

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan Community Assessment 2009-2029



McDuffie County
City of Thomson
Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Community Assessment	Page 1
Introduction	Page 1
Introduction	
How to Use the Comprehensive Plan	
Planning Development Process	
Issues and Opportunities	
Population	Page 8
Introduction	
Historical Population Trends	
Education	
Income	
Assessment	
Economic Development	Page 24
Introduction	
Regional Economic Context	
Economic Base and Trends	
Labor Force	
Economic Resources	
Assessment	
Housing	Page 43
Introduction	
Housing Types and Mix	
Condition and Occupancy	
Cost of Housing	
Cost Burdened Households	
Special Needs Housing	
Job-Housing Balance	
Assessment	
Natural and Cultural Resources	Page 58
Introduction	
Environmental Planning Criteria	
Additional Environmentally Sensitive Areas	
Additional Significant Natural Resources	
Cultural Resources	
Assessment	
Community Facilities	Page 74
Introduction	
Water Supply and Treatment	
Sewer System and Waste Water Treatment	
General Facilities and Services	
Public Safety	
Assessment	
Transportation	Page 88
Introduction	
Street Network	
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Public Transportation	
Rail Roads	
Trucking, Port Facilities and Aviation	
Transportation and Land Use Connection	
Assessment	
Major Thoroughfare Plan (Preliminary)	
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	Page 121
Introduction	
Existing Conditions	
Future Conditions	
Assessment	
Intergovernmental Coordination	Page 148
Introduction	
Adjacent Local Governments	
School Board	
Development Authorities and Districts	
Federal, State and Regional Programs	
Assessment	
Land Use	Page 154
Introduction	
Land Use Categories	
Current Land Use	
Areas Requiring Special Attention	
Recommended Character Areas	
Character Area Interpretation	
Quality Community Objectives	Page 185
Purpose	
Quality Community Objectives	
Community Participation Program	Page 193
Purpose	
Stakeholders	
Participation Techniques	
Community Agenda Schedule	
Appendix A	Page 198
Co-op Community Improvement Strategy	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

Introduction

- Figure I-1: Plan Development Process Page 3
Figure I-2: Preliminary Community-Wide Issues and Opportunities Page 5

Population

- Figure P-1: Historical Population for Selected Jurisdictions, 1980-2005 Page 8
Figure P-2: Historical Population Growth Rates, 1980-2005 Page 9
Figure P-3: Population Projections for Selected Jurisdictions, 2005-2025 Page 9
Figure P-4: Five-Year Population Growth Rates for Selected Jurisdictions, 2005-2025 Page 10
Figure P-5: Number of Households for Selected Jurisdictions, 1980-2000 Page 10
Figure P-6: Average Household Size for Selected Jurisdictions, 1980-2000 Page 10
Figure P-7: Household Types, 2000 for Selected Jurisdictions Page 11
Figure P-8: McDuffie County Age Distribution, 1980-2025 Page 11
Figure P-9: Thomson Age Distribution, 1980-2025 Page 11
Figure P-10: Dearing Age Distribution, 1980-2025 Page 12
Figure P-11: Percent of Total Population by Age Group for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000 Page 12
Figure P-12: McDuffie County Racial Composition, 1980-2000 Page 12
Figure P-13: Thomson Racial Composition, 1980-2000 Page 13
Figure P-14: Dearing Racial Composition, 1980-2000 Page 13
Figure P-15: Hispanic Population Composition Page 14
Figure P-16: McDuffie County Per Capita Income by Race, 2000 Page 14
Figure P-17: McDuffie County Educational Attainment, 1980-2000 Page 15
Figure P-18: Educational Attainment for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000 Page 15
Figure P-19: Thomson High School, Percentage of 11th Graders Passing State of Georgia Standardized Tests (1st Attempt) Page 15
Figure P-20: 2005-06 Percentage of 11th Graders Passing State of Georgia Standardized Tests (1st Attempt) Page 15
Figure P-21: High School Drop-out Rate, 2003-2006 Page 16
Figure P-22: Median Household Income for Selected Jurisdictions, 1990-2000 in constant 2000 dollars Page 17
Figure P-23: Per Capita Income for Selected Jurisdictions, 1990-2000 in Constant 2000 Dollars Page 17
Figure P-24: Poverty Level for Selected Jurisdictions, 1989, 1999 Page 17
Figure P-25: McDuffie County Income Distribution, 1990-2000 Page 18
Figure P-26: Thomson Income Distribution, 1990-2000 Page 18
Figure P-27: Dearing Income Distribution Page 18

Economic Development

- Figure E-1: Regional Employment by Industry, 2001-2005 Page 26
Figure E-2: McDuffie County Employment by Industry, 1980-2000 Page 27
Figure E-3: McDuffie County Employment by Industry, 2001-2005 Page 28
Figure E-4: McDuffie County Employment Projections, 2005-2025 Page 28

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Figure E-5: Employment Projections in Selected Areas, 2000-2025	Page 29
Figure E-6: McDuffie County Labor Force Participation, 1990-2000	Page 29
Figure E-7: Thomson Labor Force Participation, 1990-2000	Page 29
Figure E-8: Dearing Labor Force Participation, 1990-2000	Page 30
Figure E-9: Civilian Labor Force by Occupation for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000	Page 30
Figure E-10: McDuffie County Labor Force by Residence, 1980-2000	Page 31
Figure E-11: McDuffie County Laborers by Place of Work, 1980-2000	Page 31
Figure E-12: Sources of Household Income for Selected Jurisdictions, Percent of Total Income, 2000	Page 32
Figure E-13: McDuffie County Sources of Household Income (1990-2000)	Page 33
Figure E-14: Municipal Sources of Household Income, 2000	Page 33
Figure E-15: McDuffie County Average Annual Wage per Job, 2000-2005	Page 34
Figure E-16: Average Annual Wage by Selected Area, 2000-2005	Page 34
Figure E-17: McDuffie County: Estimated Average Annual Wage by Selected Industries (Constant 2004\$)	Page 35
Housing	
Figure H-1: McDuffie County Type of Housing Units, 1980-2000	Page 45
Figure H-2: Thomson Type of Housing Units, 1980-2000	Page 45
Figure H-3: Dearing Type of Housing Units, 1980-2000	Page 45
Figure H-4: McDuffie County and Augusta-Aiken MSA Percentage Types of Housing, 2000	Page 46
Figure H-5: Household Type for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000	Page 46
Figure H-6: Percentage of Household Type for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000	Page 46
Figure H-7: McDuffie County Age of Housing, 1990-2000	Page 47
Figure H-8: Thomson Age of Housing, 1990-2000	Page 47
Figure H-9: Dearing Age of Housing, 1990-2000	Page 47
Figure H-10: Age of Housing for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000	Page 48
Figure H-11: Housing Conditions for Selected Jurisdictions, 1990-2000	Page 49
Figure H-12: McDuffie County Occupancy Characteristics, 1990-2000	Page 49
Figure H-13: Thomson Occupancy Characteristics, 1990-2000	Page 49
Figure H-14: Dearing Occupancy Characteristics, 1990-2000	Page 50
Figure H-15: Percentage of Vacancy Rates of Owner-Occupied and Rental Housing Units for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000	Page 50
Figure H-16: Cost of Housing for Selected Jurisdictions, 1990-2000	Page 51
Figure H-17: Cost Burdened Households for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000	Page 52
Figure H-18: McDuffie County Supply of Affordable Housing Units, 2000	Page 52
Figure H-19: McDuffie County Housing/Income Comparison	Page 53



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Natural and Cultural Resources

Figure N-1: McDuffie County Vicinity State Protected Species	Page 63
Figure N-2: Historically Significant Structures in Dearing	Page 66
Figure N-3: Historically Significant Structures in Thomson	Page 67
Figure N-4: Historically Significant Structures in McDuffie County	Page 68

Community Facilities

Figure C-1: McDuffie County Annual Average Daily Water Consumption, 2003-2005	Page 75
Figure C-2: McDuffie County Water System, 2005	Page 76
Figure C-3: McDuffie County Sewage and Wastewater Treatment System, 2005	Page 76
Figure C-4: McDuffie County Waste Generation Rates, 2003-2005	Page 77
Figure C-5: National Recreation and Parks Association, Parks Classifications	Page 78
Figure C-6: McDuffie County City Park Property by Classification and Acreage, 2005	Page 78
Figure C-7: McDuffie County City Park Property & National Recommended Standards, 2005	Page 79
Figure C-8: McDuffie County Recreational Facilities & National Recommended Standards, 2005	Page 79
Figure C-9: Thomson Government Services: Employees by Department, 2006	Page 80
Figure C-10: McDuffie County Government Services: Employees by Department, 2006	Page 80
Figure C-11: City of Thomson Government Services: Employees by City Building/Property, 2006	Page 81
Figure C-12: McDuffie County Government Services: Employees by City Building/Property, 2006	Page 81
Figure C-13: McDuffie County Public Safety: Fire Protection, 2006	Page 81
Figure C-14: City of Thomson Public Safety: Fire Protection, 2006	Page 82
Figure C-15: Town of Dearing Public Safety: Fire Protection, 2006	Page 82
Figure C-16: McDuffie County Law Enforcement, 2006	Page 82
Figure C-17: Thomson Law Enforcement, 2006	Page 83

Transportation

Figure T-1 McDuffie County Dearing and Thomson: Percent of Population Commuting to Work Via Personal Motor Vehicle	Page 89
Figure T-2: McDuffie County Highways and Roads: Functional System Characteristics	Page 90
Figure T-3: McDuffie County Roads: Mileage by Route Type and Functional Classification, 2006	Page 91
Figure T-4: McDuffie County Roads: Changes in Mileage by Functional Classification, 2001-2006	Page 91
Figure T-5: McDuffie County Paved Roads, 2006	Page 92
Figure T-6: McDuffie County Traffic Volumes, 1997-2006	Page 92
Figure T-7: McDuffie County Gateways: AADT 1997-2006	Page 93
Figure T-9: McDuffie/Thomson Urbanized Area: Average Annual	



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Daily Traffic, 1997 – 2006	Page 94
Figure T-10: Level of Service Characteristics	
Figure T-11: Level of Service by Highway and Area Type	Page 96
Figure T-12: McDuffie County Roads by Level of Service	Page 96
Figure T-13: McDuffie County Motor Vehicle Accidents, 1998-2006	Page 99
Figure T-14: Thomson Motor Vehicle Accident Concentrations, January, 2005 – June, 2007	Page 99
Figure T-15: Sufficiency Rating of Bridges in McDuffie County, 2006	Page 100
Figure T-16: McDuffie County Recommended Street Segments by Classification (Rural Areas)	Page 115
Figure T-17: Dearing, Thomson, McDuffie County Recommended Street Segments by Classification (Municipal and Unincorporated Urban Areas)	Page 116
Figure T-18: Street Facility Spacing	Page 117
Figure T-19: McDuffie County Roads: Projected Reclassification and Capacity Improvements (Preliminary)	Page 118
Figure T-20: McDuffie County Roads: Proposed Thoroughfares (Preliminary)	Page 118
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	
Figure B-1: Means of Transportation Work, 2000	Page 123
Figure B-2: Pedestrian & Bicycle Transportation to Work as a Percentage of all Modes	Page 124
Figure B-3: Distribution of Travel Time to Work (in Minutes), 1990-2000	Page 124
Figure B-4: Thomson Major Travel Generators	Page 125
Figure B-5: Existing Sidewalks in Thomson	Page 126
Figure B-6: Thomson-McDuffie County State Bicycle Route	Page 129
Figure B-7: Proposed Thomson Town Center	Page 132
Figure B-8: Proposed Sidewalk System Upgrades	Page 138
Figure B-9: McDuffie County Proposed New Bicycle Routes	Page 140
Land Use	
Figure L-1: Current Land Usage for Selected Jurisdictions	Page 157

List of Maps

Natural and Cultural Resources	
N.1 Water Supply Watershed	Page 60-A
N.2 Groundwater Recharge Areas	Page 61-A
N.3 Wetlands	Page 62-A
N.4 Floodplains	Page 62-B
N.5 Soil Types	Page 63-A
N.6 Endangered Species	Page 63-B
Community Facilities	
C.1 County Water	Page 75-A
C.2 County Sewer	Page 76-A
C.3a Community Facilities – Water	Page 83-A
C.3b Community Facilities Schools, Libraries, Parks	Page 83-B



TABLE OF CONTENTS

C.3c Community Facilities without Industrial Parks	Page 83-C
Land Use	
L.1 County Land Use	Page 155-A
L.2 Thomson Current Land Use	Page 155-B
L.3 Dearing Current Land Use	Page 155-C
L.5 Character Areas McDuffie County	Page 176-A
L.6 Character Areas Thomson	Page 167A
L.7 Character Area Dearing	Page 164-A
Transportation	
T.1 Highway Classification	Page 90-A
T.2 Traffic Counter Gateway	Page 93-A
T.3 Traffic Counter Dearing	Page 93-B
T.4 Traffic Counter Urban Areas	Page 93-C
T.5 Capacity Improvement	Page 95-A
T.6 2000 Level of Service	Page 97-A
T.7 2022 Level of Service (Default)	Page 97-B
T.8 2022 Level of Service (Adjusted)	Page 97-C
T.9 Bridges	Page 100-A
T.10 Major Thoroughfare Plan	Page 120-A

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 1 Introduction

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

McDuffie County and the Cities of Thomson and Dearing are located in east-central Georgia, approximately 35 miles west of Augusta and 115 miles east of Atlanta. The county and municipalities are members of the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center (CSRA RDC) located in Augusta. Formed in 1870 from parts of Columbia and Warren Counties as Georgia's 132nd county, McDuffie County's traditional importance to the state is evidenced by the significant historic sites and structures throughout the community - ranging from pre-Revolutionary times through Reconstruction.

While recent growth in McDuffie County has been moderate, the conditions exist to attract additional investment. Residential growth is spilling over from the east into McDuffie County from Augusta-Richmond County and rapidly growing Columbia County. In addition, there exist adequate community facilities and expanding infrastructure that provide the basis for reviving not only manufacturing, but a number of other employment opportunities in the County. In preparing this plan, McDuffie County recognizes that there are a number of assets that can be marketed to attract growth; but, there also exists the opportunity to develop mechanisms that will channel future development in a manner that does not compromise the communities historic identity or quality of life.

WHY PLAN?

Successful communities don't just happen - they must be continually shaped and guided. A community must actively manage its land use, infrastructure and resources, and respond to changing circumstances if it is to continue to meet the needs of its residents. McDuffie County residents value the character and diversity of their communities, the strong sense of identity, and the casual pace and lifestyle associated with rural communities. Concern about promoting economic development, providing for adequate infrastructure and ensuring adequate recreational and educational opportunities for its old and new citizens are issues that all three communities are continuously trying to address. Comprehensive planning, based on good data and public consultation, will assist Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County to address these, and many other concerns.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The comprehensive plan is the official guiding document for the future of McDuffie County and the cities of Thomson and Dearing. It is designed to formulate a coordinated, long-term planning program for all communities. The plan lays out a desired future, and guides how that future is to be achieved. It serves as a guide to both the public and private sector by providing a picture of how land will develop, how housing will be made available, how jobs will be attracted and retained, how open space and the environment will be protected, how public services and facilities will be provided, and how transportation facilities will be improved. Further, the plan guides elected and appointed officials as they deliberate community development issues and convey policy and intended programs of action to residents. In short, the comprehensive plan is a unified document providing a consistent policy direction.

The comprehensive plan is structured to be a dynamic document, subject to amendment when conditions within the county or a city change significantly. Periodic updates are needed to ensure

INTRODUCTION

that it continues to meet the needs of the citizens of all McDuffie County communities. The previous comprehensive plan for McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing was prepared between 1992 and 1995. Over the years, many of the items recommended for implementation in the plans were completed or became irrelevant due to changing circumstances. The current unified planning effort addresses the significant changes in McDuffie County since the last comprehensive plan updates; and, ensures a greater level of coordination and consistency that reflects the communities' shared heritage and linked future.

HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The comprehensive plan is not, in itself, an implementation tool - but rather a guide to action. It is intended to serve as a reference point for potential users. For example, a commission or council may use the plan's policies to decide whether to approve a proposed rezoning of land. The Board of Education may use the plan to determine future student enrollment and corresponding facilities expansion. The Tax Assessors' Office may use the plan to estimate future digests.

A number of companion planning documents should be used in conjunction with this comprehensive plan. These include the *McDuffie County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan*, the comprehensive and solid waste plans of surrounding jurisdictions, and other local and state regulatory documents.

Unlike sector or single issue planning documents, which only generally refer to issues such as transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, annexation, and community services, the comprehensive plan addresses these issues in a coordinated manner.

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

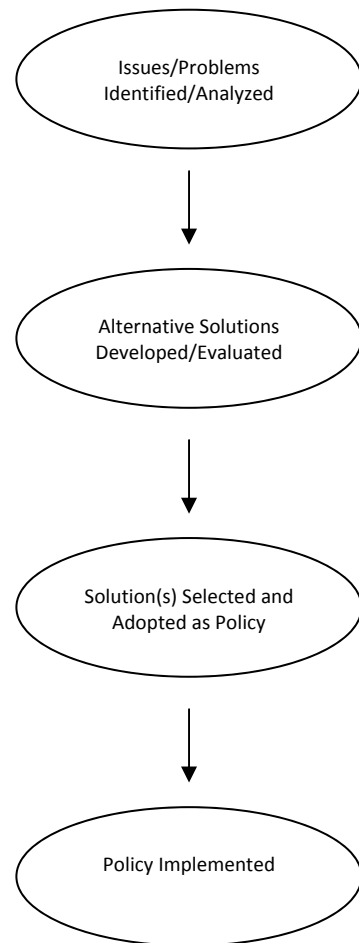
As illustrated in **Figure I-1**, the comprehensive plan is the product of extensive local government and citizen involvement through structured workshops and unstructured discussion sessions.

Planning/Advisory Committee

Preparations for the comprehensive plan began with the creation of the McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The primary purpose of the committee was to oversee and assist in the process of drafting the comprehensive plan. The committee was composed of elected officials, government employees and residents. The committee's roles included communicating the concerns of interested groups regarding the development of the community; providing a forum for discussion of differing views; developing statements of the community's vision and goals; and recommending goals, policies and implementation measures.

During the summer and fall of 2007, staff from the CSRA RDC collected background information about the planning area through historical research, site visits, and information gathered from local officials. The

Figure I-1: Plan Development Process



INTRODUCTION

Advisory Committee then provided direction and guidance by discussing the various issues raised at committee meetings and public events. Specific plan chapters were then prepared for the various functional elements of the plan. Additional activities of the Advisory Committee are highlighted in the *Community Participation Program* portion of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*.

Public Consultation

The plan's development is subject to a comprehensive public involvement process. Public involvement serves to educate community leaders about planning issues and to build constituency support - both necessary ingredients for any successful comprehensive plan. Each person at the table represents many others and offers insight on something overlooked by planners. By involving the public as a partner throughout the planning process, the message sent is that people's ideas matter. When the citizenry sees the quantifiable effect they can have on the plan, it gives them a sense of ownership over the plan; it is not just a plan document mandated by a government agency. When there is real public consultation, the citizens are likely to become advocates for its implementation.

Comprehensive Plan Components

The process of updating the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* conforms to the requirements established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning." McDuffie County's updated comprehensive plan document includes 3 principal components: *Community Assessment*, *Community Participation Program* and *Community Agenda*. The *Community Assessment* portion of the plan includes Chapters 1 through 11. The *Community Assessment* analyzes existing conditions throughout McDuffie County and defines issues and opportunities which may be addressed later in the planning process. The information provided in the *Community Assessment*, combined with public input, provides the basis for the goals, objectives and actions established during the final *Community Agenda* portion of the *Plan (Chapter 11)*. The *Community Participation Program* is accompanying this document.

Mapping Specifications

The "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" require that a number of maps be submitted with the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* – most relating to the "Natural and Cultural Resources" and "Land Use" components. Required digital maps must illustrate boundaries according to the U.S. Census Bureau's TIGER boundary files. Unfortunately, TIGER boundaries can sometimes vary from the actual corporate limits. Many of these variations are the direct result of annexation activity – annexations that are not reflected in TIGER files as being within the municipal limits. In the near future, efforts to update the boundaries of McDuffie County's two cities during participation in the U.S. Census Bureau's LUCA program will likely eliminate most boundary discrepancies.

Until TIGER files are revised during the ongoing Local Update of Census Addresses and Boundary Annexation Survey projects, many of the maps contained in this *Plan* – particularly land use and character area maps will utilize the municipal limits provided to the CSRA RDC through the records of participating communities. Exceptions are **Maps N.1** through **N.7** (Natural and Cultural Resources) which utilize TIGER boundaries.

INTRODUCTION

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* considers issues and opportunities that are applicable to McDuffie County and have been identified through data compilation and community input. Discussion with the Advisory Committee early in the planning process yielded the preliminary list of issues and opportunities found in **Figure I-2**.

The issues and opportunities listed in this section were discussed in greater detail during the preparation of the *Community Assessment* portion of the *Plan* and were revised slightly over the course of this process. A more thorough discussion of community issues and opportunities can be found in the “Assessment” section of each chapter. The recommendations contained within Chapters 2 through 11 of the *Community Assessment* are preliminary and were expanded upon further during preparation of the *Community Agenda* subject to additional community-wide input.

Figure I-2: Preliminary Community-Wide Issues and Opportunities*
<p>Economic Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to continue to promote the growth of McDuffie County’s medical facilities and look into additional partnering with MCG in the future. • We need to more effectively promote the Lake as both an opportunity for appropriate growth and as a recreational opportunity. • We need to promote McDuffie County as an attractive place for senior citizens to relocate to. This can be done with economic incentives, & quality of life incentives (medical facilities, recreation, etc.) just to name a few. • We need to create an environment conducive to bringing new industrial development to Thomson/McDuffie County
<p>Natural and Cultural Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to protect and preserve our natural resources • We need to be conscious of the impacts that development has on our historic resources
<p>Facilities and Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to foster and support the opportunities for education in the County. For example: the McDuffie County Environmental Education Center-at the state fish hatchery. • We need to improve the sewer system in Dearing. • We need to improve and expand the parks system in Dearing. • We need to plan for the impacts that the anticipated growth in the County’s educational facilities will have. •
<p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for development of both owner and renter occupied middle income housing • Increase housing options at all price points
<p>Land Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to promote appropriate new development tied to the new interstate exit. • We need to be aware of the impacts the new downtown government complex will have on the city of Thomson, and prepare for them. • We need to maximize the potential for responsible growth that the new bypass will bring. • We need to redevelop downtown Thomson in a way that accentuates its unique character and highlights its importance in the region. • We need to more effectively promote the Lake as both an opportunity for appropriate growth and as a recreational opportunity.
<p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to continue to market the airport as a regional resource. • We need to increase the access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities • We need to plan for future right of way expansion
<p>Intergovernmental Coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to continue the positive interaction between local governments. • We need to actively seek out new partnerships in order to provide our residents with the highest level of service.
<p><i>Note: Issues and opportunities listed within this Figure apply to all three (3) jurisdictions addressed by this Plan unless otherwise noted.</i></p>



McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 2 Population

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

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POPULATION

INTRODUCTION

Defining a community’s population characteristics is an essential part of any comprehensive planning process. A variety of factors, including housing, economic development, community facilities and future land use are directly influenced by population data. A thorough understanding of population projections helps to ensure that goals and policies established in other parts of the comprehensive plan are truly consistent with the community’s future needs.

When planning for McDuffie County’s future, it is important to recognize the community’s relationship with the surrounding region. McDuffie County’s location within the Augusta-Aiken Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ties the community’s prosperity directly to the health of the greater metropolitan area. The MSA includes Columbia, McDuffie and Richmond Counties in Georgia, and Aiken and Edgefield Counties in South Carolina. As a result, this plan often compares the statistics of McDuffie County with the regional population center of the Augusta-Aiken MSA. Additionally, in order to provide the most complete picture of population growth in McDuffie County comparisons to jurisdictions that share certain attributes with McDuffie County are necessary. With this in mind population trends in adjacent Warren and Columbia Counties are considered. These two counties were chosen not only for their geographic proximity to McDuffie County but also for a number of shared characteristics. Warren County shares a rural character with much of McDuffie County; conversely Columbia County with its rapidly urbanizing and growing population provides a window into what could very well be the future development pattern of McDuffie County as the Augusta metro area sprawls westward.

The principal sources of information for this chapter are the United States Census Bureau, Woods and Poole Economics Inc., the Georgia Department of Education and the McDuffie County Planning Commission.

HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS

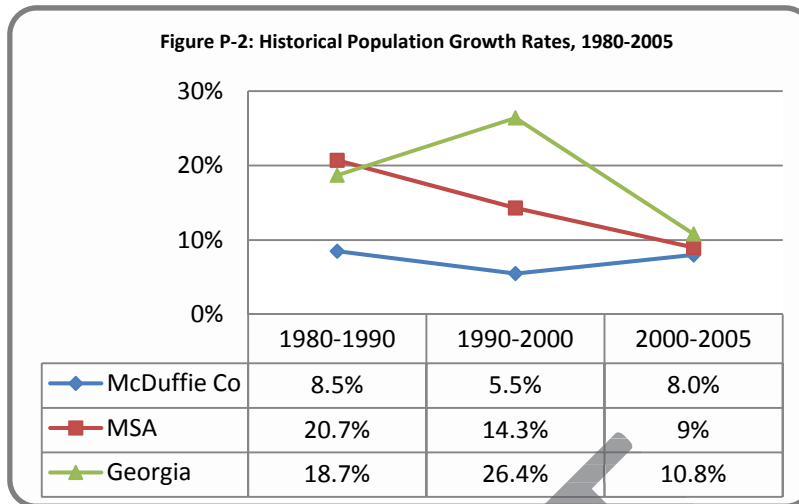
Figure P-1 illustrates the healthy population growth in McDuffie County (23.6 percent) and population decline in the municipalities (-1.9 percent in Thomson and -17.3 percent in Dearing) since 1980. During that same period, the metropolitan and statewide population increased by 50.3 percent and 66.2 percent respectively.

	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980-2005 % Change
McDuffie County	18,546	20,119	21,231	22,926	23.6%
Thomson	7,001	6,862	6,828	6,866	-1.9%
Dearing	539	547	441	446	-17.3%
Augusta-Aiken MSA	346,130	417,803	477,441	520,332	50.3%
Georgia	5,457,566	6,478,216	8,186,453	9,072,576	66.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF1); U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates (2005); Calculation by CSRA RDC

Figure P-2 shows that McDuffie County began experiencing a steady growth in population beginning in 1990. Since 1990, both the metropolitan and statewide growth rates declined from peak growth in the 1970s. Regardless of a more recent decline in growth rates, all three jurisdictions continue to experience increases in population.

POPULATION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF1); U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates (2005); Calculations by CSRA RDC

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

McDuffie County’s population is projected to increase by 6,717 (31.6 percent) through 2025 (**Figure P-3**). While the County’s growth rate will remain significantly above the metropolitan area (19.9 percent) and in line with the state’s (30.8 percent), the rate differential will continue to narrow compared to the two previous decades. The municipalities (Thomson and Dearing) within McDuffie County are projected to lose population over the planning period. Data provided to the CSRA Regional Development Center (RDC) by the County on residential building permits issued over the past 6 years, number of residential lots whose final plats have been approved, and numbers of water and sewer customers over the past five years provided the RDC with more accurate measures of McDuffie County’s population growth since the 2000 decennial census.

Figure P-3: Population Projections for Selected Jurisdictions, 2005-2025

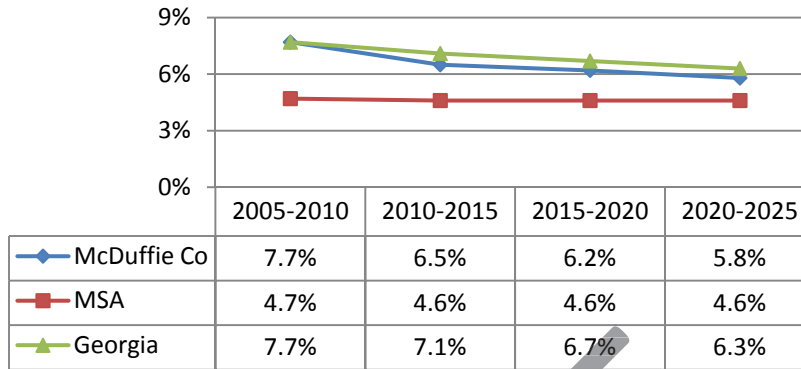
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2005-2025 % Change
McDuffie County	22,926	22,926	24,702	26,325	27,948	31.6%
Thomson	6,866	6,806	6,745	6,685	6,624	-3.5%
Dearing	446	420	394	368	341	-23.5%
Augusta-MSA	52,0070	544,440	569,750	596,100	623,720	19.9%
Georgia	8,868,675	9,550,897	10,233,118	10,915,340	11,597,562	30.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates (2005); Woods & Poole Economics (2005); Calculations by CSRA RDC

As shown in **Figure P-4**, McDuffie County’s projected 5-year growth rates illustrate an average increase of 6.2 percent through 2025, after an initial growth rate of 7.7 percent from 2005-2010. The decline in Thomson and Dearing’s populations during this same period can be attributed to the expansion of City-County infrastructure where it has not existed before. This expansion will drive residential as well as commercial development out from the existing population centers assuming current development patterns continue to be promoted. As it stands now both municipalities could be considered “built out” where all land suitable for residential development is currently in use.

POPULATION

Figure P-4: Five-Year Population Growth Rates for Selected Jurisdictions, 2005-2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates (2005); Woods & Poole Economics (2005); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Households

Typically, an increase of population will result in an increase of the total number of households within the community; although, the reverse is not necessarily true. As exhibited in **Figure P-5**, Thomson experienced a 2.6 percent increase in the number of households between 1990 and 2000 while its overall population declined. During this same time frame, the number of households in McDuffie County rose by 9.6 percent, while households in Dearing declined by 14.8 percent – a rate similar to the Town’s overall population decline. Both the Augusta-Aiken metropolitan area and the state enjoyed household growth rates in the mid-20 percent range during that same time.

Figure P-5: Number of Households for Selected Jurisdictions, 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000% Change
McDuffie County	6,270	7,270	7,970	9.6%
Thomson	2,425	2,544	2,609	2.6%
Dearing	207	209	178	-14.8%
Augusta-Aiken MSA	N/A	142,669	176,867	24%
Georgia	N/A	2,366,615	3,006,369	27%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF1)

Average household size in McDuffie County (2.62), Thomson (2.5) and Dearing (2.48) are roughly consistent with the metropolitan (2.61) and statewide averages (2.65) (**Figure P-6**). All jurisdictions illustrate a steady decline in average household size.

Figure P-6: Average Household Size for Selected Jurisdictions, 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000
McDuffie County	2.93	2.73	2.62
Thomson	2.81	2.6	2.5
Dearing	2.6	2.62	2.48
Augusta-Aiken MSA	N/A	2.7	2.61
Georgia	N/A	2.66	2.65

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF1)

POPULATION

Figure P-7 shows that family-structured households make up 73.5 percent of all households within McDuffie County. The Cities of Thomson (68.7 percent) and Dearing (71.3 percent) contain a slightly lower rate of family-structured households.

	McDuffie County	Thomson	Dearing
Total Households	7,980	2,624	149
Family Households	5,892	1,75	97
Non-Family Households	2,088	849	52

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF3, Table P14 (Calculations by: CSRA RDC)

All McDuffie County jurisdictions contain percentages of family-structured households that are similar to the overall Augusta-Aiken metropolitan area (71.5 percent) and state of Georgia (70.2 percent).

Age

Figure P-8 illustrates historical trends and projections of McDuffie County's population categorized by age group. Since 1980, all 35+ age groups within McDuffie County have experienced a significant increase in overall numbers.

Age	1980	2000	Rate (%) of Change 1980-2000	2025	Rate (%) of Change 2000-2025
0-4	1,518	1,511	-0.5%	1,984	31.3%
5-13	2,836	3,385	19.4%	4,443	31.2%
14-17	1,578	1,020	-35.4%	1,342	31.5%
18-20	980	869	-11.3%	1,118	28.6%
21-24	1,213	963	-20.6%	1,258	30.6%
25-34	2,749	2,802	1.6%	3,689	36.6%
35-44	2,100	3,238	54.2%	4,276	32.1%
45-54	1,895	2,941	55.2%	3,885	32.1%
55-64	1,718	1,974	14.9%	2,599	31.7%
65+	1,859	2,528	36%	3,354	32.7%
Total	18,446	21,231	15.1%	27,948	31.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980-2000 (SF3); Woods & Poole Economics (2005); CSRA RDC

Collectively, these age groups accounted for 3,109 new residents between 1980 and 2000. With the exception of the 5-13 year olds and 25-34 year olds groups, all other age groups declined in numbers in the past two decades. Growth rates among different age groupings are projected to stabilize through 2025 as McDuffie County becomes more integrated into the metropolitan area.

Age	1980	2000	Rate (%) of Change 1980-2000	2025	Rate (%) of Change 2000-2025
0-4	547	551	0.7%	556	0.9%
5-13	1,077	1,082	0.5%	1,088	.05%
14-17	588	321	-45.4%	0	-100%
18-20	351	303	-13.7%	243	-19.8%
21-24	422	335	-20.6%	233	-32.5%
25-34	1,083	947	-12.6%	777	-17.9%
35-44	697	911	30.7%	1,179	29.4%
45-54	649	802	23.6%	993	23.8%
55-64	697	533	-23.5%	328	-38.5%
65+	890	1,043	17.2%	1,234	18.3%
Total	7,001	6,828	-2.5%	6,624	-2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980-2000 (SF3); Woods & Poole Economics (2005); CSRA RDC

Thomson's age distribution patterns have undergone even more change, with growth and decline among all age groupings. The 35-44 and 45-54 year old age groups posted the highest growth since

POPULATION

1980, at 30.7 percent and 23.6 percent respectively (**Figure P-9**). The number of 14-17 year old (-45.4 percent) and 55-64 year old (-23.5 percent) posted the highest levels of decline.

Figure P-10: Dearing Age Distribution, 1980-2025

Age	1980	2000	Rate (%) of Change 1980-2000	2025	Rate (%) of Change 2000-2025
0 – 4	38	28	-26.3%	16	-42.9%
5 – 13	64	59	-7.8%	53	-10.2%
14 – 17	38	19	-50%	0	-100%
18 – 20	23	19	-17.4%	14	-26%
21 – 24	39	14	-64.1%	0	-100%
25 – 34	61	58	-4.9%	54	-6.9%
35 – 44	72	68	-5.6%	63	-7.4%
45 – 54	57	48	-15.8%	37	-22.9%
55 – 64	69	62	-10.1%	53	-13.6%
65 +	78	66	-15.4%	51	-22%
Total	539	441	-18.2%	341	-22.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980-2000 (SF3); CSRA RDC

Dearing has posted population declines across all age groups since 1980. The number of 21-24 year olds declines 64.1 percent while the number of 14-17 year olds declined 50 percent in the past two decades (**Figure P-10**). There is no information available that would suggest a change in these trends.

Figure P-11 presents a percentage breakdown of age groups in McDuffie County, Thomson and Dearing. Thomson has the youngest population of all jurisdictions. Approximately 34.8 percent of the City’s population is aged 45 years old or older, compared with 35.1 percent in McDuffie County and 40 percent in Dearing.

Figure P-11: Percent of Total Population by Age Group for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000

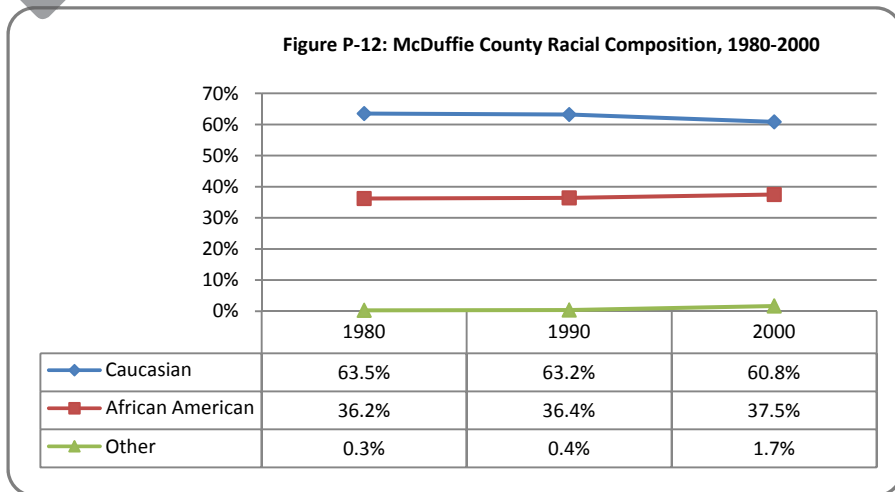
Age	McDuffie County	Thomson	Dearing
0 – 4	7.1%	8.1%	6.3%
5 – 13	15.9%	15.8%	13.4%
14 – 17	4.8%	4.7%	4.3%
18 – 20	4.1%	4.4%	4.3%
21 – 24	4.5%	4.9%	3.2%
25 – 34	13.2%	13.9%	13.2%
35 – 44	15.3%	13.3%	15.4%
45 – 54	13.9%	11.7%	10.9%
55 – 64	9.3%	7.8%	14.1%
65 +	11.9%	15.3%	15%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Racial and Ethnic Composition

Figure P-12 shows that in 2000, McDuffie County’s population was approximately 60.8 percent Caucasian, 37.5 percent African American and 1.7 percent listed as “other race.”

For purposes of this plan,

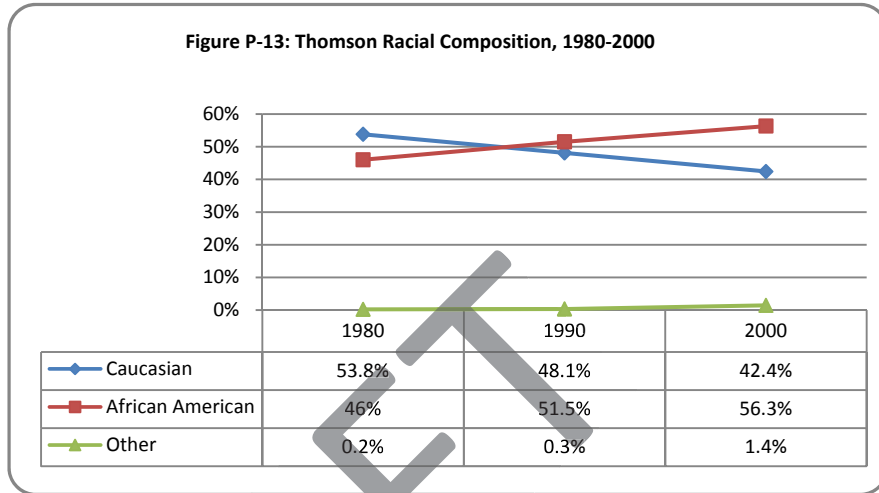


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

POPULATION

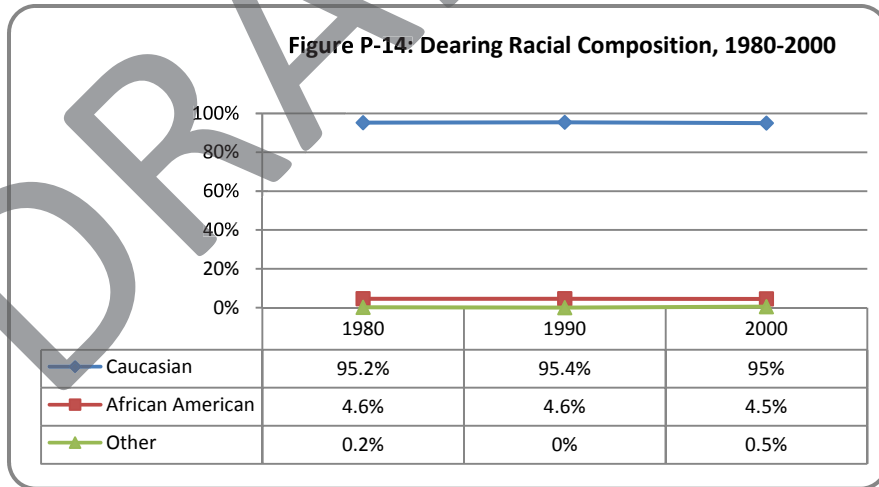
the category of “other race” includes those groups listed by the United States Census as: American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and “Some other race” (meaning a survey respondent was unable to identify with any one of the primary racial categories). Since 1980, the racial composition of county residents has not experienced any significant fluctuation.

Figure P-13 highlights racial composition in Thomson. In 2000, Thomson’s population was approximately 42.4 percent Caucasian, 56.3 percent African American and 1.4 percent listed as “other race.” Since 1980, Thomson’s Caucasian population has declined approximately 11.4 percent while the city’s African American population has increased by 10.3 percent.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure P-14 highlights racial composition in Dearing. In 2000, Dearing’s population was approximately 95 percent Caucasian, 4.5 percent African American and 0.5 percent listed as “other race.” Since 1980, the racial composition of city residents has not seen a significant change.



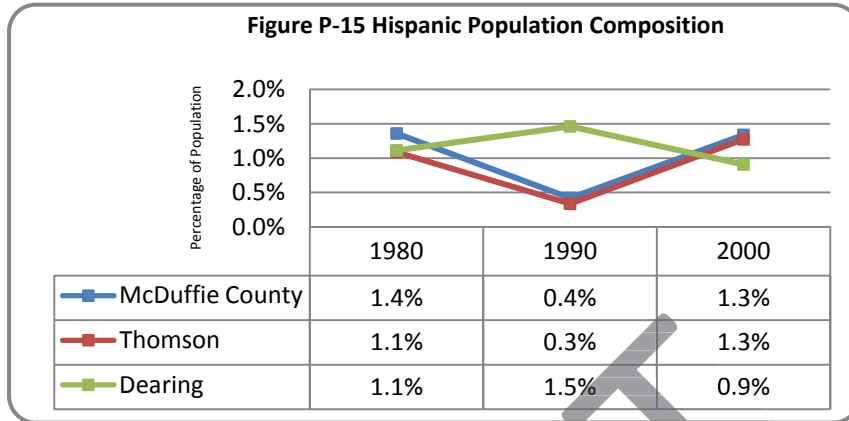
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

It is important to note that according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s “*Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: Census 2000 Brief*” (March, 2001), race and Hispanic origin are two distinct concepts. People of Hispanic ethnic origin may identify with one or more different racial groups including white, African American, American Indian, etc.

According to **Figure P-15**, McDuffie County has not experienced the surge in Hispanic population that other places in the metropolitan area have. People identifying themselves as Hispanic make up less than 1.5 percent of the population in every jurisdiction. Since 2000 the number of construction jobs

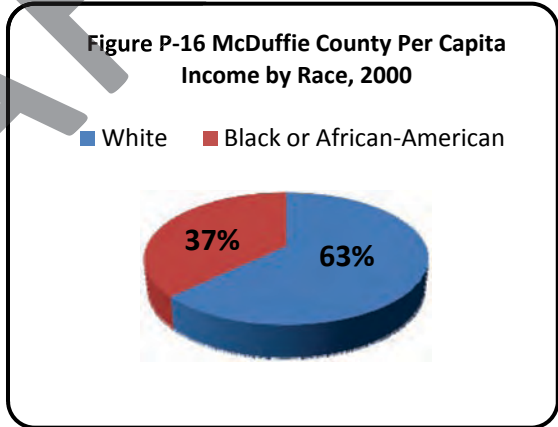
POPULATION

in McDuffie County has increased likely bringing with it an increase in the Hispanic population. Currently the lack of housing options in McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing makes it likely that the labor that Hispanic workers provide is imported from Augusta-Richmond County and Columbia County.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

As referenced in **Figure P-13**, the City of Thomson has seen a steady increase in the African American population coupled with a corresponding decrease in the Caucasian population. One possible explanation for the shift is the apparent lack of housing for all income levels in the unincorporated county. There is a direct correlation between ones level of income and ones mobility, or ability to choose where one lives. **Figure P-16** demonstrates the breakdown of per capita income by race in McDuffie County and could possibly demonstrate why the Caucasian population has grown in the unincorporated county. A higher level of income would allow Caucasian residents to live in the single family “stick-built” homes that make up the vast majority of the unincorporated areas housing stock.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

EDUCATION

The education level of a community is often a determinant of economic development potential. The skill levels of residents in an area can be inferred from the level of education prevalent in the community. Companies requiring skilled workers may look for areas with high rates of high school graduates while industries requiring highly-skilled workers may seek counties with large numbers of college graduates. The reverse is also true, with communities often seeking to attract companies that are a good fit for the educational level of its citizens.

Educational level is also important when evaluating a school system’s quality. If the number of high school dropouts is particularly high for a certain area, the school system could be in need of improvement. School system quality can also be a factor in determining quality of life for the citizens of an area.

POPULATION

Educational Attainment

In the past two decades, the educational attainment level of McDuffie County residents changed significantly. Between 1980 and 2000, the percentage of County residents failing to graduate from high school declined from 58.1 percent to 33.4 percent (**Figure P-17**).

In 1980, less than 8.2 percent of McDuffie County residents were college graduates. By 2000, the college graduate rate had increased to 14.8 percent. During this time, the total number of residents with a college education (both degreed and non-degreed) increased from 1,629 to 4,196.

Figure P-17: McDuffie County Educational Attainment, 1980-2000

	1980 Population 25 Years or Older		1990 Population 25 Years or Older		2000 Population 25 Years or Older	
	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
Less than 9th Grade	3,328	31.9%	2,322	18.8%	1,518	11.4%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	2,729	26.2%	3,100	25.1%	2,942	22%
High School Graduate (Includes GED)	2,735	26.2%	3,792	30.7%	4,694	35.2%
Some College (No Degree)	770	7.4%	1,351	10.9%	2,224	16.7%
Associate Degree	N/A	-	508	4.1%	421	3.2%
Bachelor's Degree	574	5.5%	832	6.7%	1,069	8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	285	2.7%	447	3.6%	482	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980-2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Education attainment in both Thomson and Dearing lag behind both the county and state averages. In 2000, 37.1 percent of Thomson residents and 39 percent of Dearing residents had not graduated from high school, compared to 33.4 percent for McDuffie County and 21.4 percent statewide (**Figure P-18**).

Figure P-18: Educational Attainment for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000

	McDuffie County	Thomson	Dearing	State of Georgia
Less than 9th Grade	11.4%	14.5%	10.6%	7.5%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	22%	22.6%	28.4%	13.9%
High School Graduate (Includes GED)	35.2%	29.7%	32.2%	28.7%
Some College (No Degree)	16.7%	18.9%	17.8%	20.4%
Associate Degree	3.2%	1.7%	3.8%	5.2%
Bachelor's Degree	8%	8.1%	6.3%	16%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.6%	4.6%	1%	8.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF3, 2000; Calculations by CSRA RDC

Test Scores and Dropout Rates

All students seeking a Georgia high school diploma must pass the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) and the Georgia High School Writing Assessment (GHSWA). The GHSGT is divided into four components: English/language arts, math, social studies and science. Students are given up to five opportunities to pass each of these examinations with the first opportunity coming during their 11th grade year. Initial assessment at this

Figure P-19: Thomson High School, Percentage of 11th Graders Passing State of Georgia Standardized Tests (1st Attempt)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
English/Language Arts	91%	90%	97%
Mathematics	95%	90%	96%
Social Studies	76%	76%	89%
Science	61%	69%	81%

Source: (Georgia) Governor's Office of Student Achievement, Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) & Georgia High School Writing Assessment (GHSWA)

POPULATION

time provides each student with enough time to retake the examinations prior to the end of their 12th grade year.

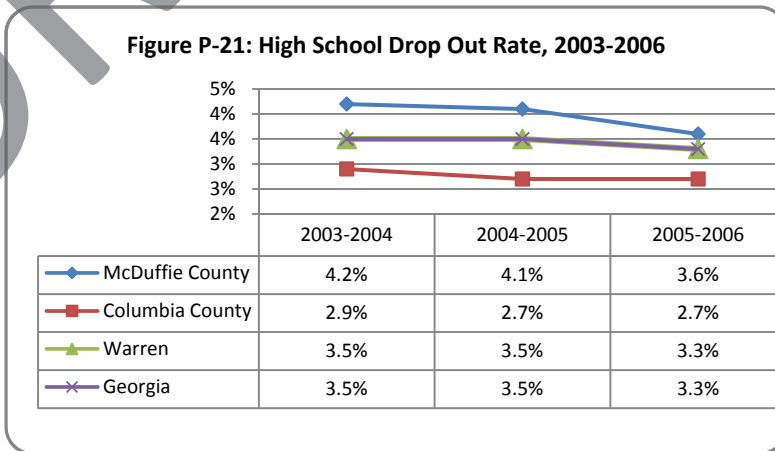
Figures P-19 and P-20 illustrates the percentage of Thomson High School 11th graders who passed the various components of the GHSGT and GHSWA on their first attempt over the last three year period. Focusing on the number of students who passed each of the exams on the first attempt is a more candid snap-shot of school achievement because results on subsequent exams may be affected by the provision of more resources to particular students than may be typical. As illustrated in **Figure P-209** Thomson High School’s 2005-2006 test results are similar to neighboring Columbia County and above the statewide average in every category. Columbia County is used as a comparison because it is believed to be one of the most successful school systems in the region, while Warren County is used as a comparison because of the rural traits that it shares with McDuffie County. Over the three year period analyzed in **Figure P-19**, there was also a marked increase in the percentage of 11th graders that were passing all four categories of the state’s standardized exams. It is important to note however, that year-to-year comparisons of standardized test results often do not provide the best picture of school achievement. Many educators indicate that student aptitude varies greatly on an annual basis and does not necessarily reflect progress the school system is making.

Figure P-20: 2005-06 Percentage of 11th Graders Passing State of Georgia Standardized Tests (1st Attempt)

	Thomson High School	Columbia County School System	Warren County School System	State of Georgia
English/Language Arts	97%	98%	57%	96%
Mathematics	96%	97%	75%	92%
Social Studies	89%	94%	63%	86%
Science	81%	85%	58%	73%

Source: (Georgia) Governor's Office of Student Achievement, Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) & Georgia High School Writing Assessment (GHSWA)

In addition to testing results, Thomson High School drop-out rates are slightly above the Columbia County, Warren County and the state of Georgia average, but appear to show a small decrease (**Figure P-21**) – declining from 4.2 percent in 2003-04 to 3.6 percent in 2005-06. The Columbia County and statewide drop-out rates declined during this period to 2.7 percent and 3.3 percent respectively. It should be noted that within the state of Georgia if a student transfers to a different school district during the school year, that student is said to have dropped out. This factor should always be taken into consideration when looking at any community’s dropout rate, because of the potential for resulting numbers to be skewed.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

POPULATION

INCOME

Household Income and Poverty

To measure McDuffie County’s household income characteristics, this section focuses on median household income rather than average household income. Especially for a population base the size of McDuffie County’s, average household income can often be skewed by a small number of particularly wealthy or poor residents. In contrast, a median figure can provide a more detailed picture of community character by clearly identifying a baseline number which roughly half of a community’s residents exceed. This section also includes information on per capita income due to population figures that suggest a growing number of single person households as opposed to families. Dollar amounts are expressed in 2000 dollars- incorporating a 32 percent rate of inflation- in order to provide a more accurate assessment of whether or not increases in income has translated into increased buying power for McDuffie County residents.

Between 1990 and 2000, McDuffie County median household income decreased from \$35,069 to \$31,920, or 9 percent (Figure P-22). Conversely, Dearing enjoyed a substantial increase in median household income during this time – increasing by 23.2 percent. While Thomson’s median household income increased by 6.5 percent, such an increase was only enough to slightly outpace the inflation rate during the same time frame. Although all McDuffie County jurisdictions fall below the state median household income; the gap is narrowing from decade to decade for the municipalities.

Figure P-22: Median Household Income for Selected Jurisdictions, 1990-2000 in constant 2000 dollars*

	1990	2000	Percent (%) Change
McDuffie County	\$35,069	\$31,920	-9.0%
Thomson	\$21,764	\$23,179	+ 6.5%
Dearing	\$22,649	\$27,917	+23.2%
State of Georgia	\$38,307	\$42,433	+9.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC
* Assumes a 32 % inflation rate

Between 1990 and 2000 per capita income also rose significantly in two of the three jurisdictions. As illustrated in Figure P-23 in McDuffie County (70 percent), Thomson (29 percent) per capita income growth outpaced inflation. While in Dearing there was a slight loss (-0.7 percent) Dearing’s small population could be to blame for its loss.

Figure P-23 Per Capita Income for Selected Jurisdictions 1990-2000 in Constant 2000 Dollars*

	1990	2000	Percent (%) Change
State of Georgia	\$17,992	\$21,154	17.5%
McDuffie County	\$13,561	\$18,005	32.8%
Thomson	\$13,256	\$14,976	13.1%
Dearing	\$12,635	\$12,728	-0.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000(SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC * Assumes an inflation rate of 32%

All three McDuffie County jurisdictions have poverty levels above the statewide average. At 27.7 percent, Thomson has the highest rate in the plan area, followed by Dearing (20.8 percent) and the county (18.5 percent) (Figure P-24). All jurisdictions with the exception of Thomson saw a

Figure P-24 Poverty Level for Selected Jurisdictions, 1989, 1999

	1989 Percent (%) Below Poverty Level	1999 Percent (%) Below Poverty Level	Percent (%) Change, 1989- 1999
McDuffie County	22.2%	18.5%	-3.7%
Thomson	26.6%	27.7%	1.1%
Dearing	25.1%	20.8%	-4.3%
State of Georgia	13.2%	13%	-0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

POPULATION

slight reduction in the number of people living below the poverty line.

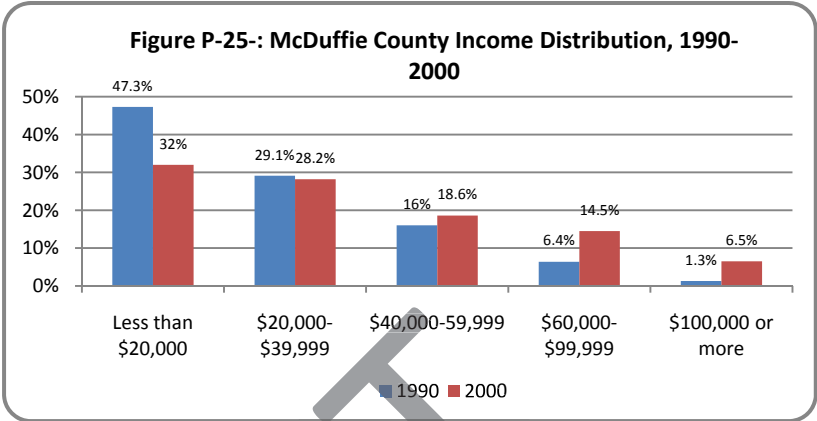
Distribution of Households by Income

Figure P-25 highlights the income distribution of McDuffie County residents. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of county residents in higher income brackets has increased substantially. The most rapid increase in household income distribution was in families earning between \$60,000 and \$99,000, which increased over twofold – from 6.4 percent of the population in 1990 to 14.5 percent in 2000. During the same period the number of families in the lowest income bracket decreased over 15.3 percent between 1990 and 2000. **Figure P-26** suggests a more equitable distribution of income throughout the county.

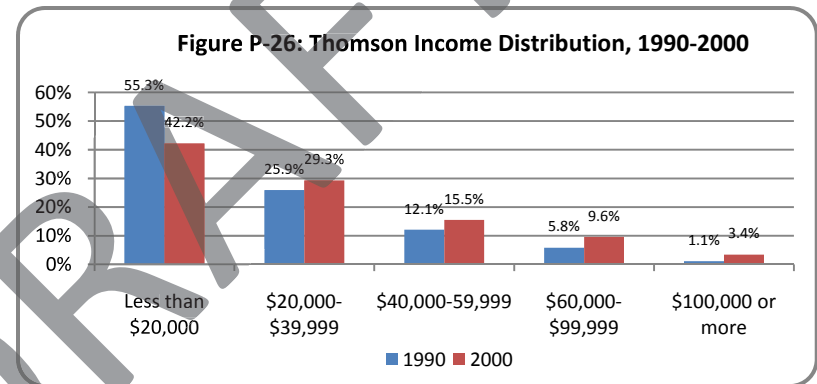
The City of Thomson has undergone a similar increase towards higher income brackets. The number of families in the lowest income bracket decreased over 13.1 percent between 1990 and 2000 (**Figure P-27**). Unlike the county, Thomson has income increases of at least 3 percent in all brackets except one- the only exception is the “less than 20,000 dollars” category.

Dearing’s income gains have occurred primarily at the 60,000-99,999 dollars and over brackets. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of

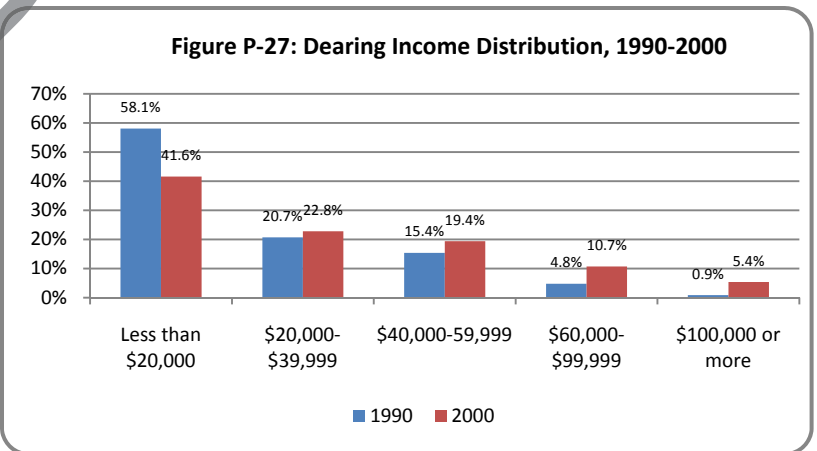
Dearing families earning 60,000 dollars or more has increased from 5.7 percent to 16.1 percent



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

POPULATION

(Figure P-27). Like Thomson and McDuffie County as a whole, Dearing has experienced a decrease in the percentage of households earning less than 30,000 dollars.

DRAFT

POPULATION

ASSESSMENT

POPULATION

Located on the outer fringe of the metropolitan area, McDuffie County has experienced little impact from the rapid population growth seen in the rest of the Augusta-Aiken urbanized area. Regardless, in recent decades growth within the county has been healthy. Data suggests that the majority of the county's recent population increases have occurred within the unincorporated portions of the county. Growth in rural portions of the county has corresponded with expansions of water and sewer infrastructure. Population within Thomson and Dearing since 1980 has declined. Population losses within the cities are likely attributed to a combination of factors including lower land costs in the unincorporated portions of the county, aging housing and infrastructure within municipal limits and limited annexation activity.

Through 2025, however McDuffie County will begin to experience more rapid growth. The suburban sprawl that has characterized the recent growth in Columbia County (and most metropolitan areas throughout the country) is now beginning to spread toward McDuffie County. The spread of population can be attributed to dwindling land supply and rising land costs within the urbanized portions of the MSA, and a desire for land owners to avoid the increased density that accompanies urbanization and maintain a rural lifestyle. Increasing population growth rates in McDuffie County may also be the direct result of local leadership's investment in significant expansions of water and sewer facilities. In the case of McDuffie County, such investment essentially invites "leapfrog" population growth. While developable land still exists in other portions of the metropolitan area, ongoing infrastructure investment will likely provide the incentive for Augusta area workers to relocate to an area that retains many of the area's rural characteristics and small town amenities.

Households

While McDuffie County is the only jurisdiction subject to this *Plan* that has experienced recent population growth, both McDuffie County and Thomson have seen increases in their total number of households. The seeming disparity between population decreases in Thomson versus household increases is likely the result of a population that is aging at a greater rate than the county. Throughout all three jurisdictions, the total number of households in the community is expected to climb at a faster rate than population (or decrease at a slower rate where applicable). The result is a decrease in household size as referenced herein. With this in mind, it is likely that the long-term increase of population referenced in the previous subsection of the "Assessment" portion of this chapter will be fueled by a significant number of senior citizens, retirees and empty-nesters.

A fairly high proportion of non-family householders reside in McDuffie County - particularly in Thomson and Dearing. McDuffie County does not have a large inventory of multi-family housing options. In addition, the county lacks many of the facilities that typically attract younger non-family householders such as: a military installation, four-year college, etc. It is apparent that such a high percentage of non-family households are the result of a large number of one-person households (which are not defined as "family" households) who reside largely in single family structures.

POPULATION

Age

McDuffie County's population increase since the mid-1990s has translated into growth across most age groups. Since 1980, all 35+ age groups within McDuffie County have experienced a significant increase in overall numbers. The growth of these age groups may indicate that some retirees and childless couples are attracted to McDuffie County by relatively low housing prices and plentiful land. Much of the population growth in the County, however, may also be attributed to the relocation of families with school-aged children – illustrated by corresponding increases in the county's population within the 5 to 13 year old age group. Such increases of families with children can be attributed – at least partially – to the desire for some families to relocate from the rapidly urbanizing areas of the Augusta-Aiken metropolitan area. In contrast, the decrease in most other younger age groups is a reflection that McDuffie County still lacks many of the educational and employment opportunities of a larger urban area. Overall population decreases in Dearing among all age groups may reflect the desire of residents to relocate to areas closer to their places of employment – whether in Thomson or the urbanized area of Augusta.

While Thomson's age group distribution currently equates to the county's youngest overall population, trends suggest that the projected population growth within the county will be more evenly distributed among all age groups. Combined with Thomson's decreasing household size and high percentage of non-family householders, it is likely that the city's population will age at a faster rate than the unincorporated portions of the county.

Race and Ethnicity

Census figures indicate a relatively consistent racial makeup within McDuffie County. While the Caucasian population has decreased slightly as an overall percentage of the county's population, it remains the county's single largest racial group. Unlike some other counties in the area, McDuffie County has not seen any significant increases in Hispanic residents.

It is likely that the majority of Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County citizens who identified themselves as "other race" are actually ethnic Hispanics who were not certain what racial category to select (As previously explained, the U.S. Census Bureau identifies Hispanics as an "ethnicity" not a "race.") There has been no significant increase in McDuffie County's Hispanic population over the past 20 years. The national trend in the exponential growth of the Hispanic population will surely be felt in all of McDuffie County's jurisdictions in the future. With regard to when or how it will affect the County as a whole, nothing more than speculation can be offered at this time.

EDUCATION

Educational Attainment

Since 1980, McDuffie County's gradual decrease in the percentage of residents not receiving at least a high school education. A corresponding increase in residents with college degrees, illustrates that a skilled workforce is emerging within the community. While McDuffie County's educational attainment levels remain lower than the statewide average, they are catching up. It is important to note that of the 33.4 percent of McDuffie County residents that do not have a high school diploma, a significant number may be represented by those aged 65 years or older. The increasing growth of

POPULATION

the county's population combined with the positive reputation of the McDuffie County school system, suggests that educational attainment levels will continue to rise and compare more favorably to statewide figures in the future.

Based on local education attainment levels, McDuffie County's workforce is well suited to continue supplying the service industries while also providing opportunities for investment in the manufacturing sector. The increase in college educated residents has also resulted in an acknowledgement that McDuffie County should find ways to promote local growth in office-based professional services including occupations such as bankers, accountants, doctors, architects, engineers, etc.

Test Score and Dropout Rate

The scores of McDuffie County school system students on state-wide standardized tests are on par with those in neighboring Columbia County, and well above those in Warren County. Steady improvement in student's test scores is to be expected for a community in McDuffie County's situation (growing population, school investment, increases in household income, etc.) As the population increases the trend should continue. McDuffie County realizes what an asset a strong public school system can be. Not only in terms of a well educated population, but also as a tool to attract industries with higher paying jobs whose employees value their children's education.

Dropout rates within McDuffie County are slightly higher than state-wide and Columbia County averages. Over the past three school years, however, the numbers are dropping at a steady pace. At the present rate McDuffie County Schools will have fewer dropouts than the state average in the next three to five years.

INCOME

The rise in both median and per capita household income for McDuffie County residents illustrates the increase in better paying jobs within the county. It also illustrates an increase in better paying jobs throughout the region because the Census Bureau data in which these figures are based analyzes the income of McDuffie County residents – regardless of where they work. McDuffie County lies in close proximity to the area's regional employment center, and as previously mentioned, the availability of better paying jobs without a significant increase in commuting costs, makes it easy for McDuffie County residents to enjoy a higher level of income. In fact, in all jurisdictions but Thomson, the increases in household income far outpaced the inflation rate for the same time frame.

A statistic of concern is the consistently high percentage of McDuffie County (18.5 percent), Thomson (27.7 percent), and Dearing (20.8 percent) families living in poverty. While the overall percentage of poverty-stricken families in McDuffie County has declined significantly in the past decade, the county and cities still lie well above the state average of 13 percent. While all three jurisdictions have shown a shift of households to higher income brackets, such a trend has occurred within Thomson in spite of the fact that the poverty rate has also risen. These conflicting statistics provide evidence that there is a significant group of residents – particularly in Thomson - that are not benefiting from the improved county-wide economic conditions. Households stuck in a situation of pervasive poverty lack the mobility of other households and likely do not have access to job

POPULATION

opportunities in neighboring jurisdictions. This scenario is one of many reasons that it is important to promote the creation of jobs for people of varying skill and education levels and reduce the reliance on jobs located in other communities.

DRAFT

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 3 Economic Development

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

Economic development is an ongoing and sustaining process - essential to planning for the future. It represents opportunity for the resident population. Virtually all residents participate in some way in the local economy, whether they produce, sell, or consumer goods and services. Continued economic growth and diversification is also important to the revenue base of the three communities that comprise McDuffie County. A local economy that balances residential with non-residential growth and can rely on multiple industry sectors for employment, will be better equipped to keep pace with current public service demands, and meet long-term maintenance responsibilities.

The purpose of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan's* economic development component is to analyze past trends and current conditions in order to assess strengths and weaknesses in the local economy. Using information related to economic base, labor force, and economic development resources, this chapter provides an in-depth look at the variables that drive the McDuffie County economy.

The principal sources of information in this chapter are the United States Census Bureau, the United States Department of Commerce, The United States Department of Labor, and Woods & Poole Economics Inc. Because McDuffie County, Dearing, and Thomson's economic well-being is tied so closely with the health of the region, this chapter also examines the regional economy as a whole. Additionally, comparisons are made to neighboring Columbia and Warren Counties due to proximity and similar characteristics.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT

As previously discussed within the *Plan*, McDuffie County is part of the five county Augusta-Aiken Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Additionally, McDuffie County is part of the 13 county Augusta-Aiken Economic Area (EA). The Augusta-Aiken EA is established by the United States Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis and relies on commuting patterns, federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) data, newspaper circulation, etc. to determine which rural counties are reliant on the economic health of a given MSA.

Figure E-1 illustrates recent employment by industry trends for the Augusta-Aiken MSA and the Augusta- Richmond County EA. Within the EA, the single biggest growth in the five year time frame occurred in the wholesale trade industry (20.7 percent). Within the same time, frame educational services experienced the largest growth (20.2 percent) within the MSA. Although most growth is positive, it must be taken into account the relatively small percentage of jobs that these two industries provide to the region. Industries like construction, administrative services, and government & government enterprises saw relatively small growth during the same period but made up a majority of overall number of jobs.

Trends illustrated by **Figure E-1** show the steady decline of manufacturing jobs in the region. This will become the norm as the economy shifts to a more service oriented one. Also illustrated in **Figure E-1** the growth in both the EA and the MSA in service related industries (education, health care, accommodation and food service, and "other services") further emphasizes this point. "Other services" refers to individuals engaged in a variety of occupations that are difficult to categorize, such

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

as: equipment and machine repair, religious services, personal care, pet care, laundry, photocopying services, etc.

Figure E-1: Regional Employment by Industry, 2001-2005

Industry Classification (N.A.I.C.S.)*	Augusta-Richmond County EA			Augusta- Aiken MSA		
	2001 Number (#) of Jobs	2005 Number (#) of Jobs	Percent (%) Change 2001- 2005	2001 Number (#) of Jobs	2005 Number (#) of Jobs	Percent (%) Change 2001- 2005
Total Employment	300,755	312,100	3.7 %	271,852	284,428	4.6 %
Construction	20,994	21,898	4.3 %	19,693	20,364	3.4 %
Manufacturing	36,854	31,383	-14.8 %	29,419	24,351	-17.2 %
Wholesale Trade	5,473	6,610	20.7 %	5,154	6,164	19.6 %
Retail Trade	34,111	35,324	3.6 %	31,426	32,480	3.4 %
Transportation & Warehousing	5,434	6,163	13.4 %	5,196	5,798	11.6 %
Information	4,451	4,428	-0.5 %	4,247	4,149	-2.3 %
Finance & Insurance	7,454	8,328	11.7 %	6,926	7,839	13.2 %
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	7,216	8,642	19.8 %	6,859	8,218	19.8 %
Administrative & Waste Services	29,176	30,153	3.3 %	28,707	29,763	3.7 %
Educational Services	Not Available	Not Available	N/A	2,323	2,792	20.2 %
Health Care & Social Assistance	Not Available	25,627	N/A	21,911	25,465	16.2 %
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	4,404	4,610	4.7 %	4,231	4,444	5.0 %
Accommodation & Food Services	17,462	20,056	14.9 %	16,485	18,962	15.0 %
Other Services except Public Administration	15,317	17,655	15.2 %	14,198	16,170	13.9 %
Government & Government Enterprises	60,918	61,496	0.9 %	55,040	56,086	1.9 %

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Table CA25N *North American Industry Classification System

ECONOMIC BASE AND TRENDS

Employment by Industry

Figures E-2 and E-3 provide employment by industry numbers for McDuffie County. As with the previous figure, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is the source of information. BEA employment numbers are collected according to the number and type of jobs that exist within a given geographic area – regardless of whether or not the job is being performed by a resident of that same geographic area. In other words, both figures provide an overview of “jobs” in McDuffie County – not an inventory of where McDuffie County residents work. It is also important to note that BEA employment data inventories full-time and part-time jobs. Therefore, it is entirely possible that in many instances two or more of the part-time “jobs” included in Figures E-2 and E-3 may actually be filled by a single person.

While Figures E-1, E-2 and E-3 are all derived from BEA data, there is some slight variation in the column labeled “industry classification.” Figure E-2 charts the change of employment by industry between 1980 and 2000. In doing so, Figure E-2 relies on the Standard Industrial Classification (S.I.C.)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

system for classifying economic activity. In 2002, the United States, Canada and Mexico all began using the North American Industry Classification System (N.A.I.C.S.) to provide standardized industrial classifications throughout the continent. As a result, more recent employment by industry data illustrated in **Figures E-1** and **E-3** uses the N.A.I.C.S. Regardless, the data provided in all three figures are similar enough to provide for cross-analysis.

Figure E-2: McDuffie County Employment by Industry, 1980-2000

Industry Class. (S.I.C.)*	1980	1990	Percent (%) of 1990 Total	2000	Percent (%) of 2000 Total	Percent % Change (1990- 2000)
Total Employment	7,590	8,952	N/A	10,733	N/A	19.9 %
Construction	378	649	7.2 %	1,063	9.9 %	63.8 %
Manufacturing	3,041	2,155	24.1 %	2,064	19.2 %	-4.2 %
Wholesale Trade	99	209	2.3 %	Not Available	N/A	N/A
Retail Trade	1,131	1,839	20.5 %	2,173	20.2 %	18.2 %
Transportation & Public Utilities	155	256	2.9 %	241	2.2 %	-5.9 %
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	341	400	4.5 %	534	5.0 %	33.5 %
Services	990	1,567	17.5 %	1,968	18.3 %	26.6 %
Government & Government Enterprises	952	1,,288	14.4 %	1,764	16.4 %	37.0 %
Farming	372	435	4.9 %	540	5.0 %	24.1 %
Ag. Services, forestry and fishing	Not Available	Not Available	N/A	203	1.9 %	N/A

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Table CA25N*Standard Industrial Classification

Figure E-2 suggests that since 1990, there has been a steady decline in manufacturing jobs (-4.2 percent) within McDuffie County. During the same time frame McDuffie County has seen an increase in construction (63.8 percent), retail trade (18.2 percent), services (26.6 percent), and government and government enterprises (37 percent). These are all noteworthy gains because they represent three out of four of the county's major employment sectors.

Since 2001, **Figure E-3** illustrates that overall McDuffie County employment opportunities have continued to increase at a steady rate – roughly 3.7 percent between 2001 and 2005. Unlike **Figure E-2**, there is a recent increase in farm employment within McDuffie County to 608 total jobs in 2005. The largest single employment sector within McDuffie County in 2005 continued to be manufacturing (16 percent) followed closely by government and government enterprises (15.9 percent)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Figure E-3: McDuffie County Employment by Industry, 2001-2005

Industry Class. (N.A.I.C.S.)*	2001	2005	Percent of 2005 employment	Percent Change
Total Employment	10,516	10,901	N/A	3.7 %
Construction	1,005	921	8.4 %	-8.4 %
Manufacturing	1,878	1,739	16 %	-7.4 %
Wholesale Trade	Not Available	Not Available	N/A	N/A
Retail Trade	1,372	1,301	11.9 %	-5.2 %
Transportation & Warehousing	284	388	3.6 %	36 %
Information	93	133	1.2 %	43 %
Finance & Insurance	410	279	2.7 %	-32 %
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	230	295	2.7 %	28.3 %
Administrative & Waste Services	392	293	2.7 %	-25.3 %
Educational Services	Not Available	43	0.4 %	N/A
Health Care & Social Assistance	Not Available	776	7.1 %	N/A
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	154	61	0.6 %	-60.3 %
Accommodation & Food Services	600	803	7.4 %	33.8 %
Other Services except Public Administration	495	605	5.5 %	22.2 %
Farming	522	608	5.6 %	16.5%
Government & Government Enterprises	1,744	1,738	15.9 %	-0.3 %

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Table CA25N*North American Industry Classification System

Employment by Industry Projections

Figure E-4 includes long-term employment by industry projections in McDuffie County. Over the next 25 years, the projections suggest that the mining and federal civilian sectors will continue to decline through 2025 at a rate of 33.3 and 20 percent respectively.

Figure E-4: McDuffie County Employment Projections, 2005-2025

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2005-2025 % Change
Farm Employment	570	590	610	630	650	14%
Agri. Services, Other	180	200	210	230	250	38.9%
Mining	30	30	20	20	20	-33.3%
Construction	1,060	1,110	1,150	1,190	1,230	16%
Manufacturing	1,820	1,830	1,850	1,860	1,880	3.3%
Transportation, Com. & Utilities	240	240	250	250	260	8.3%
Wholesale Trade	180	200	210	220	230	27.8%
Retail Trade	2,130	2,230	2,330	2,430	2,530	18.8%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	590	630	670	710	740	25.4%
Services	1,950	2,100	2,240	2,390	2,540	30.3%
Federal Civilian	50	40	40	40	40	-20%
Federal Military	110	110	120	120	120	9.1%
State & Local Government	1,640	1,760	1,870	1,990	2,100	28%
Total	10,550	11,070	11,570	12,080	12,590	19.3%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics (2005); Calculations by CSRA RDC

In contrast, the projections suggest that the overall

number of jobs within McDuffie County will climb steadily between 2005 and 2025. Between 2000 and 2025, total employment opportunities within McDuffie County are expected to increase by 19.3 percent.

Increases in McDuffie County employment opportunities will be most significant in the “services” sector – at 30.3 percent. “Services” can range from business-type endeavors, such as employment

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

agencies, equipment repair, data processing, etc, to individual-related services, such as auto repair, doctors, architects, theaters, etc. As with previous figures, **Figure E-4** includes part-time and full-time employment

While **Figure E-4** suggests long-term growth in employment opportunities within McDuffie County, the 19.3 percent increase is slow when compared to surrounding counties and the state as a whole. Fueled by metropolitan Atlanta, **Figure E-5** suggests that the growth rate of employment opportunities throughout Georgia will increase by over 38 percent between 2000 and 2025. Substantial employment growth rates are projected to take place in adjacent Columbia County as well. Neighboring Warren County is projected to see little or no job growth over the same period.

	Jobs in 2000	Jobs in 2025	Rate (%) of Change 2000-2025
McDuffie County	10,733	12,590	19.3 %
Columbia County	32,490	54,270	67.0 %
Warren County	2,370	2,380	0.4 %
Georgia	4,892,290	6,755,660	38.1 %

Source: Woods & Poole (2005)

LABOR FORCE

Labor Force Participation

The number of McDuffie County residents participating in the labor force is illustrated in **Figure E-6**. Unlike BEA data, the U.S. Census Bureau data utilized for these figures illustrates the number of work eligible McDuffie County residents (16 years of age or older) and their current employment status – regardless of whether they work within or outside of the county. The increase in labor force participation reflects McDuffie County’s steady population growth beginning in the 1990s. Individuals shown as not participating in the labor force are not classified as unemployed. Such individuals may include children not yet 16 years of age, retirees, stay-at-home spouses or people engaged primarily in volunteer labor.

	1990		2000	
	People	Percent	People	Percent
Total People	14,918	100%	15,899	100%
In labor force:	9,495	63.6%	9,712	61.1%
Civilian Employed	8,869	59.5%	8,931	56.2%
Civilian unemployed	552	3.7%	741	4.7%
In Armed Forces	74	0.5%	40	0.3%
Not in labor force	5,423	36.4%	6,187	38.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

As a percentage of McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing’s overall population, the civilian labor force remained relatively unchanged between 1990 and 2000 – fluctuating by not more than 5 percent in any of the three jurisdictions (**Figures E-6, E-7, and E-8**). The percentage of civilian unemployed remained largely unchanged during this period rising by only one percentage point. Thomson and Dearing saw a more significant rise in their civilian unemployment rates during the same time frame.

	1990		2000	
	People	Percent	People	Percent
Total People	5,059	100%	5,006	100%
In labor force:	3,003	59.4%	2,881	57.6%
Civilian Employed	2,814	55.6%	2,476	49.5%
Civilian unemployed	156	3.1%	388	7.8%
In Armed Forces	33	0.7%	17	0.3%
Not in labor force	2,056	40.6%	2,125	42.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing residents employed by the armed forces also remained largely unchanged; but, as a percentage of the overall population, military employees in McDuffie County decreased from 0.5 percent to 0.3 percent. The largest shift in McDuffie County labor force participation between 1990 and 2000 was the increase of residents who were not engaged in the labor force – rising from 36.4 to 38.9 percent. In the municipalities the rate of those not in the labor force remained largely unchanged.

Figure E-8: Dearing Labor Force Participation , 1990-2000

	1990		2000	
	People	Percent	People	Percent
Total People	314	100%	279	100
In labor force:	191	60.8%	184	65.9%
Civilian Employed	183	58.3%	155	55.6%
Civilian unemployed	8	2.5%	25	9%
In Armed Forces	0	0%	4	1.4%
Not in labor force	123	39.2%	95	34.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Labor Force by Occupation

Employment by “occupation” differs from employment by “industry.” Occupation refers to the type of work that one performs for a particular industry sector. For example, a person employed by the manufacturing industry may oversee plant operations and therefore holds a management occupation. In contrast, his or her co-worker may be responsible for preparing the manufacturing plant’s product or seeking customers to buy the product. This individual would obviously then be involved in a production or sales occupation, respectively.

Figure E-9 illustrates that – at 24.7 percent – the largest percentage of McDuffie County residents in the civilian labor force by 2000 were in management, professional, and related occupations. The figure also illustrates that the occupations of McDuffie County residents are spread fairly evenly among most occupation classifications. The lack of individuals employed in occupations associated with farming, fishing and forestry occupations is consistent with McDuffie County’s employment by industry numbers and reflects the growing suburban nature of the community.

Figure E-9: Civilian Labor Force by Occupation for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000

	McDuffie County		Thomson		Dearing	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employed civilian population 16 years and over						
Management, professional, and related occupations	2,207	24.7%	680	27.5%	23	14.8%
Service occupations	1,276	14.3%	373	15.1%	15	9.7%
Sales and office occupations	2,109	23.6%	566	22.9%	35	22.6%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	108	1.2%	35	1.4%	1	0.6%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	1,228	13.7%	251	10.1%	39	25.2%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	2,003	22.4%	571	23.1%	42	27.1%
Total	8,931	100%	2,476	100%	155	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Labor Force by Place of Work

By presenting data within the preceding sections of this chapter from differing sources (U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Census Bureau), the plan reminds us that employed residents

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

of McDuffie County may or may not work within the county. Likewise, McDuffie County employers will often hire workers who reside in other jurisdictions. **Figures E-10** and **E-11** provide a better perspective on the amount of labor that is being exported from and imported to McDuffie County. Please note that data provided in both figures – although originating from the U.S. Census Bureau – has been converted by the BEA to correspond with other datasets which they generate. In addition, **Figures E-10** and **E-11** do not account for workers holding multiple jobs. For these reasons, total employment numbers contained in both figures will differ from preceding datasets.

Figure E-10: McDuffie County Labor Force by Residence, 1980-2000				
	1980	2000	Rate (%) Of Change 1980-2000	Percent (%)of Total (2000)
Total Labor Force	5,880	8,224	39.8 %	N/A
Residence:				
McDuffie County	5,017	5,405	7.7%	65.7 %
Outside of McDuffie County				
Total	863	2,819	226.7%	34.3 %
Other Georgia Counties	863	2,705	213.4	95.6 %
Out of State	0	114	100%	4.4 %

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis based on U.S. Census Bureau "Journey to Work and Place of Work" Data

Figure E-10 illustrates that the total labor force employed within McDuffie County has grown by 39.9 percent between 1980 and 2000 to a total of 8,224 workers – suggesting a significant growth of available jobs. During this same period of time, **Figure E-11** shows that the total number of employed workers residing in McDuffie County also increased by a rate of 20.6 percent to 8,668. A comparison of the two figures suggests that historically, McDuffie County has had a slightly higher number of employed laborers as opposed to available jobs.

Figure E-11: McDuffie County Laborers by Place of Work, 1980-2000				
	1980	2000	Rate (%) Of Change 1980-2000	Percent (%)of Total (2000)
Total McDuffie County Laborers	7,185	8,668	20.6%	100 %
Place of Work:				
McDuffie County	5,017	5,405	7.7 %	62.4 %
Outside of McDuffie County				
Total	2,168	3,263	50.5 %	37.6 %
Other Georgia Counties	2,004	3,102	54.8 %	95.0 %
Out of State	164	161	-1.8 %	5.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis based on U.S. Census Bureau "Journey to Work and Place of Work" Data

Along with the growth in available jobs between 1980 and 2000, the number and percentage of county residents commuting to other jurisdictions increased significantly during the period. Between 1980 and 2000, **Figure E-11** indicates that there was a 50.5 percent increase in the number of McDuffie County residents that commuted to jobs outside of the county. By 2000, over 37 percent of all McDuffie County residents worked elsewhere. McDuffie County is exporting approximately 15.8 percent more labor than they are currently importing.

Personal Income

As with virtually every community in the nation, hourly wages and salaries are the principal sources of income for residents of McDuffie County. As illustrated in **Figure E-12**, 78.6 percent of McDuffie County residents' income was derived from wage and salary income. However, **Figure E-12** does illustrate the other varying sources

Figure E-12: Sources of Household Income for Selected Jurisdictions, Percent of Total Income, 2000

	McDuffie County	Warren County	Columbia County	State of Georgia
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	78.6%	71.6	79.2	78.2%
Aggregate other types of income for households	2.1%	3.3	1.7	1.7%
Aggregate self employment income for households	2.9%	4.6	5.4	5.6%
Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income	5.1%	11.2	5.1	5.3%
Aggregate social security income for households	5.4%	8.3	3.0	4.0%
Aggregate public assistance income for households	1%	0.4	0.1	0.0%
Aggregate retirement income for households	4.8%	0.6	5.5	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF3

of income on which households may rely. At 5.4 and 5.1 percent respectively, “social security” income and “interest dividends or net rental” income are the second and third highest sources of income for McDuffie County households. **Figure E-12** shows that public assistance for households accounted for the lowest percentage of McDuffie County residents' household income. While **Figure E-12** shows that the overall composition of McDuffie County household sources of income is similar to adjacent counties and the State of Georgia, the county's overall reliance on wages and salaries is lower than neighboring Columbia County and slightly higher than Warren County and the State of Georgia. McDuffie County households have a slightly higher reliance on social security than Columbia County and the State of Georgia but significantly below that of neighboring Warren County.

A closer look at McDuffie County's sources of income illustrates that personal income for the county's households significantly increased from 1990 to 2000. In order to determine the predominant sources of income (by percentage) generated by community residents, the data in **Figure E-13** was derived by utilizing aggregate U.S. Census household income data from both decades and dividing the total by the corresponding number of McDuffie County households. **Figure E-13** also calculates the change of average household income by type, from 1990 to 2000, in order to determine the rate at which average income increased or decreased throughout the decade. Finally, using the Consumer Price Index, a figure of 32 percent inflation between 1990 and 2000 is factored into the average household income “rate of change” in order to determine whether overall increases in wages translate into greater consumer buying power.

Figure E-13 illustrates that, at over 78 percent, McDuffie County households continue to receive a large percentage of their income from wages and salaries. When considering the increase in total number of households within McDuffie County, however, the overall value of wage and salary income increased by over 34 percent. During this same time frame, household self-employment income decreased by over 55 percent. In contrast to these decreases, average household income derived from “interest, dividends, or net rental income increased significantly in value – rising by roughly 53 percent. Social security payments – now the second largest source of average household income in McDuffie County – also increased noticeably by a total of 20.4 percent.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Figure E-13: McDuffie County Sources of Household Income, 1990-2000

	1990 Income (\$)	Percent (1990)	2000 Income (\$)	Percent (2000)	Rate (%) of Change Per Average Household 1990-2000 (Constant 2000\$)*
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	151,854,172	74.6%	295,844,300	78.6%	34.6%
Aggregate other types of income for households	2,747,013	1.3%	7,933,000	2.1%	-54.7%
Aggregate self employment income for households	17,099,074	8.4%	10,976,700	2.9%	-55.6%
Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income	8,712,229	4.3%	19,335,000	5.1%	53.4%
Aggregate social security income for households	11,751,716	5.8%	20,473,600	5.4%	20.4%
Aggregate public assistance income for households	4,184,738	2.1%	3,840,600	1.0%	-36.6%
Aggregate retirement income for households	7,224,715	3.5%	18,155,200	4.8%	73.7%
Total Income	203,573,657	100 %	376,558,400	100 %	27.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF3 (Some calculations by: CSRA RDC) Constant 2000\$; Assumes 32 percent inflation between 1990-2000 *Note: Formula factors change in total number of households between 1990-2000

Figure E-14: Municipal Sources of Household Income, 2000

	Thomson			Dearing		
	2000 Income (\$)	Percent of 2000 Income	Rate of Change 1990-2000 Per Average Household (Constant 2000\$)*	2000 Income (\$)	Percent of 2000 Income	Rate of Change 1990-2000 Per Average Household (Constant 2000\$)*
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	76,350,700	78.1 %	25.9%	3,736,600	72 %	-7.9%
Aggregate other types of income for households	2,311,200	2.4 %	159.6%	41,100	0.8 %	-58.0%
Aggregate self employment income for households	10,421,700	1.5 %	54.0%	483,600	9.3 %	115.1%
Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income	3,702,700	3.8 %	-21.7%	29,800	0.6 %	-86.3%
Aggregate social security income for households	7,668,200	7.8 %	19.9%	450,500	8.7 %	-36.0%
Aggregate public assistance income for households	1,875,700	1.9 %	-32.4%	28,100	0.5 %	-73.1%
Aggregate retirement income for households	4,405,100	4.5 %	91.5%	420,200	8.1 %	-15.6%
Total	97,735,300	100 %	15.6%	5,189,900	100 %	-12.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF3 (Some calculations by: CSRA RDC) (Constant 2000\$); Assumes 32 percent inflation between 1990-2000 *Note: Formula factors change in total number of households between 1990-2000

Sources of household income within Thomson and Dearing are provided in **Figure E-14**. As with the previous figure, the rate of change in household sources of income is an “average” which considers inflation and the change in the total number of households within each community. By illustrating an “average household income” rate of change (rather than considering an aggregate figure), **Figure E-14** provides a more accurate picture of community wealth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Figure E-14 shows that between 1990 and 2000, average household income within Thomson increased by 15.6 percent - a slightly lesser rate than McDuffie County as a whole. During this same time frame, average household incomes in Dearing fell by approximately 12 percent. It is important to note that with a small number of total households, household income data in Dearing can easily be skewed by the additional or removal of only a few households. During this same time frame “average household income derived from commissions, bonuses, or tips” (referred to in the figure as “other types of income”) increased significantly in Thomson.

Annual Wages

In order to determine the most recent trends in average wages for workers employed in McDuffie County, **Figure E-15** utilizes statistics from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The figure provides information on average annual wages for McDuffie County workers because, like many of the data sets compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, the average wage information compiled by the U.S. Department of Commerce can not be obtained at the municipal level. Regardless, **Figure E-14** considers all jobs throughout both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county.

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Rate (%) of Change (2000-2005)	Rate (%) of Change (2000-2005) (Constant 2005\$)
Average Wage per Job (\$)	22,901	23,927	24,342	24,808	26,086	26,453	15.5%	2.2%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Table CA34 (Constant 2005\$); Assumes 13 percent inflation between 2000-2005

Between 2000 and 2005, average annual wages of workers within McDuffie County increased by 15 percent. During this same period, however, the Consumer Price Index assumes an inflation rate of 13 percent. When inflation is factored into the “rate of change” of McDuffie county wages, it suggests only a 2.2 percent increase in the value of McDuffie County workers’ wages. Because data that is used to formulate the Consumer Price Index is collected predominantly from urban areas throughout the country, its direct applicability to rural areas like some of those in McDuffie County may be skewed. For example, property value and cost of housing in rural markets is typically lower than in urban areas and typically do not fluctuate at as dramatic a rate. Therefore, the true value of wage increases in McDuffie County illustrated in **Figure E-15** may be greater than the local rate of inflation and lies somewhere between both rates of change presented.

	2000 Estimated Average Annual Wage (\$)	2005 Estimated Average Annual Wage (\$)	Rate (%) of Change (2000-2005)	Rate (%) of Change (2001-2005) (Constant 2005\$)
McDuffie County	\$22,901	\$26,453	15.5 %	2.2 %
Warren County	\$24,941	\$26,190	5.2 %	-7.1 %
Columbia County	\$24,238	\$29,625	20.7 %	8.2 %

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Table CA34 (Constant 2005\$); Assumes 13 percent inflation between 2000-2005

By comparing McDuffie County average annual wages with those of surrounding counties, **Figure E-16** illustrates regional rates of change – with wage increases between 2000 and 2005 at roughly the same rate as or slower than inflation. With increases of average annual wages in Columbia County of 20.7 percent and losses in Warren County of 7.1 percent, the figure suggests that the value of McDuffie County workers’ wages remains competitive with adjacent jurisdictions.

Annual Wage by Industry

In order to determine the most recent trends in average wages for McDuffie County workers, **Figure E-17** utilizes statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, when calculating the rate of change (2001-2004) of average annual salaries within the Figure, an inflation rate of 7 percent (Consumer Price Index) was incorporated. Factoring inflation into the “rate of change” calculation provides a more accurate picture as to whether wage increases have resulted in increased consumer buying power. Decreases in buying power are illustrated in the Figure by industry sectors that show an increase in average annual wage between 2001 and 2004, but show a negative number in the “rate of change.”

Figure E-17: McDuffie County: Estimated Average Annual Wage by Selected Industries (Constant 2004\$)			
Industry Sector	2001 Estimated Average Annual Wage (Constant 2006 Dollars)	2006 Estimated Average Annual Wage	Rate (%) of Change (2001-2006)
Construction	31,296	26,168	-16.4%
Manufacturing	31,408	35,057	11.6%
Wholesale Trade	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	
Retail Trade	23,790	22,730	-4.5%
Transportation & Warehousing	29,146	32,369	11.1%
Information	60,064	39,746	-33.8%
Finance & Insurance	39,302	34,878	-11.3%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	15,359	20,501	33.5%
Administrative & Waste Services	15,005	13,980	-6.8%
Educational Services	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	
Health Care & Social Assistance	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	12,131	21,649	78.5%
Accommodation & Food Services	9,584	11,087	15.7%
Other Services except Public Administration	18,410	23,100	25.5%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages \$ Assumes 14 percent inflation between 2001-2004

Figure E-17 illustrates that within McDuffie County the greatest rate of change in wages between 2001 and 2006 was in the “information” profession losing over 33 percent, and the “real estate, rental and leasing” profession with growing at of over 33 percent. The growth in the “arts, entertainment and recreation” sector is not as noteworthy as it seems upon first glance because of the small number of residents employed by these industries.

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

State Resources

Georgia Department of Economic Development

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDECD) is the principal state-level agency engaged in business, trade partnership and tourist recruitment. The agency is led by an experienced board which includes executives from many of the state’s leading employers. GEDcD works in

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

collaboration with multiple state and federal programs, and maintains a worldwide marketing campaign targeting more than 15,000 companies with the potential to expand or relocate in Georgia. Examples of recent recruitment successes include (From most recent):

- Publix Technology center in Cumming, GA: 30 new jobs and \$15 million investment
- Proctor & Gamble expansion of operation in Albany: 34 new jobs and \$25-30 million investment
- WILO EMU (German base manufacturer of pumps) Location of new plant in Thomasville, GA: 50 new jobs and a \$8 million investment
- Dick's Sporting Goods distribution center in East Point, GA: 484 new jobs and a \$23 million investment.

Within the CSRA region, GDEcD has assisted in facilitating the location of Meltblown Technologies to Sandersville resulting in up to 100 jobs and \$1.7 million of investment to Washington County. Even closer to McDuffie County, GDEcD's assistance helped Columbia County to attract a 2002 \$35 million expansion of Quebecor World Inc., the world's largest commercial printer.

Regional Resources

Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center

The Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center (CSRA RDC) is available to provide a variety of economic development activities to its 13 county and 41 municipal member jurisdictions. Designated the region's "economic development district" by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, the CSRA RDC's development activities include assistance with:

- Site selection and initial consultation; and,
- Prospect development initiatives; and,
- Project management; and,
- Business retention activities.

The CSRA RDC's Local Government Services staff is available to assist CSRA communities by preparing, developing and administering a variety of state and federal grants tailored to meet each jurisdiction's needs. The CSRA RDC Planning staff can also conduct various economic development studies and provide data collection services. The CSRA RDC provides mapping services to local communities which can be utilized to assist in economic development efforts initiated by local public or private sector organizations.

The CSRA Business Lending Corporation is an additional component of the CSRA RDC. The Business Lending Corporation is a non-profit corporation licensed to deliver the SBA-504 program by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The SBA-504 loans administered by the Business Lending Corporation provide businesses with low, fixed rates to finance a portion of business start-up or improvement costs. A variety of other similar loan programs are also administered by the Business Lending Corporation in an effort to increase and improve business investment activity throughout the CSRA region and beyond to the rest of Georgia and portions of South Carolina.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Georgia Power, Economic Development Division

Georgia Power's Economic Development Division is charged with the responsibility of attracting businesses to the state. The Division is engaged in marketing the state of Georgia to potential investors and maintaining a database of sites appropriate for business investment. Georgia Power also serves as a consultant to local communities by providing technical advice on how to attract business investment. In addition to these services, Georgia Power's Community Development Department acts as a clearinghouse for communities to identify funding opportunities to make substantive and aesthetic improvements to local infrastructure.

Local Resources

McDuffie County Chamber of Commerce

The McDuffie County Chamber of Commerce provides a variety of services to help enhance the business environment of McDuffie County's existing and prospective businesses and industries. The Chamber of Commerce actively markets business opportunity in the county and facilitates the efforts of a variety of business interests to promote and maintain the growth of the local economy

Development Authority of McDuffie County

The Development Authority of McDuffie County is the principal economic development agency for McDuffie County and its municipalities. The organization's primary mission is to recruit new businesses to McDuffie County and to provide the necessary assistance to existing businesses in order to retain them, assist with relocation or expand. Working in cooperation with the McDuffie County Board of Commissioners and Chamber of Commerce, the Development Authority is able to market local site selection and expansion opportunities to existing or prospective McDuffie County businesses.

Clarks Hill Partnership

The Clarks Hill Partnership of Georgia was formed with the intention of creating a favorable environment for the retention of existing businesses and also attracting new business. McDuffie, Columbia, Lincoln, Warren, and Wilkes Counties are all represented. The partnership was established to work closely with Federal, State, and local governments, as well as with any other organizations interested in economic development within the Clarks Hill Region.

CSRA Unified Development Council (UDC)

The UDC is a council of the Chambers of Commerce and other economic development organizations throughout the CSRA. The UDC provides a forum for discussion and the joint pursuit of economic marketing, professional training and enrichment, and other special projects.

CSRA Unified Development Authority

The UDA is a joint development authority consisting of 13 counties in the CSRA. This authority serves as a vehicle for local governments and authorities to use for economic development related projects.

Education and Training

Augusta Technical College

The mission of Augusta Technical College is to promote the educational, economic, and community development of the Central Savannah River Area. The college provides training in multiple medical-related and technology fields. Campuses are located in Richmond, Burke, and McDuffie counties – with a new location planned for McDuffie County. Among the many personal and professional growth opportunities offered by Augusta Technical College, are two initiatives designed specifically to boost the state of Georgia’s economic development potential: the Center for Advanced Technology (CADTEC) and Quick Start.

The Center for Advanced Technology (CADTEC) at Augusta Technical College was founded to provide manufacturers in the CSRA region with access to information on the latest business technologies and training opportunities necessary to ensure long-range competitiveness in the world market. CADTEC offers multiple training and consultation opportunities to business and industry that are designed to showcase emerging industrial technologies and innovations. CADTEC also offers its clients assessments designed to establish objectives, criteria and training necessary to regain or maintain their competitive edges in the market.

Augusta Technical College also serves as a provider of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education's Quick Start training program. Quick Start provides job-specific training for Georgians to enter the workforce in new and expanding industries. Through the Quick Start program, employers can work with Certified Economic Development Trainers provided by local technical colleges to coordinate project management and employee training to ensure an ample supply of specialized labor. The state-funded program is one of the many incentive tools that the state can provide to encourage businesses to locate in Georgia. All training services are available at no cost to client companies.

ASSESSMENT

REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Augusta-Aiken MSA and EA showed continued growth of employment opportunities and overall population during the early part of the decade. As a regional population center the MSA and EA both serve as employment generators for residents of McDuffie County attracting over 3200 residents to jobs located outside the county.

This chapter illustrates that much of the regional employment growth is based in service and retail sector industries. Growth in these industry sectors is often a reaction to population growth in an area – rather than serving as the source of such growth. While such a trend is a natural product of overall population growth, it will be important for the region to closely monitor service sector growth to ensure that it reflects a balance between higher-paying administrative and professional services and lower-paying service sector jobs (ex. fast-food, grocery stores, etc.)

The Augusta-Aiken MSA has also shown overall decreases in the number of individuals employed in high-paying industry sectors such as manufacturing and information – declining between 2001 and 2005 by 17.2 and 2.3 percent, respectively. Declining employment in high-paying industry sectors can lead to a decline in disposable income by household – and a tax base that is growing at a slower rate than population – placing a greater burden on services. In addition, the small overall employment number within the MSA in information industry sectors (3,909 in 2003) suggests that the region may not be competitive in the growing technology sector. The recognition of these regional economic limitations, combined with McDuffie County's favorable location, quality of life, and business friendly atmosphere, place it in a competitive position for recruiting businesses in higher-paying industry sectors or sectors that may be complementary to established regional clusters.

ECONOMIC BASE AND TRENDS

Employment by Industry

McDuffie County has benefited economically from its location adjacent to Columbia County, one of the fastest growing areas of the state, while still retaining a rural character and quality of life. McDuffie County has felt the region-wide decline in manufacturing jobs over the past 25 years losing 40 percent of its own manufacturing jobs. During the same time frame the number of McDuffie County residents that are employed in state and local government jobs has almost doubled. The fact that such jobs are predominantly “export-proof” indicates an optimistic employment outlook for the county. The large increase in construction jobs (178 percent over the last 25 years) indicates along with all other employment by industry numbers that population growth similar to that seen in other areas of the MSA is making its way to McDuffie County. According to local officials another rapidly growing employment sector has been the medical field. McDuffie Regional Medical Center has seen significant growth recently in both services offered to McDuffie County residents and the number of people in the community that it employs. Partnerships with local and regional medical institutions and organizations should be pursued in the future.

Employment by Industry Projections

Employment by industry projections within McDuffie County indicate that recent trends in employment are likely to continue through 2025. Continued growth of the construction and retail trade sectors throughout McDuffie County is the natural result of a county-wide population increase. McDuffie County should continue to gain a share of these jobs as the result of new projected residential development on the outskirts of Thomson. As a whole, many of these jobs are fairly low-paying and will occur naturally as the population in the area continues to grow. It is important, however, for the Cities of Thomson and Dearing to actively recruit retail establishments to sites within the city's core or in other targeted areas-such as the regional commercial character area - as opposed to the outskirts to ensure that new development is resulting in the redevelopment of otherwise underutilized properties.

The county is in a relatively unique position in that recent population growth has made it feasible for expansion of joint City-County infrastructure to areas where none has existed before. Development, both residential and commercial will follow these expansions. The existence of an employment base that is accustomed to manufacturing, the potential for new industrial sites to be served by new infrastructure, and the mostly rural nature of areas of the infrastructure's expansion will make McDuffie County an extremely attractive option for basic industry expansions in the area.

LABOR FORCE

Labor Force Participation

A significant number of McDuffie County's work-eligible population participates in the labor force – primarily the civilian labor force. Between 1990 and 2000, the overall size of the labor force shrank and the percentage of work-eligible residents participating in the labor force declined. These trends are consistent with overall increases in the population's age throughout the county. During this same period, unemployment climbed noticeably although the total number of jobs in the three jurisdictions increased. A possible explanation for these contrasting figures is that the growth in county-wide jobs has been in sectors and occupations requiring education at a level greater than many McDuffie County residents. Another possible explanation is that a significant number of the counties jobs are being filled by non residents.

It is apparent that the majority of work-eligible residents in the McDuffie County who are opting not to participate in the labor are older retirees. It is likely, however, that a portion of the work-eligible population not participating in the labor force is comprised of individuals who never entered the workforce in the first place. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, 22 percent of the McDuffie County population has never even received a high school diploma. The vast majority of such individuals may be deemed as unemployable by existing and prospective employers within the County.

To ensure that a greater proportion of McDuffie County residents are benefiting from an increased number of job opportunities, further effort and resources must be dedicated to retaining students, trade skills training and other types of workforce development programs to compliment the expanding employment opportunities within the county.

Labor Force by Occupation

McDuffie County's population by occupation appears to be well-balanced. It is important to remember that because Census Bureau data is used to generate employment by occupation figures, workers included in the numbers may or may not actually work within the county. As a result, employment by occupation figures do not necessarily match similar employment by industry categories which are provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce and account for jobs that are actually located within the county.

In spite of McDuffie County's rural characteristics, it is surprising to see such a small number and percentage of residents who are engaged in "farming, fishing and forestry" occupations. The small percentage of the county's population that are employed by the "farming" industry seem to point to the suburbanizing nature of the county overall. Also the increased number of professional and related jobs speaks also to McDuffie County's growing role as a supplier of labor to Augusta.

Labor Force by Place of Work

Data illustrate that roughly 34 percent of all McDuffie County laborers commute to a job outside of the county. In contrast, roughly 37 percent of the labor force working within McDuffie County resides in another jurisdiction. There is a general perception among the community that the majority of the jobs being exported are typically ones that are more professional in nature. (e.g. nurses, accountants, bankers) A comparison of employment figures in the county with the civilian labor force suggests that there are traditionally a slightly greater number of jobs in the county than available work force. Naturally, such a comparison does not take into account unemployment rates and the quality of available jobs. Regardless, it is apparent that the jobs/housing balance in McDuffie County is weighted slightly toward employment – with a potential lack of appropriate housing options. While this imbalance is not dramatic, McDuffie County communities have an opportunity to convert some of their imported labor into full-time residents by taking steps to generate additional housing options throughout the community.

Personal Income

McDuffie County sources of personal income tend to mirror that of surrounding jurisdictions and the State of Georgia in most categories. An exception to this statement is that there is a noticeably higher percentage of personal income derived from social security and retirement income. Since 1990, the percentage of aggregate community income derived from social security and retirement has continued to climb. As with other data presented in this plan, such figures point to an aging population that is increasingly dependent on private and public retirement assistance for a vast majority of their income. There is also evidence that an increasing number of elderly citizens are relying on interest and dividend income being drawn from investments. Regardless of their sources of income, the trend of elderly citizens relying on fixed incomes will continue, and a review of senior services offered within McDuffie County is advised.

Self-employment income is also decreasing as an overall percentage of community-wide personal income, with the exception of Dearing. Dearing saw a significant increase in its self employment income (115 percent). However, Dearing's small population tends to skew the numbers. This decrease in other jurisdictions can translate into a smaller proportion of the overall population that

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

are generating employment opportunities – possibly via home-occupation businesses or via businesses that are registered to receive mail at a residence. In spite of the decrease in self-employment income, there is no corresponding increase in wages and salaries as a percentage of community-wide personal income. This suggests that there is not a significant increase in the number of workers seeking jobs outside of Dearing. The likely scenario is the retirement of a number of small local entrepreneurs.

Annual Wages (& by Industry)

Since at least 2001, average annual wages paid for jobs within McDuffie County have increased at a rate that is slightly higher than inflation. Such information suggests that workers employed in McDuffie County have slightly increased consumer buying power, with the cost of goods increasing at a rate slower than personal income. Such a trend in McDuffie County is consistent with much of the region but does not seem to exceed inflation to the point that the county is experiencing significant increases in retail trade.

Wage increases by industry vary greatly when compared to inflation. There were wage declines in the “construction”, “information”, “finance”, and “administrative and waste services” industries. This could be attributed to a surplus of workers in some industries, namely construction.

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

McDuffie County can continue to benefit from the rapid growth and development that is occurring throughout metropolitan Augusta. To do so, county and municipal leaders should actively work with state, regional, and local economic development agencies. Local officials should continue to coordinate with the chamber of commerce and development authorities to leverage and combine multiple economic development resources to achieve shared outcomes. It may also be beneficial to focus local government energy on economic development strategies and funding sources that are recommended by experts at the chamber of commerce and development authority so that effort is not wasted on programs which may not otherwise provide the county and municipalities with sufficient returns. For example, local development agencies could assist Thomson, and McDuffie County in planning for the construction of a convention center or similar facility mentioned in Chapter 6.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 4 Housing

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

Analysis of the type, condition and cost of a community's housing stock are just a few of the factors that help determine whether community development trends are meeting the needs of today's population and promoting long-term sustainable growth. In a community like McDuffie County - where the population is expected to grow at a significant rate, it is important to ensure a balance of housing options so that projected growth is not slowed by a shortfall in housing for new residents. Similar to a local economy that is not dependant on a single industry, communities that offer multiple housing options are better prepared to meet future demographic and economic shifts.

The *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan's* housing component is not only intended to determine whether adequate housing stock exists within McDuffie County to serve the current population but to determine whether the available housing stock is suitable to meet the anticipated needs of the county's existing and new residents. In analyzing housing suitability, it is necessary to consider whether McDuffie County offers dwelling units of varying types and dwelling units that are financially accessible to households with a mix of incomes – providing more opportunity for people to work and live within the county.

The principal sources of information in this chapter are the United States Census Bureau and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Many of the figures within this chapter compare McDuffie County, City of Thomson, and Town of Dearing data with the Augusta-Aiken Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the State of Georgia, and in some instances neighboring Columbia and Warren Counties.

HOUSING TYPES AND MIX

Types of Housing Units

Population increases in McDuffie County have been met by a corresponding increase in the total number of dwelling units. The 32.8 percent increase in total housing units between 1980 and 2000 – as shown in **Figure H-1** – illustrates a housing growth rate that has outpaced overall population growth. The figure also shows that the vast majority of housing growth is in single-family detached dwellings, which has traditionally accounted for the largest percentage of dwelling units in McDuffie County. During this same period, mobile homes continued to account for a large share of the county's housing stock – increasing by 143.1 percent to a total of 2,502 units – over a quarter of all available housing stock. While the figure also suggests a significant rate of change in the county's multi-family housing stock, multi-family units still account for an extremely small percentage of the community's overall housing units.

Thomson displays housing characteristics similar to the county. Single detached units account for 70.2 percent of the city's total housing stock (**Figure H-2**). Unlike the county, however, Thomson has a much higher rate of multi-family housing (22.4 percent) and lower rate of mobile homes (5.5 percent). In relative terms, the stock of Thomson's single-family and double units have declined, while larger multi-family units and mobile homes have gradually begun to account for a larger share of the city's housing.

HOUSING

Dearing's overall housing stock declined 24.2 percent between 1980 and 2000 (**Figure H-3**). Almost all the decline occurred in the stock of single family detached units, which is still the dominant housing type. **Figure H-3** illustrates that dense multi-family housing options do not exist within Dearing.

Figure H-1: McDuffie County Type of Housing Units, 1980-2000							
	1980	1980 Percent	1990	1990 Percent	2000	2000 Percent	Percent (%) Change 1980-2000
Single Units (detached)	4,954	73.8%	5,170	64.3%	5,528	62%	11.6%
Single Units (attached)	105	1.6%	87	1.1%	84	0.9%	-20%
Double Units	328	4.9%	289	3.6%	259	2.9%	-21%
3 to 9 Units	269	4%	327	4.1%	345	3.9%	28.3%
10 to 19 Units	8	0.1%	97	1.2%	59	0.7%	637.5%
20 to 49 Units	14	0.2%	0	0%	102	1.1%	628.6%
50 or more Units	7	0.1%	0	0%	37	0.4%	428.6%
Mobile Home or Trailer	1,029	15.3%	1,990	24.7%	2,502	28.1%	143.1%
All Other	0	0%	83	0%	0	0%	0%
Total Housing Units	6,714	100%	8,043	100%	8,916	100%	32.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF1); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure H-2: Thomson Type of Housing Units, 1980-2000							
	1980	1980 Percent	1990	1990 Percent	2000	2000 Percent	Percent (%) Change 1980-2000
Single Units (detached)	1,986	77.2%	1,920	70.8%	2,037	70.2%	2.6%
Single Units (attached)	87	3.4%	57	2.1%	56	1.9%	-35.6%
Double Units	258	10%	256	9.4%	220	7.6%	-14.7%
3 to 9 Units	156	6.1%	267	9.9%	260	9%	66.7%
10 to 19 Units	8	0.3%	67	2.5%	50	1.7%	525%
20 to 49 Units	0	0%	0	0%	80	2.8%	-
50 or more Units	7	0.3%	0	0%	37	1.3%	428.6%
Mobile Home or Trailer	72	2.8%	116	4.3%	161	5.5%	123.6%
All Other	0	0%	27	1%	0	0%	0%
Total Housing Units	2,574	100%	2,710	100%	2,901	100%	12.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF1); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure H-3: Dearing Type of Housing Units, 1980-2000							
	1980	1980 Percent	1990	1990 Percent	2000	2000 Percent	Percent (%) Change 1980-2000
Single Units (detached)	221	83.4%	175	76.1%	160	79.6%	-27.6%
Single Units (attached)	2	0.8%	0	0%	3	1.5%	50%
Double Units	3	1.1%	4	1.7%	0	0%	-100%
3 to 9 Units	7	2.6%	5	2.2%	6	3%	-14.3%
10 to 19 Units	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
20 to 49 Units	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
50 or more Units	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Mobile Home or Trailer	32	12.1%	46	20%	32	15.9%	0%
All Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Total Housing Units	265	100%	230	100%	201	100%	-24.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 (SF1); Calculations by CSRA RDC

HOUSING

Compared with the rest of the Augusta-Aiken MSA, McDuffie County's housing stock is less diverse. Approximately 64.8 percent of the MSA housing stock is single detached units, compared to 83.4 percent in McDuffie County (Figure H-4). The rate of multi-family units in the larger metropolitan area is approximately five times greater than in McDuffie County.

Household Type

While household type was previously discussed in the chapter on population, it is necessary to revisit this topic in greater detail in order to compare McDuffie County household types with available housing stock. Figure H-5 expands upon the household figures presented in the population chapter by categorizing family households and non-family households by size.

Figures H-5 and H-6 illustrate that a large majority of McDuffie County households are "family households" - meaning that two or more people that reside at that residence are related by blood or marriage. The high percentage of family households in McDuffie County (73.8 percent) is consistent with neighboring Columbia County (81.8 percent), Warren County (69.7 percent) and the statewide average (70.7 percent). Both Thomson (67.6 percent) and Dearing (65.1 percent) contain a smaller percentage of family households than all other jurisdictions compared. Additionally, Thomson and Dearing's non-family households

Figure H-4: McDuffie County and Augusta-Aiken MSA Percentage Types of Housing, 2000

	McDuffie County	Augusta-Aiken MSA
Single-Family Detached	83.4%	64.8%
Single-Family Attached	0.8%	2.5%
Double Units	1.1%	2.5%
Multi-Family	2.6%	12.8%
Manufactured Housing	12.1%	17.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure H-5: Household Type for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000

Household Type	McDuffie County		Thomson		Dearing	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Households	7,980	100%	2,624	100%	149	100%
Family Households	5,892	73.8%	1,775	67.6%	97	65.1%
2-person	2,331	29.2%	673	25.6%	38	25.5%
3-person	1,560	19.5%	534	20.4%	23	15.4%
4-person	1,216	15.2%	352	13.4%	12	8.1%
5-person	503	6.3%	127	4.8%	9	6%
6 or more people	282	3.5%	89	3.4%	15	10.1%
Non-Family Households	2,088	26.2%	849	32.4%	52	34.9%
1-person	1,861	23.3%	765	29.2%	50	33.6%
2-person	215	2.7%	84	3.2%	2	1.3%
3-person	5	0.1%	0	0%	0	0%
4-person	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5-person	7	0.1%	0	0%	0	0%
6 or more people	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure H-6: Percentage of Household Type for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000

Household Type	McDuffie County	Columbia County	Warren County	Georgia
Family Households	73.8%	81.8%	69.7%	70.7%
2-person	29.2%	29.5%	29.2%	27.3%
3-person	19.5%	21%	13.1%	17.5%
4-person	15.2%	20%	5.3%	15.1%
5-person	6.3%	8.3%	5.3%	6.7%
6 or more people	3.5%	3.1%	2.7%	4.1%
Non-Family Households	26.2%	18.2%	30.3%	29.3%
1-person	23.3%	15.4%	27.6%	23.6%
2-person	2.7%	2.2%	2.2%	4.6%
3-person	0.1%	0.5%	0.0%	0.7%
4-person	0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%
5-person	0.1%	0%	0.2%	0.1%
6 or more people	0%	0%	0.0%	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3); Calculations by CSRA RDC

HOUSING

are characterized by a higher percentage of one person households than all other compared jurisdictions except Warren County - consistent with an aging and/or rural population. Within McDuffie County, non-family households comprise 26 percent of all households. Because there is a disparity between the number of non-family households and multi-family dwelling units, many of McDuffie County's non-family households are probably meeting their housing needs by residing in the community's manufactured housing units or single-family homes.

CONDITION AND OCCUPANCY

Age of Housing

Figures H-7, H8 and H-9 provide data on the age of housing in McDuffie County, Thomson and Dearing between 1990 and 2000. In some instances the figures suggest that the number of historic housing units each of the communities actually increased between during the timeframe covered. The apparent discrepancy in the Census Bureau data within these three figures is the result of the method on which data is collected. Census Bureau data utilized in figures throughout the Plan is based on samples – essentially estimates. Compilation of the data is dependent on local participation to confirm the validity of the Census Bureau's Master Address File (MAF). Increases in the number of identified historic housing units between 1990 and 2000 may be a reflection on the level of coordination between local governments and the Census Bureau in compiling address data. Regardless, the information presented in Figures H-7, H-8 and H-9 is effective as an overview of housing age throughout McDuffie County.

Figure H-7: McDuffie County Age of Housing , 1990-2000

	1990		2000	
	Number (#) of Units	Percent (%) of Units	Number (#) of Units	Percent (%) of Units
Built 1990 – March 2000	-	-	2,077	23.3%
Built 1980 - 1989	2,316	28.8%	1,821	20.4%
Built 1970 - 1979	2,484	30.9%	2,160	24.2%
Built 1960 - 1969	1,399	17.4%	1,083	12.1%
Built 1950 - 1959	772	9.6%	666	7.5%
Built 1940 - 1949	422	5.2%	479	5.4%
Built 1939 or Earlier	650	8.1%	630	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure H-8: Thomson Age of Housing , 1990-2000

	1990		2000	
	Number (#) of Units	Percent (%) of Units	Number (#) of Units	Percent (%) of Units
Built 1990 – March 2000	-	-	336	11.6%
Built 1980 - 1989	712	26.3%	456	15.7%
Built 1970 - 1979	589	21.7%	697	24%
Built 1960 - 1969	576	21.3%	503	17.3%
Built 1950 - 1959	363	13.4%	385	13.3%
Built 1940 - 1949	180	6.6%	234	8.1%
Built 1939 or Earlier	290	10.7%	290	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure H-9: Dearing Age of Housing, 1990-2000

	1990		2000	
	Number (#) of Units	Percent (%) of Units	Number (#) of Units	Percent (%) of Units
Built 1990 – March 2000	-	-	28	13.9%
Built 1980 - 1989	44	18.3%	31	15.4%
Built 1970 - 1979	50	20.7%	53	26.4%
Built 1960 - 1969	46	19.1%	36	17.9%
Built 1950 - 1959	43	17.8%	18	9%
Built 1940 - 1949	25	10.4%	9	4.5%
Built 1939 or Earlier	33	13.7%	26	12.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC

McDuffie County's growth is evident when looking at the number of housing units built between 1990 and March of 2000. **Figure H-7** illustrates that in a 10 year period, McDuffie County increased

HOUSING

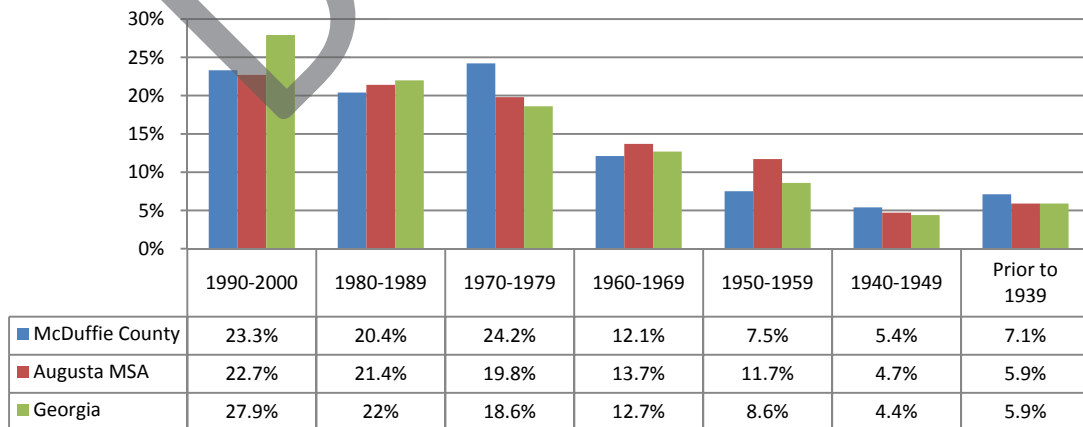
its overall housing supply by 23.3 percent. Over 43.7 percent of McDuffie County’s housing units have been built since 1980. **Figure H-7** also suggests that many historic homes still exist within McDuffie County. In 2000, the county contained an inventory of 630 housing units built prior to 1940 – 7.1 percent of the total housing stock in the county. The city of Thomson alone contains 470 homes built before 1940 – over 17 percent of the city’s housing stock. Dearing has the largest percentage - nearly one quarter of its housing stock - of homes built before 1940.

Thomson’s housing growth has been slower than the rest of the county. Approximately 11.6 percent of housing units were built since 1990 (**Figure H-8**). The city also contains a higher rate of older housing. Approximately one-third of city housing was built in 1959 or earlier. The discrepancy in the number of some of the older housing units in all jurisdictions can be attributed to a more thorough inventory of housing stock in the county between the 1990 and 2000 Census.

Dearing’s housing is also older than the county average. Approximately 13.9 percent of the city’s housing was built since 1990 (**Figure H-9**). The majority of Dearing’s housing stock (59.7 percent) was built between 1960 and 1989.

Figure H-10 compares the age of McDuffie County’s housing with that of the Augusta MSA and the state. On average, the age of McDuffie County’s housing supply is similar to the metropolitan area and the state. The County has a slightly higher rate of housing built between 1990 and 2000 (23.3 percent) than the MSA (22.7 percent), but falls below the state average (27.9 percent). The County also has a higher rate of housing built before 1949 (12.5 percent) than the MSA (10.6 percent) and the state (10.3 percent). The reason for the discrepancy may be that McDuffie County has not yet been affected by metropolitan growth to the degree that neighboring Richmond and more recently Columbia County have been experiencing.

Figure H-10: Age of Housing for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC

HOUSING

Housing Conditions

A simple measure of the conditions of a community's housing stock can be derived by looking at the number of housing units that lack certain facilities (including kitchens and plumbing). As illustrated in **Figure H-11**, complete public facilities are available in 98 percent

	McDuffie County		Thomson		Dearing	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Complete Plumbing Facilities	7,885	8,764	2,649	2,844	236	183
Percent (%) with Complete Plumbing Facilities	98%	98.3%	97.7%	98%	97.9%	91%
Complete Kitchen Facilities	7,890	2,791	2,659	2,851	238	188
Percent (%) with Complete Kitchen Facilities	98.1%	98.6%	98.1%	98.3%	98.8%	93.5%
Total Housing Units	8,043	8,916	2,710	2,901	241	201

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC

of McDuffie County housing units and 98 percent of Thomson housing units. Dearing has a lower rate of housing with complete plumbing facilities (91 percent). However, it is important to note that Dearing's small housing supply (201 units) makes it more susceptible to steeply fluctuating rates of change when only a few units are taken out of the housing supply. The data provided in Figure H-11 does not presume the all of the housing units lacking basic kitchen and/or plumbing facilities are occupied. The Census Bureau definition for "housing unit" does suggest however that the unit is at least "intended" for occupancy.

	1990 Number (#) of Housing Units	1990 Percent (%) of Total Units	2000 Number (#) of Housing Units	2000 Percent (%) of Total Units
Vacant	773	9.6%	946	10.6%
Owner Occupied	4,990	62%	5,688	63.8%
Renter Occupied	2,280	28.3%	2,282	25.6%
Total	8,043	100%	8,916	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 (SF3), Table H004; 2000 (SF3) Table H-4; Calculations by CSRA RDC

Occupancy Characteristics

Housing occupancy characteristics are an important variable in determining the adequacy of housing stock.

Owner occupied units account for 63.8 percent of all McDuffie County housing units (**Figure H-12**). Approximately one-quarter of housing units are rentals. The number of owner occupied units has climbed significantly while the number of renter occupied units has remained static. The overall vacancy rate is 10.6 percent, just slightly higher than the 9.6 percent recorded in 1990. The small increase (2 units) in rental properties in McDuffie County further reinforces the trend of people interested in home ownership choosing the county over the City of Thomson.

	1990 Number (#) of Housing Units	1990 Percent (%) of Total Units	2000 Number (#) of Housing Units	2000 Percent (%) of Total Units
Vacant	166	6.1%	286	9.9%
Owner Occupied	1,395	51.5%	1,420	49.1%
Renter Occupied	1,149	42.4%	1,189	41.1%
Total	2,710	100%	2,895	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 (SF3), Table H004; 2000 (SF3) Table H-4; Calculations by CSRA RDC

In contrast to the unincorporated portions of the county, Thomson's housing supply is more evenly balanced between owner and rental units. Just less than 50 percent of the city's housing supply is owner occupied, compared to 41.1 percent classified as rental units (**Figure H-**

HOUSING

Figure H-14: Dearing Occupancy Characteristics, 1990-2000

	1990 Number (#) of Housing Units	1990 Percent (%) of Total Units	2000 Number (#) of Housing Units	2000 Percent (%) of Total Units
Vacant	32	13.3%	28	13.6%
Owner Occupied	157	65.1%	134	65.0%
Renter Occupied	52	21.5%	44	21.4%
Total	241	100%	206	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 (SF-3), Table H004; 2000 (SF3), Table H-4; Calculations by CSRA RDC

13). Between 1990 and 2000, the vacancy rate in Thomson increased by 3.8 percent. During this period of time, the total number of vacant units increased at a faster rate than occupied units (both owner occupied and rental). This again indicates a trend of home buyers choosing to locate in the unincorporated County.

The occupancy characteristics of Dearing’s housing supply remained largely unchanged between 1990 and 2000. Dearing’s housing supply remains primarily owner occupied (65.0

percent). The percent of rental housing units in the community has also remained largely unchanged. While the overall percentage of vacant housing units has increased slightly since 1990, the overall housing stock in Dearing decreased. Dearing’s vacancy rate stands at 13.6 percent, relatively higher than both the county and City of Thomson. There is a potential correlation between the higher vacancy rate in Dearing and the higher rate of housing units without complete facilities (See Figure H-11).

Figure H-15 illustrates the percentage of vacant units within McDuffie County, Thomson and Dearing that are intended for owner occupancy or for rental use. The overall vacancy rate figure will not match those shown in the previous three figures because it does not account for seasonal vacancy or abandoned properties. When considering the vacancy rate of owner occupied and rental properties, the characteristics of a healthy housing market typically include a vacancy rate of 3 percent for housing intended for owner-occupancy, and 5 percent for rental units. Healthy overall vacancy rates are around 7 to 8 percent.

Figure H-15: Percentage of Vacancy Rates of Owner-Occupied and Rental Housing Units for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000

	McDuffie County	Thomson	Dearing	State of Georgia
Owner Occupied Units	1.4%	1.7%	4.3%	1.9%
Rental Units	8.0%	7.5%	8.3%	8.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF1), Table DP-1 Calculations by CSRA RDC

McDuffie County, Thomson and Dearing all exhibit significantly higher rental vacancy rates than owner occupied vacancy rates (Figure H-15). The high rental vacancy rate of all three communities may indicate a lack of rental housing that is “suitable” for potential residents of the county that is in good condition. Similarly, the low owner occupied vacancy rate of housing in McDuffie County and Thomson may indicate a lack of quality choices from among existing housing stock. Within Thomson, existing residents may be holding on to gradually deteriorating properties while in the county, new housing stock takes the form of custom construction for residents desiring to build in the countryside rather than a large inventory of new subdivisions speculating for potential suburban residents.

COST OF HOUSING

Median property values in all McDuffie County jurisdictions have increased significantly since 1990. Property values in McDuffie County increased from 46,900 dollars to 74,600 dollars, or 59.1 percent in the last decade (Figure H-16). Similarly, Thomson and Dearing enjoyed property value increases in the low to mid-50 percent range. All McDuffie County jurisdictions still have property values

HOUSING

significantly below the state average. It is important to note that the dollar amounts in **Figure H-16** are not calculated in constant 2000 dollars. In order to get the most accurate picture of the value of both real property and rents in all jurisdictions inflation must be factored in. According to the United

States Bureau of Labor Statistics the inflation rate between 1990 and 2000 hovered around 32 percent. This means that while all jurisdictions saw an increase in rent prices and property values, the gains were not as significant as they appear on first glance.

With the exception of Dearing, rents in McDuffie County increased at a slower pace than property values. Between 1990 and 2000, median rents increased 41.5 percent in McDuffie County and 37.4 percent in Thomson. Similar to property values, rents fall significantly below the state average. The marginal increase in rents compared to inflation may be directly attributed to a multi-family housing market that remains fairly small.

COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

Figure H-17 compares the total number of cost-burdened households in McDuffie County with the statewide average. A “cost-burdened” household refers to those households that spend 30 percent or more of their annual income on housing related expenses. There is a distinct difference between a household that is cost-burdened and one that is in poverty. There are cost-burdened households across every income class – often times categorized as such because they may be living above their means, either as a result of their own choices or from limited housing options. Another reason that households may be living in a cost-burdened situation is that housing costs in the community may have increased at a dramatically higher rate than family income.

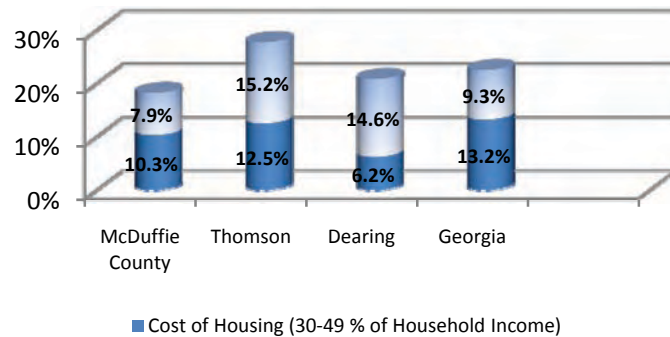
Approximately 18.2 percent of McDuffie County households are living in a cost-burdened condition – with a little less than half of this number (7.9 percent) classified as “severely cost-burdened” – spending more than 50 percent of their annual income on housing related costs. Both Thomson and Dearing contain significantly more cost-burdened households. McDuffie County and Dearing’s current level of cost-burdened households is below the state average, while Thomson is above it. According to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs the number of cost burdened households fell in all three jurisdictions from 1990-2000. McDuffie County saw a 38.6 percent drop while Thomson and Dearing experienced a 13 percent, and 70.3 percent decrease respectively. However, the 1990 Census did not calculate the percentage of severely cost burdened households, so there are no numbers with which to compare with the 2000 Census numbers. This should be kept in mind when looking at the steep decline. Other data in this chapter suggests that, at the very least, the number of cost burdened households is remaining largely the same.

		1990 (\$)	2000 (\$)	Percent (%) Change 1990-2000
McDuffie County	Median Property Value	46,900	74,600	59.1%
	Median Rent	275	389	41.5%
Thomson	Median Property Value	43,600	65,900	51.1%
	Median Rent	270	371	37.4%
Dearing	Median Property Value	43,000	67,000	55.8%
	Median Rent	281	441	56.9%
State of Georgia	Median Property Value	70,700	111,200	57.3%
	Median Rent	433	613	41.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC

HOUSING

Figure H-17: Cost Burdened Households for Selected Jurisdictions, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure H-18 compares the number of affordable housing units available to McDuffie County residents based on varying levels of median household income. The figure also examines whether the available affordable housing stock is safe and sufficient to meet occupants' needs or, exhibits problems ranging from inadequate facilities to inadequate size.

Figure H-18: McDuffie County Supply of Affordable Housing Units, 2000

	Rental Supply	Owned Supply	Total Supply	Percent of Housing Stock	Households	Percent of Total Households	Total Households with Housing Problems**	Ratio of Affordable Housing Supply to Households with Housing Problems
MFI 30*	1,046	N/A	1,046	12.8%	1,371	17.5%	863	1.2/1
MFI 50*	981	3,138	4,119	50.5%	959	12.2%	440	9.3/1
MFI 80*	353	1,155	1,508	18.5%	1,378	17.6%	396	3.8/1
MFI 100*	47	1,441	1,488	18.2%	4,121	52.6%	391	3.8/1
Total	2,427	5,734	8,161	100.0%	7,829	100.0%	2,090	3.9/1

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, SF3 (Some Calculations by CSRA RDC)
 *MFI30 means housing that is affordable for families earning 30 percent of median family income. MFI 50 means housing that is affordable for families earning 50 percent of median family income. Etc.
 **Households with a housing problem (refers to households that are cost-burdened, and/or living in units that are overcrowded, and/or living in units that lack adequate plumbing or kitchen facilities.

Figure H-18 suggests that by 2000, the affordable housing supply in McDuffie County for income classes earning 100 percent of median family income was not sufficient to meet local demand. This suggests that some households earning 100 percent of the median family income may have to compromise on the type of housing unit they reside in, such as units that are deteriorated or that are too small for the size of household that they live in. For all income groups below that, the housing supply exceeds demand. In theory, there are an adequate number of housing units (8,161) to meet the needs of all households earning 100 percent or less of median family income (7,829); however, the 3.9/1 ratio of total affordable housing units to households with at least one housing problem illustrates that there remains a gap between simply providing housing and providing housing that is in good condition and meets the residents' needs.

HOUSING

SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS

Specific data sets on the number and percent of McDuffie County residents requiring special housing accommodations is not readily available. However, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has identified the following information in regard to “special needs” populations in McDuffie County:

- AIDS Cases (1981-2000): 21
- Domestic Violence Victims: 85 police actions in response to domestic violence reports.
- Elderly Population – Aged 62+(2000): 3,065 (14.4 percent of population)
- Disabled – any mental or physical disability(1990): (33.8 percent of population)
- Substance Abuse Treatment (2001): 1,100 (5.18 percent of population)
- Seasonal Farm Workers: Unknown

Information on migrant/seasonal workers within McDuffie County was unavailable. No specific local agency caters to the needs of any of the groups identified in this section. While the Thomson Housing Authority administers U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development low rent subsidies, the Authority is not structured to target any of the special housing needs populations listed herein.

JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

Chapter 3 illustrates that 37.6 percent of McDuffie County residents commute outside of the county to work. Some of the out-migration of labor can be attributed to the fact that much of the county’s population growth is recent arrivals with established jobs in other parts of the metropolitan area. All trends suggest that the population within the county will continue to grow at a moderate rate. As growth continues throughout McDuffie County, it is likely that some retail and office development will locate within the county to serve new residents – potentially increasing the percentage of residents who may live and work within the community.

Category	Percent (%) Change 1990-2000
Median Property Value*	+17.0%
Median Rent*	+6.7%
Cost-Burdened Households (30 % - 49% Only)	-38.6%
Families Below the Poverty Level	-3.7%
Median Household Income*	-0.08%
Average Wage Per Job*	+2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 (SF3), Calculations by CSRA RDC
*Percentage of change expressed in constant 2000 dollars

In addition to relocating jobs to areas within the county, it is necessary to examine whether the jobs that residents will work are sufficient to allow them to remain within the community in the long-term. **Figure H-19** compares the growth of McDuffie County housing costs with income growth. The figure confirms information provided in this and prior chapters – that housing values are increasing. When factoring inflation, the figure illustrates that housing costs are growing at a steeper

rate than incomes. Fortunately, the figure does not show proportional increases in poverty rate and cost-burdened households.

ASSESSMENT

HOUSING TYPES AND MIX

Types of Housing Units/Household Type

Consistent with other rural and small urban areas throughout the state, the housing stock in McDuffie County, Thomson and Dearing is comprised of primarily single-family detached dwellings. Very few multi-unit structures exist within McDuffie County. While there is a continual desire by most households to attain or maintain the pride and independence that comes with single-family home ownership, a variety of conditions reduce the feasibility of some segments of the population to maintain such a living standard. Generally, the type of housing stock available to county residents appears to be meeting the needs of family households, which comprised the majority of households in all three jurisdictions. While not by a significantly high amount (2 percent), growth in the housing supply has outpaced growth in new households. Single family households will continue to account for the overwhelming majority of households.

There exist a significant number of one person nonfamily households in McDuffie County – particularly in Thomson. This characteristic is typical of an aging population. Many non-family households – particularly aging single householders – simply do not have the income to maintain a single-family structure to an acceptable level. Multi-family options (duplex, townhouse, and multi-family) should be promoted in targeted areas within or in close proximity to Dearing and Thomson and accompanying their community services. In addition to providing options for the local population, it is important to remember that multi-family housing options provide Dearing and Thomson with a “transitional” housing option to recruit and retain young professionals and their families who may be employed – or are considering employment – at local institutions such as the hospital or school system. In addition, a lack of housing choice may create long-term difficulties in retaining a suitable labor force to staff low-paying service sector jobs that will inevitably occur as a result of McDuffie County’s projected population growth.

CONDITION AND OCCUPANCY

Age of Housing/Occupancy Characteristics

When compared to the state of Georgia and the Augusta metropolitan area, McDuffie County illustrates a proportionally high percentage of housing units built prior to 1950. The vast majority of these structures are found in the combined population centers of Thomson and Dearing. Most of the newer housing units in McDuffie County can be found in unincorporated areas. While some of the growth of housing in unincorporated McDuffie County can be attributed to new residents from other jurisdictions, much of it is also the result of Dearing and Thomson residents opting to relocate to a more rural setting. Both municipalities are not just left with a decrease in the overall number of single-family housing units, but with a gradually increasing inventory of deteriorating properties and subsequently higher vacancy rates.

HOUSING

Significant effort needs to be made in attracting residential reinvestment into established population centers within McDuffie County. The *Urban Redevelopment Plan* adopted by Thomson and McDuffie County in 2005 identifies the opportunity to revitalize and preserve the traditional character of some neighborhoods in Thomson that have fallen into disrepair through either demolition or rehabilitation. Unfortunately, scattered site rehabilitation or demolition of single structures does not always generate the type of wholesale redevelopment that may need to occur within Thomson and Dearing. Without a substantial inventory of publicly held parcels to be offered for development through a public-private partnership, it will be difficult to generate developer interest and investment in established neighborhoods. Scattered site redevelopment is a greater risk for a developer because it is more difficult to generate new property assessments that will help recoup the initial investment. Preservation and repopulation of Dearing and Thomson neighborhoods may require municipal-led demolition, and property acquisition and consolidation in focused areas even smaller than the current Thomson urban redevelopment area. The resulting concentration of buildable lots may decrease developer risk and encourage neighborhood investment in higher quality housing stock.



Typical housing stock Thomson, GA

Many neighborhood redevelopment efforts focus on the provision of affordable housing for low to moderate income populations. While this trend may improve neighborhood aesthetics in limited areas, it does not necessarily generate significant increase in the tax base. Neighborhood redevelopment in Thomson should include efforts to retain the existing population that earns above median income levels. While most communities develop home maintenance assistance programs targeted to low-income families, healthy neighborhoods tend to exhibit households with a greater range of income levels. In recognition of this fact, a greater number of communities are starting to offer maintenance assistance programs to property owners who actually earn more than median household income. The programs work by providing a public subsidy that goes toward the interest rate of home equity loans to keep the rates lower than the general market. Such programs promote reinvestment in the community by middle-income families to help keep the tax base high and improve long-term gains in residential property values. Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County should consider whether such a program is feasible and determine whether there are any housing and lending institutions that they can partner with.

Deteriorated housing stock is only one of a number of visible clues that an overall neighborhood is declining and is not a place where private investment is a wise venture. Deteriorated homes are often accompanied by weeds, trash, abandoned vehicles, front yard parking, etc. The resulting landscape illustrates a degree of resident apathy and/or lack of community pride. Such neighborhoods ultimately become magnets for unwanted activities. To reverse such a trend in declining neighborhoods within Thomson, city officials must couple ongoing redevelopment efforts with neighborhood empowerment. The city should promote the formation of neighborhood associations within declining neighborhoods and sustain their efforts through the establishment of joint city/neighborhood code enforcement, strategic planning and crime watch programs. Another tool to combat disinvestment in areas in need of redevelopment would be the establishment of a

HOUSING

rental registration and inspection program. These programs require the landlords to register their property as a rental and compel them to keep the property from falling into disrepair through periodic building and health inspections. The administration of such programs can be very labor intensive so the provision of additional staff might be needed to effectively enforce the program.

Additionally all three jurisdictions might want to consider the adoption of a form based or traditional neighborhood overlay zoning district to establish design controls within targeted areas of the community. These districts could preserve the existing development patterns closer to the existing population centers, as well as extend that pattern into areas where new development is likely to occur. The social, economic, and aesthetic advantages of these types of developments are well documented. The design controls also help to preserve and create a sense of place that is unique to the community. Areas where these districts could be established are the Traditional Neighborhood-Stable, character area in Thomson, selected areas of the Downtown Dearing character area, and the Urban Reserve character area in McDuffie County.

McDuffie County's communities are actively participating in the Georgia Rural Development Council and Department of Community Affairs' Communities of Opportunity (Co-Op) Initiative. Utilizing a town hall meeting format along with focus group sessions, issues that are keeping McDuffie County from reaching its full potential are identified and strategies to address them are prioritized. The overwhelming issue identified in the preliminary rounds of these meetings had to do with housing revitalization. Leaders were asked to vision what a success would like if the problem were remedied, and then asked to describe the current reality of the housing situation. A list of actions that will help to bring about the success as it was envisioned was then developed. Actions to address issues that have come out of the Co-Op Initiative process should implemented because they are the result of an open, honest, and at times quite candid conversation about the reality of issues facing McDuffie County and its municipalities today. A copy of the Co-op Community Improvement Strategy can be found in **Appendix A**.

COST OF HOUSING

The increase in median property value in McDuffie is the direct result of the construction of new "stick-built" single-family homes in the unincorporated area that can retain greater value than most pre-existing manufactured housing. The slight rise in median rents also suggests that some of the rental supply is new housing. Although there is some new multi-family construction in McDuffie County and Thomson, the rise in median rents has only slightly outpaced inflation – indicating a continued lack of "quality" rental housing choices. The fact that median property values in Thomson and Dearing have not kept pace with the statewide average once again illustrate an unfavorable environment for residential investment in McDuffie County's municipalities.

The opportunity exists to capture some of the previously discussed labor that the county imports. The employment sectors that have seen significant growth (as discussed in Chapter 3) sometimes fail to pay enough to keep up with the rapid increase in the cost of owning a home. In turn, some of the people that work in McDuffie County are forced to the more abundant and less expensive multifamily options in Augusta-Richmond and Columbia Counties. An effort to provide a variety of housing options for all income levels could draw these workers into McDuffie County and its municipalities. Additionally the rising cost of transportation will make it more and more difficult for

COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

The percentage of cost-burdened households in McDuffie County is similar to that of other areas within the metropolitan area. While the provision of a more diverse housing supply may result in greater affordable housing choices in the county, it cannot guarantee a significant decrease in the percentage of cost-burdened households. Many households, regardless of income level, find themselves in a cost-burdened situation as a result of their own choices. This trend can ultimately lead to deferred maintenance of housing units and/or higher percentages of renters in the community. Once again, a greater diversity of housing choices may offer some cost-burdened households in McDuffie County to relocate to housing units which are more suitable for their income levels.

SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS

Housing and population data sets within this plan repeatedly illustrate significant growth in McDuffie County's elderly population. Coupled with aging and deteriorating housing units, the county's elderly population appears to be the principal segment which will require special housing options. Elderly residents currently comprise over 14 percent of the county population and it is not known at this time if their current housing needs are being met. A housing needs assessment, not for just the elderly but all groups identified in this chapter, is needed to assess the situation and to determine an appropriate course of action to remedy the situation.

JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

New housing for all income levels in McDuffie County is more difficult to find than elsewhere in the metropolitan area. Employment opportunities within the county are not plentiful for residents – resulting in many residents traveling out of county to work. Employment opportunities, particularly within the service sector, are expected to continue to increase as suburban development expands in McDuffie County. While many of these service sector jobs will provide professional opportunities for more highly educated residents, there should also be a large number of supporting lower-wage service sector jobs as well. These anticipated jobs will be much easier to fill if all three jurisdictions promote the development of new housing stock that is accessible to a much wider cross-section of income levels. As a result, a committed effort should be made by all three jurisdictions to identify and promote areas where more affordable higher-density housing within the urbanized areas – specifically within proximity to Thomson and Dearing.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 5 Natural & Cultural Resources

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

As McDuffie County grows community leaders understand the need to mitigate the impacts of development on the natural landscape. Likewise, there is an acknowledgement that growth can incorporate the preservation of key historic properties and other cultural amenities. The natural and cultural resources element examines a variety of topics including: groundwater recharge areas, water supply watersheds and wetlands; soils, prime agricultural or forest land; scenic views or sites; historic structures and properties, archeological resources; etc. By identifying such resources, the community can consider environmental standards and targeted preservation to ensure that local growth does not compromise the health of regional water systems, air, and habitat diversity.

The purpose of this section is to inventory those natural resources that should be protected in order to promote the long-term health and well-being of McDuffie County's residents; and, to inventory the city's cultural assets that enhance residents' quality of life and provide McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing with their own unique identity. This section also considers how new development will affect these resources and recommend ways to mitigate impacts through resource protection. The principal sources of information in this chapter are the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

McDuffie County straddles two geological regions – the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. These regions are separated by the “fall line,” a geological boundary running parallel with the Appalachian Mountains from Alabama to New York and historically representing the end of navigable portions of rivers emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. As of 2005, the county encompassed an area of roughly 259.8 square miles.

(Note: In accordance with state planning standards, the maps within this chapter utilize the county city boundaries that are consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau's TIGER boundary files.)

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

As part of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) developed the *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* for use by local communities. The *Criteria* establish recommended minimum planning standards for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors and mountains. This chapter identifies those applicable resources that are found in McDuffie County and its municipalities. Because there are no protected river corridors or protected mountains in close proximity to McDuffie County, those specific items are not addressed by this plan.

Water Supply Watershed

There are many different factors that determine the volume of water in a stream or other body of water. These factors include the amount of precipitation, land cover, slope, soil type, and capacity and speed of absorption into the soil. Any water that is not absorbed by the soil, detained on the surface by lakes or ponds, or used by vegetation, runs off of the land as overflow, or surface run-off. Water that is later released by the soil adds to this overflow to produce what is known as total run-off. As run-off flows to areas of lower elevation, it collects in drainage areas, the boundaries of which

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

form watersheds. Run-off from these watersheds flows into streams which serve as outlets for water in the watersheds.

McDuffie County is located within the Savannah River drainage basin. Within this basin, portions of three major watersheds can be found in McDuffie County: the Little River Watershed across the northern half of the County, the Brier Creek Watershed in the southern and southwestern portion of the County, and the Middle Savannah watershed just north of Dearing. This plan makes note of these geographic and hydrological subdivisions so that a distinction can be made between them and “water supply watersheds” that require additional resource protection to ensure a safe supply of public drinking water.

DNR’s *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* define a water supply watershed as an area of land upstream from a governmentally owned public drinking water intake. McDuffie County lies entirely within the Savannah I & D water supply watershed. The smaller Thomson-McDuffie County water supply watershed is located to the southeast of Thomson and provides Thomson and Dearing with their public drinking water supply. In addition the cities of Augusta-Richmond County and Waynesboro water supply watersheds divide the county roughly in half. McDuffie County water supply watersheds can be found on **Map N.1**

In part to address the problem of run-off, the *Criteria* establish a recommended set of standards to protect surface water supplies including the use of buffer zones around streams and specifying allowable impervious surface densities within such watersheds. At less than 100 square miles in size, the Thomson-McDuffie County water supply watershed is considered “small water supply watershed” and is subject to DNR’s “small watershed criteria.” Small watersheds are theoretically more vulnerable to contamination by land development.

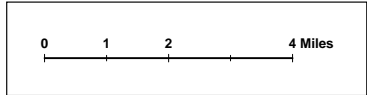
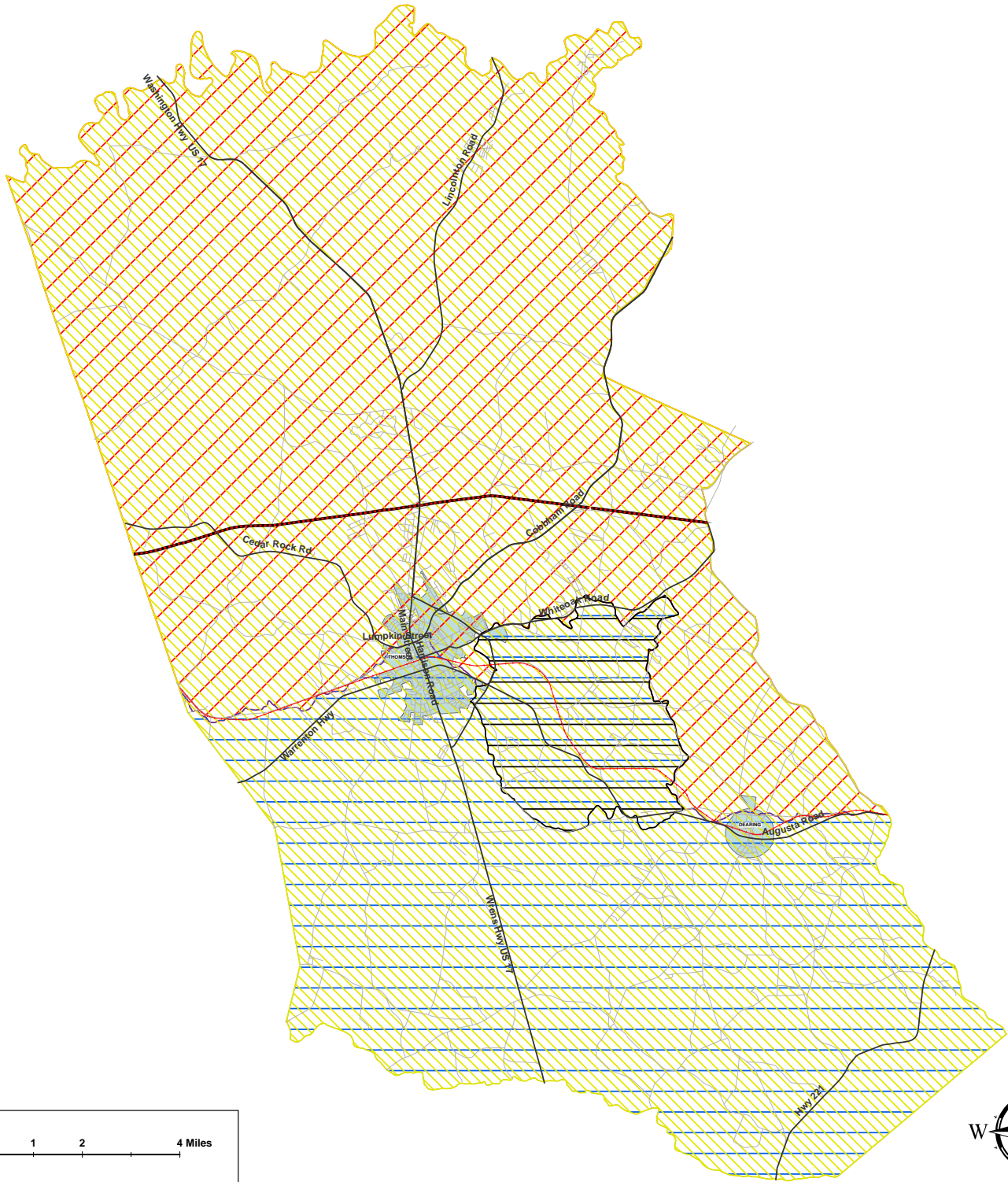
Minimum Criteria for Small Water Supply Watersheds

The perennial stream corridors of a small water supply watershed within a seven mile radius upstream of a governmentally owned public drinking water supply intake or water supply reservoir are protected by the following criteria:

- A buffer shall be maintained for a distance of 100 feet on both sides of the stream as measured from the stream banks.
- No impervious surface shall be constructed within a 150 foot setback on both sides of the stream as measured from the stream banks.
- Septic tanks and septic tank drainfields are prohibited in the setback area.

The perennial stream corridors within a small water supply watershed and outside a seven mile radius upstream of a governmentally owned public drinking water supply intake or water supply reservoir are protected by the following criteria:

- A buffer shall be maintained for a distance of 50 feet on both sides of the stream as measured from the stream banks.
- No impervious surface shall be constructed within a 75 foot setback area on both sides of the stream as measured from the stream banks.
- Septic tanks and septic tanks drainfields are prohibited in the setback areas.



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Water Supply Watersheds	
Major Highways	Thomson - McDuffie County
City of Augusta - Richmond County	Savannah I & D
City of Waynesboro	McDuffie Cities

The following criteria apply to all locations in a small water supply watershed:

- New sanitary landfills are allowed only if they have synthetic liners and leachate collection systems.
- New hazardous waste treatment or disposal facilities are prohibited.
- The impervious surface area, including all public and private structures, utilities, or facilities, of the entire water supply watershed shall be limited to 25 percent, or existing use, whichever is greater.
- New facilities which handle hazardous materials of the types and amounts determined by DNR, shall perform their operations on impermeable surfaces having spill and leak collection systems as prescribed by the DNR.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

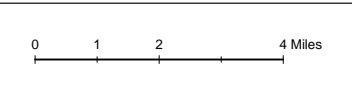
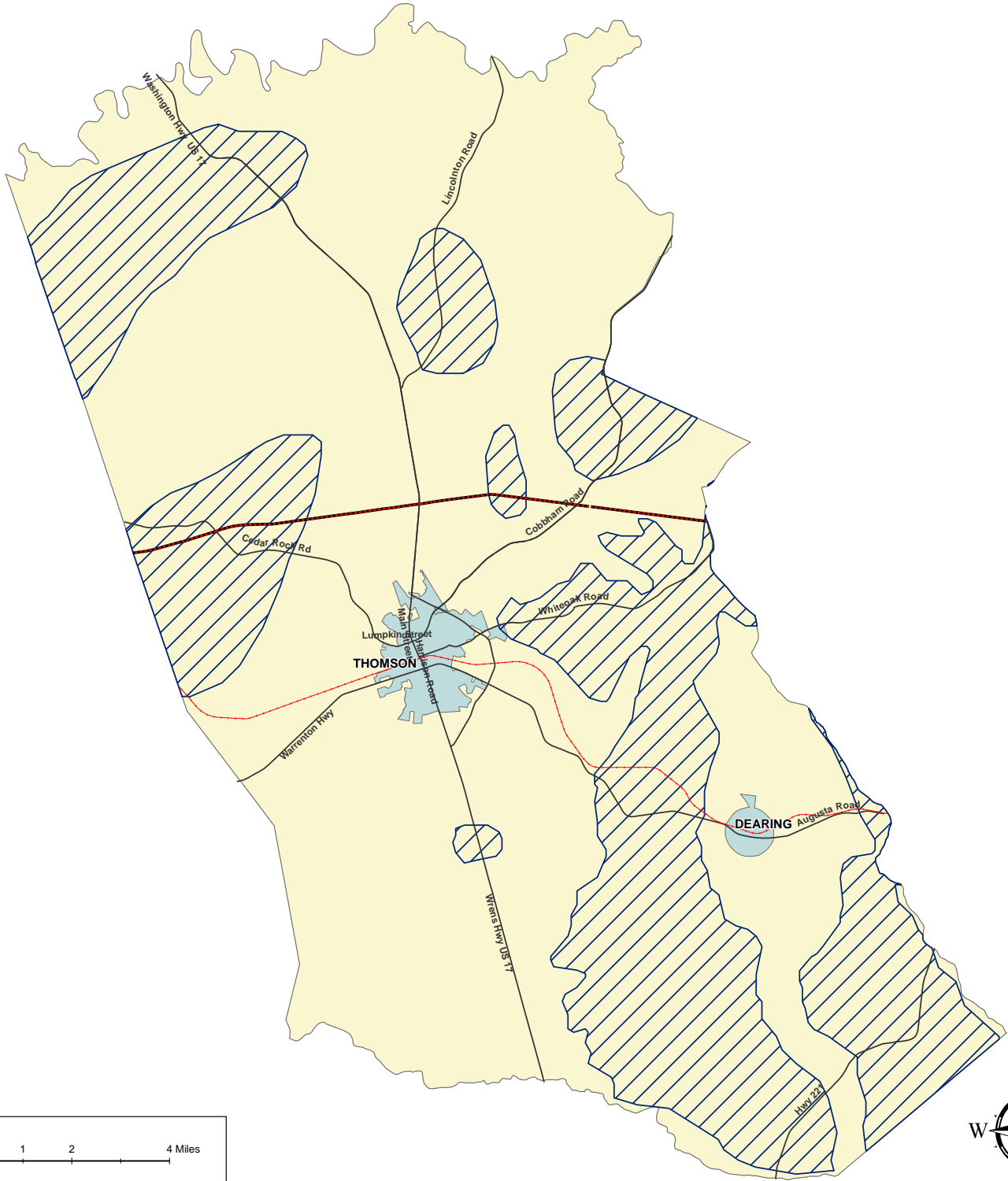
Groundwater recharge areas are portions of the earth's surface where water infiltrates the ground to replenish an aquifer, which is any stratum or zone of rock beneath the surface of the earth capable of containing or producing water from a well. In order to avoid toxic and hazardous waste contamination to drinking water supplies, groundwater or aquifer recharge areas must be protected. While recharge takes place throughout almost all of Georgia's land area, the rate or amount of recharge reaching underground aquifers varies from place to place depending on geologic conditions.

According to data provided by DNR on the Ground-Water Pollution Susceptibility Map of Georgia, Hydrologic Atlas 20, McDuffie County contains several significant groundwater recharge areas (See **Map N.2**). Recharge areas range from lower susceptibility areas in the northern section of the county adjacent to Clarks Hill Lake, to average and high susceptibility areas in the southern and south-central portion of the county that borders Richmond, Jefferson, and Warren Counties. Both the state and federal government regulate groundwater recharge areas. Requirements from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (EPD) include restrictions and regulations on sanitary landfills, land disposal of hazardous wastes, spray irrigation of wastewater and wastewater treatment basins.






Wetlands

Federal law defines freshwater wetlands as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.

Preservation of wetlands is vital because of the many important functions they serve. They are among the world's most biologically productive ecosystems and serve as crucial habitats for wildlife. Wetlands can help maintain water quality or improve degraded water by performing functions similar to a waste-water treatment plant, filtering sediment, toxic substances and nutrients. Wetland vegetation filters and retains sediments which otherwise enter lakes, streams and reservoirs often necessitating costly maintenance dredging activities. Wetlands are also important to flood



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Groundwater Recharger Area	
 Groundwater Recharge Area	 McDuffie County
 McDuffie Cities	 Railroad
	 Major Highways

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

protection, as they act as water storage areas, significantly reducing peak flows downstream, and the meandering nature of wetlands combined with abundant vegetation reduce flood velocities.

In McDuffie County, **Map N.3** illustrates the wetlands which are located adjacent to Clarks Hill Lake, Brier Creek and a number of smaller creeks throughout the county. McDuffie County amended its zoning ordinance in 1995 to clearly require Section 404 review by the Corps of Engineers of any land disturbance proposed in a wetland area. Hazardous or toxic waste receiving, treatment or disposal facilities and sanitary landfills are prohibited within wetland areas by local ordinance.

ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Flood Plains

Flood plains are relatively flat lands that border streams and rivers that are normally dry, but are covered with water during floods. The severity of a flood is usually measured in terms of loss to human life or property, which is directly proportional to the amount of development in the flood plain surrounding the stream or river.

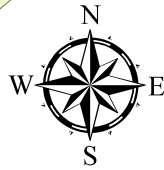
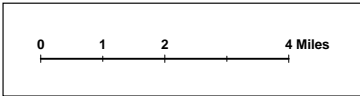
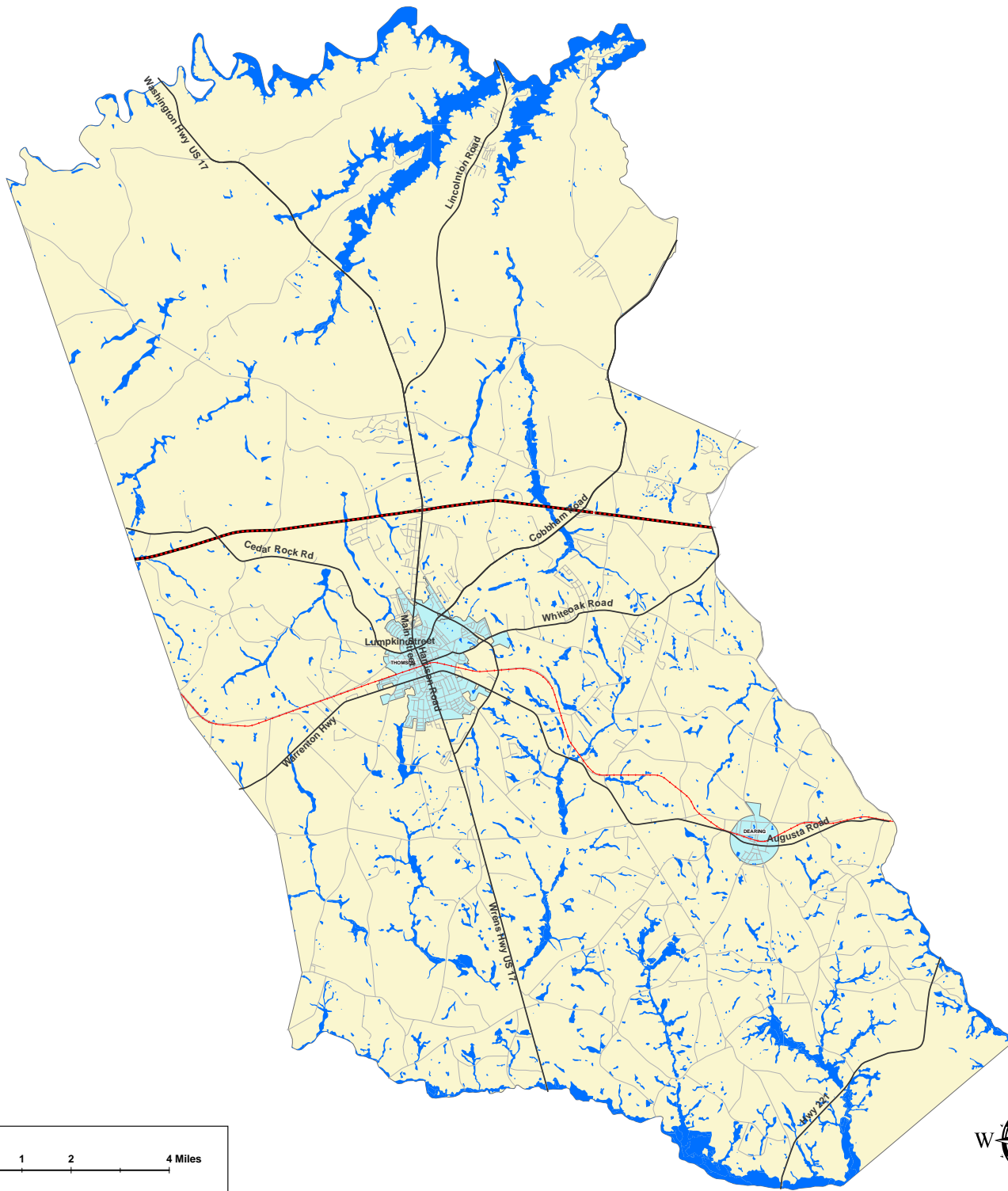
Flooding occurs when the volume of water exceeds the ability of a water body (stream, river, or lake) to contain it within its normal banks. Floodplains serve three major purposes: Natural water storage and conveyance, water quality maintenance, and groundwater recharge. These three purposes are greatly inhibited when floodplains are misused or abused through improper and unsuitable land development. For example, if floodplains are filled in order to construct a building, then valuable water storage areas and recharge areas are lost. This causes unnecessary flooding in previously dry areas and can damage buildings or other structures. Therefore, floodplain development is usually discouraged with the exception of recreational facilities.

The Cities of Thomson and Dearing do not participate in the Federal Flood Insurance program because of the absence of identified floodplains within municipal boundaries. McDuffie County participates in the Federal Flood Insurance Program at the basic level (Class 10) which allows residents within the unincorporated areas to obtain flood insurance but not at the discounted rate they would if the community participated in the Community Rating System (CRS). **Map N.4** illustrates areas that have been identified as flood zones by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

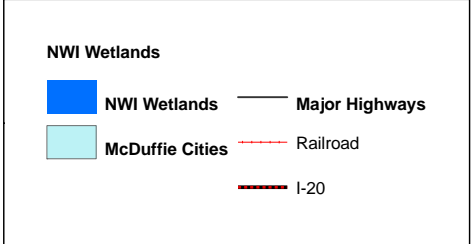
Soils

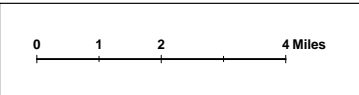
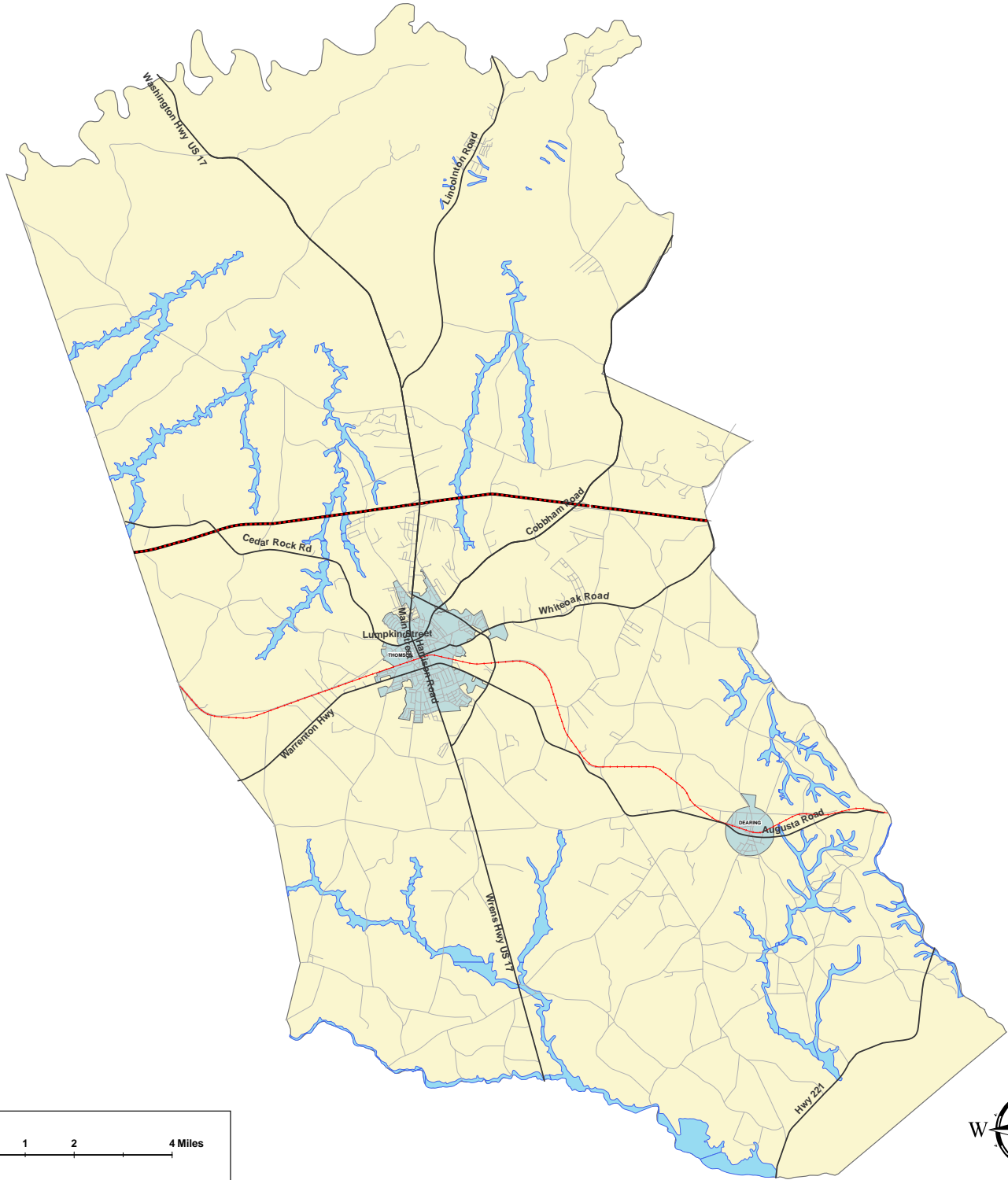
Portions of McDuffie County are located within the Carolina and Georgia Sand Hills Major Land Resource Area (MLRA), and the Southern Piedmont MLRA. The Carolina and Georgia Sand Hills MLRA actually forms a very narrow band between the Southern Piedmont MLRA and the Coastal Plain MLRA. As a result, the principal soil associations apparent in the central and southern portions of McDuffie County (*Lakeland-Vaucluse-Orangeburg* and *Vaucluse-Lakeland-Orangeburg*) exhibit characteristics that are more typical of the Coastal Plain MLRA. *Cecil-Madison-Pacolet* soils are found in the northern portions of the county and are more typical of the Southern Piedmont MLRA.

Lakeland-Vaucluse-Orangeburg and *Vaucluse-Lakeland-Orangeburg* soils are found on uplands of the Carolina and Georgia Sand Hills MLRA and Coastal Plain MLRA that include fairly broad and flat ridge

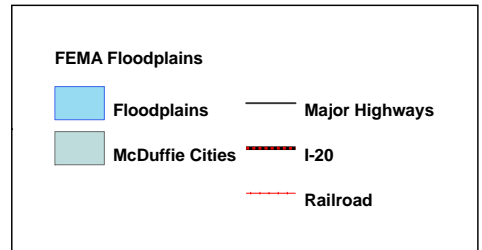


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NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

tops to slopes ranging up to 25 percent. These soils exhibit a sandy composition mixed with loam and clay. They exhibit good permeability and drain well. Exposure of such soils on steeper slopes can create erosion problems if not properly contained. Other predominant soil types in the Carolina and Georgia Sand Hills MLRA area of McDuffie County are:

- *Osier –Pelham-Rains*
- *Wagram-Troup-Norfolk*

Cecil-Madison-Pacolet soils are found on ridges and side slopes of the Piedmont uplands. This association consists of deep well-drained soils that are formed in felsic, igneous and metamorphic rocks. Surface layers consist principally of gravelly sandy loam. Other soil types that are prevalent in the Southern Piedmont MLRA sections of McDuffie County are:

- Georgeville -Toccoa- Wedowee
- Madison-Davidson-Pacolet

All McDuffie County soil associations are illustrated on **Map N.5**.

Plant/Animal Habitats

Growth and development in and around McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing will inevitably alter the natural landscape, reduce wildlife habitat, and affect animal and plant species diversity. One of the most reliable barometers to determine the level of impact that growth is having on animal and plant life is to measure the proximity of state and federally protected species to development activities. **Map N.6** illustrates that McDuffie is located within the vicinity of no fewer than eight plant species that do, or may in the future, warrant special protection. McDuffie County is also home to state and federal lands that harbor at least four critical species or habitat.

Federal Species Protection

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers the federal *Endangered Species Act (ESA, 1973)*. The *ESA* lists animal and plant species as either “threatened” or “protected.” All listed animal species and their habitats are protected from “take” – meaning they can not be harassed, harmed or captured. In addition, activities are prohibited that would create significant habitat modification or degradation that may inhibit or harm the animal’s natural behaviors. Listed plant species are not protected from “take”; but, it is illegal to collect or harm them on federal lands. In the vicinity of McDuffie County, there is one federally protected plant, the Georgia Aster, and one federally protected animal species, the American Bald Eagle.

Figure N-1: McDuffie County Vicinity State Protected Species	
Name	Status (Descriptions Below)
Southern Hognose Snake	Unusual
Sandbar Shiner	Unusual
Missouri Rockcress	Threatened
Pink Ladyslipper	Unusual
Carolina Bogmint	Unusual
Oglethorpe Oak	Rare

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resource Division

Endangered: In danger of extinction throughout all or parts of its range.

Rare: May not be endangered or threatened but which should be protected because of its scarcity.

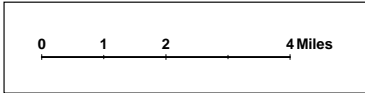
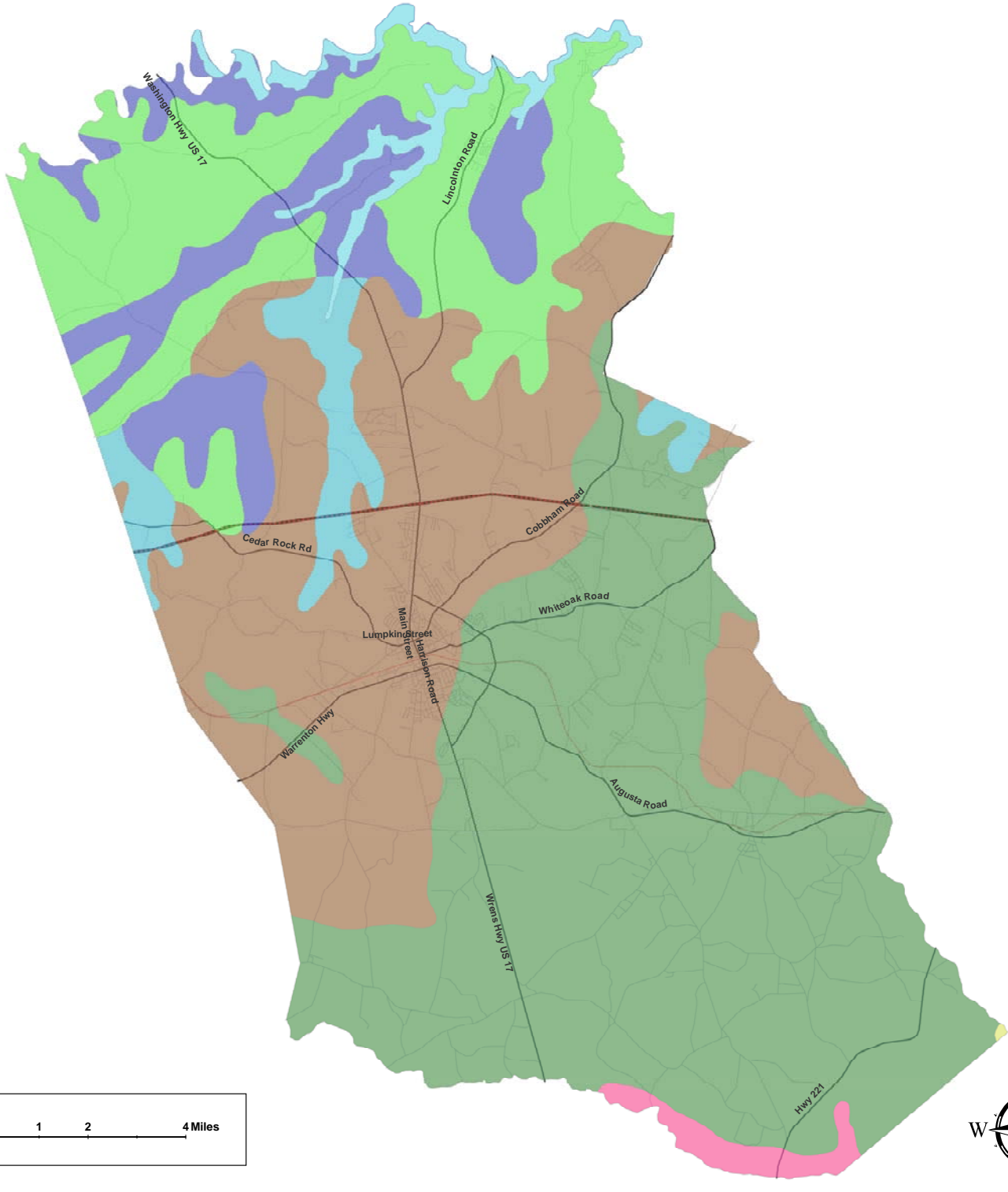
Threatened: Likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout all or parts of its range.

Unusual: Deserving special consideration such as plants that may be subject to commercial exploitation.

State Species Protection

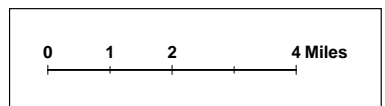
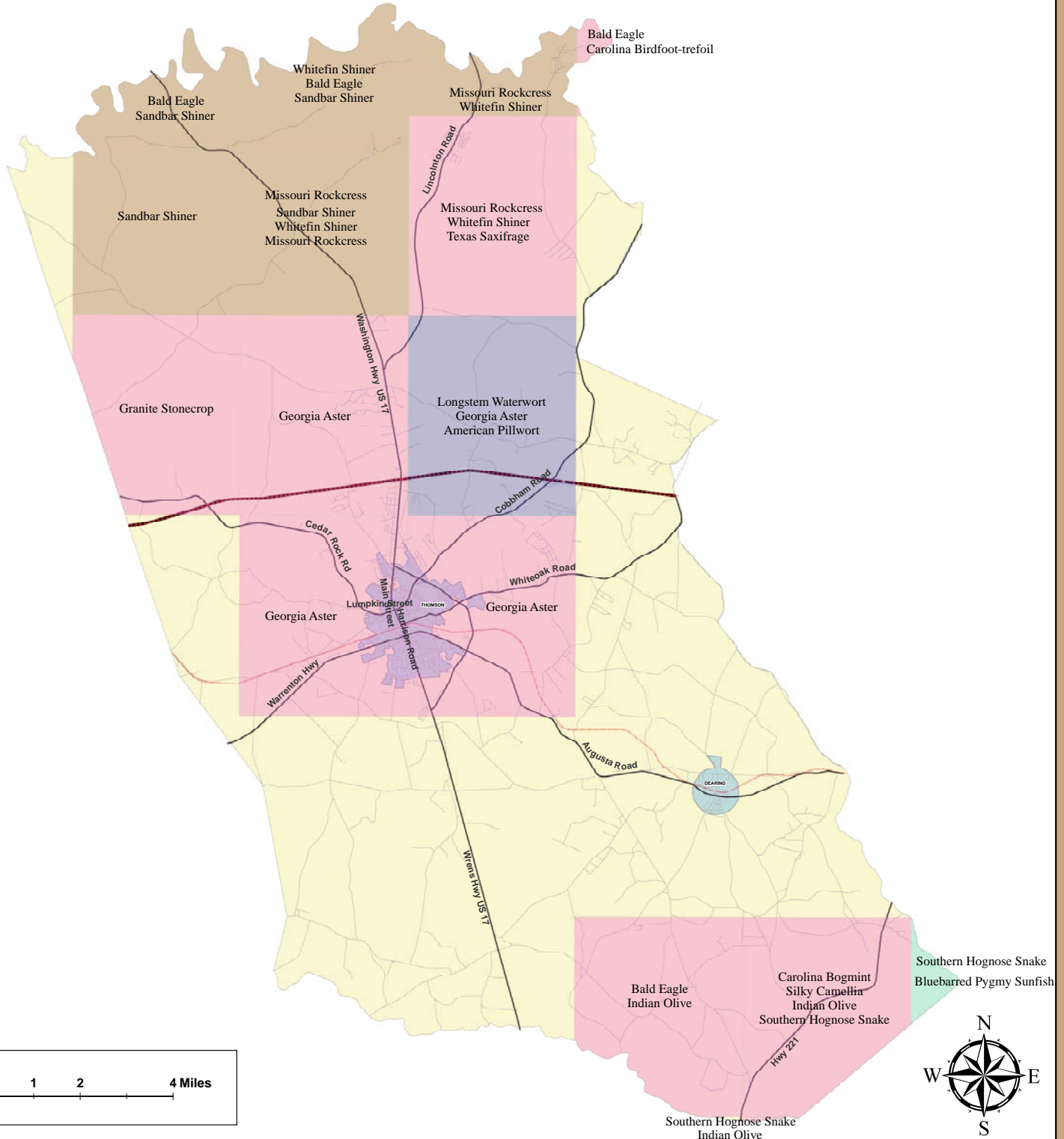
The Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Resources Division administers the state of Georgia’s *Endangered Wildlife Act (1973)* and *Wildflower*





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Legend	
■	CECIL-MADISON-PACOLET (GA025)
■	GEORGEVILLE-TOCCOA-WEDOWEE (GA033)
■	GEORGEVILLE-WEDOWEE-TOCCOA (GA032)
■	MADISON-DAVIDSON-PACOLET (GA026)
■	OSIER-PELHAM-RAINS (GA051)
■	VAUCLOSE-LAKELAND-ORANGEBURG (GA040)
■	WAGRAM-TROUP-NORFOLK (GA038)
■	WATER (GAW)
	I-20
	Major Highways
	Railroad
	Roads



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Threatened and Endangered Species

 Bird	 Fish	 I-20	 McDuffie Cities
 Dicot	 Reptile	 Major Highways	
 Fern		 Railroad	
		 Roads	

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Preservation Act (1973). These acts protect listed species habitat and prohibit the capture, killing, or selling of protected species only on state owned lands. There are two state protected animal species in the vicinity of McDuffie County. **Figure N-1** lists the plant and animal species that are currently found on the state's list of protected species.

In addition to those species listed as protected by the state of Georgia, the Georgia Natural Heritage Program (GNHP) maintains a list of species of "special concern." The special concern list includes federal and/or state protected animal and plant species; and, lists other rare or imperiled species or habitats that may not yet have official protection. The GNHP is the result of a partnership between DNR and the Nature Conservancy and is continually updating its inventory with the state-wide assistance of citizens. In addition to the species listed in **Figure N-1**, the GNHP lists the Trepocarpus, the American Pillwort, the Texas Saxifrage as plant species along with the Eastern Tiger Salamander as animal species or habitat in the McDuffie County vicinity that should be given special consideration.

ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES

Scenic Areas

Much of the countryside in unincorporated McDuffie County is picturesque and rural in character. No individual areas were identified as being particularly scenic – although it is acknowledged that the county's overall rural landscape warrant special consideration.

Prime Agricultural/Forest Land

The vast majority of land in unincorporated McDuffie County is undeveloped and some of it currently used as pasture or for other agricultural uses. No specific areas were identified as being "prime" agricultural or forestry land.

Major Parks, Recreation or Conservation Areas

As referenced in Chapter 6 (Community Facilities), most of the recreation needs of McDuffie County residents are served by Sweetwater Park. The 85 acre complex contains playlots, ball fields, and tennis and volleyball courts. Additionally the Army Corps of Engineers operates the Raysville Campground area with both primitive campsites and full RV hookups. The Raysville Campground is open from March 1 to October 31 and located within U.S. Army Corp managed property that encompasses a large portion of the county's frontage on Clarks Hill Lake.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Dearing

From 1823 through Reconstruction, the area known as “Lombardy” was a railroad and logging village. According to a brief history by A.J. Taylor written in 1904, this frontier settlement held some of the meanest, fighting, hard-drinking population in the county. Fortunately, this period of rough living phased out with the passing of time and the institution of two churches by the beginning of the 20th century. In 1870, the name of the village was changed to Dearing for one of the officials of the Georgia Railroad. The Town of Dearing was incorporated with a charter in 1910. Mr. R. P. Morgan became the first mayor.

In 1899, the Dearing Methodist Church was established on a piece of land given by Captain Jack Harris. It was the only building in town for religious purposes so all faiths met there. The next year a Sunday School was erected and a parsonage was constructed alongside the church. The first minister was the Rev. T. H. Gibson, and the church became part of the Harlem circuit, and later the lead of the Dearing circuit. In the same year, Captain Willis Howard, a large land owner, bequeathed to his heir, Mrs. M. J. Clark, most of his possessions and land. The land was sub-divided and sold from which a large number of new homes were built. The owners of the lumber firm of Culpepper and Parker built many of the town’s new homes.

By the 1920s and 1930s, Dearing was thriving with brick commercial buildings and merchants, a physician, meat market, filling station with mechanics, flour and grist mills, a woodworking shop. The town had two electric gineries for cotton.

Although Dearing had several schools that either burned or were replaced, Mr. Artie McGahee, a County Board of Education member, succeeded in getting an experimental consolidated school built in Dearing taking in several rural schools. This brick school burned in 1936, but was replaced with a new brick school building completed in 1938. Built on land given by Miss Jennie Clark and the first funds donated by Marcus Culpepper, this project used local labor and was a WPA project. The 1938 building accommodated both grammar and high school classes, but in 1958 the high school students were bused to Thomson.

Historically Significant Structures in Dearing

There are no properties within Dearing that are listed on the National Register for Historic Places or protected by local ordinance. **Figure N-2** lists significant cultural resources within and in the vicinity of the town of Dearing – some of which were referenced in the previous section.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Figure N-2: Historically Significant Structures in Dearing

Property Name	Location	Notes
Rural Dearing		
Piney Grove School	near Dearing city limits	
North Dearing Residential		
Effie Helen Jones House	Old Augusta Road	circa 1880s
Bob McGahee House	3552 Old Augusta Road	Circa 1915
Horn-Linninkohl House	corner of Old Augusta and Old Whiteoak Roads	
Old Harris House	3507 Old Augusta Road	
McElroy House	191 Church Street	
Hubert Montgomery House	151 Railroad Street	
Emmie Bess Morgan Griffin House	183 Railroad Street	has original gazebo
Harris Weathers House	Railroad Street	
Goodrich-Linninkohl House	Printup Street	
Gay House	Printup Street	
Adams-Guy House	Corner of Highway 78 and Neal Mill Road	
Earl Printup House	Printup Street and Mosel Drive	
Billy Ruben Printup House	213 Old Augusta Highway	
Good Samaritan House	Railroad Street	
Chapman-Brinkly House	Printup Street	
South Dearing Residential		
The Block	Neal Mill Road, Culpepper Street, Iron Hill Road	
Adams-Guy House	corner of H78 and Neal Mill Road	built in 1908
Reeves House	Culpepper Street	circa 1940s
Bell House	Culpepper Street	circa 1940s
Mildred Houston House	114 Culpepper Street	circa 1940s
Laura Lee Parker House	Culpepper Street	never painted, circa 1890
McGahee House	Culpepper Street	circa 1940
Simmons House	Culpepper Street	circa 1940s,
Baggott House	Culpepper Street	circa 1940s
Farr House	Culpepper Street	circa 1940s
I.T. Edwards House	Culpepper Street	circa 1940s
Commercial		
Richard Adams Store	GA 10	built 1936
Dearing Café	GA 10	formerly Reeves gas station
Former Dearing Super Market	GA 10	built 1958
Ms. Allene's Store		former burger and hot dog restaurant
Institutional		
Dearing Baptist Church and Parsonage	Old Whiteoak Road	built 1912
Dearing United Methodist Church		built 1899
Augusta Technical Adult Education Center	GA 10	built 1938

Thomson

The city of Thomson began as a settlement located in Columbia County. It was known as “Hickory Level” because of its swampy territory, and was often called “Frogpond.” It was the property of John Langston, a large plantation known as Langston’s Homeplace. The place name eventually changed to

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

the “Eureka” Hotel, then to the Terrace Hotel. Mr. Langston established a good reputation operating a boarding house for railroad train crews and offering a delicious fare to passengers of the rail trains. Before the railroad came to town, people did their trading in the town of Wrightsborough, nine miles to the northwest. When the Quaker community did not want the railroad to pass through, it was routed to Thomson. The railroad caused the town of Thomson to grow and prosper.

“Thomson” was founded in 1837, named after J. Edgar Thomson, one of the surveyors for the Georgia Railroad. Right of way was surveyed and purchased and the first rail line was constructed to come through Thomson in 1837. J. H. Stockton is said to have developed what is now the downtown business center. He sub-divided land acquired from his wife’s dowry into building lots. He also acquired many other downtown properties and quickly became an influential and wealthy citizen.

Thomson was incorporated as a village on February 15, 1854. Just a few years prior in 1850, J. H. Stockton had built on five acres the Greenway Hotel, known as the social center of the town and throughout the southeast for its fine dining. In 1860 the hotel was sold to H. Willis Gerald, who in 1879 sold it to T.A. Scott. In 1883, Scott sold some of the hotel property as business lots, on which the first six brick commercial buildings were erected in the town. Every building up to this point had been built of wood. A fire broke out in August 1886 on the west side of Main Street that destroyed the six new brick storefront buildings as well as all the wooden structures on Railroad Street. In January 1888, another fire caused 15 commercial buildings to be razed.

McDuffie County was created in 1870, and Thomson was designated the county seat. At first Thomson was managed by a board of commissioners, but in 1889, the city received a new charter that provided for an elected mayor and four councilmen. Thomson got its first post office in 1838, but operated out of rented facilities for 94 years until 1932, when the Federal government built a new post office building (on the site of the former Thrasher House). The post office building still stands today, owned by the City of Thomson, and plans are to rehabilitate it for public economic development and tourism offices.

Historically significant districts and structures within the City of Thomson can be found in **Figure N-3**

Figure N-3: Historically Significant Structures in Thomson

Property Name	Location	Notes
Residential		
Hickory Hill	Hickory Hill Dr. & Lee St.	National Register Properties
Hillman-Bowden House	1348 Plyant Crossing Rd.	National Register Property
Hardaway House	Old Mesena Rd.	National Register Property
Usry House	Milledge Street	Built in 1835
Kunnes House	Central Thomson	Built 1918
Knox House	Central Thompson	Built 1925
Commercial		
Thomson Commercial Historic District		National Register District
Transportation and Industrial		
Thomson Depot	Railroad Street	Built 1860
Institutional		
Springfield Baptist Church	Martin Luther King Street	Built in 1873
Thomson Middle School	Main Street	Built in 1939

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

McDuffie County

McDuffie County was created by an act of the Georgia Legislature on October 18, 1870 with land taken primarily from Columbia County and a lesser amount from Warren County. The idea of this new county came when Appling was deemed too far from Thomson for travel in a day. The County was named for George McDuffie (1790-1851). He was born in Columbia County on the plantation of his parents who had emigrated from Scotland. This land was cut off and became part of the new county. Properties listed on the National Register for Historic Places can be found in **Figure N-4**.

Figure N-4: Historically Significant Structures in McDuffie County

Property Name	Location	Notes
Historic Districts		
Boneville Historic District	N of Thomson near junction of GA 150 and I-20	Late 19 th century historic homes
Thomas Carr District	Wrightsboro Road, E of Ridge Road	Significant historic homes from the late 1800s
Hayes Line Historic District	N of Thomson near junction of GA 150 and I-20	Significant historic homes circa 1920-1940
Wrightsboro Historic District	Wrightsboro Road, E of Ridge Road	Early Quaker settlement established 1767
Residential		
Old Rock House	NW of Thomson on Old Rock House Road	Oldest residential structure in the State
1810 West Inn		Built 1810
James L. Hardaway House	Old Mesena Road	Built 1783-1785
Hillman-Bowden House	1348 Pylant Crossing Road	Former Plantation Home built 1860s
Pine Top Farm	SW of Thomson on Wrightsboro Road	Centennial Farm
Sweetwater Inn	off GA 17 on Old Milledgeville Road	Built 1826
Bowdre-Rees-Knox House	Wrightsboro Road	Built 1800

Cultural Events

The following culturally significant events take place in McDuffie County:

- Mayfest**
 Held in Dearing on or around May first of each year Mayfest is a Dearing tradition. It began in 2003 as a fundraiser for the rehabilitation of the gym and has grown into an annual event.
- Belle Meade Hunt**
 The Belle Meade Hunt is a foxhunting demonstration that has roots in McDuffie County since 1966. Drawing the interest of both locals and a wide cross section of people from across the region, the Belle Meade Hunt is one of McDuffie County's proudest traditions.
- Blind Willie McTell Blues Festival**
 Born in Thomson Blind Willie McTell was one of the forefathers of blues music. This festival celebrates his contributions to this uniquely American art form by showcasing top level talent in the blues genre. Held annually in Thomson the festival is one of the highlights of the summer in the region.

ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Water Supply Watershed

The city of Thomson, Dearing and a significant number of residents in the unincorporated area rely on the Thomson-McDuffie county water supply watershed for their drinking water supply. With the planned expansion of City-County infrastructure the demand will only grow. Because of its compact size extra care must be taken in regulating the development pattern within the Thomson-McDuffie County water supply watershed. McDuffie County currently has an ordinance in place providing a buffer from development around the Thomson-McDuffie county water supply watershed. Each jurisdiction should review existing ordinances to determine whether any additional recommendations in DNR's *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* pertaining to water supply watersheds should be incorporated into applicable codes.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing have required "Part V" ordinances in place to protect groundwater recharge areas within their respective jurisdictions. Still each jurisdiction should review these existing ordinances to determine whether any additional recommendations in DNR's *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* pertaining to groundwater recharge areas should be incorporated into applicable codes.

Wetlands

The vast majority of McDuffie County's wetlands lie within or in close proximity to floodplains. As with the recommendations contained in the water supply watershed and groundwater recharge area sections above, a thorough review of existing "Part V" floodplain, storm water, and erosion and sedimentation control standards and ordinances should take place by each jurisdiction. Additional wetlands protections – referencing DNR's *Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria* – should be considered to provide additional protection to sensitive wetland habitats.

ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Flood Plains

The steps that McDuffie County Thomson and Dearing have taken to address flood plain management are consistent with many communities across the country. Jurisdictions should simply monitor existing development standards to determine whether its current floodplain related provisions should be amended in the future to balance development and its impacts. McDuffie County should also consider participating in FEMA's Community Mapping System in order to get its residents a discounted rate on their federal flood insurance.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Soils

Continued implementation of sediment and erosion control measures can be augmented by additional stream side buffers and requirements for targeted open space reserves as part of development.

Plant/Animal Habitats

McDuffie County should work with the Georgia Natural Heritage Program to determine what measures might best ensure the opportunity to protect critical species that could be affected by future development activity.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Dearing

Much of the historic building stock in the town of Dearing remains intact and many historic homes are locally significant historically and architecturally to the town's height of prosperity in the early 1900's-1930s. There are many beautiful historic houses and commercial buildings that have been well maintained and unaltered. However, there are also many that are deteriorating from lack of maintenance.

The town may benefit from conducting an historic resources survey to inventory all of the historic buildings in order for Dearing's citizens to pass along the heritage of her town to adult and younger generations. This survey may also encourage those living in or taking care of historic resources to appreciate them and preserve them.

Another useful tool for heritage tourism and economic development would be the development of a National Register of Historic Places nomination. Not only would a developmental history document the architectural and cultural history of the town, but listing in the National Register would put in place the eligibility for a citizen to apply for historic preservation tax credits when substantial rehabilitation is undertaken. Historic preservation tax credit information is available through the CSRA RDC or the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division.

From the results of an historic resources survey and a citywide National Register of Historic Places nomination, a driving tour of the town would provide a brochure for the county Chamber of Commerce to attract tourists.

The historic school complex with its gym is most visible historic resource to the visitor in Dearing. The present ongoing substantial rehabilitation using federal grant and local funds will ensure the buildings' preservation for future generations.

Thomson

The City of Thomson began a concerted effort towards preservation of cultural and historic resources with the adoption in May 2006 of the state's Model Historic District Designation Ordinance for

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Georgia Cities & Counties. It is derived from Georgia Historic Preservation Act as amended (O.C.G.A., 44-10-20). The City Council appointed a five-member Thomson Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) which set up a monthly meeting schedule, and adopted bylaws, rules of procedure for conducting meetings, a certificate of appropriateness process, a budget, and a work program. The primary goals of the Thomson HPC are to become a fully functioning architectural design review board for a designated historic district, and to participate in the National Park Service's Certified Local Government Program, administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Division.

The Thomson HPC began the process of local district adoption for architectural design review by conducting a windshield survey of the historic properties within the city limits of Thomson and gathering historic photographs. A map of the historic district was drawn and a second ordinance giving a legal description of the jurisdiction area to be governed by the Thomson HPC for external material changes in appearance was written. Another required Nomination Report discussing the architectural and cultural significance of the district was written. A very large district was proposed for adoption. Following the legal process for adoption of a locally designated district for design review, a publicity campaign was instituted with a letter of notification sent to all property owners and tenants within the proposed district, newspaper articles published, and civic club programs presented. A public hearing was attended by 150 persons and a section of the Thomson-McDuffie County website was developed and dedicated to the historic preservation planning process with an opportunity for comments. After two readings, the Thomson City Council took into account public comments and adopted a large modified historic district for design review along with the historic district ordinance in September 2007.

Other components of the work program that would provide working tools for the Thomson HPC include conducting a Historic Resources Survey and providing customized Design Guidelines. The Thomson HPC has begun application to participate in the Certified Local Government program that will permit them to apply competitively annually for grant funds for such projects as hiring a professional preservationist to inventory and provide an analysis of the historic architecture and buildings within the city limits.

The City of Thomson has budgeted and hired under contract for the Thomson HPC a preservationist to complete Design Guidelines for the commercial, residential, and corridor/gateways of the locally designated district. The present design guidelines available for applicants use is the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties, available on the Thomson-McDuffie County website and through the National Park Service.

The Thomson HPC is mandated to send at least one commission member to historic preservation commission training at least once a year. This training is available through the Georgia Alliance of Preservation Commissions partnering with the Historic Preservation Division through the University of Georgia's Center for Community Design & Preservation.

The City of Thomson owns, operates, and maintains the Thomson Depot, originally built in 1860 with two additions and an annex separated by covered breezeway. This Depot is the historic focal point of downtown Thomson, and it stays booked as a community center. For the CSRA region, this Depot is an entirely unique historic property. In the CSRA's 13 counties, the Thomson Depot is the only one constructed of stone, and statewide, it is impressive in workmanship, size, and quality. The City is in

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

the process of moving its economic development and tourism offices located in the Depot to the historic Thomson Bank building across the street, so that when funds are found the entire Depot can be let for community activities.

The City has two Transportation Enhancement awards that are scheduled for construction to enhance several historic streets in downtown, including a portion of Main Street. The corridor along Railroad Street next to the historic Thomson Depot will be re-configured to provide a more compatible traffic pattern and ease of parking. This will provide a better arrangement for those using the Depot for events.

The private historic preservation and economic development organization, Camellia Partners for Economic and Heritage Education, has a staff member who is assisting with downtown revitalization projects. The Camellia Partners is instrumental in rehabilitating several downtown buildings and assisting the local historical society with the restoration of the McDuffie Museum buildings. The McDuffie County Historical Society was given two downtown historic buildings by SunTrust Bank, a former bank building and a former drug store, and is in the process of raising over \$1.5 million dollars for rehabilitation of the buildings and to develop a state of the art exhibition space. The buildings are scheduled to be open to the public by January 2009. This is an ambitious project for all partners concerned, but one that will have a lasting effect on the heritage and education of citizens and visitors to the facility. The first exhibit scheduled is a pilot project on the part of the Smithsonian Institution which has already sent lesson plans to the school system for an exhibit entitled, "America by Food." This project will rehabilitate two key buildings downtown and will provide another site to visit downtown.

McDuffie County

McDuffie County has an abundance of unique historic resources dating from the 18th to the mid-20th centuries. From the 1970s to the new millennium, McDuffie County placed an emphasis on supporting the preservation of several county historic resources with local funding and staff support to benefit the economic development of tourism and making McDuffie County a better place to live.

In the past decade, McDuffie County adopted the Model Historic District Designation Ordinance for Georgia Cities & Counties. It is derived from the Georgia Historic Preservation Act as amended (O.C.G.A., 44-10-20). McDuffie County appointed a five-member McDuffie County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) which set up a monthly meeting schedule, and adopted bylaws and a work program. McDuffie County applied for and was designated a participant in the Certified Local Government in its first year of formation. This indicates that a partnership in historic preservation policy exists between the local government's HPC, the state historic preservation office (DNR/Historic Preservation Division), and the National Park Service. McDuffie County applied for and received a federal grant to inventory all of the historic resources in the county's jurisdiction. Over 400 historic resources were recorded and a report analyzing the county's historic properties was completed. Public information meetings were held to educate the public of the results.

The HPC undertook several of the report's recommendations that were funded with CLG and local McDuffie County funds. Two historic districts were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Hayes Line Historic District and the Boneville Historic District. Although two of the dozen historic properties have burned recently in the Hayes Line Historic District, the others are vacant and

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

endangered of demolition by neglect or by County fire department practice. These resources are unique and listed in the National Register. The Boneville Mill, once a substantial economic industry in McDuffie County, was vandalized of the wood building materials and even the water wheel was stolen, until finally the entire mill collapsed from its own weight.

The Wrightsboro Church was also restored during this time. A collapsed sill beam, a very complicated task with the church fully braced, was replaced using a grant and local McDuffie County funds that preserved the church for future use as a gathering place for tourism and local activity such as the Wrightsboro Quaker Community Foundation, Inc.'s annual homecoming.

For the Wrightsboro Historic District, McDuffie County received a Transportation Enhancement award of funds that implemented placement of interpretive signage with driving aprons for vehicles to pull off and read the historical markers along Broad/James Street (Wrightsboro Road). More recently, private funds permitted the Chicora Foundation to assess the damaged Wrightsboro Quaker Cemetery headstones. Descendants were contacted and funds were raised to repair the damaged tombstones.

The Wrightsboro Historic District is so important as a colonial settlement in Georgia that it should be left alone from intrusive development. The showpieces of the district are the Wrightsboro Church (now Wrightsboro Methodist Church) and the Quaker Cemetery. The tombstones are fragile and require monitoring of their condition. The untouched natural beauty and composite history of the district is one of McDuffie County's greatest tourism attractions. All that can be done to plan for conservation of this area and the likelihood of learning more through the years about the settlement through archaeology should be carefully honed.

The Hillman-Bowden House and the Rock House, although privately operated by the Wrightsboro Quaker Community Foundation, are intact historic properties with a generous amount of acreage for community receptions and events to be held. These historic resources located in the County will serve to enhance heritage tourism. The Rock House with its Quaker association and the Hillman-Bowden House have developed their facilities to be useful for years to come for heritage tourism.

The McDuffie County Historic Preservation Commission went inactive in May 2003. One recommendation for future protection of historic resources is to resurrect the HPC in order to develop an Endangered Properties List of historic resources. The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation issues an annual "Places in Peril" each year for Georgia and Historic Augusta issues an "Endangered Properties List" to make the public aware that some of our cultural resources are endangered of being lost. Threats to the properties run from deterioration by neglect most often, to poor redevelopment, to poor public policy, and proposed demolition. With a list of significant endangered historic properties, the owners are contacted to see if they are interested in preserving their property and offered the opportunity to talk about the problems they face. The property can be highlighted to raise public awareness about the importance of the property and how they can be preserved. The owner can discover tools for preservation of the properties. Also, the HPC could encourage that the properties be sold to an interested buyer. With the aforementioned groups, a presentation to local civic groups has often generated interest in or articles placed in the newspaper have led to saving a property. The Georgia Trust and Historic Augusta have often marked "saved" on their lists. This would be an opportunity to bring awareness of McDuffie County's heritage to the public and offer an avenue for owners and potential buyers to preserve the buildings.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 6 Community Facilities

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



DRAFT



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

In order to promote community-wide economic development and improve the quality of life for a community's residents, the effective maintenance of public facilities and services is crucial. Communities such as those located in McDuffie County which are experiencing new development and an increase in population are also faced with the challenge of expanding existing services to meet projected demand. Regardless of whether a community is or is not experiencing growth, effective local governments maintain a comprehensive inventory of public services and constantly seek ways to improve and/or expand the level of service to existing and future residents.

This chapter analyzes the majority of Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County's major community facilities to determine if adequate infrastructure and services exist or are planned to meet future needs. The adequacy of McDuffie County's water and sewer distribution and treatment facilities as well as the city's storm drainage system is reviewed. Public safety services – including fire protection, E.M.S. and police are inventoried and analyzed. Parks and recreation opportunities in McDuffie County are examined to determine whether adequate facilities exist and whether there is adequate community-wide access. McDuffie County's solid waste management system is also reviewed. The only major community facility not reviewed in this component is the transportation system. McDuffie County's transportation facilities are reviewed in Chapters 7 and 8 of the *Plan*.

The Town of Dearing along with the City of Thomson and McDuffie County served as the principal source of information for this chapter although some secondary sources were also consulted. Some of the parks and recreation figures in this chapter were prepared by referencing standards recommended by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

Many of the community facilities referenced throughout this chapter can also be found on **Map C.1**.

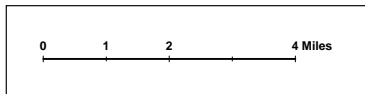
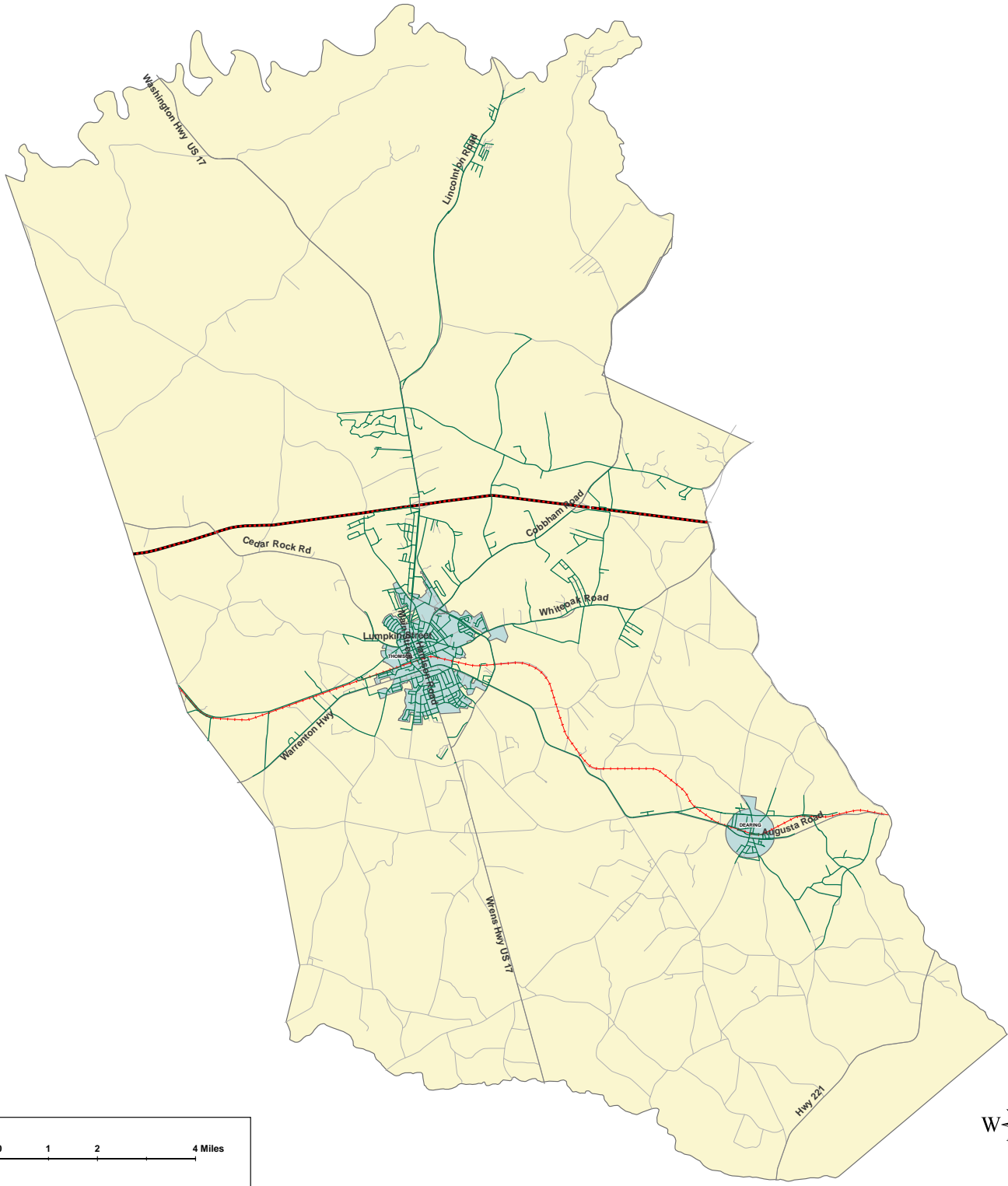
WATER SUPPLY AND TREATMENT

McDuffie County and the City of Thomson jointly own the water supply and treatment system that services Thomson, Dearing and some unincorporated areas of the county. The rate of water consumption within McDuffie County has predictably grown along with the population. **Figure C-1** shows that between 2003 and 2005 average daily water consumption increased by approximately 20 percent countywide. During the same three year period, McDuffie County's population is estimated to have increased by 16.5 percent. This small discrepancy between the rates of change for water consumption and population suggests that the water consumption habits of McDuffie County's residents and businesses are increasing slightly.








	2003	2004	2005
Average daily consumption (Gallons)	1.5M	1.7M	1.8 M
Excess System Capacity (Gallons/Day)*	2.5M	2.3M	2.2M

Source: City of Thomson City Manager's Office
*Based on treatment capacity

The Thomson-McDuffie water system is inventoried in **Figure C-2**. As previously stated, the system is jointly owned and funded by both the City of Thomson and McDuffie County. The city of Thomson oversees the day to day operations of the system including maintenance and billing. A map of current water lines and a planned expansion is pending. The system draws its main source of water from Clark's Hill Reservoir located along the northern border of McDuffie County. McDuffie County's



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Legend			
	McDuffie County	 Water Lines	 Railroad
	McDuffie Cities	 Major Highways	 Roads
		 I-20	

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

water system is solely dependent on surface water sources for its daily supply. Customers listed in **Figure C-2** include residential and nonresidential accounts.

Figure C-2: McDuffie County Water System, 2005		
Operating Authority	City of Thomson / McDuffie County	
Water Usage/Consumption	Current Average Daily Consumption:	1.8 MGD*
	Peak Average Daily Consumption (2000-2005)	3.2 MGD*
System Capacity	Total System Capacity:	4 MGD
	Excess System Capacity:	800,000 GD
Water Supply Sources	Primary Source(s) of Water Supply:	Clark's Hill Reservoir
	Secondary Source(s) of Water Supply:	Usury Pond
Storage and Treatment Facilities	Storage Facilities	6 Tanks with 1.25 MG Capacity
	Treatment Facilities:	2Total, Big Creek, and Augusta Road
Distribution Lines	Linear Mileage:	115 Miles
Customers	5,650	
<small>Source: Thomson City Manager's Office * Million Gallons per Day</small>		

SEWAGE SYSTEM AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT

The challenges to maintaining adequate sewer system capacity in McDuffie County are similar to those for supplying adequate water – increasing population has resulted in an increasing demand for service. As illustrated in **Figure C-3**, McDuffie County is currently utilizing a little over half of their sewage and wastewater treatment capacity. This leaves ample ability to accommodate the projected gains in population in the short term. Pending expansion of the sewer system to more rural areas of the county will generate population growth and a gradual increase in the usage of the system. A map of current sewer lines and planned expansions is also pending.

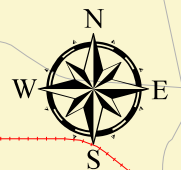
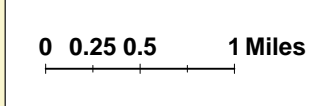
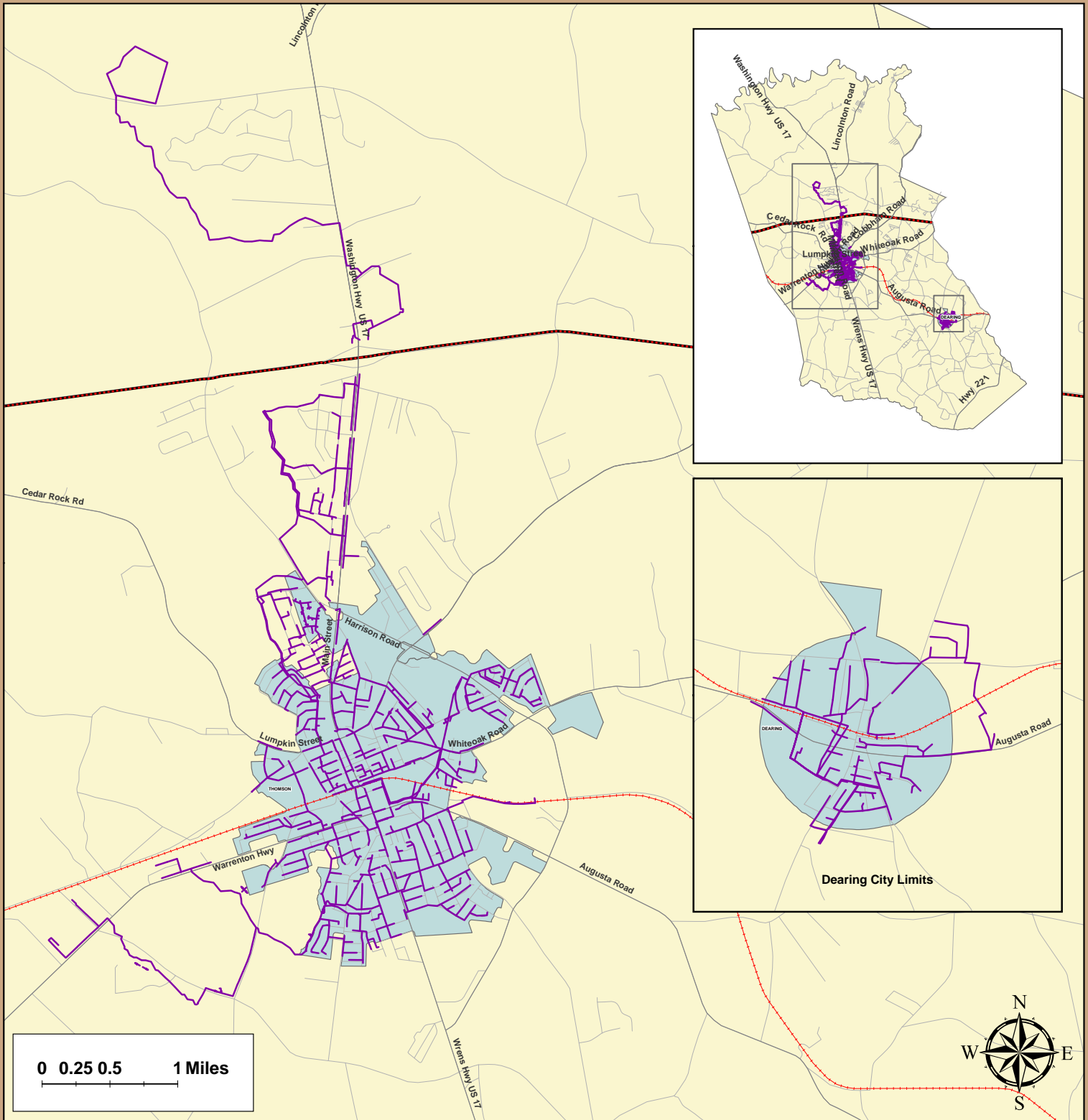
Figure C-3: McDuffie County Sewage and Wastewater Treatment System, 2005		
Operating Authority	City of Thomson / McDuffie County	
Usage	Current Average Daily Usage:	1.3 MGD
System Capacity	Total System Capacity:	2.5 MGD
	Excess System Capacity:	1.2 MGD
Treatment Facility & Customers	Treatment Facility:	1 Treatment facility: Thomson Wastewater Treatment Plant 3,473
<small>Source: Thomson City Manager's Office</small>		

As with the water supply and treatment system, McDuffie County and Thomson jointly own the sewage and wastewater treatment system. And like the water supply and treatment system the City of Thomson oversees day to day operations of the sewage system. Once again, customers listed in **Figure C-3** include residential and nonresidential accounts.








GENERAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Storm Water Management

The City of Thomson maintains storm water collection lines within a large portion of its municipal boundaries – although there remains a significant amount of street segments that utilize open ditch sections for storm water drainage. While storm water collection is facilitated on the majority of county roads via open ditch sections, there is a desire to gradually convert open ditch street sections



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Legend		
	McDuffie County	 Sewer Lines
	McDuffie Cities	 I-20
		 Major Highways
		 Railroad
		 Roads

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

to curb and gutter where the density of development calls for it. Land development regulations in Thomson - and recently within McDuffie County – now require that all new streets incorporate curb and gutter for underground storm drainage.

Solid Waste Management

The collection of solid waste in McDuffie County is handled by a variety of public and private collection agencies. The McDuffie County Transfer Station is a consolidation point for all solid waste collected in the county. It is then transported to the Waste Management Inc.'s Chambers R&B landfill located in Homer, GA. According to the capacity assurance letter provided by Waste Management Inc. to McDuffie County As part of the *McDuffie County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan (2007)*, capacity exists to accommodate McDuffie County's disposal needs for at least the next 10 years.

Figure C-4: McDuffie County Waste Generation Rates, 2003-2005

2003	2004	2005	2006	2003-2005 Percent (%) Change
28,619	37,515	37,595	25,250	-11%

Source: McDuffie County Department Solid Waste

Consistent with the findings of the *McDuffie County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan (2007)*, McDuffie County has been proactive in promoting programs to reduce/stabilize waste tonnage generated within McDuffie County. **Figure C-4** shows that between 2003 and 2006, the tonnage of solid waste generated in McDuffie County actually decreased by almost 11 percent – in spite of estimated gains in population during this same time period. McDuffie County's ability to minimize any long-term gain in generated solid waste can be attributed to yard waste collection and recycling programs. Yard waste in Thomson is collected by the Thomson Streets and Sanitation Department and taken to the Thomson-McDuffie Pit burner area located behind the Thomson-McDuffie County Recycle Drop off Facility for incineration. All other McDuffie County residents are encouraged to drop yard waste off at the same facility. County and Dearing residents may also separate and deposit recyclable materials at the McDuffie County Transfer Station as part of the county's recycling efforts. McDuffie County's recycling program is available to all residents and businesses and has been actively promoted by the McDuffie County Department of Solid Waste and The City of Thomson's Public Works Department. The recycling program is purported to have a high rate of participation.

Parks and Recreation

Maintenance of many of McDuffie County's recreation facilities is the responsibility of the Thomson-McDuffie County's Recreation and Leisure Services department. A variety of youth and adult sports programs are offered through the department and are detailed in an annual report distributed through the Recreation and Leisure Services Department's website. Parks data presented in this chapter includes National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards. A review of the NRPA standards reveals a range of recommended park acreages and facilities for communities based on multiple factors. Because application of the NRPA standards to individual communities allows for varying outcomes, the information provided in **Figures C-6, C-7** and **C-8** of this chapter should be viewed merely as an interpretation of NRPA recommendations.

Communities can develop multiple types of recreation spaces to meet varying needs and interests. **Figure C-5** shows the six park classifications defined by the NRPA. (**Note: Figure C-5** only includes the "general description" and "content" for each classification. NRPA park classifications typically address "population served," "service area and accessibility," acres and size range as well.)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Figure C-5: National Recreation and Parks Association, Parks Classifications

Playlots: Small areas intended primarily for the use of children up to early elementary grades. Most suited for apartments, townhouses and trailer parks. Includes play equipment, swings, slides, sandboxes and benches.

Neighborhood Playground: Designed to provide both active and passive short-term activities. Usually located adjacent to schools. Includes distinct play areas for preschool and school age children, shelter structures, open space, paved areas for court games, areas for field games.

Neighborhood Park: Landscaped natural park of limited size primarily for passive recreational needs of all ages but with designed active areas. Provides some scenic and aesthetic value. Should be located in the center of a multiple-family dwelling neighborhood or nearby site. Includes open lawn space, shrubbery, small picnic areas, drinking fountain, scenic paths or nature walks, areas for court games if not provided at a nearby recreation facility.

Community Playfield: Primarily an athletic complex that serves the recreational needs of the community. Usually 1 per community; however, if the community is cut by barriers or if sufficient acreage cannot be obtained, then 2 are recommended. Includes athletic complex – lighted court and field games area, community center, swimming pool, lawn areas, adequate parking, potential picnic or play area for children. May be a portion of a major community park. Has high potential for recreational programming.

Major Community Park: A large natural area and/or landscaped area to provide urban dwellers escape from city congestion without traveling a large distance. Designed to accommodate a large number of people and a wide variety of activities. Provides for both active use and passive use. Can include a wide range of facilities such as play apparatus, bicycle trails, swimming facilities, picnic tables, paths, game courts, gardens and natural areas, pavilion, ample parking, sanitary facilities. May include multi-purpose trails internally or as part of a system.

Urban Greenspace or Open Space: Passive areas in landscaped or natural state in or near urban areas. May be planned for conversion to more intensive recreational use when needed. May provide recreational experiences, provide environmental quality, or act as buffers. Main recreational purpose is to provide a buffer from congestion and provide aesthetic experience. May also act as a land bank. May include natural lands, watersheds, forests, landscaped borders, parkways and boulevards, corner parks, medians, downtown aesthetic parks, plazas, malls, sanitary facilities. May provide bicycle, hiking and nature trails as a feature or as part of a larger system.

Source: National Recreation and Parks Association

Park properties in McDuffie County are owned and maintained by the joint Thomson-McDuffie County Department of Recreation and Leisure Services. The department is governed by the McDuffie County Board of Commissioners with an appointed Board of Advisors that represent, Dearing, Thomson and the County. The department also provides access to a wide variety of youth and adult athletic and recreational programs throughout the year. Based on an inventory provided by the department, the community park system includes six properties comprising a total of 110 acres.

Figure C-6: McDuffie County City Park Property by Classification and Acreage, 2005

	Playlots	Neighborhood Playground	Neighborhood Park	Community Playfield	Major Community Park	Open Space	Total
Sweetwater Park					85		85
Pitt Street Park		10					10
Wm. Eubanks Community Center & Park			12				12
Vonteego Cummings Community Park						3	3
Senior Center	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sweetwater Activity Center	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Thomson-McDuffie County Recreation and Leisure Services Department
 *Park classifications established by the National Recreation and Parks Association

Figure C-6 categorizes McDuffie County’s park properties by the NRPA park classification which best describes them. The Senior Center and Sweetwater Activity Center provide the community with additional social services and recreational opportunities but do not fall within the definitions of the NRPA’s park classifications.

Utilizing NRPA standards, Figure C-7 examines the similarities between the number and size of McDuffie County park properties and a hypothetical community of 21,000 people - similar to



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

county's overall existing population. The figure suggests that McDuffie County is providing adequate community-wide park facilities (Sweetwater Park), but may not be providing accessibility to the diversity of park types recommended by national standards.

Figure C-7: McDuffie County City Park Property & National Recommended Standards, 2005

	Playlots	Neighborhood Playground	Neighborhood Park	Community Playfield	Major Community Park	Open Space	Total Acres
McDuffie County Parks (Total Acres)	0	10	12	0	85	3	110
NRPA* Minimum Acreage Recommendations (Per 1,000 people)	.2	2	2	1	5	1	11.2
NRPA* Minimum Acreage Recommendations (Per 21,000 people)	4.2	28	28	21	102	21	235.2
NRPA* Minimum Number of Facilities for Area of 21,000 people (Note: Rounded up to Whole Number)	4 (2 accessible to 500 - 2500 people)	2 (1 within 1/3 mile of 1,000 - 5,000 people)	2 for up to 20,000 people	1 for entire community of up to 30,000	1 for between 40,000 and 100,000 people	1 Trail system per region	N/A

*Source: Thomson-McDuffie County Recreation and Leisure Services Department
National Recreation and Parks Association

Figure C-7 also suggests that the City and County may need to consider the development of a greater amount of smaller playlots, neighborhood playgrounds and neighborhood parks. A key difference between the small and large park facilities is that the smaller facilities can be spread throughout the community to promote greater access to a larger population.

As with **Figure C-7**, **Figure C-8** compares McDuffie County's recreation facilities with NRPA recommendations. Thomson and McDuffie County compare favorably to the NRPA recommendations in most categories. The Recreation and Leisure Services Department Director has indicated that plans are currently being made to add a pool, Skate Park, two additional tennis courts, a high school age baseball field, and at least two additional neighborhood parks.

Figure C-8: McDuffie County Recreational Facilities & National Recommended Standards, 2005

	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Baseball Fields	Football Fields	Soccer Fields	Softball Fields	Multi-Use Courts	Swimming Pools	Trails
McDuffie County (Number)	4	2	2	11	4	4	11	2	0	2
NRPA* Recommended (Minimum Number)	1 per 5000	1 per 2000	1 per 5000	1 per 5000	1 per 20,000	1 per 10,000	1 per 5000	1 per 10,000	1 per 20,000	1 trail system per region
NRPA* Minimum Number Applied to Area of 21,000 people (Note: Rounded up to Whole Number)	5	11	5	5	2	3	5	3	2	1

*Source: Thomson-McDuffie County Recreation and Leisure Services Department
*National Recreation and Parks Association
**3 Baseball Fields; 1 T-Ball Field*



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Libraries

Library services for McDuffie County residents are provided by the Thomson-McDuffie County Library. The Thomson-McDuffie County Library is part of the larger Bartram Trail Regional Library System. Bartram Trail Regional Library System is administered from offices located in the Mary Willis Library in Washington, Georgia and serves the Mary Willis Library, the Taliaferro County Library, and the Thomson-McDuffie County Library. The affiliate libraries are located in the county seats of Wilkes, McDuffie and Taliaferro Counties. Via the regional library system, each participating branch has the ability to share resources in a manner that is typical of a single-jurisdiction library system that includes multiple branches. Each county library is supported by annual appropriations from its local funding agents. Each local board, assisted by the director, employs its own librarian or library manager, adopts its own budget, secures local financial support from its funding agents and handles matters of a local nature not in conflict with Georgia Public Library Law (Act 1210) or the Regional Library Constitution and By-Laws

The Thomson-McDuffie County library - through the Regional Library System - provides an extensive inventory of books, a collection of newspapers and magazines, videos and DVDs, children's programs, meeting rooms and public computer access.

Schools

McDuffie County public school students attend Thomson, Dearing, Maxwell, and Norris Elementary Schools, Thomson Middle School and Thomson High School. In the fall of 2008 the new Thomson-McDuffie Junior High School will open. The construction of this new facility will allow McDuffie County to accommodate the current growth in population. Student achievement at Thomson High School was discussed in Chapter 2.

All public schools attended by McDuffie County students are operated by the McDuffie County Board of Education. Administrative functions for the district are conducted at the McDuffie County Board of Education Building located on Lee Street in Thomson. The district currently employs 626 people making it one of the County's largest employers.

General Government Facilities

The City of Thomson's government services are divided into four departments employing a total of 108 employees. **Figure C-9** provides an inventory of City employment by department. While most departments indicate a preference for additional staffing, the City's greatest apparent staffing need is for the Public Safety Department - specifically law enforcement officers. Additionally, with the construction of the new City-County Government Center additional administrative staff will likely be required to conduct day to day operations. McDuffie County's growth trend leaves little

Administration	14
Public Safety	35
Public Works	33
Water and Sewer	26
Total	108

Source: City of Thomson Administrators Office

Administration	27
Parks and Recreation	9
Planning and Zoning	5
Public Safety	57
Public Works	41
Senior Center	8
Courts	26
Total	156

Source: McDuffie County Administrators Office

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

doubt that across-the-board staff increases for both city and county departments may need to be considered in the future.

McDuffie County's government services are divided into seven departments employing a total of 156 employees. **Figure C-10** provides a breakdown of County employees by department. Much like the City of Thomson the County has unmet staffing needs in almost all departments. Also like the City of Thomson, McDuffie County has indicated a severe need to recruit and hire additional law enforcement officers.

Figure C-11: City of Thomson Government Services: Employees by City Building/Property, 2006*

City Hall	13
Public Safety /Fire	35
Maintenance	3
Sewer Plant	6

*Source: City of Thomson
See Map C.1 for location of City properties.

The Town of Dearing has one part-time employee that works a half a day on Thursdays to collect payments for municipal services, and perform clerical duties as needed. Because of Dearing's small size, no additional staffing needs have been identified at this time.

Figure C-12: McDuffie County Government Services: Employees by City Building/Property, 2006*

Courthouse	13
Senior Center	8
Public Safety/Fire	57
Maintenance	4
Mechanic Shop	5
Courthouse Annex	7
Road/ Planning & Zoning	44
Tax Office	13
Elections	5

*Source: McDuffie County; *See Map C.1 for location of County properties.*

As illustrated in **Figure C-11 and C-12**, McDuffie County and City of Thomson employees are scattered among 11 city-owned buildings (See **Map C.1**). All future needs of both the City of Thomson and McDuffie County should be met and exceeded with the construction of the new City-County government center.

The Town of Dearing currently operates an office on Main Street. The Town's current facilities are presently enough to meet their needs.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Protection

McDuffie County fire protection services are provided by the County and City's fire departments. Staff, vehicles and equipment are inventoried for all jurisdictions in **Figures C-13, C-14, and C-15**. All firefighters are cross trained as emergency medical technicians.

Currently in McDuffie County, there are a minimum of two employees on shift at all stations to provide fire protection services at anytime. Overall staffing increases during daytime hours. No short-term need for additional staffing has been identified, in spite of projected population growth. Mutual aid agreements between jurisdictions and neighboring counties provide a more than

Figure C-13: McDuffie County Public Safety: Fire Protection, 2006

Operating Authority	McDuffie County Board of Commissioners
Staff	Full Time: 7 Part Time: 9 Paid per Call: 55
Vehicles	Rescue Truck: 1 Brush Truck: 1 Pumpers: 7 Knockers: 2 Tanker: 2 Equipment Truck: 2 Pickup Trucks: 3 Cars: 2
Special Equipment	Dive Team Equipment Extrication Equipment Rope Rescue Equipment
Stations	1: 1061 Salem Rd. Thomson 2: 434 John T. Lane Rd. Thomson 3 :5435 Adams Chapel Rd. Dearing 4: Lincolnton Hwy. Thomson 5: 104 Hobbs Mill Rd. Thomson 6: 3701 Stagecoach Rd. Thomson
Service Area of Stations	All Unincorporated area of McDuffie Co.
Insurance Rating	ISO Rating : 6/9

Source: City of McDuffie County, Department of Public Safety

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

adequate fire protection for McDuffie County's residents. In the future resources should be devoted to maintenance and replacement of equipment.

Dispatch of all fire, ambulance, and police within McDuffie County is handled by McDuffie County's 911 communications department. Head quartered in the McDuffie County Law enforcement center, the 911 communications department offers a full range of emergency assistance, including the ability to communicate with the hearing impaired, interpreter service, and the ability to monitor inclement weather warnings in surrounding counties.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency medical service is provided to McDuffie County residents through a system jointly operated by the McDuffie County Board of Commissioners and the McDuffie County Regional Medical Center. Head quartered in Thomson with a sub-station in Dearing the fleet of 5 ambulances and 40 employees (14 full-time and 26 part-time) are able to deliver service to the entire county. No additional need for personnel has been identified at this time. In the future resources should be devoted to maintenance and replacement of equipment and training of personnel.

Law Enforcement

McDuffie County's law enforcement services are provided in Thomson by the City's Police Department and in the unincorporated county and the Town of Dearing by the McDuffie County Sherriff's Department. Police staff, vehicles and facilities are inventoried in **Figure C-16** and **C-17**.

Prisoners being detained in McDuffie County are held at the County's detention facility. Along with county prisoners the Sherriff's department is under contract with the state of Georgia to house state inmates. Current capacity at the county's detention facility is meeting the needs of

Figure C-14: City of Thomson Public Safety: Fire Protection, 2006

Operating Authority	City of Thomson
Staff	Full Time: 10 Part Time: 4 Paid per Call: 21
Vehicles	Pumpers: 4 Ladder Truck: 1 Pickup Truck: 1 Equipment Truck:1 Cars: 2
Special Equipment	None
Station(s)	1: 228 McCommons St. Thomson 2: 531 Jackson St. Thomson
Service Area of Stations	City of Thomson
Insurance Rating	ISO Rating: 4

Source: City of McDuffie County, Department of Public Safety

Figure C-15: Town of Dearing Public Safety: Fire Protection, 2006

Operating Authority	Town of Dearing
Staff	Paid per Call: 18
Vehicles	Pumpers :2
Special Equipment	None
Station(s)	5435 Adams Chapel Rd. Dearing
Service Area of Stations	Town of Dearing
Insurance Rating	ISO Rating: 8

Source: City of McDuffie County, Department of Public Safety

Figure C-16: McDuffie County Law Enforcement, 2006

Operating Authority	McDuffie County Sheriff's Department
Staff	Full Time: 39 Part Time: 1
Vehicles	Patrol Vehicles (Ford Crown Victoria's) – 21 Pick-up Truck – 1 Van - 1
Special Equipment	18' Boat Special Response Vehicle Ballistic Shields & Helmets Riot Shield Gas Masks Portable Generator & Trailer
Station(s)	1 Headquarters 1 Substation
Detention Facilities	53,000 sq. ft. reinforced block brick building

Source: City of McDuffie County Administrator

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

the county. If the need arises for additional space in the future, there is adequate land on which to expand the present facilities.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, staffing levels are reported to be inadequate. The amount that McDuffie County can afford to pay its deputies makes it difficult to recruit and retain quality employees. Data on calls for service and other indicators of the workload of the law enforcement departments in McDuffie County was not available, so there is no quantifiable measure of the extent to which law enforcement in McDuffie County is overburdened at current staffing levels.

Figure C-17: Thomson Law Enforcement, 2006

Operating Authority	City of Thomson
Staff	Full Time Officers: 13 Part Time Officers: 2 Full Time Civilian Employees: 3 Part Time Civilian Employees: 4
Vehicles	1997 Ford Explorer 1997 Ford Crown Vic 1998 Ford Crown Vic 1998 Ford Crown Vic 2000 Ford Crown Vic 2001 Ford Crown Vic 2001 Dodge Durango 2002 Dodge Intrepid 2002 Ford Crown Vic 2003 Ford Crown Vic 2003 Ford Crown Vic 2005 Ford Crown Vic 2006 Dodge Charger 2007 Ford Crown Vic
Special Equipment	None
Station(s)	Thomson Police Station 105 McDuffie Ave.
Detention Facilities	None

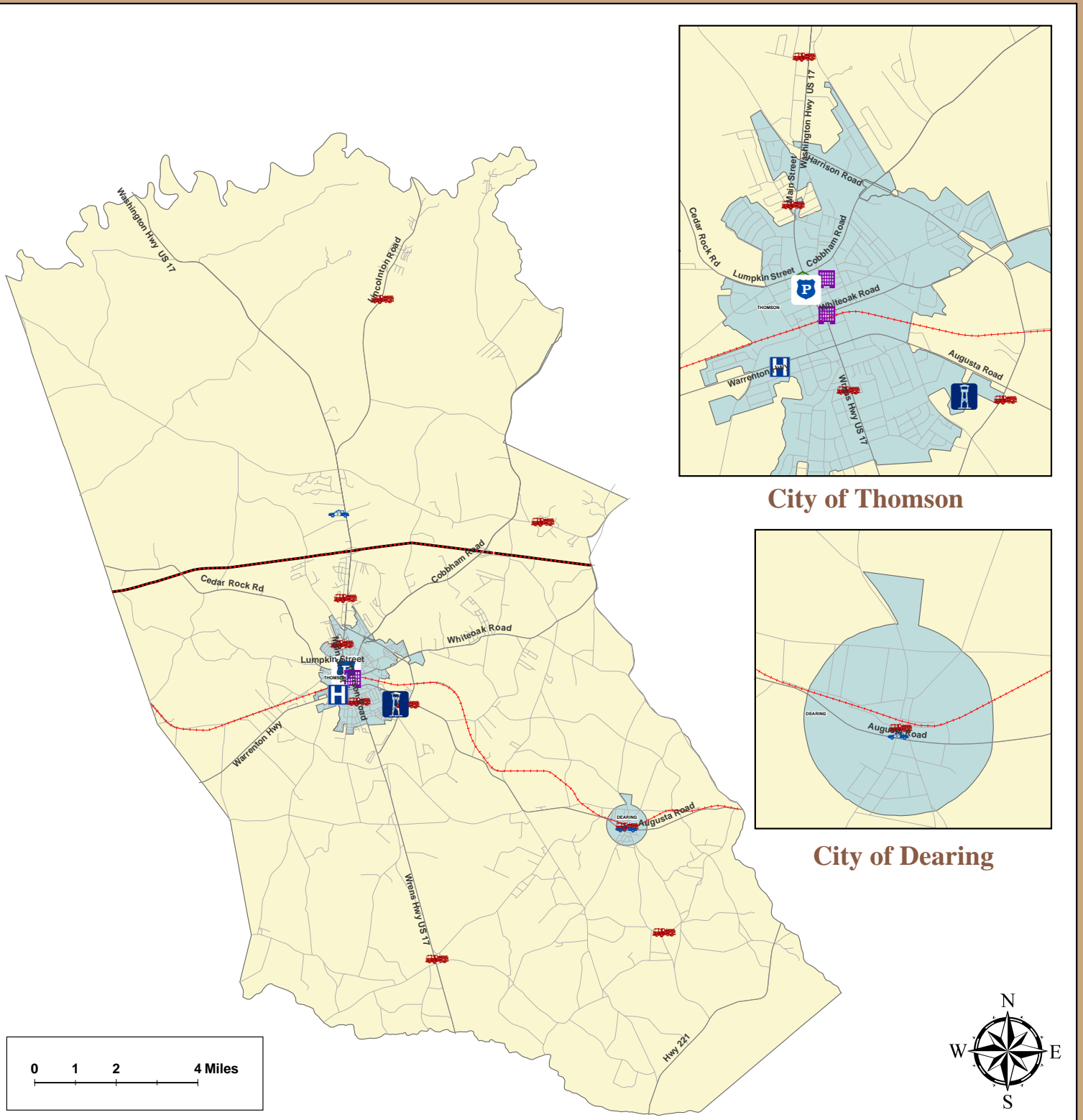
Source: City of Thomson Administrator

Public Health

The medical needs of residents are served by the McDuffie Regional Medical Center. The MRMC is a JCHAO accredited 47 bed hospital located in Thomson. It provides a full range of inpatient, outpatient, and emergency services. The MRMC staffs 61 physicians.

Additional public health services are provided by the McDuffie County Health Department. A division of Georgia's Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health's East Central Public Health District, the McDuffie County Health Department serves all McDuffie County residents with an emphasis on typically underserved populations. The McDuffie County Health department is staffed by a registered nurse. Programs that the Health Department provides include: medical services, immunizations, nutrition information, and dental, HIV/AIDS testing, environmental health enforcement in public places, and disease investigation /monitoring.

Also located in Thomson is a branch of the Family Y Network of the CSRA. The Thomson Y provides a safe environment where people can exercise and socialize. Recent growth in membership has prompted the Thomson Y to look at moving its facility to a location that can better accommodate its members.



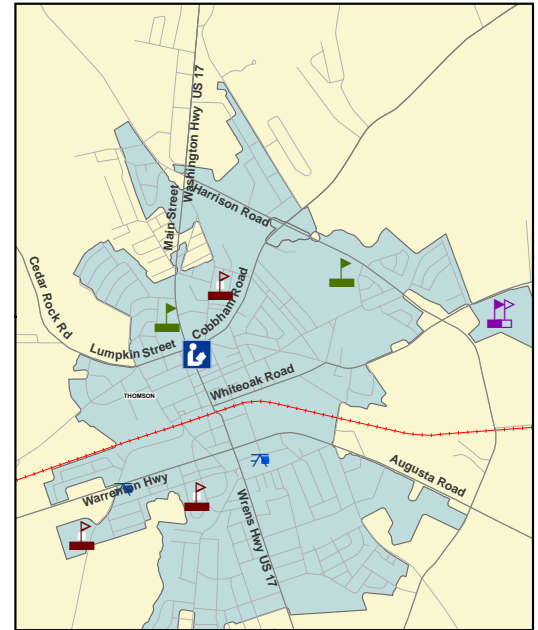
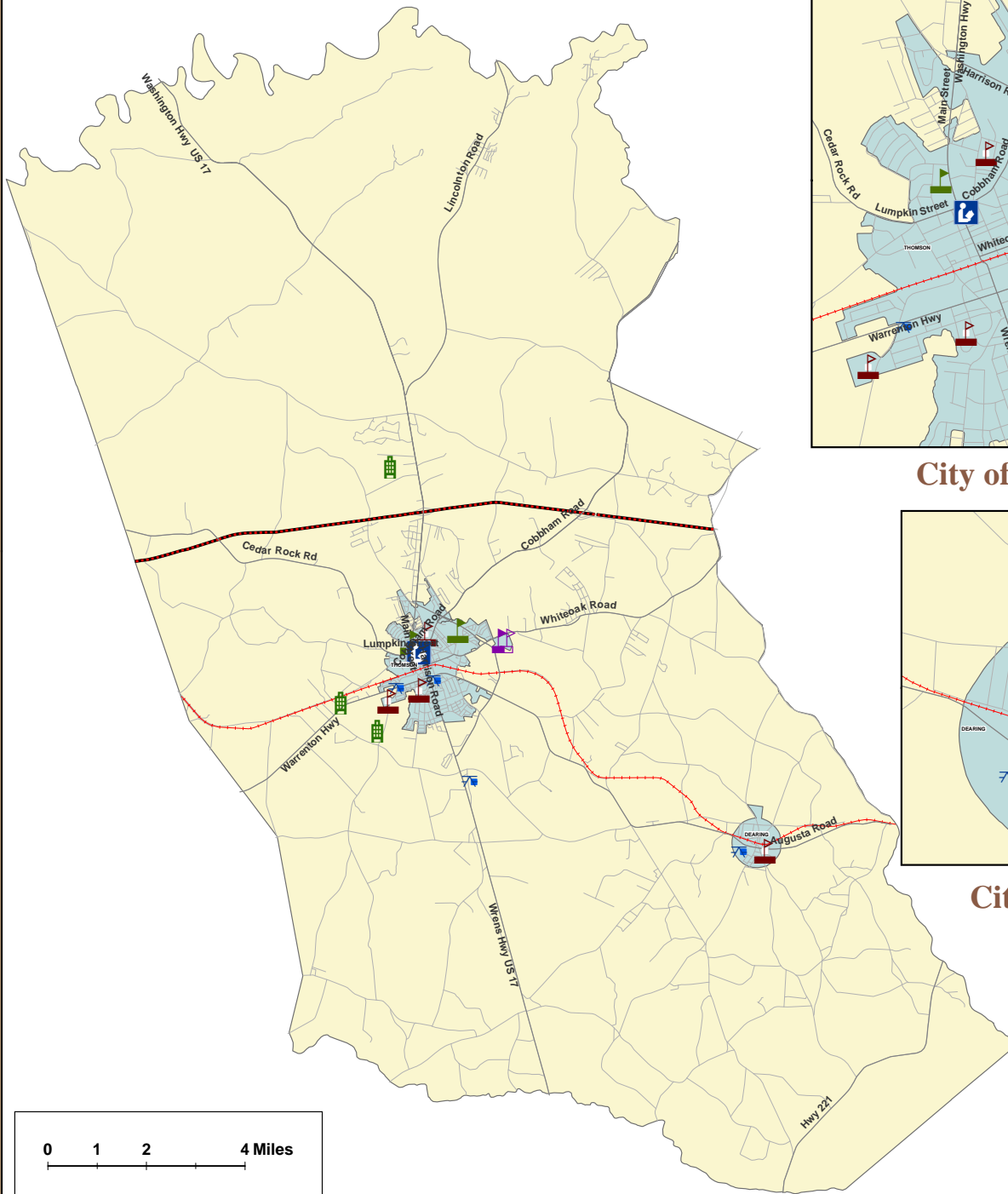
City of Thomson

City of Dearing

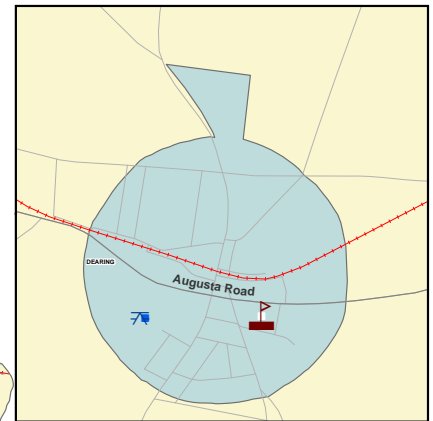


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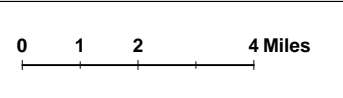
Community Facilities					
	Water Works		Hospital		Major Highways
	Government Offices		Law Enforcement		I-20
	County Jail		Fire Stations		Railroad
	Courthouse		City Hall		Roads
					McDuffie Cities
					McDuffie County



City of Thomson



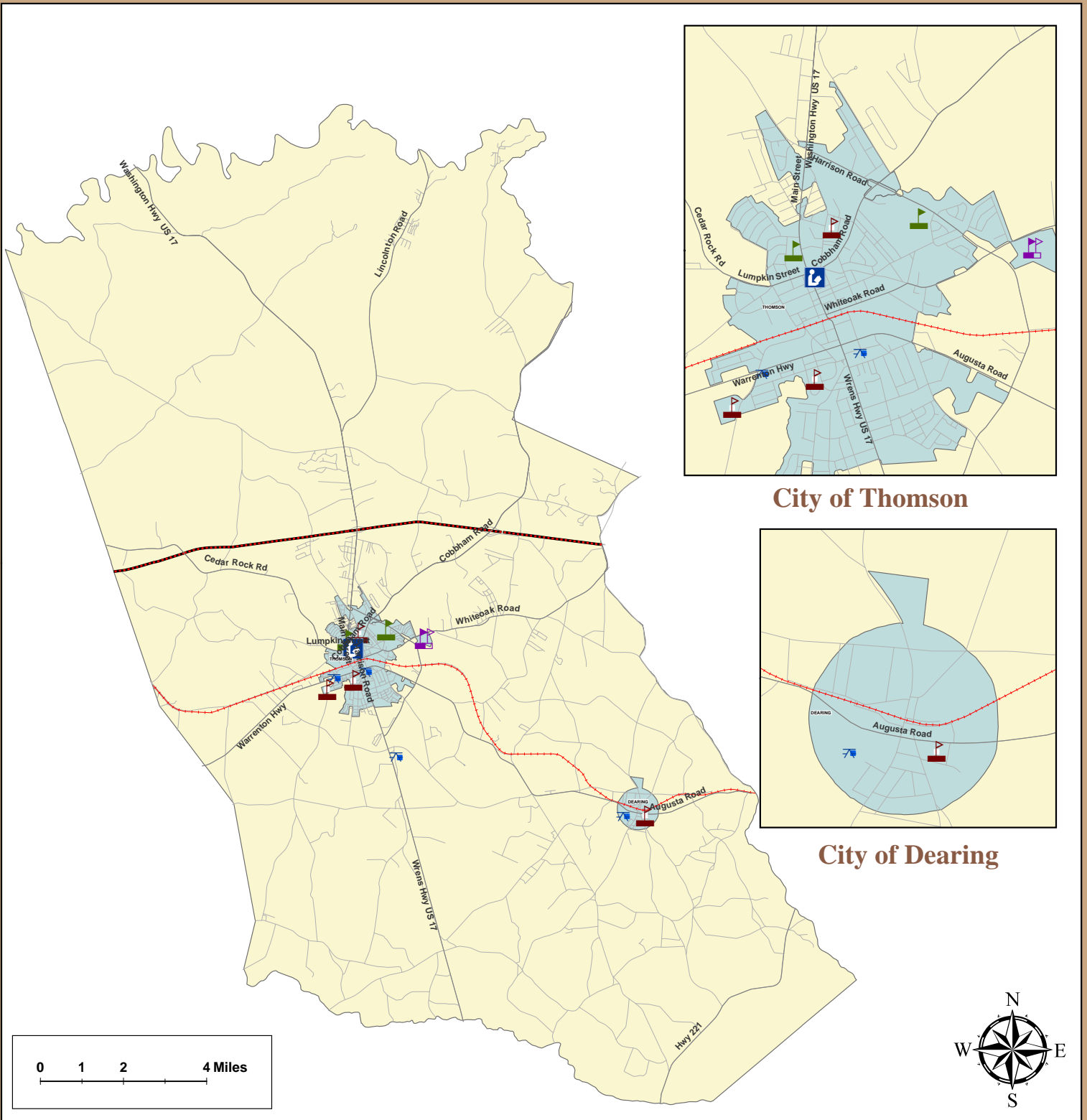
City of Dearing



Central Savannah River Area
 Regional Development Center
 GIS Department
 3023 River Watch Parkway, Suite A
 Augusta, GA 30907-2016
www.csradc.org

Community Facilities

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|-----------------|--|---------------------|
| | Parks | | Middle School | | Major Highways I-20 |
| | Industrial Parks | | High School | | Railroad |
| | Public Library | | Roads | | McDuffie Cities |
| | Elementary School | | McDuffie County | | |



City of Thomson

City of Dearing

0 1 2 4 Miles



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Community Facilities

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|-----------------|--|---------------------|
| | Parks | | Middle School | | Major Highways I-20 |
| | Public Library | | High School | | Railroad |
| | Elementary School | | Roads | | McDuffie Cities |
| | | | McDuffie County | | |

ASSESSMENT

CONSISTENCY WITH SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires that all community facilities addressed in this chapter are reviewed for consistency with the current service delivery strategy. A review of facilities conducted during this planning process – including transportation – confirms that all McDuffie County community facilities and services are being provided in accordance with the current McDuffie County Service Delivery Strategy. In accordance with state requirements, a review and update of the communities' service delivery strategy will be necessary to ensure that all community facilities and services addressed within the *Plan* continue to be provided to residents in an efficient manner.

WATER SUPPLY AND TREATMENT

McDuffie County has recently pursued a policy of rapid and aggressive water expansion into some of the unincorporated areas of the county. According to County officials 72 miles of water lines will be added in the next two to three years. While the provision of water services to current residents is obviously the primary goal, there may possibly be some unintended consequences. Areas that have been identified as needing to retain their rural character may have a difficult time conforming to the character areas identified in Chapter 10 when the infrastructure that will allow for a more dense, urban type of development already exists or will soon be in place. Conversely, the expansion of water lines into areas that are not designated for higher density can perpetuate water consumption habits which can place a strain on natural resources. Development of low density residential subdivisions, with their irrigation systems, and supporting commercial uses like golf courses, car washes, etc. make it difficult to conserve water. Additionally, it is difficult for low density development to sustain the cost of maintenance or improvements over the long term. McDuffie County and Thomson should consider the targeted provision of water to areas that are intended for higher density development; and, focus a greater proportion of future expenditures on maintenance of existing facilities.

SEWAGE SYSTEM AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT

As with water resources, McDuffie County currently has plans to expand facilities into some of the unincorporated county. A policy of expansion with regard to sewer facilities carries with it even more potential for dense development than water. McDuffie County should carefully consider where it expands either sewer or water. As also mentioned in the previous section a shift in focus, concentrating on maintenance and upgrading existing facilities and targeted expansions consistent with the character areas identified in Chapter 10 should be considered.

GENERAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Storm Water Management

The adverse affects of open ditch sections of road on local streams is well documented. With no place to direct the flow of the additional runoff that the increase in impervious surface creates, even a minor rain shower can have a tremendous erosive effect. Because Thomson and McDuffie County

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

both now require curb and gutter storm drainage systems for all new development, the problems associated with open ditch storm drainage systems should not increase over time.

Conversely, traditional curb and gutter storm water drainage systems can not offset the overall impact of increasing development pressure. Increased volumes of storm water runoff, channeled directly to streams via a curb and gutter system, can result in an increased velocity of discharge - threatening streams with silt and/or erosion. Thomson and McDuffie County should consider “low-impact” development alternatives that allow storm water to flow through filtration, detention and/or retention systems that allow for a more natural treatment of runoff. These engineered systems are more reliant on topography, soils and native vegetation – as opposed to hard structures – to slow the amount and speed of storm water runoff before it reaches stream channels.

Solid Waste Management

Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County continue to exhibit a commitment to reducing solid waste disposal through the active provision and promotion of household and yard waste recycling programs. A continued commitment to these programs is recommended. The purchase of additional equipment to further enhance the recycling of yard waste could be accomplished with the application of Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority funds.

Parks and Recreation

McDuffie County currently meets most nationally recommended standards for the provision of park space and recreational opportunities.

Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County should focus on greater park accessibility through the development of smaller neighborhood related facilities such as playgrounds, tot lots, community greens, etc. While Vonteego and Eubanks Parks are centrally located, the sites are fairly isolated as a result of limited pedestrian and bicycle access. Most users must access these parks by driving in their automobiles. As targeted areas in Thomson are redeveloped, smaller neighborhood accessible park spaces could be incorporated into developments. The County, and City of Thomson could also consider meeting future active and passive park space demands by requiring new developments that exceed a certain threshold to incorporate public or private park spaces, or open space into their developments. Requiring the incorporation of small park areas into new development is a way of letting growth pay for itself – similar to requiring new streets, sidewalks, storm water systems and other community facilities. In addition, requiring private park spaces to meet some of the recreational demands of new residents and nationally recommended standards allows local government to focus public dollars on the further development of large existing community-wide parks.

Park safety at older park sites within Thomson was a concern that was raised during the initial public input phase for this plan. An increased police presence, along with the creation of a neighborhood watch or advocacy group to keep an eye on the park could have a very significant impact on safety in the neighborhood parks. Such activities could be a function of the community groups referenced in Chapter 4.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Libraries

The Thomson-McDuffie Library provides all county residents with the services that are associated with a modern library facility. As with other forms of recreation in McDuffie County, accessibility for all residents of McDuffie County to the library may be limited as the result of a location (in Thomson).

Schools

The McDuffie County Board of Education's construction of a new McDuffie County Junior High School is a clear response to the need for larger and improved facilities. Like many modern school facilities, its location – driven in part by statewide minimum acreage requirements – results in another automobile dependant community facility. The possible addition of pedestrian facilities servicing the new junior high school should be considered.

In the future, the Board of Education should also prioritize the rehabilitation of existing facilities or construction of new facilities at existing locations. Statewide minimum acreage requirements are flexible given certain existing conditions. As discussed in more detail within Chapter 9, where new facilities (in addition to existing schools) are required to serve the growing population, they should be located in areas identified by the *Plan* as appropriate for new residential growth. A dialogue should begin now about the reservation of land in these areas in advance of development. The construction of a new school building in an area that is intended to remain rural would be counterproductive to the land use goals identified by Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County.

General Government Facilities

With the need for across-the-board staff increases in the future to provide services to a growing population, it is difficult to determine which city department truly has the greatest personnel needs.

With the construction of the new City-County government center in downtown Thomson, most of the present and future needs for Thomson and McDuffie County facilities will be addressed. An effort should be made to utilize the buildings left vacant after construction is complete. It is a possibility that the Courthouse that currently houses the County offices could possibly be used as the county's juvenile court. The Thomson city hall, if it cannot be adapted for re-use, should to be replaced with a building that has the urban character of the rest of downtown Thomson. Additionally an interest has been expressed to build a facility that would be large enough to host a regional conference, or be used as a large municipal meeting space. As referenced in chapter 2, this space could be a tool for recruiting business to Thomson-McDuffie County. Construction of such a facility should be incorporated into plans for a second phase of the new City-County government center, or another location altogether. Site selection must be focused on locations within the existing population center of downtown Thomson. Construction of this facility in such a location would promote activity and reinvestment in Thomson's downtown.

Although the city of Thomson and McDuffie County jointly own and operate several community services (water and sewer, parks, planning and zoning, information technology, etc.) an effort has been made not to let employee duties overlap – resulting in duplication of services or directives from more than one supervisor. These joint efforts provide cost-saving benefits to the general population.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Services/Law Enforcement

With a problem in recruiting and maintaining an adequate level of law enforcement officers in Thomson and McDuffie County, it is apparent that local officials must strongly consider a variety of measures to increase local revenue for this vital community service. Although no data was provided to support the assumption that more law enforcement officers are needed, it stands to reason that as the population grows the need for officers will grow along with it. The county will have to establish the appropriate measures to fund the creation of new positions. While McDuffie County cannot apply for the program directly (must apply through the State of Georgia), the most likely financial supplement to law enforcement services is the U.S. Department of Justice's *Justice Assistance Grant* program.

While the greatest current need for McDuffie County fire protection services is further training for staff, projected population increases will undoubtedly result in demands for more staff, equipment and vehicles. McDuffie County and Thomson should consider supplementing local revenue which goes to fund fire protection and emergency services operations with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's *Assistance to Firefighters Grants*.

The Emergency Medical Services in McDuffie County are currently meeting the needs of the residents.

Public Health

The McDuffie Regional Medical Center has seen remarkable growth since its establishment fifty one years ago. As the Medical Center grows with the population a primary concerns will be the provision of adequate space for that growth to occur and also, linking all of its facilities on a single campus. The MRMC should work closely with the city to either assume responsibility streets that bisect their campus or actively work with the city to institute traffic calming elements so that strong walkable connections between buildings are retained. Additionally MRMC should continue to seek partnerships with healthcare providers throughout the region to improve and expand the quality of care and options that it provides to McDuffie County residents.

As previously mentioned the Thomson Y has outgrown its current facilities. When selecting a site for the Y's future growth sites closer to Thomson's city center should be given priority over sites along the edges of town. The positive impacts that an activity hub such as the Y could have on a redeveloping downtown area would be immense. By locating an activity center in the city's center redevelopment and activity are promoted, which in turn stimulate more investment. While there are perceived obstacles to redeveloping or rehabilitating existing structures in an urban core as opposed to development in "Greenfield" sites on the periphery, there exist numerous opportunities and resources designed to bolster redevelopment in existing downtown areas. A Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRFLF), Redevelopment Fund, Georgia Cities Foundation, Employee Incentive Program, and OneGeorgia Equity are all designed with this specific purpose in mind. Additionally, partnerships between the private sector and governments in all three jurisdictions focusing on bringing development to downtowns should be explored.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 7 Transportation

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



DRAFT



TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

Provision of an efficient transportation system throughout McDuffie County is crucial to maintaining economic growth and improving the quality of life for the community's residents. Many people think of transportation solely in terms of roads and streets that allow them to commute in their cars between home, work, recreation and shopping. Efficient transportation systems actually focus on the movement of people and goods – rather than vehicles - through the use of multiple means. As a result, this component of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* addresses streets, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, public transportation, parking, railroads, freight, etc. Only by considering all modes of transportation can McDuffie County, Dearing and Thomson prepare to meet the future needs of its citizens and businesses.

This chapter analyzes the community's street network including existing conditions, levels of service and potential deficiencies. Pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation systems are also reviewed to see where potential deficiencies can be addressed to provide residents with travel options. Parking and freight (including trucking, rail and aviation) are examined to determine their effects on economic development potential throughout the community. Finally, the transportation/land use connection is examined to determine how future land use decisions can balance the capacity of the transportation network with projected travel demand. By comparing population growth trends, land use and zoning patterns, and infrastructure expansion with traffic data, this chapter also provides preliminary recommendations for revisions to the county's major thoroughfare system.

The principal sources of information for this chapter are the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Transportation Research Board (TRB). Other regional and federal organizations also serve as sources of information including: the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Rail Administration and Surface Transportation Board.

STREET NETWORK

The most obvious component of a communities' transportation networks are streets. Because the vast majority of Americans rely on automobiles as their principal source of transportation, maintaining or improving the efficiency of the street network is the most significant transportation concern of a majority

of local governments. McDuffie County, Dearing and Thomson are perfect examples of this trend – with over 79, 65 and 76 percent of all workers commuting alone via motor vehicle in 2000, respectively. In total, over 95 percent of each community's workers commuted to work via a motor vehicle (alone or carpool) in 2000. These facts emphasize the need to focus significant energy toward maintaining the communities' street networks.

Figure T-1: McDuffie County, Dearing and Thomson: Percent of Population Commuting to Work Via Personal Motor Vehicle, 2000

Journey to Work	McDuffie County	Dearing	Thomson
Drove Alone	79.1%	65.6%	76.4%
Carpooled (2 or More Persons per Vehicle)	16.8%	29.9%	20.3%
Used a Personal Motor Vehicle (Cumulative)	95.9%	95.5%	96.7%

Source: US Census Bureau; Table QT-P23 (2000)

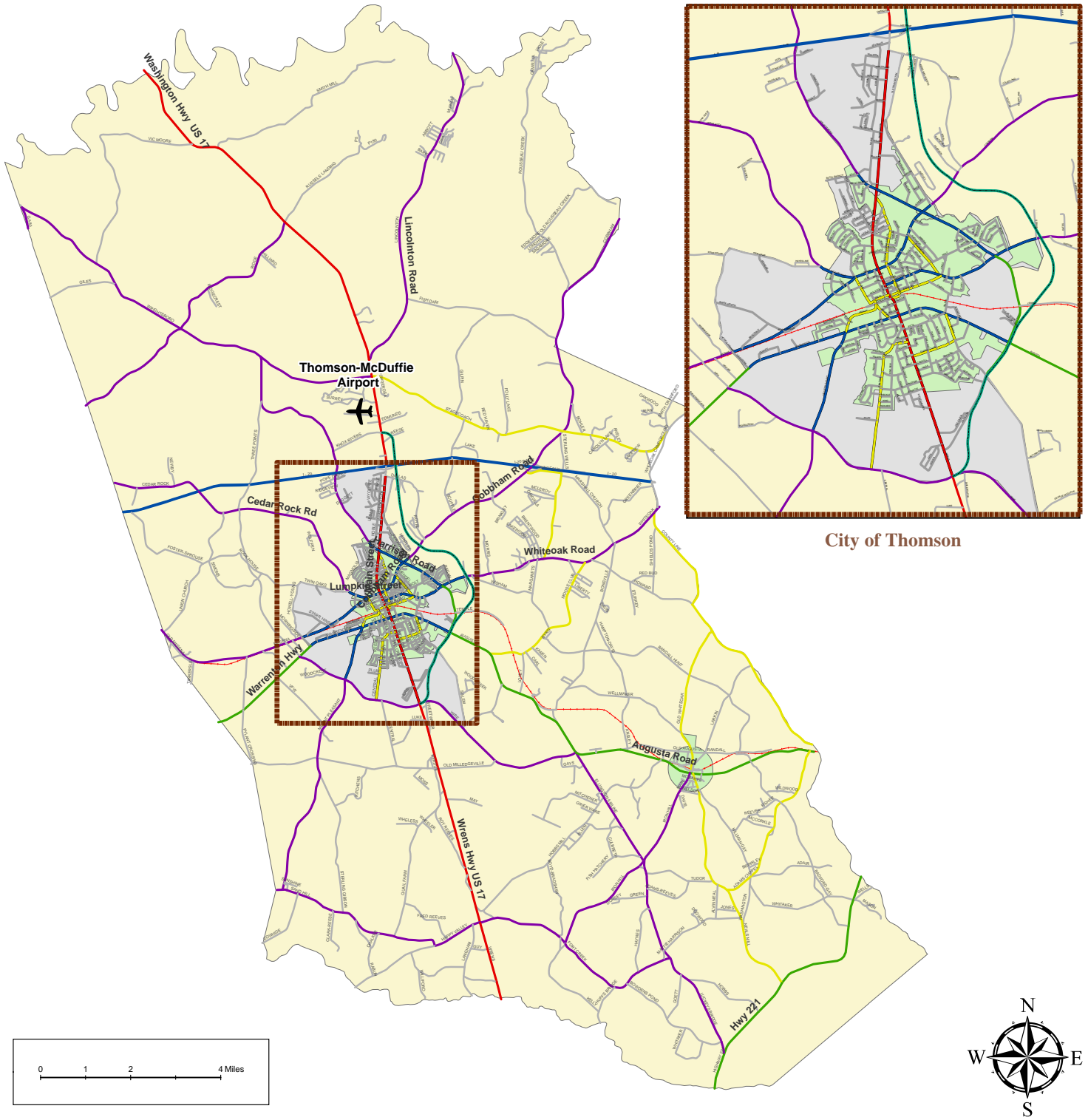
Existing Street Network

Roadways are classified by the FHWA based on their function within the local highway network and, according to their geographic location within urban or rural areas. While individual states have the discretion to make variations to the FHWA functional classification guidelines, the *Georgia Statewide Transportation Plan* states that “...roads in Georgia have been classified according to functional use in accordance with guidelines developed by the FHWA” (Sec. 4-1). FHWA’s hierarchy of street functional classification is divided into four primary components: **A)** principal arterial streets; **B)** minor arterial streets; **C)** collector streets; and, **D)** local streets.

McDuffie County is considered by the FHWA and GDOT to be a “small urban area.” The county’s designation as a “small urban area” is actually determined by the U.S. Census Bureau and indicates that it contains an area of population concentration of at least 5,000 people (but not in excess of 50,000 people). McDuffie County’s urban concentration includes those Census block groups that are within and directly adjacent to the city of Thomson as illustrated on **Map T.1**. As a small urban area, both “rural” and “urban” highways can be found in McDuffie County. Consistent with FHWA guidelines, **Figure T-2** contains a description of the varying types of highways and roads that can be found in the county.

Figure T-2: McDuffie County Highways and Roads: Functional System Characteristics	
Rural Areas:	
Rural Interstate Principal Arterial:	Includes all presently designated routes of the interstate system.
Rural Principal Arterial:	All non-interstate principal arterials. Such as state highways, provides links between cities and larger towns; and, should provide for relatively high overall travel speeds with minimum interference to through movement.
Rural Minor Arterial:	Provide links between cities and larger towns; and, should provide for relatively high overall travel speeds with minimum interference to through movement.
Rural Major Collector:	Provides service to any county seat not on an arterial route, and to towns not directly served by the higher system.
Rural Minor Collector:	Provide links to traffic generators not served by the arterial system including small towns, consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks, mining and agriculture.
Rural Local Road:	Provide access to adjacent land as well as service to travel over relatively short distances.
Small Urban Areas:	
Urban Freeways & Expressways:	Serves major activity centers in the urban area. Carries the bulk of the urban areas traffic with the least amount of mileage.
Urban Principal Arterial:	Includes interstates, freeways and principal arterials with limited or no access control. Serves the major centers of activity of an urban area, the highest traffic volume, the longest trips, and the highest proportion of total urban area travel.
Urban Minor Arterial:	Includes all arterials not classified as principal and contains facilities that place more emphasis on land access and offer a lower level of traffic mobility. May carry local bus routes and provide intra-community continuity – but does not penetrate identifiable neighborhoods.
Urban Collector:	Provides land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas. May penetrate residential neighborhoods to collect and distribute local traffic to and from the arterial system. In central business (and similar) districts, the collector system may be comprised of the majority of the street grid.
Urban Local Street:	Serves primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to higher order systems. Offers low-level mobility and “through-traffic” movement is usually discouraged.
Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, “FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines.”	

The hierarchy of highways and roads referenced in **Figure T-2** is illustrated on **Map T.1**. Urban road segments are located exclusively within the Thomson small urban area boundary while all other county thoroughfares are classified as rural. The significance of having roads with both rural and urban classifications will be discussed throughout some of the remaining portions of this chapter.



Highway Functional Classification ID

	Rural Principal Arterial		Urban Principal Arterial		Thomson_Urban_Area
	Rural Interstate Principal Arterial		Urban Minor Arterial		City of Thomson
	Rural Minor Arterial		Urban Collector Street		
	Rural Major Collector		Urban Local Street		
	Rural Minor Collector		East By-pass		
	Rural Local Road				



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Figure T-3: McDuffie County Roads: Mileage by Route Type and Functional Classification, 2006

	Route Type (Mileage)			Total
	State Route	County Road	City Street	
Functional Classification (Rural)				
Interstate	11.8	0.0	0.0	11.8
Principal Arterial	18.2	0.0	0.0	18.2
Minor Arterial	18.7	0.6	0.0	19.3
Major Collector	28.0	60.4	0.0	88.4
Minor Collector	0.0	30.0	0.0	30.0
Local	0.1	245.2	3.7	249.0
Total (Rural)	76.9	336.2	3.7	416.8
Functional Classification (Urban)				
Principal Arterial	5.2	0.0	0.0	5.2
Minor Arterial	9.0	3.3	0.0	12.3
Collector	0.0	1.8	5.6	7.4
Local	0.0	20.3	34.2	54.5
Total (Urban)	14.2	25.5	39.8	79.4
Total Mileage (All Roads)	91.1	361.7	43.5	496.2

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Data, "445 Report."

Figure T-3 illustrates that the vast majority of roads within McDuffie County are owned and maintained by the county government. Of the 496.2 miles of public road within McDuffie County, 72.9 percent are the county's responsibility. Figure T-3 also shows that 416.8 – roughly 84 percent of all road miles in McDuffie County – are located outside the Thomson urban area boundary. As with many counties in the CSRA region, high volume arterial streets are almost

exclusively owned and maintained by GDOT. The figure also illustrates a high percentage of city streets being classified as local roads. A large inventory of local roads within the municipal boundaries reflects the tendency of Dearing and Thomson's street systems to have a higher degree of interconnectivity and streets of limited distance. In contrast, many of the local roads in the rural portions of the county reflect a large number of dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs. The county's distribution of roads between arterial, collector and local classifications is currently consistent with the FHWA's guidelines of the extent of functional classifications (rural and urban).

Between 2001 and 2006, the number of miles in the McDuffie County road network has remained largely unchanged. Figure T-4 indicates that during this time frame, there was

Figure T-4: McDuffie County Roads: Change in Mileage by Functional Classification, 2001-2006

	Total Mileage (2001)	Total Mileage (2006)	Percent % Change (2001-2006)
Functional Classification (Rural)			
Interstate	12.0	11.8	-1.7%
Principal Arterial	21.0	18.2	-13.3%
Minor Arterial	21.3	19.3	-9.4%
Major Collector	92.1	88.4	-4.0%
Minor Collector	33.4	30.0	-10.2%
Local	262.3	249.0	-5.1%
Total (Rural)	441.9	416.8	-5.7%
Functional Classification (Urban)			
Principal Arterial	2.6	5.2	100.0%
Minor Arterial	7.5	12.3	64.0%
Collector	6.5	7.4	13.8%
Local	38.4	54.5	41.9%
Total (Urban)	55.1	79.4	44.1%
Total Mileage (All Roads)	497.0	496.2	-0.2%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Data, "445 Report."

TRANSPORTATION

actually a small (0.2 percent) decrease of overall road miles in the county. During this same time frame, a gradual increase in population and density within, and in the vicinity of Thomson resulted in an increasing percentage of the communities' roads being reclassified from rural to urban. The reclassification of roads from rural to urban is a reflection of the development of more intense land uses on abutting properties in the vicinity of the applicable road segments. The functional differences between rural and urban road segments will be discussed further in this chapter within the section regarding level of service.

Figure T-5 indicates that the entire GDOT road system and vast majority of municipal road systems within McDuffie are paved. In contrast, a large percentage of the county road system – almost 30 percent – remains unpaved. Overall, almost 80 percent of the entire county road network is paved. The figure does not presume the condition of paved surfaces within the McDuffie County road network.

Figure T-5: McDuffie County Paved Roads, 2006

	Total Road Mileage (2006)	Paved Road Mileage (2006)	Percent (%) Paved Mileage (2006)
State Route	91.1	91.1	100.0%
County Road	361.7	255.7	70.7%
City Street	43.5	42.7	98.2%
Total	496.2	389.4	78.5%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Data, "400 Series Reports."

Traffic Volumes

Figure T-6: McDuffie County Traffic Volumes, 1997-2006

	Total Road Mileage (1997)	Daily VMT* (1997)	Total Road Mileage (2006)	Daily VMT* (2006)	Percent % Change of Total Road Mileage 1997-2006	Percent % Change of Daily VMT* 1997-2006
Functional Classification (Rural)						
State Route	83.3	610,562	76.9	575,981	-7.7%	-5.7%
County Road	355.7	158,223	336.2	172,856	-5.5%	9.2%
City Street	4.9	2046	3.7	1995	-24.5%	-2.5%
Total (Rural)	443.9	770,831	416.8	750,831	-6.1%	-2.6%
Functional Classification (Urban)						
State Route	9.1	81,332	14.2	124,410	56.0%	53.0%
County Road	7.0	5488	25.5	24,574	264.3%	347.8%
City Street	39.2	31,408	39.8	36,392	1.5%	15.9%
Total (Urban)	55.3	118,228	79.4	185,375	43.6%	56.8%
Total (All Roads)	499.2	889,059	496.2	936,206	-0.6%	5.3%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Data, "445 Report." *Vehicle Miles Traveled.

Although the state, county and municipal road networks within McDuffie County have not expanded over the last 10 years, the total number of vehicle miles driven by residents and workers within the community have increased at a rate similar to recent population trends. **Figure T-6** compares the growth of the road network in McDuffie County with the growth of motor vehicle trips on the network. The Figure measures McDuffie County traffic in "vehicle miles traveled" (VMT). VMT is defined as a measurement of total miles traveled by all vehicles for a specific time period in a defined area. In **Figure T-6**, the total VMT is measured by the Georgia Department of Transportation for a 24 hour period on McDuffie County, Dearing and Thomson's entire road network.

Figure T-6 shows a substantial increase in the size and the VMT figures of the county's urban road network – while the total size and VMT figures on the rural road network illustrate a corresponding

TRANSPORTATION

decrease. As previously mentioned within this chapter, much of these changes are due solely to the reclassification of some areas of the county as part of the Thomson urban area established by the U.S. Census Bureau. As a result, percentages represented in the figure illustrate a change in traffic patterns that is more dramatic than actual conditions. A closer look at **Figure T-6** – particularly the data for “all roads” – shows that VMT actually increased by about 5.3 percent between 1997 and 2006. While state routes still account for the vast majority of VMT in McDuffie County, **Figure T-6** suggests substantial increases in traffic on the county road network – in both urban and rural areas.

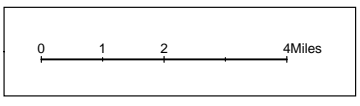
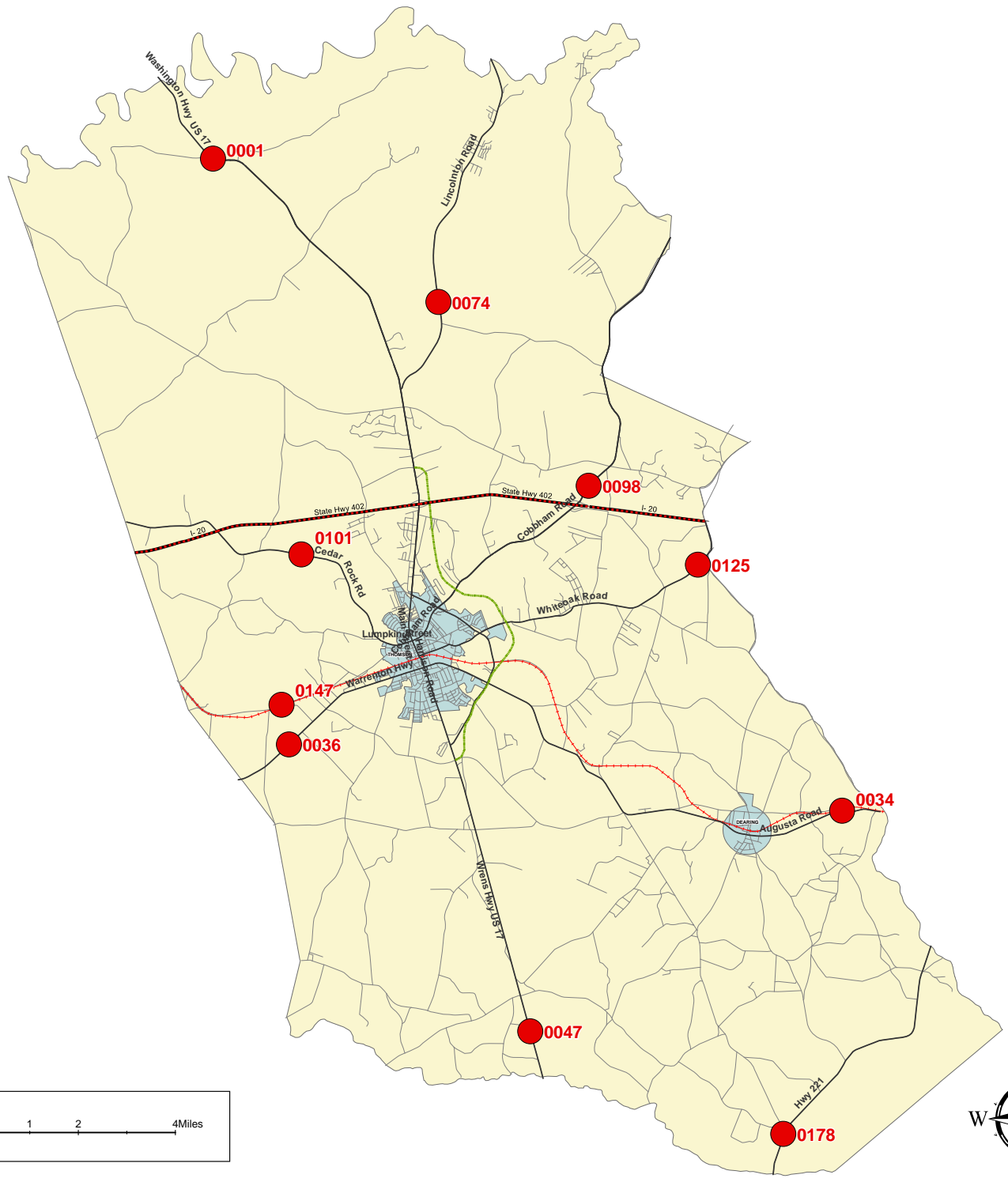
Figure T-7: McDuffie County Gateways: Average Annual Daily Traffic (1997 – 2006) (See Map 7.2)

Traffic Counter (See Map 7.2)	Street	Direction of Entry/Exit Point	1997 AADT	2001 AADT*	2006 AADT*	Percent (%) Change of AADT 1997-2006
0001	U.S. 78, GA 10/17	North	4028	3989	4000	-0.7%
0034	U.S. 78/278, GA 10	East	4413	5060	4960	12.4%
0036	U.S. 278, GA 12	West	4440	4377	4490	1.1%
0047	GA 17	South	3174	4557	3620	14.1%
0074	GA 43	North	2484	2397	2350	-5.4%
0098	GA 150	North	2690 (est.)	2500	2550	-5.2%
0101	GA 223	West	1182	594	1010	-14.6%
0125	GA 223	East	2576	2961	2470	-4.1%
0147	C.R. 310	West	825	1828	3630	340.0%
0178	U.S. 221, GA 47	South	727	962	590	-18.8%
Total-Select gateway segments	N/A	N/A	23365	24668	26050	11.5%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Data, "Annual Traffic Counts."
*To avoid the use of estimates, the Figure includes some 2002 and 2005 data.

A closer examination of major thoroughfares within McDuffie County confirms a gradual increase of traffic throughout the county. **Figures T-7, T-8 and T-9** however, suggest a greater dispersal of traffic to outlying areas of the community. All 3 figures illustrate changes in annual average daily traffic (AADT) on specific segments of the greater McDuffie County road network. The information in the figures utilizes GDOT traffic count data of traffic traveling in both directions on a specific road segment. In most locations throughout the state, AADT data is collected by GDOT via portable traffic count collection devices that measure counts on an annual cycle for a typical 48 hour period (excluding for example holidays and weekends). In order to provide the most accurate traffic count information in each figure, estimates are avoided wherever possible by substituting count data from the year preceding or following those referenced in the table. These substitutions are noted accordingly. (**Note:** When reviewing the information in, **Figures T-7, T-8 and T-9** it is important to cross-reference **Maps T.2, T.3 and T.4** to find the location of each traffic counter on the applicable road segment.)

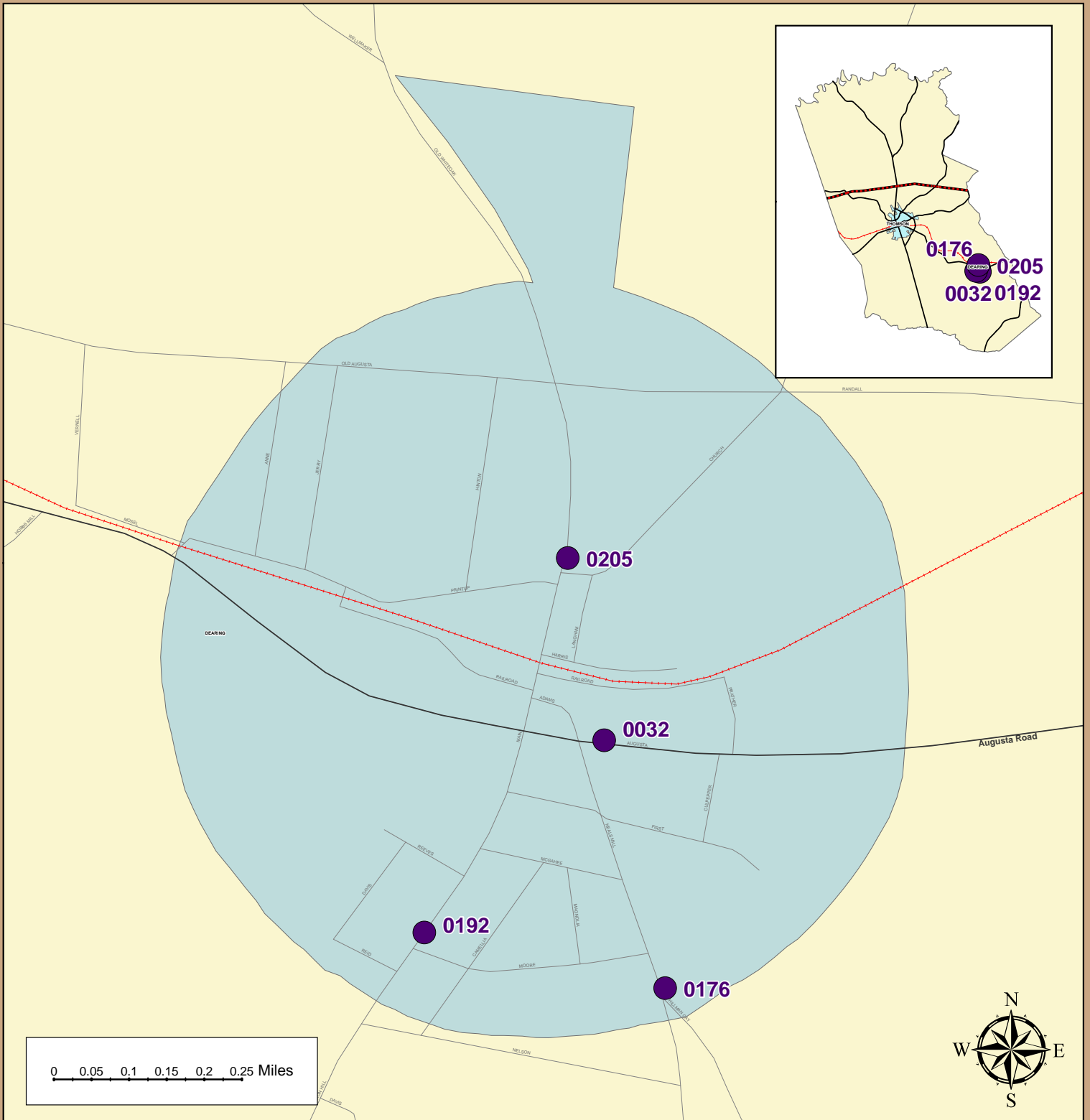
Figure T-7 includes AADT information from a sampling of traffic counters located on major thoroughfares at points close to adjacent counties. The figure does not include traffic count data from Interstate 20. Traffic volumes on Interstate 20 within McDuffie County have shown little fluctuation in recent years but do confirm slight increases in volume at locations east of Thomson. Data collected by GDOT from all other county “gateways” shows highly variable rates of AADT increases and decreases. The figure suggests that traffic volumes on road segments entering and exiting the county remain highest on U.S. 78/278, GA 10 close to Columbia County. AADT at this location in 2006 was roughly 4960 vehicles per day – a 12.4 percent increase since 1997. Overall, **Figure T-7** also indicates that there has been an 11.5 percent increase in the recorded number of motor vehicle trips at locations at the periphery of McDuffie County.



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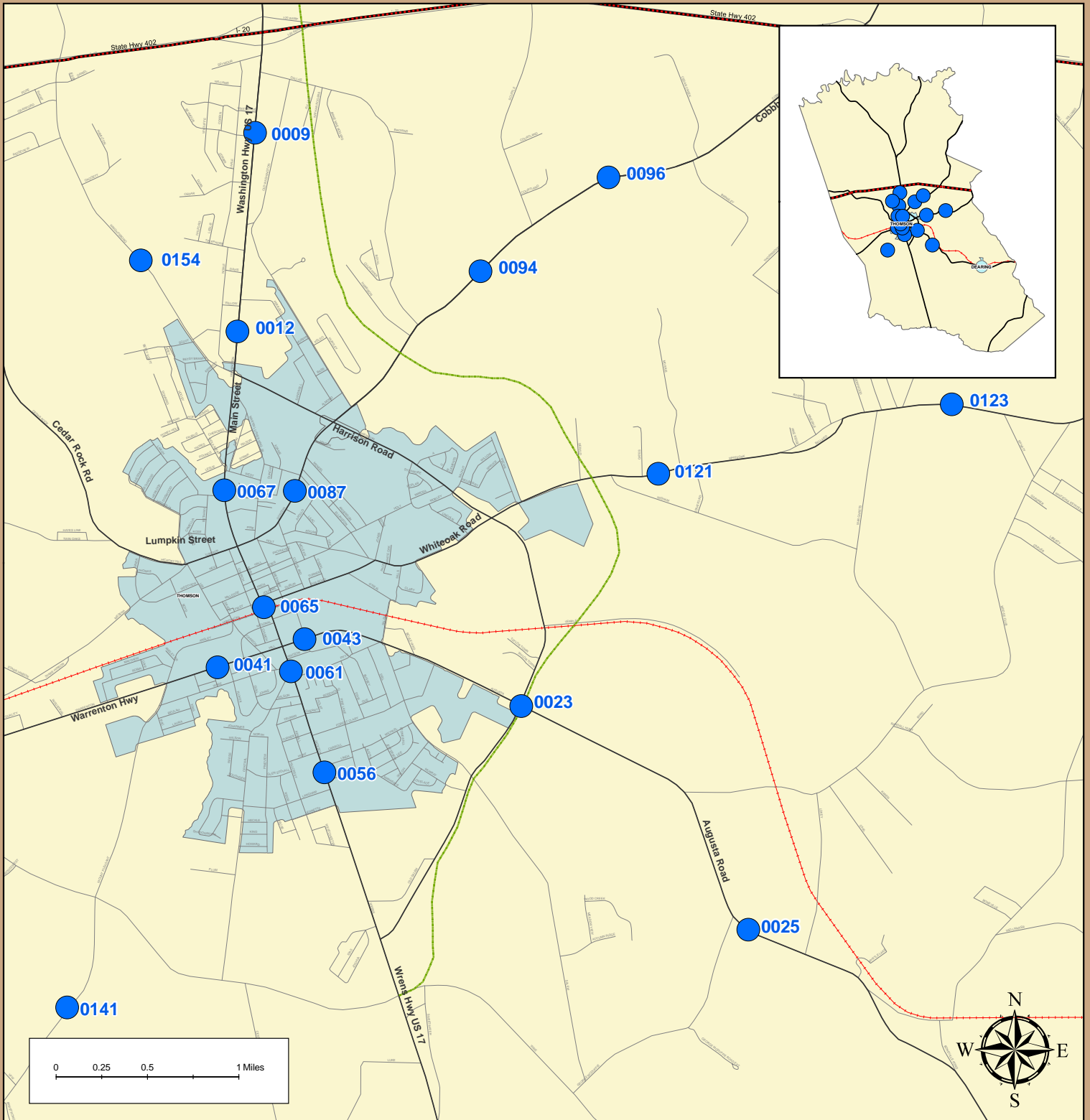
- McDuffie Gateway Traffic Counters
- East Bypass
- Major Highways
- - - - Railroad
- Roads



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- Roads
- Railroad
- Major Highways



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- Thomson Urbanized Area Traffic Counters
- - - - - Railroad
- - - - - East Bypass
- Roads

TRANSPORTATION

Figure T-8 examines changes in AADT within the Town of Dearing. Composite data from 4 traffic counters within the municipal limits illustrates a 22.6 percent increase in AADT within Dearing over a 10 year period. Located close to Columbia County, the most dramatic increases in AADT can actually be found on Main Street – rural collector roads that are not intended for long-distance travel between urban areas.

Traffic Counter (See Map 7.3)	Street	1997 AADT	2001 AADT*	2006 AADT*	Percent (%) Change of AADT 1997-2006
0032	U.S. 78/278	4610	5028	4470	-3.0%
0176	C.R. 303	689	873	980	42.2%
0192	S. Main Street	886	1572	1570	77.2%
0205	N. Main Street	772	1166	1510	95.6%
Total	N/A	6957	8639	8530	22.6%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Data, "Annual Traffic Counts."
*To avoid the use of estimates, the Figure includes some 2002 and 2005 data.

Figure T-9 measures changes in AADT at a variety of locations within and in close proximity to the Thomson urbanized area. As with **Figure T-7** **Figure T-9** shows a high degree of variability in changes to AADT on thoroughfares in the vicinity of Thomson. In contrast with **Figure T-7**, **Figure T-9** shows a gradual decrease of traffic at collection points in the Thomson vicinity. Between 1997 and 2006, **Figure 7-I** suggests that traffic volumes at select locations within and near the Thomson urbanized area decreased by 5.4 percent. It is important to note that **Figure T-9** examines arterial streets only. The figure does not account for a possible shift of traffic to lower volume collector or local streets. Taken as a whole, **Figures T-7, T-8** and **T-9** confirm overall increases in traffic volume in McDuffie County and suggest that much of the volume is being dispersed as the unincorporated portions of the county develop.

Traffic Counter (See Map 7.4)	Street	Traffic Counter Within Urban Area (Yes/No)?	1997 AADT	2001/2002 AADT*	2006 AADT	Percent (%) Change of AADT 1997-2006
0009	U.S. 78, GA 10/17	Yes	15512	17743	15280	-1.5%
0012	U.S. 78, GA 10/17	Yes	17200	19693	15650	-9.0%
0023	GA 10 (at U.S. 78 & GA 12)	Yes	6914	7168	6120	-11.5%
0025	U.S. 78/278, GA 10	No	5898	5880	5080	-13.9%
0041	U.S. 278, GA 12, W. Hill St.	Yes	12552	11464	15110	20.4%
0043	U.S. 78, E. Hill St.	Yes	10835	12300	10900	0.6%
0056	GA 17, S. Jackson St.	Yes	7052	6069	6590	-6.6%
0061	GA 17, S. Jackson St.	Yes	19302	19000	16590	-14.1%
0065	GA 17, Main St. (Downtown)	Yes	17226	16571	17680	2.6%
0067	U.S. 78, GA 17, N. Main St.	Yes	17835	15674	15910	-10.8%
0087	GA 150, Gordon St.	Yes	5368	8135	6280	17.0%
0094	GA 150	Yes	7743	7625	6030	-22.1%
0096	GA 150	Yes	4038	6164	5130	27.0%
0121	GA 223	No	6934	4491	4330	-37.6%
0123	GA 223	No	3261	3097	3000	-8.0%
0141	CR 297	No	1004	1250	1450	44.4%
0154	CR 308, Wrightsboro Rd.	Yes	2285	1133	1100	-51.9%
Total-Select segments	N/A	N/A	160959	163457	152230	-5.4%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Data, "Annual Traffic Counts."
*Where possible, 2001 data used. To avoid the use of estimates, this Figure substitutes 2002 data for 2001 data in some cases.

Planned Additions to Street System Capacity

A review of statewide planning documents produced by GDOT reveals that future levels of service on McDuffie County roads will be affected by at least 3 construction projects aimed at adding motor vehicle capacity and improving intra-county commute times. Georgia's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a 3 year multi-modal program containing a list of federally funded transportation projects statewide, identifies the Thomson East By-Pass as a project that will begin construction before the end of 2007. The Thomson East Bypass is a 4-lane restricted access highway extending from U.S. 78/GA 17 north of town to a point on GA 17 south of the city. The Thomson East By-Pass is included on the 2007-2009 STIP and on the pending 2008-2011 STIP. The draft 2008-2011 STIP also includes the widening of a portion of U.S. 78/GA 10/GA 17 north of Thomson from 2 to 5 lanes. This project has been added to the STIP as part of the Governor's Georgia Road Improvement Program (GRIP) intended to improve economic development potential throughout the state by providing Georgia communities with reasonable access to 4-lane highways. The U.S. 78/GA 10/GA 17 widening referenced in the draft 2008-2011 STIP is undergoing preliminary engineering work.

In addition to the STIP projects referenced in this section, GDOT maintains a 6 year Construction Work Program. The current Construction Work Program for McDuffie County includes the widening of the remaining portions of GA 17 within the county as part of the GRIP initiative. **Since many projects identified in the STIP are derived from unfunded projects that are first listed in the Construction Work Program, it is unlikely that these road widening segments will be completed prior to those referenced in the previous paragraph.**

All road improvement projects referenced in this section can be found on **Map T.5**. While the STIP and GDOT Construction Work Program identify a variety of other transportation projects programmed for McDuffie County, such projects do not increase vehicle capacity via the addition of new travel lanes. No other pending or planned capacity additions to McDuffie County's major thoroughfare street system have been identified by GDOT or local officials.

Level of Service

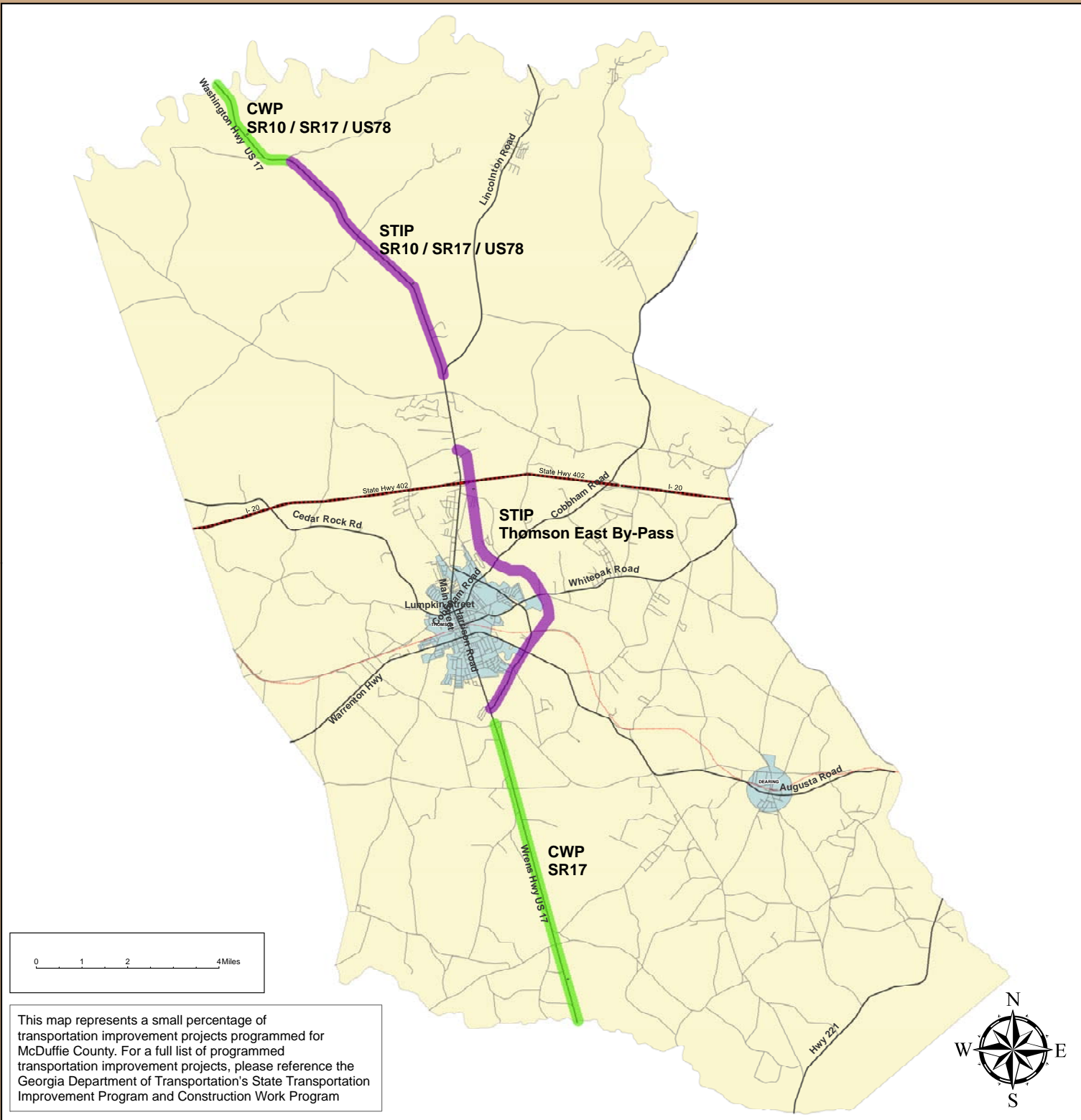
The primary method for analyzing the operational efficiency of a community's road network is by measuring the Level of Service (LOS) of the major thoroughfares within the network. According to the Transportation Research Board's *Highway Capacity Manual*, LOS is a measure of highway congestion describing operational conditions of a roadway in terms of average speed, travel time, maneuverability, and traffic interruptions. **Figure T-10** provides a description of the 6 LOS categories.

It is important to note that descriptions in **Figure T-10** focus solely on the freedom of drivers to travel between destinations with as little interference as possible. Because communities are typically comprised of multiple street types, land uses and development intensities, a LOS of A is not

Figure T-10: Level of Service Characteristics

Level of Service	Description
A	Free flow with low volumes and high speeds.
B	Reasonably free flow, but speeds beginning to be restricted by traffic conditions.
C	In stable flow zone, but most drivers are restricted in the freedom to select their own speeds.
D	Approaching unstable flow; drivers have little freedom to select their own speeds.
E	Unstable flow; may be short stoppages
F	Unacceptable congestion; stop-and-go; forced flow.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "Flexibility in Highway Design."
Adapted from the AASHTO Green Book.



This map represents a small percentage of transportation improvement projects programmed for McDuffie County. For a full list of programmed transportation improvement projects, please reference the Georgia Department of Transportation's State Transportation Improvement Program and Construction Work Program



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Transportation Capacity Improvement Project

- █ Construction Work Program
- █ State Transportation Improvement Program
- I-20
- Major Highways
- Roads
- Railroad

TRANSPORTATION

necessarily the most appropriate level of traffic flow within certain areas of McDuffie County. For instance, the high unrestricted speeds permitted by a LOS A street are not appropriate for a residential neighborhood or central business district where pedestrian activity is likely. **Figure T-11** identifies the FHWA’s recommended LOS for highway types based on location. It is important to note that in no case is a LOS A recommended for a street segment.

Within this *Plan*, levels of service for McDuffie County roads were calculated using the GDOT’s *Multi-Modal Transportation Planning Tool* – a program developed in partnership with the Georgia Institute of Technology. The GDOT modeling program utilizes 2002 road characteristics traffic data collected by the Department and projects level of service for all road corridors within a selected geographic area. In calculating level of service data, the program utilizes GDOT system-wide default values. With knowledge about projected population and vehicle miles traveled growth trends, a program user may alter data for specific road segments to account for the unique conditions within a given jurisdiction.

Figure T-11: Level of Service by Highway and Area Type

Type of Area and Appropriate Level of Service				
Highway Type	Rural Level	Rural Rolling	Rural Mountainous	Urban and Suburban
Freeway	B	B	C	C
Arterial	B	B	C	C
Collector	C	C	D	D
Local	D	D	D	D

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "Flexibility in Highway Design." Adapted from the AASHTO Green Book.

Level of Service Analysis – Default Values

Default values within the *Multi-Modal Transportation Planning Tool* were first utilized in order to generate 2002 levels of service on McDuffie County roads and projected levels of service in 2022. The results of this analysis are contained in **Figure T-12**. **Figure T-12** lists all roads within McDuffie County that contain at least 1 segment that does not currently meet appropriate recommended levels of service, and those additional road segments that are not projected to meet appropriate recommended levels of service by 2022.

Figure T-12: McDuffie County Roads by Level of Service (See Maps 7.6 and 7.7)*

Street	Street Segment(s) Number #	Functional Classification and Recommended Level of Service	Level of Service (2002)	Projected Level of Service (2022)
Level of Service (Current: Deficient; Projected: Deficient)**				
SR10	1-20	Rural Arterial (B) Urban Minor Arterial (C)	C,D & E (Varies by Segment)	E & F (Varies by Segment)
SR12	21-24	Rural Minor Arterial (B) Urban Minor Arterial (C)	C,D & E (Varies by Segment)	F
SR 17	25-27	Urban Principal Arterial (C)	E	F
Level of Service (Current: Appropriate; Projected: Deficient)***				
Interstate 20	28-30	Freeway (B & C)	B & C (Varies by Segment)	F
CR 308	31-33	Rural Major Collector (C)	A & B (Varies by Segment)	D
CR 310	34	Urban Minor Arterial (C)	B	D
SR 10	35-40	Rural Principal Arterial (B)	A & B (Varies by Segment)	D, E & F (Varies by Segment)
SR 12	41-44	Urban Minor Arterial (C)	A	D & E (Varies by Segment)
SR 17	45-55	Rural Principal Arterial (B) Urban Principal Arterial (C)	B & C (Varies by Segment)	E & F (Varies by Segment)
SR 43	56	Rural Major Collector (C)	A	D
SR 150	57-67	Urban Minor Arterial (C) Rural Major Collector (C)	B & C (Varies by Segment)	E & F (Varies by Segment)
SR 223	68-77	Urban Minor Arterial (C) Rural Major Collector (C)	A, B & C (Varies by Segment)	D, E & F (Varies by Segment)

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation & Georgia Institute of Technology; Multi-Modal Transportation Planning Tool *Assumes no additional capacity. **Illustrated on Maps 7.6 and 7.7. ***Illustrated on Map 7.7 only.



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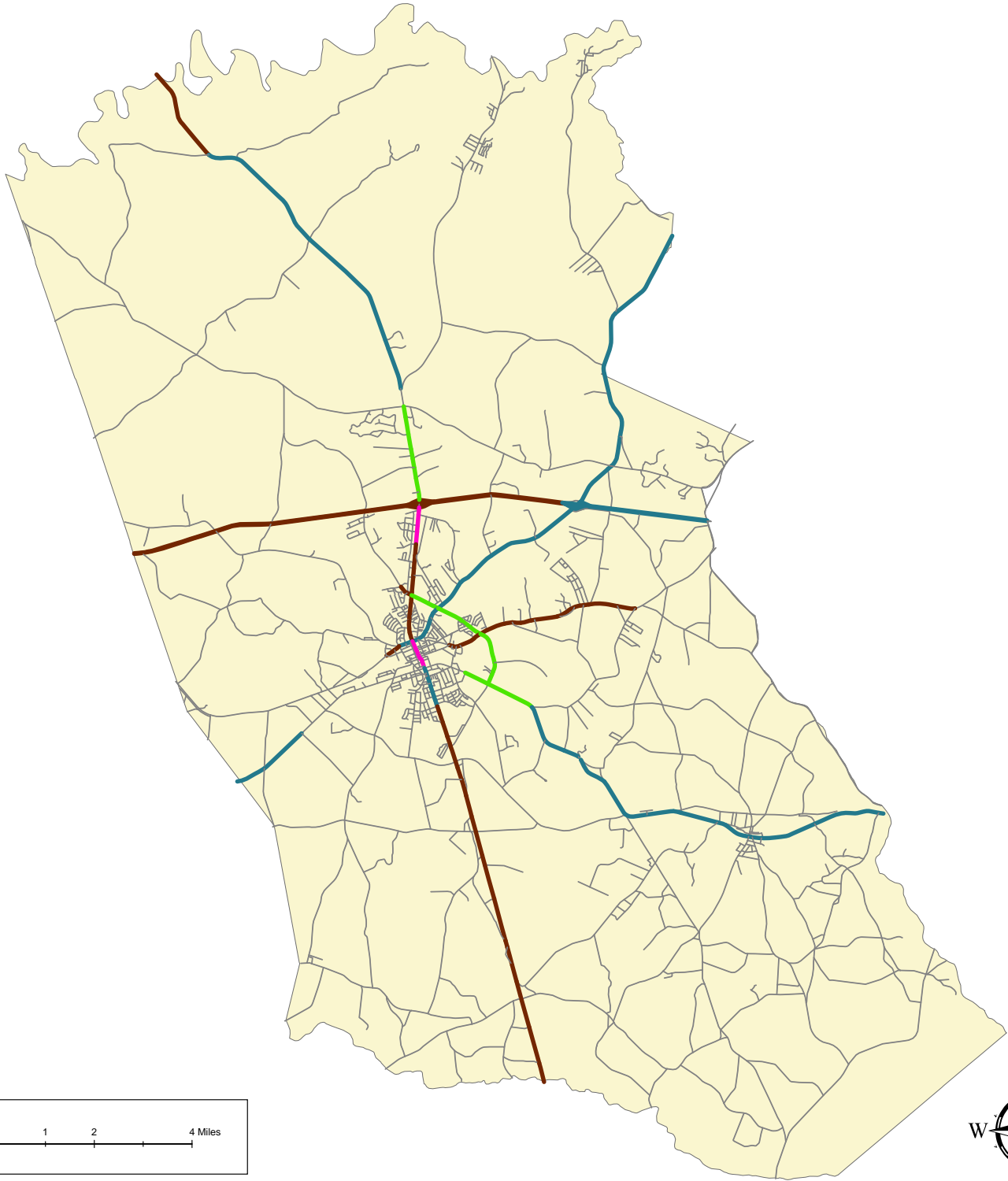
Under current highway capacity conditions, **Figure T-12** suggests that there are 27 road segments in the county that do not meet appropriate levels of service. As indicated in the figure and illustrated on **Map T.6**, the deficient street segments are confined to portions of SR 10, SR 12 and SR 17 that are in close proximity to Thomson. Assuming no change in current highway capacities, **Figure T-12** suggests that an additional 50 highway segments will be functionally deficient by 2022. Highway segments projected to be deficient by 2022 based solely on default values are illustrated on **Map T.7**.

It is important to emphasize that the information contained in **Maps T.6** and **T.7**, and **Figure T-12** is based solely on system-wide trends. The maps and figure do not account for projected increases in highway capacity via new roads, additional travel lanes or intersection improvements; and, do not consider projected changes to land use and population growth that are unique to McDuffie County. Regardless, information related to vehicle miles traveled that is displayed in other figures within this chapter suggests that McDuffie County's traffic volume growth rates are generally consistent with averages throughout GDOT District 2.

Level of Service Analysis – Adjustments for McDuffie County Conditions

Due to growth and development patterns unique to McDuffie County, the projected level of service of some road segments should be adjusted to account for population shifts, additions to public infrastructure and alterations of land use patterns. While many of the projected levels of service for Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County road segments are accurately represented in the previous subsection using default values, the following variables were considered in order to adjust projected levels of service on selected road segments:

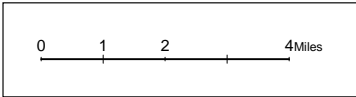
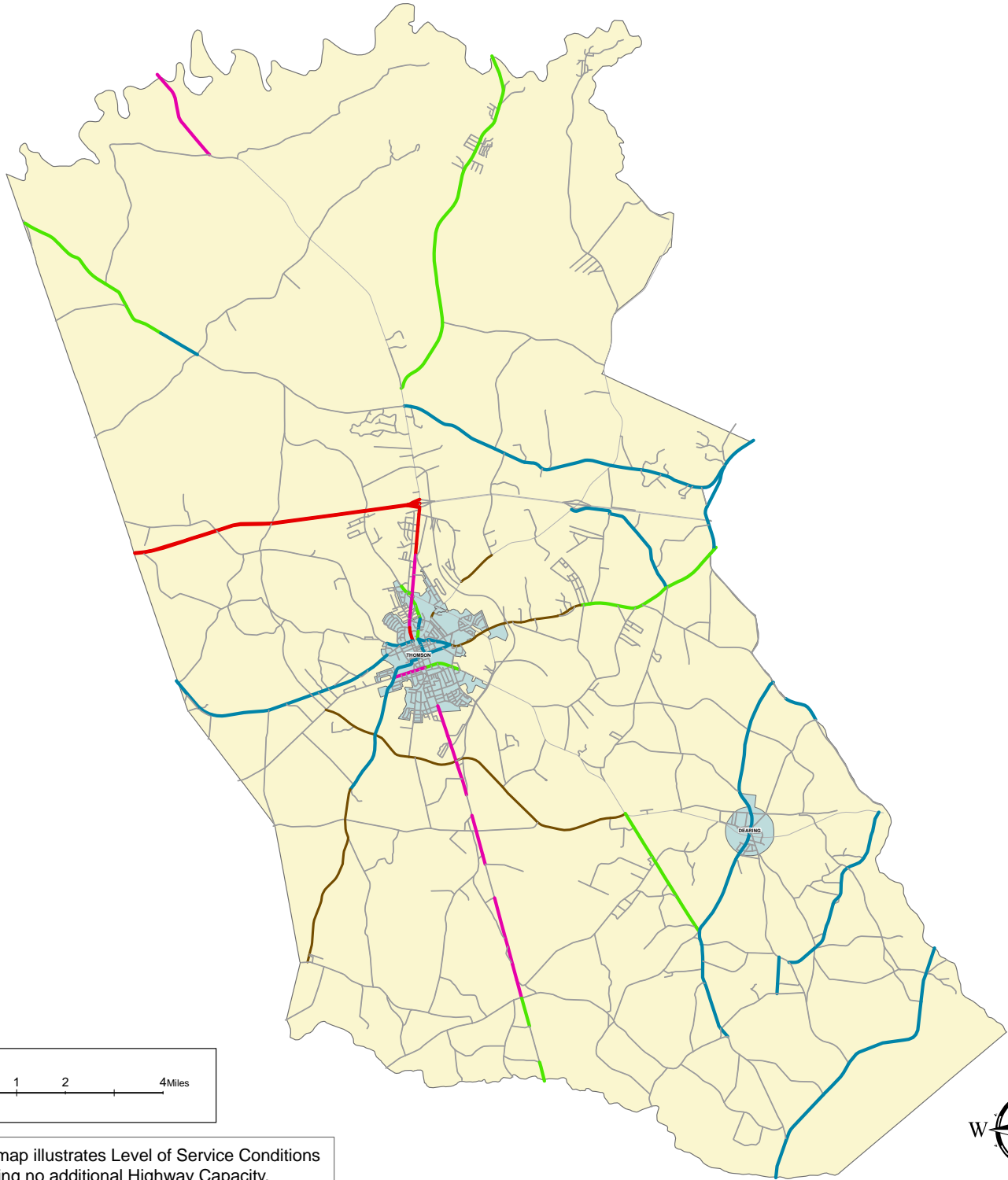
- *New road construction.* As indicated in the previous subsection entitled “Planned Additions to Street System Capacity,” construction on the Thomson East By-Pass will begin in the near future. This project will directly impact traffic patterns on all arterial and collector road segments extending into Thomson from east of U.S. 78/ SR 17. In addition, a new interchange is programmed at CR21/Three Points Road and Interstate 20 altering traffic patterns on the local road.
- *Additional lane capacity.* As indicated in the previous subsection entitled “Planned Additions to Street System Capacity,” lane additions to all 2-lane segments of SR 17 will increase the capacity of this major north-south thoroughfare.
- *Intersection improvements.* An improvement project is earmarked for the pending intersection at SR 223 and the Thomson East By-Pass. Traffic signals are also programmed for 9 locations including: SR 10, SR 12, SR 17, SR 43 and SR 43 By-Pass.
- *New infrastructure.* Chapter 6 illustrates a significant expansion of the Thomson-McDuffie water and sewer systems. Sewer system expansion in particular, coupled with plans for a new higher density residential zoning district in unincorporated McDuffie County has the potential to increase average traffic volume on a number of roadways - particularly to the north and northeast of Thomson.
- *Land use.* Potential changes to the county's zoning ordinance related to residential density may result in increased trip generation rates directly adjacent to Thomson and extending to the northeast of the city. Zoning changes, sewer capacity increases and development pressure extending from rapidly suburbanizing Columbia County may cause average traffic volumes for some road segments to the east and north of Thomson to exceed averages for GDOT District 2.



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2002 Level of Service Roads



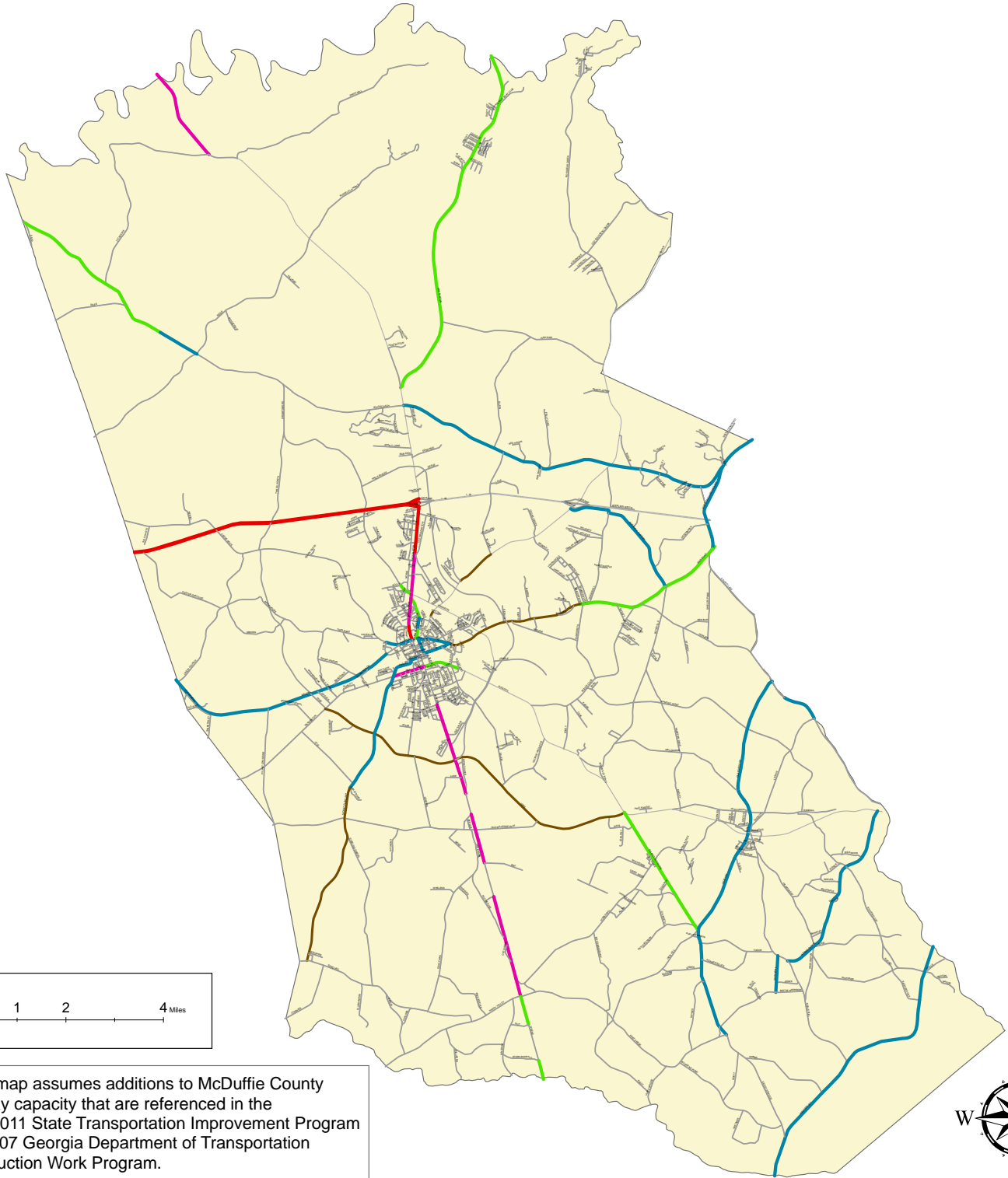


* This map illustrates Level of Service Conditions assuming no additional Highway Capacity.



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2022 Level of Service Roads					
—	LOS A	—	LOS C	—	LOS E
—	LOS B	—	LOS D	—	LOS F



* This map assumes additions to McDuffie County highway capacity that are referenced in the 2008-2011 State Transportation Improvement Program and 2007 Georgia Department of Transportation Construction Work Program.



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2022 Level of Service Roads					
	LOS A		LOS C		LOS E
	LOS B		LOS D		LOS F

TRANSPORTATION

Map 7-8 illustrates revised levels of service for thoroughfares in McDuffie County based on a review of the 5 conditions listed in this subsection. Because revised level of service figures were only prepared for selected segments within the county, a figure of deficient highway segments that corresponds with **Map 7-8** has not been prepared. Levels of service were revised on some McDuffie County highway segments through consideration of the following:

- *New road construction/Additional lane capacity/Intersection improvements.* Staff utilized the *Thomson Bypass Construction Traffic Study (2002)* and received assistance from the GDOT to determine the level of service of arterial highways intersecting the pending Bypass. Considering the potential traffic diversion rate of the Thomson East Bypass on these intersecting roads, level of service adjustments were prepared for intersecting highway segments directly adjacent to the bypass. Level of service adjustments were made in accordance with the Transportation Research Board's *Highway Capacity Manual (2005)*. Two-lane highways bisecting the Thomson East Bypass from downtown Thomson were assumed to be Class II highways – indicating that drivers would expect a greater degree of impediments to free flow speed.

The *Highway Capacity Manual* was also utilized in order to adjust the levels of service for segments of SR 17 north and south of Thomson which are slated to be widened to 4 lanes.

- *New infrastructure.* Although **Maps C.1a-** and **C.2a-** illustrate a substantial amount of water and sewer expansion into less developed areas of McDuffie County, the county's preliminary character area map (**Map L.5**) illustrates that residential densities in most portions of the county are intended to remain low and should not affect default district-wide traffic growth rates projected by the GDOT.
- *Land use.* Future development in McDuffie County is projected to be channeled largely to areas adjacent to and extending northeast of the City of Thomson (**Map L.4**). These development areas may accommodate increased residential densities and more intense land uses than currently exist. Even if all available acreage in these areas is developed to increased densities (See Chapter ?), the traffic generated would remain far below the level of traffic growth projected by GDOT utilizing district-wide default values. Furthermore, full development of such areas to increased densities would result in population increases far in excess of the county-wide 20 year population projections contained in this *Plan* – indicating that these areas may actually take much longer to develop. As a result, projected changes to land use were not determining factors in revising level of service projections.

The analysis used to prepare level of service maps in this *Plan* may be used to assist the county in preparing a Major Thoroughfare Plan and programming highway capacity improvements to accommodate the projected population growth in McDuffie County. As development occurs during the time period covered by this *Plan*, it will be prudent for McDuffie County, Dearing and Thomson to conduct more detailed traffic studies on thoroughfares within or in close proximity to urbanizing and suburbanizing areas.

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Increased traffic volume on McDuffie County roadways has not directly resulted in an increase in the rate of motor vehicle accidents into a gradual increase in motor vehicle accidents.

Figure T-13 McDuffie County Motor Vehicle Accidents (1998-2006)

Motor Vehicle Accidents (1998-2006)	McDuffie County	Columbia County	Warren County	State of Georgia
Total Number	5231	22,860	1181	2,493,352
Annual Rate (Per 10,000 Licensed Drivers)	415.6	405.9	367.8	526.9

Source: Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, CASI Report (September, 2004)

Motor vehicle accident data compiled by the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety between 1996 and 2003 shows that the total number and rate of motor vehicle crashes in McDuffie County fluctuated but did not significantly increase over time. During the 8 year period measured by the Department, there were a total of 5231 reported motor vehicle accidents in McDuffie County. Per 10,000 licensed drivers, the average annual rate of reported motor vehicle accidents in the county between 1996 and 2003 was 415.6 annually. **Figure T-13** illustrates that the accident rate in McDuffie County is fairly consistent with surrounding jurisdictions. The motor vehicle accident rate is significantly lower than the state of Georgia as a whole.

More recent data provided by the City of Thomson Police Department illustrates where the highest concentration of motor vehicle accidents occur. As expected, a high frequency of motor vehicle accidents occur at busy intersections – although this does not necessarily mean that they comprise the majority of the total motor vehicle accidents in the city. **Figure T-14** illustrates that the greatest concentration of motor vehicle accidents in Thomson between January, 2005 and July, 2007 occurred at the signalized intersections of Jackson and Hill Street, and the Harrison Road intersections with Gordon and Main Streets.

Figure T-14: Thomson Motor Vehicle Accident Concentrations (January, 2005 – June, 2007)

Location (Ranked)	Number
Hill Street – Jackson Street	40
Harrison Street – Gordon Street	37
Harrison Street – Main Street	37
Main Street – Gordon Street	33
Main Street – Martin Luther King Jr. Street	27
Hill Street – Mt. Pleasant Street	24
Hill Street – Guill Street	20
Total	218

Source: City of Thomson, Police Department

Signalization and Signage

There are 9 signalized intersections within McDuffie County – all located within, or directly adjacent to the Thomson urbanized area. All other intersections with identified arterial and collector streets are posted with stop signs. Additional signalization improvements within McDuffie County are included on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Signals will be included at all intersections along the Thomson East By-Pass.

Bridges

GDOT oversees the bi-annual inspection of all bridges located on federal, state, county and city roads. The Department also oversees the bi-annual inspection of all other drainage structures on interstates and state highways only. For purposes of inspection and maintenance by GDOT, a bridge generally includes: bridges and culverts that are longer than 20 feet in length. Drainage structures typically include: those remaining structures that may allow for drainage under the roadway but are less than 20 feet in length.

TRANSPORTATION

Drainage structures inspected by GDOT are done so according to standards established by the Department. Communities that require assistance to rehabilitate locally owned and maintained drainage structures may request funding assistance from GDOT. While a number of drainage structures likely exist throughout McDuffie County, Dearing and Thomson, they have not been inventoried as part of the *Plan*.

GDOT's bi-annual inspections of bridges are required by the FHWA. Bridge inspections are based on sufficiency ratings which take into account a variety of factors including: condition of major structural components, volume of traffic, load rating, type of design clearance, alignment of approach, etc. Bridges with a rating of 75 or better are deemed "sufficient." Bridges rated between 50 and 75 are classified as "structurally deficient" while bridges rated less than 50 are "functionally obsolete." Of the 42 bridges within McDuffie County, 19

Figure T-15: Sufficiency Rating of Bridges in McDuffie County (2006)

Bridge (By GDOT Inventory Number)	Location	Rating	Classification
189-0001-0	US 78 (at Hart Creek)	50.10	Structurally Deficient
189-0002-0	US 78 (at Big Creek)	50.10	Structurally Deficient
189-0004-0	US 78 (at Sweetwater Creek)	53.77	Structurally Deficient
189-0007-0	Three Points Road (at I-20)	57.07	Structurally Deficient
189-0008-0	Scuffel Road (at I-20)	65.27	Structurally Deficient
189-0009-0	SR 43 (at Little River)	19.34	Functionally Obsolete
189-0013-0	SR 150 (at I-20)	16.62	Functionally Obsolete
189-0015-0	SR 223 (at I-20)	70.96	Structurally Deficient
189-0022-0	White Oak Camp Road (at I-20)	64.68	Structurally Deficient
189-0024-0	Fort Creek Road (at Big Brier Creek)	74.56	Structurally Deficient
189-0030-0	US 221/SR 47 (at Big Brier Creek)	29.31	Functionally Obsolete

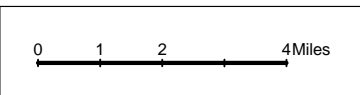
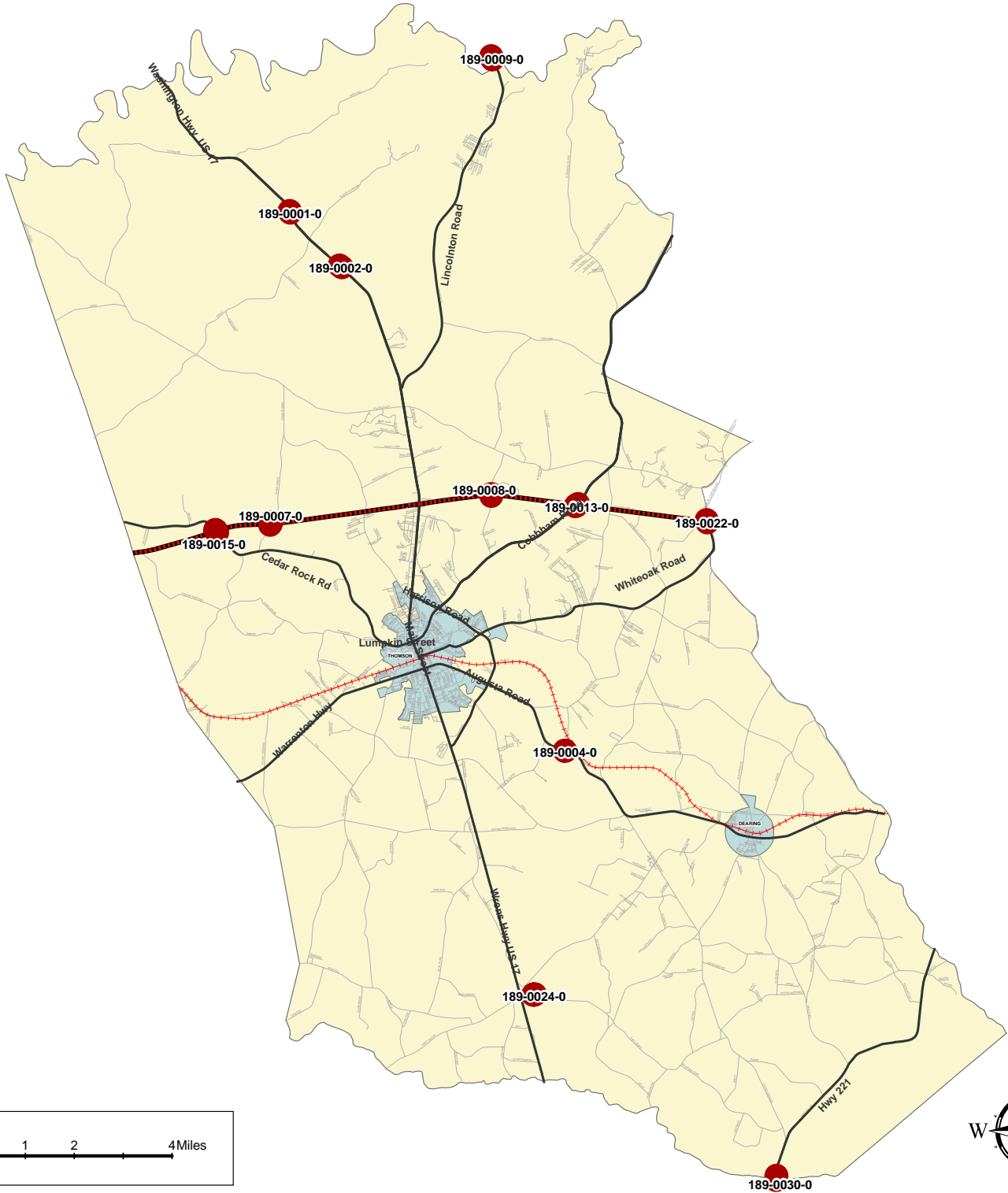
Source: Georgia Department of Transportation.

percent are rated as structurally deficient while 7 percent are rated as functionally obsolete. **Figure T-15** presents the location and sufficiency ratings of McDuffie County's 8 structurally deficient and 3 functionally obsolete bridges. The bridges listed in **Figure T-15** are also illustrated on **Map T.9**. It is important to note that when a bridge is classified as "functionally obsolete," is not necessarily in danger of structural failure. In most instances, it simply means that the bridge cannot carry the type of traffic that it is experiencing and maintain an appropriate level of service on the roadway. Many bridges in the GDOT system are classified as functionally obsolete due to constraints on capacity such as number of lanes or lane width. None of the three functionally obsolete bridges in McDuffie County have been identified as being in danger of structural failure.

Of the three functionally obsolete bridges listed in **Figure T-15**, the SR 43 bridge at Little River and the US 221/SR 47 bridge at Big Brier Creek are both included on the 2008-2011 STIP and are slated to be replaced within a few years. Of the structurally deficient bridges listed in the figure, half are represented by bridges that pass over Interstate 20. Regardless, the pending interchange project at Three Points Road and Interstate 20 will include a bridge replacement. Bridge improvements along US 78 at Big Creek and Hart Creek are also likely to be part of the US 78 widening included in the 2008-2011 STIP as a result of inclusion within the Governor's GRIP initiative.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Upon the commencement of work on the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* and the formation of the planning advisory committee, a subcommittee of local officials was formed to



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Legend

- Selected Bridges
- Railroad
- I-20
- Roads
- Major Highways

TRANSPORTATION

address the specific issues of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Thomson and unincorporated McDuffie County. The subcommittee's work, with the assistance of the CSRA Regional Development Center, was funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation and was intended to provide an analysis of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in both communities in much greater detail than might typically occur during the comprehensive planning process. The efforts of the subcommittee resulted in the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*.

Creation of the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* was always intended to be part of the comprehensive planning process for Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County. As a result, the final plan was not forwarded to the Thomson City Council or McDuffie County Board of Commissioners for formal adoption as an independent document. Instead, the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* has been reformatted and included as a chapter of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*. A full inventory of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Thomson and unincorporated McDuffie County can be found in Chapter 8.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the Town of Dearing were not inventoried as part of the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*. A separate survey of Dearing bicycle and pedestrian facilities reveals a lack of either. Dearing pedestrian facilities include a 50 to 100 foot segment of sidewalk along the south side of U.S. Highway 278 and extending west of the intersection with Iron Hill Road. Marked crosswalks are located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 278, Iron Hill Road and Main Street. There are no bicycle facilities within Dearing, and the town is not located along a state designated or regional bicycle route.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

McDuffie County, Dearing and Thomson residents are served by the McDuffie County Rural Transportation System – operated by the Thomson-McDuffie County Recreation and Leisure Services Department. The transit service is available to all McDuffie County residents by appointment (24 hour notice required) and can provide customers with access to facilities within all of McDuffie County between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The transit system also makes weekly trips to Augusta on Thursdays and Fridays by appointment.

The McDuffie County Rural Transportation System operates five vans – including one with a wheelchair lift. The system offers significantly lower farebox rates for residents 60 years or older than for younger segments of the population. Funding for the system comes from a mix of local sources – including operating revenues – and federal Section 5311 funds. Agreements with the Georgia Department of Human Services and other state departments also allow the transit system to provide free trips to qualifying seniors and citizens with limited economic resources.

There is no current plan to expand the transit system, either through additional vehicles, establishment of standard routes, or the expansion of service hours.

PARKING

The city of Thomson and McDuffie County require development to adhere to minimum off-street parking standards within their respective land development regulations. Both communities' off-street parking standards are consistent with current national standards which provide ample

TRANSPORTATION

parking and promote contemporary development patterns. The town of Dearing does not regulate off-street parking.

On-street parking within McDuffie County is principally confined to the central business district and older neighborhoods of historic Thomson. Development regulations within Thomson and McDuffie County neither prohibit nor make accommodation for on-street parking as part of their street design standards. Dearing does not regulate on-street parking. Current policies in Thomson and McDuffie County, however, suggest a trend toward disallowing on-street parking in new development – via ongoing updates to both communities’ development ordinances. Section 11-51 of Thomson City Code also includes a general restriction disallowing a person to “...stop an automobile or other vehicle on the streets of the city at any place other than a regular parking place.” While this language is clearly intended to keep streets clear of obstructions, liberal enforcement could also extend to vehicles parked on neighborhood streets where the parking space is not defined via signage or pavement markings.

The local trend to limit on-street parking is most evident as a result of recent efforts to implement center city revitalization in downtown Thomson. The revitalization effort includes the planned and current removal of on-street parking on a number of downtown streets – most notably on Main Street via a streetscape project funded by a Georgia Department of Transportation transportation enhancement grant. The effort to remove on-street parking in downtown Thomson is intended by local officials to promote traffic flow through the area so that downtown workers and shoppers will not be turned away from the area as a result of congestion. Thomson officials’ current preferred method for accommodating parking downtown is via increasing reliance on off-street parking areas.

RAILROADS

McDuffie County is bisected by CSX Transportation’s Atlanta to Augusta mainline (the “Georgia Railroad”). CSX is defined by the federal Surface Transportation Board as a Class 1 Railroad, meaning that its average annual operating revenue meets or exceeds 255.9 million dollars. The rail line running through the county serves only freight operations and is defined as a “mainline” because it serves a large number of trains conveying a high volume of tonnage between major markets (terminals). The Augusta-Aiken MSA is a particular beneficiary of the railroad’s mainline status because Augusta is home to a CSX *Transflo* bulk transfer terminal which allows for rail/truck transfers of freight.

According to the *Georgia Freight Rail Plan* and more recent maps provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation, the segment of the Atlanta to Augusta mainline which includes McDuffie County carried approximately 13.5 million gross ton miles per mile of track in 1998 and as of 2004 conveys roughly 15.3 million gross tons per mile of track. Roughly 15 trains pass through McDuffie County on a daily basis – a gradual increase since 1998. While trains are passing through McDuffie County, motor vehicle traffic at almost 20 “at-grade” street crossings is blocked – including where major arterial highway routes bisect the railroad. This is a particular problem at SR 10 (Harrison Road) and SR 17 (Main Street) where train traffic can negatively impact the level of service of these major thoroughfares. With the exception of the planned Thomson East By-Pass, there are no overpasses or underpasses in McDuffie County at rail crossings. The *Georgia Statewide Freight Plan* suggests that rail tonnage is expected to double throughout the state of Georgia by 2035.

TRANSPORTATION

McDuffie County is not currently served by passenger rail. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program proposes intercity passenger rail service between Augusta and Atlanta in the long-term; however, such service has not been listed as a priority or been provided funding.

TRUCKING, PORT FACILITIES AND AVIATION

Trucking

Map 7.1 and various figures within this chapter illustrate that there are a number of high volume arterial roads that traverse McDuffie County. In most instances, the predominant amount of large freight truck traffic making trips through the jurisdiction will utilize these arterials roads – along with some collector level thoroughfares located in the unincorporated portions of the county. For the most part, the functional classification of the roads that are utilized for heavy freight vehicles is appropriate. Conflicts most often arise however, when high volume thoroughfares traverse areas that are intended to be pedestrian friendly or are otherwise ill-designed for large vehicles. The most obvious instance of such a conflict in McDuffie County is where Georgia State Routes 12, 17, 150, 223 and U.S. Highway 278 converge within or just north of downtown Thomson. The existence of truck traffic in this area is due to the current lack of a by-pass highway around the city. As previously noted within this chapter, completion of the Thomson East By-Pass should divert a large volume of truck traffic from traversing through the center of Thomson.

Chapter 11, Section 28 of Thomson City Code prohibits the operation of large freight vehicles through the city on all streets except for designated state highways. There are exceptions to the prohibition – with the most notable being local deliveries. The Town of Dearing and McDuffie County do not have ordinances prohibiting truck traffic.

Port Facilities

The closest port facility to McDuffie County is located in Savannah. There is no apparent and direct economic impact of truck/port, or rail/port transfers originating or terminating in the county.

Aviation

McDuffie County is home to the Thomson-McDuffie County Regional Airport (HQU). This airport is categorized by Aviation Programs, Georgia Department of Transportation as a Level III airport and accommodates various aviation related activities including: recreational flying, agricultural spraying, corporate/business jets, ultra-lights, experimental aircraft, and flight training (*Georgia Aviation System Report, Airport Summary Report (2003)*).

McDuffie County is also in close proximity to other general aviation airports of varying size and accommodation. Some McDuffie County residents may find that one or more of the following airports may also meet their aviation needs due to their proximity within the recommended service areas (based on driving distance between their residence and the applicable airport):

- Augusta Regional Airport at Bush Field (Level III)
- Augusta-Daniel Field (Level I)

TRANSPORTATION

- Wilkes County Airport (Level II)
- Wrens Memorial Airport (Level I)

When categorizing airports by “level”, the Aviation Programs, Georgia Department of Transportation typically considers factors such as: current airport roles, number of registered aircraft served, number of pilots served, amount of based aircraft served, current facilities/infrastructure, services available, highway access and expansion potential. In addition, each airport’s classification is subject to specific airside and general aviation facilities ranging from runway length and lighting systems, to amount of hangar storage and fuel availability. Criteria used by the State of Georgia is consistent with policies established by the Federal Aviation Administration. A full listing of Georgia airport functional roles, and facility and service criteria can be found in the *Georgia Aviation System Report, Airport Summary Report*.

Thomson-McDuffie County Regional Airport’s status as a Level III airport means that it is capable of accommodating a variety of business/corporate jet aircraft. As a Level III (general aviation) airport, its service area encompasses a 45 minute drive time. In order to retain Level III airport status, multiple recent projects have been included in the state’s Airport Capital Improvement Program (CIP) based on recommendations in the 2003 *Georgia Aviation System Report, Airport Summary Report*. No fewer than five additional capital projects are included in current Airport CIPs that will ensure that the airports service status remains at the current level – most notably, a 300 foot extension of the runway to a total recommended length of 5500 feet.

TRANSPORTATION/LAND USE CONNECTION

Residential

Residential development patterns within the city of Thomson are typical of small population concentrations located within rural areas. Older residential areas are connected with the central business district via a network of interconnected streets. While residential densities in Thomson are greater than in the surrounding county, “high density” as characterized in the community still does not approach that of much larger urbanized areas. As a result, most housing stock in Thomson is single-family detached and there are only limited areas where lot sizes are smaller than 10,000 square feet.

Newer residential development in and directly adjacent to Thomson has a lower degree of interconnectivity and tends to funnel a higher percentage of traffic to a limited number of arterial thoroughfares without the benefit of further traffic dispersal through connecting collector roads. Thomson’s residential development pattern is shared to a smaller degree by Dearing – which has even lower densities and a lesser degree of interconnectivity.

Residential development patterns further from Thomson in the unincorporated portions of McDuffie County are based on large lot single-family development with sole access from existing major thoroughfares. Multi-family development in McDuffie County is found primarily on the fringes of Thomson along major thoroughfares – closer to contemporary commercial corridors. While contemporary residential development throughout McDuffie County not only lacks interconnectivity of new streets, it also lacks sidewalks and bicycle facilities ensuring automobile dependence for virtually all trips. Current low-density development patterns perpetuate the notion that pedestrian

TRANSPORTATION

facilities are an unnecessary expense. Such development patterns also consume land at a greater rate than most other land uses and require the construction of more miles of public streets and other infrastructure – all of which require long-term maintenance.

Commercial

Commercial land uses in McDuffie County can be found in the central business districts of Dearing and Thomson, and the more contemporary commercial corridors extending into the county from Thomson. Dearing's central business district is limited in size, is bisected by US Highway 278 and lacks pedestrian facilities or access management. In spite of these features, there is a noticeable amount of pedestrian traffic that may benefit from investment in additional pedestrian facilities. Thomson's central business district is characterized by narrow streets and wide sidewalks intended to promote pedestrian activity and safety; but, commercial activities are significantly limited in comparison to the automobile dependant commercial corridors located along the fringes of the city. As with contemporary residential development in McDuffie County, contemporary commercial development has occurred in a manner that decreases the feasibility of walking or bicycling. Commercial development along major thoroughfares is also patterned to funnel traffic directly onto major thoroughfares from each individual site via multiple curb cuts and a lack of shared and cross access easements, and other access management features.

Industrial

Industrial development in McDuffie County is primarily located directly adjacent to the Atlanta and Augusta mainline railroad and the intersection of I-20 and SR 150. Such locations increase the viability of industrial sites in the county; however, industrial sites west of Thomson along US Highway 278 currently lack direct access to I-20 – increasing probabilities that large vehicle traffic may continue to bisect the city's central business district. A future interchange at the I-20 and Three Points Road overpass may divert some large vehicle traffic from entering downtown Thomson from the west, but may alternatively decrease the level of service of the road without future improvements. Other heavy vehicle traffic in McDuffie County is generated by industrial kaolin mining operations.

Other Land Uses

Remaining land in McDuffie County not classified as commercial, industrial or residential is primarily used for forest or agricultural purposes, or otherwise vacant or unused. In spite of the potential for some residential growth in the vicinity of Clark's Hill Lake, much of the county's lakefront property is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Activity on forest and agricultural properties described in this section is intermittent and generates very little traffic – having minimal effect on the transportation system.

TRANSPORTATION

ASSESSMENT

STREET NETWORK

Existing Street Network/Traffic Volumes/Level of Service

As with most suburbanizing communities, McDuffie County's growth pattern is projected to remain defined by low-density residential growth in the unincorporated portions of the county. Under this scenario, it is likely that traffic will continue to increase on existing arterial streets. Although the county has the discretion to require new developments to include collector streets – and thereby disperse increased traffic load among intersecting arterial streets – these important linkages in the street network have been largely omitted to date. The lack of collector-level connections between arterial streets has occurred as a result of two key policy decisions. First, county officials have not required new developments to include street stub connections to adjacent developable tracts. Next, these new “cul-de-sac” style developments have been developed at extremely low densities. With the prospect that these low density segmented developments will never individually generate high traffic volumes, collector streets are deemed functionally unnecessary. Unfortunately, such a developments – lacking interconnectivity - will cumulatively overwhelm the existing arterial street system over time. To avoid long-term inefficiencies in the county's street system, McDuffie County should apply street development standards in a manner that more closely resembles the FHWA hierarchy for the functional classification of streets. Recommended application measures are discussed in more detail within the *Major Thoroughfare Plan*.

Regardless of future projected increases in traffic volumes on the road network in the unincorporated portions of McDuffie County, all three jurisdictions face immediate needs in road maintenance – particularly pavement preservation. Throughout Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County, local revenue sources and GDOT's Local Assistance Road Program only account for the annual repaving of no more than a couple of road miles – although there are almost 500 miles of road county-wide. In addition, there still remain a number of miles of unpaved road segments in unincorporated portions of McDuffie County. Roads with pavement in poor condition, and unpaved public roads, can serve as liabilities for all three jurisdictions. Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County must meet projected increases in demand on these thoroughfares by earmarking further funding toward local road maintenance. This critical need may be met through creative disbursement of tax revenues, new tax revenues including special assessments, or via fees assessed to new development. Specifically, public upgrades or maintenance to road segments serving new development may occur partially through funding generated by the application of impact fees to new development. Within areas such as downtown Thomson, smaller maintenance projects may be funded via the creation of a business improvement district.

To incrementally address various other deficiencies in the county road network, McDuffie County may in part look to employ mechanisms that require new development to offset its impacts to the community. Subdivision regulations can easily be amended to require developers to dedicate additional right-of-way along existing thoroughfares that are identified in the *Major Thoroughfare Plan* as being targeted for upgrade. Subdivision regulations may also require unpaved roads to be paved to the entry point of a new development. Similarly, regulations may also allow the local government to require the reservation of right-of-way and or the construction of higher order streets

as part of a new development when warranted by the *Major Thoroughfare Plan*. While much of this anticipated growth will occur in unincorporated McDuffie County, such development standards should also be strongly considered by Dearing and Thomson.

Planned Additions to Street System Capacity

Programmed improvements within the GDOT's STIP, GRIP and Construction Work Program will meet many of the immediate street system capacity needs of Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County. Additional street system capacity improvements that should be planned and programmed by all three communities are contained within the final subsection of this chapter (See subsection entitled: "Major Thoroughfare Plan").

Motor Vehicle Accidents

As with most communities, the vast majority of motor vehicle accidents throughout McDuffie County occur on or near thoroughfares with the greatest traffic volume. Aside from innovative approaches to traffic law enforcement, the most efficient way for Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County to limit motor vehicle accidents on major thoroughfares is to manage access to adjacent properties – and thus, control the number of turning motions in and out of private property and side streets. Access management standards can be adopted by all three communities via additions to applicable land development regulations.

If adding access management standards to the land development regulations of Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County, it is important to consider varying standards based on the functional classification and location of thoroughfares. On suburban and rural automobile-dependent thoroughfares – where traffic volumes and speeds may be greater – access management ordinances may focus on the wider separation and/or sharing of curb-cuts, and requirements for cross-access easement agreements for vehicular traffic between parcels. In partnership with GDOT, access management along developed or developing segments of state highways may also be accomplished by incorporating traffic control medians, and acceleration and deceleration lanes. All of these features can channel motor vehicle flow to specific access points along the roadway. The safety benefits to controlling access on major thoroughfares are further enhanced by the corresponding increase in the roadways' functional capacity and the use of traffic control medians as landscaping features. As referenced in **Figure T-17**, parkways and landscaped medians are also considered a suitable urban greenspace by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

Access management standards on major thoroughfares which bisect pedestrian-friendly central business districts and older neighborhoods should be employed in a far different manner than those on contemporary commercial corridors. It is important to manage traffic flow through such areas in a way that does not inadvertently decrease pedestrian safety and the aesthetic qualities of the districts by increasing traffic speeds and/or volumes. Access management in such areas can be enhanced via the use of rear parking and alley access – both in residential and non-residential areas – in order to ensure orderly traffic flow. Access management in such areas should typically not include the narrowing of sidewalks, removal of on-street parking, removal of street trees, etc. Such actions risk the long-term viability of pedestrian-oriented districts through the erosion of their original and unique characteristics.

TRANSPORTATION

Because the majority of highways that would best benefit from access management regulations are part of the state highway system, GDOT should be a partner in their preparation. If considering access management features for urban areas, it is important to also partner with other organizations with transportation planning expertise – particularly in bicycle and pedestrian topics – in order to ensure the context-sensitive implementation of access management standards.

Signalization and Signage

Many of the immediate signalization needs throughout McDuffie County – whether signaling new intersection, changing signals, or adjusting signal timing - are programmed in the 2008-2011 STIP. Other intersections are slated to be signalized as part of the Thomson East Bypass project. Should there be a desire for the signalization of additional intersections as a result of motor vehicle accidents or to increase traffic flow, such action should only be taken if linked to the implementation of appropriate access management standards. It is also important for local officials to be aware that local crash data does not correlate signalization of an intersection with a decrease in motor vehicle accidents.

Should Dearing, Thomson and/or McDuffie County adopt a policy for the construction and placement of future collector and minor arterial streets via the adoption of the *Major Thoroughfare Plan* contained within this *Plan*, spacing will be adequate to allow for new signalization where they intersect arterial or other collector streets.

Bridges

Of the 11 bridges in McDuffie County listed as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, at least 5 are programmed for improvements. Active coordination between McDuffie County and GDOT will ensure that improvements to other deficient bridge structures may also be gradually programmed – particularly in areas where significant population growth or heavy vehicle traffic growth is expected. Close coordination between county staff with GDOT engineers regarding the date and results of biannual bridge and drainage structure inspections will enable the community to act promptly on potential future deficiencies.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and walkways are a fairly simple way for communities to develop a transportation system not solely reliant on motor vehicles. Road segments that include sidewalks are a reminder that streets are intended to convey people – not vehicles. Not only do such facilities provide Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County residents with a viable transportation alternative; but, they provide pathways on which people can exercise and experience the outdoors.

Most information related to pedestrian facilities in Thomson and unincorporated McDuffie County can be found in Chapter 8 of this *Plan*. An inventory and assessment of both jurisdictions' pedestrian facilities and policies has been largely addressed via the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* – which has been subsequently reformatted as Chapter 8 of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*. Formal adoption of the recommendations contained within the

TRANSPORTATION

Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan is intended to occur as part of this *Plan* (See also: **Appendix A**).

Although pedestrian travel within Dearing is a fairly frequent activity, pedestrian facilities in the town are extremely limited. Dearing can facilitate the gradual long-term creation of a pedestrian network via the adoption of subdivision regulations which include sidewalk requirements for all new development. Such standards may include a requirement for sidewalks along newly constructed streets, and on existing street segments along which a new subdivision has frontage. Sidewalk requirements may alternatively be included within the town's general code and be linked to the requirement of a building permit. Lacking the staff resources to enforce any such ordinances, the town may seek to contract with McDuffie County and Thomson for land development regulation enforcement. In addition, Dearing should consider seeking access to GDOT programs which can fund pedestrian improvements (such as Transportation Enhancement or Safe Routes to School programs) to construct sidewalks along existing routes. Likely street segments where pedestrian facilities may be warranted include U.S. 278 within the central business district, and N. Main Street extending to Dearing Elementary School.

Pedestrian networks for all 3 communities may be improved by incorporating appropriate design features into existing or proposed development regulations. Sidewalks of at least 5 feet in width, rather than 4 feet, allow 2 people to walk comfortably beside each other. Revising street design standards to move sidewalks at least 6 feet away from curbs decreases design conflicts where sidewalks cross driveway approaches, provides room for tree plantings and provides pedestrians with a greater feeling of safety – particularly on higher-volume streets. Exceptions to this general recommendation should be made when considering sidewalks in downtown districts – which should incorporate completely different dimensions and elements depending on the overall character of the streetscape. Painting motor vehicle stop bars and pedestrian crossings on the street pavement at intersections can also provide drivers with a better understanding that they are in a pedestrian environment. Mid-block crosswalks can also be enhanced by incorporating traffic calming devices in the pavement such as speed tables or rumble strips and/or strategically installing “Yield to Pedestrian” signage at key locations. In addition, on-street pedestrian networks can be enhanced by incorporating “walkway” connections (pedestrian paths not located in a street right-of-way) between residential developments and adjacent land uses such as parks, schools or major shopping destinations. Further assessment on pedestrian facilities in McDuffie County and Thomson can be found in Chapter 8.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

The communities best prepared to deal with increasing traffic congestion are those which invest in non-motorized elements of their transportation system. Gradual investment in on-street and off-street bicycle facilities increases a community's quality of life by providing residents with more than one transportation option. As more retail and office uses follow population trends and locate in all three McDuffie County jurisdictions, local residents will have more options to work and shop within the community. Under Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County's current development pattern, these increasing “internal” trips will need to be accommodated almost entirely by motor vehicles.

As discussed in the previous subsection, most information related to bicycle facilities in Thomson and unincorporated McDuffie County can also be found in Chapter 8 of this *Plan*. An inventory and

TRANSPORTATION

assessment of both jurisdictions' bicycle facilities and policies has been largely addressed via the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* – which has been subsequently reformatted as Chapter 8 of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*. Formal adoption of the recommendations contained within the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* is intended to occur as part of this *Plan* (See also: **Appendix A**).

In addition to the bicycle-related facility assessment and recommendations contained in Chapter 8, all three McDuffie County communities should consider the guidance contained within this subsection when considering the creation of a bicycle network. For instance, in addition to the bicycle routes and corresponding facilities proposed in Chapter 8, Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County should require bike lanes on new targeted collector level streets (See: *Major Thoroughfare Plan*); and, include bike lanes in future road improvement projects. The relatively low traffic volume and speeds particularly on collector streets makes bike traffic suitable and provides the basic facilities to encourage novice bike riders to consider some trips (to neighbors, parks, schools, convenience store, etc.) as bicycle commuting opportunities.

Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County may also rely on the use of a trail system to further supplement a bicycle network. A greenway trail is a prime tool to introduce a community to recreational cycling. Additional extension of the trail between streets and subdivisions will also give McDuffie County residents the option of using the trail for trips between neighborhoods. Such activity can be accommodated in existing neighborhoods by working with homeowners associations in developments bordering the trail to create linkages to the trail from neighborhood streets. Land development regulations can also be revised to require new developments which border an existing or planned trail to provide pathways between the trail and the development and, to designate greenway easements.

A bicycle network also requires facilities for cyclists when they arrive at a destination. Many communities require the provision of bicycle racks as part of new development through their zoning ordinances. Others communities initially promote bicycle parking by providing bicycle racks at properties owned by the local jurisdiction.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

While McDuffie County residents have access to the county's transit system, limited services result in logistical challenges for persons interested in utilizing public transportation. The lack of established routes; or evening, holiday or weekend service decrease the general public's awareness of the service – thus decreasing potential ridership. Limited service options places a particular burden on individuals who cannot drive or do not own a motor vehicle. A community's public transit system should be viewed as a local economic development tool rather than a public subsidy. An increased ability to connect potential workers with places of employment – above and beyond the typical rural transit system - is one of many assets that McDuffie County can market to potential industries considering whether to locate within the county.

In addition, statistics in the *Georgia Statewide Transportation Plan* illustrate that road construction and maintenance will not be able to keep pace with projected vehicle miles traveled. The result is that increased traffic congestion in McDuffie County and statewide is almost guaranteed. Recognition of projected increases in traffic congestion, combined with current limits to viable public

TRANSPORTATION

transit, indicate that McDuffie County should consider ways to increase transit options with local public transit service providers. Options could range from increased hours for existing services, to the establishment of new targeted transit services such as express commuter buses. Ideas such as these can be explored in greater detail with stakeholders via a transit development plan.

PARKING

McDuffie County and Thomson's parking needs are currently addressed via off-street parking requirements contained in its zoning regulations. There is no indication at this time that continued application of these standards will fail to address future parking needs on non-residential properties within both communities. Particular attention should be paid, however, to off-street parking lot design standards for non-residential development. As larger non-residential developments are constructed to meet the needs of the county's growing population, greater traffic volume will increase on-site congestion and motor vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. McDuffie County and Thomson can pro-actively address these pending issues by considering revisions to parking lot design standards such as: increasing driveway throat lengths, spacing of access points, traffic control islands and medians, and on-site pedestrian walkways between parking areas and buildings. It is important to note that some of these features may also be addressed via inclusion in access management standards discussed in the subsection entitled "Motor Vehicle Accidents."

McDuffie County and Thomson should also consider adding off-street parking provisions that define the "maximum" amount spaces allowed in a parking lot. Even the minimum temporary parking standards typically result in large segments of pavement that rarely are used to capacity. In addition, private developers will often build parking lots far in excess of the minimum parking standards required by local governments. The resulting expanses of impervious surfaces increase surface temperatures and dramatically increase storm water runoff. McDuffie County and Thomson should consider decreasing the minimum required amounts of parking for non-residential development exceeding certain square footages and/or cap the percentage of allowable off-street parking that is constructed on a development site that is in excess of local minimums. To assist in providing the right parking balance, standards should also be adopted which promote shared parking between uses. Shared parking arrangements and public parking solutions should be utilized when providing these facilities in a traditional pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.

In order to further address community-wide parking needs, Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County should promote on-street parking as a preferred development pattern. The prohibition, or the removal of, on-street parking from existing streets and/or the design standards for new streets will result in unintended consequences – particularly in residential subdivisions. The lack of any on-street parking on local residential streets increases the width of travel lanes and can encourage higher speeds and traffic volumes in neighborhoods. On-street parking is essentially traffic calming. Instances of front yard parking can also increase for residents with multiple vehicles or in instances where there are large gatherings. While the principal basis for the removal of on-street parking is based on emergency access, many communities have created and adopted alternative context sensitive street standards that balance on-street parking and emergency access – both for contemporary subdivisions or traditional areas of development.

As both communities update and amend their street design standards, on-street parking should be incorporated into local residential street standards. On-street parking should also be incorporated as

TRANSPORTATION

part of a neighborhood collector street standard and a variety of urban thoroughfares which would be appropriate in downtown areas and new-urbanist style developments (Various street types are discussed further in the *Major Thoroughfare Plan*). Within existing development, attempts to remove on-street parking from streets should be avoided where possible – particularly on street segments that have curb and gutter. Many communities often will increase vehicle flow and emergency access on excessively narrow streets by prohibiting parking on only one-side of the street (typically the side of the street that does not have a sidewalk). For the city of Thomson, a good way to implement this “balanced” type of policy relating to on-street parking on street segments that are not specifically marked for parking is to revise Chapter 11, Section 51 of city code to clarify that it is not intended to prohibit on-street parking. Such an action can be coupled with an effort to place signage on specific street segments where on-street parking is prohibited.

RAILROADS

McDuffie County benefits indirectly by increased use of the CSX rail line that bisects the community and the *Transflo* facility located in Augusta. Increased use of these facilities translates into potential jobs for residents of the entire Augusta-Aiken MSA. The direct benefit of the railroad to McDuffie County is an increased ability to attract employers who rely on access to a mainline railroad.

Unfortunately, Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County are also directly impacted by the noise, traffic delays and potential disruption of emergency response which can occur when freight trains pass at-grade street crossings. These issues are compounded even more as traffic volumes on city streets and state highways increase.

Increases in both rail freight and motor vehicle volumes are not likely to subside in the foreseeable future. Alleviating the rail/motor vehicle conflict may best be accomplished through facility improvements. It may be necessary to consider intersection realignments or the conversion of at-grade street crossings to above or below-grade crossings where possible. Noise abatement may be accomplished by working with CSX to establish “quiet zones” at existing at-grade crossings. Quiet zones alter at-grade crossings to mitigate the need for passing trains to sound their horns when approaching. Rules for the establishment of quiet zones are maintained by the Federal Railroad Administration.

While the inclusion of passenger rail service on existing rail lines has the potential to increase train traffic through McDuffie County, such a scenario is unlikely in the short-term. There is no funding for the establishment of an Augusta to Atlanta intercity passenger rail line – nor is funding likely in the near future. Even if passenger rail service is established between Atlanta and Augusta there is no guarantee that it would be located within existing CSX rights-of-way (although that is currently the most cost-effective approach). There is also no guarantee that McDuffie County would be directly served by passenger rail through the construction of a depot within the county limits.

TRUCKING, PORT FACILITIES AND AVIATION

Trucking

Truck traffic in McDuffie County is largely limited to arterial thoroughfares and has very little direct impact on residential areas. While this pattern of truck traffic being located almost exclusively on

TRANSPORTATION

arterial thoroughfares is predictable and appropriate, it results in a heavy volume of large vehicle traffic bisecting downtown Dearing and Thomson. Classified as a primary rural arterial thoroughfare, U.S. Highway 78/278 is designed to convey “through-traffic” through Dearing in an expedient manner. It is unlikely that building an alternate route around Dearing to divert large vehicle traffic would be feasible and this Plan does not recommend this as an alternative. In contrast, as previously indicated much of the large vehicle traffic that passes through downtown Thomson will be diverted once the new Thomson East Bypass finishes construction. Regardless, because there is no West Bypass programmed by GDOT, large truck traffic between Thomson and Warrenton may not be able to be diverted from the downtown area for an extended period of time.

While Thomson does not currently have the authority to prohibit large vehicle truck traffic from state highways, the city and McDuffie County should maintain communication with GDOT about the possibility of a partial truck prohibition on state highways located between the future bypass and Main Street – in order to further cull the volume of heavy vehicles bisecting the central part of the city. Further diversion could be accomplished by prioritizing the conversion of Wire Road and Three Points Road between SR 17 and I-20 to a 4 lane arterial. This action would result in a West Bypass and link existing and proposed industrial areas that are referenced in **Chapter 10** of the *Plan*.

As part of the communities’ efforts to attract more industrial and warehousing activity to the area, Thomson and McDuffie County should develop industrial street standards to be applied where concentrations of heavy vehicle activity is anticipated. Industrial streets include wider dimensions for vehicle maneuvering and greater pavement thicknesses to accommodate increased weight.

Port Facilities

There is no apparent and direct correlation between McDuffie County and coastal port facilities requiring action by the community.

Aviation

McDuffie County is home to the Thomson-McDuffie County Regional Airport (HQU) and is located in close proximity to 4 other public use airports providing a range of aviation services to the CSRA region. Further development of all 5 facilities is recommended by the *Georgia Aviation Systems Plan* to increase the effectiveness of each airport’s services. With no projected capacity deficiencies at any of the accessible airports, travelers to and from McDuffie County – whether flying commercial, chartered or personal aircraft – will continue to benefit from competitive options.

It is naturally important however, for McDuffie County to continually upgrade its own airport facilities for the community to remain an attractive option for future investment. To this end, Thomson and McDuffie County continue to make improvements to the Thomson-McDuffie County Regional Airport consistent with the *Georgia Aviation System Report, Airport Summary Report*. Included in the *Report*, is a recommendation to establish greater zoning controls on properties within the approaches to the airport. In addition to the facility upgrades completed or programmed, McDuffie County should amend its zoning ordinance to establish an airport protection overlay district. Any airport protection district drafted and mapped should be prepared in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations, Chapter 1, Part 77 (Objects Affecting Navigable Space). The district would address conflicts relating to structure height, noise and some land limitation. Such

TRANSPORTATION

a district may also be drafted so that proposed building activities within the airport approach that require completion of FAA form 7460-1 will also be provided to county officials for review.

TRANSPORTATION/LAND USE CONNECTION

Development patterns that are predominantly dependant on low-density residential growth however, risk creating infrastructure networks that are difficult to maintain over extended periods of time – particularly transportation systems. When homes are constructed further apart, it is necessary to extend streets, curb and gutter and sidewalks additional distances. Although most of these initial costs will be paid by the developer or new residents, it will ultimately be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction to provide for long-term maintenance. It will be important for Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County to channel residential development in specific areas where an interconnected grid of streets can convey traffic between destinations via a variety of routes rather than channeling all traffic to a limited number of existing arterial roads. Interconnected street networks between development nodes will decrease congestion at existing choke points and provide alternative access points for emergency service providers.

While pressure to locate most commercial development will continue to be on thoroughfares which convey heavy traffic volumes, some retail/office uses are not as dependent on highway visibility. Efforts should be made to allow for the targeted location of neighborhood-scale commercial uses along lower order collector thoroughfares and among otherwise exclusively residential areas. New commercial development on high volume roads should only be permitted where on-site and on-street access management standards have been implemented to reduce obstructions to traffic from vehicles entering and exiting adjacent properties.

Industrial uses should be located near major transportation corridors and should not be accessed via residential developments. Efforts should be made to develop internal streets intended for the wear and tear, and turning movements of large vehicle traffic.

Of all of the land use recommendations in this section however, none have the ability to have a greater affect on an efficient land use and transportation connection, than a commitment to promoting mixed-use development. While access management features, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, etc. may offset the overall impact of a growing population, existing development patterns in most communities within the CSRA region requires that most of us use our automobiles for almost all of our trips. Other than in traditional downtowns and surrounding center city neighborhoods, modern development patterns require uses to be segmented and separated on large single lots. The resulting lack of proximity between home, work, school and shopping almost necessitate automobile use. McDuffie County and Thomson should strongly consider promoting the development of high-intensity mixed-use development centers within targeted segments of the Urban Reserve and Suburban Reserve character areas. These developments could be located at the intersections of major thoroughfares such as the Thomson East Bypass and Interstate 20, and mix commercial, office, residential and public uses within development tracts and buildings.

MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN (PRELIMINARY)

Faced with increasing growth pressure, the *Major Thoroughfare Plan* component of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* is an overall policy in which to base decisions on the improvement

TRANSPORTATION

and extension of Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County’s principal street corridors. The *Major Thoroughfare Plan* serves as the communities’ guide for securing street rights-of-way for principal transportation corridors within areas of projected growth in order to meet future travel demand.

As with other chapters of the *Community Assessment* portion of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*, the recommendations within this subsection are preliminary. Final recommendations regarding thoroughfare improvement and expansion, and mechanisms to ensure implementation, is subject to further public input. A final *Major Thoroughfare Plan* with official recommendations will be incorporated into the *Community Agenda* portion of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*.

Street Hierarchy

The FHWA establishes a recommended hierarchy of streets – based on functional classification - for communities across the nation. There is no need for Dearing, Thomson or McDuffie County to deviate from this established hierarchy in order to achieve the best possible traffic flow throughout the community. The free flow of traffic is, however, not the only basis in which to determine the appropriate function of a street. Local communities must design and construct streets that not only facilitate effective traffic flow as described via national FHWA guidelines, but also are sensitive to the context of the local community. Recent efforts by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) have resulted in preliminary recommendations on how to design new thoroughfares in a context sensitive manner within urban areas. **Figures T-16 and T-17** include a description of the street types that should be incorporated into the street systems of Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County – with consideration given to a variety of transportation engineering and planning sources.

Figure T-16 describes street segments that should be included in the rural portions of unincorporated McDuffie County. Within this *Plan*, rural is generally described as those portions of the unincorporated county outside of the Urban Reserve character area. The recommendations contained within **Figure T-17** are derived largely from the FHWA’s functional classification system but also incorporate recommendations from a preliminary ITE report.

Figure T-16: McDuffie County Recommended Street Segments by Classification (Rural Areas)*
Interstate Principal Arterial: Includes all segments of Interstate 20 within McDuffie County.
Principal Arterial: All non-interstate principal arterials. Such as state highways, provides links between cities and larger towns; and, should provide for relatively high overall travel speeds with minimum interference to through movement. Access to abutting property is secondary to traffic flow .
Minor Arterial: Provide links between cities and larger towns; and, should provide for relatively high overall travel speeds with minimum interference to through movement. Access to abutting property is partially controlled.
Collector: Collects and distributes traffic between local roads and the arterial thoroughfare system in an efficient manner with direct access to some adjacent properties. Pedestrian facilities should be separated from motor vehicle travel lanes, and may incorporate bicycle facilities.
Residential Collector: Low speed collector road which distributes traffic between local roads from within neighborhoods to external arterial thoroughfares while providing access to abutting parcels. May provide linkages within neighborhoods between residential areas and supporting community facilities or services. May incorporate on-street parking and other traffic calming features to encourage motor vehicle travel in a slow orderly manner that is complimentary to and supportive of pedestrian and bicycle activities and facilities.
Local Road: Provide access to adjacent land as well as service to travel over relatively short distances.
<i>Note: Mixed-use or other high density areas should alternatively incorporate urban street standards (See Figure 7-R)</i>

TRANSPORTATION

Figure T-17 lists street segments by type that should be included within development located in Dearing, Thomson and the urbanizing areas of McDuffie County – including areas within or adjacent to the Urban Reserve character area. The recommendations contained within **Figure T-17** are derived largely from the preliminary ITE report *Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities*. The figure also notes the corresponding functional classification of each thoroughfare.

Figure T-17: Dearing, Thomson, McDuffie County Recommended Street Segments by Classification (Municipal and Unincorporated Urban Areas)*	
Freeway/Expressway.**	Parkway: A form of high speed divided freeway or expressway intended solely to convey motor vehicle traffic between major activity centers in the urban area and between urban areas. Carries the bulk of the urban areas traffic with the least amount of mileage. Typically includes grade-separated interchanges. Differs from the typical freeway via the inclusion of significant landscaping features in the median and along both outer edges of right-of-way.
Arterial (Major and Minor).**	Boulevard: A high speed divided thoroughfare of 4 or more lanes intended to convey traffic through and between urban activity centers with little direct access limited to large development tracts. On-street parking is not provided and bicycle and pedestrian facilities may be provided in a manner that clearly separates them from motor vehicle lanes. Setbacks of structures exceed those found in more urbanized environments and are augmented by heavy landscaping. Performs the function of an arterial thoroughfare.
Low Speed Boulevard:	A low speed divided thoroughfare within urban (and urbanizing) areas intended to serve local and through traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists. Up to 4 lanes wide, low speed boulevards may include on-street parking and some direct access to adjacent properties but serve longer trips through districts and neighborhoods located in the urban environment. Perform the function of an arterial thoroughfare.
Minor Arterial/Collector.**	Avenue: A low to moderate speed thoroughfare intended to provide for the access of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists to abutting land. Up to 4 lanes wide, avenues allow on-street parking and convey traffic within central business district, mixed-used district or other activity center. May alternatively be divided or undivided. Avenues are typically short in length and either link or transition into higher order thoroughfares meant to convey traffic between activity centers. May perform the function of an arterial or collector thoroughfare.
Local.**	Local Street: A low speed thoroughfare which serves primarily to provide direct access to abutting properties for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists, and links residential areas with access to higher order streets. Provides connectivity between neighborhoods and other districts of concentrated development or activity. May alternatively serve portions of central business or mixed use districts which bisect thoroughfares intended to convey higher traffic volumes throughout such districts. Performs the function of a local street in the functional classification system.
	Alley: A low speed shared vehicular serviceway providing access to the rear of properties for parking, and utility easements and servicing. Not intended to serve traffic flow as part of the functional classification system.
<p>Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers, <i>Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities (Preliminary)</i>. * Note: Appropriate for areas that are currently rural in nature but intended for mixed use and other higher density development. ** Note: Applicable Functional Classification.</p>	

The descriptions contained in **Figures T-16** and **T-17** expand upon the basic FHWA functional classification recommendations in order to promote the development of a community-wide street network that takes into account preferred development patterns. For instance, an arterial street in an existing downtown district or proposed mixed-use activity center must be designed for different activities than an arterial street in the rural portions of the county. Specific design recommendations for all street types described in this subsection should be included in the *Community Agenda* portion of this *Plan*. Regardless, all three communities should update their applicable development regulations to allow for the design and construction of a wider variety of street types than currently allowed.

Street Facility Spacing

While most of the specific design recommendations for the streets described in **Figures T-16** and **T-17** should be addressed in the *Community Agenda* section of the comprehensive plan, it is necessary to at least explore spacing recommendations for new arterial and collector thoroughfares in order to

TRANSPORTATION

prepare a Major Thoroughfare Plan map. Based on functional classification of street, **Figure T-18** identifies recommended spacing between two of the same street facilities.

Figure T-18: Street Facility Spacing	
Street Segment by Functional Class	Separation Between Facilities*
Principal Arterial	1 – 2 Miles
Minor Arterial	½ to 1 Mile
Collector**	¼ to ½ Mile

*Recommendations for urban type thoroughfares will vary outside of ranges presented in this Figure.
 **Includes residential collector streets.

It is important to note that spacing recommendations in **Figure T-18** are representative of rural and suburban thoroughfare systems. Spacing recommendations for many of the urban street types listed in **Figure 7-R** are significantly less. Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County should ultimately base street spacing and interconnectivity requirements on both functional class and thoroughfare type.

Major Thoroughfare Plan Map

The *Major Thoroughfare Plan Map (Map T.10)* within this subsection is preliminary. The recommended location of new thoroughfares and thoroughfare upgrades illustrated on the map is based on a review of projected and recommended growth patterns in Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County and associated highway levels of service. Based on this review it was determined that the need to map major thoroughfares was limited to portions of McDuffie County in direct proximity to Thomson. When utilizing the preliminary *Major Thoroughfare Plan Map*, it is important to note the following key considerations:

- *The Major Thoroughfare Plan Map illustrates the recommended location of streets that should be upgraded in functional class.*
- *The Major Thoroughfare Plan Map illustrates all new recommended arterial thoroughfares.*
- *The Major Thoroughfare Plan Map illustrates only some of the recommended future collector thoroughfares located within or in close proximity to the city of Thomson. The Map in no way infers that these are the only locations in which future collector streets should be considered. The location of additional future collector thoroughfares should be based on the type of development, recommended facility spacing and incorporated into the subdivision/development process.*
- *This map is conceptual. The location of future arterial and collector streets is approximate based on recommended facility spacing, existing property lines and topography. Actual location may vary in either direction.*
- *Future and upgraded thoroughfares are illustrated according to functional classification only. Refer to **Figure T-20** to determine the most appropriate thoroughfare type.*

TRANSPORTATION

Figure T-19: McDuffie County Roads: Projected Reclassification and Capacity Improvements (Preliminary)

Description of Segment		Distance (Miles)	Functional Classification		Reason for Reclassification
Street	Location		Existing	Proposed	
SR 150/Cobham Road	Thomson East Bypass to Interstate 20	3.08	Major Collector	Minor Arterial	Bisects the Suburban Reserve character area providing principal linkage between future residential areas, downtown Thomson and Interstate 20.
Scuffle Road	Stagecoach Road to SR150/Cobham Road	2.23	Local	Collector	Bisects the Suburban Reserve character area placing it in the middle of McDuffie County's preferred area for future suburban growth. May be extended south to link with additional arterial routes.
Three Points Road/Wire Road	Just north of Interstate 20 interchange to SR 17 south of Thomson	7.35	Local & Major Collector	Principal Arterial	Slated for interchange at Interstate 20 and conversion to western bypass. Upgrades to account for projected increases in heavy vehicle traffic.

Figure T-20: McDuffie County Roads: Proposed Thoroughfares* (Preliminary)

Description of Proposed Segment					
Street	Location	Distance (Miles)	Functional Classification	Thoroughfare Type**	Notes
Branan Street Link	Branan Street terminus west to Cedar Rock Road		Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	Existing section of Branan and Dunn Streets would require improvement.
Dallas/Cobham Extension	Dallas Road east of Washington Highway to Cobham Road at Interstate 20	3.6	Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial	None.
Knox Street Connector	Mendel Street to Harrison Road	.4	Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	None.
Lincoln Street Extension	White Oak Road south to proposed O'Neal/Temple Connector	.5	Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	None.
O'Neal/Temple Connector	Sills Street to Harrison Road	.8	Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	Extension of existing Thomson street grid.
Plum Street Connector	Old Salem Road at SR 17 west to Warrenton Highway	2.1	Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	Local connection between existing and future neighborhoods.
Reese Road Extension	Reese Road terminus east to Scuffle Road	1.2	Collector	Collector	None.
Scott Street Extension	Scott Street terminus west to Cedar Rock Road	.7	Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	Existing section of Betsy Branch and Scott Streets would require improvements.
Scuffle Road Extension	SR 150/Cobham Road south to Moose Club Road	3.6	Collector	Collector	Intended to convey local traffic along the east side of Thomson between arterials.
Seymour Street Connector	Washington Highway to Cedar Rock Road	2.1	Minor Arterial	Boulevard	None.
Shank Street Extension	MLK to Ferrous Road	.6	Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	None.
Shiloh Street Spur	Manassas Drive to Wrens Highway		Collector	Avenue (2 Lane)	None.
West Bypass Link	Washington Highway to Three Points Road	3.0	Principal Arterial	Parkway	Conveys through traffic and large vehicle traffic between industrial areas and the pending Three Points Road interchange.

**Note: List is not inclusive of all new collector routes necessary to serve current and future travel needs. Additional collector thoroughfare needs should be identified via the development review process.*

***Note: See Figures 7-Q and 7-R for descriptions.*



TRANSPORTATION

Just because an existing street segment is not highlighted on the *Major Thoroughfare Plan Map*, or listed within **Figures T-18** and **T-19**, does not mean that it should not be a candidate for future improvements. An existing thoroughfare's omission from this subsection simply means that the road's functional classification does not need to change as a result of any projected growth or improvement. Local government leaders are encouraged to pro-actively identify additional existing thoroughfares that are in need of improvement, but not necessarily in need of increases in capacity. Such a list should be included as part of a final *Major Thoroughfare Plan* contained in the *Community Agenda*. Efforts should subsequently be made to ensure that existing road improvements correspond with the applicable street types and design standards contained within the *Plan*. Finally, local effort should be made to add the road improvement projects listed in the *Major Thoroughfare Plan* to the GDOT Construction Work Program and STIP.

Right-of-Way Reservation.

The recommendations contained within the *Major Thoroughfare Plan* and illustrated on the *Major Thoroughfare Plan Map* cannot be implemented without pro-active efforts on behalf of local governments to prevent encroachment within corridors designated to be major thoroughfares.

In some states, the right to reserve rights-of-way for public use is tied directly to the completion of an "Official Map" which illustrates existing public streets and facilities, and proposed future street rights-of-way that have been determined via surveys. While the state of Georgia also provides statutes governing the preparation of official maps for existing state and local highway systems (O.C.G.A. 32-4), there is no passage that expressly requires or permits "future" rights-of-way to be included. Barring specific requirements within Georgia for local governments to illustrate future street rights-of-way on an official map, subject to formal survey, the *Major Thoroughfare Plan Map* should provide the necessary authority for McDuffie County and Thomson to preserve rights-of-way for these important community facilities. Where possible however, formal advanced survey of future arterial thoroughfares illustrated on the *Major Thoroughfare Plan Map* should take place to provide the community with greater predictability of their ultimate location.

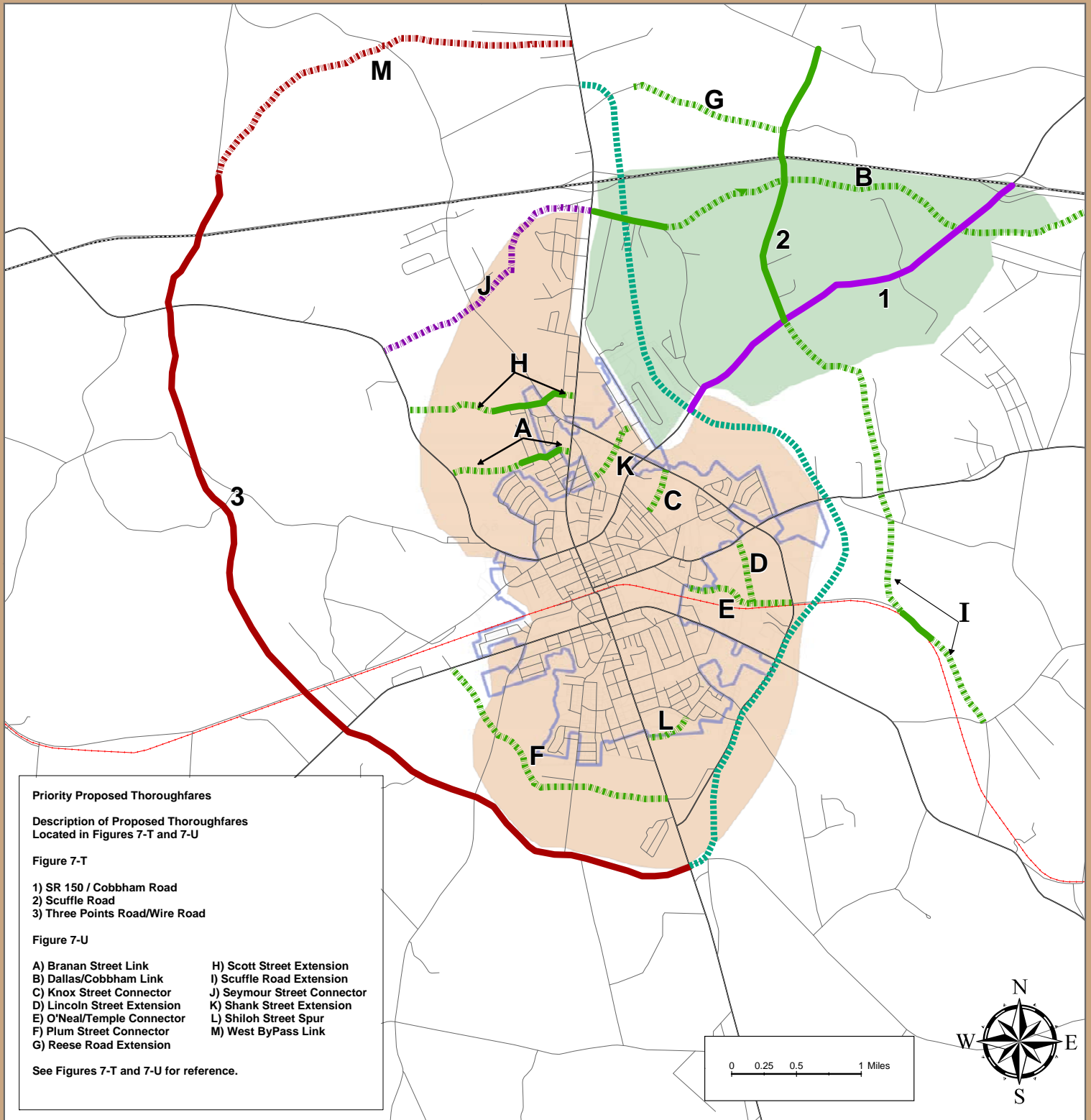
As previously indicated within this chapter, right-of-way reservation consistent with the *Major Thoroughfare Plan* can be accomplished partially via the subdivision process. Where new subdivisions are located in proximity to a future arterial street, or in such a manner that a new collector street should be constructed/extended, local subdivision regulations may require the dedication of the applicable section of right-of-way. In some instances the regulations may even require construction of a portion of the road segment if it will serve as an access to the new development. Alternatively, where land is not intended to be subdivided, right-of-way reservation can be tied directly to a request for a building permit on a particular piece of property. Ultimately however, the pace of surrounding development may exceed the local government's ability to acquire all of the right-of-way necessary to construct a new thoroughfare. In such instances, local governments must be prepared to negotiate with a property owner for advanced purchase rights.

Right-of-way purchases for future thoroughfares may be obtained via direct purchase, less than fee simple purchase or density transfers. All three mechanisms are dependent on circumstances that are occurring in the vicinity. Advance fee simple purchase funds are usually limited - so they should be considered only as a last resort shortly prior to the need to build the facility. Less than fee simple purchase may occur in conjunction with development-triggered right-of-way reservation in areas

TRANSPORTATION

where development pressure is not yet excessive, keeping costs of the purchase low. Finally, density transfers may be appropriate to incorporate in conjunction with any right-of-way reservation requirements that may be implemented by local governments. As a result, the developer's loss of land may be directly compensated by an increase in the net density of the remaining portions of their development tracts.

DRAFT



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Major Thoroughfare Recommended Priorities

East ByPass	Roads	Suburban Reserve
Proposed Collector (Existing Street)	Railroad	Urban Reserve
Proposed Collector (New Street)	City of Thomson	
Minor Arterial (Existing Street)		
Minor Arterial (New Street)		
Major Arterial (Existing Street)		
Major Arterial (New Street)		

McDuffie County Character Areas
See Chapter L5

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan
2009-2029

Chapter 8
Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

Upon the commencement of work on the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* and the formation of the planning advisory committee, a subcommittee of local officials was formed to address the specific issues of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Thomson and unincorporated McDuffie County. The subcommittee's work was intended to provide an analysis of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in both communities in much greater detail than might typically occur during the comprehensive planning process. The efforts of the subcommittee resulted in the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*.

Creation of the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* was always intended to be part of the comprehensive planning process for Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County. As a result, the final plan was not forwarded to the Thomson City Council or the McDuffie County Board of Commissioners for formal adoption as an independent document. Instead, the *Thomson-McDuffie County Long Range Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* has been reformatted and included as a chapter of Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County's *Community Assessment*. **This chapter does not include an independent analysis of pedestrian and bicycle facilities for Dearing.** An overview of pedestrian and bicycle facilities within Dearing can be found in Chapter 7 (Transportation).

Pedestrian and bicycle transportation has become an important component of Thomson-McDuffie County's long-range planning efforts. As the City and County embark on a major redevelopment effort, non motorized modes (particularly pedestrian transportation) will receive considerable attention in local circulation plans.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Bicycle and Pedestrian chapter is to define strategies to encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation in Thomson-McDuffie County, with particular emphasis on downtown Thomson. The following objectives have been identified by Thomson-McDuffie County officials in meeting the goal:

- To develop policies and action strategies for new pedestrian and bicycle facilities guidance.
- To identify important pedestrian linkages and connectivity between the downtown district and surrounding neighborhoods.

Subcommittee members were asked to follow a 5-step plan development process, which included (in order):

- Assessing existing conditions.
- Reviewing existing plans and public works projects.
- Determining needs in light of existing conditions and plans/projects.
- Developing policies to address needs.
- Prioritizing implementation options.

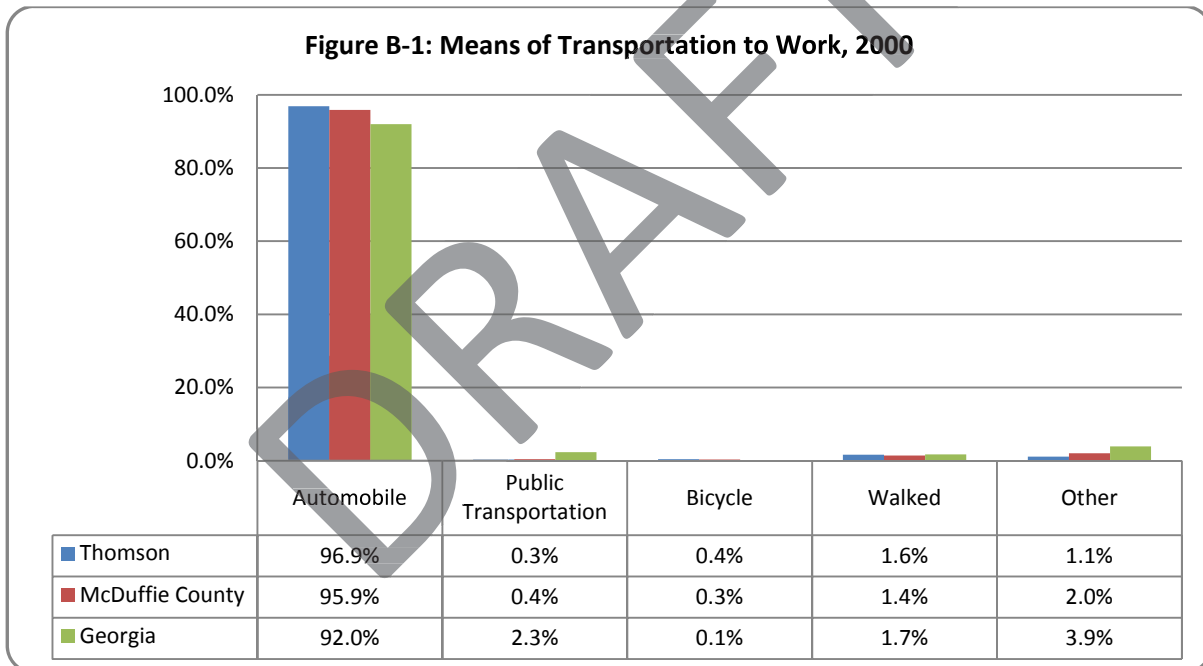
BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Although a comprehensive view of pedestrian and bicycle transportation is taken, the major emphasis of this chapter is placed on infrastructure improvements, as these are viewed as the major obstacles for pedestrian and bicycle transportation in Thomson and McDuffie County.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Pedestrian and Bicycle Usage

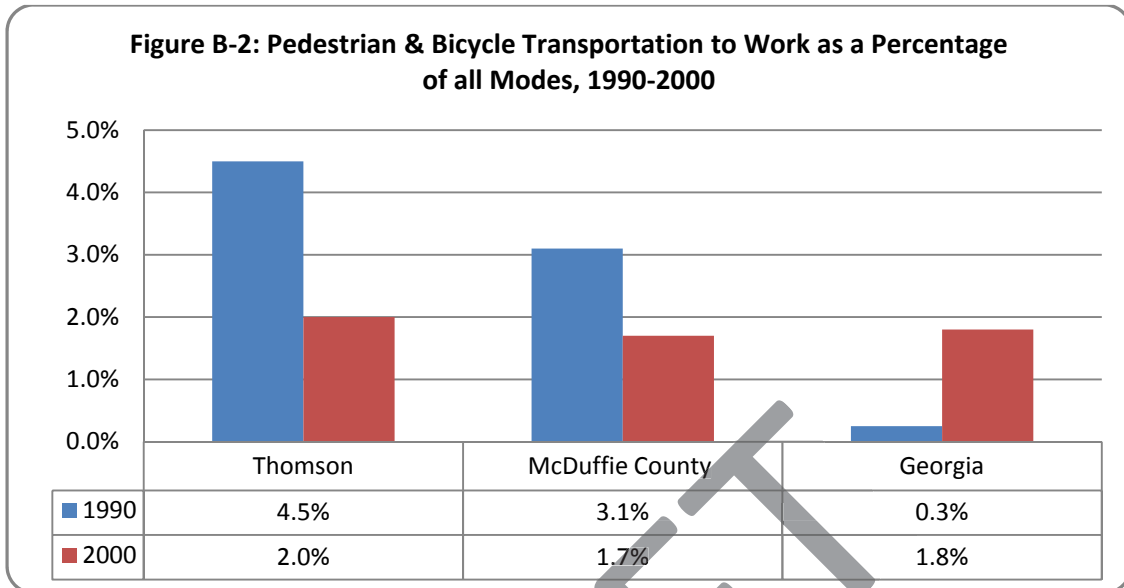
Data on pedestrian and bicycle transportation is not readily available. The U.S. Bureau of the Census counts work trips but other utilitarian trips are not measured. The census data does, however, provide insight into the transportation habits of the working population. **Figure B-1** details the means of transportation to work for Thomson, McDuffie County and Georgia residents. Both Thomson and McDuffie County residents depend on automobile transportation for 95.9 percent and 96.6 percent of work trips respectively, a rate higher than the state average of 92 percent. Walking and bicycling to work account for less than 2 percent of all work trips.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; SF3 P-49 (2000); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure B-2 includes the percentage of walking and bicycling trips to work since 1990. In Thomson, the walking and bicycling rate to work declined from 4.5 percent of all work trips in 1990 to 2 percent in 2000. Similarly, walking and bicycling trips for both McDuffie County and the state as a whole declined since 1990, albeit at a slower rate than Thomson.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; SF3 P-49 (2000), P-30 (1990); Calculations by CSRA RDC

Figure B-3 details the distribution of travel times to work under 30 minutes (generally defined as the pedestrian catchment area). Overall, travel times to work have lengthened for Thomson, McDuffie County and the state as a whole. The most pronounced trend, however, is seen in Thomson. In 1990, 9.2 percent of Thomson residents were within five minutes of their workplace. By 2000, this was reduced by almost two thirds to 3.9 percent. Similarly, the percentage of Thomson’s population within 10 minutes of their workplace declined from 36.2 percent to 30.8 percent.

The decline in walking and bicycling rates mirror the decline of Thomson’s downtown business district. As more businesses moved to the City’s outer fringe - or other parts of unincorporated McDuffie County - to benefit for lower land values and more parking, work travel distances increased for City residents.

Figure B-3: Distribution of Travel Time to Work (in Minutes), 1990-2000

	Thomson		McDuffie County		Georgia	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less than 5 minutes	9.2%	3.9%	5.3%	4%	3.2%	2.5%
Less than 10 minutes	36.2%	30.8%	21.9%	19.4%	14%	11.5%
Less than 20 minutes	75.9%	69.1%	58.5%	54.3%	47.1%	40.9%
Less than 30 minutes	82.6%	79.6%	69.7%	68.5%	67.2%	60.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; SF3 P-31 (2000), P50 (1990)

It is data such as this that has prompted City and County officials to take a closer look at policies geared towards pedestrians and bicyclists.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Travel Generators

Major travel generators – defined as public facilities, churches, daycares and school areas – are listed in **Figure B-4**. The bulk of Thomson’s major travel generators are located along Main Street.

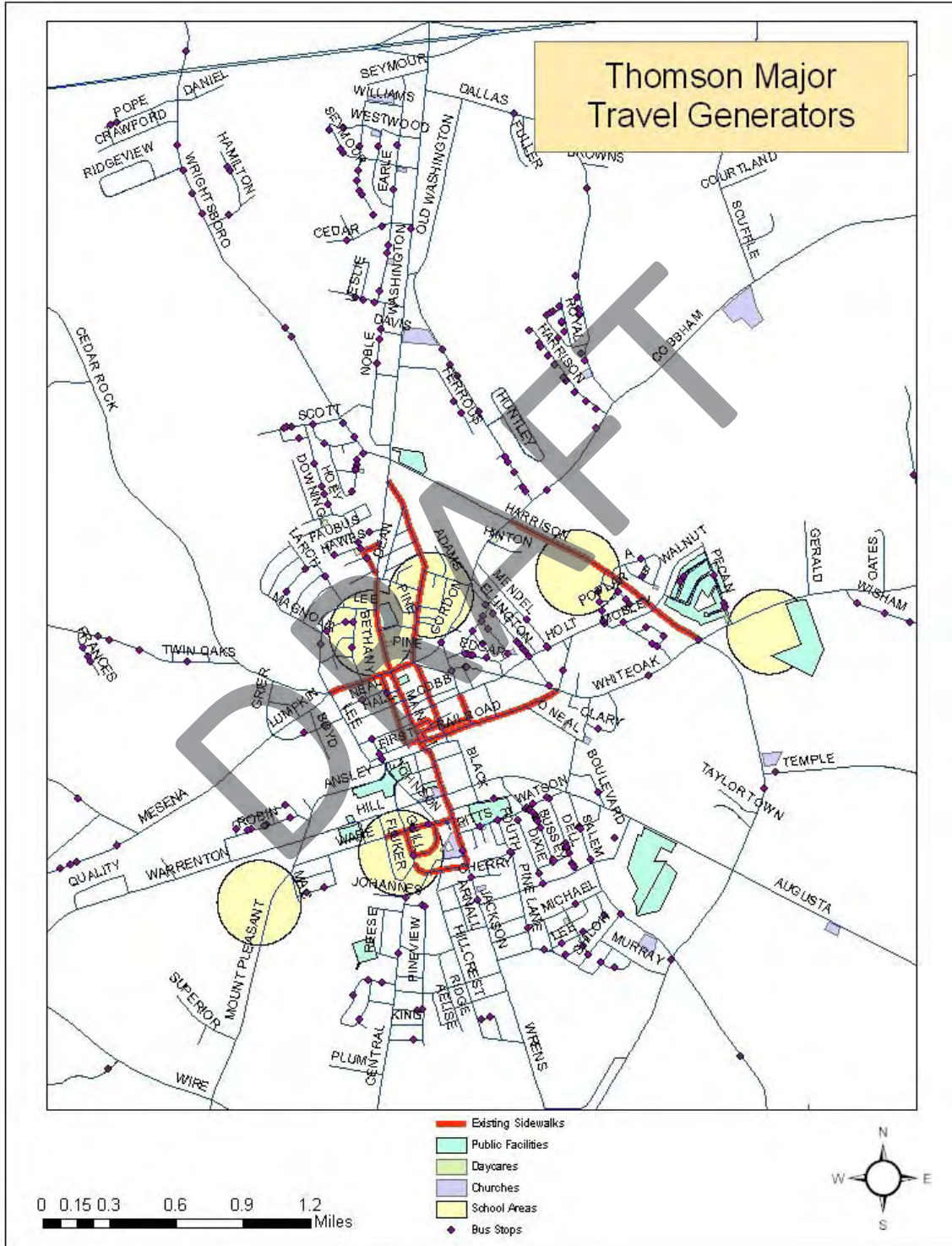


Figure B-4: Thomson Major Travel Generators

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are an essential transportation facility for pedestrians as they provide critical connections between neighborhoods, schools, shopping areas, parks, and other important local destinations.

Sidewalks in Thomson are generally limited to sections of Main Street and areas adjacent to Railroad Street (Figure B-5). Existing sidewalks were developed by the City (and GDOT along Main Street) in the 1960s and 1970s. Less than 5 percent of Thomson has sidewalk coverage. Low sidewalk coverage is due to the lack of sidewalk requirements in Thomson’s zoning and subdivision regulations. When Thomson was a smaller, more compact City, the existing sidewalk network sufficed to link most of Thomson’s neighborhoods to major travel generators. As the City grew, and more subdivisions were developed away from downtown, sidewalk coverage declined drastically.

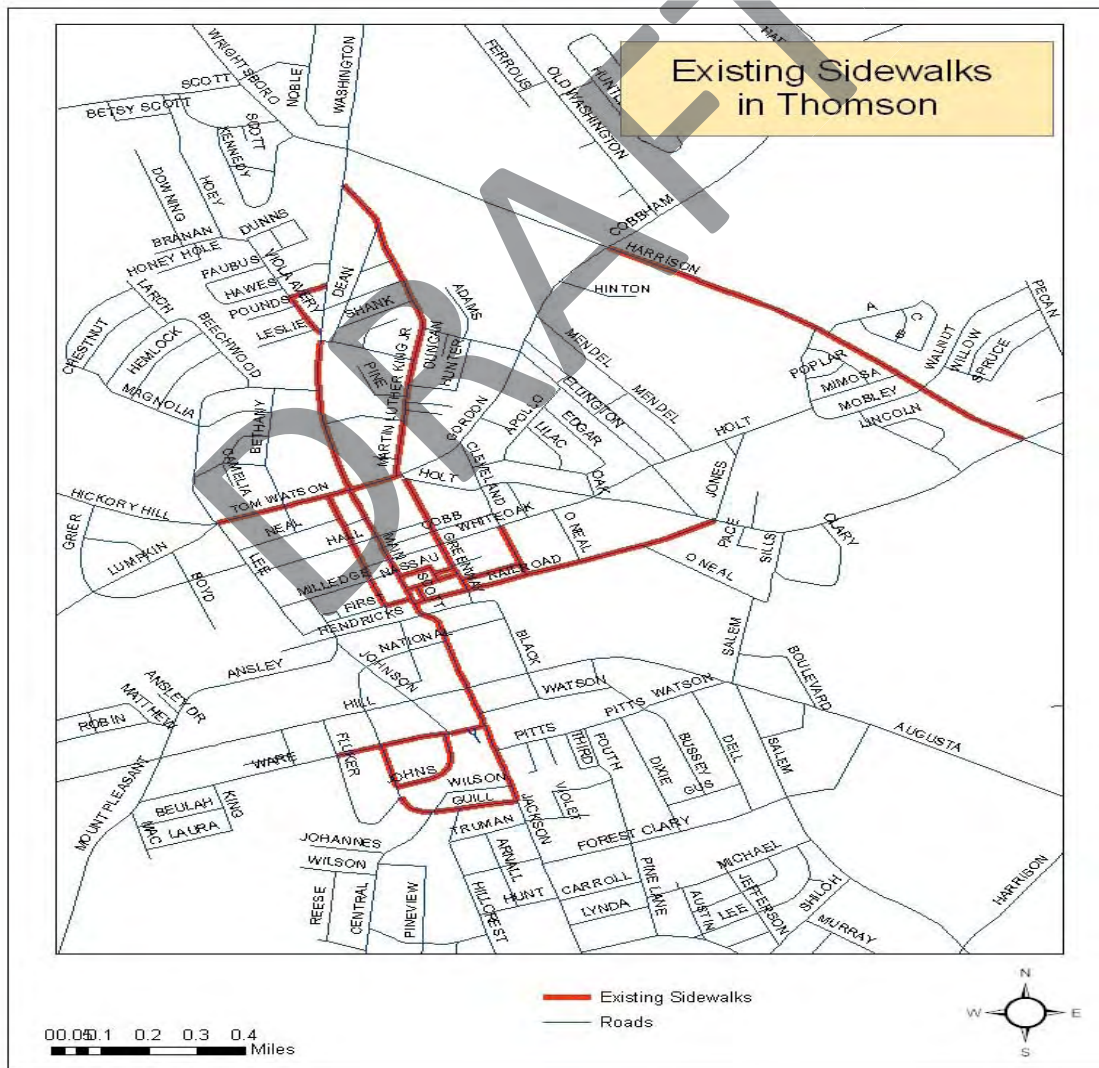


Figure B-5: Existing Sidewalks in Thomson

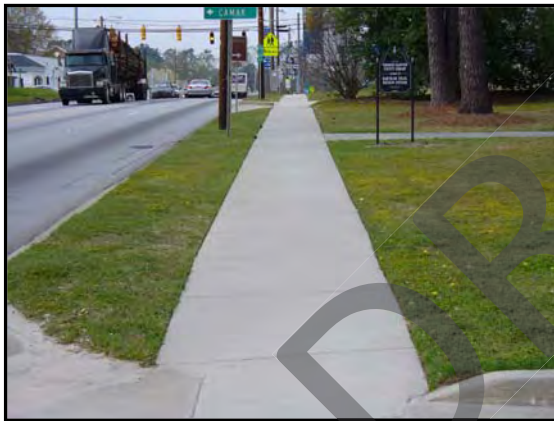
BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The condition of sidewalks varies throughout the City. Along Main Street, sidewalks are generally in good condition as these have been resurfaced by GDOT during roadway maintenance projects. Along City streets (most of which lead to Main Street), most sidewalks are in poor condition, reflecting their age after 30-40 years of use. Thomson officials identified numerous problems with the existing sidewalk system:

- Decrepit sidewalks
- Poor sidewalk linkages
- Encroaching vegetation
- Protruding objects (bushes and utility poles)
- Overhead power lines

Other deficiencies, such the lack of directional signage, pedestrian-scale lighting, lack of crosswalks, high traffic volumes) are discussed below.

Sidewalks in poor condition are a barrier that discourages pedestrian transportation. The lack of adequate sidewalks forces pedestrians onto the roadway with motor vehicle traffic. This problem is especially common along roadways leading to Main Street.



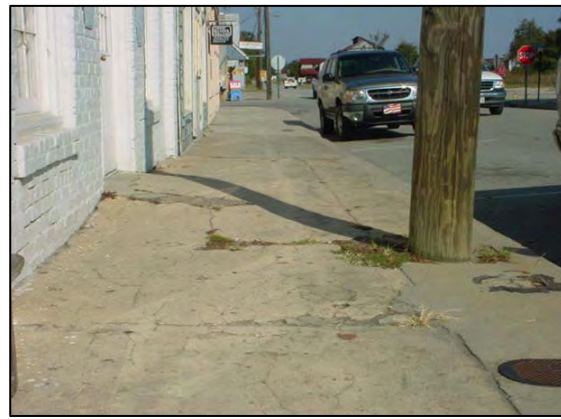
Good conditions sidewalks along Main Street



Sidewalks cracks and encroaching vegetation along Tom Watson Way



Protruding objects along Tom Watson Way



Uneven and broken pavement along Journal Street

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Crosswalks

Crosswalks are designated points along a roadway which are employed to assist pedestrians wishing to cross. They are designed to keep pedestrians together where they can be seen by motorists, and where they can cross most safely with the flow of vehicular traffic.

Crosswalks are only available at two signalized intersections along Main Street in Thomson. These crosswalks are currently in poor condition, with faded markings.

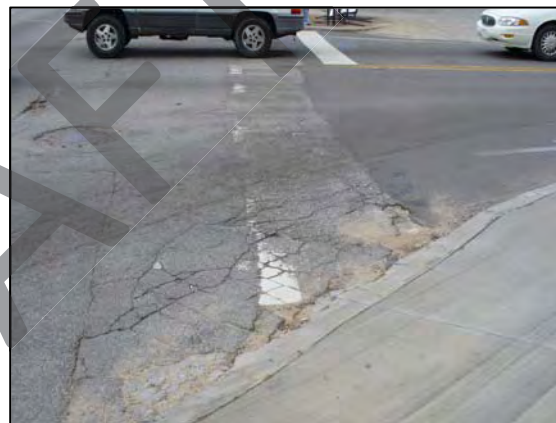


Faded crosswalk along Main Street

Curb Ramps

Curb ramps are critical in providing access through accessible transitions between the sidewalk and the street for people who use wheelchairs.

Curb ramps are available along Main Street and certain sections within the historic district but are almost all in poor condition.



Dilapidated crosswalk along Main Street

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is a term applied to a variety of physical measures intended to reduce the speed of automobile traffic. Techniques involve the use of physical changes to the roadway to reduce vehicle speeds.

There is currently no traffic calming infrastructure in Thomson, even though significant traffic volumes are evident along Main Street. Reduced speed limits are currently the only mechanism to reduce vehicle speeds through the City.

Support Facilities

Pedestrian support facilities – such as street trees, directional signage, lighting, and benches – are used to enhance the pedestrian environment and make walking appealing to pedestrians.

Currently within Thomson and McDuffie County pedestrian support facilities do not exist.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Bicycle Infrastructure

Neither Thomson nor McDuffie County have any bicycle lanes, wide shoulders, or paths to facilitate bicycle transportation. Instead, bicyclists ride on narrow shoulder or share the lane along often high traffic volume roadways. Bicyclists also ride along sidewalks in Thomson, which is not permitted.

There are two state bicycle routes that intersect in Thomson and McDuffie County (**Figure B-6**):

- State Bicycle Route 50 is an east-west route (Augusta link) which originates in Augusta and ends in downtown Thomson.
- State Bicycle Route 85 is a north-south route (Savannah River Route) which originates in Savannah and ends at the Tennessee state line.

As part of the Central Savannah River Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, two other bicycle routes were proposed:

- U.S. 278/GA 12 linking Warrenton and Thomson
- GA 43 linking Thomson and Lincolnton

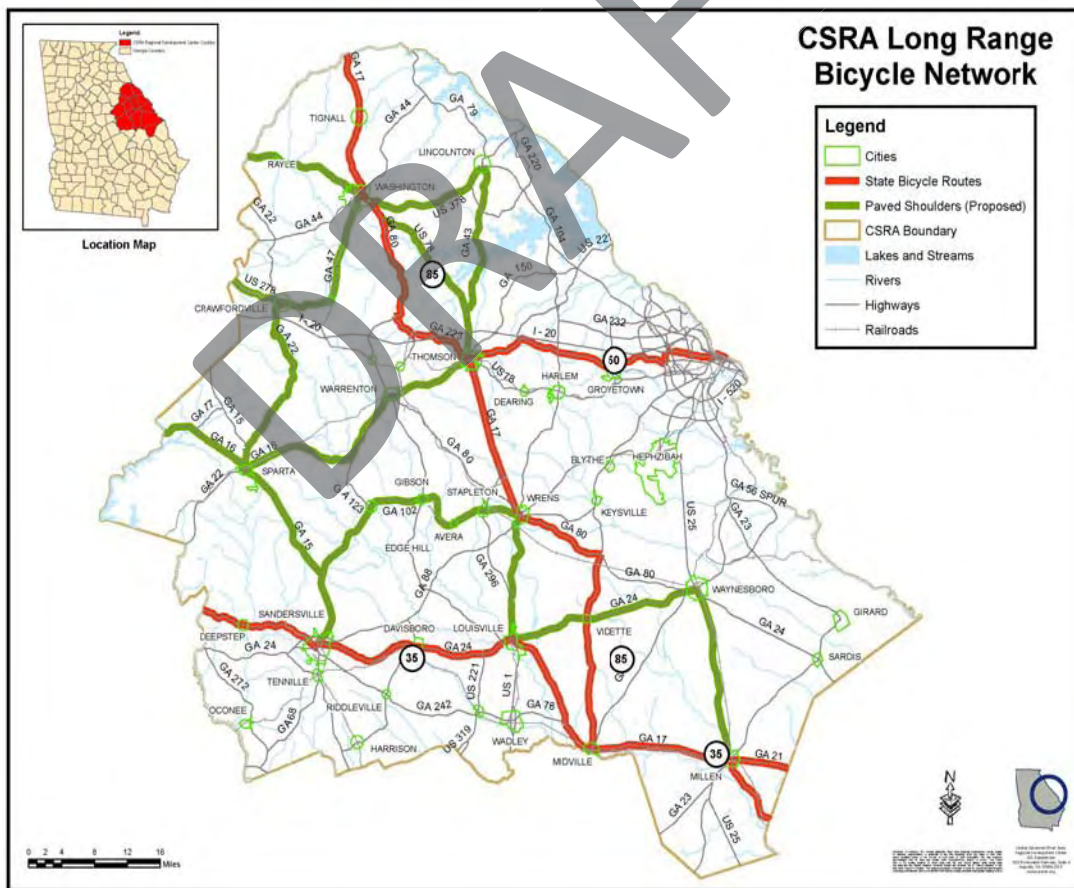


Figure B-6: Thomson-McDuffie County State Bicycle Route

Source: CSRA Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2004, p.3-3)

Roadways

Thomson's roadways fall into two broad categories. The larger system is linear and suburban-type and is evident away from downtown Thomson. The smaller type (around downtown) is interconnected and small block pattern street network, which provides good opportunities for pedestrian access and mobility. In unincorporated McDuffie County, the road network is comprised of state highways providing regional connections, along with sprawling county roadways that lead to relatively small residential settlements.

The following classification of roadways identifies existing streets and their link to major areas. Some streets may fall under more than one classification.

- **Historic Streets:** Streets that have historic significance. These streets play a significant role in community life and provide special uses including parades and festivals. Railroad Street and all adjacent streets qualify as historic streets.
- **Main Streets:** Streets that typically include major shopping and entertainment locations. Such streets generally have retail and services on both sides and extend for numerous blocks. Main Street (SR 17) is an example of Thomson's main streets.
- **Pedestrian Connectors:** Streets that provide direct access to the downtown district. These routes play an important role in integrating neighborhoods and the downtown district. Examples include Harrison St, Gordon St and Pitts Street.
- **Activity Centers:** Streets that are in proximity or lead to community facilities. They are typically located in proximity to major neighborhoods and have a higher probability of attracting pedestrians. Whiteoak Street and Wrightstboro Road are examples.

A significant issue with roadways is the high traffic volumes along Main Street, which renders it difficult to cross the street. According to GDOT State Traffic and Report Statistics (2006), the Annual Average Daily Traffic along Main Street is 17,680, an increase of 7 percent since 2001.

Existing Policy Context

Decisions affecting pedestrian and bicycle transportation are under the direction of the Thomson and McDuffie County Departments of Public Works (DPW). Currently, there are no mechanisms for guidance on facilities development as city council and the county commission have not developed policy in regards to pedestrian or bicycle transportation.

Maintenance of all roads and some sidewalks is provided by the City of Thomson and McDuffie County in their respective jurisdictions. Steam cleaning is scheduled on a monthly basis. GDOT maintains roadways and sidewalks along state highways.

Land Use and the Built Environment

As noted, Thomson developed along transportation routes – Main Street and the railroad – rather than along a traditional grid pattern. Commercial development along Main Street runs for several miles. Because of this pattern, Thomson has no town square or common area that functions as the community's hub of economic and social activity.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Since the 1980s, Thomson's role as McDuffie County main retail area has come under increased competition from fringe area development. Fringe development has been characterized by auto-centered patterns that often neglect pedestrian facilities in favor of parking lots and lengthy road widths.

Neighborhoods in different parts of Thomson are characterized by very different mixes and distributions of land uses. In general, older parts of Thomson, including the downtown area, have more intermingled land uses than other areas in the City. In more recently-developed zones, land uses tend to be significantly more segregated, with most neighborhoods encompassing either residential or commercial development.

In the older sections of Thomson, more destinations are within walking distance and residents are able to meet more of their daily needs by walking. Main Street, while overwhelmingly commercial, is relatively dense and provides convenient specialty shops, grocery shopping and a number of varied services. A bank, library, post-office, and restaurants also contribute to the residents' abilities to meet their daily needs by walking in the neighborhood.

In neighborhoods with more segregated land use patterns, walking is limited to recreation. Even if an adequate pedestrian transportation network is in place in these areas, many destinations residents wish to reach are too far away to consider walking a viable transportation option.

FUTURE CONDITIONS

Redevelopment Efforts

The City of Thomson is in the process of preparing a multi-faceted, long-range plan for redevelopment of the City's central business district – roughly bounded by Journal Street, Greenway Street, Railroad Street, Hendricks Street and Church Street. The purpose of the plan is to stop further disintegration of the economic and social vitality of the central business district and to restore a sense of prosperity to downtown Thomson by encouraging existing businesses to remain in the area and to attract new businesses.

The centerpiece of the long-range plan is the development of a new town center. The plan envisions the town center being anchored by a new City/County building complex located on the eastern edge of the existing commercial district (**Figure B-7**). Other key components of the long-range plan include:

- Pedestrian safety improvements throughout the district to render the commercial business district more pedestrian friendly;
- Preservation of the last remaining brick paved street in Thomson and redevelopment of the commercial business spaces along Journal Street;
- Improvement of existing parking facilities and the provision of additional strategically located parking;
- Establishment of a local history museum that includes a section devoted to the role that transportation has played in the establishment and development of the City and County;

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

- Streetscape improvements to create a more aesthetically inviting area in the business district; the desired improvements include the establishment of landscape planting beds for small ornamental trees, shrubbery and seasonal color plantings, replacement of existing street lighting with historic reproduction light fixtures, and placing existing overhead electric power, telephone and cable TV lines underground;
- Development of a sign ordinance;
- Development of architectural standards that will be applicable to the renovation of existing buildings and construction of new buildings.

The City of Thomson was awarded Transportation Enhancements (TE) federal aid funding for Phase I and II of its long-range plan for redevelopment plan. In developing the project, the City went through a process of defining the general scope of the long-range plan, identifying specific components of the long range plan that would be eligible for TE grant funding, developing estimates of probable construction costs for these components, and prioritizing implementation options. The specific components included in the projects are described below.

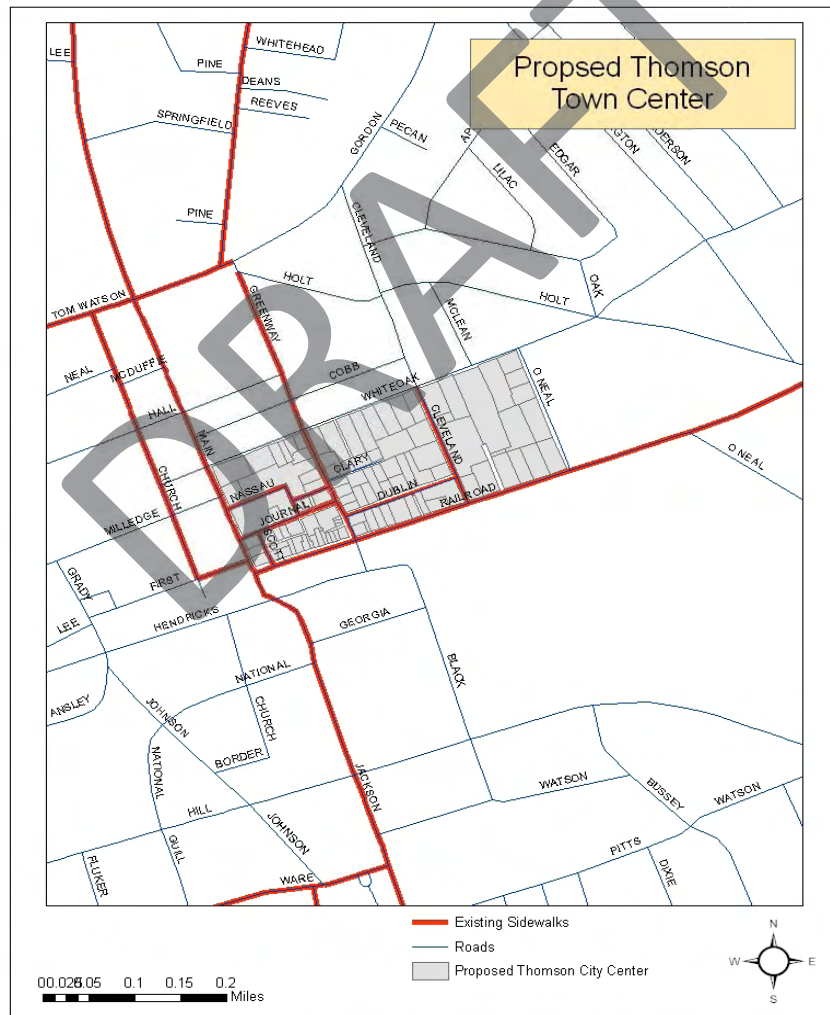


Figure B-7: Proposed Thomson Town Center

Pedestrian Safety Improvements – Sidewalk Rehabilitation

Large portions of the existing sidewalks in the targeted area are broken and deteriorating. These sections of sidewalk pose a pedestrian safety hazard. Furthermore, the absence of sidewalks in some areas puts pedestrian traffic on the street with vehicular traffic, resulting in unsafe conditions. Specific sidewalk improvements funded include:

- Replace broken and deteriorated sidewalks on White Oak Street from SR 17 to Greenway Street
- Replace sidewalk on north side of Railroad Street from SR 17 to Greenway Street
- Construct new sidewalks along the north side of 1st Avenue from SR 17 to Church Street and along Church Street from 1st Avenue to Milledge Street. 1st Avenue will be changed from two-way to one-way traffic.

Pedestrian Safety Improvements - Upgrade Pedestrian Crossings on SR 17

The Thomson-McDuffie Downtown Development Council participated in the process of defining the scope of the TE projects. Members of the Council noted that the speed and volume of truck traffic along Main Street has a negative impact on pedestrian movements across the street, and consequently a negative impact on retail businesses on the central business district. At the intersection of Main Street and Tom Watson Way/Lumpkin Street, and at the intersection of Main Street and White Oak Street, substandard turning radii cause long wheel base single unit and combination unit vehicles to drive up and over the curb and sidewalk. For these reasons, upgrading of the pedestrian crossings on Main Street (SR 17) is a top priority of this project. The specific improvements included the following:

- Improved pedestrian crossings along Main Street: The existing crossings are white traffic striping on asphalt paving. The crossings will be replaced with 6-foot wide, colored stamped concrete that resemble red brick pavers, with a 1-foot wide, white concrete strip on each side. The visual difference between the asphalt pavement and the pedestrian crossings alerts motorists to the pedestrian crossing. In addition, signage will be added in advance of the three crossings to advise motor vehicle operators that pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- Improved pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Main Street and Lumpkin Street/Tom Watson Way: The curb and gutter will be moved back to provide adequate vehicle turning radiuses within the roadway and the sidewalk reconstruction at the intersection will include ramps at the pedestrian crossings. The existing pedestrian crossings on all four legs of the intersection will be replaced with 6-foot wide, colored stamped concrete that resembles red brick pavers, with a 1-foot wide, white concrete strip on each side. The traffic signal system will be upgraded to include pedestrian crossing signals (not funded with TE funds).

Streetscape Improvements

The goal of these improvements is to have a major change in the streetscape of Main Street through downtown Thomson so that the corridor is a visually appealing City street rather than a stark high traffic volume throughway. Proposed improvements include:

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

- Replace existing street lighting with historic reproduction poles and fixtures, along Main Street from East Hall Street to Railroad Street, on White Oak Street from Main Street to Greenway Street, on Railroad Street from Main Street to Greenway Street, on Journal Street from Main Street to Greenway Street, on 1st Avenue from Main Street to Church Street, and on Church Street from 1st Avenue to Milledge Street.
- In conjunction with the street light replacement, placing existing overhead electric power, telephone and cable TV lines underground, along Main Street from East Hall Street to Railroad Street, along Railroad Street from Main Street to Greenway Street, along White Oak Street from Main Street to Greenway Street along 1st Avenue from Main Street to Church Street, and along Church Street from 1st Avenue to Milledge Street (not funded with TE funds).
- Construct a new municipal parking lot to provide overflow parking for the historic railroad depot that has been restored by the City, and to provide parking for the new local history museum located at the corner of Main Street and 1st Avenue. A portion of the local history museum is to be devoted to the role that transportation has played in the economic and social development of the City. The parking lot will be located at the intersection of 1st Avenue and Church Street. Layout of the parking lot will include grassed islands planted with shade trees and small scale ornamental trees (not funded with TE funds).
- Establish a screen of trees and shrubbery along the south edge of the depot parking lot to screen the view of the railroad tracks and the mixed use commercial development south of the tracks. This improvement along, with replacing the street lighting on Railroad Street with historic reproduction fixtures, will complete the restoration of the historic railroad depot that has been funded by the City.

Historic Preservation Improvements

A large portion of the target area is included within Thomson Commercial Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Preservation of the remaining historic resources within the Historic District is an important component of the long-range plan. Specific improvements proposed include:

- Reconstruct Journal Street from Main Street to Greenway Street. Journal Street is the last remaining brick paved street in the City of Thomson. The improvements will include new curb and gutter and sidewalk, and reconstruction of the brick roadway. Reconstruction of the roadway is seen as the important first step in commercial redevelopment of Journal Street.
- Replace the street lighting in the target area with historic reproduction fixtures.

This project will aid in converting the retail core and the surrounding area into a modern, competitive business district containing a balance of land uses with adequate access and parking. The project will help improve the traffic circulation system and reduce conflicts between the local nature of the downtown area and through traffic. It will provide adequate parking convenient to the access streets and to the businesses served. Pedestrian orientation of the district will be improved by creating an interconnecting system of safe walkways. The project will also develop a system of controls to assure compatible land uses and standards of development.

Air Quality

Poor air quality has been a significant issue for the Augusta metropolitan area since the 1990s. In the least five years, Augusta-Richmond County has been planning for the possibility of non-attainment designation. Other – primarily suburban- communities have been slow to respond despite the fact that non-attainment designation is rarely imposed on a single county jurisdiction but rather covers a wider region.

With proposed changes to particulate matter standards, it is possible that McDuffie County will be designated as a non attainment area. An increase in pedestrian and bicycle facilities – with a corresponding increase in use – is one major way that communities can mitigate the effects of non-attainment status.

DRAFT

ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities chapter promotes a supportive pedestrian and bicycle approach, recognizing that non-motorized transportation is an important component of redevelopment and long-range planning efforts. To achieve this, pedestrian and bicycle facilities must ensure:

- Comfort
- Convenience
- Efficiency
- Safety

Several impediments stand in the way of creating an efficient pedestrian and bicycle system. When considering the high cost of providing facilities, funding is difficult to obtain. Providing pedestrian facilities away from the downtown area, where pedestrian use is relatively low is difficult to justify for elected officials. Furthermore, most of Thomson's neighborhoods are already developed, which complicates providing pedestrian facilities in areas with insufficient right-of-way. Nevertheless, City and County officials identified the need to invest in pedestrian infrastructure.

Proposed Improvement Projects

City and County officials identified various priorities guiding future improvement projects. These include (in order of importance):

- System preservation
- Expanded infrastructure
- Support Facilities
- Supportive Policies

System Preservation

System preservation was identified as the highest priority. The existing sidewalk system covers a significant portion of Thomson's downtown area and enjoys the highest use.

A significant number of sidewalks in Thomson are generally in poor condition. Broken pavement, encroaching vegetation, protruding objects and poor condition of curb ramps limit residents' access to these facilities. These conditions are hazardous for all residents but pose additional challenges to users in wheelchairs and pedestrians with strollers. Eliminating these hazards so people can travel safely from one point to another are improvements that will promote walking and potentially attract new pedestrians.

System preservation requires that the City of Thomson maintain existing sidewalks, cross walks and curb ramps within its jurisdiction. The City should also coordinate with GDOT to resurface sidewalks, improve crosswalks and curb ramps along Main Street while resurfacing the roadway.

Expanded and New Infrastructure

Figure B-8 details proposed improvements needed to expand the existing pedestrian network. Expansion of the network is needed to provide links from established neighborhoods to the downtown area. For purposes of priorities, the sidewalk network is divided into two classifications:

- Primary Network: Improvements that link major neighborhood and/or commercial areas to downtown Thomson.
- Secondary Network: Improvements that link other small neighborhood areas to primary network sidewalks.

As a general rule a minimum 5' wide sidewalks should be built on both sides of all streets. This provides sufficient space for two pedestrians to travel side by side or for two people going in opposite directions to pass one another. Wider widths are preferred along the historic district, where pedestrian traffic levels are higher than in residential areas. In addition to the 5' minimum, space should be allowed for 4' zone for trees and street furniture along major pedestrian travel corridors linked to downtown. Sidewalks along local roadways along high-volume vehicular corridors should be separated from the travel way by a planting strip.

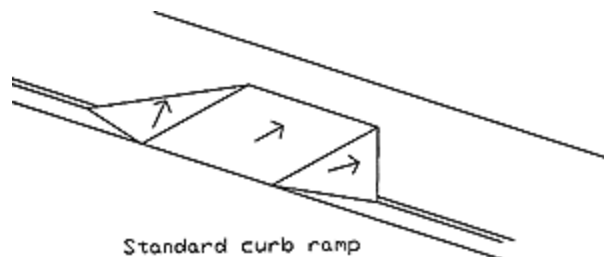
Regardless of location, all design should meet the ADA minimum width of 4 feet of unobstructed sidewalk passage.

Numerous pedestrian design guides are available to guide planning of facilities. Among the more popular are the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (1990), Institute of Transportation Engineers, Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities, A Proposed Recommended Practice (1993), and Federal Highway Administration, Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access (2001). The federal government has also developed accessibility standards in Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) to guide facility development for pedestrians with disabilities.

Additionally, Thomson and McDuffie County should consider a study to investigate the feasibility of a community wide trails network that would link the larger community with the on-street pedestrian network.

Curb Ramps

Curb ramps should be provided at each corner of an intersection that aligns with a pedestrian crossing through intersections. Broadly, three types of curbs are commonly employed, distinguished by their structural design and position relative to the sidewalk and street.



- Perpendicular curb ramp: one that is aligned so that the ramp is generally perpendicular to the curb and users will be traveling perpendicular to vehicular traffic at the bottom of the ramp.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

- Diagonal curb ramp: a single curb ramp that is located at the apex of the corner at an intersection with a straight path of travel down the ramp leading diagonally into the center of an intersection.
- Parallel curb ramp: two ramps leading down towards a center level landing at the bottom between both ramps with a level landing at the top of each ramp.

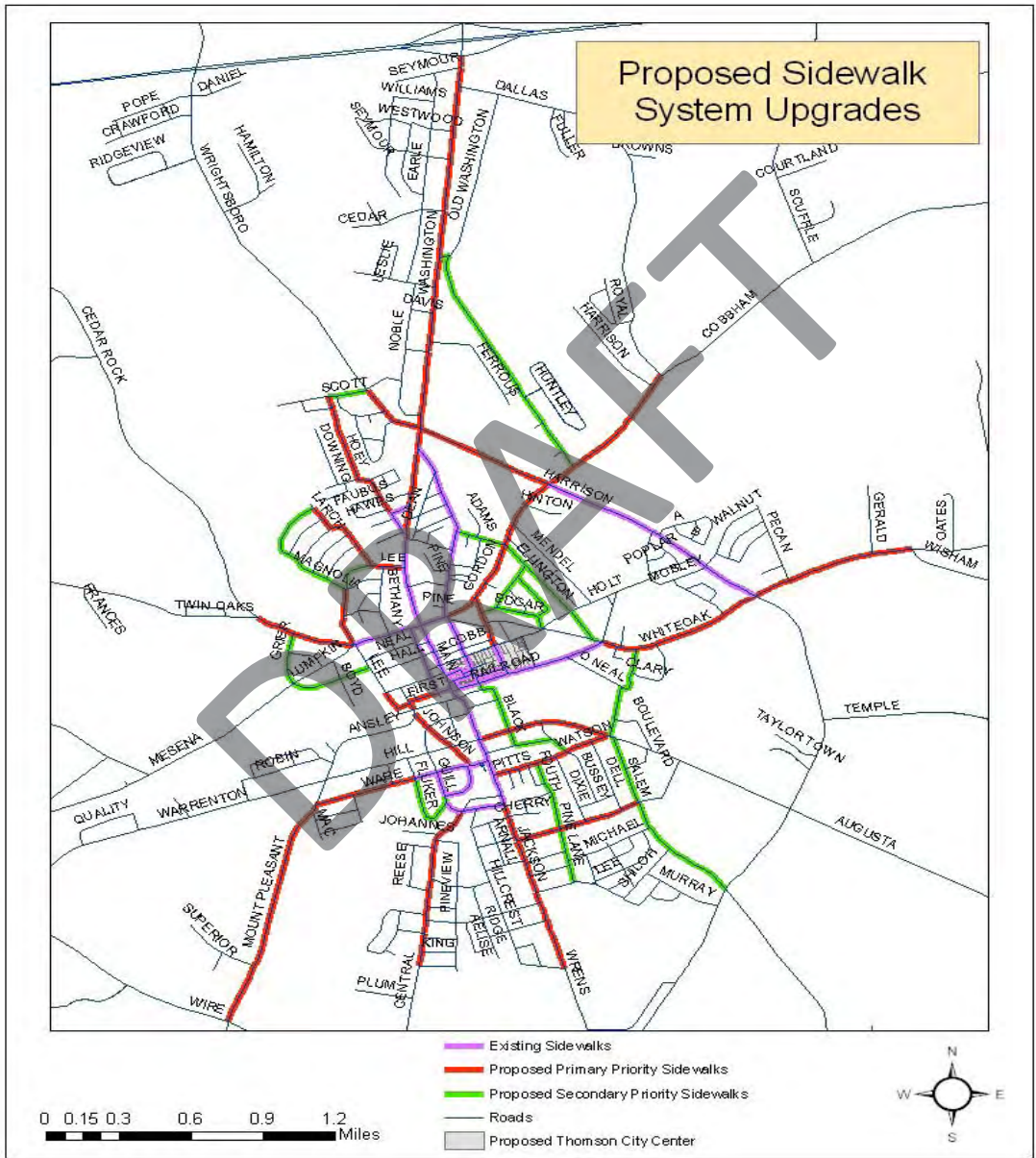


Figure B-8: Proposed Sidewalk System Upgrades

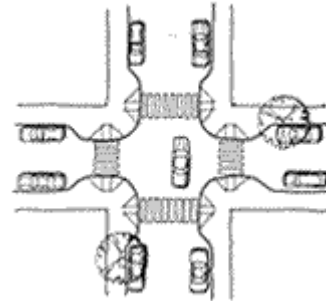
All three types have their advantages and disadvantages and all are acceptable so long as they meet acceptable design standards and do not place users directly in front of the intersection. A common design error is ramps that are oriented in the same direction of travel as the path. When angled

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

towards the middle of an intersection, the risk of pedestrian-motor vehicle accidents is significantly higher.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming serves to safely balance the needs of all users of the roadway. By slowing traffic speeds, traffic calming devices increase the reaction time available to motorists and pedestrians, thereby creating more opportunities for all users to share the roadway. Traffic calming also allows communities to enhance the aesthetic elements of a roadway and increase the livability of streets.



Common traffic calming techniques include:

- Roundabouts
- Lane Width Reduction
- Additional street landscaping and furniture
- Center islands and Pedestrian refuges at crossing locations
- On-street parking
- Bulb outs at crosswalks to reduce distances for pedestrian crossings
- Enhanced roadway lighting
- Separated sidewalks and curbing
- Textured pedestrian crossings (paved brick, cement concrete, granite pavers etc)
- Pavement Markings
- Raised Crosswalks

From all the above-mentioned options, crosswalk pavement markings are the most affordable alternative to more infrastructure-intensive techniques. Crosswalks define locations where pedestrians have a legal right of way when crossing streets. They can be at intersections or mid-block, at controlled intersections or uncontrolled intersections, be mark or unmarked, and be raised or at street level. Each of these configurations has different implications for pedestrian transportation.

Most crosswalks are at street level. Different pavement markings are used to draw attention to the crosswalk. Standard crosswalks are delineated with a single stripe at either edge of the crosswalk. Zebra crosswalks are used when it is desirable to make the crosswalk more visible to motorists. In raised crosswalks, vehicular traffic is raised to the level of the sidewalk, slowing down oncoming traffic. Crosswalks should be wide enough to accommodate the pedestrian flow and be designed to blend in with the surrounding environment.

Currently, pedestrian travel along Main and Railroad Streets is discouraged high traffic volumes and by motorists who disregard posted speed limits. Thomson should examine various forms of traffic calming at intersections along Main thoroughfares.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Bicycle Improvements

The existing State Bicycle Route and CSRA Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan networks offer Thomson and McDuffie County residents options for bicycle transportation. Current roadway geometrics and funding challenges do permit the addition of bicycle lanes, wide lanes or bicycle paths. Proposed bicycle improvements highlighted in **Figure B-9** include adding to the existing network through share the road signage and eventual 4-foot shoulders along designated roadways. The selected link county population centers with existing state bicycle routes and CSRA routes in order to create a continuous bicycle network. Four-foot shoulders should be added to all designated roadways during local resurfacing projects.

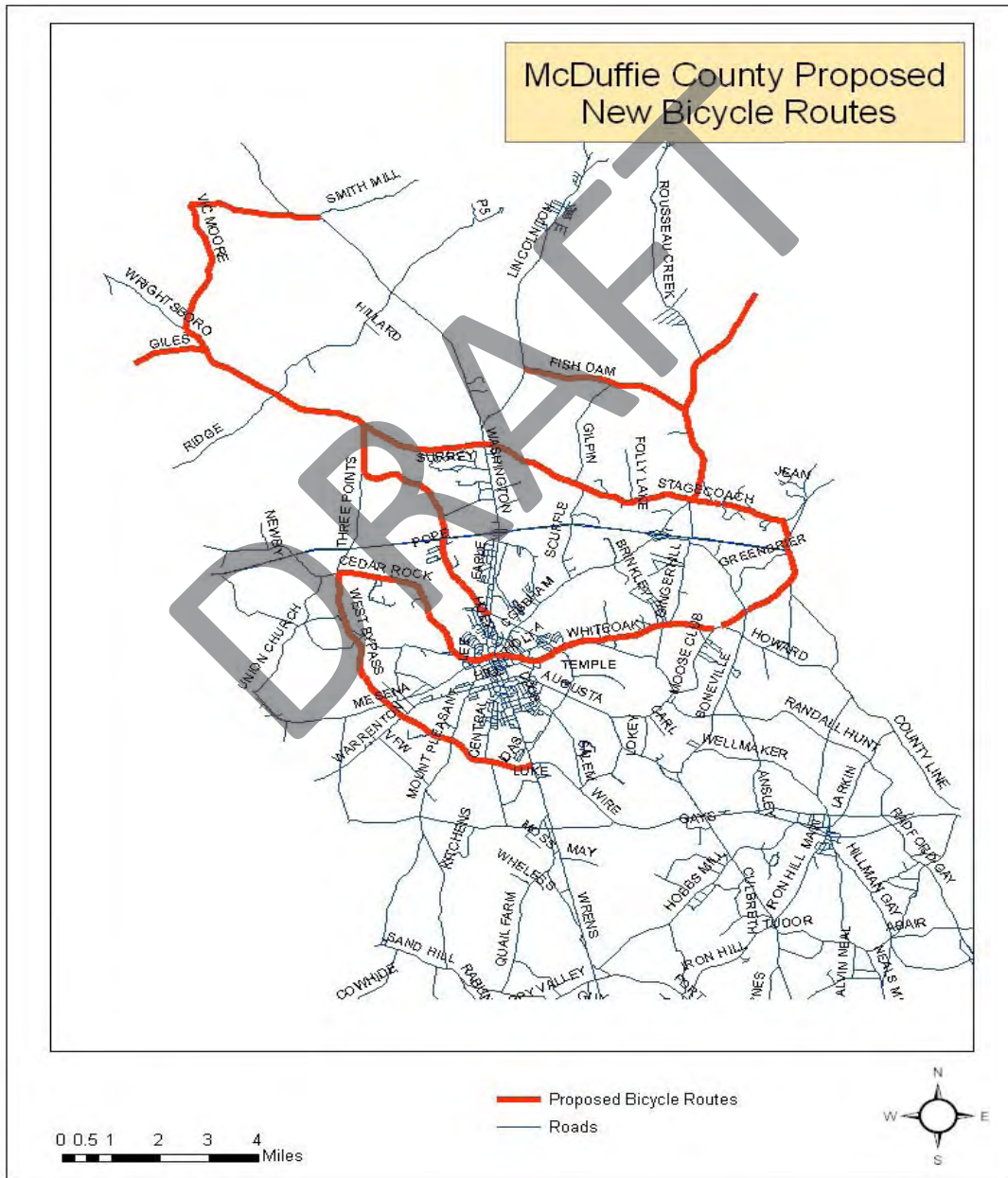


Figure B-9: McDuffie County Proposed New Bicycle Routes

Support Facilities

In attracting residents to Thomson's business district, both the destination itself and routes to the destination should be appealing enough to attract pedestrian and bicycle trips. The easiest way to achieve this is to establish pedestrian and bicycle networks that facilitate movements between residential and the downtown areas. Support facilities are needed along the major thoroughfares of Main and Railroad Streets.

Street Trees

Trees serve as a visual and auditory buffer between pedestrians and automobile traffic. They also support the aesthetic appearance of a street and provide shade in warm climate. Street trees should be part of any future streetscape projects along Main and Railroad Streets - at 25-35 foot intervals.



Trees require a minimum of 48 inch by 48 inch planting area. If improperly maintained, trees can cause sidewalk cracks and change in level. As such, Thomson must make a clear commitment to maintenance. Trees should also be chosen with care for their branch patterns. Above the surface, branches can be vertical obstructions and protruding objects if they extend horizontally into the sidewalk corridor. Branches hanging lower than 80 inches should be trimmed away.

Landscaping

Landscaping is used for a variety of purposes, including masking public utilities, and enhancing scenic views. Flowers and shrubs placed along Main and Railroad Streets are needed to improve the appearance of the business district. Landscaping features should be included as part of any future streetscape projects. Within the historic district, landscaping should be kept consistent to boost the visual coherence of the roadway and sidewalk systems.



Street and Directional Signs

The majority of pedestrian information is conveyed through signs and signals in the public right-of-way that are directed primarily at motorists. Although these signs affect pedestrians, they are not always positioned for pedestrian use. Examples of this include street name signs on many arterials hung at the center of the intersection, and traffic signals along streets that are often missing for pedestrians. Pedestrians need their own signs because sight lines, viewpoints, and travel speeds are substantially different from those of motorists.



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Pedestrian signs are a relatively inexpensive way to encourage greater use of facilities by making pedestrians feel more secure. Directional signage can help pedestrians navigate along principal pedestrian routes and major destinations. By giving directions to nearby destinations, signs can make it easier, and thus more appealing, to walk. Directional signage should be provided along Main Street and sections of Railroad Street pointing to the business district. Care is needed to ensure signs are placed in locations that do not limit the effective width of sidewalks or block the clear path of travel.

Pedestrian and directional signage should be consistent in format and location, enabling residents to learn to identify the information and meaning. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) emphasizes uniformity in traffic control devices to protect the clarity of their meaning. A uniform device conforms to regulations for dimensions, color, wording, and graphics.

Lighting

Like signs, lighting can encourage greater use of facilities by making pedestrians and bicyclists feel more secure. Signs and lighting are especially useful where facilities and streets meet to help pedestrians and bicyclists see where to turn and to help motorists see users. Pedestrian-scale lighting should be provided throughout Main Street and the downtown business district, at intervals of 25-35 feet.



Strong visual contrasts are required between road and pedestrian areas to assist people with sight disabilities. The transition between poorly-lit and well-lit areas requires people with visual disabilities to adjust their vision to change in light. While improving street lighting makes a location appear friendlier, some lighting strategies are unhelpful because designers put them in solely for the aesthetic value of creating neighborhood continuity or improve motorists' ability to see. Such lighting along the public right-of-way is directed towards the road and provides little benefit to pedestrians with visual disabilities.

Street Furniture

Creating a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment encompasses more than creating a continuous system of sidewalks or bikeways. It should also include, depending on surrounding uses, benches and trash receptacles. Street furniture is an important sidewalk amenity that provides pedestrians and bicyclists with an opportunity to sit, rest, and socialize. Many town centers across Georgia have successfully incorporated these principles into the redevelopment of their existing central business districts and have created vibrant shopping districts. Street furniture should be provided throughout Main Street and along the historic district, where sidewalk widths are adequate. In general, they should be installed in the curb zone a minimum 2 feet from the curb, or in the building zone as long as they do not obstruct the pedestrian path of travel.



Supportive Policies

Street Crossings

The essential pedestrian transportation crossing issue is the relationship between design and travel behavior. Poor design - design that does not take into account pedestrian convenience - results in unpredictable behavior. Pedestrians will often ignore traffic signals if they feel they have waited enough or if the distance to a traffic signal is too far. Similarly, pedestrians will only use crosswalks if they feel motorists will stop.



Commonly-used approaches to increase pedestrian crossing opportunities center on roadway designs that incorporate features such as signal timing and medians, marked crosswalks, and mid-block curb extensions.

Most pedestrian crossings occur along Main Street and Railroad Street. These corridors include concentrated nodes of activity (government offices, tourism facilities library, school, etc.). Each intersection along these streets should be equipped with adequate pedestrian signalization.

Vacant Lots

Most Thomson residents walk for recreation. Recreational walking is less location-specific, with many residents confining their activities to local neighborhoods. Many of these neighborhoods are located adjacent to the downtown business district. Attracting recreation walkers will require shop owners and the City invest in lively building facades with architectural relief, windows, and attractive surfacing.

The draw of the business district is shopping opportunities. Yet the business district is plagued by vacancies. Attracting more businesses to (re) locate will require the City to market the district as part of its redevelopment planning efforts.

OTHER

Other Design Consideration

Regardless of the type of improvement, it is critical that future designs be cognizant of the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists and consider the implications of site design decisions on pedestrian and bicycle movements. Corridor Sensitive Designs occurs when pedestrians and bicyclists are recognized as a significant factor in shaping the arrangement of onsite facilities and the relationship of those facilities to others. Designs should consider the full range of users - from children and the elderly to people with disabilities.

Maintenance

Forethought must be given to the practicality of future maintenance. Accessible designs will not improve pedestrian and bicycle convenience if maintenance is neglected and sidewalks and roadways are allowed to degrade to a state where they cannot be used or must be avoided. There are two aspects to maintaining such facilities: keeping them structurally sound and keeping them clean. Examples of design features to be avoided include blind corners that can accumulate debris and restricted areas that cannot accommodate sweepers or other power equipment. Thomson and McDuffie County should include maintenance strategies in the preliminary planning stages of new construction and alterations, and develop a plan that clearly specifies the frequency of maintenance activities and how reported maintenance concerns will be addressed.

A major barrier to pedestrian travel is surface conditions. Poor condition of pedestrian facilities, whether potholes, broken pavement or debris, can discourage people from walking. Pedestrians are sensitive to glass, uneven pavement and other hazards. Well-maintained sidewalks encourage walking and are crucial for children, the elderly and pedestrians with disabilities, who often have trouble stepping or rolling over uneven pavement and overgrown vegetation. Sidewalks in Thomson's older neighborhoods, particularly those adjacent to Main Street, are vulnerable to damage from tree roots and aging concrete. A more intense schedule of maintenance, including resurfacing, weed abatement and steam cleaning is needed.

Regulatory Controls

Land use patterns have a critical impact on pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Thomson and McDuffie County's current land use policies will result in sprawl and encourage disproportionate motor vehicle use. Incremental development along arterials such as Main Street (away from the downtown core), with multiple access points for automobiles and large parking lots around buildings often results in inconvenient and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. A sustained effort to plan ahead and seriously examine policies such as infill-development and more intermingled land uses is vital to developing an adequate pedestrian and bicycle network. Thomson's redevelopment plan represents one such effort. McDuffie County should follow suit by encouraging development in proximity to Thomson.

Both pedestrian and bicycle transportation are dependent on the distance of potential destinations. Neighborhoods are walkable and bikeable only to the extent that there are functional destinations at their center and that surrounding streets are designed appropriately. Thus, attractions closer to one another are more likely to encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation.

The success of any pedestrian/bicycle plan rests on how well it is integrated with an area's land use plan, zoning, and subdivision ordinances. There are a range of planning and regulatory tools to support non-motorized transportation. For Thomson and McDuffie County, these primarily center on zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Subdivision Regulations

McDuffie County's subdivision regulations were recently amended to require sidewalks to be included within new residential developments. The city of Thomson's subdivision regulations currently do not require pedestrian facilities of any kind within new developments.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The purpose of addressing pedestrian facilities within subdivision regulations is threefold:

- To provide access within developments not addressed in zoning regulations.
- To ensure pedestrian circulation is considered both within a site as well as between a site and surrounding developments.
- To promote consistency of access among multiple new developments.

General provisions of subdivision regulations include requirements for approval, application requirements, and design standards to guide the development of pedestrian access provisions.

Design standards established for pedestrian access can ensure that the quality of facilities constructed is consistent throughout Thomson. This is particularly important for the downtown business district, which contains important historic characteristics. The provision of clear standards also reduces confusion on the part of site developers as to requirements. Some specific pedestrian facility design standards can be found in the “Assessment” section of Chapter 7.

Thomson should amend its subdivision ordinances to incorporate the concepts discussed above.

Zoning

Local jurisdictions have a wide range of features they would like to see incorporated into development proposals. Zoning regulations contain a set of sections in that describe and define the purposes for which the regulations are adopted, establish zones for different uses, set requirements for development, and establish guidelines for site plans.

The overall intent of including pedestrian and bicycle facility provisions in zoning regulations is to ensure that new development or redevelopment of land includes these facilities in the appropriate design and location. References to pedestrian and bicycle access can be included to define the types of facilities that are required and establish standards for facility design. Thomson and McDuffie County should amend their zoning ordinances to:

- Require pedestrian and bicycle access as part of new development; and
- Provide guiding principles included in this Plan for facility designs

Inclusion of such provisions in the McDuffie County and Thomson zoning ordinances ensures that on-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities link to appropriate facilities at destinations. For instance, while a pedestrian or bicyclist may be able to utilize on-street facilities to travel to a regional shopping center, their safety may be compromised without the proper designated facilities to convey them from the street right-of-way – across an expanse of automobile parking - to the front door of the building. These issues can be addressed via simple revisions to established zoning ordinances.

Funding Sources

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Several state and federal agencies are involved in bicycle and pedestrian transportation funding. Funding, promotion, planning and design, construction and management, land use development, and enforcement all involve regulatory controls and statutes set forth in state and federal legislation.

All of the major funding programs created under ISTEA, and continued under TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU include pedestrian and bicycle programs as eligible activities. In order to receive federal transportation funds, the legislation requires that each state develop a comprehensive statewide transportation plan. In addition states are required to develop a plan for trails and walkways for appropriate parts of the state. Such pedestrian and bicycle elements must be incorporated into the long-range transportation plan. To use any of the following federal funds (summarized and adapted from various U.S. DOT programs), the state must first identify the project in the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

Surface Transportation Program

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides States with flexible funds which may be used for a wide variety of projects on any Federal-aid Highway including the NHS, bridges on any public road, and transit facilities.

Eligibility - Pedestrian and bicycle improvements are eligible activities under the STP. This covers a wide variety of projects such as on-road facilities, off-road trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, parking, and other ancillary facilities. SAFETEA-LU also specifically clarifies that the modification of sidewalks to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act is an eligible activity.

As an exception to the general rule described above, STP-funded pedestrian and bicycle facilities may be located on local and collector roads which are not part of the Federal-aid Highway System. In addition, non-construction projects, such as maps, coordinator positions, and encouragement programs, are eligible for STP funds.

Transportation Enhancements

Ten percent of a State's STP apportionment must be set-aside to fund activities that enhance the transportation system in ways that have not traditionally been included in the design and construction of the transportation system.

Eligibility - The list of 12 eligible activities includes three which relate specifically to pedestrian and bicycle transportation:

- Provision of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Provision of safety and educational activities for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Preservation of abandoned railroad corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for bicycle and pedestrian trails).

Matching funds - States have the flexibility to allow Federal funds to be used for all or any part of a project under the Transportation Enhancement program provided that the State program as a whole

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

achieves an 80 percent Federal/20 percent State funding balance (subject to the sliding scale for States with significant Federal lands holdings).

States may also, with FHWA approval, allow in-kind contributions such as volunteer labor, land donations and in-kind services to count towards State matching funds, provided that a cash-value can be attributed to the donated time, resource, or product.

Local Sources

One of the most important issues related to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the rural CSRA are adequate funding. Thomson and McDuffie County are faced with many transportation needs and there is limited local funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Nevertheless, the City and County cannot continue to neglect pedestrian and bicycle facilities projects. At a minimum, the City and County governments should establish a funding system that balances the need to improve and expand pedestrian and bicycle facilities with the need to most effectively use available funds.

A potential local source of funding is developer impact fees. In large urban areas such fees are typically tied to trip generation rates and traffic impacts produced by proposed projects. In smaller cities, fees could be based on the assessed value of property or a flat rate.

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McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan
2009-2029

Chapter 9
Intergovernmental Coordination

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



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INTRODUCTION

Successful implementation of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* is largely dependant on maintaining and/or enhancing the relationships that all three jurisdictions have with other government entities as well as with one another. The intergovernmental coordination component of the *Plan* provides Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County with the opportunity to inventory existing multi-jurisdictional agreements and policies, and the localized policies of adjacent jurisdictions. An assessment of these agreements and policies ensures that successful *Plan* implementation is achieved in concert with the objectives of other governments and entities.

Service Delivery Strategy

Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County maintain a cooperative relationship which is outlined in the communities' Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). The SDS ensures adequate delivery of public services to citizens of all three jurisdictions.

ADJACENT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Multiple Jurisdictions

McDuffie County governments and adjacent jurisdictions partner with each other through a variety of intergovernmental service agreements and contracts in order to provide for efficient and cost effective services to their residents. A principal example of such cross-border cooperation come in the form of mutual assistance agreements with all adjacent counties to provide effective fire and EMS service. In addition, McDuffie County shares other services with some adjacent comminutes such as coroner transport and legal resources. The Clark's Hill Partnership - as referenced in Chapter 3 – promotes economic development in the communities bordering Clark's Hill Lake.

Glascocock County

McDuffie County Department of Solid Waste currently has a contract with Glascocock County to transport solid waste collected in their jurisdiction to the McDuffie County Transfer Station. In addition, EMS and fire services for Glascocock County are provided by McDuffie County.

City of Harlem

The McDuffie County –City of Thomson Water & Sewer Commission continues to negotiate with the City of Harlem (Columbia County) to provide water service to augment the City's existing supply. This expansion would allow for addition growth in Harlem while providing for improved water flow and quality for Dearing which is currently located at the end of the water trunk line.

Warren County

McDuffie County Department of Solid Waste currently has a contract with both Warren County and the City of Warrenton to transport solid waste collected in their jurisdictions to the McDuffie County

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Transfer Station. Portions of Warren County are also served by the McDuffie County City of Thomson Water & Sewer Commission.

SCHOOL BOARD

McDuffie County Board of Education

All public schools attended by students living in McDuffie County are operated by the McDuffie County Board of Education. The McDuffie County Board of Education keeps local communities informed of events through their administration.

McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing currently keep the Board of Education informed of growth of the county's school aged population by working closely with the administration. This allows the county and the Board of Education to coordinate their proposals for facility expansion.

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES AND DISTRICTS

Development Authority of McDuffie County and the City of Thomson

Previously identified in the *Plan* as an economic resource for McDuffie County, the Development Authority of McDuffie County and the City of Thomson is the only independent development authority that directly impacts the county as a whole. As noted, the organization's primary mission is to recruit new businesses to McDuffie County and Thomson and to provide the necessary assistance to existing businesses in order to retain them, assist with relocation or expand. The Authority works in cooperation with the McDuffie County Board of Commissioners and Chamber of Commerce to market local site selection and expansion opportunities to existing or prospective McDuffie County businesses.

FEDERAL, STATE AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center

McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing are also members of the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center (CSRA RDC) and benefit from access to planning, grant writing and aging programs. All jurisdictions within McDuffie County are also kept aware of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) by the CSRA RDC staff in accordance with procedures established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Fort Gordon Military Reservation, U.S. Department of Defense

Located on the border of Fort Gordon, McDuffie County's economic well-being is as closely tied to the activities within the Fort as any other County in the region. McDuffie County was represented on both the Policy Committee and Technical Committee of the *Fort Gordon Joint Land Use Study (2005)* which addresses the need to avoid land uses on private properties in close proximity to the Fort that can disrupt its mission. Recommendations contained within the *Study* will be considered when

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

developing the future development maps for the Cities and the County along with goals and objectives of other portions of this plan.

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ASSESSMENT

SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The joint SDS between Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County has effectively ensured a cooperative effort on a variety of services in order to achieve shared goals. Preparation of the *Plan* has revealed that little revision from the current SDS structure is necessary as it is updated. The most significant SDS revision that could occur would involve code enforcement and land development administration for the Town of Dearing should applicable building, property and land development standards be adopted.

ADJACENT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

There exist multiple opportunities for Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County to partner with adjacent jurisdictions to address shared needs. Of the existing cooperative efforts addressed within this chapter, solid waste disposal relationships may be augmented by joint application for state funding to establish recycling programs as proposed in the *McDuffie County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan*. With existing cooperative arrangements with Glascock and Warren Counties, access to funding for recycling facilities has the potential to benefit multiple jurisdictions.

SCHOOL BOARD

McDuffie County Board of Education

While McDuffie County governments and the McDuffie County Board of Education keep each other informed of various events and administrative decisions, there is an opportunity for greater cooperation to ensure that the Board's service provision and facility location policies is complementary to the growth and development policies of Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County. In addition to providing the Board of Education with population projections, it is imperative local government officials keep the board apprised of the short-term goals and long-term policies that are contained within the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*.

All four government entities should also work cooperatively to prioritize the rehabilitation of existing facilities within current areas of population concentration to promote reinvestment in existing neighborhoods. Should existing school facilities located within Thomson, and Dearing be targeted for consolidation or relocation, priority should be given to sites closer to city center. While the State of Georgia does have minimum acreage requirements for new schools, state policy does allow for deviations in developed areas where reduced acreages can be shown to be appropriate.

Although school facility investment should be focused on rehabilitation and the continued use of existing sites, new schools may inevitably have to be constructed for a growing population. It is important for Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County to work with the Board of Education so that potential new school facilities are sited within character areas where the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* channels the vast majority of new residential growth. Dialogue should begin now over ways in which to cooperatively reserve property within these targeted character areas in

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

advance of project development. Such cooperation is imperative to ensure that there is little pressure to deviate from future development patterns promoted by Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County as a result of new school placement in character areas where significant growth is not intended. School siting decisions should not serve as a catalyst for development in areas intended to remain rural.

Interim activities that can assist potential school siting decisions include the continual provision of rezoning cases and proposed subdivisions to the Board of Education.

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES AND DISTRICTS

Development Authority of McDuffie County and the City of Thomson

The *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* consolidates a wide variety of data sets and land development policies that can assist the Development Authority of McDuffie County and the City of Thomson in determining where the county business recruitment efforts should be focused. As Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County's policy on growth and development the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* should be utilized by the Development Authority when considering the appropriate location in which to propose large commercial industrial activity.

FEDERAL, STATE AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center

A variety of planning, grant writing and other local government services are available to Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County through the use of their Regional Development Center.

Fort Gordon Military Reservation, U.S. Department of Defense

McDuffie County should continually consult the recommendations of the *Fort Gordon Joint Land Use Study* when considering development policies and programs which support the implementation of the garrison's Army Compatible Use Buffer Program.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Chapter 10 Land Use

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



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INTRODUCTION

Development patterns and the use of land are the most obvious manifestation of all demographic information provided in previous chapters of this *Plan*. The built form that property takes – in contrast to the natural setting remaining on other pieces of property – is inextricably tied to a variety of factors ranging from population change, to location of infrastructure, to job creation, to environmental limitations, etc.

This chapter reviews the current land use pattern in McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing and compares it to the information and projections formulated in previous chapters. By making these comparisons, the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* formulates a preliminary land use and development strategy to meet the future economic, social, physical and environmental needs of McDuffie County and its municipalities. The land use and development recommendations proposed in this chapter result in a set of preliminary recommended “character areas.” This format provides McDuffie County and its municipalities with a framework for making development decisions that are complementary to long-term goals throughout all chapters of this plan. The format also allows adequate flexibility to alter development strategies according to unanticipated changes in conditions, while avoiding the emergence of inefficient development patterns.

Unlike previous chapters, this chapter does not contain an “Assessment” section. Assessment of land use in McDuffie County and its municipalities is summarized within the section addressing preliminary recommended character areas.

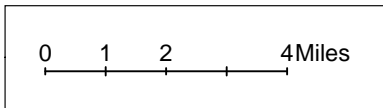
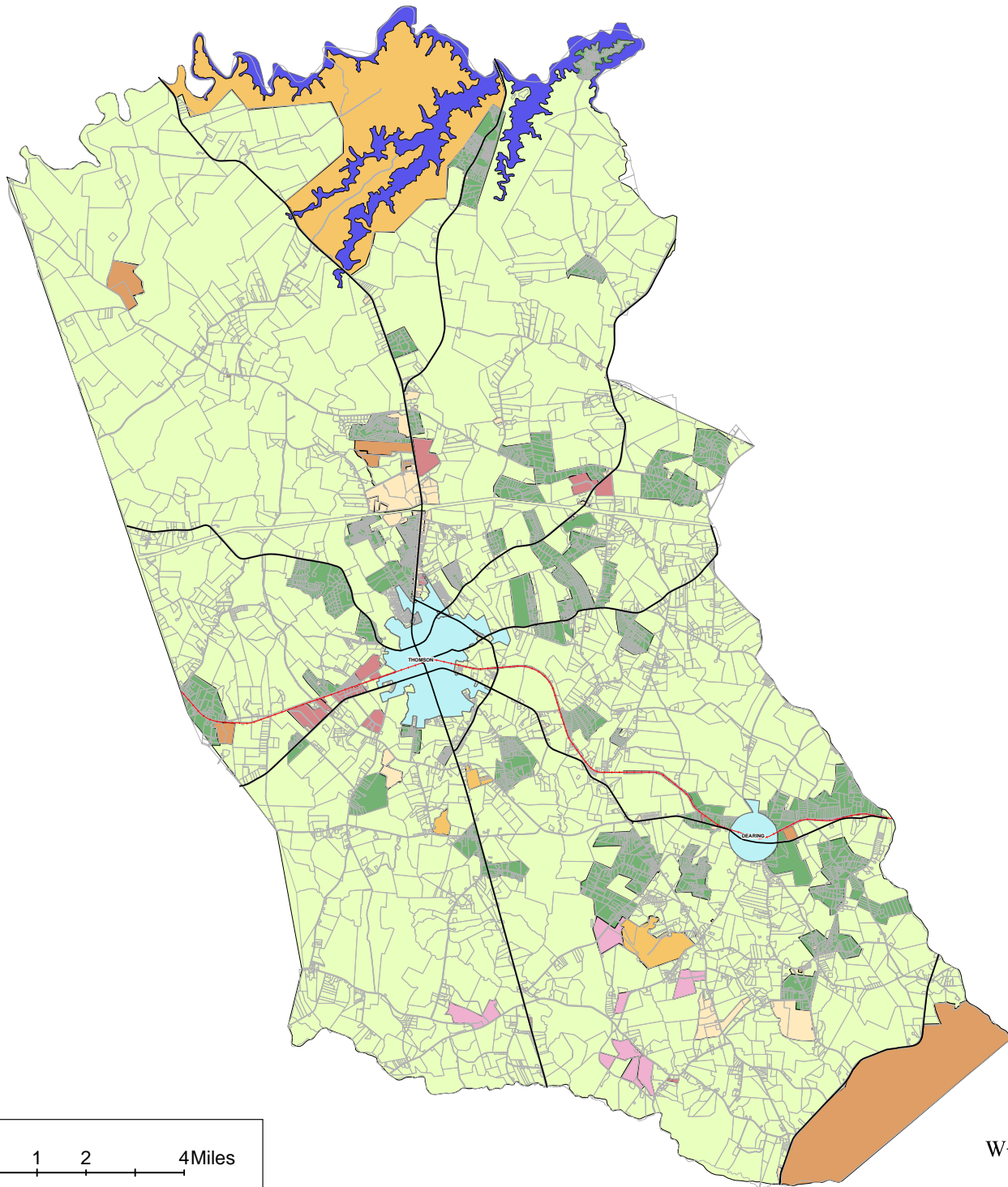
LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs’ (DCA) “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning” includes a list of standard land use categories. The broadly defined land use categories contained in the list establish the parameters under which each local jurisdiction should classify existing parcels. The following section provides an overview of the land use categories McDuffie County and its jurisdictions have opted to utilize in order to inventory current land uses. A breakdown of current land uses in each is contained in **Figure L-1** and **Maps L.1, L.2, and L.3**.

Residential

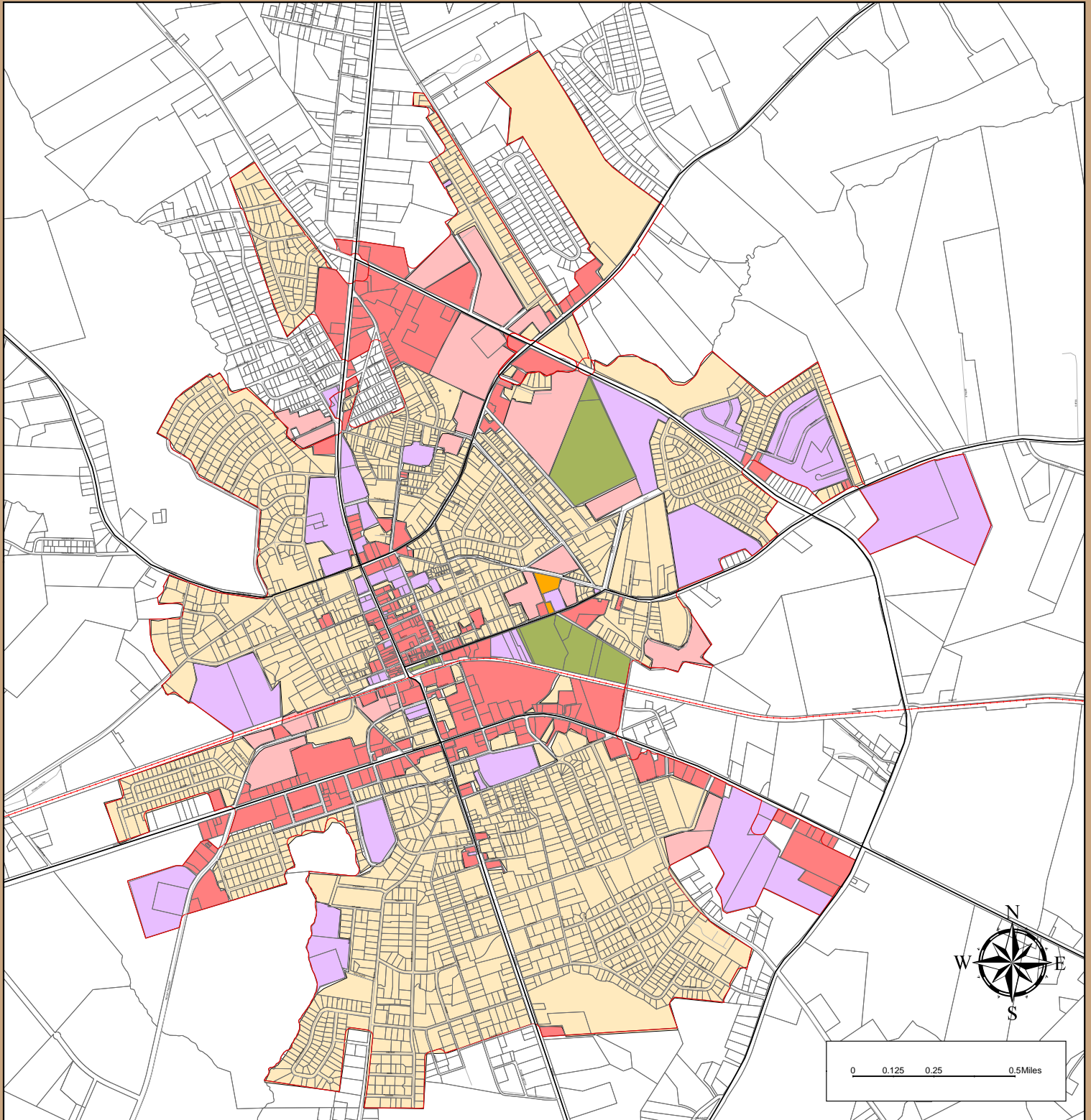
The vast majority of residential property in all three jurisdictions is composed of single-family detached “stick-built” homes – although there are limited numbers of mobile homes, duplexes and multi-family structures.

Includes: Low-density residential housing types including single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached dwellings and duplexes, and higher density, multi-family (more than three dwelling units) housing types.













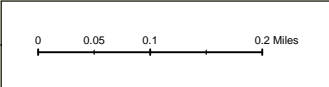
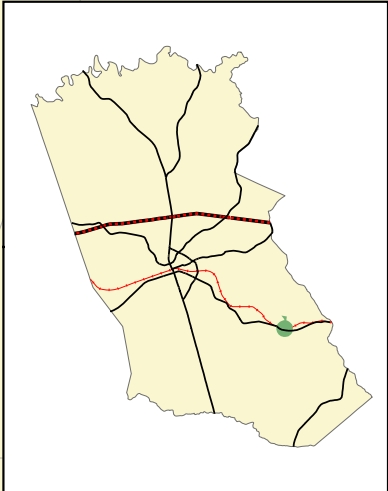
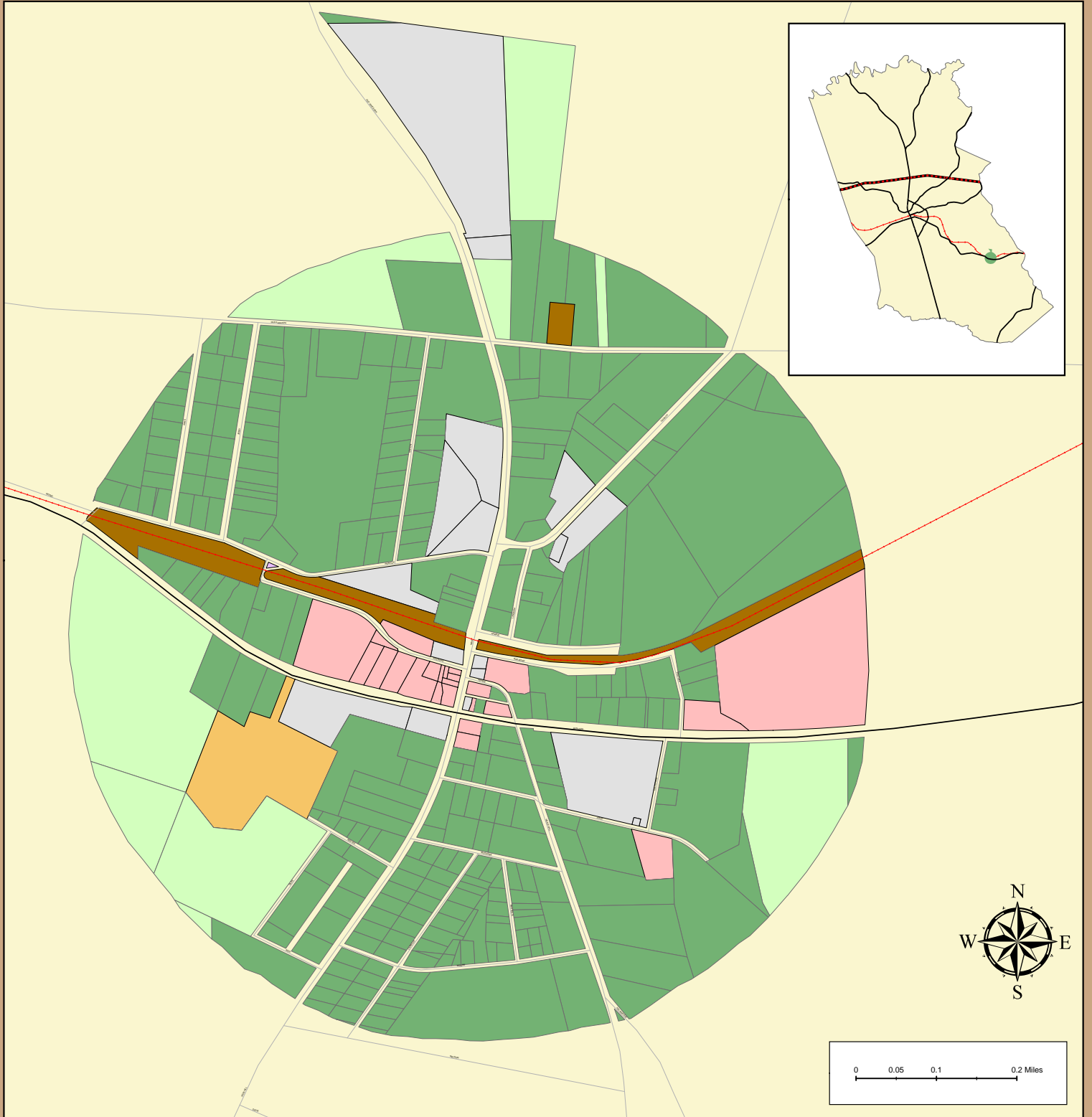
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McDuffie Current Land Use							
	AF		IM		R		Major Highways
	C		PI		TCU		Railroad
	I		PRC		WTR		McDuffie Cities














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Thomson Current Land Use					
	Commercial		Un-Used		Thomson City
	Public/Institutional		TCU		Major Highways
	Industrial		Residential		Roads
					Railroad



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Dearing Current Land Use					
	AF		R		Major Highways
	C		TCU		Railroad
	PI		UU		Roads
	PRC				McDuffie County

Commercial

Includes: All land dedicated to non-industrial business uses including retail sales, offices and general services.

Industrial

Includes: Manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade, mining or mineral extraction, etc.

Public/Institutional

Includes: Government and institutional uses such as city halls, government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons and post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Also includes private facilities such as colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. Some public facilities such as utility or recreational properties are classified in other more appropriate categories.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities

Includes: Major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, etc.

Park/Recreation/Conservation

Includes: Land dedicated for active or passive recreational uses. These public or privately owned properties may include playgrounds, parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreations centers, etc.

Agriculture/Forestry

Includes: Land dedicated to farming such as fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc; and, large-scale agriculture operations, commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.

Undeveloped/Vacant

Includes: Lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not yet been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.

Mixed Use

Includes: Buildings or structures developed for two or more different uses such as, but not limited to, residential, commercial, or public/institutional.

LAND USE

CURRENT LAND USE

Considering all but the “mixed use” land use category referenced in the previous section, **Maps L.1, L.2, and L.3** illustrate the composition of current land uses in McDuffie County, Thomson, and Dearing according to individual parcel.

While there are a number of structures within the two “Downtown” character areas that have the potential to incorporate a mixture of uses such as retail, office and residential; these buildings are currently being utilized for single-uses. As a result, downtown properties are represented on the current land use map (See **Map L.2**) as commercial or industrial - although the preliminary character areas recommended in this chapter promote the future use of the downtown as a mixed-use district.

Figure L-1 shows that the predominant land use classification in the metropolitan areas are residential. And in the unincorporated county the predominant land use is agricultural/ forestry. Land use patterns in both Thomson and Dearing are fairly typical for small urban areas. According to some publications by the American Planning Association the predominant land usage for a small urban area is divided roughly into 52 percent residential, 3 percent commercial, 8 percent industrial and 47 percent for all other uses. **Figure L-1** illustrates that both municipalities generally follow these trends. The exception being the large amount of agricultural land within the city limits of Dearing.

Figure L-1: Current Land Usage for Selected Jurisdictions

Dearing Land Use			Thompson Land Use			McDuffie County Land Use		
Category	Acreage	%	Category	Acreage	%	Category	Acreage	%
Agricultural-Forestry	804.9	43.2%	Agricultural- Forestry	88.7	3.0%	Agricultural-Forestry	130,872.19	83.0%
Commercial	71.1	3.8%	Commercial	339.2	11.0%	Commercial	980.9	0.6%
Industrial	0.0	0.0%	Industrial	149.1	4.8%	Industrial	670.9	0.4%
Public Institutional	39.6	2.1%	Public-Institutional	317.5	10.3%	Public Institutional	4,805.5	3.0%
Parks & Recreation	11.9	0.6%	Parks & Recreation	15.8	0.5%	Parks & Recreation	7,397.6	4.7%
Residential	904.8	48.6%	Residential	1,695.6	54.8%	Residential	9,135.5	5.8%
Trans. Comm. Utilities	29.1	1.6%	Trans. Comm. Utilities	422.6	13.7%	Trans., Comm., Utilities	174.7	0.1%
Unused/Vacant	0.0	0.0%	Unused/ Vacant	67.1	2.2%	Unused/Vacant	3,696.3	2.3%
TOTAL	1,861.4		TOTAL	3,095.6		TOTAL	157,734.0	

AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

In preparing the *Community Assessment* portion of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*, it is necessary to evaluate existing land development patterns to determine if any areas should be given special attention. By reviewing prior chapters of this document and comparing the information contained within each to knowledge gained from public meetings, interviews and field research, clear land use characteristics emerge.

The “areas requiring special attention” listed in this section are compiled under headings contained in the State of Georgia’s “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.” The supporting descriptions in this section are brief because they summarize the

analysis and assessment made throughout other portions of the *Community Assessment* document. In addition, all areas described in this section have been considered when formulating preliminary character area recommendations. The locations of each of these can be found on **Maps L-5, L-6, and L-7**.

Areas of Significant Natural or Cultural Resources

Areas of significant natural or cultural resources are identified on **Maps L-5, L-6, and L-7** by a number **1**.

- **Lake Front Properties** Some of the last undeveloped and underdeveloped land along the shores of Clark's Hill Lake is in McDuffie County. Attention should be paid to protection of viewshed, and open space along the water.
- **Usry Pond** This pond that lies directly south of Thomson and is one of the main surface water sources for all three jurisdictions.
- **Historic Districts** McDuffie County is home to six distinct historic districts that are on the National Register of Historic Places. They are: *the Bonneville Historic District*, *the Hayes Line Historic District*, *the Pine Top Farm Historic District*, *the Thomson Commercial Historic District*, *the Wrightsboro Historic District*, *the Thomson Historic District*, and *the Thomas Carr Historic District*. Special attention must be paid to nearby development activities that may have a negative impact on these unique and historically significant sites.

Areas Where Rapid Development or Change of Land Use is Likely

Areas Where Rapid Development or Change of Land Use is Likely are identified on Maps L-5, L-6, and L-7 by a number **2**.

- **Southeastern Dearing** Large undeveloped parcels of land in this area of the town are likely to develop and change the land use from agricultural to residential.
- **Three Points Road Interchange** The construction of a new major highway interchange in the very near future has the potential to shift the primary land use in this area from agricultural and forestry uses to higher density, higher impact development very quickly.
- **Proposed new R-3 Zoning District northeast of Thomson** This is another area where large tracts of undeveloped primarily agricultural lands will be converted to residential uses.
- **Thomson East Bypass Corridor** The construction of a new limited access bypass also has the potential to shift the primary land uses from lower intensity to higher intensity very rapidly.

Areas Where Development May Outpace Community Resources and Services

Areas Where Development May Outpace Community Resources and Services are identified on **Maps L-5, L-6, and L-7** by a number **3**.

- **Three Points Road Interchange** The potential for rapid development that will accompany the construction of a new highway interchange may put an increased

demand on not only the municipal infrastructure that will be required in this area but also on the existing transportation network.

- **Proposed new R-3 Zoning District northeast of Thomson** The increased residential density in this area will put a strain on the transportation network that serves this area.

Areas in Need of Redevelopment

Areas in Need of Redevelopment are identified on **Maps L-5, L-6, and L-7** by a number **4**.

- **Downtown Dearing** Bisected by a state highway, the center of Dearing lacks any sense of place or even a sidewalk network to connect it to the rest of the town.
- **“The Quarters” in Dearing** What was originally a somewhat stable neighborhood has recently begun to show signs of disinvestment. A low level of owner occupied houses coupled with a rising crime level make this area prime location for redevelopment.
- **Thomson Redevelopment Area** Identified in the *Thomson Redevelopment Plan* this area focuses on strengthening Thomson’s traditional and historic neighborhoods that have fallen somewhat into disrepair.
- **Thomson Company** A former industrial site located just on the outside of the Thomson City Limits.

Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

Large Abandoned Structures or Sites are identified on **Maps L-5, L-6, and L-7** by a number **5**.

- **Old McDuffie County Landfill on Dallas Dr** A closed MSW landfill site where appropriate future development in the vicinity must be carefully considered.
- **Williams-Mesena Landfill site** A closed MSW landfill site that needs to have appropriate future development located on or near it.
- **Thomson Company** A former industrial site located just on the outside of the Thomson City Limits.

Areas with Significant Infill Opportunity

Areas with Significant Infill Opportunity are identified on **Maps L-5, L-6, and L-7** by a number **6**.

- **City of Thomson** There are various undeveloped and vacant parcels throughout the City of Thomson that could possibly be developed before any expansion of city limits occurs.

Areas with Significant Disinvestment

- See previous “Areas in Need of Redevelopment” sub-section.

RECOMMENDED CHARACTER AREAS

Knowledge gained from data and information displayed throughout all sections of the *Community Assessment* document can be translated into a preliminary future development scenario for McDuffie County and its municipalities. This preliminary scenario is presented in the form of “character areas” as recommended by the “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.” Character areas not only identify existing and future land uses that may be appropriate for a particular area, they can highlight a variety of other factors such as: the form, function and style of new development; existing features that should be incorporated into future development scenarios; and, relationships to adjacent development. In short, a character area addresses not only *WHAT* a piece of land should be used for; but, also *HOW* that land should be used.

Preliminary character areas that are referenced in this section can be found on **Maps L.5, L.6, and L.7**. The recommended preliminary character areas in the *Community Assessment* will not necessarily retain their current composition following the completion of the *Community Agenda* document. By incorporating additional public input, the character area boundaries and descriptive elements may be revised. In addition, other character areas may be identified or some areas contained in this chapter may be eliminated.

CHARACTER AREA INTERPRETATION

While the preliminary character area recommendations in this chapter are subject to change, please make note of the following character area features:

Boundaries

General Characteristics

Unlike a parcel-specific future land use map, boundaries on a character area map are conceptual and may cross parcel lines. The character area boundaries in this document are intended to represent an approximation. This flexibility allows the governing body charged with implementing the plan to make decisions based on changing conditions while reducing the need to continually update the future development map. As a result, it is possible to assume that small parcels located directly adjacent to one or more character areas may be permitted by the local government to develop according to the parameters of the adjacent area rather than the area in which it is located. Such an action should be taken sparingly and the decision should only be made if the local government can show that it is consistent with the recommendations provided in all other sections of the *Comprehensive Plan*. For the most part however, tracts should develop according to the parameters established in the specific character area in which it is located. All jurisdictions are strongly encouraged to initiate amendments to their future development map whenever they intend to promote a development pattern in an area that is inconsistent with the adopted map.

Boundary Revisions

The character area boundaries illustrated in **Maps L.5, L.6, and L.7** are preliminary and will be adjusted as a result of public input during the preparation of the *Community Agenda* document.

Relation Between Jurisdictions

Annexation

When the annexation of property from the unincorporated county into the municipal city limits of both Thomson and Dearing occurs the “character area” that the annexed property was previously a part of should be considered when assigning a “character area” to the newly annexed property. An amendment of the existing character area map should be done at the time of annexation to reflect the city’s current boundaries as well as guide decisions about future land use.

Implementation

Recommended techniques for the implementation of character areas will be formulated during preparation of the *Community Agenda*.

Implementation of Key Concepts

Cluster Subdivisions

A cluster subdivision is one where there is a reduction in the lot area, setback, or other development standard, provided that there is no increase in the allowed net density. Clustering of residential development does two things: reduces the negative impacts of traditional sprawling subdivisions, and preserves open space. The utilization of cluster subdivisions in the “Wrightsboro Village”, and “Lakeshore” character areas will serve to preserve the open space and natural viewsheds that define these areas. The “Cluster Development Option” in McDuffie County’s *Land Development Code* for new residential development in the previously mentioned character areas should be required.

To accommodate the recommendations revisions to the existing “Cluster Development Option” in McDuffie County’s *Land Development Code* should include:

- Allow cluster subdivisions in all residential zoning districts
- Remove the 40 dwelling unit minimum on new cluster developments
- Revise the open space standards to include significant common open space

Natural Resource Zoning Districts

The current Zoning ordinance does little to protect the rural nature of the “countryside” character area. A natural resource zoning district that seeks to protect the natural integrity of the land while still allowing for people to utilize the land in the most responsible manner is recommended. It is essentially a cluster subdivision as described above but with a much lower density. The key difference between the two is that a cluster subdivision’s open space is preserved in its natural state perpetuity, and in the natural resource zoning district the open

LAND USE

space may be used for pasture /silvicultural /agricultural uses etc. By establishing a large minimum lot size (10 acres for example)and allowing only a specific portion of each lot to be used for residential development, the rural character and natural resources in the “countryside” character area could be preserved.

To allow for the preservation of the rural aesthetic in the “countryside” recommended amendments to the McDuffie County Zoning Ordinance include:

- Establishment of Natural Resource Zoning District
- Short term application of the new district to targeted areas within the “countryside” character area
- Long term application of the district to the entire “countryside” character area

Conservation Subdivisions

While based on the same concept as a cluster subdivision, a conservation subdivision goes a step further in incorporating unique natural features of a site into the subdivision’s design. While a clustered subdivision is concerned with the layout of the lots, a conservation subdivision is more concerned with leaving as much of the original site as undisturbed as possible. Use of existing vegetation and natural features as a means to control storm water, reduce the need for pesticide, and control erosion makes these types of subdivisions ideal for locations in the “countryside” character area near the “watershed preserve.” The “Lakeshore” and “Wrightsboro Village” character areas would also be appropriate locations.

To accommodate the recommendations for allowing conservation subdivisions in unincorporated McDuffie County the following amendments to the McDuffie County’s Land Development Code should include:

- Adoption of conservation subdivision standards
- Requirement of conservation subdivision design in targeted environmentally sensitive areas

Thomson Redevelopment Plan Area

In February of 2005, the city of Thomson and McDuffie County jointly adopted an Urban Redevelopment Plan. The plan was created in an effort to address and correct numerous problems created by the existence of slum and blight, abandoned industrial sites, and a central business district that has “suffered the ravages of changing shopping habits and the location of shopping centers and Wal-Mart outside the central business district.”

The Redevelopment Plan identified five land use objectives within the identified redevelopment area. They are:

- Preserve residential neighborhoods
- Restore vitality to the Central Business District
- Improve the transportation network within the redevelopment area
- Revitalize the Old Thomson Company Building
- Improve the utility infrastructure within the redevelopment area
- Update of land use codes (zoning and subdivision regulation)

LAND USE

Strategies identified by the Redevelopment Plan to reach each of the goals are as follows:

- Application for HUD Action grant
- Work with Habitat for Humanity and local developers to provide affordable housing options and preserve and restore residential neighborhoods.
- Hire more staff to more strictly enforce existing codes
- Application for Transportation Enhancement grant funds to improve transportation network in redevelopment area
- Application for Community Development Block Grant funds to implement a Corrective Action Plan for the Old Thomson Company Site
- Commission an economic analysis of commercial and industrial properties within the redevelopment area to find what types of businesses the central business district can support
- Contract with the CSRA Regional Development Center to update the City and County's zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations in order to coordinate land use decisions

The identified boundaries of the Thomson Redevelopment plan area encompass portions of several character areas. When making future land use decisions in these character areas the goals and objectives as well as their implementation strategies need to be taken into consideration.

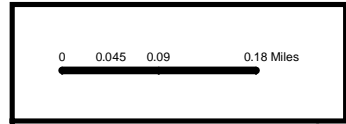
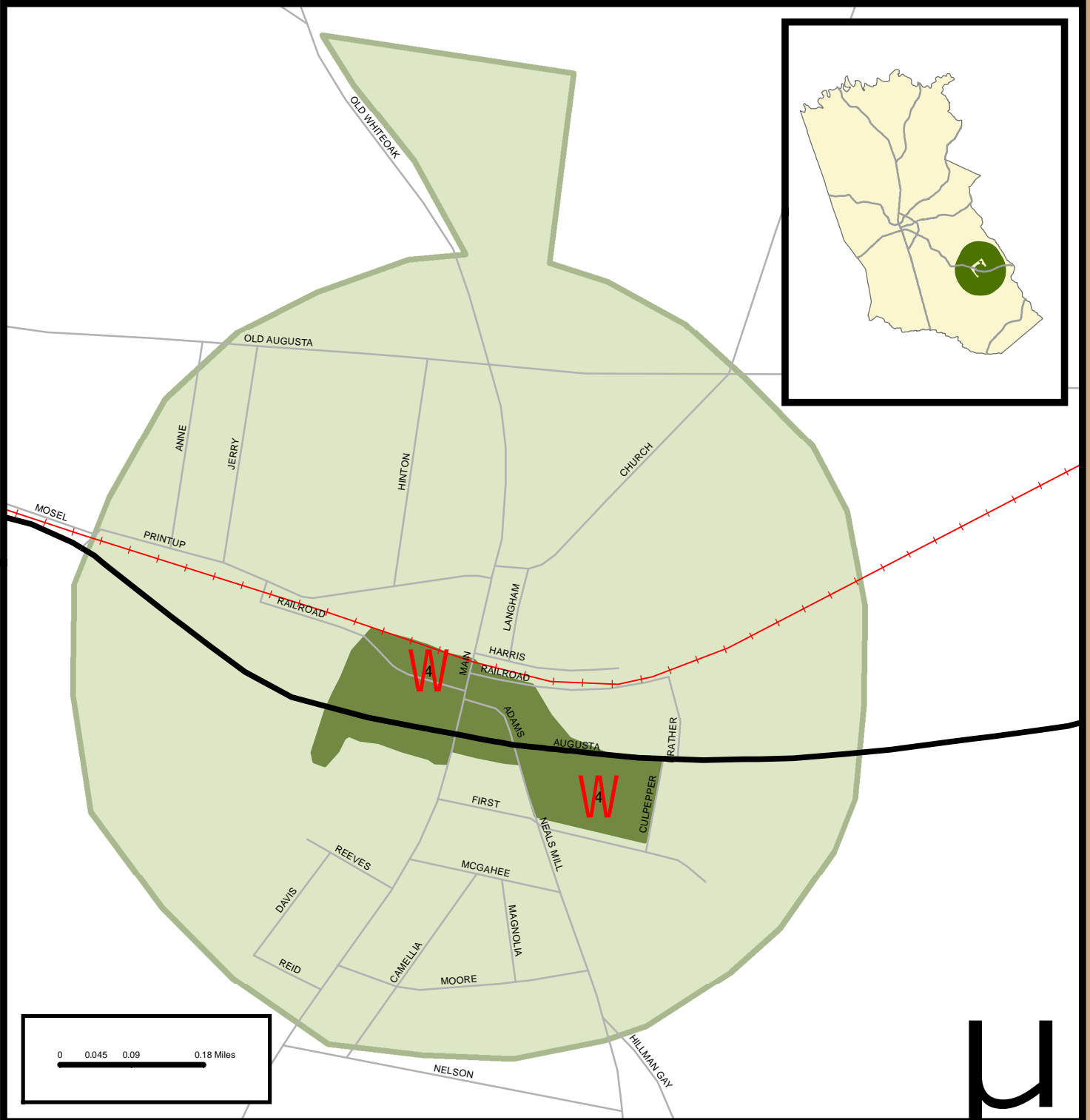
DRAFT

Town of Dearing Character Areas

DRAFT

Town of Dearing Preliminary Character Areas

L.7



Central Savannah River Area
 Regional Development Center
 GIS Department
 3023 River Watch Parkway, Suite A
 Augusta, GA 30907-2016
www.csrradc.org

Areas Requiring Special Attention

W A Areas in Need of Redevelopment

Character Areas

 City of Dearing

 Downtown Dearing

14

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) DEARING CHARACTER AREA: DEARING COMMUNITY

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Because of its compact size the Dearing Community character area is bound by a strong sense of community. Encompassing the majority of the Town, the somewhat traditional development pattern and distance from other development serve to strengthen the Dearing Community's sense of place. This area should strive to include housing options for all residents, and increase interconnectivity throughout the community with the addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities linking community facilities and destinations.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Low density residential and supporting community uses
- Mixture of traditional and modern style of neighborhood development
- Properties and buildings in varying states of repair
- Large undeveloped tracts on the periphery of character area
- High level of interconnectivity within developed areas
- Transportation corridors divide character area into northern and southern segments
- Streets characterized by open ditch sections without curb and gutter
- Lack of pedestrian facilities

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Continued emphasis on single family development, particularly along or connecting to developed streets
- Addition of multi-family housing in close proximity to major transportation facilities, public services, and the downtown area
- More bike/pedestrian transportation options for linkages to community facilities
- Continue interconnected street pattern as new parcels are developed
- Abate building and property nuisances through stronger codes and associated code enforcement
- Incorporate greenspace into new development



Larger lots with no curb and gutter or sidewalks define the character of Dearing.



Curb and gutter along with pedestrian facilities and attractive landscaping provide this neighborhood with a unique sense of place

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) DEARING CHARACTER AREA: DOWNTOWN DEARING

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Downtown Dearing will continue to serve as the focal point of the community. Its current mix of service and public /institutional uses will serve as the anchor for a walkable activity center. The addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities will encourage alternative modes of transportation to the community facilities already located downtown. Additionally, design standards will serve to give new development a similar vernacular - strengthening and preserving Downtown Dearing's sense of place.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Mix of old and new structures
- Majority of the town's institutional properties
- Property in varying conditions
- Large amount of pedestrian traffic without adequate pedestrian facilities.
- Many properties used as outdoor storage and display.
- Recent development heavily auto-centric
- Bisected by major highway and rail corridors
- Includes some underutilized or vacant properties

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Adopt design guidelines to ensure that future development reflects a traditional building character, orientation, and placement on site
- Reduce impervious surfaces by encouraging street design with on-street parking
- Soften hard-scape with landscaping standards
- Encourage new commercial development to locate downtown
- Add pedestrian facilities to increase access to major destinations (post office, city hall, etc.)
- Acquire property for community park / focal point



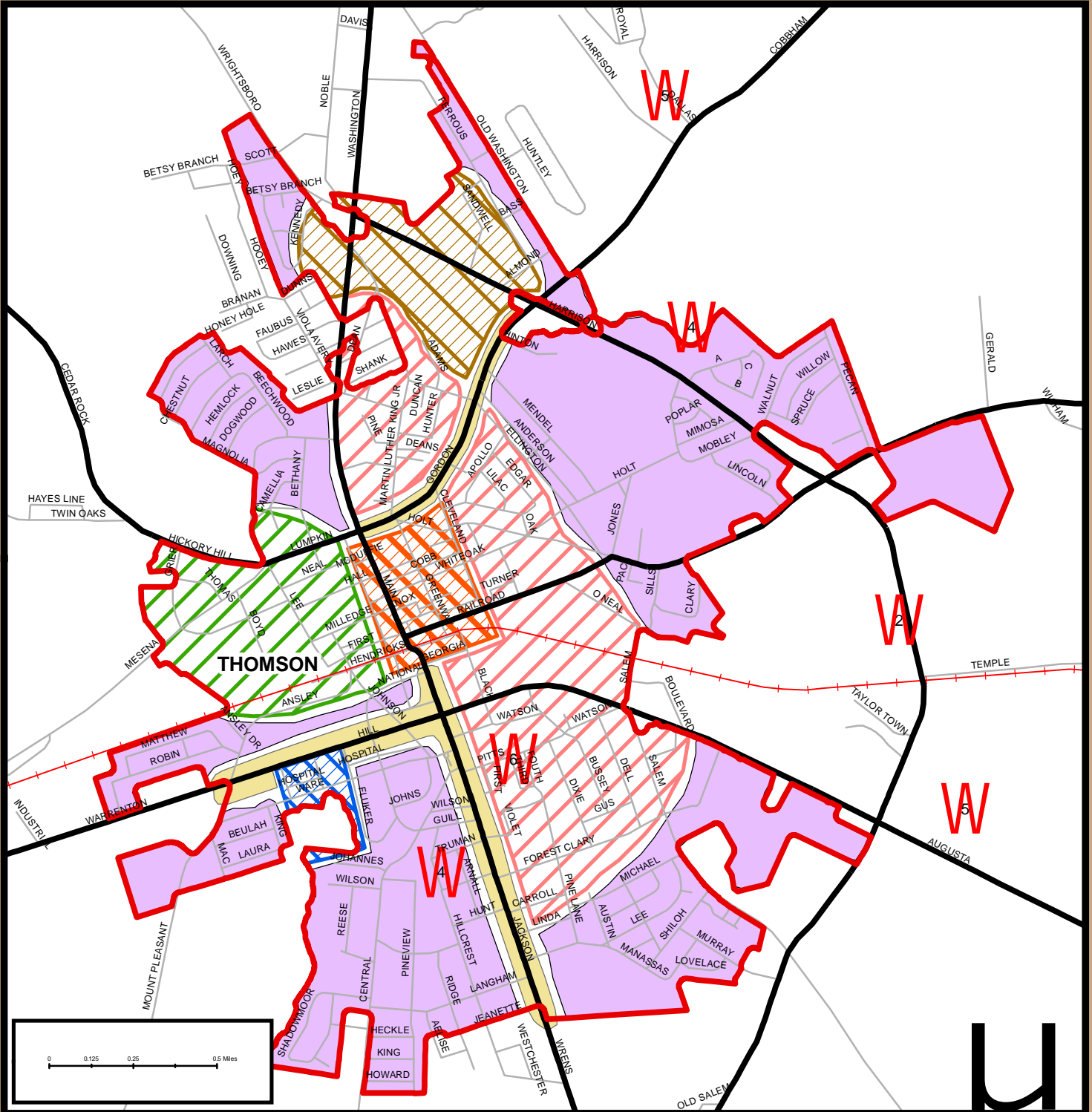
Buildings set back from the street, a lack of parking, and pedestrian facilities define Downtown Dearing's existing character.



Similar architecture, on street parking and a high level of pedestrian access make this an example of what Downtown Dearing could be

City of Thomson Character Areas

DRAFT





Areas requiring Special Attention

- 1 Significant Natural or Cultural Resources
- 2 Rapid Development or Change of Land Use
- 4 Areas in Need of Redevelopment
- 5 Large Abandoned Structures or Sites
- 6 Areas with Significant Infill Opportunity

Character Areas

- ▨ Traditional Neighborhood Stable
- ▨ Tradition Neighborhood Declining
- ▨ Downtown Thomson
- ▨ Suburban Residential
- ▨ Medical District
- ▨ Regional Commercial
- ▨ Commercial Corridor

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Office and retail areas along Warrenton Highway, Jackson Street and portions of Gordon Street that focus on local community services located in smaller buildings and development tracts than would be found in the “regional commercial” character area. Future development patterns should focus on on-site access management features, pedestrian enhancements, and uniform building, site, landscaping and sign standards in order to improve function and aesthetics.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Mix of vacant sites and small-scale retail development.
- Increasing number of small strip-centers.
- Multiple curb cuts on main thoroughfares.
- Limited landscaping features and signage of variable sizes and shapes.
- No unifying building elements across sites.
- Increasing amount of neighborhood serving retail.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Small-scale office and retail development (buildings and parcels).
- Maximum building square footages.
- Shallow depth of commercial zoning.
- Controlled vehicular access via curb spacing and cross-access easements.
- On-site pedestrian and bicycle features.
- Uniform design standards for buildings, landscaping and signage.
- No off-premise signs.
- Stringent lighting requirements.
- Standards and incentives to promote the re-use of remaining residential structures
- Street improvements which promote urban style thoroughfare types



Parking in front of buildings with a auto centered design make the character of the commercial corridor forgettable



Uniform building style and walkability create an inviting and attractive commercial corridor

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: DOWNTOWN THOMSON

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Downtown Thomson is the heart of a still thriving former railroad town. The existing character is defined mostly by a traditional downtown development pattern (buildings to the edge of the sidewalk, dense, multi-story development, etc.) with uses ranging from public/institutional, to office and some commercial. New development will build on the attributes that give downtown Thomson its traditional pedestrian-friendly character without reinforcing contemporary development patterns that detract from it (little or no connectivity, parking in the front of buildings, and no clearly defined public realm).

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Mix of commercial, service, institutional, and some retail uses
- Bisected by major north/south route. (GA-78)
- Completely contained within historic district.
- Some vacant or underused buildings.
- Historic downtown character still intact.
- Motor vehicle congestion at rush hour.
- Some infill with inappropriate design and character.
- Deteriorated pedestrian features and limited connectivity.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Design of new buildings should be pedestrian oriented with strong walkable connections between uses.
- Road edges clearly defined by locating buildings or landscaping at roadside, and parking allowed only in the rear.
- Incorporate design guidelines for new development to preserve historic downtown character.
- Encourage development of new office/retail mixed uses
- Possible new traffic pattern to encourage walkability and alleviate congestion.
- Home of new Government complex



Deteriorated pedestrian facilities define Downtown Thomson's character



Walkable and dense as shown in this example Downtown Thomson's character is not far away from being ideal

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: MEDICAL DISTRICT

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The McDuffie County Regional Medical Center is a foundation upon which both Thomson and McDuffie County can grow. Located within an existing commercial corridor, the access that the Medical District character area enjoys will help to facilitate its growth. The future development in this character area should be driven by interconnectivity. The expansion of health care and related uses should be in a campus style. Uniform signage with a simple and attractive street and pedestrian network will make wayfinding simple.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- McDuffie County Regional Medical Center
- Modern regional health care facility
- Bounded by residential uses and commercial along Warrenton Highway.
- Access limited directly to Warrenton Highway.
- Unified system of way-finding signage.
- Limited landscaping features.
- Residential areas south of hospital in good condition.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Expansion of medical and professional offices associated with health care.
- Creation of campus-like atmosphere
- Increased access to major thoroughfares
- Simple and attractive street design
- Pedestrian linkages between uses
- Uniform wayfinding signage
- Creation of a gateway into the city



The existing character in the medical district is defined by the character of the Hospital.



Campus style development with access to major thoroughfare, recommended for the Medical District.

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: REGIONAL COMMERCIAL

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Large retailers that have a high catchment area are located within the regional commercial character area. The potential revenue that these retailers bring are welcome, however responsible design and mitigation of some of the less desirable effects of traditional big box development need to be taken into consideration. Future development within the Regional Commercial character area should incorporate design and access standards to promote a sense of identity, something that is lacking in other regional commercial developments. Increased linkages to expanded bicycle and pedestrian networks, along with perimeter buffering should also be incorporated.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Big box retailers with their standard store designs
- Destination shopping to serve a regional market
- Auto oriented design
- Close proximity to major thoroughfares
- Almost no interconnectivity between stores
- Located on what used to be urbanized periphery

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Large-scale office and retail development (buildings and parcels).
- Controlled vehicular access via curb spacing and cross-access easements.
- On-site pedestrian and bicycle features.
- Uniform design standards for buildings, building materials, landscaping and signage – including outparcels.
- No off-premise signs.
- Stringent lighting requirements.
- Bicycle and pedestrian connections directly to adjacent residential developments and streets.
- Perimeter buffering.



Big box style development defines the character of the regional commercial district.



Use of different building materials with the application of design guidelines can shape the character of regional commercial development in a positive way.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Typical suburban development is the dominant style in Thomson’s suburban residential character area. Development in the area is auto-centric with little to no pedestrian orientation and no transit. Future development should incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities and increased linkages between existing developments. A variety of architectural styles and types of housing should be encouraged in order to begin to establish neighborhood identities.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

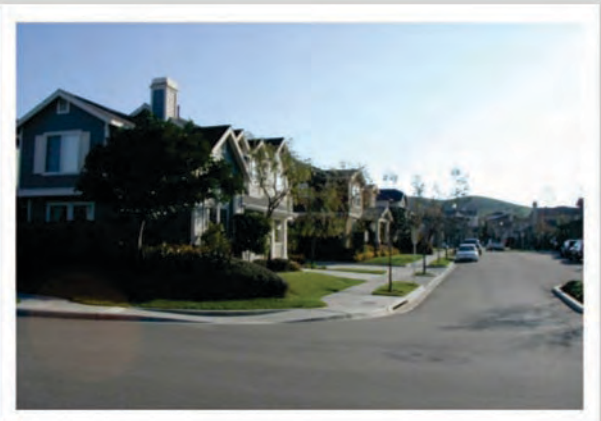
- Primarily residential.
- Newer single-family subdivisions (principally single-family detached and single-family attached).
- Some older single-family subdivisions.
- Large vacant tracts zoned for low-density residential.
- Street system self-contained – principal access via existing arterial streets.
- Sidewalks within newer development.
- Few landscape/streetscape features incorporated into new development.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Low to moderate density housing options (single-family, duplex, townhouses).
- Varying housing types contained within separate development tracts or streets.
- Promote variety of architectural styles.
- Street linkages between arterials and adjacent development tracts.
- Collector street standards for large developments and in targeted areas.
- Bicycle and pedestrian features with direct linkages to greenways and community facilities.
- Self-contained neighborhood parks or recreation space.



Little or no pedestrian access coupled with a low level of interconnectivity define the character of the suburban residential character area.



Street trees and sidewalks define the character of this suburban neighborhood.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: SUBURBAN RESERVE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Suburban Reserve character area is comprised of developed and undeveloped areas of the county within close proximity to Dearing and Thomson that are intended for low to moderate density residential land uses including single-family dwellings, duplexes and townhouses; and small-scale non-residential uses that are directly associated with and support residents. The area allows for flexibility in residential building design, but encourages street block and lot arrangements that promote interconnectivity between tracts.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Principally large lot residential
- Some remaining agricultural, and forestry uses
- Commercial development along main thoroughfares
- Pockets of higher density residential development as you approach the urban area
- Limited design parameters for new development
- Majority of roads retain rural character (no curb and gutter, no sidewalks)
- Increasing access to municipal water and sewer
- Currently zoned for low density residential
- New development self-contained and lacking street connectivity to adjacent development tracts

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Low to moderate density housing options (single-family, duplex)
- Targeted areas of potential high density and/or traditional development adjacent to major transportation corridors (e.g. Thomson East Bypass, I-20)
- Varying housing types contained within separate development tracts or streets
- Promote variety of architectural styles
- Street linkages between arterials and adjacent development tracts
- Collector street standards for large developments and in targeted areas
- Bicycle and pedestrian features with direct linkages to community facilities
- Self-contained neighborhood parks or recreation space
- Use of bisecting “watershed preserve” character areas according to applicable development pattern recommendations



Large lots with little to no connectivity or pedestrian facilities define the character in the suburban reserve



Bicycle and pedestrian facilities along with a mix of architectural styles give this suburban neighborhood a specific character

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DECLINING

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Once a stable and thriving residential area the traditional neighborhood- declining character area contains a concentration of structures/properties that exhibit characteristics of deterioration. New development should include appropriate neighborhood scale retail and commercial to support redeveloping residential uses and rehabilitated structures. New parks and greenspace throughout the entire character area should also be included to serve as focal points and provide much needed recreation opportunities.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Majority of original housing stock in place.
- Low percentage of owner-occupied homes
- Neglect of property maintenance
- Traditional neighborhood development pattern
- Good interconnectivity between streets
- Little or no bicycle or pedestrian facilities
- Lack of unifying or neighborhood defining features
- Underutilized, and sometimes dangerous parks

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Continue to follow redevelopment plan for this area to increase percentage of owner occupied homes
- Take advantage of vacant or blighted parcels to infill with architecturally compatible, mixed income housing.
- Build new neighborhood scale retail/commercial center to serve as a focal point.
- Addition of well designed parks and/or greenspace to also serve as a focal point.



Dilapidated housing stock and a lack of positive identity define the character of the TN-D character area



These infill houses can create not only an attractive neighborhood but a strong sense of identity in the TN-D character area.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) THOMSON CHARACTER AREA: TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD - STABLE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The traditional neighborhood-stable character area of Thomson has remained viable over the long term. Comprised of mostly older well-maintained homes, this character area offers its residents a strong neighborhood identity. Future development should focus on maintaining traditional neighborhood identity mentioned above – both in building style and site layout. The improvement and possible expansion of pedestrian facilities to link this neighborhood to community facilities and destinations would serve to make this neighborhood even more livable.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Older but well maintained housing stock
- Distinct neighborhood identity
- High rates of home ownership
- Traditional neighborhood design
- Good pedestrian network
- Well maintained street network
- Consistent site layout to create sense of architectural rhythm

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Continue maintenance of existing properties
- Strengthen pedestrian connections to community facilities and other destinations
- Continue support of neighborhood identity
- Infill subject to compatible design requirements (building and site plans)



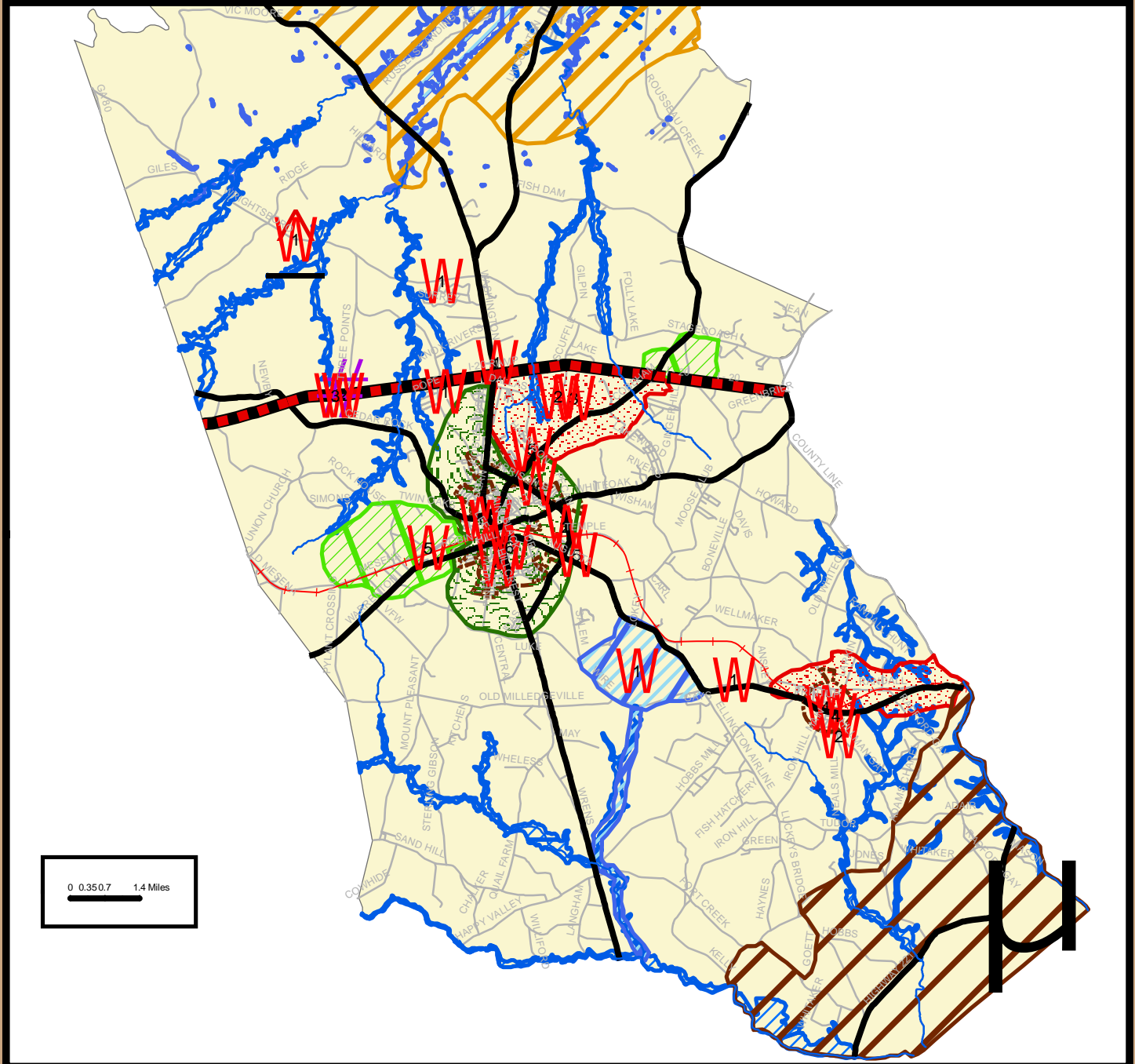
A typical well maintained older home in the TN-S character area the front porch and sidewalks contribute to the character of the neighborhood



Street trees and enhanced pedestrian facilities lend a feeling of safety and comfort to the character pictured above.

McDuffie County Character Areas

DRAFT



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 Miles



Central Savannah River Area
Regional Development Center
GIS Department
3023 River Watch Parkway, Suite A
Augusta, GA 30907-2016
www.csrardc.org

Areas Requiring Special Attention

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

- 1 Significant Natural or Cultral Resources
- 2 Rapid Development of Change of Land Use
- 3 Development Outpaces Community Resources
- 4 Areas in Need of Redevelopment
- 5 Large Abandoned Structures or Sites
- 6 Areas with Significant Infill Opportunity

Character Areas

- # Three Points Intersection
- Countryside
- Fort Gordon Buffer
- Watershed Preserve
- FEMA Flood Zones
- Urban Reserve
- Wrightsboro Village
- Production
- Suburban Reserve
- Lakeshore

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY)McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: COUNTRYSIDE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Countryside character area is predominantly rural, undeveloped land that is used for agriculture or rural residential. Future development in the Countryside character area should strive to retain the rural character through the preservation of open spaces. Very large lot residential, clustered or conservation residential subdivisions and agricultural uses should continue to be the preferred development pattern within the area.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Mix of rural uses including forestry, agriculture, and low density residential
- Commercial uses primarily limited to convenience enterprises at major intersections
- Location of current and prior industrial mining operations
- Increasing amount of subdivision and large lot residential development
- Targeted areas of public water and sewer expansion

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Emphasize cluster subdivision design that incorporates a significant amount of open space
- Apply natural resource zoning district standards to majority of character area to significantly increase lot sizes for residential uses
- Encourage compatible architecture to maintain regional rural character
- Whenever possible connect to network of trails or bike routes particularly those located within the watershed reserve.
- Focus infrastructure investment on maintenance rather than expansion in order to retain rural character



Currently there is minimal development within the countryside character area



Future development impacts should be minimal and should strive to protect open spaces and rural character, like the example above.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: FORT GORDON BUFFER

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Fort Gordon Buffer character area should remain a largely rural and undeveloped buffer between Fort Gordon and residential areas of McDuffie County. While the fort has no current plans for expansion into McDuffie County residents realize that it is an active military facility that could have negative impacts on quality of life if development is allowed to encroach too close to its borders.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Low density residential agricultural/forestry located in close proximity to Ft. Gordon
- Contains population most likely to be affected by activities (noise) generated from within the fort
- Contains one mile buffer identified by the US Army Garrison Ft. Gordon as a priority for ensuring compatible land uses to retain viability of the fort.
- Reliance on well and septic
- Includes portion of Ft. Gordon

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Restrict development that would be incompatible with the day to day operation of Fort Gordon
- Public purchase of development rights, easements, and/or properties, to ensure compatible land use buffers with Fort Gordon
- No further expansion of municipal infrastructure to discourage high intensity development
- Use of bisecting “watershed preserve” character areas according to applicable development pattern recommendations
- Observe recommendations put forth in both the Fort Gordon Joint Land Use Study and the U.S. Army’s Compatible Use Buffer program.



The Fort Gordon Buffer is very rural with lots of undeveloped open space as we see in this example



The rural character in the Fort Gordon character area should remain largely unchanged

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: LAKESHORE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Characterized by mainly deteriorating housing stock on small lots, the Lakeshore character area is not the typical lake front development. A lack of adequate access to transportation facilities have made it difficult for the developable areas of this character area to reach their full potential. Design guidelines and clustering of new residential development to protect open spaces and views could convert the area along Clark’s Hill Lake into a thriving, and unique lakefront village.

<h3>EXISTING CHARACTER:</h3>	<h3>DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):</h3>
------------------------------	---

- Properties adjacent to and in close proximity to Clark’s Hill Lake and its tributaries
- Large percentage of federally managed land
- Pockets of late 20th century residential development of varying condition
- Large forested tracts of land
- Predominantly unpaved roads
- High reliance on septic and wells
- Bordered and bisected by major State/Federal highways

- Design guidelines for new construction
- Mostly residential development
- Pockets of neighborhood commercial
- Buffer for stream corridors
- Focus on cluster and conservation subdivision design to maximize open space
- Limits on land disturbance and impervious surfaces
- Use of bisecting “watershed preserve” character areas according to applicable development pattern recommendations



Dilapidated housing along major thoroughfares define the character of Lakeshore



The residential development pattern for this character area should emphasize the conservation and incorporation of the natural landscape into new development.

LAND USE

PRELIMINARY) McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: PRODUCTION

The production character area is so named not only because of the goods and services that are produced within its boundaries but the jobs and revenue that are also generated. This area lies away from most residential centers so conflicts from negative byproducts of industry are minimized. This character area has a high degree of access to all of the current and future transportation facilities within the county. This character area will be the home of most future manufacturing and warehousing uses within the county.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Many properties already being used in a small industrial capacity
- Multiple city owned properties intended for industrial use, within both areas identified as production districts
- High level of access to arterial thoroughfares and/or rail
- Remaining pockets of low density residential, agriculture, and forestry
- Lots/parcels of varying size
- Centered on highway corridors with high volumes of traffic

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Concentration of future industrial and manufacturing uses
- Provision of streets designed to accommodate continual large vehicle traffic
- Supporting commercial and offices as secondary uses
- Limitation on noises, smells and lighting associated with manufacturing uses
- Removal of zoning districts that allow for residential development
- Landscaping with a focus on significant buffering of industrial uses from adjacent uses and thoroughfares



Large lots with single industrial uses define the character in the majority of the production character area



The concentration of industrial and supporting uses will create the defining character of the production district.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: THREE POINTS INTERCHANGE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

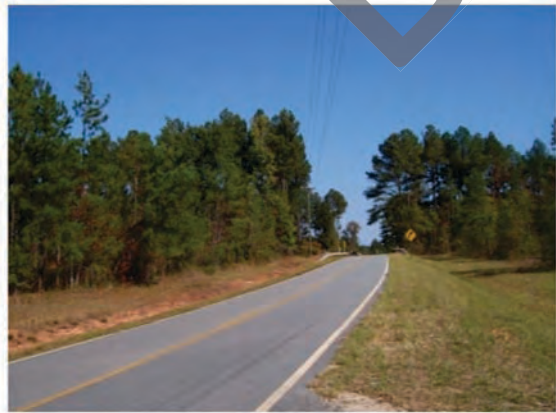
The predominant land use in the Three Points Interchange character area is currently agricultural and forestry. This area will be the site of a new major interchange with Interstate 20. Development directly around the interchange should be auto oriented and typical of a major highway interchange. Development to the north of the interchange should be primarily industrial, leading towards the airport. Development south of the interchange may include limited commercial with some residential mixed in as you approach the urbanized area of Thomson.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- o Large lots
- o Pasture and forestry uses only
- o Bisected by Interstate 20

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- o Provision of new/improved infrastructure including water, sewer, and industrial grade streets
- o Development of interchange with I-20
- o Mix of limited commercial and residential on the southern side of I-20 in proximity to Thomson
- o Industrial and complimentary uses north of I-20 extending towards the airport following the route of the proposed west bypass.
- o Improvement of thoroughfares south of the character area to accommodate heavier traffic volumes
- o Incorporate access management standards for new and existing streets
- o Significant open space to separate residential and non-residential uses



The existing character is very rural in nature as this example shows.



Development should attempt to preserve as much open/greenspace as possible.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: URBAN RESERVE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

As greater Thomson grows its residential and supporting land uses will expand with it. The Urban Reserve character area surrounds the urbanized area of Thomson. Primarily rural residential mixed in with some commercial development exists currently. Higher density residential, multifamily, commercial even mixed-use developments would be appropriate. The traditional grid should be the primary development pattern in order to extend the urban fabric throughout the character area.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Area immediately surrounding Thomson
- Some larger lot residential uses
- Scattered commercial development
- Low level of interconnectivity between streets
- Little or no existing pedestrian facilities
- Collector level streets evenly dispersed throughout

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Incorporate access management standards for new and existing streets
- Promote mixed-use developments at intersections with new east bypass or areas where density makes it appropriate
- Higher density residential including some multi-family, townhomes, and duplexes
- No parking in front of new commercial development
- Neighborhood commercial development limited in size and scattered throughout developing areas
- Interconnectivity of streets
- New streets designed in a urban manner which regulate traffic flow and increase pedestrian safety



Larger lots with little or no connectivity currently define the character of the urban reserve.



Denser more walkable development with a focus on fostering an urban character should be encouraged in the urban reserve character area.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: WATERSHED PRESERVE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The environmentally sensitive nature lands located within this character area are unsuitable for most development. These areas include water supply watersheds, protected river corridors, wildlife management areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas. This land could be best utilized in the future as open space and utilized in conjunction with other character areas to create a network of trails or greenways that provide residents with recreation and transportation options.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Lands containing and adjacent to streams, and floodplains
- Properties located within the Thomson-McDuffie Water supply Watershed (Usry Pond)
- Watershed properties subject to land use restrictions and environmental regulations
- Streams and floodplains largely undeveloped some instances of sedimentation due to agricultural /pasture operations

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Promote preservation of watershed areas' natural features
- Require buffer areas of streams and floodplains while retaining native vegetation
- Purchase of properties and or easements in the Usry Pond watershed
- Limit residential density in Usry Pond watershed
- Promote passive activity & development along stream and corridors (trails, benches, picnic tables, outdoor classrooms, etc.)
- Develop as bicycle and pedestrian "greenway" corridors while creating linkages to and between adjacent development and properties



Pristine watershed properties define the character of the watershed preserve character area.



A greenway follows a floodplain. This character is appropriate for this area.

LAND USE

(PRELIMINARY) McDUFFIE COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: WRIGHTSBORO VILLAGE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Wrightsboro was one of the earliest settlements in the state of Georgia. Founded by Quakers on land that was ceded from the Creek Indians, Wrightsboro village has managed to retain its character for the almost 230 years since its founding. Protection of the historic character of the Wrightsboro village should be the guiding principle of all development within the character area. Clustering of low density residential development to protect the viewsheds, and open space will be the easiest way to keep the historic feel of the Wrightsboro Village character area intact.

EXISTING CHARACTER:

- Concentration of National Register historic structures
- Location of Wrightsboro town site, and historic Wrightsboro road
- Bisected by multiple streams and tributaries
- Large tracts of agricultural and pasture lands
- Surrounded by open space
- Belle Meade Hunt stable & grounds located in close proximity

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY):

- Low density clustered or conservation residential development
- Design guidelines to preserve historic character
- Placement of buildings as to protect view sheds
- Limitation of non-residential uses to home occupations
- Use of bisecting “watershed preserve” character areas according to applicable development pattern recommendations
- Limit development threat to historic context through concentration of water/sewer expansion to “suburban reserve”, “urban reserve”, “three points” and “production” character areas.



Historic structures define what the Wrightsboro Village character area is.



Clustered, low density development recommended for this character area works with the natural landscape to reduce the visual impact of new structures.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan
2009-2029

Chapter 11
Quality Community Objectives

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

PURPOSE

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" establish state-wide planning goals. These goals are accompanied by a list of "Quality Community Objectives" that elaborate on the state-wide goals through consideration of local and regional growth and development issues. As part of the *Community Assessment* (Chapters 1 – 11 of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*) Dearing, Thomson and McDuffie County have evaluated their current policies, activities and development patterns for consistency with the Quality Community Objectives.

Factoring in the data and recommendations contained in prior chapters, a comparison of McDuffie County's current status with the Quality Community Objectives reveals additional issues and opportunities to consider. **The "issues and opportunities" associated with some of the objectives in the consistency review below are not intended to be an all-inclusive list.** In some instances, the issues and opportunities expand on prior recommendations made throughout other portions of the *Community Assessment*. In other instances, suggestions in this chapter may simply duplicate prior recommendations. Regardless, all issues and opportunities contained in the chapter should be considered further during preparation of the *Community Agenda*.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides a tool for communities to assess their compliance with Quality Community Objectives. This tool has been utilized in the following sections. The comments column of the tool has been left largely blank because the commentary on each objective can be found in the text above it.

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.

Status: McDuffie County and its communities are tied to the greater Central Savannah River Area region through both a shared culture and industry. Industrial operations tied to regional clusters can be found in a number of locations throughout McDuffie County. H.P. Pelzer and Thomson Plastics provide essential components for the farm equipment and golf cart manufacturers that have large operations in the region.

Additionally, the rural character and history of the region is preserved throughout McDuffie County. From the six nationally designated historic districts to the Blind Willie McTell Blues Festival, Belle Meade Hunt, and Dearing's Mayfest, McDuffie County offers a tapestry of history and culture unique to this region.

Issues and Opportunities: Promotion of McDuffie County as a regional center of industry should be continued with cooperation between all of the local and regional development entities listed in

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Chapter 3 (Economic Development). Continued promotion of cultural events in McDuffie County will serve to strengthen McDuffie County’s status as a hub of culture in the region.

Development Patterns			
Regional Identity			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X		See above
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	X		
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage(mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.)	X		
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s regional tourism partnership.	X		
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X		
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	X		

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 responding to growth opportunities.

Status: McDuffie County continues to make incremental improvements to its land development regulations as growth occurs. The previously discussed expansion of water and sewer by the City and County is largely in an area that has been identified as suitable for residential growth. McDuffie County and its municipalities are pro-active in seeking new way to encourage responsible, sustainable growth. The inclusion of a *Major Thoroughfare Plan* and independent bicycle/pedestrian chapter is being incorporated into the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* – in excess of minimum state comprehensive planning standards. The desire to establish more thorough transportation policies to address projected population growth is evidence of McDuffie County’s commitment to orderly development.

Issues and Opportunities: Revisions to street standards and design can reduce potential future traffic congestion by increasing interconnectivity. Beyond the current planned expansion of water and sewer, future priority should be given to maintenance of existing facilities and reinvestment of established urbanized areas. Recommendations of both the *Major Thoroughfare Plan* and the bicycle/pedestrian chapter of this *Plan* should be implemented in order to mitigate dependency on automobile exclusive transportation systems.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Social and Economic Development			
Growth Preparedness			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X		
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.	X		
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X		
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X		
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X		
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		X	
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X		
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.		X	
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	X		
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X		

Appropriate Businesses

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.

Status: McDuffie County has benefited from its proximity to transportation facilities and an environment that attracts business. The County and City of Thomson are actively recruiting employers from all sectors to locate within McDuffie County.

Issues and Opportunities: McDuffie County can work with the assistance of the numerous regional and local entities listed in Chapter 3 (Economic Development) in order to highlight community data and property to entice business investment in the County. The County can host prospective commercial investors to highlight investment opportunities within McDuffie County. The identification and reservation of land for future industrial development can be tied to pending transportation improvements and proposed land development patterns recommended in the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Social and Economic Development			
Appropriate Business			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X		
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	X		
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.	X		
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	X		

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 advances.

Status: A satellite campus of Augusta Technical College is located in Thomson, and just recently began offering classes in Dearing. Augusta Tech provides technical training in a variety of fields that give McDuffie County residents the opportunity to further their education.

Issues and Opportunities: The expansion of classes offered in Dearing will benefit not only the town its self but the county as a whole. The McDuffie County Industrial Development Authority can work cooperatively with Augusta Technical College to ensure tie job training and other economic development programs to prospective large employers considering investment in the county. The McDuffie County Board of Education may also work with Augusta Technical College to develop vocational training programs for at-risk students in the public school system.

Social and Economic Development			
Educational Opportunities			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	X		
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X		
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X		
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X		These opportunities are limited, but growing.

Employment Options

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

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Status: Active recruitment of service sector employers will provide McDuffie County residents of varying education levels with expanded access to jobs.

Issues and Opportunities: Additional service and retail employment options in Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County must be matched with a variety of safe and convenient housing options within the County for potential employees.

Social and Economic Development			
Employment Options			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.		X	
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X		
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X		These positions are limited, but growing

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.

Status: With well defined historic districts as well as a rich cultural heritage, McDuffie County and its municipalities have long been invested in the value of historic preservation. The recently adopted historic preservation district in downtown Thomson, along with the ongoing rehabilitation of the old gymnasium in Dearing are evidence of the investment of the communities in preserving their history.

Issue and Opportunities: Investment in existing historic residential structures can be promoted via live-work or mixed-use zoning standards to increase the economic potential of the properties. The allowance of non-residential uses can be directly tied to exterior design guidelines. The Thomson and Dearing can investigate the possibility of National Register designation for some structures – either through individual listing, a geographic district or the creation of a Multiple Property Submission document. McDuffie County can preserve historic viewsheds with proximity to such significant sites such as Wrightsborough via further revisions to their development regulations.

Resource Conservation			
Heritage Preservation			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	X		
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.	X		
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	X		

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Open Space Protection

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 greenbelt/wildlife corridors.

Status: McDuffie County’s land development regulations currently provide an option for a clustered residential subdivision to protect open space.

Issue and Opportunities: Current county zoning regulations allow lots as small as one acre county-wide. In contrast, current minimum lot size requirements in denser portions of Thomson do not allow for small single family lots. The combined effect of both communities’ lot size requirements is alternatively a threat to the rural character of the unincorporated portions of the county and the inability to maximize residential development within the city. McDuffie County can develop conservation subdivision standards to supplement the existing standards. Also the amendment of the county’s zoning ordinance to include a natural resource zoning district, as described in Chapter 10 (Land Use), would place a priority on substantially increasing the minimum lot size in rural portions of the county and require the preservation of open space.

Resource Conservation			
Open Space Protection			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.		X	
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	X		
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.		X	
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	X		

Environmental Protection

Objective: Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from the 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.

Status: McDuffie County currently has soil erosion and sedimentation control, and watershed district ordinances in place. The City of Thomson currently has a soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance. The city of Dearing currently has no environmental protection ordinances.

Issues and Opportunities: McDuffie County and Thomson have the minimum controls in place to mitigate the effects of development on the natural environment. The addition of the previously mentioned conservation subdivision standards to the County’s land development code would go a step further in preserving the pristine character of the county’s environmentally sensitive areas. Additional measures can be put in place to promote environmental preservation such as larger

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

stream buffers, tree preservation/planting standards, decreases in allowable impervious surface ratios, required deed-restricted passive open space in new development, etc. Dearing can partner with the McDuffie County Planning Commission to apply land development and/or environmental protection ordinances within the town limits.

Resource Conservation			
Environmental Protection			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	X		
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	X		
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.	X		
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	X		
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.		X	
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.		X	
7. We are using storm water best management practices for all new development.		X	
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	X		

Regional Cooperation

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

Status: Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County are a model for how jurisdictions can work together to achieve a mutually beneficial goal.

Issues and Opportunities: The positive relationship between the jurisdictions needs to be fostered and continued.

Governmental Relations			
Regional Cooperation			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	X		
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	X		
3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	X		
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	X		

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Transportation Alternatives

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

Status: Thomson and McDuffie County have shown a commitment to the provision of transportation alternatives through the endorsement of the *Long Range Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*. The plan has been incorporated into this document as Chapter 8.

Issues and Opportunities: Efforts should be made to implement the recommendations of the bicycle/pedestrian component of this plan (Chapter 8). The operations of the McDuffie County Rural Transportation System can also be reviewed to determine how it can be utilized to provide greater access to jobs and shopping destinations for a larger cross-section of the community.

Development Patterns			
Transportation Alternatives			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community	X		
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry / exit.		X	
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X		
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	X		The city of Thomson is the only one with sidewalk requirements for new development
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks whenever possible.	X		The city of Thomson is the only one with sidewalk requirements for new development
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community	X		
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X		

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.

Status: As documented throughout the *Community Assessment*, Thomson and McDuffie County jointly own and operate many services provided to all residents of the County.

Issues and Opportunities: A continuation of current policies that promote regional solutions is recommended. Additionally an assessment of services to determine if further cooperation could benefit residents in McDuffie County is recommended.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Governmental Relations			
Regional Solutions			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X		
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X		
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X		
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X		

Housing Choices

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.

Status: McDuffie County and the Town of Dearing’s housing stock is defined by single-family and other low-density housing choices. The City of Thomson offers a slightly broader range of housing choices, but single family style is predominant.

Issues and Opportunities: To provide additional safe and affordable housing options within the areas identified as appropriate in the Chapter 10 (Land Use). Areas located within the boundary identified in the *Urban Redevelopment Plan* for the City of Thomson that contain dilapidated housing stock can be targeted for redevelopment of higher-intensity residential uses. A housing needs assessment would also be beneficial in determining the exact needs for all jurisdictions.

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



QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

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.

Status: Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County do not have any standards or incentives to promote traditional development patterns that are compact and promote a mixture of uses. Traditional development patterns in McDuffie County are limited to downtown Thomson and adjacent center city neighborhoods.

Issues and Opportunities: Consider development of a traditional neighborhood development district and/or mixed-use development district. Continue implementation of the *Urban Redevelopment Plan* to strengthen and preserve the traditional neighborhood character that currently exists within areas the *Plan* identifies. Develop urban style thoroughfares for use in urbanized areas as recommended in Chapter 7 (Transportation).

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

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.

Status: The redevelopment plan for the City of Thomson calls for a large degree of infill development - both commercial and residential - within the identified boundaries. The current rehabilitation of the old gymnasium in Downtown Dearing is an excellent example of infill development.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Issues and Opportunities: Continued implementation of the strategies for both residential and commercial infill development in the *Urban Redevelopment Plan*.

Development Patterns			
Infill Development			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and / or infill development.	X		
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment	X		
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield development		X	
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).		X	
5. Our Community allows small lot development (5, 000 square feet or less) for some uses.	X		

Sense of Place

Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where it 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.

Status: Thomson and Dearing both have a well established downtown with a unique character. Additionally Thomson has a recently established historic preservation district in place to protect historic properties.

Issues and Opportunities: The development of nodes of higher intensity mixed-use development in specific character areas as recommended in Chapter 10 (Land Use) should be considered. Also the reinvestment in downtown Thomson that could result from the implementation of the recommendations of the *Urban Redevelopment Plan* should be realized.

Development Patterns			
Sense of Place			
	YES	NO	Comments
1. If someone were dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics	X		
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas	X		
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	X		
4. We have ordinances to regulate the type and size of signage in our community.	X		
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X	
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland		X	

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan Community Participation Program 2009-2029



McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

PURPOSE

As a document that reflects the shared vision, goals and objectives of an entire community, a comprehensive plan must be based on extensive public involvement. Only through the input of local leaders and the general public can any comprehensive plan be embraced as the community's guide to long-term health and sustainability. The level of community ownership of a comprehensive plan is tied directly to the degree of public input that is incorporated into the planning effort. Only by conducting a comprehensive planning process that creates this public sense of ownership will the community make a conscious decision to work toward its implementation. Without active citizen involvement, it is unlikely that a comprehensive plan will do more than sit forgotten on a shelf. A comprehensive plan that is based on public input, however, will continue to serve as a dynamic policy guide that benefits the community well into the future.

The *Community Participation Program* ensures that public input is incorporated into the comprehensive planning process for Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County. To obtain this input, stakeholders are targeted to focus attention to key issues and opportunities that must be addressed through the creation of McDuffie County's joint *Community Agenda*; and, to provide an understanding of priorities in advance of the *Agenda* preparation. Through workshops, the general public will refine and revise community issues and opportunities. The general public will also generate the ideas that will ultimately form the implementation policies of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*.

STAKEHOLDERS

Planning/Advisory Committee

The *Community Participation Program* proposes the continued use of a planning/advisory committee appointed by local officials. The McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will meet intermittently to provide direction to *Community Agenda* preparation based on input received through public workshops and surveys.

The McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee was actually formed soon after *Community Assessment* data collection was initiated. The Advisory Committee is composed of a broad cross-section of community leaders including citizens and local officials. As with any data collection effort, a plan preparer must take

into account quantitative and qualitative information. The support of the Advisory Committee during the data collection effort was essential – both in fulfilling many primary data requests; and, in providing the necessary feedback to better understand statistical information.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee	
Name	Organization
Sean Kelley	Mayor, Town of Dearing
Don Powers	Administrator, City of Thomson
Don Norton	Administrator, McDuffie County
Georgia Hobbs	McDuffie County Planning Commission
Fred Guerrant	Director, McDuffie County Planning
David Wells	Thomson Planning Commission
Doug Kier	McDuffie County Reg. Medical Center
Chris Pelly	McDuffie County Public Works
Logan Marshall	Sherriff, McDuffie County
Mark Peterson	McDuffie County Board of Education
Peter Ruddick	McDuffie County Utilities
Donald Greene	Citizen
Andy Knox	Citizen
George Lokey	Citizen
Tony Burnley	Citizen
Lee Anne Cowart	Citizen
Bob Wilson, Jr.	Citizen
Jim Alfriend	Citizen
Riley Stamey	Citizen

Additional Stakeholder Identification

With the assistance of the Advisory Committee during the *Community Assessment* process, additional stakeholders have been identified. During preparation of the *Community Agenda*, it will be important to offer stakeholder organizations and individuals the opportunity to provide feedback and direction through a variety of options. In addition to the principal public participation techniques proposed in this document, many community stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in individual interviews and/or future Advisory Committee discussions. Stakeholder groups and organizations include the following:

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders	
Augusta Regional Transportation Study	CSRA Business Lending Corporation
Augusta Technical College	Development Authority of McDuffie County
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Fort Gordon
Georgia Department of Transportation	Forward McDuffie
The Clark's Hill Partnership	McDuffie County Historic Preservation Commission
McDuffie County Sherriff's Office	McDuffie County Board of Education
McDuffie County Water & Sewer Commission	City of Thomson Police Department
Thomson-McDuffie County Planning Commission	McDuffie County Regional Medical Center
McDuffie County Department of Public Works	Georgia Power
McDuffie County Department of Solid Waste	Thomson Department of Streets and Sanitation

PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

Planning/Advisory Committee Meetings

Community Assessment

Meetings of the Advisory Committee began in April of 2007. The initial committee meeting focused on a description of the comprehensive planning process and the importance of a comprehensive plan in establishing long-term community policy. Committee members also provided initial input on issues and opportunities facing Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County. Subsequent committee meetings focused on presentations and discussions that revolved around data sets and information that are required in order to adhere to the "Supporting Analysis of Data and Information" section of the "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning."

Community Agenda

Advisory Committee meetings will continue during the preparation of the *Community Agenda* portion of the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan*. The committee will retain their role as a focus group – helping to translate community input into measurable goals and priorities. The committee will also assist in the initial development of *Plan* implementation strategies. Finally, the committee will serve as the primary vehicle for soliciting public participation in the *Community Agenda* process. It will be the Advisory Committee's responsibility to educate residents on the need to participate in the planning process; and, to inform the community of upcoming opportunities to

participate. The number and frequency of Advisory Committee meetings during the *Community Agenda* process is illustrated in the comprehensive plan schedule within this document; but, is subject to change based on public input.

Public Workshops

Community Assessment

The initial public workshops for the *McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan* were held on Monday October 29th, 2007 in Dearing, and Tuesday October 30th, 2007 in Thomson. Through the initiative of Advisory Committee members, Dearing, Thomson, and McDuffie County residents and property owners were invited to participate in the workshop through the distribution of flyers, and public hearing notices posted in the *McDuffie County Mirror*. Newspaper postings advertising the workshop were prepared in large block format so that they would be conspicuous to readers.

The agenda at both public workshops was identical-residents were simply given two attendance choices in order to accommodate potential conflicts with their personal schedules. Attendees listened to a presentation explaining the comprehensive planning process and detailing how they would be able to participate in *Plan* preparation during the *Community Agenda* portion of the planning effort. After questions and answers, an attendee information/survey card was distributed that included basic questions soliciting citizens' opinions on positive and negative attributes of their communities. These responses supplemented information received from prior Advisory Committee meetings and augmented recommendations contained in the *Community Assessment* document.

Community Agenda

At least 3 sets of additional public workshops will be held for the general public during preparation of the *Community Agenda*. As with the initial public workshops held during the community assessment process, each "set" of community agenda workshops will be held at two locations to offer a scheduling option to potential attendees. Unlike the formal presentation format of the initial *Community Assessment* workshop, some *Community Agenda* workshops may be held in a "drop-in" format. As with an open house, drop-in workshops allow members of the public to attend at any point during an identified block of time and stay for the period of time they feel comfortable with. Drop-in workshops also will provide individual staff members with the opportunity to speak one-on-one with attendees.

At the first workshop, attendees will be able to walk among displays that highlight issues and opportunities related to all topics addressed in the *Community Assessment*. For each topic, attendees may complete a survey form that allows them to rank the information presented in order of priority. The surveys will also allow attendees to suggest revisions and options to the preliminary recommendations that are being presented. Project staff will be available throughout to answer questions and provide clarification. All information will be compiled and utilized to revise community goals and objectives.

At the second workshop there will be a focus on the transportation and land use elements of the *Plan*. An explanation of the concept of "character areas" and their role in the comprehensive

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

planning process will be given along with an explanation of all elements of the transportation plan including the Major Thoroughfare Plan.

The third workshop will be conducted in the same format as the first; except, participants will focus on suggesting and prioritizing implementation policies. An additional workshop may be scheduled at any time during the Community Agenda process if planners determine that more focus needs to be given to a particular topic.

Stakeholder Interviews

Many of the stakeholder groups identified herein were contacted for input during preparation of the *Community Assessment*. As previously suggested, stakeholder groups will have the opportunity to provide input on the draft *Community Assessment* document. Stakeholder groups expressing interest will have the opportunity to participate in individual interviews and attend *Community Agenda* public workshops.

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held in accordance with the “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.”

COMMUNITY AGENDA SCHEDULE

The *Joint McDuffie County Comprehensive Plan* is being prepared according to the schedule located on page 197. This schedule was approved by the Advisory Committee at their initial meeting in April 2007. The number of Advisory Committee meetings and public workshops illustrated on the schedule is a minimum and may increase.

McDuffie County Joint Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029

Appendix A

Communities of Opportunity Community Improvement Strategy

McDuffie County

City of Thomson

Town of Dearing

Prepared by the CSRA Regional Development Center





Communities of Opportunity

A Community Development Initiative of the Georgia Rural Development Council

Community Improvement Strategy

McDuffie

COUNTY



Cover design by Tyson Young at the Fanning Institute, UGA
Photos by Brenda Hayes at the Fanning Institute, UGA

Co-Op: McDuffie County

Community Improvement Strategy: Housing Revitalization

McDuffie County seeks to improve the housing stock in their community by rehabilitating derelict properties and beautifying neighborhoods, with the hope of also reducing crime in those neighborhoods and bringing the community more closely together.

Issues to be Addressed

McDuffie County has chosen to address housing revitalization in the community to deal with dilapidated housing in blighted neighborhoods to encourage civic engagement around a common issue. The community also hopes that a beautified and revitalized community will reduce crime and encourage economic development.

Strategy

As a Community of Opportunity, McDuffie County will accomplish the following over the next two years:

1. Educate and get public interested in housing revitalization in McDuffie County
2. Establish a Housing Task Force
3. Develop standards for new residential infill
4. Develop incentives for private investors to rehabilitate homes in targeted neighborhoods
5. Adopt and enforce Codes and Ordinances that support and encourage quality buildings
6. Organize neighborhood organizations to maintain & improve properties for cleaner safer neighborhoods

Measures of Success

For each strategy listed above, success will be measured as follows:

1. McDuffie County Housing Task Force established.
2. New standards for residential infill developed.
3. Incentives are created for private investors interested in rehabilitating homes in targeted neighborhoods.
4. New building codes are adopted and enforced.
5. Neighborhood Associations and neighborhood watch groups established.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Issue Addressed	Action Item	Responsible Local Partners	Responsible State Partners	Cost Estimate	Possible Funding Sources	Starting and ending dates for completion of action item
Public Awareness Campaign	Form Public Awareness Campaign Committee	Representative from each affected neighborhood, local law enforcement, neighborhood churches Don Powers	DCA	N/A	N/A	July 2008
Public Awareness Campaign	Research what other communities have done to advocate for housing and neighborhood revitalization	Public Awareness Campaign Committee Don Powers	GMA RDC	N/A	N/A	July 2008 – August 2008
Public Awareness Campaign	Identify best way to educate and inform each target area	Public Awareness Campaign Committee Don Powers	N/A	To be determined	Local governments	September 2008
Public Awareness Campaign	Education Campaign in newspapers radio & door to door (Morning radio shows, Public service, announcements, Internet websites)	Public Awareness Campaign Committee, local radio station, local newspapers Don Powers	N/A	\$3,000.00	Local governments, Private Sources	September 2008- July 2010
Structure & Resources	Consider applying to become a participating community in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Program (GICH)	Housing Task Force, local governments Charlie Newton	DCA	N/A	N/A	July 2008 – August 1, 2008 (deadline for submittal will be sometime in August)

Issue Addressed	Action Item	Responsible Local Partners	Responsible State Partners	Cost Estimate	Possible Funding Sources	Starting and ending dates for completion of action item
Structure & Resources	Establish a Housing Task Force	Mission McDuffie, Habitat for Humanity, Churches, City of Thomson, City of Dearing, McDuffie County Board of Commissioners, Home Owners, Renters Charlie Newton	Department of Community Affairs (DCA)	N/A	N/A	July 2008
Structure & Resources	Conduct Housing Needs Assessment one neighborhood at time (This may be conducted by CSRA RDC and funded by a USDA grant. McDuffie Co. will find whether or not grant was awarded in October 2008)	City Planning Inspector, County Planning Inspector, Health Department Charlie Newton Charlie Newton	State Fire Marshall, DCA	\$500/unit?	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DCA	October 2008 – July 2009
Structure & Resources	Consider Hiring a Director for the Housing Task Force	Housing Task Force, City of Thomson, McDuffie County Board of Commissioners Charlie Newton	N/A	To be determined based on whether director is full or part-time	Local governments	October 2008 – July 2010

Issue Addressed	Action Item	Responsible Local Partners	Responsible State Partners	Cost Estimate	Possible Funding Sources	Starting and ending dates for completion of action item
Structure & Resources	Develop Leadership in key neighborhoods to assist in forming Neighborhood Associations and Neighborhood Watches	Housing Task Force, Director of Housing Task Force Charlie Newton	DCA	To be determined	Local governments	October 2008 – December 2008
Structure & Resources	Develop initiatives to deal with drug problems in targeted neighborhoods (Consider Neighborhood Watch Program)	Neighborhood Associations (may need some training), Local Law Enforcement Charlie Newton	Georgia Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice Operation Weed and Seed	To be determined	Local	January 2009 – July 2010
Neighborhood Associations	Hold neighborhood meetings with the assistance of neighborhood leaders identified earlier	Housing Task Force, Director of Housing Task Force, Housing Authority Mike Carrington	DCA	N/A	N/A	January 2009
Neighborhood Associations	Formally establish each neighborhood association with bylaws and meet monthly	Neighborhood Association members, Housing Task Force Mike Carrington	DCA, GICH	N/A	N/A	February 2009 – May 2009
Neighborhood Associations	Neighborhood associations will address issues identified by their association	Neighborhood Association Members Mike Carrington	N/A	To be determined	Local governments	February 2009 – July 2010

Reinvestment & Infill Development	Develop Standards for infill housing	Historic Preservation Commission, local governments, developers, realtors Mike Carrington	DCA, CSRA RDC, HUD	\$10,000	DCA, local governments	July 2008 – July 2009
Reinvestment & Infill Development	Develop incentives for private investors to rehabilitate homes in targeted neighborhoods	Local banks, Local Governments, private non-profits, local developers, realtors Mike Carrington	DCA, HUD, CSRA RDC, Small Business Association (SBA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	To be determined	DCA, HUD, SBA, USDA, local governments	July 2008 – December 2008
Code & Ordinances	Research other local governments' buildings codes, and standard building and housing codes	City of Thomson, McDuffie County Board of Commissioners, City/County Planning Dept. Charlie Newton	DCA, CSRA RDC	N/A	N/A	July 2008 – December 2008
Code & Ordinances	Compare McDuffie County and Thomson's existing codes to the ones researched above	City of Thomson, McDuffie County Board of Commissioners, City/County Planning Dept Don Powers	DCA, CSRA RDC	N/A	N/A	January 2009 – March 2009

Issue Addressed	Action Item	Responsible Local Partners	Responsible State Partners	Cost Estimate	Possible Funding Sources	Starting and ending dates for completion of action item
Code & Ordinances	Develop draft proposal for changes/additions to existing code & present to Leaders & Community	City of Thomson, McDuffie County Board of Commissioners, City/County Planning Dept Don Powers	DCA, CSRA RDC	To be determined	Local governments	March 2009
Code & Ordinances	Review & Identify Enforcement Staffing Options	City of Thomson, McDuffie County Board of Commissioners, City/County Planning Dep Don Powers t	DCA, CSRA RDC	To be determined	Local governments	March 2009
Code & Ordinances	Adopt Ordinances or Proposals to include enforcement staff	City County Governments Don Powers	N/A	To be determined	Local governments	May 2009
Alternative Housing Options	Do an inventory to assess and identify the rental houses that are available in McDuffie County.	Housing Task Force, Community Development Director, City/County Planning Departments Charlie Newton	DCA, CSRA RDC, HUD	To be determined	Local governments	January 2009 – March 2009
Alternative Housing Options	Research how other counties have dealt with alternative housing options	Housing Task Force Charlie Newton	DCA, GICH	N/A	N/A	January 2009 – March 2009

Issue Addressed	Action Item	Responsible Local Partners	Responsible State Partners	Cost Estimate	Possible Funding Sources	Starting and ending dates for completion of action item
Alternative Housing Options	Conduct Inventory of Sub-standard Housing	Housing Task Force, Plan Inspection, Code Inspections, Health Department, Dept. of Family and Children's Services, local law enforcement, landlords Charlie Newton	DCA, CSRA RDC, HUD	To be determined	Local governments	January 2009 – May 2009
Alternative Housing Options	Identify which houses can be rehabilitated at a reasonable cost	Housing Task Force Charlie Newton	DCA, GICH	To be determined	Local governments	May 2009 – July 2009
Alternative Housing Options	Meet with residents of lease properties and the owners to assess their ability and desire to relocate	Housing Task Force Charlie Newton	DCA, GICH	N/A	N/A	July 2009 – September 2009
Alternative Housing Options	Identify available properties to relocate residents willing to move	Housing Task Force Charlie Newton	DCA, GICH	N/A	N/A	July 2009 – September 2009
Alternative Housing Options	Identify Residents not willing to relocate, however resources are available to improve the outward appearance	Housing Task Force Charlie Newton	DCA, GICH	N/A	N/A	July 2009 – September 2009

TOWN OF DEARING

RESOLUTION OF TRANSMITTAL

Transmittal of the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* sections of the Joint McDuffie County Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center.


WHEREAS, the Town of Dearing, Georgia, has completed the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Plan* sections of the Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update,

WHEREAS, the City of Dearing certifies that the minimum public hearing requirements as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning have been met.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Dearing City Council does hereby transmit the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* sections of the Joint Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center for review under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

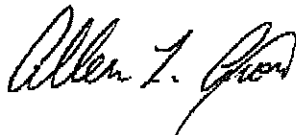
July 14

Adopted this day of , 2008.



Mayor, Town of Dearing

ATTEST:



McDuffie County Board of Commissioners

McDuffie County Courthouse THOMSON, GEORGIA 30824
337 Main Street

(706) 595-2100
FAX# (706) 595-4710

Sammie Wilson, Sr.
Darrell L. Wester

Charles (Charlie) G. Newton IV, Chairman
Donald W. Norton, County Manager

Frederick D. Favors
J. Robert (Bob) Farr

McDUFFIE COUNTY

RESOLUTION OF TRANSMITTAL

Transmittal of the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* sections of the Joint McDuffie County Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center.

WHEREAS, McDuffie County, Georgia, has completed the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Plan* sections of the Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update,

WHEREAS, McDuffie County certifies that the minimum public hearing requirements as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning have been met.

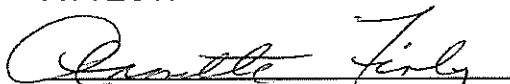
BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the McDuffie County Board of Commissioners does hereby transmit the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* sections of the Joint Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center for review under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

Adopted this 15th day of July, 2008.



Charles G. Newton, IV
Chairman, McDuffie County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:


Annette Finley, County Clerk

Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider



A Governor's All Star Community

Justin

706-210-2006

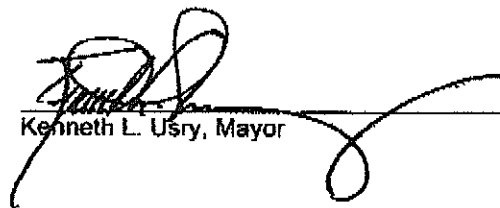
**CITY OF THOMSON
RESOLUTION OF TRANSMITTAL**

Transmittal of the *Community Assessment and Community Participation Program* sections of the Joint McDuffie County Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center.

WHEREAS, the City of Thomson, Georgia, has completed the *Community Assessment and Community Participation Plan* sections of the Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update,

WHEREAS, the City of Thomson certifies that the minimum public hearing requirements as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning have been met.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Thomson City Council does hereby transmit the *Community Assessment and Community Participation Program* sections of the Joint Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center for review under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. Adopted this 10th day of July, 2008.


Kenneth L. Ury, Mayor

ATTEST:


Dianne L. Landers, City Clerk

