

COUNTY OF JACKSON
STATE OF GEORGIA

RESOLUTION NO: _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE
JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM AND
THE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT
TO THE REGIONAL COMMISSION AND STATE
FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT
PURSUANT TO STATE OF GEORGIA
LOCAL PLANNING REQUIREMENTS CHAPTER 110-12-1-.08**

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan is required for municipalities and counties in Georgia in order to maintain their Qualified Local Government Status; and

WHEREAS, the first step in a comprehensive planning process under the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, is to prepare a Community Participation Program and a Community Assessment; and

WHEREAS, Jackson County, Georgia, has prepared a Community Participation Program and a Community Assessment; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 110-12-1-.08 of said rules requires that the Community Participation Program and Community Assessment be submitted for regional and state review; and

WHEREAS, to authorize such review, a resolution of the Governing Body is required; and

WHEREAS, the Jackson County Planning Commission held an advertised public hearing during its regular meeting on September 24, 2009, the purpose of which was to brief the community on the potential issues and opportunities identified through the Community Assessment, obtain input on the proposed Community Participation Program, and notify the community of when these plan components will be transmitted to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners held an advertised public hearing during its regular meeting on October 19, 2009, the purpose of which was to brief the community on the potential issues and opportunities identified through the Community Assessment, obtain input on the proposed Community Participation Program, and notify the community of when these plan components will be transmitted to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission; and

WHEREAS, drafts of the Community Participation Program and the Community Assessment have been made available to the public

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Jackson County, Georgia, as follows:

1.

It is hereby authorized that the Community Participation Program and Community Assessment shall be submitted for regional and state review in accordance with Chapter 110-12-1-.08 of the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

2.

Jackson County hereby submits the Community Participation Program and Community Assessment to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission in order for it to prepare a completeness check, review the Community Assessment for adequacy, and a prepare a report of findings and recommendations, and respectfully requests its favorable determinations.

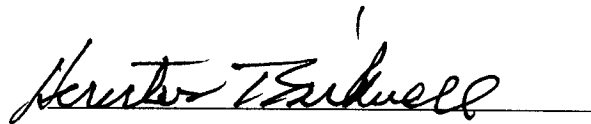
3.

Jackson County respectfully requests that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs review the Community Participation Program for adequacy and requests its favorable determination.

4.

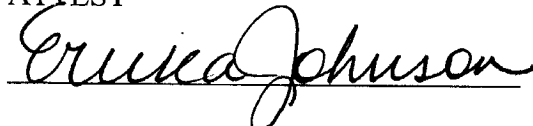
Upon review by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission and Georgia Department of Community Affairs, it is hereby resolved that the Department of Public Development is directed to publicize the Community Participation Program and Community Assessment, which shall at minimum include notice in a newspaper of general circulation identifying where complete copies of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program may be reviewed.

RESOLVED, this 19th day of October, 2009.



Hunter Bicknell
Chairman, Jackson County
Board of Commissioners

ATTEST



Ericka Johnson, Deputy Clerk
Jackson County Board of Commissioners

**JACKSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL APPENDIX SYNOPSIS**

November 2009



Prepared by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Under Supervision of the Jackson County Public Development Department
Map Production by the Jackson County GIS Department

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This document summarizes the several technical reports on population, housing, labor force and economy, natural resources, historic resources, character areas and land use, community facilities and services, and intergovernmental coordination. It is also considered a transitional document between the community assessment report and the various technical appendix chapters. It contains more details of the assessment of quality community objectives than is presented in the primary community assessment report.

ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

There are many different ways to organize community assessments. At the most fundamental level, the state's local planning requirements suggest that this report should "only include the evaluations, data, or maps necessary to substantiate or illustrate potential issues or opportunities, to document significant trends affecting the community, or to support character area delineation." Other evaluations, data, and map must be relegated to a separate appendix to the community assessment report.

Hence, the first decision about how to organize the material is already dictated by the local planning requirements. The community assessment for Jackson County consists of three major documents, a community assessment (proper), this synopsis, and a series of technical appendix chapters that collectively comprise the "supporting analysis of data and information." This synopsis presents major trends, but there are references here to the technical appendix chapters where further information and analysis are provided.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS SYNOPSIS

One of the most obvious ways to organize this document would be to address each requirement of the rules separately – i.e., group the discussion of "issues and opportunities" together, consolidate the assessment of QCOs into one section of the report, and address "areas requiring special attention" in yet another chapter or section of this report. Such an organizational approach is useful, and it aids in the review of this assessment for consistency with state requirements. Indeed, that is the approach taken in the primary "community assessment" document.

However, there is one major drawback to that organizational scheme – due to overlaps in the material, there is some repetition if one uses that approach. To illustrate, following the rule requirements necessitates that a community discuss how policies support environmental and open space QCOs, and they also require maps and discussion of significant natural resources under the "areas requiring special attention." Furthermore, there are "issues and opportunities" associated with each of these considerations. If the discussion is organized according to rule requirements, then there is some repetition (see the table below). In our view, in light of the need to be concise, organization by rule requirements would not be the most efficient presentation strategy when it comes to a more informed view of material for policymaking. A more efficient alternative for presenting the material, it seems, is to deal with each particular "substantive area" at one time, and combine the various required assessments under each such area. The following substance or functional organizational scheme is used (see the first column

below, “chapter titles”). Table 1 shows how similar materials under separate rule requirements are combined in these chapters:

**Table 1
Organization of this Report and Relationship to Rule Requirements**

Synopsis Chapter Title	Technical Appendix Chapter	Assessment of Quality Community Objectives (QCOs)	Areas Requiring Special Attention
Chapter 1: Protecting Natural Areas	Natural Resources	Environmental protection; open space preservation	Areas of significant natural resources
Chapter 2: People and Preparing for Growth	Population (see also Employment and Community Facilities and Services)	Growth preparedness	Areas of concentrated poverty; Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur
Chapter 3: Growing the Economy with Working Areas	Labor Force and Economy (see also Community Facilities and Services)	Appropriate businesses; employment options; educational opportunities	Areas in need of redevelopment; large abandoned structures or sites; areas of significant disinvestment and/or unemployment
Chapter 4: Living Areas and Efficient Development Patterns	Housing; Land Use and Character Areas	Housing opportunities; traditional neighborhood, infill development	Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)
Chapter 5: Promoting Sense of Place and Community Character	Historic Resources; Land Use and Character Areas	Regional identity; heritage preservation; sense of place	Areas of significant cultural resources; Areas in need of aesthetic improvement
Chapter 6: Infrastructure Supporting Growth and Sustainability	Community Facilities and Services	[none specified but see regionalism]	Areas outpacing the availability of facilities and services
Chapter 7: Moving People and Goods Around	Transportation	Transportation alternatives	Areas outpacing the availability of transportation facilities
Chapter 8: Working Within the Larger Community	Intergovernmental Coordination	Regional cooperation, regional solutions	[none specified but see community facilities and services]

The technical appendix chapters produced as a part of this community assessment match pretty closely, but not perfectly, with this organizational format. Each chapter in this summary report contains the required assessment of Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) for that particular subject area, except for community facilities and services which has none. Each of the chapters has one or more “areas requiring special attention,” as summarized in the table above. And, each of these substantive areas has “issues and opportunities” which have been reported only in the primary “community assessment” document.

ASSESSING QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs)

Requirements

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to its fullest potential. The QCOs are articulated in Chapter 110-12-1-.06 of the Local Planning Requirements (Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs).

The community assessment portion of the comprehensive plan is required to include an assessment of the community's current policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with the QCOs (see Chapter 110-12-1.03 of DCA Rules, "Local Planning Requirements").

What is Evaluated and Assessed?

It is important to emphasize that an assessment of QCOs, in order to be comprehensive per the rule requirements, should review three major components:

1. **Plans.** The comprehensive plan, as adopted in 1998 and amended over time, establishes the policy framework for county initiatives and programs; therefore, the adopted comprehensive plan needs to be assessed with respect to the QCOs, even though the 1998 plan as amended is to be comprehensively rewritten in the form of a new "community agenda."
2. **Regulations.** The county's land use regulations are even more important than "policies," in that they impose requirements. Regulations have a stronger influence in determining whether the various QCOs (at least those related to development patterns) are or are likely to be met. Therefore, the QCO assessment needs to include an examination of the county's land use regulations.
3. **Development Practices.** Development pattern, in the rules, refers to actual land use practices. Here, in order to comprehensively examine consistency with the QCOs (at least those related to development patterns), it is necessary to look at existing land use and development practices "on the ground."

In addition to these three areas of inquiry, "policies" and "activities" manifest themselves in certain other important ways. For instance, budgets and capital investments, special studies, and other routine actions can have a bearing on whether or not QCOs are implemented locally. Therefore, to the extent they exist, such other investments, studies and actions need to be considered in this assessment.

Assessment Tools and Techniques

The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created an assessment tool meant to give communities an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching these objectives set by the Department. The assessment is much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community that "you are here." That assessment tool provides a checklist format, with yes or no answers and a column in the table for elaboration and explanation.

Prior QCO Assessment (2007)

In July 2007, Jackson County's Department of Public Development prepared a "Partial Plan Update" which included a preliminary assessment of the county's consistency with QCOs. This assessment draws on that prior work but includes more detailed information based on additional research, particularly the information presented in the various chapters of the appendix to this Community Assessment.

Organization of the QCO Assessment

Organizationally, this QCO assessment for Jackson County draws on the specific questions provided in DCA’s assessment tool, but it does not present the information in a tabular format with yes or no answers. Also, some of the parameters for this assessment are organized differently from that provided in the DCA assessment tool. For instance, it groups together similar QCOs, where there is some overlap. This assessment also draws on many of the questions posed in the DCA assessment tool, but again does not utilize a checklist format. Also, as noted above, the QCO assessment is physically divided according to substance into the various chapters of this summary report.

QCO Grades

This summary assessment employs a letter-grade system for each QCO, much like a school student would be assigned on a report card. The grade is assigned by the reviewer (planning consultant) based on several objective considerations. However, the grades assigned are, in the end, subjective, and may not be based on all applicable considerations. The “grades” should be considered constructively critical, not offensive in terms of evaluating current county policies, programs, and regulations. Jackson County’s grades for QCOs are summarized as follows:

QCO	Letter Grade	QCO	Letter Grade
Environmental Protection	B+	Infill Development	D
Open Space Preservation	C	Regional Identity	n/a
Growth Preparedness	B	Heritage Preservation	B-
Appropriate Business	A-	Sense of Place	B-
Employment Options	A-	Regional Cooperation	B-
Educational Opportunities	A	Regional Solutions	B-
Housing Opportunities	B-	Transportation Alternatives	C
Traditional Neighborhood	n/a		

AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

In this community assessment report, certain areas are designated as requiring special attention. It is important to underscore at the outset what is meant by that phrase. A given resource or area may be important, and require regulations or some public policy action or program. For example, wetlands are clearly important, and they are mapped in the technical appendix of this report. However, since the county has already addressed them adequately in its unified development code, they are not designated here as areas requiring special attention. In other words, those important regulatory issues and policy problems that have already been adequately addressed are not shown on maps in this summary report and labeled as areas requiring special attention.

It is also important to emphasize and clarify the relative time period which is being considered, when one identifies areas requiring special attention. To suggest something needs “attention” means that it deserves consideration and action in the short-term, i.e., within the next five years, as opposed to consideration over the “long range.” Therefore, Jackson County’s efforts to identify areas requiring special attention are focused on those items that need to be addressed during the next five years.

This Synopsis contains the following maps which are designated as “Areas Requiring Special Attention:” (these are covered in the community assessment primary document)

- Soils with severe limitations on septic tank absorption fields (Chapter 1)
- Agricultural Preservation (Chapter 1)
- Areas Requiring Special Attention, including areas rapidly outpacing infrastructure and areas likely to undergo rapid development (Chapter 2)
- Opportunities for Residential Infill Development (Chapter 4)

ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The analysis of development patterns includes an existing land use map and a narrative summarizing existing land uses (See Chapter 4).

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The essential purpose of identifying “issues and opportunities” is to highlight for policy makers the most important considerations they need to address in the community agenda (i.e., the plan portion of the comprehensive plan). By “issue,” we mean something that is important, yet unresolved, and in need of some sort of action, policy, regulation, or program. By “opportunity,” we mean there is potential for the county to capitalize on some special circumstances that exist, which could lead to implementation of its many goals and objectives.

While one can define the terms issues and opportunities differently, the way they are phrased, and the perspective from which they are confronted, could lead to different conclusions about whether they are really “issues” or “opportunities.” Stated differently, by wording a particular issue one way, it might be considered an opportunity. Again, to use wetlands as an example, one could say that wetland loss is an issue; or one could observe that wetland protection is an opportunity to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat. Hence, rather than try to label each precisely as an issue or opportunity, there is no distinction made in Jackson County’s Community Assessment document.

It should also be noted here that one could probably come up with 300 or more individual issues and opportunities that should be addressed in the comprehensive plan. The reasoning behind setting forth issues and opportunities in advance of community participation is to engage the community in determining which of those several issues and opportunities are the most important ones that need to be addressed in the comprehensive plan. At this stage of the planning process, one is simply trying to identify the most important issues and opportunities, and confirm them in the public process. We are not attempting to analyze a range of solutions or solve problems at this stage of the process. That comes later, in the community agenda formulation process. Issues and opportunities were previously included in this synopsis and the individual technical appendix chapters, but they have been excluded to avoid repetition since they are all grouped in the community assessment primary document.

CHARACTER AREAS

Jackson County amended its comprehensive plan in 2003 to include a new, character area-based future land use plan map. That map and the descriptions of each character area are provided in the primary community assessment report.

CHAPTER 1 PROTECTING NATURAL AREAS

Fundamental to any comprehensive planning effort is the identification of natural resources and proposing policies, programs, and initiatives to sustain the air, land and water. In Jackson County there are forests, farms, minerals, soils, topographic conditions and water resources (rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes and ponds) that must be considered first before long-range plans can be developed. There is a reason why this chapter is presented first – without an inventory and assessment of the resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas, Jackson County risks expanding development into these areas. That would not be smart.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES

The technical appendix for natural resources has a comprehensive written discussion of natural resources and areas with environmental limitations. There are also several maps of natural resources, including protected rivers, wetlands, flood plains, groundwater recharge areas, and others. This summary assessment goes into further detail with regard to two considerations, farmland preservation and soils with development limitations.

ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION QCO

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

Comprehensive Plan Policies for Environmental Protection

The 1998 comprehensive plan acknowledged that little had been done to protect environmental, natural, and rural resources. The needs assessment and goals and policies sections of the 1998 comprehensive plan are highly supportive of environmental protection measures, so in terms of policy framework alone, Jackson County meets the environmental protection QCO. However, the old adage, “actions speak louder than words,” is applicable here. Jackson County has implemented its comprehensive plan policies with regulations in its Unified Development Code (UDC), since 2003, thereby improving remarkably its environmental protection practices.

Comprehensive Natural Resources Inventory

The 1998 comprehensive plan for the county provided a comprehensive inventory in map format of major natural resources, including but not limited to rivers and streams, prime agricultural soils, developable soils, scenic views and sites, and environmental planning criteria areas (groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and water supply watersheds; see later section of this report), among others. That inventory was generally sufficient, and this community assessment carries forth that prior inventory and makes certain refinements including two new maps (areas requiring special attention) for agricultural preservation and areas with severe limitations on septic tank drainfields. Therefore, Jackson County meets the environmental protection QCO with respect to having a comprehensive inventory of natural resources.

However, in the 2007 preliminary assessment of QCO consistency, Jackson County acknowledged that it does not use a resource inventory to steer development. In the words of

that assessment, “we do nothing special with our natural resources other than applying buffers and setbacks from such entities as streams and lakes.” Therefore, to be effective, Jackson County must make greater reliance on the inventories of natural resources in rezoning and development decisions.

Regulations to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Natural Resources

Jackson County has adopted key regulations to protect the environment, including soil erosion and sedimentation control, flood plain management, and zoning and subdivision regulations. In that sense (ordinance adoption), Jackson County meets this component of the environmental protection QCO. Generally, the existing regulations are adequate, but more can be done to strengthen the regulations, advance the prospects for implementation, and ensure proper enforcement.

“Part V” Environmental Ordinance Adoption and Enforcement

The Department of Public Development administers the zoning and land use regulations for unincorporated Jackson County, which are contained within the Unified Development Code (UDC). Ordinances for protection of Part “V” (as in Roman numeral) were completed and adopted as part of the UDC in 2003. Article 9 of the UDC is titled “environmental protection.”

Division 1, “River and Stream Corridor Protection,” defines all three major rivers in the county (Middle Oconee, North Oconee, and Mulberry) as protected rivers, and 100-foot greenway buffers are required to be maintained. Division 2 establishes protection requirements for five “small” water supply watersheds (i.e., less than 100 square miles): Bear Creek, Curry Creek, Gove Creek, Sandy Creek, and Little Curry Creek. A natural greenway of 150 feet is required around public water supply reservoirs. Division III addresses groundwater recharge area protection. Division IV establishes regulations for wetlands. Hence, Jackson County has adopted as regulations the Environmental Planning Criteria for protected rivers, water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands. Jackson County has no “protected mountains” within its boundary.

Enforcement of the 150 foot required buffer around the Bear Creek Reservoir has become a major issue. Although owners of lots abutting the reservoir do not have rights to use the reservoir, there are several documented instances where buffers are encroached upon for unauthorized uses. Jackson County is currently working actively to enforce the buffer requirements and mitigate encroachments into the buffer.



Unauthorized beach constructed within required 150 foot wide buffer for Bear Creek Reservoir.

Tree Preservation and Tree-Replanting Ordinances

Jackson County's UDC has a landscaping, buffers, and tree conservation component. While it prevents clear cutting, except for agricultural and forestry activity prior to having a specific development project, it reportedly does not do a good job of designating tree buffers, and it does not address tree protection on individual residential lots.

The UDC requires tree replanting for specimen trees that are removed as part of infrastructure improvements in commercial and industrial developments, but the impact of these regulations are limited since replacement trees can be placed in buffer, parking, and frontage areas of a given development site. The UDC does not require street yard trees to be planted within new residential or non-residential subdivisions or along all other streets, but there is reportedly some support to change the UDC to strengthen those provisions in the future.

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all New Development

Jackson County actively inspects and requires BMPs for all new development.

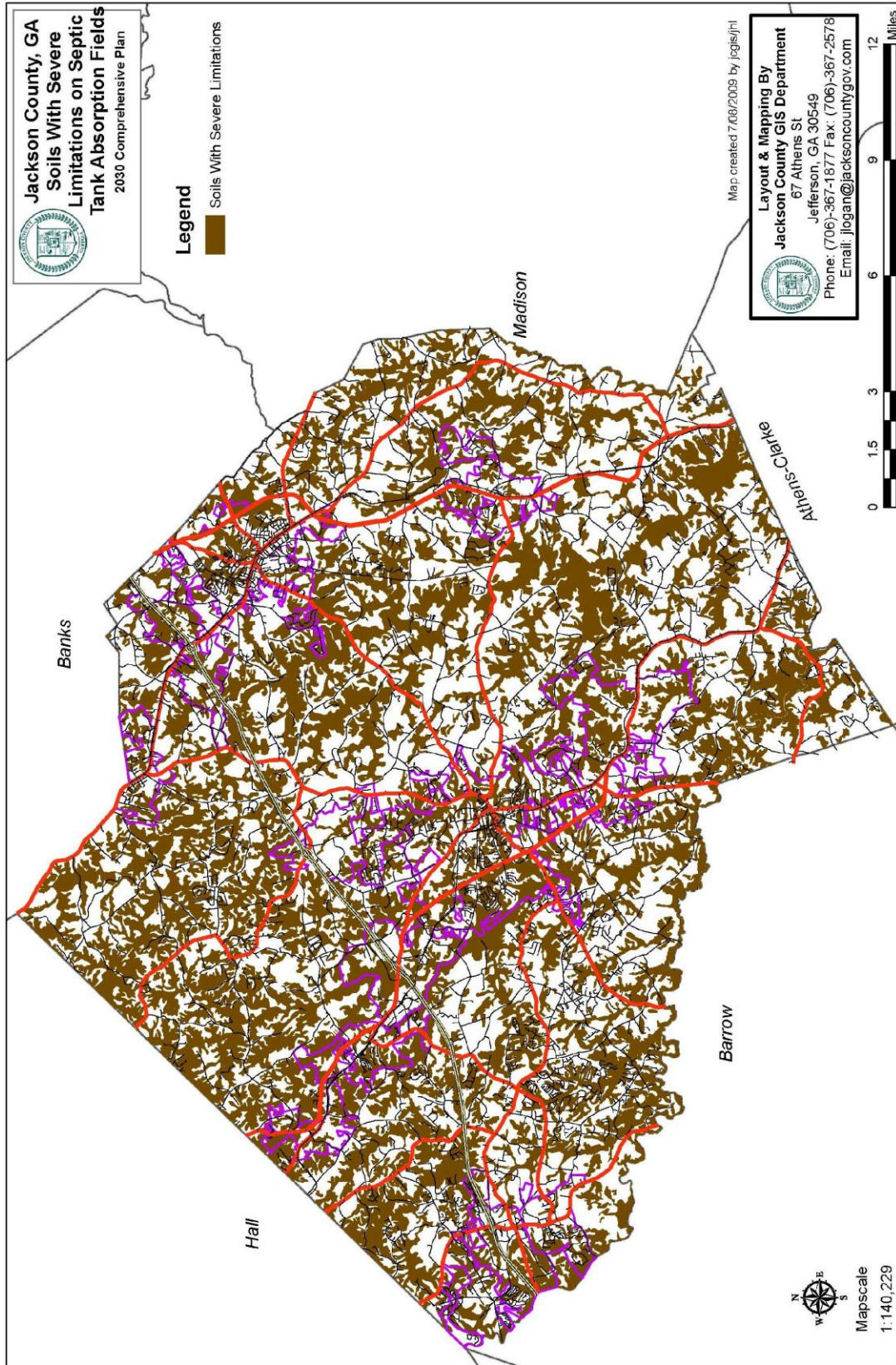
Environmental Protection QCO Grade

Jackson County has natural resource inventories needed to ensure it knows what resources need to be preserved. The resource inventory is improved remarkably over the 1998 comprehensive plan, with the preparation of this community assessment (see "natural resources" technical appendix). It has appropriate policies to encourage environmental protection. In this sense, Jackson County receives a strong "A" grade (excellent) from the reviewer in those respects for the Quality Community Objective for Environmental Protection.

Jackson County has put into place ordinances implementing the environmental planning criteria, has adopted tree preservation requirements, and has an enforcement staff to ensure best management practices for soil erosion and sedimentation control are followed. However, the county does not utilize its natural resources inventory to any significant degree in reviewing new subdivision and development proposals. There are some acknowledged weaknesses in its tree protection and landscaping ordinances. Furthermore, enforcement of water supply reservoir buffers around Bear Creek Reservoir has been lacking. Jackson County therefore receives a "B" (good) grade for this part of the environmental protection QCO. Its overall grade assigned for the environmental protection QCO is a "B+" (very good). Jackson County can improve its grade by utilizing the map "soils with severe limitations on septic tank absorption fields" and other resource maps in all subdivision and development review processes.

Soils with Severe Limitations on Septic Tank Absorption Fields

This map is a composite of all soils in the county that have severe limitations on septic tank drain fields. This map is very important because it shows where residential subdivisions should not be constructed if they are to utilize onsite sewage management systems (i.e., septic tanks). This map, therefore, is designated as a map of "areas requiring special attention." It needs to be consulted each time a residential subdivision utilizing individual septic tanks is proposed, and proposals for residential subdivisions in these areas should be disapproved or at least discouraged unless specific studies and technologies are used to overcome the severe limitations soils pose on septic tank absorption fields.



ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION QCO

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

Comprehensive Plan Policies for Open Space

Adopted natural resource policies call for the provision of open space and conservation areas in the county. Specifically, the county’s 1998 plan identified the North Oconee River watershed area north of Interstate 85, between State Highways 82 and 98, for open space protection. The 1998 plan also called for greenspace and greenways throughout the county and specifically recommended a long-term strategy of participating in Athens-Clarke County’s greenspace program by extending those plans for greenways into Jackson County. A transferable development rights (TDR) program was also suggested as a possible long-term strategy to consider in order to facilitate natural resource protection.

State and Local Policy for Greenspace and Open Space Protection

A greenspace program was prepared for Jackson County in the early 2000s, when such countywide programs were strongly encouraged by the Governor Barnes Administration. The legislation and rules establishing countywide greenspace programs still exist, but the state greenspace program was largely supplanted if not formally replaced by Governor Purdue’s Land Conservation Partnership, which emphasizes private efforts over public land acquisition of greenspace. Countywide greenspace plans required a goal of maintaining 20 percent or more of the total land area in the county as permanently protected open space. That goal has proved to be too ambitious for many urban areas, and suburban and rural county governments have not been able to acquire sufficient funding to pursue that lofty (but worthy) goal. For these reasons, many local governments shifted away from implementing countywide greenspace protection plans, and in Jackson County the greenspace program is no longer active.

Currently, Jackson County has no plans for the direct purchase of green space set aside, and at this point it has no program for purchasing additional land for the county’s park system.

Greenspace Regulations and Development Patterns Today

Countywide, almost 80 percent of the land in Jackson County is agriculture, forestry, and vacant/undeveloped land, and in the unincorporated area that figure is 82 percent (see Table 2 in “land use and character areas” in the community assessment appendix). With such a wealth of resource lands, some community leaders might believe there’s nothing to worry about in Jackson County in terms of preserving green space. Indeed, it will be many years before development in Jackson County results in substantial decreases in these large percentages of agricultural and forest land.

Nonetheless, one cannot assume that private land in agriculture and forestry is the same thing as permanently protected public open space. Therefore, it is prudent to begin planning to preserve greenspaces in the county. The best time to plan for greenspace protection is *before* the community has lost its most appropriate opportunities. Jackson County is at a critical juncture and should be opportunistic in terms of promoting greenspace protection.

Definition and Protection of Conservation Lands

Jackson County's UDC (Sec. 918) specifically defines natural resource conservation areas. They are divided into "primary" and "secondary." Primary conservation areas include floodways, 100-year floodplains, required river and stream greenways, wildlife habitats of threatened or endangered species, wetlands, and soils classified as "unsuitable." All greenways, protected wetlands, and all other primary conservation areas *within a subdivision or a master planned development that are required to be protected* shall be permanently protected by a conservation or natural resources easement (Sec. 920).

Secondary conservation areas include steep slopes, exposed bedrock or rock outcroppings, poorly drained soils, wetland buffers, mature timber stands, registered historic or archaeological assets, viewshed protection areas, village greens and parkways, and passive recreational areas. Similarly, secondary conservation areas *that are designated by the developer for protection* shall be included within a natural resources or conservation easement. Use limitations are placed on such conservation areas *if they are set aside for conservation*.

Conservation Subdivision Ordinance

"Open space" subdivisions for single-family residential homes are optional in Jackson County in any zoning district (Sec. 506 UDC). In such cases, at least 20 percent of the total area of the total site shall be set aside as open space for conservation, preservation, or passive recreational use (Sec. 505 UDC).

These requirements to preserve 20 percent of developable land as open space are the closest thing Jackson County has to an active greenspace conservation program. And even those regulations appear to be falling short of their objectives. To illustrate, in the 2007 partial plan update, the county identified the need to change the UDC to require that the 20 percent open space dedication be "useable" land, as opposed to simply allowing the undevelopable land in a given tract to count as open space.

Prime Farmland Soils

In the data appendix for natural resources, there is a map of prime agricultural soils. These soils are scattered throughout much of Jackson County, but major concentrations can be generalized as follows:

- **Central Jackson County.** The largest concentration is an area including the Interstate 85 corridor at SR 82 (Dry Pond Road), and running southeast at the fringe of the city limits of Jefferson, and including the Tyratira settlement community (see settlement character map), then extending further southeast into the northwest part of the Brockton settlement character area. This area is generally within the Curry Creek watershed. Much of these areas remain undeveloped with potential for preservation as an agricultural preserve. However, the northernmost parts of these prime agricultural soils are mostly slated for industrial development within the city of Jefferson.
- **Western Jackson County.** Within the city limits of Braselton and Hoschton, there is a significant concentration of prime agricultural soils. However, since this is a predominantly urban area inside municipalities, they are unlikely to be considered appropriate for agricultural preservation.

- **Maysville.** Within and just south of the City of Maysville, there is a small concentration of prime agricultural soils. While some of the fringe portions of this area may remain in agriculture, this area also is expected to undergo some urban and suburban development.
- **Commerce.** There is a linear belt of concentrated agricultural soils within the city limits of Commerce. As Commerce is mostly urban development, it is unlikely that this concentration of prime agricultural soils can be preserved for agriculture.
- **Cedar Grove.** The Cedar Grove settlement character area has a high concentration of prime agricultural soils. It is largely undeveloped and represents an opportunity to designate an agricultural preservation area.
- **Southeast Jackson County.** There is a significant concentration of prime agricultural soils paralleling the center one-third of the Jackson County-Clarke County line and extending generally northward following U.S. Highway 129 through the Attica, Clarksboro, and Redstone settlement character areas (mapped in Chapter 5).

It is interesting to note that there are two major areas designated as agricultural preservation in the Jackson County land use plan now, but which actually have relatively few concentrations of prime agricultural soils. Those two major areas are Apple Valley (central Jackson County, see settlement character map), and the rural area running along SR 334 in eastern Jackson County. While those two major areas are certainly worthy of maintaining in agricultural use (and indeed much of the lands are designated for conservation use assessment), they are not likely to be the best lands to preserve strictly for purposes of crop production.

Conservation Parcels

A map of properties within the current use and preferential agricultural tax assessment programs is provided in this chapter. Approximately 39 percent of the total land area in the county is designated as conservation parcels. Generally, these properties require the landowner to sign a 10-year covenant not to develop the property in exchange for keeping property taxes corresponding to current use or agriculture and forest use. While property owners may not renew their conservation pledges with the county tax offices, these properties by and large are likely to remain as farm and forest land during the short term and perhaps for the planning horizon. This map alone, therefore, has a substantial bearing on the potential for amending the county's future land use plan map, and for designating more finely tuned agricultural protection and conservation programs.

Prime Agricultural Soils within Conservation Parcels

Of particular interest is the existence of prime agricultural soils within areas designated for conservation use assessment by the Jackson County Tax Assessor. Using GIS technology, the map of prime farmland soils has been superimposed on the map of conservation properties, yielding another map which constitutes the areas not only that are most valuable for crop production, but which are likely to remain (even without local land use regulation) in resource lands (agriculture and forestry). Because these areas represent the highest level of importance with respect to conservation for agriculture, they are designated as an area requiring special attention. That map is then used for more detailed land use planning and character area delineation.

Planned Commercial Farm Development (PCFD) Zoning

Jackson County's UDC contains a Planned Commercial Farm Development Zoning District. There are several properties in Jackson County that are currently zoned PCFD. The parcel must be at least 35 acres devoted to agricultural production.

Composite Map of Agricultural Preservation

This community assessment includes a map that combines prime agricultural soils, conservation use parcels, and PCFD zoning into one composite map titled "Agricultural Preservation." This map is considered a map of "Areas Requiring Special Attention" because more can be done to preserve the agricultural character and agricultural uses within Jackson County.

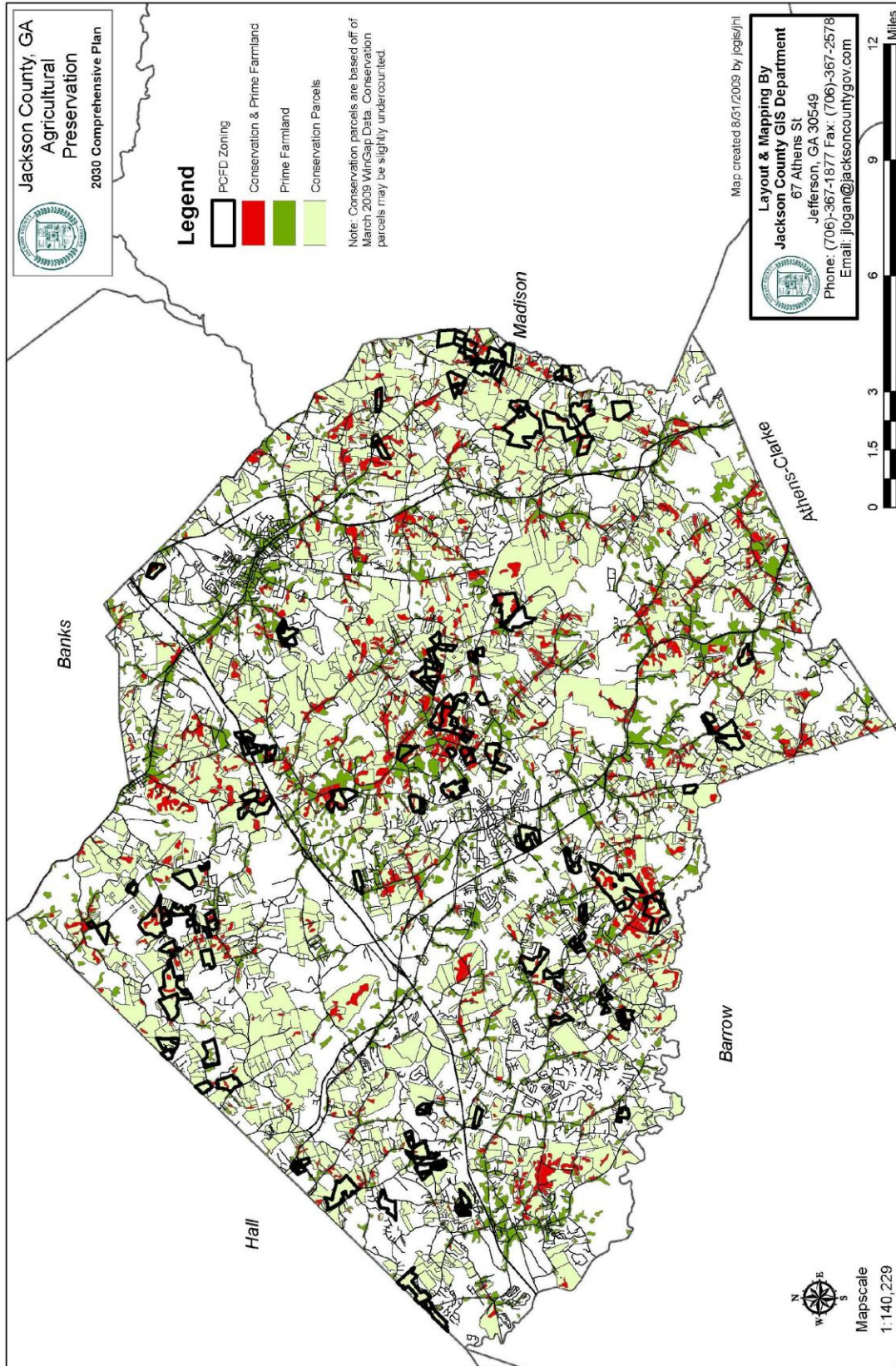
Open Space Preservation QCO Grade

The inventories of natural resources have been improved upon in this community assessment, therefore increasing the prospects that important resource lands in the county will be preserved in the future. Jackson County participated in the Georgia Greenspace Program in 2000, when that was a major emphasis of the Gov. Barnes Administration. Furthermore, the county has made strides to add to their park lands and open spaces and develop better "green infrastructure" with passive recreational opportunities for the citizens of Jackson County to enjoy. Like most counties, with funding no longer provided for the Georgia Greenspace Program, formal programs to acquire and/or protect open spaces in Jackson County have not been pursued.

Jackson County's UDC defines conservation lands, and puts in place a requirement for open space subdivisions and master planned developments to set aside at least 20 percent of the total area for open space. However, open space subdivisions and planned developments are optional, and up to developers to determine whether these development types will be pursued. A stronger open space policy is needed, and implementing regulations need to be enhanced if Jackson County is to improve its score for this QCO.

Jackson County's comprehensive plan identifies several areas for "agricultural preservation" and has the implementing tools (such as the PCFD zoning district and conservation use assessment programs) to help conserve agricultural lands.

Jackson County's overall grade for consistency with the open space QCO is a "C" (average), because it (like most counties in Georgia) has no formal acquisition process for open spaces, yet tremendous opportunities. There is much more that Jackson County can do, and this community assessment provides an agricultural preservation map (Areas Requiring Special Attention) to highlight those areas that need to be considered during the planning process if Jackson County is to elevate agricultural preservation to the level expected by its citizenry. The county can also more formally pursue land acquisition policies and seek implementation of major suggestions in the prior comprehensive plan (such as transferable development rights, greenways acquisition and development and stronger agricultural preservation programs).



CHAPTER 2 PEOPLE AND PREPARING FOR GROWTH

Technical data collection begins with an understanding of the people that reside in the community, now or in the future. Planning is fundamentally about people – especially, where they live. We need an understanding of the various characteristics of the people in the county now, such as their age, race, and income, as well as likely characteristics for people who will move into Jackson County in the future. We all know that the county will grow, but here we explore how much population growth is expected. And we need to understand how that population increase will place demands on critical facilities, such as schools, water systems, and government generally. The degree to which facilities and services will need to change and improve is addressed in Chapter 6 of this community assessment report.

POPULATION TRENDS

Jackson County's population increased from 30,005 people in 1990 to 41,589 in 2000, a 38.6 percent increase. From 2000 to 2008, Jackson County increased by more than 20,000 residents, to a population of 61,620, an eight-year increase of 48.2 percent (population appendix, Table 1). In the year 2000, the unincorporated population in Jackson County was 26,328 (63.3 percent of the total county population in 2000). A substantial share of the population growth during the last decade has occurred in western Jackson County (Census Tract 101), which contained almost one-quarter (23.8 percent) of the total population of Jackson County in 2000. Western Jackson County (Census Tract 101 in 2000) includes Braselton, Hoschton, Pendergrass, and Talmo, and many subdivisions in the unincorporated area, most notably "Traditions."

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Just how much Jackson County will grow depends on a number of conditions. First, the market may or may not support different paces of housing growth (and thus population increase). As recent conditions have shown, housing starts have fallen to record low numbers in the county and elsewhere in the past two years, and no one knows for sure how long it might be before the feverish pace of homebuilding continues (if it ever resumes prior paces of housing starts). Second, population increases at least in Jackson County are largely a function of the amount of vacant land available for residential subdivisions. In that regard, Jackson County has seemingly unending potential to accommodate residential growth. Specifically, it is noted in the technical appendix (population) that a reasonable "buildout" capacity of Jackson County is 456,000 residents, if all vacant and agricultural land converted to residential uses at low densities. Infrastructure availability, such as water, sewer, schools, and roads, is also a potential limiting factor or stimulus (if sufficient) for rapid population growth.

Various plans and studies have projected Jackson County's population. They indicate a wide range of possibilities. By 2020 (market trends permitting), Jackson County could increase in population to a range of from 85,000 to 115,000 people. And in 2030, the likely range of population is projected to be 120,000 to 170,000 people (Table 4, population appendix).

Projections of population by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc, prepared as a part of the major roads plan in 2009, predict less population increase; according to those projections, Jackson County would have about 78,000 persons in the year 2018 and 95,614 persons in the year 2028 (Table 5, population appendix). There are at least two reasons why these more recent

population projections are lower. First, the consultant “constrained” the county’s population by using projections prepared by the state Office of Planning and Budget. Second, these projections are more recent, and reflect the virtual halt in housing activity which occurred in 2008 and 2009 due to the severe economic recession.

AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Jackson County’s population from 2000 to 2008 has grown in all age cohorts, but some important trends with respect to age of the population are particularly evident. Due to the availability of “starter” type housing built in Jackson County during the last decade, the county is attractive to first-time home buyers who are also starting families. Jackson County witnessed an increase of almost 2,200 young children in just eight years. Although in absolute numbers from 2000 to 2008 the number of persons ages 18 to 24 has increased significantly, in terms of percentage of the total population, that age group has decreased. A decline in percentage of people in the 18-to-24 age group is not surprising given that many persons in this age category will graduate from high school and go on to attend college somewhere outside the county.

Due to the attractiveness and affordability of single-family housing in Jackson County, and the good reputations of public schools, it is not surprising that the 25 to 44 years age group witnessed one of the largest absolute increases of all age groups in Jackson County from 2000 to 2008 (more than 6,600 persons in eight years). The 45 to 64 age group is the older segment of the labor force. From 2000 to 2008, this segment of the population increased substantially, by almost 4,000 persons. In Jackson County, the 65-years-and-older age group increased in absolute terms and increased slightly as a percentage of total population from 2000 to 2008 (Table 6, population appendix).

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The most significant increases in households occurred in the \$75,000 to \$99,999 and \$100,000 to \$124,999 income groups – in these two groups alone, Jackson County added an estimated 2,275 households between the reporting periods. This represents almost half (45 percent) of the total household increase in Jackson County during the reporting period. Similarly, every household income grouping from \$75,000 and above increased as a percentage of total households from 1999 to 2005-2007 (Table 9, population appendix).

These are positive and significant trends in that they represent the movement of much more wealthy households, with more buying power, into Jackson County. At the lowest end of the income spectrum, the absolute number of the poorest households (less than \$10,000) declined during the time period; however, increases (in absolute and percentage terms) occurred in the income categories between \$10,000 and \$24,999, as well as decreases in households with incomes in certain low-middle and middle-income groups. Census Tract 101 (southwestern Jackson County) led all census tracts in 2000 with higher median household, median family, and per capita incomes when compared with the county as a whole. In terms of future trends, it is likely that as households continue to move into Jackson County, household incomes will continue to increase. However, due to lower prices of land and more affordable housing generally, Jackson County is likely to continue witnessing absolute increases in the numbers of low and moderate income households over time.

CONCENTRATIONS OF POVERTY

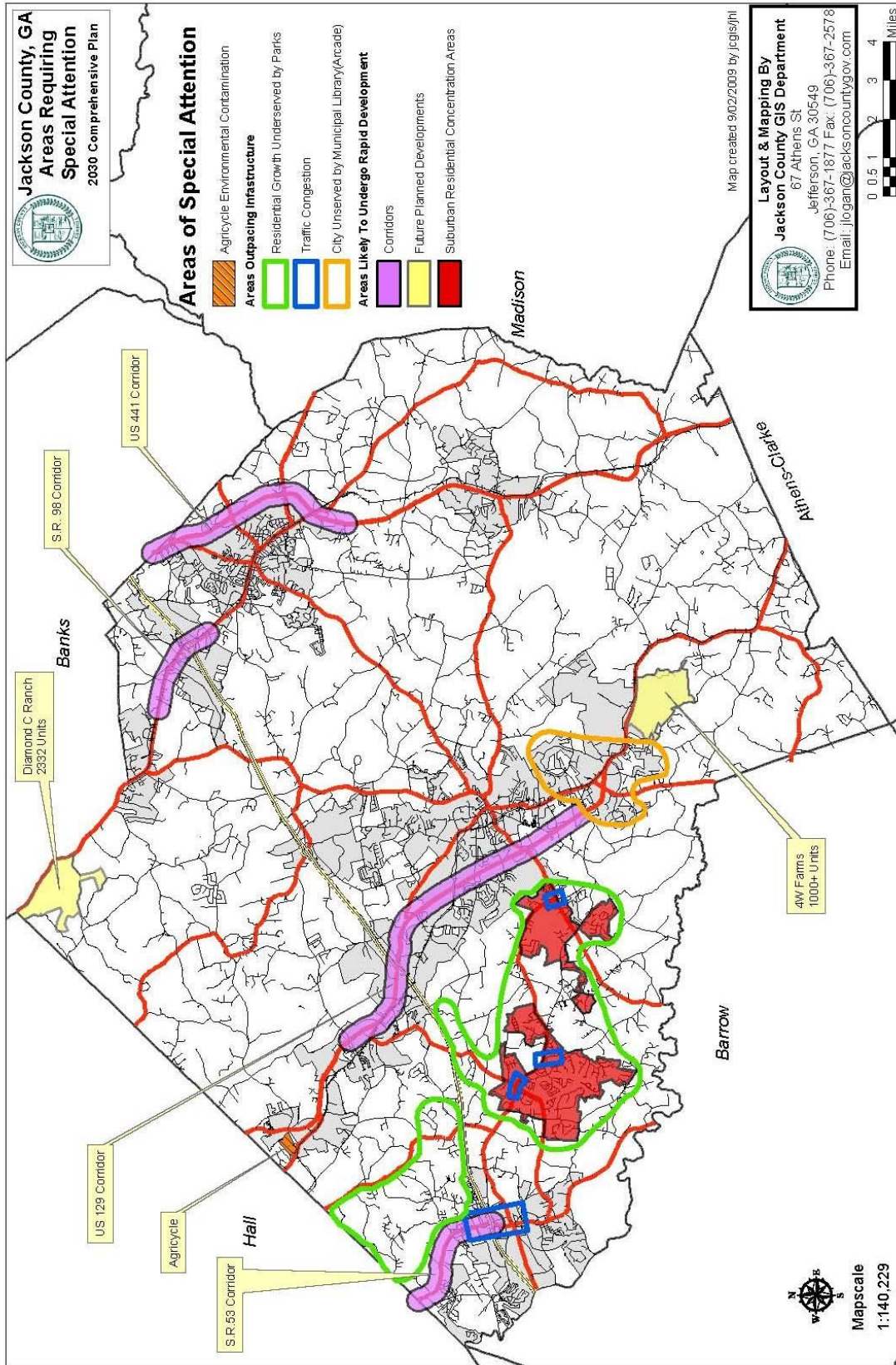
Any significant concentration of poverty could be considered a candidate for special attention, such as community development programs. Countywide, there were an estimated 3,870 households in Jackson County in 2005 to 2007 which had no earnings at all. In Jackson County, the lowest per capita incomes in 1999 were found in Census Tract 106 (Arcade and unincorporated area), which also had the highest number of persons below poverty level in 1999 and the highest number of households with public assistance income in 1999 (Table 11, population appendix). While concentrations of poverty in Census Tract 106 or elsewhere might warrant special attention, they are not identified as such here, given that no census tract appears (as of 2000) to exhibit substantial variation when compared with other census tracts or the county as a whole.

AREAS WHERE RAPID DEVELOPMENT WILL OCCUR

Whether rapid development will resume any time soon, after the severe economic recession of 2008 and 2009, is uncertain. However, one can be certain that eventually, the economy will turn positive again, and significant development will resume again in Jackson County. Therefore, it is prudent to anticipate those areas that will experience rapid development in a healthy economy and put plans in place to address the new development. It is an opportune time for Jackson County (while development is not taking place so rapidly) to focus on proactive rather than reactive measures. The comprehensive plan is an opportunity for Jackson County to be proactive, anticipating and planning for future development. A map titled "Areas Requiring Special Attention" is provided in this section. It focuses on two of the required considerations: areas where rapid development is expected to occur and "areas where growth is outpacing or likely to outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation. This map also shows one area known in the county to be subjected to environmental contamination.

Previously Identified Areas

On the map of areas needing attention which was provided in the Partial Plan Update (2007), Jackson County identified three major areas which generally fit this consideration: The SR 53 corridor north of Braselton; a development of regional impact proposed, and for which rezoning was granted, northwest of Maysville along SR 52 (Diamond C Ranch), and "4W Farms," which was approved by the City of Arcade for a major residential and mixed-use development but which has not yet begun construction. In addition to those areas, the County's draft major roads plan identified an area east of Braselton/Hoschton and southwest of Jefferson as a "residential concentration area," suggesting rapid additional subdivision development there. There are several additional areas that should be identified as areas likely to undergo or experience rapid development. Areas expected to undergo rapid development in the near future are described more fully below and are shown on a map titled "areas undergoing rapid development in the future."



SR 53 Corridor North of Braselton

Due to planned road widening and residential growth trends, this corridor is confirmed as being an area of potentially rapid development. Road widening tends to promote changes in land uses, toward commercial. Also, due to proximity of this area to growth centers in Barrow and Gwinnett County, and its convenient access to those centers via Interstate 85, the SR 53 corridor is likely to be one of the first to witness rapid development when market conditions turn around. Some of this corridor has already been annexed by Braselton, suggesting another opportunity of intergovernmental coordination.

U.S. Highway 129 Corridor

The U.S. Highway 129 corridor (a.k.a., Daman Gause Bypass), from Talmo through Jefferson is expected to experience rapid commercial development in the near future or as soon as the market economy improves. This corridor is governed from a land use standpoint, not only by Jackson County (unincorporated areas) but by the cities of Talmo, Pendergrass, and Jefferson, and further south, by Arcade. Hence, the management of development in the upper U.S. Highway 129 Corridor is also an issue of intergovernmental coordination to ensure that development is compatible through all local government jurisdictions. Furthermore, because this corridor is mostly undeveloped now, there is an opportunity to enhance the quality of development with additional regulations and guidelines matching the “sense of place” objectives of Jackson County and its municipalities (see Chapter 5 of this summary report).

U.S. Highway 441 Corridor in the Commerce Area

Properties along US Highway 441, starting at Banks Crossing in Banks County and extending southward into the City of Commerce and Jackson County, is likely to witness significant additional commercial development in the near future. This corridor is almost equally divided between incorporated (City of Commerce) and unincorporated (Jackson County) areas, thus necessitating (like other corridors mentioned) a coordinated, intergovernmental approach to corridor management.

SR 98 Corridor near I-85

Maysville Road (SR 98) north and south of its interchange with Interstate 85 is another corridor that deserves designation as an area likely to undergo significant, rapid commercial and industrial development in the near future. Again, like the other corridors, some of the land within it has been incorporated (i.e., annexed by the City of Commerce), while large sections of unincorporated lands remain. While this area is mapped as generally coinciding with Commerce’s water and sewer service area, it is possible that development could eventually extend into Maysville’s service area. Hence, three governments and potentially two service areas are involved in this area.

Suburban Residential Concentration Areas

Two non-contiguous areas are identified as requiring special attention because of existing and platted residential subdivisions. This is a more tightly drawn iteration of the “residential concentration area,” delineated in the major roads plan and referenced above. These two areas are (1) including the Traditions development and adjacent subdivisions west of SR 332 and mostly south of SR 124; and (2) an area west of Jefferson, along both sides of SR 11. Several

homes already exist in these areas, but there is vast additional potential for homebuilding given existing platted lots. These two areas are expected to generate substantial demands for urban services, including park and recreation, library, fire and public safety services and facilities in the near future.

Diamond C Ranch (DRI 1162)

This area consists of 1,400 acres in the northernmost corner of Jackson County south of SR 52 and bordering Hall and Banks Counties. This approved and rezoned development, if constructed, can ultimately result in 2,232 housing units in a golf course community, along with acreage for commercial retail and hotel development. This development, if constructed, will result in substantial additional needs with respect to infrastructure and public facilities and services that are not presently accommodated in the county's comprehensive plan.

4W Farms – Arcade

This project (1000+ units), while within the City of Arcade, is substantial enough that it should be recognized in the county's plan as an area expected to undergo rapid development in the future. This area is designated as a "Town Center" in the City of Arcade's Community Agenda.

Areas Considered but Not Designated

There are a number of emerging industrial areas along the I-85 corridor, including unincorporated lands but near or within Pendergrass and Jefferson, that are likely to undergo rapid industrial development in the near future. However, Jackson County and the relevant municipalities have in large measure planned for infrastructure improvements in these areas and are therefore ready to accommodate additional industrial development. For that reason, they do not necessarily require additional attention in the near future with respect to infrastructure development.

The area at and near the intersection of SR 124 and SR 60 is undergoing rapid transformation into a neighborhood or community commercial node, serving residential development in the vicinity. However, road widening and improvement projects are already planned, water and sewer infrastructure is considered adequate, and the county has put into place overlay district provisions designed to ensure quality architecture is constructed in this area. Therefore, there appears to be no need to designate this node as requiring significant additional attention.

There are a number of other, more scattered, residential subdivisions platted in various parts of Jackson County which collectively will place additional demands on public facilities and services. However, these are not mapped as significant concentrations of properties that will result in rapid development.

ASSESSMENT OF GROWTH PREPAREDNESS QCO

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

To a large extent, this QCO cuts across several other considerations covered in this report, including housing, community facilities and services, economic development, and intergovernmental coordination. Therefore, this part of the report must also be considered in the context of other report chapters.

Housing and Infrastructure

Housing is addressed in Chapter 4, and infrastructure needs in Chapter 6 of this summary report. Generally, more refinement is needed of the county's policies with respect to the types of housing desired. Those issues are identified in Chapter 4 of this summary assessment.

Jackson County has prepared a master plan for parks and recreation facilities, but that plan is already outdated and not reflective of significant initiatives to increase the amount of parkland available to residents of Jackson County. Water and sewer master plans are generally in place to promote future economic development but outside the context of economic development they are in the formative stages. The Industrial Development Authority has for some time now planned for a series of roads paralleling Interstate 85 in order to promote industrial development in the corridor. And the county as a part of this planning process is preparing a major roads plan.

One of the issues discussed in Chapter 6 of this report is whether to plan for water and sewer services on a countywide basis. More coordination of population projections with the school systems in Jackson County is also needed (see also Chapter 8 regarding working with the larger community).

Workforce Training

Workforce training opportunities are inventoried and assessed in the data appendix, "Labor Force and Economy" and summarized in Chapter 3 of this summary report. Jackson County received an award from the Appalachian Regional Commission in the amount of \$149,725 to provide space for Lanier Technical College to maintain higher education opportunities within Jackson County (FY 2009 budget). That shows Jackson County Government's commitment to maintain workforce training opportunities in the county. Generally, workforce training opportunities are considered adequate, but additional issues regarding improvement are identified.

Ordinances to Direct Growth

Jackson County directs the location of growth through its zoning regulations. However, the zoning ordinance has been amended mostly at will, in order to allow for residential subdivisions in scattered locations. This report includes as an "issue" whether Jackson County needs to do more to direct future development into desired locations, and in a more concentrated pattern as suggested in the adopted plan. See Chapter 4 of this report for more information.

Leadership

More keen attention is being paid to growth issues by Jackson County's elected board of commissioners and planning commissioners. With respect to economic development, the Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Authority (see Chapter 3 of this report and the data appendix, "Labor Force and Economy") are actively pursuing recruitment strategies and planning for infrastructure improvements which will provide for industrial development. Working

with the municipalities is an important area that needs improvement, as discussed more fully in Chapter 8, titled “Working with the Larger Community” in this summary report.

Growth Preparedness QCO Grade

Jackson County is well aware of its growth challenges. Leaders in the county have supported planning and capital improvements in response to the needs, including improving prospects for workforce training. The county’s Unified Development Code in conjunction with a “consistency” requirement that rezoning decisions be made in accordance with its land use plan, has helped to ensure that the county does not get overwhelmed by the pace of development. And the county is aware of the parts of the county that need more infrastructure. Yet it still can do more to prepare for facility needs. Its overall grade is a “B” (good), but with room for improvement.

CHAPTER 3 GROWING THE ECONOMY WITH WORKING AREAS

Jackson County, like any other community, desires to have a strong and sustainable economy. People need places to work, and while by choice not all of Jackson County's residents will work inside the county, it is critically important to maintain, nurture, and promote the economy of Jackson County.

LABOR FORCE

Labor Force Trends

Jackson County is surrounded on three sides by metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs): the Atlanta MSA to the south; Gainesville MSA to the west; and the Athens MSA to the east. Jackson County is strategically located at the edge of these three major labor markets and job centers. The civilian labor force in Jackson County has increased steadily in recent years, at least until 2006-2008, when it stabilized and declined slightly. The resident labor force in Jackson County in 2008 was 26,059 persons (Table 2 labor force and economy data appendix). Despite the recent slow growth and slight decline in the number of Jackson County labor force participants from 2006 to 2008, employment of Jackson County's working residents continued to increase during that time period. Unemployment has historically been rather low but increased remarkably in recent years due to the economic recession.

Labor Force by Place of Work

Residents of Jackson County who work may find employment within the county, or they may seek employment outside the county. Similarly, residents of a given city in Jackson County who are working may be employed within the city in which they reside, in Jackson County but outside their city of residence, or outside the county. Slightly more than 4 of every 10 working residents (41.6 percent) of Jackson County worked within the county in 2000. Stating the obverse, the vast majority of working residents of Jackson County commuted out of the county for work in 2000. The largest single location of jobs outside Jackson County for its working residents in 2000 was Athens-Clarke County, with almost 16 percent of all workers (Table 3 labor force and economy data appendix).

Labor Force by Industry

Manufacturing employed about one of every five working residents in Jackson County (21.3 percent) in 2000, thus manufacturing led all other industries in terms of employment of Jackson County's labor force. Retail trade was the second largest industry employer of Jackson County's residents in 2000 (12.3 percent of the total labor force). Construction ranked third for Jackson County's labor force in 2000, with an 11.1 percent share of total employment of the county's labor force (Table 5 labor force and economy data appendix).

Labor Force by Occupation

One quarter of Jackson County's labor force (25.2 percent) in 2000 worked in sales and office positions, and 22.5 percent worked in management, professional, and related occupations. Grouping together certain "blue collar" occupations (construction, production, and transportation and material moving), as of 2000 more than one-third (37.2 percent) of Jackson County's labor force was blue collar in nature. Other types of service occupations (health care, food

preparation, personal care, and protective services) collectively made up eight percent of the labor force occupations of Jackson County's working residents in 2000 (Table 6 labor force and economy data appendix).

EMPLOYMENT

Place of Residence for Those Employed in Jackson County

A majority (52.8 percent of the jobs in Jackson County in 2000 were filled by Jackson County residents. The most significant source of labor force outside Jackson County in 2000 for jobs in Jackson County was from Banks County, which is comparatively limited in terms of job opportunities except in the Banks Crossing area at Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 441. Employers in Jackson County in 2000 also drew significantly from the labor forces in adjacent Hall (8.0 percent), Clarke (6.3 percent), Madison (4.7 percent) and Barrow Counties (3.8 percent) (Table 7 labor force and economy data appendix).

Major Employers

According to the Department of Labor's Area Labor Profile (2008) the largest employers in Jackson County are BJC Medical Center, Mission Foods-Jefferson, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Wayne Poultry. The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce also provides data on major employers, which indicate the largest employer in Jackson County is Wayne Farms, LLC, with 1,350 employees, followed by the Jackson County Board of Education with 825 employees.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing is the largest employing industry in Jackson County. Manufacturing employment in Jackson County totaled 4,247 in 2000 according to *County Business Patterns*, or 30 percent of total non-government employment. It increased steadily in total employment from 2000 to 2004, reaching a height of 4,880 in 2004, then declined to 4,554 in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns* (see Table 9 labor force and economy data appendix). The Georgia Department of Labor's statistics for 2003 and 2008 reveal a gain in manufacturing employment over a five-year period, from 4,043 in 2003 to 4,537 in the year 2008. In terms of percent share of total employment, including government, manufacturing comprised 26.1 percent in 2003 and 24.7 percent in 2008 in Jackson County according to the Department of Labor (Table 10 labor force and economy data appendix).

Government

While not covered under *County Business Patterns*, the Georgia Department of Labor data suggest that as of 2008, government is the second most significant industry in Jackson County, comprising almost one-fifth (19.9 percent) of total employment in the county. The Labor Department data indicate that government (local, state, and federal) employment has increased by 909 jobs from 2003 to 2008, a 33 percent increase. The 2008 figures reported by the Georgia Department of Labor do not appear to reflect the full effect of government downsizing during the past two years, where state government has been in a more-or-less constant budget-cutting mode, and local governments have delayed filling vacant positions and in many instances laid off government employees. It is clear, however, that government employment is witnessing a significant, upward trend, as various facilities and services are added to meet the county's burgeoning population. While generally not thought of as an industry, it should be recognized that government employment is the second most significant in Jackson County as of

2008, surpassing retail trade employment sometime after the year 2003, according to the Georgia Department of Labor.

Retail Trade

After manufacturing, retail trade is the second most significant *non-government* industry in Jackson County. Retail trade employment increased from 2,400 in the year 2000 to 3,522 in 2006, according to *County Business Patterns*. It comprised from 17 percent to 22 percent of total nongovernment employment in Jackson County within the last decade. Georgia Department of Labor data, however, show a different picture, with employment in retail trade totaling 2,994 in 2003 and declining some, to 2,880, in the year 2008. If the Department of Labor's data are more accurate, retail trade comprised 15.7 percent of total employment in Jackson County in 2008. Despite the big discrepancy between *County Business Patterns* and Georgia Department of Labor data, it is clear that retail trade is a very important sector in Jackson County, ranking second in terms of non-government employment. Further, it is clear that retail trade will grow substantially as the population in Jackson County continues to increase.

Accommodation and Food Services

According to *County Business Patterns*, employment in this industry has increased some, from 1,618 in the year 2000 to 1,817 in the year 2006. If one looks at the intervening years (2002 and 2004), it shows remarkable fluctuation (a drop to 1,193 employment in 2002). Using *County Business Patterns* data, one would conclude that accommodation and food services is the third most important industry in Jackson County after manufacturing and retail trade, comprising some 10-11 percent of all non-government jobs in the county. Department of Labor data show employment in the accommodation and food services industry sector was only 1,023 in the year 2003, rising to 1,143 in the year 2008. If the Department of Labor's data are more accurate, then accommodation and food services industries comprised 6.2 percent of total employment (including government) in 2008 in Jackson County.

Construction

Depending on which source of employment data is consulted, construction is either third or fourth in terms of significance to Jackson County's economy. *County Business Patterns* indicates that construction employment has increased steadily but not remarkably from 929 in 2000 to 1,175 in 2006 (8.6 percent of total non-government employment) (see Table 9 labor force and economy data appendix). The Georgia Department of Labor reported construction employment at 1,239 in the year 2003, and it also indicates a substantial drop in construction employment to 995 in the year 2008 (see Table 10). Clearly, the economic recession and crash in the housing market had a severe impact on construction employment in Jackson County during the last two years, dropping from 8 percent to 5.4 percent of total employment (including government).

Transportation and Warehousing

This industry is one that has been among the fastest growing in Jackson County in terms of employment, with only 377 employees in 2000 and increasing (more than tripling) to 1,143 employees in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns*. The Georgia Department of Labor also reflects a substantial increase in transportation and warehousing employment from 206 in 2003 to 759 employees in 2008. Clearly, Jackson County has much potential to further develop

this type of industry (transportation and warehousing), given its many miles of frontage along both sides of Interstate 85, as well as two important north-south U.S. Highways (129 and 441).

Other Industry Sectors

Jackson County had 1,083 persons employed on farms in 2007. According to *County Business Patterns*, health care and social assistance employment totaled 811 employees in 2000 and increased to 989 employees in 2006, representing 5.7 percent of total non-government employment in Jackson County in 2006. *County Business Patterns* (Table 9) shows that employment in professional, technical, and scientific services more than doubled between 2000 and 2006, from 215 to 486 employees, respectively; the Georgia Department of Labor data for professional, technical, and scientific services show significant growth in this industry between 2003 and 2008, an increase of almost one-third (31 percent) in just five years. Finance and insurance establishments represent a relatively small, but growing, industry in Jackson County.

Employment Forecast

Total employment in Jackson County was forecasted as a part of the 2003 update of the land use element of the comprehensive plan. That forecast indicated employment of 33,603 in the year 2009, 43,855 in the year 2015, and 66,195 in the year 2025. That forecast used Georgia Department of Labor historic data for a base line and utilized an “employees per capita” method which assumes a continuing and steady interrelationship between population and employment.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is the central entity focused upon economic development within the greater Jackson County area. The Chamber coordinates between the Jackson County government, the Jackson County Industrial Development Authority, the Jackson County Economic Development Council (EDC), and the local business community. Economic development resources in Jackson County are considered excellent.

UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Jackson County is located in close proximity to a number of technical schools and universities. These include the University of Georgia and Athens Technical College (both located in Athens-Clarke County), Brenau University (Gainesville), Gainesville State College (Oakwood), and Lanier Technical College (with a campus in Commerce), Gwinnett Technical College, and Georgia Gwinnett College. These opportunities to improve education and technical skills are considered excellent. However, during the community workshops and discussion with the Jackson County comprehensive plan steering committee, it was determined that there are more steps that need to be taken with regard to building the proper workforce skills that Jackson County’s future employers will need (see discussion in “issues and opportunities” below).

AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

In the framework of this chapter (economy), there are three areas that should be identified, if they exist: areas in need of redevelopment, large abandoned structures or sites, and areas of significant disinvestment or unemployment. We conclude that the county, due to its economy being in the earlier stages of suburbanization, does not have places in the unincorporated areas that need redevelopment, nor has there been any significant structures or sites that have been abandoned. Similarly, the technical analysis does not reveal any significant concentrations of

disinvestment or unemployment. Therefore, there are no maps of areas requiring special attention for these considerations.

ASSESSMENT OF QCOs

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

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

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

Because these QCOs are similar, they are assessed collectively. The labor force and economy data appendix contains a detailed empirical assessment of the appropriate business and employment options QCOs. Specifically, it compares the county’s resident labor force and jobs in the county by industry to see where deficits or surpluses lie. That analysis is summarized here.

Job and Labor Force Comparison

Inherent in the “appropriate business” QCO is the assumption that Jackson County desires to have one job inside the county for each working resident of Jackson County, so that nobody has to leave the county for work. In other words, this analysis tells us what Jackson County’s economic development professionals would want to know if they sought a situation where nobody had to go outside the county for a job in their industry.

Starting with total employment first, Jackson County had, as of 2000, about 5,363 fewer jobs than it would need if it put all of its resident work force to work inside the county. That is a significant finding in itself – that there would clearly be quality of life benefits to Jackson County’s labor force if more jobs could be created. But in which industries? Jackson County had almost exactly the same amount of retail trade jobs as it had resident labor force participants working in that industry in 2000. Similarly, the manufacturing industry was close to optimal in 2000, in terms of the number of jobs in Jackson County and the number of Jackson County resident laborers working in manufacturing industries. Accommodation and food services and administrative and support and waste management services fall into a category of “surplus,” or “more jobs available than resident workers in the county.”

Those industries that have a “deficit” in terms of fewer jobs than resident workers in that industry are summarized below.

- **Educational Services:** The largest deficit in terms of jobs is in the educational services industry, but this is explained largely by the fact that many working residents of Jackson County are employed by the University of Georgia in Athens-Clarke County.

- **Construction:** Jackson County in 2000 could support a whole lot more construction jobs, given the large number of construction workers who resided in Jackson County at that time.
- **Health Care Services:** Another large deficiency in terms of jobs in Jackson County and jobs filled by Jackson County's residents is in the health care field. Taken to the extreme, this analysis would suggest that Jackson County needs another hospital so it can employ many more of its health care labor force inside the county. However, upon further reflection, one has to consider that three of the top ten largest employers in the Jackson County *area* (in adjacent counties of Clarke, Hall, and Gwinnett) are in the health care industry.
- **Transportation and Warehousing:** There are more transportation and warehousing workers that lived in Jackson County in 2000 than there were jobs in that industry in Jackson County in 2000. The good news is that this is an industry that has vast potential in Jackson County. One could predict with confidence that, given the number of warehouse buildings that have been constructed or are zoned in Jackson County, especially in the City of Jefferson, the deficiency of jobs will dissolve over time. Further, it is likely that this sector will become a job-surplus industry in Jackson County over the long term, with more jobs than resident workers in this industry.

Grade for Economic Development-Related QCOs

While there may be fewer jobs in Jackson County than workers participating in the labor force, Jackson County has matched almost exactly the number of manufacturing jobs with the number of residents working in manufacturing industries. Concerted, coordinated efforts have been made to ensure that new manufacturing jobs can locate in the county. The infrastructure needed to support manufacturing growth (especially sewer and roads) is in place. The county has committed to the appropriate level of resources to provide technical training of the work force. Institutional arrangements are in place with the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce being the lead coordinating agent.

A formal economic development plan is still in the formative stages. While appropriate emphasis has been placed on manufacturing, other sectors and economic development opportunities, such as tourism, heritage tourism, and agriculture and forestry, have not yet been fully integrated into the county's formal economic development efforts. Furthermore, there is more that can be done to integrate the municipalities (especially those with historic and cultural resources) into a more comprehensive economic development strategy. Jackson County receives "A-" grades for the employment options and appropriate business QCOs, and an "A" for educational opportunities (but with room for improvement).

CHAPTER 4 LIVING AREAS AND EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Nothing touches people more stridently than things that impact their homes and neighborhoods. People have preferences about how they live, and there is a diversity of preferences. People and households are not always able to match their preferences with their economic means. It is important to understand the existing housing stock, in terms of types of housing units, the characteristics of households, the age and condition of housing units, and the affordability of living in Jackson County. Almost everyone who moves into Jackson County in the future will be a part of a “household” and thus the plan needs analyze, predict, and/or forecast the demands and needs for housing that will be created in the future. Planning is about ensuring that people have places to live, and that to the extent possible within their own means, it is affordable and as desirable as possible. Everyone wants a neighborhood with relative peace and quiet, and this chapter moves Jackson County toward these objectives.

While the individual rights and desires of individual households are of paramount importance here, the county has an obligation to keep taxes as low as possible and provide the right mix of community facilities and services that residents need. If housing and neighborhood patterns are allowed to be dictated solely by the market, or by individual preferences, an inefficient development pattern is likely to result, costing all taxpayers in the long run. The individual preferences of households must therefore be mediated with considerations of how to grow more efficiently to keep costs and tax burdens as low as possible.

HOUSING

Housing Trends

Jackson County’s total housing stock has increased from 16,455 housing units in 2000 to 23,572 units in 2007 (Table 3, housing data appendix). That is a remarkable increase of 43 percent in just seven years. Geographically, the vast majority of housing units in Jackson County are located outside of the nine municipalities. The housing stock in municipalities is divided generally into three sizes of cities: very small (200 housing units or less), including Pendergrass and Talmo; small (400 to 600 housing units), including Arcade, Braselton (Jackson County portion), Hoschton, Maysville, and Nicholson; and moderate-size cities (more than 1,500 housing units), including Jefferson and Commerce. The average household size in Jackson County, at 2.71 persons in 2000, appears rather typical for counties in Georgia. The larger municipalities in Jackson County (Jefferson and Commerce) have smaller average household sizes than the county as a whole.

Types of Housing Units

As of 2000, more than 9 over every 10 housing units in Jackson County was a single-family detached home or manufactured home. Jackson County has very few multi-family units, due in large measure to a lack of sanitary sewer for residential development in the unincorporated areas. But even including the various municipalities, there is still a small percentage of multi-family units. Almost one in three (30.8 percent) homes in Jackson County as of 2000 were manufactured homes. In two municipalities, Nicholson and Arcade, the percentage of manufactured homes is more than 60 percent of the total housing stock. On the positive side, the high percentages of manufactured housing means that there is “affordable” housing in Jackson County, since manufactured homes have historically been (and still are) considered a much more affordable housing option than stick-built housing. On the negative side, a large

number of manufactured homes has implications with regard to the residential tax base; while some owner-occupied manufactured homes on individual lots are valued as real property, many are treated for tax purposes as “personal” property and are subject to rapid depreciation by tax assessors. The percent share of manufactured homes has decreased in Jackson County as of 2005-2007, to about 26 percent, due to the substantial pace of building stick-built homes in Jackson County.

Age and Condition

There are no issues identified with regard to the age and condition of the housing stock in Jackson County.

Housing Values, Costs, and Affordability

Jackson County in 2000 had about the same percentage of owner-occupied housing units with values under \$100,000 as Georgia’s housing stock, suggesting that Jackson County has a comparable percentage of homes at the lowest end of the housing value spectrum. Also, in comparison with Georgia in 2000, Jackson County’s owner-occupied housing stock had slightly lower proportions of homes in the ranges of \$100,000 to \$149,999 and \$150,000 to \$199,999 categories when compared with the state, but slightly higher proportions in the \$200,000 and higher value categories in 2000.

Braselton and Hoschton had (in 2000) much higher median home values than the county or state – this is explained at least in part by those municipalities being more heavily influenced by the Atlanta metropolitan area’s housing market. Nicholson, which has the highest percentage of manufactured homes of all cities in the county as of 2000, had the lowest median value of owner-occupied homes, at \$60,300. The City of Arcade is similar, in that it has a majority of its housing stock as manufactured homes and a corresponding lower median value for owner-occupied units. In other words, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Nicholson and Arcade are heavily influenced by manufactured homes making up a majority of the housing stock.

It is useful to analyze and determine the extent to which owner and renter households are cost burdened or severely cost burdened with regard to housing. “Cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 30 percent of a household’s income for housing, and “severely cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 50 percent of a household’s income for housing.

In 1999 (2000 Census), about one in every five owner-occupied household was cost burdened or severely cost burdened with respect to housing costs. Estimates available from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2005-2007 reveal that cost burdens have increased significantly since 1999 – it is now more than one out of every four owner-occupied households that are cost burdened or severely cost burdened; there were 3,865 owner households (26.3 percent of all homeowner households) which were cost-burdened and severely cost burdened in Jackson County in 2005-2007 (Table 20, housing data appendix).

An additional analysis of housing affordability in Jackson County is conducted (see housing data appendix). Two of the most important implications of that analysis are, to promote housing affordability, that: (1) Jackson County needs more houses in the range of low- and moderate income household incomes; and (2) the county has a vast surplus of occupied homes with market prices that are not affordable to the homeowner households in Jackson County, especially for households within annual incomes above \$125,000.

ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES QCO

“Housing Opportunities Objective: Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.”

Relationship of Employment Wages and Housing

Under the title “jobs-housing balance,” the state’s minimum standards call for an assessment of whether workers in the community have sufficient wages and incomes to be able to live in the community. The housing data appendix (Table 26) provides a comparison of wages by industry for employees with jobs within Jackson County and salaries and wages for males who are a part of Jackson County’s labor force (and who may work in Jackson County or elsewhere).

The comparison of wages shows, on average for all industries, residents of Jackson County who are in the labor force make about as much money as those employed in Jackson County. That is a positive finding in the sense that, overall, there is not a major incentive for Jackson County’s labor force to go outside the county for higher-paying jobs. However, the picture is different when specific industry wages are reviewed.

In some industries, people who work in Jackson County make better money than the labor force participants who reside in Jackson County and work in the same type of industry. This is true for the following industries: manufacturing; wholesale trade; administrative and support and waste management and remediation; retail trade; transportation and warehousing, health care and social assistance; and government (public administration). For these industries, there is strong incentive via higher pay for residents of the county to work in the county. Most of these industries pay comparatively good wages, meaning that workers in these industries by and large will find Jackson County’s housing stock affordable.

The opposite is true, however, for other industries. Working residents of Jackson County made less wages and salaries than those working in the same industry inside Jackson County, in the following industries: construction; information; finance and insurance; real estate; scientific and technical services; education services; arts, entertainment and recreation services; and accommodation and food services. Workers in these industries have some incentive to seek higher wages and salaries outside Jackson County. At the same time, they may desire to reside in Jackson County due to its housing stock which is affordable when compared with metro areas like Athens-Clarke County and the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Housing Opportunities QCO Grade

Jackson County’s housing stock provides a range of housing costs, from more upscale homes, to stick-built starter housing, to manufactured homes. There is some range of density for single-family units, but there is generally a lack of higher density residential areas in the county, even when the municipalities are included. In terms of types of units, multi-family dwelling are underprovided, even after considering the municipal housing stocks. While, overall, the housing stock appears affordable, statistics reveal that more than one in every four households in the county as of 2005-2007 were cost-burdened or severely cost burdened. Workers in some industries have some incentive to seek higher wages and salaries outside Jackson County. The reviewer gives Jackson County a “B-” grade for housing opportunities. During the planning

horizon, Jackson County will need to address further specific housing needs for the disabled and elderly, as well as any other “special needs” housing.

EXISTING LAND USE

The land use and character areas data appendix provides more details, including statistics, on existing land use in Jackson County as a whole, in the unincorporated areas, and for each of the nine municipalities (Jackson County portion only). The following paragraphs summarize existing land use trends.

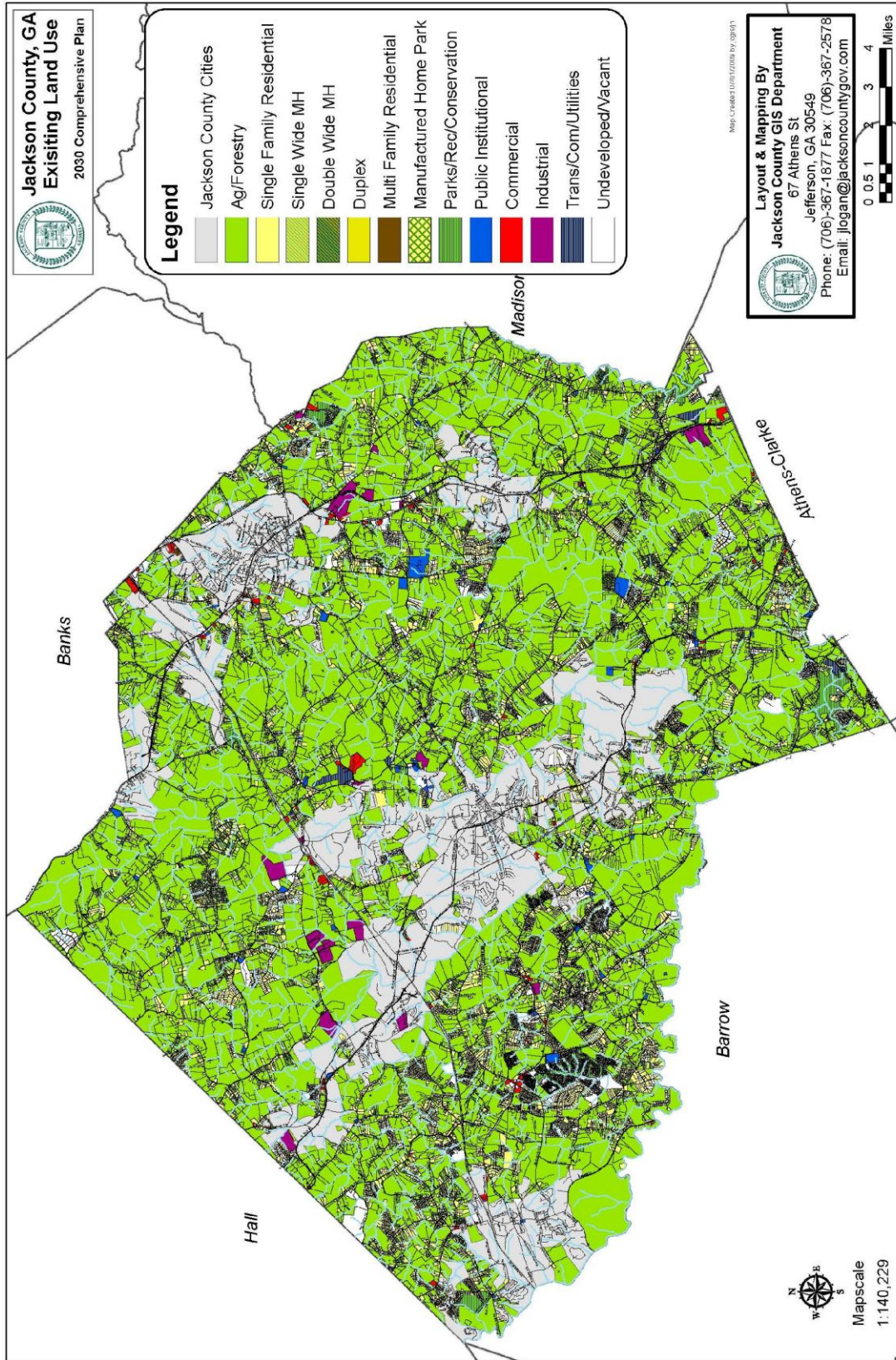
Agriculture and Forestry

As of 2009, almost three-quarters (72.1 percent) of the land area in the county, including municipalities, is classified as agriculture and forestry. In the unincorporated area, that figure is 77.5 percent. From the Census of Agriculture (2007), it is apparent that Jackson County lost 23 farms and nearly 15,000 acres of farmland between 2002 and 2007; that was a decrease of 14.8 percent in terms of farmland acreage. The average size of farm also decreased from 109 acres in the year 2002 to 95 acres in the year 2007. Farmland loss from 2002 to 2007 occurred across the spectrum in terms of the size of farms; not only large farms were lost, but small- and medium-sized farms as well.

The amount of harvested cropland remained more or less the same from 2002 to 2007, at about 15,300 acres. However, total cropland declined by 18,424 acres from 2002 to 2007; almost all of the total cropland lost was “cropland used for pasture or grazing” (18,151 acres). Total woodland decreased by 2,730 acres from 2002 to 2007; the largest share of the decrease during that time period was for woodland pastured (for more information, see tables 5, 6, and 7, land use and character areas data appendix).

Residential

Jackson County has added approximately 7,117 housing units from July 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007. The western portion of the county has experienced the most rapid development due to its proximity to Gwinnett County. Jackson County has followed standard practices for most suburbanizing communities, allowing and even encouraging conventional suburban land development patterns in a dispersed pattern. As a result, there has been a significant “scatteration” of residential subdivision across most parts of the county, sometimes even encroaching into areas of agricultural preservation (see maps in this chapter).



In fact, there are some 365 residential subdivisions distributed throughout the county. The aggregate number of residential lots is 16,718, with the average subdivision size being 46 lots. The largest subdivision in terms of residential lots is the Traditions Subdivision, which has 1,103 lots, but the second largest subdivision only has 299 lots (Countywide Roads Plan).

Those areas of unincorporated Jackson County which have so far escaped significant subdivision development activity include the northern tip (west, southwest and south of Maysville), Apple Valley (between Jefferson and Commerce along SR 15 Alt.), the Brockton area (east of Jefferson, north-northeast of Arcade, and west of Nicholson), and most areas on the eastern fringe of Jackson County. Not surprisingly, these areas not subjected to residential subdivision development correspond pretty closely with the county's agricultural preservation designation on its future land use plan map.

Institutional, Commercial, and Industrial

As would be expected for a rural county with numerous municipalities, the lion's share of public and institutional properties are located within city limits, especially Jefferson which is the county seat. Institutional land uses in unincorporated areas consist primarily of schools and churches, along with some rural cemeteries often located next to historic community churches.

Like with public-institutional uses, most of the existing commercial land is located within municipalities. The extent of unincorporated commercial land use is actually quite limited; commercial uses (with some exceptions for isolated zones) exist along segments of U.S. Highway 129 and U.S. Highway 441, and near the interchange of SR 53 and I-85 outside the city limits of Braselton. Most of the existing industrial land use outside of municipalities is located between Interstate 85 and Wayne Poultry Road.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities

Major land uses classified in the Transportation/Communication/Utilities category include: Jackson County Airport east of SR 82 North along Airport Road and Lyle Field Road (north of Jefferson's city limits); the waste water treatment property west of Opossum Creek Road north of Interstate 85 in Jefferson; wastewater treatment plant property along Curry Creek in Jefferson; water treatment property at New Savage Road and Bear Creek Lake; property east of Jarret Road which lies east of U.S. Highway 441 south of Commerce; and property at the intersection of Davis Road, County Farm Road and Airport Road.

ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD QCO

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

Limited Opportunities for Traditional Neighborhood Development

Traditional neighborhood development is defined generally by the QCO cited above. Traditional neighborhood development, by and large, is an urban phenomenon, and one that requires sanitary sewer. Outside its municipalities, one would not expect a rural, suburbanizing county like Jackson to have any traditional neighborhood development, given its lack of sanitary sewer serving residential areas. Because Jackson County does not have urban-density residential development in unincorporated areas (with very few exceptions) and due to a lack of sanitary

sewer, one cannot expect the county to pursue this type of development pattern. Therefore, this QCO is generally not attainable, on the surface at least. And residential development in unincorporated Jackson County to date has not attained this type of pattern. Subdivisions developed or platted in unincorporated Jackson County exhibit much lower densities, follow curvilinear street patterns, are not built to a human scale, do not mix uses with one another, and do not facilitate pedestrian activity.

Traditional Neighborhood QCO Grade

We conclude that a “not applicable” (N/A) grade is warranted. There are some things that Jackson County can do to promote more of this type of development, at least within master planned developments where densities can begin to approach urban scale. Furthermore, Jackson County can promote some of the objectives and ideals inherent in this QCO, by ensuring pedestrian access, encouraging more grid-like street patterns, and allowing for mixtures of land uses in the same neighborhood.

ANALYSIS OF INFILL DEVELOPMENT QCO

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

Municipal Infill Development Opportunities

Taken literally, this QCO would suggest that development should be concentrated within municipalities when land is available. Indeed, there are incredible supplies of land within the municipalities that are undeveloped/vacant and agriculture/forestry, much of which is ready for conversion to suburban and urban uses, as shown in Table 2.

Not all of these acreages are or will be planned for residential development, but from these data one can illustrate the vast potential supply of land for residential use in municipal portions of Jackson County. The most striking conclusion about the data in Table 2 is that every municipality except for the Maysville portion of Jackson County has the vast majority of its acreage available for development. These are infill development opportunities in the truest sense of its meaning. While it may not hold true entirely in Jackson County, developers and land use planners look at agricultural and forest lands within municipalities as eventually ripening for land development. Talmo is clearly an exception to this generalization, since it intends to remain mostly agricultural, and it may also be untrue in other municipalities where agriculture is expected to remain throughout the twenty-year planning horizon.

Jackson County is anticipated to increase in population to roughly 100,000 people in the year 2030; that is an addition of approximately 38,380 people. At an average household size of 2.7 persons in the county, and assuming a future residential development occurred at a low density of one unit per acre, 14,215 acres of new land for residential development would be needed to accommodate the entire additional population projected for the year 2030.

Table 2
Vacant and Agricultural Land, 2009
Municipalities or Portions Thereof in Jackson County

Municipality	Agriculture and Forestry (Acres)	Agriculture and Forestry (Percent Total City Area)	Vacant (Acres)	Vacant (Percent Total City Area)	Agriculture and Vacant (Acres)	Agriculture and Vacant (Percent Total City Area)
Arcade	3,507.8	66.4%	260.4	4.9%	3,768.2	71.3%
Braselton	1,029.0	35.0%	1,097.8	37.3%	2,126.8	72.3%
Commerce	2,539.8	36.7%	1,577.5	22.8%	4,177.3	59.5%
Hoschton	356.5	21.0%	548.7	32.4%	905.2	53.4%
Jefferson	5,779.1	44.1%	1,475.2	11.3%	7,254.3	55.4%
Maysville	470.9	33.5%	221.0	15.7%	691.9	49.2%
Nicholson	1,162.4	48.7%	172.0	7.2%	1,334.4	55.9%
Pendergrass	1,357.2	72.9%	222.1	11.9%	1,579.3	84.8%
Talmo	1,102.3	85.5%	13.5	1.0%	1,115.8	86.5%
Total Cities	17,305.0	--	5,588.2	--	22,893.2	--

Source: Jackson County Comprehensive Plan, Community Assessment, Land Use and Character Areas Technical Appendix, Tables 3 and 4 (land use data and acreages prepared by Jackson County GIS, August 2009).

Notes: Braselton and Maysville extend into other counties. The figures here are for Jackson County's portion only. The total for all land uses calculated is less than total city limits area because public right of ways are excluded.

Data in Table 2 show that, as of 2009, there are 22,893.2 acres total of land within municipal limits in Jackson County that is agriculture/forestry and vacant/undeveloped. If one accepts a simple assumption that two thirds (66.6 percent) of the agricultural/forestry and undeveloped/vacant land within the cities is available for residential development during the 20-year planning horizon, there would be approximately 15,247 acres available, more than enough to satisfy residential land needs for the next 20 years in Jackson County. Stated differently, if Jackson County wanted to and somehow magically funnel all new housing into the municipalities, there would be enough land in the municipalities to satisfy likely market demands such that not a single, additional housing unit permit in unincorporated Jackson County would need to be issued! As if these findings are not astounding enough, one then has to turn to the unincorporated portions of the county to see just how many opportunities for residential infill development there are. And as the reader will notice, those opportunities are tremendous also.

Residential Infill Development Opportunities in Unincorporated Jackson County

Here, we define "infill development opportunity" in the context of unincorporated Jackson County to mean all those opportunities to build on existing, platted lots. A map has been developed, titled "Opportunities for Residential Infill Development," and that map is considered a map of "Areas Requiring Special Attention." Because of the scale of individual lots, the reader is generally unable to grasp the extent of vacant lots across Jackson County (but readers using the pdf version of this document can zoom into the map for better detail. These development opportunities are so vast that, if the county never approved another residential subdivision during the next 20 years, it would have enough lots under current market conditions to satisfy its needs during the entire planning horizon and beyond by just directing homebuilding to these subdivisions.

Not only is it important to recognize the value of these areas from a simple land supply standpoint, there are important public quality of life issues associated with the numerous “ghost” subdivisions that exist in Jackson County. The subdivision street pictured on the right is just one of dozens of subdivision streets that have been platted and are ready for building. Without a presence of at least some homes on these subdivision streets, a number of important problems have begun to surface. First, theft of such things as manhole covers from storm catch basins is now frequent. And those subdivisions that have a few homes (vacant at that) are increasingly being looted for such things as the copper piping on exterior air conditioning units.



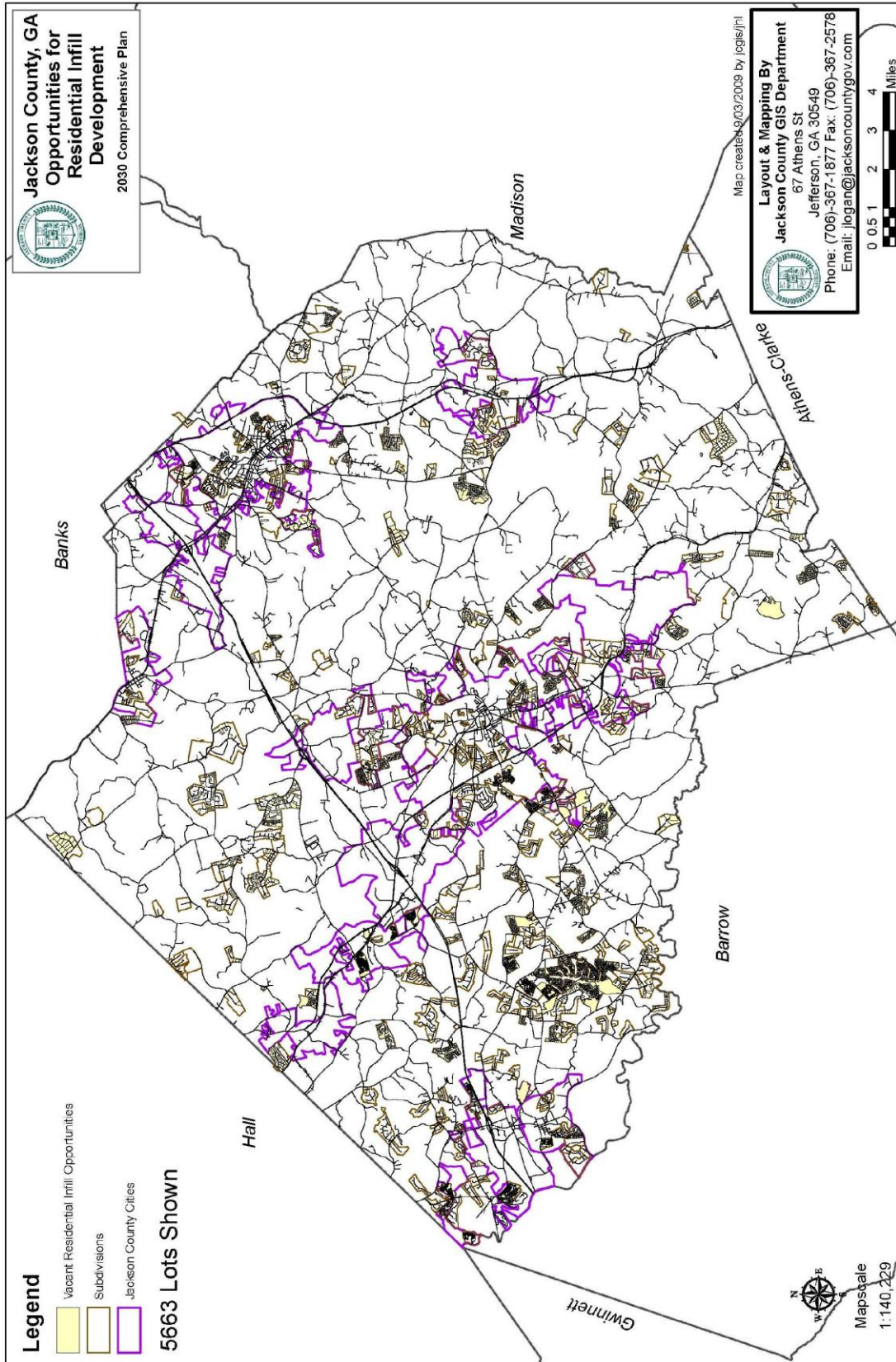
This vacant subdivision street in the River Bend Subdivision is representative of literally dozens of subdivisions that lie mostly or totally vacant; victims of excess subdivision, a flat housing market economy, and subject to vandalism and theft.

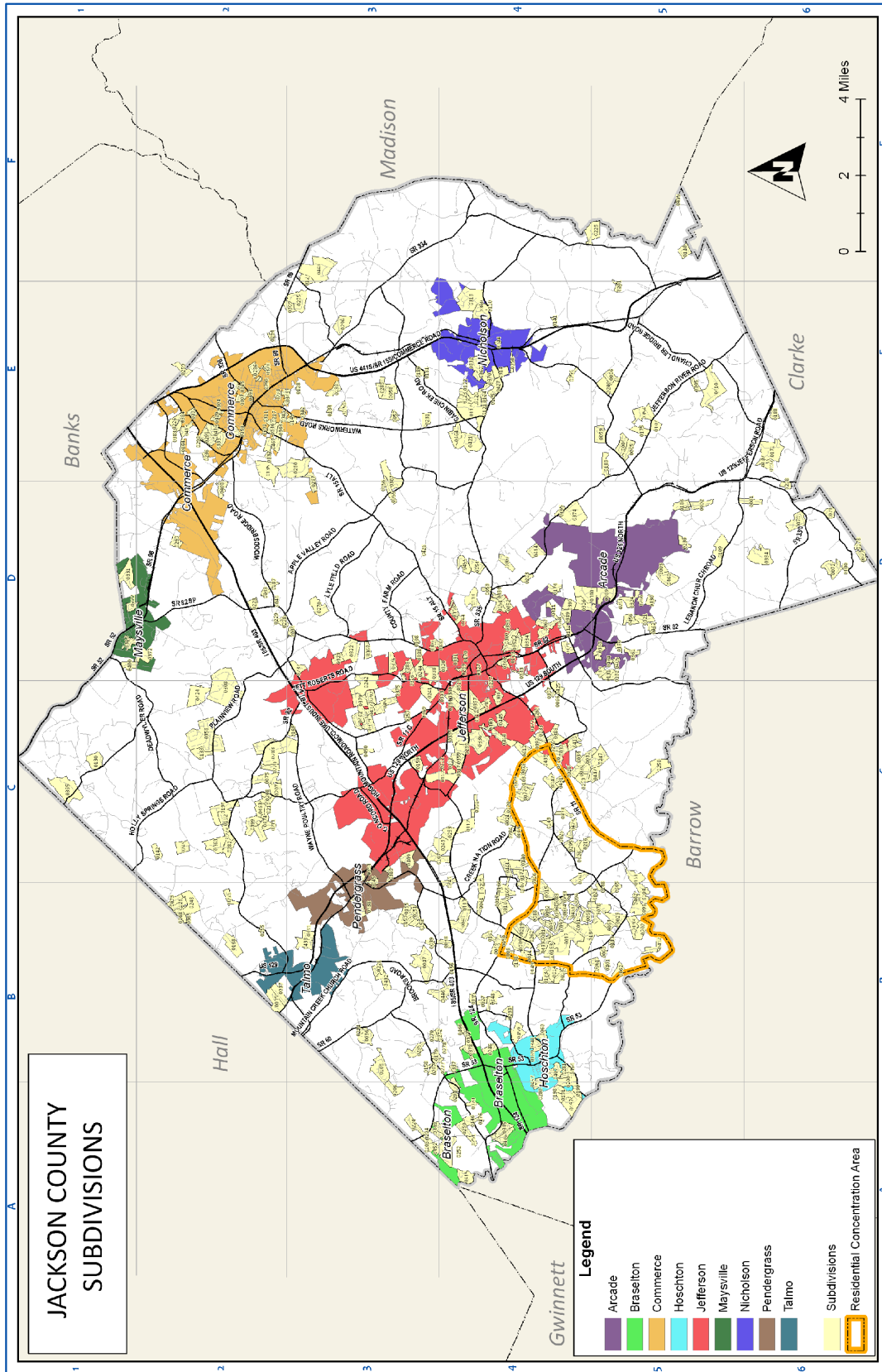
Yet another map (see “Subdivisions” helps to show the scattered nature of the subdivisions in unincorporated areas; they are spread across nearly all parts of the county.

Infill Development QCO Grade

In 2003, Jackson County adopted a land use plan that promotes the concentration of development in existing developed areas. However, actual development approvals and practices have gone in the opposite direction – toward extensive scatteration and sprawl, as evidenced on the two maps referenced in this section. One has to also consider that the two maps referenced in this section do not indicate the extent of rural residential development which has occurred on individual lots, outside subdivisions; hence the nature of rural sprawl is even vaster than can be depicted here.

Prior to this assessment, Jackson County’s leaders have never seen numbers that indicate the infill development potential inside the various cities in Jackson County. And, the full scope and nature of the residential development pattern today has similarly not been made evident. Now, with this information, leaders in Jackson County are aware that the scattered residential development pattern and infill development opportunities, including both for municipalities and the unincorporated areas, are so vast that there appears to be no market need that cannot be realized first by developing inside the municipalities, and second by simply building on vacant, subdivided lots. There is simply no justification to approve additional residential subdivisions in Jackson County any time soon. And, rezoning decisions for new residential development must be made more closely in accordance with the residential recommendations of the county’s land use plan, as opposed to allowing subdivisions in isolated areas, including within those areas designated for agricultural preservation. The county, including municipalities which have annexed large areas of undeveloped land, therefore receives from the reviewer a nearly failing (“D”) grade with respect to promoting a development pattern that minimizes the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery and encourages development of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban cores (cities) within the county.





CHAPTER 5 PROMOTING SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

People move to and continue to reside in a given area for some reason or another. Often, the choice of where to reside relates to their historical roots, but also how comfortable folks are in a given place. History, comfort and the look and feel of a community contribute to its sense of place and character. The character of places, such as the rural nature of unincorporated Jackson County and the small towns within the county, will erode over time if market conditions are allowed to turn special places into placeless suburbs. Maintaining and promoting historic and rural character will not happen on its own. A concerted effort is warranted if Jackson County is to maintain and enhance its existing character, and equally important, promote some character and quality in newly developed places.

Increasingly, planners have learned that conventional zoning tools will not result in the special places with character that most people say they value and want to see. We must look beyond simple exercises like deciding where housing will occur and where industry will be built. We need to introduce new principles about building communities with a sense of place; that will not be easy, but this chapter begins the discussion of what is needed to ensure Jackson County does not become just another “bedroom suburb” or extension of the metropolitan Atlanta, Athens, and Gainesville regions.

ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL IDENTITY QCO

“Regional Identity Objective: Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.”

A Diversity of Regional Influences

From a regional perspective, Jackson County is most closely associated with the Athens-Clarke County region. Much of that connection with Athens-Clarke County has to do with the common linkages of residents with the University of Georgia. Clearly, Jackson County is “bulldog” country.

However, as noted elsewhere, it is on the fringe of two other Metropolitan Statistical Areas: Atlanta-Sandy Springs and Gainesville-Hall County. For that reason, Jackson County has never really taken on a special, regional identity of a single region. The county shares many of the same characteristics as other rural counties in the planning region of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, as well as abutting counties in the Georgia Mountains region. For instance, Jackson County (particularly the northern one third) has close economic linkages with Hall County via the poultry industry. It also has economic linkages with racing venues within and close to Jackson County, such as Road Atlanta. And, as portions of the county continue to suburbanize, areas such as Braselton and Hoschtot continue to be associated with the market economy and development patterns of metropolitan Atlanta. With regard to architecture, there is no discernible regional identity.

Regional Identity QCO Grade

Because Jackson County is on the fringe of three identifiable regions yet does not have any themes of regionally identifiable architecture, the reviewer assigns a “Not Applicable” grade with

regard to this QCO. However, more is said in this chapter about rural character, which Jackson County shares with a number of counties in abutting regions.

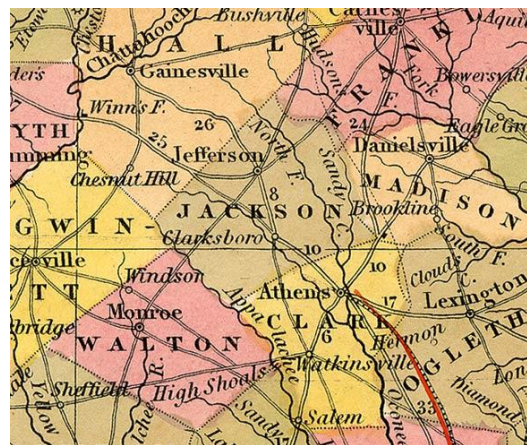
HISTORY OF JACKSON COUNTY

Of all things that might contribute to the “character” of a given area or community, it is the community’s history and culture that are arguably the most important contributors to community character. For that reason, the discussion of history and cultural resources is presented in this chapter. A separate data appendix chapter on historic resources is provided in this community assessment. It goes into detail with a historical narrative and inventory of historic resources in the county and its municipalities, including how the county’s jurisdiction has changed over time (see also the historic maps below).



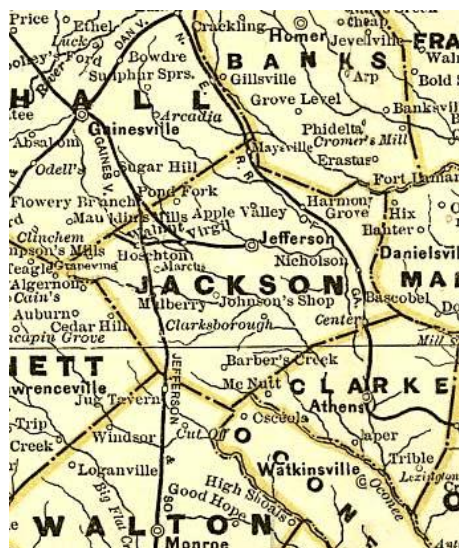
Jackson County, 1822

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia



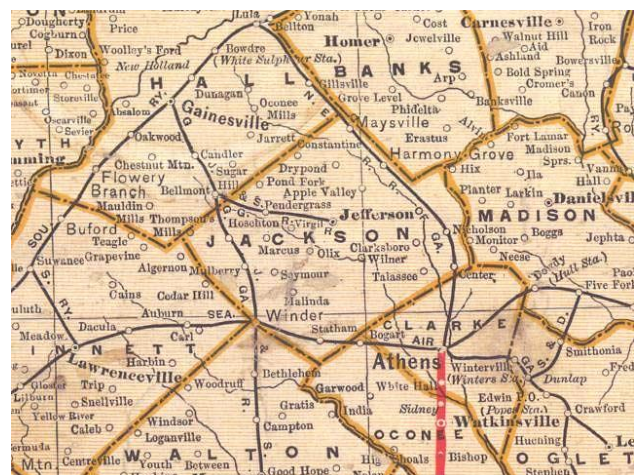
Jackson County, 1846

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia



Jackson County, 1883

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia



Jackson County, 1899

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Survey of Historic Resources

In 1976, Jackson County's historic buildings were surveyed to identify properties that appeared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The survey was sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources. Information on each surveyed building includes an estimated date of construction, description of architectural features, and condition of building. In Jackson County, 209 historic buildings were surveyed. In Commerce, 53 buildings were surveyed and 51 buildings in Jefferson. These resources are mapped in the data appendix chapter called "historic resources." That map is also included here as a map of "Areas Requiring Special Attention," because these resources (and others that should be comprehensively inventoried) are subject to immediate pressures of demolition and destruction.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic places is our country's list of historic resources that are worthy of preservation. The list is maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Park Service. Jackson County has a dozen properties on the National Register, but all but three of them are located within municipalities and are not discussed further here. Those listed on the National Register and located in unincorporated Jackson County are: Holder Plantation, the Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm, and the Williamson-Maley-Turner Farm.

Georgia Centennial Farms

In the state of Georgia, farms that contribute to the state's agricultural heritage are recognized by the Georgia Centennial Farm Program. This program is administered by the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the University of Georgia, College of Agriculture and Environmental Services, the Georgia National Fair and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

In Jackson County, four farms are recognized as Georgia Heritage Farms, two of which are also on the National Register of Historic Places:

1. The Shields-Ethridge Farm (Centennial Heritage Farm)
2. Holder Plantation (Centennial Farm)
3. Sarah & Clarence Carson Farm (Centennial Family Farm)
4. Johnson Farm (Centennial Family Farm)

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE PRESERVATION QCO

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

County Historic Preservation Efforts

Fundamentally, Jackson County has not taken an active role in identifying or protecting private properties that are historic or have historic buildings and structures. The county does not have a current, comprehensive historic resource survey, and without one, it is unable to be certain of just how important given properties, buildings, and structures are to the county's history. The county has not seriously considered establishing a local historic preservation program, one that would designate a local historic preservation commission and regulate demolitions and changes to the material appearance of locally designated historic structures and properties within one or more locally designated historic districts. Jackson County is not alone in that regard; several municipalities, especially Commerce and Maysville, have significant concentrations of historic resources but they have not adopted local historic districts or established local preservation commissions. To date, only Jefferson in Jackson County has taken such a step.

Heritage Preservation QCO Grade

Jackson County has not maintained a current inventory of historic resources (something that is badly needed and which will be called for in its short-term work program). It has not formally adopted and staffed a preservation program. Nonetheless, the county government has undertaken some critically important steps toward preservation of its history. It has formed a committee and appropriated money to restore the historic county courthouse in Jefferson, one of the most historically important public properties in the county.

Jackson County has also created a Heritage Village site at its Hurricane Shoals Park, where historic buildings and structures from various places in the county have been saved from destruction and relocated in a village-type arrangement. Though when historic structures are removed from their original site they lose some of their authenticity, Jackson County is to be commended for that effort. The county has also restored the historic Sell's Mill on its Sells Mill park site, and the county is overall supportive (including financially) with regard to the Jackson County Historical Society.



Heritage Village at Hurricane Shoals Park

On balance, Jackson County receives a B- (low good) grade with respect to attaining the Heritage Preservation QCO. Its public efforts have been outstanding but it has so far focused only on those properties within its own ownership, to the potential detriment of all historic resources on private properties. Clearly, there is more the county can do.

ASSESSMENT OF SENSE OF PLACE QCO

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

Lack of Downtowns in the Unincorporated Areas

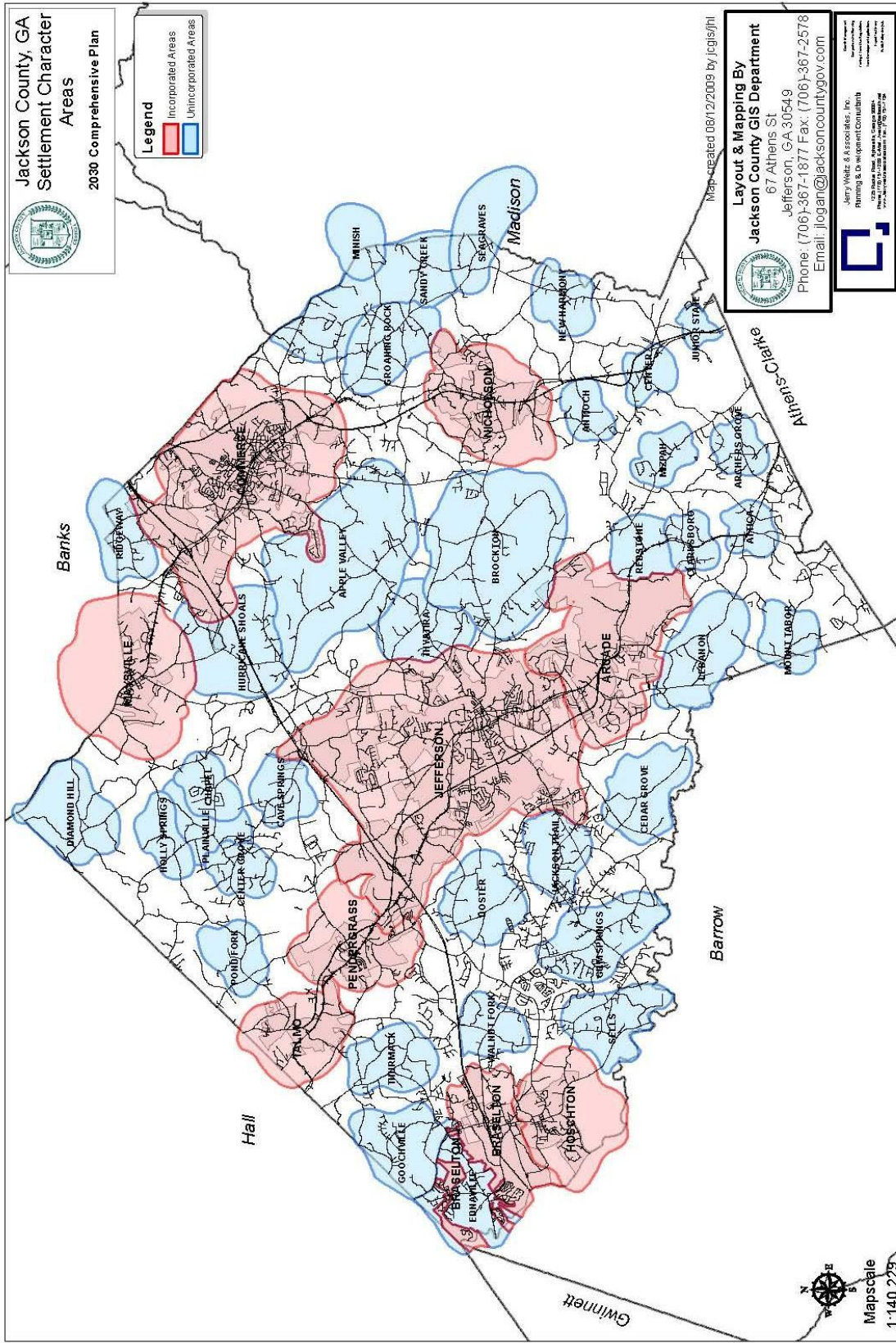
Jackson County includes several small towns that have what would be termed “traditional downtown areas.” However, Jackson County in its unincorporated areas (where it exercises land use authority) is agricultural, rural, and suburbanizing. Because unincorporated Jackson County lacks any such downtowns, it does not have downtowns in the true sense of this QCO. Furthermore, even if the county has the potential for such places, they are unlikely to meet the description in this QCO because the scale and intensity cannot be managed without sanitary sewer service, which Jackson County lacks in most of the unincorporated area.

Settlement Character: Community Focal Points

The county’s planning consultant has prepared a map titled “Settlement Character Areas.” In historical context, Jackson County developed in a series of mostly rural and urban settlements spanning across almost all of Jackson County. This map was drafted with several purposes in mind. First, a large county is difficult to generalize about, and it can be difficult to even refer to different subareas of the county unless there are names associated with the parts. This map allows one, fundamentally, to refer to smaller subareas of the county that would otherwise be difficult to describe without the aid of a map of this sort.

Secondly, any attempt to describe character on a countywide basis should be cognizant of the original settlement pattern of the community. The settlement character map is thus an attempt to capture the historic roots of early settlement patterns. The map includes urban areas that correspond with municipal limits generally as they exist today. Some of the areas on this map are identified today as unique, unincorporated communities and even have their own identifying signs along roads and highways (e.g., Brockton and Apple Valley). The names for other settlements were taken from maps of the county, such as the Georgia Department of Transportation’s general highway map and the Aero Atlas. Names such as Clarkesboro and Attica appear on them, reflecting some evidence that unincorporated communities have taken on their own, unofficial names. Some settlements were identified by the planning consultant based primarily on the existence of churches. Yet others have roots in the earliest history of Jackson County.

Third, the settlement character map was thought to have potential for forming more refined character area policies in Jackson County.



Quality Development Standards

Jackson County has “quality development standards” (Sec. 505 UDC) which apply to open space subdivisions and master planned developments. These standards pertain to both residential (Sec. 505b) and nonresidential (Sec. 505c) development. One of the particular requirements is the installation of recreational amenities in residential subdivisions which are required for master planned developments (see illustrations below).



Amenity Feature at Staghorn



Lake Amenity at Traditions

SR 124 and SR 53 Corridor Overlay District

This overlay district, established in Article 5, Division II of the Unified Development Code, applies to all development abutting or within 500 feet of State Routes 124 and 53 in unincorporated Jackson County. Special use approval is required for certain automobile-oriented commercial land uses. The overlay district requires the submission of proposed building materials and color for building facades and consistency with certain architectural standards and design guidelines. Therefore, Jackson County has put in place some architectural standards which address the quality of development and character of place, at least along these two state highway corridors.



**New Retail Development at Traditions
along the SR 124 Corridor**

Areas in Need of Aesthetic Improvement

There are no areas which have been identified as needing aesthetic improvement, because the focus here is on unincorporated Jackson County which is still mostly rural. The county does not have older, suburbanized commercial corridors that have suffered from neglect and obsolescence, although the SR 98 (Maysville Road) corridor is identified on a county map of areas requiring special attention due to potentially rapid development (see Chapter 2), and the same has been identified as an area in need of aesthetic improvement in Commerce’s plan.

Sense of Place QCO Grade

As noted above, most of the considerations of this QCO, as literally worded, do not apply to unincorporated Jackson County. However, its overall sense of place includes an agricultural heritage, one that has not been cultivated and formally identified for protection, as the above discussion about historic resources indicates (which is assessed and graded separately). Jackson County has begun to pay attention to the aesthetics of new development, by adopting and implementing quality development regulations and by establishing architectural standards via zoning overlay districts for the SR 53 and SR 124 corridors. While some of the principles of the Sense of Place QCO do not apply to unincorporated Jackson County, it receives a “B-“ (a low good score) grade for its mixed efforts of underemphasizing its agricultural flavor and proactive efforts to promote quality sense of place in certain new developments.

CHARACTER AREAS GENERALLY

Jackson County’s Character-based Plan and Regulations

Jackson County incorporated the character areas approach into its comprehensive plan and Unified Development Code (UDC). Via an amendment to its comprehensive plan in 2003, character areas were established in the county’s plan and shown on the future land use plan map. Furthermore, Jackson County established a consistency requirement, meaning that rezoning of property cannot be approved unless they are consistent with the recommended character area as shown on the future land use plan map.

Intentions to Refine the Character-based Future Land Use Plan Map

It is the intent of Jackson County to thoroughly review, refine, and if necessary change the character areas already adopted. At the time this Community Assessment was released in complete form to the public, the county was also simultaneously engaging the community in community workshops. Specifically, participants of community workshops discussed these character areas in small group settings and made changes on blank base maps of the county to reflect their desired changes to the future land use plan (character area) map. The county specifically desired to allow citizens input on the map as adopted. For these reasons, the preliminary map of character areas contained in this Community Assessment is the character-based future land use plan map adopted by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. The preliminary character areas map is intended to give the community a starting point for consideration of changes and refinements per the community participation program.

Relationship to Rule Requirements and the Community Agenda

Ultimately, the preliminary character areas map will be adopted as a “Future Development Map” per state rules in the “Community Agenda” part of the comprehensive plan. A Future Development Map is based on character more than land use (form more than function), and is not the same thing as a Future Land Use Plan Map. The state’s local planning requirements indicate that a future land use plan map may be prepared but cannot substitute for the future development map. If a local government prepares a Future Land Use Plan Map in addition to a Future Development Map, it is supposed to show future land uses as an “overlay” to the Future Development Map. However, recognizing the practical difficulty of that rule requirement, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs now allows the two maps to be shown separately.

When specified in the Community Agenda, the character area descriptions are required by local planning requirements to include the following; since they are required for the Community Agenda, this Community Assessment conveys those requirements, with the understanding that changes and refinements are likely during the community participation process.

- Written description, pictures, and/or illustrations that make it clear what types, forms; styles and patterns of development are to be encouraged in the area;
- Listing of specific land uses or zoning categories to be allowed in the area;
- Listing of Quality Community Objectives that will be pursued in the area; and
- Identification of implementation measures to achieve desired development patterns.

CONCEPTUALIZING CHARACTER

The data appendix on land use and character has some information that was used to stimulate discussion during early public participation efforts about the county's adopted character-based future land use plan map. Some of that information is summarized here. Also, it was felt that the county, in revising its own character map, should have a better understanding of what adjacent counties and cities in Jackson County have promoted in terms of their own character areas. The discussion below also weaves in some discussion about Jackson County's own character area-based map.

Character is often defined in terms of a particular geography: character may follow a linear "corridor," usually a roadway; or it may be concentrated (or conceptualized to be located) in a "center" of some type, such as a place centered at the intersection of two major roadways. Or, it may simply be some other type of "area" or "neighborhood" that does not follow a linear (corridor) pattern or is not geographically centered on a given place or road intersection. Character areas are almost always appropriately based on a continuum from exurban, to rural, to suburban, to urban, or some variation of that continuum.

Conservation

These character areas are usually termed "conservation" (Arcade, Jackson County, Jefferson) and sometimes "preserve" (Banks County, Barrow County). Generally, these are natural resource areas and the intent is to conserve or preserve them in a more-or-less natural state, allowing or encouraging only those land uses that are compatible with natural resource protection goals and objectives.

Agricultural and Rural

Agricultural character is sometimes distinguished (appropriately) from "rural" areas, as is the case with Jackson County's currently adopted "agricultural preservation" and "rural places" character areas (Jackson County). Most often, however, communities lump together agricultural and rural areas (Banks County, Maysville, Barrow County). Others notice and encourage peculiar "rural residential" (Banks County, Jefferson) or "estate" residential areas (Arcade), thus recognizing that very low- or low-density residential use is predominant. In the case of more urban Athens/Clarke County, it does not have an agricultural area but does have a "rural" character area which follows the fringe of the county, including areas near the Jackson County line.

Neighborhoods (Residential)

Residential areas are often distinguished from one another in terms of their densities. As noted above, residential areas can be very low density (“rural” or “estate”) in nature or they can be “suburban” or “urban” in nature, each being different in terms of overall density. Jackson County has an “urban” residential category.

Also, residential neighborhoods can differ in terms of development characteristics such as street pattern and design, building placement, and existence of or design type of open spaces and amenities. Here, a key difference is the “traditional neighborhood” (most often found in urban areas which in turn are most often found within municipalities; these are not cited here since they generally don’t match anything yet built in unincorporated Jackson County) and “suburban,” or “conventional suburban” (e.g., Barrow County, Jefferson, and Maysville), reflecting design characteristics of conventional residential suburbs (i.e., curvilinear streets ending in cul-de-sacs). Finally, sometimes a timing element is introduced, suggesting that areas are “emerging suburban” (Banks and Barrow) or ready for (or experiencing) “growth.”

Centers

Character is often defined based on a central place, which is most often the intersection of two major roads. Usually, centers are defined as having a mixture of uses, including civic/institutional and others, but almost always including retail and service commercial as the predominant land use in a given center. Similarly, just the same as with neighborhoods, centers can run the full range of rural to urban character, including rural crossroads (e.g., Barrow County), to more urban forms like “town center” (e.g., Arcade). Sometimes, these are simply called “activity center” (e.g., Jefferson). Centers are often given different names to distinguish the scale and size of land uses around the central place, based generally on the market area such a mixed-use center will support. These include centers serving an immediate “neighborhood” (e.g., Jackson County; Athens/Clarke County), “community” activity centers (e.g., Athens/Clarke County, Banks County, Barrow County, and Jackson County), and “regional” (e.g., Athens/Clarke County, Barrow County).

Corridors

As noted above, many character areas follow major roads and highways. Like with some of the character areas already described, corridors can have character ranging from rural (Banks County), scenic rural (Barrow County), to commercial corridors lined with primarily highway-oriented businesses and auto traveler-related services (Arcade, Barrow County). Several communities generalize several road corridors that enter the communities as “gateway” corridors (Arcade, Barrow County, Jackson County, Jefferson) and focus on particular design treatments and guidelines in an effort to improve the appearance of the community to the entering traveler.

Others single out “bypasses” (Banks County, Barrow County, Jefferson) as having particular character or deserving recognition for peculiar land use patterns and issues (or recommended design treatments). Yet others apply the corridor character designation to specific highways or segments of them (e.g., the I-85 commercial corridor in Jefferson and the “Banks Crossing” area along U.S. Highway 441 corridor at Interstate 85 in Banks County). Finally, some define the corridor character area on the basis of the future pattern, calling them “growth” (Banks County) and “transitional” (Barrow County) corridor(s).

Employment and Industry

Most local governments single out their major employment or industrial areas and call them, simply, “industrial” (Barrow County, Maysville, and Jefferson) or “industrial workplace” (Jackson County). In Athens/Clarke County these places are called “manufacturing and distribution centers.” Such areas are dominated by manufacturing and industrial employment, and usually do not have any sort of mixture of uses. Their “character” is mostly large, single-story buildings with heavy or frequent freight transportation.

Special Districts and Others

In some instances there is a need to distinguish special land uses as their own character due to particular impacts or needs, such as is the case with airports (e.g., Barrow County, Jefferson), where surrounding land use needs to be limited due to airport noise impacts and heights of buildings have to be controlled to protect aircraft approach zones. Also, some character area schemes of local governments separately designate large properties according to single-function land use (e.g., Transportation/Communications/Utilities and Public Institutional in Jackson County), given that they really don’t have “character” per se but are large or common enough to be separately identified on the character area/future development map. Other possibilities exist, such as Maysville’s designation of a “potential annexation area.”

CRITIQUE OF JACKSON COUNTY’S EXISTING CHARACTER AREA FRAMEWORK

The original intent was to present Jackson County’s adopted character areas as adopted and then gain community input on the “as adopted” framework. While that is the case, and community participation is ongoing at the time this Community Assessment was first published, there are some concerns and issues with the current framework. The subsections which follow articulate some of those concerns and issues, which will ultimately lead to clarifications and refinements of the existing character area framework, as well as additions and other changes.

Combination of Character Areas and Land Use Districts

While the county’s future land use plan map has several character area districts, it also includes single-function land use-related districts: public-institutional, transportation/communication/utilities, and park/recreation/conservation. Descriptions of the character areas are provided, but the single-function land use districts are not similarly described with regard to intended character.

Inherent Inconsistencies and Conflicts with General Descriptions

The adopted comprehensive plan provides a summary table (“Future Land Use Categories”) which provides a description of the character areas. Then, under the description of future land use patterns, there is a summary of residential land uses and then yet another, more detailed description of the character area later in the chapter. These different levels of description do not perfectly match one another, leading to some questions of interpretation, significant inconsistencies, and potential conflicts.

Identification of Zoning Districts to Implement the Character Areas

The summary table (“Future Land Use Categories”) lists zoning districts that are compatible with, and intended to implement, the county’s character areas. The more detailed descriptions

also do the same. In some cases these descriptions are not consistent, or are unnecessarily confusing, are not mutually exclusive (they overlap in some cases), and/or may not match the descriptions of intended character. As one example, the MH (Manufactured Housing) zoning district is listed as implementing the “rural places” character district, but it allows manufactured home parks which have densities inconsistent with the character area description. The written text indicates that specific requirements of the Unified Development Code control, however, and therefore supersede any inconsistencies.

Unclear Relationship of Planned Development Districts

The summary table “Future Land Use Categories” has a subheading describing the intended land uses within planned developments, but it does not clarify in what instances such planned developments are permitted. The more detailed description does not assist with this question, either.

Other Observations

- Intensive agriculture, such as a poultry farm, is inherently incompatible with residential subdivisions and individual residential lots. The agricultural preservation character area may be too generalized, in that it lumps together active agriculture and large-lot residences. Stated differently, there may be a need for exclusive farm use areas in addition to a more generalized agricultural preservation district that encompasses rural residences, pasture lands, and crop production.
- Recreation and open space designations are still on the map, but now apply only to large forested tracts held in quasi-public ownership and some county parks. A prior version of the plan map included all flood plains.
- The “gateway corridor” character area is not assigned just to corridors, but rather to individual areas unrelated to a corridor, and further, this character area does not necessarily relate to “gateways” or the major entrances to the county.
- The “urban residential” character area applies only in very limited instances, near Jefferson and Commerce. These areas are not served currently by sewer and may not be served in the near future by sanitary sewer, even though sewer is a requirement for this character area.

CHAPTER 6 INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Infrastructure is an overused buzzword, but it captures all of the underlying systems that are needed to support the built environment. Planning is about recognizing and anticipating the needs for and demands on community facilities and services as the area increases its population and employment. These new pressures of growth create a need for additional fire stations, more schools, expanded water systems, larger sewer treatment plants, more government personnel in various departments, and expansion of many other different services like mental health, social services, libraries, and hospitals. A prior chapter on people and preparing for growth is related to the discussion in this chapter.

A good plan puts some science behind the observations about future growth and generates reliable forecasts of how these facilities and services will need to be expanded as growth occurs. In our preoccupation with planning new facilities and services, one must not forget about the needs (and considerable costs) associated with maintaining the facilities that exist in the county today. Sustainability means making smart choices about investing in new infrastructure but also in maintaining or replacing existing facilities. Here, when mistakes are made, they are among the most costly a community can make, and such mistakes are largely irreversible. Making efficient and smart decisions about capital investments is integral to the success of any community's comprehensive plan.

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Law Enforcement

Jackson County has planned ahead with regard to the sheriff's department and all court services. Facilities have been recently improved, or are in the process of being improved. Jackson County's sheriff serves as the police force for Talmo and Nicholson. The Jackson County Jail, funded with SPLOST III at a cost of approximately \$33 million, consists of 125,000 square feet and will house 424 inmates, jail support services, and Sheriff's administrative space. Law enforcement staffing will undoubtedly need to expand during the planning horizon.

Fire and Rescue

Fire and rescue services rely on volunteers; this is a serious issue as the county continues to witness additional development. At issue is the extent of time Jackson County can rely on all-volunteer fire service delivered by 10 fire districts in the unincorporated areas. Jackson County has done well to serve the municipal and special districts, including some support for the firefighters association and in constructing a new fire training facility on the county's campus. Jackson County also operates a fire brigade through the Correctional Institute which provides backup support to all fire departments in the county.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services in Jackson County are provided by six full-time stations on a countywide basis, including all municipalities. Stations are located in Commerce, Jefferson, Braselton/Hoschton, Nicholson, Plainview, and South Jackson. There is a perceived need for an additional EMS unit in West Jackson, plus weather siren coverage in that area. And as

development continues and demands increase, there will be additional needs to expand facilities and coverage areas.

911 Communications Center/Services

This is a countywide service. The Jackson County Public Safety Communications Center was established in 1991 by referendum of the voters of Jackson County. The center serves as central dispatch for all public safety units within Jackson County. All communications of public safety agencies are directed through Jackson County's primary public safety answering point, thus serving the Sheriff, municipal police departments, volunteer fire departments, volunteer rescue units, emergency medical services, animal control, and the county marshal. In 2006, the Board of Commissioners approved an upgrade of equipment in the communications center, the first major upgrade since 1991.

Emergency Management and Homeland Security

Jackson County's Emergency Management Agency is responsible for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to emergencies and disasters throughout Jackson County and its municipalities.

Animal Control

Jackson County provides animal control services to the unincorporated areas of Jackson County and in some of the cities in Jackson County to differing degrees based on service agreements. This service is managed by the Public Development Department. Jackson County employs animal control officers to capture and control animals and contracts with an animal care facility for the housing and care of animals. The county is currently considering provision of its own animal shelter.

Courts

On a countywide basis, Jackson County provides Superior Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, Probate Court and Juvenile Court to all citizens of Jackson County including the municipalities. All cities except for Nicholson and Talmo have their own municipal courts. Jackson County provides court services for all law violations committed within the cities of Nicholson and Talmo.

UTILITY-TYPE OPERATIONS

Water

The Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority (JCWSA) owns and operates a water and sewerage system that primarily serves the unincorporated area of Jackson County, Georgia. The vast majority of the water supplied by the JCWSA is purchased from the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority (UOBWA) from its Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant, which is located immediately adjacent to its Bear Creek Reservoir located on Georgia Route 330 in southwest Jackson County. The water treatment plant is owned by Barrow, Jackson and Oconee counties. Jackson County's ownership share of the reservoir is 25 percent and its share of the water treatment plant is 44 percent. Authority water supplies are supplemented by water purchases from the City of Commerce, most often only when water main breaks or other unforeseen circumstances occur.

Most of unincorporated Jackson County is served with water lines with the exception of the eastern portion, along the SR 334 corridor, which consists mostly of agricultural and undeveloped land. Commerce, Jefferson, Hoschton, Maysville, and Nicholson (through its Water Authority) provide water distribution service for their respective service areas. Arcade will have a shared water distribution service district within Arcade, recognizing the county authority's current water distribution services. Major issues associated with water supply and distribution include planning for a new water supply reservoir, possible unification and consolidation of water systems, and plans for extending existing water service areas.

Sanitary Sewer

Jackson County through the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority has a wastewater permit and provides sanitary sewer services in parts of unincorporated areas of the county and the cities of Pendergrass and Talmo. Presently, the service area is limited mostly to two areas of the county – a residential area including the Traditions planned community, and the industrial area north of Interstate 85 above Jefferson's city limits.

The cities of Commerce, Jefferson, Braselton, Hoschton, and Maysville provide wastewater collection services in their respective service areas. Nicholson through the Nicholson Water Authority has a designated sewer service area but currently relies on septic systems. Arcade has also maintained interest in developing its own sanitary sewer services and applied for a wastewater permit, as it currently relies exclusively on septic tanks. Issues with regard to the sewer system including planning for additional treatment capacity, possible unification and consolidation of sewer systems, and plans for extending sewer service areas. A question in the community questionnaire asks whether citizens support countywide sewer service, and the results of that questionnaire will help inform that question.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

Jackson County does not operate a landfill. Solid waste is disposed of at the R & B Landfill operated by Waste Management in Banks County. Long-term contracts are in place, and Waste Management has provided the County with a Letter of Capacity Assurance until 2013. Jackson County has one transfer station and two compactor sites. Plans are underway for refurbishment or replacement of the building(s) at the transfer station site. Georgia's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 requires local governments to develop a plan for reducing the amount of solid waste going into landfills and other disposal facilities.

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

Jackson County Parks and Recreation

Jackson County provides parks and recreation facilities at five locations: Hurricane Shoals Park, Lamar Murphy Park, Sell's Mill Park, West Jackson Park (Hoschton) and East Jackson Park (Nicholson). Jackson County owns the Pat Bell Conference Center located at 7020 Highway 82 Spur and is generally considered to be a part of the Hurricane Shoals Park complex. In addition, the county is in the process of developing an access point on the Bear Creek Reservoir.

According to the FY 2009 county budget document, there is a need to provide greenways and trail systems throughout the county, as well as at individual parks, particularly Sells Mill Park, which is presently underdeveloped. Input from the public during the course of preparing this

community assessment revealed a consensus that Jackson County does not have enough parks and needs to provide more facilities for not only youth but the elderly as well. There is also a great need for indoor facilities; with the exception of the old gymnasium at Center Park (now in private hands) and facilities at county schools, there are no indoor recreation facilities available for use by county residents. Residents during the community workshops held in September 2009 also suggested that the county build a cultural arts facility. They also suggested that the county pursue a YMCA for youth activities.

To address growing needs for parks and recreation in Jackson County, a bond referendum for \$15 million in parks and recreation improvements was held in February 2008, but it was not passed by the citizenry. Though the parks and recreation bond referendum failed, the list of needs is retained for future capital improvement programs; furthermore, as needs mount, however, a new referendum for parks and recreation may be warranted.

Senior Center

Jackson County provides senior center services on a countywide basis. It operates one senior center located at 219 Darnell Road; the building was constructed in 1981 and consists of 11,220 square feet. In 2008, a CDBG grant was received to completely renovate the senior center. One complication with the renovation is it will cause temporary displacement. The I W Davis Facility, which was recently purchased by Jackson County, may be used for a temporary home for the senior center.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Jackson County Courthouse opened for business in August, 2004. It has five courtrooms, two jury rooms, two public restrooms on each of its three floors, five elevators, and a full basement. It houses all judicial offices, including Superior Court, Probate Court, Juvenile Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Clerk of Court's Office. It also houses the Jackson County Historic Society, Information Technology, Sheriff/Courthouse Security and a law library. The county has a large property complex for the addition of facilities in the future – participants during the community workshops raised a question of what the county plans to do with the land that is currently banked at the county's major facility campus. It has also been suggested by citizens that the county should use the property it has, before buying any more properties.

The County Administration Building, at 67 Athens Street in Jefferson, was constructed in the 1930s and consists of approximately 26,000 square feet. It is by no means considered adequate to continue in its current role of housing county administrative offices, including the public development department, GIS, and tax assessment offices among others.

GROUNDS, PUBLIC WORKS, AND TRANSPORTATION

Buildings and Grounds

The main office for Buildings and Grounds is located at 509 Curtis Spence Drive and consists of 750 square feet; it was constructed in 1995. Other buildings at the buildings and grounds office include a shop building and a grounds shed, among others.

Road and Bridge Construction and Maintenance

Jackson County provides road and bridge construction and maintenance services through a combination of in-house, consultant, and contractor service providers for all county-maintained roads and bridges, some of which are inside the city limits. The county's Service Delivery Strategy contains a list of roads that are within cities and towns that are county-maintained roads. Cities are responsible for all city streets within their respective jurisdictions; however, they may be eligible for county maintenance through intergovernmental agreement under certain conditions. The Service Delivery Strategy calls for establishment of countywide road and bridge construction standards, uniform road classifications, and countywide transportation master planning.

Fleet Maintenance

The county's fleet maintenance division is located at 170 Fowler Drive. The main building consists of 8,288 square feet, constructed in 1975. At this facility, there is also a tire storage building and a paint shop.

PLANNING AND ZONING-RELATED FUNCTIONS

Planning and Zoning

Jackson County has an appointed Planning Commission which serves the unincorporated area only. Zoning administration and development plan review are provided by the Department of Public Development which is housed in the Jackson County Administration Building in Jefferson. During the process of developing this community assessment, at least one participant suggested that the county staff should be more open to working with individual property owners on zoning matters, as opposed to simply telling them that they cannot do what they want with their land.

Geographic Information Systems

Jackson County has a GIS Department which serves the mapping needs of all county departments, especially the tax assessor, as well the municipalities in Jackson County. GIS services represent an opportunity for intergovernmental joint service delivery by the county's GIS Department.

Building Inspections

Jackson County provides building inspections in the unincorporated area and also provides inspections for the Jackson County portion of Maysville. Building inspections functions are provided by the Department of Public Development.

HEALTH, EDUCATION, WELFARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Public and Environmental Health

The Jackson County Health Department provides services on a countywide basis. There are two public health facilities. The primary health department office is located in the Jefferson area (275 General Jackson Drive) and consists of 7,140 square feet in a single building constructed in 1991. A second public health office is located in the "Jackson Campus," a shopping center

within the city limits of Commerce (623 South Elm Street) which was purchased by Jackson County (it consists of 67,349 square feet). These two health clinics provide the following basic services: health checkups, immunizations, WIC Supplemental Food Program, nutrition education, family planning, and screening for STDs, HIV, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B.

The Health Department also has a separate Environmental Health office located at 260 Lee Street in Jefferson. The building was constructed in 1958 and consists of 3,094 square feet.

The comprehensive plan in 1998 identified the long-term need to provide more convenient health services to residents of southern Jackson County. Otherwise, south Jackson residents have to drive several miles to Jefferson or Commerce for public health assistance. Though recognizing limitations to funding, the 1998 plan also indicated that health-related transportation was needed, such as to and from the BJC Medical Center. During the public participation process of preparing this community assessment, participants suggested there were needs for non-hospital emergency health facilities, particularly in West Jackson County.

Hospitals

BJC Medical Center is located in Commerce. BJC Medical Center consists of 90 licensed hospital beds, 167 nursing facility beds, and a staff of over 400 medical professionals that provide a range of in-patient, out-patient and long-term nursing care services including 24-hour emergency services, surgical services, obstetric services, laboratory services, radiology services, physical therapy services, outpatient clinics, and other services. There is a growing consensus that Jackson County is in need of a full-service hospital and more health facilities in the Braselton-Hoschton area of the county.

Public Schools

Unlike most counties that have countywide public school systems, there are three independent public school systems in Jackson County: the county system, and city school systems in Commerce and Jefferson. The county's school system has increased in terms of total number of students in recent years. Given the population growth anticipated in the county, demands on the county's public school system will undoubtedly increase. Jefferson's total school enrollment has increased by roughly 100 students in the past few years. Enrollment in Commerce's school system, in contrast, has remained relatively steady in recent years. The comprehensive plan steering committee noted that each of the three school systems is required to prepare five-year plans for facilities, and that those facility plans need to be reviewed and incorporated into the county's comprehensive plan.

Libraries

The Piedmont Regional Library System provides library services to Banks, Barrow, and Jackson Counties. All of the libraries in Jackson County are affiliated with the regional system in what is considered a loose confederation. While operating under a loose confederation within the Piedmont Regional Library System, the seven libraries of Jackson County are independent of each other. Unlike most other library systems in Georgia, the Regional Agency does not have direct line authority over the seven libraries in Jackson; instead, the libraries report directly to their individual city governments.

The following cities have their own library facilities and provide paid and volunteer staff: Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Maysville, Nicholson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. There are full-

service libraries in Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Maysville, and Nicholson, while Pendergrass and Talmo libraries are characterized as book-service outlets. The libraries in Jackson County are supported primarily by their individual cities, with some support by the county, mostly through in-kind payment of regional membership fees. As funding has continued to grow over the years from the municipalities, the county levels have not increased. The libraries have undergone a dramatic increase in use over the past several years. By 2011 the Commerce Library will be improved with the 5,000 square foot planned addition. A significant issue of funding equity between the municipalities and the county is described in the technical appendix of this community assessment (see also “issues and opportunities” in this chapter).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce is the primary coordinator and promoter of economic development. Jackson County’s Industrial Development Authority owns industrial parks in the incorporated areas of the City of Commerce (East Jackson Industrial Park) and the City of Jefferson (Central Jackson Industrial park). In partnership with the Industrial Development Authority, the Board of Commissioners in 2004 issued \$16 million in bonds for economic development road projects.

AREAS OUTPACING THE AVAILABILITY OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES

See Chapter 2 of this summary report, specifically the map of areas requiring special attention. Generally, the area most undersupplied at this time with important public facilities and services is the West Jackson area. Participants in community workshops in support of this assessment identified a number of facilities that are needed now or will be needed in the future in Western Jackson County, including but not limited to health facilities, EMS, weather warning sirens, better fire service coverage, and more parks, among others.

FACILITY MASTER PLANS

Public Safety Master Plan

The 2007 Partial Plan Update called for preparation of a public safety master plan and indicated its preparation was ongoing. Such a master plan will provide more detailed assessments and identification of future facility needs.

Water and Sewer Master Plan

The 2007 Partial Plan Update indicates that water and sewer master planning was ongoing at that time. Clearly, the master plans for water and sewer facilities need to be coordinated with this comprehensive plan update, in particular to ensure that land use plans and facility extension plans are compatible with one another. Phase II of a water study was authorized in 2008 at a cost of approximately \$294,000. With respect to water and fire protection, there is an identified need to install additional fire hydrants throughout the county for improved fire protection.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

In 2002, the county completed a System-Wide Recreation Master Plan, 2003-2012. That plan needs updating to account for several new initiatives and improvements made, as described earlier in this chapter.

School System Five-Year Facility Plans

The Jackson County comprehensive plan steering committee suggested that the comprehensive plan needs to include a review of the five-year facility plans for each of the three school systems and acknowledge/integrate those plans into the comprehensive plan.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

The Board of Commissioners, during the FY 2007 budget hearings, were apprised and agreed to the need to establish a Capital Improvement Program in order to address restoration, maintenance and preventative maintenance of the County's facilities. Staff has acquired comprehensive long-range planning software that will facilitate systematic CIP planning. Jackson County did not implement a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) in FY 2008, but made great strides in collecting data for use in formulating future capital budgets. The CIP is expected to be a planning guide for future improvements to the county's infrastructure and other capital items that are in excess of \$5,000 with an economic useful life of one (1) year or more. The CIP expects to use the findings from a number of interrelated plans – comprehensive plan, transportation plan, and parks and facilities master plan – to assist in developing an orderly schedule for implementing projects. The most current fiscal year of the CIP will become a component of the total annual budget, and will reflect the mission “to maintain cost effective programs and services while focusing on preserving and enhancing the quality of life that is enjoyed by all Jackson County citizens” (FY 2009 budget).

Furthermore, the capital improvement programming effort would achieve two goals espoused by citizens during the community workshops held in September 2009 – optimal use of existing facilities to maximize their potential use, and purchase in advance of land for schools and fire stations (also called “land banking”).

CHAPTER 7 MOVING PEOPLE AND GOODS AROUND

People have to get around to work, school, shop, and visit friends and family. We all need various goods to sustain ourselves and our families, and that means movement of those goods by bulk, in trucks along our highways or along rail lines. While goods in Jackson County must be moved by truck along roads or perhaps along railroads, people have some other choices. The car is king in Jackson County when it comes to mobility. There are currently no other viable choices for most people and households, except perhaps for some folks living inside the cities of Jackson County.

While there are few people with a choice in terms of how they get around, we have to begin thinking about alternatives. If Jackson County continues to develop under the assumption that it can rely exclusively on the automobile, it will wind up being quite sorry if current trends of oil depletion and gasoline price inflation continue, as they are expected to do.

While looking ahead to better options about getting around, Jackson County must ensure that its roads and other transportation systems will meet future needs and demands as the community grows. This means an emphasis on where new roads should go, what intersections need improvement, and which highways will need to be widened.

A technical appendix is provided which summarizes major aspects of the transportation system. That appendix and this Chapter rely heavily on the Countywide Roads Plan (2008-2028), which is in the process of being finalized as a part of this Community Assessment. Upon submission of this Community Assessment for regional and state review, that document is to be submitted along with the Community Assessment as a more detailed inventory and assessment of the road system.

TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

Transportation can be divided into air travel, water transportation, and many forms of ground transportation. Air travel includes not only general aviation airports but private landing strips, military posts with air operations, and even helicopter landing facilities. Water transportation includes port facilities, marinas, ferry transportation, and other considerations.

Ground transportation is usually the central focus of local transportation planning efforts. It includes highways, streets, and roads (which are themselves multi-modal in nature and include cars, trucks, bicycles, and pedestrians in addition to buses or public transit), railroads, multi-use pathways, off-street bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. Ground transportation can be further divided into “private” and “public,” the latter including (in addition to public streets) public transportation systems such as rural public transit.

JACKSON COUNTY AIRPORT

Jackson County operates its own airport and has an airport department and airport manager to oversee the airport. Jackson County received an AIRGeorgia grant for \$2,927,923 to complete a 5,000-foot runway expansion in order to accommodate larger aircraft such as corporate jets. That \$6.1 million project was considered vital to sustain economic viability and competitiveness for Jackson, Banks, and Madison Counties in the Northeast Georgia Region as corporate businesses are seeking out this area for their facilities. Plans have also been readied for the

addition of a parallel taxiway that is essential for improving safety during takeoff and landings. A new Airport Master Plan is being completed as part of the Runway Extension Project. The proposed runway extension to 5,000 feet will dramatically increase the number of based aircraft and the demand for additional aircraft hangar space at the airport. As a result of that expansion and for other reasons, the airport has a number of other capital project needs that have been identified in addition to the runway expansion.

RAILROADS

Jackson County is served by two railroads. CSX Transportation has a rail line extending from Athens to Gainesville that traverses western Jackson County. Norfolk Southern has a line extending from Lula to Athens that passes through the east side of Jackson County. These are very light traffic density lines serving local industries along the lines. These lines do not carry through or overhead railroad traffic. There are no existing switching yards or other major related facilities located in Jackson County. Two industrial parks currently have rail access: Walnut Fork Industrial Park and Commerce 85 Business Park.

TRUCKING FACILITIES

A number of trucking facilities are located primarily within the Interstate 85 corridor. These are inventoried in the I-85 Corridor Study prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Jackson County's Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program has been included within the General Fund as a department of the Health and Welfare function. It continues to experience increases in demands. In FY 2009, Jackson County shifted one part-time driver to full-time status based on high demand for the service. The mission of the Jackson County Transport System is to provide a low cost transportation alternative to the citizens of Jackson County. The department has three full-time positions (FY 2009 Budget).

The program logged 5,200 hours of bus service operation in 2007 and expects that number to increase to 5,400 in FY 2009. It served 9,284 passengers in 2007 and that number is expected to increase to 9,800 in FY 2009. Jackson County recently agreed to prepare a public transportation plan to be spearheaded by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MODES

Jackson County, as a still rural county does not have many facilities to serve pedestrians and has few if any bicycle facilities. The overall lack of facilities means that existing bicycle users and pedestrians largely rely on the local road network.

There are some sidewalks along state highways in the unincorporated area, but by and large pedestrian travel facilities are confined to the municipalities. Jackson County also requires that new streets have sidewalks, but in the case of subdivisions, sidewalks have not been installed except along the frontage of each lot as it is developed. Therefore, even in newer developed areas, the sidewalk system is spotty and insufficient. As a result, the county does not have a good inventory of sidewalks.

The Northeast Georgia Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2005) determines several routes suitable for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and it identifies several improvements specific to

Jackson County. One of the most significant recommendations of that plan is the development of a greenway along the North Oconee River from the Athens-Clarke County line north to Deadwyler Road.

Planning for improvement of cross-county greenway trails is furthered considerably by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center's (2008) "Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia". That study evaluates possible routes for greenways, including Interstate 85, transmission line easements, railroads, and riparian corridors. It is useful in future planning efforts to improve on the lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Jackson County. The map containing recommendations of possible projects in Jackson County is provided in the transportation technical appendix of this Community Assessment.

AREAS OUTPACING THE AVAILABILITY OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Areas outpacing road infrastructure are shown on a map of Areas Requiring Special Attention in Chapter 2.

ASSESSMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES QCO

“Transportation Alternatives Objective: Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged.”

The Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (now Regional Commission), in its year 2005 Regionwide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, articulates with precision the extent to which the northeast Georgia region outside Athens currently does not succeed in meeting this QCO objective. The following paragraphs are excerpted from that plan (they also appear in the technical assessment of this Community Appendix).

Lack of Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Bicycling and walking are the most basic and efficient forms of transportation and were once perceived as an important mode of transportation. Both are healthy, low-impact modes of travel that provide low-cost transportation alternatives for all segments of society, including financially disadvantaged, children, elderly, and disabled populations. Many of the trips people make on a daily basis are short enough to be accomplished on a bicycle, on foot, or by wheelchair.

Despite the importance of pedestrian and bicycle travel, the overwhelming majority of transportation improvements are dominated by auto-centric projects. Today, motor vehicles dominate the transportation system, and cycling and walking have been largely relegated to recreational status. Because of this increased automobile dependency, bicycling and walking are now perceived as an increasingly dangerous mode of transportation.

Increased use of bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation requires concentrations of populations within proximity to major trip generators. The majority of development in the northeast Georgia region, outside of Athens, has been low-density, single-family residential development that has been constructed in isolation from the types of uses (schools, employment, shopping) that generate bicycle and pedestrian activity.

Overall, the current environment is generally considered unsafe for non-motorized travelers, aside from walking or cycling within residential neighborhoods, because of high travel speeds on the majority of major roads and the lack of adequate shoulder space to accommodate additional users. The general perception that cyclists and pedestrians do not belong on the road and the lack of financial commitments to improving the nonmotorized travel environment has greatly contributed to an overall lack of safety for existing users, which in turn, has prevented any nominal increase in the use of alternative modes of transportation (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005. Northeast Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan).

Transportation Alternatives QCO Grade

The above references would suggest Jackson County should receive a failing grade, along with the rest of the northeast Georgia region outside of Athens. However, since Jackson County is in company with many other counties with the same type of conditions, it receives an average or "C" grade from the reviewer. Though facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists are largely missing, there are some requirements in place for improvement. No matter how much Jackson County supports improvement of these modes, financial limitations and the external environment of rural and suburban places make its limitations very difficult to overcome in the short-term and even during the longer-range planning horizon.

CHAPTER 8 WORKING WITHIN THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Residents and businesses in Jackson County are a part of a larger community – the region. People may have their own allegiance to the county, but they recognize that Athens is just down the road from here, and increasingly the Atlanta metropolitan growth machine is nipping at the western edges of the county. Just like the United States can no longer consider itself isolated in a growing international world economy, it is increasingly true that Jackson County cannot operate without communication, cooperation, or at minimum coordination with the regional agencies established to plan ahead, protect resources, and serve the needs of our people. Similarly, planning problems cross the county’s boundaries and therefore necessitate collaboration with other adjacent counties in the region. Sometimes, what may be in the “parochial” or local interests of the county may not be best for the northeast Georgia (Athens) region as a whole.

And let’s not overlook the fact that within Jackson County’s borders, there are nine municipalities, not to mention various other entities like school boards, water and sewer authorities, fire districts, special service providers, and other quasi-public or even private organizations, all trying to do the best they can to plan and serve Jackson County in their respective functional areas. At minimum, a framework is needed to ensure that all of these service and facility providers know what every other entity is trying to do, and that they are working together toward desired ends without duplication or conflict. More importantly, the culture of Jackson County’s past practices needs to change in favor of more proactive, rather than reactive, intergovernmental coordination.

SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIES

In 1997, the State passed the Service Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). This law mandates the cooperation of local governments with regard to service delivery issues. Each county was required to initiate development of a service delivery strategy between July 1, 1997, and January 1, 1998. Service delivery strategies must include an identification of services provided by various entities, assignment of responsibility for provision of services and the location of service areas, a description of funding sources, and an identification of contracts, ordinances, and other measures necessary to implement the service delivery strategy.

Changes to service arrangements described in a service delivery strategy require an update of the service delivery strategy and an agreement by all parties. Because of this provision, it is likely that the need for intergovernmental coordination with regard to service delivery strategies will continue into the future. In addition, service delivery strategies must be updated every ten years. The Service Delivery Strategy Act also mandates that land use plans of different local governments be revised to avoid conflicts.

ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL COOPERATION AND SOLUTIONS QCOs

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

“Regional Solutions Objective: 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.”

These two QCOs are so similar that they are assessed together. They both refer to “regional” and “shared” needs. They both suggest collaboration, and there is not much if any difference between the two. Here, this QCO is considered both within the context of other counties in the region but also within Jackson County’s borders (i.e., cooperation with municipalities and special districts).

Cooperation Regionally and with Adjacent Counties

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission is a service provider and important player in terms of planning in the northeast Georgia region, including Jackson County. Historically, Jackson County has participated well with the regional commission and has cooperated with its various regional efforts. One example of this is the Regional Water Resources Study (2004).

The Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority is an intergovernmental partnership for water supply. Athens-Clarke, Jackson, Barrow, and Oconee Counties own a share of the Bear Creek Reservoir and its water treatment plant. This is a prime example of regional cooperation for water supply.

One example of a regional cooperative effort that has not yet been addressed by Jackson County is the recommendation of the Northeast Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2005) that multi-jurisdictional greenways be established, including along the North Oconee River.

Cooperation within Jackson County

The comprehensive plan adopted in 1998, included Jackson County and all of the cities within the county, with the exception of the City of Maysville which participated in the Banks County comprehensive plan. During this round of comprehensive planning, all municipalities in Jackson County elected to complete their own comprehensive plans, more or less without active participation of the county.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement (in effect the police force) for the Cities of Talmo and Nicholson. Mutual aid agreements exist between Jackson County and all municipalities, effective in 1999 according to the Service Delivery Strategy. Therefore, Jackson County has cooperated with the public safety needs of small municipalities that have elected not to provide their own police services.

Jackson County, in its partial plan update prepared in 2007, identified some significant deficiencies in terms of intergovernmental coordination. It indicated that there was little or no interaction between the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority, the Jackson County Public Development Department, and municipalities. It indicates further that there was currently limited communication or joint action planning between the county and other entities.

Jackson County has participated in a “sphere of influence” program where it notifies municipalities of pending rezoning and land use activities when they are located close to municipal boundaries.

Certain services are provided within Jackson County on a fragmented basis. Three key examples are schools (three public systems), fire districts (ten districts plus two municipal fire departments) and libraries (a collection of municipal libraries under the loose federation of a

regional library system). Because of this fragmentation, Jackson County may be less effective than other counties in terms of providing the most efficient service and facilities possible.

Regional Cooperation and Solutions QCOs Grades

The prior analysis reveals that there are some significant positives in terms of Jackson County's efforts to cooperate and coordinate services on a regional basis, and within the boundaries of the county itself. However, there are also some acknowledged weaknesses in terms of communication and coordination, particularly with regard to service providers. A fragmented system of fire districts and municipal libraries (within the framework of a regional system), as well as three public school systems, indicate challenges which lie ahead. An overall score is difficult to assign, but the reviewer gives the county a "B-" (low good) for these QCOs – it is clearly trying but faces institutional arrangements that make it more difficult to coordinate.

GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS

The following terms have been defined to increase reader understanding of this document. With regard to some terms, there is not a consensus in the planning profession on how they can be defined.

Affordable Housing: Housing that has a sale price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that may occupy middle-, moderate-, or low-income housing. In the case of for-sale units, housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance and condominium or association fees, if any, constitute no more than 28 (or 30) percent of such gross annual household income for a household of the size which may occupy the unit in question. In the case of dwelling units for rent, housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of such gross annual income for a household of the size that may occupy the unit in question.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.

Buildout: A theoretical condition or imagined future that assumes development occurs on all available vacant lands at densities and intensities according to the future land use plan map, or allowed by current zoning, or both. Buildout is typically quantified by assigning a land use to each vacant parcel to be developed and multiplying the acreage of vacant land by the units per acre (residential) or floor-area ratio to determine additional housing units and square footage of non-residential development.

Capital Improvement: An improvement with a useful life of ten years or more, by new construction or other action, which increases the service capacity of a public facility.

Capital Improvements Element: A component of a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq. which sets out projected needs for system improvements during a planning horizon established in the comprehensive plan, a schedule of capital improvements that will meet the anticipated need for system improvements, and a description of anticipated funding sources for each required improvement.

Character Area: A specific geographic area within the community that: has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor; has potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern); or requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.). Each character area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community vision.

Character Area Map: A map showing character areas. Local planning requirements require a "preliminary" character area map be provided in the community assessment report. The

Community Agenda is required to contain a character area map, which is a version of the preliminary character area map that is refined during the community participation program implementation process.

Community Agenda: The portion of the comprehensive plan that provides guidance for future decision-making about the community, prepared with adequate input from stakeholders and the general public. It includes: (1) a community vision for the future physical development of the community, expressed in the form of a map indicating unique character areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns; (2) a list of issues and opportunities identified by the community for further action; and (3) an implementation program that will help the community realize its vision for the future and address the identified issues and opportunities.

Community Assessment: The portion of the comprehensive plan that is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the community prepared without extensive direct public participation. It includes: (1) a list of potential issues and opportunities the community may wish to take action to address, (2) evaluation of community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with Quality Community Objectives; (3) analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development of the community; and (4) data and information to substantiate these evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities. The product of the Community Assessment must be a concise and informative report (such as an executive summary), to be used to inform decision-making by stakeholders during development of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a formula basis for entitlement communities, by the state Department of Community Affairs for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Community Participation Program: The portion of the comprehensive plan that describes the local government's program for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

Comprehensive Plan: A 20-year plan by a county or municipality covering such county or municipality and including three components: a Community Assessment, a Community Participation Program, and a Community Agenda. The comprehensive plan must be prepared pursuant to the local planning requirements for preparation of comprehensive plans and for implementation of comprehensive plans, established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in accordance with O.C.G.A 50-8-7.1(b) and 50-8-7.2.

Corridor: An area of land, typically along a linear route, containing land uses and transportation systems influenced by the existence of that route.

Future Land Use Plan Map: A map showing long-term future land uses desired in the community. Such a map is "optional" in the local planning requirements. A future land use plan map will be prepared and made a part of the Community Agenda. The future land use plan map is different from the character area map, in that it provides specific recommendations for future land uses and generally provides detail at the parcel level.

Infill: Development that occurs on vacant, skipped-over, bypassed, or underused lots in otherwise built-up sites or areas.

Local Historic Preservation Ordinance: An ordinance that identifies procedures for creating local historic districts and administering the review of building renovations or alterations to properties located within the district. It typically establishes a historic preservation commission that is charged with the review of development proposals within historic districts.

Mixed-Income Housing: Housing for people with a broad range of incomes on the same site, development, or immediate neighborhood.

National Register of Historic Places: The federal government's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation, documented and evaluated according to uniform standards established by the National Park Service, which administers the program.

Overlay District: A defined geographic area that encompasses one or more underlying zoning districts and that imposes additional requirements above those required by the underlying zoning district. An overlay district can be coterminous with existing zoning districts or contain only parts of one or more such districts.

Projection: A prediction of future conditions that will occur if the assumptions inherent in the projection technique prove true.

Qualified Local Government: A county or municipality that: adopts and maintains a comprehensive plan in conformity with the local planning requirements; establishes regulations consistent with its comprehensive plan and with the local planning requirements; and does not fail to participate in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' mediation or other means of resolving conflicts in a manner in which, in the judgment of the Department, reflects a good faith effort to resolve any conflict.

Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria: Those standards and procedures with respect to natural resources, the environment, and vital areas of the state established and administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, including, but not limited to, criteria for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains and protected river corridors.

Service Delivery Strategy: The intergovernmental arrangement among city governments, the county government, and other affected entities within the same county for delivery of community services, developed in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy Law. A local government's existing Strategy must be updated concurrent with the comprehensive plan update. To ensure consistency between the comprehensive plan and the agreed upon Strategy: (1) the services to be provided by the local government, as identified in the comprehensive plan, cannot exceed those identified in the agreed upon strategy and (2) the service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by the local government must be consistent between the plan and Strategy.

Stakeholder: Someone (or any agency or group) with a "stake," or interest, in the issues being addressed.

Starter Housing: Generally, housing that is affordable for first-time homebuyers to own. The term usually refers to detached, single-family dwellings, though it is not necessarily limited in

that respect. This term may also include attached single-family and fee simple townhomes and condominiums as applicable.

State Planning Recommendations: The supplemental guidance provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to assist communities in preparing plans and addressing the local planning requirements. The plan preparers and the community must review these recommendations where referenced in the planning requirements in order to determine their applicability or helpfulness to the community's plan.

Short-Term Work Program: That portion of the Implementation Program that lists the specific actions to be undertaken annually by the local government over the upcoming five years to implement the comprehensive plan.

Vision: A written statement that is intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.”

Visioning: A planning process through which a community creates a shared vision for its future.

Source: Compiled by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., from various sources, including regulations prepared by the same firm, Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *A Planners Dictionary* (Michael Davidson and Fay Dolnick, Planning Advisory Service Report No. 521/522, 2004), and *Planning and Urban Design Standards*, 2006, by American Planning Association and John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The quality of life in a given community depends on maintaining existing facilities and adding facility and service capacity in order to continue growing and developing. Without adequate facilities, such as roads, water, sewer, schools, parks, etc., private development will not be possible. The provision of facilities is understandably complex, and the provision of facilities can take several years to plan, design, construct, and operate.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an inventory of the community facilities and services serving Jackson County and assess their adequacy. The information contained in this chapter will assist the county in coordinating the planning of public facilities and services with new development and as the population and employment of the county increases.

In this assessment, facilities and services are grouped generally into eight categories. There is some overlap among the categories in some instances, and arguments could be made that one particular facility or service belongs under a different category than the one assigned. However, the classifications represent typical organizational arrangements by county and/or municipal departments.

1. Public Safety Facilities and Services
2. Utility-Type Operations
3. Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Facilities
4. General Administrative Facilities and Services
5. Grounds, Public Works, and Transportation
6. Planning and Zoning-Related Functions
7. Health, Education, Welfare and Social Services
8. Economic and Community Development

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Law Enforcement and Jail

The Jackson County Sheriff's Offices moved its Administrative operations, Uniform Patrol, Criminal Investigations, and Central Records to the new Jackson County Jail located at 555 General Jackson Drive.

According to the FY 2009 county budget, the current jail population is housed in an old facility that is in constant need of repair. The same facility also houses the administrative services of the Sheriff's Office, the Patrol Division Dispatch, and the Records Division. The facility is only large enough to contain Jail Operations. Therefore, this necessitates the construction of a new facility to house the Administrative Services and Patrol Division.

Municipal police departments exist in Arcade, Braselton, Commerce, Hoschton, Jefferson, Maysville, and Pendergrass. The Jackson County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement (in effect the police force) for the unincorporated part of the county, as well as for the Cities of Talmo and Nicholson. Mutual aid agreements exist between Jackson County and all municipalities, effective in 1999 according to the Service Delivery Strategy.

Jackson County provides jail services on a countywide basis. The Sheriff's Department operates the county jail which is located at 268 Curtis Spence Drive (next to the Correctional Institution). It was initially built in 1953 but renovated in 1989 with a capacity of 140 beds. In 1996, 25 beds were added to the jail, physical security was improved, and additional monitoring equipment was installed. The building inventory shows that the jail currently consists of 18,828 square feet. The main corrections building at 255 Curtis Spence Drive was constructed in 1987 and consists of 27,512 square feet. Through SPLOST IV funding, a new jail is being constructed (see capital improvements at the end of this chapter)

All municipalities in Jackson County send their prisoners to the Jackson County Jail. Municipalities pay lodging fees as appropriate per housing and booking contracts (last revised in 2003), and Jackson County has such contracts with Maysville, Pendergrass, Commerce, Hoschton, and Jefferson.

The Jackson County Correctional Institution is to be moved to the former I.W. Davis facility located at 265 I.W. Davis Road around January 1, 2010. A contractual agreement was made between the Department of Corrections and the Jackson County on July 1, 2009, for a 20-year lease and an additional 10-year lease on a year-to-year basis. An additional agreement was made to raise the maximum amount of inmates located at the Jackson County Correctional Institution from 174 to 200. The acquisition of the I.W. Davis Facility will provide an even more secure environment for the inmates and citizens of Jackson County. It will provide a more efficient area to prepare the inmates for their return into the workforce upon release due to the space it offers for classrooms needed for programs such as GED, Motivation for Change, Compass, Alcoholics Anonymous, Religious Programs and Re-Entry Classes.

Fire and Rescue

Overview

Planning for fire protection involves several steps, including the identification of the nature and extent of fire risks, establishment of level of service standards, identification of the most efficient and effective use of public resources to obtain the level of service standards, and implementation of a management and evaluation system.¹ The water system, discussed in another section, is an integral part of fire protection capabilities. Fire houses must be adequate in terms of size (e.g., equipment storage, number of bays for rolling stock, volunteer or full-time firefighters' quarters, etc.).

Fire protection is broader than many people realize at first glance—fire departments have become providers of emergency medical care, emergency management, disaster assistance, providers of “cat in the tree” calls, rescue services, and many other roles. The overall objective of fire protection services is to “minimize casualties and losses of property from fire by helping to prevent fires from occurring and to reduce losses and casualties from fires that do occur.”²

¹ Burns, Robert B. 1988. “Planning for Community Fire Protection.” In Ronny J. Coleman and John A. Granito, eds, *Managing Fire Services*, 2nd Ed. Washington, DC: International City Management Association, 1988.

² Hatry, Harry P., et al. 1992. *How Effective Are Your Community Services? Procedures for Measuring Their Quality*. 2nd Ed. Washington, DC: Urban Institute and International City/County Management Association.

Fire Districts in Jackson County

According to the adopted Service Delivery Strategy, there are 10 fire districts and two municipalities that provide fire protection for Jackson County (see map). The City of Commerce contracts with the East Jackson Fire District for services. The City of Commerce Fire Department serves the municipal district and the unincorporated areas in the East Jackson Fire District. The City of Jefferson operates a city fire department which also service unincorporated property adjacent to Jefferson. The Service Delivery Strategy indicates that the Commerce and Jefferson fire districts change to coincide with city limit expansion upon annexation.

The West Jackson Fire District is the only district that is constitutionally established, and it directly levies its own tax, with the Jackson County Tax Commissioner providing for billing, collection, and remittance of taxes to the District.

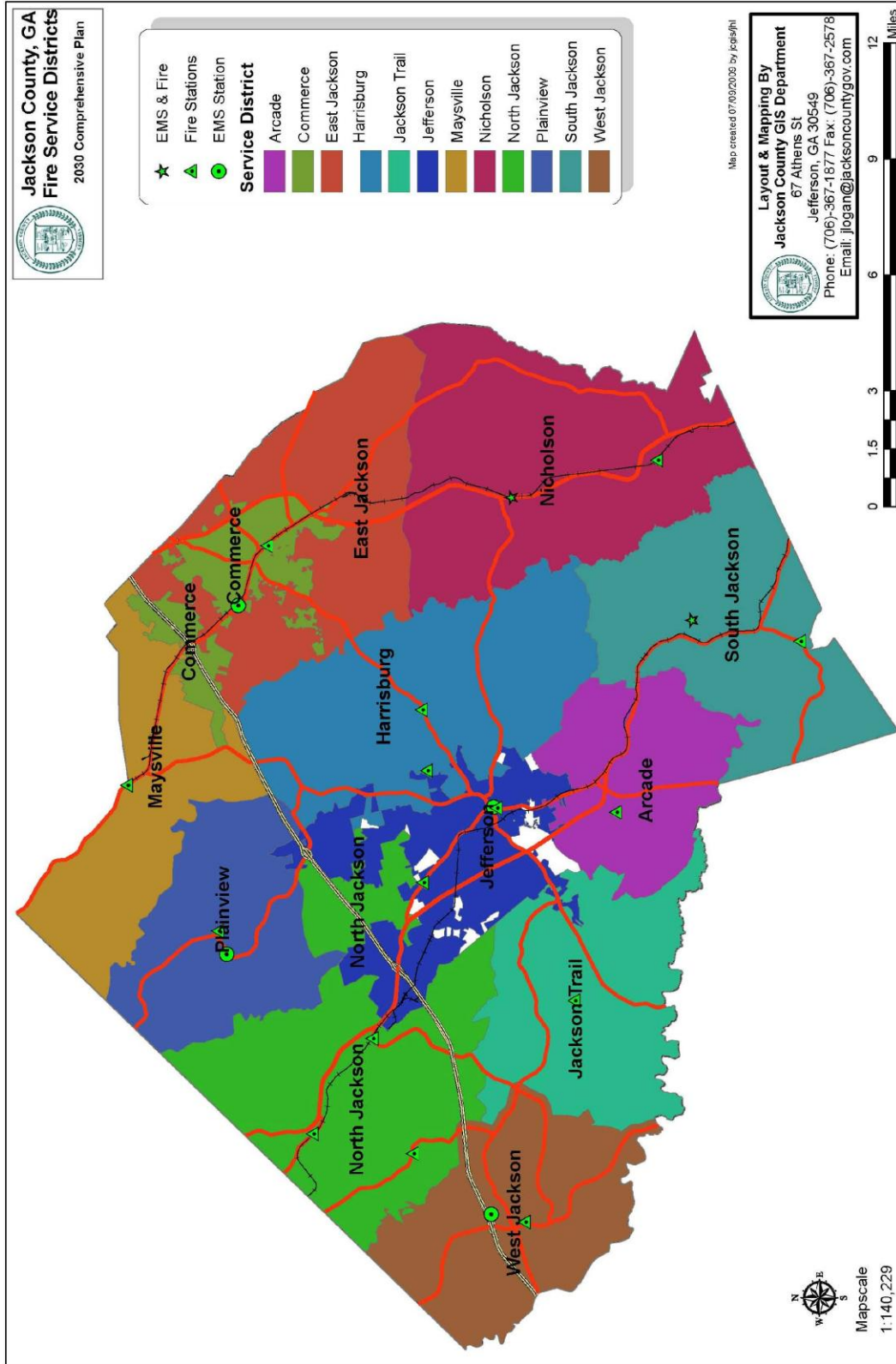
The other Fire Districts were created through acts of the General Assembly and the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners can levy taxes in each fire district which are also handled by the Jackson County Tax Commissioner. Each independent Fire District has a Board of Directors. Table 1 provides an inventory of fire stations by fire district in Jackson County (confirm/complete).

**Table 1
Fire Stations by Fire District, Jackson County**

Fire Service District	Station	Address	Construction Date	Square Footage	No. of Bays	ISO Rating
North Jackson	1	22 Railroad St. Pendergrass	1996			9
North Jackson	2	541 Main Street Talmo	1986			9
North Jackson	3	2689 Highway 60, Pendergrass	1980			9
Plainview	1	4346 Plainview Rd. Maysville	1981; 1995	3,800	2	9
Maysville	1	9223 Gillsville Rd, Maysville	1988	7,400	6	6
East Jackson/ Commerce	1	1491 S. Elm St., Commerce	1985	9,300		5/7
Nicholson	1	4562 US Hwy. 441, Nicholson	1985	12,000		9
Nicholson	2	9371 US Hwy. 441, Center	1985	1,800		9
South Jackson	1	Crooked Creek Road	1983	1,750		9
South Jackson	2	SR 330	1990	1,500		9
Arcade	1	483 Swann Road	1993	4,800		9
Harrisburg	1	Thiatyra Community Church Rd.		4,000		9
Harrisburg	1	Jackson Co. Correctional Inst. 255 Curtis Spence Dr.	1992	3,396		
Jefferson	1	147 Athens St. Jefferson	1970	10,376		4
Jefferson	2	U.S. Hwy. 129 N. Jefferson				4
Jackson Trail	1	3343 Jackson Tr. Rd.	1978	2,400		7
West Jackson	1	69 West Jackson Rd.	1973;1988	5,500	5	6
Ga. Forestry Comm.	1	SR 11	Mid-1950s	800		

Source: Jackson County Comprehensive Plan 1998, Community Facilities Element, updated with available information.

Due to the separately constituted fire districts, the Jackson County Firefighters Association plays a key role in coordinating the activities and services between fire departments and on a countywide basis. Because fire services are a critical countywide public safety function, some support to the private association by Jackson County appears warranted.



Jackson County has constructed a Fire Service Training Center which is available to all fire district personnel for regular training. Jackson County also operates a fire brigade through the Correctional Institute which provides backup support to all fire departments in the county. The Jackson County Correctional Institute fire station is located on Curtis Spence Drive and consists of 3,396 square feet (constructed in 1990).

Rescue Operations in Jackson County are managed through the Emergency Management Agency (discussed in a separate section below). There are nine rescue units operating around the county and are staffed with volunteers (see Table 2).

**Table 2
Fire Districts, Rescue and EMS Facilities in Jackson County**

Fire Service District	General Area (Municipalities and unincorporated surroundings)	Fire Stations	Rescue	EMS
West Jackson	Braselton; Hoschton	Yes (#3)	Yes (#3)	Yes (#3)
North Jackson	Talmo; Pendergrass	Yes (#4) (Pendergrass)	Yes (#4) (Pendergrass)	No
Plainview	All unincorporated	Yes (#10)	Yes (#10)	Yes (#5)
Maysville	Maysville	Yes (#5)	Yes (#5)	No
East Jackson	Commerce	Yes (#1)	Yes (#1)	Yes (#1)
Nicholson	Nicholson	Yes (#2)	Yes (#20)	Yes (#4)
South Jackson	All unincorporated	Yes (#7)	Yes (#6)	Yes (#6)
Arcade	Arcade	Yes (#6)	Yes (#6)	No
Jackson Trail	All unincorporated	Yes (#9)	No	No
Jefferson	Jefferson	Yes (#11) (two stations, City #1 and City #2)	Yes (#2)	Yes (#2)
Harrisburg	All unincorporated	Yes (#8 and #15)	No	No

Source: Compiled from the Jackson County government web page.

ISO Ratings

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) rates communities according to the adequacy of the water and fire protection systems. The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) is the manual ISO uses in reviewing the fire-fighting capabilities of individual communities. The schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire-suppression system, including but not limited to the sizes and types of buildings in a community, the presence or absence of fire alarm systems, the way calls are received and handled, whether fire fighters are paid or volunteer, the size of water mains and capacity, and how long it takes to respond to a call. Fifty percent of the overall grading is based on the number of engine companies and the amount of water a community needs to fight a fire. ISO reviews the distribution of fire companies throughout the area and checks that the fire department tests its pumps regularly and inventories each engine company's nozzles, hoses, breathing apparatus, and other equipment. The rating schedule manual uses a numerical grading called a Public Protection Classification (www.iso.com). ISO ratings are based on a scale from one to ten, with a one being the best and ten being no fire protection.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services in Jackson County are provided by six full-time stations on a countywide basis, including all municipalities. Stations are located in Commerce, Jefferson, Braselton/Hoschton, Nicholson, Plainview, and South Jackson. EMS is responsible for the provision of First Responder programs and Advanced Life Support (ALS) patient treatment/transport throughout the county. Jackson County hosts an Emory Flight base at the Jackson County Airport where an aircraft is stationed and staffed with a pilot, paramedic, and nurse.

911 Communications Center/Services

This is a countywide service. The Jackson County Public Safety Communications Center was established in 1991 by referendum to the voters of Jackson County. The center serves as central dispatch for all public safety units within Jackson County. All communications of public safety agencies are directed through Jackson County's primary public safety answering point, thus serving the Sheriff, municipal police departments, volunteer fire departments, volunteer rescue units, emergency medical services, animal control, and the county marshal. In 2006, the Board of Commissioners approved an upgrade of equipment in the communications center, the first major upgrade since 1991.

E-911 Addressing Services

Jackson County provides this service countywide, including all municipalities.

Emergency Management and Homeland Security

Jackson County's Emergency Management Agency is responsible for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery to emergencies and disasters throughout Jackson County and its municipalities. Volunteer rescue units, a dive team, and other specialized response units are under the direction of this agency. Homeland security is provided on a countywide basis by the Jackson County Emergency Management Agency, and Jackson County is the lead agency for homeland security. Work of the agency includes identification of critical infrastructure and possible targets of terrorism. Emergency management also has an EMT flight building at the Jackson County Airport, constructed in 2005 and consisting of 13,260 square feet.

Animal Control

Jackson County provides animal control services to the unincorporated areas of Jackson County and in some of the cities in Jackson County to differing degrees based on service agreements. This service is managed by the Public Development Department. Jackson County employs animal control officers to capture and control animals and contracts with an animal care facility for the housing and care of animals. With respect to the municipalities, the current arrangements for animal control service by municipality are summarized in Table 3.

The only formal intergovernmental agreement with regard to animal control referenced in the service delivery agreement is between Jackson County and the Town of Braselton (July 2003). There may be opportunities to formalize or revisit current service delivery arrangements with the

municipalities for animal control. The most pressing concern appears to be that no animal control services are available within Talmo and Pendergrass. At minimum, it seems that Jackson County should approach the elected officials of these two cities to see if they desire to provide animal control services within the city limits. Secondly, since two cities (Jefferson and Hoschton) provide their own animal control services, there may be opportunities for collaboration or the joint delivery of services or selected portions thereof. Third, the semi-limited service agreement with Commerce should be periodically evaluated for adequacy.

**Table 3
Status of Animal Control Agreements with and Services by Municipalities**

Municipality	Full Service: Capture, Control, Housing, Care, and Disposal by County	Limited Service: Capture and Control Only by County	Semi-Limited Service: Housing, Care and Disposal by County
Arcade	X		
Braselton	X		
Commerce			X
Jefferson	None: City provides all of its own animal control services.		
Hoschton	None: City provides all of its own animal control services.		
Maysville	X		
Nicholson	X		
Pendergrass	None, and no municipal animal control service is provided.		
Talmo	None, and no municipal animal control service is provided.		

Courts

On a countywide basis, Jackson County provides Superior Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, Probate Court and Juvenile Court to all citizens of Jackson County including the municipalities. All cities except for Nicholson and Talmo have their own municipal courts. Jackson County provides court services for all law violations committed within the cities of Nicholson and Talmo. The service delivery strategy does not reference any formal service agreements with these two cities for court services. As such, service arrangements should be formalized and/or periodically revisited for adequacy.

Court facilities for the county are housed in the Jackson County Courthouse, constructed in 2004 with 134,304 square feet.

UTILITY-TYPE OPERATIONS

Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority

The Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority (JCWSA) is an authority created by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners through the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority Act, Georgia Laws 1986. The Authority owns and operates a water and sewerage system that primarily serves the unincorporated area of Jackson County, Georgia.

The Authority is run by a five-member board of directors, appointed by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners on a rotating schedule. Board directors serve without compensation. Board appointments are for three-year terms, with a limit of a three term maximum.

The JCWSA operates as an independent political entity, except that it does not have the power to tax. The Authority operates as an enterprise fund, and as such is designed to operate off of revenues from water and sewer billings and fees. The JCWSA does, however, receive a percent of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) dollars from Jackson County. The SPLOST dollar amount is subject to the review and approval of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. Any such funds, as designated by Georgia Statute, are reserved for capital improvements and have been used exclusively for major projects such as water mains, water towers, and pumping stations.

The day-to-day operations of the Authority are supervised by a general manager, who is appointed by the Authority Board. Staff includes four water staff, three sewer staff, four engineering/inspection/construction staff, one Geographic Information System (GIS) staff member, and a six-person administrative/financial staff. The main office of the JCWSA is located at 117 Martin Luther King Avenue in Jefferson and serves as the central point for the provision of the Authority's services.

Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority

The Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority was formed in 1994 in response to the demand for the growing water supply needs of its four member counties: Athens-Clarke, Oconee, Barrow and Jackson. The Board of Commissioners of the four counties adopted local resolutions approving the passage of state legislation which created the Authority as a political subdivision of the State of Georgia and a public corporation. The Authority is governed by a ten-person Board that is directly responsible to the citizens through the commission chairpersons of its member counties.

Pursuant to the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority Act (H.B. 1514), the Authority encourages regional planning (while acknowledging the independence of its member counties to determine their own growth strategies), encourages water conservation, and guarantees the performance of its projects in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Initial planning of the Authority ensured that stream withdrawal rights among member counties were addressed prior to funding of its reservoir project, denied preferential rate treatment to one member over others, and required uniform rates for comparable service. Member jurisdictions can reduce or increase the uniform rate between and among themselves in response to an enhancement to the water supply such as treatment or transmission. Authority power is limited in that it may not obligate any member county to guarantee revenue bonds or indebtedness unless the member county has approved, and the membership in the Authority does not affect the ability of counties, cities, and other authorities to own and operate water and wastewater systems.

The member counties decided it was in their collective best interest to purchase water from a regional reservoir owned and controlled by the Authority (see discussion of source of water – Bear Creek Reservoir, below). Although the Authority is empowered to develop and provide wastewater services, efforts to date have included the construction of the reservoir and associated pump station and the construction of the Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant. The terms of the authority agreement were entered into July 22, 2006, and are effective for 50 years. The Bear Creek Reservoir project does not include the transmission of raw or treated water to member county distribution systems.

Each member county has an established maximum quantity that may be withdrawn from the reservoir based on percent of the total yield. Associated formulas establish monthly and daily withdrawal limits for each member county based on peaking factors. Annual raw water allocation for each county is as follows: Athens-Clarke (44 percent); Barrow (19 percent); Jackson (25 percent); and Oconee (12 percent).

Water

Overview

Potable water is a vital community service. A lack of adequate water can stifle if not terminate a community's growth and development. As with any growing community, the need for water will continue to increase. Water service is best thought of as an integrated system of production, treatment, storage, and distribution. Water systems, regardless of their size, are complicated and expensive operations. Thus, there are many aspects of the water system that are included in this inventory and analysis.

Water Supply

The vast majority of the water supplied by the JCWSA is purchased from the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority (UOBWA) from its Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant, which is located immediately adjacent to its Bear Creek Reservoir located on Georgia Route 330 in southwest Jackson County. Raw water is pumped from the reservoir directly into the water treatment plant, where it is conditioned and filtered. The water is then chlorinated and pumped into JCWSA's water distribution system ready for consumption. As noted above, the Bear Creek Reservoir is owned by four member counties: Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Jackson and Oconee. The Bear Creek Reservoir is permitted for withdrawal of 52 MGD.

The water treatment plant is owned by Barrow, Jackson and Oconee counties. Jackson County's ownership share of the reservoir is 25 percent and its share of the water treatment plant is 44 percent. Authority water supplies are supplemented by water purchases from the City of Commerce, most often only when water main breaks or other unforeseen circumstances occur.

Water Treatment

Concurrent with the signing of the agreement that created the Bear Creek Reservoir, Jackson, Barrow and Oconee counties executed an agreement with the Upper Oconee Water Authority which provided for the construction of the 21 MGD Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant. Under the 50-year agreement, the authority owns and manages the water treatment facility and provides water treatment and transmission to the three member counties for resale. Athens-Clarke County chose to pump its raw water to a water treatment facility which is owned by and located within Athens-Clarke County. Table 4 provides the allocation of water capacity at the Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant.

**Table 4
Allocation of Treated Water Capacity
Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant**

Member County	Allocation	Percentage of Total
Barrow	8 MGD	38.10%
Jackson	9 MGD	42.86%
Oconee	4 MGD	19.04%

Water Distribution Service Area Areas

Jackson County through the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority purchases treated water from the Upper Oconee Water Basis Authority and other sources, then transmits it to the majority of unincorporated areas, Arcade, Talmo, and Pendergrass, and to various other municipalities in accordance with separate water purchase agreements. As the map of current water lines shows, most of unincorporated Jackson County is served with water lines with the exception of the eastern portion, along the SR 334 corridor, which consists mostly of agricultural and undeveloped land.

Commerce, Jefferson, Hoschton, Maysville, and Nicholson (through its Water Authority) provide water distribution service for their respective service areas. Arcade will have a shared water distribution service district within Arcade, recognizing the county authority's current water distribution services. The service delivery areas for water are shown on a map included in this report.

System Details

The JCWSA water system contains 425.47 miles of water main, seven pumping stations and has a water storage capacity of 6.2 millions of gallons per day (mgd). A generalized map of the water system is provided in this report.

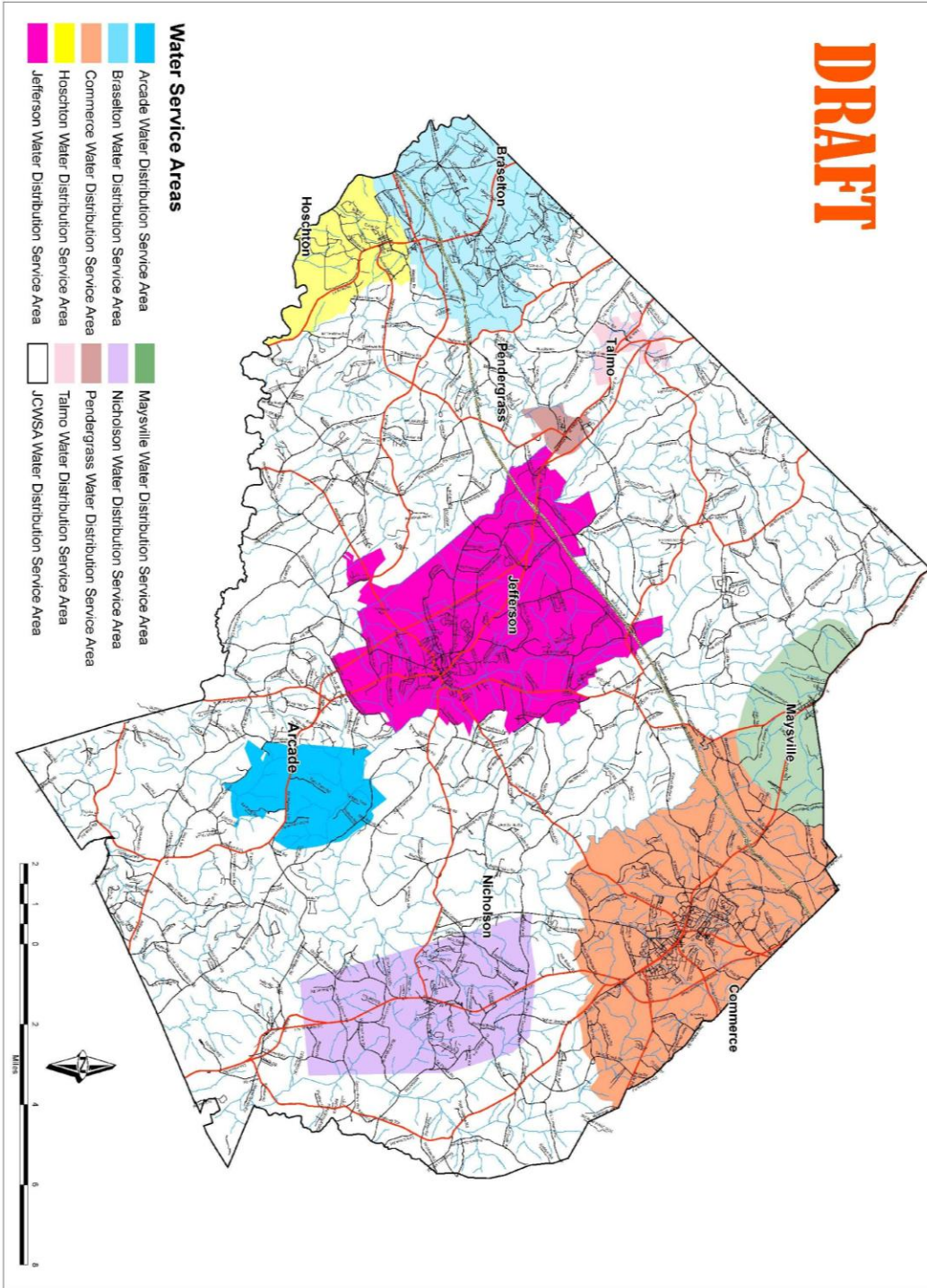
Customers and Service Demands

JCWSA water service has grown rapidly in the past ten years, as indicated by the increasing number of customers shown in Table 5. Principal customers as of 2008 are shown in Table 6.

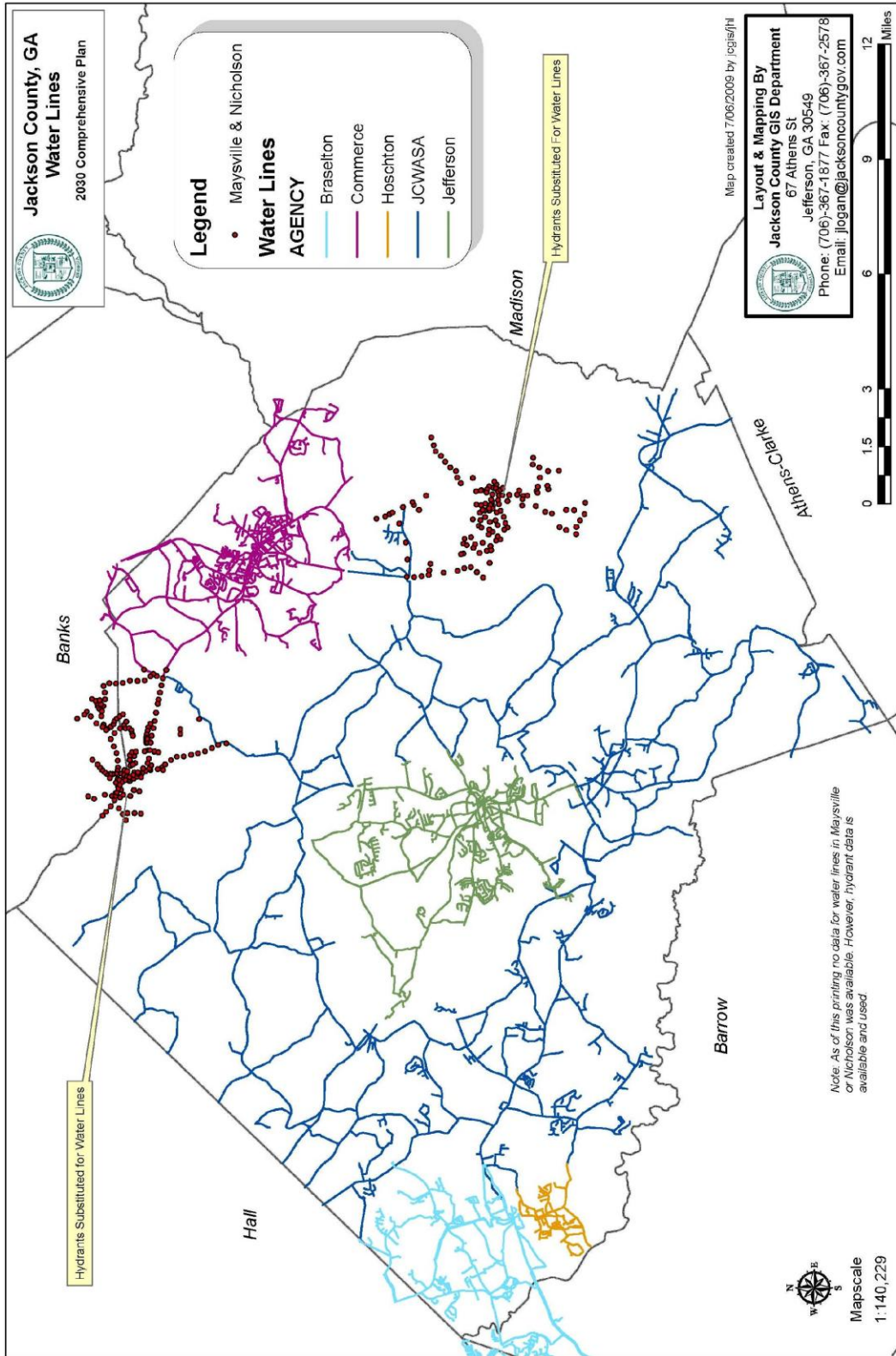
**Table 5
Customers, 1999-2008
Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority**

Year	Residential Customers	Commercial Customers
1999	1,597	0
2000	1,925	0
2001	2,415	0
2002	2,994	16
2003	3,702	28
2004	4,411	28
2005	5,200	37
2006	6,098	39
2007	6,712	41
2008	6,927	53

DRAFT



<p>Map Created: December 8, 2005 Last Revised: March 10, 2006 This Printing: December 8, 2005</p>	<p>JACKSON COUNTY, GEORGIA</p> <p>Water Distribution Service Areas</p>	<p>Jackson County Department of Public Development Planning Division 67 Athens Street Jefferson, Georgia 30549 706-367-5808</p> <p>www.jacksoncountygov.com email: cbrink@jacksoncountygov.com</p>
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Water purchases during the corresponding time period began at 170.4 million gallons in 1999, and grew steadily and peaked at 807.7 million gallons in 2007. With the declaration of a Level 4 drought and corresponding watering restrictions and conservation efforts, water purchases by the JCWSA dropped to 569.5 million gallons in 2008.

These restrictions have negatively impacted the cash flow to the JCWSA as sales income is their sole income source, and these strict conservation restrictions will negatively impact Authority operations over time if the restrictions are not altered. The conservation efforts can place pressure on the Authority to raise water and sewer rates due to a slow down in overall water consumption.

**Table 6
Principal Customers, 2008
Jackson County Water & Sewerage Authority**

Customer Name	Facility Type	Annual Usage (Gallons)	Total Bill (Annual)	Percent of System Billing
Georgia Power	Power Plant	929,000	\$534,553	11.17
Jefferson	City	45,279,600	\$168,868	3.53
Braselton	City	745,000	\$2,159	0.05
Hoschton	City	16,695,610	\$44,873	0.94
Georgia Freezer	Cold Storage	8,240,540	\$79,480	1.66
Louisiana Pacific	Wood Processing	7,428,120	\$69,562	1.45
Jackson County Board of Education	Public Schools	9,495,340	\$151,677	3.17
Affordable Homes	Mobile Home Park	2,802,200	\$26,265	0.55
Potters House	Charitable Organization	2,806,350	\$26,316	0.55
TD Auto Compressor	Automotive	10,595,190	\$169,900	3.55
Totals		105,016,950	\$1,273,652	26.62

Source: JCWSA Comprehensive Financial Annual Report: 3-16-2009

System Interconnections

During the long period of drought that was experienced from mid-2004 to late 2008, the JWCSA made investments in improving connectivity to four in-county municipal water systems and the Gainesville-Hall County water system, in order to guarantee a safe and adequate water supply to Jackson County residents. Most of these connections are two-directional and will enable each provider to negotiate water transfers during emergency periods. These negotiations, on several occasions, produced inter-local water purchase agreements and outlined the opportunity for the JCWSA to purchase additional treated water supply should it be needed.

Capacity Needs

To meet future needs for water, estimates of future consumption are needed. Many factors influence the amount of water used, including the price, leaks in the system, wasteful practices versus conservation measures, the sizes and types of commercial and industrial establishments, and the amount of municipal annexation (or changes to water service area boundaries) and rezoning. If the estimates are too low, the community risks not having enough water to meet its needs. If the estimates are too high, it risks spending substantial sums of money for capacity it will not use.

Domestic water use can vary between 40 and 120 gallons per person per day. Average per capita per day consumption of water for all uses (residential, commercial, institutional, industrial) generally is in the range of 170 to 300 gallons per capita per day. Water use can be much higher than these averages, and there are substantial variations in water use from community to community. For planning purposes in the absence of a water master plan, a level of service of 300 gallons per day per person is recommended.

For the JCWSA system, average daily water system consumption has never peaked above 4 MGD. The JCWSA has excess production potential from the Upper Oconee Water Basin Authority and agreements with the City of Commerce and Gainesville-Hall County. Hence, JCWSA has between two and three times the current usage available to serve future growth.

Even so, the extended drought also led the JCWSA to begin a study of the potential development of a future water supply watershed lake dedicated to meet the long term future growth needs of the unincorporated county. This study is ongoing. Many community leaders have supported this effort, as it will require an extensive investment by the JCWSA and/or Jackson County. The driving force behind this planning effort is the recognition that bringing a water supply lake and treatment facility on-line takes between ten and fifteen years after study completion and a decision made to proceed with the project.

Mapping and Information Management

The JCWSA GIS staff has worked diligently to update the authority's mapping data base, which is available for use by the various independent fire departments in Jackson County. JCWSA GIS staff maintains a comprehensive listing of fire hydrants sorted by county fire districts, and a corresponding Fire Hydrant Map Book with roads and streets indexed by street number and hydrant location. The data are available in both hard copy and in electronic form.

In addition to the firefighting data base, the authority maintains an electronic database of all water and sewer service locations as well as the county's adopted water and sewer construction standards and its industrial pre-treatment program for the development community. The information is essential for design professionals, as well as residential, commercial and industrial developers.

City of Braselton Water System

Braselton operates a water system and the source is groundwater accessed via drilled wells.

City of Commerce Water System

The City of Commerce is permitted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to operate a water supply reservoir, a drinking water treatment plant, a water distribution system, three wastewater treatment facilities, and a sewer collection system.

Commerce owns and maintains a 325-acre watershed lake, known as the Grove River Reservoir, which is located in the southern part of Banks County. The lake is fed by the Grove River and its tributaries that extend to eastern Hall County. The drainage basin for the reservoir covers 37 square miles. This lake is the supply for the city's drinking water system. Public use is allowed; however, there are rules and regulations that must be followed. These are enforced by the City of Commerce and the Department of Natural Resources. The city has adopted

ordinances for watershed protection and reservoir management. Commerce also prepared and adopted a drought contingency plan, which was updated in November, 2007 to more closely comply with the EPD-mandated water restrictions.

A feasibility study to modify the dam structure at the reservoir to increase storage capacity was completed in January 2009 by Schnabel Engineering, LLC. These modifications to the dam to raise the normal full pool by four feet will increase the area to 380 acres and double the storage capacity of the reservoir. The timing of this project will be dependent on the increased water demand.

Commerce operates the water plant in accordance with Withdrawal Permit No. 006-0106-01 issued by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and Operational Permit No. CS157001. The water plant was originally placed in service in 1970, with a treatment capacity of 2.2 MGD. This plant is a conventional filter plant with sedimentation basins and dual media filters. The most recent upgrade was completed in 2000, which increased the treatment capacity to 4.5 MGD. The plant can pump 3,125 Gallons per Minute (GPM) into the distribution system at a pressure of 130 PSI. Future increases in treatment capacity will require building additions and new treatment facilities.

The City produces an annual report known as the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) which outlines the parameters for water quality in the system.

The water and sewer service area is defined in the Jackson County Service Delivery Strategy as approved by the Department of Community Affairs. The service areas include the city limits of Commerce as well as adjoining unincorporated areas of Jackson, Banks, and Madison Counties.

Commerce's water distribution system consists of four elevated storage tanks with a capacity of 1.6 million gallons. There are 118 miles of water mains ranging in size from 16 inch to 6 inch and 760 fire hydrants. The system is basically looped within the service territory with the exception of a few dead ends. Water system expansion for new subdivisions and commercial projects is funded by developers and subdividers. Those projects are reviewed by city staff and city engineers under a delegation of review agreement with the Georgia EPD.

City of Hoschton Water System

Hoschton operates a municipal water system which is supplied by groundwater and the purchase of water from the City of Winder. There were agreements in the 1990s for emergency water supplies from the Barrow County Water and Sewer Authority and the City of Braselton. Also, during the 1990s, Hoschton had an agreement to supply water to the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority.

City of Jefferson Water System

The City of Jefferson has its own public water supply, the 35-acre Curry Creek Reservoir, located in the eastern part of the city. It has operated a surface water treatment facility since the early 1950s. Jefferson is working toward a new raw water supply reservoir on Parks Creek. This facility would be augmented by pumping water from the North Oconee River. A withdrawal permit for this source has been under review by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) since early 2000. The City has three interconnections with the Jackson County Water

and Sewerage Authority, and has an agreement to purchase finished water from the County for up to 0.3 MGD.

Nicholson Water Authority

The Nicholson Water Authority provides water service within the city limits of Nicholson and to unincorporated areas within its designated service area.

Issues and Opportunities

1. *Water service to Arcade.* Water service to Arcade, via the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority as well as plans for municipal service by the City of Arcade, is increasingly critical since groundwater still serves a number of residents in the area and it is contaminated with environmental hazards.
2. *System interconnections for contingencies.* If not already sufficient, contingency plans should be prepared for dealing with major water line breaks, loss of water sources during drought, and other possible damages to the water system such as flooding. There may be additional opportunities to connect municipal and county water distribution systems in order to move water around the county during periods of drought.
3. *Extensions of service to additional unincorporated areas.* Adequate water supplies are needed for all parts of unincorporated Jackson County from a public health and also a fire fighting capability standpoint. However, as water lines are run to into rural areas, such projects may not be very efficient (i.e., the marginal costs exceed marginal revenues in terms of connecting additional water customers in low-density rural areas). Yet, JCWSA relies on user fees to fund its system tends to provide an incentive to expand its system to increase revenues. Extending water lines into previously unserved areas can stimulate residential development, sometimes in a manner inconstant with countywide land use plans. At issue is how the county and JCWSA coordinate their activities to ensure that proprietary concerns of the authority are met, critical public needs are satisfied, and county land use planning efforts are not frustrated.
4. *Water conservation.* It is important that governments take steps to promote water conservation. As population growth continues, there is an increased strain on existing water supplies, so water facility expansion is necessary. Water conservation efforts can minimize the levels of increased expansion by cutting down on the amount of water used per capita.
5. *Financial considerations.* Because water systems are operated as utilities, the revenue produced by the system should be sufficient to pay for all necessary capital expenditures, operation and maintenance costs, debt service, administrative costs, and provide a contingency fund for emergencies. Customers should also pay for the amount of water they use. Flat monthly rates for water encourage wasteful practices. Customers requiring very large volumes of water should pay additional demand charges. All customer lines should be metered. Developers of new subdivisions should be required to install the water mains and appurtenances through or along the tract and deed the facilities to the county (JCWSA).

6. *Oversizing of water mains where necessary for growth.* Regulations should establish a policy for the “oversizing” of water mains so that when a larger water main is needed than would serve the subdivision or development, the county can contribute a prorated share of the cost to construct a water main that serves a larger population or area.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Sanitary sewer systems are indispensable to maintaining community health. The utility provider must be able to manage water-borne waste by operating, maintaining, expanding, and replacing components of the wastewater system to ensure uninterrupted collection, transport, processing, and treatment. Collection and treatment of sewage is one of the most critical elements in the development of any site. A key challenge for the wastewater system is to convey all sanitary wastewater flows to the treatment plant without bypassing flows into receiving waters and without causing waste backups that store sanitary sewage on private properties.

Wastewater systems that discharge into receiving waters must apply for a permit to discharge under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Permits require collection of samples, laboratory analyses, reporting, and periodic inspections to assure compliance with regulatory requirements.

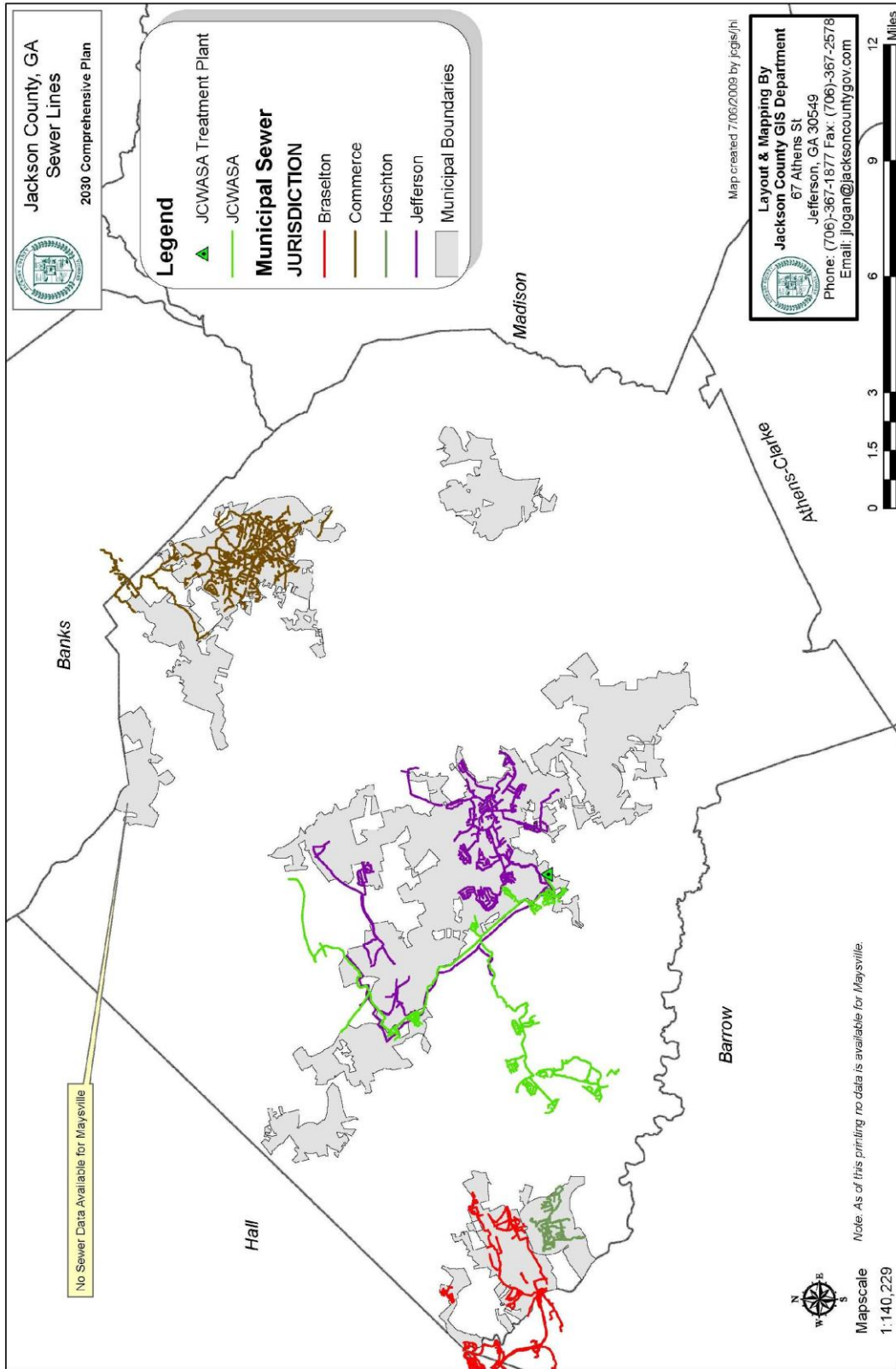
Jackson County through the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority has a wastewater permit and provides sanitary sewer services in parts of unincorporated areas of the county and the cities of Pendergrass and Talmo. The cities of Commerce, Jefferson, Braselton, Hoschton, and Maysville provide wastewater collection services in their respective service areas. Nicholson through the Nicholson Water Authority has a designated sewer service area but currently relies on septic systems. Arcade has also maintained interest in developing its own sanitary sewer services and applied for a wastewater permit, as it currently relies exclusively on septic tanks.

The Authority provided sewer service to 472 customers as of December 31, 2008. The sewerage is received into the JCWSA sewerage system and is treated at the Middle Oconee Wastewater Treatment Plant which is located on the south side of Georgia Route 11 (Winder Highway), west of U.S. 129. The plant is permitted to treat up to 300,000 gallons per day.

In early 2008, the JCWSA began an upgrade to the existing treatment plant to include new head works, an electrical building, an emergency generator, and a SCADA system, a primary operations control system that allows remote sensing of a lift station or wastewater treatment plant. When the upgrade is accepted and approved by the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, design specifications call for the facility to be permitted and treat 500,000 gallons of wastewater effluent daily. Long term design plans for the facility call for the treatment of 2.5 million gallons daily of wastewater.

City of Jefferson Wastewater System

Jefferson currently operates three wastewater treatment facilities. Commerce provides sanitary sewer treatment and collection to areas in Banks County. Braselton provides treatment and collection to areas in Barrow, Gwinnett, and Hall Counties.



City of Commerce Wastewater System

The City of Commerce is permitted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to operate three wastewater treatment facilities and a sewer collection system. The Northside Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP), National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. GA0026247, is located off W.E. King Road.

Commerce's W.E. King plant has a permitted capacity of 1.05 MGD. The discharge from this facility flows to Beaver Dam Creek, a tributary in the Savannah River Basin.

The Davis House WPCP, NPDES Permit No. GA0032646, is located off Eisenhower Drive at Banks Crossing. This oxidation pond has a permitted capacity of 0.067 MGD. The discharge from this facility flows to Crooked Creek, a tributary in the Savannah River Basin.

The Holiday Inn WPCP, NPDES Permit No. GA0032638, is located behind the Holiday Inn located on U.S. Highway 441 at Banks Crossing. This oxidation pond has a permitted capacity of 0.041 MGD. The discharge from this facility flows to Crooked Creek, a tributary in the Savannah River Basin.

The Northside WPCP has completed an expansion that increases the capacity to 2.1 MGD as well as complies with the new Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements for water quality. The average daily flow for 2008 was 0.850 MGD. It is projected that the plant will reach 80 percent capacity by 2025.

Commerce's sewer collection system consists of 98 miles of sewer lines ranging in size from 21 inches to 6 inches in diameter with 1,185 manholes. There are 7 pump stations and 5 miles of force mains. Sewer system expansion to new residential and commercial developments is funded by developers.

The water and sewer service area is defined in the Jackson County Service Delivery Strategy as approved by the Department of Community Affairs. The service areas include the city limits of Commerce as well as adjoining areas in unincorporated Jackson, Banks, and Madison Counties.

Forecasting Future Needs

As a general rule of thumb, approximately 70 to 80 percent of the potable water supplied by any given community's water system is returned to the sanitary sewer collection system. Sanitary sewer systems are usually sized to accommodate average wastewater flows of approximately one hundred gallons per capita per day (Somers et al 1986).³ Other sources note that in general "about 60 to 80 percent of the per capital consumption of water will become sewage,"⁴

³ Somers, Donald M., Martin J. Manning, and L. Scott Tucker. 1986. Water Resources. In Sam M. Christofano and William S. Foster, Eds., *Management of Local Public Works*. Washington, DC: International City Management Association, 1986.

⁴ Colley, B. C. 1986. *Practical Manual of Site Development*. New York: McGraw-Hill. 1988.

and that an estimated 65 percent of the water used for residential use returns to the sewage system.⁵

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

Jackson County does not operate a landfill, but it has one transfer station at 100 Landfill Drive in Jefferson. The main transfer station building was constructed in 1994 and consists of 3,120 square feet. The transfer station site also includes the scale house and scale-house office, inmate break room, and records storage. The transfer station facility is in need of repair, and the Board of Commissioners has authorized a replacement project (see discussion of capital improvements). Jackson County also operates two compactor sites, one at 781 New King Bridge Road and the other at 232 Yarbrough Ridgeway Road. Both buildings on the compactor sites were constructed in 1990.

The county and cities are individually responsible for arranging for the collection of municipal solid waste. However, most jurisdictions allow for the private market to provide for collection services. Jackson County provides a clean community program through Keep Jackson County Beautiful as an umbrella program involving cities, schools, civic organizations, nonprofit groups, and neighborhood associations. Programs include Adopt-A-Highway, Bring One for the Chipper, Recycling and Litter education, and Great American Cleanup.

Jackson County operates two compactor sites and a transfer station; solid waste is disposed of at the R & B Landfill operated by Waste Management in Banks County. Long-term contracts are in place, and Waste Management has provided the County with a Letter of Capacity Assurance until 2013.

Jackson County currently operates a drop-off program to collect recyclables at the County transfer station and the two staffed compactor sites. The transfer station and drop-off sites have collection containers for aluminum cans, newspaper, and cardboard.

The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 requires local governments to develop a plan for reducing the amount of solid waste going into landfills and other disposal facilities. Such reductions may be accomplished by many techniques, including recycling materials such as plastic, aluminum, and newspaper and the diversion of yard waste from disposal facilities into backyard and other composting operations. The county has participated in a regional solid waste management plan, prepared by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

Jackson County Parks and Recreation

Jackson County provides parks and recreation facilities at five locations: Hurricane Shoals Park, Lamar Murphy Park, Sell's Mill Park, West Jackson Park (Hoschton) and East Jackson Park (Nicholson). These are described below (need confirmation of acreage figures):

⁵ Brewer, William E., and Charles P. Alter. 1988. *The Complete Manual of Land Planning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

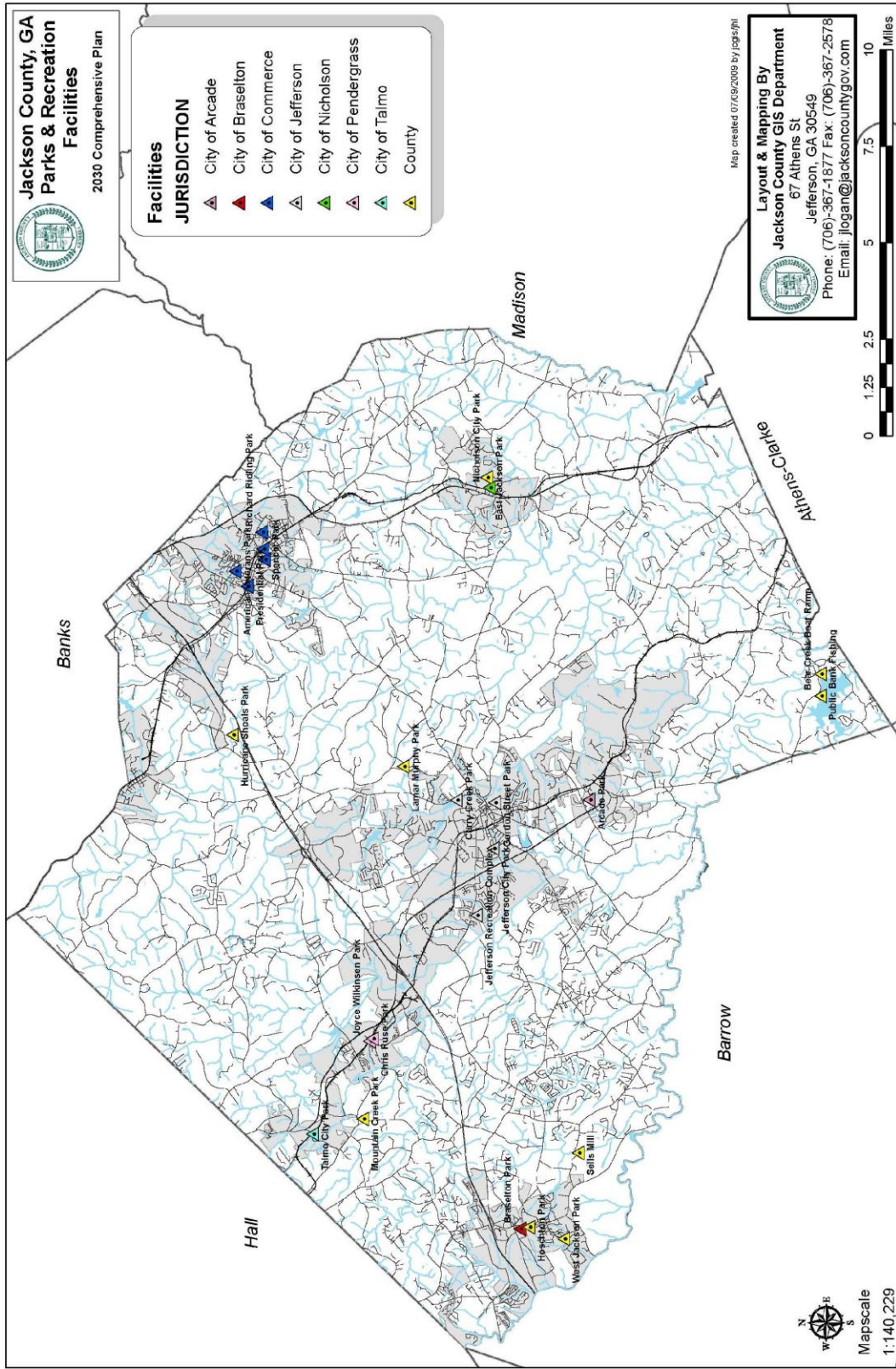
1. **Hurricane Shoals Park** (70.3 acres) is located just off Ga. Hwy. 82 Spur south of Maysville. There are seven covered pavilions and an amphitheatre which can be rented. There are many open picnic tables, grills, two restroom facilities, two playgrounds and walking trails.
2. **Lamar Murphy Park** (15.0 acres) opened in 1997 and has the following amenities: three 300 foot lighted baseball/softball fields; two 200 foot lighted baseball/softball fields; two lighted football/soccer fields; two outdoor batting cages, two concession stands, three covered pavilions with picnic tables, a playground, and a walking trail.
3. **West Jackson Park** opened in Spring 2004 and is located in Hoschton. Its facilities include the following: four 200 foot lighted baseball/softball fields; one 100 foot t-ball field, one concession stand, two covered pavilions with picnic tables, a playground, and a walking trail.
4. **Sell's Mill Park** (28 acres) has a covered pavilion with several picnic tables, a playground, restrooms, walking trails and the Mill building.
5. **East Jackson Park**, near Nicholson, opened in the Spring of 2008. It consists of four ballfields and is on a site of approximately 36 acres.

Two other parks exist, Center Park south of Nicholson (10 acres) (now owned by private entities) and Hoschton City Park (7 acres). Neither is owned by Jackson County but Hoschton City Park is programmed and maintained by the Jackson County Department of Parks and Recreation according to the System-Wide Recreation Master Plan 2003-2012. Hoschton City Park is small but serves residents of the western portion of the County. Hoschton City Park contains multi-use fields and support facilities. Center Park contains a gymnasium (which needs renovation) and some other improvements. In addition, the county is in the process of developing an access point on the Bear Creek Reservoir.

The county Parks and Recreation Department also utilizes Jackson County Schools and their recreational facilities, which constitute approximately 15 acres. There are also five school recreation sites that have indoor and outdoor facilities that are used by Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department for practice and game purposes.

According to the FY 2009 county budget document, there is a need to provide greenways and trail systems throughout the county, as well as at individual parks, particularly Sells Mill Park, which is presently underdeveloped. There is also a great need for indoor facilities; with the exception of the old gymnasium at Center Park and facilities at county schools, there are no indoor recreation facilities available for use by county residents.

With regard to funding, according to the 2009 county budget document, the preferred method for funding recreation system improvements is a continuation of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). It is suggested that, in order to develop future facilities, particularly those with a high cost such as recreation centers, that the portion of SPLOST dedicated to recreation increase to 25 percent. In the new SPLOST approved in March, 2005, the portion dedicated to recreation is 20 percent.



To address growing needs for parks and recreation in Jackson County, a bond referendum for \$15 million in parks and recreation improvements was held in February, 2008, but it was not passed by the citizenry. The funds would have been used to finance a recreation center, 340 acre park, a facility for the disabled, covered arena exposition center, the addition of a soccer field and tennis court at West Jackson Park, and the addition of a football/soccer stadium and facilities at Lamar Murphy Park. These items were considered priority projects to alleviate the lack of infrastructure needed for recreational programs and opportunities. Though the parks and recreation bond referendum failed, the list of needs is retained for future capital improvement programs; furthermore, as needs mount, however, a new referendum for parks and recreation may be warranted.

With regard to programming, the county Parks and Recreation Department provides a wide range of youth programs for children between ages of 5 and 16 years. Program offerings include athletics, cheerleading, and camps. With the opening of the new East Jackson Park, more opportunities are available for recreation programs. However, according to the FY 2008 budget document, there are not enough outside and indoor programs offered, and current programs do not address the needs of all age groups. Specific needs include: soccer, swimming, volleyball, fitness, tennis, theater and cultural programs, racquetball, disc golf, and senior programs.

Municipal Parks and Recreation Programs

Jefferson and Commerce are the only cities in Jackson County that have recreation departments that provide several park and recreational facilities within their city limits. Commerce's Recreation Department cooperates with the Commerce School System for joint use of recreational facilities. Commerce has a full-time Parks and Recreation Department staff that operates and maintains the recreational facilities and operates programs within the city. Arcade and Braselton have limited park facilities but do not have organized recreational activities.

Senior Center

Jackson County provides senior center services on a countywide basis. It operates one senior center located at 219 Darnell Road; the building was constructed in 1981 and consists of 11,220 square feet. In 2008, a CDBG grant was received to completely renovate the senior center. One complication with the renovation is it will cause temporary displacement. The I W Davis Facility, which was recently purchased by Jackson County, may be used for a temporary home for the senior center.

Pat Bell Conference Center

Jackson County owns the Pat Bell Conference Center located at 7020 Highway 82 Spur and is generally considered to be a part of the Hurricane Shoals Park complex.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Administrative employees, such as county management, human resources, and financial managers, need adequate space for work. Space needs may be based on projections of employees and a certain square footage per employee (e.g., 300 square feet for each

employee). In addition, space needs should take into account needs for a comfortable council/court chambers, conference room(s), and storage space.

Jackson County Courthouse

The Jackson County Courthouse opened for business in August, 2004. It has five courtrooms, two jury rooms, two public restrooms on each of its three floors, five elevators, and a full basement. It houses all judicial offices, including Superior Court, Probate Court, Juvenile Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Clerk of Court's Office. It also houses the Jackson County Historic Society, Information Technology, Sheriff/Courthouse Security and a law library. The state-of-the-art building has automated lighting and temperature controls and is secured by metal detectors and surveillance cameras.

Jackson County Administration Building

The County Administration Building, at 67 Athens Street in Jefferson, was constructed in the 1930s and consists of approximately 26,000 square feet. It is by no means considered adequate to continue in its current role of housing county administrative offices, including the public development department, GIS, and tax assessment offices among others.

Voter Registration and Elections

Elections are provided on a countywide basis. However, municipalities are responsible for their own city elections.

Tax Assessment and Tax Collection

Jackson County provides tax assessment services on a countywide basis and collects property taxes for the entire county. Commerce, Jefferson, and Maysville also collect municipal property taxes within their incorporated boundaries.

GROUND, PUBLIC WORKS, AND TRANSPORTATION

Buildings and Grounds

The main office for Buildings and Grounds is located at 330 Curtis Spence Drive and is shared with the Engineering Department; it was constructed in 1995. The Department will be moving to 381 Curtis H. Spence Drive once renovations to that building are completed. The shop facility at 358 Curtis Spence Drive consists of three buildings (6,000 square foot building built in 2007, which houses trade technicians and tool and parts storage; mobile construction shop; and old pole barn).

Road and Bridge Construction and Maintenance

Jackson County provides road and bridge construction and maintenance services through a combination of in-house, consultant, and contractor service provides for all county-maintained roads and bridges, some of which are inside the city limits. The county's Service Delivery Strategy contains a list of roads that are within cities and towns that are county-maintained roads. Cities are responsible for all city streets within their respective jurisdictions; however, they may be eligible for county maintenance through intergovernmental agreement under

certain conditions. The Service Delivery Strategy calls for establishment of countywide road and bridge construction standards, uniform road classifications, and countywide transportation master planning.

One issue that arises on occasion is the issue for who is responsible for road maintenance when a municipality annexes the road, or along one side of the road. Also, if the county operates traffic signals in a given area that is annexed, responsibility may not necessarily be shifted to the annexing municipality. These are issues that deserve further attention and policy development.

Road Department facilities are located at 12 Hendrix Drive in Jefferson. The main office consists of 3,102 square feet and was constructed in 1959. Other facilities include a fertilizer pole shed, a sign shop, tractor storage, and salt shed.

Fleet Maintenance

Fleet maintenance reviewed these numbers and found that the main building is about 6,300 square feet with an addition of about 1,160 square feet, for a total of approximately 7,460 square feet for the main building. An oil change facility of approximately 792 square feet also exists. The main shop building was constructed sometime in the 1950s. The front office area and the welding shop were added in the early 1990s. The body shop room, paint room and small engine building along with an inmate restroom and the tire storage building were also most likely constructed in the 1950s.

PLANNING AND ZONING-RELATED FUNCTIONS

Land Use Planning

In 1998, Jackson County was lead agency for preparing a comprehensive plan for the county and all municipalities with the exception of Maysville, which is assigned to the Georgia Mountains region and plans with Banks County. Since that time, the county and each municipality has prepared their own respective land use/comprehensive plans.

Planning Commissions, Zoning Administration and Development Plan Review

Jackson County has an appointed Planning Commission which serves the unincorporated area only. Zoning administration and development plan review are provided by the Department of Public Development which is housed in the Jackson County Administration Building in Jefferson.

At one time, Jackson County administered zoning regulations and conducted land development inspections for Jefferson and other municipalities. In 2003, the Quad Cities Planning Commission was formed among the Cities of Arcade, Jefferson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. The cities consolidated their zoning administration and building inspections functions under a new planning commission which was housed within the City of Jefferson's government facilities. The municipalities prepared a consolidated land use management code. Pendergrass withdrew from the planning commission and assumed its own planning and zoning functions in 2004, just before the new code was adopted by the three other cities. In 2009, Arcade withdrew from the planning commission, leaving just the cities of Jefferson and Talmo. As a result, the Quad Cities Planning Commission was reconstituted as the Jefferson-Talmo Planning Commission. Arcade

provides its own planning and zoning services via the city and a contract with a private consulting firm.

Braselton, Commerce, Hoschton, and Maysville administer their own zoning ordinances. In 2009, Nicholson adopted a zoning ordinance for the first time and is administering it on its own.

Although the municipalities conduct their own long-range planning activities, the need for countywide coordination has not diminished. Efforts have been made in this comprehensive plan to provide a countywide perspective, including all municipalities and parts of municipalities located in Jackson County. However, additional and regular coordination is paramount to the success of any countywide growth management strategies.

Geographic Information Systems

At the time the Service Delivery Strategy was most recently revised (2006), there was no arrangement for countywide provision of GIS services. Jackson County has a GIS Division which serves the mapping needs of all county departments, especially the tax assessor, as well the municipalities in Jackson County. The City of Commerce has a GIS system and at the time the strategy was enacted Braselton was exploring the possibility of providing GIS services. Municipalities can contract with Jackson County for GIS Services, and the county has been in the process during the past year of cultivating relationships with the various cities and consolidating all GIS services into the County's GIS Division. Initial technical assistance by the county regarding GIS has been an essential step, as municipal boundary changes (through annexation) were not being updated on a timely basis by all cities, thus affecting various aspects of the county's facility and service system.

Building Inspections

Jackson County provides building inspections in the unincorporated area and also provides inspections for the Jackson County portion of Maysville. Building inspections functions are provided by the Department of Public Development.

HEALTH, EDUCATION, WELFARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Public and Environmental Health

The Jackson County Health Department provides services on a countywide basis. There are two public health facilities. The primary health department office is located in the Jefferson area (275 General Jackson Drive) and consists of 7,140 square feet in a single building constructed in 1991. A second public health office is located in the "Jackson Campus," a shopping center within the city limits of Commerce (623 South Elm Street) which was purchased by Jackson County (it consists of 67,349 square feet). These two health clinics provide the following basic services: health checkups, immunizations, WIC Supplemental Food Program, nutrition education, family planning, and screening for STDs, HIV, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B.

The Health Department also has a separate Environmental Health office located at 260 Lee Street in Jefferson. The building was constructed in 1958 and consists of 3,094 square feet.

The comprehensive plan in 1998 identified the long-term need to provide more convenient health services to residents of southern Jackson County. Otherwise, south Jackson residents

have to drive several miles to Jefferson or Commerce for public health assistance. Though recognizing limitations to funding, the 1998 plan also indicated that health-related transportation was needed, such as to and from the BJC Medical Center.

Hospitals

BJC Medical Center is located in Commerce. BJC Medical Center consists of 90 licensed hospital beds, 167 nursing facility beds, and a staff of over 400 medical professionals that provide a range of in-patient, out-patient and long-term nursing care services including 24-hour emergency services, surgical services, obstetric services, laboratory services, radiology services, physical therapy services, outpatient clinics, and other services.

Public Schools

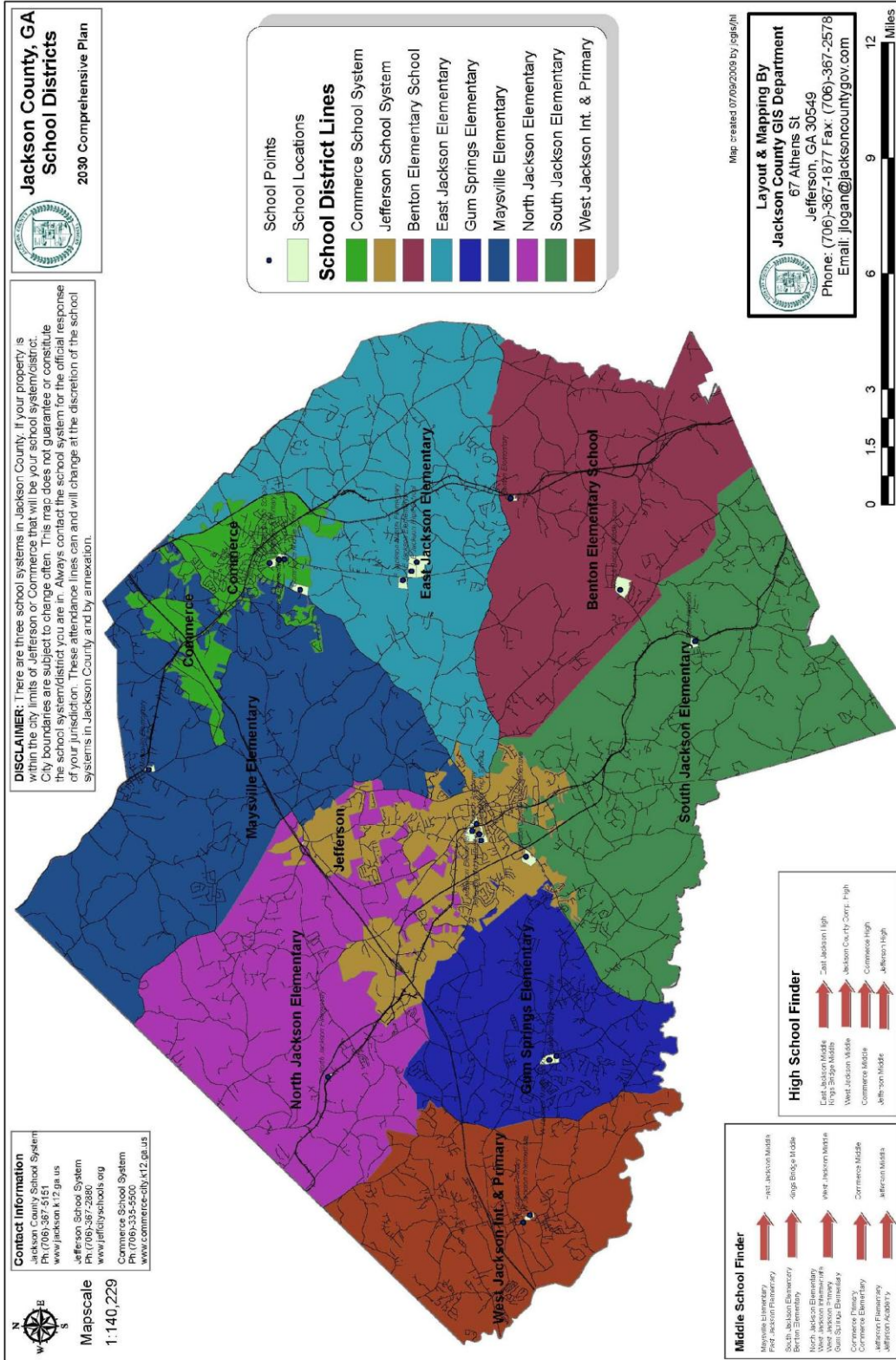
Unlike most counties that have countywide public school systems, there are three independent public school systems in Jackson County: the county system, and city school systems in Commerce and Jefferson. Table 7 provides the individual student enrollments for the past three years for all three school systems.

**Table 7
Public School Enrollment by System by Grade, FY 2007 to FY 2009
Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson Public School Systems**

Grade	Jackson County			City of Commerce			City of Jefferson			Total, All Three School Systems		
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
Pre-k	200	208	221	44	53	51	78	92	93	322	354	365
Kindergarten	563	605	606	144	140	151	195	217	206	902	962	963
1 st grade	530	563	595	108	132	105	208	195	229	846	890	929
2 nd grade	527	522	534	118	108	136	198	211	195	843	841	865
3 rd grade	527	540	538	124	122	101	188	190	208	839	852	847
4 th grade	489	542	553	113	124	112	177	199	204	779	865	869
5 th grade	493	512	552	107	121	118	193	173	208	793	806	878
6 th grade	523	516	536	123	106	105	192	202	194	838	824	835
7 th grade	512	513	490	116	109	101	190	193	207	818	815	798
8 th grade	518	530	526	120	116	116	184	191	185	822	837	827
9 th grade	604	608	590	118	120	112	190	189	208	912	917	910
10 th grade	416	491	518	113	109	117	153	178	188	682	778	823
11 th grade	410	368	432	81	102	94	137	138	159	628	608	685
12 th grade	341	380	347	83	64	88	136	139	136	560	583	571
Total	6653	6898	7038	1512	1526	1507	2419	2507	2620	10584	10931	11165

Source: Georgia Department of Education, Data Collection System.

The county's school system has increased in terms of total number of students in recent years. Given the population growth anticipated in the county, demands on the county's public school system will undoubtedly increase. Jefferson's total school enrollment has increased by roughly 100 students in the past few years. Enrollment in Commerce's school system, in contrast, has remained relatively steady in recent years.



From the figures in Table 8, public school student generation multipliers have been calculated for the 2007 year. These multipliers can be useful in terms of projecting future school students in Jackson County as a whole, or for the three independent school systems. Also, for rezoning applications, the Department of Public Development might use these multipliers as the best available estimates of potential impacts on schools serving the area rezoned.

**Table 8
Public School Student Generation Multipliers Per Household (Occupied Housing Unit)
Jackson County (All Three School Systems Combined; Year 2007 Data)**

Grade	Student Generated Per Household 2007
(pre-k through 2nd grade)	0.1350
Pre-k	.0149
Kindergarten	.0418
1 st grade	.0392
2 nd grade	.0391
3rd through 5th	0.1118
3 rd grade	.0389
4 th grade	.0361
5 th grade	.0368
6th through 8th	0.1149
6 th grade	.0389
7 th grade	.0379
8 th grade	.0381
9th through 12th	0.1290
9 th grade	.0423
10 th grade	.0316
11 th grade	.0291
12 th grade	.0260
Total Per Household	0.4908

Source: Compiled by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., August 2009, based on estimate of 2007 households and year 2007 enrollment data for the Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson School Systems from the Georgia Department of Education, Data Collection System.

**Table 9
Jackson County School Enrollment by School, FY 2007 to FY 2009**

School, Jackson County School System	FY 2007 Enrollment	FY 2008 Enrollment	FY 2009 Enrollment
North Jackson Elementary (pre-k through 5 th grade)	393	395	390
Maysville Elementary (pre-k through 5 th grade)	397	414	434
East Jackson Elementary (pre-k through 5 th grade)	444	432	468
South Jackson Elementary (pre-k through 5 th grade)	540	585	510
Benton Elementary (pre-k through 5 th grade)	295	302	348
Gum Springs Elementary (pre-k through 5 th grade)	--	--	714
West Jackson Primary (pre-k through 2 nd grade)	670	724	396
West Jackson Intermediate (3 rd through 5 th grade)	590	640	339
West Jackson Middle (6 th through 8 th grade)	920	747	758
East Jackson Middle (6 th through 8 th grade)	633	403	406
Kings Bridge Middle (6 th through 8 th grade)	540	409	388
East Jackson Comprehensive High (9 th through 12 th grade)	--	826	932
Jackson County Comprehensive High (9 th through 12 th grade)	1,739	986	898
Regional Evening Alternative School	32	35	57
Total, All Schools	6,653	6,898	7,038

Source: Georgia Department of Education, Data Collection System.

While Table 7 above provides consolidated enrollment statistics by grade in all three public school systems in Jackson County, Tables 9, 10, and 11 provide enrollment statistics for specific schools in Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson, respectively for the three most recent years.

**Table 10
City of Commerce School Enrollment by School, FY 2007 to FY 2009**

School, City of Commerce School System	FY 2007 Enrollment	FY 2008 Enrollment	FY 2009 Enrollment
Commerce Primary (pre-k through 2 nd grade)	414	433	443
Commerce Elementary (3rd and 4th grade)	237	246	213
Commerce Middle (5 th through 8 th grade)	466	452	440
Commerce High (9 th through 12 th grade)	395	395	411
Total	1,512	1,526	1,507

Source: Georgia Department of Education, Data Collection System.

**Table 11
City of Jefferson School Enrollment by School, FY 2007 to FY 2009**

School, City of Jefferson School System	FY 2007 Enrollment	FY 2008 Enrollment	FY 2009 Enrollment
Jefferson Academy (3 rd through 5 th grade)	--	562	620
Jefferson Elementary (pre-k to 5 th grade 2007) (pre-k to 2 nd 2008-9)	1,237	715	723
Jefferson Middle (6 th through 8 th grade)	566	586	586
Jefferson High (9 th through 12 th grade)	616	644	691
Total	2,419	2,507	2,620

Source: Georgia Department of Education, Data Collection System.

According to the FY 2009 county budget document, the one percent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax for education is not generating enough revenues to keep up with current demand. The new East Jackson High School has opened and has helped to alleviate the capacity strain at the high school level for the county. The East Jackson High School was financed with \$30 million of the \$70 million bond issued in 2005. Future school development will undoubtedly be aimed at the rapidly growing west side of Jackson County in the Braselton/Hoschton area.

Libraries

Historical Context

As in many parts of the country, Jackson County's libraries all began as either volunteer libraries, book deposits or as collections of used books. Over the years, the seven cities of Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson Maysville, Nicholson, Pendergrass and Talmo decided that their libraries were an important part of their cultural identity and thus the municipal libraries were founded. However, the model for individual municipal libraries is an outdated one from the 1930s and 1940s.

Beginning in the 1950s, regional or county-based systems developed and are now the norm throughout Georgia and the Southeast. The state of Georgia encourages regional systems to foster cooperation and resource sharing. To encourage cooperation, efficiency and scalability since the late 1950s, the only libraries eligible for state aid are those which are a part of a county or a regional system.

Piedmont Regional Library System

The Piedmont Regional Library System provides library services to Banks, Barrow, and Jackson Counties. All of the libraries in Jackson County are affiliated with the regional system in what is considered a loose confederation. While operating under a loose confederation within the Piedmont Regional Library System, the seven libraries of Jackson County are independent of each other. Unlike most other library systems in Georgia, the Regional Agency does not have direct line authority over the seven libraries in Jackson; instead, the libraries report directly to their individual city governments.

The Regional System provides access to PINES, courier service to share materials across the system and the state, cataloging and processing of books and other materials, administration of state funds (including construction funds), operating extension services, and other services. Additionally, the Regional System also does most of the acquisition and selection of books, a time-consuming task that requires much professional judgment, especially on limited budgets.

Municipal Libraries in Jackson County

The following cities have their own library facilities and provide paid and volunteer staff: Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Maysville, Nicholson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. There are full-service libraries in Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Maysville, and Nicholson, while Pendergrass and Talmo libraries are characterized as book-service outlets.

Table 12 provides an inventory of the square footage of existing library buildings in Jackson County, as well as planned expansions.

**Table 12
Current Library Stock and Existing and Planned Building Inventory, 2009
Libraries in Jackson County**

Municipal Library	Print and Audio Visual (AV) Materials	Existing Building Square Footage	Additional Building Square Footage Planned
Braselton	22,688	6,100	--
Commerce	31,290	9,000	5,000
Jefferson	24,780	4,800	--
Maysville	10,983	4,120	--
Nicholson	10,672	4,500	--
Pendergrass	5,931	843	--
Talmo	3,452	578	--
Totals	114,796	29,941	34,941

Source: Piedmont Regional Library System, August 2009.

Existing Level of Service

Though it does not capture level of service measures of quality, in terms of quantity the existing level of service of library facilities in Jackson County can be judged in part by determining how much building square footage per resident is provided by the various libraries.

With a 2010 population estimate of 64,564 persons (extrapolated from the population projections provided in Table 4 of the population analysis in this data appendix), the libraries in total in Jackson County provide an overall level of service of 0.48 square feet per capita as of 2008 and 0.46 square feet per capita as of 2010. Considering the 5,000 square foot addition to the Commerce library, by 2011 (with another year of projected growth, to 66,036 persons), the level of service will be an estimated 0.53 square feet per capita.

In terms of library holdings, one standard often used is to maintain two volumes per person. Considering that benchmark, Jackson County residents (assuming no additions from the current library stock) have a 2010 level of service of 1.78 volumes per capita.

Board Oversight

The Jackson County Library Board of Trustees is composed of representatives from each funding agency and sends four representatives to the Regional Library Board. The Jackson Board exists to develop policy for the libraries, and to determine the distribution of County and State funds.

Funding

The libraries in Jackson County are supported primarily by their individual cities, with some support by the county, mostly through in-kind payment of regional membership fees. As funding has continued to grow over the years from the municipalities, the county levels have not increased. County funding distribution is based on the following formula: one-third is divided evenly amongst the seven libraries and the remaining two-thirds are based on the size of the local budgets. Therefore, cities that support their libraries more aggressively receive more county funding.

The majority of state funding for libraries consists of book money, and the Jackson County Library Board of Trustees has voted to distribute these funds to each library based on population, as the state does. The remaining portion of the state funding goes to the Regional Office, to provide services to the member libraries throughout the region.

Inconsistent Standards and Operations

Library service is not consistent, due to each city library operating independently and current funding formulas. There are no set standards that these seven municipal libraries adhere to, so the quality of library service varies greatly. The findings below illustrate the differences that occur with the various libraries given that there are no system-wide standards in place:

- Each city determines the level of service it wants to receive and pays accordingly. As a result, annual budgets at libraries range from \$20,000 to \$230,000.
- Wage rates vary considerably, especially for managers.

- Annual local expenditures on books and other materials range from \$0 to \$20,000.
- There is a wide range of services and programs provided.
- Facilities range from less than 1,000 to 9,000 square feet.
- No two libraries have the same operating hours.

Dramatic Increases in Use

Jackson County’s libraries have undergone a dramatic increase in use over the past several years. From Fiscal Year 2005 to Fiscal Year 2008, libraries in Jackson County have experienced a 40 percent increase in foot traffic, a 90 percent increase in computer users, and a 126 percent increase in checkouts (Source: Regional Library System 2009). It is the substantial population growth in unincorporated parts of the county that is placing the lion’s share of new burdens on city libraries. This presents a funding equity issue described further below.

Inability to Accommodate Future Growth

None of the existing libraries is sized for the next 15 years of county growth, according to the Regional Library Director, Alan Harkness. And there is no county-wide library strategic plan to address those future growth needs.

Future needs can be projected by looking at population projections and applying a level of service (LOS) standard. The American Library Association generally recommends a level of service standard of 0.6 square feet per capita. Also, the Georgia Public Library Service, a unit of the Board of Regents, also recommends the same 0.6 square feet per capita that the American Library Association does. As noted above, the libraries in Jackson County with programmed improvements will provide a level of service of 0.53 square feet per capita in 2011 with the 5,000 square foot planned addition to the Commerce Library. The current level of service, before the planned expansion of the Commerce library, is 0.48 square feet per capita.

**Table 13
Library Level of Service and Projected Populations
Municipal Libraries in Jackson County**

Jurisdiction	Population 2008	Existing Building Square Footage	Level of Service (Square Feet Per Capita)	Projected Population 2028
Arcade	2,019	--	--	3,501
Braselton*	3,195	6,100	*	6,245
Commerce	6,575	9,000	1.37	9,186
Hoschton	1,625	--	--	2,700
Jefferson	7,813	4,800	0.61	13,251
Maysville*	1,698	4,120	*	2,763
Nicholson	1,989	4,500	2.26	3,601
Pendergrass	588	843	1.43	900
Talmo	627	578	0.92	1,118
Unincorporated	35,491	--	--	52,348
Jackson County	61,620	29,941	0.48	95,614

* City limits extend into one or more other counties; therefore, a LOS calculation based on Jackson County alone would not be valid.

As the figures in Table 13 indicate, because libraries are only provided by certain municipalities (with some county funding), some municipal residents are without library services unless they use the facilities in other municipalities. Similarly, residents of unincorporated areas must use the municipal libraries, since none is provided in unincorporated areas. The level of service standards noted in Table 13 are therefore somewhat misleading, in that the municipal libraries have much lower levels of service when one considers they are used by unincorporated residents. The level of service analysis, however, is important in showing what is considered a major funding disparity between Jackson County and the municipal libraries. Stated another way, if the municipalities in Commerce, Jefferson and Nicholson in particular did not have to serve unincorporated residents, they would have levels of service that would far exceed the suggested standard of 0.6 square feet per capita, and they would not need to expand their libraries for many years.

A look at year 2028 conditions is also instructive. Based on a level of service standard of 0.53 square feet per capita (the 2011 level of service with the planned 5,000 square foot library expansion in Commerce), Jackson County will need (in 2028) 50,675 square feet of library space total, meaning there will be a need to add 15,734 square feet of new library space. If the standard is 0.6 square feet per capita as recommended by the American Library Association, the total need in 2028 will be 57,368 square feet, or an additional 17,427 square feet.

Increasing City-County Funding Disparities and Funding Equity Concerns

Under current arrangements, and with no countywide facilities plan, the municipal libraries are expected to continue serving Jackson County's growth, the vast majority of which is expected to occur in the unincorporated portions of the county. This is creating a serious fiscal disparity that raises funding equity issues. The cities cannot be expected to continue funding improvements to municipal libraries to serve a burgeoning unincorporated population. Clearly, Jackson County is participating in the funding of libraries in the municipalities, but at issue is the extent to which municipal library expansion can be expected to meet the needs of unincorporated residents without substantial increases in funding from the county government, or without the county becoming a library service provider itself (or considering a regional service alternative).

Another way of illustrating the disparity is to note that Jackson County will have 52,348 residents residing in unincorporated areas in the year 2028. The total demand for library space to serve the unincorporated residents (without using the municipal libraries) would be 27,744 square feet at an LOS standard of 0.53 square feet per capita and 31,408 square feet at an LOS standard of 0.60 square feet per capita. Clearly, some reduction of those dramatic needs would be justified, considering that Jackson County has assisted with the funding of libraries in the municipalities with the understanding they have patrons from unincorporated areas as well. But these projections of needs underscore the need for some sort of alternative service delivery system for libraries in Jackson County in the future, unless the county government increases its funding in proportion with the demands placed on the municipal libraries as a result of substantial growth in the unincorporated areas.

Jackson County should seriously consider changing the loose confederation of individual municipal libraries into either a countywide system or officially merging all municipal libraries into the Piedmont Regional Library System. Advancing one of those options, which would require a change to the county's service delivery strategy, would increase efficiency, provide for systemwide standards, and provide for the projected demands placed on libraries by unincorporated and incorporated residents alike. Of course, municipalities, several of which

have funded libraries over several years, may be politically reluctant to give up a city service and make a major change to existing service delivery arrangements. Notwithstanding that potential limitation, serious considerations of alternative arrangements must be explored.

Housing Authorities

Jackson County does not have a housing authority, but there are housing authorities in Commerce and Jefferson. These agencies provide low-income public housing to residents who qualify for government-subsidized housing. Commerce has two projects, Willoughby Homes and Bellview with a total of 50 units. Jefferson has three projects totaling 90 units. In the Jackson County portion of Braselton, the Winder Housing Authority provides the Dunaway Massey housing project.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development functions are described also in the chapter on Labor Force and Economy, which is a part of the community assessment technical appendix. The county's service delivery strategy indicates that there is a formal agreement between the county and the City of Commerce regarding economic development.

Chamber of Commerce

The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce is the primary coordinator and promoter of economic development. It is described further in another chapter of this community assessment technical appendix.

Industrial Development Authorities

Jackson County's Industrial Development Authority owns industrial parks in the incorporated areas of the City of Commerce (East Jackson Industrial Park) and the City of Jefferson (Central Jackson Industrial park). The only city in Jackson County that has a similar authority is the City of Jefferson, which has created a Development Authority in 1996 to promote economic development. Periodic coordination between the Jefferson and Jackson County Development Authorities is warranted, and there may be opportunities for collaboration.

Downtown Development Authorities

Downtown development is not a service that is provided by Jackson County, since it is not a municipality and does not have a downtown area of its own in an unincorporated area. The cities and towns of Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, and Maysville have established downtown development authorities. Other cities in the future may opt to form their own downtown development authorities.

There is probably little if any cooperation among these downtown development authorities with one another, and with the county's chamber of commerce and Industrial Development Authority. Indeed, the county's industrial development authority is focused on attracting industry and manufacturing, while the city and town downtown development authorities are focused on primarily retail and service "Main Street" type businesses within a concentrated urban area. However, all of these development authorities are working for a common purpose of bettering the economy and employment opportunities in Jackson County. Note that two of the

municipalities, Braselton and Maysville, cross into other counties and therefore necessitate additional coordination efforts with counties other than Jackson.

Given the importance of economic development in municipalities which intertwines with historic preservation and downtown “Main Street” type activities, there is an opportunity to bolster the resources of the various authorities into an umbrella-type coordination function. Furthermore, the umbrella-type organization for downtown development in the various municipalities should be linked with county industrial recruitment efforts into an overall strategic economic development program, coordinated among all providers and constituent interests.

CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDING

The primary funding source for major capital improvements is the Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). According to the 2009 county budget document, in March, 2005, Jackson County and its nine municipalities voted to approve a new 1% Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, and the tax was implemented in July 2005 (SPLOST #4).

There are two “level-one” countywide projects: the Jail Facility that will receive 20 percent of the total SPLOST, and the Health Department Facilities will receive 1 percent of the total SPLOST. The municipalities within the County will share 29 percent of the SPLOST proceeds and the unincorporated portions of the County will receive 50 percent. The county’s share will be distributed as follows: parks and recreation (20%); public safety (14%); roads and bridges (32%); libraries (1%), and water and sewerage (32.5%).

RECENT AND ONGOING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Historic Courthouse

In 2008 the county appointed a committee to oversee the renovation of the historic Jackson County Courthouse. Approximately \$2 million have been appropriated for the renovation. The committee is also expected to make recommendations for future uses within the renovated facility.

Jackson County Jail

The Jackson County Jail, funded with SPLOST III at a cost of approximately \$33 million, consists of 125,000 square feet and will house 424 inmates, jail support services, and Sheriff’s administrative space.

Jackson County Fire Training Facility

Also funded with SPLOST, this facility began construction in August 2008 and includes a burn building, a pumper test station, and various training facilities to support other emergency services operations. This project supports all 12 fire units in the county.

East Jackson Sports Complex

Utilizing SPLOST funding, Jackson County completed the East Jackson Sports Complex, which includes four baseball fields, a refreshment center, and spectator seating on a 36-acre park site. This park opened in December 2008.

Hurricane Shoals Park

Several recent improvements to Hurricane Shoals Park have been made or are in the process of being completed. These include restoration of the coverage bridge with an ISTE A grant, the addition of Heritage Village (where historic structures from around the county have been saved from destruction and relocated in a village setting), the Pat Bell Conference Center, horse riding arena, and disc and miniature golf facilities. The miniature golf course at Hurricane Shoals Park was completed in time for the annual *Art in the Park Festival* held in September, 2008. The new miniature golf course contains running water to mimic shoals just yards away and also miniature replicas of some of the historic structures of the park.

Solid Waste Transfer Station

As of 2008 the existing solid waste transfer station was in a state of disrepair. The Board of Commissioners authorized \$1.1 million for a new transfer station. The master plan for the site calls for reconstruction of the transfer station building and scale house and provides a future site for a recycling center.

Economic Development Road Projects

In partnership with the Industrial Development Authority, the Board of Commissioners in 2004 issued \$16 million in bonds for economic development road projects.

Senior Center Renovation and Expansion

In August 2008 Jackson County received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to renovate and expand the Senior Center.

Health Department Renovations

The county has completed renovations to the health department in Jefferson.

E-911 Communications

The county has completed a major upgrade of the E-911 computer aided dispatch system.

FACILITY MASTER PLANS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

Public Safety Master Plan

The 2007 Partial Plan Update called for preparation of a public safety master plan and indicated its preparation was ongoing. Such a master plan will provide more detailed assessments and identification of future facility needs.

Sewer and Water Master Plan

The 2007 Partial Plan Update indicates that water and sewer master planning was ongoing at that time. Clearly, the master plans for water and sewer facilities need to be coordinated with this comprehensive plan update, in particular to ensure that land use plans and facility extension

plans are compatible with one another. Phase II of a water study was authorized in 2008 at a cost of approximately \$294,000. With respect to water and fire protection, there is an identified need to install additional fire hydrants throughout the county fire improved fire protection.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

In 2002, the county completed a System-Wide Recreation Master Plan, 2003-2012. That plan needs updating to account for several new initiatives and improvements made, as described in the previous section.

Space Needs Analysis and Formal Capital Improvement Programming

The 2007 Partial Plan Update included a short-term work program which called for development of a formal capital improvement program, along with an update to the previously prepared office needs assessment. These items have not been completed but are necessary in order to fully identify capital needs of the various departments in Jackson County and to project facility requirements in the future.

EVALUATING FACILITIES

In determining the need for new facilities, and in evaluating various existing buildings and structures for their adequacy in the future, the following considerations should be kept in mind. These are provided in this report to assist facility managers with further, more detailed assessments of the adequacy of their facilities and services.

- **Facility plans.** Has a space needs study ever been conducted for the facility or service, and have capital plans been developed to meet needs identified?
- **Legal requirements.** Are there federal or state mandates with respect to the operation of the facility, and if so, are they met? If not, what is required to comply?
- **Location and accessibility.** When planning for new facilities, do they need to be located at a central point in the service area?
- **Centralization versus decentralization.** Can the facility or service be provided in smaller, decentralized locations? Or is it important for efficiency that all operations of the facility or service be located in one, centralized place?
- **Age and condition.** How old is the facility? When was it constructed and last renovated? Does it have roof leaks, old HVAC equipment, or other immediate maintenance and replacement needs?
- **Obsolescence.** Is the facility obsolete in the sense that it has not been modernized to keep up with advances? Were parts of the building designed for certain uses but are now used for other purposes? If so, what are the potential renovation costs, and are they prohibitively expensive?

- **Expansion potential.** Is there any expansion potential for the existing building, or does it consume the vast majority of the lot or site on which it is located, thus preventing expansion?
- **Adequacy of parking.** Does the facility receive visitors? Are enough parking spaces provided? Is ingress and egress adequate, especially for public safety vehicles?
- **Adequacy of office space for personnel.** Are work spaces provided for each employee, and are they adequate? Does office and other equipment spill into halls and entrance ways?
- **Restrooms facilities and employee support space.** Are the restrooms adequate and ADA accessible? Is there a “break” room or kitchen for personnel?
- **Adequacy of storage and on-site records space.** Has the facility outgrown its storage capacity? To what extent do overcrowded storage spaces increase the time of retrieval and decrease efficiency of departmental operations? Has all existing storage space been maximized in terms of efficiency? Does the department or office have records or equipment stored off-site?

**Table 14
Inventory of Major Buildings
Jackson County**

Type	Facility Description	Address (Jefferson unless noted)	Year Built	Square Footage	Replacement Cost New
Cultural	Courthouse (old)	85 Washington St.	1879	13,217	\$2,093,400
Administration	Administration	67 Athens St.	1939	35,018	\$4,572,100
Courts, etc.	Courthouse	5000 Jackson Pkwy.	2004	134,304	\$28,511,100
Health	Health Department	275 General Jackson Dr.	1991	7,140	\$1,464,300
Health	Environmental Health	260 Lee St. Jefferson	1958	3,094	\$547,900
Health, Schools, etc.	Jackson Campus (shopping center)	623 Broad St. Commerce	1980	67,349	\$5,451,400
Sheriff	Criminal Investigations	368 Curtis Spence Dr.	2001	5,252	\$802,400
Sheriff	Jail	268 Curtis Spence Dr.	1953	18,828	\$4,249,200
Sheriff	Evidence Building	268 Curtis Spence Dr.	1955	936	\$45,000
Sheriff	Nurse's Trailer	268 Curtis Spence Dr.	1990	784	\$76,700
Corrections	Corrections Main	255 Curtis Spence Dr.	1987	27,512	\$5,301,600
Emergency Services	EMT/Flight Bldg.	500 Airport Dr.	2005	13,260	\$1,103,900
Fire	JCCI Fire Station	Curtis Spence Dr.	1990	3,396	\$293,600
Parks and Recreation	Main Office	1801 County Farm Rd.	2002	1,566	\$692,700
Parks and Recreation	Pat Bell Conference Center	7020 Highway 82 Spur	1955	2,388	\$190,100
Parks and Recreation	Senior Center	151 General Jackson Pkwy.	1981	11,220	\$1,286,700
Solid Waste	Compactor Building	781 New King Br. Rd, Athens	1990	96	\$59,000
Solid Waste	Compactor Building	232 Yarbrough Ridgeway Rd Maysville	1990	96	\$86,700
Solid Waste	Transfer Station – Scale House/Office	100 Landfill Dr.	2001	1,200	\$201,700
Solid Waste	Transfer Station – Transfer Station	100 Landfill Dr.	1994	3,120	\$180,400
Solid Waste	Transfer Station – Inmate breakroom	100 Landfill Dr.	1998	420	\$32,100
Solid Waste	Transfer Station – Records Storage	100 Landfill Dr.	1985	288	\$19,100
Social Service	Jackson Creative	106 Industrial Pkwy. Commerce	1994	16,994	\$2,132,200
Social Service	Head Start	215 General Jackson Dr.	1997	9,400	\$1,022,200
Social Service	Mental Health	383 General Jackson Dr.	2000	5,429	\$609,100
Extension	4H Main Office	256 Clover Leaf Cir.	1956	2,414	\$292,000
Extension	4H Work Shop	256 Clover Leaf Cir.	2003	1,471	\$124,200
Buildings and Grounds	Office	509 Curtis Spence Dr.	1995	750	\$86,600
Buildings and Grounds	Shop	509 Curtis Spence Dr.	1995	1,200	\$93,900
Buildings and Grounds	Grounds Shed	509 Curtis Spence Dr.	1988	2,100	\$94,200
Buildings and Grounds	Hay Barn	Curtis Spence Ln.	1975	2,880	\$61,100
Buildings and Grounds	Open Space	Curtis Spence Ln.	2002	3,200	\$92,800
Public Works	Fuel Canopy	131 Four Fifty Seven Dr.	1998	2,257	\$104,400

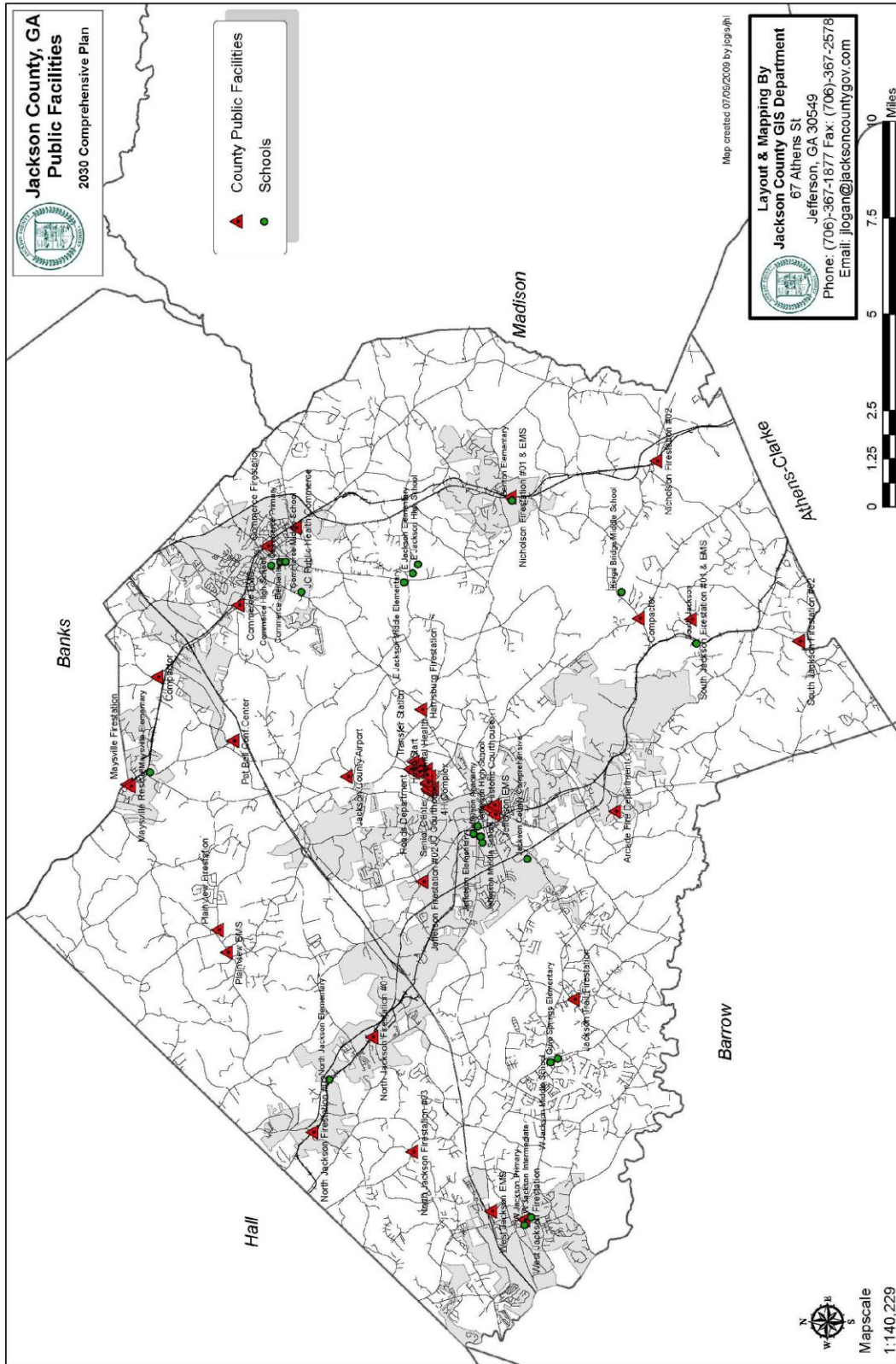
Type	Facility Description	Address (Jefferson unless noted)	Year Built	Square Footage	Replacement Cost New
Public Works	Attendant Station	131 Four Fifty Seven Dr.	2000	308	\$132,500
Roads	Main Office	12 Hendrix Drive	1959	3,012	\$477,500
Roads	Fertilizer Pole Shed	12 Hendrix Drive	1995	3,744	\$119,800
Roads	Sign Shop	12 Hendrix Drive	1995	4,988	\$174,400
Roads	Tractor Storage	12 Hendrix Drive	2001	3,444	\$99,900
Roads	Salt Shed	12 Hendrix Drive	2005	10,000	\$352,700
Fleet Maintenance	Main Building	170 Fowler Drive	1975	8,288	\$921,700
Fleet Maintenance	Tire Storage	170 Fowler Drive	1975	1,440	\$80,900
Fleet Maintenance	Paint Shop	170 Fowler Drive	1975	3,195	\$211,900

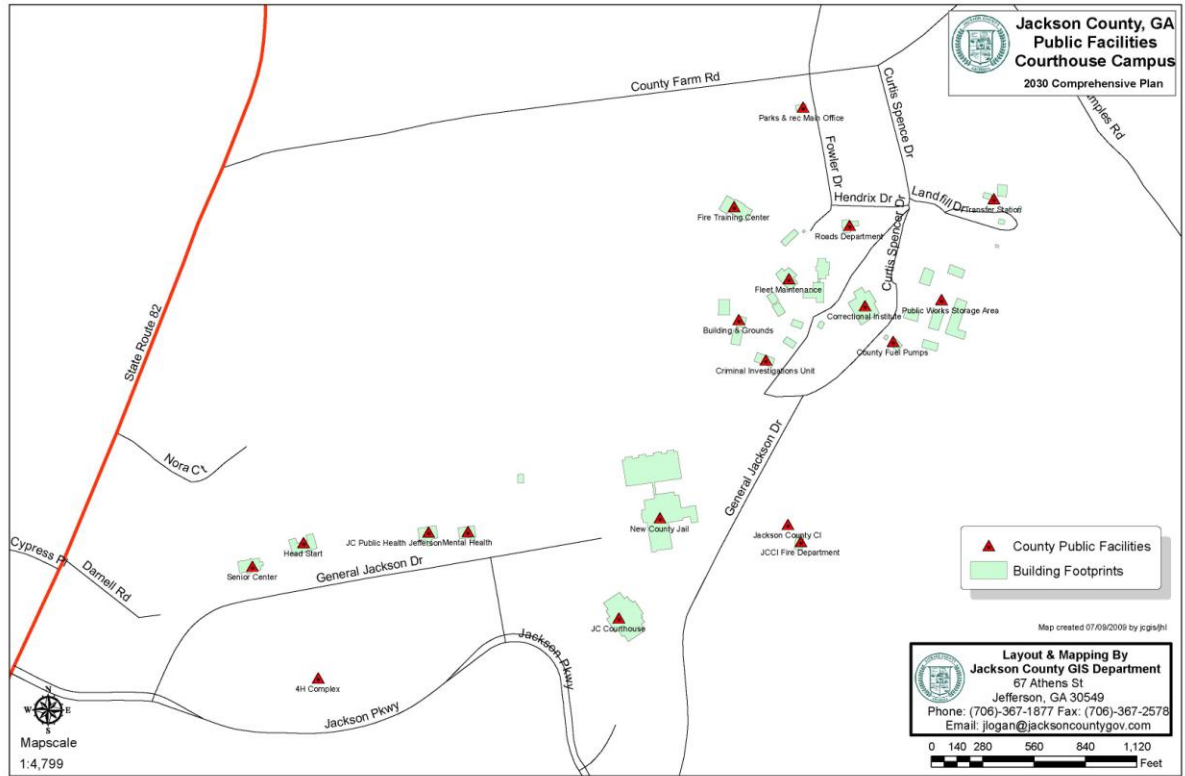
Source: CBIZ Valuation Group, LLC. Association County Commissioners of Georgia – Interlocal Risk Management Agency. Jackson County 2006 Property Appraisal Report.

Sheriff's Office Note: The Sheriff's office moved its Administrative operations, Uniform Patrol, Criminal Investigations, and Central Records to the new Jackson County Jail located at 555 General Jackson Drive.

Fleet Maintenance Note: Fleet maintenance reviewed these numbers and found that the main building is about 6,300 square feet with an addition of about 1,160 square feet, for a total of approximately 7,460 square feet for the main building. An oil change facility of approximately 792 square feet also exists. The main shop building was constructed sometime in the 1950s. The front office area and the welding shop were added in the early 1990s. The body shop room, paint room and small engine building along with an inmate restroom and the tire storage building were also most likely constructed in the 1950s. The oil change area was just a shelter with a roof over it in November 1997; it was re-roofed in 1998-1999. Then in about 1999-2000, the old metal was taken from the old roof to enclose the sides and one end of the oil change area. The oil change area was destroyed by the weather in June 2009. The estimate to replace it is \$34,000, including two electronic overhead doors, concrete block construction, more and better lighting, and more compressed air hook-ups, a passage door and new metal roof.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal: The table above has been modified to reflect comments received from the Solid Waste Collection and Disposal personnel of Jackson County.





Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMY

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

Prepared Under Contract By:

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LABOR FORCE AND ECONOMY

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ECONOMIC ANALYSES

Local planning requirements require, at minimum, for the community assessment to include the following:¹

(c) **Economic Development.** Identify trends and issues relating to the economic characteristics of the community, including:

Economic Base. Evaluate the various sectors or industries that constitute the community's economy in terms of their relative importance and impact, including the community's place in the larger economies of the state and the nation.

Labor Force. Evaluate characteristics of the community's labor force, including employment status, occupations, personal income, wages and commuting patterns.

Economic Resources. Evaluate the development agencies, programs, tools, education, training and other economic resources available to the community's businesses and residents.

Economic Trends. Evaluate economic trends that are ongoing in the community, including which sectors, industries or employers are declining and which are growing. Also evaluate any unique economic situations, major employers and important new developments for their impact on the community.

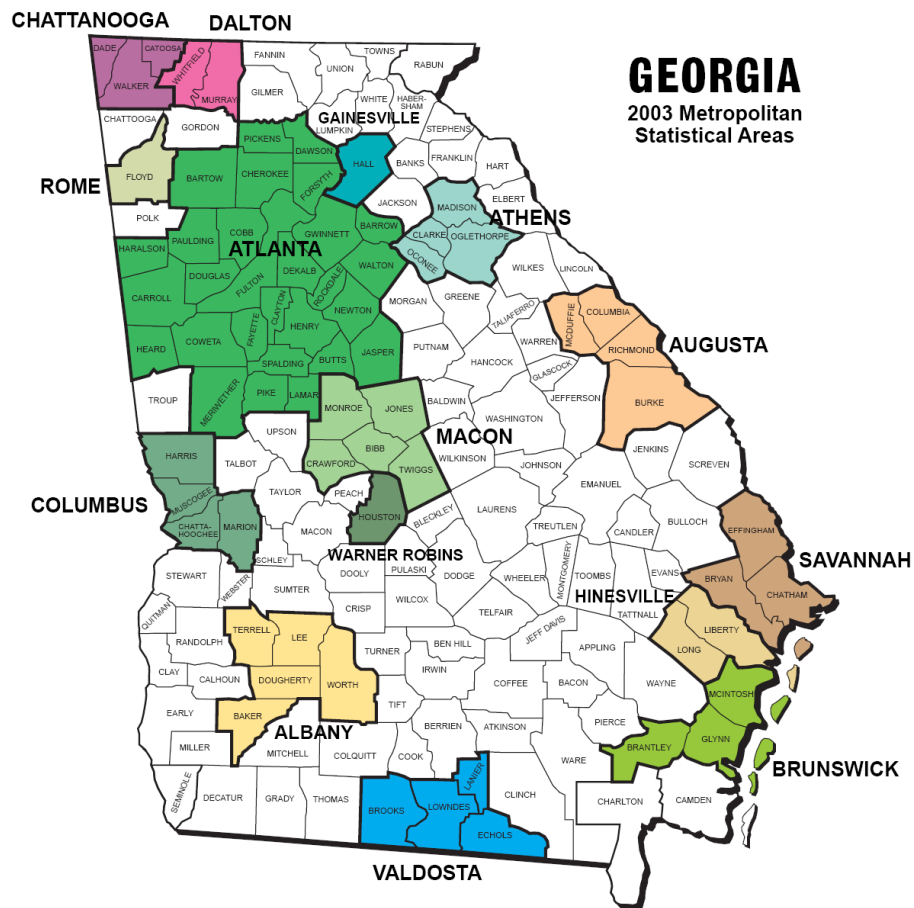
OVERVIEW

This analysis begins with an assessment of data related to Jackson County's labor force, including the surrounding Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) context. Second, this analysis covers jobs in Jackson County by industry to reveal past and current trends. Specific attention is paid to the geographic location of various employers within and adjacent to Jackson County. Third, economic development resources are described. Finally, selected issues and opportunities are highlighted.

¹ Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning "Local Planning Requirements" (Effective Date: May 1, 2005), Chapter 110-12-1-.07, Data and Mapping Specifications, 110-12-1-.07 Data and Mapping Specifications, (b) Economic Development.

LABOR FORCE

Although Jackson County as of 2003 was not part of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), it is surrounded on three sides by MSAs: the Atlanta MSA to the south; Gainesville MSA to the west; and the Athens MSA to the east (U.S. Bureau of Census 2003). Jackson County is strategically located at the edge of these three major labor markets and job centers (see figure).



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Table 1 provides labor force and unemployment data for the three MSAs abutting Jackson County. The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta MSA is by far the largest with some 2.7 million resident workers (labor force) in 2008. The labor force in Gainesville’s MSA, which consists only of Hall County, is smaller than the Athens MSA, which consists of four counties. All three MSA labor forces have grown significantly in terms of labor force participants from 2003 to 2008, as is evident from the data in Table 1.

Of the three MSAs, unemployment rates have been lowest in the Athens-Clarke County MSA, and highest in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta MSA. The 2008 unemployment rates do not

reflect worsening conditions – as of 2009 the unemployment rate has risen above 10 percent in the Atlanta-area MSA.

Table 1
Annual Average Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment, 2003 and 2008
Persons 16 Years and Older
Metropolitan Statistical Areas Adjacent to Jackson County

	Athens-Clarke County MSA		Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta MSA		Gainesville MSA	
	2003	2008	2003	2008	2003	2008
Labor Force	95,308	109,233	2,456,021	2,746,408	79,267	92,616
Employed	91,861	103,906	2,337,883	2,577,453	76,126	87,658
Unemployed	3,447	5,327	118,138	168,955	3,141	4,958
Unemployment Rate	3.6	4.9	4.8	6.2	4.0	5.4

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Information and Analysis, Revised March 2009.

Table 2 shows the civilian labor force in Jackson County for recent years, along with unemployment rates. The civilian labor force in Jackson County has increased steadily in recent years, at least until 2006-2008, when it stabilized and declined slightly. Despite the recent slow growth and slight decline in the number of Jackson County labor force participants from 2006 to 2008, employment of Jackson County’s working residents continued to increase during that time period.

In 2008, the unemployment rate for Jackson County’s resident workers increased significantly, and jumped to 9.5 percent in January 2009. Clearly, Jackson County has not escaped the effects of the national economic recession, as the number of unemployed resident workers in Jackson County more than doubled between 2007 and January 2009. The total number of employed residents of Jackson County decreased by more than 2,000 from 2008 to January 2009.

Table 2
Annual Average Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment, 2003-2009
Persons 16 Years and Older
Jackson County

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (Jan.)
Labor Force	22,687	23,990	25,551	26,805	26,863	26,059	28,171
Employed	21,686	22,964	24,375	25,721	25,743	27,746	25,498
Unemployed	1,001	1,026	1,176	1,084	1,120	1,687	2,673
Unemployment Rate	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.0	4.2	6.1	9.5

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Information and Analysis, Revised March 2009.

Labor Force by Place of Work and Commuting Patterns

Residents of Jackson County may find employment within the county, or they may seek employment outside the county. Similarly, residents of a given city in Jackson County who are working may be employed within the city in which they reside, in Jackson County but outside their city of residence, or outside the county.

Table 3 shows the counties where Jackson County’s working residents were employed in 2000. Slightly more than 4 of every 10 working residents (41.6 percent) of Jackson County worked within the county in 2000. Stating the obverse, the vast majority of working residents of Jackson County commuted out of the county for work in 2000. The largest single location of jobs outside Jackson County for its working residents in 2000 was Athens-Clarke County, with almost 16 percent of all workers. Hall County and Gwinnett County also had significant shares in terms of attracting Jackson County’s working residents to work in 2000. Banks County, most likely the concentration of businesses at Banks Crossing (Interstate 85 and US Highway 441), attracted a small share of workers who live in Jackson County (most likely those residing in the Commerce area of Jackson County).

Table 3
Labor Force by Place of Work, 2000
Workers 16 Years and Older
Jackson County

County of Work	Number of Residents Working in this County	Percentage of Total Jackson County Labor Force
Jackson County	7,960	41.6%
Clarke County	3,022	15.8%
Hall County	2,367	12.4%
Gwinnett County	2,261	11.8%
Barrow County	883	4.6%
Banks County	748	3.9%
Fulton County	459	2.4%
DeKalb County	312	1.6%
Other Counties	1,120	5.9%
Total Workers in Jackson County	19,132	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, as reported in Jackson County Area Labor Profile, Georgia Department of Labor.

Table 4 provides important statistics as of 2000 for working residents of the municipalities in Jackson County. Residents of the City of Jefferson, which is generally centrally located in Jackson County, led all municipalities in 2000 in terms of the percent of its labor force working in Jackson County; more than one-half (53.2 percent) of Jefferson’s working residents in 2000 worked in Jackson County. However, the City of Commerce was not far behind, with nearly half (48.9 percent) of its resident labor force working in Jackson County.

Not surprisingly, residents with homes near the county line appear to have significant out-commuting patterns. Braselton and Hoschton, which have convenient access through a small part of Barrow County into Gwinnett County’s concentration of jobs, have comparatively low shares of their resident labor forces who worked in Jackson County in 2000. Maysville had the lowest share of all the municipalities in that regard in 2000; that is not surprising, given that only part of Maysville is located in Jackson County (the other part is in Banks County), and given that it is somewhat remote in terms of location from much of Jackson County’s job locations (except Commerce).

Table 4
Place of Work by County and Place of Residence, 2000
Workers 16 Years and Older
Jackson County and Municipalities

	Total Workers 16 Years and Over	Worked in County of Residence	% Working in County of Residence	Worked in Place of Residence	% Working in Place of Residence
Jackson County	19,132	7,960	41.6%	1,322	6.9%
City of Arcade	804	277	34.5%	31	3.9%
City of Braselton	535	163	30.5%	53	9.9%
City of Commerce	2,410	1,179	48.9%	635	26.3%
City of Hoschton	495	136	27.5%	46	9.3%
City of Jefferson	1,770	941	53.2%	518	29.3%
City of Maysville	588	131	22.3%	41	7.0%
City of Nicholson	539	216	40.1%	39	7.2%
City Pendergrass	178	77	43.3%	9	5.1%
City of Talmo	164	8	4.9%	8	4.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF 3, Tables P26 and P27.

Jefferson led all municipalities in Jackson County in 2000 in terms of the percentage of resident labor force who worked in their city of residence (29.3 percent). Jefferson was followed closely by Commerce (26.3 percent). All other cities in Jackson County had less than 10 percent of their resident labor forces working in the city itself. This is explained largely in terms of a lack of diverse jobs available in many of the smaller cities in Jackson County.

Talmo appears as an anomaly when compared with the other cities, with a very small share of working residents of that city choosing to work in Jackson County. It appears that, given its location close to the Hall County line, Talmo’s small resident labor force commutes into Hall County for work. Arcade, Pendergrass, and Talmo, all small cities with relatively small labor forces, had very small shares of working residents working in their city of residence – that is largely a function of limited job availability in the small cities, as noted above.

The Georgia Department of Labor publishes an “Area Labor Profile” which lists the largest employers in the Jackson County area, which is defined generally as Jackson County and the abutting counties. The largest ten employers in the area are all outside of Jackson County, in Clarke County (University of Georgia, Athens Regional Medical Center, and Goldkist), Gwinnett County (Gwinnett Hospital System, WalMart, Publix, Kroger, and Scientific Games), and Hall County (Fieldale Farms and Northeast Georgia Medical Center). Note that three of the top ten largest employers in the Jackson area are in the health care industry, three are groceries and retail stores, and two are involved in poultry production.

Labor Force by Industry

Next, we look more closely at the labor forces of Jackson County and its two larger municipal labor forces – Commerce and Jefferson – in terms of within what industries they work. These data are shown in Table 5. Manufacturing employed about one of every five working residents

in Jackson County (21.3 percent), Commerce (19.7 percent), and Jefferson (21.0 percent) in 2000. Manufacturing thus led all other industries in terms of employment of the local labor forces. This means that, at least as of 2000, Jackson County's resident labor force (along with Commerce's and Jefferson's) was heavily reliant on a single industry for employment.

Table 5
Employment by Industry, 2000
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson
(Place of Residence)

Industry	Jackson County	% of Total	City of Commerce	% of Total	City of Jefferson	% of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	502	2.6	23	0.9	14	0.8
Mining	60	0.3	0	0	4	0.2
Construction	2,165	11.1	183	7.4	161	9.0
Manufacturing	4,154	21.3	487	19.7	376	21.0
Wholesale trade	876	4.5	83	3.4	73	4.1
Retail trade	2,394	12.3	355	14.4	173	9.7
Transportation and warehousing	769	3.9	101	4.1	40	2.2
Utilities	275	1.4	13	0.5	45	2.5
Information	378	1.9	53	2.1	71	4.0
Finance and insurance	571	2.9	65	2.6	46	2.6
Real estate and rental and leasing	300	1.5	52	2.1	33	1.8
Professional, scientific, and technical services	529	2.7	61	2.5	58	3.2
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative and support and waste management services	587	3.0	68	2.8	33	1.8
Educational services	1,566	8.0	249	10.1	202	11.3
Health care and social assistance	1,241	6.4	183	7.4	124	6.9
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	182	0.9	40	1.6	16	0.9
Accommodation and food services	1,232	6.3	226	9.2	138	7.7
Other services (except public administration)	984	5.0	97	4.0	85	4.9
Public administration	778	4.0	129	5.2	97	5.4
Total	19,542	100%	2,468	100%	1,789	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF 3, Table P49.

Retail trade was the second largest industry employer of Jackson County's residents in 2000 (12.3 percent of the total labor force). Though also ranked second, retail trade was more significant for Commerce's resident labor force in 2000, at 14.4 percent of the total resident labor force. Construction ranked third for Jackson County's labor force in 2000, with an 11.1 percent share of total employment of the county's labor force. Education, health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and other services had relatively equal shares of

total employment (5-8 percent) of Jackson County residents in 2000. Several industry sectors had low percentages of Jackson County’s labor force in 2000 – utilities, information, real estate, professional and scientific services, and arts and entertainment all. On the basis of these industry figures alone, one would conclude that Jackson County’s labor force is heavily reliant on manufacturing and construction jobs – at first glance, one could characterize Jackson County’s labor force as largely “blue collar” in nature; however, there is more to it than meets the eye, as noted below.

Labor Force by Occupation

The figures in Table 6 substantiate the prior conclusion that Jackson County’s labor force is largely blue collar in nature, but it also demonstrates the opposite in some respects. Grouping together certain “blue collar” occupations (construction, production, and transportation and material moving), as of 2000 more than one-third (37.2 percent) of Jackson County’s labor force was blue collar in nature. If one adds buildings and grounds cleaning and maintenance in the “blue collar” category, the total was more than 4 in 10 (41.5 percent) in 2000.

**Table 6
Employment by Occupation, 2000
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson
(Place of Residence)**

Occupation	Jackson County	% of Total	City of Commerce	% of Total	City of Jefferson	% of Total
Management, professional, and related occupations	4,405	22.5	544	22.0	542	30.3
Service: Health care support service	333	1.7	82	3.3	21	1.2
Service: Protective service	331	1.7	70	2.8	31	1.8
Service: Food preparation and serving	900	4.6	143	5.8	76	4.2
Service: Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	847	4.3	140	5.8	82	4.6
Service: Personal care and service	337	1.7	35	1.4	42	2.3
Sales and office	4,912	25.2	666	27.0	455	25.5
Farming, forestry, fishing	210	1.1	20	0.8	15	0.8
Construction, extraction and maintenance	2,849	14.6	266	10.8	192	10.7
Production occupations	2,959	15.1	393	15.9	227	12.7
Transportation and material moving	1,459	7.5	109	4.4	106	5.9
Total	19,542	100	2,468	100	1,789	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF 3, Table P50.

However, looking at the obverse, the vast majority of Jackson County’s working residents in 2000 worked in other-than-blue-collar occupations. One quarter of the labor force (25.2 percent) worked in sales and office positions, and 22.5 percent worked in management, professional, and related occupations. Though not substantiated in the above numbers, it could be that the large percent of labor force in professional-type positions is linked to the educational economy

of the University of Georgia in Athens-Clarke County. Similarly, it should not be overlooked that “manufacturing” industries also employ significant numbers of managers and professionals of various types. Other types of service occupations (health care, food preparation, personal care, and protective services) collectively made up eight percent of the labor force occupations of Jackson County’s working residents in 2000 (Table 6).

EMPLOYMENT IN JACKSON COUNTY AND COMMUTING PATTERNS

Next, the analysis shifts from looking at the labor force in Jackson County to the jobs in Jackson County. As already noted, people employed in Jackson County may be residents of Jackson County, or they may reside outside the county. We first identify from where employers in Jackson County drew their labor force from in 2000. Not surprisingly, a majority of the jobs in Jackson County in 2000 were filled by Jackson County residents. The most significant source of labor force outside Jackson County in 2000 for jobs in Jackson County was from Banks County, which is comparatively limited in terms of job opportunities except in the Banks Crossing area at Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 441. Employers in Jackson County in 2000 also drew significantly from the labor forces in adjacent Hall (8.0 percent), Clarke (6.3 percent), Madison (4.7 percent) and Barrow Counties (3.8 percent), as indicated in Table 7.

**Table 7
Workers 16 Years and Older Working in Jackson County
by Place of Residence, 2000**

County of Work	Number of Residents Living in this County and Working in Jackson County	Percentage of Total Employment in Jackson County
Jackson County	7,960	52.8%
Banks County	1,386	19.2%
Hall County	1,205	8.0%
Clarke County	952	6.3%
Madison County	706	4.7%
Barrow County	567	3.8%
Gwinnett County	537	3.6%
Franklin County	385	2.6%
Other Counties	1,374	9.1%
Total Employed in Jackson County	15,072	100%

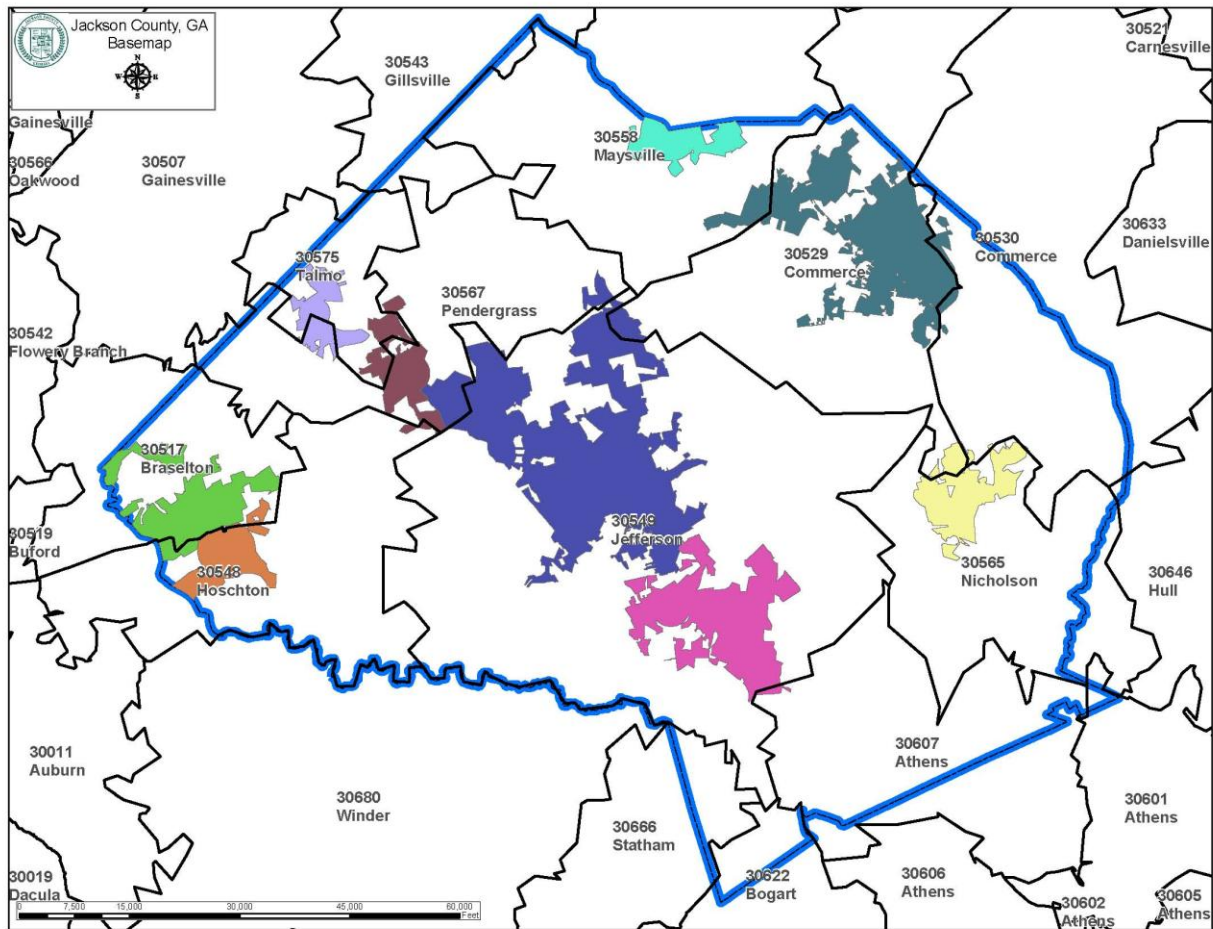
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, as reported in Jackson County Area Labor Profile, Georgia Department of Labor.

Distribution of Employment in Jackson County by Industry

It is useful from a land use and economic development standpoint to understand how employment in Jackson County is distributed geographically. The U.S. Census Bureau publishes limited employment data by zip codes. This section provides data on how employment in 2006 (the most recent year available) is distributed geographically in the county.

A map of zip codes is provided in this section for reference. It is important to note that many of the zip codes do not correspond exactly or exclusively with Jackson County’s boundaries.

Several zip codes go well outside the county, hence, the statistics need to be understood in that context.



Zip Codes Within and Partially Contained in Jackson County

To elaborate further on this point, only Zip Code 30549 (Jefferson, also including Arcade) and Zip Code 30567 (Pendergrass) are located entirely within Jackson County. The Nicholson Zip Code (30565) is largely representative of Jackson County conditions, with only a small portion crossing into Madison County. Satham (30666) and Bogart (30622) Zip Codes have small portions in Jackson County, areas which are not significant in terms of employment. The Gillsville Zip Code (30543) crosses into parts of Jackson County, but given those parts are quite rural and likely do not include any significant employment reported in Zip Code Business Patterns, it is excluded from this analysis.

Table 8 shows establishments and employment by 12 of 13 Zip Codes in, or partially contained within, Jackson County in 2006 (the most recent year for which data are available). Again, reporting employment by zip code helps to understand the geographic distribution of employment in Jackson County and the vicinity.

Table 8
Establishments and Employment by Zip Code in Jackson County, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Establishments	Total Employment
30517	Braselton	243	3,787
30548	Hoschton	252	1,273
30575	Talmo	17	119
30567	Pendergrass	55	2,775
30558	Maysville	50	305
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	342	3,892
30529	Commerce	428	6,090
30530	Commerce	48	390
30565	Nicholson	46	174
30607	Athens	210	3,267
30666	Statham	99	621
30622	Bogart	377	5,238

The City of Commerce lies within two Zip Codes, 30529 and 30530, but does not encompass all the area of either Zip Code. The vast majority of economic activity in Zip Code 30529 is believed to be within Jackson County and is therefore considered mostly representative of Jackson County. The City of Commerce itself makes up only part of the geography of Zip Code 30529, yet probably has the vast majority of the economic activity in the Zip Code. Zip Code 30529 led all zip codes in 2006 in terms of the total number of establishments and total employment, with 428 and 6,090, respectively, as shown in Table 8. The Bogart Zip Code (30622) ranked second in both establishments and employment, but as noted above, that Zip Code is considered not representative at all with regard to employment and establishments in Jackson County. The Braselton and Athens Zip Codes were next highest, but again, a significant but undetermined number of establishments and employment in those Zip Codes lies outside Jackson County. The Pendergrass Zip Code (30567) is entirely within Jackson County and ranked sixth in employment size, though it had a comparatively small number of establishments; the Pendergrass Zip Code has some large industries and agricultural manufacturing employers. The significance of those Zip Codes split between Jackson and other counties is addressed later in this analysis.

Employment by Industry

There are different sources of information for employment statistics in Jackson County. A principal source used for this analysis is the U.S. Census Bureau, which annually publishes statistics on employment within individual counties and (now) Zip Codes, but not for municipalities. The most recent available year for which data are available from *County Business Patterns* is 2006. Table 8 shows employment by industry for two year intervals from 2000 to 2006 in Jackson County. It is useful to report the earlier years, as they can reveal trends. Also, because these figures are not annual averages, there can be some fluctuations from year to year. A look at several years therefore helps in that regard. It is important, in considering the data in Table 8 (*County Business Patterns*), that the data cover only establishments with payroll and thus exclude most self-employed persons. Furthermore, they do not include government employment. Hence, when looking at the percentages of total

employment in Table 9, one has to consider that many self-employed persons and all government employees are excluded.

Table 9
Employment For Week Including March 12 by Industry, 2000 to 2006
Jackson County
(Census Bureau, County Business Patterns)

Industry	2000	%	2002	%	2004	%	2006	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0-19	--	22	0.1	0-19	--	21	0.1
Mining	0-19	--	20-99	--	20-99	--	59	0.3
Construction	929	6.6	929	6.3	1,014	6.4	1,175	6.8
Manufacturing	4,247	30.0	4,338	29.3	4,880	30.8	4,554	26.2
Wholesale trade	1,025	7.2	1,349	9.1	1,081	6.8	1,288	7.4
Retail trade	2,400	16.9	2,941	19.9	3,570	22.5	3,522	20.3
Transportation and warehousing	377	2.7	257	1.7	722	4.6	1,143	6.6
Utilities	100-249	--	100-249	--	100-249	--	100-249	--
Information	128	0.9	177	1.2	147	0.9	128	0.7
Finance and insurance	332	2.3	341	2.3	356	2.2	400	2.3
Real estate and rental and leasing	128	0.9	175	1.2	181	0.1	196	1.1
Professional, scientific, and technical services	215	1.5	238	1.6	322	2.0	486	2.8
Management of companies and enterprises	20-99	--	500-999	--	20-99	--	0-19	--
Administrative and support and waste management services	842	5.9	232	1.6	372	2.3	484	2.8
Educational services	13	0.1	17	0.1	76	0.5	68	0.4
Health care and social assistance	811	5.7	773	5.2	829	5.2	989	5.7
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	260	1.8	79	0.5	97	0.6	176	1.0
Accommodation and food services	1,618	11.4	1,193	8.1	1,356	8.6	1,857	10.7
Other services (except public admin.)	370	2.6	430	2.9	514	3.2	556	3.2
Auxiliaries or unclassified	100-249	--	100-249	--	0-19	--	0-19	--
Total Reported (total % shown)	14,179	96.5	14,815	91.1	15,839	96.7	17,357	98.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, for selected years.

Another source of employment data is the Georgia Department of Labor. It has a couple of advantages over *County Business Patterns*. First, the Georgia Department of Labor publishes in a more timely fashion and thus more recent years can be reported here. Second, Department of Labor data include government employment and thus provide a much more complete picture when looking at the proportionate shares each industry has in terms of total employment. Third, Department of Labor data represent average monthly employment, as opposed to employment during a single week, thus it is likely to be more representative for the given year as a whole than *County Business Patterns*, which might not capture upturns or downturns in the latter part of the year.

Average monthly employment by industry in Jackson County for the years 2003 and 2008 are shown in Table 10.

Table 10
Average Monthly Employment by Industry, 2003 and 2008
Jackson County
(Georgia Department of Labor)

Industry	2003	%	2008	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	nr	--	99	0.5
Mining	nr	--	nr	--
Construction	1,239	8.0	995	5.4
Manufacturing	4,043	26.1	4,537	24.7
Wholesale trade	1,094	7.1	1,076	5.9
Retail trade	2,994	19.4	2,880	15.7
Transportation and warehousing	206	1.3	759	4.1
Utilities	nr	--	nr	--
Information	103	0.7	103	0.6
Finance and insurance	216	1.4	341	1.9
Real estate and rental and leasing	183	1.2	177	1.0
Professional, scientific, and technical services	264	1.7	346	1.9
Management of companies and enterprises	nr	--	nr	--
Administrative and support and waste management services	222	1.4	759	4.1
Educational services	40	0.3	19	0.1
Health care and social assistance	404	2.6	575	3.1
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	32	0.2	154	0.8
Accommodation and food services	1,025	6.6	1,143	6.2
Other services (except government)	198	1.3	265	1.4
Government	2,749	17.8	3,658	19.9
Total Reported	15,464	97.1	18,368	97.3

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

As alluded to above, data for employment within municipal geographies are extremely limited. The Census Bureau's Economic Census provides some data for municipalities, but it does not provide data for all cities. The data that are provided for cities do not provide total employment; hence, the economic censuses provide an incomplete picture for municipal employment, but an incomplete picture is better than no data at all. Table 10 provides employment data for the Cities of Commerce and Jefferson, along with Jackson County, in 2002 (the most recent year for which data are available). The 2007 economic census for Georgia has not been released at the time of this writing.

Table 11
Employment For Week Including March 12 by Key Industry, 2002
Jackson County, Commerce, and Jefferson

Industry	Jackson County Employees	%	City of Commerce			City of Jefferson		
			# Establishments	Employees	% County Total Employees	# Establishments	Employees	% County Total Employees
Manufacturing	4,338	29.3	10	546	12.6	12	642	14.8
Retail trade	2,941	19.9	113	1,331	45.3	27	278	9.5
Real estate and rental and leasing	175	1.2	14	105	60.0	6	17	9.7
Professional, scientific, and technical services	238	1.6	10	66	27.7	15	21	8.8
Administrative and support and waste management services	232	1.6	4	nr	--	13	142	61.2
Health care and social assistance	773	5.2	26	648	83.8	9	42	5.4
Accommodation and food services	1,193	8.1	23	346	29.0	9	144	12.1
Total Shown in Table	14,815	66.9*	200	3,042	20.5	91	1,286	8.7

* This percentage is the percentage of total employment in Jackson County that falls into the categories in this table.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *County Business Patterns* (2002) and 2002 Economic Census, Selected Statistics by Economic Sector.

The employment by industry data in Tables 9, 10, and 11 are discussed in detail for each of the major industries, in the following paragraphs (see Economic Analysis by Industry).

Major Employers

Residents of other counties are attracted to Jackson County to work due to a variety of industries and manufacturing in the county, but the top five largest employers in Jackson County according to the Department of Labor’s Area Labor Profile (2008) are: BJC Medical Center, Mission Foods-Jefferson, Home Depot, WalMart, and Wayne Poultry.

The local chamber of commerce also provides data on major employers, which presents a different perspective from the Department of Labor’s data. According to data were compiled by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc., as a part of the Countywide Road Plan, the largest employer in Jackson County is Wayne Farms, LLC, with 1,350 employees. The second largest employer is the Jackson County Board of Education with 825 employees. Other major employers are shown in Table 12, from Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.

**Table 12
Major Employers in Jackson County**

Employer	Industry	Employees	Year Opened	Location
Wayne Farms, LLC	Poultry	1,350	1967	977 Wayne Poultry Road, Pendergrass, Georgia 30549
Jackson County Board of Education	School System	825	1953	1660 Winder Hwy., Jefferson, Georgia 30549
Jackson County EMC	Electric Power	650	1930	850 Commerce Rd., Jefferson, Georgia 30549
Baker & Taylor Books	Book Distributor	500	1967	251 Mount Olive Church Rd., Commerce, Georgia 30529
Haverty's	Furniture Distributor	450	2000	1090 Broadway Ave., Braselton, Georgia 30517
BJC Medical Center	Hospital	411	1960	70 Medical Center Dr., Commerce, Georgia 30529
Jackson County Government	Government	400	1796	67 Athens St., Jefferson, Georgia 30549
Mission Foods	Food Service	385	1989	225 John B. Brooks Rd., Pendergrass, Georgia 30567
TenCate Nicolon	Geotextiles	235	1995	365 S. Holland Dr., Pendergrass, Georgia 30567
Roper Pump Company	Pumps	200	1965	P.O. Box 269, Commerce, Georgia 30529
Southeast Toyota Distributors	Automobiles	163	1987	P.O. Box 89, Commerce, Georgia 30529
Huber Engineered Woods	Wood Products	150	1990	P.O. Box 670, Commerce, Georgia 30529
YearOne	Automotive	140	2003	P.O. Box 10, Braselton, Georgia 30517
Buhler Quality Yarns Corporation	Textile	135	1996	P.O. Box 506, Jefferson, Georgia 30549
Caterpillar, Inc.	Tractors	130	1992	420 John B. Brooks Rd., Pendergrass, Georgia 30567
Mayfield Dairy Farms	Food Service	123	1996	P.O. Box 400, Braselton, Georgia 30517

Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. July 2009. Countywide Roads Plan (Draft), Table 29.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS BY INDUSTRY

This section presents a detailed discussion of employment by industry in Jackson County. First, it looks at industries that are industrial in nature and which are likely to be concentrated in light industrial workplaces: manufacturing, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing. Second, it looks at industries that are commercial in nature and which typically locate along major commercial highway corridors: retail trade, accommodation and food services, and

construction. Third, service-related industries, likely to be located in office environments are discussed, including finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing employment in Jackson County totaled 4,247 in 2000 according to *County Business Patterns*, or 30 percent of total non-government employment. It increased steadily in total employment from 2000 to 2004, reaching a height of 4,880 in 2004, then declined to 4,554 in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns* (see Table 9). The Georgia Department of Labor’s statistics for 2003 and 2008 reveal a gain in manufacturing employment over a five-year period, from 4,043 in 2003 to 4,537 in the year 2008. It is difficult to reconcile the manufacturing employment totals from the two sources, except to say that the Department of Labor provides average monthly employment and the U.S. Census Bureau reports employment during the week of March 12th of each year. In terms of percent share of total employment, including government, manufacturing comprised 26.1 percent in 2003 and 24.7 percent in 2008 in Jackson County according to the Department of Labor (Table 10). Regardless of the source of information for manufacturing employment, it is evident that manufacturing is the largest employing industry in Jackson County.

Table 13
Manufacturing Establishments by Zip Code in Jackson County, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Manufacturing Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	8	4	0	1	1	2
30548	Hoschton	10	1	3	3	2	1
30575	Talmo	2	1	0	1	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	13	0	0	1	5	7
30558	Maysville	4	1	0	1	2	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	17	4	0	2	7	4
30529	Commerce	13	6	1	1	3	2
30530	Commerce	5	2	1	0	1	1
30565	Nicholson	2	1	1	0	0	0
30607	Athens	15	3	4	3	1	4
30666	Statham	8	2	0	4	2	0
30622	Bogart	16	3	5	2	3	3
--	All Zip Codes Shown	113	28	15	19	27	24
--	Jackson County	70	19	4	9	18	20

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary, 2006. Jackson County totals from County Business Patterns (NAICS), 2006.

Table 13 shows the distribution of manufacturing employment by Zip Code in 2006. Of the 112 manufacturing establishments in the 12 Zip Codes shown in Table 12, 70 establishments were in Jackson County, or almost two-thirds of the total establishments. There were 30 establishments concentrated in the Jefferson (30549) and Pendergrass (30567) Zip Codes (both totally contained in Jackson County). Jackson County was home to 20 of the 24 largest (50-employee or more) manufacturers in the 12 Zip Codes in 2006. As indicated in Table 11, Jefferson and

Commerce in 2006 were collectively the location for about one-quarter of all manufacturing employment in Jackson County.

Table 14 provides major manufacturing employers in Jackson County, listed in terms of largest employment first. These are very important employers, together comprising approximately 17 percent of total jobs in Jackson County. These published data due not appear to be as complete as the data supplied by the local chamber of commerce and reported in Table 12.

Table 14
Major Manufacturers in Jackson County, 2009
(100 Jobs or More)

Manufacturer	Location	Product Manufactured	Number of Employees
Wayne Farms	Pendergrass	Poultry processing	1,270
Mission Foods	Jefferson	Corn flour, tortillas, taco shells	346
Braselton Poultry	Braselton	Breaded and battered chicken	307
Gold Kist, Inc.	Commerce	Poultry processing	220
Caterpillar Fuel Systems	Pendergrass	Fuel injections parts/assemblies	180
Roper Pump Co.	Commerce	Industrial pumps, turbines	178
Ten Cate Nicolon	Pendergrass	Geotextiles	159
J. M. Huber Corp.	Commerce	Oriented strandboard	150
Buhler Quality Yarns Corp.	Jefferson	Combed cotton yarn	135
Louisiana-Pacific	Athens (30607)	Paper	133
Skaps Industries, Inc.	Commerce	Liners	120
Total Shown	--	--	3,198

Source: Georgia Manufacturer's Directory, search for manufacturers in Jackson County. 2009. GeorgiaFacts.Net.

Wholesale Trade

Because they require large buildings for storage, wholesale trade establishments are usually found in industrially zoned areas of municipalities and counties.

Wholesale trade employment in Jackson County has remained relatively steady throughout the years, with employment of 1,025 in 2000 (*County Business Patterns*) and 1,076 in 2008 (Department of Labor). It reached a high of 1,349 in 2002 per the *County Business Patterns* data. Wholesale trade comprised about 7 percent of total non-government employment in Jackson County earlier in the decade, and as of 2008 comprised 5.9 percent of total employment (including government) according to the Department of Labor.

Table 15 shows the distribution of wholesale trade establishments in the Jackson County area as of 2006. A slight majority (54.4 percent) of the establishments summarized in Table 14 are within Jackson County. The Bogart Zip Code led all Zip Codes with 29 establishments, but none or very few of these are actually in Jackson County, it is believed. Aside from the Bogart Zip Code, wholesale trade establishments in 2006 were concentrated primarily in four areas, Braselton, Hoschton, and Commerce (all with convenient access to Interstate 85), as well as the Athens Zip Code (30607).

**Table 15
Wholesale Trade Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006**

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Wholesale Trade Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	18	13	1	1	1	2
30548	Hoschton	18	15	2	0	1	0
30575	Talmo	2	2	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	6	3	0	2	1	0
30558	Maysville	2	1	1	0	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	11	4	0	5	1	1
30529	Commerce	17	9	2	1	3	2
30530	Commerce	2	1	0	0	1	0
30565	Nicholson	4	4	0	0	0	0
30607	Athens	20	6	3	9	1	1
30666	Statham	7	3	3	1	0	0
30622	Bogart	29	12	7	3	6	1
--	All Zip Codes Shown	136	73	19	22	15	7
--	Jackson County	74	44	6	12	7	5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Transportation and Warehousing

Like manufacturing and wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing establishments are typically found in industrially zoned areas of municipalities and counties. This industry is one that has been among the fastest growing in Jackson County in terms of employment, with only 377 employees in 2000 and increasing (more than tripling) to 1,143 employees in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns* (refer back to Table 9).

The Georgia Department of Labor also reflects a substantial increase in transportation and warehousing employment from 206 in 2003 to 759 employees in 2008. Given the differences in numbers from the two different sources, there must be differences in how these industries are classified.

According to Table 16, which shows the distribution of transportation and warehousing establishments by Zip Code, Jackson County contains about two-thirds (60 of 92) of these establishments in the 12 Zip Codes shown. Nine of the ten largest companies in this industry are in Jackson County. The Jefferson and Braselton Zip Codes led the way in terms of total numbers of establishments as of 2006, but the Bogart and Athens Zip Codes were not far behind. A total of 10 establishments were located in the two Commerce Zip Codes, and nine establishments were located in the Pendergrass Zip Code. Clearly, Jackson County has much potential to further develop this type of industry (transportation and warehousing), given its many miles of frontage along both sides of Interstate 85, as well as two important north-south U.S. Highways (129 and 441).

Table 16
Transportation and Warehousing Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Transportation and Warehousing Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	15	10	0	0	0	5
30548	Hoschton	8	6	2	0	0	0
30575	Talmo	1	1	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	9	4	1	1	1	2
30558	Maysville	2	1	0	0	0	1
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	14	10	2	1	1	0
30529	Commerce	6	3	1	0	1	0
30530	Commerce	4	3	1	0	0	0
30565	Nicholson	4	4	0	0	0	0
30607	Athens	12	5	3	3	0	1
30666	Statham	5	4	0	1	0	0
30622	Bogart	12	6	2	1	2	1
--	All Zip Codes Shown	92	57	12	7	5	10
--	Jackson County	60	38	7	3	3	9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Retail Trade

After manufacturing, retail trade is the second most significant non-government industry in Jackson County. Retail trade employment increased from 2,400 in the year 2000 to 3,522 in 2006, according to *County Business Patterns* (Table 9). It comprised from 17 percent to 22 percent of total nongovernment employment in Jackson County within the last decade (Table 9). Georgia Department of Labor data, however, show a different picture, with employment in retail trade totaling only 2,994 in 2003 and declining some, to 2,880, in the year 2008. If the Department of Labor's data are more accurate, retail trade comprised 15.7 percent of total employment in Jackson County in 2008.

As indicated in Table 17, Jackson County is home to more than two-thirds (69.5 percent) of the total retail trade establishments in the 12 Zip Codes in 2006. Not surprisingly to residents who shop in Commerce, almost half (46.3 percent) of the total retail trade establishments in the 12 Zip Codes in 2006 were located in Zip Code 30529, which includes "Banks Crossing," the unincorporated part of Banks County at the junction of I-85 and U.S. Highway 441. Ten of the 17 largest (50 or more employee) retail trade establishments in the 12 Zip Codes in 2006 were located in Jackson County.

Table 17
Retail Trade Establishments by Zip Code in Jackson County, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Retail Trade Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	26	13	5	3	1	4
30548	Hoschton	21	15	4	1	0	1
30575	Talmo	2	0	2	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	7	6	0	1	0	0
30558	Maysville	5	5	0	0	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	43	15	16	6	6	0
30529	Commerce	176	52	68	33	16	7
30530	Commerce	3	3	0	0	0	0
30565	Nicholson	3	2	1	0	0	0
30607	Athens	26	17	3	5	1	0
30666	Statham	8	6	1	1	0	0
30622	Bogart	60	22	10	16	7	5
--	All Zip Codes Shown	380	156	110	66	31	17
--	Jackson County	264	102	88	41	23	10

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Table 18 provides more detail with regard to retail trade establishments in Jackson County in 2006. Incidentally, it also includes accommodation and food services employment data which are discussed in the next subsection. These data can be used in more elaborate economic analyses; for instance, based on area population one can estimate market thresholds and whether there is “leakage” or money going out of Jackson County for certain goods because they are not available for purchase inside the county. That sort of analysis, however, is beyond the scope of this analysis.

Despite the big discrepancy between *County Business Patterns* and Georgia Department of Labor data, it is clear that retail trade is a very important sector in Jackson County, ranking second in terms of non-government employment. Further, it is clear that retail trade will grow substantially as the population in Jackson County continues to increase.

Table 18
Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services
Establishments and Employment, 2006, Jackson County

Industry Code	Description	Employees	Establishments
44111	New car dealers	120	5
44131	Automotive parts and accessories	64	9
44132	Tire dealers	20-99	6
442	Furniture and home furnishings	532	17
4431	Electronics and appliances	55	7
4441	Building material supplies dealers	296	15
4442	Lawn and garden equipment and supplies	59	9
445110	Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience)	416	11
445120	Convenience	0-19	3
44611	Pharmacies and drug	116	9
4471110	Gasoline stations with convenience	170	37
447190	Other gasoline stations	146	5
4481	Clothing stores	532	52
448210	Shoe	140	15
4483	Jewelry, luggage, and leather goods	37	7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book and music	55	11
452	General merchandise	438	10
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	75	20
454	Nonstore retailers	173	6
721	Accommodation	520	12
722	Food services and drinking places	1,337	74

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Accommodation and Food Services

According to *County Business Patterns*, employment in this industry has increased some, from 1,618 in the year 2000 to 1,817 in the year 2006. If one looks at the intervening years (2002 and 2004), it shows remarkable fluctuation (a drop to 1,193 employment in 2002). Using *County Business Patterns* data, one would conclude that accommodation and food services is the third most important industry in Jackson County after manufacturing and retail trade, comprising some 10-11 percent of all non-government jobs in the county. Department of Labor data show employment in the accommodation and food services industry sector was only 1,023 in the year 2003, rising to 1,143 in the year 2008. If the Department of Labor's data are more accurate, then accommodation and food services industries comprised 6.2 percent of total employment (including government) in 2008 in Jackson County.

**Table 19
Accommodation and Food Services Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006**

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Accommodation and Food Service Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	16	5	0	3	6	2
30548	Hoschton	7	4	1	1	1	0
30575	Talmo	0	0	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	0	0	0	0	0	0
30558	Maysville	0	0	0	0	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	25	7	5	4	8	1
30529	Commerce	52	17	8	9	13	5
30530	Commerce	2	1	0	0	0	1
30565	Nicholson	0	0	0	0	0	0
30607	Athens	8	1	1	1	4	1
30666	Statham	3	3	0	0	0	0
30622	Bogart	10	3	1	2	4	0
--	All Zip Codes Shown	123	41	16	20	36	10
--	Jackson County	86	30	11	14	25	6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

From Table 19, it is evident that Jackson County is home to more than two thirds (86 of 123) of the accommodation and food services establishments in the 12 zip codes as of the year 2006. Like with retail trade establishments, they are concentrated most heavily in the 30529 (Commerce) Zip Code. Jefferson’s Zip Code (30549) was second in terms of the largest number of establishments in this industry type.

Construction

Depending on which source of employment data is consulted, construction is either third or fourth in terms of significance to Jackson County’s economy. *County Business Patterns* indicates that construction employment has increased steadily but not remarkably from 929 in 2000 to 1,175 in 2006 (8.6 percent of total non-government employment) (see Table 9). The Georgia Department of Labor reported construction employment at 1,239 in the year 2003, and it also indicates a substantial drop in construction employment to 995 in the year 2008 (see Table 10). Clearly, the economic recession and crash in the housing market had a severe impact on construction employment in Jackson County during the last two years, dropping from 8 percent to 5.4 percent of total employment (including government). One might attribute the difference between the Census Bureau (*County Business Patterns*) and the Georgia Department of Labor construction employment data to differences in reporting practices – it may be that smaller construction firms are required to report to the state but are not captured in the U.S. Census Bureau’s data.

Table 20 shows the distribution of construction establishments in the 12 Zip Codes wholly or partially contained in Jackson County. Unlike manufacturing, retail trade, and other industries already discussed in this report, construction companies (particularly the smallest ones) may be run out of rural residential parts of Jackson County.

Table 20
Construction Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Construction Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	42	33	5	2	2	0
30548	Hoschton	72	52	9	6	4	1
30575	Talmo	5	1	1	0	3	0
30567	Pendergrass	9	4	4	1	0	0
30558	Maysville	26	18	6	2	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	72	55	8	7	1	1
30529	Commerce	28	20	6	1	1	0
30530	Commerce	17	14	2	1	0	0
30565	Nicholson	17	13	0	1	3	0
30607	Athens	32	15	6	7	2	2
30666	Statham	33	20	7	4	0	2
30622	Bogart	55	33	10	7	4	1
--	All Zip Codes Shown	408	278	64	39	20	7
--	Jackson County	248	178	36	21	11	2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

The data in Table 20 are telling in that regard – of 238 construction establishments in Jackson County in 2006, nearly three-quarters (71.7 percent) employed four persons or less. Jackson County is characterized by a large number of small builders and construction contractors – only two of the seven largest (50 or more employee) construction companies in the 12 Zip Code area were located in Jackson County in 2006. The Jefferson and Arcade Zip Code (30549) and Hoschton (30548) Zip Codes led the way with 72 establishments each (almost 30 percent each of the total construction establishments in Jackson County). This is not surprising, given that the Braselton-Hoschton and Jefferson areas were hot locations for homebuilding as of 2006.

Finance and Insurance

Finance and insurance establishments represent a relatively small, but growing, industry in Jackson County. Employment has increased from 332 in the year 2000 to 400 in 2006 according to *County Business Patterns*. The Georgia Department of Labor data show an increase in finance and insurance employment from 216 in the year 2003 to 341 in 2008. If the numbers from the two data sources are compatible and comparable, then finance and insurance witnessed some job losses in Jackson County between 2006 and 2008 (about 59 employees, comparing Tables 9 and 10). Table 20 shows that the Commerce (30529), Jefferson, and Bogart Zip Codes led the way in 2006 in terms of the largest number of establishments in this industry. Several Zip Codes have none, or very few, of these establishments; this suggests that

they are only likely to locate in areas where other business is significant. The vast majority of establishments in finance and insurance industries are very small employers.

Table 21
Finance and Insurance Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Finance and Insurance Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	13	7	2	3	1	0
30548	Hoschton	8	7	1	0	0	0
30575	Talmo	0	0	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	1	1	0	0	0	0
30558	Maysville	0	0	0	0	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	21	14	5	2	0	0
30529	Commerce	25	14	6	1	3	1
30530	Commerce	0	0	0	0	0	0
30565	Nicholson	0	0	0	0	0	0
30607	Athens	4	2	1	0	1	0
30666	Statham	3	2	1	0	0	0
30622	Bogart	20	12	4	3	1	0
--	All Zip Codes Shown	95	59	20	9	6	1
--	Jackson County	66	41	14	6	4	1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Real Estate and Rental and Leasing

The overall contribution of this industry type to Jackson County's economy is comparatively small, at about one percent of total employment, and under 200 employees no matter which year is cited (2000 through 2008). The Bogart Zip Code led the 12 Zip Codes in terms of the total number of establishments in 2006 (see Table 22). These jobs are relatively evenly distributed, however, among several Zip Codes that were experiencing substantial homebuilding at the time, in 2006: Braselton, Hoschton, Jefferson, and Athens.

**Table 22
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006**

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	17	15	1	0	1	1
30548	Hoschton	16	14	2	0	0	0
30575	Talmo	2	2	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	2	1	0	0	0	0
30558	Maysville	0	0	0	0	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	18	17	1	0	0	0
30529	Commerce	12	7	3	2	0	0
30530	Commerce	0	0	0	0	0	0
30565	Nicholson	3	3	0	0	0	0
30607	Athens	14	10	2	2	0	0
30666	Statham	6	6	0	0	0	0
30622	Bogart	28	23	2	2	1	0
--	All Zip Codes Shown	118	98	11	6	2	1
--	Jackson County	68	56	7	3	2	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Service

This industry type is somewhat difficult to comprehend, as it appears to lump together service-related employment with some occupations that would be considered blue collar in nature. That difficulty is compounded further with the rather wild fluctuations and discrepancies among the employment data sources with regard to total employment in this industry. *County Business Patterns* data show employment in this industry was 842 in the year 2000 but then dropped to 232 in the year 2002 and rebounded part of the way to 484 employees in the year 2006. The Department of Labor’s data appear to be consistent with *County Business Patterns* in the observation that there were 222 employees classified as within this industry in 2003. But the Department of Labor shows a major increase in the last five years of employment in this industry, rising to 759 employees (and 4.1 percent of total countywide employment including government) in 2008.

Table 23 shows that these types of industries were concentrated mostly in the Jefferson and Bogart Zip Codes in 2006, with the Braselton, Hoschton, and Athens Zip Codes also comprising significant shares. The vast majority of these establishments are small employers.

**Table 23
Administrative, Support, Waste Management and
Remediation Service Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006**

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Service Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	13	10	3	0	0	0
30548	Hoschton	19	14	4	1	0	0
30575	Talmo	1	1	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	3	1	0	0	1	1
30558	Maysville	3	2	0	0	1	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	28	21	3	0	2	0
30529	Commerce	6	4	1	1	0	0
30530	Commerce	2	2	0	0	0	0
30565	Nicholson	2	1	0	1	0	0
30607	Athens	14	9	1	2	2	0
30666	Statham	6	5	0	0	1	0
30622	Bogart	26	11	9	4	0	2
--	All Zip Codes Shown	123	81	21	9	7	3
--	Jackson County	73	54	11	3	3	2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Health Care and Social Assistance

Again, total employment in this industry in Jackson County is hard to generalize, since the two sources of employment data paint relatively different pictures. According to *County Business Patterns*, health care and social assistance employment totaled 811 employees in 2000 and increased to 989 employees in 2006, representing 5.7 percent of total non-government employment in Jackson County in 2006.

The Georgia Department of Labor, on the other hand, reported only 404 employees in this industry in Jackson County in 2003, and an increase to 575 employees in 2008. While it is apparent that the health care industry has not suffered during the recent and ongoing economic depression generally, and that health care employment will continue rising, it is unclear why the two employment reporting sources show such vast differences in the total employment classified as health care and social assistance.

According to Table 24, which shows the distribution of health care and social assistance establishments among 12 Zip Codes within or partially contained within Jackson County in 2006, Commerce (30529) leads the way in terms of the total number of establishments, with 34. Bogart was second, followed by the Jefferson and Athens Zip Codes. Only three of the eight largest establishments in this industry were located within Jackson County in 2006, and only

about half (66 of 122) of the total establishments in the 12 Zip Codes were located in Jackson County. The fact that 20 of them are located in the Braselton and Hoschton Zip Codes suggests that these establishments will increase significantly in areas experiencing rapid population growth.

Table 24
Health Care and Social Assistance Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Health Care and Social Assistance Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	12	7	3	0	2	0
30548	Hoschton	8	7	0	1	0	0
30575	Talmo	0	0	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	0	0	0	0	0	0
30558	Maysville	3	2	0	1	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	16	6	6	2	1	1
30529	Commerce	34	14	9	8	1	1
30530	Commerce	2	2	0	0	0	0
30565	Nicholson	0	0	0	0	0	0
30607	Athens	16	6	3	3	1	3
30666	Statham	5	4	0	0	1	0
30622	Bogart	26	6	9	2	6	3
--	All Zip Codes Shown	122	54	30	17	12	8
--	Jackson County	66	32	18	10	3	3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

This industry is comparatively less significant than most in terms of its contribution to total employment in Jackson County. *County Business Patterns* (Table 9) shows that employment more than doubled between 2000 and 2006, from 215 to 486 employees, respectively. The Georgia Department of Labor data are relatively comparable as of 2003, with an observation that there were 264 employees in this industry. That source also shows significant growth in this industry between 2003 and 2008, an increase of almost one-third (31 percent) in just five years.

Table 25 shows that these types of establishments were located predominantly in the Bogart, Hoschton, and Braselton Zip Codes, and to a lesser extent, Jefferson. Commerce appears to be comparatively undersupplied or at least underrepresented with regard to professional, scientific and technical service establishments as of 2006. A majority of the establishments in this industry are located in Jackson County, and four of five such establishments located in Jackson County are very small employers (four employees or less).

**Table 25
Professional, Scientific and Technical Service Establishments by Zip Code
in Jackson County, 2006**

Zip Code	Area (City Location)	Total Professional, Scientific and Technical Service Establishments	Number of Establishments by Employment-size Class				
			1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
30517	Braselton	31	23	2	4	2	0
30548	Hoschton	34	28	2	2	1	1
30575	Talmo	1	1	0	0	0	0
30567	Pendergrass	2	2	0	0	0	0
30558	Maysville	1	1	0	0	0	0
30549	Jefferson (+ Arcade)	28	24	2	2	0	0
30529	Commerce	9	6	0	2	1	0
30530	Commerce	5	4	0	0	1	0
30565	Nicholson	4	4	0	0	0	0
30607	Athens	15	9	2	3	1	0
30666	Statham	6	5	1	0	0	0
30622	Bogart	45	29	8	6	2	0
--	All Zip Codes Shown	181	136	17	19	8	1
--	Jackson County	100	80	4	10	5	1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns (NAICS), Industry Code Summary. Jackson County totals from *County Business Patterns* (NAICS), 2006.

Agriculture and Forestry

The aforementioned data sources would suggest that agriculture and forestry are not significant contributors to Jackson County. That would be a mistake to conclude, however. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, *Regional Economic Accounts* (April 2009), reveals that in 2007, Jackson County had 1,083 persons employed on farms. That is a slight decrease from the 1,124 persons employed on farms in 2006, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Government

While not covered under *County Business Patterns*, the Georgia Department of Labor data suggest that as of 2008, government is the second most significant industry in Jackson County, comprising almost one-fifth (19.9 percent) of total employment in the county. The Labor Department data indicate that government (local, state, and federal) employment has increased by 909 jobs from 2003 to 2008, a 33 percent increase. The 2008 figures reported by the Georgia Department of Labor do not appear to reflect the full effect of government downsizing during the past two years, where state government has been in a more-or-less constant budget-cutting mode, and local governments have delayed filling vacant positions and in many instances laid off government employees. It is clear, however, that government employment is witnessing a significant, upward trend, as various facilities and services are added to meet the county's burgeoning population. While generally not thought of as an industry, it should be

recognized that government employment is the second most significant in Jackson County as of 2008, surpassing retail trade employment sometime after the year 2003, according to the Georgia Department of Labor.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (April 2009) also provides employment statistics for government. Government employment as of 2007 in Jackson County was mostly local (3,243), with more limited amounts employed by the federal government (131), military (180), and state government (158).

JOB AND LABOR FORCE COMPARISON

Table 26 compares the jobs of Jackson County's resident workforce in 2000 with the jobs reported in Jackson County as of 2000, by industry.

**Table 26
Comparison of Employment of Jackson County
and Jobs in Jackson County by Industry, 2000**

Industry	Employment of Jackson County Residents (all locations)	Jobs in Jackson County	Gross Net Surplus or (Deficiency) of Jobs in Jackson County (notes)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	502	0-19	(not comparable)
Mining	60	0-19	(41-60)
Construction	2,165	929	(1,236)
Manufacturing	4,154	4,247	93
Wholesale trade	876	1,025	(149)
Retail trade	2,394	2,400	6
Transportation and warehousing	769	377	(392)
Utilities	275	100-249	(26-175)
Information	378	128	(250)
Finance and insurance	571	332	(239)
Real estate and rental and leasing	300	128	(172)
Professional, scientific, and technical services	529	215	(314)
Management of companies and enterprises	0	20-99	20-99
Administrative and support and waste management services	587	842	255
Educational services	1,566	13	(1,553)
Health care and social assistance	1,241	811	(430)
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	182	260	78
Accommodation and food services	1,232	1,618	386
Other services (except public administration)	984	370	(614) (not comparable)
Public administration	778	n/a	Not comparable
Total	19,542	14,179	(5,363)

Source: Employment of Jackson County Residents from U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF 3, Table P49. Employment in Jackson County from U.S. Census Bureau, *County Business Patterns*, 2000.

This comparison is useful in that it can be used to help guide recruitment efforts for various industries, even if the data are for the year 2000 and therefore may no longer be fully representative of current conditions. To follow the logic of this analysis, one assumes that Jackson County desires to have one job inside the county for each working resident of Jackson County, so that nobody has to leave the county for work. In other words, this table reveals what Jackson County's economic development professionals would want to know if they sought a situation where nobody had to go outside the county for a job in their industry.

Starting with total employment first, Jackson County had, as of 2000, about 5,363 fewer jobs than it would need if it put all of its resident work force to work inside the county. That is a significant finding in itself – that there would clearly be quality of life benefits to Jackson County's labor force if more jobs could be created. But in which industries?

Educational Services

Not surprisingly, the largest deficit in terms of jobs is in the educational services industry. The short answer is that a whole bunch of workers go into Athens for work at the University of Georgia. At the extreme, to remedy this out-commuting, one would want to relocate UGA to Jackson County. While that is obviously not a realistic possibility, one can use this finding to suggest that a satellite campus of UGA, or other educational institution in Jackson County, would be good, in that it would decrease the discrepancy between jobs available in Jackson County and resident county workers in the educational services industry. On the other hand, some could easily argue that this discrepancy is a fact of life, and a desirable one – in that some people who work at UGA prefer to live in Jackson County and would continue that arrangement (preference) even if a similar job was available in Jackson County or appropriate housing was available in Athens-Clarke County. One also has to take into account the fact that many government jobs are involved in county and city school systems, and that depending on classification methods (i.e., designating public education as “government” rather than educational services), there may be many more education jobs inside Jackson County than meets the eye, if public education jobs were classified as “employment services” rather than “government.”

Construction

According to Table 25, Jackson County in 2000 could support a whole lot more construction jobs, given the large number of construction workers who resided in Jackson County at that time. This suggests that Jackson County would want to increase construction employment extensively if it were to try and balance job opportunities with workers in this industry. This also underscores the importance of assuring that the homebuilding industry rebounds in Jackson County as soon as possible.

Health Care Services

Another large deficiency in terms of jobs in Jackson County and jobs filled by Jackson County's residents is in the health care field. Taken to the extreme, this analysis would suggest that Jackson County needs another hospital so it can employ many more of its health care labor force inside the county. However, upon further reflection, one has to consider that three of the

top ten largest employers in the Jackson County *area* (in adjacent counties of Clarke, Hall, and Gwinnett) are in the health care industry. Simply put, this discrepancy can probably not be solved with economic development policies, such as attracting another hospital in Jackson County. Furthermore, subsidiary health care establishments usually locate near hospitals, and Jackson County's capacity in that regard may be somewhat limited. However, it is instructive to note that any future health care providers locating in Jackson County would appear to have a good size labor force from which to choose, assuming that some workers would prefer to work inside Jackson County.

Transportation and Warehousing

There are more transportation and warehousing workers that lived in Jackson County in 2000 than there were jobs in that industry in Jackson County in 2000. The good news is that this is an industry that has vast potential in Jackson County. One could predict with confidence that, given the number of warehouse buildings that have been constructed or are zoned in Jackson County, especially in the City of Jefferson, the deficiency of jobs will dissolve over time. Further, it is likely that this sector will become a job-surplus industry in Jackson County over the long term, with more jobs than resident workers in this industry.

Other Industry Job Deficiencies

Again, if one were to assume Jackson County wanted to provide a job in the county for every person in the industry they worked within as of 2000, then the following industries would need to add jobs: wholesale trade, utilities, information, professional services, and real estate. One can simply suggest here that recruitment of businesses in these industries would be a very good match for Jackson County's labor force, at least as of the year 2000.

Manufacturing and Retail Trade: The Right Match of Labor Force and Jobs

The data in Table 25 show that as of 2000 Jackson County had almost exactly the same amount of retail trade jobs as it had resident labor force participants working in that industry. This doesn't suggest, however, that almost every retail trade job in Jackson County was filled by a Jackson County working resident. Similarly, the manufacturing industry was close to optimal in 2000, in terms of the number of jobs in Jackson County and the number of Jackson County resident laborers working in manufacturing industries. There was a slight surplus in 2000, but that is not to suggest that Jackson County should stop recruiting industry – rather, it should be taken to mean Jackson County has been successful in recruiting the right amount of industry to the best advantage of its resident labor force. Further, one has to consider the tax base advantages of continuing to recruit industry, which is beneficial whether or not it will keep resident workers inside the county for work.

Industries with Job Surpluses as of 2000

Accommodation and food services and administrative and support and waste management services fall into a category of "more jobs available than resident workers in the county." Food service workers and jobs in the lodging industries bring comparatively lower wages, and as such, it may be that people are available to work in these industries but elect not to work in them, in favor of higher paying jobs in other industries. Due to comparatively low pay and the observation that as of 2000 there were more jobs in these industries than workers in Jackson

County, there appears to be no compelling reason to recruit establishments in those industries, at least as a formal economic development strategy.

WAGES

Annual average wages per job for recent years in Jackson County, MSAs, surrounding counties, and the state are provided in Table 27.

**Table 27
Annual Average Wages per Job, 2005-2007
Jackson County and Selected Geographies
(\$ Dollars)**

Geographic Area	2005	2006	2007
Banks County	\$22,729	\$23,312	\$24,671
Barrow County	\$30,600	\$31,439	\$31,455
Clarke County	\$32,771	\$33,713	\$34,353
Gwinnett County	\$42,447	\$44,544	\$45,397
Hall County	\$35,053	\$36,100	\$36,710
Jackson County	\$29,755	\$30,961	\$31,102
Madison County	\$26,428	\$27,578	\$28,314
Athens-Clark County, GA, MSA	\$31,761	\$32,723	\$33,424
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA, MSA	\$44,423	\$45,781	\$47,715
Gainesville, GA, MSA	\$35,053	\$36,100	\$36,710
Nonmetro Georgia	\$27,267	\$28,238	\$29,203
State of Georgia	\$38,653	\$39,975	\$41,574

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, April 2009.

Wages are highest in the Atlanta area MSA. Average wages per job are higher in the Gainesville MSA than they are in the Athens-Clarke County MSA. Only the Atlanta area MSA had average wages per job higher than the state as a whole, however. Of the surrounding and nearby counties, Gwinnett County had the highest average wage per job. Jackson County had higher average wages per job in 2005, 2006, and 2007 than nonmetropolitan Georgia, but Jackson County’s average was well below that earned in abutting Barrow, Clarke, and Hall Counties.

These lower average wages per job in Jackson County shed more light on the previous analysis regarding matching of jobs by industry in the county with labor force by industry of Jackson County’s residents. Even if a perfect match of jobs was available inside Jackson County to accommodate Jackson County’s resident labor force, the higher wages available outside the county may entice workers to commute outside Jackson County for better-paying jobs.

Wages by industry are provided in Table 28, for the years 2003 and 2008 in Jackson County. Data from some industry types are not available, but for those shown, wholesale trade paid the highest wages in 2008. In 2003, it was arts, entertainment and recreation which led all industries in terms of average weekly wages, and transportation and warehousing also paid higher wages than wholesale trade.

Table 28
Average Weekly Wages by Industry, 2003 and 2008
Jackson County
(\$ Dollars)

Industry	2003	2008
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	n/a	\$543
Mining	n/a	n/a
Construction	\$561	\$662
Manufacturing	\$592	\$709
Wholesale trade	\$649	\$883
Retail trade	\$394	\$507
Transportation and warehousing	\$797	\$679
Utilities	n/a	n/a
Information	\$643	\$593
Finance and insurance	\$625	\$823
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$500	\$530
Professional, scientific, and technical services	\$595	\$765
Management of companies and enterprises	n/a	n/a
Administrative and support and waste management services	\$380	\$520
Educational services	\$597	\$285
Health care and social assistance	\$516	\$543
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$992	\$599
Accommodation and food services	\$223	\$212
Other services (except public admin.)	\$426	\$522
Total – Private Sector	\$519	\$625
Government	\$530	\$594
All Industries	\$521	\$619

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Employment and Wages, 2003 and 2008.

Most of the industries have shown increases in average weekly wages over time, from 2003 to 2008. However, there are exceptions. Average weekly earnings have declined in Jackson County from 2003 to 2008 for transportation and warehousing, educational services, and arts, entertainment and recreation. Furthermore, already the lowest paying industry, the accommodation and food services employers dropped their wages further in Jackson County, from \$223 in the year 2003 to \$212 in the year 2008. Overall, wages have increased significantly. Where government employees on average had higher wages in 2003 than private sector employees, private sector jobs paid higher on average than government did in 2008 in Jackson County.

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

Total employment in Jackson County was forecasted as a part of the 2003 update of the land use element of the comprehensive plan. That forecast indicated employment of 33,603 in the year 2009, 43,855 in the year 2015, and 66,195 in the year 2025. That forecast used Georgia Department of Labor historic data for a base line and utilized an “employees per capita” methods which assumes a continuing and steady interrelationship between population and employment.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

This section describes existing economic development resources. It draws almost verbatim on work by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. in its I-85 Corridor Study Report for Jackson County, which in turn reflects extensive discussions with the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce. Credit goes to Moreland Altobelli for compiling the information the paragraphs which follow, again with the Chamber being the primary source of data.

Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce

The Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is the central entity focused upon economic development within the greater Jackson County area. The Chamber is ultimately responsible to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. Economic development in Jackson County began with the formation of the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce about 30 years ago. About 15 years ago, the economic development function was transferred from the Chamber to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners' staff, but lasted only a few years and was then transferred back to the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, where it has remained for the last 12 years.

Two critical Chamber committees are the Economic Development Council (EDC) and the Economic Development Alliance (EDA) and is headed by the Chairman of the EDA and the Alliance's Steering Committee. The Steering Committee coordinates between the Existing Industry Committee, Workforce Development, the Tourism Council, and the Special Projects Committee.

It is very important to have a single point of contact to facilitate success in recruitment of new employers to a particular community. The Chamber serves that role and coordinates between the Jackson County government, the Jackson County Industrial Authority, the Jackson County Economic Development Council (EDC), and the local business community. These relationships are illustrated in the figure, Local Economic Development Coordination.

The EDC was established in 2005 and has the primary purpose to meet and discuss sensitive economic development issues and to review new business proposals for industrial developments desiring to locate within the county. The EDC is composed of the key political leaders within the county.



Source: Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, 2009. In Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc., I-85 Corridor Study Report for Jackson County (July 2009 Draft).

Jackson County Industrial Development Authority

The Chamber has a very close working relationship with the Jackson County Industrial Development Authority. The Jackson County Industrial Development Authority does not currently have any staff but primarily utilizes the Chamber to serve their administrative needs. The Authority primarily focuses upon bond financing and has a few remaining acres for industrial development in two industrial parks.

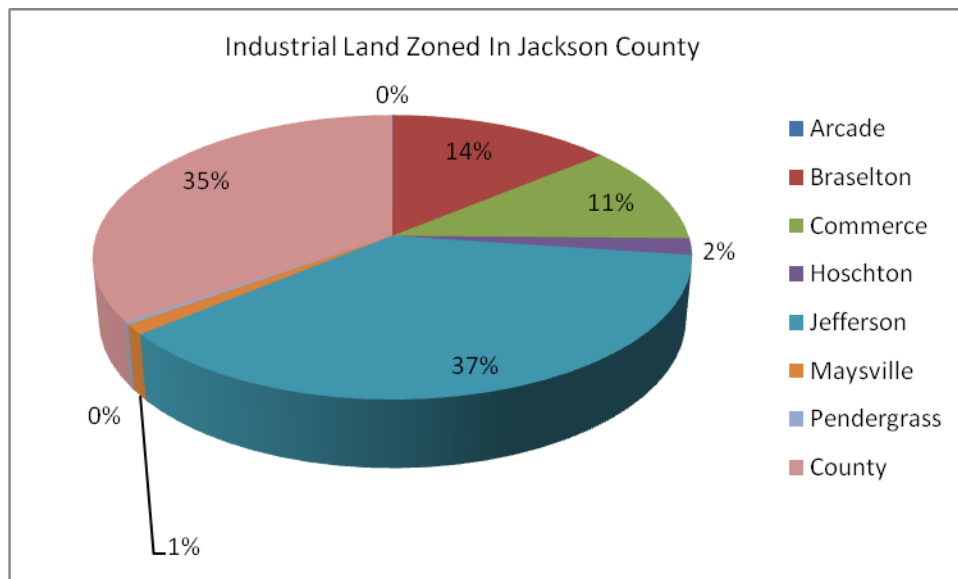
Area Attractions

As a part of the countywide road plan, Moreland-Altobelli Associates, Inc. compiled area attractions from information supplied by the Chamber of Commerce. According to the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce, Jackson County has an abundance of attractions that attract people from all over the state. Listed below are significant attractions in the county. They bring visitors into Jackson County and can therefore be considered vital to future economic development efforts. These including racing venues, heritage sites and museums, golf courses, other recreation facilities, commercial recreation centers, and shopping (flea markets and outlet mall).

- Atlanta Dragway, Commerce
- Crawford W. Long Museum, Jefferson
- Crow’s Lake, Jefferson
- Double Oaks Golf Club, Inc., Commerce
- Funopolis Family Fun Center, Commerce
- Hurricane Shoals Park & Heritage Village, Maysville
- J & J Flea Market, Athens
- Mayfield Dairy Visitors Center, Braselton
- Peach State Speedway, Jefferson
- Pendergrass Flea Market, Jefferson
- Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm, Inc., Jefferson
- Tanger Factory Outlet, Commerce
- Traditions of Braselton Golf Club, Jefferson

Land Available for Industry

Zoning in the county and the various cities within Jackson County establishes a constraint, or opportunity, with regard to establishing future manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and other business and industry opportunities. An analysis of industrial zoning was completed by the county’s GIS manager. Countywide (including municipalities), there are 10,851 acres of land zoned for industrial use. That constitutes almost 5 percent (4.93%) of the total county land area. With regard to the county’s land use plan, it designated 9,409 acres, or 4.28 percent of the unincorporated land area, for industrial development. Counting the land use plan for unincorporated areas and the existing industrial zoning within municipalities, there is some 7.5 percent of the total land area in Jackson County that is now available or planned for industrial development.



The pie chart below shows industrial land use planned in unincorporated Jackson County and industrial land zoned by municipalities in Jackson County. The City of Jefferson has the largest proportion of land zoned and/or planned for industrial land uses, at 37 percent of the total. However, unincorporated Jackson County a comparable proportion (35 percent). Braselton is

third, with 14 percent of total industrial land available, followed by Commerce in fourth position with 11 percent.

This analysis was conducted when there was a rezoning proposal in unincorporated Jackson County near the Clarke County line for several hundred acres of new industrial development. The figures suggest there are already ample opportunities for substantial growth in manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and other related industrial-type employers.

Existing Industrial Parks and Sites

Jackson County is home to a number of industrial parks, most of which are located along the I-85 corridor. Two of these have rail access: Walnut Fork Industrial Park and Commerce 85 Business Park. The industrial parks are shown on a map on the following page (Georgia Power Company, from Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. July 2009).

I-85 at SR 53:

- Park 85, Braselton (Duke Realty)
- Braselton Distribution Center (Solutions Property Group)

I-85 at US 129:

- Walnut Fork Industrial Park (Pattillo)
- ProLogis Park I-85 (ProLogis)
- Valentine Farms Business Park (Various Developers)
- Jefferson Mill Business Park (WeeksRobinson)

I-85 at SR 82

- Jackson 85 Distribution Park (RACO)
- Jefferson Distribution Center (IDI)
- McClure Industrial Park (Pattillo)

I-85 at SR 98

- Commerce 85 Business Park (Rooker)

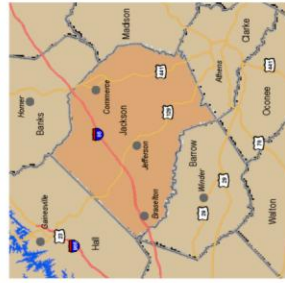
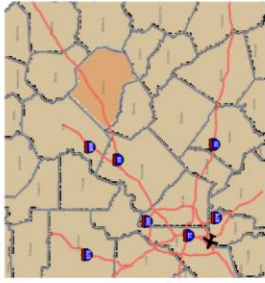
(Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. June 2009. I-85 Corridor Study).

There are reportedly industrial sites located within Jackson County with an aggregate of about 3.6 million square feet of floor space. Detailed descriptions of those sites are omitted here but are available from the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce and are also provided in the I-85 Corridor Study by Moreland Altobelli (July 2009 draft).

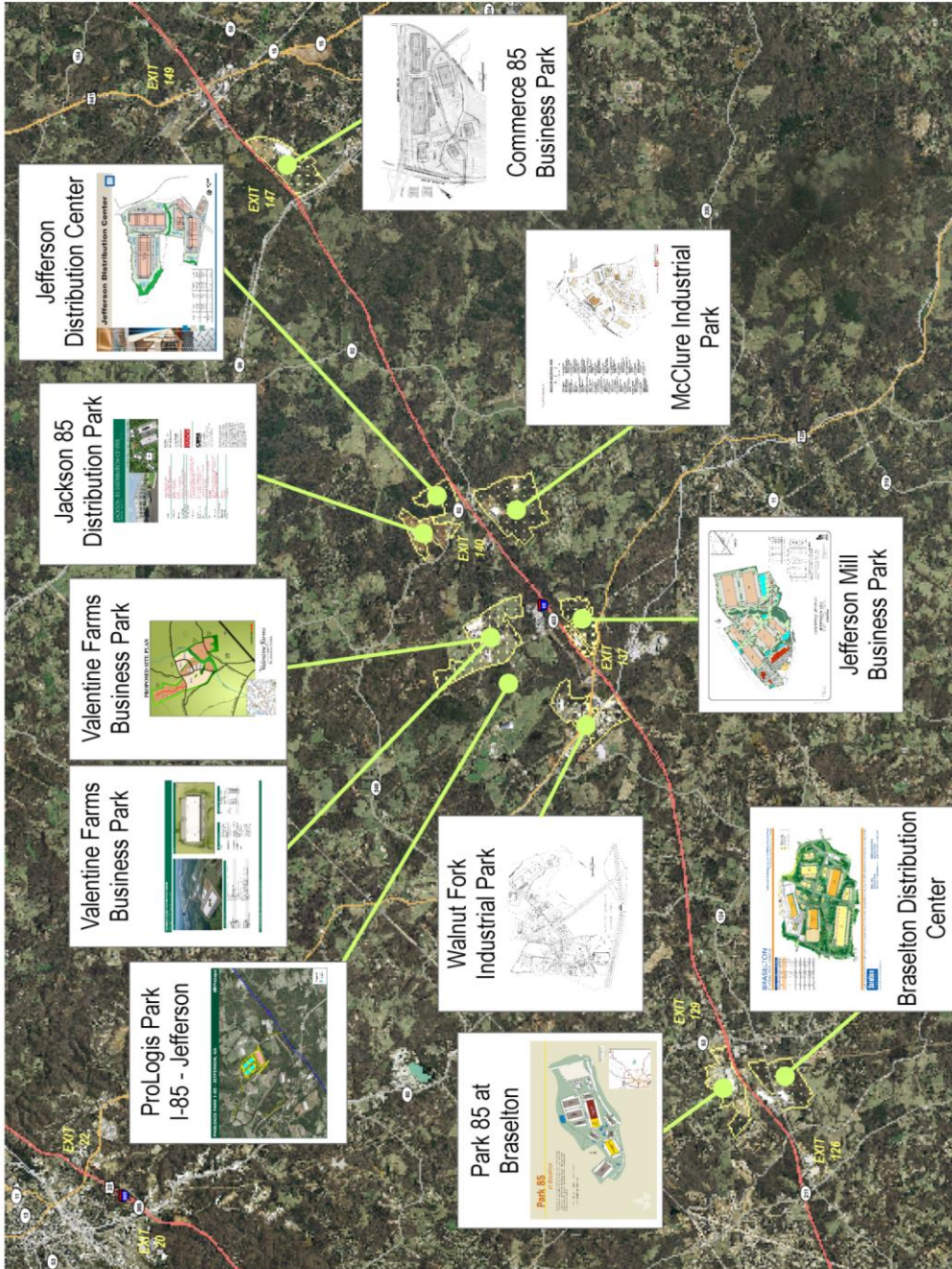
Universities, Colleges, and Technical Schools

Jackson County is located in close proximity to a number of technical schools and universities. These include the University of Georgia and Athens Technical College (both located in Athens-Clarke County), Brenau University (Gainesville), Gainesville State College (Oakwood), and Lanier Technical College, Gwinnett Technical College, and Georgia Gwinnett College.

Jackson County Interstate 85 Sites



March 2008



Sources:
 Georgia Power Community and Economic Development
 Jackson County Development Authority

Economic Development Bond Program

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners in 2004 established a Bond Program for roads and sanitary sewer systems in order to promote economic development. These investments are expected to facilitate industrial and business development primarily in the I-85 corridor. For more information, see Jackson County Board of Commissioners, Economic Development Bond Program 2004, Roads and Sanitary Sewer System, Final Summary (August 2007) and 2008 (November 2007).

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

HISTORIC RESOURCES

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

Prepared Under Contract By:

**Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Planning & Development Consultants
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HISTORIC RESOURCES

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Early Settlement

When the first settlers came to this area, they found it inhabited by the Creek and Cherokee Indians. Indian trails cross through Jackson County and have been the basis for many migration paths and trade routes as well as modern highways and railroad beds.

One of the first permanent settlements was started in January 1784 in the Groaning Rock section of Jackson County. By the time the county was established in 1796, 47 people had moved to Groaning Rock. As more settlers moved into the area, the community expanded toward Yamtrahoochee (Hurricane Shoals). Several homes were constructed including a fort, a grist mill, and a smelting plant. By 1788, the community of Hurricane Shoals had established the first formal school. Others were along Sandy Creek at Groaning Rock, Yamacutah (near present-day Commerce), Hurricane Shoals, and in 1786 on the Middle Oconee River near the Tallassee Shoals.

Government

Jackson County was established on February 11, 1796, by an Act of the Georgia General Assembly from an area originally included in Franklin County. The county was named for James Jackson, Revolutionary War Lieutenant Colonel, United States Senator, and later governor of Georgia from 1798 to 1801.

The Georgia General Assembly granted 40,000 acres for a state college in 1784. In 1801, a site for the college was selected in part of Jackson County (later to become Clarke County). The first classes at Franklin College (now the University of Georgia) were held in Jackson County. The founding of the University and the development of the City of Athens in 1801 caused Jackson County to lose part of her original territory. In 1804, an Act of the Georgia legislature added land (an 80 square mile strip) to Jackson County which it purchased from the Cherokees. In 1811, however, Jackson County lost land for the creation of Madison County. In 1812, land was added back to Jackson but in 1818 Jackson County lost a large amount of land to create part of Walton, Gwinnett, and Hall Counties. In 1821, Jackson County was enlarged with territory from Franklin County, but in 1858, Banks County received territory from Jackson. The largest and final loss to Jackson County was the creation of Barrow County in 1914 (Source: 1998 comprehensive plan, historic resources).

Clarksboro, centrally located in the county in 1796 (today located about midway between Arcade and the Jackson and Clarke County lines on U.S. 129), was selected as the seat for the first county government. There are no records of a courthouse ever being built in Clarksboro, but a jail was constructed in the summer of 1797. Clarksboro remained the county seat for six years until 1802. With the creation of Clarke County in 1801, a new county seat was needed to be centrally located in Jackson County. Consideration was given to a site between Talmo and Pendergrass near the present North Jackson County School. In 1803, a committee selected Thomocoggan (now Jefferson) because of the ample water from Curry Creek and four, freely flowing springs. Thomocoggan was renamed Jefferson after Thomas Jefferson. The move of the new county seat was in 1803, but it was not until 1806 that the Georgia General Assembly made the move official and Jefferson was incorporated.



Jackson County, 1822

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia



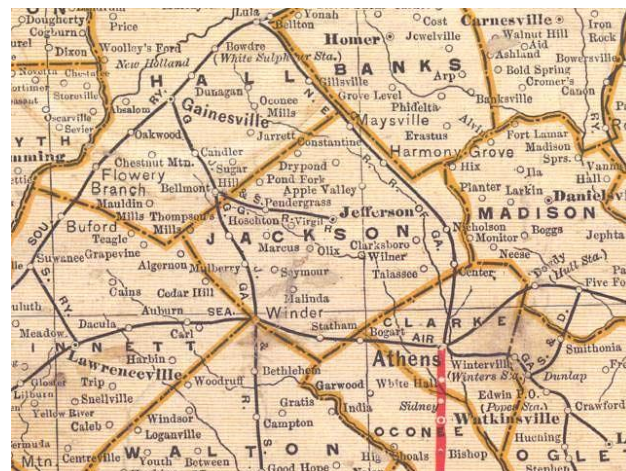
Jackson County, 1846

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia



Jackson County, 1883

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia



Jackson County, 1899

Source: Atlas of Historic Maps of Georgia

The Rise and Fall of Cotton

The early settlers were yeoman farmers who practiced subsistence farming. As the population increased and cotton markets opened, farmers turned to cotton production as a cash crop. The community around Talmo was noted for its very fine grade of short staple cotton. With the building of the railroad through Harmony Grove (now Commerce), the town flourished as a cotton market from 1880 to 1910, receiving cotton from Jackson, Banks, Madison and Franklin Counties.



Murphy Cotton Gin, Circa 1906 int # 54

Source: Talmo Comprehensive Plan, Technical Addendum to Community Assessment, 2008

The incorporation of the Harmony Grove Mill in 1893 enhanced the market. By 1899, the Jefferson Cotton Mill was chartered, and the cotton market was booming in Jackson County. At one time, Jackson County had 19 cotton gins and six cotton seed oil mills.

As the county's population grew, roads were made to connect farms with cotton gins and village stores and towns with neighboring county seats. When the boll weevil struck Jackson County in 1921, however, cotton production declined and market prices fell sharply. Further destruction to the market occurred with a sustained drought, and cotton was never able to make a comeback.

As cropland was taken out of production, some farmers turned to other means of making a living. Many farmers went to work in the textile mills, manufacturing plants, and poultry dressing plants in the area. Many farmers who remained in the business converted their farms from crop production to beef cattle or poultry production. Poultry production began in the county after 1926.

DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPALITIES

Jefferson

Jefferson was originally known as "Thomocoggan," when it was an Indian village. It was called "Jeffersonville" from 1805 to 1810, and then "Jeffersonton" from 1810 to 1824, and finally "Jefferson" in 1824. Jefferson was chartered as the official county seat. Jefferson is the oldest remaining city in Jackson County.

The Gainesville-Midland Railroad was built through Jefferson in 1883. The railroad transported passengers, freight, and mail from Jefferson to Gainesville and south to Social Circle. In 1806, By the 1830s, stagecoaches were in operation and Jefferson became an overnight stop on the Augusta to Dahlonega route. The Gainesville Midland Railroad developed from the Gainesville, Jefferson, and Southern Railroad which had been organized in 1872. By 1883, the forerunner of the Gainesville-Midland line was moving passengers and freight from Gainesville to Jefferson and on to Athens in 1905. A branch line went to Social Circle. Many communities had passenger waiting rooms for the Gainesville-Midland lines. The trains for both rail lines were initially pulled by wood-fired steam engines and later converted to coal burning. Passenger and mail service was discontinued in the 1940s, but freight trains still operated.

Harmony Grove (Commerce)

The settlement of Harmony Grove, now Commerce, dates back to 1810. The central business district did not form until the 1850s, when business was centered along State and Cherry Streets, known as the Athens and Clarkesville Road. Residential areas developed in areas surrounding the business center. The Northeastern Railroad Company laid tracks through Harmony Grove from Lula connecting with Athens 18 miles to the south in 1876. Harmony Grove was not incorporated until 1884. By 1904, the name of Harmony Grove was changed to "Commerce" to reflect the prosperity of the community.

Maysville

Maysville was incorporated in 1879. The original city limits radiated three-quarters of a mile from the depot. The Town straddles the Jackson-Banks County line. The Northeastern Railroad which connected Richmond and Danville Air Line Railroad at Lula, Georgia, was built through Maysville in the mid-1870s and the railroad was the catalyst for development of the town.

Hoschton

Hoschton developed as a railroad town after the Gainesville Midland Railroad built its line through the town in 1878. In 1880, two of the Hosch brothers, R.A. and J.R., sought to develop the town and began surveying lots. By 1889, the town with its linear, grid pattern formally existed in Georgia and within Jackson County. It eventually grew into a bustling town with two cotton gins, a tannery, newspaper, millinery, and school (Source: Hoschton Comprehensive Plan). Hoschton was incorporated in 1891 with city limits that ran three-quarters of a mile in every direction radiating from the depot.

Pendergrass

Pendergrass was also incorporated in 1891. Garden Valley was the name of this community in the late 1700s and through most of the 1800s. The name was changed to Pendergrass to honor Franklin Lafayette Pendergrass, a prominent businessman who was a director of the Gainesville, Jefferson, and Southern Railroad.

Center

In 1906, the Town of Center was established with its town limits stretching one-half mile in each direction along the railroad and a one-quarter mile in each direction from the railroad, making the town one mile long and one-half mile wide. Center has since relinquished its city charter and abolished its city government.

Cooper (Nicholson)

Just north of Center, the town of Cooper (now Nicholson) established a post office. The town was named after the large Cooper farm in that area. The local residents wanted the railroad depot in their area, so they petitioned the local "railroad man" (Mr. Nicholson) to get a fuel stop located in their town. Mr. Nicholson was successful and the town was officially named Nicholson in 1882. In 1907, the town of Nicholson was incorporated.

Arcade

Arcade was incorporated in 1909. The first city government was dissolved and later reincorporated.

Braselton

Braselton was incorporated in 1916, but the town dates back to 1884 when John O. Braselton opened a small store.

Talmo

Talmo was first settled by a land grant to Stephen Whitmire in 1816 for 375 acres. The name of Talmo is derived from the Creek Indian work, "Talomeco," meaning "home of the Chief Tallassee." The first recorded settlers arrived around 1840. Talmo had one store and a railroad line in 1896. The town of Talmo was incorporated on August 9, 1920.

School Systems

Jackson County Academy in Jefferson was created by an act of the Georgia General Assembly in 1818. The legislature created a framework for countywide school systems in 1827. Maysville operated an independent school system as early as 1845. Commerce had an independent city school system created by the legislature in 1902, and it followed with one for Jefferson in 1912. In 1917, an independent school system was created by the legislature for Braselton. Maysville's school system merged with Jackson County's in 1941. Braselton's independent school system merged with Jackson County in 1950.¹

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Prehistoric and historic archaeological sites have been identified in Jackson County. The Georgia Archaeological Site File identified 181 known sites (1996). This list is not definitive or complete. It does not include all archaeological sites, but known or documented sites. Specific information regarding these sites "exists for the use of individuals, government agencies, and organizations that are engaged in legitimate research and cultural resource management activities." (Site File Policy statement, 1996.) Research is available on a fee basis and at the discretion of the Georgia Archaeological Site File.

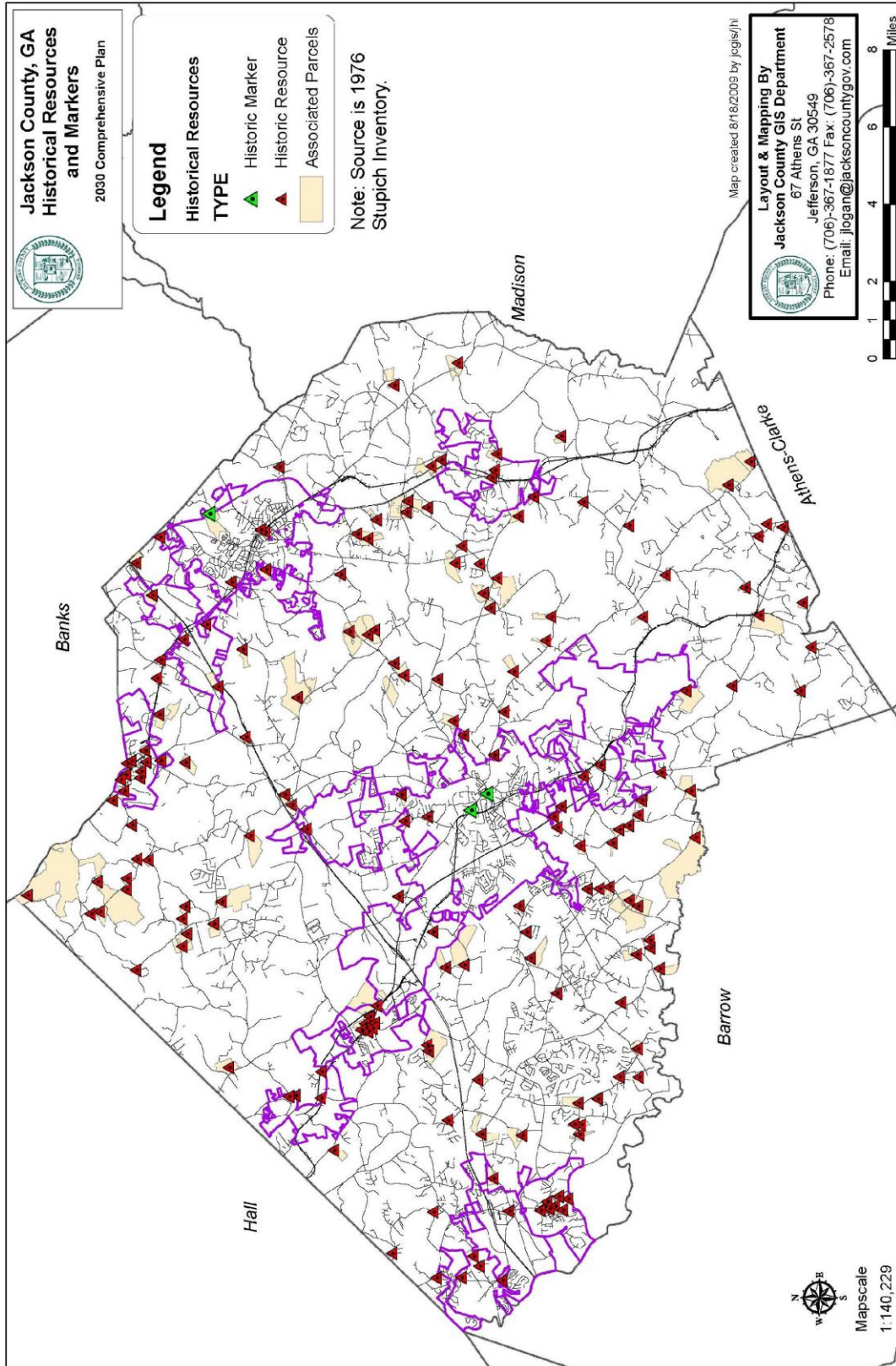
SURVEY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

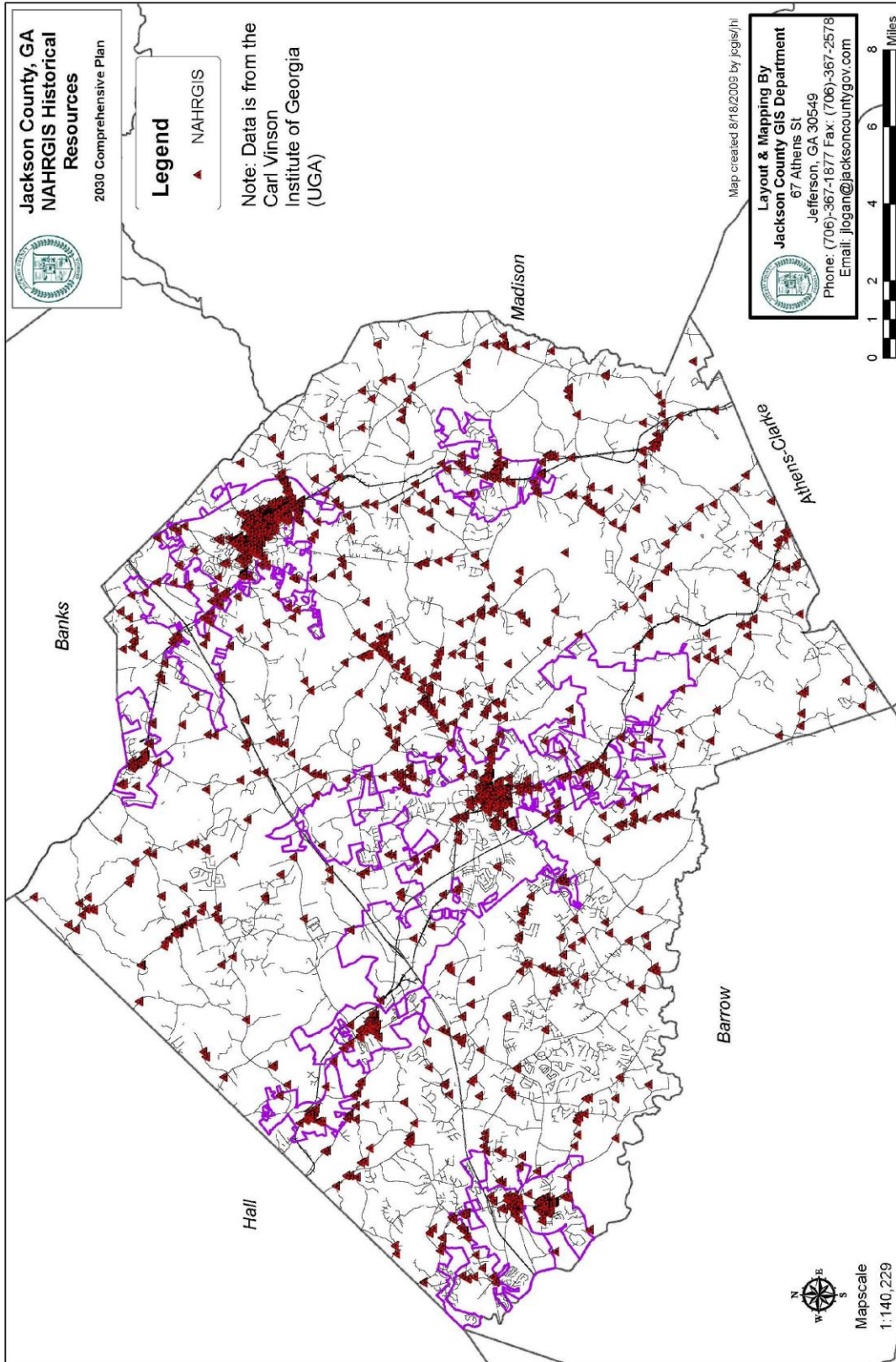
In 1976, Jackson County's historic buildings were surveyed to identify properties that appeared eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The survey was sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources. Information on each surveyed building includes an estimated date of construction, description of architectural features, and condition of building. In Jackson County, 209 historic buildings were surveyed. In Commerce, 53 buildings were surveyed and 51 buildings in Jefferson. This same survey found 11 historic buildings in Hoschton. Information regarding the current condition of these 313 historic buildings is unavailable. The survey's information is obtainable at the Historic Preservation Division and the Northeast Georgia RDC. A map reflecting this inventory is provided on the following page.

Since 1976, many of the county's and cities' historic buildings have been physically altered or destroyed. In addition, many buildings not included in the 1976 survey need to be identified and recorded. The 1998 comprehensive plan called for a new, updated survey for the county and individual cities.

Another, more recent survey was done by student at the University of Georgia (NARGIS). The accuracy and reliability of this information has not been verified, and it is thought that the resources shown on this map have not been carefully verified in the sense of the standards followed in the 1976 inventory. It is provided here, however, as supplemental information.

¹ Leadership Jackson County. April 1990. "School Merger: A History of the School Merger Issue in Jackson County."





NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Overview

The National Register of Historic places is our country's list of historic resources that are worthy of preservation. The list is maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Park Service. In Georgia, the National Register program is administered by the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Department of Natural Resources. To be listed in the National Register, a property must meet the National Register criteria for evaluation. These criteria require that a property be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and that it still look and appear as it did in the past. In addition, the property must (a) be associated with events, activities, or developments that were important in the past; or (b) be associated with the lives of people who were important in the past; or (c) be significant in the areas of architectural history, landscape history, or engineering; or (d) have the ability to yield information through archaeological investigation that would answer questions about our past.

Listing on the National Register does not place obligations or restrictions on the use or disposition of and individual property. National Register listing is not the same as local historic district zoning or local landmark designation that protects listed properties with design review. Properties listed in, or eligible for, the National Register are subject to an environmental review for projects using federal funds--regardless of the amount. National Register listing does not encourage public acquisition of or access to property. Properties listed in the National Register qualify for both state and federal grant programs. These programs offer financial incentives for the repair and rehabilitation of listed properties.

National Register Listings in Jackson County

In Jackson County, the following historic resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Following the name of each property is a brief description of the property and related information.

1. **Seaborn M. Shankle House** (Commerce) is a building originally constructed in 1840 and enlarged in the 1970s. The property includes the Shankle family cemetery and an outbuilding. The house was constructed by Seaborn Shankle who operated a mercantile business in the area until his death in 1885 and remained a prominent member of the Harmony Grove Community (later named Commerce). The Seaborn M Shankle House was the first property in Jackson County listed in the National Register (November 29, 1979) and included 1.3 acres of land.
2. **Hillcrest/Allen Clinic and Hospital** (Hoschton) is a Neoclassical-styled building constructed between 1914-1917. The building was originally owned and used by two doctors, L.C. and Myron Allen who specialized in early radium procedures in the treatment of tumors. The hospital was known regionally and state wide, attracting patients from all areas of the state. The property, at the time of its National Register listing on May 2, 1985, covered 6.11 acres and included seven outbuildings. It is also considered regionally significant and included in the Northeast Georgia Regional Comprehensive Plan as a regionally significant historic resource.

3. **Maysville Historic District.** The Maysville Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 10, 1985 and comprises approximately one-half of the total land area inside the city limits. A unique characteristic of the community is its location in both Banks and Jackson Counties. The boundary runs along the Southern Railroad track through the center of town. Homer Street is the north-south axis of the town and is considered one of the community's central arteries in conjunction with East and West Main Streets. East and West Main are located on either side of the railroad and roughly represent the town's east-west axis. Systems of smaller surface streets extend from these three principal arteries that form the backbone of the present historic district (Source: Maysville Comprehensive Plan, Community Assessment, Chapter 7, Historic Resources).
4. **Gov. L. G. Hardman House** (Commerce) is a two-story brick house constructed in 1921 and Mediterranean or Mission architectural style. The house was the home of Dr. Hardman, who was a noted physician, successful businessman, and politician--serving in the Georgia House of Representatives and as the Governor of Georgia. The property includes five acres of land and was listed on June 16, 1988.
5. **Commerce Commercial Historic District** (Commerce) comprises late 19th and early, 20th-century buildings covering approximately nine acres in downtown Commerce. This district is situated along the ridge which is followed by the railroad and is the dividing watershed for three rivers. The irregular street pattern is due to the city being at the site of a confluence of several wagon roads which were later intersected by the railroad. Most of the buildings are of brick construction and several with cast iron storefronts. The district was listed in the National Register on January 19, 1989.
6. **Holder Plantation** is a c. 1867 rural farmhouse that includes numerous outbuildings and landscape features related to its use as a farm during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is located three and one-half miles northwest of downtown Jefferson on U.S. Highway 129. The Holder Plantation consists of an I-house with a one-story rear ell, numerous historic outbuildings, and surrounding pasture and woodlands which at one time made up a working cotton plantation. The main house dates from c. 1867 and is a two-story, frame, one-room deep addition to the 1850s structure which forms part of the rear ell. The son of one owner was John N. Holder, longtime owner/editor of The Jackson Herald and five time candidate for Governor. The property, as the time of its listing on September 5, 1990, included 27.54 acres of land. It is also considered regionally significant and included in the Northeast Georgia Regional Comprehensive Plan. Holder Plantation was recognized as a Centennial Farm in 1993.
7. **The Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm** has been a working farm complex since 1799. The main house was built in 1866. Its plantation plain facade was changed to represent the Neoclassical style in 1914. Over 60 other structures are part of this historic district, including tenant houses, a two-room schoolhouse, barns and storage buildings, along with a cotton gin complex, a commissary and grist mill/hammer mill operation which served the surrounding farm population. It is located two and one half miles south of downtown Jefferson, southwest of the intersection of U.S. 129 and Ethridge Road. It was listed in the National Register on June 25, 1992, and a portion of the Farm was subsequently deeded to The Shields-Ethridge Farm Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization. The Farm was also recognized as a Georgia Centennial Heritage Farm by the Department of Natural Resources in 1993. The Foundation manages a portion of the original farm and provides tours and hosts annual events that are open to the public. The

farm complex, as a whole, in 1997 was in the process of being restored for its use as an outdoor agricultural museum. “Bachelors’ Academy,” located at the Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm, is a restored, two-room building that accommodated one teacher for seven grades. The Shields-Ethridge Farm is included in the Northeast Georgia Regional Comprehensive Plan as a regionally significant historic resource.

8. **The Williamson-Maley-Turner Farm** is an early 20th farm that includes several significant outbuildings used as part of the farm’s dairy operations. It is located on Georgia Highway 15, the Commerce-Jefferson Road. The main house is a Craftsman-styled building and constructed in 1913. The farm includes a distinctive round barn that is significant for its uses in experimental agricultural technologies. The round barn was built to serve as a dairy barn. It was modeled after round barns seen in the northern states and is presently used as a furniture store. At the time of its National Register listing on July 7, 1995, the farm property covered approximately 50 acres of land. It is also identified as a regionally significant historic resource in the Northeast Georgia Regional Comprehensive Plan.

9. **The Talmo Historic District** (Talmo) is a small district comprising approximately 40 acres and including ten historic buildings that evidence two periods of development in 1866 and 1883. Talmo is representative of a railroad community that developed as a crossroads community. The community also evidences cotton production in Jackson County, as the location of the high quality of cotton grown and known as the “Talmo Cotton District.”



Source: Talmo Comprehensive Plan, Technical Addendum to Community Assessment, 2008

10. **Jackson County Courthouse** is one of the oldest courthouses still in use. It was built in 1879 by W. W. Thomas with locally made bricks from the 1820 courthouse.

11. **Braselton Downtown:** The Downtown District is the Town of Braselton’s most significant cultural resource and is designated on the National Register of Historic Places.

12. **The Hoschton Depot:** The Hoschton Depot is the only physical evidence of the railroad that exists in the town. It was built in 1883 to provide train service with The Gainesville Midland Railroad line. The depot operated until 1947 and provided for both passenger and freight service. The depot, like others found in Georgia, contained a large freight room, a smaller passenger waiting room and an interior ticket room. The railroad line stretched from Gainesville to Monroe (Walton County) and then linked to the Georgia Railroad in Social Circle. The Hoschton Depot was rehabilitated in 2002 as part of a Transportation Enhancement project funded through the Georgia Dept. of Transportation. It was listed on the National Register on March 31, 2000 (Source: Hoschton Comprehensive Plan).

HISTORIC RESOURCES IN MUNICIPALITIES

This section lists historic resources within the various cities in Jackson County, not already identified under the discussion of National Register-listed landmarks, properties, and districts.

Arcade

The 1998 comprehensive plan indicates that there are several historic properties exist in the City of Arcade, but no listing is provided.

Braselton

1. **The W.H. Braselton home** is a two-story, Neoclassical building that is located south of Braselton's town center. The city purchased the building in 1995, intending to rehabilitate the building for its adaptive-use as a city hall. Stabilization repairs to the building began in 1996. The Town of Braselton sought National Register listing for the W.H. Braselton home.
2. **Braselton Store** is the site of the Braselton brothers enterprise, dating back to 1884.
3. **Green Braselton House** is a neoclassical house was built in 1918 for Green Braselton, one of the three Braselton brothers.
4. **John O. Braselton House** is a neoclassical house built in 1904 and was the home of John O. Braselton, the youngest of the three brothers who began the firm of the Braselton Brothers.
5. **W. H. Braselton House:** This home of the eldest brother, W. H. Braselton, was built in 1910 in the neoclassical style.
6. **Braselton Historic District:** The immediate area of the Braselton Brothers Store, W. H. Braselton Home and several other historic resources could be nominated as a potential National Register district. All of the Town's historic resources were being considered for National Register listing as a historic district.

In 1996, two of Braselton's historic buildings were destroyed: The Braselton Hotel, considered a landmark, was destroyed by arson, and the Braselton Blacksmith shop was demolished to provide additional parking space for an adjacent business.

Commerce

1. **Shankle Heights Historic District:** Located on Victoria and Elizabeth streets and comprised of c. 1920-1942 residential buildings with several Neoclassical homes.
2. **Old Broad Street Historic District:** Comprised of several historic buildings located near the L. G. Hardman House. These properties could be individually listed or included in a district.
3. **Broad Street Properties:** Several buildings dating to c. 1894 are located on Broad Street and between Elm Street. These buildings may be eligible for individual National Register nominations.

Hoschton

In 2002, the Georgia “Find It” Program, a survey partnership sponsored by the Georgia Transmission Corporation (GTC) in partnership with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division (HPD) and the University of Georgia, surveyed cultural resources in Hoschton. It “intensively” identified historic resources and is probably the most accurate data available. It identified seventy-five historic properties in the town. Of these, twenty-seven were believed to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Source: Hoschton Comprehensive Plan).

Based on this more recent survey, a small, intact historic district could be delineated and possibly nominated to the National Register. **The Hoschton Historic District** (proposed) would include some of the 27 surveyed historic properties extending to the downtown’s commercial buildings and surrounding residential buildings. While Hoschton does contain many historic resources, many intrusions (e.g., infill development) have created gaps within the historic areas. In addition, physical changes to individual historic buildings that altered their historic character will affect the boundaries of a potential district. Further research is needed on individual historic properties and the district as a whole to evaluate Hoschton’s National Register eligibility.

Jefferson

1. **Jefferson Downtown Historic District:** A locally designated district of Jefferson which includes the downtown commercial district and historic residences. Included in this district are the Ethridge-Gurley House (c. 1836) and the Ethridge-Daniel House (1910) on Lee Street, the Pendergrass-Snare House (1893), and the Smith House (1913) on Sycamore Avenue. The downtown local historic district also contains the Crawford W. Long Museum complex located on the former site of Dr. Long’s office on the public square.

2. **Crawford W. Long Museum:** Located in Jefferson, this three-building complex includes the Pendergrass store of 1858 and the two story drugstore/office building built by Dr. J. B. Pendergrass in 1879. The museum is located on the site where Dr. Crawford W. Long performed the first operation with ether anesthesia on March 30, 1842. Open since 1957, the Museum commemorates Long’s discovery of ether’s use as an anesthetic and the first painless surgery which took place March 30, 1842. The original museum building was constructed in 1879.



Source: Jefferson Comprehensive Plan, Community Agenda, 2008

3. **Bruce Home:** Washington Street, Jefferson. Built 1875 with Greek Revival fluted Doric columns and pilasters with a full-height porch.
4. **Ethridge-Gurley House:** Located in Jefferson and built in c. 1836, it is the oldest existing house in Jefferson.

5. **Jefferson Depot:** One-story frame building with a hipped standing seam metal roof supported by large brackets under the eaves.
6. **Pendergrass Store:** Incorporated as part of the museum in 1987, the Pendergrass store was largely built in 1858.
7. **Washington Lawrenceville Historic District:** This locally designated residential district in Jefferson contains a mixture of late 19th and early, 20th-century homes as well as two historic districts.
8. **Turner Goodwin House:** Located on Lawrenceville Avenue.
9. **Jefferson Mills,** established in 1899, remains as the oldest industry in town. A mill village was constructed around the Victorian-era brick mill and contributes two distinctive building types to Jefferson.
10. **Washington Street Historic District:** A small residential district located along Washington Street and south of Elm Street.

Maysville

Maysville was not included in the coverage of the 1998 comprehensive plan for Jackson County. However, the county's 1998 plan indicates that: "the Task Force reported that historic properties in Maysville are being allowed to be demolished by neglect."

Maysville has a large historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, it lacks protection ordinances and does not have a historic preservation commission. It proposes to certify the city's downtown development authority to serve as the historic preservation commission.

Nicholson

The Freeman House is one of the oldest houses in Jackson County and built of hand-hewn logs.

Pendergrass

The 1998 plan indicates that many historic buildings in Pendergrass are being repaired, but others have deteriorated beyond the point of repair. The town has retained its depot which serves as the center of the city limits.

Talmo

As noted previously Talmo has received recognition in the National Register of Historic Places.

AGRICULTURAL AND FARM RESOURCES IN UNINCORPORATED JACKSON COUNTY

This section identifies historic and cultural resources not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They are divided into types of resources (agricultural/farm, institutional, etc.)

Jackson County has a long and rich agricultural tradition. Many significant farms existed in the county and several historic farms remain that evidence the past. The county's rural character is also considered one of the county's main attributes.

Georgia Centennial Farms Overview

In the state of Georgia, farms that contribute to the state's agricultural heritage are recognized by the Georgia Centennial Farm Program. This program is administered by the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the University of Georgia, College of Agriculture and Environmental Services, the Georgia National Fair and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

The program recognizes farms through three types of award categories: (1) the Centennial Heritage Farm Award, (2) the Centennial Farm Award and (3) Centennial Family Farm Award. Each category requires that eligible farms use a minimum of 10 acres for agriculture production or earn \$1,000 in farm generated income. Other requirements pertain to each category involving ownership and National Register listing as follows:

- Centennial Heritage Farms, owned by members of the same family for 100 years or more and listed in the National Register;
- Centennial Farm Award, at least 100 years old and listed in the National Register; and
- Centennial Family Farm, owned by members of the same family for 100 years or more and not listed in the National Register.

Centennial Farms in Jackson County

In Jackson County, four farms are recognized as Georgia Heritage Farms from the three categories. These farms include:

1. The Shields-Ethridge Farm (Centennial Heritage Farm)
2. Holder Plantation (Centennial Farm)
3. Sarah & Clarence Carson Farm (Centennial Family Farm)
4. Johnson Farm (Centennial Family Farm)

Jackson County's history indicates that farms played an important role in its economic development during the 19th and 20th centuries. Farms also comprise many of the county's historic resources as well as cultural landscapes. Farms in Jackson County, more generally, contribute to its rural character and its inherent qualities. The recognized farms not only represent important cultural resources, but may possess opportunities related to tourism and promoting the county's quality of life. Because of Jackson County's strong associations to agriculture, many other farms may be eligible for recognition by the Centennial Farm program.

Other Agricultural Resources

1. **Sells Community** is located off state Route 53 south of Hoschton near the intersection of Watkins and Jackson Trail roads. This community began as a dairy farm. The owner's main house, a store, and tenant houses comprise a small farming community historic district.

2. **The Duke Farm**, sometimes known as the Hallelujah Farm, is located on Highway 60 and was the site of one of the official state distilleries. This site has been specifically identified as suitable for centennial farm designation.
3. **State Arboretum**: A 318-acre forest deeded to the University of Georgia in 1980 from the estate of Jason Newton Thompson. The forest is two miles southwest of Braselton and includes more than 100 species of native Georgia trees.

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES IN UNINCORPORATED JACKSON COUNTY

1. **Etoho Baptist Church**, located at Hurricane Shoals, was probably the first church in the county. The church was established in 1788 and was moved in 1852 to its current site on the Jefferson-Maysville Road. The name was changed during the move from Etoho to Oconee Baptist.
2. **Thyatira Presbyterian Church** was the second church in the county, founded in 1795. As of 1997 it was still in existence. It is located three miles south of its original location on the Commerce-Jefferson Road.
3. **Cabin Creek Baptist Church** was the third church established in the county (1796).
4. **Crooked Creek Baptist Church** was founded near an Indian village in 1803, off the Athens-Jefferson Road.
5. **The Academy Baptist Church**, established in 1810, was located three miles north of Jefferson off the Jefferson-Gainesville Road.
6. **The Groaning Rock Community (?)**

TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Native American Trails

Several early Native-American and frontier trails extend through Jackson County. These trails were important in the development of the county, the northeast Georgia region, and the state of Georgia. Many of Jackson County's towns were founded sites of Native-American villages; Native-American history is important to the county's and cities' history. There such trails are evident from prior analyses:

1. **Jackson Trail** is an old Indian trail that crosses through Jackson County.
2. **The Locoda Trail**, passing through Center, Nicholson, Commerce, and Maysville, was a historic Indian trail in the area.
3. **The Okoloco Indian Trail**, passed through the western part of Jackson County where the Hog Mountain Road is now located.

Historic Bridges

In Jackson County, several historic bridges remain that evidence the county's early road development. In particular, the double-arched bridge in Jefferson is significant as a historic structure.

LOCAL FORMAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Local Historic District Designation and Protection

Jefferson enacted a Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1986 which established the Jefferson Historic Preservation Commission. There are six historic districts located in and around the downtown area of Jefferson. The six districts are Downtown, Martin-Cooley, Oak Avenue, Paradise Cemetery, Washington-Lawrenceville, and Woodbine Cemetery.

Certified Local Government

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program was created by the National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980 in order to formally establish a federal-state-local preservation partnership. The amendments outline five broad standards that must be met by a local government in order to be granted “certified local government” status. These standards include:

1. Enforcing appropriate state or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties;
2. Establishing an adequate and qualified historic preservation review commission by local legislation,
3. Maintaining a system for survey and inventory of historic properties,
4. Providing for adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program, including the process of recommending properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and
5. Satisfactorily performing the remaining responsibilities delegated to it by Federal and State governments.

The role of “certified local governments” in the federal-state-local partnership involves, at minimum, the responsibility for review and approval of nominations of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and the eligibility to apply to the State Historic Preservation Officer for matching funds reserved for “certified local governments.” In Georgia, the Certified Local Government program is served by the Office of Preservation Services located at the University of Georgia in Athens. This office can provide guidance and technical service related to CLGs. They also provide grant applications and information for preservation projects.

Restoration Efforts

Jefferson is restoring the Historic Crawford W. Long Museum. Jackson County is restoring the historic courthouse in Jefferson. Jackson County has also preserved selected historic buildings from demolition and destruction and located them to the Hurricane Shoals County Park.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides substantial evidence of the importance of historic resources in Jackson County and its municipalities. The cities have rich histories based on prior agricultural use, the rise and fall of the cotton industry, and the development of railroads through the county. Some of Jackson County’s history has literally been parceled off in the form of a new county (Barrow). Its first county seat, Clarksboro, seems to have no recognition in the county at all.

The county's focus on historic and cultural resources should consist of a two-pronged strategy, with various, multiple objectives for each. First, the county should recognize and nurture the efforts of municipalities in Jackson County, especially including Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Hoschoton, and Maysville (but not neglecting any of the cities), and find a way to weave the individual municipal efforts together into a formalized municipal historic preservation program for Jackson County. Many of the cities in Jackson County are still too small to devote enough resources to historic preservation. Though private groups and the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (as well as the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission with regard to Maysville) have done admirable work in terms of technical assistance and other support, a formal program needs to be established if preservation and its importance to heritage tourism and downtown revitalization are to be truly recognized and nourished in Jackson County.

Secondly, in addition to a formal municipal preservation program assisted at the county level, Jackson County itself needs to strengthen and focus its efforts on the many agricultural and rural resources in the unincorporated areas of the county. Such efforts should include aggressive actions to nominate more properties for centennial farm status, a more thorough inventory of resources in the unincorporated parts of the county, an interim preservation protection ordinance, and ultimately, strong consideration to a countywide historic preservation program to protect resources in unincorporated parts of the county.

Assuming that these recommended actions receive consensus support by the county (its plan steering committee, the planning commission, and the board of commissioners), the Community Agenda should lay out in detail the necessary actions, steps, policies, programs, and implementing tools.

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

HOUSING

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

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HOUSING

PURPOSE

The housing analysis provides an inventory of the existing housing stock and an assessment of its adequacy and suitability for serving current and future populations. The assessment considers whether existing housing is appropriate to the needs of residents in terms of quantity, affordability, type and location, and, if not, what might be done to improve the situation.

The state of Georgia, through its local planning requirements,¹ has established a housing goal “to ensure that all residents of the state have access to adequate and affordable housing.” It has also identified a “quality community objective” for “housing opportunities” which suggests that “quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.” This goal and quality community objective provide the policy basis under which Jackson County’s housing analyses, policies, and programs are prepared.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING ANALYSES

Local planning requirements require, at minimum, for the community assessment to include the following:²

(c) Housing. Use the following factors to evaluate the adequacy and suitability of existing housing stock to serve current and future community needs. If applicable, check for consistency with the Consolidated Plan prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Housing Types and Mix. Evaluate the composition and quality of the community’s housing stock, how it has changed over time, recent trends in the types of housing being provided, and whether there is a good mix of types (including modular, mobile or stick-built), sizes, and multi-family vs. single family throughout the community.

Condition and Occupancy. Evaluate the age and condition of housing in the community as well as the proportion of units that are owner-occupied and renter occupied, plus vacancy rates for owners and renter units.

Cost of Housing. Evaluate the cost of housing in the community, both for owners and renters, in terms of affordability for residents and workers in the community.

¹ Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning “Local Planning Requirements” (Effective Date: May 1, 2005), Chapter 110-12-1-.06, State Planning Goals and Objectives, 110-12-1-.06 State Planning Goals and Objectives. See (2) “Statewide Planning Goals,” (d) “Housing Goal, and (3) “Quality Community Objectives,” (l) Housing Opportunities Objective.”

² Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning “Local Planning Requirements” (Effective Date: May 1, 2005), Chapter 110-12-1-.07, Data and Mapping Specifications, 110-12-1-.07 Data and Mapping Specifications, (c) Housing.

Cost-Burdened Households. Evaluate the needs of households that are cost-burdened (paying 30% or more of net income on total housing costs) and severely cost-burdened (paying 50% or more of net income on total housing costs). Also evaluate the relationship of local housing costs and availability to the socioeconomic characteristics of these households, including income, income from social security or public assistance, employment status, occupation, household type, age of householder, household size, race, and unit type.

Special Housing Needs. Evaluate special housing needs in the community (e.g., housing needs of residents who are elderly; homeless; victims of domestic violence; migrant farm workers; persons with mental, physical, or developmental disabilities; persons with HIV/AIDS; and persons recovering from substance abuse) using information obtained from local service providers on caseloads, waiting lists, etc.

Jobs-Housing Balance. Evaluate housing costs compared to wages and household incomes of the resident and nonresident workforce to determine whether sufficient affordable housing is available within the community to allow those who work in the community to also live in the community. Data on the commuting patterns of the resident and nonresident workforce may assist in determining whether there is a jobs-housing balance issue in the community. Also evaluate any barriers that may prevent a significant proportion of the community's nonresident workforce from residing in the jurisdiction, such as a lack of suitable or affordable housing, suitably zoned land, etc.

HOUSEHOLDS, HOUSING UNITS, AND GROUP QUARTERS

The population consists of the “household” population and “group quarters” population. Table 1 provides household and housing characteristics for Jackson County and its municipalities in 2000. Table 2 shows the same data by census tract in Jackson County.

Table 1
Households and Housing Characteristics, 2000
Jackson County and Municipalities

Geographic Area	Households	Household Population	Housing Units	Average Household Size	Group Quarters Population
Jackson County	15,067	40,780	16,226	2.71	809
City of Arcade	565	1,643	609	2.91	0
City of Braselton	489	1,206	491	2.83	0
City of Commerce	2,051	5,045	2,273	2.46	247
City of Hoschton	388	1,070	404	2.76	0
City of Jefferson	1,415	3,779	1,522	2.67	46
City of Maysville	481	1,240	529	2.58	7
City of Nicholson	435	1,247	484	2.87	0
City Pendergrass	156	431	171	2.76	0
City of Talmo	146	477	150	3.27	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF 1, Tables P15, P16, P17, P37, and H1.

The figures in Table 1 indicate that the vast majority of housing units in Jackson County are located outside of the nine municipalities. The housing stock in municipalities is divided generally into three sizes of cities: very small (200 housing units or less), including Pendergrass and Talmo; small (400 to 600 housing units), including Arcade, Braselton, Hoschton, Maysville, and Nicholson); and moderate-size cities (more than 1,500 housing units), including Jefferson and Commerce.

The average household size in Jackson County, at 2.71 persons in 2000, appears rather typical for counties in Georgia. It is not surprising that the larger municipalities in Jackson County have smaller average household sizes than the county as a whole.

The group quarters population typically is a very small percentage of the total population (five percent or less), and that is true for Jackson County as of 2000. Of the total group quarters population (809 persons) in 2000, most (436 people) were in correctional institutions in unincorporated Jackson County. The nursing home population in 2000 in Jackson County consisted of only 91 people, 84 of whom resided within the city limits of Commerce. The remainder of the institutionalized population (163 people) resided in institutions other than correctional institutes and nursing homes. Jackson County as of 2000 had no non-institutional populations such as college dormitories or military quarters, but the census indicates there were 46 people living in “other noninstitutional group quarters in the Jackson County part of Maysville in 2000 (Census 2000, SF 1, Table P37).

Table 2
Households and Housing Characteristics, 2000
Census Tracts in Jackson County

Geographic Area	Households	Housing Units	Average Household Size	Group Quarters Population
Jackson County	15,067	16,226	2.71	809
Census Tract 101	3,518	3,734	2.82	0
Census Tract 102	1,489	1,599	2.83	7
Census Tract 103	1,558	1,721	2.51	268
Census Tract 104	1,614	1,770	2.49	0
Census Tract 105	1,789	1,918	2.76	0
Census Tract 106	2,487	2,695	2.73	57
Census Tract 107	2,602	2,789	2.67	477

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF 1, Tables P15, P17, P37, and H1.

Table 2 indicates that Census Tract 101 contains the largest concentration of housing units in the county as of 2000, and the highest average household size of all seven tracts. The smallest average household sizes in 2000 were in Census Tracts 103 and 104, which include the City of Commerce.

**Table 3
Housing Unit Estimates, July 1, 2000-2007
Jackson County**

Geographic Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Jackson County	16,455	17,392	18,139	18,955	19,690	21,072	22,363	23,572

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. "Annual Estimates of Housing Units for Counties in Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007" (HU-EST2007-04-13). Release Date: August 21, 2008.

Table 3 shows the substantial increase in the number of housing units in Jackson County from 2000 to 2007. An estimated 7,117 housing units were added in Jackson County during that seven-year period, representing a 43 percent increase over the year-2000 housing stock. Clearly, Jackson County has witnessed one of the faster paces of homebuilding in Georgia in recent years.

TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS

Table 4 shows the year-2000 housing stock in Jackson County and its municipalities by types of housing units: detached single-family, mobile or manufactured home,³ and other units which include mostly duplexes and multi-family units. Types of housing units are not indicative, in and of themselves, of household tenure (owner or renter). That is to say, a manufactured home or detached dwelling may be owned or rented. Clearly, for-rent apartments are synonymous with renter-occupied homes, but some attached units can be owner-occupied condominiums.

**Table 4
Types of Housing Units, 2000
Jackson County and Municipalities**

Geographic Area	Single-Family Detached	% Total	Mobile or Manufactured Home	% Total	Attached/ Other Unit Types	% Total	Total Housing Units
Jackson County	10,258	63.2	5,003	30.8	965	6.0	16,226
City of Arcade	244	39.5	374	60.5	0	--	618
City of Braselton	416	92.2	21	4.7	14	3.1	451
City of Commerce	1,571	70.4	356	16.0	303	13.6	2,230
City of Hoschton	305	74.8	33	8.1	70	17.1	408
City of Jefferson	1,121	73.8	121	8.0	276	18.2	1,518
City of Maysville	408	75.3	112	20.7	22	4.0	542
City of Nicholson	180	36.6	309	62.8	3	0.6	492
City Pendergrass	129	68.6	59	31.4	0	--	188
City of Talmo	65	45.8	71	50.0	6	4.2	142

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF 3, Table H30.

The housing data in Table 4 are revealing in many respects. First, there is a relatively small percentage of housing units that are not single-family detached or manufactured homes. That observation is typical of a mostly rural county – multi-family housing opportunities are generally

³ The U.S. Census Bureau still uses the term "mobile" home, which is now out of vogue. The more accepted term today is "manufactured" home. When referring to Census statistics, the term "mobile" is used but in other respects the preferred term "manufactured" home is used in this analysis.

uncommon. However, it has important implications in terms of the lack of diversity of the housing stock. Second, manufactured homes comprised a significant share (more than 30 percent) of the county’s housing stock in 2000. On the positive side, this means that there is “affordable” housing in Jackson County, since manufactured homes have historically (and still are) considered a much more affordable housing option than stick-built housing. On the negative side, a large number of manufactured homes has implications with regard to the residential tax base; while some owner-occupied manufactured homes on individual lots are valued as real property, many are treated for tax purposes as “personal” property and are subject to rapid depreciation by tax assessors. These issues are discussed in greater detail later.

It is also important to note that three of Jackson County’s municipalities (Arcade, Nicholson, and Talmo) had a majority of their year-2000 housing stock comprised of manufactured homes. On the other hand, Braselton, Jefferson, and Hoschton have very small percentages of their total housing stock comprised of manufactured homes, as of 2000.

Table 5 shows the types of housing units by Census Tract in 2000. These figures are illuminating, since when considered in the context of data in Table 4, trends for the unincorporated areas are revealed. Consider first Census Tract 101, which contains four municipalities. Two of the cities in Census Tract 101 did not have significant shares of manufactured housing in 2000, and though Talmo and Pendergrass did, the number of manufactured homes in those municipalities was relatively small. This means the vast majority of manufactured homes in Census Tract 101 as of 2000 were located in unincorporated areas.

**Table 5
Types of Housing Units, 2000
Jackson County and Census Tracts**

Geographic Area	Single-Family Detached	% Total	Mobile or Manufactured Home	% Total	Attached/Other Unit Types	% Total	Total Housing Units
Jackson County	10,258	63.2	5,003	30.8	965	6.0	16,226
Census Tract 101	2,636	70.6	990	26.5	108	2.9	3,734
Census Tract 102	803	50.2	765	47.8	31	2.0	1,599
Census Tract 103	1,065	61.9	385	22.3	271	15.8	1,721
Census Tract 104	1,343	75.9	283	16.0	144	8.1	1,770
Census Tract 105	1,033	53.9	796	41.5	89	4.6	1,918
Census Tract 106	1,350	50.1	1,248	46.3	97	3.6	2,695
Census Tract 107	2,028	72.7	536	19.2	225	8.1	2,789

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF 3, Table H30.

Census Tract 102, which is almost entirely unincorporated except for Maysville and small, non-residential parts of Jefferson and Commerce, had almost half of its year-2000 housing stock comprised of manufactured homes. Census Tracts 103 and 104, which include Commerce, had the lowest shares of manufactured homes of all seven tracts. It appears that manufactured homes in those tracts were relatively evenly distributed between Commerce and unincorporated Jackson County.

Census Tract 105 has a majority of manufactured homes in unincorporated areas despite a concentration of more than 300 manufactured homes within Nicholson itself in 2000. The same even more true of Census Tract 106, which had the highest number of manufactured homes in

2000 of all seven tracts. Census Tract 106 includes the City of Arcade, which has a majority of its housing stock comprised of manufactured homes, yet the vast majority of the manufactured homes in that tract in 2000 were located in unincorporated parts of the tract. Similarly, the vast majority of manufactured homes in Census Tract 107 are also located in unincorporated areas. Hence, manufactured housing as of 2000 was largely a rural, unincorporated and small city housing opportunity.

More recent estimates of housing by type of unit are available for the county as a whole but not for municipalities or census tracts. These estimates are provided in Table 6. Similar to that noted already, the figures in Table 6 indicate a substantial overall increase in the number of housing units in Jackson County from 2000 to the 2005-2007 reporting period. The vast majority of the increase in housing stock during that reporting period is detached, single-family homes. Manufactured housing also increased substantially, by almost 800 units, but with the overshadowing amount of stick-built homes added, manufactured homes as a percentage of total housing stock has declined substantially (from 30.8 to 25.8 percent) in Jackson County since 2000. A small but notable increase in other types of housing (attached) also occurred. Furthermore, it is likely that the percent share of single-family, detached, stick-built homes will continue to increase in Jackson County; that prediction is based on past subdivision activity in the county and the desirable nature of the county for residence.

**Table 6
Types of Housing Units, 2000 and 2005-07
Jackson County**

Type of Housing Unit	2000 (Census)	% Total	2005-2007 (3-Year Estimate)	% Total	2000 to 2005-07 Change
Single-Family Detached	10,258	63.2	15,206	68.1	4,948
Mobile or Manufactured Home	5,003	30.8	5,775	25.8	772
Attached/ Other Unit Types	965	6.0	1,354	6.1	389
Total Housing Units	16,226	100	22,335	100	6,109

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF 3, Table H30; American Community Survey, 2005-2007 3-Year Estimates, Table B25024.

OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY

Table 7 shows the number and percentage of occupied and vacant housing units in 2000 for Jackson County and Census Tracts. These figures do not reveal anything out of the ordinary. The highest vacancy rates in 2000 were in Census Tracts 103 and 104 which include Commerce.

**Table 7
Occupied and Vacant Housing Units, 2000
Census Tracts in Jackson County**

Census Tract	Occupied Units	% of Total	Vacant Units	% of Total	Total Units
Jackson County	15,057	92.8	1,169	7.2	16,226
Census Tract 101	3,518	94.2	216	5.7	3,734
Census Tract 102	1,489	93.1	110	6.9	1,599
Census Tract 103	1,558	90.5	163	9.5	1,721
Census Tract 104	1,614	91.2	156	8.8	1,770
Census Tract 105	1,789	93.3	129	6.7	1,918
Census Tract 106	2,487	92.3	208	7.7	2,695
Census Tract 107	2,602	93.3	187	6.7	2,789

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF1, Table H3.

Census estimates of occupancy and vacancy of housing for Jackson County are provided in Table 8. Interestingly, the number of vacant housing units almost doubled in Jackson County between 2000 and the 2005-2007 reporting period, thus increasing the overall vacancy rate. However, the higher vacancy rate is probably attributable to the very swift pace of homebuilding and the fact that many new homes were constructed and either unsold or sold and not yet occupied.

**Table 8
Occupied and Vacant Housing Units, 2000 and 2005-2007
Jackson County**

2000 (Census)					2005-2007 (3-Year Estimate)				
Occupied Units	% of Total	Vacant Units	% of Total	Total Units	Occupied Units	% of Total	Vacant Units	% of Total	Total Units
15,057	92.8	1,169	7.2	16,226	20,080	89.9	2,255	10.1	22,335

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF1, Table H3. U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, Table B25002.

Vacancy by Tenure

Local planning requirements indicate that communities should look at the vacancy rates for owner-occupied and renter-occupied homes. Data specific to those questions is not directly available via year-2000 census statistics but can be derived by cross-tabulating other available data (see Table 9).

**Table 9
Owner and Renter Units and Vacancy Rates, 2000
Jackson County and Municipalities
(Housing Units)**

	Total Owner-Occupied Units	Vacant For Sale	Total Owner Units	Owner Occupancy Vacancy Rate	Total Renter-Occupied Units	Vacant for Rent	Total Renter Units	Renter Occupancy Vacancy Rate
Jackson Co.	11,276	250	11,526	2.2%	3,781	369	4,150	8.9%
Arcade	472	14	486	2.9%	93	13	106	12.3%
Braselton	406	14	420	3.3%	53	5	58	8.6%
Commerce	1,325	45	1,370	3.3%	726	103	829	12.4%
Hoschton	275	1	276	0.3%	113	4	117	3.4%
Jefferson	917	26	943	2.8%	498	42	540	7.8%
Maysville	392	19	411	4.6%	89	3	92	3.3%
Nicholson	338	15	353	4.2%	97	20	117	17.1%
Pendergrass	72	0	72	0%	84	5	89	5.6%
Talmo	55	0	55	0%	91	2	93	2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF 1, rates calculated from summations of Tables H4 and H5.

It should be acknowledged here that some vacancy rate for housing units is desirable; if there were no vacant homes, there would be no mobility in terms of housing choice – people could not move into the community and those already in the community would not be able to change housing if they desired, when no homes are vacant. Therefore, it is healthy and appropriate to have some vacancy rates. The data in Table 9 reveal generally that vacancy rates are low, or at least normal when compared generally with expectations or those of other communities. For instance, consider the city of Hoschton, which had almost no vacancies for owner-occupied housing units in 2000. This means constrained housing mobility for new and existing households in that city. Similarly, renter-occupancy vacancies are very low in Talmo, Maysville, and Hoschton. The only vacancy rate that appears unusually high is the renter-occupied vacancy rate in Nicholson – this may be attributed to a large number of manufactured homes for rent but unoccupied.

Tenure

Tenure means the length of stay of a given household in a dwelling. Generally, owner-occupied households stay longer, while renter-occupied households are by their very nature considered to be shorter in duration. Table 10 provides a classification of housing units by the number of people in the household as of 2000 in Jackson County. These figures indicate that about three of every four households in Jackson County in 2000 were owner occupied.

**Table 10
Tenure by Number of Persons per Household, 2000
Jackson County
(Occupied Housing Units)**

Number of Persons in Unit (household)	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number of Units	%	Number of Units	%
1 person	1,899	16.8	1,070	28.4
2 persons	3,978	35.3	1,083	28.7
3 persons	2,330	20.7	666	17.6
4 persons	1,877	16.6	552	14.6
5 persons	786	6.9	247	6.6
6 persons	259	2.3	110	2.9
7 or more	154	1.4	46	1.2
Total	11,283	100	3,774	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H17.

With regard to household sizes, the data in Table 10 reveal nothing out of the ordinary or what would typically be expected. Owner-occupied homes tend to have larger numbers of people (i.e., more families) than renter-occupied homes. Renter-occupied homes have smaller average household sizes. In Jackson County, a majority of renter-occupied home consist of just one or two household members. What is interesting, however, is that renter-occupied housing units in Jackson County in 2000 had percentages of five, six, and seven-or more person households about the same as owner-occupied households. That finding may be significant in terms of suggesting that Jackson County has a need for larger households that rent their homes.

Table 11 provides a comparison of 2000 census statistics and 2005-2007 estimates with regard to the tenure of housing units in Jackson County. The figures in Table 11 show a slight increase over time in the percentage of total households who are renters, from 25.1 percent in 2000 to 26.9 percent in the 2005-2007 reporting period. That finding runs counter to other overall housing trends, which suggest higher percentages of detached, single-family dwellings and thus, in all likelihood, higher percentages of owner-occupied versus renter-occupied homes.

**Table 11
Owner- and Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000 and 2005-2007
Jackson County
(Occupied Housing Units)**

2000 (Census)					2005-2007 (3-Year Estimate)				
Owner-Occupied Units	% of Total	Renter-Occupied Units	% of Total	Total Units	Owner-Occupied Units	% of Total	Renter-Occupied Units	% of Total	Total Units
11,276	74.9	3,781	25.1	15,057	14,680	73.1	5,400	26.9	20,080

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF1, Table H3. U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, Table B25003.

AGE

Another consideration is the age of housing – if homes are too old, then it may not make good economic sense to upgrade them. Homes built in the 1960s and 1970s tend to be substantially smaller than those constructed in later decades. The age of homes is not in itself an indicator of poor condition. Older homes are sometimes better constructed than newer ones, and the overall condition of homes depends on the amount of upkeep and maintenance by the owners. As homes age, however, more upkeep is needed, and if occupancy goes to renter rather than owner-occupied status, maintenance tends to get deferred.

Table 12 provides a comparison of the age classification of housing units in Jackson County and the State of Georgia as of 2000. The most significant observations are twofold. First, due to a healthy pace of homebuilding in years leading up to the 2000 decennial census, Jackson County has higher percentages of housing units than does the state in the most recent categories of years structures were built. Secondly, Jackson County has a higher percentage of homes than the state which were built before 1949; the implication of that finding is that Jackson County has a larger than typical stock of homes that could be considered historically significant (i.e., any structure 50 years old or older).

Table 12
Age of Housing Units, 2000
Jackson County and State
(Housing Units By Range of Years Structure Was Built)

Year Structure Built	Jackson County	%	Georgia	%
Built 1999 to March 2000	1,233	7.6	130,695	4.0
Built 1995 to 1998	2,628	16.2	413,557	12.5
Built 1990 to 1994	1,988	12.3	370,878	11.3
Built 1980 to 1989	2,932	18.1	721,174	22.0
Built 1970 to 1979	2,502	15.4	608,926	18.6
Built 1960 to 1969	1,692	10.4	416,047	12.7
Built 1950 to 1959	1,076	6.6	283,424	8.6
Built 1940 to 1949	752	4.6	144,064	4.4
Built 1939 or earlier	1,423	8.8	192,972	5.9
Total	16,226	100%	3,281,737	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H34.

Table 13 provides the median year of housing construction for Jackson County and municipalities. The median age of housing is largely a function of new construction – as more homes get built, the median age rises; in fast-growing areas the median age rises dramatically with new home building. Table 13 shows that Commerce (1968) has the oldest median age of housing, followed by Pendergrass (1970). Again, this is function of the lack (or small number) of homes being built or manufactured homes established in those cities. Braselton has the youngest median age of housing units (1995) which is not surprising, given it is heavily influenced by metropolitan Atlanta residential growth influences and is within easy commuting distance to employment centers in Gwinnett County. The American Community Survey, 2005-

2007 estimates, reveal that the median year of Jackson County’s housing stock has now risen to 1986 (Table B25035).

Table 13
Median Age of Housing Units, 2000
Jackson County and Municipalities

Geographic Area	Median Year Structure Built
Jackson County	1982
Arcade	1991
Braselton	1995
Commerce	1968
Hoschton	1987
Jefferson	1981
Maysville	1981
Nicholson	1991
Pendergrass	1970
Talmo	1981

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H35.

CONDITION

Two typical measures of substandard housing conditions are the number of housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities and the number of units lacking complete kitchen facilities. Table 14 provides data on the structural and plumbing characteristics of the housing stock in 2000 for Jackson County and municipalities. Generally, these statistics on housing conditions reveal that housing is overall in sound condition; although Jackson County as a whole has some (less than 200 each) units which lacked completed plumbing and complete kitchen facilities in 2000, this is not considered to be a significant housing issue.

With regard to the municipalities, only in Commerce did the percentages of homes lacking complete plumbing facilities reach one percent or more. Very few housing units in the municipalities in 2000 lacked completed kitchen facilities. Therefore, housing condition is largely not an issue for Jackson County and its municipalities.

Table 14
Structural and Plumbing Characteristics of Housing Units, 2000
Jackson County and Municipalities

Jackson Co.	Total Housing Units	Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	% of Total Housing Units	Units Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	% of Total Housing Units
Jackson Co.	16,226	194	1.2	176	1.1
Arcade	626	2	0.3	0	--
Braselton	451	0	--	0	--
Commerce	2,206	24	1.1	9	0.4
Hoschton	408	0	--	2	0.5
Jefferson	1,518	9	0.6	2	0.1
Maysville	542	0	--	0	--
Nicholson	492	0	--	2	0.4
Pendergrass	188	0	--	5	2.7
Talmo	142	0	--	0	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Tables H47 and H50.

OVERCROWDING

Overcrowding provides an occupancy measure of inadequate housing conditions. An overcrowded housing unit is one that has 1.01 or more persons per room. Severe overcrowding is considered to be occupancy by 1.51 or more persons per room. Table 15 shows overcrowded and severely overcrowded housing units in Jackson County in 2000 by tenure. Overcrowding was, in 2000, more of an issue in owner-occupied units than renter-occupied units, while severe overcrowding was much more prevalent in renter-occupied housing units in 2000.

Table 15
Overcrowded Housing Units by Tenure, 2000
Jackson County
(Occupied Housing Units)

Occupants per Room	Owner-Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units	Total	Percent of Total Occupied Units
Total Occupied Housing Units	11,283	3,774	15,057	100%
1.01 to 1.5 occupants per room (overcrowded)	229	133	362	2.4%
1.51 or more occupants per room (severely overcrowded)	69	131	200	1.3%
Total Overcrowded or Severely Overcrowded Housing Units	298	264	562	3.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 SF3, Table H20.

COST

The cost of housing is one of the most important considerations in this housing analysis. The value and affordability for both renter and homeowner households is examined. First, Table 16 shows the range of value for owner-occupied housing units in Jackson County in 2000 and for the 2005-2007 reporting period. Percentage shares of each value range for the state's housing stock is also provided for the year 2000.

Table 16
Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2000 and 2005-2007
Jackson County and State
(Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units in 2000)
(Owner-Occupied Housing Units in 2005-2007)

Range of Value (\$)	Jackson County 2000 Census		Georgia 2000	Jackson County 2005-2007 Estimates	
	Units	%	%	Units	%
Less than \$50,000	671	9.5	10.3	1,654	11.2
\$50,000 to \$99,999	2,494	34.2	38.3	3,469	23.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,608	25.8	24.7	3,225	22.0
\$150,000 to \$199,999	937	13.3	14.4	2,255	15.4
\$200,000 to \$299,999	597	10.2	9.2	2,194	15.0
\$300,000 or more	203	7.0	3.1	1,883	12.8
Total	6,510	100	100%	14,680	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H74. 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, Table B25075.

In Table 16, it is the percentage shares that are important (and comparable). Note that the year 2000 statistics reported in Table 15 are for “specified” owner-occupied housing units, meaning that it is not the total number of owner-occupied units. On the other hand, the 2005-2007 estimates represent a total estimate of owner-occupied housing units.

In looking at the percentages, Jackson County in 2000 had about the same percentage of owner-occupied housing units with values under \$100,000 as Georgia's housing stock, suggesting that Jackson County has a comparable percentage of homes at the lowest end of the housing value spectrum. Also, in comparison with Georgia in 2000, Jackson County's owner-occupied housing stock had slightly lower proportions of homes in the ranges of \$100,000 to \$149,999 and \$150,000 to \$199,999 categories when compared with the state, but slightly higher proportions in the \$200,000 and higher value categories in 2000.

Table 17 compares median values for the state, Jackson County, and municipalities in 2000 with regard to the median values of owner-occupied housing units and mobile homes. For all owner-occupied units, Braselton and Hoschton have much higher median home values than the county or state – this is explained at least in part by those municipalities being more heavily influenced by the Atlanta metropolitan area's housing market. Jefferson, also located closer to metropolitan Atlanta than several other cities in Jackson County, also had median owner-occupied home values exceeding the state's median but not as high as Braselton and

Hoschton. The county and all other municipalities not cited here were well below the state's median value for owner-occupied housing units in 2000.

**Table 17
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units and Mobile Homes, 2000
Jackson County and Municipalities and State
(Dollars)**

Geographic Area	Median Value for All Owner-Occupied Housing Units (\$)	Median Value for Mobile Homes (\$)
Georgia	100,600	33,600
Jackson County	89,900	53,100
Arcade	71,400	60,100
Braselton	143,200	45,000
Commerce	74,000	17,200
Hoschton	130,200	28,100
Jefferson	108,900	61,900
Maysville	82,600	53,300
Nicholson	60,300	55,200
Pendergrass	91,700	60,700
Talmo	113,600	Less than 10,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Tables H85 and H82.

Nicholson, which has the highest percentage of manufactured homes of all cities in the county as of 2000, had the lowest median value of owner-occupied homes, at \$60,300. The City of Arcade is similar, in that it has a majority of its housing stock as manufactured homes and a corresponding lower median value for owner-occupied units. In other words, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Nicholson and Arcade are heavily influenced by manufactured homes making up a majority of the housing stock.

With regard to values of mobile (manufactured) homes, the county and all municipalities except Hoschton, Commerce, and Talmo had values for manufactured homes that were well above the state's median value in 2000. Arcade, Jefferson, and Pendergrass all had median values of manufactured homes in 2000 above \$60,000 and thus above the county's median value. The lowest values for manufactured homes in 2000 for all the cities were in the Cities of Talmo and Commerce. As of 2005-2007, the median value of manufactured homes in Jackson County was \$62,900, considerably higher than the \$53,100 found in the decennial census (Table B25083).

Table 18 shows gross rents of the renter-occupied housing stock in 2000 and 2005-2007 for Jackson County. In 2000, about half the county's rental housing stock rented for \$500 or less per unit per month, and less than 10 percent of the units rented for above \$750 per unit per month. A rather dramatic increase in rents has occurred in Jackson County between the decennial census and the 2005-2007 reporting period. Only about one in five renter units rented for \$500 or less per unit per month in 2005-2007. Almost one-quarter of the rental units rented for \$750 to \$999 per unit per month in the 2005-2007, a considerable increase (about 800 units) from the year 2000. And the number of units renting for more than \$1,000 rose sharply between the reporting periods, by about 180 units.

Table 18
Gross Rent, Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000 and 2005-2007
Jackson County

Gross Rent (\$)	Jackson County 2000 Census		Georgia 2000 Census	Jackson County 2005-2007 Estimate	
	Units	%	%	Units	%
Less than \$250	360	11.5	9.3	161	3.7
\$250 to \$499	1,195	38.3	25.5	741	16.8
\$500 to \$749	1,325	42.4	33.2	2,277	51.6
\$750 to \$999	197	6.3	22.1	1,013	22.9
\$1000 or more	45	1.5	9.9	222	5.0
Total Cash Rent Units	3,122	100%	100%	4,414	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H63. 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, Table B25063.

Table 19
Median Gross Rent, Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000
Jackson County and Municipalities
(Dollars)

Geographic Area	Median Gross Rent, Renter-Occupied Housing Units (\$)
Georgia	\$613
Jackson County	\$501
Arcade	\$531
Braselton	\$633
Commerce	\$528
Hoschton	\$513
Jefferson	\$508
Maysville	\$375
Nicholson	\$427
Pendergrass	\$500
Talmo	\$583

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H63.

COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

“Housing is affordable if a low- or moderate income family can afford to rent or buy a decent quality dwelling without spending more than 30 percent of its income on shelter....The increased availability of such housing would enable hard-working and dedicated people—including public servants such as police officers, firefighters, schoolteachers and nurses—to live in the communities they serve....Removing affordable housing barriers could reduce development costs by up to 35 percent; then, millions of hard-working American families would be

able to buy or rent suitable housing that they otherwise could not afford” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2005).⁴

It is useful to analyze and determine the extent to which owner and renter households are cost burdened or severely cost burdened with regard to housing. “Cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 30 percent of a household’s income for housing, and “severely cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 50 percent of a household’s income for housing. Table 20 provides such data for specified owner-occupied housing units in the county in 1999 and 2005-2007.

In 1999 (2000 Census), about one in every five owner-occupied household was cost burdened or severely cost burdened with respect to housing costs. Estimates available from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2005-2007 reveal that cost burdens have increased significantly since 1999 – it is now more than one out of every four owner-occupied households that are cost burdened or severely cost burdened.

Table 20
Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999 and 2005-2007
Jackson County
(Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units)

Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income	1999 (Units)	%	2005-2007 (Units)	%
30 to 49 percent (cost burdened)	814	12.5%	2,495	17.0%
50 percent or more (severely cost burdened)	530	8.1%	1,370	9.3%
Total cost burdened and severely cost burdened	1,344	20.6%	3,865	26.3%
Total Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units	6,510	100%	14,680	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H94. American Community Survey, 2005-2007 3-Year Estimates, Table B25091.

Table 21
Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999 and 2005-2007
Jackson County
(Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units)

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	1999 (Units)	%	2005-2007 (Units)	%
30 to 49 percent (cost burdened)	516	14.3%	1,532	28.3%
50 percent or more (severely cost burdened)	496	13.8%	759	14.0%
Total cost burdened and severely cost burdened	1,012	28.1%	2,291	42.4%
Total Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	3,597	100%	5,400	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table H69. American Community Survey, 2005-2007 3-Year Estimates, Table B25070.

⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. February 2005. “Why Not in Our Community?” *Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing. An Update to the Report of the Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing.*

Table 21 provides the same data on the cost burden in 1999 and 2005-2007, but for specified renter-occupied households. Cost burdens are clearly worse for renter-occupied households in Jackson County. In 1999, more than one in four households (28.1 percent) were cost burdened or severely cost burdened. As of 2005-2007, that figure is 42.1 percent. Clearly the cost of housing is an issue for a substantial number of both owner-occupied and renter households.

The minimum planning standards call for an evaluation of the relationship of local housing costs and availability to the socioeconomic characteristics of households, including income, income from social security or public assistance, employment status, occupation, household type, age of householder, household size, race, and unit type. Incomes and sources of income are provided in the population assessment.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE BY HOUSING UNIT TYPE

Table 22 indicates the housing unit type by type of household. The types of households are divided generally into “family” and “non-family” households. Family households are further divided into married couples, families with no wife present, and families with no husband present. The data in Table 22 are a reflection of existing conditions, not necessarily “demand” or “preference.” Households are constrained by the available housing stock and their own household income limitations. Stated differently, some households may now be living in a housing unit type (e.g., manufactured home) but prefer another housing type (apartment or one-unit structure). Therefore, these figures should not necessarily be reflective of demands or desires with regard to housing types.

Table 22
Household Type by Housing Unit Type
Jackson County, 2005-2007
(Households)

Type of Household	Total Households	1-Unit Structures	%	2-Or-More-Unit Structures	%	Mobile Homes and Other Types of Units	%
Married couple family	11,118	8,583	77.2	106	1.0	2,429	21.8
Other family: Male householder, no wife present	1,021	427	41.8	80	7.9	514	50.3
Other family: female householder, no husband present	2,580	1,448	56.1	383	14.9	749	29.0
Nonfamily	5,361	3,332	62.1	427	8.0	1,602	29.9
Total Households	20,080	13,790	68.7	996	5.0	5,294	26.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2005-2007 3-Year Estimates, Table B11011.

To a large extent, the data in Table 22 confirm what is self-intuitive to most. Married couple families live in (and probably prefer) 1-unit (stick-built) houses on their own lots, usually for the sake of their children if they have them. However, more than one of every five families (21.8 percent) resided in manufactured homes in 2005-2007. Attached housing, which is not prevalent in Jackson County, is hardly occupied by married couple families.

A majority (50.3 percent) of male householders with children and no wife present resided in manufactured homes in 2005-2007. The vast majority (56.1 percent) of female householders with children and no husband present reside in 1-unit (stick-built) houses, but they also make up

the largest proportion of household type occupying attached housing units (14.9 percent). A majority of nonfamily households in Jackson County in 2005-2007 resided in one-family (stick-built) homes, but more than one in four (26.3 percent) resided in a manufactured home. These findings, again, may reveal some insights as to the housing market, but they cannot necessarily be cited as “preferences” since a different housing mix would probably reveal different conditions. Furthermore, the income limitations of the various households may dictate the housing unit choice, since each of the housing unit types have different implications with regard to incomes.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE BY TENURE

Table 23 provides a division of households by owner-occupied units and renter-occupied units. As noted earlier in the discussion about tenure, any housing unit can be either rented or sold, except for-rent apartments. The data show that the vast majority (85.1 percent) of married-couple families are homeowners. Like with housing unit types (Table 22), there is a difference in terms of men and women with regard to housing tenure: more than two-thirds (68.9 percent) of male householders in Jackson County in 2005-2007 rented their homes, but less than half of female householders were renter households. Non-family households are split about two to one in favor of homeowners.

Table 23
Household Type by Tenure
Jackson County, 2005-2007
(Households)

Type of Household	Total Households	Owner-Occupied Units	%	Renter-Occupied Units	%
Married couple family	11,118	9,464	85.1	1,654	14.9
Other family: Male householder, no wife present	1,021	318	31.1	703	68.9
Other family: female householder, no husband present	2,580	1,446	56.0	1,134	44.0
Nonfamily	5,361	3,452	64.4	1,909	35.6
Total Households	20,080	14,680	73.1	5,400	26.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2005-2007 3-Year Estimates, Table B11012.

Table 24 provides a general tool for estimating housing affordability based on income groupings used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Historically, it was an accepted benchmark that lenders would underwrite mortgages for single-family homes if the purchase price was not greater than 2.5 times the household’s income. More recently, some lenders may increase that figure to three times the household income, though given the huge numbers of mortgage foreclosures in recent years that figure is increasingly in doubt. Affordable monthly rents can be estimated by using the accepted principle that households should not use more than 30 percent of their household income for rent.

Table 24
Homeowner and Monthly Rent Affordability by Income Grouping

Income Grouping	Midpoint of Income Grouping	Homeowner Affordability Value (2.5 times household income)	Homeowner Affordability Value (3.0 times household income)	Affordable Monthly Rent (at 30% income)
Less than \$10,000	--	< \$25,000	< \$30,000	\$250
\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$12,500	\$31,250	\$37,500	\$312
\$15,000 to \$19,999	\$17,500	\$43,750	\$52,500	\$437
\$20,000 to \$24,999	\$22,500	\$56,250	\$67,500	\$562
\$25,000 to \$29,999	\$27,500	\$68,750	\$82,500	\$687
\$30,000 to \$34,999	\$32,500	\$81,250	\$97,500	\$812
\$35,000 to \$39,999	\$37,500	\$93,750	\$112,500	\$937
\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$42,500	\$106,250	\$127,500	\$1,062
\$45,000 to \$49,999	\$47,500	\$118,750	\$142,500	\$1,187
\$50,000 to \$59,999	\$55,000	\$137,500	\$165,000	\$1,375
\$60,000 to \$74,999	\$67,500	\$168,750	\$202,500	\$1,687
\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$87,500	\$218,750	\$262,500	\$2,187
\$100,000 to \$124,999	\$112,500	\$281,250	\$337,500	\$2,812
\$125,000 to \$149,999	\$137,500	\$343,750	\$412,500	\$3,437
\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$175,000	\$437,500	\$525,000	\$4,375
\$200,000 or more	--	>\$500,000	>\$600,000	>\$5,000

Source: Compiled by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.

Household by household income was already reported in the population analysis (Table 8). Using the 2005-2007 income data by household, a general comparison of housing affordability with the existing housing stock can be completed (see Table 25).

The final column in Table 25 shows how the Jackson County housing market in 2005-2007 would provide housing units at different price ranges in order to meet principles of affordability. As can be seen, as one would expect, there is a vast undersupply of affordable housing for households at lower income levels, and a huge oversupply of higher-end housing.

How is it possible, then, that people are living in homes that they cannot afford? The short answer is that the “affordability” principles are not being followed to any great extent. Rental households, for instance, are not limiting their housing payments to 30 percent of their incomes. Indeed, this analysis (Table 21) shows that there 2,291 renter households (42.1 percent of all renter households) which were cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened in Jackson County in 2005-2007. Looking at owner-occupied households, they too are not limiting their housing payments to 2.5 or 3 times the annual household income, it seems. Indeed, this analysis (Table 20) shows that there are 3,865 owner households (26.3 percent of all homeowner households) which were cost-burdened and severely cost burdened in Jackson County in 2005-2007.

**Table 25
Housing Affordability Assessment in Relation to
Current Housing Stock, 2005-2007
Jackson County**

Household Income Grouping	Households	Affordable Owner-Occupied Units Available	Affordable Renter Occupied Housing Units Available	Total Affordable Occupied Units Available	Additional Affordable Units Needed (Surplus)
Less than \$10,000	1,458	268	161	429	1,029
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,657	227	168	395	1,262
\$15,000 to \$19,999	1,371	176	344	520	851
\$20,000 to \$24,999	1,473	157	600	757	716
\$25,000 to \$29,999	1,080	62	1,404	1,466	(386)
\$30,000 to \$34,999	1,069	108	577	685	384
\$35,000 to \$39,999	1,780	196	553	749	1,031
\$40,000 to \$49,999	1,478	460	385	845	633
\$50,000 to \$59,999	1,912	424	185	609	1,303
\$60,000 to \$74,999	1,597	1,213	37	1,250	384
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2,651	1,832	--	1,832	819
\$100,000 to \$124,999	1,536	1,303	--	1,303	233
\$125,000 to \$149,999	353	1,922	--	1,922	(1,569)
\$150,000 to \$199,999	358	2,255	--	2,255	(1,899)
\$200,000 or more	307	4,077	--	4,077	(3,770)
No cash rent	n/a	n/a	986	986	(986)
Total	20,080	14,680	5,400	20,080	

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., Calculated on the basis of Table 24 and census estimates from prior tables.

What happens, or is likely to happen with such a mismatch between affordable homes and the market prices and rents for homes? First, households tend to adjust, by doubling up (increasing household sizes), take on renters, or are using incomes that are not reported/reflected in the census data. Another outcome, one that has borne out in the past two years, is that households are truly unable to make their payments, and in the case of homeowners, they eventually foreclose on their mortgages. Yet another possibility is that, because there is no market buyers for the homes at their real values, more expensive homes are sold at fractions of their value. That possibility also has become a reality in the housing market in the last few years, not just in Jackson County, but statewide and nationally.

Two of the most important implications of this analysis are, to promote housing affordability, that (1) Jackson County needs more houses in the range of low- and moderate income household incomes; and (2) it has a vast surplus of occupied homes with market prices that are not affordable to the homeowner households in Jackson County, especially for households within annual incomes above \$125,000.

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Local planning requirements indicate that housing analyses should consider the special needs of the homeless, the elderly, migrant farm workers, persons with disabilities, and others. Data on the senior population and persons with disabilities are described in the population analysis of this technical appendix. Jackson County does not have any significant population of migrant

farm workers. Data are generally not available with regard to specialized populations such as the homeless, the number of persons with HIV/AIDS and victims of domestic abuse.

Generally, there is a correlation between age and disabilities – as age increases, so too does the likelihood or occurrence of disabilities. The implications with regard to housing the senior population and persons with disabilities is fairly self-evident. Persons with significant mental, sensory, or physical disabilities need assistance within and outside the home. This places most of the housing needs for disabled persons in the area of “institutionalized” care, though the data discussed in the population analysis are for the “noninstitutionalized” population, meaning the folks covered are not living in group quarters.

Housing for the disabled is a very important housing and legal issue. State policy relative to fair housing has been articulated by the Georgia General Assembly in O.C.G.A. 8-3-200. Such state policy includes “safeguard all individuals from discrimination...in the provision of a dwelling because of that individual’s...disability or handicap...” Further, the state intends to “promote the protection of each individual’s interest in personal dignity and freedom from humiliation and the individual’s freedom to take up residence wherever such individual chooses...”

With regard to physical defects, the implication is that dwelling units need to be designed, or retrofitted for access by the disabled. In many instances, disabled persons live in small housekeeping units of 2 to 6 persons, with supervisors or caretakers. In Georgia, the “community living arrangement”⁵ is a relatively common and desirable form of housing. While living as any other household in a single-family, detached dwelling is desirable, some communities regulate them as group homes and do not allow them outright as a permitted use in single-family zoning districts. Providing opportunities for compatible “community living arrangements” in single-family zoning districts is consistent with the state’s quality community objective for “housing choices.”

RELATIONSHIP OF EMPLOYMENT WAGES AND HOUSING

Income data, including sources of income (e.g., social security, public assistance, etc.) for Jackson County’s residents are provided in the population analysis. The previous section has assessed local incomes in relation to housing affordability. Household types and housing units, and their implications, are also covered in this chapter.

The relationship of employment status and wages on housing are more difficult to quantify. Under the title “jobs-housing balance,” the state’s minimum standards call for an assessment of whether workers in the community have sufficient wages and incomes to be able to live in the community. Table 26 compares wages by industry for employees with jobs within Jackson County and salaries and wages for males who are a part of Jackson County’s labor force (and who may work in Jackson County or elsewhere).

⁵ See: Office of Regulatory Services, Georgia Department of Human Resources, Chapter 290-9-37 Rules and Regulations for Community Living Arrangements, effective November 13, 2002; revised February 12, 2008.

**Table 26
Comparison of Industry Wages
Jackson County and the County's Labor Force**

Industry	Annual Wages and Salaries in Jackson County	Annual Wages and Salaries, 2007, Jackson County Working Residents (Males)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$28,236	\$37,548
Mining	-	\$23,913
Construction	\$34,424	\$37,472
Manufacturing	\$36,868	\$32,819
Utilities	-	\$32,244
Wholesale trade	\$45,916	\$38,973
Retail trade	\$26,364	\$22,250
Transportation and warehousing	\$35,308	\$27,425
Information	\$30,836	\$52,220
Finance and insurance	\$42,796	\$68,594
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$27,560	\$100,000+
Professional, scientific and technical services	\$39,780	\$96,356
Management of companies	-	--
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation	\$27,040	\$14,739
Educational services	\$14,820	\$46,456
Health care and social assistance	\$28,236	\$7,324
Arts, entertainment and recreation	\$31,148	\$90,083
Accommodation and food services	\$11,024	\$12,948
Government	\$36,088	\$31,283
All industries	\$32,188	\$32,197

Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, Area Labor Profile (2008 employment by industry in Jackson County; weekly wage data converted to annual salary). U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B24032 (Earnings by Industry in 2007 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars for Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over).

The comparison of wages in Table 26 shows, on average for all industries, residents of Jackson County who are in the labor force make about as much money as those employed in Jackson County. That is a positive finding in the sense that, overall, there is not a major incentive for Jackson County's labor force to go outside the county for higher-paying jobs. However, the picture is different when specific industry wages are reviewed.

In some industries, people who work in Jackson County make better money than the labor force participants who reside in Jackson County and work in the same type of industry. This is true for the following industries: manufacturing; wholesale trade; administrative and support and waste management and remediation; retail trade; transportation and warehousing, health care and social assistance; and government (public administration). For these industries, there is strong incentive via higher pay for residents of the county to work in the county. Most of these industries pay comparatively good wages, meaning that workers in these industries by and large will find Jackson County's housing stock affordable.

The opposite is true, however, for other industries as shown in Table 26. Working residents of Jackson County made less wages and salaries than those working in the same industry inside

Jackson County, in the following industries: construction; information; finance and insurance; real estate; scientific and technical services; education services; arts, entertainment and recreation services; and accommodation and food services. Workers in these industries have some incentive to seek higher wages and salaries outside Jackson County. At the same time, they may desire to reside in Jackson County due to its housing stock which is affordable when compared with metro areas like Athens-Clarke County and the Atlanta metropolitan area. The issue of jobs-housing balance is taken up in more detail in the economic analysis.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE TRENDS IN THE HOUSING MARKET⁶

The market for housing is influenced by many factors. These include the demographic characteristics of the population (such as age structure, patterns of family relationships, and the spatial distribution of the population), as well as economic determinants (such as incomes and the prices of land, dwellings/structures, transportation, and other factors) and institutional constraints (such as zoning restrictions).

As the existing population ages and preferences for fewer children prevail, a greater proportion of majority households will be without children. The landscape of traditional households no longer will be married couples with children—instead, households without children will be the more frequent household types, comprising nearly 40 percent of the population by 2025. Household size is shrinking. Married couples without children (in the home) and single-person households outnumber “traditional family” households nationally. The combination of longer life expectancies and the continuing preference for one or two children will make households without children even more numerous. Non-Hispanic white households will be of a smaller size than ever before, and a growing proportion of these households will be elderly.

The projected increase in the nation’s households will occur largely in the older, post-childrearing age groups. “Nonfamily” households are growing rapidly, and the majority of them consist of persons living alone. Single-person households are the nation’s second most numerous household type, accounting for over 25 percent of all households (nationally as of 2000). This is not surprising, considering that people ages 65 and older are the largest share of single-person households. Clearly, the traditional family household of married couples with children is common among households headed by someone under age 45. However, with population growth concentrated in older age groups, this household type is projected to account for only one in five households in 2025, or 30 percent of all family households.

Not too many years ago, housing professionals thought almost exclusively about the housing needs and preferences of families with children. (Indeed, houses were generally referred to as “family” houses.) Now they need to understand the needs and preferences of several different household types, not just for housing construction but also including preferences for refitting a current home to meet the needs of a new, post-child-rearing household configuration and avoid a move from a cherished home or valued neighborhood. One clear implication is a need to build flexibility into new or existing housing, to accommodate a variety of uses. Some builders are already designing spaces that can serve equally well as home offices or foster semi-independent living (for younger or older family members) before, after, or instead of

⁶ Excerpted verbatim from parts of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. February 2003. *Issue Papers on Demographic Trends Important to Housing*.

housing children. Doing this effectively requires adapting basic processes—for instance, thinking through plumbing and other key structural features with an eye to potential modifications, either by the same or subsequent residents.

Homeownership rates across all household categories have increased dramatically in the past several years. Although the nation's population continues to grow at all ages, the largest growth is in the population that has largely completed its child rearing. Other things equal, this shift should in itself increase the proportion of the population that owns, rather than rents, its housing.

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

Under Contract By:

**Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Planning & Development Consultants
Alpharetta, Georgia**

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

The intergovernmental coordination element identifies existing coordination mechanisms and further opportunities for such coordination. More and more, effective planning efforts for community facilities, environmental protection, transportation, and land use are increasingly beyond the abilities of individual jurisdictions. This report identifies areas where intergovernmental coordination is ongoing or lacking, as well as, issues that may require intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

The issue of intergovernmental coordination generally appears to have been neglected in the past. Jackson County, in its partial plan update prepared in 2007, identified some significant deficiencies in terms of intergovernmental coordination. It indicates that presently there is little or no interaction between the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority, the Jackson County Public Development office, and municipalities. It indicates further that there is currently limited communication or joint action planning between the county and other entities. This is proposed to be addressed with improved and expanded communications. For instance, the partial plan update recommends that, at minimum an annual meeting with all elected officials and managers of all local governments should be held to share information and requirements of importance to all the communities in the county. The partial plan update for Jackson County (2007) also indicates that the County must work specifically with the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority to ensure new water and sewer lines are planned only in those future land use areas intended for denser residential and commercial development.

Also, through the Jackson County Service Delivery Strategy Agreement, there is expected to be some additional, ongoing dialogue between the county and municipal water and sewer providers to realign service areas that make better strategic sense.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FRAMEWORK

Intergovernmental coordination is needed to some degree with many different public and quasi-public agencies, including but not limited to the following:

Adjacent Counties

Certain land use, transportation, environmental protection, and other issues cause the county to coordinate matters of concern with abutting counties.

Municipalities

The cities in Jackson County participate in a variety of activities with Jackson County. Cities (general purpose governments) and their citizens, who are also county residents, are recipients of county services. There are two cities in Jackson County that cross into other counties: Maysville is partially within Banks County, and Braselton extends into three other counties besides Jackson County: Barrow, Gwinnett, and Hall. In some cases, municipalities in an adjacent county may be close enough to Jackson County so as to present some coordination opportunities or issues. For instance, the downstream local governments of Winder and Athens-Clarke County have water supply withdrawal intakes which necessitate environmental protections in Jackson County and certain cities in Jackson County.

Authorities and Special Districts

Within the county, or perhaps extending across county boundaries in some cases, there are special districts and authorities that provide single-purpose facilities or services. These include three public school systems in Jackson County: Jackson County itself, the City of Commerce, and the City of Jefferson.

The Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority is an intergovernmental partnership for water supply. Athens-Clarke, Jackson, Barrow, and Oconee Counties own a share of the Bear Creek Reservoir and its water treatment plant.

Fire protection in Jackson County is provided via volunteer Fire Departments divided into eleven districts, and some cities such as Talmo do not have their own municipal fire departments. Talmo, for example, is served by the North Jackson Fire District which is governed by an elected Board of Directors that establishes a budget and sets a millage rate for the district.

Regional and Metropolitan Agencies

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission is a service provider and important player in terms of planning in the northeast Georgia region including Jackson County. To the extent that municipalities are partially located in Jackson County but also extend into other counties, as is the case in the Cities of Maysville and Braselton, coordination with other regional commissions (Atlanta Regional Commission with regard to Gwinnett County) and the Georgia Mountains (with regard to Banks and Hall Counties) is also needed from time to time. In addition, various state agencies are involved to varying degrees in actions, programs, regulations and other activities within the county.

In addition to the regional commissions, there are Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in Gainesville-Hall County, Athens (which includes parts of Madison and Oconee Counties), and the Atlanta area (Atlanta Regional Commission). To the extent the transportation facilities cross out of the boundaries of these MPOs and into Jackson County, coordination is warranted.

State and Federal Agencies

A variety of state and federal agencies interact with Jackson County on a routine basis, some more than others. Key state agencies include the Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Federal agencies have relatively little active presence in Jackson County.

However, Jackson County is located within the jurisdiction of the Appalachian Regional Commission, which may be an overlooked source of resources for Jackson County. The current strategic plan for that federal agency is "Moving Appalachia Forward: ARC Strategic Plan, 2005–2010."

REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (previously Regional Development Center) has over the years prepared various regional plans and studies. While too expansive to review and summarize here, it is important simply to note that Jackson County should be aware of those plans and work to integrate regional planning initiatives and principles into its comprehensive

plan. While some of the review for regional consistency is the responsibility of the Regional Commission, it is important for Jackson County to accept responsibility for researching the applicability of various regional planning initiatives and acknowledging them as appropriate in its comprehensive plan.

Regional Comprehensive Plan, Short-term Work Program

This document covers the time period of 2009 to 2013. Some of the work program items list local governments as a responsible implementing partner. Therefore, it is important that Jackson County anticipate those suggestions and integrate them as appropriate into its comprehensive plan.

Corridor Feasibility Study for the Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks (2008)

This is an important document which needs to be consulted with regard to greenway opportunities along the North Oconee, Middle Oconee and Mulberry Rivers. It also presents relevant information about the Interstate 85 corridor in Jackson County, as well as rail lines and pipeline easements in the county and region.

Northeast Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2005)

The plan sets forth a regional direction for the development of a regional bicycle and pedestrian network and provides recommendations for achieving a multi-modal transportation system. Bicycle route suitability is evaluated. The plan document has a table which lists the suitability of bike facilities by major road segment in the county, thus providing useful guidance in future plans for bicycle facilities in Jackson County. Based on that suitability analysis, a map of recommended bicycle facilities is provided in the plan for Jackson County (see p. 92). This plan also recommends strategies for regional implementation of the plan. The plan further identifies a desire to construct multi-jurisdictional greenways, including along the Oconee River. There is a regional implementation strategy that includes suggested actions by local governments, including Jackson County, which should be consulted as appropriate and integrated into the county's short-term work program, as appropriate.

Regional Water Resources Study (2004)

This document may be consulted for data and mined for potential issues and opportunities for Jackson County and the region. The natural resources component of this study was utilized in preparing the natural resources chapter of this data appendix for Jackson County's comprehensive plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN JACKSON COUNTY

A principal mechanism to coordinate various programs and services is to prepare a comprehensive plan which includes the county and all of its municipalities in a single, coordinated effort. The comprehensive plan, adopted in 1998, included Jackson County and all of the cities within the county, with the exception of the City of Maysville which participated in the Banks County comprehensive plan.

During this round of comprehensive planning, all municipalities in Jackson County elected to complete their own comprehensive plans, more or less without active participation of the county. Since that is the case, extra efforts are needed to ensure that the Jackson County

comprehensive plan anticipates the coordination issues and opportunities that are presented in the individual municipal comprehensive plans. In order to do so, this report includes an analysis of the most recent plans of municipal governments within or partially within Jackson County.

Arcade

Jackson County's partial plan update identifies the 4-W Farms site, which has been annexed into the City of Arcade, as an area requiring special attention. The 4-W Farms site has been approved by Arcade for 1,000 plus residential unit development. At the present time, the development has not proceeded due to issues regarding water and sewer service and also because of the downturn in the residential development market.

Arcade's community agenda articulates a desire to enhance gateway corridors, which involve entrances to the community from unincorporated Jackson County and also the City of Jefferson. It also articulates a desire for Arcade to construct its own water and sewer systems.

Arcade participated in the Quad Cities Planning Commission, an innovative municipal partnership formed in 2003 between the cities of Arcade, Jefferson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. In 2004, Pendergrass withdrew from the Quad Cities Planning Commission, leaving it with three cities. In 2009, also Arcade withdrew, leaving just Jefferson and Talmo as participants.

Braselton

The Town of Braselton, which has municipal boundaries extending into Barrow, Gwinnett, and Hall Counties, is in the process of preparing its own comprehensive plan. It was initially included in Jackson County's comprehensive plan (1998). The most recently adopted plan document is a 2007 partial plan update. Major findings include the following with regard to Braselton and intergovernmental issues and opportunities:

- **Mulberry River Watershed Protection:** Braselton lies within a 7-mile radius upstream of the City of Winder's public water supply intake on the Mulberry River. This means it is required by the state's environmental planning criteria to implement protection measures within that watershed.
- **SR 53 Corridor:** The SR 53 corridor between Interstate 85 and the Jackson/Hall County line, north of Braselton, is mainly unincorporated and rural in nature but lies within the Town's service area. Future annexation of that corridor by Braselton is a strong possibility, according to the partial plan update. Braselton's plan update identifies the SR 53 corridor as an area of special concern because it is anticipated to undergo rapid land use change in the near future. The county's partial plan update also indicates that the Georgia Department of Transportation has a project under design to widen State Route 53 from Gainesville to its intersection with I-85, which also underscores the need to have this corridor designated as an area requiring special attention.
- **Comprehensive Planning:** Braselton's partial plan update specifically recognizes the need to continue to coordinate and discuss comprehensive planning and service delivery amongst its neighboring municipalities and county governments.

Commerce

Commerce prepared a partial plan update in September 1997. Only one issue jumps out as being significant in terms of intergovernmental coordination, but see also Maysville with regard to water, sewer, and fire service opportunities.

- **U.S. Highway 441 Corridor.** The city's plan update identifies the U.S. Highway 441 corridor between Banks Crossing and SR 334 as an area expected to undergo rapid land use change, with highway commercial along the highway frontage and residential development behind the commercial development. Furthermore, it shows the U.S. Highway 441 corridor through most of Commerce as "highway commercial pressure" on its map of areas requiring special attention. It should be noted that Commerce's city limits do not encompass the entire corridor and that, therefore, both Jackson County and Commerce will regulate this corridor. To ensure that development standards are consistent, there should be a coordinated strategy between Commerce and Jackson County toward U.S. Highway 441 development.
- The Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority has the ability to, and does from time-to-time, purchase treated water from the City of Commerce in northeast Jackson County. This is done mainly in response to high demands on the system such as water main breaks, severe drought, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Hoschton

A partial plan update for Hoschton was completed in late 2007. It states that Hoschton seeks to improve intergovernmental relationships with neighboring towns as well as with the County and State agencies by identifying projects of mutual interest. It identifies the following intergovernmental coordination issues or opportunities:

- **Rural Character of Maddox Road and SR 332:** Hoschton and Jackson County have common interests in maintaining the residential character of Maddox Road and Highway 332 as "Rural Highways." Hoschton has adopted the Jackson County goal of utilizing Maddox Road as a "Rural Highway" which limits it to two lanes, and does not promote commercialization. East Jefferson Street becomes Maddox Road at Hoschton's city limit line.
- **SR 53 Bypass:** In its partial plan update, Hoschton articulates a preference that any State Route 53 bypass should be located east of the City of Hoschton (implicitly, in unincorporated Jackson County). Jackson County's partial plan update also refers to the need for a bypass around Braselton and Hoschton to address the traffic constraints on State Routes 124 and 53.
- **Parks and Recreation Facilities:** Hoschton has acquired 8 acres of park space from Creekside Village on State Route 53 and has agreed to allow Jackson County Parks and Recreation to add park facilities on this site.
- **Future Land Use:** Hoschton's partial plan update contains a revised future land use map (October 2007), which shows certain designations outside the immediate city limits. Jackson County's land use plan should be reviewed for consistency and compatibility.

- **Utility Systems:** From a map in the partial plan update, Hoschton's water and/or sewer lines appear to extend beyond the city limits into unincorporated Jackson County. To the extent they do, service delivery strategies should ensure that service jurisdictions are clearly adopted.

Jefferson

Jefferson's community agenda articulates a desire to enhance gateway corridors, which involve entrances to the community from unincorporated Jackson County. Gateway corridors include Jett Roberts Road, U.S. Highway 129 Business, Athens Street, and State Highways 11, 15, and 82. Since these corridors also have unincorporated areas, there is a need to coordinate development standards along entrances into Jefferson with Jackson County to ensure compatible and consistent development patterns and quality specifications.

Jackson County airport is located close to, but not within Jefferson. Since Jefferson's land use jurisdiction surrounds much of the airport's airspace, there is a need to coordinate land use in Jefferson with requirements for safe airport operations.

The Curry Creek water supply watershed, which provides water for Jefferson's reservoir, is mostly encompassed within the city limits of Jefferson but also extends into unincorporated Jackson County. Thus, there is a need for joint efforts of the city and county to protect the watershed for public water supply.

Jefferson was a key player in forming the Quad Cities Planning Commission in 2003, along with the cities of Arcade, Jefferson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. Withdrawals by Pendergrass (2004) and Arcade (2009) led to a disbanding of the Quad Cities Planning Commission and reformulation of the planning commission with just Jefferson and Talmo as participants.

Maysville

As noted above, Maysville is only partially located in Jackson County, the larger portion being in Banks County. Maysville completed a community assessment in 2008 and adopted the community agenda part of its plan in August 2008.

- **Development near Maysville in unincorporated Jackson County.** The community assessment notes that parts of Jackson County within close proximity to Maysville have already been identified for proposed developments, including projects large enough to qualify for the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review process within several miles of Maysville. There is also the likelihood of increasing growth pressures emanating from the Banks Crossing area and Commerce just several miles to the east and south of Maysville; therefore, that area is identified as a corridor expected to undergo rapid development and change in the future.
- **Annexation and Land Use Coordination.** The community assessment indicates that the town is likely to feel some pressure from development to expand boundaries. It suggests planning and coordination as part of the Service Delivery Agreements with Banks and Jackson Counties. Maysville expresses some concern with regard to Jackson County's policies regarding annexation and land use mitigation. The community assessment for Maysville indicates that the Jackson County Service Delivery Agreement

places strict limitations on the ability of the Town of Maysville to annex land in Jackson County, while in turn the Town has marginal means to challenge incompatible land use issues with the County or another municipality. As this part of the region is experiencing strong growth pressures the concern is that these conditions will limit the Town's ability to accommodate future growth and, more importantly, leave it susceptible to development patterns that might adversely impact Maysville.

- **Potential Annexation Area.** As one of its character areas, Maysville identifies a potential annexation area. However, that designation only appears to apply to an unincorporated island in Banks County.
- **Water Source and Water Service Area.** Maysville operates its own public water supply system for service within the town and select areas immediately adjacent to the town, serving approximately 2,000 customers. Water for this service is drawn from a pair of public wells, but the Town can also purchase water from the Banks County Utilities Department or from the City of Commerce.
- **Potential Sewage Treatment by Commerce.** Maysville's community agenda indicates that the proposed expansion of sewage treatment capacity by the City of Commerce provides Maysville with the chance to coordinate systems and provide near complete coverage of sewer service within the area.
- **Fire Services Agreement with City of Commerce.** The Town also has an agreement with the City of Commerce in the event outside support is needed for an emergency.
- **Possible Parks and Recreation Facilities.** Although Maysville's plan emphasizes Banks County, it alludes to the need to coordinate with the County Parks and Recreation Departments in locating appropriate space inside or, most likely, outside of the town limits. The community agenda suggests that Maysville work with Banks County and/or Jackson County to identify land and resources for a new park in or around Maysville.
- **School Services: Maysville Elementary (Jackson County).** Maysville Elementary, a facility of the Jackson County School Board, is the only school within the Town of Maysville. Through an agreement with the Jackson County School Board, the Maysville Elementary School provides education to all elementary-grade students within the Town of Maysville, even those residing within Banks County.
- **Water Supply Watershed for Athens/Clarke County.** Like unincorporated Jackson County around Maysville, all of Maysville within Jackson County and beyond is located within a small water supply watershed for Athens/Clarke County.
- **Possible Bypass around Maysville.** Maysville's community agenda alludes to possible options for a bypass and/or improvements to SR 98 and West Main Street. To the extent that is a possibility, it could bring part of such road improvement outside the town limits into unincorporated Jackson County.

Nicholson

Nicholson prepared a draft partial plan update in May 2009 but it has not yet received approval from the region and state. Like Commerce, Nicholson anticipates that the U.S. Highway 441

corridor will undergo rapid land use change. The same opportunities for coordinating land use and development standards between Commerce and Jackson County also apply to Nicholson and Jackson County. The draft plan update also refers to a Municipal Association of Jackson County which meets every month and is an opportunity to coordinate various issues and opportunities that affect all municipalities in Jackson County. Furthermore, the draft plan update recognizes the need for the Nicholson Water and Sewer Authority to coordinate its activities and programs with Jackson County.

Pendergrass

Pendergrass completed a partial plan update in June 2007. Like other jurisdictions in Jackson County, rapid growth along the U.S. Highway 129 corridor is anticipated. The partial update does not identify specific issues or opportunities that need to be acknowledged here.

Pendergrass initially participated in the Quad Cities Planning Commission, an innovative municipal partnership formed in 2003 for the cities of Arcade, Jefferson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. In 2004, Pendergrass withdrew from the Quad Cities Planning Commission.

Talmo

- **Areas of Rapid Land Use Change.** Talmo's community assessment indicates that the U.S. Highway 129 corridor is anticipated to undergo rapid development and land use change.
- **Facilities and Services.** Talmo lacks its own water and sewer services and is therefore currently served by the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority. Also, Talmo does not operate a police force, and is therefore served by the Jackson County Sheriff's Department. In fact, all public safety services to the residents and property owners of Talmo are provided by Jackson County through an intergovernmental agreement.
- **Planning.** Talmo participated in the Quad Cities Planning Commission since its inception in 2003 and has remained in a revamping of that planning commission which now serves just Jefferson and Talmo.
- **Scenic Resources.** The Community Assessment technical report for Talmo indicates that State Route 332, Talmo Trail, U.S. Highway 129 and Pond Fork Church Road are designated scenic road corridors within Talmo. Allen Creek is designated as a scenic corridor. To the extent that these corridors extend outside Talmo's jurisdiction, the county plan should be cognizant of Talmo's desire to protect them as scenic resources.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN ABUTTING COUNTIES

At the same time, there is also a need to review and understand the major contents of the comprehensive plans of abutting local governments. This is particularly necessary in light of regional quality community objectives, which must be addressed in the community assessment. More specifically, this means opportunities for the regional delivery of facilities and services, quality of place, environmental protection efforts, transportation planning, and land use coordination. Hence, some attention is also given to major planning initiatives identified in the comprehensive plans of counties abutting Jackson County.

Athens-Clarke County

Athens-Clarke County completed its community agenda in April 2008. The community agenda does not appear to specifically mention any coordination issues or opportunities involving Jackson County.

A “guiding principle” has been established to set back buildings and paved parking areas from the North Oconee, Middle Oconee River, McNutt Creek, Cedar Creek, Trail Creek, Sandy Creek corridors a minimum of 200 feet in the rural area and 100 feet in the urban area; set back from tributaries to these rivers 75 feet; and create a non-disturbance area of 50 feet along any flowing water course. These riparian buffers and setbacks are more restrictive than state standards.

Banks County

Banks County’s community agenda does not appear to identify any specific issues or opportunities with regard to intergovernmental coordination with Jackson County. However, the “Banks Crossing” area, which is that area surrounding the interchange of U.S. Highway 441 and Interstate 85, is located in Banks County but extends more or less into the City of Commerce in Jackson County. In the past, certain character improvements have been made to the Banks Crossing area, such as the installation of streetscapes (landscaping, street lighting, and banners). Due to the unique destination character of this area and its location next to Commerce, there are efforts to coordinate planning and development regulations in an effort to meet quality development and character delineation objectives.

Maysville is located in both Banks County and Jackson County. To the extent that Jackson County’s plan involves issues or opportunities surrounding Maysville, it is likely to raise issues or opportunities with Banks County, as well.

Barrow County

Barrow County’s community agenda, which includes all municipalities within (except Braselton) does not appear to identify any specific issues or opportunities for coordination with Jackson County.

Hall County

Hall County adopted an intergovernmental coordination element in 2004 under the state’s minimum planning standards which existed prior to the 2005 standards. Other than a general policy supportive of coordination with abutting local governments, there are no issues or opportunities identified in Hall County’s intergovernmental coordination element that relate to Jackson County or any municipalities within Jackson County. It should also be noted that because Braselton is located partially in Hall County, efforts with regard to that municipality may cross over into the realm of Jackson County as well.

Madison County

Madison County with assistance from the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (now Regional Commission) prepared a partial plan update in 2008. That document does not reveal any significant issues or opportunities involving coordination with Jackson County.

SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIES

In 1997, the State passed the Service Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). This law mandates the cooperation of local governments with regard to service delivery issues. Each county was required to initiate development of a service delivery strategy between July 1, 1997, and January 1, 1998. Service delivery strategies must include an identification of services provided by various entities, assignment of responsibility for provision of services and the location of service areas, a description of funding sources, and an identification of contracts, ordinances, and other measures necessary to implement the service delivery strategy.

Changes to service arrangements described in a service delivery strategy require an update of the service delivery strategy and an agreement by all parties. Because of this provision, it is likely that the need for intergovernmental coordination with regard to service delivery strategies will continue into the future. In addition, service delivery strategies must be updated every ten years. The Service Delivery Strategy Act also mandates that land use plans of different local governments be revised to avoid conflicts.

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

**EXISTING LAND USE AND
CHARACTER AREAS**

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

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**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

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EXISTING LAND USE AND CHARACTER AREAS

Jackson County encompasses 343.0 square miles, of which 342.4 square miles consists of land and 0.6 square miles consists of water. In terms of acreage, the size of the county is approximately 219,100 acres.¹

EXISTING LAND USE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Jackson County's 1998 comprehensive plan provides acreage data by type of land use in unincorporated Jackson County in 1997. Similarly, an update of the land use plan by a county planning consultant in 2003 also provided existing land use data. It is useful from a planning standpoint to recite those numbers here, as they allow one to get a sense of trends in terms of land use change. It is even more useful to place the historic and current existing land use acreage data in a single table in order to more easily reveal such changes. While such a comparison is desirable, the existing land use inventories at different points in time were done by different planning agencies or consultants, and thus their methods different making the data not perfectly comparable. For that reason, the land use data collected over time are provided separately, without statistics of land use "change" compiled." Table 1 summarizes land use data for unincorporated Jackson County as of 1997 and 2003.

Table 1
Existing Land Use, 1997 and 2003
Unincorporated Jackson County

Land Use	1997 Unincorporated Jackson County (Acres)	1997 Percent of Total Unincorporated County Area	2003 Unincorporated Jackson County (Acres)	2003 Percent of Total Unincorporated County Area
Agriculture and Forestry	148,300.9	76.0%	141,984.6	75.1%
Residential, all types	25,747.2	13.2%	27,798.5	14.7%
Public/Institutional	608.4	0.3%	762.2	0.4%
Commercial	876.2	0.5%	1,330.4	0.7%
Industrial	1,007.0	0.5%	1,090.6	0.5%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	1,035.4	0.5%	1,477.3	0.8%
Park/Recreation/Conservation	296.8	0.1%	384.6	0.2%
Undeveloped/Vacant	17,324.1	8.9%	14,297.2	7.6%
Total Land (in original source)	195,196.0	100%	189,125.4	100%

Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center based on Tax Assessor's data, 1997. WFR Associates. September 8, 2003. Jackson County Comprehensive Plan Update: Land Use Plan Amendment.

As indicated in Table 1, unincorporated Jackson County was predominantly agricultural and forestry in 1997. Residential comprised only 13.2 percent of the unincorporated land areas. Vacant land was more than 17,000 acres in 1997. Commercial, industrial, public/institutional, parkland, and transportation facilities each comprised well less than 1 percent of the unincorporated land area.

¹ *The 2002 Georgia County Guide, 21st Ed.*, edited by Susan R. Boatright and Douglas C. Bachtel (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development), October 2002.

In describing existing land use as of 1997, the 1998 comprehensive plan indicated that the majority of existing land use in the unincorporated portions of Jackson County is low-density single-family housing and agricultural land. It found that the majority of residential, commercial and industrial land uses are concentrated within close proximity to the municipalities and along major transportation corridors.

The western portion of the county at that time was experiencing the most rapid development due to its proximity to Gwinnett County. Encroachment of industrial and heavy commercial development into residential areas was at that time considered relatively rare, as the county's zoning ordinance limited such incompatible land uses. Most of the undeveloped/unused land in 1997 was located adjacent to residential land use. Agriculture land use was located throughout the county and was found to be most prevalent in the eastern and northwestern portions of the county.

These findings in 1997 are still largely true today, in 2009, as Jackson County has witnessed a continuation of the same trends and patterns. Land use did not change significantly from 1997 to 2003, according to the figures in Table 1, except that most developed land categories increased marginally in acreage while agricultural/ forestry and undeveloped land decreased. Note also that the total unincorporated area decreased by approximately 6,000 acres, reflecting municipal annexations during the six-year time period. The decrease in total unincorporated land from 1997 to 2003 also has some marginal effect on the change in percentages from 1997 to 2003.

EXISTING LAND USE IN 2009

After a nearly one-year effort, Jackson County compiled and checked existing land use data for the entire county, including municipalities (see Table 2).

The acreage data in Table 2 show both a compilation of the county as a whole, including all municipalities, and the unincorporated areas. The countywide numbers are especially important, because land use is ultimately controlled by 10 different local governments. While Jackson County has, by far, the largest jurisdiction, ignoring the land use trends in municipalities risks losing the true perspective of what is going on in total in all of Jackson County. Generally, like change from 1997 to 2003, land use change in unincorporated Jackson County followed the same trends of marginal increases in residential, commercial, industrial, and other development categories and significant reductions in the amount of undeveloped/vacant land. More is said about the individual land use categories in the paragraphs that follow. Table 3 provides a compilation of existing land use data for each municipality in Jackson County. Note that, for Braselton and Maysville, only the Jackson County portions are reported.

**Table 2
Existing Land Use, 2009
Jackson County and Unincorporated Jackson County**

Land Use	All of Jackson County (Acres)	Percent of Total County Area	Unincorporated Jackson County (Acres)	Percent of Unincorporated Area
Agriculture and Forestry	154,066.2	72.1	136,761.1	77.4
Single-family residential total	35,533.3	16.6	26,394.2	15.0
--Single-family residential, site built	28,731.6	13.4	21,298.1	12.1
--Manufactured home, single-wide	2,242.7	1.0	1,767.2	0.9
--Manufactured home, double-wide	4,559.0	2.1	3,328.9	1.9
Multi-family residential total	484.1	0.2	278.4	0.2
--Two-family residential (duplex)	61.7	0.0	22.9	0.0
--Multi-family residential	117.5	0.1	22.9	0.0
--Manufactured home park	304.9	0.1	232.6	0.1
Public/Institutional	2,003.7	0.9	1,054.0	0.6
Commercial	1,562.9	0.7	724.9	0.4
Industrial	3,129.2	1.5	1,350.6	0.8
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	941.5	0.4	437.1	0.2
Park/Recreation/Conservation	2,219.3	1.0	1,549.8	0.9
Undeveloped/Vacant	13,766.9	6.4	8,178.5	4.6
All Land Uses Calculated	213,707.1	99.8	176,728.6	100.1
Total Land	220,017.0			

Notes: The difference between all land uses calculated and total land is attributed to road right of ways. Percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: Jackson County GIS, August 2009.

**Table 3
Existing Land Use, 2009
Municipalities and Parts of Municipalities in Jackson County**

Land Use	Arcade	Braselton	Commerce	Hoschton	Jefferson	Maysville	Nicholson	Pendergrass	Talmo
Agriculture and Forestry	3507.8	1029.0	2539.8	356.5	5779.1	470.9	1162.4	1357.2	1102.3
Single-family residential total	1451.6	268.5	1727.9	584.9	3341.8	485.6	931.1	191.8	155.8
--Single-family residential, site built	651.6	266.5	1540.6	567.5	3254.0	363.2	470.1	177.0	143.0
--Manufactured home, single-wide	219.1	0.1	53.9	3.3	32.9	26.6	116.0	13.0	10.4
--Manufactured home, double-wide	580.9	1.9	133.4	14.1	54.9	95.8	345.0	1.8	2.4
Multi-family residential total	12.4	6.8	120.0	11.2	43.7	1.6	7.8	0	0
--Two-family residential (duplex)	7.9	2.3	5.0	11.2	6.5	1.6	2.3	0	0
--Multi-family residential	0	0	57.3	0	37.2	0	0	0	0
--Manufactured home park	4.5	4.5	57.7	0	0	0	5.5	0	0
Public/Institutional	28.7	41.5	206.0	38.6	458.2	111.8	41.3	9.2	14.4
Commercial	19.0	70.6	283.4	55.1	341.7	28.5	22.5	14.3	2.7
Industrial	0	330.0	270.0	62.9	1015.0	74.9	0	25.9	0
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	1.8	27.1	55.4	16.2	390.7	11.8	0.2	0.2	1.0
Park/Recreation/Conservation	0	74.7	141.1	21.9	251.1	0.3	49.8	40.6	0
Undeveloped/Vacant	260.4	1097.8	1577.5	548.7	1475.2	221.0	172.0	222.1	13.5
All Land Uses Calculated	5,281.7	2,946.0	6,921.1	1,696.0	13,096.5	1,406.4	2,387.1	1,861.3	1,289.7

Notes: Braselton and Maysville extend into other counties. The figures here are for Jackson County's portion only. The total for all land uses calculated is less than total city limits area because public right of ways are excluded.

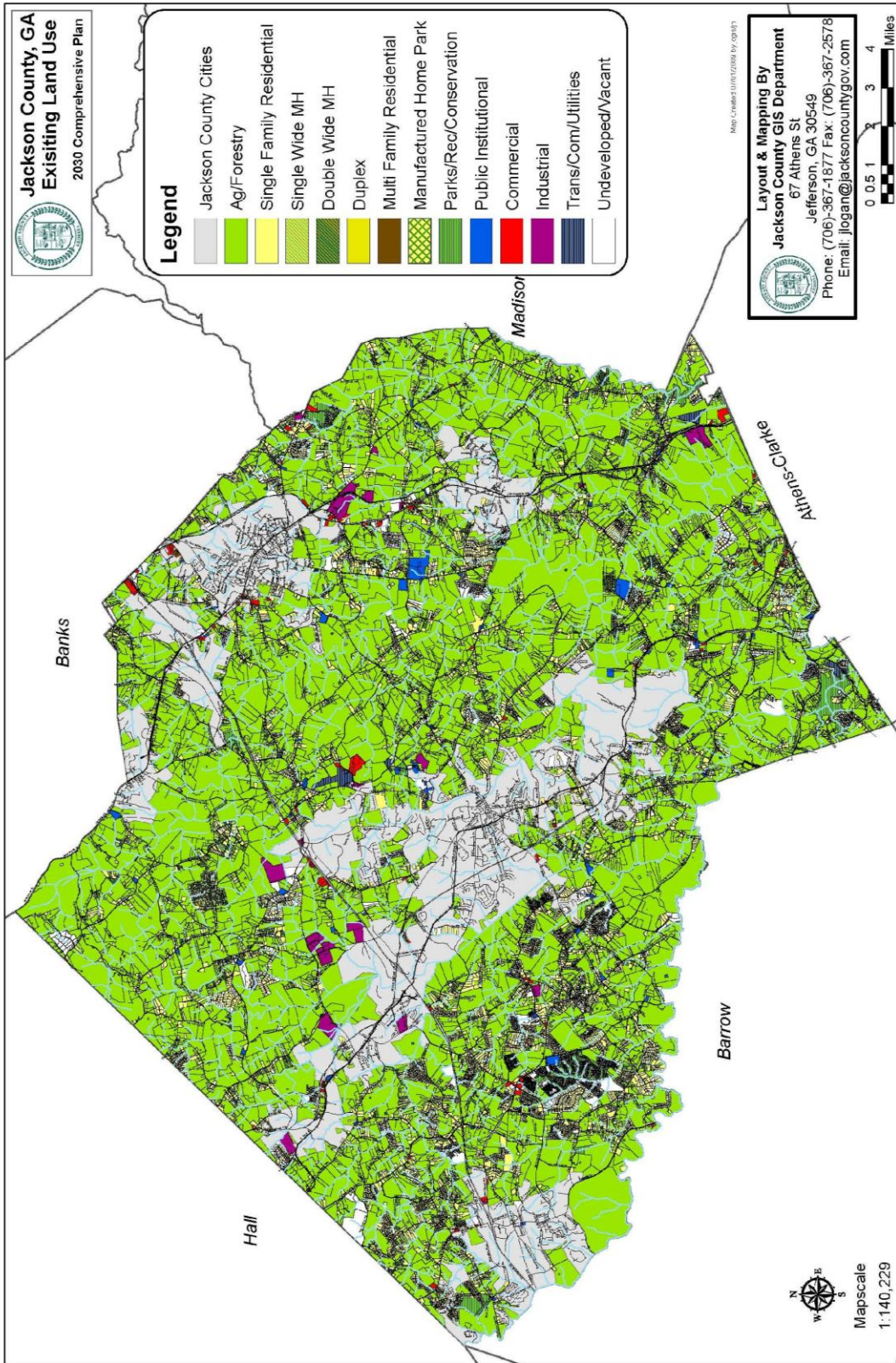
Source: Jackson County GIS, August 2009.

**Table 4
Percentages by Existing Land Use Category, 2009
Municipalities and Parts of Municipalities in Jackson County**

Land Use	Arcade	Braselton	Commerce	Hoschton	Jefferson	Maysville	Nicholson	Pendergrass	Talmo
Agriculture and Forestry	66.4	35.0	36.7	21.0	44.1	33.5	48.7	72.9	85.5
Single-family residential total	27.5	9.1	25.0	34.5	25.5	34.5	39.0	10.3	12.1
Multi-family residential total	0.2	0.2	1.7	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.3	--	--
Public/Institutional	0.5	1.4	3.0	2.3	3.5	8.0	1.7	0.5	1.1
Commercial	0.4	2.4	4.1	3.2	2.6	2.0	0.9	0.8	0.2
Industrial	--	11.2	3.9	3.7	7.8	5.3	--	1.4	--
Transportation/Communication/ Utilities	0.1	0.9	0.8	1.0	3.0	0.8	0.1	--	0.1
Park/Recreation/Conservation	--	2.5	2.0	1.3	1.9	0.1	2.1	2.2	--
Undeveloped/Vacant	4.9	37.3	22.8	32.4	11.3	15.7	7.2	11.9	1.0
All Land Uses Calculated	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Notes: Braselton and Maysville extend into other counties. The figures here are for Jackson County's portion only. The total for all land uses calculated is less than total city limits area because public right of ways are excluded.

Source: Jackson County GIS, August 2009.



Agriculture and Forestry

Because unincorporated Jackson County is predominantly agricultural in character, it is worthwhile to review recent statistics on agriculture in the county. Table 5 provides data on farmland trends in 2002 and 2007 for Jackson County. Note that all of the data presented here are for the county as a whole and therefore include farms within the city limits of municipalities in Jackson County. Table 1 shows the number of farms, total land in farms, and the average size of farm. Jackson County lost 23 farms and nearly 15,000 acres of farmland between 2002 and 2007; that was a decrease of 14.8 percent in terms of farmland acreage. The average size of farm also decreased from 109 acres in the year 2002 to 95 acres in the year 2007.

Table 5
Agricultural Land Statistics, 2002 and 2007
Jackson County

	2002	2007	Net Change 2002-2007	Percent Change 2002-2007
Number of farms	915	892	-23	-2.5%
Land in farms (acres)	99,554	84,869	-14,685	-14.8%
Average size of farm (acres)	109	95	-14	-12.8%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Profile, Jackson County, Georgia.

Table 6 provides greater detail by size of farm. These statistics need to be interpreted with caution, in that they do not always represent what they seem to portray. To illustrate, a farm with 50 acres that sells off one acre of land between 2002 and 2007 is moved to a different category. Similarly, changes in overall acreages of farms can be deceiving in that a given farm may also increase acreage to the point that is classified five years later within a larger farm size category. Hence, one should be careful not to interpret individual categories as losses of farms, given that changes to acreage may simply have resulted in that farm being classified in a different farm size category.

The most striking finding is the loss of all three farms with 2,000 or more acres during the five-year reporting period. These farms could have been downsized (partially sold), or discontinued altogether, but one is unable to tell from the statistics provided. Most but not all of the farm size categories witnessed decreases in the number of farms, as well as acreage – this means generally that farmland loss from 2002 to 2007 occurred across the spectrum in terms of the size of farms; not only large farms were lost, but small- and medium-sized farms as well. The 2003 amendment to the land use plan noted the rapid conversion of A-2 zoned land to residential subdivisions, particularly near Braselton and Hoschton.

Table 6
Farms and Farm Acreage by Farm Size Category, 2002 and 2007
Jackson County

Farm Size Category	2002		2007	
	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres
1 to 9 acres	78	362	62	299
10 to 49 acres	387	10,456	431	11,189
50 to 69 acres	127	7,113	101	5,980
70 to 99 acres	80	6,569	69	5,687
100 to 139 acres	76	8,584	63	7,273
140 to 179 acres	43	6,784	51	8,034
180 to 219 acres	28	5,538	20	3,861
220 to 259 acres	12	2,813	19	4,515
260 to 499 acres	49	16,771	47	16,124
500 to 999 acres	25	17,160	23	13,556
1,000 to 1,999 acres	7	10,927	6	8,351
2000 acres or more	3	6,477	--	--
Total	915	99,554	892	84,869

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Data, Georgia, Table 8.

Table 7 provides detailed data regarding the use of farms in Jackson County in 2002 and 2007.

Table 7
Land in Farms According to Use, 2002 and 2007
Jackson County

Farmland Use	2002		2007	
	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres
Total cropland	541	42,903	495	24,479
--Harvested cropland	347	15,315	362	15,347
--Cropland used for pasture or grazing	346	24,924	157	6,773
--Other cropland	91	2,664	92	2,359
--Cropland idle, used for cover, or soil improvement but not harvested and not pastured or grazed	71	2,265	56	1,447
--Cropland on which all crops failed	22	375	36	679
--Cropland in cultivated summer fallow	8	24	12	233
Total wooded	509	20,198	510	17,468
--Woodland pastured	330	9,753	313	7,860
--Woodland not pastured	274	10,445	273	9,608
Permanent pasture other than cropland and woodland pastured	470	27,835	621	37,039
Land in farmsteads, buildings, livestock facilities, ponds, roads, wasteland, etc.	532	8,618	486	5,883
Pastureland, all types	762	62,512	757	51,672

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Data, Georgia, Table 8.

The amount of harvested cropland remained more or less the same from 2002 to 2007, at about 15,300 acres. However, total cropland declined by 18,424 acres from 2002 to 2007; almost all of the total cropland lost was “cropland used for pasture or grazing” (18,151 acres). Total woodland decreased by 2,730 acres from 2002 to 2007; the largest share of the decrease during that time period was for woodland pastured.

In looking at the statistics from the U.S. Census of Agriculture, one must address a discrepancy between those data and the existing land use data from the county’s existing land use inventory. Specifically, the *Census of Agriculture* indicates that there were 84,869 of land in farms in Jackson County in 2007 (including cropland, woodlands, and pasture). On the other hand, the county’s existing land use data which was informed by tax assessor’s data, show a much larger acreage in 2009: 154,066 acres. What accounts for this difference?

First, in comparing data from two different sources, one should always be cognizant of differences in classification methods. Second, the Census of Agriculture may be low in terms of estimates of existing farmland. Census of Agriculture data generally include lands for which some income was made, and hence those data may not capture the full scope of agricultural land in Jackson County since some (especially smaller) farms may not have income or reported income. Third, tax assessor’s data (the existing land use inventory) may be high, based on the character or look of the property or on historic usage (i.e., used for farmland in the past but no longer active). Fourth, the existing land use inventory most likely classified some wooded tracts as forestry, even though the properties are not owned and utilized for timber land. Most likely, this latter explanation is the best answer: the difference between the Census of Agriculture statistic and the county’s existing land use statistics is probably attributable to vacant, forested sites that are not under active timber management. This is further corroborated below.

Separate statistics are kept for forest land by Georgia County. The most recent year for which published data are available is 2007, and year 1997 data are also available (Table 8). These data help further explain the discrepancy.

**Table 8
Forest Land, 1997 and 2007
Jackson County**

	1997	2007
Acres of forest land	126,800	109,200
Total areas in county (acres)	219,100	219,100
Percent of total land county land area in forest	57.8%	49.8%

Source: 1997 data and total county area from *The 2002 Georgia County Guide, 21st Ed.*, edited by Susan R. Boatright and Douglas C. Bachtel (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development), October 2002. 2007 data from www.georgiastats.uqa.edu.

If one adds together the year 2007 land in farms (Census of Agriculture) and the acres of forested land (2007), then subtracts the amount of wooded farm acres, there is a total of 176,601 acres of agriculture and forestry in Jackson County as of 2007. That figure is much closer to the 154,066 acres found in the existing land use inventory for 2009. And the difference

could quite possibly be attributed to the difference in reporting period (2009 versus 2007), suggesting significant further loss of forest land in Jackson County in the last two years.

Regardless of what the explanation might be, from a land use planning perspective, the discrepancy between the two sources on total farmland acreage is not troublesome, since it is better to overestimate agriculture and forestry than to under-recognize it.

Residential Development

Table 9 of the housing analysis chapter in this technical appendix indicates that Jackson County has added approximately 7,117 housing units from July 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007. As of July 1, 2007, Jackson County had an estimated 23,572 housing units, up from 16,455 only July 1, 2000.

Table 5 shows total number of residential building permits issued in all of Jackson County from 2003 to 2007. That figure includes all permitting authorities; Jackson County issues building permits only for the unincorporated areas, so its number is less than the totals shown.

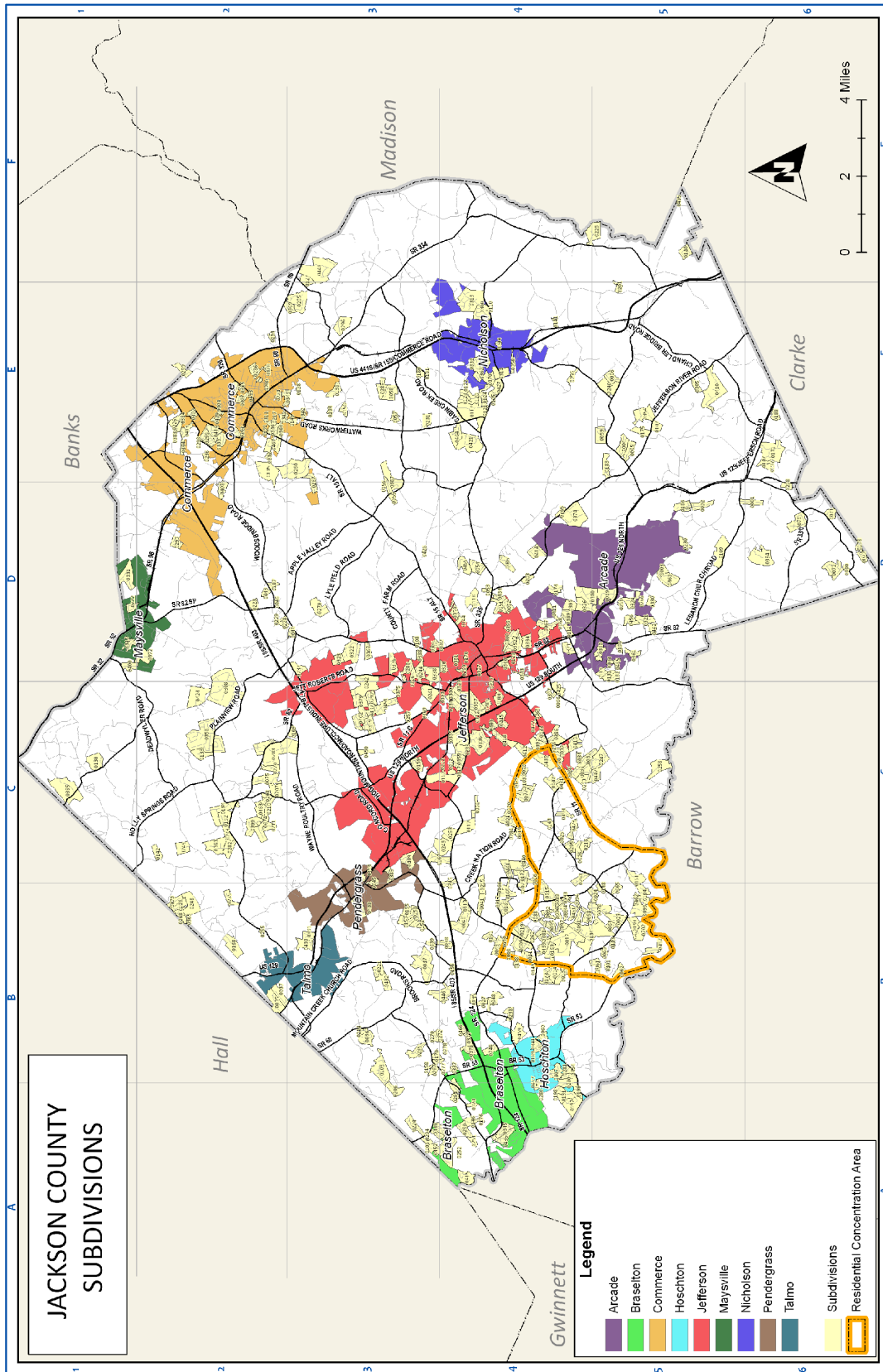
**Table 9
Residential Building Permits (Units) 2004-2007
Jackson County**

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Residential Building Permits Total, Jackson County	1,523	1,457	1,388	819

Source: www.georgiastats.uga.edu

As noted in the 2003 update of the land use plan, Jackson County has followed standard practices for most suburbanizing communities, allowing and even encouraging conventional suburban land development patterns in a dispersed pattern. The following map, “Jackson County Subdivisions,” shows the geographic distribution of residential subdivisions in unincorporated Jackson County. This map provides a good indicator of the extent of organized residential development in unincorporated Jackson County. It does not indicate the extent of rural residential development which has occurred on individual lots. Clearly, residential subdivision development has occurred in most parts of unincorporated Jackson County. As noted on the map, the largest concentration of residential subdivisions in unincorporated Jackson County is east of Hoschton and southwest of Jefferson. There is also substantial residential subdivision development within the unincorporated areas within the overall geographic extent of Jefferson. Clearly, residential subdivision development is more heavily concentrated in the western half of Jackson County.

Those areas of unincorporated Jackson County which have so far escaped significant subdivision development activity include the northern tip (west, southwest and south of Maysville), Apple Valley (between Jefferson and Commerce along SR 15 Alt.), the Brockton area (east of Jefferson, north-northeast of Arcade, and west of Nicholson), and most areas on the eastern fringe of Jackson County. Not surprisingly, these areas not subjected to residential subdivision development correspond pretty closely with the county’s agricultural preservation designation on its future land use plan map.



Transportation/Communication/Utilities

Major land uses classified in this category include: Jackson County Airport east of SR 82 North along Airport Road and Lyle Field Road (north of Jefferson's city limits); the waste water treatment property west of Opossum Creek Road north of Interstate 85 in Jefferson; wastewater treatment plant property along Curry Creek in Jefferson; water treatment property at New Savage Road and Bear Creek Lake; property east of Jarret Road which lies east of U.S. Highway 441 south of Commerce; and property at the intersection of Davis Road, County Farm Road and Airport Road.

Public Institutional

As would be expected for a rural county with numerous municipalities, the lion's share of public and institutional properties are located within city limits, especially Jefferson which is the county seat. Land uses in unincorporated areas consist primarily of schools and churches.

Commercial and Industrial

Like with public-institutional uses, most of the existing commercial land is located within municipalities. The extent of unincorporated commercial land use is actually quite limited; commercial uses (with some exceptions for isolated zones) exist along segments of U.S. Highway 129 and U.S. Highway 441, and near the interchange of SR 53 and I-85 outside the city limits of Braselton. Most of the existing industrial land use outside of municipalities is located between Interstate 85 and Wayne Poultry Road.

For additional discussion of commercial and industrial trends, see the report "labor force and economy" in this technical appendix.

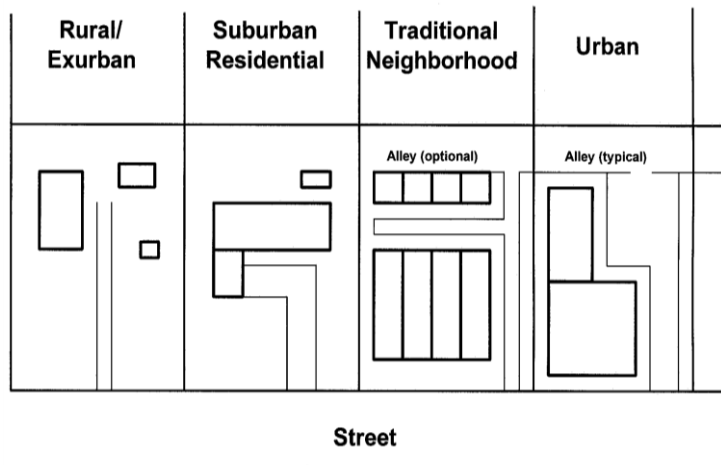
CHARACTER AREAS

Delineating Character Areas

The intent behind delineating character areas is to capture the unique design or feel of a given area, regardless of land use. That is to say, one generally hopes to define these areas in ways where one land use is not dominant. However, from a practical standpoint, character areas are often defined almost as much by "function" (i.e., use) as they are by "form" (i.e., character).

Geographically, as the examples below show, character is often defined in terms of a particular geography: character may follow a linear "corridor," usually a roadway; or it may be concentrated (or conceptualized to be located) in a "center" of some type, such as a place centered at the intersection of two major roadways. Or, it may simply be some other type of "area" or "neighborhood" that does not follow a linear (corridor) pattern or is not geographically centered around a given place or road intersection.

Character are almost always appropriately based on a continuum from exurban, to rural, to suburban, to urban, or some combination of them, such as that shown in the figure below.



Continuum of Rural to Urban Character

Character Areas in Municipalities, Jackson County, and in Abutting Counties

This analysis focuses on compatibility of the county planning effort with the plans of the various cities in Jackson County, as well as abutting counties and Jackson County itself. An understanding of the intentions of municipalities and abutting counties is important with respect to land use and character areas, because Jackson County should plan seamlessly to extend municipal planning concepts into unincorporated areas, where appropriate, and to plan for similar character in areas that cross into abutting counties.

Attention is paid below to those character areas that apply at the fringes of municipalities, as opposed to their more urban or downtown areas (and character areas applied to those parts of cities are not discussed here). Based on review of available plans, including Jackson County’s own (existing) policies, the following character areas have been articulated by cities within and counties abutting Jackson County in addition those applying to unincorporated Jackson County itself. Where names are slightly different, they have been consolidated in the listings below, so as to provide some generalizations.

As described in the following paragraphs, character areas can be generally classified into the following types: conservation; agricultural and rural; neighborhoods (residential); centers; corridors; employment and industry; and special districts and others.

Conservation

These character areas are usually termed “conservation” (Arcade, Jackson County, Jefferson) and sometimes “preserve” (Banks County, Barrow County). Generally, these are natural resource areas and the intent is to conserve or preserve them in a more-or-less natural state, allowing or encouraging only those land uses that are compatible with natural resource protection goals and objectives.

Agricultural and Rural

Agricultural character is sometimes distinguished (appropriately) from “rural” areas, as is the case with Jackson County’s currently adopted “agricultural preservation” and “rural places” character areas (Jackson County). Most often, however, communities lump together agricultural and rural areas (Banks County, Maysville, Barrow County). Others notice and encourage peculiar “rural residential” (Banks County, Jefferson) or “estate” residential areas (Arcade), thus recognizing that very low- or low-density residential use is predominant. In the case of more urban Athens/Clarke County, it does not have an agricultural area but does have a “rural” character area which follows the fringe of the county, including areas near the Jackson County line.

Neighborhoods (Residential)

Residential areas are often distinguished from one another in terms of their densities (again, see the graphic above describing a rural to urban continuum). As noted above, residential can be very low density (“rural” or “estate”) in nature or they can be “suburban” or “urban” in nature, each being different in terms of overall density. Jackson County has an “urban” residential category.

Also, residential neighborhoods can differ in terms of development characteristics such as street pattern and design, building placement, and existence of or design type of open spaces and amenities. Here, a key difference is the “traditional neighborhood” (most often found in urban areas which in turn are most often found within municipalities; these are not cited here since they generally don’t matching anything yet built in unincorporated Jackson County) and “suburban,” or “conventional suburban” (e.g., Barrow County, Jefferson, and Maysville), reflecting design characteristics of conventional residential suburbs (i.e., curvilinear streets ending in cul-de-sacs). Finally, sometimes a timing element is introduced, suggesting that areas are “emerging suburban” (Banks and Barrow) or ready for (or experiencing) “growth.”

Centers

Character is often defined based on a central place, which is most often the intersection of two major roads. Usually, centers are defined as having a mixture of uses, including civic/institutional and others, but almost always including retail and service commercial as the predominant land use in a given center. Similarly, just the same as with neighborhoods, centers can run the full range of rural to urban character, including rural crossroads (e.g., Barrow County), to more urban forms like “town center” (e.g., Arcade). Sometimes, these are simply called “activity center” (e.g., Jefferson). Centers are often given different names to distinguish the scale and size of land uses around the central place, based generally on the market area such a mixed-use center will support. These include centers serving an immediate “neighborhood” (e.g., Jackson County; Athens/Clarke County), “community” activity centers (e.g., Athens/Clarke County, Banks County, Barrow County, and Jackson County), and “regional” (e.g., Athens/Clarke County, Barrow County).

Corridors

As noted above, many character areas follow major roads and highways. Like with some of the character areas already described, corridors can have character ranging from rural (Banks County), scenic rural (Barrow County), to commercial corridors lined with primarily highway-

oriented businesses and auto traveler-related services (Arcade, Barrow County). Several communities generalize several road corridors that enter the communities as “gateway” corridors (Arcade, Barrow County, Jackson County, Jefferson) and focus on particular design treatments and guidelines in an effort to improve the appearance of the community to the entering traveler.

Others single out “bypasses” (Banks County, Barrow County, Jefferson) as having particular character or deserving recognition for peculiar land use patterns and issues (or recommended design treatments). Yet others apply the corridor character designation to specific highways or segments of them (e.g., the I-85 commercial corridor in Jefferson and the “Banks Crossing” area along U.S. Highway 441 corridor at Interstate 85 in Banks County). Finally, some define the corridor character area on the basis of the future pattern, calling them “growth” (Banks County) and “transitional” (Barrow County) corridor(s).

Employment and Industry

Most local governments single out their major employment or industrial areas and call them, simply, “industrial (Barrow County, Maysville, and Jefferson) or “industrial workplace” (Jackson County). In Athens/Clarke County these places are called “manufacturing and distribution centers.” Such areas are dominated by manufacturing and industrial employment, and usually do not have any sort of mixture of uses. Their “character” is mostly large, single-story building with heavy or frequent freight transportation.

Special Districts and Others

In some instances there is a need to distinguish special land uses as their own character due to particular impacts or needs, such as is the case with airports (e.g., Barrow County, Jefferson), where surrounding land use needs to be limited due to airport noise impacts and heights of buildings have to be controlled to protect aircraft approach zones. Also, some character area schemes of local governments separately designate large properties according to single-function land use (e.g., Transportation/Communications/Utilities and Public Institutional in Jackson County), given that they really don’t have “character” per se but are large or common enough to be separately identified on the character area/future development map. Other possibilities exist, such as Maysville’s designation of a “potential annexation area.”

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

NATURAL RESOURCES

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

Prepared Under Contract By:

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NATURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

This analysis summarizes information from the county's prior comprehensive plan (adopted 1998), the natural resources element of the regional comprehensive plan for the Northeast Georgia Region (2004) and other sources, with regard to the natural resources of Jackson County.

Accompanying this text (at the end of this document) is a Natural Resources Map Series. Some of the maps were initially prepared by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (now Regional Commission) as a part of the 1998 comprehensive plan. All maps presented here have been refined and produced by Jackson County's Geographic Information Systems Department. The Natural Resources Map Series includes the following, which are reproducible in color at a sheet size of 11" x 17":

- Wetlands
- Groundwater Recharge Areas
- Small and Large Water Supply Watersheds
- Floodplains
- Floodplains (Newly Released Update – Unofficial)
- Steeply Sloping Soils
- Prime Farmland
- Scenic Resources

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Jackson County is located on the upper fringes of the Piedmont Plateau, characterized by gently rolling ridges and valleys. Relief ranges from a low of approximately 640 feet above mean sea level, along the North Oconee River near the Clarke County line, to 1,100 above mean sea level west of Talmo near the Chestnut Mountain area of Hall County.

Jackson County is bisected by two broad ridges that run northwest to southeast, extending the entire length of the county from Hall County to Athens-Clarke County. About half the county between these two ridges slopes inward to the Middle Oconee River. Outside these ridges, land in Jackson County drains west to the Mulberry River and east to the North Oconee River.

LAND COVER AND NATURAL VEGETATION

The natural vegetation covers in the Northeast Georgia region are pine, pine-hardwood mix, and hardwood. Almost none of the habitat in the Midland Piedmont Province, in which Northeast Georgia lies, is pristine. Most of the land in the region was agricultural land that has returned to forest, though not the same forests that were there prior to the habitat disruption. Habitat in the region demonstrates all successional states: weed to grass shrub, pine (dominant), mixed pine-hardwoods, and hardwoods.

There are locally important areas of rock outcrops. Outcrops larger than 1.5 acres are eligible for the National Landmarks program (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Regional Water Resources Study 2004).

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Environmental Planning Criteria were promulgated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources immediately following adoption of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The original set of criteria included water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands. Pursuant to the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act of 1991, protected mountains and protected river corridors were added as components to the environmental planning criteria. Jackson County includes all of these types of areas except for protected mountains. The details of these criteria are summarized in this assessment in sections that follow.

WETLANDS

Defined

Wetlands are areas that are flooded or saturated by surface or groundwater often and long enough to grow vegetation adapted for life in water-saturated soil. A wetland does not have to be flooded or saturated for more than one week of the year in order to develop the vegetation and soil characteristics that qualify it as a wetland.

Functions and Importance

Wetlands serve many functions and have a number of values. Wetlands temporarily store flood waters, thereby preventing flood damage, and they can also protect lands from erosion by reducing the velocity of water currents. They serve as pollution filters by helping to remove sediment, absorb chemicals and nutrients, and produce oxygen. Wetlands have important environmental values including improving water quality by intercepting stormwater runoff, preventing eutrophication of natural waters, and supporting delicate aquatic ecosystems (nutrient retention and removal, food chain support, migratory waterfowl usage, providing other wildlife habitat, etc.). Many wetlands are areas of groundwater recharge, and they also can provide a source of recreation (hunting and fishing), aesthetics, and scientific research.

Inventory

Approximately 4.4 percent of the northeast Georgia region is classified as wetlands. Wetlands are not always coterminous with flood plains, but most of them are contained within flood plains. Some of the major rivers support extensive and valuable riparian wetlands. However, some wetlands in the region are located around seeps and springs (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Regional Water Resources Study 2004).

The following river and stream corridors (in their entirety) contain wetlands of special significance, in part for their wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor value (see also the section titled "habitat"): Middle Oconee River; North Oconee River; Curry Creek, and Little Curry Creek.

Wetland Regulation

Wetland regulatory approaches are generally designed to require an evaluation of a proposed use in order to permit those uses which will not adversely alter the wetland resources and to deny uses which will have a significant adverse effect. In light of the particularity of different wetland environments, this will require identification of the values inherent in specific wetlands,

the potential effect of a proposed activity upon those values, and the alternative available to mitigate or prevent the adverse consequences of the proposed use.

The primary regulatory tool used to protect and preserve wetlands is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' §404 program. Current §404 regulatory policy focuses on wetland restoration and creation as the primary means of compensating for unavoidable wetland impacts. However, most wetland restoration and creation projects are inefficient; restoration efforts are often expensive, confined to small parcels, not coordinated with regional conservation plans, and of questionable functional value. In contrast, preserving existing wetlands is a cost-effective means of maintaining and enhancing a wide variety of aquatic ecosystem function, and can be more easily directed within the framework of a statewide resource protection plan (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

In addition to the §404 program, the Georgia Forestry Commission developed Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect and enhance important wetland functions on most sites while permitting silvicultural operations. The functions of wetlands include: water quality, timber production, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, education, research and scenic beauty. More specifically, these BMPs are designed for silvicultural operations where sustained timber production is anticipated. However, it is acknowledged that some wetland sites are not suitable for commercial timber production and that on extremely sensitive sites more stringent measures may be required (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

Wetlands are supposed to be protected under Georgia's *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* and a local implementing ordinance that meets this state mandate. Protection ordinances are only supposed to allow those land uses that will not impair the wetland function long-term, such as: timber production and harvesting, wildlife and fisheries management, wastewater treatment, recreation, natural water quality treatment or purification, or other uses permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Specifically, the following criteria for alteration of wetlands are supposed to be integrated into local comprehensive plans:

Any proposal for development involving the alteration of, or an impact on, wetlands should be evaluated according to the following (based on Ga. DNR Rule 391-3-16-.03):

- Whether impacts to an area would adversely affect the public health, safety, welfare, or the property of others.
- Whether the area is unique or significant in the conservation of flora and fauna including threatened, rare, or endangered species.
- Whether alteration or impacts to wetlands will adversely affect the function, including the flow or quality of water, cause erosion or shoaling, or impact navigation.
- Whether impacts or modification by a project would adversely affect fishing or recreational use of wetlands.
- Whether an alteration or impact would be temporary in nature.
- Whether alteration of wetlands would have measurable adverse impacts on adjacent sensitive natural areas.

Where wetlands have been created for mitigation purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, such wetlands shall be considered for protection.

Impacts on Wetlands and Additional Regulatory Efforts

In the northeast Georgia region, there has been relatively little impact on wetlands due to urban development. Most conversion of wetlands in the past is probably attributable to agricultural activities. However, wetlands can be threatened in the future by increasing development pressures, a general disregard for natural resources protection, and failure to utilize the comprehensive plan in zoning decisions. The Regional Plan recommends public education on wetland issues and stricter than minimum regulatory controls on wetlands (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

Wetland Mitigation Banks

Wetland mitigation banks are an alternative method to restoring or maintaining wetlands. They allow developers to replace wetlands in one location with wetlands that are bought through credits from another person or agency on another site. In principle if not in practice, a wetland in a mitigation bank is supposed to equal the wetland that has been lost or damaged, thus meeting federal policy that there should be no net loss of wetlands (reference, Clean Water Act, Sec. 404).

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

Recharge areas are defined by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as any portion of the earth's surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. "Significant recharge areas" are also defined in DNR rules based on outcrop area, lithology, soil type and thickness, slope, density of lithologic contacts, geologic structure, the presence of karst, and potentiometric surfaces. In the Piedmont, the significant recharge areas are those with thick soils and slopes of less than eight percent.

In Georgia there are relatively limited areas where aquifers are recharged and thus where groundwater is most susceptible to pollution. The Environmental Planning Criteria for groundwater recharge areas established state policy for protecting significant groundwater recharge areas. In support of those criteria, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) produced a map titled "Hydrologic Atlas 18," that shows significant groundwater recharge areas in the state. The atlas maps each area according to its pollution susceptibility potential.

Inventory

Aquifers in the Piedmont region of Northeast Georgia are relatively small, unconfined aquifers consisting of horizontal and vertical fractures in crystalline, non-porous rock. They commonly generate 1 to 25 and rarely exceed 500 gallons per minute. These aquifers in the northeast Georgia region are generally underutilized and remarkably free of contamination.

Threats of Contamination

Aquifers in the Piedmont are largely unconfined, meaning that pollutants can travel long distances, thus making pollution sources difficult to identify (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element). Contamination threats to groundwater recharge areas include naturally occurring sources and man-made sources. Mineral salts (i.e., high total dissolved solids, manganese, and iron) are the

most extensive contamination source, but there are also radioactive minerals that are common rock constituents in many Georgia aquifers. Contaminants introduced from non-natural activities include bacteria and viruses, nitrates, pesticides, herbicides, solvents, minerals, chloride, sodium, and metals (especially lead, arsenic, and aluminum). The sources of these various groundwater contamination threats are varied, and include agricultural activities (insecticides and herbicides), residences (e.g., septic systems, household use of fertilizers and other chemicals) and non-residential development (e.g., dry cleaning establishments, auto repair shops, hazardous waste disposal, hazardous materials use, underground storage tanks, and landfills).

Nitrates have become the most common groundwater contaminant. Nitrates are generated by septic systems, municipal waste water treatment plants, and livestock feedlots. However, it is believed that the constant application of synthetic fertilizer has the most profound effect on groundwater. It is estimated that more than one-half of the nitrogen fertilizer applied to fields dissolves and runs into surface streams or groundwater (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

State Environmental Protection Criteria and Protection Measures

In order to protect groundwater supplies, the state's environmental planning criteria urge local governments with significant groundwater resources to adopt and implement groundwater recharge protection ordinances. State-specified protection measures include a prohibition on hazardous waste disposal facilities and new sanitary landfills without synthetic liners and leachate collection systems, increased lot sizes for dwellings served by individual septic systems, and secondary containment for new above ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks. In more detail but still paraphrased, within any significant groundwater recharge area:

1. Sanitary landfills should not be permitted. If permitted, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will not issue permits for sanitary landfills not having synthetic liners and leachate collection systems.
2. Land disposal of hazardous waste should be prohibited, and DNR shall not issue any permits for said use. Any treatment, storage or disposal of hazardous waste should take place only on an impermeable pad having a spill and leak collection system.
3. To prevent oil from polluting groundwater, new above-ground storage tanks for chemicals or petroleum for non-agricultural uses should only be permitted if secondary containment for 110 percent of the tank's volume (or the largest tank in a cluster of tanks) is provided, as presently required by rules of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
4. New agricultural waste impoundment sites should be discouraged. Clay liners should be installed as approved by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service) if an agricultural waste impoundment site is located in a significant groundwater recharge area.
5. New dwellings, including mobile/manufactured homes, if served by septic tank/drain field systems, must be located on a lot size of from 110% to 150% of the size of the minimum lot area required by the zoning district in which it is located, depending upon the pollution susceptibility of the area in question. Existing lots of record are exempted.

6. Permanent stormwater infiltration basins should be discouraged and should not be constructed in an area with high pollution susceptibility.
7. Wastewater treatment basins should have liners if constructed in an area of high pollution susceptibility, and wastewater spray irrigation systems in high pollution susceptibility areas should only be permitted subject to approval by DNR.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Jackson County is located primarily within the Oconee River Basin, with a small portion of northeastern Jackson County located within the Savannah River Basin.

Middle Oconee River

The Middle Oconee River is formed by the confluence of Pond Fork, Opossum Creek, and Allen Creek in Jackson County. It flows south, 20 miles to the Barrow County line, where it then flows through Clark County on the west side of Athens and joins the North Oconee River south of Athens to form the Oconee River. The Middle Oconee River forms 1.8 miles of the northern boundary of Jackson County.

The Middle Oconee River averages approximately one to 3 feet deep and 50 to 75 feet in width. The river has a slow to moderate flowing form in some areas, with isolated riffles and in other areas is rapidly flowing with an abundance of small falls, riffles and pools. The floodplain is narrow and the banks of the river are steep and well vegetated with overhanging trees and shrubs (verbatim from the 1998 comprehensive plan).

Mulberry River

Several creeks join to form the Mulberry River in Hall County. The river then flows through Gwinnett County and is the border between Barrow and Jackson Counties until it flows into the Middle Oconee River north of Athens. The river forms 21.3 miles of the southwest boundary of Jackson County.

The river is about 15 to 20 feet wide and has a narrow floodplain for a majority of its length. Some sections have been channelized and some sections have been dammed by beavers. The river flows through forests, pastures, and croplands; as of 1997 there were no urbanized areas in the floodplain (verbatim from the 1998 comprehensive plan).

North Oconee River

The headwaters of Curry Creek are in Jackson County, in Jefferson. Curry Creek joins the North Oconee River in Jackson County, flows through the northeastern side of the county for 29 miles and then flows through the northeastern side of the City of Athens until it joins the Middle Oconee River to form the Oconee River south of Athens. The floodplain of Curry Creek is fairly narrow and shoals and rapids are numerous. Beaver dam ponds are also common (verbatim from the 1998 comprehensive plan).

PROTECTED RIVERS

O.C.G.A. §12-2-8 required the Department of Natural Resources to develop minimum planning standards and procedures for the protection of river corridors in the state, and rules adopted pursuant to that statute required local governments to use the state's minimum standards in developing and implementing local comprehensive plans. The primary method mandated for the protection of river corridors is the establishment of natural vegetative buffer areas alongside each protected river. Local governments are required to develop river corridor protection plans that will maintain the integrity of this buffer area. The minimum standards call for a one hundred-foot buffer on each side of the river channel; however, nothing prohibits local governments from establishing standards that are more restrictive than the minimum standards established by the Department of Natural Resources. A "protected river" includes any perennial river or watercourse with an average annual flow of 400 cubic feet per second as determined by the U.S. Geological Survey. In Jackson County, the Middle Oconee River is designated as a protected river according to the state's environmental planning criteria.

While not officially a protected river, the Mulberry River has been identified as a valuable resource needing particular attention (flood plains and swampy areas). The 1998 comprehensive plan indicates that since the Mulberry River serves as a water source for cities in Jackson, Clarke, and Barrow Counties, it should be afforded the same status in terms of "protected rivers" as the Middle Oconee River, even though it does not officially meet the definition of a "protected river" and thus is not required by state policy to be protected as such.

There are readily apparent opportunities for joint county river corridor assessments and planning. Also, Jackson County, Athens-Clarke County, and Oconee County all have active groups planning and promoting river-related greenways. There is an obvious opportunity for cooperation in linking these efforts into a regional greenways effort. The local groups are in contact with each other, although as of 2004 there was no formal inter-governmental approach under way (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

The Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (2004) has observed that many developments along stream corridors in the region do not provide for an adequate vegetative buffer, and that several developments have cleared all vegetation to the stream bank. Furthermore, it finds that many local governments are experiencing storm water management problems related to uncontrolled growth, and that few jurisdictions have ordinances limiting post-development runoff to pre-development runoff rates or volumes.

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has established minimum watershed protection criteria for watersheds associated with municipal drinking water intakes or reservoirs. The criteria differentiate between large watersheds (greater than 100 square miles) and small watersheds (less than 100 square miles). In a large water supply watershed, the perennial streams seven miles upstream of a reservoir are protected through maintenance of a 100-foot vegetative buffer, limitation of impervious surfaces, and restricted location of septic tanks and their drain fields. No restrictions are placed on land beyond seven miles. Within a small water supply watershed the criteria require maintenance of a 100-foot vegetative buffer, a prohibition on impervious surfaces within 150 feet of the streams and septic tank drain fields. Beyond the seven-mile limit, a 50-foot vegetative buffer is required and impervious surfaces, and septic tank

drain fields are prohibited within 75 feet of the stream. The criteria require local governments to identify existing and future water supply watersheds and adopt water supply watershed protection plans as part of their planning process (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

There are three “large” water supply watersheds in Jackson County according to the criteria: the Middle Oconee River watershed (Athens-Clarke County), the North Oconee River watershed (Athens-Clarke County), and the Mulberry River watershed (City of Winder). There are five “small” water supply watersheds in Jackson County: Curry Creek (Jefferson), Little Curry Creek (Jefferson proposed), Sandy Creek Watershed (Athens-Clarke County), Grove Creek Reservoir (Banks County), and Bear Creek Reservoir (Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority serving multiple jurisdictions) (1998 comprehensive plan).

The Bear Creek water supply watershed (a small water supply watershed) spans county lines (Jackson and Barrow). As of 2004, the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority (serving Barrow, Athens-Clarke, Jackson, and Oconee Counties) was in the process of developing a comprehensive watershed protection plan in lieu of the minimum standards for water supply watersheds (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

FLOOD PLAINS

Flood plains in the county are mapped. These areas are regulated by the county’s flood plain management ordinance.

FOREST RESOURCES

Forest resources are important in the region for their aesthetic, recreational, habitat, and economic value. One important resource in particular in Jackson County is the University of Georgia’s Thompson Mills Forest (318 acres of forest), located in western Jackson County, which has been designated the State Arboretum by the Georgia General Assembly. This forest serves as a site for the study of trees and natural plant communities (1998 comprehensive plan).

The primary threat to forest resources is development and clear-cutting. Not only do these activities destroy the forest, they impact soil erosion, water quality, and habitat.

Protection of forest resources is largely voluntary, lacking much regulatory guidance from state and local governments. There are no state regulations regarding timber harvesting. Most local governments in the northeast Georgia have identified the need to protect forest resources, particularly urban ones, but there are no locally adopted mechanisms designed to prevent widespread destruction of forests. Loggers and landowners are asked to comply with Georgia’s Recommended Best Management Practices (Georgia Forestry Commission). However, unless there is a change in development practices within the region, forest resource destruction will continue (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

MINERAL RESOURCES

Jackson County is underlain predominantly by biotitic gneiss, schist, and granite gneiss. Other minerals known to exist in the county include asbestos, beryl, granite, and related rock outcrops (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 1998 comprehensive plan).

Jackson County is not among the major mineral-producing counties in the Northeast Georgia region. However, there are quarries located in Jackson County, and opposition by local residents and environmentalists to mining operations (especially crushed stone quarries), continues to be a major regulatory issue in Georgia, with protests concerning noise, dust, traffic, and damage from blasting (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

SOILS

Detailed information about soils in Jackson County is available from the Soil Survey for Barrow, Hall, and Jackson Counties (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1977). Also, the 1998 comprehensive plan provides (Table 4-1) a detailed listing of soils, their extent of coverage (land area) in Jackson County, and whether they are prime farmland, contain steep slopes, or pose limitations for on-site septic tanks. There is no requirement to reiterate that table here, but the analysis of soils and their relationship to these topics is provided in this assessment under other sections.

PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Prime agricultural lands are high quality farming soils, those best suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. In Jackson County, there are six specific soil types that are considered prime farmland: Altavista sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (AIB) (960 acres); Appling sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (ApB) (2,690 acres); Cecil sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (CeB) (24,390 acres); Hiwassee loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (HsB) (780 acres); Madison sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (MdB) (1250 acres); and Wickham sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes (WhB) (1720 acres) (Table 4-1, 1998 comprehensive plan). Collectively, these prime farmland soil types comprise approximately 13.2 percent of the total county land area.

According to the regional plan (2004), Jackson County is not among the leading counties in terms of significant amounts of prime agricultural lands. The most common use for farm land in Northeast Georgia is for poultry and pasturing cattle, which are not dependent on locations with prime agricultural soils (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element). Only 1.3 percent of the county's agricultural income historically has been derived from crop production, which is dependent on prime agricultural soils (1998 comprehensive plan).

This does not mean agricultural land preservation in Jackson County is unimportant, however. Agricultural lands have converted and will continue to convert to more urban land uses during the planning horizon (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

Farmland protection has come to be recognized as a key ingredient in the overall effort to manage growth. Protection of agriculture is an issue in determining future growth patterns in the county. Agricultural zoning has become popular as a low-cost approach to protecting

agricultural lands. Other potential tools include purchase of development-rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs.

Between 1987 and 1992, Jackson County witnessed a decrease in the number of farms and the number of acres in farms. The chief threat to prime agricultural lands in Jackson County recognized in the 1998 comprehensive plan was the conversion of A-2 zoned lands from agriculture to residential development in the southwestern portion of the county near the cities of Braselton and Hoschton. Secondly, the 1998 plan indicates that open space protection in the Middle Oconee River watershed (north of I-85 between State Routes 82 and 98) should be considered.

STEEP SLOPES

Steep slopes can be determined on the basis of the published soil survey. From the 1998 comprehensive plan (Table 4-1), there are eight soil types that correspond with steep slopes. These steeply sloping soils are mapped here in this community assessment, technical appendix. Steep slopes typically require substantial alteration for building development and pose severe limitations to septic tank drain fields. Alterations of steep slopes also changes the natural landform and character of the area and can create serious erosion problems (1998 comprehensive plan).

PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITAT

As already noted under forest resources, the University of Georgia's Thompson Mills Forest (318 acres of forest) is located in western Jackson County and has been designated the State Arboretum by the Georgia General Assembly. This forest includes more than 100 indigenous species in addition to some 80 native trees grown from seeds collected from throughout the state (1998 comprehensive plan).

The 1998 comprehensive plan recognized the value of the Middle Oconee, Mulberry, and North Oconee Rivers. Deer, beaver, and wood ducks have been cited along the Middle Oconee River. The Mulberry River provides habitat for deer, squirrel, rabbit, quail, woodcock, various songbirds and some turkeys; it is considered especially good habitat for waterfowl. The North Oconee River is considered good wildlife habitat for deer, squirrel, cottontail rabbit, swamp rabbit, raccoon, mink, muskrat, and beaver. The hardwood swamps and beaver ponds of the North Oconee River are considered excellent waterfowl wintering areas. Many resident and migratory birds use the riverine area, including, mourning doves, hawks, owls, quail, kingfishers, woodpeckers, and many species of songbirds (1998 comprehensive plan).

The DNR Natural Heritage Program maintains a database on rare natural systems and species in the state. Data collected come from a variety of sources, including museum and herbarium records, literature, and reports from individuals and organizations, as well as field surveys by staff biologists. Most jurisdictions in Northeast Georgia believe that federal and state regulations are adequate for protection of endangered and threatened species. However, since the exact location of habitats is not available through DNR, nor is there an on-site survey of properties, the extent of destruction of the habitat of endangered or threatened species is unknown. No local government in the region has or is planning to undertake any habitat inventory, nor do any participate in a habitat conservation plan. Development decision-making does not include consideration of habitat issues. As development pressures increase, the habitat for species will be reduced and fragmented so that there are insufficient contiguous habitats to support species. Because there is a large amount of forested and agricultural land in

the region, the importance of habitat conservation is overlooked. For these reasons, the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center has recommended an Inventory of important (not necessarily endangered) habitats, consideration of habitat communities in development decisions, maintenance of habitat diversity, and development of a regional habitat conservation plan (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

The DNR Natural Heritage Program maintains a database on rare natural systems and species in the state. Data collected come from a variety of sources, including museum and herbarium records, literature, and reports from individuals and organizations, as well as field surveys by staff biologists. In most cases the information is not the result of an on-site survey. Many areas in Georgia have never been surveyed thoroughly. Therefore, the Georgia Natural Heritage Program can only occasionally provide definitive information on the presence or absence of rare species or natural communities on a specific site. An on-site field survey by a competent biologist is the only way to determine the presence or absence of rare species (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, Regional Water Resources Study 2004).

Table 1, "Aquatic and Partially Aquatic Species and Ecosystems of Concern Found in the Northeast Georgia Study Area," in the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center's, Regional Water Resources Study (2004) does not list any such species and ecosystems of concern in Jackson County. A map of rare aquatic species and habitats in that same source, however, does show one area along the southernmost part of the Barrow-Jackson County line as a rare aquatic habitat which may contain rare species (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

Jurisdictional waterways could potentially serve as habitat for two (2) protected species. The USFWS County Listing of Threatened and Endangered Species in Jackson County and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) County Listing of Locations of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities were reviewed. Based on this information, one (1) federally-protected species and one (1) state-protected species are known to occur in Jackson County, the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and the Altamaha shiner (*Cyprinella xaenura*). Potential habitat may exist within the study area for each of these species. Large waterways such as the Middle Oconee River, Mulberry River, North Oconee River, and Hills Lake may provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat for the Bald Eagle. Although the Bald Eagle is no longer listed on USFWS's protected species list, it is still afforded protection under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc., 2009 Draft. I-85 Corridor Study Report, Jackson County, Georgia)

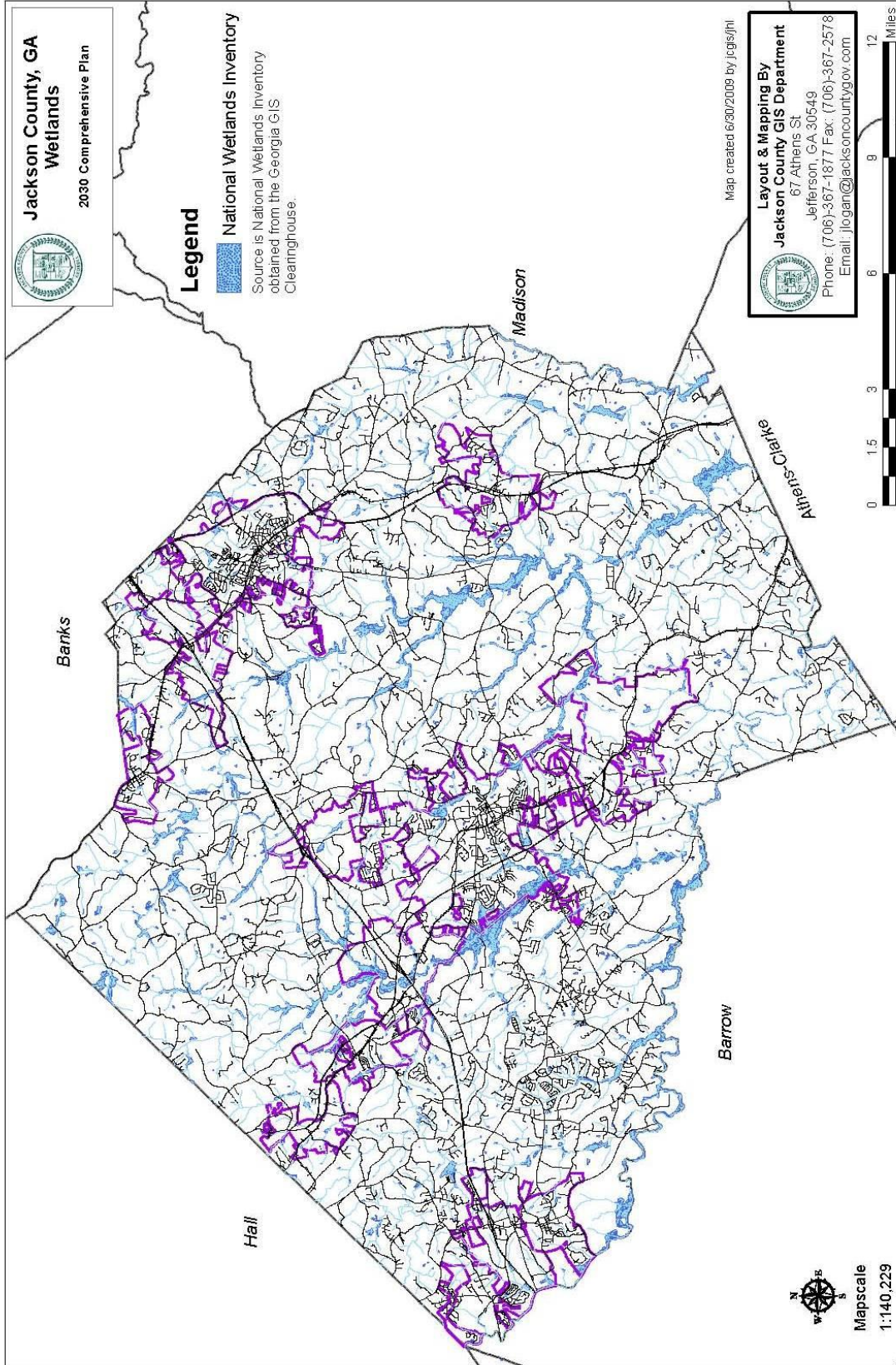
OPEN SPACES AND SCENIC RESOURCES

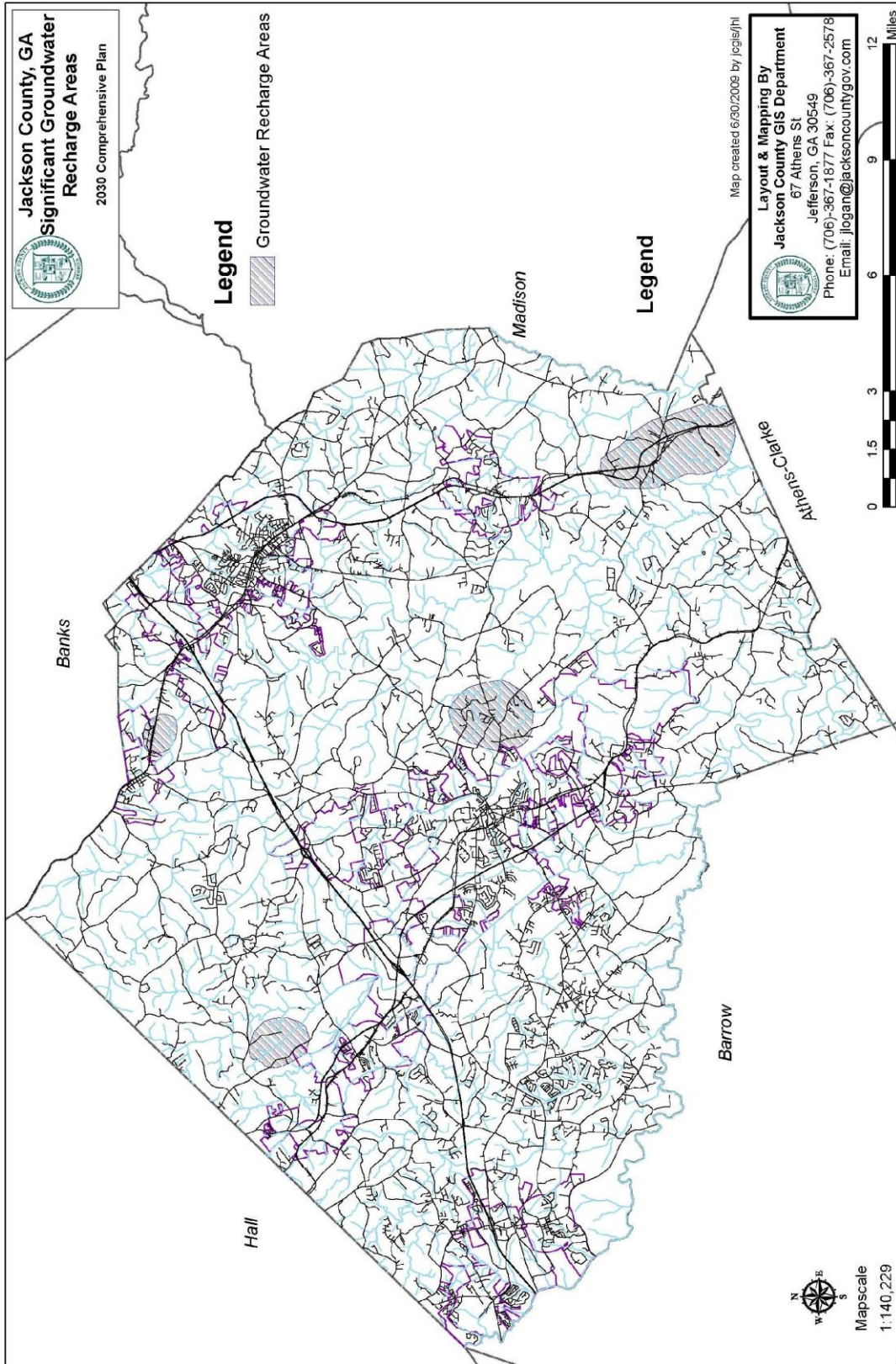
Open spaces and scenic viewsheds continue to be lost to development in the region. Some local zoning ordinances require open space in certain developments, but usually only in planned unit developments. Furthermore, there is typically no requirement to associate the open space with specific natural resources and no evaluation of the quality of the open space. Also, there are few if any local ordinances in the region that require scenic area protection. The regional commission recommends a survey of potential regionally significant scenic areas in order to identify the viewsheds so that detailed strategies can be implemented by local governments (Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, 2004, Regional Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources Element).

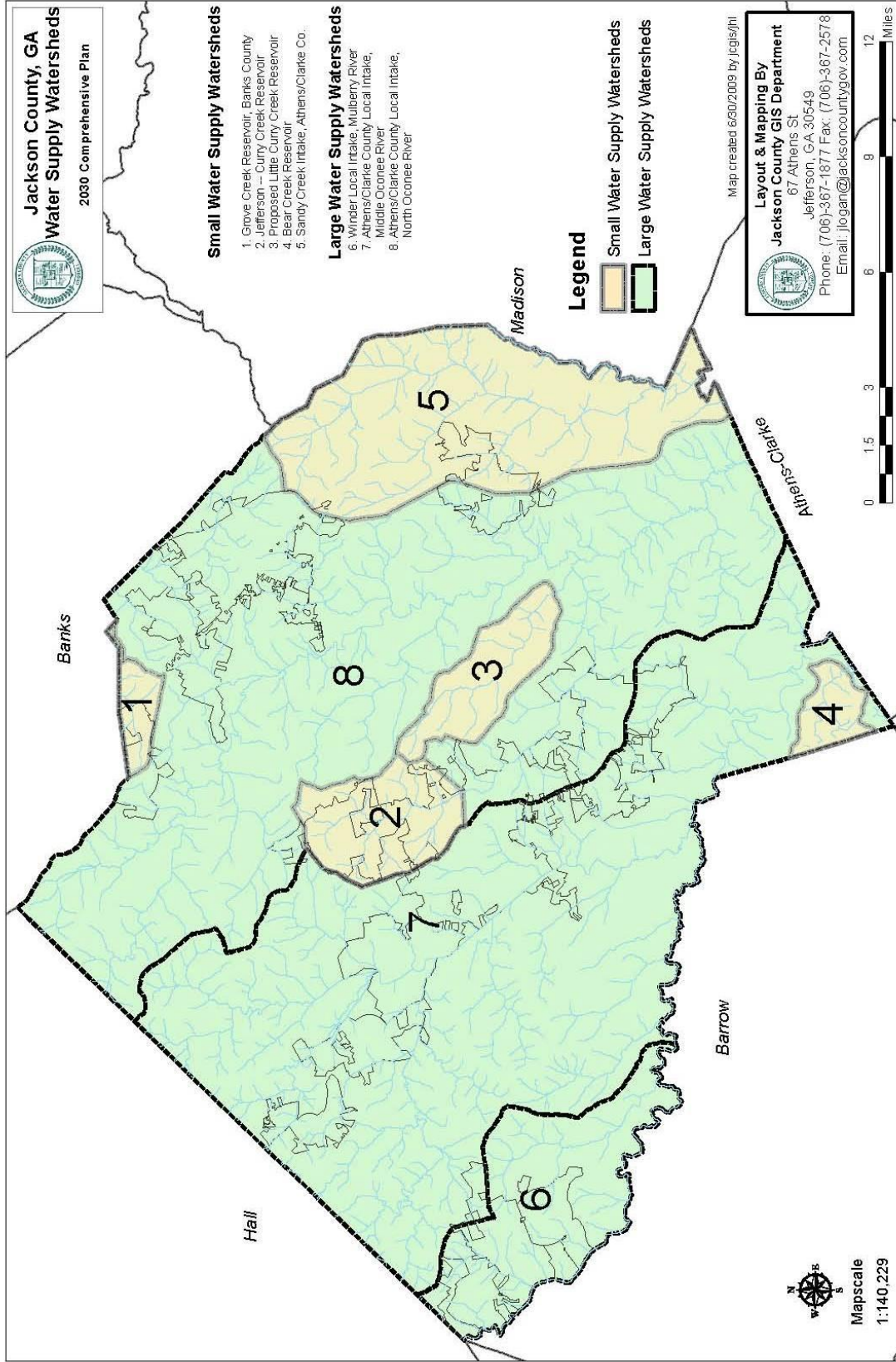
The 1998 comprehensive plan specifically identifies and maps 32 scenic views and sites in Jackson County. They are listed below.

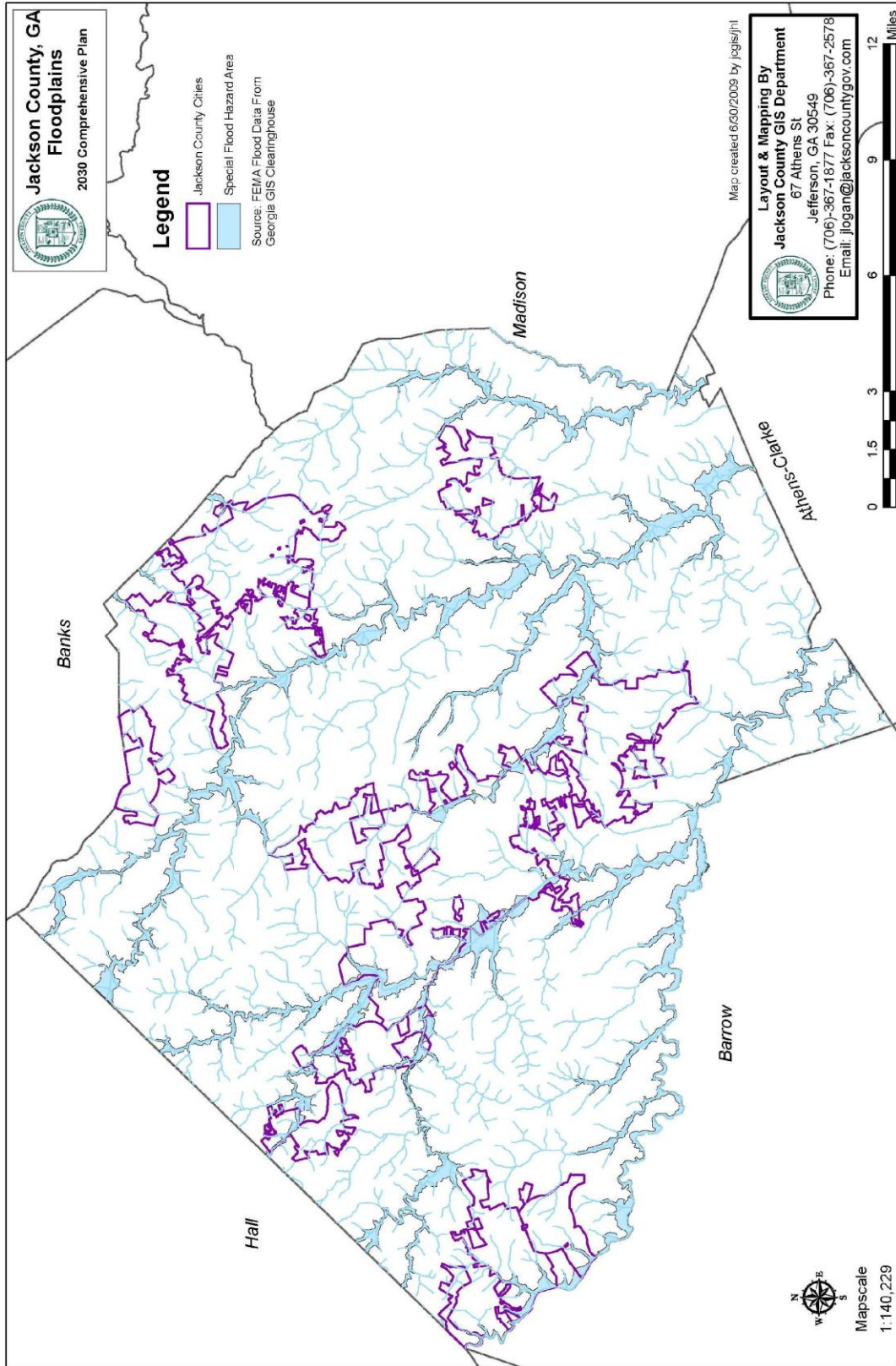
Hurricane Shoals Park	Donald Child Farm	North Oconee River
Crow's Lake	Aaron McKinney Farm	Price Mountain
Georgia Forestry Arboretum	Wayne Miller Farm	Barbara Lizenby Farm
Booker Farm	Allen Creek	John Long Farm
Sell's Mill	Walnut Creek	John Braezeale Farm
Middle Oconee River Swamp	Chetham Farm/Parks Farm	Doug Makemson Property
Jimmy Johnson Farm	Craven Land	Walter Harris Property
Terry Farm	McMullen Farm	Trip Rodgers Property
4-W Farm	Minix (Blackwitch) Farm	Sheilds-Ethridge Farm
Mulberry River	Bob Wood (Hallelujah) Farm	Williamson-Maley-Turner Farm
Indian Creek Area	Braswell Farm	

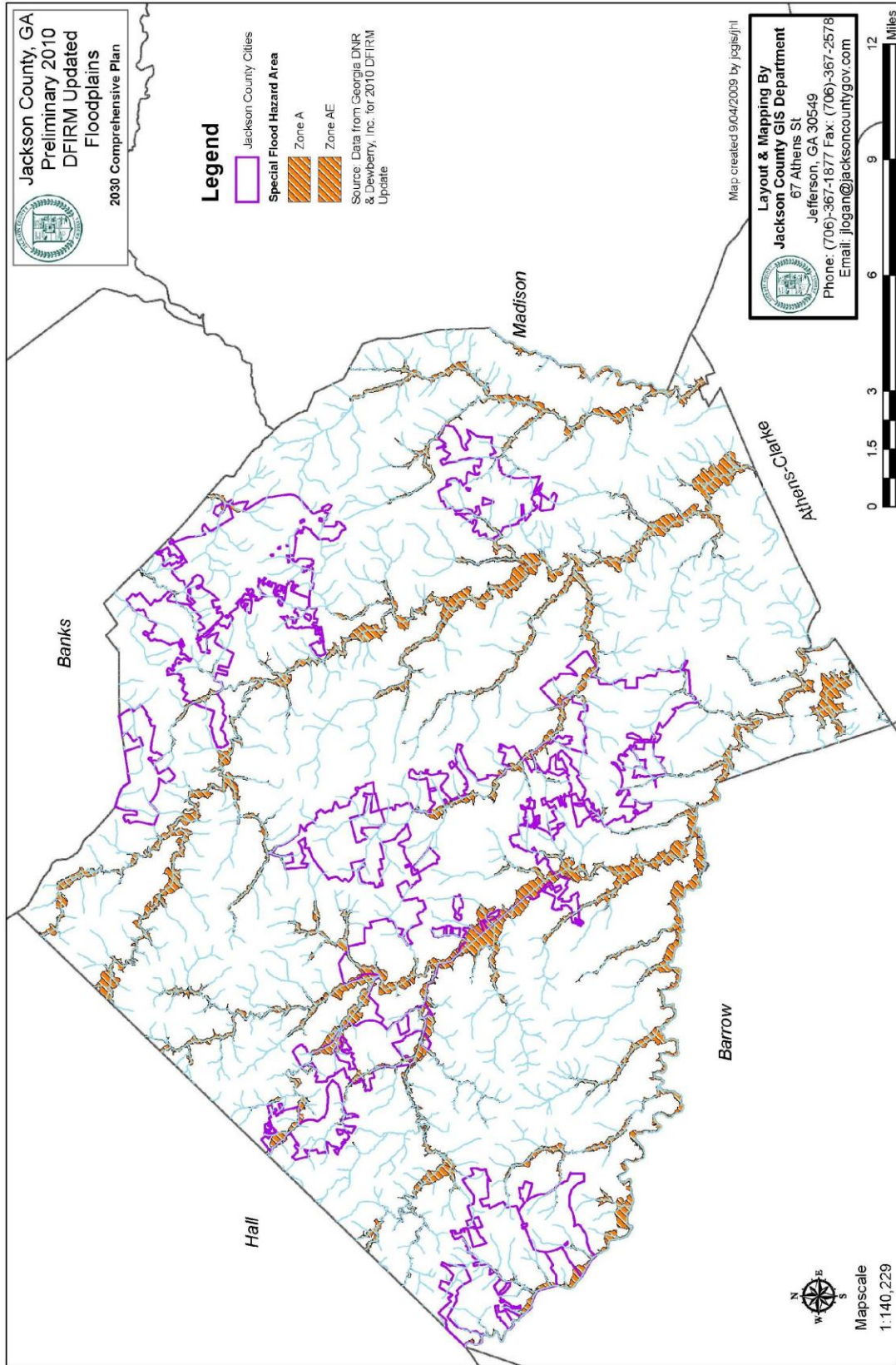
In addition to these 32 sites, the 1998 plan identified scenic road corridors.

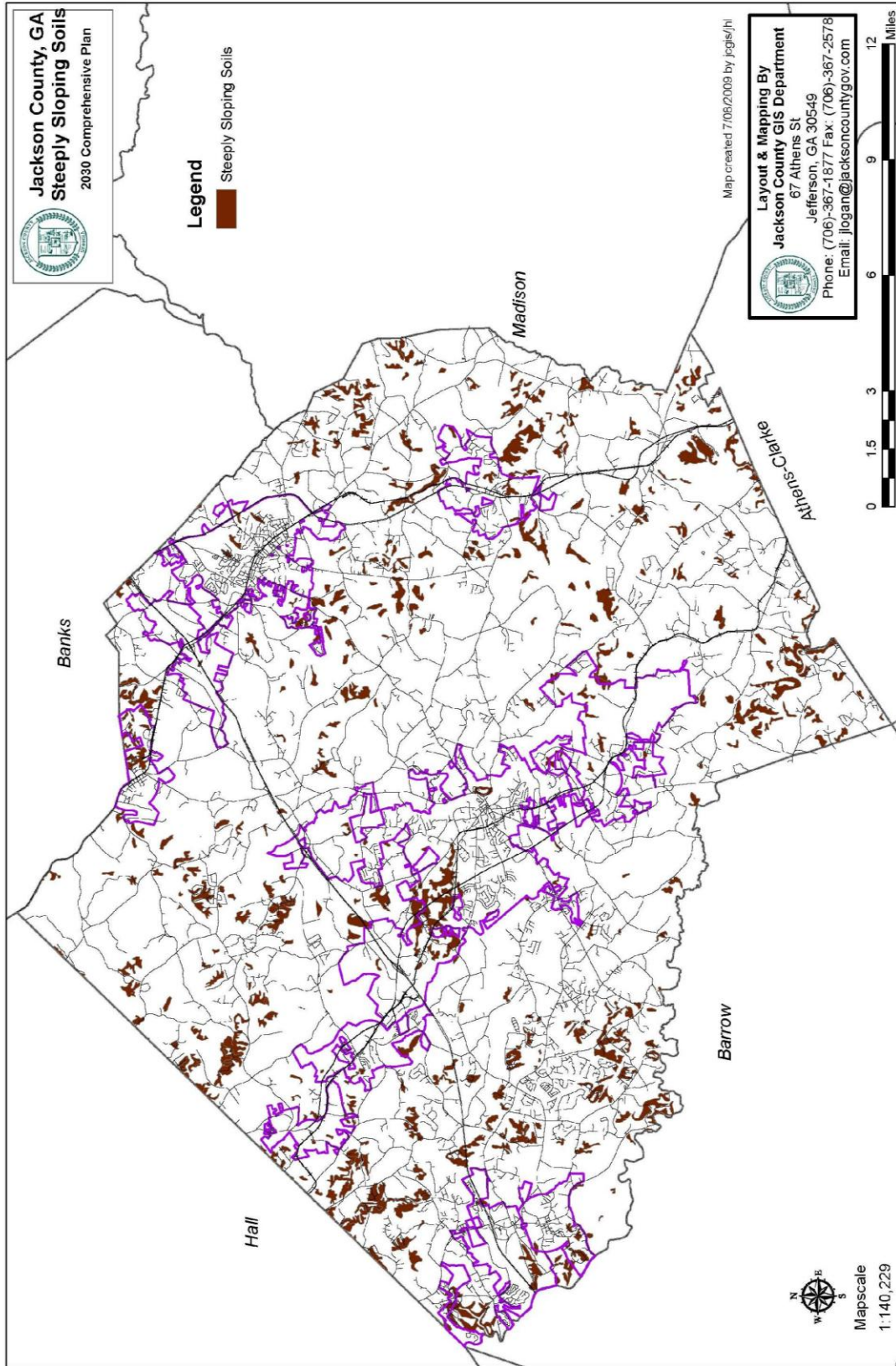


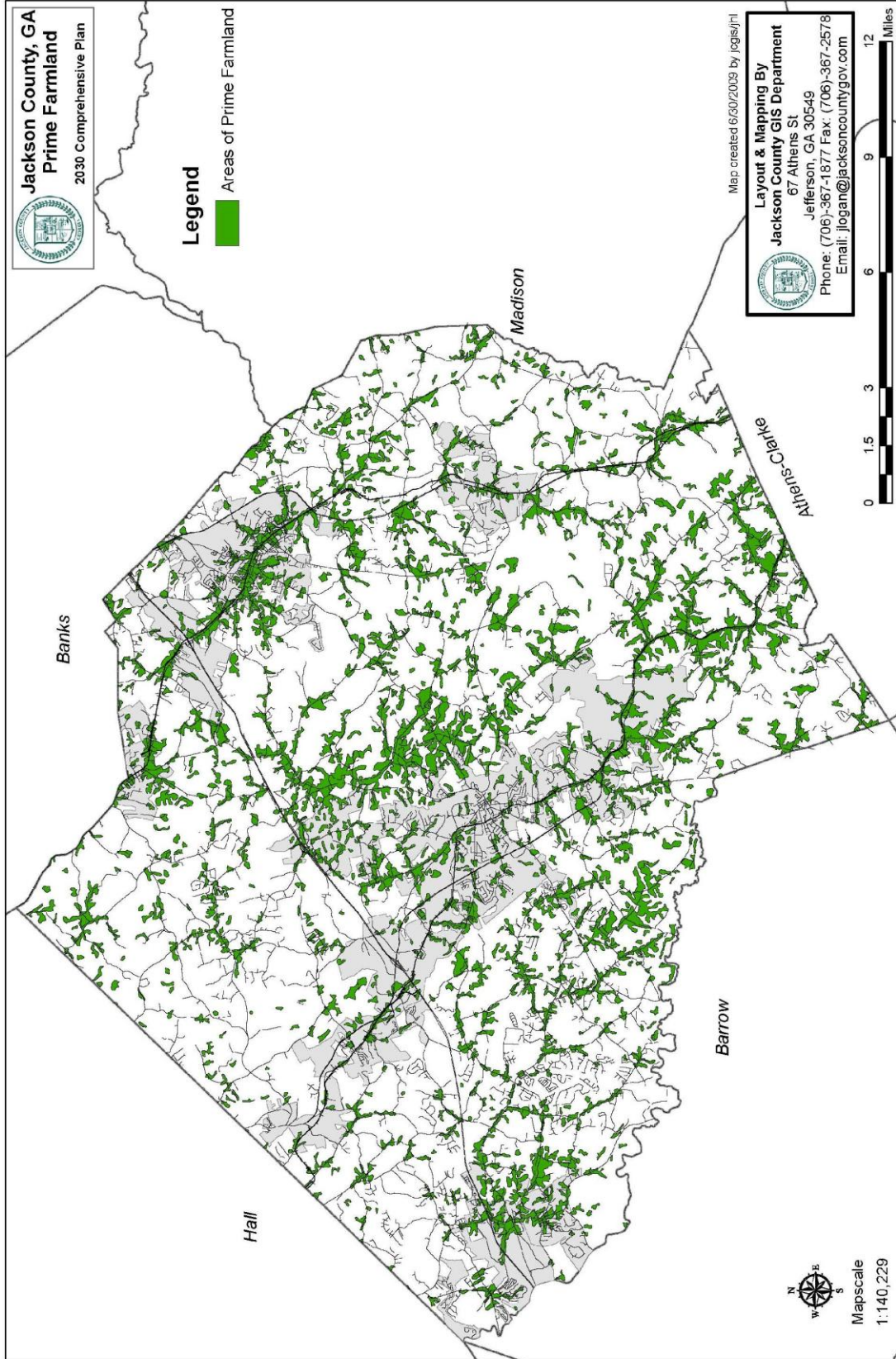


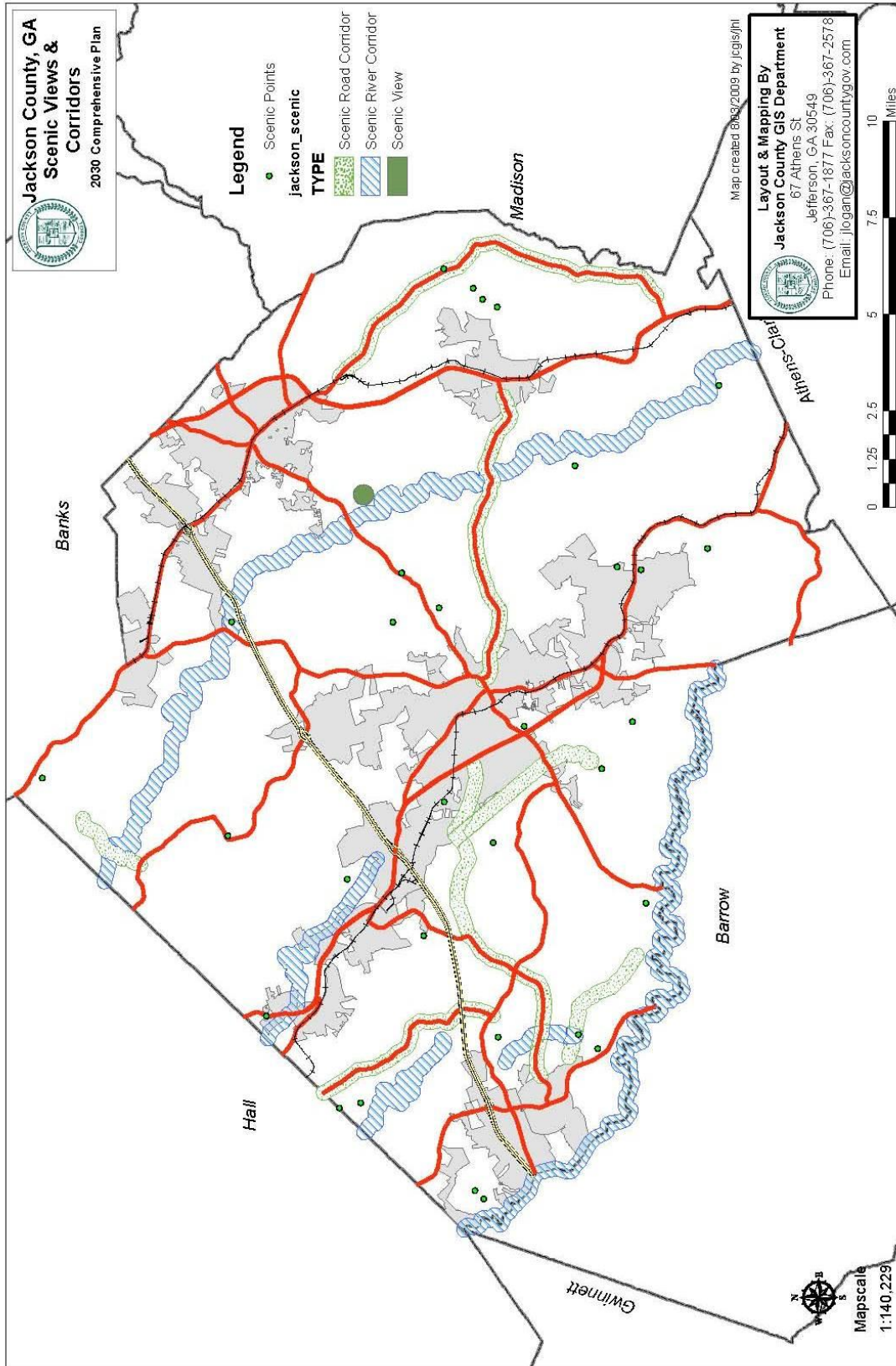












Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

POPULATION

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

Prepared Under Contract By:

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POPULATION

PURPOSE

This analysis provides an inventory and assessment of trends in population growth and in the demographic characteristics of the population. This information will assist the county in determining community service and infrastructure needs, employment opportunities, and housing needed to support the existing and future population. The information gathered in this inventory is assessed to identify significant trends, issues, and opportunities with regard to the local population and its characteristics.

The county can also use the information gathered in this analysis to determine whether the growth trends identified are desirable for the community and whether alternatives for managing or redirecting these trends should be considered. Such an assessment can result in the development of population-specific needs and goals that specify an appropriate rate of growth, and an implementation strategy for managing the community's growth throughout the planning period.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR POPULATION ANALYSES

Local planning requirements require, at minimum, for the community assessment to include the following:¹

(a) Population. Identify trends and issues in population growth and significant changes in the demographic characteristics of the community, including:

Total Population. Evaluate how the total population of the community has changed in recent years, what is projected for the future, and how the community compares, in terms of growth rate, to other areas.

Age Distribution. Evaluate the community's age groupings and how these are projected to change over time. Identify implications for the community.

Race and Ethnicity. Evaluate the community's racial and ethnic composition, how it is changing, and how it compares to neighboring communities. Identify implications these future trends will have for the community.

Income. Evaluate income levels, income distribution and poverty levels in the community and how these have changed and are expected to change over time.

¹ Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning "Local Planning Requirements" (Effective Date: May 1, 2005), Chapter 110-12-1-.07, Data and Mapping Specifications, 110-12-1-.07 Data and Mapping Specifications, (a) Population.

TOTAL POPULATION – HISTORIC AND CURRENT TRENDS

Historic population trends are provided in Table 1 for the county and state. Jackson County is bounded by several counties, including mostly urbanized Gwinnett and Clarke Counties. Jackson County’s decennial population increase from 1990 to 2000 was a substantial 38.6 percent, but that growth rate was less than that witnessed in Banks, Barrow, Gwinnett, and Hall Counties during that decade. From 2000 to 2008, however, Jackson County’s rate of population increase (48.2 percent) was second only to Barrow County (51.9 percent) when compared with surrounding counties.

Table 1
Historic Population Trends and Percent Change, 1990-2008
Jackson County, Surrounding Counties, and State

	1990 (Census)	2000 (Census)	% Change 1990-2000	2008 (July 1)	% Change, 2000-2008
Banks County	10,308	14,422	39.9%	16,760	16.2%
Barrow County	29,721	46,144	55.3%	70,073	51.9%
Clarke County	87,594	101,489	15.9%	114,737	13.1%
Gwinnett County	352,910	588,488	66.7%	789,489	34.2%
Hall County	95,434	139,277	45.9%	184,814	32.7%
Jackson County	30,005	41,589	38.6%	61,620	48.2%
Madison County	21,050	25,730	22.2%	28,200	9.6%
State of Georgia	6,478,149	8,186,453	26.4%	9,685,744	18.3%

Sources: 1990 and 2000 figures and 1990-2000 percent change from U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000 Summary File 1, as reported in *The 2002 Georgia County Guide, 21st Ed.*, edited by Susan R. Boatright and Douglas C. Bachtel (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, October 2002); County 2008 estimates from Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties of Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008” (CO-EST2008-01-13), Release Date: March 19, 2009. 2008 state estimate from Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, “Estimates of the Resident Population by Selected Age Groups for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico: July 1, 2008” (SC-EST2008-01), Release Date: May 14, 2009. Percentage change, 2000-2008 calculated by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.

Municipal and Unincorporated Population Trends

Table 2 provides annual estimates for Jackson County as a whole and each of the nine municipalities in the county. Two cities are split between Jackson and one or more other counties – Braselton is split among four counties, and Maysville is split between two counties. Braselton’s population within Jackson County in 2000 was 701 persons, and Maysville’s population share within Jackson County in 2000 was 575 persons. Thus, in the year 2000, the unincorporated population in Jackson County was 26,328 (63.3 percent of the total county population in 2000).² More recent estimates of the unincorporated population cannot be provided with precision, since estimates for municipalities do not disaggregate the data for municipalities split into more than one county.

² Source: *The 2002 Georgia County Guide, 21st Ed.*, edited by Susan R. Boatright and Douglas C. Bachtel (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, October 2002). This figure disagrees slightly with the consultant’s calculation (see Table 3), which uses April 1 estimates provided in Table 2 rather than the decennial statistics for the municipalities.



Municipalities in Jackson County

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

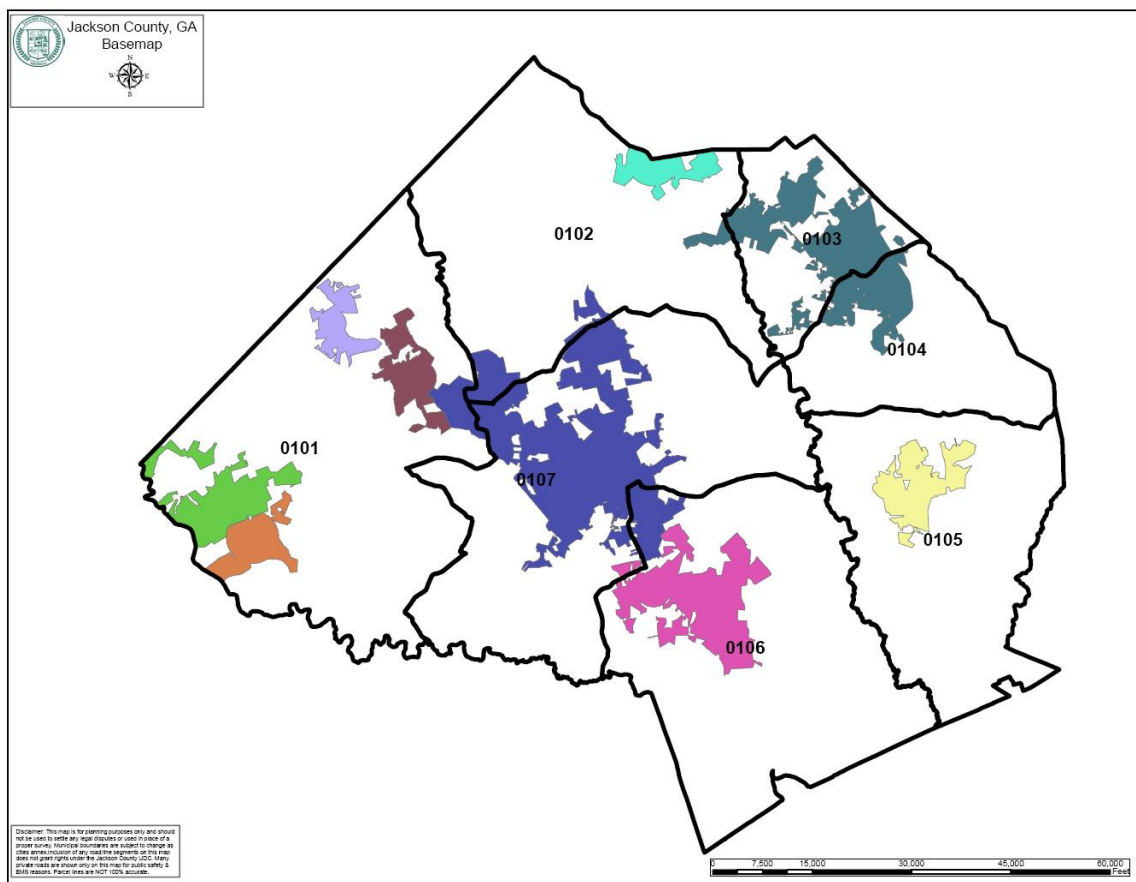
**Table 2
Population Estimates, July 1, 2000-2007
Jackson County and Municipalities**

Total Population	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Jackson County	41,894	43,631	45,486	46,929	49,347	51,999	55,542	59,254
City of Arcade	1,709	1,769	1,823	1,856	1,930	1,901	1,921	1,941
City of Braselton	1,739	1,834	1,938	2,109	2,309	2,519	2,792	3,072
City of Commerce	5,451	5,376	5,563	5,568	5,797	5,871	6,083	6,323
City of Hoschton	1,097	1,221	1,309	1,392	1,432	1,446	1,507	1,563
City of Maysville	1,293	1,405	1,479	1,483	1,509	1,520	1,574	1,633
City of Jefferson	4,082	4,186	4,307	4,398	4,679	5,582	6,427	7,513
City of Nicholson	1,347	1,351	1,359	1,345	1,392	1,530	1,720	1,913
City Pendergrass	501	514	529	538	545	542	557	565
City of Talmo	510	526	541	550	555	585	593	603

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. "Annual Estimates of the Population for Incorporated Places in Georgia, Listed Alphabetically: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007" (SUB-EST2007-04-13). Release Date: July 10, 2008.

Population by Subcounty Area (Census Tract)

In addition to understanding the division of population between incorporated and unincorporated areas, it is also useful to look at the distribution of the population in the county via subareas or parts of the county. This is accomplished by the U.S. Census Bureau with what is termed "Census Tracts," for which detailed decennial statistics are compiled and available for the year 2000. A map of census tracts in 2000 in Jackson County is provided for reference. There are seven census tracts, numbered in a clockwise fashion starting in the southwestern part of the county.



Census Tracts, 2000, Jackson County, with Current Municipal Boundaries

Table 3 provides the distribution of population by census tract in 2000. An estimate of municipal versus unincorporated population as of 2000 is also provided. The tracts and their characteristics are further summarized below:

Census Tract 101 is southwestern Jackson County. It includes the cities of Braselton (part), Hoschton, Talmo, and Pendergrass and (now, through annexation) small, non-residential parts of Jefferson and Commerce. Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 129 bisect this census tract. Almost one-quarter (23.8 percent) of the total population of Jackson County in 2000 resided in this tract. Even with four municipalities, about 71 percent of the population in this census tract resided in unincorporated areas in 2000.

Census Tract 102 includes only Maysville (part) and (now) small parts of Jefferson. It is located in the northwestern part of the county. It abuts Banks County to the north. It has the least amount of city population of all seven tracts (575 in the Jackson County part of Maysville in 2000). Only 10 percent of the county's total population resided in this census tract in 2000.

Census Tract 103 is located in northernmost Jackson County abutting Banks County to the north. Approximately half or more of its land area is comprised of the City of Commerce (the northern two thirds of the city). U.S. Highway 441 bisects this tract. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that about half of Commerce's population in 2000 resided in this tract

(see Table 3). Along with CT 104, this tract had one of the highest percentages of incorporated population (in Commerce).

Census Tract 104 is northeastern Jackson County and contains the southernmost one-third of Commerce. U.S. Highway 441 bisects this tract. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that about half of Commerce’s population in 2000 resided in this tract (see Table 3). Along with CT 103, this tract had one of the highest percentages of incorporated population (in Commerce). However, this tract comprised the smallest share of total county population in 2000, at 9.7 percent.

Census Tract 105 encompasses southeastern Jackson County and includes the City of Nicholson. U.S. Highway 441 bisects this tract. This tract abuts primarily rural Madison County to the east. Almost three quarters (72.9 percent) of the population in 2000 resided in unincorporated areas.

Census Tract 106 is the southernmost part of Jackson County and includes the City of Arcade and a small, primarily residential part of the City of Jefferson. This tract abuts Athens-Clarke County and the southernmost portion of U.S. Highway 129 bisects this tract. Almost two-thirds (64.8 percent) of the population in this tract in 2000 resided in unincorporated areas.

Census Tract 107 encompasses the central and south-central parts of Jackson County. Jefferson is located in the center of the tract. A very small part of Arcade is also located in this tract. The northern and southern parts of the tract are unincorporated. U.S. Highway 129 bisects this tract.

**Table 3
Population by Census Tract (CT), Jackson County, 2000**

	CT 101	CT 102	CT 103	CT 104	CT 105	CT 106	CT 107	County Total
Total Population in Tract	9,920	4,228	4,185	4,022	4,966	6,849	7,419	41,589
% of County Total Pop.	23.8	10.2	10.1	9.7	11.9	16.5	17.8	100%
Population in Households	9,920	4,221	3,917	4,022	4,966	6,792	6,942	40,780
Group Quarters Population	0	7	268	0	0	57	477	809
Est. Population within Cities	2,809	575	2,726	2,725	1,347	2,409	3,382	15,973
Est. Unincorporated Pop.	7,111	3,653	1,459	1,297	3,619	4,440	4,037	25,616
% Unincorporated Pop.	71.7	86.4	34.9	32.2	72.9	64.8	54.4	61.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Summary File 1.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Table 4 provides a compilation of projections of county population from various sources.

**Table 4
Population Projections, Jackson County, Various Sources, 2010-2050**

Source (Date)	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Jackson County Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Plan Amendment (2003)	64,218	97,870	n/a	n/a	n/a
Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority Review (2008)	59,781	85,931	120,303	160,003	200,003
Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (2004)	66,200	98,320	136,480	176,450	215,290
Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (2008)*	73,554	114,972	168,428	230,542	298,844

* Total population derived from projection of households (multiplied by 2.6 persons per household). Source: Table 2-11, regional population assessment, NEGRDC Regional Plan. n/a = not available

Table 5 provides countywide, unincorporated, and municipal population projections to the year 2028, which were prepared by Moreland Altobelli and Associates, Inc. as a part of the Countywide Roads Plan (July Draft, 2009).

**Table 5
Population Projections, 2008-2028
Jackson County and Municipalities**

Jurisdiction	2008	2013	2015	2018	2023	2028	2000 - 2028 Percentage Growth	2000 - 2028 Average Annual Growth Rate
Jackson County	61,620	68,980	72,531	77,858	86,736	95,614	129.90%	4.64%
Arcade	2,019	2,421	2,565	2,781	3,141	3,501	113.11%	4.04%
Braselton	3,195	3,849	4,169	4,648	5,446	6,245	417.80%	14.92%
Commerce	6,575	7,161	7,431	7,836	8,511	9,186	73.58%	2.63%
Hoschton	1,625	1,873	1,983	2,149	2,424	2,700	152.33%	5.44%
Jefferson	7,813	8,893	9,474	10,345	11,798	13,251	246.43%	8.80%
Maysville	1,698	1,958	2,065	2,226	2,495	2,763	121.59%	4.34%
Nicholson	1,989	2,379	2,542	2,786	3,194	3,601	188.80%	6.74%
Pendergrass	588	659	691	740	820	900	108.91%	3.89%
Talmo	627	757	805	877	998	1,118	134.39%	4.80%
Unincorporated	35,491	39,031	40,807	43,470	47,909	52,348	108.14%	3.86%

Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. July 2009. Draft Countywide Roads Plan, Table 25.

POPULATION GROWTH PRESSURES FROM THREE REGIONS

Population growth is a function, in major part, of regional growth trends. Before the national housing collapse, Jackson County was in the top ten fastest growing counties in America in terms of population. Those trends are attributed to Jackson County's location at the edge of three fast-growth regions:

1) **Metro Atlanta (Gwinnett County):** Gwinnett County has a population of more than three quarters of a million people. Much of the growth the county has experienced (and will continue to experience) is the flight of people seeking a better quality of life no longer available in a major urban area. In addition to the flight of people, the reaches of the metro Atlanta urban area itself have already pushed several miles into Jackson County's borders through the City of Braselton.

2) **Athens Metro Area (University of Georgia):** The second major urban area pushing on our border is Athens-Clarke County, directly south of Jackson County. It is also one of the smallest counties in Georgia. Athens-Clarke County is simply not big enough to handle additional growth as both the general population and university population expands. With two major arterial corridors, U.S. Highway 129 and U.S. Highway 441 connecting the two counties, Jackson County is within convenient commuting distance to Athens and therefore is poised to receive the overflow population growth from Athens-Clarke County.

3) **Gainesville Metro Area:** While not as significant as the Atlanta and Athens regions, there is also pressure on Jackson County from the Gainesville-Hall County area from new residents seeking a better quality life, especially in the form of school system services.

CAPACITY FOR FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Population growth is a function in part of the capacity for residential development in a given county. There is tremendous capacity for future residential growth in Jackson County. As part of this effort, the county conducted a brief analysis (using Geographic Information System technology) of vacant land and agricultural forest land in Jackson County, in an effort to estimate the future capacity for residential development.

By 2050, Jackson County will likely "build out" much like Gwinnett County is nearing buildout now. During the next 40 years most if not all of the farmland will convert to residential uses. The buildout analysis reveals that countywide, Jackson County currently (2009) has 151,784 acres of land that are vacant/ developable for residential uses. This includes agricultural and forest lands.

Given Jackson County's location, it is evident that forty years from now, the overall population density will increase significantly to something beginning to approach the population densities of abutting counties where the residential growth pressures are initiating. For perspective, consider that the population density (per acre) *in the year 2000* for abutting Gwinnett County was 2.12 persons per acre, and for abutting Athens-Clarke County in 2000 it was 1.31 persons per acre (source: regional population assessment, NEGRDC Regional Plan). Population density in those abutting counties has undoubtedly increased since then, but we offer those figures for perspective.

It is very reasonable to assume that by 2050 the residential land and agricultural and forest land will be largely developed in Jackson County. To be conservative, we assume in the year 2050 a density of one person per every acre of land that is developable for residential in the county including municipalities. Some lands may not develop at all, but others will be developed at higher density. A minimum reasonable assumption, in our opinion, is that Jackson County will add one person for each of its 151,784 acres now vacant, a population density which if achieved would be much lower than Athens-Clarke County and substantially lower than Gwinnett County in the year 2000.

If one accepts this conservative assumption, there is the likelihood Jackson County will add an additional 151,784 persons (i.e., one person for each vacant acre) in addition to the 61,620 people living in the county as of 2008 according to official estimates of the U.S. Census Bureau. A reasonable “buildout” capacity of Jackson County is much higher, at some 456,000 residents.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age is among the most important dimensions of the population. There can be vast differences in the needs of children versus the elderly. Age has a relationship to the labor force – workers include the population ages 16 years and over through retirement age and sometimes beyond. Age has important relationships to housing and can help predict likely first-time homebuyers, renters, owners of second homes, etc. Age can also affect the political situation: for instance, in places where there is a large percentage of elderly, they sometimes vote down bond referendums for schools.

The relationship of the age of population to the needs for community facilities and services is also very important. For instance, a high elderly population often translates into a need for health care and nursing and personal care homes. On the other hand, a town with many children signals a need for schools, day care centers, and playgrounds. More information on the implications of age is provided by looking at characteristics of various age groups, as provided in Table 6.

Table 6
Population by Age Group, 2000 and 2008
Jackson County

Age Grouping	2000	% of Total	2008	% of Total
Under 5 Years	3,021	7.3%	5,208	8.4%
5 to 13 Years	5,720	13.7%	8,181	13.3%
14 to 17 Years	2,330	5.6%	3,439	5.6%
18 to 24 Years	3,626	8.7%	4,741	7.7%
25 to 44 Years	13,215	31.8%	19,842	32.2%
45 to 64 Years	9,356	22.5%	13,354	21.7%
65 Years and Older	4,321	10.4%	6,855	11.1%
Total	41,589	100%	61,620	100%

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Selected Age Groups and Sex for Counties in Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008.” Release Date: May 14, 2009.

Ages 0 to Less Than 5 Years

The number of persons age five years and younger is significant in Jackson County is significant and has increased over time both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total population. Due to the availability of “starter” type housing built in Jackson County during the decade, the county is attractive to first-time home buyers who are also starting families. This is quite significant in terms of planning for future expansion of the county as well as Commerce and Jefferson public school systems. Jackson County witnessed an increase of almost 2,200 young children in just eight years, the vast majority of whom will become public school students in the county or city school systems. The implication is that the school systems should be prepared for a major increase in elementary school enrollment during the next several years,

assuming that these young families will continue to reside in Jackson County. Pre-school services will also be in demand in the near future in Jackson County. Given the availability of starter housing in Jackson County, there is every reason to believe the 0-5 age group will continue to increase in the future.

Ages 5 to 13 Years

The 5-to-13 year age category increased substantially in Jackson County from 2000 to 2008, by 2,461 persons. That figure is representative of the increase in student populations during the last several years. As with the 0-5 year age group, first-time homebuyers are bringing their young children and the result is an increase in public elementary and middle school enrollment. Because Jackson County is attractive to first-time home buyers, many of whom have elementary and middle school-age children, there is every reason to believe that this age group will continue to increase in the future in Jackson County. This is based on the assumption that young families with public school age children will continue to reside in Jackson County, as opposed to moving out during their children's tenure in public elementary and middle schools in the county.

Ages 14 to 17 and 18 to 24 Years

The age 14-to-17 and 18-to-24 age groups represent the high-school age population and the youngest segment of the labor force. Although retirement-age people are increasingly taking entry-level, lower-paying jobs, it is this segment of the population that will supply the labor force for retail and service jobs in the county. The absolute numbers of people in these age categories have increased in Jackson County from 2000 to 2008, but in terms of percentage of the total population, they have remained steady or decreased. A decline in the 18-to-24 age group is not surprising, given that many persons in this age category will graduate from high school and go on to attend college somewhere outside the county. No colleges or universities are located in the county, and as of yet Jackson County does not appear to be a commuter location for students of the University of Georgia in Athens (other than those who are already Jackson County residents).

Ages 25 to 44 Years

The 25 to 44 age group represents the prime working-age population. This demographic group includes first time home buyers, as well as, households that are upgrading housing for the first or second time. Due to the attractiveness and affordability of single-family housing in Jackson County, and the good reputations of public schools, it is not surprising that this age group witnessed one of the largest absolute increases of all age groups in Jackson County (more than 6,600 persons in eight years). This appears to also represent increasing strength in terms of total labor force, also suggesting that a growing labor force will help the county to attract additional industries and businesses.

Ages 45 to 64 Years

The 45 to 64 age group is the older segment of the labor force. From 2000 to 2008, this segment of the population increased substantially, by almost 4,000 persons. Persons in this age category typically have the greatest amount of disposable income when compared with other age groups. They are not as likely to change residences, although the more affluent households may look for and purchase second homes. This group is probably less demanding

of public facilities and services such as schools and parks. Residents in this age category also have children who have generally completed their high school educations and are going to college. This may help to explain the slight decrease in percentage of total population in this age category in Jackson County, from 2000 to 2008, despite the significant absolute increase.

Ages 65 Years and Older

In Jackson County, the 65-years-and-older age group increased in absolute terms and increased slightly as a percentage of total population from 2000 to 2008, as indicated in Table 6. The implications of an increasingly elderly population are noted below.

The 65-years-and-older age group is commonly referred to as the “elderly” and the “retirement age” population. Most of the people in this age group are no longer in the work force. While some elderly households may have more disposable income than ever before in their lifetimes, many elderly households will have limited incomes because they are no longer earning wages and salaries. Persons who own residences in this age group are likely to eventually seek alternative housing, because they may own large homes that provide more living space than needed, they have little desire to upkeep residential grounds and structures, they experience a need for closer societal relationships with others as family relationships devolve, and because they are more likely than other age groups to need assisted care or medical attention. Because of differences in life expectancy between men and women, a very high proportion of older persons is and will be women. The differences in life expectancy also contribute to the number of elderly women living alone, many of whom are likely to have inadequate income.³

Nationally, one of the more important changes is that, for the first time in history, the population will have roughly equal numbers of people in every age group, which will make the age picture of the country look more like a pillar than the classic pyramid.⁴

RACIAL AND ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 7 shows the distribution of the total population by race for the years 2000 and 2008 in Jackson County. The vast majority of the population increase in Jackson County from 2000 to 2008 has been the White alone race, which increased to almost 95 percent of the total population in 2008 (up from 90.2 percent in 2000). The Black or African American population in Jackson County increased by about 1,500 persons during the eight-year period, but declined slightly as a percentage of the total population. Very slight increases in other races, as a percentage of total population, were observed for other races such as Asians and persons with more than one race, from 2000 to 2008 in Jackson County. The absolute increase in the numbers of Asians (plus more than 600) represents one small trend of diversity to counteract the overall trend toward even greater homogeneity. One would not expect, based on these numbers, to see a significant shift in the racial composition in Jackson County in future years. Rather, continued homogeneity (White alone) is forecasted for Jackson County’s future population.

³ Howe, Deborah A., Nancy J. Chapman, and Sharon A. Baggett. 1994. *Planning for an Aging Society*. Planning Advisory Service Report Number 451. Chicago: American Planning Association.

⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. February 2003. *Issue Papers on Demographic Trends Important to Housing*.

**Table 7
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2000 and 2008
Jackson County**

Race	2000	% of Total	2008	% of Total
White alone	37,506	90.2%	55,125	94.6%
Black or African American alone	3,257	7.8%	4,759	7.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	77	0.2%	88	0.1%
Asian Alone	417	1.0%	1,033	1.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	3	--	3	--
Two or More Races	329	0.8%	612	0.9%
Total	41,589	100%	61,620	100%
Hispanic Origin*	3,201	7.7%	4,647	7.5%

*Note: Hispanic origin is not a race, but an ethnic origin. It is therefore not included in the percentage of distribution by race.

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for Counties in [STATE]: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008." CC-EST2008-6RACE-[ST-FIPS]: Release Date: May 14, 2009.

From 2000 decennial census data by census tract, the Black or African American population in 2000 was concentrated primarily in three census tracts: CT106 (including Arcade and a large unincorporated area), with 993 persons (30.7 percent); CT 107 (including Jefferson unincorporated areas), with 842 persons (26 percent of all Blacks or African Americans); and CT 103 (northern Commerce and unincorporated areas), with 767 persons (23.7 percent). All other census tracts had less than 200 persons of that race in 2000.

Persons with Hispanic origin (which is not a race) increased by some 1,400 persons from 2000 to 2008 in Jackson County but declined slightly as a percentage of the total population. It should be noted here that the census estimates report a much higher number of persons of Hispanic Origin than that reported in the decennial census for Jackson County (3,201 versus 1,249 persons, respectively). It cannot be determined for sure, but it could be that the difference is attributed either to sampling methods used in the census estimates, or perhaps an upward adjustment of the Hispanic Origin population based on historic trends of undercounting. Regardless, while the increase of Hispanics shown by the Census estimates is not insignificant, the decline as a percentage of the total population suggests that Jackson County is not likely to witness a major influx of Hispanics in the future which has begun to transform other places, such as adjacent Gainesville-Hall County.

INCOME

Table 8 provides a comparison of Jackson County and the state in 1999 in terms of various income measures. Jackson County had slightly lower median family, median household and per capita incomes in 1999 when compared with the state as a whole. The median household income takes into account both family and non-family incomes. A median rather than "mean" is used as the reported average, since median numbers are not skewed by a few very large household incomes.

**Table 8
Comparison of Income Measures, 1999
Jackson County and State of Georgia**

Income in 1999	Jackson County	State of Georgia
Median Family Income	\$46,211	\$49,280
Median Household Income	\$40,349	\$42,433
Per Capita Income	\$17,808	\$21,154

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (SF3, P53, P77, P80), and *The 2002 Georgia County Guide* (21st Ed.). University of Georgia.

Table 9 provides comparison of households by income groupings in 1999 and 2005-2007 for Jackson County. Trends from 1999 to 2005-2007 can be described in terms of changes in absolute terms (increase or decreases in the total number of households) and percentage terms for each income classification. First, with the significant growth in the number of households in Jackson County, the total household increase in most but not all income groupings over time.

**Table 9
Households by Income Grouping, 1999 and 2005-2007
Jackson County**

Income Grouping in 1999	Jackson County, 1999		Jackson County, 2005-2007	
	Households	Percent of Total Households	Households	Percent of Total Households
Less than \$10,000	1,623	10.8%	1,458	7.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,013	6.7%	1,657	8.3%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	1,008	6.7%	1,371	6.8%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	1,012	6.7%	1,473	7.3%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	1,031	6.9%	1,080	5.4%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	878	5.8%	1,069	5.3%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	871	5.8%	1,780	8.9%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	928	6.2%	757	3.8%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	884	5.9%	721	3.6%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	1,550	10.3%	1,912	9.5%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	1,718	11.4%	1,597	8.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,328	8.8%	2,651	13.2%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	584	3.9%	1,536	7.6%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	205	1.4%	353	1.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	227	1.5%	358	1.8%
\$200,000 or more	169	1.1%	307	1.5%
Total Households	15,029	99.9%	20,080	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (SF3, Table P52). U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

The most significant increases in households occurred in the \$75,000 to \$99,999 and \$100,000 to \$124,999 income groups – in these two groups alone, Jackson County added an estimated 2,275 households between the reporting periods. This represents almost half (45 percent) of the total household increase in Jackson County during the reporting period. Similarly, every household income grouping from \$75,000 and above increased as a percentage of total households from 1999 to 2005-2007. These are positive and significant trends in that they represent the movement of much more wealthy households, with more buying power, into Jackson County. At the lowest end of the income spectrum, the absolute number of the poorest households (less than \$10,000) declined during the time period; however, increases (in absolute and percentage terms) occurred in the income categories between \$10,000 and \$24,999, as well as decreases in households with incomes in certain low-middle and middle-income groups.

Per capita incomes for more recent years are provided in Table 10, for Jackson County, surrounding counties, and the state. As in 1999, Jackson County's per capita income figures have remained lower than those for the state in 2005 through 2007. Jackson County's per capita income figures were higher than the corresponding figures for Barrow, Clarke, and Madison Counties but generally lower than those for Banks, Gwinnett, and Hall Counties.

**Table 10
Comparison of Per Capita Income (Dollars), 2005-2007
Jackson County, Surrounding Counties, and State**

	2005 (\$)	2006 (\$)	2007 (\$)
Banks County	27,321	26,936	28,927
Barrow County	24,901	25,465	26,222
Clarke County	23,532	24,190	24,842
Gwinnett County	31,773	32,542	33,163
Hall County	28,143	28,808	29,623
Jackson County	27,058	27,105	27,932
Madison County	25,854	26,077	27,092
State of Georgia	31,260	32,299	33,499

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, personal income and Per Capita Personal Income by County for Georgia, 2005-2007. April 2009.

In terms of future trends, it is likely that as households continue to move into Jackson County, income measures will continue to increase. As one example, suburbanizing Forsyth County has considerably lower income statistics when compared with the state as a whole in 1980 and even 1990, but by the decade of the 2000s it had become one of the wealthiest counties in the state. Such a trend is possible in Jackson County, though perhaps not as acute in terms of a transformation. Clearly, higher-income households are moving into Jackson County and will continue to do so. However, due to lower prices of land and more affordable housing generally, Jackson County is likely to continue witnessing absolute increases in the numbers of low and moderate income households over time.

INCOME, POVERTY STATUS AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INCOME

Analysis by Census Tracts

Like with other statistics reported in this analysis, it can be useful to observe income, poverty, and public assistance conditions for various subareas of the county (i.e., Census Tract data). Table 11 provides comparisons of income measures in 1999 from the 2000 decennial census, along with data for poverty status and public assistance to households. Census Tract 101 (southwestern Jackson County; see prior description) led all census tracts with considerably higher median household, median family, and per capita incomes when compared with the county as a whole. Census Tract 107 (including Jefferson) was also higher in terms of these income measures than the county as a whole. All other census tracts fell below the 1999 county incomes. The lowest per capita incomes in 1999 were found in Census Tract 106 (Arcade and unincorporated area), which also had the highest number of persons below poverty level in 1999 and the highest number of households with public assistance income in 1999. Census Tracts 103 and 104 (the Commerce area) had the lowest median household incomes in 1999 of all tracts in Jackson County. Though scoring the highest in terms of median family and median household incomes, Census Tract 101 (southwestern Jackson County) also had the second highest number of persons with income in 1999 below poverty level.

Table 11
Income, Poverty Status, and Public Assistance Income
in 1999 by Census Tract, Jackson County

Income in 1999	CT 101	CT 102	CT 103	CT 104	CT 105	CT 106	CT 107	County Total
Median Household Income	\$46,810	\$37,866	\$34,079	\$34,153	\$40,000	\$36,703	\$42,816	\$40,349
Median Family Income	\$54,844	\$42,987	\$38,125	\$42,564	\$46,618	\$39,375	\$49,055	\$46,211
Per Capita Income	\$19,113	\$18,099	\$16,788	\$19,281	\$17,272	\$15,944	\$17,751	\$17,808
Persons with Income in 1999 Below Poverty Level	1,010	548	542	527	429	1,051	771	4,878
Households with Public Assistance Income in 1999	76	71	49	33	48	95	58	430

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Summary File 1.

Sources of Income

Table 12 indicates the various sources of income of Jackson County households as of 2005-2007, and it provides percentage comparisons for the state. Households may obtain income from one, or more than one, source of income.

Table 12
Sources of Household Income, 2005-2007
Jackson County and State

Source of Income in Past 12 Months	Jackson County		Georgia
	Households, 2005-2007	Percent of Total Households, 2005-2007	Percent of Total Households, 2005-2007
No Earnings	3,870	19.3%	17.3%
Wage or Salary Income	15,365	76.5%	79.8%
Self-employment Income	2,471	12.3%	11.1%
Interest, Dividends, or Net Rental Income	3,078	15.3%	19.3%
Social Security Income	6,025	30.0%	23.6%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	1,039	5.2%	3.7%
Public Assistance Income	297	1.5%	1.4%
Retirement Income	2,757	13.7%	15.4%
Receipt of Food Stamps	1,884	9.4%	8.2%
Total Households	20,080	--	--

Source: 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, Tables B19051, B19052, B19053, B19054, B19055, B19056, B19057, and B19059.

In comparison with sources of incomes for households in the state as a whole, Jackson County's households in 2005-2007 were slightly less reliant on wage and salary income, interest, dividends, or net rental income, and retirement income. Jackson County households were slightly more reliant than households in the state as a whole for self-employment income, social security income, public assistance income, and receipt of food stamps. Jackson County also has a slightly higher percentage than the state of households with no earnings; almost one in five households in Jackson County have no earnings meaning that those households are supported financially by others, such as family members.

Some of the other data regarding sources of income are surprising – for instance, social security provides an income source for almost one-third (30 percent) of Jackson County's households. This finding would suggest that there is a disproportionate number of senior households living in Jackson County – however, it may merely suggest that parents and adult offspring are residing together more so than in the past. Similarly, self-employment is a significant source of income for households in Jackson County.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

While local planning requirements for population analyses no longer require an exploration into the educational attainment of the population, it is valuable to compile and analyze school enrollment statistics. Table 13 provides a comparison of total school enrollment figures for 2000 and 2005-2007. These figures are valuable from the standpoint of grasping net increases in public school enrollment. Some (relatively small) percentages of students are in private rather than public schools. A compilation of school enrollment figures for the county and city school systems in Jackson County for the years reported would provide a more accurate figure in terms of exactly how public school enrollment has increased in the past 5 to 7 years. However, that

research is beyond the scope of this report, and the statistics in Table 11 reveal general trends that are useful for long-range planning.

Between 2000 and the 2005-2007 reporting period for estimates in the American Community Survey, total school enrollment for residents of Jackson County increased by almost 4,000 students. The largest increase for the school types was for high-school grade students (Grades 9 to 12), which increased by more than 1,000 students. The increases in students attending grades 5 through 8 was also significant, at 951 students. Interestingly, the estimates reveal nearly a doubling of undergraduate school enrollment from Jackson County. This might be attributed to families and households locating within Jackson County due to close proximity to the University of Georgia, and/or quite possibly, an overflow into Jackson County of students community to the university campus in nearby Athens.

Table 13
Enrollment by Level of School by Type of School, 2000 and 2005-2007
Population Three Years and Over, Jackson County

	2000 (Census)	2005-2007 (Estimates)	Increase, 2000 to 2005-2007
Total Persons 3+ Years	39,788	52,668	12,880
Enrolled in School	9,885	13,855	3,970
Enrolled in Kindergarten	689	1,058	369
Enrolled in Grades 1 – 4	2,698	3,474	776
Enrolled in Grades 5 – 8	2,522	3,473	951
Enrolled in Grades 9 – 12	2,108	3,137	1,029
Enrolled in College, Undergraduate	872	1,705	833
Graduate or Professional School	160	197	37

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3, Table P52. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B14001.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The U.S. Census Bureau provides data on various types of disabilities. These data are compiled for purposes of meeting minimum requirements for housing analyses (see the next chapter of this technical appendix).

Table 14 provides data for Jackson County residents ages 5 years and over with disabilities, in 2000 and 2005-2007. In 2000, approximately 11.6 percent of the population had a disability and 10.6 percent had two or more types of disabilities.

The 2005-2007 estimates indicate some remarkable increases in the numbers of people with disabilities in Jackson County. While the 2005-2007 data are estimates that are subject to large ranges of sampling error, it is evident that as the population ages, the incidence of disabilities also increases.

Table 14
Disabilities by Type, 2000 and 2005-2007
Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population 5 Year and Over
Jackson County

Disability Status	2000	%	2005-2007	%
With a sensory disability	675	1.8	3,215	6.3
With a physical disability	1,036	2.7	5,281	10.4
With a mental disability	638	1.7	3,966	7.8
With any disability	4,410	11.6	9,166	18.1
Two or more disabilities	4,132	10.9	4,869	9.6
Total Universe	37,865	--	50,690	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census. SF3, 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B18001 through B18006.

INITIAL POPULATION ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Rate and Extent of Population Growth

Until the economic recession, mortgage foreclosure crisis, and rising unemployment trends which began in 2007 and 2008 and have continued through the first half of 2009, Jackson County was one of the fastest-growing counties in Georgia in terms of annual population increases. At issue is whether that pace of population increase is desirable, or whether the comprehensive plan should establish policies and programs designed to monitor, guide, or even regulate the pace of population increase.

Geographic Distribution of Population

At issue is the extent to which the mostly scattered pattern of population growth, in virtually all areas of the county, is desirable. There are various adopted plan policies that would suggest the "sprawl" type of development pattern is not desirable, and in fact, the plan promotes a different pattern that would result in more efficient development patterns that will have less of an impact on the county's future provision of public facilities and services. The geographic distribution of population and the division among rural and municipal populations should be the subjects of significant consideration and debate in the comprehensive planning process.

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

TRANSPORTATION

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

Prepared Under Contract By:

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TRANSPORTATION

Transportation can be divided into air travel, water transportation, and many forms of ground transportation. Air travel includes not only general aviation airports but private landing strips, military posts with air operations, and even helicopter landing facilities. Water transportation includes port facilities, marinas, ferry transportation, and other considerations.

Ground transportation is usually the central focus of local transportation planning efforts. It includes highways, streets, and roads (which are themselves multi-modal in nature and include cars, trucks, bicycles, and pedestrians in addition to buses or public transit), railroads, multi-use pathways, off-street bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. Ground transportation can be further divided into “private” and “public,” the latter including (in addition to public streets) public transportation systems such as rural public transit.

Local transportation plans may involve all of the following, and more: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements for airports, state freight mobility, and other statewide transportation plans, regional transportation plans prepared by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), service delivery by regional transportation special districts, and the need to coordinate with adjacent county and city governments and other departments in the same local government (parks and recreation, public works, etc.). We plan transportation systems with several outcomes in mind: safety, mobility, accessibility, connectivity, congestion mitigation, efficiency, and convenience, among others.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Jackson County Airport

Jackson County operates its own airport and has an airport department and airport manager to oversee the airport. The overall mission is to “provide safe and adequate aviation facilities to support community requirements for access to the nation’s air traffic system and support general aviation as a viable part of the community’s transportation network” (FY 2009 Budget). The airport also intends to promote the growth of aviation commerce through the aggressive development of an Airport Master Plan that maximizes benefits to the community within acceptable geographical and environmental limits.

Jackson County received an AIRGeorgia grant for \$2,927,923 to complete a 5,000-foot runway expansion in order to accommodate larger aircraft such as corporate jets. That \$6.1 million project was considered vital to sustain economic viability and competitiveness for Jackson, Banks, and Madison Counties in the Northeast Georgia Region as corporate businesses are seeking out this area for their facilities. Plans have also been readied for the addition of parallel taxiway that is essential for improving safety during takeoff and landings. A new Airport Master Plan is being completed as part of the Runway Extension Project.

The proposed runway extension to 5,000 feet will dramatically increase the number of based aircraft and the demand for additional aircraft hangar space at the airport. As a result of that expansion and for other reasons, the airport has a number of other capital project needs in addition to the runway expansion being completed.

1. Acquisition of 52 acres of property bordering the west property line of the airport at an estimated cost of \$3,025,000. Future development will include a new west taxiway

which is required to provide access to the new airport terminal area and commercial/corporate ramps.

2. Construction of a Hangar Taxiway at an estimated cost of \$435,000 to meet the increasing requirement for hangar space at the airport.
3. The airport currently has 31 names on its hangar waiting list. Current plans include construction of four new T-hangar buildings, 350' x 50' in size.
4. Jet A Fuel Storage and Dispensing System at an estimated cost of \$150,000
5. Fuel Ramp and Parking Construction at an estimated cost of \$135,000.
6. Rejuvenate and Paint Runway & Taxiways at an estimated cost of \$90,000.
7. AWOS (automatic weather observation system) Update at an estimated cost of \$28,000.

Heliports and Helistops

It is not common for local transportation plans to consider the needs of helicopter landing facilities. However, the needs for public and private heliports and helistops should be considered if applicable in the local transportation plan. Helicopter facilities and their locations can become critically important in emergency management situations, so they should at least be inventoried for inclusion in emergency management and disaster preparedness plans.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

Jackson County does not have any ports or other water transportation modes.

RAILROADS

Jackson County is served by two railroads. CSX Transportation has a rail line extending from Athens to Gainesville that traverses western Jackson County. Leaving Athens, this line heads northwest, passing several storage tanks related to the pipeline easements that cross it. U.S. Highway 129 parallels the line. As the line leaves Athens-Clarke County and enters Jackson County, the surroundings become increasingly agricultural in character. The line passes through the cities of Arcade and Jefferson, then continues through Pendergrass and Talmo and enters Hall County.

Norfolk Southern has a line extending from Lula to Athens that passes through the east side of Jackson County. The Commerce-Center segment is a portion of a longer railroad line, and part of it is inactive, Part of it is operated by The Athens Line. From unincorporated Center in Jackson County, it travels north, through predominately undeveloped areas. The adjacent U.S. Highway 441 has been recently upgraded to four lanes, which could bring new growth to the area. Around Nicholson, density increases, with predominately residential subdivisions. North of Nicholson, the line turns away from US 441 and through largely undeveloped areas, with some agriculture and industry. The line travels through the center of Commerce, with streets on both sides and numerous crossings. This area is relatively dense, with residential and commercial uses. North of Commerce, it continues towards the town of Maysville through an area with a mix of agriculture and residential uses. South from Center, the Center-Athens-Bishop (Norfolk & Southern) line passes through an area with a mix of industrial, residential, and undeveloped land. Further south, it continues through an industrial area, approaching downtown Athens. (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, June 2008. "Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia").

Both of these railroad light have light traffic density and serve local industries. Neither of these railroad lines carry through or overhead railroad traffic. There are no existing switching yards or

other major related facilities located in Jackson County. Two industrial parks currently have rail access: Walnut Fork Industrial Park and Commerce 85 Business Park (Source: Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.).

TRUCKING FACILITIES

A number of trucking facilities are located primarily within the Interstate 85 corridor. These are inventoried in the I-85 Corridor Study prepared by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Jackson County's Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program has been included within the General Fund as a department of the Health and Welfare function. It continues to experience increases in demands. In FY 2009, Jackson County shifted one part-time driver to full-time status based on high demand for the service. The mission of the Jackson County Transport System is to provide a low cost transportation alternative to the citizens of Jackson County. The department has three full-time positions (FY 2009 Budget).

The program logged 5,200 hours of bus service operation in 2007 and expects that number to increase to 5,400 in FY 2009. It served 9,284 passengers in 2007 and that number is expected to increase to 9,800 in FY 2009. Jackson County recently agreed to prepare a public transportation plan to be spearheaded by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION

Bicycling and walking are the most basic and efficient forms of transportation and were once perceived as an important mode of transportation. Both are healthy, low-impact modes of travel that provide low-cost transportation alternatives for all segments of society, including financially disadvantaged, children, elderly, and disabled populations. Many of the trips people make on a daily basis are short enough to be accomplished on a bicycle, on foot, or by wheelchair.

Despite the importance of pedestrian and bicycle travel, the overwhelming majority of transportation improvements are dominated by auto-centric projects. Today, motor vehicles dominate the transportation system, and cycling and walking have been largely relegated to recreational status. Because of this increased automobile dependency, bicycling and walking are now perceived as an increasingly dangerous mode of transportation.

Increased use of bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation requires concentrations of populations within proximity to major trip generators. The majority of development in the northeast Georgia region, outside of Athens, has been low-density, single-family residential development that has been constructed in isolation from the types of uses (schools, employment, shopping) that generate bicycle and pedestrian activity.

Overall, the current environment is generally considered unsafe for non-motorized travelers, aside from walking or cycling within residential neighborhoods, because of high travel speeds on the majority of major roads and the lack of adequate shoulder space to accommodate additional users. The general perception that cyclists and pedestrians do not belong on the road and the lack of financial commitments to improving the nonmotorized travel environment has greatly contributed to an overall lack of safety for existing users, which in turn, has prevented any nominal increase in the use of alternative modes of transportation (Source: Northeast

Georgia Regional Development Center, 2005. Northeast Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan).

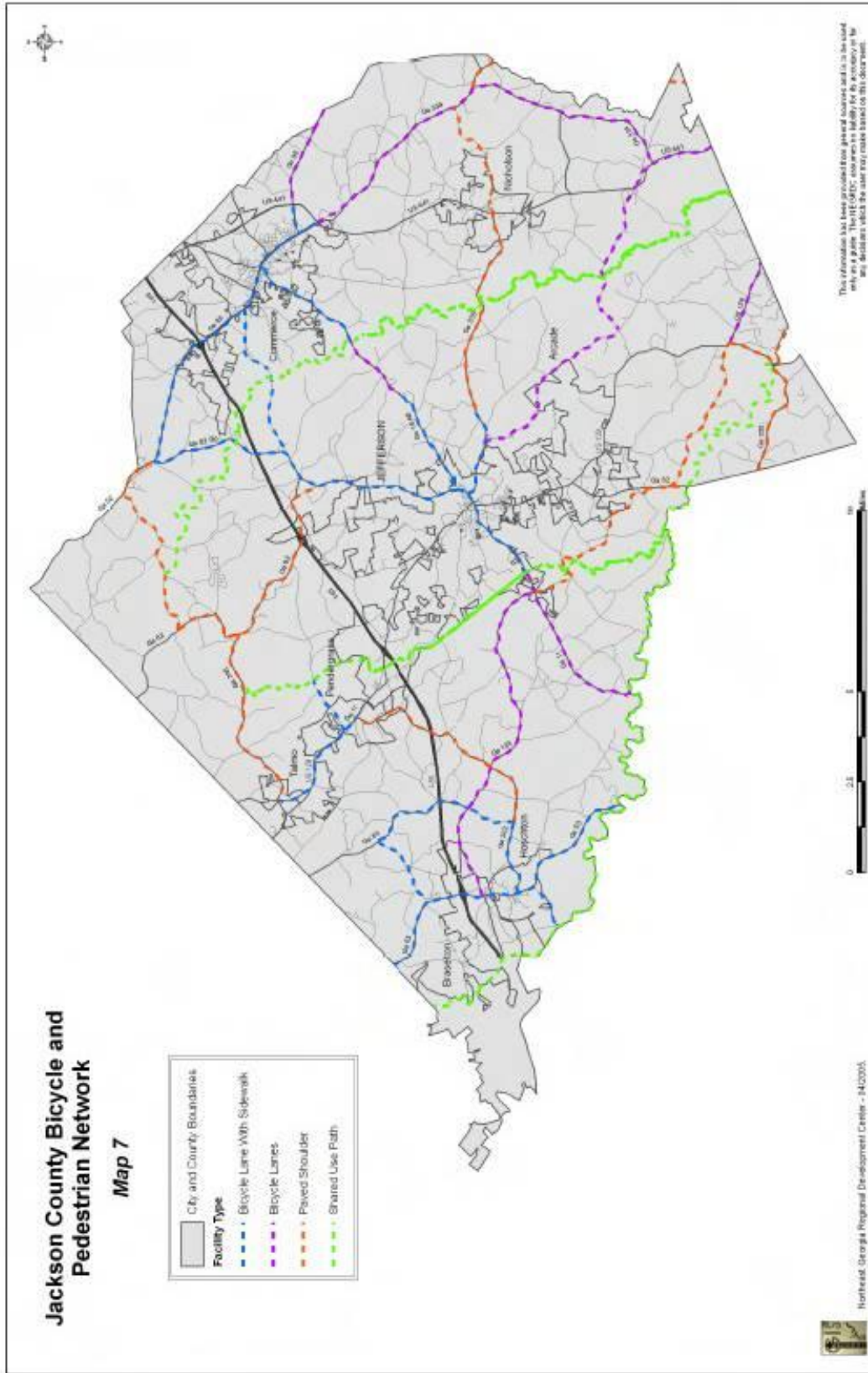
Existing Facilities

Jackson County, as a still rural county is no different from the description above, and as a result, does not have many facilities to serve pedestrians and has few if any bicycle facilities. The overall lack of facilities means that existing bicycle users and pedestrians largely rely on the local road network.

There are some sidewalks along state highways in the unincorporated area, but by and large pedestrian travel facilities are confined to the municipalities. Jackson County also requires that new streets have sidewalks, but in the case of subdivisions, sidewalks have not been installed except along the frontage of each lot as it is developed. Therefore, even in newer developed areas, the sidewalk system is spotty and insufficient. As a result, the county does not have a good inventory of sidewalks.

Northeast Georgia Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan

This plan determines several routes suitable for bicycle facilities, and identifies several corridors that could potentially support shared use paths, on a county-by-county basis. Proposed projects in Jackson County are shown on the following map.



Potential Upper Oconee River Greenway

Multi-use greenway trails can be considered not only recreational amenities but also part of the multi-modal transportation system. The Northeast Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2005) recommends two greenway projects in Jackson County: along the North Oconee River, from the Athens-Clarke County line northward to Deadwyler Road (some 46.9 miles); and one along the Middle Oconee River.

It appears that the North Oconee River greenway presents a good opportunity for establishing connections to an existing greenway. The Sandy Creek Nature Center, a park and currently the northern terminus of the North Oconee River Greenway, is situated at the confluence of the North Oconee River and Sandy Creek. Cook's Trail and the associated Sandy Creek Greenway tie in here. From the Nature Center, the North Oconee River flows south through Downtown Athens (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, June 2008. "Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia"). Hence, a connection/extension to that greenway would be an important component of a planned regional system.

Potential Use of Interstate Highway Right of Way for Bicycle or Pedestrian Facilities

Interstate highways present a unique opportunity for multi-use trails. They often have wide rights-of-way, screened with substantial vegetation. Within Northeast Georgia, trails sited along an interstate could run several miles without having to cross a street (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, June 2008. "Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia").

Potential Use of Railroad Right of Ways

Two railroads, CSX and Norfolk & Southern, operate the major railroads within the Northeast Georgia region. Each of these is a Class I Railroad, the highest level of freight railroads operating in the United States, with a network spanning the Eastern U.S. Both railroads have policies that discourage rails-with-trails.

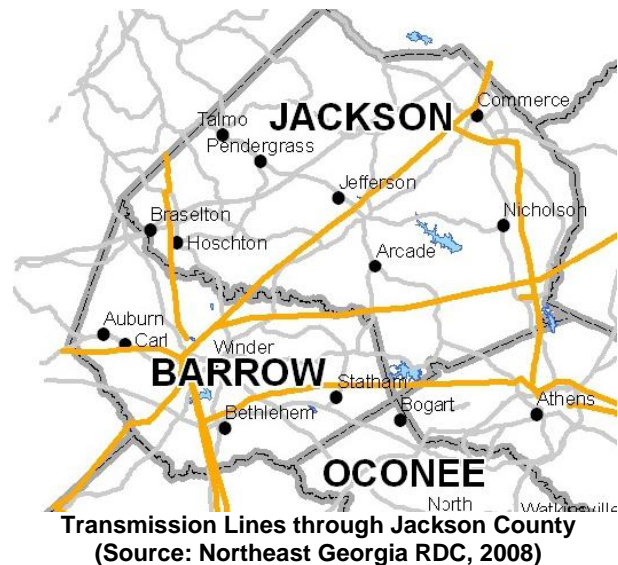
However, the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center in 2008 identified the Center-Athens-Bishop (Norfolk & Southern) railroad line which leads into downtown Athens, as a potential multi-modal trail route. It suggests that this railroad corridor's proximity to the University of Georgia and downtown Athens makes it an opportunity for trails. Norfolk & Southern currently leases the track to a short line, which moves very little freight. If this line were acquired by UGA, it could provide an opportunity for both campus transit and rails-with-trails (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, June 2008. "Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia").

Potential Use of Electric Transmission Line Easements

Transmission lines are primarily owned by one of two entities: Georgia Power or Georgia Transmission Corporation, which maintains transmission lines for smaller EMCs throughout the state. Transmission line rights-of-way tend to be mowed once every six years, with some pesticides applied by hand to prevent the growth of tall trees. Security concerns only exist around the base of the pylons, and at substations. The regulations require that trees shall not

interfere with the overhead wires. Corridors vary in width, with most ranging between 75 and 150 feet.

Commerce is a hub for these transmission lines. Two main lines leave the city for other points within the region: one to Jefferson and Winder, and one to Nicholson and Athens. A line connects these two south of the city. Several other lines head north, beyond the region. A shorter line branches off northwest to Maysville (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, June 2008. “Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia”).



PARKING FACILITIES

Jackson County has no public parking areas except for those that exist on the county government campus complex. Therefore, this is not a consideration in terms of Jackson County’s comprehensive plan.

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE CONNECTIONS

Transportation projects can act as stimuli to further land use changes, which may be desirable or undesirable. Land use changes can stimulate the need for transportation improvement projects.

The Countywide Roads Plan delves into several important relationships between transportation and land use. That plan took into account population projections, major land use generators, and future land use policies, among many other considerations. In addition, it provides a number of important recommended amendments to the Unified Development Code in order to implement the Countywide Roads Plan.

ROADS

Interstate 85

In Jackson County, Interstate 85 runs for some 21.7 miles. The approximate annual average daily traffic on I-85 in Jackson County was 52,500 in 2006. Also with respect to I-85 in Jackson County, there are currently 4 exits, 6 overpasses, 1 underpass, 3 bridges, 1 rail overpass, and 1 rail underpass (Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, June 2008. “Corridor Feasibility Study for Evaluation of Potential Greenway Networks in Northeast Georgia”).

U.S. Highways

Two major U.S. highways traverse Jackson County in a north-south direction. U.S. Highway 129 connects Gainesville and Athens, traveling the entire length of Jackson County from Talmo, through Jefferson and Arcade, to the Clarke County line. Almost all of this route has been improved to four lanes with median dividing the directions of travel. U.S. Highway 441 connects Athens to Commerce and beyond, into Banks and Habersham Counties to the north. U.S. Highway 441 has been improved to four lanes with a median dividing the directions of travel.

State Highways and Local Streets

A road inventory is not provided here, since there is a separate "Countywide Roads Plan" being developed by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. However, some of the following paragraphs summarize the inventory and public participation work done pursuant to that planning effort.

Road Resurfacing, Paving, and Maintenance

Jackson County strives to maintain its present paved roads and to upgrade gravel roads to hard-surfaced roads. Currently, the county has 582 miles of road, 445 paved miles and 137 gravel miles. The county continues to make efforts towards reducing the number of miles of gravel road through a proactive base and paving program. The Road Department paved over 5 miles of gravel roads in 2008, and it expects to pave an additional 5 miles in FY 2009. As new roads are upgraded from gravel to paved, there will be additional maintenance requirements several years later, when they will be added to the routine maintenance list.

The county continues an aggressive road resurfacing program. There were over 21 miles of roads resurfaced in FY 2008, and in FY 2009 the Roads Department expects to resurface 25 miles of roadway. The lifetime of a resurfaced road is ten years. Since the county has 445 of surfaced roads it should resurface at least 44 miles of roadway each year to have well maintained roads and to stay within the standards of safety. Jackson County has adopted a standard of paving 25 miles per year, but asphalt prices have been rising, and funds received through SPLOST have proved to be insufficient to meet this standard. For FY 2009, the county hopes to resurface 40 miles.

Road maintenance also includes mowing of right of ways. Jackson County has mowed about 5,000 or more miles of roadways annually during the past several years. The county also has about 5 miles of guardrails which require maintenance.

Bridges

Jackson County has 76 bridges. Their locations are mapped in the Major Roads Plan. That plan indicates that Bridge Serial Number 157-0011-0 on SR 15 Alternate over the North Oconee River will need replacement in the short-term.

Major Roads Inventory and Plan

Jackson County secured the services of Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc. to prepare a major roads plan. That work was completed at the time this community assessment was completed. This report excerpts major sections of that plan, which included an extensive inventory of roads and road conditions in the county. The existing roadway inventory and analysis not only includes the types, location, and capacity of the various existing roadways, but also identifies

current safety issues or signage problems along the major roadways within the county. Additionally, the existing roadway analysis also included an intercity connectivity element.

This summary assessment does not substitute for the entire roads inventory in that document, and readers are encouraged to review that document for more detailed information.

Basic Operational Safety Considerations

The following considerations were accounted for in the Countywide Roads Plan:

Blind hill	Offset intersections
Blind curve	Poor sight distance at street intersection
Bridge width too narrow	Road intersection located in a curve
Bridge condition seems structurally unsafe	Shoulder width too narrow
Stormwater drainage flows over the roadway	Shoulder is eroded
Improper driveway spacing	Skewed intersection angle
Improper intersection spacing	Very poor driving surface condition
Travel lane width too narrow	

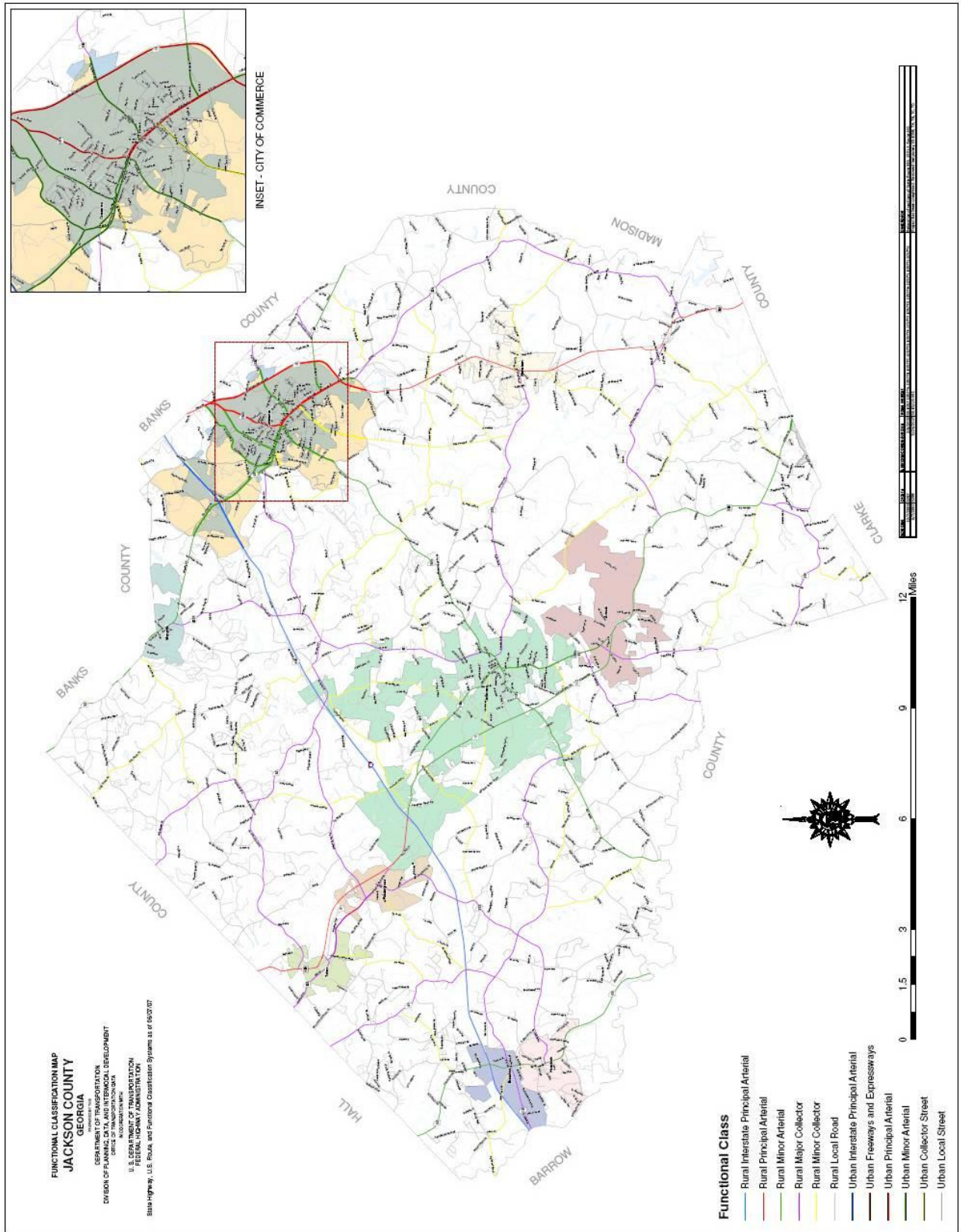
Functional Classification of Roads

Jackson County has established a street classification system in Subsection 1010(b) of the Unified Development Code. The functional classification system established by the County includes five different classifications, listed as follows. These classifications are generally consistent with the AASHTO standards and those used by GDOT, except GDOT breaks out urban vs. rural classifications. The functional classification of each road in the county is provided in Table 1 of the Countywide Roads Plan and includes the following classifications: Principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors, minor collectors, and local roads. A map of the GDOT functional classification of roads is included in this technical appendix.

Planned Road Improvements

The county’s Major Road Plan contains a review of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Construction Work Program to identify those projects planned for Jackson County. GDOT construction projects in Jackson County include the following (for more detail, please see County Major Roads Plan):

1. SR 98 @ CR 286/B WILSON & CR 536/KING ROAD (Intersection improvement)
2. SR 98 @ NS #717696D (railroad crossing)
3. SR 15 @ 3 LOCS & SR 11BU @ 1 LOC (signals)
4. JACKSON COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARK - LOCAL ACCESS ROAD (widening)
5. SR 15ALT @ NS #717706G|SR 98WE and NS #717707N|SR 326@NS #717703L (Railroad Crossing Warning Devices)
6. CR 536/KING ROAD @ NS #717710W (Railroad Crossing Warning Devices)
7. MCCLURE INDUSTRIAL PARK IN JEFFERSON - LOCAL ACCESS ROAD (Miscellaneous Improvements)
8. SR 11/ US 129/ @ ALLEN CREEK N OF TALMO (bridges)
9. SR 11/US 129 FM SR 332 @ TALMO/JACKSON TO SR 323/HALL (widening)
10. I-85 @ 7 Locations IN BANKS & JACKSON - BRIDGE REHABILITATION
11. HOODS MILL RD @ WATERWORKS RD (intersection improvements)
12. STATE ROUTE 332 IN HOSCHTON (relocation)
13. GA18X024 5311 RURAL JACKSON CAPITAL (transit projects)



Countywide Road Issues and Concerns (In ranked order of importance)

1. The SR 124/SR 53 intersection needs improvements in order to reduce traffic congestion caused by poor semi-truck turning movements, and this problem also affects other county road intersections that receive semi-truck traffic.
2. Need better lighting, more turn lanes and traffic signals at school locations and those roads leading to schools to reduce traffic congestion and enhance public safety.
3. Concerned with insufficient funding to meet future roadway improvement needs including maintenance.
4. The existing interchange area, north and south of the interchange, on Interstate 85 at SR 53 (Exit 129) needs improvements by GDOT.
5. Keep big box businesses close to Interstate 85 to help maintain the existing character of the rural areas of Jackson County.
6. The Board of Commissioners should prepare and update on a regular basis a long-range plan for future road needs throughout Jackson County.
7. Need more direct travel routes between existing major highways in Jackson County.
8. Need left-turn lanes and traffic signals installed by the Owner/Developer at the time of construction of new subdivision and business entrances, if warranted.
9. Need to ensure that county roadway improvements are of the highest quality.
10. The road intersection at SR 124 (Braselton Highway) and SR 11 (Lee Street) located southwest of Jefferson needs the same type of intersection improvements that were installed at SR 124/SR 332 east of Hoschton, which included a 4-way stop and turn lanes at all approaches.
11. Need GDOT to construct a new interchange on Interstate 85 at SR 60, which would also include the necessary side road improvements and mitigation of impacts to adjacent residential areas.
12. Construction standards for roadways need to vary by functional classification, especially those receiving semi-truck traffic.
13. The existing SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) Program will be needed to meet future roadway funding needs.
14. Continue to make safety improvements like those recently completed at the intersection of SR 11/SR Alternate 15 and Apple Valley Road, which eliminated a poor sight distance problem at the intersection due to a blind hill, which was lowered, and turn lanes were added.
15. Posted speed limits along all county roadways need to be consistent with the existing road conditions, such as functional classification, shoulder condition, road grade,

adjacent land uses, frequency of driveway accesses, building setbacks, sight distances, geometric features of the roadway, pedestrian activity, and historical crash data.

16. Need to continue to build the access feeder roads along I-85 throughout Jackson County to concentrate major commercial and industrial uses along that corridor.
17. Existing traffic backups at various locations along county roads need to be eliminated, especially during peak travel periods. An example is SR Alt. 15 (Commerce-Jefferson Road).
18. SR 124 needs to be extended around Jefferson and subsequently connect to SR 15 resulting in a by-pass around Jefferson. (GDOT is in the process of reconstructing the bridge on Galilee Church Road and this may be a good time to consider making this bridge wider or maybe even relocating the part of Galilee Church Road that has the large curve and putting the bridge somewhere else.)
19. SR 335 needs to be widened between Nicholson and Jefferson and rerouted before approaching the existing old bridge near Jefferson possibly at Mauldin Road. At that point the realigned road would continue northwesterly and cross SR Alternate 15 and either continue to US 129 to connect to Exit 137 at I-85 or alternatively continue to SR 82 and connect to Exit 140 at I-85.
20. The Unified Development Code (UDC) should preclude the creation of off-set road intersections.
21. Need a new by-pass travel route around the Hoschton/Braselton area.
22. Safety at all roadway intersections needs improving by requiring better design standards on all county roads.
23. Concerned that the road system will not be able to accommodate the future travel demands based upon projected growth.
24. More east-west travel routes are needed throughout Jackson County to improve intra-county connectivity.
25. Jackson County should utilize consultants in their long-range planning program, especially where special expertise is required.
26. The Unified Development Code (UDC) needs to be amended to ensure that the minimum design standards for those roadways that allow semi-truck traffic do accommodate the proper semi-truck turning maneuvers.
27. Need to install rumble strips on all approaches to the signalized intersections along US 441 to improve driver awareness of each of the approaching intersections resulting in enhanced public safety.
28. Existing north-south travel routes need capacity improvements, such as increasing the number of travel lanes.

29. Need a traffic signal and turn lanes installed at the road intersection of SR 98 at B. Wilson Road to improve capacity and driver safety.
30. Need adequate police enforcement for driver disregard of traffic control signage, such as traffic signals, speed limit signs, and stop signs.
31. Concerned with existing high traffic volumes and poor levels of service along SR 124 from the Barrow County line to SR 11.
32. Need to improve road maintenance in Jackson County to better address poor drainage, narrow or lack of shoulders, lack of pavement markings, etc.
33. All traffic signals throughout Jackson County should have different timing lengths during nighttime use vs. daytime use.
34. Improved roadway lighting is needed at critical areas, such as horizontal alignment curves, blind areas, intersections, and bridges.
35. Need to complete the existing by-pass travel route around the Jefferson area which included the Brockton Loop.
36. Concerned that the construction of by-passes around small cities or towns adversely affect, to the point of nonexistence, the local economies of those locales.
37. Concerned with the lack of traffic control signage at various locations along some of the county roads, such as stop signs, warning signs, and "No Through Trucks" signs.
38. A plan is needed for SR 11 and SR Alternate 15 to be widened to 4 lanes from Commerce to the Barrow County line.
39. Need a traffic signal and turn lanes installed at the road intersection of SR 98 at Old Maysville Road to improve capacity and driver safety.
40. Interstate 85 needs to be widened from 4-lanes to 6-lanes through Jackson County.
41. Concerned that there are no shoulders on some roadways in Jackson County.
42. A plan is needed for SR 332 to be widened from Hoschton to Pendergrass.
43. Concerned with the increase in traffic volumes on SR 53 entering Jackson County from Hall County north of Braselton.
44. Traffic signals need to be installed at certain locations along the county road system.
45. Warehousing and industrial land uses are adversely affecting the public's ability to safely access Interstate 85.
46. Concerned that the SR 53 widening project will adversely affect adjacent roadways and residential subdivisions.
47. Concerned with the quantity of litter along road rights-of-way.

48. Concerned that some existing commercial areas do not have access via a major road.
49. Continuity of roads within Jackson County is a concern, since road improvements are implemented on roads that lead “nowhere.”
50. A one-cent sales tax on gasoline sales is needed to help fund the future roadway improvements.
51. A system of integrated sidewalks and bike paths is needed in Jackson County.
52. Sidewalks are needed on many county roads near residential subdivisions and other residential areas.
53. Concerned about the high level of semi-truck noise affecting residential areas, especially at night.
54. The Board of Commissioners needs to prohibit cell phone use while driving a motorized vehicle in Jackson County.
55. Jackson County should reduce reliance on stormwater detention ponds located in neighborhoods by planning for and constructing regional stormwater retention ponds that could also be used as parks supporting multiple uses, including fishing.
56. Need to not waste money on sidewalks and bike lanes on main roads, such as U.S. 441, in the Nicholson area.
57. Need to promote the use of roundabouts with sufficient land area in lieu of 4-way stop or signalized intersections.
58. Concerned that “solutions” to current problems will worsen those original problems.
59. Another new interchange exit off I-85 is needed at Ridgeway Church Road in the City of Commerce.
60. Work with the cities and/or utility/construction companies in Jackson County about limiting work on construction projects during normal school hours for student attendance (i.e.: gas pipeline work currently being done on SR 11). This would help with the traffic congestion in and around Jefferson and other cities in Jackson County.

Concerns and Issues with Roads in Municipalities

City of Maysville

- Upgrading county roads including widening and paving.
- Replacing any one-lane bridges on county roads.

City of Arcade

- Lack of money for maintenance of county roads.
- Need funding for joint projects to upgrade some city roads/streets.
- County’s inability to work with municipalities to share all available resources for the betterment of the county as a whole, such as by assisting the cities in

developing satisfactory infrastructure to serve all the citizens of the county, at a fair and reasonable expense.

- Lack of a schedule for paving dirt roads and repaving existing roads.

City of Jefferson

- Need for efficient cross-county arterial road connections.
- Need for an integrated countywide road system with a single point of contact to inform of new developments.
- Need consistent road signage. Road ownership is a problem affecting naming roads, especially after annexations.
- Need continued enhanced communication involving road projects and pending development.

City of Commerce

- Need to complete the parallel roads to I-85 near the City of Commerce to enhance economic development in the county. Particularly, it was noted that Bana Road between Spur 82 and SR 98 needs to be extended east and west as part of the proposed parallel road system.
- County needs more active approach to maintaining all roads and streets that transverse into municipal limits, including mowing of rights-of-way. Municipalities typically mow urban streets on a weekly basis vs. a monthly schedule on rural county roads.
- Improving intersection visibility with minor sight distance maintenance improvements at Hospital Road (Old Maysville Road) and Ridgeway Road (Mt. Olive Road).

Town of Braselton

- County needs better access management standards and utilization.
- Reducing future municipal improvements and costs, due to the County's curb cut approvals on roads within the Town creating offset street intersections at new residential subdivision entrance roads.
- Jackson County's acceptance of financial payments in lieu of Developer's required project improvements in the Town is resulting in poor appearance and safety concerns.

City of Hoschton

- Hoschton needs better access to I-85 instead of the narrow congested segment of SR 53, and we want better access for all our residents to any part of Hoschton. Currently, it is difficult, and sometimes dangerous, for people on one side of SR 53 to patronize businesses on the other side of SR 53.
- Hoschton would like to participate in the planning and improvements on those roads that lead into Hoschton.
- Hoschton would like to participate in the future land use planning for areas adjacent to the city.

City of Talmo

- Need a parallel road along I-85.
- Need new off/on-ramps at SR 60 and I-85.

City of Pendergrass

- Paving and resurfacing of county roads and state roads in and around our cities

New Roads and Road Improvements Suggested by Municipalities

City of Arcade

- Etheridge Road at Old 129 intersection improvement: The roads do not line up at Etheridge Road and Ramblers Inn Road.

Town of Braselton

- Jesse Cronin Road (road widening)
- Zion Church Road east and west of SR 53 to connect to I-85

City of Jefferson

- Hog Mountain Road (McClure Industrial) to Possum Creek Road (road widening)
- Old Pendergrass Road (road widening)
- An eastern by-pass is needed possibly beginning at Galilee Church Road to Canter Way to SR 82 to Dry Pond Road Connector to the I-85/SR 82 interchange
- SR 82/Jett Roberts/McClure Industrial intersection improvement
- Assistance with signal improvements at SR 11 at US 129 By-pass serving the Jackson County Comprehensive High School

City of Hoschton

- West Jefferson Street needs to be improved from SR 53 to SR 124 (road widening).
- SR 53 on the southern end of Hoschton (road widening)
- SR 53 By-pass

Intercity Connectivity Analysis and Improvement Needs

Jackson County officials emphasized that intercity connectivity was an important issue that should be evaluated in the Countywide Roads Plan. Hence, the work of Moreland Altobelli included an identification of where future road improvements could be made and result in better connectivity between existing municipalities within the county. As a result, several potential improvements were identified in the Countywide Roads Plan, and five were recommended in the Countywide Roads Plan:

1. **Braselton and Hoschton to Arcade:** Connection between SR 332 and SR 124
2. **Braselton and Hoschton to Pendergrass:** Connection between Tom White Rd and Charlie Cooper Rd (I-85 Overpass) and a connection between Charlie Cooper Rd and Lanier Rd, or alternatively a connection between Cedar Rock Rd and Lanier Rd
3. **Braselton and Hoschton to Maysville:** The recommended improvements for Braselton to Pendergrass as well as a connection between SR 332 and Wayne Poultry Rd at Old State Rd and a connection from Wayne Poultry Rd at SR 82 to Silver Dollar Rd at Plainview Rd
4. **Braselton and Hoschton to Nicholson:** The recommended improvements for Braselton to Arcade as well as a connection between the SR 15/Damon Gause By-Pass intersection to Orrs School Road to Brockton Loop to new connection road to SR 335

5. Braselton and Hoschton to Talmo: Connection between New Cut Rd and A.J. Irwin Rd

These potential improvement routes are shown on the following map:

