

# **Joint County-City Comprehensive Plan 2007-2027**

**Community Assessment**

**for**

**Haralson County**

**And the cities of**

**Bremen, Buchanan, Tallapoosa, and Waco**

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**Prepared by the Coosa Valley Regional Development Center**

**DRAFT**

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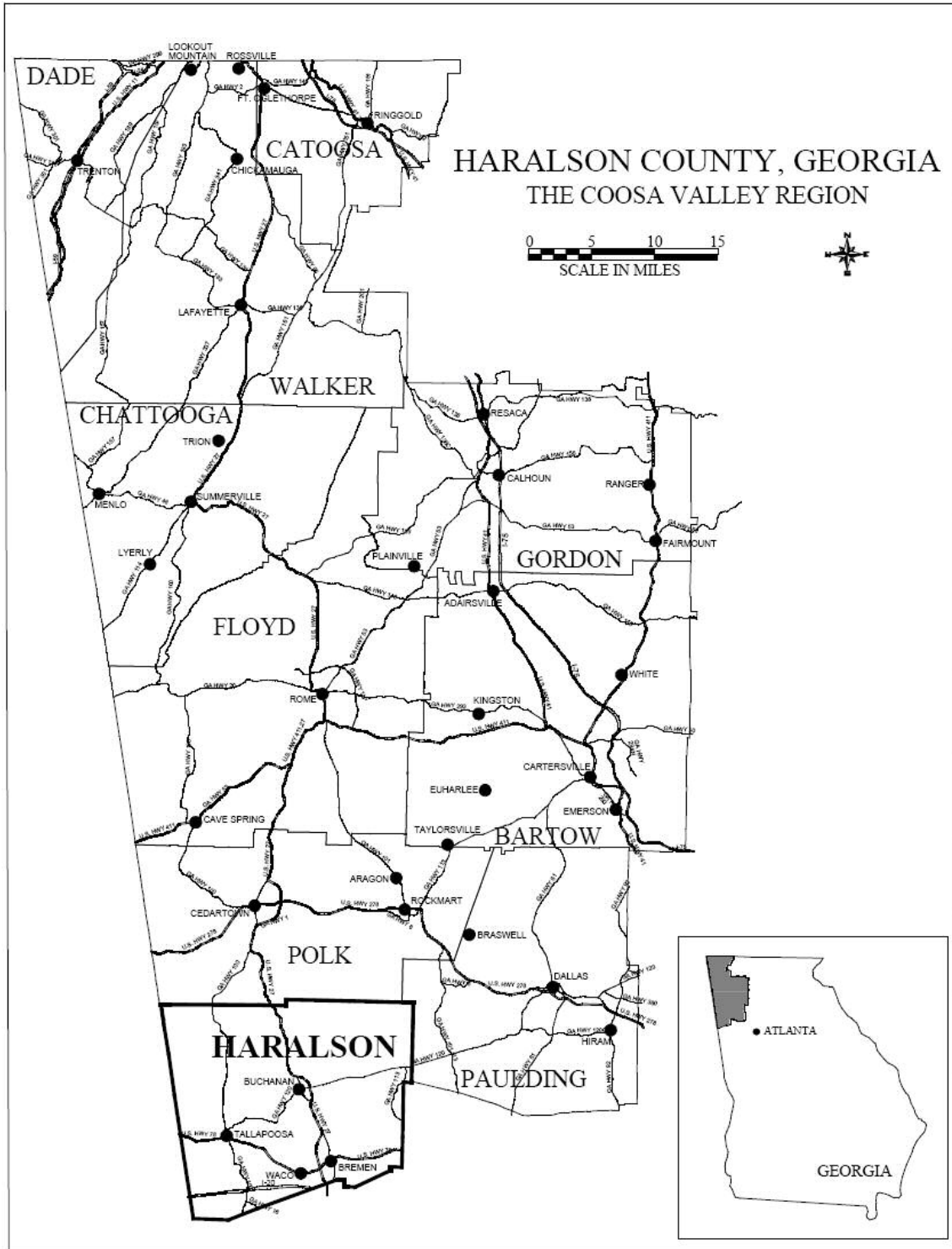
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**LOCATION MAP**



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose**

This report lays the foundation for the revisions to the joint city-county Comprehensive Plan for Haralson County, which will create an agenda to manage growth over the next twenty years. This report outlines a set of issues and opportunities related to each of the Comprehensive Plan's elements that are based on an analysis of the existing conditions and historical trends. The report is designed to meet the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and adopted on May 1, 2005.

### **Scope**

As required in the DCA Standards, this report includes four basic components:

1. List of issues and opportunities that the community wants to address
2. Analysis of existing development patterns
3. Evaluation of current community policies, actions, and development patterns for consistency with the Quality Community Objectives
4. Analysis of supportive data and information

In its coverage of these four components, this report is written in an executive summary-like fashion so that citizens and decision makers can quickly review the essential elements and major findings of this planning effort. Most of the detailed findings of this assessment are included in a "Technical Addendum."

### **Methodology and Schedule**

As required by the DCA Standards, this Community Assessment is primarily the product of a review of County and its cities policies, plans, regulations, and development patterns. The study area for this Assessment is the incorporated and non-incorporated areas of Haralson County.

This Community Assessment document is the first major step in preparation of Haralson County's Comprehensive Plan. The following schedule outlines the remainder of the process. This document and the Community Participation Program will be submitted to the DCA for approval. Upon approval of both documents, work on the Community Agenda will commence.

The Community Agenda, the most important part of the plan; includes the community's vision for the future, key issues and opportunities it chooses to address during the planning period, and its implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities. To kick off the effort, a Community Visioning Meeting will be held in late July. This will be followed a month later by the Community Design Workshop. These two community involvement events will provide the public

support and input critical to a successful Comprehensive Plan. An Open House is scheduled for September 2006 to present the preliminary recommendations to the public. Upon completion of the Community Agenda, it will begin its 3-month long adoption process. This is scheduled to take place between November and January of 2006 - 2007.

## **II. Haralson County Issues and Opportunities**

### **Population Issues:**

#### **Haralson County**

- According to the NW Georgia Growth Management Initiative, Haralson County, along with most other counties in NW Georgia will double in size over the next 20 years. Located between three major metropolitan areas, Haralson County and NW Georgia can expect to see significant growth as these three areas expand. This will present a multitude of issues from the preservation of community's rural/agricultural character, the protection of environment quality, and the costs of providing and maintaining necessary community services and infrastructure, to the balancing of the often conflicting needs of existing residents and developers.
- By 2010 the number of Haralson County's elderly is expected to increase to more than 25% of the total population. This will create a need for expanding local healthcare, retirement housing and senior services.
- As Atlanta grows westward and the population continues to move out from Atlanta, the county will need to work diligently to balance the residential growth with commercial and industrial development in order to maintain an adequate tax base to support services.

#### **Bremen**

- Continued population growth pressure, due to the expanding Atlanta Metro Area and to the city's proximity to a major interstate. This will strain Bremen's existing infrastructure, especially sewer and water systems.

#### **Buchanan**

- Population will double in 20 years.
- Large number of senior citizens and low income families.
- People will continue to move outward from Atlanta, stressing water and utilities.
- Needs make sure affordable housing is available.

#### **Tallapoosa**

- Population is forecasted to increase by double in 20 years. This presents a myriad of issues for Tallapoosa's services, environment, infrastructure, and quality of life.

- Aging population. The City has a large quantity of elderly, widowed women who are predominantly living below the poverty line.
- The City needs to establish an independent school district, as current statistics from the Haralson County BOE indicate a problem with student achievement.
- The City has many single women, with children, residing in public housing.

### Waco

- Population is growing older and young people are not staying when they become adults.

### **Economic Development Issues:**

#### Haralson County

- The County has a disproportionately high number of low-skill jobs. This is primarily due to the educational ability and skill class of the local workforce. The ability to recruit higher skilled jobs will be directly affected by the ability of the local community to provide a higher skilled workforce. Local school systems must work to raise test scores and lower dropout rates. Greater emphasis should be placed on increasing graduation rates and encouraging post secondary options such as the local technical college and area colleges and universities. Collaborative efforts between the local school systems and technical college could create more interest in education among disenfranchised students.
- Industrial and commercial growth has not kept pace with the burgeoning residential population. An unbalanced tax base will result in too much demand for municipal services without providing the tax base to finance those services. Approximately half of the county's workforce continues to drive outside the county for work. This figure is down considerably from the 65% figure which occurred after the textile industry closed. There are still opportunities to expand existing businesses and recruit new businesses utilizing the employment base that is currently driving outside the county.
- Most full-service health care facilities can only be found outside the County. Being located on the very fringes of certain emergency services, sparsely-populated areas may suffer some slow response times. Although Haralson County is part of a regional medical facility with additional health care providers and facilities located in the next county, the increase in elderly population may warrant study into new services that could be provided locally.



- The limited capacity of water and sewer services could significantly impact the county's ability to grow and diversify its economic base. Currently, neither the public water system nor the existing sewer systems has unused capacity adequate to service substantial economic development. Little if any extra is available to attract prospective employers. Although the county is in the process of developing Class A business and industrial space, provision of adequate water and sewer infrastructure will diminish the county's ability to attract business and industry. The most critical issue facing the county is how to provide water/sewer services for new and expanding business and industry.
- Lack of cohesiveness within and between local governments will create leadership issues. Effective leadership is foundational to appropriate growth and development.

### Bremen

- Lack of employment for skilled labor. The City has a disproportionately high number of low-skill jobs. These jobs are needed both to have diversified work force and economy, but also to provide employment to the incoming residents of Bremen's increasingly expensive subdivisions.
- Increase tax base. Industrial and commercial growth has not kept pace with the burgeoning residential population.
- No extra sewer capacity for economic development. All of the existing sewer capacity has been allocated to forthcoming developments; none is available to lure prospective employers.

### Buchanan

- Need to finish Downtown refurbishing project.
- Must attract both commercial and industrial development.
- Need ordinances to control building development.
- Must upgrade existing sewer system for capacity.

### Tallapoosa

- The Cities historic downtown has been the subject of extended deferred maintenance.
- The City does not have a Uniform Development Ordinance, controlling the emplacement of public infrastructure nor minimum standards for commercial development.

- The City has an area of great potential economic development around Exit 5 on I-20. However, and this also applies to #1, the City has no comprehensive, focused retail recruitment incentive program.
- The City would benefit from mass transit, both intra-county scheduled bus service and inter-county bus and train service.
- The City and County are Tier 2. The underlying goal should be to raise up the County to Tier 3. However, many minimum standards of the Georgia DoT undermine this effort. Specifically, the difficulty in removing the trees surrounding Exit 5 on I-20 and the recently begun GA 100 truck spur, which has been declared a “limited access” road.
- The City needs a Welcome Center located in the downtown area.
- The City does not have a web page.
- There is too much junk and trash strewn on too many citizens’ property.

#### Waco

- Waco needs more industrial and commercial development.

### **Economic Development Opportunities:**

#### Haralson County

- Successful economic development efforts depend on a community’s economic vitality and ability to manage growth in a timely, orderly, and predictable manner. And a community’s economic vitality depends on a balanced tax base, consisting of a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land uses.
- Haralson County’s location at the base of three major metropolitan areas is an important opportunity if managed well. Regional growth from Atlanta, Birmingham and Chattanooga can be expected to have an effect on the county’s growth and development. The county’s location on Interstate 20 and U.S. 27 four-lane provide opportunities for development along these transportation corridors. Commercial and industrial growth will be focused on these corridors. Multi modal transportation which includes north/south and east/west rail and truck transportation will offer additional growth challenges and opportunities along with access to the West Georgia Regional Airport and Hartsfield Jackson International Airport.

- The economic development strategy for this county has three areas of focus: workforce development, infrastructure and growth management. To realistically promote economic development without advancing workforce development and quality growth will create the type of economic development that no one wants.
- Downtown areas within the municipalities must revitalize and modernize in order to attract new commercial, office and mixed-use development. There are opportunities to retrofit existing buildings for use as loft apartments, incubator space, retail, technology, and commercial ventures. Efforts on the part of municipalities to create viable town centers will pay off in terms of added value of tax base and business expansion.
- Promote downtown with marketing and festivals and events. A thoughtful marketing campaign consisting of advertising and events will raise the profile of the community, and its interest to entrepreneurs and developers.
- Develop and promote a unique, tourism-based economy featuring small boutiques, antique shops, cultural performances, bed-and-breakfasts, and sight-seeing activities. Especially if marketed in conjunction with the development of the proposed West Georgia Regional Reservoir, the County could not only insure an adequate water supply but also become an attractive tourist destination. The county should continue its efforts to build the reservoir to create additional water capacity and tourism opportunities.
- Improve overall quality of life. An attractive quality of life is fundamental to creating a sustainable economy. This includes preserving rural/agricultural character by protecting large tracts of open space, developing a network of greenways, improving healthcare and education, insuring the community safety, expanding parks and conservation areas, while providing job opportunities through the expansion of existing business and location of new business.
- Expand infrastructure to undeveloped areas only to attract industrial/business growth. Additional sewer capacity, fire protection, and high-tech options are needed. However, in order to create enough demand to offset expenses of infrastructure, additional housing will be needed as well. It will be the responsibility of both the county and municipal authorities to balance residential, commercial, and industrial development.

### Bremen

- Downtown revitalization. Recently the city has begun a streetscape project in the downtown area. This will add population gathering points, increased sense of place, and connectivity with new sidewalks extending from downtown.

- Promote downtown with marketing and festivals and events. A thoughtful marketing campaign consisting of advertising and events will raise the profile of the community, and its interest to entrepreneurs and developers.
- The city is currently looking at expanding sewer infrastructure to provide for future residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

### Buchanan

- Modernize Downtown Area.
- Promote Downtown with festivals and events.
- City needs to develop a web page.
- City is a Better Hometown.
- City has 3 active groups: Better Hometown, DDA, and Downtown Buchanan Revitalization
- City also has a Joint Development Authority with Haralson County City need to recruit industry for better paying jobs,
- Improve Code Enforcement.

### Tallapoosa

- Downtown revitalization and infill. Leverage the delightful historic downtown to bring infill and new commercial, office and residential developments.
- Promote downtown with marketing and festivals and events. A thoughtful marketing campaign consisting of advertising and events will raise the profile of the community, and its interest to entrepreneurs and developers.
- Promote historic-based tourism. The City is an excellent day trip get away. The West Georgia Museum, Tally Mountain Golf Course, Helton Howland Picnic Spot, Haralson County Veteran's Memorial, plus Bud Jones' Nature Museum and West Georgia Golf and many community activities including a big Halloween celebration, Easter Egg Hunt, Memorial Day Celebration, Veteran's Day Parade, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration City Wide Yard sale; makes the City is an excellent place to visit on a weekend.
- Improve overall quality of life. Quality of life is now a key to creating a sustainable economy. This includes preserving rural character and open space, developing an excellent recreation system, to include various activities, adult activities, senior activities and programs.

- Expand infrastructure to attract industrial/business growth. Additional sewer capacity, fire protection, and high-tech options are needed.
- The City is a Better-hometown. The City has an active DDA. The City has a 501c3 historic preservation organization. The City is in the process of creating a façade grant program. It would most likely benefit the City to establish a local historic preservation commission.
- The City needs a historic downtown retail recruitment package.
- The City needs an exit 5 interstate recruitment team/master development plan.
- The City needs to develop a web page.
- Improve codes enforcement action and start a Keep America (Tallapoosa) Beautiful Chapter.

#### Waco

- Waco needs a higher level of income.

#### **Housing Issues:**

#### Haralson County

- Planning for and managing of residential growth must be considered the “make or break” community issue. Unchecked residential development can devastate local communities, while not enough will prohibit healthy community expansion. There are a variety of smart growth development tools that can guide residential growth and should be incorporated into Haralson County’s developmental policies. The county should utilize these tools to create local regulations and planning programs that will encourage balanced residential growth.
- There is currently a lack of variety in new housing units. Develop a policy and regulations to encourage a wide diversity of housing styles and price ranges so as to appeal to people of all ages and family size.
- Currently Haralson County has no traditional neighborhood mixed-use zoning, zoning that is needed so as to encourage developers to produce villages reflecting the traditional design: variable lot sizes on a street grid layout that unites a variety of residential, commercial, cultural, and civic uses with user-friendly sidewalks and bicycle paths.

### Bremen

- Lack of significant overall housing plan. Housing developments happen on a project-by-project basis with no continuity, connectivity, and concern for preexisting infrastructure.

### Buchanan

- Need to balance affordable low income housing with higher priced units
- There is much undeveloped land inside the City limits; developers are beginning look at this land as potential building sites

### Tallapoosa

- Much of the City housing stock was constructed between 1890 and 1950. Many, due to ownership circumstances, have been subject to deferred maintenance.
- The City public housing authority contains too many units.
- The City has many acres of undeveloped land. However, the current development regulations are not specifically detailed enough to guarantee excellence when these vacant acres are developed.
- The City needs to conduct a sub-standard housing study. The last one completed was during the late 1960's.

### Waco

- Waco needs better more planned communities.

## **Housing Opportunities:**

### Haralson County

- Incorporate traditional neighborhood developments. In the large undeveloped areas surrounding the currently existing and future cities, traditional neighborhood mixed-use development should be required.
- The use of conservation subdivisions, PUD ordinances requiring mixed-use development, tree ordinance regulations, high density housing in CBD, bike pathways, traditional neighborhood development districts, historical preservation ordinances, watershed ordinances where housing is located near streams or rivers, live-work comprehensive plan designation for emerging activity centers designed to guide future growth into concentrated areas.

- Subdivisions and mixed-use developments should also take into account the location and access of schools. Large residential developments should provide land at no charge for school facilities.
- Charging of Impact fees on developments to offset costs of upgrading water/sewer infrastructure.

### Bremen

- Focus on creating a master plan for both housing and other city land uses.
- Develop design standards for new neighborhoods and infill development.

### Buchanan

- Develop policies to promote a diversity of housing types
- Develop policies to encourage smart growth in undeveloped areas

### Tallapoosa

- The City needs to continue to pursue CDBG grants to assist private property owners in renovating deferred maintenance property sites.
- The City needs a policy of interconnected, large-scale residential districts. Public schools need to be located such that the children in these districts can walk to school. This partnering of goals should lead to integrated bike and sidewalk access throughout all parts of the City.

### Waco

- There is lots of land within and just outside of the city, which could be developed.

## **Natural Resource Issues:**

### Haralson County

- Tree cover is a good measure of the ecological health of the landscape. American Forests recommends increasing average tree cover to 40% to maximize benefits to air quality and weather moderation. Due to the loss of trees and canopy inevitable during development, Haralson County must adopt an effective tree ordinance to protect large existing trees and require curbside street trees in new developments.

- Without protection, current patterns of area development will lead to the destruction of remaining open space, agricultural, and timber lands.
- At present, there is no County program providing for the permanent preservation of farmland, forests, open space, and rural community character.
- Declining water quality and quantity. As development occurs, the water quality declines while the amount available to sustain additional growth decreases.
- Poor air quality. Most current County land use regulations and transportation policies fail to address deteriorating air quality.
- Junkyards and other unsightly areas continue to be an issue in the County.

#### Bremen

- Air quality concerns due to proximity to the Atlanta region.
- Preservation of open space. Develop a plan to preserve land within developments and through conservation programs

#### Buchanan

- City is dependant on the County Water Authority for it's water; extended drought leaves the City vulnerable.
- Junkyards and unsightly areas are a problem

#### Tallapoosa

- The City and County depend upon the Tallapoosa River to supply potable water. This leaves the City very vulnerable to downturns in precipitation.
- The Tallapoosa River lacks a buffer zone along it, as do its tributaries, banks.
- Topography of the City is deep rolling hills. This shall necessitate larger than normal minimum lot sizes.
- The City has many, very mature, beautiful street trees. These trees, particular the Tallapoosa Originals, need to be protected during the anticipated impending development.
- Many parts of the City do not have easy access to parks and recreation.

#### Waco



- Waco has elevation problem and this does not allow all residents to have sewage.

## **Natural Resource Opportunities:**

### Haralson County

- Coordinate the preservation of prime agricultural land, existing open space, and forestland tracts. Develop a comprehensive community land use plan to preserve neighborhood character, farms and forestland through conservation programs such as (a) the Transfer of Development Rights from areas worthy of preservation to pre-planned development zones and (b) Permanent Conservation Easements that insure that community open spaces will remain open forever.
- Protect the water quality of all County streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes. As the primary source of County drinking water, the Tallapoosa River and its tributaries demand particular protection from pollutants, animal waste, erosion and silting.
- So as to insure an adequate future water supply, governmental agencies at all levels must make every effort to provide for the timely development of the proposed West Georgia Regional Reservoir without which additional residential, commercial, or industrial growth, whether planned or unanticipated, will soon become impossible.
- Increase usage of the conservation subdivision option for new developments. Craft a policy framework and ordinance revisions to encourage the concentrating of development and the preservation of greenspace.
- Implementation of a Land Development Guidelines Handbook that includes information on plan review and permitting, road design standards, storm water management and environmental considerations.
- Focus local planning on providing continuous public pathways and nature park areas along portions of the Tallapoosa River.
- Institute a comprehensive stream buffer ordinance, which requires progressively wider buffers dependent upon stream size.
- Enforce existing ordinances regulating junkyards and unsightly areas and review ordinances to determine if additional ordinances are needed.
- It is important to take steps to protect the forest and timber lands within the region. Conservation easements and conservation subdivision ordinances, in-fill development in developed areas are methods of preserving forests pastureland. Active tree-planting programs also help raise the awareness of forest protection.

### Bremen

- Craft a policy framework and minor ordinance revisions to encourage usage and preserve greenspace.

### Buchanan

- Countywide Reservoir
- Pass and enforce ordinances to regulate junkyards and unsightly areas.

### Tallapoosa

- The key to environmentally benign development is the construction of a 2000 acre or larger county/region-wide reservoir.
- Pursuing the Tree City designation is a natural fit for our community. However, the City would be required to invest a minimum of \$2.00 per capita to obtain this designation.
- It may be wise to establish a park and tree foundation to develop recreational facilities in all 6 planning districts.
- It would be beneficial to create a master planned, community wide master sidewalk and bicycle improvement plan.

### **Land Use Legal Issue:**

#### Haralson County

- At some time parts of the zoning ordinances of the County and/or existing cities may be subject to legal challenges. Authorities must make all land use decisions by strictly following the intent and direction of the Future Land Use Plan.

### **Cultural Resources Issues:**

#### Haralson County

- There are currently no standards of building character or architectural design in the county.
- Most historic buildings and sites have not yet been cataloged.
- Scenic by-ways to be preserved have not been formally identified.

### Bremen

- No historical district or many other cultural assets, such as performance halls, art galleries, etc.

### Buchanan

- No standards on building design in City Of Buchanan
- City does not have webpage to promote events.

### Tallapoosa

- The City is in need of a master plan for recreational options and activities to be delivered over the next 5 to 10 years.
- The City does not utilize the tourism potential of the River.
- The City does not have a great, interactive web page so citizens can post notices and receive “upcoming event” ads from the City.

## **Cultural Resources Opportunities:**

### Haralson County

- Establish a Haralson County Historic Preservation Commission to encourage the preservation and promotion of the historic character and resources of the area.
- Institute neighborhood architectural design guidelines so as to insure that future development is compatible with the character of the neighborhoods in which it is to be located.
- Inaugurate a sign ordinance on roads with particular attention to scenic by-ways.

### Bremen

- Focus on including cultural assets as part of any further downtown redevelopment opportunities or projects.

### Buchanan

- Develop webpage
- Adopt ordinances for building and subdivision design

- Promote Old County Courthouse / Buchanan-Haralson County Public Library located on the Downtown Square

### Tallapoosa

- Promote the Historic Residential District with a brochure.
- Promote the Vet's Memorial with a Brochure.
- Create a City oriented "events", "attractions", and shopping brochure.
- Renovate auditorium and turn into our local Civic Center.
- Work to make the historic central business district eligible for the National Register.
- Create a web page.

### Waco

- West Central Technical College is located nearby providing great potential opportunities for growth.

## **Community Facilities and Services Issues:**

### Haralson County

- Overall, the population of Haralson County has increased almost 23% during the past 10 years, and that rate is expected to accelerate. This growth has created increasing demands on local taxpayers to provide and maintain increasingly expensive public services and infrastructure. Correctly anticipating future development patterns will be most crucial in insuring that the local authorities are able to provide the required services and infrastructure as economically as possible and in a timely fashion.
- Over the next 20 years, Haralson County must anticipate the deterioration of aging individual wastewater systems. Because the majority of County residents currently use septic tanks, we must plan for requiring the replacement of these sanitary systems.
- As additional areas continue to be covered with impervious surfaces and new roads are required to install curbs to contain oil-contaminated highway run-off, the community must establish comprehensive guidelines regulating the safe

recharging of stormwater run-off into the environment without flooding surface areas or contaminating ground water.

- Recent and proposed changes in service delivery, funding sources, and annexation policies will have to be reflected in an update of the SDS as part of this planning effort. Open communication and dialogue with the adjacent jurisdictions will have to be maintained throughout this planning process.
- The Haralson County water system is not adequate to meet anticipated demands.
- Haralson County currently has no sewer system to provide for the Georgia West Business & Technology Park. The City of Buchanan sewer system, currently supplying wastewater treatment, no longer has unused capacity adequate for the demands of Georgia West.
- Currently, the condition of several Haralson County facilities, facilities operating at or beyond designed capacity, requires immediate State-mandated expansion. Others urgently need expensive physical repairs.
- Lack of viable commercial and industrial development combining with the anticipated increase of residential construction will quickly cause the county an upside-down tax base, whereby there are more negative service users than positive revenue providers.

#### Bremen

- Strain on city facilities and infrastructure capacity due to increasing growth.

#### Buchanan

- Water supply may not be adequate for future growth.
- Sewer system is aging and will not have capacity for future growth.
- Infiltration of sewer system with Stormwater.

#### Tallapoosa

- The City needs a capital improvement plan.
- Most of the City streets do not have curb and gutter. This leads to problems of sheeting water across many residential properties.
- Many, especially the newer streets out of the historic residential core, do not have sidewalks (GA 100, 120, Broad Street, McDonald Road).

- The City has many dead end streets without cul de sacs.
- Many streets are relatively thin. Current standards for new streets require only a 20' wide travel area.
- The treatment facility and the extension of the City limits to I-20 has created a situation where sewerage is being pumped a long distance. It would be wise, when the growth trend of exit 5 is examined, to construct a treatment plant closer to I-20.
- The City sewer lines are aging.
- Many of the natural gas lines in the City are constructed of cast iron, which has been determined to be a potential problem.
- The City golf course is a drain on capital funds.
- Recreation facilities are currently in high demand. The City needs a multi-purpose, multi-activity gymnasium and outdoor recreation facilities.

#### Waco

- City Hall is in need of repair.

### **Community Facilities and Services Opportunities:**

#### Haralson County

- The expansion of sewer and water capacity should be used as a development tool and strictly reserved for use in areas in which planned development is to be encouraged. By building and directing infrastructure, the county can direct and control its growth. Lack of county infrastructure will cause the development community to proceed on its own with the less than desirable provision of private water and wastewater infrastructure, i.e. septic tank systems and individual wells. Prohibit residential rezoning that increase permitted gross density in rural preservation areas of the Haralson County Future Land Use Map.
- Stormwater management throughout the entire County should be coordinated by the adoption of a stormwater management ordinance.
- Create an annexation policy. Haralson County needs a clear policy to define when annexation is or is not in its best interest and to define its expectations for prospective development. Work closely with surrounding jurisdictions, state and regional planning agencies to ensure that new community facilities and services

built within this sphere of influence support the needs of local residents and businesses and are compatible with the provisions of this Comprehensive Plan.

- Development policies should be implemented in order to direct growth toward delineated growth districts, maintaining greenspace and natural regions but still providing development areas.

#### Bremen

- Complete the service delivery strategy with the county.
- The city is beginning to plan to expand sewer capacity.
- Further study the creation of a utility for Stormwater management.
- The city is in the final planning stages of building a new public safety building to increase space and facilities for both the police and fire departments.
- An additional field is being added at the recreation complex at this time

#### Buchanan

- Work on stormwater management ordinance.
- Pass Sewer Use Ordinance.
- Repair and Upgrade current Sewer Plant.

#### Tallapoosa

- The City has initiated a needs assessment for a second sewer treatment plant.
- The City needs to lobby state Legislative leaders to pass enabling legislation for MOST and FOSTER.
- The SPLOST split system needs to be amended so the proceeds are distributed under three categories: a) Population; b) Source of tax; c) % of contribution to County budget.
- City needs to pursue GEFA loans for curb & gutter/storm water control.
- City needs a sidewalk and bike path improvement master plan.
- City needs Capital Improvement Plan.
- Complete update of SDS.

- City needs to lobby Federal representatives to establish Amtrak stop in Tallapoosa; also need passenger depot.

#### Waco

- Parks should be improved.

#### **Intergovernmental Coordination Issues:**

- In order to ensure that proper coordination and execution of much needed transportation improvements, County officials need to be actively involved in transportation planning activities at the Coosa Valley Regional Development Center, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, and Georgia Department of Transportation.
- Intergovernmental agreements are needed to meet anticipated service demands and potential future land use conflicts that may result from both annexation and development.
- Regarding Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax renewal, city and County officials need to work closely in order to ensure that this important source of capital improvements funding is used most effectively. Water and sewer infrastructure should become a recipient of SPLOST dollars.
- Recent and proposed changes in service delivery, funding sources, and annexation policies will have to be reflected in another update of the SDS as part of this planning effort. Open communication and dialogue with the cities will have to be maintained throughout this planning process.
- Under new State requirements, Haralson County is going to have to implement stormwater management practices. Though coordination of these activities with the Cities is not a requirement, it could be beneficial for the County and the Cities to coordinate their efforts in this endeavor.

#### Bremen

- Intergovernmental agreements needed to meet anticipated service demands
- Renew Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. City officials need to work closely with the County to help ensure that this important source of capital improvements funding is used effectively.



## Buchanan

- Water rates between City and County on all County buildings currently served by the City of Buchanan's water and sewer system.
- Water and Sewer infrastructure for the New Jail and County Complex needs to be Coordinated with the City Of Buchanan.
- Water and Sewer infrastructure for the Haralson Industrial Park needs to be Coordinated with the City Of Buchanan.
- Water and Sewer infrastructure for the new BOE bus barn needs to be Coordinated with the City.

## Tallapoosa

- The City and County need to comprehensively revisit the Service Delivery Strategy. The current situation of many County services being paid for by City residents, plus the majority of the local sales tax revenue, generated in the city(ies) but remaining in County coffers, practically strangle the cities and prevents them from wisely, with maximized impact, scheduling capital improvements.
- Currently, the City of Tallapoosa is NOT an issuing authority relative to land disturbing activity. It is believed that Haralson County is. It would be wise, if this assertion is correct, to have an intergovernmental contract whereby the County agrees to issue land disturbance permits for City projects.
- The City needs to precisely determine what improvements on the state highways, which traverse our community, are needed and diligently pursue the scheduling and accomplishing of those projects.
- It is crucial for this development pattern to occur that the County zone the vast majority of the county low density development (5 acre lot size).
- The County Health department frequently defers investigating complaints which begin in the City. The County Health Department is better suited to effectively accomplish this than the City.

## **Intergovernmental Coordination Opportunities:**

### Haralson County

- Adopt annexation policies that identify a greater territorial area or sphere of influence. Work closely with surrounding jurisdictions and state and regional

planning agencies to ensure that new community facilities and services built within this sphere of influence support the needs of local residents and businesses and are compatible with the provisions of this plan.

- Coordinate closely with the Cities in meeting the state and federal stormwater management requirements.

#### Bremen

- Actively participate in regional transportation planning efforts.

#### Buchanan

- Need to set new rate structure for water and sewer
- Need Intergovernmental Agreements for the Future placement of water and sewer Lines and other infrastructure

#### Tallapoosa

- It would benefit all concerned if the County identified urban growth zones (most likely the entire southern half of the County). These zones so identified would have a secondary overlay which would indicate an anticipated “annexation” OK zone. (Possibly have a “rural preservation district” and a “future urban development district”.)
- Actively work with the County and the Regional Water Authority to have a large drinking water/recreation reservoir constructed in the County.
- Work to establish an inter-government agreement that requires the County Health Department to respond as passionately to complaints of a health nature in the City as in the unincorporated sections of the City.
- Intergovernmental agreement with Haralson County for issuing authority over sight.

#### Waco

- Waco has a very close working relationship with the County.

### **Transportation Issues:**

#### Haralson County

- Haralson County has an incomplete public transportation network and provides few options. Lacking adequate bus service, bike lanes, and pedestrian sidewalks, County residents have no alternatives but to use private vehicles to reach even the most elementary neighborhood activities.

### Bremen

- The city needs to create a comprehensive sidewalk inventory, a sidewalk installation program and funding source.

### Buchanan

- City needs comprehensive street register with existing right-of-ways Busses cannot pass each other on road leading to Primary School

### Tallapoosa

- The City needs a master sidewalk installation program and funding source.
- The City needs an intra-city bike path system.
- The City would benefit from mass transit projects: Commuter Rail, an Amtrak stop, intra & inter county scheduled bus system, express bus system to Atlanta.
- The state routes which traverse the City are in need of substantial upgrades to enhance safety and traffic conveyance capacity.
- The City needs a comprehensive Street register
- With the state allowing vehicles to travel 10 mph over the posted speed limit, all speed limits within the City need to be evaluated to determine the greatest maximum speed the City wishes vehicles to travel at, then subtract 15 miles from that and post that speed limit on our roads.

### Waco

- Need trails to connect points of interest.
- Sidewalks need repairs.

## **Transportation Opportunities:**

### Haralson County

- Traffic congestion is going to get worse as Haralson County grows. Steps alleviating increasing traffic flow are needed to be emplaced to slow the increase in congestion including requiring street connectivity by prohibiting subdivisions with but a single entrance, improving street connectivity within and between developments, conducting comprehensive traffic studies, actively participating in regional transportation planning efforts, and application of impact fees to mitigate the costs of new development.
- Public transportation linking Carrolton, Bremen, Buchanan, Buchanan, and Rome along US 27 would be a boon for Haralson County's economy while reducing dependence on private transportation. County authorities should press GDOT and its elected State officials to speed consideration of the process.
- County subdivision regulations should emphasize pedestrian/bike accessibility. Subdivisions and mixed-use developments should include roads designed and sized in keeping with pedestrian accessibility.

#### Bremen

- Improving street connectivity within and between developments.

#### Buchanan

- City should look at changing traffic patterns, perhaps indicating some streets as one-way streets

#### Tallapoosa

- Create convenient and safe bike connectivity of the Cities and establish very safe bike routes within the City.
- Prospective commuter rail. Commuter rail would be a boon for Tallapoosa's economy.
- Annex I-20 to the Welcome Center.
- Request that GDoT construct the emergency flyover and weigh stations in Haralson County.
- Produce the street register.
- Complete a Major thoroughfare plan.

#### Waco

- Sidewalks from downtown to West Central Tech.

## **Land Use Issues:**

### Haralson County

- Existing land use regulations do not establish means or incentives to prevent the prevailing pattern of low-density sprawl.
- The lack of meaningful development and architectural standards, agricultural and land conservation techniques, infrastructure planning and strategic location of public facilities, conservation subdivision ordinances, mixed-use development ordinances and capital improvement planning needs to be addressed.
- Clean up and redevelop junkyards and brownfields.
- Create opportunities and incentives for reinvestment and redevelopment in run-down areas.

### Bremen

- Continued pressure to build within or adjacent to floodplains.

### Buchanan

- Junkyards and unsightly areas
- No subdivision regulations
- Explore Impact Fees for sanitary sewer consumption

### Tallapoosa

- The City subdivision ordinance needs to be updated.
- The City needs a uniform development ordinance.
- The City needs to explore impact fees/capacity consumption of sanitary sewer and water treatment plant fees.
- The City needs to be able to factor in adjoining property uses abutting its city limits. Currently the county does NOT have a viewable, single sheet zoning ordinance map.

- The City needs to develop a land use evaluation criteria and strive to determine if the currently zoned property has the correct zoning. This should be done on a planning service district basis.

#### Waco

- City needs much more development.

### **Land Use Opportunities:**

#### Haralson County

- Reserve land for industrial and commercial growth within the Future Land Use Plan. Balance a variety of residential programs with the necessity to include acreage adequate for the growth of positive tax-revenue generating/local-employment demanding commercial and industrial uses.
- Manage development patterns.
- Protect water resources.
- Protect the county's rural and scenic assets.
- Manage infrastructure needs.
- Preserve agricultural land, open space, and forestland by developing a comprehensive community plan to preserve neighborhood character.
- Encourage traditional neighborhood development. Traditional neighborhood design is always viable but should be required whenever developing projects adjacent or in close proximity to existing neighborhoods.
- Protect natural resources within developments. Promote using conservation subdivision practices, adopt a stream buffer ordinance, and create an incentive program to encourage voluntary greenway connections.

#### Bremen

- Encourage higher density infill development around our central city to justify sidewalk improvements, minimize the amount of new infrastructure needed (both to provide and maintain), and to further encourage the commercial growth of downtown.
- Reserve land for industrial and commercial growth. Within the Future Land Use Plan, include adequate space for the growth of employment-related uses.

- Identify areas that might be potentially well suited for open space.

#### Buchanan

- Develop ordinances to regulate junkyards and unsightly areas.
- Develop subdivision regulation.
- Explore Impact Fees for sanitary sewer consumption.
- Update existing maps.

#### Tallapoosa

- Exploring the possibility of TDRs, which if analysis determines to benefit the development of the community, will need extensive public education, will be a great benefit to the County and state.
- Having a single sheet zoning map for the County will be profoundly beneficial.
- Developing a land use evaluation criteria will benefit the City and potentially the entire state.
- The establishment and enforcement of a uniform development ordinance will ensure the orderly development of our City and substantially increase property values.

#### Waco

- Lot of land available for development.

### **III. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

The purpose of this analysis is to gain a clear understanding of the geographic setting within the entire area of Haralson County and to explore further those issues and opportunities that relate directly to the physical environment. The following analysis looks at three aspects of the existing development patterns throughout Haralson County and its current municipalities: Existing Land Use, Areas Requiring Special Attention, and current Area Character.

#### **Existing Land Use:**

Analyzing the existing land use map in conjunction with the historical trend data can help to illustrate how the development patterns were formed. The land use map for each jurisdiction illustrates what is currently on the ground. It is based on a compilation of tax assessor's data in comparison with aerial photography, and field surveys to determine what at this time are the predominant land use trends for parcels throughout the county.

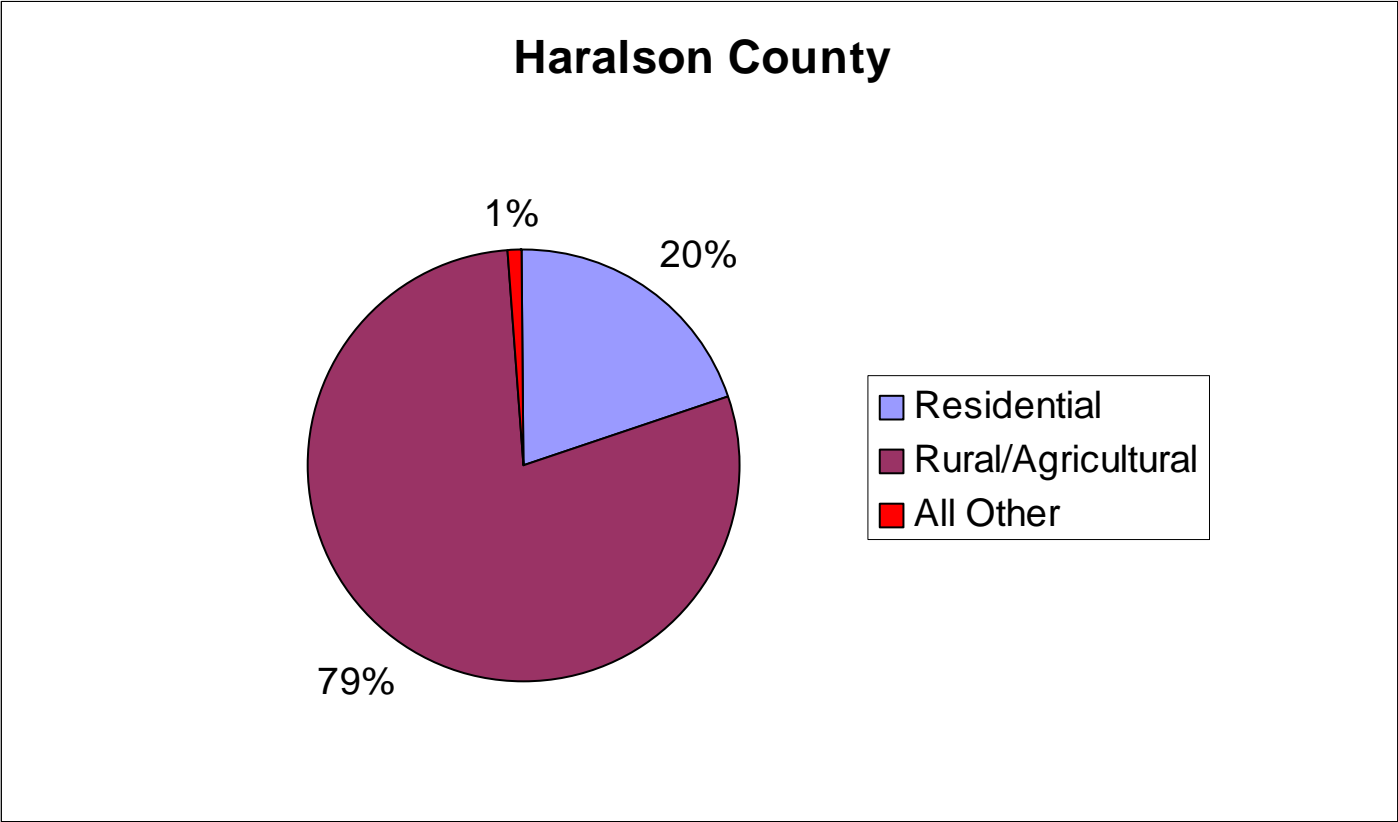
Table 1 defines the types of land uses found throughout Haralson County and its cities, while Table 2 breaks down the existing land use by category and total acreage.

**Table 1: Land Use Definitions:**

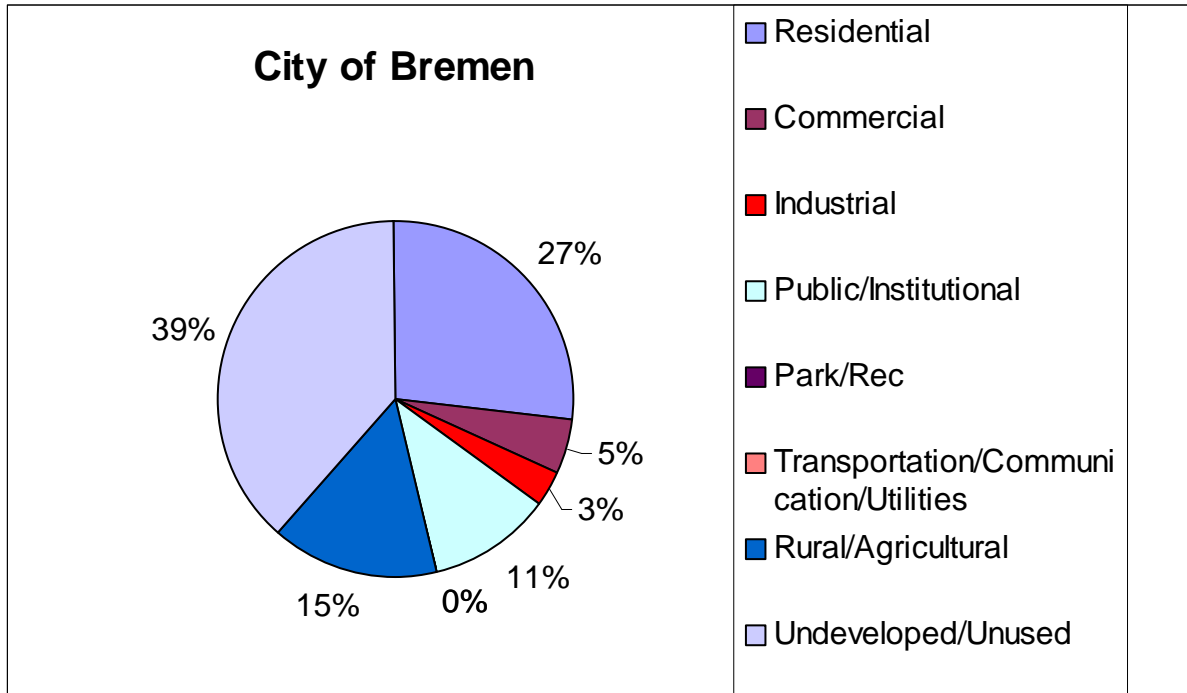
<b>Existing Land Use Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Rural/Agriculture	Rural: undeveloped land with one unit per two acres. Agriculture: land in open, cultivated state or sparsely settled, including woodlands and farms lands.
Residential	Single or Multi-family developments with lot sizes one acre or less.
Commercial	Commercial and office; including strip malls, big-box retail, auto-related businesses, restaurants, convenience stores, and office buildings.
Industrial	Industrial uses.
Public/Intuitional	Community facilities, schools
Recreational	Parks, and protected land
TCU	Transportation/Communication/Utilities
UU	Undeveloped/Unused



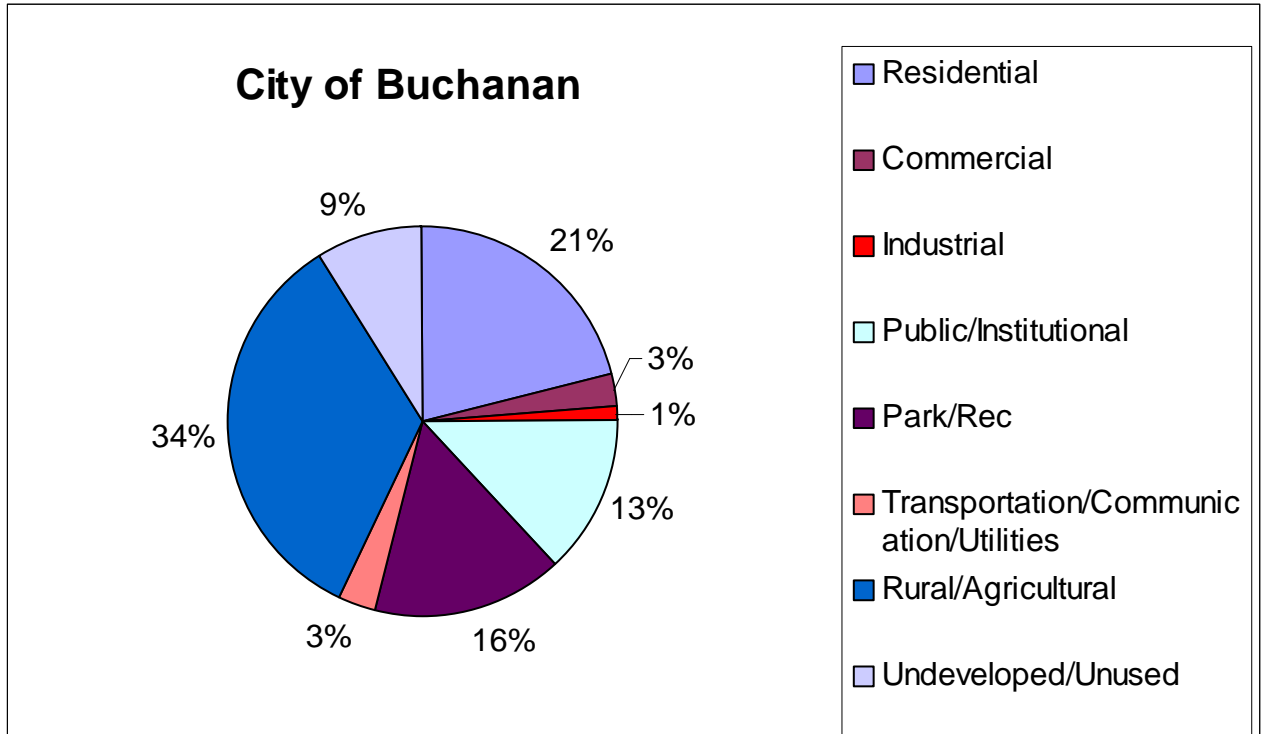
**Figure 1-A: Haralson County Existing Land Use:**



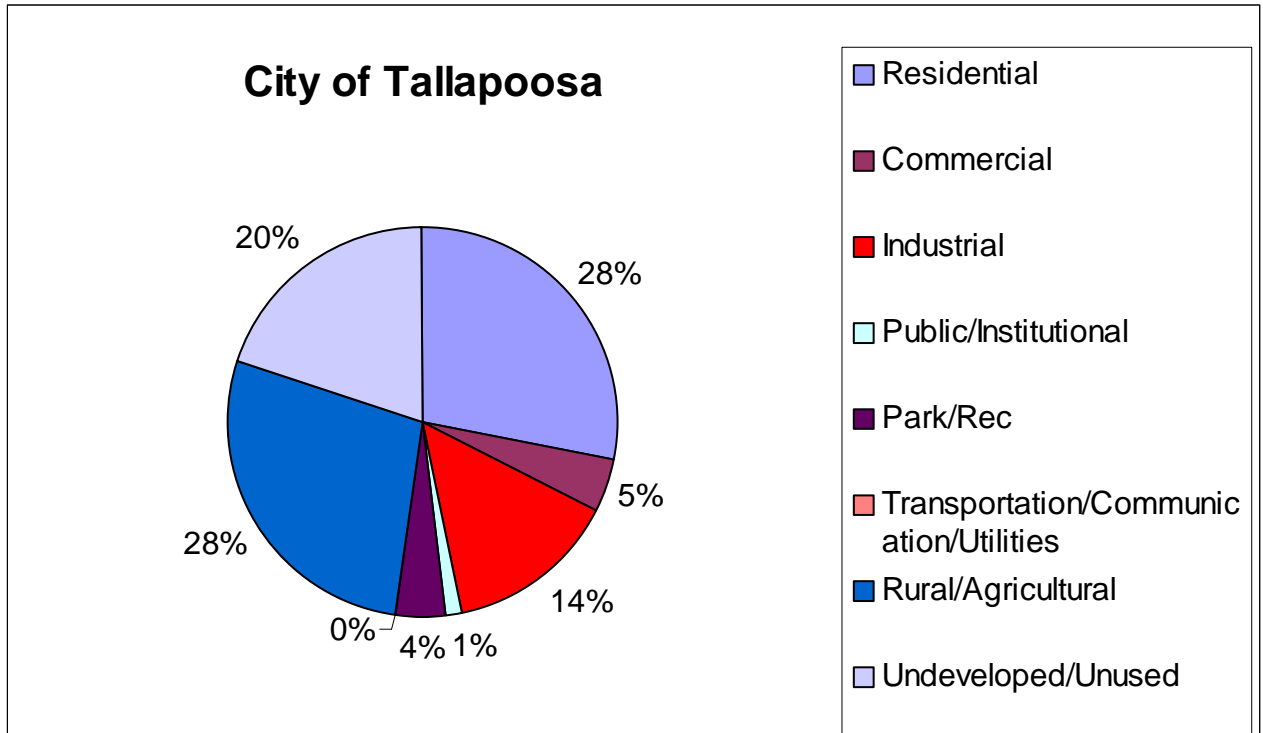
**Figure 1-B: Bremen Existing Land Use:**



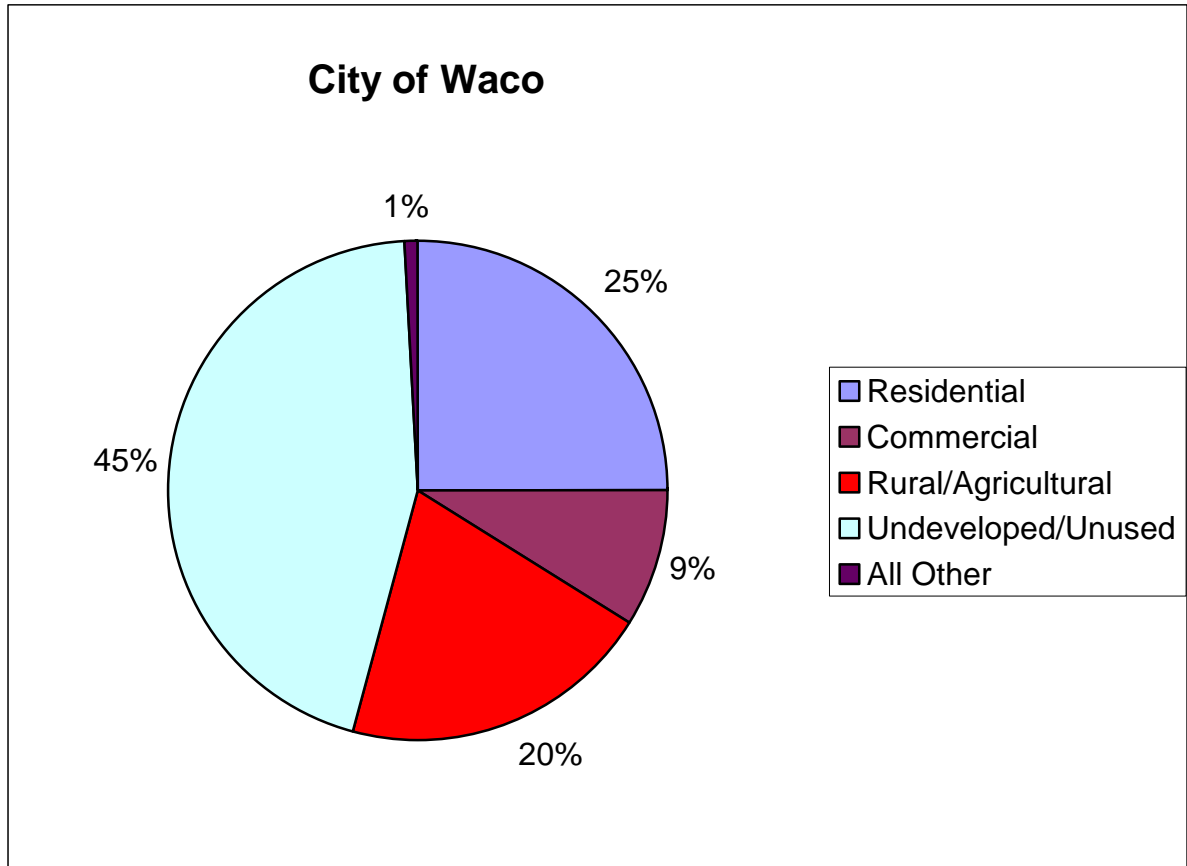
**Figure 1-C: Buchanan Existing Land Use:**



**Figure 1-D: Tallapoosa Existing Land Use:**



**Figure 1-E: Waco Existing Land Use:**



**Existing Land Use:**

Although development has increased throughout the county over the past decade, over 79% of the county remains in a Rural or Agricultural state, while Commercial is at 0.4% and Industrial are only at 0.1%. Residential acreage comprises the second largest amount of land use at 20% of the County's total acreage. All other categories, Public, Recreation, Transportation/Communication/Utilities, and Undeveloped/Unused make up a combined total of 0.5% of county acreage use.

Figures 2: A-E illustrate the existing land use, countywide, of the County and each city, maps. These maps represent a first draft of the existing land use and will be refined throughout the public participation process to correct any inaccuracies that may exist on the map.

Figure 2-A: Haralson County Existing Land Use:

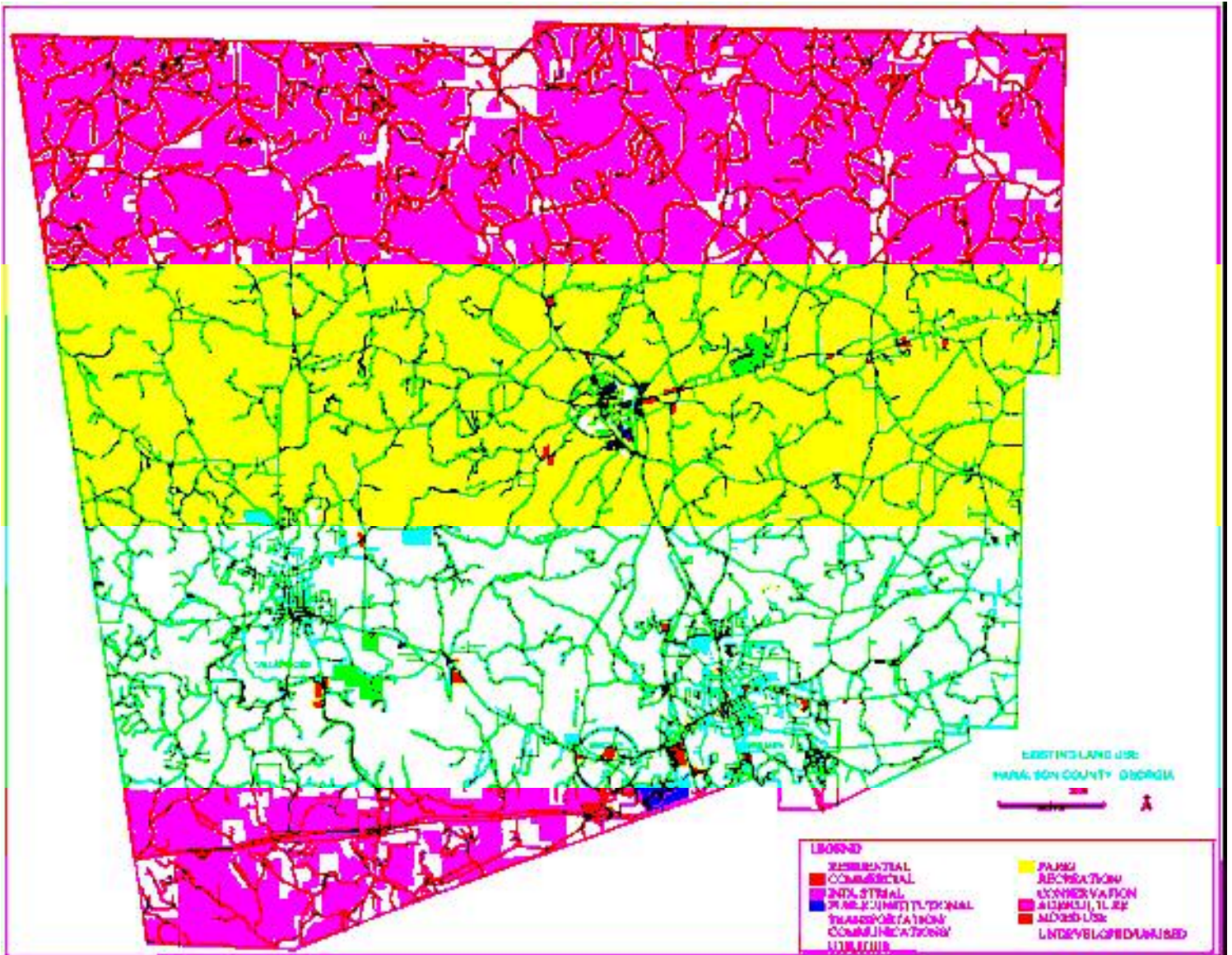




Figure 2-B: Bremen Existing Land Use:

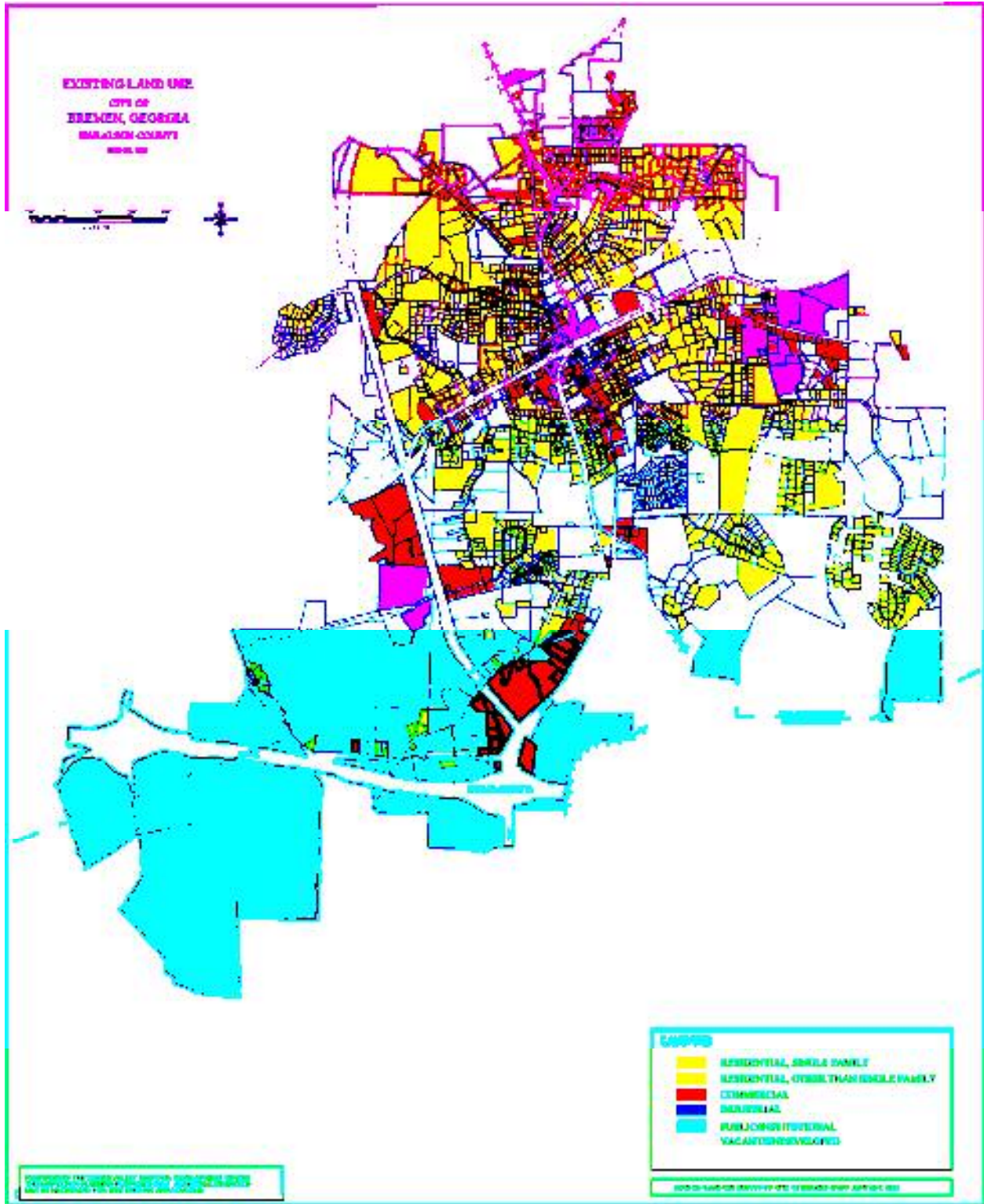


Figure 2-C Buchanan Existing Land Use:

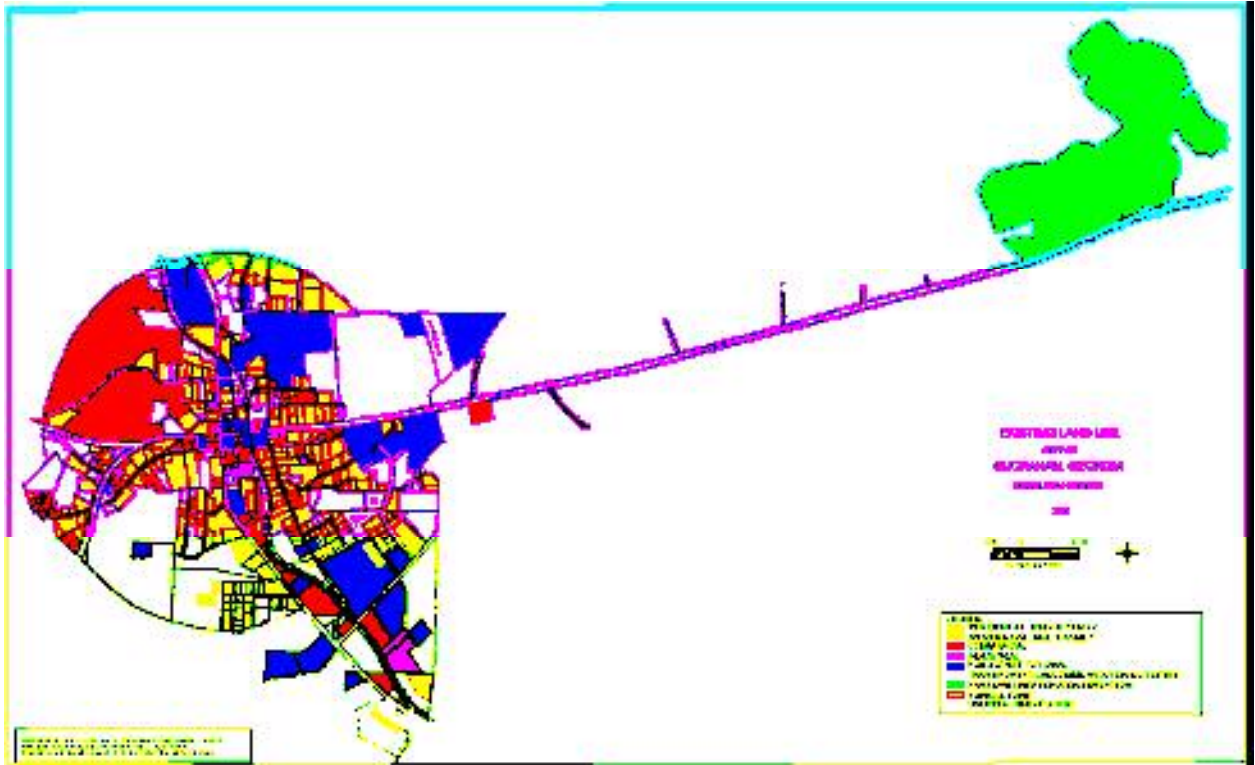




Figure 2-D: Tallapoosa Existing Land Use:

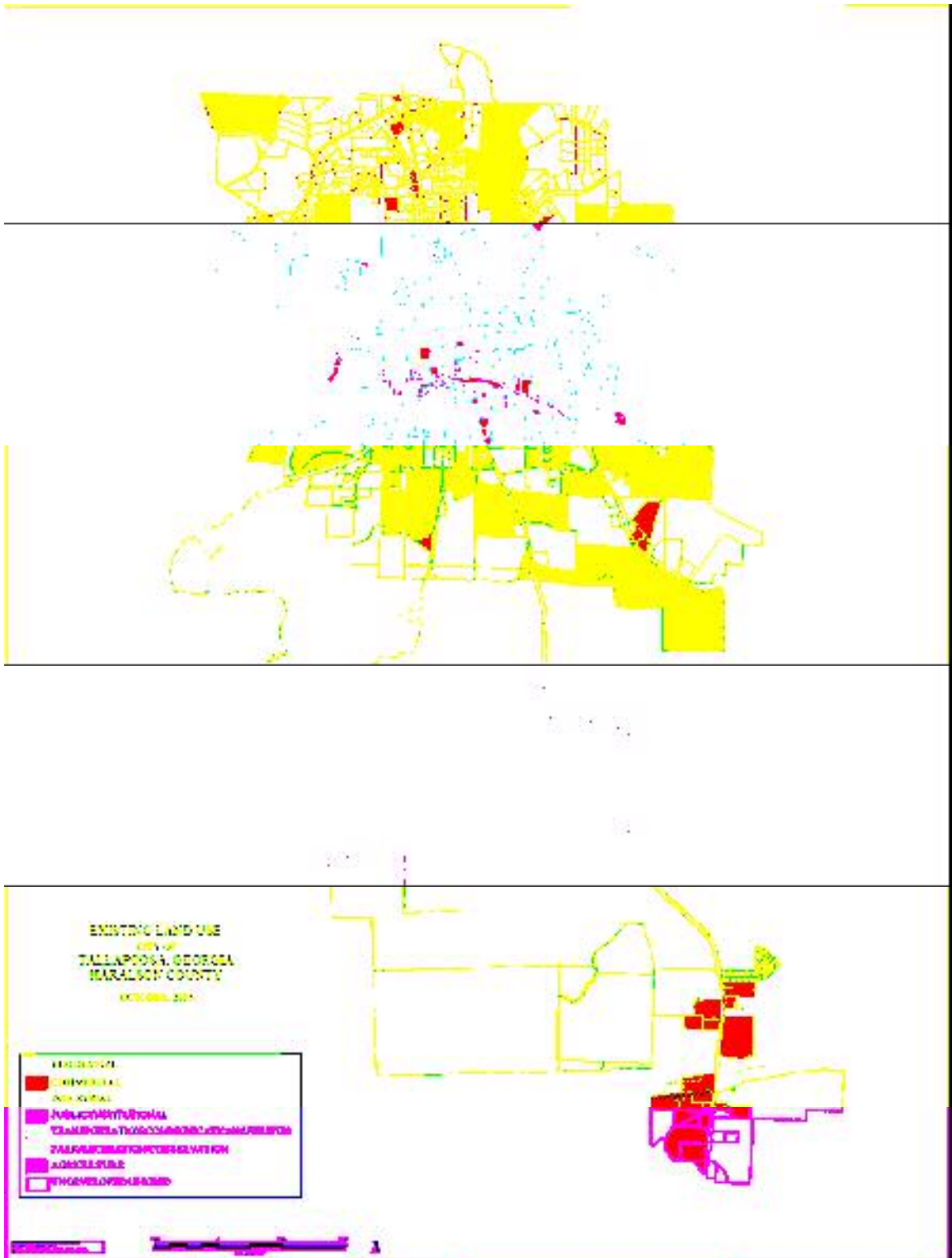
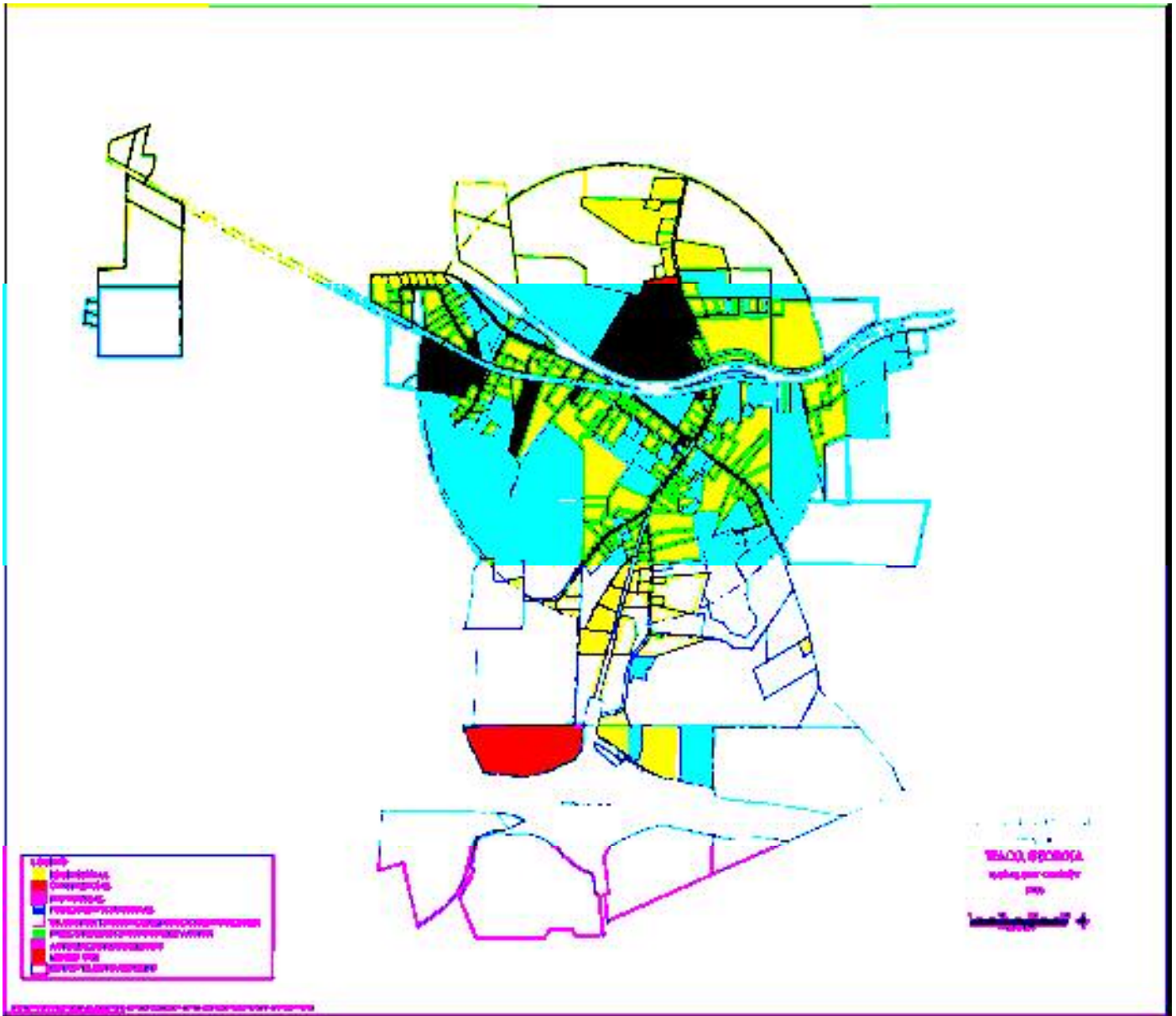


Figure 2-E: Waco Existing Land Use:



**Areas Requiring Special Attention:**

As growth continues there are inevitably going to be impacts to the existing natural and cultural environment as well as the community facilities, services and infrastructure that are required to service existing and future development. This section outlines areas where growth should be avoided, where growth is likely to occur, and where growth could potentially be stimulated. Figures 3:A-E provides a map of all Areas Requiring Special Attention.

**Areas of significant natural or cultural resources:**

The maps of the County and its Cities illustrate the presence of a variety of environmentally sensitive areas located throughout the county. The environmental areas include wetlands, floodplains, streams, groundwater recharge areas, and steep slopes.

**Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur:**

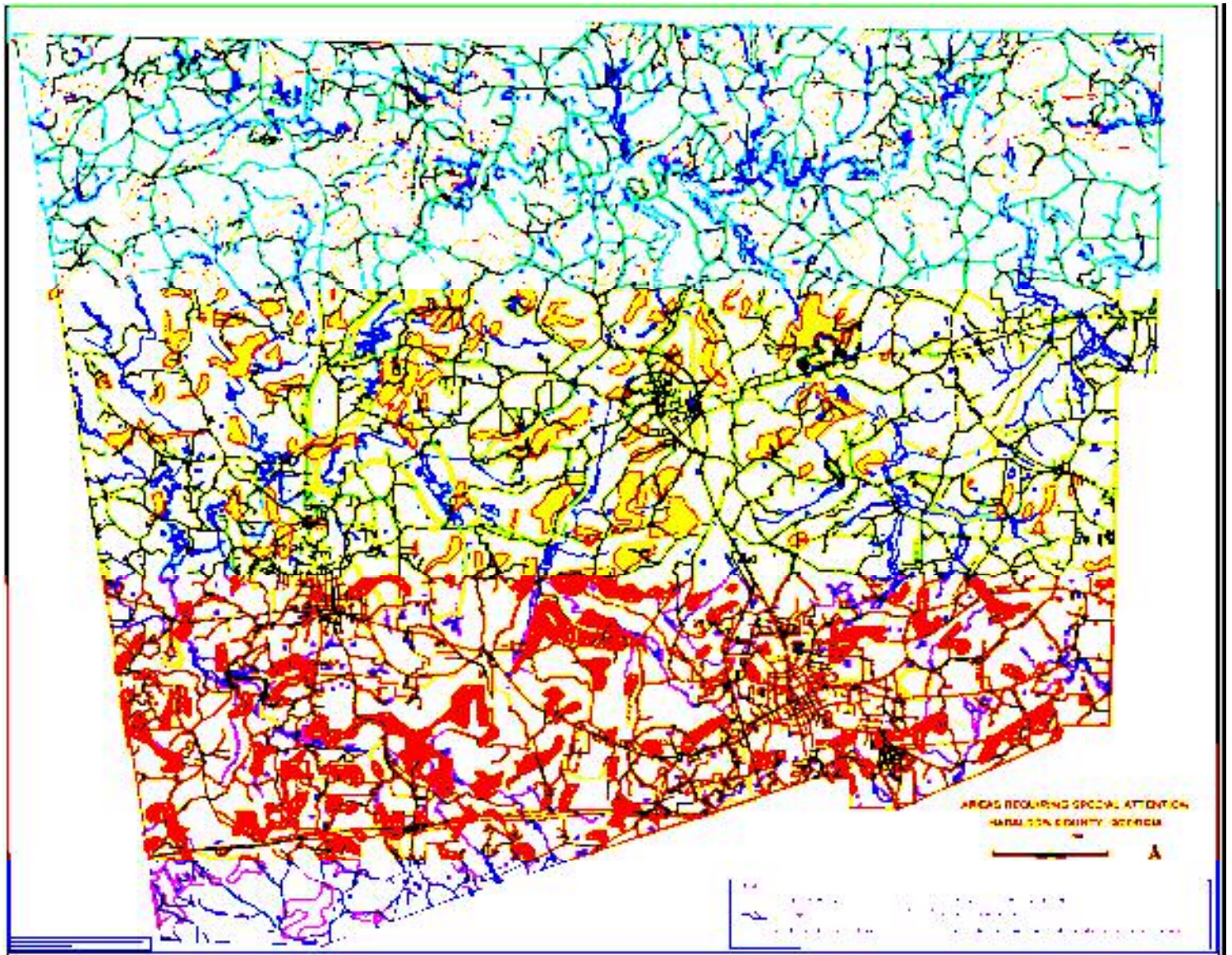
Existing development patterns have indicated that throughout the county areas around the cities have experienced the most rapid rates of growth. Throughout the County and within the cities, development will challenge the communities' ability to provide the same level of service for infrastructure, community facilities, and services.

**Areas where the pace of development has or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation:**

As development continues there will be impacts to all community services and infrastructure networks, including schools, water service, and law enforcement without continued investment in personnel, facilities and equipment that represent opportunities for the rehabilitation of existing historic structures for economic development purposes.



**Figure 3-A: Haralson County Areas Requiring Special Attention:**



**Figure 3-B: Bremen Areas Requiring Special Attention:**

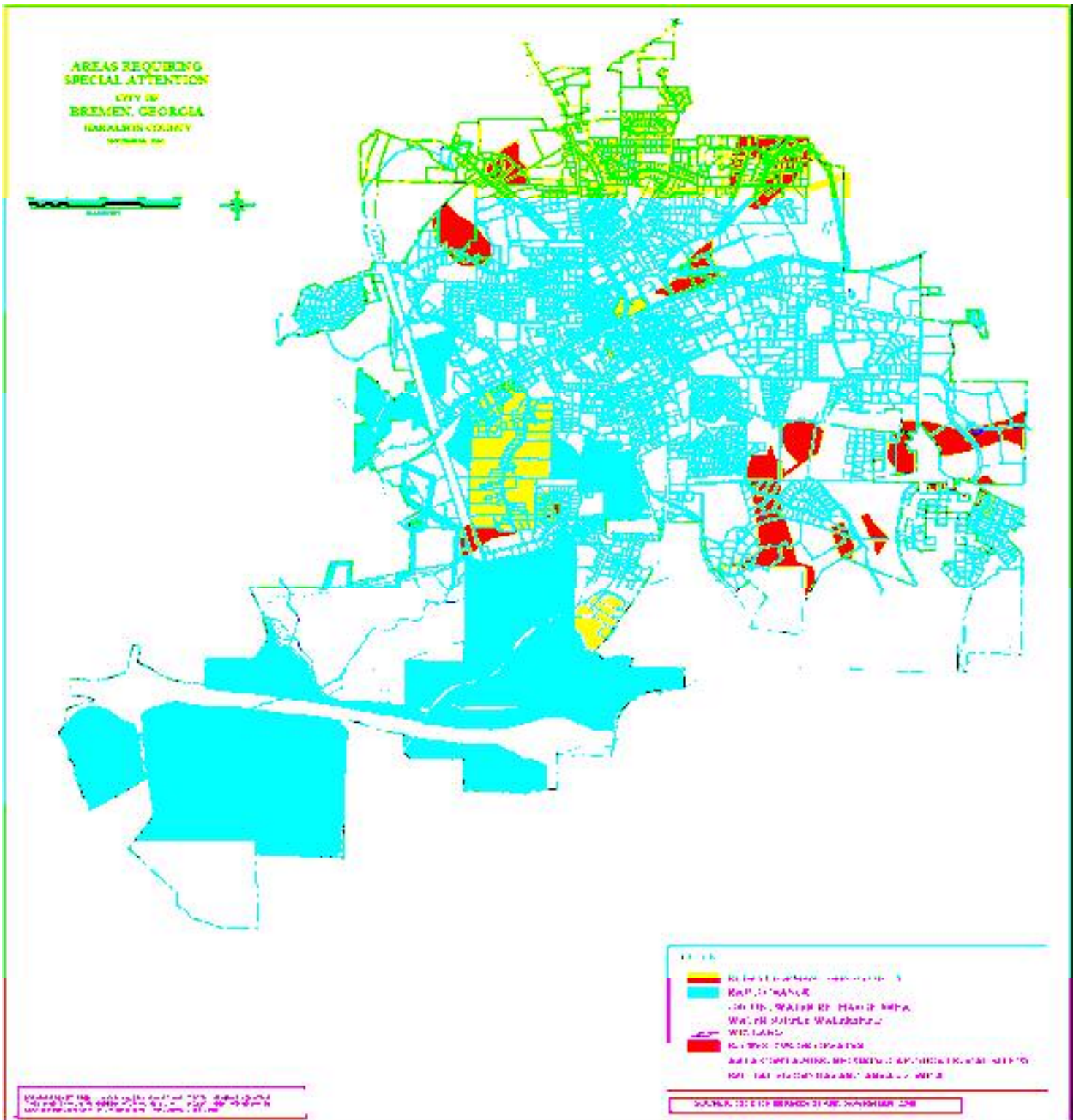
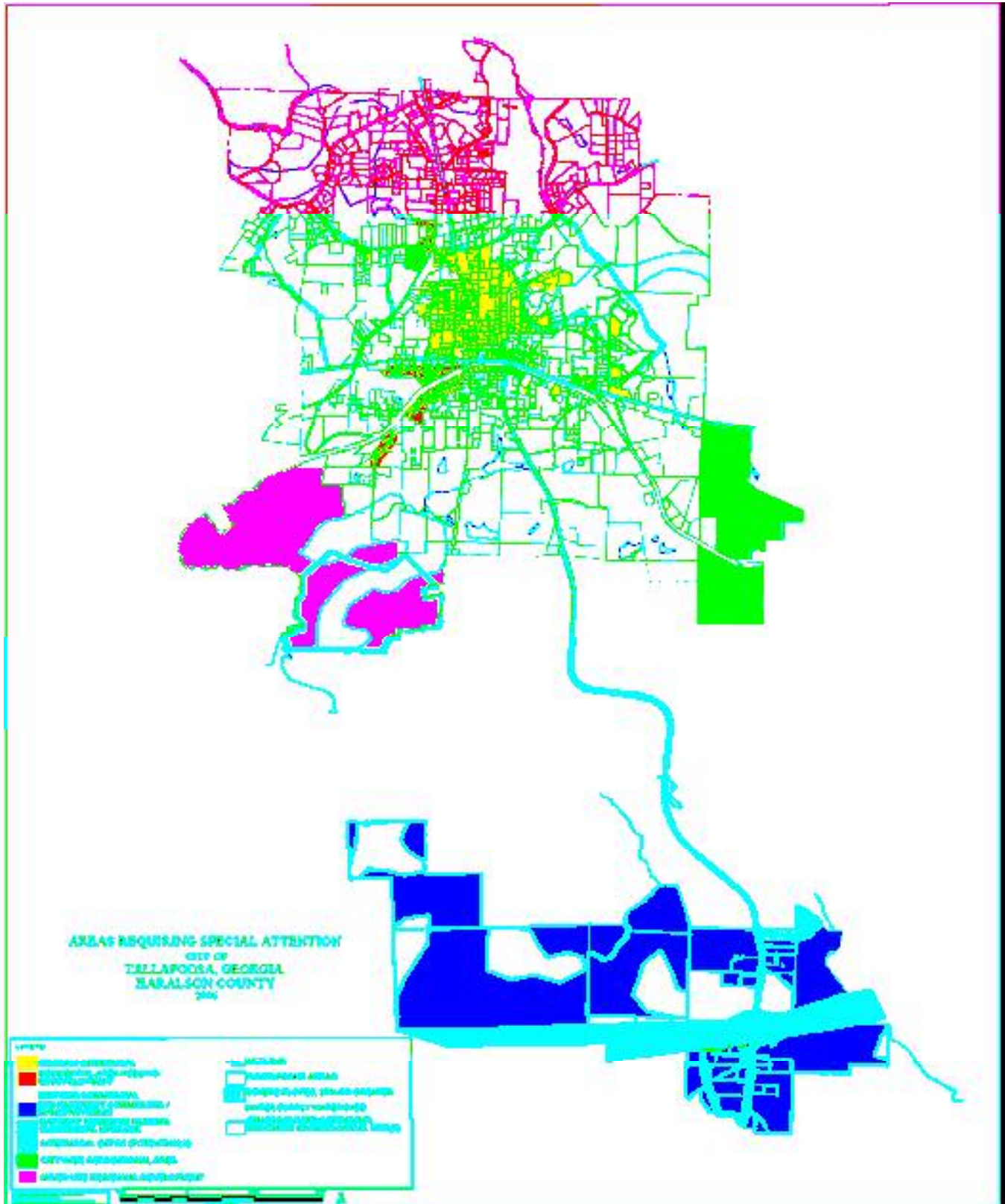




Figure 3-C: Buchanan Areas Requiring Special Attention:



Figure 3-D: Tallapoosa Areas Requiring Special Attention:



**Figure 3-E: Waco Areas Requiring Special Attention:**





### **Preliminary Character Areas:**

Character areas are defined as geographic areas of a community that share unique characteristics or have the potential to evolve as a unique area. Character areas can be used to illustrate existing patterns of development and also as guidelines for desired development patterns based on a community vision. The following character area maps are based on existing conditions and the information contained in the section on Areas Requiring Special Attention. As the public participation process evolves and a community vision emerges the character areas will be revisited to make the map compatible with the vision, goals and objectives of the community.

### **Character Area Description:**

- Rural: Consists primarily of open pastures, woodlands, and farmlands as well as large-lot and estate residential areas.
- Agricultural/Forest/Farm: is land in an open, cultivated or sparsely settled state, including woodlands and farms lands.
- Historic: Includes all national register listed properties and districts throughout the County.
- Downtown: A mixed-use area within a city, centrally located, usually containing retail, governmental offices, service users, professional, cultural, recreational and entertainment establishments and uses.
- In-Town Corridor: A road that connects part of town to another.
- Rural Residential: Areas with homes located outside village or city boundaries, often without water and/or sewer service.
- Traditional Stable Neighborhood: An area that have been established for a number of year, see little growth and is not in need of redevelopment.
- Suburban Residential: These are areas that contain conventional subdivisions and are within proximity to a public water network.
- Suburban Developing: An area were suburban growth is going to develop or has just begun developing.
- Suburban Built-Out: Theses are areas were suburban growth has already occurred and on more is planned.
- Suburban Gateway: Areas developing within the county just outside a city.

- Inter-city Residential: Areas with homes within city boundaries.
- Redevelopment Area: An area that needs to be rebuilt.
- Highway Corridor: Roadway connecting communities from within and outside of the County.
- Scenic Corridor: Roadway with scenic or historic views.
- Commercial and Office: Areas that include strip malls, big-box retail, auto-related businesses, restaurants, convenience stores, medical centers, and office buildings.
- Industrial: Production facilities and parks.
- Public/Institutional: Community facilities including schools, municipal buildings, and public cemeteries.
- Parks/Recreation: Parks and protected land.
- Transportation-Communication-Utilities: Both private and quasi-public providers of electric power, water, and telephone systems as well as road crew sites.
- Undeveloped/Unused: vacant land.

Figure 4-A: Haralson County Preliminary Character Areas:

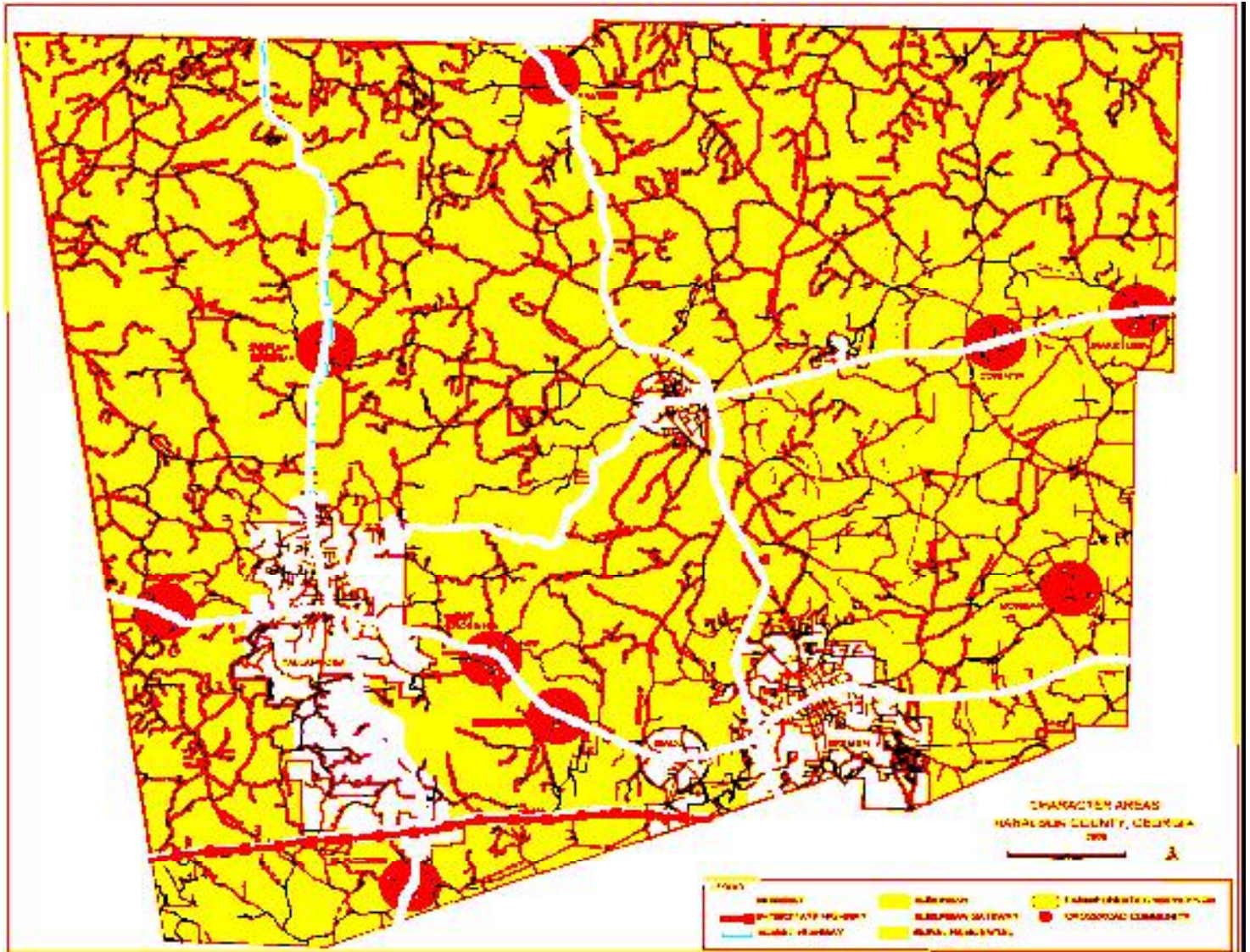




Figure 4-B: Bremen Preliminary Character Areas:

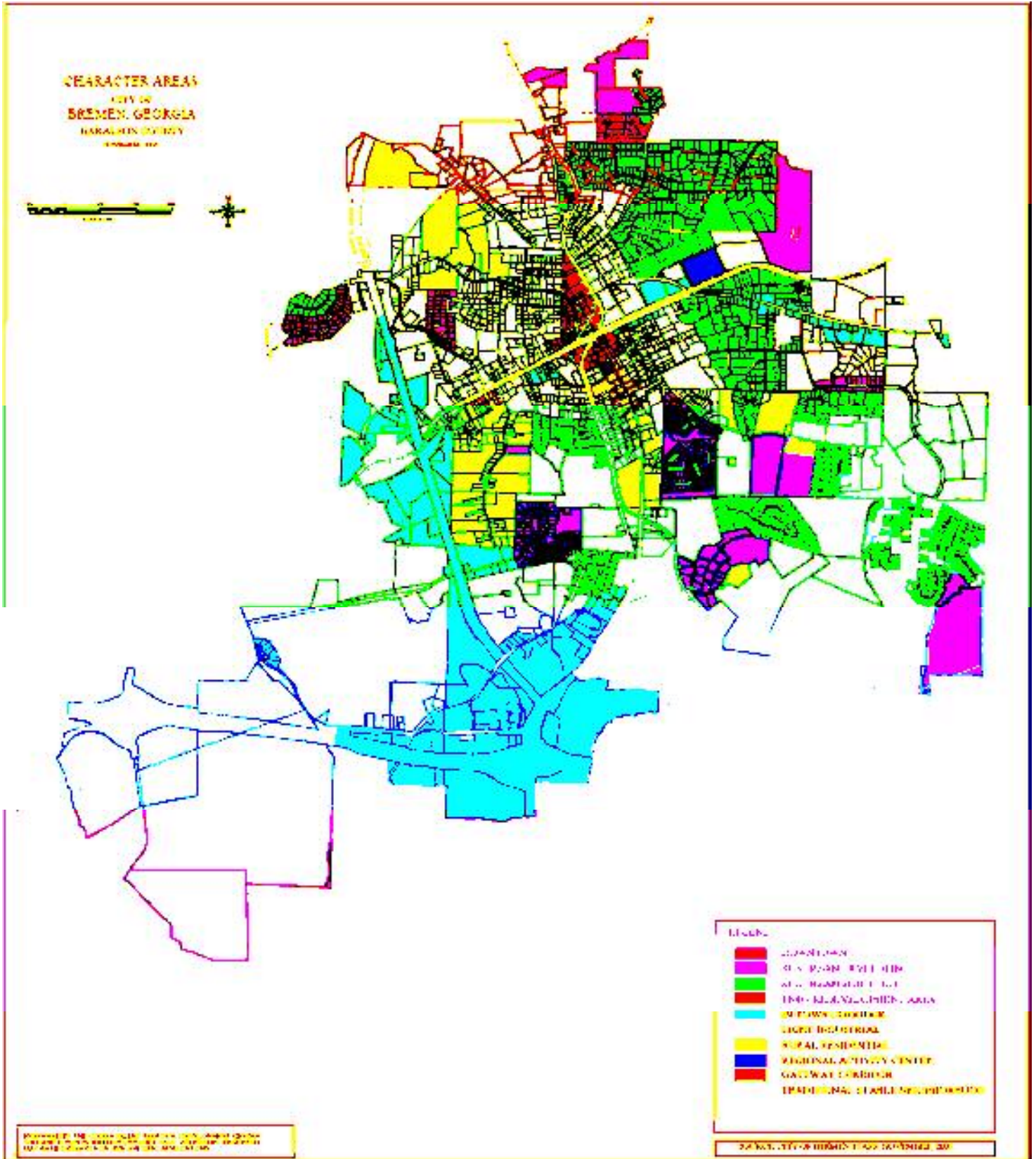


Figure 4-C: Buchanan Preliminary Character Areas:

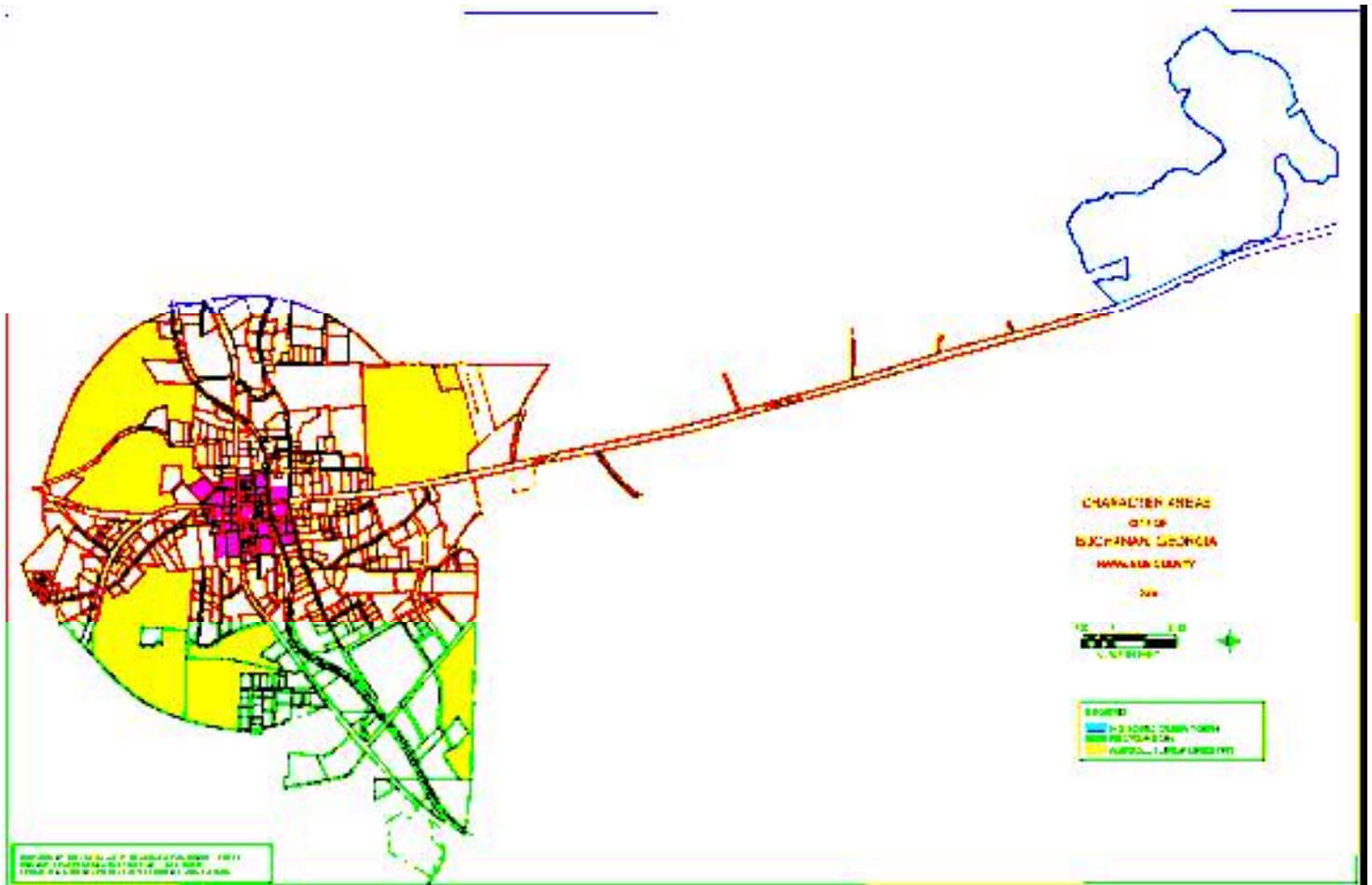


Figure 4-D: Tallapoosa Preliminary Character Areas:

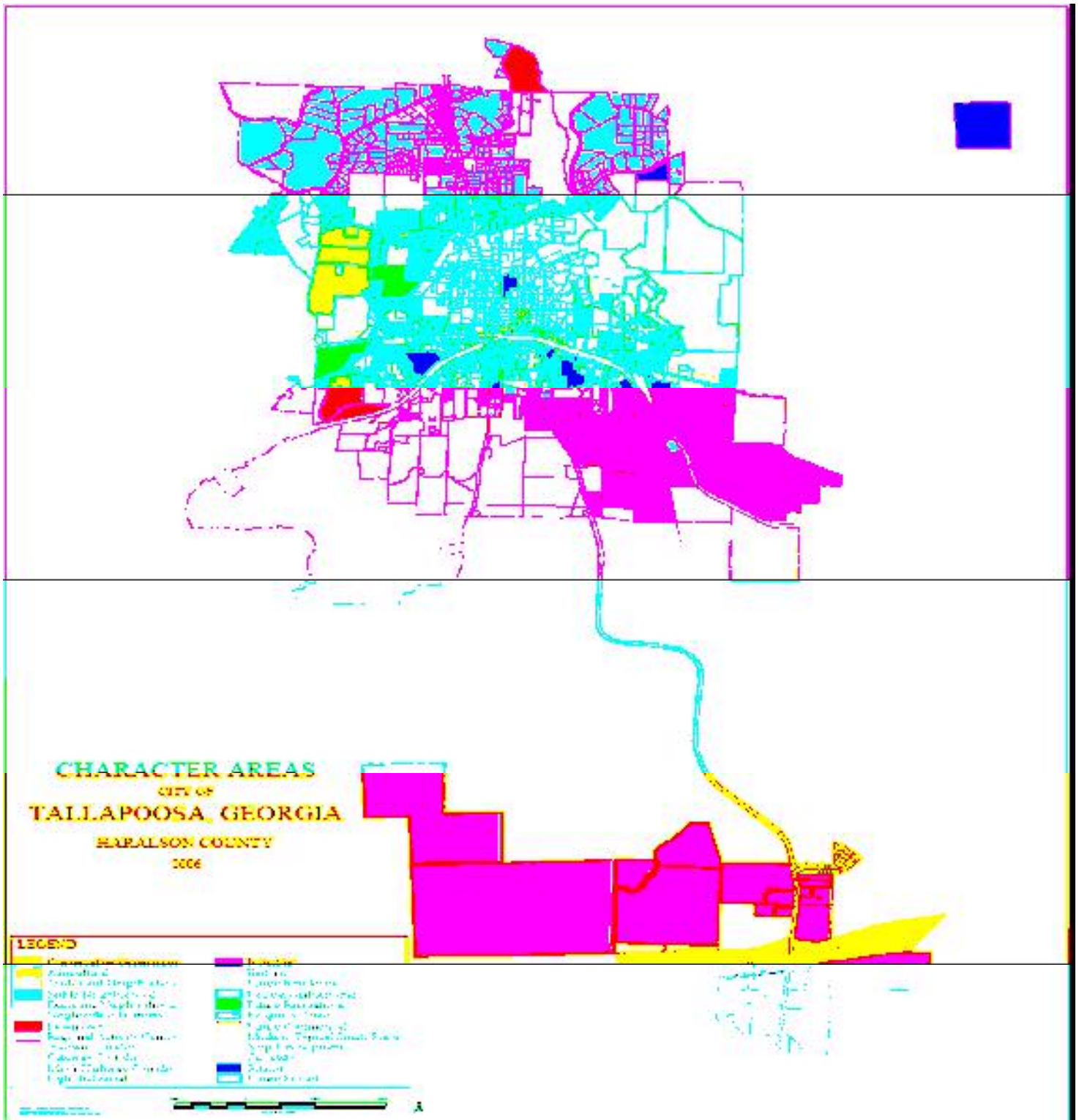




Figure 4-E: Waco Preliminary Character Areas:

