included in these 44 are 5 mini-buses, each of which are equipped with a lift for transporting students in wheelchairs. The school system purchases an average of four new buses per year to replace aging vehicles. Between 2,300 and 2,400 students ride buses to school. (Source: Superintendent's Office)

### 5.1.10.2. Higher Education

Currently, there are no higher education facilities located in Gilmer County. Nearby colleges are shown in Figure 5-H and include the following:

- Appalachian Technical College, Jasper;
- Reinhardt College, Waleska;
- North Georgia College, Dahlonega.
- Northwest Georgia Technical College, Blairsville; and
- Dalton State College, Dalton.

Gilmer County is a member of the North Georgia Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA). College courses are frequently offered at Appalachian Technical College, Gilmer County High School and Fannin County High School through the RESA office.

In addition, the Gilmer County School Board coordinates with Appalachian Technical College to offer courses at Gilmer County High School.

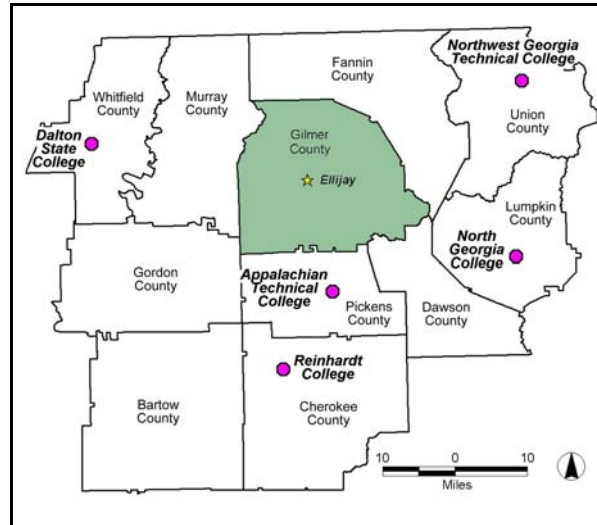


Figure 5-H. Colleges near Gilmer County

### 5.1.10.3. Vocational Training

Gilmer High School staff conduct vocational training courses for students who do not plan to attend college. The pre-vocational programs provide courses in agriculture, auto-mechanics, construction, art, business education, and home economics. Students from Gilmer High School can enroll in these courses as part of their high school program.

#### Assessment: Education Facilities

The school system has an immediate need for additional classroom space to accommodate the growing student population. Based on population projections, by 2015 the school system will need 4.7 primary/elementary schools (650 students each), 1.8 middle schools (900 students each), and 2.1 high schools (1,200 students each). By 2025, the school system will need 6.8 primary/elementary schools, 2.5 middle schools, and 2.5 high schools.

In May 2003, the School Board purchased 300 acres along Clear Creek Road for a new school campus. If sewer lines are extended to the property, a new middle school, a high school, and an elementary school will be built. The new middle school is planned for completion in the next five years.

Additional post-secondary educational opportunities should also be explored.

## 5.1.11. Library and Other Cultural Facilities

### 5.1.11.1. Library

**Operational Responsibility.** The Gilmer County Library is part of the Sequoyah Regional Library System which serves Cherokee, Pickens, and Gilmer Counties. The headquarters is located at the R.T. Jones Public Library in Canton, Georgia.

**Mission Statement.** It is the mission of the Sequoyah Regional Library System to provide organized print, non-print, and electronic materials to meet the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of a growing, diverse community, with emphasis placed on the chosen roles of the library system.

**Facilities and Services.** The Gilmer County Library was built in 1977 and was expanded and renovated in 1991 with 10,401 total square feet. The library presently has 9,500 borrowers and approximately 24,851 volumes. Other facilities include a 50-seat meeting room and two small study rooms.

Library circulation and catalog are automated. The online catalog is available via the internet at <http://www.sequoyahregionallibrary.org>. At the Gilmer County Library, there are 23 computers available for public use, including 15 computers with internet access. The Gilmer County Library is open seven days a week, including four evenings and Sunday afternoon, for total of 62 hours per week. Figure 5-1 illustrates attendance and book circulation levels at the Gilmer County Library over the last five years.

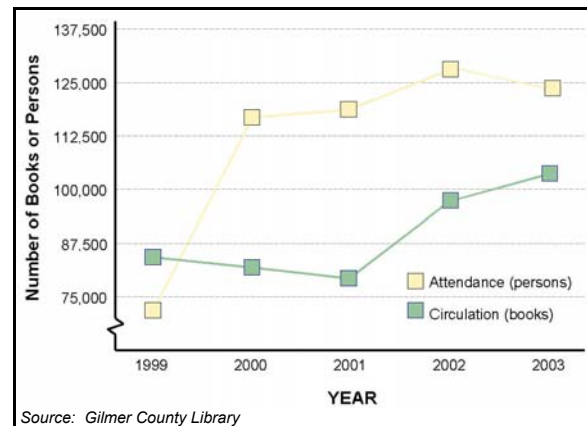


Figure 5-1. Library attendance and circulation.

In addition to circulation of books and other materials, the Gilmer County Library offers a wide range of services to the community: copiers for public use (including a color copier/scanner), fax service, Spanish/bilingual materials, Spanish computer, microform readers, genealogy/local history room, computer classes, low vision reader, adaptive computer with software and accessories for patrons with special needs, laminating, children's story times and vacation reading club, tax forms, and voter registration.



Gilmer County has plans to build a new library to replace the current one on Dalton Street.

Recent enhancements to library service include an express checkout station where patrons who prefer self-service may check out their own materials. The library web site also has been enhanced to include the capability for renewing materials online, requesting interlibrary loans online, and applying for a library card online. New improved library cards with keychain cards were introduced in 2003.

**Funding.** Annual operating funding for the Gilmer County Library is provided by the County Government, Board of Education (\$10,000 per year), City of



Ellijay (\$3,000 per year), and City of East Ellijay (\$1,500 per year). The library also receives per capita funding from the State for maintenance and operations and for library materials.

**Staff.** As of January 2004, the library had five full-time employees and four part-time employees. The library is administered by a certified, state-paid librarian, who is assisted by a Circulation Manager, Circulation Clerk, Reference Coordinator, and Children's Coordinator. Except for the one state-paid librarian, all other library positions are funded by the County.

### 5.1.11.2. Senior Center

**Operational Responsibility and Service Area.** The North Georgia Community Action Agency is responsible for oversight of the Senior Center. The Center is open to all senior citizens in Gilmer County.

**Facilities and Services.** In 2000, the construction of a new, 2,400 square foot senior center in downtown Ellijay was completed. The center is open Monday through Friday. Services provided include home delivered meals and meals served at the center. Senior citizens use the facility for bingo, exercise classes, quilting, and dominos.



**The new Gilmer County Senior Center opened in 2000.**

**Funding.** Funds for construction of the new senior center came from a \$315,640 Community Development Block Grant and local sources. The building is owned and maintained by Gilmer County. Funding for staff salaries comes from the North Georgia Community Action Agency.

**Staff.** The senior center has three paid personnel: one full-time director and two part-time staff members. The center relies heavily up on volunteers to provide services to senior citizens in the community.

### 5.1.11.3. Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association

**Operational Responsibility.** Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association (GAHA) is a local non-profit, service and educational organization established in 1979. Its Board of Directors has 13 members.

**Facilities and Services.** The Gilmer County Arts and Heritage Association is an umbrella organization supporting a variety of community based arts programs. The Arts and Heritage Council is important to Gilmer County because it is the only organization in Gilmer County that provides art and cultural education to local residents. The Council also works closely with the Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism for Gilmer County.

The GAHA Community Players put on two to three well-known theatrical productions each year, such as *Steel Magnolias* and *On Golden Pond*, and are committed to building a children's theatre program. The Community Chorus and the Community Band provide a variety of musical programs throughout the year. "Write-On," the literary arm of the organization, meets monthly and is popular with amateur and professional writers in the area. The Historical Heritage Committee is dedicated to documenting, preserving, and celebrating the area's rich heritage, and produces a historical calendar each year. The Gilmer Arts Academy provides classes and workshops in all aspects of the arts, and has ongoing children's programming in both drama and dance.

GAHA's outreach programs include projects that provide exposure and participation in the arts for those who might not otherwise have the opportunity. Theatre classes are taught at the middle school level at no expense to the school system, and the Atlanta Ballet provides free instruction in both ballet and jazz.

GAHA also hosts BEST (Bringing Ellijay Sensational Talent) and BEST for Kids. The BEST Series features nationally known talent, such as Rita Coolidge, Jerry Reed, Sandi Patti, and the Russian Ballet. BEST for Kids provides experiences in the arts to the schools, with performances by such notable groups as Glen Road and the Atlanta Opera.

**Funding.** Funding for GAHA is provided by corporate sponsorship, community membership, and grants.

### **Assessment: Library and Other Cultural Facilities**

**Library.** The recommended standard for libraries is 0.7 square feet per person and 2.5 books per capita. The current Gilmer County Library is well below minimum space requirements for a county of its size; therefore, the Gilmer County Library Board of Trustees is working on a long range goal of obtaining funding for a new public library building. The Gilmer County Board of Education has offered 5 acres of land adjacent to the new Mountain View Elementary School off Hwy 282. In order to take advantage of this property, a public library must be built on the site within 5 years.

A 20,000 square foot facility is planned. Proposed features of the new Gilmer County Library include space for more books, a large parking area, larger browsing areas, more self-service, a story time and crafts area for children, a young adult area, a quiet area for study, a snack area, computer labs, additional meeting space, and an expanded genealogy and local history room. In addition to providing for adequate library space, another long-range goal is to obtain adequate funding for library materials. While State standards require 2-4 books per capita, Gilmer County has only about 1 book per capita. The Library Board will work toward raising both state and local government contributions for library materials.

A campaign to increase financial support from private businesses and organizations also is planned. In addition, the library will take advantage of grant opportunities to fund materials for special needs (business, home school, Spanish, etc.)

Using recommended library standards and population projections presented in the Population Element, by 2015, Gilmer County will need almost 31,500 square feet of library space. By 2025, the county will need almost 48,000 square feet of library space.

**Senior Center.** Even though the senior center is only a few years old, it is already functioning at capacity. Using a level of service based upon current square footage per population over 65 years of age, by 2015, Gilmer County will need approximately 6,400 square feet of senior center space. By 2025, the county will need 11,650 square feet.

**Gilmer County Arts and Heritage Association.** GAHA is searching for a permanent home to provide the necessary visibility to promote the arts. Both the Arts and Heritage Council and the Chamber of Commerce recognize the potential for coordinating expanded cultural activities with tourist promotions

### 5.1.12. Other Public Facilities

There are no emergency shelters in Gilmer County. A tri-county emergency children's shelter is planned for construction in Pickens County and will serve Gilmer County. In the future, the need for a separate facility in Gilmer County is likely.

A Family Resource Center is planned for Gilmer County which would provide a user-friendly, one-stop facility housing a variety of service providers, while saving taxpayer dollars. Having providers housed in one location would allow for better communication and interaction between agencies and prevent duplication of services. The following agencies would potentially be housed in the facility.

#### **Family Crisis Services**

- Department of Family and Children Services
- Gilmer County Sexual Assault Center
- Prevent Child Abuse Gilmer
- Foster Parents Association
- Dept. of Juvenile Justice

#### **Emergency Family Services**

- Family Connection
- Food Pantry
- Clothes Closet
- Community Action
- Habitat for Humanity

#### **Education and Youth Services**

- Department of Labor
- Family Connection (including Low Income Housing Program, Targeted Case Management Services, Hispanic Services Bureau, and Youth Leadership Development Center)

## 5.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

In Section 5.1, the capacity, performance, general condition, and expected life of the community facilities and services in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay was provided. This assessment of current and future community facilities and services needs involves the following:

- an analysis of the data provided in Section 5.1., including consideration of the implications of historical trends, current conditions, and 20-year forecasts,
- an evaluation of this data in terms of its significance to the community and its relevance to other plan elements,
- a statement(s) of current and future needs base upon projections of future growth, and
- an assessment of how these needs may affect or be affected by other elements.

This assessment can be completed by answering the following questions which were derived from Section 110-12-1-.0 4(12)(e)2.(ii) of Georgia's Minimum Local Planning Standards.

- Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the current needs of the community and how can the utilization of existing facilities be optimized (e.g. through conservation measures, multi-purpose uses, increased productivity, extended operating hours) as an alternative to expanding existing facilities to meet community needs and goals?
- Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the future needs of the community or will improvements be needed to accommodate anticipated population and economic growth?

These questions are answered in Section 5.2.1. and 5.2.2.

### 5.2.1. **Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the current needs of the community and how can the utilization of existing facilities be optimized as an alternative to expanding existing facilities to meet community needs and goals?**

Many of the community's existing facilities are operating at capacity and plans are underway to remedy the situation. New planned facilities include a county courthouse, a library, a middle school, a hospital, and a tri-county emergency children's shelter.

Other facilities and services which do not meet current needs include the following:

- Emergency Management – a new fire station headquarters is needed to replace the existing facility on South Main Street.
- Health Department – additional space or a new facility is needed.
- Family Resource Center – a shared facility is needed.
- Parks and Recreation – additional passive and active recreation facilities are needed.
- Gilmer County Arts and Heritage Association – a permanent facility is needed.
- Planning Department – additional staff is needed.
- Environmental Health Department – additional staff is needed.

Most of the existing public facilities are generally used at or near capacity. Alternatives for expanding capacity without the construction of new facilities is limited; however, a capital facilities maintenance plan would be very beneficial to ensure that facilities are well-maintained and can be safely used for as long as possible.

**5.2.2. Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the future needs of the community or will improvements be needed to accommodate anticipated population and economic growth?**

Growth in Gilmer County is occurring at a rapid pace and new facilities and the addition of staff are needed in several key areas to meet both current and future needs. Table 5-M provides an estimate of staffing needs for 2015 and 2025 while Table 5-N on the following page provides an estimate of future community facility needs for the years 2015 and 2025.

**Table 5-M. Potential Community Facilities and Services Needs (Personnel)**

Community Service	Current # of Employees	Current Level of Service	Desired Level of Service	2015 Needs	2025 Needs
<b>Gilmer County Sheriff's Department</b>	1 Sheriff 31 Deputies, Officers, and Investigators (plus 6 other staff)	1 Sheriff plus 1 Deputy/Officer/ Investigator per 757 persons	1 Sheriff plus 1 Deputy/Officer/ Investigator per 750 persons	1 Sheriff plus 60 Deputies/ Officers/ Investigators	1 Sheriff plus 98 Deputies/ Officers/ Investigators
<b>Gilmer County Fire Department</b>	1 Chief, 3 FT firefighters, 3 PT firefighters, 80 volunteer firefighters, 2 arson investigators	1.5 FT firefighters per station per shift (10 stations)	4 FT firefighters per station per shift	144 FT equivalent firefighters (12 stations)	144 FT equivalent firefighters (12 stations)
<b>Gilmer County EMS</b>	17 FT EMTs 10 PT EMTs	8.5 FT EMTs and 5 PT EMTs per station (2 stations)	same as current	34 FT EMTs 20 PT EMTs (4 stations)	34 FT EMTs 20 PT EMTs (4 stations)
<b>Gilmer County Health Department</b>	1 Director plus 11 staff members including 4 nurses	1 nurse per 5,864 persons	same as current	8 nurses	13 nurses
<b>East Ellijay Police Department</b>	1 Chief and 5 Officers	1 Chief plus 1 Officer per 141 persons	same as current	1 Chief and 10 Officers	1 Chief and 13 Officers
<b>Ellijay Police Department</b>	1 Chief and 9 Officers	1 Chief plus 1 Officer per 176 persons	same as current	1 Chief and 12 Officers	1 Chief and 13 Officers
<b>Ellijay Fire Department</b>	1 Chief, 3 FT firefighters, 20 volunteer firefighters	1 chief plus 1 FT firefighter per shift	3 firefighters per station per shift	9 FT equivalent firefighters	9 FT equivalent firefighters

Population in 2000: Gilmer – 23,456; Ellijay – 1,584; East Ellijay – 707  
 Population in 2015: Gilmer – 45,119; Ellijay – 2,010; East Ellijay – 1,332  
 Population in 2025: Gilmer – 68,241; Ellijay – 2,250; East Ellijay – 1,752

**Table 5-N. Potential Community Facilities and Services Needs (Capital Projects)**

Community Facility or Service	Potential Future Project	Date of Need	
		by 2015	by 2025
Solid Waste Management	Additional Convenience Centers	✓	✓
East Ellijay General Government and Police Department	New City Hall to Include Police Department Offices	✓	--
Gilmer County Fire Department	New Headquarters	✓	--
	Additional Satellite Station	✓	--
Gilmer County EMS	New Ambulance Stations (2)	✓	--
Ellijay Fire Department/Police Department	New Fire Station possibly to include facilities for the Ellijay Police Department	✓	--
Hospital (private)	New Hospital	✓	--
Health Department	Additional Square Footage	✓	--
Public Parks	3 or 4 satellite parks	✓	✓
	multi-purpose building	✓	--
	football complex	✓	--
	2 soccer complexes	✓	--
Gilmer County General Government	East Ellijay City Hall	✓	--
	Gilmer County Courthouse		
Education	New Middle School	✓	✓
	New High School	✓	✓
	New Elementary School	✓	✓
Library	New Library	✓	--
Senior Center	Additional Square Footage	--	✓
Family Resource Center	New Facility	✓	--

**Population in 2000:** Gilmer – 23,456; Ellijay – 1,584; East Ellijay – 707  
**Population in 2015:** Gilmer – 45,119; Ellijay – 2,010; East Ellijay – 1,332  
**Population in 2025:** Gilmer – 68,241; Ellijay – 2,250; East Ellijay – 1,752

## 5.3. Community Goals

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that sets forth a plan for community facilities and services in terms of the following:

- capital improvements,
- services expansions, and
- utilization strategies.

The implementation program must support the Community Vision and include actions which should be undertaken to achieve the Community Vision.

### 5.3.1. Community Vision

In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

**Livability.** We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.

**Community Character.** We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.

**Shared Direction.** The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.

### 5.3.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following community facilities and services goal and associated objectives and action items:

<p><b>Goal:</b> Public Facilities which have the capacity, and which are in place when needed, to support and attract growth and development and maintain and enhance the quality of life of all residents in the community.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 1: Regional Solutions. *</b> Regional solutions should be used when needs are shared by more than one local jurisdiction, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate multi-jurisdictional use of regional water supply sources including Carters Lake.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 2: Water Supply and Treatment.</b> Assure an adequate and economical supply of water for the growth needs of the county and incorporated cities.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and implement the Water and Sewer Authority's CIE.</li> <li>Continue to make system-wide improvements.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 3: Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment.</b> Provide public sewer service to growth areas as consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and implement the Water and Sewer Authority's CIE.</li> <li>Continue to make system-wide improvements.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 4: Solid Waste Management.</b> Manage solid waste activities in a manner consistent with State requirements and the Joint Solid Waste Management Plan.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update, adopt, and maintain the Solid Waste Management Plan.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 5: Public Safety.</b> Provide excellent emergency management and law enforcement services commensurate with the unique needs of the area.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct a new County Emergency Management Headquarters building.</li> <li>Construct one additional satellite fire stations.</li> <li>Construct two additional EMS stations.</li> <li>Construct a fire and/or police department building in the City of Ellijay.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 6: Public Health Facilities.</b> Support improvements in the area's health care system.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for and develop a new public health facility.</li> <li>Support the development of a new hospital and expanded nursing home.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 7: Recreation.</b> Provide recreation facilities and programs that meet both the active and passive recreational needs of community's residents.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</li> <li>Develop up to 4 satellite parks in the community.</li> <li>Develop a multi-purpose recreation building to include a gymnasium, office space, and classrooms.</li> <li>Develop a football complex.</li> <li>Develop two soccer complexes.</li> <li>Provide additional multi-purpose trails throughout the community.</li> <li>Seek grant funding for recreation projects when appropriate.</li> </ol>

\* A DCA "Quality Communities" Objective



<p><b>Policy 8: Government Facilities.</b> Expand and/or construct government facilities necessary to meet the demands of the growing population.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Construct a new County Courthouse.</li> <li>b. Construct a new East Ellijay City Hall.</li> <li>c. Seek a new location for the Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 9: Education Facilities.</b> Provide excellent education facilities and support coordination between local governments and the school system to assure new school locations are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.</p>	<p><b>Action Items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support the development of the new public school campus on Clear Creek Road.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 10: Cultural and other Public Facilities.</b> Support the expansion of cultural facilities and programs and other public facilities in keeping with population growth.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek a permanent location for the Creative Arts Guild.</li> <li>b. Support Gilmer County Family Connection efforts to construct a Gilmer County Family Resource Center as well as an emergency children’s shelter.</li> <li>c. Support the development of a new library.</li> </ul>

# 6

## Land Use

The Land Use Element of this Joint Comprehensive Plan provides the following:

- an inventory and assessment of how land is currently being used in Ellijay, East Ellijay, and unincorporated Gilmer County,
- a discussion of the community's needs and desires for both the type and location of future growth in the community, and
- goals, policies, and strategies for future land use that support and reflect the economic, housing, natural and cultural resources, and community facilities and services goals and policies of this plan.

### 6.1. Inventory

Gilmer County's existing land use patterns have a direct impact on the county's future growth potential; therefore, an analysis of these existing patterns is important as the basis for the preparation of the future land use plan. Existing land use in Gilmer County was inventoried in late spring/early summer of 2003. The land use categories used in the inventory are based on standards established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and include the following:

- **Residential.** This category includes land used for single family and multi-family residential uses.
- **Commercial.** This category includes land used for non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service, and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.
- **Industrial.** This category includes 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. Public 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, and hospitals. Facilities that are publicly owned, but would be classified more accurately in another land use category, are not included in this category. For

#### *Element Outline:*

##### **6.1. Inventory**

- 6.1.1. *Residential Land Uses*
- 6.1.2. *Commercial Land Uses*
- 6.1.3. *Industrial Land Uses*
- 6.1.4. *Public and Institutional Land Uses*
- 6.1.5. *Transportation, Communication, and Utilities Land Uses*
- 6.1.6. *Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Land Uses*
- 6.1.7. *Agriculture Land Uses*
- 6.1.8. *Forestry Land Uses*
- 6.1.9. *Vacant or Undeveloped Land*

##### **6.2. Assessment of Existing Land Use**

##### **6.3. Projection of Future Land Use Needs**

##### **6.4. Community Goals and Implementation Program**

- 6.4.1. *Future Land Use Map*
- 6.4.2. *Future Land Use Narrative*
- 6.4.3. *Goal, Policies, and Action Items*

example, publicly owned parks are included in the Park/Recreation/Conservation category, while landfills would fall under the Industrial classification.

- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities.** This category includes such uses as roads, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, or other similar uses.
- **Park/Recreation/Conservation.** This category includes land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses.
- **Agriculture.** This category includes land dedicated to agriculture, farming, or other similar rural uses such as pasture land not in commercial use.
- **Forestry.** This category includes land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting or other similar rural uses such as woodlands not in commercial use.

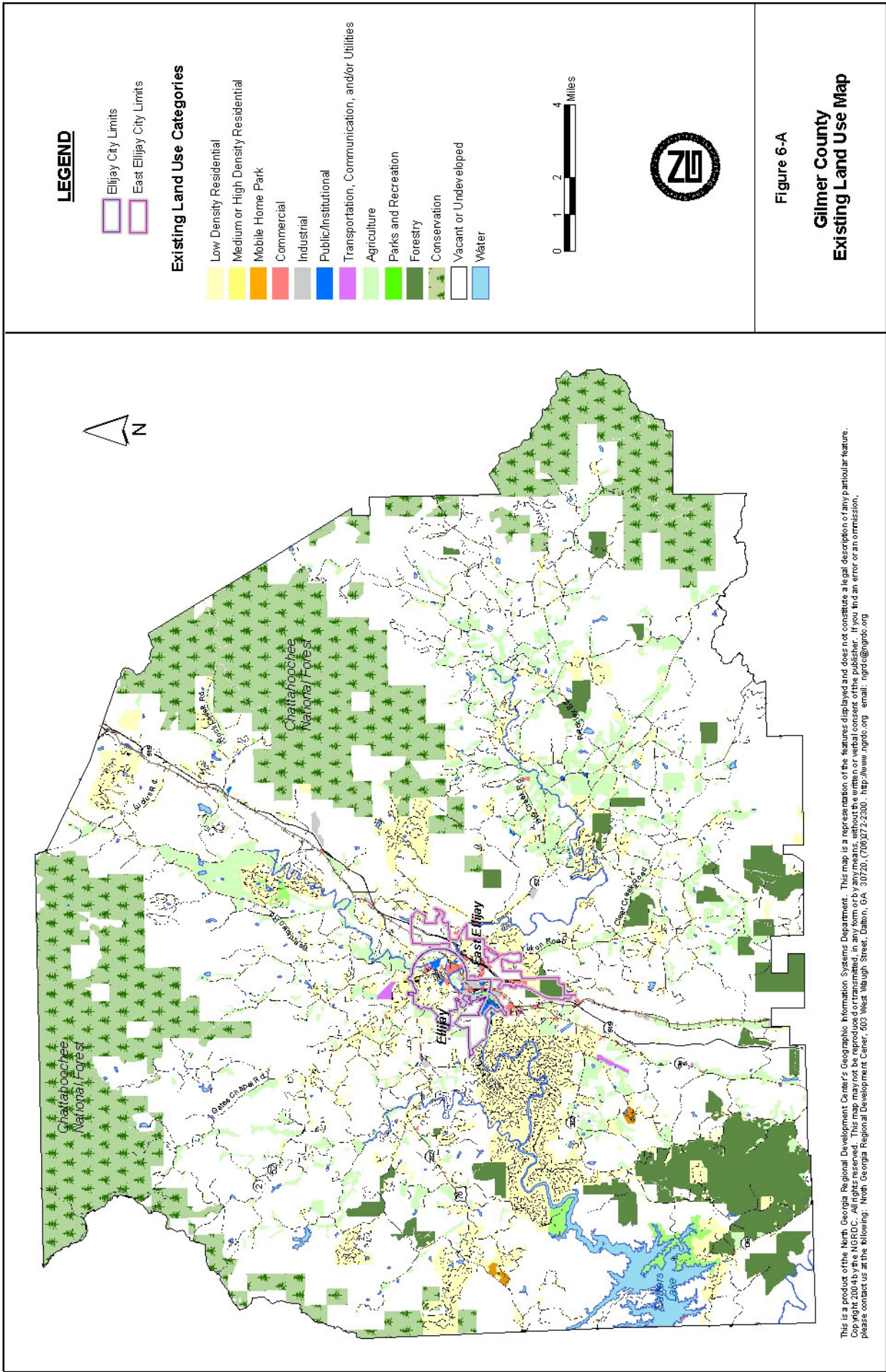
Table 6-A provides a breakdown of land use types by acreage and percentage of total land area.

**Table 6-A. Existing Land Use in Gilmer County**

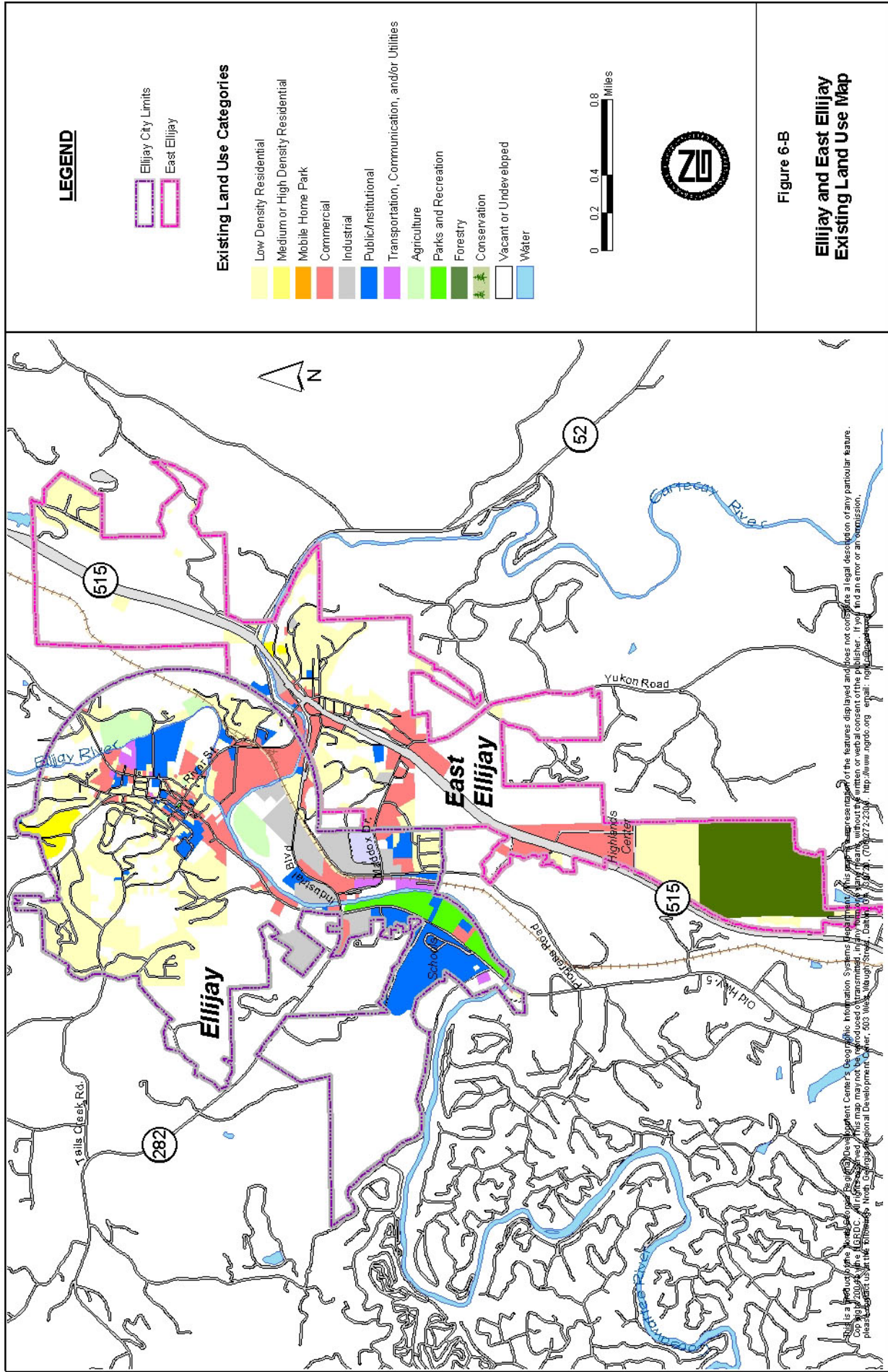
Land Use Type	Gilmer County		Ellijay		East Ellijay		Unincorporated Gilmer County	
	acres	%	acres	%	acres	%	acres	%
<b>Residential</b>	26,162							
Single Family	25,968	9.4%	430	19.9%	309	17.8%	25,229	9.3%
Multi-Family	36	0.0%	23	1.1%	3	0.2%	10	0.0%
Mobile Home Park	158	0.1%	0	-	0	-	158	0.1%
<b>Commercial</b>	608	0.2%	164	7.6%	141	8.1%	303	0.1%
<b>Industrial</b>	416	0.2%	130	6.0%	11	0.6%	275	0.1%
<b>Public or Institutional</b>	248	0.1%	168	7.8%	8	0.5%	72	0.0%
<b>Transportation, Communication, or Utilities</b>	8,048							
Road Right-of-Way	7,742	2.8%	153	7.1%	170	9.8%	7,419	2.7%
Rail Right-of-Way	124	0.0%	8	0.4%	3	0.2%	113	0.0%
Communications, Utilities, and Other Transportation	182	0.1%	21	1.0%	-	-	161	0.1%
<b>Parks, Recreation, or Conservation</b>	54,862							
Parks and Recreation	907	0.3%	48	2.2%	-	-	859	0.3%
Conservation	53,955	19.6%	-	-	-	-	53,955	19.8%
<b>Agriculture</b>	15,629	5.7%	54	2.5%	-	-	15,575	5.7%
<b>Forestry</b>	12,732	4.6%	-	-	195	11.2%	12,537	4.6%
<b>Vacant or Undeveloped</b>	153,773	55.8%	938	43.3%	894	47.8%	151,941	55.9%
<b>Water</b>	3,275	1.2%	29	1.3%	5	0.3%	3,241	1.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>275,753</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,739</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>271,848</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NGRDC GIS

Existing land use for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay is illustrated figures 6-A, 6-B, and 6-C on the following pages.



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### 6.1.1. Residential Land Uses

Approximately 9.5% of the land, or 26,162 acres, in Gilmer County is used for residential purposes. Nearly all of the residential development is single-family in nature. Residential land uses account for almost 20% of land area in Ellijay and East Ellijay.

Residential land uses have been grouped into the following categories:

**Single Family.** All land area or part of area with principal structures consisting of single family detached housing.

**Multi-Family.** All land area with principal structures consisting of attached housing types including duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes, townhouses, and apartments.

**Mobile Home Parks.** All land area with principal structures consisting of mobile homes and trailer homes in mobile home parks.



Much of the residential development in Gilmer County over the past decade has been of the “second home” or “vacation home” variety.

### 6.1.2. Commercial Land Uses

**Gilmer County.** Less than 1% of the land in Gilmer County (608 acres) is used for commercial purposes. Most of the commercial development is located within the limits of Ellijay and East Ellijay, with approximately 8% of the land in each city being used for commercial purposes. Commercial enterprises which are located outside the city limits are generally found along major road corridors such as Highway 282 and Highway 52 East and include uses such as convenience stores and apple houses.

**Ellijay.** Downtown Ellijay serves as is a commercial hub for the Ellijay. It contains a variety of commercial uses such as restaurants, retail shops, and professional offices. Because of recent streetscaping efforts, it offers a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Other commercial areas include Highway 5/Main Street and Highway 52/River Street. A variety of commercial uses are located along these corridors such as car washes, convenience stores, and small offices and shops.



The commercial area near the square of downtown Ellijay is pedestrian-friendly due to recent streetscaping efforts.



**Lowe's is one of the recent "big-box" retailers to open on Highway 515.**

**East Ellijay.** East Ellijay has been experiencing rapid commercial growth in recent years, with much of the commercial development locating along Highway 515. Recent development includes a new super Wal-Mart, a Lowe's home improvement store, and a Goody's department store. Other new businesses in the area along Highway 515 include automobile dealerships, car washes, a motel, and fast food restaurants.

centers, such as the shopping center where the old Wal-Mart was located. Efforts are underway to find a new tenant for that location.

This new development has led to vacancies in older commercial

Other commercial land uses in East Ellijay include fast-food restaurants, grocery stores, automobile dealers, pharmacies, banks, gas stations, specialty retail shops, hair salons, appliance dealers, real estate offices, and accounting offices.

### 6.1.3. Industrial Land Uses

**Gilmer County.** Less than 1% of the land in Gilmer County is used for industrial purposes. Most of the industrial development is located within the limits of Ellijay, with 6% of the land in the city being used for industrial purposes. Less than 1% of the land in East Ellijay is used for industry.

Examples of industries in Gilmer County, including the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay include Gold Kist (poultry processing), Regal Ellijay (manufacturer of bath mat sets and rugs), Blue Ridge Commercial Carpet (tufted carpet manufacturer), and White Path Fab Tech (wire harness assembly).

Efforts are underway to recruit additional specialty manufacturing businesses to the area.

### 6.1.4. Public and Institutional Land Uses

**Gilmer County.** Less than 1% of the land in Gilmer County is used for public or institutional purposes. Most of the land used for public or institutional development is located within the limits of Ellijay, with 7.8% of the land in the city being used for such purposes. Less than 1% of the land in East Ellijay is devoted to public or institutional use.

**Ellijay.** The property owned by the public school system comprises the largest amount of acreage in the city limits. Other public land uses



**The Gilmer County School System owns approximately 511 acres, including the 300 acres recently purchased on Clear Creek Road.**

in the City include City Hall, the County Courthouse, the public library, the Post Office, the medical center, and numerous churches.

**East Ellijay.** Public and institutional land uses in East Ellijay include City Hall and several churches.

### **6.1.5. Transportation, Communication, and Utilities Land Uses**

Approximately 3% of the land in Gilmer County is used for transportation, communication, and utilities. Streets make up the largest portion of this land use category, with 7.1% of Ellijay and 9.8% of East Ellijay being used for road rights-of-way.

### **6.1.6. Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Land Uses**

Less than 1% of the land in Gilmer County is used for parks and recreation, while almost 20% is in conservation. The land under conservation is located in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Park, recreation, and conservation areas are described in more detail in Section 4.1.14.

### **6.1.7. Agriculture Land Uses**

Almost 6% of the land in Gilmer County (15,629 acres) is used for agriculture. Nearly all of this land is in the unincorporated parts of the county.

Farmland is discussed in more detail in Section 4.1.11.



**Agriculture is an important industry in Gilmer County.**

### **6.1.8. Forestry Land Uses**

Almost 5% of the land in Gilmer County (12,732 acres) is used for forestry purposes. Nearly all of this land is in the unincorporated parts of the county.

### **6.1.9. Vacant or Undeveloped Land**

Over half of the land Gilmer County (153,753 acres) is vacant or undeveloped. Just under half of the land located within the limits of Ellijay and East Ellijay is also vacant or undeveloped. The mountainous topography of Gilmer County is a primary reason why so much land is vacant or undeveloped.



## 6.2. Assessment of Existing Land Use

In Section 6.1, the capacity, performance, general condition, and expected life of the community facilities and services in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay was provided. The assessment of current and future community facilities and services needs involves the following:

- an analysis of the data provided in Section 5.1., including consideration of the implications of historical trends, current conditions, and 20-year forecasts,
- an evaluation of this data in terms of its significance to the community and its relevance to other plan elements,
- a statement of current and future needs base upon projections of future growth, and
- an assessment of how these needs may affect or be affected by other elements.

This assessment can be completed by answering the following questions which were derived from Section 110-12-1-.0 4(12)(e)2.(ii) of Georgia's Minimum Local Planning Standards.

- What historical factors have led to current development patterns?
- How do land use patterns and densities relate to the provision of infrastructure improvements?
- Are there blighted areas, areas in need of redevelopment, or transitional areas in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay?
- Are there environmentally sensitive or locally valued land and resources which are unsuitable for development or in need of special protection or management practices?
- Are there any problems with existing patterns of land use such as extensive single-use districts, strip commercial development, or "leap-frog" development?
- What opportunities exist for infill development, traditional neighborhood development, and other compact forms of urban development?
- What local development policies can affect future land use patterns?

These questions are answered in Section 6.2.1. through 6.2.4.

### 6.2.1. What historical factors have led to current development patterns?

Several factors have led to current development patterns including the following:

- mountainous topography,
- streams, creeks, and flood control structures,
- National Forest lands,
- development of resort communities,
- school construction,
- creation of Carter's Lake, and
- construction of Georgia Highway 515, the Appalachian Highway.



**The construction of Georgia Highway 515 has had a great impact upon development in Gilmer County.**

### **6.2.2. How do land use patterns and densities relate to the provision of infrastructure improvements?**

Typically, infrastructure improvements have been made in response to development needs. For example, significant infrastructure improvements will be required to facilitate the development of the new public school campus and proposed business and technology park on Clear Creek Road. Another example is the extension water and sewer lines to the Highlands development on 515. Infrastructure was extended as part of the development agreement.

An example of infrastructure being provided to stimulate development is the construction of Georgia Highway 515, the Appalachian Highway. This road opened up large tracts of land for development that would likely have remained undeveloped otherwise.

### **6.2.3. Are there blighted areas, areas in need of redevelopment, or transitional areas in Gilmer County, Ellijay, or East Ellijay?**

There are several abandoned or idle commercial and industrial sites in the area including the old Wal-Mart shopping center and the old Shaw plant.

Redevelopment along Old Highway 5 South should be encouraged as an alternative to Highway 515. Low intensity commercial and light industrial development would be appropriate. New development should be conducted in a manner which will allow for the future widening of Old Highway 5.

Numerous improvements have been made in downtown Ellijay; however, the downtown would benefit from an overall master plan which would include items such as streetscaping, parking, façade improvements, housing alternatives, infill development, commercial support and recruitment, and marketing. Efforts at finding tenants or new owners of vacant buildings such as the old NAPA Auto Parts store will be important. The construction of the new Gilmer County Courthouse and the reuse of the existing courthouse building will also have a great impact on the future of downtown Ellijay.

### **6.2.4. Are there environmentally sensitive or locally valued land and resources which are unsuitable for development or in need of special protection or management practices?**

Gilmer County is full of environmentally sensitive lands including steep slopes and small streams, tributaries, and headwaters. Many of these areas receive some protection from existing regulations. Water quality and water availability is of concern to residents and business owners and measures are being taken within the community to promote water quality. (Refer to Sections 4.1.2 and 4.3.2 for more detail.)

Other locally valued lands and resources in Gilmer County include the numerous flood control dams and lakes, the golf course, the River Park, and the square.

**6.2.5. Are there any problems with existing patterns of land use such as extensive single-use districts, strip commercial development, or “leap-frog” development?**

Because of the lack of zoning in the county, many residents feel that developers have been directing growth in the community. Strip commercial and “leap-frog” development is occurring along Highway 515 and this pattern is expected to continue, with the flattest properties likely to be developed first. As discussed in Section 8.2.1., this type of development pattern along Highway 515 is going to drastically reduce the highway’s capacity because more traffic signals and lower speed limits will be requested. In addition, without some form of design guidelines for signs and landscaping, auto-oriented commercial development has the potential to detract from the natural beauty of the community.

**6.2.6. What opportunities exist for infill development, traditional neighborhood development, and other compact forms of urban development?**

The mountainous topography found in much of Gilmer County limits the opportunities for traditional neighborhood development and other compact forms of urban development; however, this type of development can be encouraged in areas where public water and sewer infrastructure exists. Infill opportunities exist in limited areas within the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay. These opportunities should be identified as part of a downtown master plan for the City of Ellijay.

**6.2.7. What local development policies can affect future land use patterns?**

The Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have zoning ordinances which, when used in conjunction with this Comprehensive Plan, will guide future land use patterns. Similarly, the proposed Gilmer County Land Use Ordinance (zoning ordinance) is intended to establish minimum standards for the use of land and the improvements which are located on the land. The ordinance is designed to accomplish the following:

- protect existing development;
- lessen congestion on the streets;
- secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers;
- promote health and the general welfare;
- provide adequate light and air;
- prevent overcrowding of land;
- avoid undue concentration of population;
- ease the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements;
- promote desirable living conditions,
- sustain the stability of neighborhoods,
- protect property against blight and depreciation;
- secure economy in government expenditures;
- conserve the value of buildings;
- encourage the most appropriate use of land and structures; and
- improve and protect the overall aesthetics of the community.

### 6.3. Projection of Future Land Use Needs

Future land use needs for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay were prepared for the years 2015 and 2025. Tables 6-B and 6-C show the amount of land that will be needed to accommodate the anticipated future population and economic growth presented in the population, economic development, and housing elements.

**Table 6-B. Projected Future Land Use Needs in Gilmer County (unincorporated and incorporated areas)**

Land Use Type	2003		2015 (Projected)		2025 (Projected)	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Residential	26,162	9.5%	49,968	18.1%	66,204	24.0%
Commercial	608	0.2%	874	0.3%	1,065	0.4%
Industrial	416	0.2%	684	0.2%	841	0.3%
Public or Institutional	248	0.1%	448	0.2%	598	0.2%
Road Right-of-Way	7,742	2.8%	12,993	4.7%	17,177	6.2%
Rail Right-of-Way	124	0.0%	124	0.0%	124	0.0%
Communications, Utilities, and Other Transportation	182	0.1%	197	0.1%	212	0.1%
Parks and Recreation	907	0.3%	967	0.4%	1027	0.4%
Conservation	53,955	19.6%	53,955	19.6%	53,955	19.6%
Agriculture	15,629	5.7%	14,429	5.2%	13,429	4.9%
Forestry	12,732	4.6%	10,932	4.0%	9,432	3.4%
Vacant or Undeveloped	153,773	55.8%	12,907	4.7%	108,415	39.3%
Water	3,275	1.2%	3,275	1.2%	3,275	1.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>275,753</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>275,753</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>275,753</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: NGRDC

**Table 6-C. Projected Future Land Use Needs in Ellijay and East Ellijay**

Land Use Type	Ellijay			East Ellijay		
	2003	2015	2025	2003	2015	2025
Residential	453	622	699	312	547	744
Commercial	164	180	200	141	325	450
Industrial	130	180	230	11	21	21
Public or Institutional	168	183	193	8	28	38
Road Right-of-Way	153	291	330	173	230	313
Rail Right-of-Way	8	8	8	3	3	3
Communications, Utilities, and Other Transportation	21	26	31	0	5	10
Parks and Recreation	48	58	68	0	10	20
Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agriculture	54	25	0	0	0	0
Forestry	0	0	0	195	120	45
Vacant or Undeveloped	938	562	376	894	444	90
Water	29	31	31	5	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>1,739</b>	<b>1,739</b>	<b>1,739</b>

Source: NGRDC

### **6.3.1. Residential Land Use Needs**

Residential land use needs are based upon future housing projections (Section 3.2.2.) and the current land consumption trend of 2.2 acres per unit in Gilmer County, 0.7 acres per unit in Ellijay, and 1.2 acres per unit in East Ellijay.

Based upon these projections, approximately 40,000 additional acres (66,204 total) might be needed in Gilmer County for residential purposes by the year 2025. The actual amount used will likely be smaller given the number of undeveloped lots that currently exist in the county.

In addition, the amount that is actually needed to accommodate the projected number of housing units can be reduced by encouraging compact, higher density development patterns in areas where water, sewer, and other community facilities are provided.

### **6.3.2. Commercial and Industrial Land Use Needs**

Commercial and Industrial land use needs are based upon future employment projections (Section 2.1.1.1.) and the current land consumption trend of 0.3 acre per commercial job and 0.1 acre per industrial job in Gilmer County. Based upon these projections, 882 additional acres (1,906 total) might be needed in Gilmer County for commercial and industrial uses by the year 2025.

Given that Ellijay already has 1,068 acres zoned for commercial or industrial uses and East Ellijay has 898 acres zoned for commercial uses, the need to rezone property in the unincorporated areas to either commercial or industrial uses should be limited to areas where adequate infrastructure exists or can be economically provided. Leap-frog development or commercial and industrial development in remote areas of the county should be discouraged.

### **6.3.3. Other Land Use Needs**

Growth in the other land use categories was based upon a variety of factors. Public/Institutional growth was based in large part upon the development of the new school campus on Clear Creek Road. It was estimated that the entire property would be developed by 2025.

The amount of land needed for road right-of-way was estimated to be 25% of the total acres developed for residential, commercial, industrial, and public or institutional uses.

In terms of parks and recreation, the cities were projected to add a total of 20 acres each by the year 2025. An additional 80 acres were projected for the unincorporated areas.

Lands used for agriculture and forestry were projected to decline by 100 acres and 150 acres per year, respectively.

The total amount of vacant or undeveloped land is projected to decline from 153,773 acres to 108,415 acres by 2025.

## 6.4. Community Goals and Implementation Program

### 6.4.1. Future Land Use Map

The future land use map is designed to reflect the results of the assessment of current and future land use needs. It depicts the general location, distribution, and characteristics of future land uses. The following land use categories are included on the future land use map:

- Commercial
- Crossroads Commercial
- Industrial
- Public or Institutional
- Transportation, Communication, and Utilities
- Low Density Residential
- Medium to High Density Residential
- Agriculture, Forestry, and Very Low Density Residential
- Parks and Recreation
- Conservation

Two of the categories listed above were not used in the existing land use map: “Crossroads Commercial” and “Agriculture, Forestry, and Very Low Density Residential.”

Crossroads Commercial areas are designated as land within a 400 meter (437 yard) radius of crossroads that currently have one or more existing commercial uses such as a convenience store, plus another non-residential use such as a church, fire station, or other landmark. These are areas which in the future will serve the nearby rural neighborhood and the commuting or traveling public. Typical uses will include convenience stores, small sit-down restaurants (as opposed to fast-food, drive thru restaurants), and a limited range of specialty and professional services such as a hair salon, dry cleaner, gift shop, etc.

The areas which are designated for agriculture, forestry, and/or very low density residential development are areas which are currently rural in character and are currently either (1) undeveloped, (2) used for forestry or agriculture, and/or (3) have very steep slopes. They are likely to remain as such in the future unless water and sewer service becomes available. This designation is applied throughout much of the county in order to reflect both non-residential and residential potential.

The future land use maps for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are shown on the following pages. The land use maps show a development pattern in which all vacant land has been consumed by the year 2025. While all land will not be consumed by this time, the future land use map is intended to reflect the development potential of all property and the desired land use pattern over time. Because development cannot be accurately predicted at the parcel level, the future land use maps are generalized and are intended to provide ample locational choices while still being consistent with the desired land use policies.

Because the future land use map is based upon general policy guidelines, it should be reviewed periodically and revised when appropriate in order to reflect development trends and conditions in the community.

## 6.4.2. Future Land Use Narrative

This section summarizes the reasoning behind the land use patterns shown on the future land use maps.

**Community Vision.** The following community vision evolved out of the planning process. The future land use map was developed with this vision in mind.

*In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:*

**Livability.** *We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.*

**Community Character.** *We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.*

**Shared Direction.** *The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.*

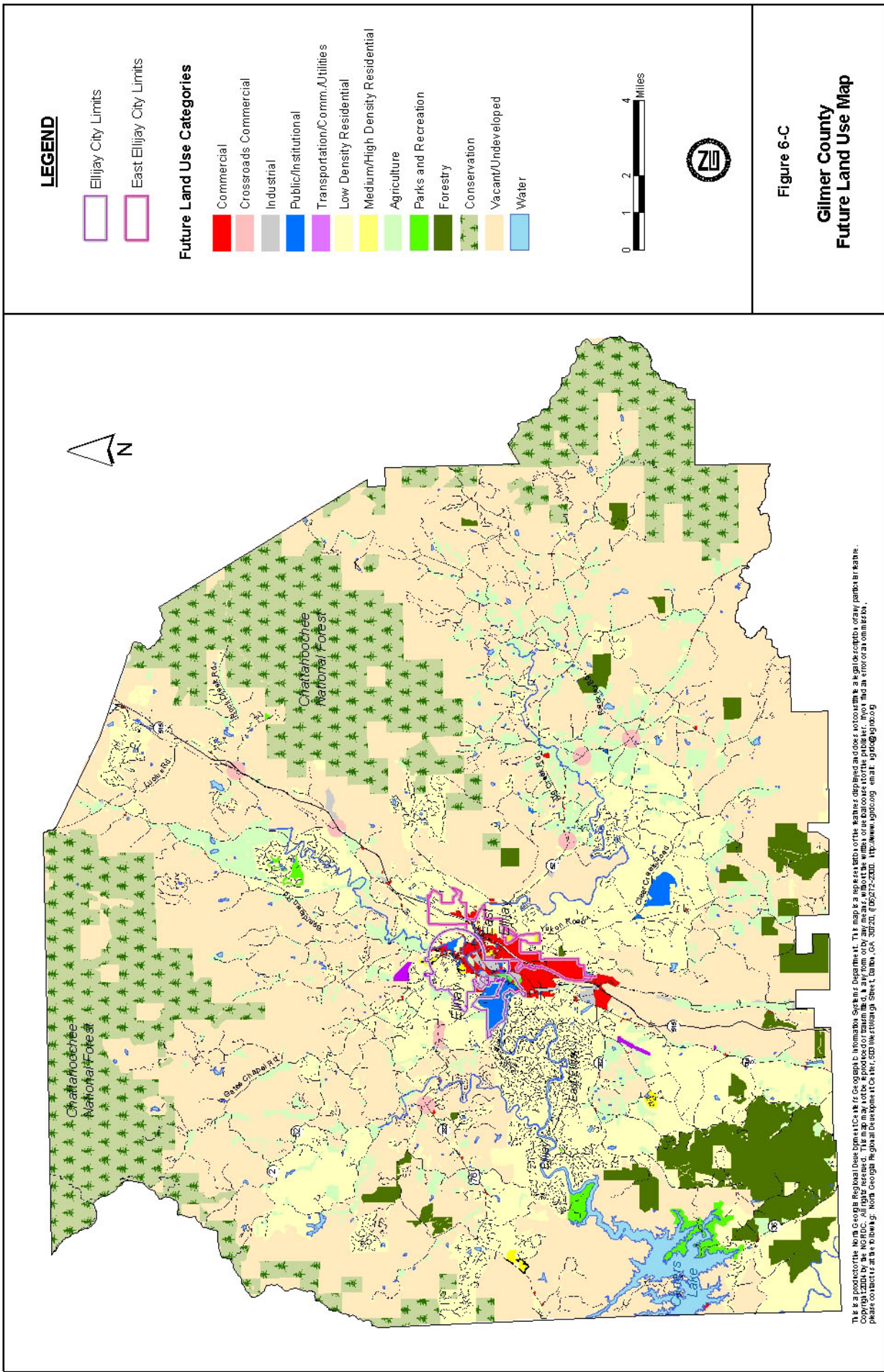
**Growth and Transition Areas.** Several areas in Gilmer County can be expected to see major growth in the next ten years. The first is along Highway 515, specifically around the Highlands shopping area in East Ellijay. Commercial and mixed-use developments are expected to continue to occur in this area.

The second area expected to experience growth is in the vicinity of the new school campus on Clear Creek Road. A variety of residential developments and some light commercial development is likely to occur there when the school campus is developed, and especially when water and sewer service is extended to the area.

A third area of the county which will experience growth will be in the vicinity of the new hospital campus. The location for the new hospital has yet to be determined, but its location will impact growth in its immediate vicinity. Medical and other hospital support business are likely to locate near the new hospital.

**Commercial Development.** In 2003, Gilmer County had approximately 603 acres of land which were either being used for or developed for commercial uses. The projection of future land use needs shows a potential demand for a total of 1,065 acres of commercial property. In order to provide for flexibility and opportunity for commercial growth, the Future Land Use Map includes a total of 1,908 acres of commercial property and an additional 814 acres of crossroads commercial property. This represents an increase from the year 2003 amount of commercial property of 351%.

*The Future Land Use Map includes 2,722 acres of commercial property. In 2003, there were 603 acres of land either being used commercially or being developed for commercial use.*



**LEGEND**

- Ellijay City Limits
- East Ellijay City Limits

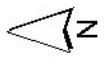
**Future Land Use Categories**

- Commercial
- Crossroads Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Transportation/Comm./Utilities
- Low Density Residential
- Medium/High Density Residential
- Agriculture
- Parks and Recreation
- Forestry
- Conservation
- Vacant/Undeveloped
- Water



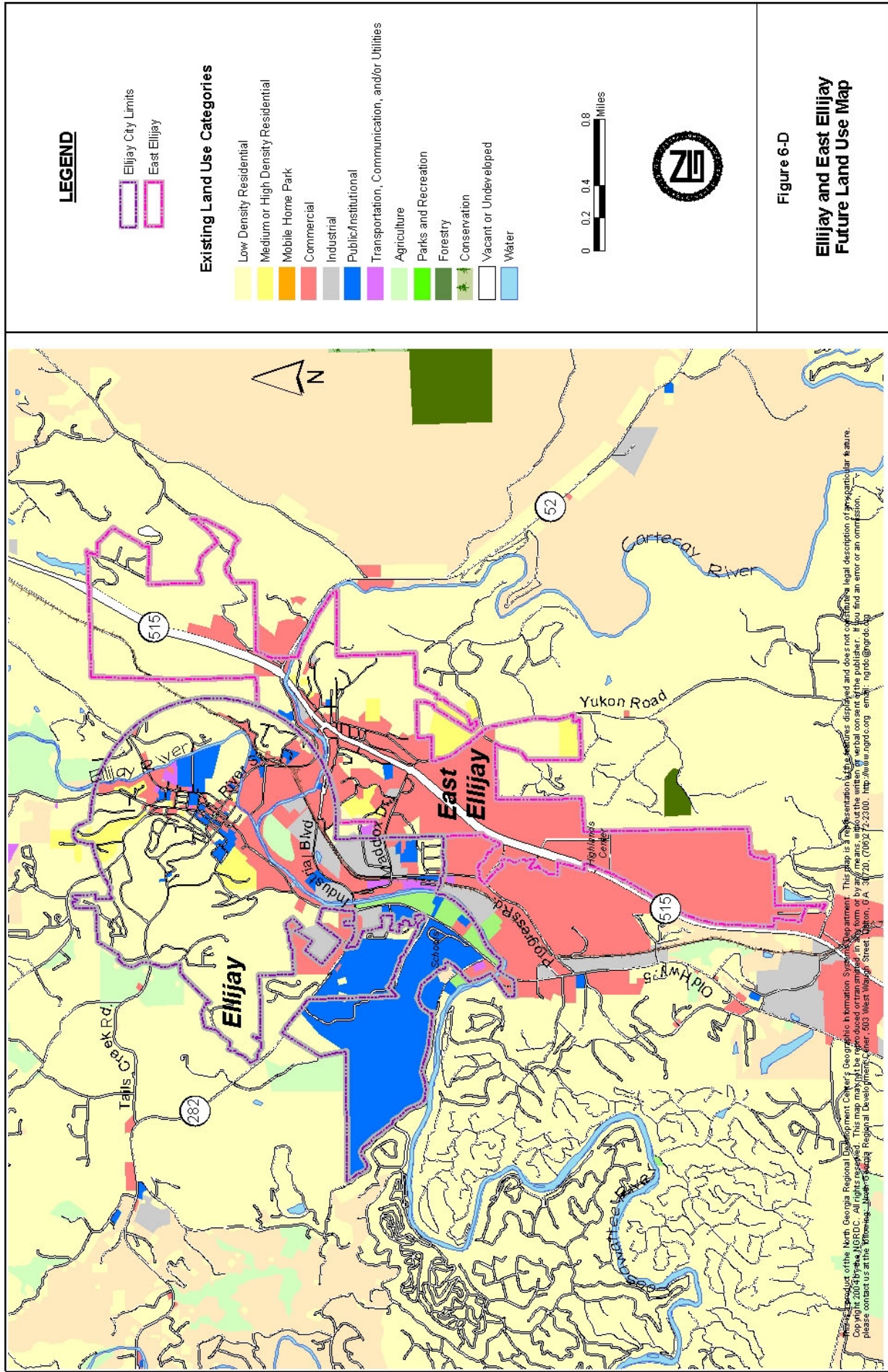
Figure 6-C

**Gilmer County  
Future Land Use Map**



This map was prepared by the Georgia Regional Development Authority (GRDA) for the Georgia Regional Development Authority. The map is a representation of the future land use categories and is not a guarantee of any particular use. The map is for informational purposes only and should not be used as a basis for any legal or financial decision. For more information, please contact the GRDA at 404-271-2300. <http://www.grda.org>





**Highway 515.** Development along Highway 515 can be expected to continue in the future. The pace and scale will depend largely upon access to the state-right-of-way. The Georgia Department of Transportation maintains a permit review process for all projects which require access to the highway.

Compact development along Highway 515 can protect the functionality of the highway as well as the scenic quality of this corridor. For this reason, the future land use map focuses commercial development in certain areas along the corridor, rather than along its entire length. Design guidelines should be developed to enhance the appearance of the corridor.

**Infrastructure.** Because the cities have a well-developed base of facilities and services, the Future Land Use Plan places an emphasis upon the cities and the immediate outlying areas for future growth. Development of the greatest density and intensity should be located within or near the city limits or in the three growth areas discussed earlier in order to encourage an efficient and cost effective utilization of existing public facilities.

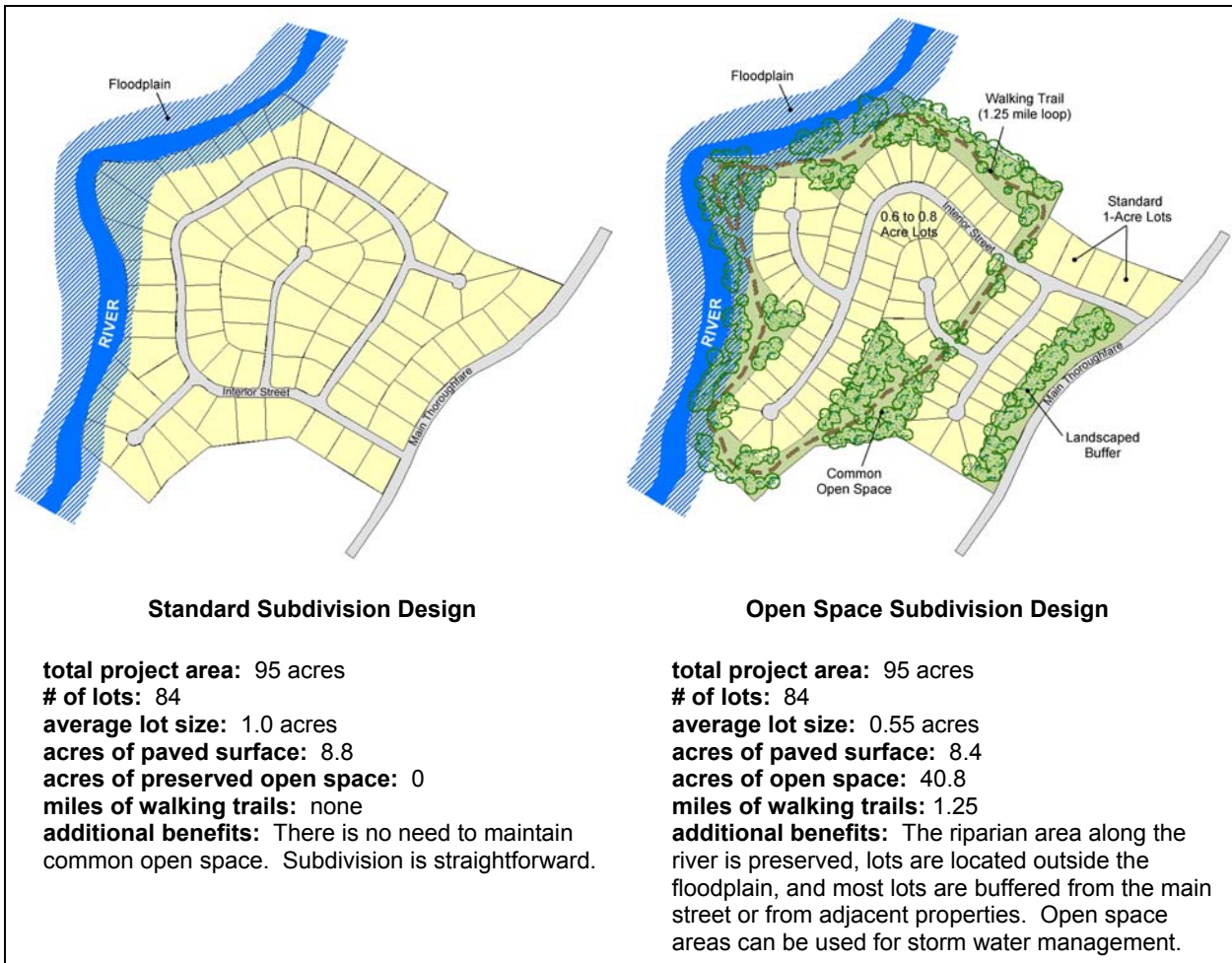
**Critical and Sensitive Areas.** Gilmer County has an abundance of natural resources as detailed in Element 4. Development of steep slopes and protecting water quality will be among the most pressing issues for new development.

In addition to existing regulations for protecting natural resources, conservation or open-space subdivision design should be investigated as a means for protecting valuable critical and sensitive areas. Conservation subdivision design allows for development at maximum densities while preserving open space, steep slopes, or other valuable natural resources. Typically, access to water and sewer are necessary for this type of development. More information on conservation subdivision design can be found on the National Association of Homebuilders website at <http://www.nahb.org> or the Natural Lands Trust website at <http://www.natlands.org/pdffiles/growinggreener.pdf>. A comparison of a standard subdivision and an open space subdivision design is shown on the following page.

**Redevelopment Areas.** Old Highway 5 South should be targeted for redevelopment in order to provide opportunities for lower cost light industrial and commercial development (as an alternative to Highway 515). In addition, upon completion of a master plan for downtown Ellijay, the areas surrounding the core commercial area would benefit from residential redevelopment.

**Agriculture and Forestry.** Only 3% of the County contains cropped acreage, while timberland accounts for almost 80% of the county; therefore, a rural cultural landscape in Gilmer County is more likely to be forested, or have chicken houses, rather than apple orchards or cultivated fields. The pressure to develop this land will continue to increase in the future. This can have a dramatic impact upon the natural resources in the area as well as upon the community's scenic beauty.

In addition, there will continue to be a conflict between certain agricultural uses and other uses in the community. Poultry houses in particular are seen by some as detracting from the quality of life of neighboring residents.



**Figure 6-E. A comparison of a standard subdivision with an open space subdivision.**

### 6.4.3. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support the land use map and narrative above, the following goal and associated policies and action items have been developed:

<b>Goal: Land resources which have been allocated for uses that will accommodate and enhance economic development, natural and historic resources, community facilities, and housing and will protect and improve the quality of life of residents and visitors.</b>	
<b>Policy 1: Community Character and Environmental Quality.</b> The positive qualities of the natural environment, historic and cultural resources, and scenic characteristics which contribute to Gilmer County’s character should be preserved.	<b>Action Items:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Adopt a land use ordinance in Gilmer County.</li> <li>b. Through a committee of local officials, developers, and interested citizens, develop design guidelines for the Highway 515 corridor which will promote a positive visual image of the community.</li> <li>c. Continue to enforce environmental regulations.</li> <li>d. Pursue TMDL and SWAP initiatives.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy 2: Residential Development.</b> Future residential development should be compatible with the physical limitations of the land and the established land uses in the area. In addition, the transition in size, density, site development, and other characteristics should be compatible from one district to another.	<b>Action Items:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Investigate the effectiveness and applicability of open space subdivision design and consider this type of design in any housing projects in which local governments participate.</li> <li>b. Support the use of package treatment plants and other alternative on-site wastewater treatment systems in subdivision developments in the county and incorporated cities.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy 3: Agriculture and Forestry.</b> Prime agricultural and forest lands should be protected through the use of incentives, land use regulation, and other means.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide information to property owners of farmland, forest land, and environmentally sensitive land about tax incentives for leaving property undeveloped.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy 4: Parks and Recreation.</b> Plan for the development of parks and open spaces in locations throughout the community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prepare and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy 5: Reuse of Historic Buildings.</b> The adaptive reuse of historic facilities and structures in the county and incorporated cities should be encouraged.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek ways to protect the historic fabric of downtown Ellijay through methods such as design guidelines or a preservation commission.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy 6: Sense of Place.*</b> Community focal points are important and should be encouraged. Such areas should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment. Downtown Ellijay is a focal point which should be promoted.	
<b>Policy 7: Traditional Neighborhoods.*</b> Traditional neighborhood patterns should be encouraged, including the use of human scale development, mixing uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.	
<b>Policy 8: Infill Development.*</b> The development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of Ellijay and East Ellijay should be encouraged.	

\* A DCA “Quality Communities” Objective

**Goal: Land resources which have been allocated for uses that will accommodate and enhance economic development, natural and historic resources, community facilities, and housing and will protect and improve the quality of life of residents and visitors.**

**Policy 9: Infrastructure.** Development should be encouraged in areas which are targeted for growth on the future land use map and which either have public services or where public services can be extended at a reasonable cost.

**Policy 10: Strip Commercial Development.** Strip commercial development should be discouraged and compact development in activity nodes should be encouraged to reduce traffic congestion and efficiently utilize public services.

**Policy 11: Neighborhood Commercial Development.** Appropriate neighborhood commercial development should be planned to serve the needs of major residential areas in the county and cities.

**Policy 12: Transitional Uses.** An orderly transition between commercial areas and single family residential areas should be promoted through transitional uses such as multi-family residential and natural buffer areas.

**Policy 13: Industrial Development.** Industrial development should be encouraged in areas which have compatible soils, drainage, and other environmental characteristics, and which can be efficiently and effectively provided with adequate utilities and infrastructure with minimum costs to both industry and government.

**Policy 14: Government Facilities.** The downtown area of Ellijay should be promoted as the primary location for government facilities.

# 7

## Intergovernmental Coordination

The Intergovernmental Coordination Element provides the following:

- an inventory of existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes,
- an assessment of the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of the community, and
- goals and strategies for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that may involve multiple governmental entities and independent organizations.

### What is intergovernmental coordination?

Intergovernmental coordination involves how the local governments of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay work with each other, with adjacent local governments, and with other quasi-public entities such as the school board and the water and sewer authority. Adequate coordination is needed to plan for orderly growth in the community because plans and decisions made by a local government will have an impact upon other public agencies and independent organizations and vice versa.

#### **Element Outline:**

##### **7.1. Inventory**

###### **7.1.1. Coordination with Governmental and Other Public Entities**

- Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay
- Surrounding Counties
- Gilmer County School Board
- Constitutional Officers
- Independent Special Districts and Development Authorities
- Utility Companies
- Other Joint Planning Efforts

###### **7.1.2. Coordination with State Programs and Activities**

- Service Delivery Strategy
- Governor's Greenspace Program
- Appalachian Regional Commission Program
- Regional Water Supply/ Water Protection Plans

##### **7.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs**

##### **7.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program**

## 7.1. Inventory

### 7.1.1. Coordination with Governmental and Other Public Entities

#### 7.1.1.1. Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay

**Comprehensive Planning.** In 1994, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay prepared and adopted a joint comprehensive plan entitled *Gilmer 2015: A Shared Vision*. The County and Cities have continued this tradition of cooperative planning by completing this comprehensive plan.

**Annexation.** Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay adopted a land use dispute resolution agreement in 1998. This agreement contains the process for resolving disputes over annexation. Following is a summary of the dispute resolution process:

1. The City notifies the County government and affected property owners about the proposed annexation.
2. The County forwards a statement of (a) no objection or (b) bona fide objection.
3. If there is no objection, the City proceeds with the annexation.
4. If there is an objection, the City may respond in one of four ways: (a) agreeing to implement the County's stipulations, thereby resolving the County's objections, (b) agreeing with the County and stopping action on the proposed annexation, (c) initiating a mediation process, or (d) seeking a declaratory judgement in court.

**Service Delivery.** Gilmer County and the City of Ellijay adopted a Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) in 1999. At that time, the City of East Ellijay had a population of less than 500 and therefore was not required to have an SDS. The Service Delivery Strategy documents the coordination and delivery of services in Gilmer County and is being updated as part of the comprehensive plan update process.

Following is a summary of the services included in the SDS:

- **Economic Development.** The Economic Development Authority and the Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce encourage and coordinate county-wide economic development. The City of Ellijay provides additional economic development services within its incorporated boundary.
- **Property Tax Assessment and Collection.** Gilmer County provides tax assessment services and collects County property taxes for both unincorporated and incorporated areas. The City of Ellijay provides municipal tax collection services for its residents. The City of East Ellijay does not assess a property tax.
- **Courts.** Gilmer County provides Superior Court, Magistrate Court, Probate Court, and Juvenile Court Services for both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County. The Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay provide municipal court services.
- **Library.** The Sequoyah Regional Library System serves the library located in Gilmer County. The library receives financial support from all local governments.
- **Airport.** The Gilmer County Airport Authority is the administrative/advisory body to the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners for airport operations.
- **Health and Human Services.** The Gilmer County Health Department, Senior Center, and Day Care Center provide services to residents of both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county.
- **Zoning.** The Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay both provide zoning within their incorporated boundaries. Gilmer County is in the process of adopting a zoning ordinance, called the "Gilmer County Land Use Ordinance."
- **Planning.** Gilmer County provides planning services to the unincorporated portions of the county while the Cities provide planning services in their respective municipalities.
- **Construction and Code Enforcement.** Gilmer County provides construction and code enforcement services to the unincorporated portions of the county while the Cities provide construction and code enforcement services in their respective municipalities.

- **Housing Authority.** The Ellijay Housing Authority provides public housing in the City of Ellijay to low income residents who qualify for government subsidized housing.
- **Animal Control.** Gilmer County provides animal control services to the County. The City of Ellijay assists with animal control within its city limits.
- **Emergency Management.** Gilmer County provides emergency management to all areas of the county via the Emergency Management Agency. The county also provides fire protection services to all unincorporated areas as well as the City of East Ellijay. The City of Ellijay operates its own fire department. EMS and E-911 services are provided to residents in both the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county.
- **Road and Bridge Construction and Maintenance.** Gilmer County provides maintenance to all county roads and bridges. The Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have their own road maintenance departments.
- **Parks and Recreation.** Gilmer County operates a Parks and Recreation Department which provides a variety of services to residents of both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county.
- **Law Enforcement.** The Gilmer County Sheriff's Department is available to both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county. The Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay operate their own police departments.
- **Jails.** Gilmer County provides jail services to both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county.
- **Water and Waste Water Supply, Treatment, and Distribution.** The Ellijay/Gilmer County Water and Sewer Authority provides treated water and waste water treatment to portions of the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay.

### 7.1.1.2. Surrounding Counties

**Developments of Regional Impact.** Development in counties which are adjacent to Gilmer County or developments of regional impact (DRI) which occur in a nearby county have the potential to impact Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay. Surrounding and nearby counties include the following:

- Fannin
- Lumpkin
- Pickens
- Murray
- Union
- Dawson
- Gordon

Developments of regional impact are

“large-scale developments that are likely to have effects outside of the local government jurisdiction in which they are located. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorized the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish procedures for intergovernmental review of these large-scale projects. These are designed to improve communication between affected governments and to provide a means of revealing and assessing potential impacts of large-scale developments before conflicts relating to them arise. At the same time, local government autonomy is preserved since the host government maintains the authority to make the final decision on whether a proposed development will or will not go forward.”

*(source: [www.dca.state.ga.us/planning/regionalimpact.html](http://www.dca.state.ga.us/planning/regionalimpact.html))*



All developments of regional impact are reviewed by their respective Regional Development Centers (RDCs). The RDC evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed development and determines whether it is consistent with the regional plan and the plans of affected local governments. The RDC's evaluation is advisory in nature and is designed to help a local government anticipate possible impacts of a proposed development. The local government is encouraged to take this information into account in deciding whether to approve, deny, or require modifications to the development in order to mitigate any undesirable impacts which were uncovered during the RDC's evaluation.

Other coordination mechanisms which exist or are planned between the surrounding counties and the governments of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay include the following:

- mutual aid agreements for law enforcement and fire protection (existing) and
- a tri-county emergency children's shelter (planned).

### 7.1.1.3. Gilmer County School Board

Informal coordination occurs between the School Board, the local governments, and various other agencies in the community, but there is not a formal process for coordinating such activities.

One example of successful coordination is the sharing of recreation facilities between the School Board and the Gilmer County Recreation Department. The School Board is also working with the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Authority, the Water and Sewerage Authority, and the Recreation Department on plans for its new campus on Clear Creek Road.

### 7.1.1.4 Constitutional Officers

**Sheriff and Police Chiefs.** The Sheriff's Department submits monthly financial reports to the County Commission, but does not make regular reports regarding law enforcement activities. The Police Chiefs for the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay make regular reports to their respective City Councils regarding law enforcement activities.

**Tax Assessor.** There is no formal process for coordination between the County Commission and the Tax Assessor although regular, informal communication occurs between these entities. The Ellijay City Clerk coordinates informally with the Ellijay City Council and Mayor. The City of East Ellijay does not assess a property tax.

**Courts.** Gilmer County is part of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit which also includes Fannin and Pickens Counties. A District Attorney and several Assistant DAs serve the Appalachian Circuit. Gilmer County also has a Probate Court, a Juvenile Court, and a Magistrate Court. Ellijay and East Ellijay have their own municipal courts. Gilmer County is considering establishing a Public Defender's Office to handle growing number of indigent cases.

No formal coordination exists between the local governments and the court system.

### 7.1.1.5. Independent Special Districts and Development Authorities

**Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority (WSA).** The WSA board is comprised of members appointed by the County Commission and the City Councils. The board members report regularly to their respective governments.

**Economic Development Authority (EDA).** The EDA board is comprised of members appointed by the County Commission. The EDA coordinates informally with the County Commission. It is presently coordinating with the County School Board on the development of a business and technology park on the property recently purchased by the School Board.

**Ellijay Housing Authority.** The Housing Authority board is appointed by the City of Ellijay. The Authority coordinates informally with the Mayor and City Council.

#### 7.1.1.6. Utilities

Electricity is provided by Amicalola Electric Membership Corporation, Georgia Power Company, and Atlanta Gas and Light. Although informal coordination occurs between the local governments and utilities, no formal coordination mechanisms have been established.

#### 7.1.1.7. Other Joint Planning Efforts

**Gilmer Family Connection Commission/Collaborative.** Gilmer County Family Connection was established in 1998 and consists of a Commission and a Collaborative that ensure progress on 24 programs and activities designed to help Gilmer families and children. Its current 3-year plan includes the following goals:

- All Gilmer children and youth will be successful in school, will be drug free, and will have opportunities to become productive citizens.
- All Gilmer families will be strong and stable.

The following agencies and organizations work in partnership to accomplish the goals of the Commission:

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ Dept. of Family and Children Services    | ▪ Gilmer County Parks & Recreation  |
| ▪ Gilmer County Schools                    | ▪ Fraternal Order of Police         |
| ▪ Community Mental Health                  | ▪ Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce |
| ▪ Gilmer County Health Department          | ▪ Department of Juvenile Justice    |
| ▪ Gilmer County Head Start                 | ▪ Juvenile Court                    |
| ▪ Gilmer County Pre-K                      | ▪ Gilmer County Youth Council       |
| ▪ Georgia Dept. of Labor/Vocational Rehab. | ▪ Hispanic Task Force               |
| ▪ Gilmer Adult Education                   | ▪ Faith Community                   |
| ▪ Ellijay Housing Authority                | ▪ Civic Groups (e.g. Lions Club)    |

Representatives from each of the local governments serve on the board of the Commission.

**Chamber of Commerce.** Gilmer County and the City of East Ellijay contract with the Chamber of Commerce for tourist-related advertising. Regular, informal coordination occurs between the Chamber and the City of East Ellijay and Gilmer County. The Chamber also works closely with the Economic Development Authority on a variety of projects.

**Downtown Ellijay Merchants and Associates (DEMA).** DEMA makes regular reports on its activities to the Ellijay City Council.

## 7.1.2. Coordination with State Programs and Activities

### 7.1.2.1. Service Delivery Strategy

As discussed in Section 7.1.1.1, Gilmer County and the City of Ellijay adopted a Service Delivery Strategy in 1999. The Strategy is being updated as part of the comprehensive planning process.

### 7.1.2.2. Governor’s Greenspace Program

Gilmer County and the City of Ellijay jointly participate in the Governor’s Greenspace program. Together, they propose to protect 5,495 acres of land. This is in addition to the 54,718 acres of the Chattahoochee National Forest which are presently owned by the federal government. The land type, estimated acreage, and tools for protection which are proposed in the community’s Greenspace Program are shown below.

TABLE 7-A. Governor’s Greenspace Program Proposal

Land Type	Estimated Acreage	Tools for Protection	
		Permanent	Temporary
Floodplain	4,950	conservation easements restrictive covenants	Part V Minimum Environmental Standards
Archaeological Sites	50	fee simple acquisition conservation easements	archaeological/conservation overlay zones, agricultural zoning
Steep Slopes	495	conservation easements	Part V Minimum Environmental Standards

The Greenspace Program Vision Map is included in Section 4.1.16.

### 7.1.2.3. Appalachian Regional Commission Program

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a federal-state partnership that awards program grants for projects which address the ARC’s five goal areas:

1. education and workforce training,
2. physical infrastructure,
3. civic capacity and leadership,
4. business development, and
5. health care.

Gilmer County is eligible to participate in ARC programs. The County’s liaison with the ARC is the North Georgia Regional Development Center.

### 7.1.2.4. Regional Water Supply/Water Quality Protection Plans

Every year the State of Georgia is required to make a list of lakes, rivers, and streams which do not meet Federal and State water quality standards. This list is based on results of annual water quality testing done by the State’s Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the US Geological Survey. In Gilmer County, all of the lakes, rivers, and streams meet the standards for most pollutants except for fecal coliform bacteria. The Coosawattee River, Cartecay River, Ellijay River, Mountaintown Creek, Flat Creek, and Tails Creek all have segments

exceeding Federal and State standards for fecal coliform bacteria pollution. Fecal coliform bacteria, which comes from animal or human waste, is an indicator of the presence of potential bacteriological pathogens.

Over the past two years, the North Georgia Regional Development Center (NGRDC) has been working with local governments and other agencies in Gilmer County, as well as with a citizen advisory committee, to determine how to address the fecal coliform bacteria pollution. Initially, efforts were made to determine the potential source of the pollution. Since fecal coliform bacteria comes from animal and human waste, a study was made to determine how many cattle and poultry operations existed in the Coosawattee River watershed and where they were located relative to the many streams in the area. It was determined that there are over 190 poultry and cattle farming operations in the Coosawattee River watershed. Many of the cattle operations allow cattle to enter streams for watering purposes and have heavy feeding operations where animal waste accumulates and runs off into adjoining streams. Many of the poultry operations spread poultry manure on fields in the area. This manure often runs off into adjacent streams during heavy rains. These kinds of conditions contribute to the high fecal coliform bacteria pollution.

Most of Gilmer County's residential development is served by a septic tank and drainfield system. Sometimes these systems fail and can cause surface water pollution. Decades ago, many people did not even use septic systems and used a drain pipe that dumped waste directly into a nearby stream. These kind of conditions also contribute to the high fecal coliform counts that are found in many streams in the Coosawattee River watershed.

Recognizing that these problems existed, local governments and agencies supported the NGRDC's efforts to secure a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Water Quality Control Act. NGRDC was awarded \$150,000. The funded project, which began in January 2003, was designed to address four objectives which are described below.

**Objective 1:** To determine if there is interest in forming a Coosawattee River group, which would consist of an on-going organization of local officials, citizens, State agencies, and others who are interested in preserving water quality.

**Status of Objective 1:** The NGRDC staff has led several meetings of stakeholders interested in protection of the waters of the Coosawattee River. The stakeholders, who are primarily local, state, and federal employees working in the water protection field, are urging the public to become more involved in the protection and clean-up of the Coosawattee River. It is anticipated that a "Coosawattee River Alliance" will be a by-product of an open meeting planned for the summer of 2004 to discuss the water-related issues in this important river basin.

**Objective 2:** To educate local citizens, farmers, and government officials about water quality in the watershed and what can be done to improve it. This will be accomplished through workshops, press releases, and demonstration projects.

**Status of Objective 2:** An on-site agricultural best management practices (BMP) workshop was held in May 2004 at a farm on Boardtown Road. The workshop was a forum for farmers to see first-hand some of the projects which were funded by the EPA grant. The farm is participating in the cost share program set up by the NGRDC through EPA grant funding. The workshop was conducted by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service with participation from NGRDC, EPA, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Georgia Water and Soil Conservation Commission. The NGRDC also plans a poultry BMP workshop in the near future.

**Objective 3:** To provide funding for agricultural best management projects, which will serve as a demonstration to cattle and poultry farmers in the area on how to minimize animal waste from entering streams. The NGRDC will provide a small grant covering 60% of the cost of a poultry waste stack house, fencing along streams, off-stream watering facilities, or construction of heavy use feeding areas to those farmers whose current operations may be contributing to the fecal coliform bacteria in a nearby stream. The NGRDC has grants to fund approximately seven of these type projects.

**Status of Objective 3:** Three projects have already been completed and a fourth is in development. These projects were selected through the assistance of the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

**Objective 4:** To fund septic system repairs, which may be contributing to the fecal coliform pollution. The NGRDC will provide a small grant (up to 60% of a project cost, but not to exceed \$1,500) to property owners who have failing septic systems.

**Status of Objective 4:** Three projects have been completed and a fourth is in development. All four projects consisted of homes that did not have a septic system. These projects were selected through the assistance of the Gilmer County Environmental Health Office. The NGRDC has grants to fund approximately twelve septic repair projects.

## 7.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

The following assessment involves an analysis of the data provided in Section 7.1. to determine if existing coordination mechanisms and agreements are adequate to serve the community's current and future needs and if there are any issues or problems which can be addressed by the local governments.

This assessment can be completed by answering the following questions which were derived from Section 110-12-1-.0 4(12)(g)2.(ii) of Georgia's Minimum Local Planning Standards.

- What issues are arising or have arisen from growth and development proposed in comprehensive plans of nearby local governments or other governmental entities that indicate a need for additional planning coordination between local governments?
- What specific problems and needs in the community would benefit from improved or additional intergovernmental coordination and how could this coordination be achieved?
- Are existing coordination mechanisms or agreements adequate in achieving predictable positive results for ensuring efficient and effective delivery of local services, coordinated land use and growth management, and protection or conservation of natural resources?

These questions are in Sections 7.2.1. through 7.2.3.

### 7.2.1. What issues are arising or have arisen from growth and development proposed in comprehensive plans of nearby local governments or other governmental entities that indicate a need for additional planning coordination between local governments?

No conflicts have been identified with any adjacent counties or other governmental entities.

### 7.2.2. What specific problems and needs in the community would benefit from improved or additional intergovernmental coordination and how could this coordination be achieved?

The level of communication between the various governments, utilities, and public agencies is not at the level needed for effectively dealing with community-wide issues. Consequently, the community would benefit from quarterly, biannual, or biannual coordination meetings involving the local governments, local authorities, the County School Board, and other agencies.

Gilmer County Family Connection is proposing to construct a Family Resource Center which would provide a user-friendly, one-stop facility housing a variety of service providers, while saving taxpayer dollars. Having providers housed in one location would allow for better communication and interaction between agencies and prevent duplication of services. The following agencies would potentially be housed in the facility.

#### Family Crisis Services

- Department of Family and Children Services
- Gilmer County Sexual Assault Center
- Prevent Child Abuse Gilmer
- Foster Parents Association
- Dept. of Juvenile Justice

#### Emergency Family Services

- Family Connection
- Food Pantry
- Clothes Closet
- Community Action
- Habitat for Humanity

#### Education and Youth Services

- Department of Labor
- Family Connection (including Low Income Housing Program, Targeted Case Management Services, Hispanic Services Bureau, and Youth Leadership Development Center)

The Gilmer County Health Department has expressed a desire to co-locate with these agencies; however, this would nearly double the amount of square footage required for the Family Resource Center. It would be extremely advantageous to have the Health Department included in the Resource Center, but because funding for the facility may be limited, it may not be financially possible.

**7.2.3. Are existing coordination mechanisms or agreements adequate in achieving predictable positive results for ensuring efficient and effective delivery of local services, coordinated land use, growth management, and the protection or conservation of natural resources?**

The Service Delivery Strategy that was adopted by Gilmer County and the City of Ellijay is in the process of being updated to include the City of East Ellijay. This strategy documents the coordination and delivery of services in Gilmer County and should be updated as needed.

The community would benefit from improved coordination between the local governments, the School Board, the Water and Sewer Authority, and other public agencies and community organizations. Mechanisms for improving coordination could include quarterly “state of the community” meetings in which representatives from the various governments, agencies, and organizations would meet informally to discuss projects of importance in the community.

Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay adopted a land use dispute resolution agreement in 1998. This agreement contains the process for resolving disputes over annexation.

Through the joint comprehensive planning process, a future land use plan and map will be adopted. The result will be future land use plans for the Cities and County that are coordinated and use the same land use definitions. This joint planning effort will reduce land use conflicts at jurisdictional borders.

Additionally, the Land Use Element contains policies and action items related directly to coordinated land use, growth management, and the protection of natural resources. The Community Facilities and Services Element contains policies and action items related directly to the need for coordination between the provision of public infrastructure and land use.

## 7.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that sets forth a plan for intergovernmental coordination to include joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making.

The implementation program must support the Community Vision and include actions which should be undertaken to achieve the Community Vision.

### 7.3.1. Community Vision

In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

**Livability.** We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.

**Community Character.** We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.

**Shared Direction.** The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.



### 7.3.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following intergovernmental coordination goal and associated objectives and action items:

<p><b>Goal:</b> Positive, cooperative, and effective relationships between Gilmer County, the City of Ellijay, the City of East Ellijay, and other public agencies and organizations.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 1: Local Coordination.</b> Promote effective coordination between the County and City governments and the County School Board, the Water and Sewer Authority, and Economic Development Authority.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consider quarterly, biannual, or annual joint planning meetings of the local governments, authorities, boards, and agencies to improve communication and coordination.</li> <li>b. Seek funding for a full-time, paid staff position of “Economic Development Director” through a cities/county partnership.</li> <li>c. Update the Service Delivery Strategy as needed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 2: Joint Planning.</b> Continue the joint comprehensive planning approach to ensure collaborative planning and decision-making.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop, adopt, and maintain a Joint Comprehensive Plan and associated implementation programs which are acceptable to all governments.</li> <li>b. Update, adopt, and maintain the Joint Solid Waste Management Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 3: Consistency with the Future Land Use Plan.</b> Use the adopted Joint Comprehensive Plan as a guide for decision-making.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Require that rezoning actions be consistent with the Future Land Use Maps in the Comprehensive Plan.</li> <li>b. Discourage making capital investments in rural areas that are not slated for urban/suburban intensity growth in the Future Land Use Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 4: State Coordination.</b> Pursue effective relationships with key State agencies and departments.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with state level economic development agencies to attract new businesses to the area.</li> <li>b. Jointly approach the Department of Transportation regarding needed road improvements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy 5: Cooperative Planning.</b> Promote cooperative planning efforts throughout the community.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support efforts to improve water quality in the community.</li> <li>b. Support Gilmer County Family Connection efforts to construct a Gilmer County Family Resource Center as well as an emergency children’s shelter.</li> </ul>

# 8

## Transportation

The Transportation Element provides the following:

- an inventory of the components of the local transportation network,
- an assessment of their adequacy for serving current and future population and economic development needs, and
- goals and strategies for providing the desired level of transportation facilities and services.

### What is transportation planning?

Transportation planning is a **process** for identifying current and future transportation needs and developing solutions to meet those needs. Its purpose is to provide policy and program options and implementation strategies to elected officials and transportation partners so they can make transportation investment decisions which meet the community's needs.

The ultimate goal is to maximize the benefits derived from the transportation system while reducing the associated negative aspects such as congestion and pollution. Ideally, transportation planning will result in a transportation system which accomplishes the following:

- supports economic vitality
- increases safety
- increases mobility, accessibility, and connectivity
- protects the environment
- improves quality of life
- promotes efficient system management

While vehicular and truck traffic is typically the primary focus of transportation planning, this transportation element also highlights other aspects of Gilmer County's transportation network including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transportation, rail service, and air service.

### ***Element Outline:***

#### ***8.1. Inventory***

##### ***8.1.1. Streets, Roads, and Highways***

- Roadway Network and Functional Classification
- City Streets
- Traffic Volumes
- Roadway Conditions
- Accident Data

##### ***8.1.2. Bridges***

##### ***8.1.3. Signalization and Signage***

##### ***8.1.4. Parking Facilities***

##### ***8.1.5. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities***

##### ***8.1.4. Public Transportation***

##### ***8.1.5. Railroad***

##### ***8.1.6. Airport***

#### ***8.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs***

#### ***8.3. Community Goal and Implementation Program***

## 8.1. Inventory

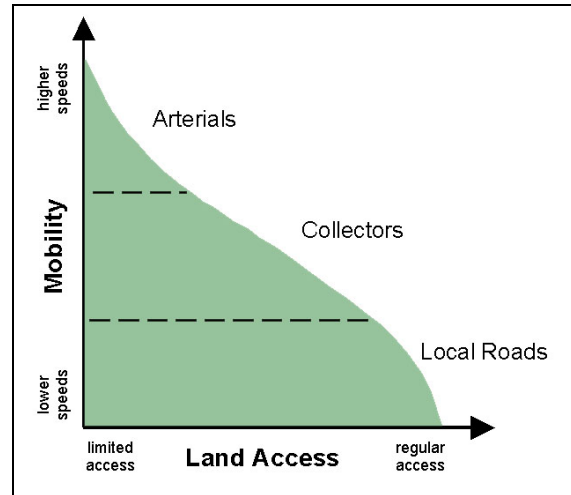
### 8.1.1. Streets, Roads, and Highways

#### 8.1.1.1. Roadway Network and Functional Classification

Functional classification is a way of grouping roads, streets, and highways in a hierarchy based on the type of highway service they provide. A typical hierarchy includes arterials, collectors, and local roads.

Streets and highways perform two types of service: traffic mobility and land access. In general, the greater the mobility afforded by a street, the less access to adjacent land it provides and vice versa. This is illustrated in Figure 8-A.

Gilmer County contains approximately 1,009 miles of roads in its transportation network. The roads in Gilmer County can be categorized into the following five functional classifications.



**Figure 8-A. Functional Classification and the Relationship Between Access and Mobility**

**Principal Arterial.** (Example: GA 515) A principal arterial provides for high speed travel and is typically used for longer vehicle trips. Mobility through an area rather than access to adjacent properties is the primary function of an arterial. Often curb cuts are limited, as is the case with GA Highway 515. Traffic volumes are typically highest on principal arterials.

**Minor Arterial.** (Example: GA 2/52 West) A minor arterial provides for relatively high speed travel and is used to serve traffic generators which attract travel over longer distances (e.g. shopping centers, large schools).

**Major Collector.** (Example: Old Highway 5) A major collector usually connects commercial centers and other large traffic generators to an arterial road. Collector roads provide both mobility and land access, with major collectors providing more mobility and less land access than a minor collector. Generally, trip lengths, speeds, and volumes are moderate.

**Minor Collector.** (Example: Clear Creek Road) A minor collector typically collects traffic from local roads and distributes it to major collectors or arterials. Minor collectors provide both mobility and land access with a greater emphasis on land access than a major collector. Generally, trip lengths, speeds, and volumes are moderate.

**Local Road.** (Example: North Gilmer Street) The primary function of a local road is to provide land access. Speed limits and traffic volumes are generally low. Most side streets in downtown areas and most streets in residential neighborhoods are classified as local roads. Generally, through traffic is limited because these roads are short and often end in cul-de-sacs. Rural local roads typically serve residences and scattered businesses which individually do not generate large volumes of traffic.

Table 8-A provides mileage by functional classification of the roads in Gilmer County while Figure 8-B provides an illustration of the various road types in the county.

**Table 8-A. Classification of Roads in Gilmer County**

Classification	Mileage by Location (not by ownership*)				% of total
	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Unincorp. County	Total	
<b>Principal Arterial</b> (GA 515 and GA 282)	1.2	7.4	26.6	35.2	3.5%
<b>Minor Arterial</b> (e.g. GA 2/52)	1.7	0.6	11.3	13.6	1.3%
<b>Major Collector</b> (e.g. GA 382, Old Highway 5, Yukon Road)	3.3	1.9	83.7	88.9	8.8%
<b>Minor Collector</b> (e.g. Pleasant Hill Road, Clear Creek Road)	0.0	0.0	36.4	36.4	3.6%
<b>Other Local Roads</b>	22.4	10.2	802.5	835.1	82.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>960.5</b>	<b>1,009.2</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NGRDC GIS and GDOT, Office of Information Services, 400 Series Reports, 1DPP445-PDS

\* Not all streets in Ellijay and East Ellijay are city-owned. Some are private roads, while others are County or State roads. For this reason, the mileage in this table may not equal the mileage listed in other tables in this element.

### 8.1.1.2. City Streets

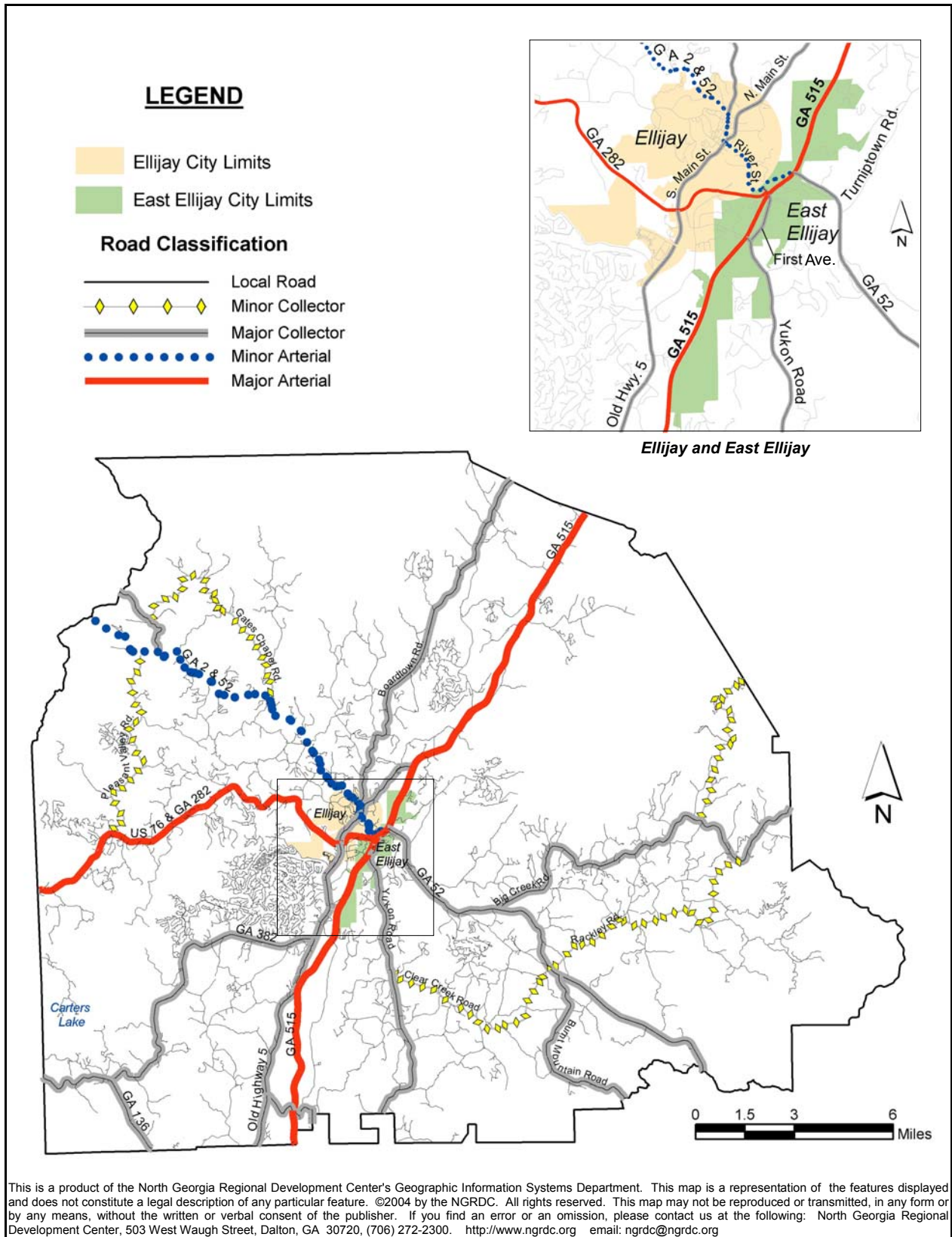
**Ellijay.** The City of Ellijay owns 19.55 miles of streets within its limits. Table 8-B provides a listing of the of those streets. Note that not all streets located within the city are city-owned.

**Table 8-B. Ellijay City Streets**

Street	Miles	Class	Street	Miles	Class
Alpine Way	0.1	local	Lucille Avenue	0.3	local
Barclay Street	0.1	local	Maddox Drive	0.5	local
Boardtown Road	0.5	major collector	Main Street, North	0.8	major collector
Broad Street	0.15	local	Main Street, South	2.2	major collector
Cedar Street	0.1	local	Maple Street	0.1	local
Cemetery Circle	0.4	local	Mary Ann Street	0.15	local
Church Street	0.15	local	McCutchen Street	0.7	local
College Street	0.2	local	North Avenue	0.2	local
Corbin Hill	1.0	local	Oak Street	0.1	local
Cox Creek Road	0.8	local	Orr Street	0.2	local
Crawford Street	0.3	local	Parks Avenue	0.25	local
Depot Street	0.1	local	Penland Street	0.35	local
Dogwood Street	0.1	local	Pine Street	0.1	local
Forest Glen	0.1	local	Poplar Street	0.05	local
Gartrell Street	0.35	local	Progress Road	1.0	local
Gilmer Street (N & S)	0.2	local	Sailors Drive	0.35	local
Gudger Street	0.1	local	Sand Street	0.1	local
Hancock Drive	0.6	local	Seminary Circle	0.1	local
Hospital Circle	0.3	local	Skyline Drive	0.6	local
Jeff Drive	0.45	local	Spring Street	0.25	local
Kell Street	0.3	local	Tabor Street	0.1	local
Legion Road	0.2	local	Teem Street	0.1	local
Letch Drive	0.6	local	Timberland Drive	0.3	local
Logan Circle	0.6	local	Victory Drive	0.5	local
Logan Street	0.2	local	Vista Drive	0.5	local
Logan Lane	0.25	local	Westwoods Drive	0.5	local
Logan Way	0.1	local	Wikle Road	0.5	local
Lois Parks Drive	0.1	local	Woodland Drive	0.2	local

Source: City of Ellijay

Note: The length of the streets in this table were measured in the field by city personnel. As such, the mileage may differ slightly from that used by GDOT or calculated by the NGRDC GIS data.



**Figure 8-B. Functional Classification of Roads in Gilmer County**

**East Ellijay.** The City of East Ellijay is responsible for 17.04 miles of streets within its limits. Table 8-C provides a listing of those streets. Not all streets in the city are city-owned or maintained.

**Table 8-C. East Ellijay City Streets**

Street	Miles	Class	Street	Miles	Class
Bailey Street	0.10	local	Martin Street	0.10	local
Cherry Street	0.10	local	Mountain View Lane	0.30	local
Coosawattee Drive	0.30	local	Mulberry Street	0.40	local
Craig Street	0.44	local	Oak Street	0.20	local
Cross Street (E & W)	0.18	local	Orchard Drive	0.30	local
Dogwood Drive	0.20	local	River Street	0.10	minor arterial
First Ave.	1.70	major collector	Riverside Drive	0.50	local
Fowler Street	0.40	local	School Street	0.10	local
Greenfield Ridge	0.10	local	Spring Street	0.30	local
Greenfield Road	0.90	local	Swamp Creek Lane	0.15	local
Hefner Street	0.40	local	Sycamore Street	0.10	local
Highland Crossing	0.68	local	Walnut Street	0.35	local
Highland Parkway	0.45	local	Water Tower Lane	0.20	local
Hill Street	0.15	local	West Avenue	0.20	local
Lanning Road	0.10	local	Willow Street	0.10	local
Laurel Street	0.25	local	Highway 52	1.23	major collector
Maddox Drive	0.53	local	Highway 282	0.27	major arterial
Maple Street	0.10	local	Highway 515	4.76	major arterial

Source: City of East Ellijay

Note: The length of the streets in this table were measured in the field by city personnel. As such, the mileage may differ slightly from that used by GDOT or calculated by the NGRDC GIS data.

### 8.1.1.3. Traffic Volumes

Given the population growth Gilmer County has experienced over the past ten years, it is not surprising that traffic volumes have also steadily increased. For example, volumes on GA 515 increased by between 66% and 93% between 1992 and 2002. The locations of various traffic count stations are illustrated in Figure 8-C on the following page. The inset in Figure 8-C provides the locations of the traffic stations in Ellijay and East Ellijay.

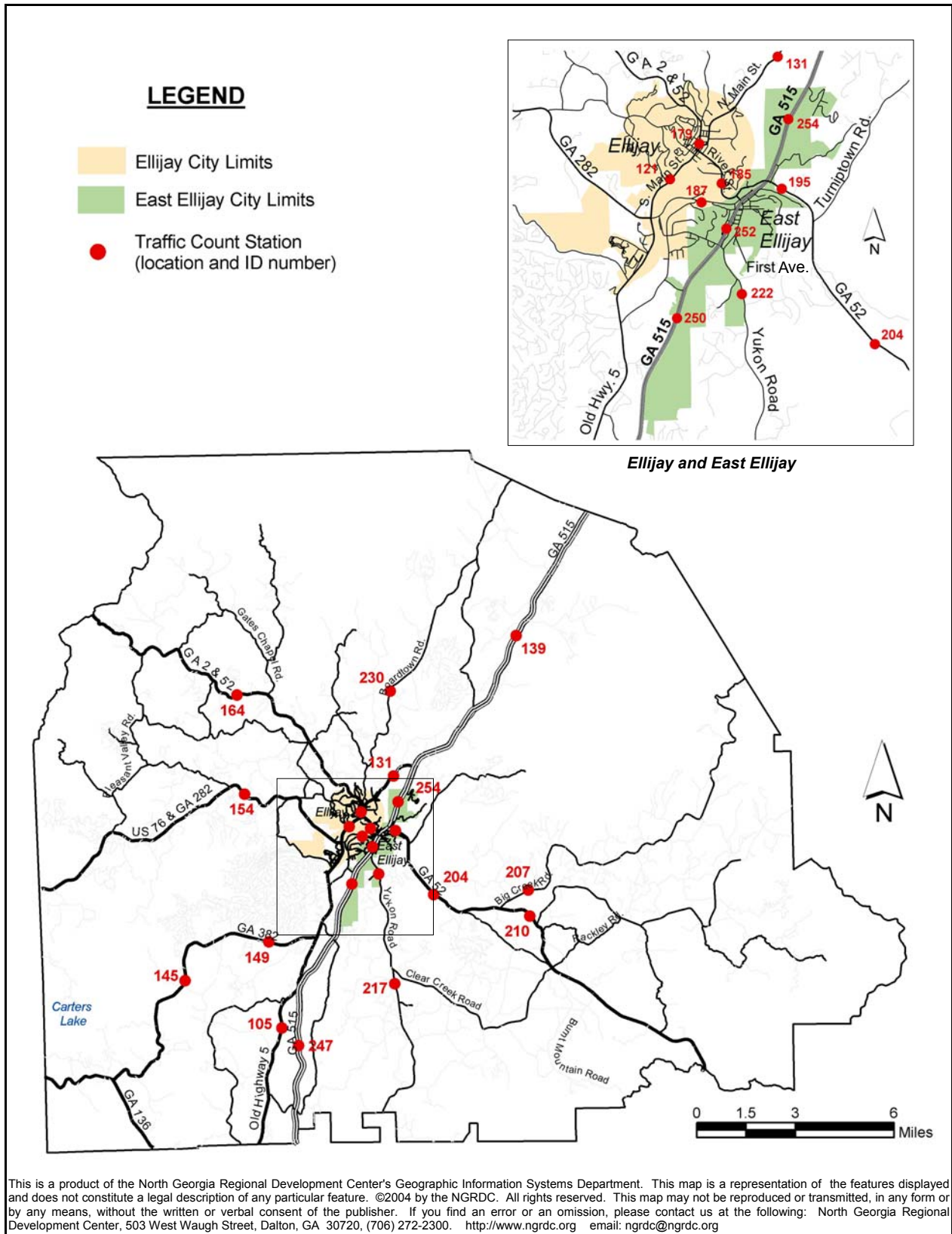
Historical traffic volumes for arterials and major collectors in Gilmer County are presented in Table 8-D below.

**Table 8-D. Traffic Counts (Estimated Annual Average Daily Trips) at Select Stations in Gilmer County**

Highway and Station #	1992	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	% Change	
								'92-'02	'97-'02
<b>Principal Arterials</b>									
GA 515 139	8,322	10,140	8,980	9,115	10,520	13,677	14,629	76%	44%
"" 247	7,376	9,753	8,844	8,977	10,400	13,293	14,205	93%	46%
"" 250	7,489	6,697	8,770	8,902	12,656	13,100	13,646	82%	104%
"" 252	9,435	11,815	13,545	13,748	15,380	1,524	15,699	66%	33%
"" 254	8,848	10,262	10,260	12,776	13,014	13,729	16,602	88%	62%
GA 282 154	5,026	5,230	4,989	5,501	5,314	5,336	6,624	32%	27%
Industrial Blvd. 187	7,546	11,027	12,046	9,405	11,657	12,157	12,578	67%	14%
<b>Minor Arterials</b>									
GA 2 / 52 164	951	1,067	1,118	1,356	1,300	1,339	1,426	50%	34%
Dalton Street 179	6,374	9,034	8,661	8,393	7,762	8,100	8,468	33%	-6%
River Street 185	6,656	4,523	4,458	4,320	8,576	8,900	8,856	33%	96%
<b>Major Collector</b>									
Old Hwy. 5 105	1,904	2,414	2,421	1,989	2,486	2,586	1,833	-4%	-24%
S. Main Street 121	10,598	21,428	16,790	17,210	21,600	14,281	16,695	58%	-22%
N. Main Street 131	2,511	3,248	3,368	3,452	2,779	2,900	3,085	23%	-5%
GA 382 145	1,253	990	1,050	1,076	1,624	1,700	1,436	15%	45%
"" 149	2,893	4,202	4,233	4,339	4,720	3,274	3,581	24%	-15%
GA 52 195	6,999	6,440	6,800	7,966	10,756	11,200	10,657	52%	65%
"" 204	6,314	7,275	7,453	8,183	7,771	7,871	9,926	57%	36%
"" 210	3,206	2,421	2,814	3,845	3,186	3,275	4,606	44%	90%
Big Creek Road 207	1,731	2,223	2,634	2,700	2,827	2,800	2,542	47%	14%
Yukon Road 217	1,465	2,226	2,108	2,161	2,186	2,550	2,787	90%	25%
"" 222	3,324	3,179	3,313	3,396	4,891	5,100	5,820	75%	83%
Boardtown Road 234	609	830	831	699	843	882	830	36%	0%
<b>Minor Collector and Local Roads</b>	There are no traffic count stations on minor collector or local roads.								

Source: Georgia DOT, Annual Traffic Counts





**Figure 8-C. Select Traffic Count Stations**

As shown in Table 8-E to the right, traffic volumes on Highway 515 have increased significantly, particularly on the segment near Highlands Center. Other roads in Gilmer County which have experienced greater than average (4 – 5%) growth in traffic volumes are shown in Table 8-F below. Given the rapid growth in the county in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is not surprising that certain roads experienced much greater average annual growth during the five year period from 1997 to 2002 than during the ten year period from 1992 to 2002.

**Table 8-E. Growth in Traffic Volumes on Highway 515**

GA 515 Segment and Station #		Average Annual Traffic Volume Growth	
		1992 - 2002	1997 - 2002
Pickens Co. to Talona Rd.	247	6.8%	7.8%
Talona Road to Maddox Drive	250	6.2%	15.3%
Maddox Drive to First Avenue	252	5.2%	5.8%
First Ave. to Old Hwy. 5 North	254	6.5%	10.1%
Old Hwy. 5 North to Fannin Co.	139	5.8%	7.6%

Source: Georgia DOT, Annual Traffic Counts

**Table 8-F. Highway Segments (Excluding GA 515) with Greatest Average Annual Growth in Traffic Volumes**

Highway and Jurisdiction*	Station Number	1992	1997	2002	Average Annual Traffic Volume Growth	
					1992 - 2002	1997 - 2002
GA 2/52 W GC	164	951	1,067	1,426	4.1%	6.0%
River Street E	185	6,656	4,523	8,856	2.9%	14.4%
GA 382 GC	145	1,253	990	1,436	1.4%	7.7%
GA 52 E EE	195	6,999	6,440	10,657	4.3%	10.6%
GA 52 E GC	204	6,314	7,275	9,926	4.6%	6.4%
GA 52 E GC	210	3,206	2,421	4,606	3.7%	13.7%
Yukon Road EE	222	3,324	3,179	5,820	5.8%	12.9%

Source: Georgia DOT, Annual Traffic Counts

\*GC – unincorporated Gilmer County; E – City of Ellijay; EE – City of East Ellijay

#### 8.1.1.4. Roadway Conditions

There are approximately 1,185 lane miles of public roads in Gilmer County. According to the Georgia DOT, in 2002, 68% of the public lane miles in Gilmer County were paved, compared to the statewide figure of 74%. Table 8-G provides data on the type of surface found on the public roads in Gilmer County.

**Table 8-G. Lane Mileage of Public Roads by Surface Type in 2002**

Type of Street (Public Streets Only)	Total Lane Miles*	Mileage by Surface Type				% of miles paved	
		Unpaved	Low Type Bitum.	High Type Bitum.	P.C. Concrete	Gilmer	Georgia
State Routes	207	0	0	187	20	100%	100%
County Roads	876	330	311	234	0	62%	65%
City Streets	38	1	8	30	0	98%	96%
Other Public Roads	64	48	6	10	0	26%	38%
<b>Total Lane Miles</b>	<b>1,185</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>74%</b>

Source: GDOT, Office of Information Services, 400 Series Reports, 1DPP452-PDS

\*The lanes miles in this table will not equal highway mileage figures in other tables two reasons: the data source and date. It does, however, provide useful data pertaining to surface type.

According to the local GDOT office in Gilmer County, heavily loaded truck traffic is a major cause of road deterioration. Road surface conditions can change very quickly if truck traffic increases on a particular road segment. For this reason, GDOT does not program resurfacing projects beyond one or two years. State roads which are scheduled for resurfacing in the near future include the following:

- SR 2/52 from Murray County to Dawson County
- SR 282 from Old Highway 5 to a point approximately 2 miles north
- SR 515 from just north of County Road 8 to Fannin County (all lanes in both directions)

Gilmer County's Road Department maintains a schedule of roads which need to be paved or resurfaced. County roads which are scheduled for resurfacing in the near future include the following:

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ Turniptown Road     | ▪ Yukon Road              |
| ▪ Lucious Road        | ▪ Ponderosa Road          |
| ▪ John Teem Road      | ▪ Doves Chapel Road       |
| ▪ Lower Cartecay Road | ▪ Tails Creek Church Road |

City roads which are scheduled for resurfacing using Local Road Assistance Program (LARP) funds from the Georgia DOT include the following:

**Ellijay**

- Mary Ann Street
- North Avenue
- McCutchen Street
- Teem Street
- Oak Street
- Depot Street
- Seminary Circle

**East Ellijay**

- Maddox Drive\*
- Fowler Street
- Walnut Street
- Sycamore Street
- Willow Street

**8.1.1.5. Accident Data**

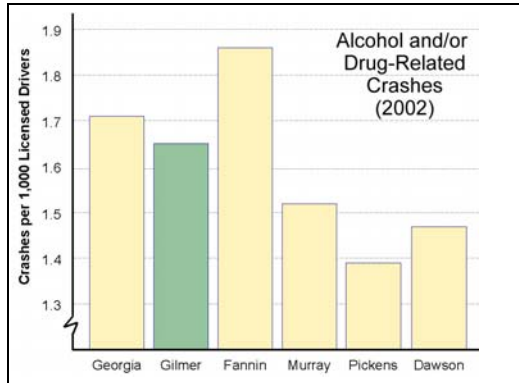
Table 8-H provides traffic accident data from the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS). While there were more accidents in 2002 than in 1997, the number of crashes per mile of travel actually decreased. In Gilmer County, crashes were more likely to be a result of unsafe or illegal speed than from alcohol and/or drug use. According to the DMVS, throughout Georgia the number of alcohol related crashes is declining while the number of drug related crashes is increasing.

**Table 8-H. Gilmer County Traffic Accident Data**

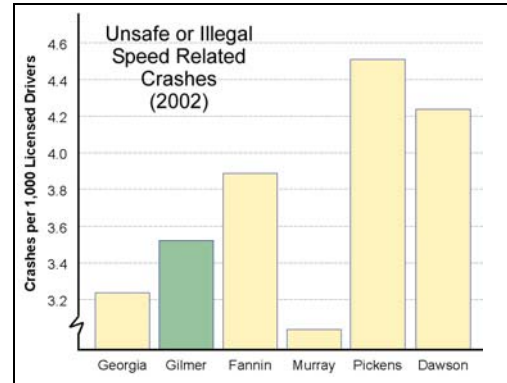
	1997	2002	% Change
<b>Number of Crashes</b>	414	436	5%
Crashes per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	170.9	116.8*	-32%
<b>Number of Crashes with Injuries</b>	219	248	13%
Injuries per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	90.4	66.4	-27%
<b>Number of Crashes with Fatalities</b>	10	2	-80%
Fatalities per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	4.13	--	--
<b>Crashes Related to Unsafe or Illegal Speed</b>	76	73	-4%
Crashes per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	530.9	353.4	33%
<b>Crashes Related to Alcohol or Drug Use</b>	28	34	21%
Crashes per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	195.6	164.6	-16%

\*The average figure for all of Georgia was 307 crashes per 100 million VMT.  
Source: Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety

Figures 8-D and 8-E below compare accident statistics for Gilmer County with nearby counties and the entire state. Gilmer County has a lower ratio of crashes related to alcohol and/or drugs than the state, but a higher ratio for crashes related to unsafe or illegal speeds.



**Figure 8-D.** Alcohol and/or Drug Related Crashes in 2002. (Source: GA DMVS)



**Figure 8-E.** Unsafe or Illegal Speed Related Crashes in 2002. (Source: GA DMVS)

### 8.1.2. Bridges

All bridges in Gilmer County which have a span of 20 feet or more are inspected every two years by GDOT's Bridge Inspection Division. (There are 71 bridges in Gilmer County which span over 20 feet.) A copy of the inspection report is provided to the Gilmer County Road Department. Table 8-I below and on the following pages lists the bridges in the county which are inspected by GDOT.

**Table 8-I. Locally Owned Federal Aid Route Inspected Bridges in Gilmer County**

Location	ID	Type	Condition
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Ellijay River Tributary	0031	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Ellijay River Tributary	0032	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Kells Creek	0033	bridge structure	good/fair
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Ross Creek	0034	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Jones Creek	0035	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Boardtown Creek	0036	bridge structure	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Boardtown Creek	0037	bridge structure	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Boardtown Creek	0038	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Anderson Creek	0039	all conc. bridge structure	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Holden Creek	0040	bridge culvert	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Stover Creek	0041	bridge culvert	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Stover Creek	0046	bridge culvert	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Bailey Creek	0047	bridge culvert	good

Source: GDOT, Gilmer County Office

**Table 8-1. Locally Owned Federal Aid Route Inspected Bridges in Gilmer County (continued)**

Location	ID	Type	Condition
CR 193, Yukon Road over Fausett Creek	0042	bridge culvert	good
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Town Creek Tributary	0001	bridge culvert	fair
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Pickett Branch	0002	bridge culvert	good
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Town Creek Tributary	0003	bridge culvert	fair
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Town Creek	0004	bridge culvert	good
CR 239, Ellijay Road over Coosawattee River	0005	all conc. bridge structure	good/fair
CR 239, North Main Street over Ellijay River Tributary	0006	bridge culvert	good
CR 239, North Main Street over Ellijay River	0007	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 239, North Main Street over CSX Railroad	0008	bridge structure	good/fair
CR 6, Northcutt Road over Ellijay River Tributary	5001	bridge structure	good
CR 6, Northcutt Road under CSX Railroad	5050	non-roadway structure	--
CR 9, Northcutt Road over Big Turniptown Creek	5002	bridge culvert	good
CR 12, White Path Road over Jones Creek	5003	bridge culvert	good
CR 12, White Path Road over Ellijay River	5004	all conc. bridge structure	good
CR 14, Bushy Head Gap Road over Fightingtown Creek	5005	bridge culvert	good
CR 15, Clear Creek Road over Clear Creek	5006	bridge structure	good/fair
CR 15, Clear Creek Road over Turkey Creek	5007	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 16, Roy Road over Anderson Creek	5008	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 27, Craigtown Road over Little Mountain Creek	5011	bridge structure	good
CR 58, Seth Hyatt Road over Davis Creek	5014	bridge culvert	good
CR 59, Taylor Pritchett Road over Davis Creek	5015	bridge structure	fair
CR 60, Mountaintown Road over Conasauga Creek	5016	bridge culvert	good
CR 64, Sam Hill road over Mountaintown Creek	5017	bridge structure	good
CR 65, Gates Chapel Road over Little Mountaintown Cr.	5018	bridge structure	good
CR 65, Gates Chapel Road over Mountaintown Creek	5045	bridge structure	good
CR 92, Orchard Lane over Clear Creek	5051	bridge culvert	good
CR 97, Henry Evans Road over Turkey Creek	5019	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 98, Johnson Mill Road over Clear Creek	5020	all conc. bridge structure	good
CR 99, Blackberry Mountain Road over Clear Creek	5021	bridge structure	good
CR 101, Lower Cartecay Road over Cartecay River	5024	bridge structure	good
CR 120, Holt Bridge Road over Cartecay River	5026	bridge structure	fair
CR 121, Owl Town Road over Cartecay River Tributary	5059	bridge structure	good
CR 121, Owl Town Road over Cartecay River Tributary	5058	bridge structure	good
CR 121, Owl Town Road over Cartecay River Tributary	5060	bridge structure	good
CR 127, River Hill Road over Cartecay River	5031	bridge structure	closed
CR 129, East New Hope Road over Stover Creek	5030	bridge structure	good
CR 131, Old Bucktown Road over Tickanetley Creek	5032	bridge structure	fair
CR 131, Old Bucktown Road over Tickanetley Creek	5033	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 131, Old Bucktown Road over Tickanetley Creek	5034	bridge structure	good

Source: GDOT, Gilmer County Office

**Table 8-I. Locally Owned Federal Aid Route Inspected Bridges in Gilmer County (continued)**

Location	ID	Type	Condition
CR 132, Buford Weaver Road over Tickanetley Creek	5061	bridge structure	good
CR 132, Buford Weaver Road over Tickanetley Creek	5036	bridge structure	good
CR 133, Tickanetley Road over Tickanetley Creek	5037	bridge structure	good
CR 136, Diamond Road over Anderson Creek	5038	bridge structure	good
CR 138, Macedonia Road over Anderson Creek	5039	bridge structure	good
CR 140, Pole Coffee Circle over Rolston Creek	5040	bridge structure	good
CR 141, New Liberty Road over Holden Creek	5041	corrug. metal pipe culv.	good
CR 144, Pisgah Road over Holden Creek	5053	corrug. metal pipe culv.	good
CR 145, Ray Mountain Road over Big Turnip Town Cr.	5057	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 151, Rock Creek Church Road over Rock Creek	5052	bridge structure	good
CR 153, Rock Creek Road over Rock Creek	5043	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 184, Zion Hill Road over Harper Creek	5054	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 187, South Lucius Road over Cherrylog Creek	506	bridge culvert	good
CR 226, White Stone Road over Talona Creek	5048	bridge culvert	good
CR 234, Talona Road over Talona Creek	5012	bridge culvert	good
CR 257, Cherry Log Street over Rock Creek	0013	all conc. bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 258, Rock Creek Road over Rock Creek	5042	bridge structure	good
CR 280, Kells Ridge Road over Kells Creek	5056	bridge structure	good
CS 542, McCutchen Street over Ellijay River	5049	bridge structure	good/satisf.

Source: GDOT, Gilmer County Office

According to the most recent inspection report, all bridges on state routes are structurally sufficient. The following bridges are scheduled for replacement under Georgia's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

- Rock Creek Road at Rock Creek, 9 miles northeast of Ellijay (2004)
- GA 282 over Tails Creek west of Ellijay (2005)
- GA 2 over Ellijay River in Ellijay (after 2006)

In terms of evacuation, a closing of the bridge located on Old Highway 5 over the Coosawattee River, just south of Legion Road, could have an impact on a school evacuation should one be necessary.

### 8.1.3. Signalization and Signage

There are six signalized intersections in Gilmer County, all of which are on state highways and are located in the incorporated cities. The locations are shown in Figure 8-F below. As traffic volumes increase, more signals may be warranted. Possible locations of future signals are also shown on Figure 8-F.

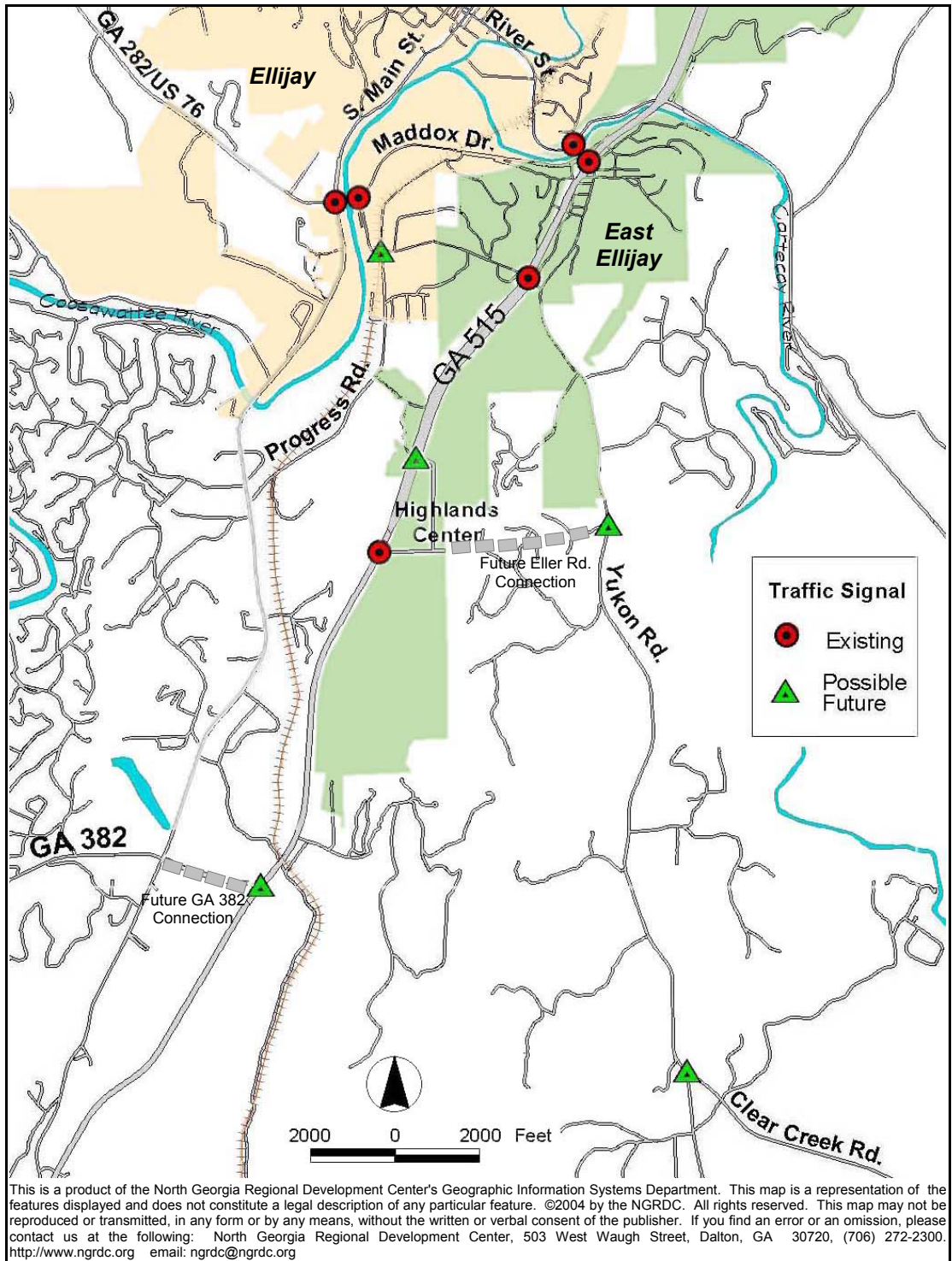


Figure 8-F. Signalized Intersections in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay

#### 8.1.4. Parking Facilities

**Ellijay.** On-street parking is available along most streets in downtown Ellijay. There are two public parking areas: one is off River Street and the other is off Broad Street in front of the Senior Center and behind the library. The new County Courthouse will be constructed on much of the Broad Street parking lot; therefore, a new lot is planned off South Dalton Street. Several existing County government buildings will be demolished to accommodate the new parking lot.

The newly constructed lot off of River Street has alleviated much of the parking problem for the businesses on River Street. Parking around the courthouse tends to be a problem when court is in session.



**On-street parking is available along many streets in downtown Ellijay.**

At present, there are no parking decks existing in or planned for Ellijay, East Ellijay, or the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County.

**East Ellijay.** There is one park-and-ride facility located on Craig Street, just off Highway 515 in East Ellijay. On-street parking is available along most side streets in the city.

**Unincorporated Areas.** There are no designated parking facilities in the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County.

#### 8.1.5. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

**Bike Routes.** The Georgia Bicycle Master Plan, developed by GDOT, includes 14 bicycle routes. The “Mountain Crossing” bike route, which is included in the plan, traverses Gilmer County from east to west along GA 52 and goes through both Ellijay and East Ellijay. Approximately 3.2 miles of the Mountain Crossing Route in Gilmer County contain bike lanes and these bike lanes are located along GA 52 East. As other portions of GA 52 are improved by GDOT, more bike lanes will be added to this route. There are no designated bike lanes along city streets in Ellijay or East Ellijay.

The North Georgia and Coosa Valley RDCs are currently working on a joint project to develop a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. The purpose of the plan is to enhance and promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation throughout the region. The plan is funded by GDOT and is expected to influence GDOT’s long range work program elements for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the region.

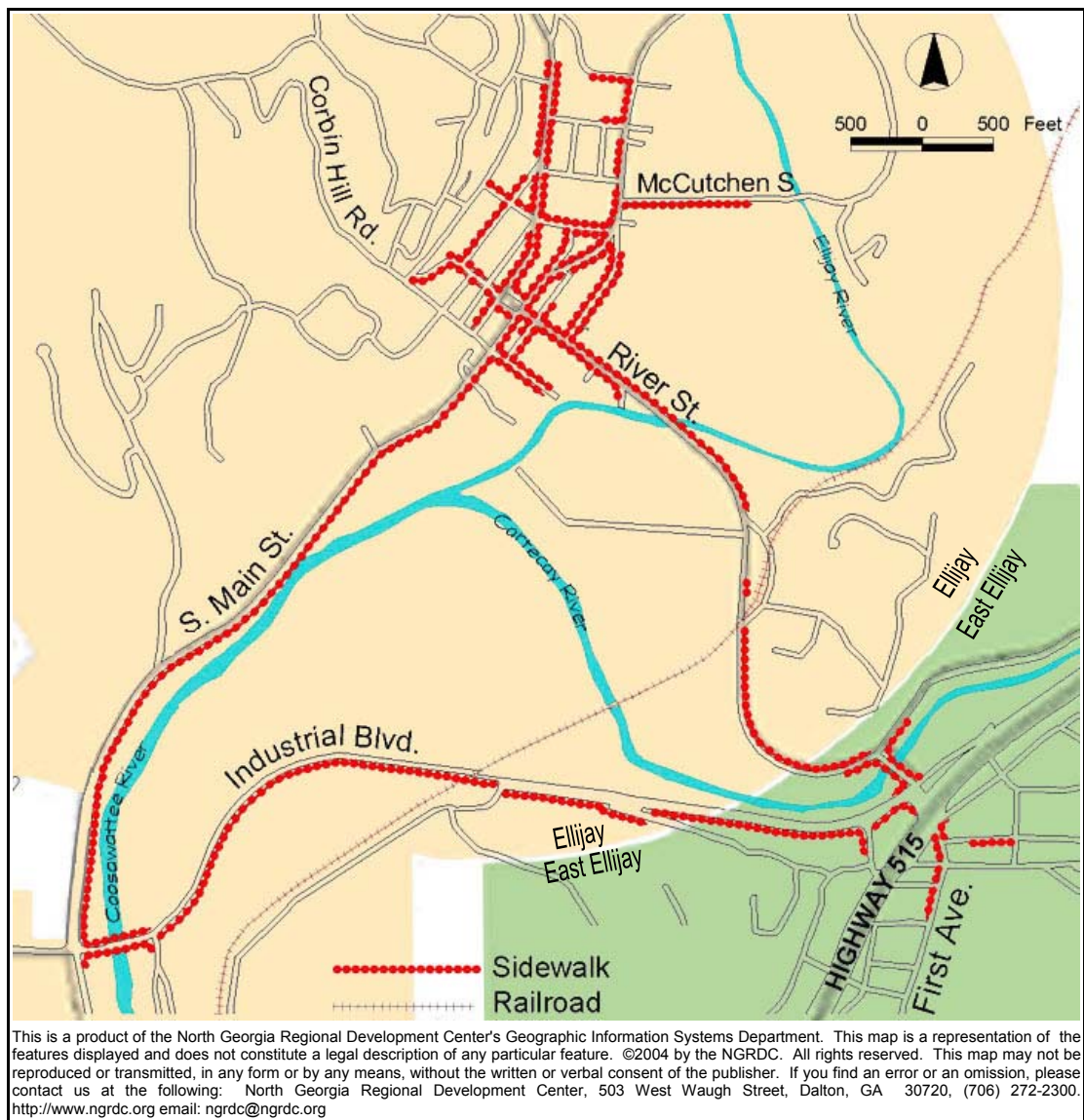


**Sidewalks.** Gilmer County contains 5.9 miles of sidewalks, the majority of which are located in the City of Ellijay. (See Figure 8-G.) The City of Ellijay has benefited greatly from receiving a series of Transportation Enhancement grants which have helped fund downtown streetscape projects, including sidewalk improvements. The City will continue to apply for funding for sidewalk improvement projects in the future.

East Ellijay contains a limited number of sidewalks as shown in Figure 8-G. There are no sidewalks in the unincorporated areas of the county.



**Sidewalks have been improved in Ellijay with Transportation Enhancement and local funding.**



**Figure 8-G. Sidewalks in Ellijay and East Ellijay**

**Trails.** Gilmer County contains several miles of recreational trails, most of which are located in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The North Georgia Regional Development Center is in the process of mapping certain trails in Gilmer and surrounding counties for the Georgia DOT. More information on trails in Gilmer County can be found at <http://georgiatrails.com>.

The County River Park also contains a multi-purpose trail parallel to the Coosawattee River. This trail is a great amenity to the community and there are plans to extend it in the future.



**Gilmer County contains several miles of recreational and nature trails.**

### 8.1.6. Public Transportation

Gilmer County contracts with the North Georgia Community Action Agency, d.b.a. the Mountain Area Transportation System (MATS), to operate the county public transit system. Four buses, two of which have wheelchair lifts, operate on a flexible, fixed route schedule, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Each vehicle averages 500 one-way passenger trips per month. This figure has been fairly consistent over the past ten years.

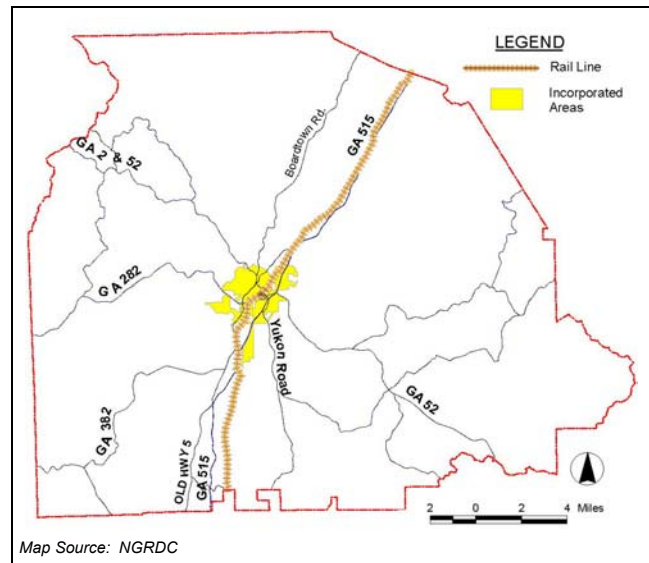
MATS provides curb-to-curb and shared-ride service. Individual fare service is provided with 24-hour advance notice. Pre-arranged charter services is also available.

### 8.1.7. Railroad

The location of rail lines in Gilmer County is shown in Figure 8-H. The county is currently served by the Georgia Northeastern Railroad (GNRR). GNRR operates over the former Louisville & Nashville Hook and Eye line from a connection with CSX at Elizabeth (Marietta) to Ellijay (66 miles).

Timber, grain, poultry, and marble products are the primary goods which are hauled. Daily service to Gilmer County is available.

GNRR also operates the Georgia Marble Company's railroad at Tate and the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad. In past years, the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad made trips to Ellijay during the summer, with the train stopping at the depot on River Street and a shuttle taking tourists to the square in Ellijay. This did not occur in 2003 and will not occur in 2004. The Downtown Ellijay Merchants and Associates (DEMA) will continue to approach the Scenic Railroad in the future to reestablish trips to Ellijay.



**Figure 8-H. Rail Lines in Gilmer County.**

The overall rail system for the northern half of Georgia is shown in Figure 8-I on the following page.

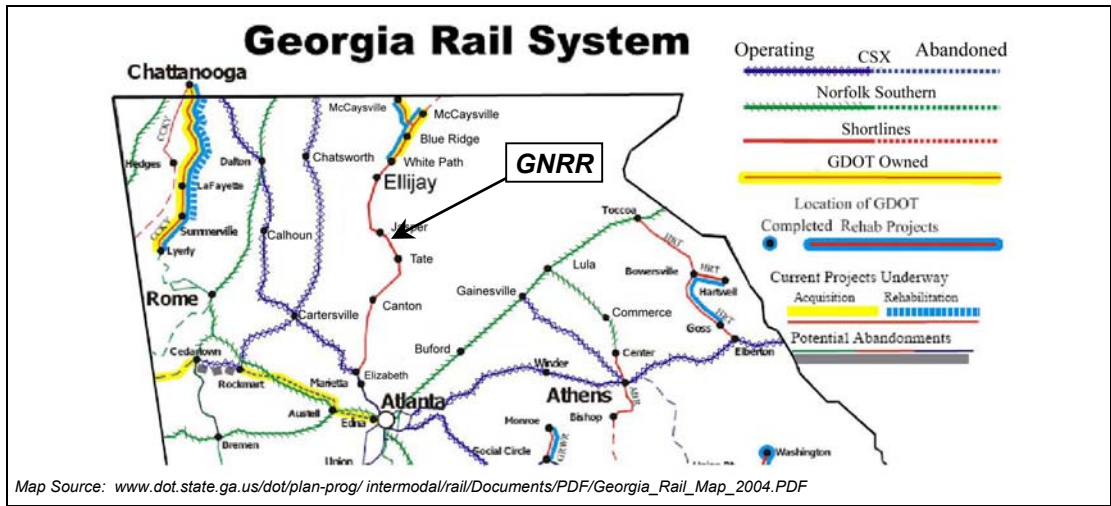


Figure 8-I. Georgia Rail System, January 2004. (Source: GDOT, Office of Intermodal Programs)

No passenger rail service is available in Gilmer or adjacent counties; however, a commuter rail station is proposed for Canton, just 35 miles from downtown Ellijay. While the construction of this station is very unlikely in the next ten years, it is likely to be constructed within the next twenty years. Having a commuter rail station this close to Gilmer County could have a significant impact upon growth in the county. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program map is shown in Figure 8-J below.

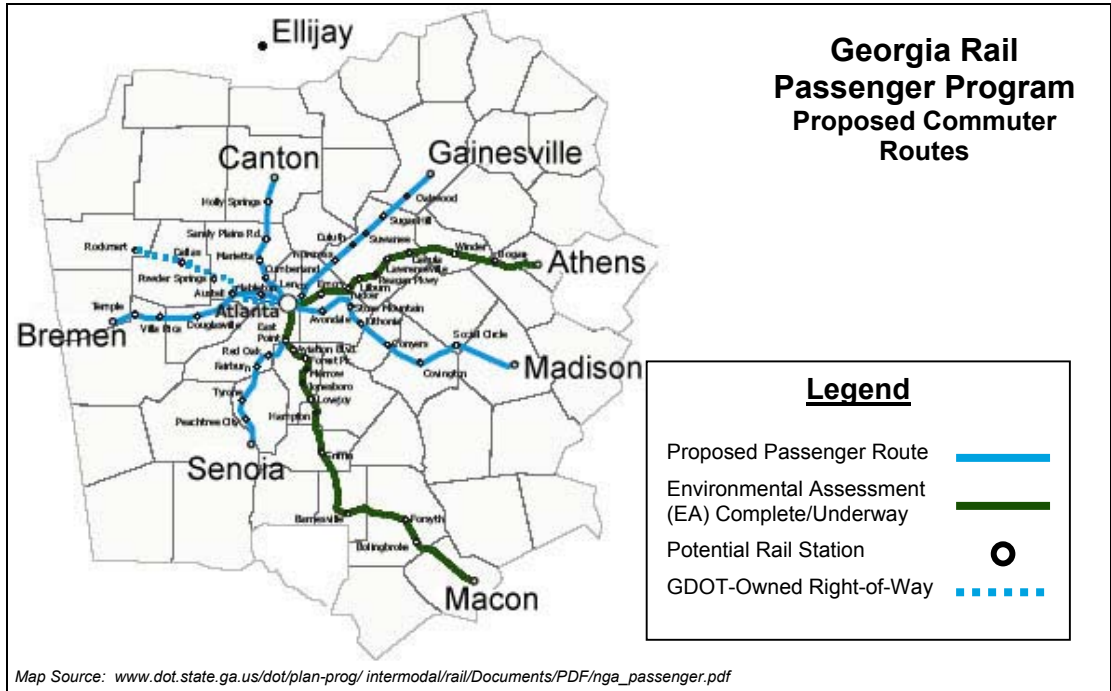


Figure 8-J. Proposed Commuter Routes (Source: GDOT, Office of Intermodal Programs)

### 8.1.8. Airport

The Gilmer County Airport is located on a 100 acre tract, south of Ellijay off Highway 382. (See Figure 8-K.) It was developed in the mid-1960s and serves Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County. The airport is owned by Gilmer County.

The Airport Advisory Board is a 3-member board composed of citizens from the community selected because of their interest in and knowledge of aviation. The board is appointed by and reports to the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners.

The condition of the Gilmer County Airport has deteriorated over the past decade. Many of the buildings are in poor condition, the runway surface is cracked, and the airport beacon is inoperative. In addition, fuel services were removed in the late 1990s which resulted in some aircraft owners moving to other airfields.

In 2003, the Federal Aviation Administration awarded Gilmer County a \$450,000 grant to renovate and upgrade the airfield. The grant will fund 90% of the renovation project with the remaining funds coming from the State Department of Transportation Aviation Program (\$25,000) and Gilmer County (\$25,000). Renovations are expected to begin in the summer of 2004. The airport will be closed during renovations.

Elements of the renovation are still being determined and may include:

- rehabilitating and widening the runway,
- rehabilitating runway lighting, and
- updating the airport master plan.

The closest airports with commercial passenger flights are Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (85 miles from downtown Ellijay) and Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (65 miles from downtown Ellijay).

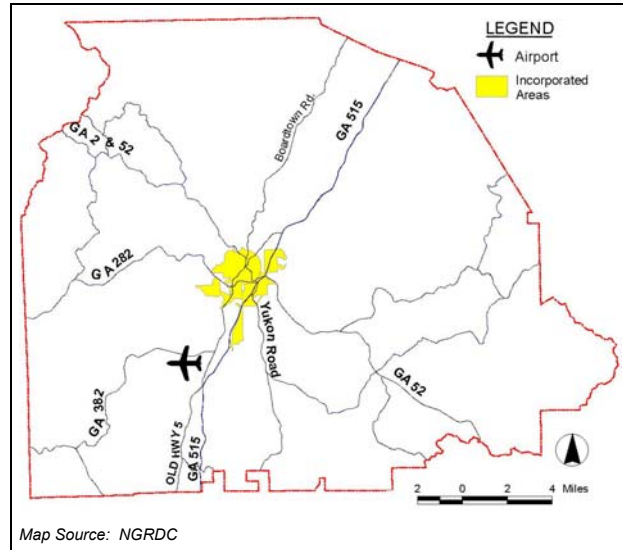


Figure 8-K. Gilmer County Airport Location

## 8.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

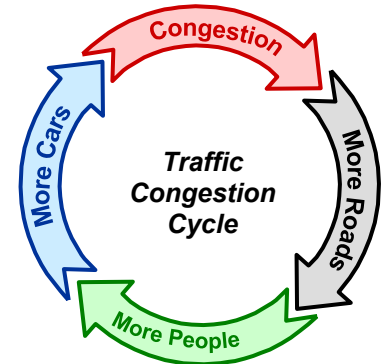
Section 8.1 provided an inventory of the components of Gilmer County’s transportation network. The assessment in this section answers the following question which was derived from the requirements in Section 110-12-1-.04(12)(h)ii of the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning:

***Can the future needs of the community can be met with existing transportation facilities and services? If not, what improvements will be needed to (1) accommodate anticipated population and economic growth and (2) provide a safe and efficient transportation network?***

Based on population and employment projections, the future transportation needs of Gilmer County cannot be met by the existing transportation facilities and services. The following facilities and services are analyzed in this section: streets, roads, and highways; parking facilities; bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and public transit.

### 8.2.1. Streets, Roads, and Highways

In most parts of the country, a “traffic congestion cycle” exists whereby a road is built or widened which adds capacity. Development then occurs along the road which attracts people who drive vehicles, which adds to congestion. New roads are built to add capacity, which attracts people, adding to congestion, and so on and so on. This cycle is illustrated to the right.



“Level of Service” (LOS) is a measure of traffic congestion along a segment of roadway and is expressed as letters “A” through “F” with “A” being the best travel condition and “F” being the worst. LOS can be further defined as follows:

- LOS A – Free flow or unrestricted traffic movement
- LOS B – Stable flow, noticeable traffic
- LOS C – Stable flow with more traffic interactions
- LOS D – High density traffic with restricted speed and freedom to maneuver
- LOS E – Road is operating at or near capacity, speed is low, convenience is poor
- LOS F – Unstable flow, severe congestion

GDOT’s MultiModal Transportation Planning Tool (MTPT) was used to perform a basic highway analysis for Gilmer County. The MTPT estimates the level of service for various road segments. The MTPT’s default values were used for the required data with the exception of traffic growth rates. The average annual growth rates for traffic volumes on arterials, collectors, and local roads in Gilmer County were changed from 5%, 2%, and 1% to 6%, 4%, and 2%, respectively. The revised rates better reflect historical growth in traffic volumes in Gilmer County, particularly along Highway 515.

It should be noted that the MTPT provides a simplified analysis of current and future traffic conditions in Gilmer County. A more accurate analysis would require the development of a model which is specifically tailored to Gilmer County's land use, population, traffic, and transportation network. In addition, the traffic network in the MTPT uses roads which were in existence in 1997. Various road improvements have been made since that time which would influence the output of the model. For example, passing lanes have been added to segments of GA 282 West, which have alleviated some congestion on this road.

While the MTPT does have its limitations, it is a valuable tool for providing a general picture of traffic conditions which are likely in Gilmer County in the future. The following sections (8.2.1.1., 8.2.1.2., and 8.2.1.3.) summarize the results from the MTPT analysis in terms of predicted levels of services for the current year, 2010, and 2020. The results are described in general terms first, and then more specifically by jurisdiction. Section 8.2.1.4. provides information on improvements planned by the GDOT and possible improvements to the road network which came out of the MTPT analysis.

### 8.2.1.1. Current Year LOS

**Overview.** Figure 8-L on the following page illustrates current (year 2000) traffic levels of service for various road segments in Gilmer County. The levels of service which are illustrated are for some time period during the day, most likely during the AM and PM peak hours, and not necessarily during the entire day. Construction of passing lanes has alleviated some of the congestion along the portions of GA 282 West and GA 52 East which are shown at LOS D and E. The model shows that two road segments, South Main Street between Industrial Boulevard and the square, and Industrial Boulevard between South Main Street and First Avenue operate at LOS F at some time period during the day.

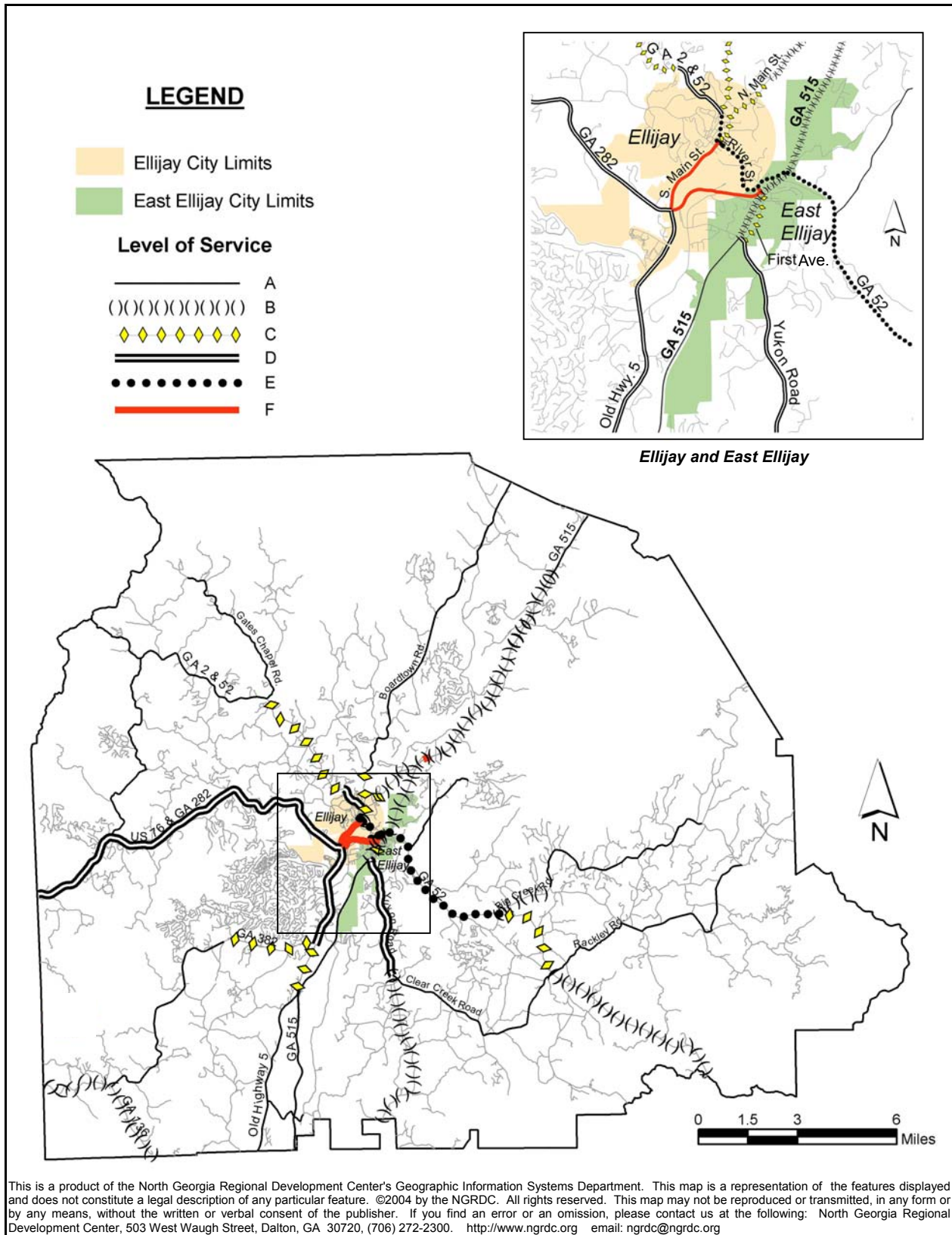
**Ellijay.** The inset in Figure 8-L shows that in the City of Ellijay, South Main Street and a portion of GA 282 function at LOS F at some time period during the day. River Street functions at LOS E as does a portion of GA 2/52. Within the city limits, there are severe limitations to providing additional lanes to alleviate congestion. Limitations include inadequate right-of-way, steep topography, and natural resources such as the Ellijay and Coosawattee Rivers.

**East Ellijay.** In East Ellijay, GA 52 is operating at LOS E, Yukon Road is at LOS D, First Street is at LOS C, and portions of GA 515 are at LOS B. Within the city limits, there are severe limitations to providing additional lanes to alleviate congestion. Limitations include inadequate right-of-way, steep topography, and natural resources such as the Cartecay and Coosawattee Rivers.

The Eller Road extension (see Figure 8-F on page 8-13) from GA 515 to Yukon Road may help alleviate some of the congestion which is growing in the southern portion of the city around the new Highlands Shopping Center.

**Unincorporated Areas.** Most of the traffic congestion in Gilmer County is contained within the incorporated cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay. As stated previously, the provision of passing lanes has alleviated much of the congestion on GA 282 and GA 52 East.

An east/west connection between GA 382 and GA 515 is planned for some time between 2006 and 2009. (See Figure 8-F on page 8-13.) This is expected to redirect some traffic from the downtown areas and keep it on the less-traveled/higher capacity roads in the unincorporated areas.

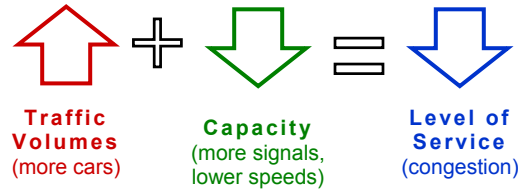


**Figure 8-L. Year 2000 Levels of Service (Source: MTPT Analysis)**

### 8.2.1.2. Year 2010 LOS

**Overview.** Figure 8-M on the following page illustrates likely traffic conditions in 2010. Traffic along major corridors is becoming more congested. Given the proliferation of new development along GA 515 in East Ellijay, the level of service will most likely be even worse than shown, and probably approach LOS D or E.

By 2010, not only will overall traffic volumes in the community be greater, but associated turning movements (right and left turns onto and off of a highway) will be greater as well. More traffic signals will be required and reduced speed limits will be requested in an attempt to improve safety. All of these factors



will contribute to a reduction in the overall capacity of the road network. Increased traffic volumes combined with decreased capacity will lead to lower levels of service.

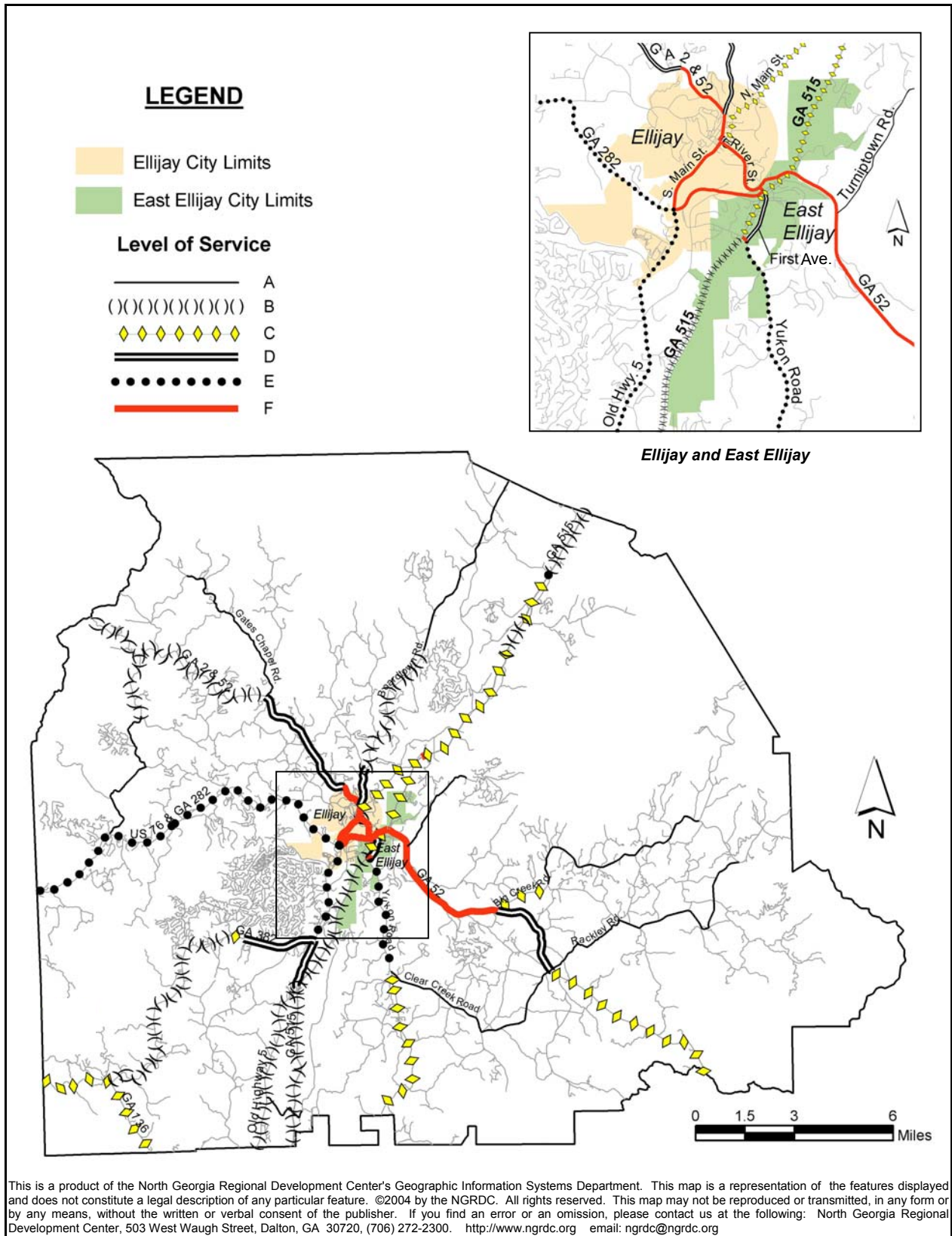
**Ellijay.** THE MTPT predicts that in the City of Ellijay, North Main Street will function at LOS C while Boardtown Road will be at LOS D. Portions of GA 282, and Old Highway 5 will be at LOS E while South Main Street, River Street, GA 282, and portions of GA 2/52 will be at LOS F.

**East Ellijay.** In East Ellijay, GA 515 is predicted to function at either LOS B or C. First Avenue will be at LOS D, Yukon Road will be at LOS E, and GA 52 will be at LOS F.

**Unincorporated Areas.** By 2010, the MTPT predicts that GA 515 will be at either LOS B or C. The east/west corridors of GA 282 and GA 52 function at a range of service levels from B to F, with levels becoming worse the nearer the road segment is to the incorporated areas. Other collector roads are functioning at levels B and C. The worst congestion is still primarily within the limits of the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay.

The development of new east/west connections in the cities and county may help alleviate some of the developing congestion.





**Figure 8-M. Projected Level of Service in 2010 (Source: MTPT Analysis)**

### 8.2.1.3. Year 2030 LOS

**Overview.** Figure 8-N on the following page illustrates likely traffic conditions in 2020. Note that most major road corridors, including GA 515 are at LOS F for some portion of the day. Local roads are also beginning to show congestion. Improving connectivity throughout the county will be an important way of achieving relief from congestion.

**Ellijay.** As shown in the inset in Figure 8-N, in the City of Ellijay, nearly every main road will function at LOS F by the year 2020 if no improvements are made to the network. Few remedies exist to correct these problems.

**East Ellijay.** In East Ellijay, all major roads are predicted to function at LOS F by the year 2020. Given the amount of commercial development occurring in East Ellijay, it is likely that these roads will approach LOS F before the year 2020.

**Unincorporated Areas.** As illustrated in Figure 8-N, all of GA 515 is predicted to function at LOS F by the year 2020. In addition, all east/west routes are showing congestion at or above LOS C. Several local roads are beginning to show congestion.

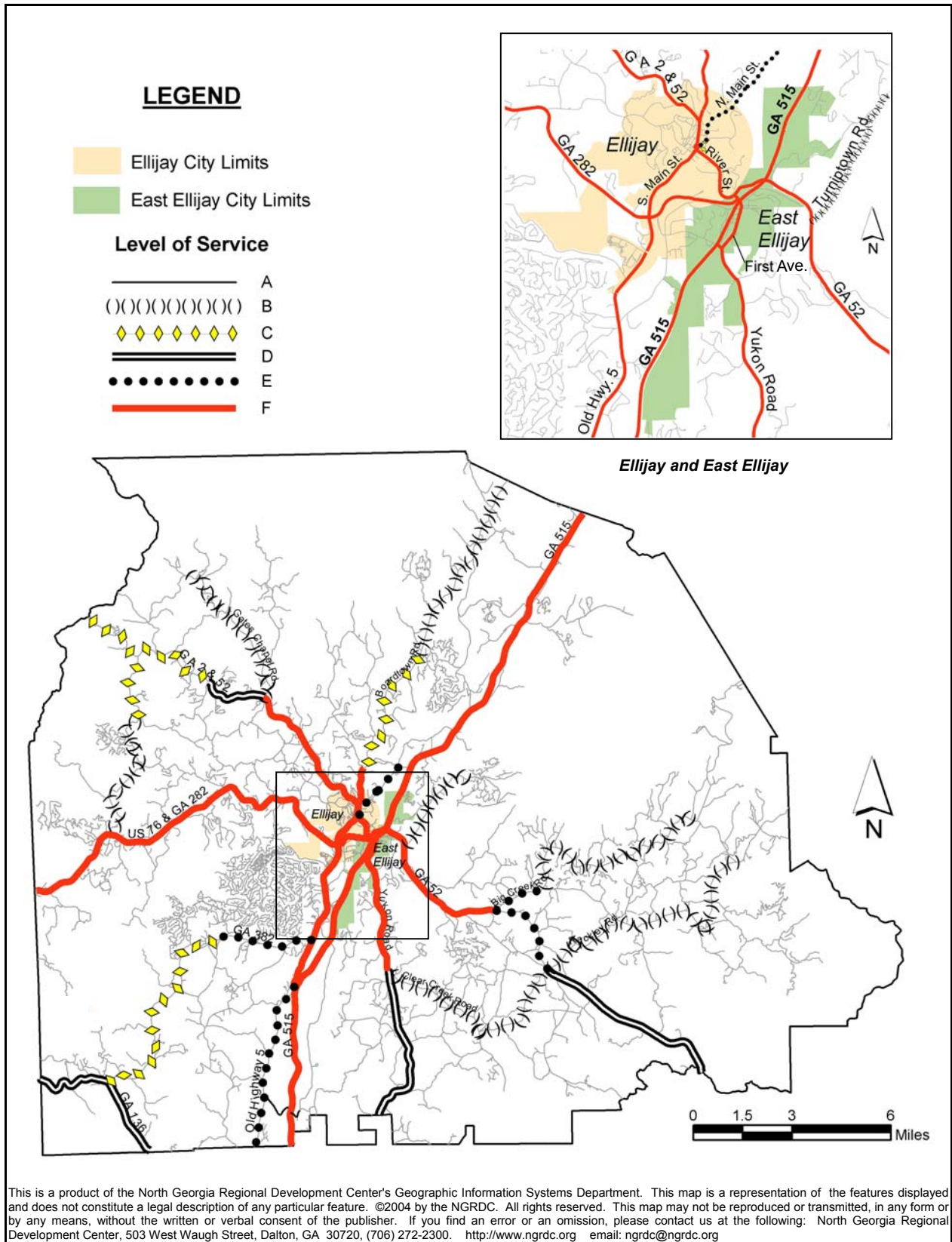
### 8.2.1.4. Roadway Improvements

Gilmer County is growing rapidly and the strain on the existing transportation network is quickly reflecting this growth. It is not surprising that numerous improvements to county and state roads will be needed to enhance the capacity of the road network. Planned roadway improvements included in the State Transportation Improvement Program are listed in Table 8-J. These are the GDOT's committed road projects for the next three years. Also included in the table are projects in Gilmer County which are part of GDOT's construction work program.

**Table 8-J. 2004 – 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (excludes bridge projects) and Selected Construction Work Program Projects for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay**

Project #	Description	Jurisdiction
631260	GA 382 Extension from Old Highway 5 to GA 515 (construction after 2006, programmed for 2009)	Gilmer County
M002537	GA 52 from GA 2 to Dawson County line – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County
M002538	GA 2 from Murray County line to GA 515 – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County
M002539	GA 282 from east of Corbin Hill Road to Old Highway 5 – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay and Gilmer County
S006111	Bobcat Trail at GA 515 – intersection improvements	Ellijay
S006934	Clear Creek Road and Yukon Road – widen and resurface	East Ellijay and Gilmer County
S005640	Cross Street in East Ellijay – resurface and maintenance	East Ellijay
S006173	Dogwood Drive in East Ellijay – resurface and maintenance	East Ellijay
S006174	Tabor Street and Church Street in Ellijay – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay

Source: Georgia DOT



**Figure 8-N. Projected Level of Service in 2020 (Source: MTPT Analysis)**

While these projects will improve traffic operations, they will not enhance the capacity (add lanes) of the road network. The MTPT analysis proposes a number of projects to enhance traffic capacity. These projects, most of which are on roads which are in both incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county, are listed in Table 8-K. Estimated costs associated with these improvements are provided and are based upon an average statewide improvement cost. Actual costs could be significantly greater.

**Table 8-K. Possible Future Roadway Improvements** (Note: These projects are outputs of the MTPT computer analysis and are not necessarily projects which should or will occur in the future.)

Project Description	Jurisdiction	Length	Estimated Cost (in 2010 \$)	LOS in 2020	LOS with improvements
GA 515 – widen from 4 lanes to 6 lanes	GC, EE	22.06 mi.	\$58 million	F	D or E
S. Main Street – add one lane	GC, E	4.30 mi.	\$2.2 million	F	F
N. Main Street – add one lane	GC, E	3.43 mi.	\$1.2 million	F	D or E
Yukon Road from First Ave to Clear Creek Road – add one lane	GC, EE	3.69 mi.	\$1.9 million	F	F
First Avenue – add one lane	EE	0.65 mi.	\$0.4 million	F	E
Big Creek Road from GA 52 to Holt Bridge Road – add one lane	GC	1.76 mi.	\$0.9 million	E	D
Boardtown Road from GA 52 to Flat Branch Road – add one lane	GC, E	1.16 mi.	\$0.6 million	F	E

*Note: The estimated cost is based upon the default construction cost included in the MTPT. The actual cost will likely be greater due to the county's terrain and escalating land prices. GC – Gilmer County, E – City of Ellijay, EE – City of East Ellijay*

Given that the MTPT LOS projections are based upon traffic volume growth rates and not land use trends, and given that new roads, signalizations, intersection improvements, etc. cannot be programmed into the MTPT, it is recommended that a 20-year, county-wide Long Range Transportation Plan be prepared. Such a plan would be based upon projected growth in the community and compatibility with the future land use map included in this Comprehensive Plan. The plan would include both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

This plan would include projects for improving operations, capacity, and connectivity (e.g. GA 382 extension, Eller Road extension). Other critical items which would be factored into the plan include the development of the new school on Clear Creek Road and the new development occurring and proposed on Highway 515.

The Transportation Plan would be implemented through a Capital Improvements Plan and Budget through a combination of financing methods which could include general fund, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, impact fees, and State and Federal assistance.

### **8.2.2. Parking Facilities**

Additional parking will be needed in downtown Ellijay when the construction of the new courthouse is complete. Although a parking deck may seem unnecessary given today's parking needs, it would likely be a valuable asset to the downtown in the coming years. Development of such a facility as an alternative to conventional parking lots should be considered. Municipal parking is not projected to be a need in East Ellijay as the commercial developments occurring in the city provide on-site parking.

The need for public parking areas in the unincorporated portion of the county is not anticipated unless passenger rail service becomes available.

### **8.2.3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

Making Gilmer County and its cities more bicycle friendly will enhance its attractiveness as a tourist destination and provide an alternative mode of transportation for those who either cannot afford a vehicle or prefer to use a bicycle. A regional bicycle plan is underway and recommendations for bicycle facilities for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay should be pursued.

Downtown Ellijay currently has a good network of sidewalks. In some areas the sidewalks need to be improved to make them more user friendly and in some areas sidewalks do not exist. All public buildings in the downtown area should be linked with sidewalks. A pedestrian plan should be included as part of the recommended downtown revitalization plan.

Other areas which would benefit from additional pedestrian facilities include downtown East Ellijay, the Riverfront Park area, the existing public school campus, the new library, the proposed public school campus of Clear Creek Road, and the proposed hospital campus. Pedestrian links across the Coosawattee, Ellijay, and Cartecay Rivers should also be pursued.

### **8.2.4. Public Transportation**

The need for public transportation service is expected to grow with the population. Expanding service should be investigated on an as-needed basis.

A segment of the population, primarily the immigrant population working in the poultry processing industry, has developed its own form of public transportation whereby one person purchases a van and charges between \$1.00 and \$1.50 per passenger for a trip to and from work. This system appears to be a satisfactory, temporary alternative to expanding public transportation to serve these individuals.

## 8.3. Community Goal and Implementation Program

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that sets forth a plan for the transportation system.

The implementation program must support the Community Vision and include actions which should be undertaken to achieve the Community Vision.

### 8.3.1. Community Vision

In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

**Livability.** We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.

**Community Character.** We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.

**Shared Direction.** The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.

### 8.3.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following transportation planning goal and associated policies and action items:

<p><b>Goal:</b> To achieve a modern, well-funded multi-modal transportation network that is efficient, safe, and protects the environment while enhancing the area's economic development.</p>	
<p><b>Policy 1: Adequate Transportation System.</b> A good transportation network is vital for the physical, social, and economic well-being of Gilmer County and the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay; therefore transportation planning should be a priority for the community.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prepare a Long Range Transportation Plan and associated improvements program.</li> <li>b. After development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, evaluate setback requirements, access, and zoning activities for properties on roads which will be widened in the future.</li> <li>c. Pursue system-wide improvements, including new connector roads and alternate routes, to improve the level of service on the roads in the community.</li> <li>d. Complete renovations of the airport and update the Airport Master Plan.</li> <li>e. Maintain a positive working relationship with GNRR.</li> <li>f. Continue to utilize the Local Assistance Road Program for resurfacing projects.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 2: Transportation Alternatives.*</b> Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available and greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support the development and implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.</li> <li>b. Seek funding to develop a downtown master plan for the City of Ellijay to address traffic, parking, and pedestrian facilities, and housing.</li> <li>c. Pursue funding for and develop additional pedestrian facilities to include sidewalks, trails, and river crossings.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Policy 3: Regional Solutions.</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.</p>	<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support the development and implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.</li> <li>b. Continue to advocate for Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad excursions to Ellijay.</li> </ol>

\* A DCA "Quality Communities" Objective

# 9

## Community Agenda

### 9.1. Short Term Work Programs (STWPs)

The purpose of a short term work program (STWP) is to schedule specific actions that a local government intends to take to address the needs and goals identified in their comprehensive plan.

The short term work programs provided in Sections 9.1.1., 9.1.2, and 9.1.3. are based upon **major tasks** which are projected to occur in Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay within the next five years. These tasks relate directly to the “Goals, Policies, and Action Items” sections of Elements 2 through 8.

Not all action items listed in Elements 2 through 8 are included as projects in the STWPs. In some instances, the action item is anticipated to be undertaken in later years (2009-2013) rather than during the 2004-2008 STWP cycle. In other instances, the task is an ongoing responsibility of a local government office and it is therefore not appropriate to include it in a short term work program.

The projects and activities listed in the tables below are not prioritized, but follow the order in which they are listed in the comprehensive plan. The first column contains the number of the element where the item can be found. (Note: Some projects may be included in more than one Element.) The second column contains the action item number. The following columns include a brief description of the project, the year it is estimated to be undertaken, the responsible party or parties, a cost estimate, and a funding source. In some cases a cost estimate cannot be prepared because the scope of the project will not be defined until the future.

#### ***Element Outline:***

#### ***9.1. Short Term Work Programs***

- 9.1.1. Gilmer County STWP*
- 9.1.2. Ellijay STWP*
- 9.1.3. East Ellijay STWP*

#### ***9.2. Reports of Accomplishments***

- 9.2.1. Gilmer County Report*
- 9.2.2. Ellijay Report*
- 9.2.3. East Ellijay Report*

#### ***9.3. Capital Improvements Element Update***

#### ***9.4. Public Participation Program***

- 9.4.1. Plan Schedule*
- 9.4.2. Public Hearing Notices*
- 9.4.3. Transmittal Resolutions*
- 9.4.4. Adoption Resolutions*



### 9.1.1. Gilmer County Short Term Work Program

Element	Action Item #	Gilmer County Project or Activity	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
2.	1.a.	Fund a full-time, paid staff position of "Economic Development Director" through a cities/county partnership.			X			Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, Chamber, EDA	\$75,000	to be determined
2.	3.b.	Work with the Georgia Tech Economic Development Institute to prepare an Economic Development Feasibility Study.				X		Chamber, EDA	\$50,000	Grants
2.	5.a.	Development of a business and technology park, including adequate infrastructure.		X				Chamber, EDA, Gilmer County	\$300,000-\$500,000	State & Federal Grants, Private Sector, Gen. Fund
4.	1.a.	Acquire and develop new parks and open spaces.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County	\$200,000 - \$400,000	General Fund, Grants
4.	1.b.	Investigate the effectiveness and applicability of open space subdivision design and prepare standards if deemed appropriate.				X		Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	\$10,000	General Fund
6.	2.a.									
4.	2.a.	Fund additional staff positions in the planning commission and environmental health department.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County	depends upon the number of staff added	General Fund
4.	2.b.	Pursue TMDL and SWAP initiatives and conduct public education and BMP demonstration projects to improve the environment and increase environmental awareness.	X	X	X	X	X	USDA NRCS, GA WSCC NGRDC	\$1.3 M	Section 319 Grants
4.	2.c.									
4.	2.d.									
4.	3.a.	Pursue the creation of a Coosawattee River Basin Group.		X				Gilmer County NGRDC	n/a	n/a
4.	3.b.	Investigate multi-jurisdictional use of regional water supply sources including Carters Lake.	X	X	X	X	X	Water and Sewer Authority	n/a	n/a
5.	1.a.									
5.	2.a.	Update and implement the Water and Sewer Authority's CIE.	X					Water and Sewer Authority	n/a	n/a
5.	3.a.									
5.	4.a.	Update, adopt, and maintain the Solid Waste Management Plan.	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
7.	2.a.									
5.	5.a.	Construct a new County Emergency Management Headquarters building.				X		Gilmer County	\$500,000-\$1 million	General Fund
5.	5.b.	Construct one additional satellite fire station.	X					Gilmer County	\$100,000	General Fund
5.	5.c.	Construct two additional EMS stations.			X		X	Gilmer County	\$100,000 ea.	General Fund
5.	7.a.	Prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	X	X				Gilmer County Recreation Dept.	staff time	General Fund, Grants
6.	4.a.									
5.	7.b.	Develop two satellite parks.		X		X		Gilmer County	unknown	General Fund, Grants, User Fees
5.	7.d.	Develop a football complex.					X	Gilmer County	unknown	General Fund, Grants, User Fees
5.	7.e.	Develop a soccer complex.			X			Gilmer County	unknown	General Fund, Grants, User Fees
5.	7.g.	Seek grant funding for recreation projects as appropriate.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County	staff time	n/a
5.	8.a.	Construct a new County Courthouse.	X	X				Gilmer County	\$7.5 million	SPLOST
5.	8.c.	Build a new Chamber of Commerce facility.		X	X			Chamber of Commerce	\$250,000	General Fund, Grants

n/a: not applicable

unknown: cannot determine until the scope of the project is identified

Element	Action Item #	Gilmer County Project or Activity (continued)	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
5. 7.	10.b. 5.b.	Support Gilmer County Family Connection efforts to construct a Gilmer County Family Resource Center as well as an emergency children's shelter.		X				Gilmer County Family Connection	\$1.2 million	Grants
5.	10.c.	Support the development of the new public library.	X	X				Gilmer County	\$2 million	SPLOST
6.	1.a.	Adopt a land use ordinance.	X					Gilmer County	staff time	n/a
7.	1.a.	Hold annual, biannual, or quarterly joint planning meetings of the local governments authorities, boards, and agencies to improve communication and coordination.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, Chamber, EDA, WSA	staff time	n/a
7.	1.b.	Update the Service Delivery Strategy	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
7.	2.a.	Develop, adopt, and maintain a Joint Comprehensive Plan and associated implementation programs which are acceptable to all governments.	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
8.	1.a.	Prepare a Long Range Transportation Plan and associated improvements program.		X				Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	\$40,000	General Fund
8.	1.d.	Complete renovations of the airport and update the Airport Master Plan.		X				Gilmer County	\$500,000	Grants, State Funds, General Fund
8.	2.a.	Support the development and implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	staff time	n/a
8.	2.c.	Pursue funding for additional pedestrian facilities to include sidewalks, trails, and river crossings.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay	staff time	n/a

n/a: not applicable

unknown: cannot determine until the scope of the project is identified

## 9.1.2. Ellijay Short Term Work Program

Element	Action Item #	City of Ellijay Project or Activity	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
2.	1.a.	Fund a full-time, paid staff position of "Economic Development Director" through a cities/county partnership.			X			Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, Chamber, EDA	\$75,000	to be determined
2.	6.a.	Seek funding to develop a downtown master plan for the City of Ellijay.			X			Ellijay	\$40,000	Grants, General Fund
2.	6.d.	Expand the streetscape program.	X	X	X	X	X	Ellijay	unknown	Grants, General Fund
3.	3.a.	Seek funding to conduct a housing assessment and vacant lot inventory in the City of Ellijay.	X					Ellijay	\$16,000	Grants, General Fund
3.	3.b.	Apply for CDBG funding for housing rehabilitation in targeted areas.		X				Ellijay	\$500,000	Grants, General Fund
4.	1.b.	Investigate the effectiveness and applicability of open space subdivision design and prepare standards if deemed appropriate.				X		Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	\$10,000	General Fund
4.	1.a.	Seek ways to protect the historic fabric of downtown Ellijay through methods such as design guidelines or a preservation commission.	X	X	X	X	X	Ellijay	staff time	n/a
5.	4.a.	Update, adopt, and maintain the Solid Waste Management Plan.	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
5.	5.d.	Construct a fire and/or police department building in the City of Ellijay.		X				Ellijay	\$500,000 - \$1 million	General Fund, Grants
7.	1.a.	Hold annual, biannual, or quarterly joint planning meetings of the local governments authorities, boards, and agencies to improve communication and coordination.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, Chamber, EDA, W&SA	staff time	n/a
7.	1.b.	Update the Service Delivery Strategy	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
7.	2.a.	Develop, adopt, and maintain a Joint Comprehensive Plan and associated implementation programs which are acceptable to all governments.	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
8.	1.a.	Prepare a Long Range Transportation Plan and associated improvements program.		X				Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	\$40,000	General Fund
8.	2.a.	Support the development and implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	staff time	n/a
8.	2.c.	Pursue funding for additional pedestrian facilities to include sidewalks, trails, and river crossings.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay	staff time	n/a
8.	3.b.	Advocate for Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad Excursions to Ellijay.	X	X	X	X	X	Ellijay, DEMA	staff time	n/a

n/a: not applicable

unknown: cannot determine until the scope of the project is identified

### 9.1.3. East Ellijay Short Term Work Program

Element Action Item #	City of East Ellijay Project or Activity	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
2. 1.a.	Fund a full-time, paid staff position of "Economic Development Director" through a cities/county partnership.			X			Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, Chamber, EDA	\$75,000	to be determined
4. 1.b. 6. 2.a.	Investigate the effectiveness and applicability of open space subdivision design and prepare standards if deemed appropriate.				X		Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	\$10,000	General Fund
5. 4.a. 7. 2.a.	Update, adopt, and maintain the Solid Waste Management Plan.	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
5. 8.b.	Build a new City Hall/Police Station in East Ellijay.	X	X				East Ellijay	\$500,000	General Fund
7. 1.a.	Hold annual, biannual, or quarterly joint planning meetings of the local governments authorities, boards, and agencies to improve communication and coordination.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, Chamber, EDA, W&SA	staff time	n/a
7. 1.b.	Update the Service Delivery Strategy	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
7. 2.a.	Develop, adopt, and maintain a Joint Comprehensive Plan and associated implementation programs which are acceptable to all governments.	X					Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	n/a	n/a
8. 1.a.	Prepare a Long Range Transportation Plan and associated improvements program.		X				Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	\$40,000	General Fund
8. 2.a.	Support the development and implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan.	X	X	X	X	X	Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay	staff time	n/a

n/a: not applicable

unknown: cannot determine until the scope of the project is identified

## 9.2. Reports of Accomplishments

The purpose of a report of accomplishments is to identify the current status of projects and activities listed in an old short term work program. At a minimum, local governments are to indicate whether each activity in their old STWP has been completed, is currently underway, has been postponed, or has not been accomplished. Explanations must be provided for projects which are underway, postponed, or not accomplished.

The following three reports of accomplishments (Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay) are based upon the 1998-2003 Short Term Work Program, not upon the new Short Term Work Program outlined in Section 9.1. In some cases, items included in the old STWP are now ongoing processes; therefore, they are not included in the new STWP.

### 9.2.1. Gilmer County Report of Accomplishments

<b>Gilmer County</b>  <b>1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Currently Underway</b>	<b>Postponed</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>	<b>Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program</b>
Action 1.0.1 Continue to pursue the establishment of a community development council.			X		Participating organizations have not had this as a priority. This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as item 7.1.a. It is anticipated that joint planning meetings will begin after the 2004 elections.
Action 1.1.1 Continue to improve inter-governmental cooperation.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP. Joint planning meetings, which are intended to improve intergovernmental coordination, are proposed in the new STWP as item 7.1.a.
Action 1.1.2 Continue to seek grant-in-aid for County projects.		X			This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as items 5.7.g. and 8.2.c.
Action 2.0.1 Continue to fund economic development activities.		X			This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as items 2.1.a. and 2.3.b.
Action 2.1.1 Continue to work with Department of Community Affairs to do the BREP survey.				X	Participating organizations have not had this as a priority and are no longer interested in including it as a specific line item in the short term work program. It will be a responsibility of a new Economic Development Director which is included in the new STWP as item 2.1.a. and may also be included as part of an Economic Development Feasibility Study which is included in the new STWP as item 2.3.b.
Action 2.2.1 Continue to update advertising and promotional materials as necessary	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.2.3 Continue to develop an industrial park under leadership of the Economic Development Authority (formerly the Industrial Development Authority). Consider developing a joint industrial park with adjoining counties.		X			The Economic Development Authority continues to explore options for a business and technology park as well as an industrial park. This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as item 2.5.a.
Action 2.3.1 The career planning program for the school system will continue to focus on self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.3.2 Drop-out prevention programs will continually be adopted, promoted and assessed in order to reduce drop-outs at the 9th and 10th grade levels thereby increasing the graduation rate.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.3.3 Continue to study and implement parent/community/school improvements in partnerships to include mentors, volunteers and/or speakers.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.

Gilmer County (continued)  1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program
Action 2.3.4 Academic opportunities for adults will continue at the Adult Learning Center, the Mountain Education Center and Gilmer High School. Other programs will be considered as the needs arise.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.1. Continue to maintain and update information	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.2 Continue to promote tourist attractions with other agencies.	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.3 Continue to sponsor Apple Festival plus sponsor a new festival to be held in downtown Ellijay in May of each year.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.5.3 Work with DOT to seek Scenic By-way status.				X	This project was pre-empted by major issues, including the need to construct a new, larger courthouse, and to develop adequate library facilities, all of which required a major effort to continue the SPLOST. Other projects in the County continue to be a higher priority and the County is no longer interested in including it as an item in their STWP.
Action 3.5.1 Continue efforts to create of a Historic Preservation Commission.				X	Currently, historic preservation is an issue of interest to the City of Ellijay, but not to the County. For this reason, this item has been removed from the County's STWP. Historic preservation issues are included in the City of Ellijay's new STWP.
Action 3.5.1b Continue to determine additional areas that are eligible for National Register nomination and prepare applications	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.5.1d Continue to seek grant funds for preservation projects.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.5.1e Continue to produce information materials	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.5.1f Maintain heritage education curriculum.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.1 Mitigate adverse effects to historic properties and landscapes from County projects through environmental review.				X	Participating organizations have not had this as a priority and are no longer interested in including it in the short term work program at this time.
Action 3.6.2 Transfer historic resource survey information related to the County to land use map as an overlay.				X	Funding has not been available for this initiative and is not likely to become available in the foreseeable future; therefore it is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.3 Specifically provide historic resources survey information to the Tax Assessors office.				X	Funding has not been available for this initiative and is not likely to become available in the foreseeable future; therefore it is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.4 Consider adoption of an ordinance after establishment of the Historic Preservation Commission.				X	Currently, historic preservation is an issue of interest to the City of Ellijay, but not to the County. For this reason, this item has been removed from the County's STWP. Historic preservation issues are included in the City of Ellijay's new STWP.
Action 3.6.5 Consider establishing districts upon establishment of Historic Preservation Commission.				X	Currently, historic preservation is an issue of interest to the City of Ellijay, but not to the County. For this reason, this item has been removed from the County's STWP. Historic preservation issues are included in the City of Ellijay's new STWP.
Action 3.6.6 Continue to notify property owners as appropriate.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.7 Establish Historic Preservation seat on Planning Commission upon establishment of Historic Preservation Commission				X	Currently, historic preservation is an issue of interest to the City of Ellijay, but not to the County. For this reason, this item has been removed from the County's STWP. Historic preservation issues are included in the City of Ellijay's new STWP.
Action 3.6.8 Consider participation in Certified Local Government program after establishment of Historic Preservation Commission and completion of various historic district nominations.				X	Currently, historic preservation is an issue of interest to the City of Ellijay, but not to the County. For this reason, this item has been removed from the County's STWP. Historic preservation issues are included in the City of Ellijay's new STWP.

Gilmer County (continued)  1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program
Action 4.0.1.1 Continue to plan and implement transportation improvement projects.		X			This item has been incorporated into the new STWP as items 8.1.a., 8.1.d., and 8.2.a.
Action 4.0.1.3 Continue to seek passenger and freight service on rail line.	X				Freight service has been re-established from Blue Ridge, through Ellijay, and down to Marietta. Extending passenger service to Gilmer County is not in the State's 20 year plan. Advocating for the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad is included in the City of Ellijay's STWP as item 8.3.b.
Action 4.02 Continue to make recommended airport improvements as funds are available		X			Airport renovations are expected to begin in August 2004, now that necessary environmental permits have been approved by the State. This item is included in the new STWP as item 8.1.d.
Action 4.1.1.2 Re-evaluate the necessity of locally adopted well-head protection regulations for privately owned, individual wells			X		Because of the controversy surrounding the new zoning ordinance, well-head protection has been a low priority. This item has been incorporated into the water resources issues in the new STWP. See items 4.2.b., 4.2.c. 4.2.d., and 4.3.a.
Action 4.2.1.1 Complete sewerage treatment capital facilities as planned and implement as funds are available.		X			See items 5.2.a. and 5.3.a. in the new STWP.
Action 4.2.1.3 Continue to administer and evaluate water and sewer hook-up fees.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Water and Sewerage Authority and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.3.1.2 Expand recycling program to include other materials.		X			The County Commission is exploring possibilities for recycling glass and plastic. Solid waste management activities are included in the new STWP as items 5.4.a. and 7.2.a.
Action 4.4.1.2 Continue to support and make improvements to 911.	X				Gilmer County has a county-wide enhanced 911 emergency system. An independent 911 Dispatch Committee was deemed not necessary.
Action 4.5.1.1 Prepare County wide Fire Protection Plan and continue to make improvements to fire protection services as recommended in the Plan.				X	Fire Department officials were never advised of this work program item; therefore it has not been undertaken. The County is no longer interested in having it on their STWP.
Action 4.5.1.2 Continue fire protection inspections and education.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Emergency Management Department and therefore is not included in the new Short Term Work Program.
Action 4.5.1.3 Continue to add new volunteers as necessary.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Emergency Management Department and therefore is not included in the new Short Term Work Program.
Action 4.5.1.5 Organize emergency operations planning committee and continue to implement plan recommendations.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Emergency Management Department and therefore is not included in the new Short Term Work Program.
Action 4.6.1.1 Add two (2) more ambulance substations.			X		Funding has not been available for this project. It is included in the new STWP as item 5.5.c.
Action 4.7.1.1 Continue to enforce health inspection regulations.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.1.2 The Public Health Department will add two more nurses and a Health Educator in 1999.				X	This project was not accomplished due to lack of funding and a cut in state grant availability.
Action 4.7.1.4 The public health department will continue the Children First program.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.1.5 Continue Pre-K, Meals on Wheels, Headstart and other alternate care programs.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.3.5 Continue recruiting staff as necessary.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.8.1.1 Continue efforts to prepare 10 year Recreation Master Plan.		X			A long range planning team has been formed to begin developing a recreation master plan. This item is included in the new STWP as items 5.7.a. and 6.4.a.

Gilmer County (continued)  1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program
Action 4.8.1.2 Continue to seek funds to support for non-athletic related recreational opportunities.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.8.2.1 Continue to seek increased funding for recreation programs.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.1.1 Hire at least one full time and one part time staff member (due to steady increase in library usage), In 2002, extend library hours to at least to 68 hours per week.	X				The library has added a part time person, and increased its hours of operation to 62 hours per week. Hiring a full time person and increasing hours of operation will depend on increased funding. At this point in time, the construction of the new library is of a higher priority than increasing staff or hours. It is included in the new STWP as item 5.10.c.
Action 4.9.1.3 Continue to support additional funding to library.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.1.4 Support expansion of research technologies.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.2.1 Expand by building new facility . Need approximately 20,000 –25,000 sq ft.		X			See item 5.10.c. Construction is expected to begin in 2005.
Action 4.10.2 School will continue to pursue state funding for elementary and middle school counselors. Add K-3.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.3 Academic activities will continue to be evaluated and expanded in order to meet State BOE requirements, as well as the need of students.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.4 The Gilmer Board of Education will continue support of teacher salaries, staff development and classrooms.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.5 Consideration will be extended to the music program when needed. Add art curriculum and facilities to high school.	X				Music and art programs have been extended. Additional programs will be evaluated on an ongoing basis in the future.
Action 4.10.6 Continue to generate after school care.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.7 School will continue to pursue a child-care program for the high school.				X	Funding has not been and is not expected to be available for this project. In addition, other projects and programs have replaced this issue as a priority, including the development of a new school campus; therefore this item has been removed from the STWP.
Action 4.10.8 School will continue support programs that meet the needs of migrant student populations.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.9 School will continue to pursue mentoring opportunities in order to take advantage of a great wealth of knowledge in Gilmer County business community, parents and retired person. Will also ask for volunteers, start-up costs, staff development.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.10 School will continue to focus on school improvement plans in progress plus other plans that focus on student performance in the classroom.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.11 Continue to seek grants for technology education.	X				This is now an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 5.3.1 Continue to investigate the applicability of state and federal grant assistance for housing projects.		X			This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included as a specific line item in the new STWP; however, an emergency children's shelter is included in the new STWP as items 5.10.b. and 7.5.b.
Action 6.0.1 Develop and reconsider a more simplified land use regulation.		X			The land use ordinance is currently in a public review period. It should be adopted by the end of 2004. This item is included in the new STWP as item 6.1.a.



## 9.2.2. Ellijay Report of Accomplishments

City of Ellijay 1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program
Action 1.0.1. Continue to pursue the establishment of a community development council.			X		Participating organizations have not had this as a priority. This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as item 7.1.a. It is anticipated that joint planning meetings will begin after the 2004 elections.
Action 1.1.1 Continue to improve inter-governmental cooperation.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP. Joint planning meetings, which are intended to improve intergovernmental coordination, are proposed in the new STWP as item 7.1.a.
Action 1.1.2 Continue to seek grant-in-aid for City projects.		X			This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as items 2.6.a., 3.3.a., 3.3.b., 3.3.c., and 8.2.c.
Action 2.0.1 Continue to fund the Chamber for Economic development activities; will consider increasing amount as need arises.		X			This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as items 2.1.a. and 2.3.b.
Action 2.1.1 Continue to work with Department of Community Affairs to do the BREP survey.				X	Participating organizations have not had this as a priority and are no longer interested in including it as a specific line item in the short term work program. It will be a responsibility of a new Economic Development Director which is included in the new STWP as item 2.1.a. and may also be included as part of an Economic Development Feasibility Study which is included in the new STWP as item 2.3.b.
Action 2.2.1 Continue to update advertising and promotional materials as necessary	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new Short Term Work Program.
Action 2.2.3 Continue to develop an industrial park under leadership of the Economic Development Authority (formerly the Industrial Development Authority). Consider developing a joint industrial park with adjoining counties.		X			The Economic Development Authority continues to explore options for a business and technology park as well as an industrial park. This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as item 2.5.a.
Action 2.4.1 Continue to maintain and update tourist information	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.2 Continue to promote tourist attractions with other agencies.	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.3 Continue to sponsor Apple Festival plus sponsor a new festival to be held in downtown Ellijay in May of each year.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.5.1. Expand Downtown Master Plan to include adjoining areas and implement recommended projects as grant funds are available.		X			This item has been reworded and is included in the new STWP as items 2.6.a. and 3.3.c.
Action 2.5.2 Continue to develop a 'Walking Tour' of historic downtown Ellijay, adjoining historic areas, and old cemetery area.	X				The downtown section is complete. The rest will be undertaken as volunteer assistance becomes available.
Action 2.5.3- Pursue Better Hometown Program through DCA		X			The City has completed a Quality Growth Project for the downtown area and may pursue the Better Hometown Program is a Historic Preservation Commission is established.
Action 3.5.1 The City supports the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission and if there is no interest from the County or City of East Ellijay to establish a Joint Commission will establish one for the City of Ellijay.		X			Currently, historic preservation is an issue of interest to the City of Ellijay, but not to the County. Historic preservation issues are included in the City of Ellijay's new STWP under item 4.1.a. and 6.5.a.
Action 3.5.1.b Continue to determine additional areas adjacent to the downtown that are eligible for National Register nomination and prepare applications.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.

City of Ellijay (continued)  1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program
Action 3.5.1.d Continue to seek grant funds for preservation projects.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.5.1.e Continue to produce heritage information materials	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.5.1.f Maintain heritage education curriculum.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.1. Mitigate adverse affects through environmental review.				X	Participating organizations have not had this as a priority and are no longer interested in including it in the short term work program at this time.
Action 3.6.2. Transfer historic resource survey information related to the City to land use map as an overlay.				X	Funding has not been available for this initiative and is not likely to become available in the foreseeable future; therefore it is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.3 Specifically provide historic resources survey information on city properties to the Tax Assessors office.				X	Funding has not been available for this initiative and is not likely to become available in the foreseeable future; therefore it is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.4 Consider adoption of a demolition delay ordinance after establishment of the Historic Preservation Commission.		X			The City is exploring the adoption of an ordinance within the context of a DCA funded Quality Growth project.
Action 3.6.6 Continue to notify property owners of rehabilitation tax incentives as appropriate.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 3.6.7 Establish Historic Preservation seat on Planning Commission upon establishment of Historic Preservation Commission			X		This depends on the Historic Preservation Commission, which has not yet been established.
Action 3.6.8 Consider participation in Certified Local Government program after establishment of Commission and completion of various historic district nominations.		X			The City is exploring the this possibility within the context of a DCA funded Quality Growth project.
Action 4.0.1.3 Continue to seek passenger and freight service on rail line.	X				Freight service has been re-established from Blue Ridge, through Ellijay, and down to Marietta. Extending passenger service to Gilmer County is not in the State's 20 year plan. Advocating for the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad is included in the City of Ellijay's STWP as item 8.3.b.
Action 4.2.1.1 Complete sewerage treatment capital facilities as planned and implement as funds are available.		X			See items 5.2.a. and 5.3.a. in the new STWP.
Action 4.2.1.3 Continue to administer and evaluate water and sewer hook-up fees.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Water and Sewerage Authority and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.4.1.2 Continue to support and make improvements to 911.	X				Gilmer County has a county-wide enhanced 911 emergency system. An independent 911 Dispatch Committee was deemed not necessary.
Action 4.5.1.1 Continue to make improvements to fire protection services. The City wants to be represented in the development of the Master Fire Protection Plan.	X				The City of Ellijay now has its own Fire Department. A Master Fire Protection Plan is no longer a priority. The City is planning to construct a fire department building and this is included in the new STWP as item 5.5.d.
Action 4.5.1.2 Continue Fire Prevention Inspections and education.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Fire Department and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.5.1.3 Continue to add new volunteers as necessary.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Fire Department and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.6.1.1 EMS will add two (2) more ambulance substations. The City of Ellijay continues to support this program.			X		Funding has not been available for this project. It is included in the new STWP as item 5.5.c.
Action 4.7.1.2 The Public Health Department will add two more nurses and a Health Educator in 1999. The city would like membership on the board of Health.				X	This project was not accomplished due to lack of funding and a cut in state grant availability.

<b>City of Ellijay (continued)</b>  <b>1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Currently Underway</b>	<b>Postponed</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>	<b>Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program</b>
Action 4.7.1.4 The public health department will continue the Children First program. The City of Ellijay wants the program continued.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.1.5 The City continues to support alternative care programs for the elderly and children.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.3.5 Hospital to continue recruiting. City would like it continued.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Hospital and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.8.1.1 Continue efforts to prepare 10 year Recreation Master Plan.		X			A long range planning team has been formed to begin developing a recreation master plan. This item is included in the new STWP as items 5.7.a. and 6.4.a.
Action 4.8.1.2 Continue to seek funds to support recreation opportunities.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.8.2.1 City will contribute \$5,000 to the Recreation Department. City will also contribute lights, bathroom, and dugout to the recreation department.	X				The City has paid for the construction of bleachers, and contributes to Fourth of July fireworks via the Chamber of Commerce. The City does not intend a specific commitment during the upcoming planning period. Funding will be an ongoing process; therefore this item is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.1.1 The library in 1999 will hire at least one full time and one part time staff member (due to steady increase in library usage), approx. \$25,000/yr. Extend library hours at least to 68 hours per week.	X				The library has added a part time person, and increased its hours of operation to 62 hours per week. Hiring a full time person and increasing hours of operation will depend on increased funding. At this point in time, the construction of the new library is of a higher priority than increasing staff or hours. It is included in the new STWP as item 5.10.c.
Action 4.9.1.3 Continue to support additional funding to library.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.1.4 Support expansion of research technologies.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.2.1 Expand by building new facility or branch library. Need 20,00-25,000 sq ft.		X			See new STWP item 5.10.c. Construction is expected to begin in 2005.
Action 4.10.2 School will continue to pursue state funding for elementary and middle school counselors. Add k-3. City would like to continue.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.3 Academic activities will continue to be evaluated and expanded in order to meet requirements as well as the need of students.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.4 The Gilmer Board of Education will continue support of teacher salaries, staff development and classrooms. City supports.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.5 Consideration will be extended to the music program when needed. Art is a priority for the high school. City would like to continue.	X				Music and art programs have been extended. Additional programs will be evaluated on an ongoing basis in the future.
Action 4.10.6 Continue to generate after school care.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.7 School will continue to pursue a child-care program for the high school.				X	Funding has not been and is not expected to be available for this project. In addition, other projects and programs have replaced this issue as a priority, including the development of a new school campus; therefore this item has been removed from the STWP.
Action 4.10.8 School will continue support programs that meet the needs of migrant student populations.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.

<b>City of Ellijay (continued)</b>  <b>1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Currently Underway</b>	<b>Postponed</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>	<b>Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program</b>
Action 4.10.9 School will continue to pursue mentoring opportunities in order to take advantage of a great wealth of knowledge in Gilmer County business community, parents and retired person. Will also ask for volunteers, start-up costs, staff development.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.10 School will continue to focus on school improvement plans in progress plus other plans that focus on student performance in the classroom.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.11 School will continue to seek grants for technology education, City would like to continue.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 5.3.1 Continue to investigate the applicability of state and federal grant assistance for housing projects.		X			This item has been reworded and included in the new STWP as items 3.3.a. and 3.3.b.
Action 6.3.1 Continue to seek annexations into the city as is feasible.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the City and therefore is not included in the new STWP.

### 9.2.3. East Ellijay Report of Accomplishments

City of East Ellijay 1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity	Completed	Currently Underway	Postponed	Not Accomplished	Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program
Action 1.0.1 Continue to pursue the establishment of a community development council.			X		Participating organizations have not had this as a priority. This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as item 7.1.a. It is anticipated that joint planning meetings will begin after the 2004 elections.
Action 1.0.2 Continue efforts to establish a local leadership program.	X				The Chamber of Commerce sponsors the local leadership program.
Action 1.1.1 Continue to improve inter-governmental cooperation.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP. Joint planning meetings, which are intended to improve intergovernmental coordination, are proposed in the new STWP as item 7.1.a.
Action 1.1.2 Continue to seek grant-in-aid for City projects.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.0.1 Continue to support Industrial Development efforts with logistical support, no financial support.		X			The Economic Development Authority continues to explore options for a business and technology park as well as an industrial park. This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as item 2.5.a.
Action 2.1.1 Continue to work with Department of Community Affairs to do the BREP survey.			X		Participating organizations have not had this as a priority and are no longer interested in including it as a specific line item in the short term work program. It will be a responsibility of a new Economic Development Director which is included in the new STWP as item 2.1.a. and may also be included as part of an Economic Development Feasibility Study which is included in the new STWP as item 2.3.b.
Action 2.2.1 Continue to update advertising and promotional materials as necessary	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.2.3 Continue to develop an industrial park under leadership of the Economic Development Authority (formerly the Industrial Development Authority). Consider developing a joint industrial park with adjoining counties.		X			The Economic Development Authority continues to explore options for a business and technology park as well as an industrial park. This item has been rephrased and is included in the new STWP as item 2.5.a.
Action 2.4.1 Continue to maintain and update advertising and promotional information.	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.2 Continue to promote tourist attractions with other agencies.	X				This is an ongoing, daily responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.3 Continue to sponsor Apple Festival.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 2.4.4 Continue to seek funding to rehab Perry House to Historic Preservation Standards and utilize it for public use such as a museum.			X		The Perry House will be either demolished or relocated so that the new County Courthouse can be constructed on the site. If the building is relocated, it will be done by family members rather than as a public project.
Action 3.5.1 Provide information and technical assistance to property owners who are interested in National Register benefits and State and Federal rehabilitation incentives.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association; therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.0.1.2 Continue to seek passenger and freight service on rail line.	X				Freight service has been re-established from Blue Ridge, through Ellijay, and down to Marietta. Extending passenger service to Gilmer County is not in the State's 20 year plan. Advocating for the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad is included in the City of Ellijay's STWP as item 8.3.b.
Action 4.2.1.1 Complete sewerage treatment capital facilities as planned and implement as funds are available.		X			See items 5.2.a. and 5.3.a. in the new STWP.
Action 4.2.1.3 Continue to administer and evaluate water and sewer hook-up fees.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Water and Sewerage Authority and therefore is not included in the new STWP.

<b>City of East Ellijay (continued)</b>  <b>1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Currently Underway</b>	<b>Postponed</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>	<b>Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program</b>
Action 4.4.2.2 City will need to add two (2) more officers.			X		The City has been able to hire one officer. There has not been sufficient funding to hire a second.
Action 4.5.1.1 The city supports the County's efforts to develop a Master Fire Protection Plan but would like input into the development of the Plan and any subsequent implementation.				X	Fire Department officials were never advised of this work program item; therefore it has not been undertaken. The County is no longer interested in having it on their STWP.
Action 4.5.1.2 Continue to support education and inspection programs.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Emergency Management Department and therefore is not included in the new Short Term Work Program.
Action 4.5.1.3 Continue to add new volunteers as necessary.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Emergency Management Department and therefore is not included in the new Short Term Work Program.
Action 4.5.1.5 Although this is County EMS initiative, the City supports all efforts to improve emergency management services	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the Emergency Management Department and therefore is not included in the new Short Term Work Program.
Action 4.6.1.1 EMS will add two (2) more ambulance substations.			X		Funding has not been available for this project. It is included in the new STWP as item 5.5.c.
Action 4.7.1.1 Continue to support Board of Health in improving health inspection programs.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.1.2 The Public Health Department will add two more nurses and a Health Educator in 1999.			X		This project was not accomplished due to lack of funding and a cut in state grant availability.
Action 4.7.1.4 Continue the above program efforts	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.1.5 Continue alternate care programs.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.7.3.5 Continue to recruit staff as necessary.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.8.1.1 Prepare 10 year Recreation Master Plan.		X			A long range planning team has been formed to begin developing a recreation master plan. This item is included in the new STWP as items 5.7.a. and 6.4.a.
Action 4.8.1.2 Expand non-competitive sports/recreational opportunities as funds are available	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.8.2.1 Support long term funding for recreation.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.1.1 The library in 1999 will hire at least one full time and one part time staff member (due to steady increase in library usage), approx. \$25,000/yr. In 2002, the library will extend hours at least to 68 hours per week, staff costs approx.\$4,000/yr.	X				The library has added a part time person, and increased its hours of operation to 62 hours per week. Hiring a full time person and increasing hours of operation will depend on increased funding. At this point in time, the construction of the new library is of a higher priority than increasing staff or hours. It is included in the new STWP as item 5.10.c.
Action 4.9.1.3 Library to continue to find state funding for library materials; city will contribute \$1500 per year.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.1.4 Continue to expand research technologies and equipment.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.9.2.1 Expand library by building new facility. Need 20,00-25,000 sq ft. Obtain state matching grant; approximate county portion would be 800K)		X			See new STWP item 5.10.c. Construction is expected to begin in 2005.
Action 4.10.2 School will continue to pursue state funding for elementary and middle school counselors and also add counselors for grades K-5.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.

<b>City of East Ellijay (continued)</b>  <b>1998-2003 Short Term Work Program Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Currently Underway</b>	<b>Postponed</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>	<b>Explanation for Postponed or Unaccomplished Program</b>
Action 4.10.3 Academic activities will continue to be evaluated and expanded in order to meet requirements as well as the need of students.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.4 The Gilmer Board of Education will continue support of teacher salaries, staff development and classrooms.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.5 Consideration will be extended to the music program when needed. Art is a priority for the high school.	X				Music and art programs have been extended. Additional programs will be evaluated on an ongoing basis in the future.
Action 4.10.7 School will continue to pursue a child-care program for the high school.				X	Funding has not been and is not expected to be available for this project. In addition, other projects and programs have replaced this issue as a priority, including the development of a new school campus; therefore this item has been removed from the STWP.
Action 4.10.8 School will continue support programs that meet the needs of migrant student populations.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.9 School will continue to pursue mentoring opportunities in order to take advantage of a great wealth of knowledge in Gilmer County business community, parents and retired person. Will also ask for volunteers, start-up costs, and staff development.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.10 Continue to focus on school improvement plans in progress plus other plans that focus on student performance in the classroom.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.10.11 Continue high technology education advances.	X				This is an ongoing process and therefore is not included in the new STWP.
Action 4.11.1 Build or find a new facility to house city offices.		X			Construction is expected to begin in August 2004. See new STWP item 5.8.b.
Action 6.3.1 Continue to seek annexations into the city as is feasible.	X				This is an ongoing responsibility of the City and therefore is not included in the new STWP.

## 9.3. Capital Improvements Element Update

All local governments that utilize an impact fee system under the Georgia Development Impact Fee Act (GDIFA) must include Capital Improvement Elements (CIEs) in their comprehensive plan and update the CIE portion of their plan annually. Gilmer County has impact fees for water and sewer; therefore it is required to prepare a CIE update. The 2004 update for the county is shown on the following pages and includes a list of water capital projects, a list of sewer capital projects, and an annual impact fee financial report.

**Ellijay-Gilmer County Water & Sewerage Authority**      **Capital Improvements Project Update 7/1/04 to 6/31/09**  
**Public Facility: Water**  
**Service Area: District 1**

Project Number & Description	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Estimated Cost of Project	Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees	Other Funding Sources	Expenditures for 7/1/03 to 6/30/04	Impact Fees Encumbered thru 6/30/04	Status and/or Remarks
<b>Water Transmission &amp; Distribution</b>								
WD 13 Water Tank, Location to be Determined	2004	2005	\$600,000	55%	ARC			Adjusted
WD 35 Calhoun Transmission Main	2004	2006	\$1,800,000	33%	EGOWSA, GEFA			Adjusted
WD 36 Water Tank, to be located @ Victory Circle	2005	2006	\$750,000	100%				Adjusted
WD 37 Water Tank, to be located @ Victory Circle	2006	2007	\$750,000	100%				Adjusted
WD 38 Miscellaneous New Mains, 6 thru 8-inch	2004	2009	\$1,151,760	80%	EGOWSA, GEFA			Carried Over
WD 43 Miscellaneous Mains, 8 thru 10-inch	2004	2009	\$1,216,978	80%	EGOWSA, GEFA			Carried Over
WD 44 Miscellaneous Mains, 12 thru 16-inch	2004	2009	\$1,288,000	80%	EGOWSA, GEFA			Carried Over
WD 47 Booster Pumping Station, Location TBD	2004	2006	\$105,000	80%	EGOWSA, GEFA			Carried Over
Total:			\$7,661,138			\$0.00	\$0.00	

Updated: July 20, 2004

**Ellijay-Gilmer County Water & Sewerage Authority**      **Capital Improvements Project Update 7/1/04 to 6/31/09**  
**Public Facility: Sewer**  
**Service Area: District 1**

Project Number & Description	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Estimated Cost of Project	Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees	Other Funding Sources	Expenditures for 7/1/03 to 6/30/04	Impact Fees Encumbered thru 6/30/04	Status and/or Remarks
<b>Sewage Treatment</b>								
ST 9 Phase 3 WPOP Expansion to 4 MGD	2005	2006	\$4,500,000	10%	GEFA, EGOWSA			Adjusted
<b>Sewage Collection Transmission</b>								
SC 13 Miscellaneous 8-inch Sewer Mains	2004	2008	\$191,100	80%	GEFA, EGOWSA			Carried Over
Total:			\$4,691,100			\$0.00	\$0.00	

Updated: July 20, 2004





## 9.4. Public Participation Program

### 9.4.1. Schedule for the Preparation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, the Joint Solid Waste Plan, and the Capital Improvements Element/Short Term Work Program Update

The Georgia Planning Act strongly emphasizes public participation in the process of developing a comprehensive plan. For the Comprehensive Plan, seven advisory groups were established to review and comment upon the various plan elements. Each group met during public workshops to review the inventory and assessment sections and develop goals and objectives. The Land Use advisory group met two times, once to discuss existing land use and another time to review future land use. Following is a list of the public hearings and workshops which were held in conjunction with the preparation of this plan.

**February 26, 2004** – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to present the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, the planning process and schedule, and the public participation program.

A series of public workshops were held at Ellijay City Hall:

- March 2, 2004 – Economic Development Workshop
- March 2, 2004 – Housing Workshop
- March 16, 2004 – Natural and Cultural Resources Workshop
- March 16, 2004 – Community Facilities Workshop
- March 30, 2004 – Land Use Workshop #1
- March 30, 2004 – Intergovernmental Coordination Workshop
- April 20, 2004 – Land Use Workshop # 2
- April 20, 2004 – Transportation Workshop

**June 18, 2004** – The complete draft plan was made available for public review in hardcopy format at the Gilmer County Library, Ellijay City Hall, East Ellijay City Hall, and the Gilmer County Commissioners Office.

**July 1, 2004** – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to brief the community on the contents of the draft Comprehensive Plan; to provide an opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions, or revisions; and to inform the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Development Center and Department of Community Affairs for review.

**July 8, 2004** – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to present the purpose of the Solid Waste Management Plan, the planning process and schedule, and the public participation program.

**August 5, 2004** – The draft Solid Waste Management Plan and the proposed Capital Improvements Element/Short Term Work Program update was made available for public review in hardcopy format at the Gilmer County Library, Ellijay City Hall, East Ellijay City Hall, and the Gilmer County Commissioners Office.

**August 12, 2004** – Joint Public Hearing: This hearing was held to brief the community on the contents of the draft Solid Waste Management Plan; to provide an opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions, or revisions; and to inform the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Development Center and Department of Community Affairs for review. In addition, the proposed Capital Improvements Element/Short Term Work Program update was presented for review and comment.

## 9.4.2. Notices of Opportunities for Public Involvement

Copies of the Public Hearing Notices for the Joint Comprehensive Plan, the Joint Solid Waste Management Plan, and the Capital Improvements Element/Short Term Work Program Update are included on the following pages.

### 9.4.2.1. Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing Notices

The first required public hearing was held on February 26, 2004. It was advertised in the *Times-Courier* on February 12 and February 19. The February 12 advertisement is shown below.

TIMES-COURIER • ELLIJAY, GEORGIA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2004 **5C**

**Notice of Public Hearing  
Regarding the Gilmer County, City of Ellijay, and City of East Ellijay  
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update**

Notice is hereby given that the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, the Ellijay City Council, and the East Ellijay City Council will hold a Joint Public Hearing on Thursday, February 26, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. in the Courtroom of the Courthouse. The purpose of the hearing is to inform the public about the update of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Topics to be covered include the purpose of the comprehensive plan, the preparation of the plan. Staff from the North Georgia Regional Development Center will be making the presentation.

The schedule for the completion of the update of the Joint Comprehensive Plan is as follows:

February 26, 2004: Joint Public Hearing to provide introductory information to the public.

March - April 2004: A series of meetings will be held to address seven elements of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Those elements are (1) economic development, (2) housing, (3) natural and cultural resources, (4) community facilities and services, (5) land use, (6) intergovernmental coordination, and (7) transportation.

May 13, 2004: Target date to release the preliminary draft of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Copies of the draft plan will be made available to the public in paper form and via the Internet.

May 27, 2004: Joint Public hearing to receive comments on the Preliminary draft of the Plan.

June 10, 2004: Target date to release the revised draft of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

June 29, 2004: Target date to submit the Plan to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

July - August 2004: Review of the Plan by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

September 2004: Adoption of the Plan by Gilmer county and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay.

All meetings will be advertised and the public is invited to attend and participate in the planning process.

The second required public hearing was held on July 1, 2004. It was advertised in the *Times-Courier* on June 17 and June 24. The June 17 advertisement is shown below.

TIMES-COURIER • ELLIJAY, GEORGIA

THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 2004 **13B**

**Notice of Joint Public Hearing  
Regarding the  
Gilmer County, City of Ellijay, City of E. Ellijay  
Joint Comprehensive Plan**

Notice is hereby given that the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, the Ellijay City Council, and the East Ellijay Council will hold a Joint Public Hearing on Thursday, July 1, 2004, at 5:15 p.m. in the Gilmer County Library Meeting Room. The hearing is being held to (1) brief the community on the contents of the draft Comprehensive Plan, (2) provide an opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions, or revisions, and (3) to inform the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Development Center and Department of Community Affairs for review.

#### 9.4.2.2. Solid Waste Management Plan Public Hearing Notices

The first required public hearing was held on July 8, 2004. It was advertised in the *Times-Courier* on June 24, 2004 and July 1, 2004. The June 24, 2004 advertisement is shown below.

**Notice of Public Hearing  
Regarding the  
Gilmer County, City of Ellijay,  
and City of East Ellijay  
Joint Solid Waste Management Plan**

Notice is hereby given that the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, the Ellijay City Council, and the East Ellijay City Council will hold a joint public hearing on Thursday, July 8, 2004, at 6:00 P.M., in the courtroom of the courthouse. The hearing is being held to (1) inform the public about the purpose of the joint solid waste management plan and the process to be followed in the preparation of the plan and (2) elicit community input on needs and goals. Staff from the North Georgia Regional Development Center will be making the presentation.

The second required public hearing was held on August 12, 2004. It was advertised in the *Times-Courier* on July 29, 2004 and August 5, 2004. The July 29, 2004 advertisement is shown below.

**Notice of Joint Public Hearing  
Regarding the  
Gilmer County, City of Ellijay, and City of East Ellijay  
Joint Solid Waste Management Plan**

Notice is hereby given that the Gilmer County Commission, the Ellijay City Council, and the East Ellijay City Council will hold a Joint Public Hearing on Thursday, August 12, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. in the main courtroom of the Courthouse. The hearing is being held to (1) brief the community on the contents of the draft Solid Waste Management Plan, (2) provide an opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions, or revisions, and (3) to inform the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Development Center and Department of Community Affairs for review.

#### 9.4.2.3. Capital Improvements Element/Short Term Work Program Update Public Hearing Notice

The required public hearing was held on August 12, 2004 at the same time as the second Solid Waste Management Plan Public Hearing. It was advertised in the *Times-Courier* on August 5, 2004. The advertisement is shown below.

4D THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2004

TIMES-COURIER • ELLIJAY, GEORGIA

**Notice of Joint Public Hearing  
Regarding the Gilmer County, City of Ellijay, and City of  
East Ellijay Joint Solid Waste Management Plan and The  
Capital Improvements Element (CIE)/ Short-Term Work  
Program (STWP) Update for the Joint Comprehensive Plan**

Notice is hereby given that the Gilmer County Commission, the Ellijay City Council, and the East Ellijay City Council will hold a Joint Public Hearing on Thursday, August 12, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. in the courtroom of the Courthouse. The hearing is being held to (1) brief the community on the contents of the draft Solid Waste Management Plan, (2) provide an opportunity for residents to make suggestions, additions, or revisions, and (3) to inform the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Development Center and Department of Community Affairs for review. In addition, comments and suggestions on the proposed Capital Improvements Element (CIE)/Short-Term Work Program (STWP) Update for the Joint Comprehensive Plan will be received.

Copies of the Draft Solid Waste Management Plan and the Draft Capital Improvements Element/Short-Term Work Program Update will be available for review at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 5, 2004, at the Public Library, as well as, at each of the local government offices.

#### 9.4.3. Transmittal Resolutions

Copies of the resolutions for transmitting the Joint Comprehensive Plan, the Joint Solid Waste Management Plan, and the Capital Improvements Element/Short Term Work Program Update are provided on the following pages.

### 9.4.3.1. Gilmer County Transmittal Resolution

Page 1 of 2

#### RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF  
THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
AND  
THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT/  
SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM UPDATE FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
TO THE NORTH GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires that local governments in Georgia complete a Comprehensive Plan every ten years in order to retain Qualified Local Government status, and presently requires this task of Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay; and,

**WHEREAS**, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have prepared a draft Joint Comprehensive Plan which adheres to the Minimum Local Planning Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans; and,

**WHEREAS**, the public participation program outlined in the Minimum Procedural Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans has been implemented; and,

**WHEREAS**, two joint public hearings were held in conformance with the Minimum Procedural Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans, one prior to the planning process on February 26, 2004 at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Courthouse and one at the conclusion of the planning process on July 1, 2004 at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Public Library; and

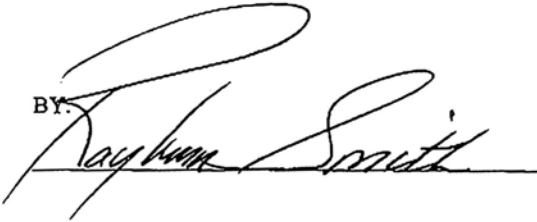
**WHEREAS**, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have prepared an annual update to a Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program; and,

**WHEREAS**, the annual update of the Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program was prepared in accordance with the Development Impact Fee Compliance Requirements and the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and a Public Hearing was held on August 12, 2004, at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Courthouse,

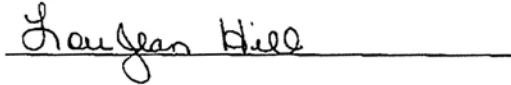
**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners does hereby submit the draft Joint Comprehensive Plan and the annual update of the Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program covering the five-year period 2004 to 2009 to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for Regional Review, as per the requirements of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 12 day of August, 2004.

BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 9.4.3.2. City of Ellijay Transmittal Resolution

Page 1 of 2

#### RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF  
THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
AND  
THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT/  
SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM UPDATE FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
TO THE NORTH GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires that local governments in Georgia complete a Comprehensive Plan every ten years in order to retain Qualified Local Government status, and presently requires this task of Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay; and,

**WHEREAS**, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have prepared a draft Joint Comprehensive Plan which adheres to the Minimum Local Planning Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans; and,

**WHEREAS**, the public participation program outlined in the Minimum Procedural Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans has been implemented; and,

**WHEREAS**, two joint public hearings were held in conformance with the Minimum Procedural Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans, one prior to the planning process on February 26, 2004 at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Courthouse and one at the conclusion of the planning process on July 1, 2004 at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Public Library; and

**WHEREAS**, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have prepared an annual update to a Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program; and,

**WHEREAS**, the annual update of the Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program was prepared in accordance with the Development Impact Fee Compliance Requirements and the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and a Public Hearing was held on August 12, 2004, at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Courthouse,

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Ellijay does hereby submit the draft Joint Comprehensive Plan and the annual update of the Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program covering the five-year period 2004 to 2009 to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for Regional Review, as per the requirements of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.



**APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 23<sup>RD</sup> day of August, 2004.

**BY:**

Al Hafe

**ATTEST:**

Sandra Salas

### 9.4.3.3. City of East Ellijay Transmittal Resolution

Page 1 of 2

RES. #: 006-04

## RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF  
THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
AND  
THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT/  
SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM UPDATE FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
TO THE NORTH GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires that local governments in Georgia complete a Comprehensive Plan every ten years in order to retain Qualified Local Government status, and presently requires this task of Gilmer County, the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay; and,

**WHEREAS**, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have prepared a draft Joint Comprehensive Plan which adheres to the Minimum Local Planning Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans; and,

**WHEREAS**, the public participation program outlined in the Minimum Procedural Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans has been implemented; and,

**WHEREAS**, two joint public hearings were held in conformance with the Minimum Procedural Standards for Local Comprehensive Plans, one prior to the planning process on February 26, 2004 at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Courthouse and one at the conclusion of the planning process on July 1, 2004, at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Public Library; and

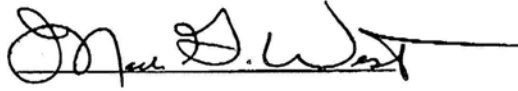
**WHEREAS**, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have prepared an annual update to a Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program; and,

**WHEREAS**, the annual update of the Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work Program was prepared in accordance with the Development Impact Fee Compliance Requirements and the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and a Public Hearing was held on August 12, 2004, at 6:00 PM at the Gilmer County Courthouse,

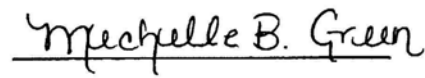
**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of East Ellijay does hereby submit the draft Joint Comprehensive Plan and the annual update of the Capital Improvements Element and Short Term Work covering the five-year period 2004 to 2009 to the North Georgia Regional Development Center for Regional Review, as per the requirements of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2004.

BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark D. West", written over a horizontal line.

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle B. Green", written over a horizontal line.

RESOLUTION006-04.DOC

#### **9.4.4. Adoption Resolutions**

Copies of the resolutions for the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan and the Capital Improvements Element/Short Term Work Program Update are provided below and on the following pages.

9.4.4.1. Gilmer County Adoption Resolution

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT  
THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2004-2025  
FOR GILMER COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
AND  
THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT/  
SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM UPDATE FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY

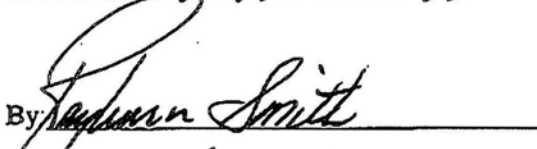
WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan to retain their Qualified Local Government status and eligibility for State permits, grants, and loans; and


WHEREAS, the *Joint Comprehensive Plan Update 2004 - 2025 for Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay* has been completed to update growth projections, identify issues and needs, and recommend policies and implementation strategies to enable efficient and cost effective growth for Gilmer County and its municipalities; and

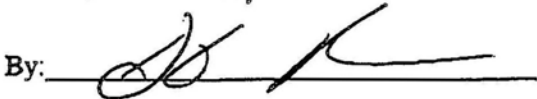
WHEREAS, the *Joint Comprehensive Plan Update 2004 - 2025* includes a Capital Improvements Element Update and Short Term Work Program Update; and

WHEREAS, such Plan has been approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as meeting the State's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures;


NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners hereby officially adopts the *Joint Comprehensive Plan Update 2004 - 2025 for Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay*.

By:  Rayburn Smith, Commission Chairman

By:  Charles Fowler, Post 1 Commissioner

By:  Steve Ralston, Post 2 Commissioner

This 28 day of October, 2004

Attest: 



9.4.4.3. City of East Ellijay Adoption Resolution

RES. #: 010-04

**RESOLUTION**

**A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT  
THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2004-2025  
FOR GILMER COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY  
AND  
THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT/  
SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM UPDATE FOR GILMER COUNTY  
AND THE CITIES OF ELLIJAY AND EAST ELLIJAY**

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan to retain their Qualified Local Government status and eligibility for State permits, grants, and loans; and


**WHEREAS**, the *Joint Comprehensive Plan Update 2004 - 2025 for Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay* has been completed to update growth projections, identify issues and needs, and recommend policies and implementation strategies to enable efficient and cost effective growth for Gilmer County and its municipalities; and

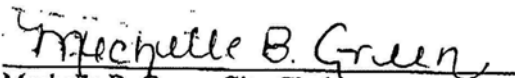
**WHEREAS**, the *Joint Comprehensive Plan Update 2004 - 2025* includes a Capital Improvements Element Update and Short Term Work Program Update; and

**WHEREAS**, such Plan has been approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as meeting the State's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of East Ellijay hereby officially adopts the *Joint Comprehensive Plan Update 2004 - 2025 for Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay*.

**RESOLVED**, this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2004.

  
Mack E. West, Mayor  
City of East Ellijay

  
Michelle B. Green, City Clerk  
City of East Ellijay

Res010-04doc