



# Marion County & City of Buena Vista



## Comprehensive Plan 2021-2025

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION  
MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MARION COUNTY-BUENA VISTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2021-2025

WHEREAS; it is the desire of the Marion County Board of Commissioners that the community plan wisely to prepare for the well-being and prosperity of its future, and

WHEREAS; the Georgia General Assembly did enact the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 to institute local comprehensive planning by local governments throughout the state, and

WHEREAS; said Act requires local governments to prepare, maintain and periodically update a state-approved, local comprehensive plan to maintain eligibility for certain state-issued grants, loans and permits which serve to advance the well-being and prosperity of the community, and

WHEREAS; Marion County, working with the City of Buena Vista, has updated the joint Marion County-Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan, previously adopted October, 2015, for the planning period 2021-2025, and

WHEREAS; Marion County has been notified by appropriate authority that the most recent effort updating the local comprehensive plan adequately addressed the minimum standards and procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to facilitate compliance with said Act.

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED; and it is hereby resolved by the Marion County Board of Commissioners that the Marion County-Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan 2021-2025 be adopted.

SO RESOLVED; this 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2021,

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY:   
George Neal, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST:   
Sylvia Russell, County Clerk

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION  
CITY OF BUENA VISTA  
MARION COUNTY-BUENA VISTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2021-2025

WHEREAS; it is the desire of the Mayor and Council of the City of Buena Vista that the community plan wisely for the well-being and prosperity of its future, and

WHEREAS; the Georgia General Assembly did enact the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 to institute local comprehensive planning by local governments throughout the state, and

WHEREAS; said Act requires local governments to prepare, maintain and periodically update a state-approved, local comprehensive plan to maintain eligibility for certain state-issued grants, loans and permits which serve to advance the well-being and prosperity of the community, and

WHEREAS; Buena Vista , working with the Marion County Board of Commissioners, has updated the joint Marion County-Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan, previously adopted October, 2015, for the planning period 2021-2025, and

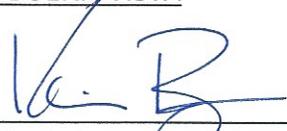
WHEREAS; Buena Vista has been notified by appropriate authority that the most recent effort updating the local comprehensive plan adequately addressed the minimum standards and procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to facilitate compliance with said Act.

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED; and it is hereby resolved by the Mayor and Council of the City of Buena Vista that the Marion County-Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan 2021-2025 be adopted.

SO RESOLVED; this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2021,

CITY OF BUENA VISTA

BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Shondria Golden, City Clerk

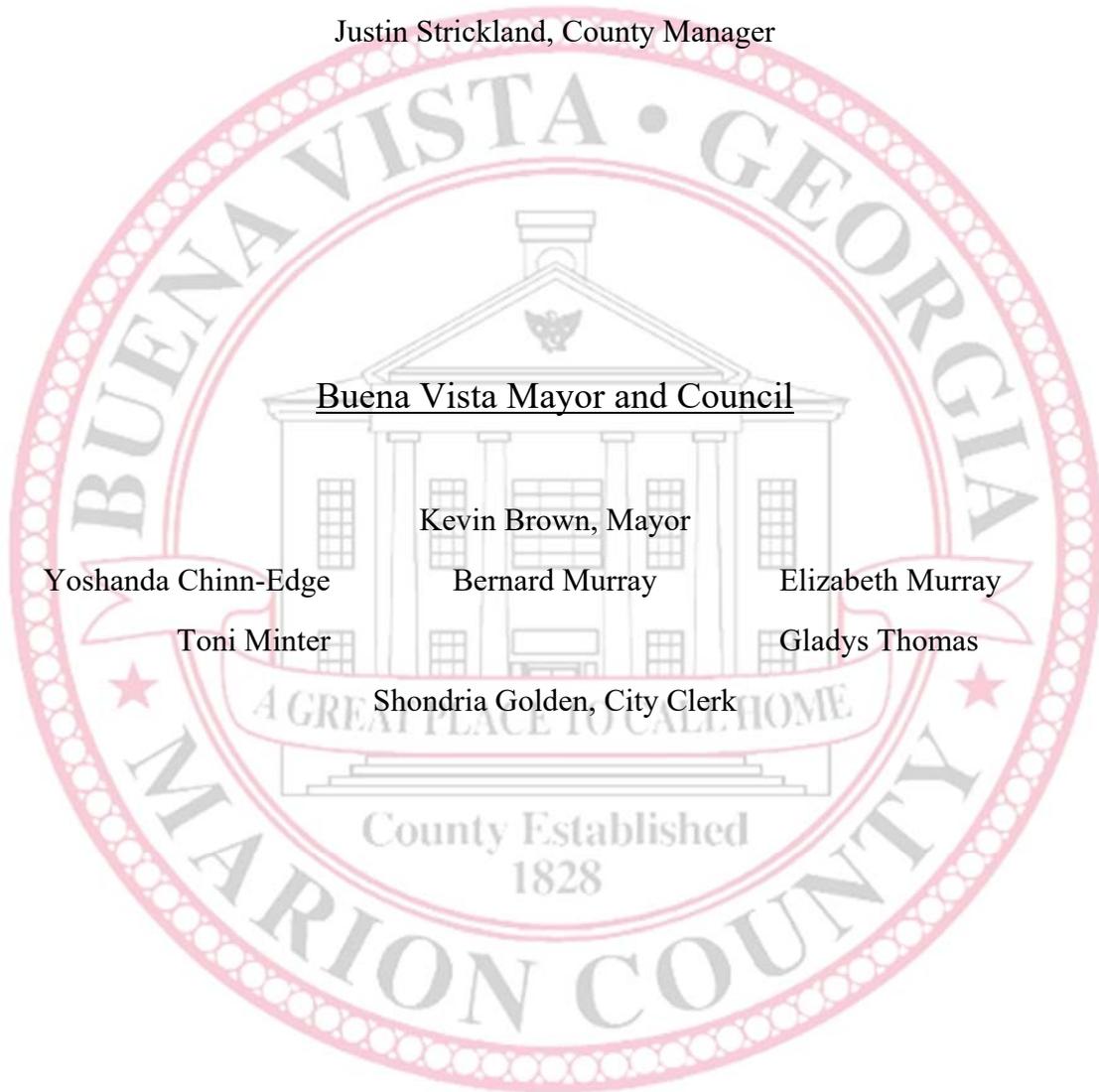
Marion County Board of Commissioners

George Neal, Jr., Chair

Jody Grimsley  
Matthew Gunnels

Norman Royal  
Steven Young

Justin Strickland, County Manager



Buena Vista Mayor and Council

Kevin Brown, Mayor

Yoshanda Chinn-Edge

Bernard Murray

Elizabeth Murray

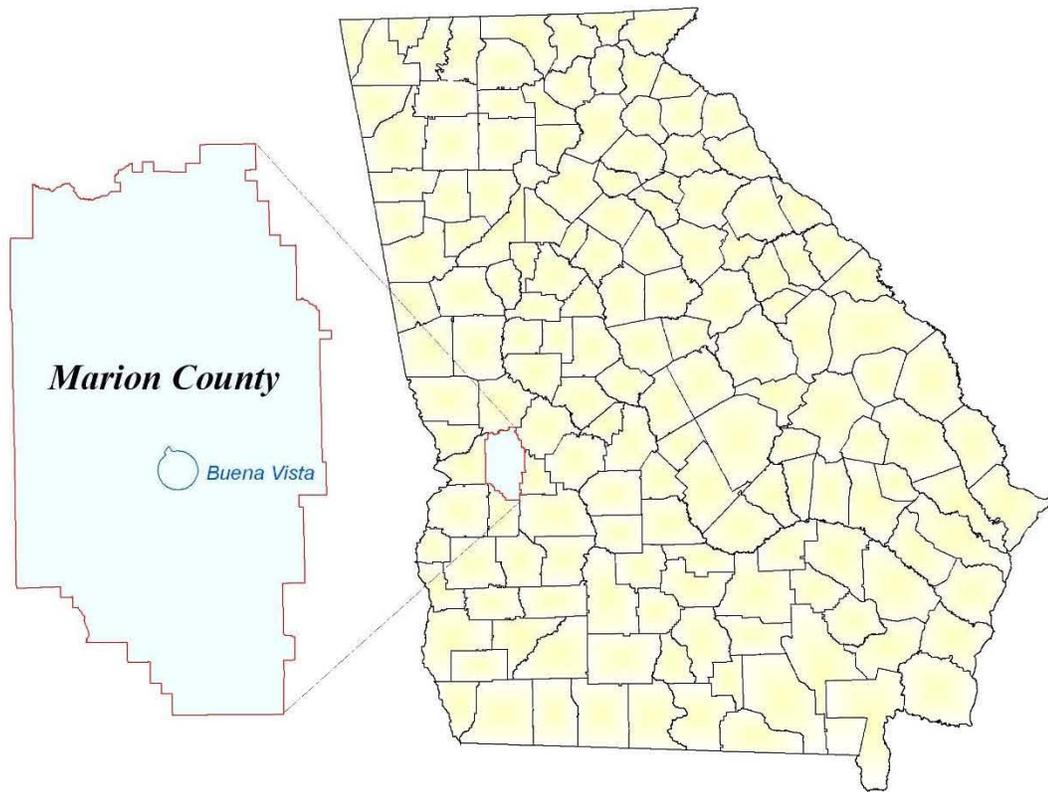
Toni Minter

Gladys Thomas

Shondria Golden, City Clerk

Assisted by:  
River Valley Regional Commission  
228 West Lamar Street 710 Front Avenue  
Americus, Georgia 31709 Columbus, Georgia 31901

# ***SITE LOCATION MAP***



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## Introduction

This is the fifth iteration of the comprehensive plan prepared jointly by Marion County and the City of Buena Vista in compliance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The legislative intent and purpose of said law, codified at O.C.G.A. 36-7-1, is as follows:

The local governments of the State of Georgia are of vital importance to the state and its citizens. The state has an essential public interest in promoting, developing, sustaining, and assisting local governments. In addition, the natural resources, environment, and vital areas of the state are of vital importance to the state and its citizens. The state has an essential public interest in protecting and preserving the natural resources, the environment, and the vital areas of the state. The purpose of this article is to provide for local governments to serve these essential public interests of the state by authorizing and promoting the establishment, implementation, and performance of coordinated and comprehensive planning by municipal governments and county governments, and this article shall be construed liberally to achieve that end. This article is enacted pursuant to the authority granted the General Assembly in the Constitution of the State of Georgia, including, but not limited to, the authority provided in Article III, Section VI, Paragraphs I and II(a)(1) and Article IX, Section II, Paragraphs III and IV.

The law charged the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with providing a framework for development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans. The framework developed and published by the Department took the form of Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. This plan was prepared in compliance with the Standards and Procedures which took effect October 1, 2018.

### Required Plan Elements

Required plan elements applicable to this document and the options selected, where applicable, are:

#### Community Goals

Current Standards and Procedures do not require this element be updated, but plan participants chose to expand upon the general vision statement included in the previous iteration.

#### Needs and Opportunities

Reference to needs and opportunities identified in previous planning efforts helped participants recognize lingering needs and untapped opportunities. Consolidation of relevant elements of those from the past with those of the day resulted in an updated list of Needs and Opportunities the community intends to address.

#### Community Work Program

This is a list of specific activities and projects Buena Vista and Marion County plan to undertake independently or jointly during the next five years to resolve needs and capitalize on opportunities.

#### Economic Development

Needs and Opportunities specifically related to Economic Development were identified and five-year work programs were developed by the city and county to address them.

#### Land Use

Of the two options available to address this planning element participants identified the

characteristics which distinguish sixteen geographical areas of the community, Character Areas, determined which characteristics needed to be preserved, maintained or recreated and how to accomplish those ends.

#### Broadband Services Element

Incorporated into the Standards and Procedures by way of amendment in 2018, this is the first plan iteration to address broadband. It consists of the community's plan to facilitate the extension of reasonable and cost-effective broadband at a minimum specified level of service to currently unserved and underserved areas of the community. It constitutes the first official declaration that broadband has become as essential to the quality of life and economic well-being of the community as other utilities.

#### Plan Development

This document was developed as a joint plan. Marion is among the state's twenty-two counties with a sole municipality. Accounting for one-quarter of the community population Buena Vista is the seat of county government and the civic, geographic and economic heart of the community. This dynamic is stronger than in most counties with multiple municipalities. Nevertheless, they are separate legal entities with distinct political authorities reflected herein in separate Community Work Programs. Even so, there is joint support of and responsibilities for certain community activities and efforts as evidenced in their separate work programs.

Four meetings were scheduled to solicit broad public input; February 13 served as the first public hearing, March 9, public involvement was then suspended for seven months in response to Covid-19, October 20 and October 27, 2020. An additional meeting was held with the planning commission to discuss land use. An on-line survey was conducted leading up to the second public hearing held November 23, after which the draft was presented to the board of commissioners and city council. Forty stakeholders, identified at the outset, and elected officials were e-mailed meeting reminders. The mayor and county manager functioned as the steering committee with strong economic development staff input at plan work sessions. Documentation of community involvement is presented in Appendix A.

## Community Goals Element

### General Vision Statement:

Marion County and the City of Buena Vista seek to uphold and enhance its...

**Vibrant Economy**, an economy stimulated by growth in business and industry, in individual income and well-being, and in high quality standards in homes and in schools.

**Rural Quality of Life**, a standard of living that preserves the integrity of the natural environment while enhancing its worth with quality housing, well-structured neighborhoods, and modern goods and services.

**Community Pride**, feeling of unity exhibited by individuals and families who are happy to live and work here; who take pride in themselves, their homes, their schools, their churches, and their civic organizations; and who respect their neighbors as well as their environment and communicate that respect through dialogue, through litter-free landscapes, and through safe, law-abiding lifestyles.

## Needs and Opportunities Element

1. Housing and housing-related issues are widespread: high incidence of substandard housing, (inconsistent) (uncoordinated) code enforcement, blight, the questioned ability of much of the housing stock to withstand strong wind events and susceptibility to fire, negative effect of preferential tax treatment of manufactured housing on the property tax digest, lack of housing which meets market demand, and special needs of battered women, the homeless, transition housing for those unemployed because of addictions or recently released from prison.
2. Speculative housing is needed
3. Additional public-private collaboration is needed to address the needs of families
4. Youth have too much unstructured, unproductive time
5. Greater community involvement is needed from young adults
6. Easier access to more library materials and services
7. The community does not have general transit service
8. A more conveniently located and larger senior center is needed to meet the demand for increased programming and services
9. Recreational sites, facilities and programs are inadequate for all ages
10. A wholesale assessment of the long-term viability of the county jail is needed to determine the appropriate course of action
11. Buena Vista needs a web presence to facilitate communication, service delivery and economic development
12. Municipal facilities cannot provide the level and quality of services needed
13. The community is without any local health care service after-hours
14. Facilitate and as appropriate incentivize widespread availability and highspeed broadband service
15. Upgrade services needed to better recruit and develop industry
16. Keep pace with the worker skill needs of industry
17. Lack of local work opportunities and options contributes to self-worth/work ethic issues among the young
18. A prioritized inventory and assessment of community resources is needed to facilitate organized promotion of economic development
19. The community is not capitalizing on the tourism potential of cultural, historic and natural resources
20. Brain drain; too few local high school graduates return home after college
21. Need to continue recent improvements in communication and cooperation between institutions there is insufficient
22. There is insufficient local capital to facilitate business startups
23. Modern, evolving technology is needed to court and attract new development and industrial prospects.
24. The community needs to approve the proposed 2022 referendum to renew the regional TSPLOST
25. Greater outreach to and networking with the Ft. Benning community should enhance the potential for local growth

## Community and Economic Development Work Program Element

<b>Marion County Community Work Program FY 2021-2025</b>								
<b>Action</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>					<b>Funding</b>		<b>Responsible Party</b>
	'21	'22	'23	'24	'25	Amount	Source	
pursue funding for housing and/or related improvements (water, road, drainage, blight)		x			x	±\$500K	CDBG CHIP USDA	county manager
support continuation of homebuyer education workshops by third-party entities	x	x	x	x	x	\$6K	UGA ext. FVSC Flint Energies	Family Connections
support Family Connections	x	x	x	x	x	staff time	staff time	BOC
monitor regional developments in transit service for consideration of local service				x	x	staff time	staff time	county manager
promote computer class offerings; request addition of evening classes	x	x	x	x	x	staff time	staff time	county manager
launch an anti-litter/clean community campaign	x					staff time	staff time	chamber of commerce
pursue new/larger library			x			\$750K \$75K	CVRLS local	library manager
identify options and pursue assistance for after-hours medical facility	x	x				\$100K	USDA Mercer Univ.	BOC city council
perform comprehensive review of zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, update as necessary	x					\$7K	local	zoning administrator
consider character area design strategies when establishing LMIG/TIA priorities	x	x	x	x	x	staff time	staff time	county manager
have periodic but regular meetings between local public boards, commissions and authorities	x	x	x	x	x	nominal	local	BOC
facilitate implementation of U.S. DOL YouthBuild concept - (GED/education, construction trade training, housing development, leadership development)					x	\$150K/yr	DOL CDBG	Family Connections
incorporate pre-disaster mitigation functions into planning, permitting, capital budgeting	x	x				staff time	staff time	county manager
secure a dedicated, hardened Emergency Operations Center			x			\$400K	FEMA GEMA USDA	EMD

Action	Fiscal Year					Funding		Responsible Party
	'21	'22	'23	'24	'25	Amount	Source	
Convert electronic file storage to the cloud		x				TBD	local	county manager
obtain multiple backup generators to power utility systems, communications, emergency response entities	x	x				\$60K ea	FEMA GEMA local	EMD
maintain mandated local government reporting	x	x	x	x	x	staff time	staff time	county manager
renovations/repairs to courthouse				x		\$200K	SPLOST	county manager
south water tower maintenance	x					\$75K	local	county manager
north water towers - paint one		x				>\$125K	GEFA USDA	county manager
Blueville Rd water plant - install iron filter				x		>\$400K	GEFA USDA	county manager
new EMS station					x	\$175K	SPLOST USDA	EMS Dir
site and develop a recreation complex					X>	\$2M	SPLOST DNR local	Rec Dir
monitor infrastructure closely for emergent needs	X	X	X	X	X	staff time	staff time	county manager
adopt a Broadband ordinance	X					staff time	local	BOC
secure Broadband Ready Community designation	X					staff time	local	BOC
pursue funding and/or otherwise facilitate enhanced broadband service availability	X					staff time	local	BOC
jail - new/renovation	long-range					TBD	local	sheriff
ground tank maintenance	long-range					\$100K	SPLOST USDA	county manager
water plant south - possible iron filter installation	long-range					>\$600K	SPLOST USDA	county manager

**Marion County  
Economic Development Work Program  
FY 2021-2025**

Action	Fiscal Year					Funding		Responsible Party
	'21	'22	'23	'24	'25	Amount	Source	
organize for economic development by creating and staffing the paid position of economic developer			x	x		TBD PT/FT	general fund	BOC
supplement March, 2015, tourism recommendations with an inventory of human and natural resources, establish and prioritize goals, develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy to include an employment development initiative featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• industrial park enhancement</li> <li>• targeted employer recruitment</li> <li>• capitalize a revolving loan fund</li> <li>• entrepreneur development/ business incubator services/ site</li> </ul>	-	-	x			staff time		economic developer
	-	-						
			x	x		\$250K \$5K/yr.	OneGa local funds	
			x	x		>\$100K	USDA, CDBG	
					x	staff time	USDA local	
develop economic incentive and promotional brochure (digital format)			x	x		staff time	staff time	economic developer
create leadership development programs (adult and youth)	x					\$2.5K	Flint Energies	economic developer
re-establish rail freight service			x	x	x	staff time	staff time	economic developer

Buena Vista Community Work Program FY 2021-2025								
Action	Fiscal Year					Funding		Responsible Party
	'21	'22	'23	24	'25	Amount	Source	
maintain aggressive code enforcement activity	X	X	X	X	X	P&Z budget	general fund	zoning administrator
pursue housing and/or housing-related improvements (water, sanitary/storm sewer, street, blight)		X			X	\$500K/yr	CDBG CHIP USDA	city council
pursue funding assistance for housing development in Burgin character area, and redevelopment/rehabilitation elsewhere	X	X	X	X	X	\$2M+	HUD USDA	city council
facilitate implementation of U.S. DOL YouthBuild concept (GED/education, construction trade training, housing development, leadership development)			X	X		\$150K/yr	CDBG DOL	Family Connections
facilitate homebuyer education workshops by third party entities	X	X	X	X	X	\$6K	UGA Ext. FVSC Flint EMC	Family Connections
use web site to promote housing/environmental/nuisance code compliance (fire-hazard/pre-disaster mitigation) and mentoring	X	X	X	X	X	staff time	staff time	P&Z
identify options and pursue assistance for after-hours medical facility	X	X				\$25K	USDA Mercer Univ	city council BOC
identify/acquire site and construct public safety building (police and fire)					X	\$400K	general fund	city council
secure squad truck for fire department and replace one fire apparatus					X	\$150K	general fund FEMA	fire chief
general fire department improvements; acquire/replace equipment, tools	X	X	X	X	X	\$10K/yr	general fund FEMA	fire chief
sidewalk construction (41 N., et.al.)			X			\$50K	LMIG/TIA	city clerk
replace well on Industrial Drive			X			\$150K	GEFA	city clerk
replace wastewater treatment plant		X	X			\$6.5M	GEFA USDA	city clerk

Action	Fiscal Year					Funding		Responsible Party
	'21	'22	'23	'24	'25	Amount	Source	
replace six sewage pump stations			x			\$900K	GEFA	Water/sewer Super
replace <u>two blowers</u> for sludge digester; one <i>sludge pump</i>	x					<u>\$20K</u> \$25K	GEFA	Water/sewer Super
replace high service pumps at water treatment plant	x					\$60K	GEFA	Water/sewer Super
replace submersible well pump near city hall	x					\$30K	GEFA	Water/sewer Super
maintenance on all three city water towers	x					\$225K	GEFA	Water/sewer Super
replace ±150 water valves					≥x	\$750K	USDA	Water/sewer Super
identify better location options and pursue a larger senior citizens center					x	\$500K	CDBG	city council
Monitor closely infrastructure for emergent needs	x	x	x	x	x	staff time	staff time	city council
incorporate pre-disaster mitigation functions in planning, permitting and capital budgeting	x	x	x			staff time	staff time	city clerk
complete comprehensive review of the zoning ordinance and update as necessary		x				\$7K	general fund	P&Z
identify incentives for infill development	x					staff time	staff time	P&Z
facilitate periodic but regular meetings between local public boards, commissions and authorities	x					staff time	staff time	city council
adopt a Broadband ordinance	x					staff time	local funds	city council
secure Broadband Ready Community designation	x					staff time	local funds	city council
pursue funding and/or otherwise facilitate enhanced broadband service availability	x					staff time	local funds	city council
prioritize improvements needed at Josh Gibson youth and family center, identify and pursue funding assistance	long range project					unknown	USDA, CDBG	city council
wholesale renovation of municipal water plant	long range project					unknown	USDA, GEFA	Water/sewer Super

**Buena Vista  
Economic Development Work Program  
FY 2021-2025**

Action	Fiscal Year					Funding		Responsible Party
	'21	'22	'23	'24	'25	Amount	Source	
organize for economic development by creating and staffing the paid position of economic developer (C of C and DA)			x	x		TBD (PT/FT)	local funds	city council BOC
supplement the March, 2015, tourism resource recommendations with an inventory of human and natural resources, establish and prioritize goals, develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy likely to include a downtown revitalization plan with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of Downtown Development Authority</li> <li>• pursue Main Street-type designation</li> <li>• create local historic commercial district</li> <li>• National Register designation</li> <li>• develop design guidelines</li> <li>• develop façade program</li> </ul>		x	x			\$20K	local funds	CofC economic developer
use municipal web page to support mentoring program	x	x	x	x	x	staff time	staff time	city clerk
develop dynamic web site	x					\$5,000	local funds	city clerk
create leadership development programs (adult and youth)	x	x				staff time	staff time	mayor
design and implement a job development initiative (RLF, entrepreneur development/ business incubator services/site, employer recruitment program, industrial park)			x	x	x	\$10K	staff time	economic developer
supplement Camera Ready postings on state website	x	x				staff time	staff time	CofC

**Marion County Short Term Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments  
FY 2016-2020**

Project Activity	Complete <sup>1</sup>	Underway, to be completed	Postponed until	Not Accomplished
pursue funding for housing rehabilitation activity			≥2022 infrastructure issues took priority over new programs	
support continuation of homebuyer education workshops			2021-2025 infrequent offerings by third party providers	
implement joint city/county effort to address community's special and transitional housing needs				deleted - deferred to housing authority
support Family Connections	X			
review regional developments in transit service for consideration of local service			2024/2025 economic climate precluded operational subsidy	
promote computer class offerings; request addition of evening classes	X			
launch an anti-litter/clean community campaign			2021 not top priority	
pursue new/larger library			2023 suspended pending regional library funding	
identify options and pursue assistance for after-hours medical clinic	X <sup>2</sup>			
perform comprehensive review of zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations (cluster/buffering) and update as necessary		2021		

<sup>1</sup> Activity may be completed for the period but retained as part of a longer-term, continuing effort

<sup>2</sup> Secured 8:00-5:00 clinic, still in pursuit of "after-hours" health facility

Project Activity	Complete <sup>1</sup>	Underway, to be completed	Postponed until	Not Accomplished
review character area design strategies when establishing LMIG/ TIA priorities	X			
have regular meetings between local public boards, commissions and authorities		2021-2025		
identify site and construct new county jail, or contract for jail services (revised: jail – new/renovation)			≥2025 longer-term project	
implement YouthBuild concept (GED/education, construction trade training, housing development, employment, leadership development)			2025 temporary loss of Responsible Party	
incorporate pre-disaster mitigation functions in planning, permitting and capital budgeting	X			
<b>Economic Development</b>				
organize for economic development by creating and staffing the paid position of economic developer			2023-2024 no funding for staff	
supplement March, 2015, tourism recommendations with an inventory of human and natural resources, establish and prioritize goals, develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy to include an employment development initiative featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• siting, sizing, designing and developing an industrial park</li> <li>• targeted employer recruitment program</li> <li>• capitalizing a revolving loan fund</li> <li>• entrepreneur development/ business incubator services/site</li> <li>• <u>airport resurfacing</u></li> </ul>			2023-2024 economic developer position not funded during period of depressed SPLOST receipts	
	X (FAA and local)			

<sup>1</sup> Activity may be completed for the period but retained as part of a longer-term, continuing effort

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Complete<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Underway, to be completed</b>	<b>Postponed until</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>
develop economic incentive and promotional brochure			<2023-2024 pending funding of economic developer position; literature to be digital	
ensure members of the Marion County Development Authority receive mandated training	X			
create leadership development programs (adult and youth)			2021 no funding	
re-establish rail freight service			2025 no local rail-serviced industry	

<sup>1</sup> Activity may be completed for the period but retained as part of a longer-term, continuing effort

<p align="center"><b>Buena Vista Short Term Work Program</b>  <b>Report of Accomplishments</b>  <b>2016-2020</b></p>				
<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Complete<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Underway, to be completed</b>	<b>Postponed until</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>
maintain aggressive code enforcement activity	X			
pursue housing rehabilitation assistance			2022> infrastructure issues took priority over new programming	
implement joint city/county effort to address community's special and transitional housing needs				deleted - deferred to housing authority
pursue funding assistance for housing development in Burgin character area and redevelopment/rehabilitation elsewhere			2021-2025 extended period of depressed SPLOST receipts prevented new initiatives	
implement YouthBuild concept (GED/education, construction trade training, housing development, employment, leadership development)			2023-2024 temporary loss of Responsible Party	
support continuation of homebuyer education workshops			2021-2025 infrequent offerings by third party providers	
use web site to promote housing/environmental/ nuisance code compliance (fire-hazard/pre-disaster mitigation), support mentoring program			2021-2025 creation of dynamic web site was delayed	
identify options and pursue funds for after-hours medical clinic	X			

<sup>1</sup> Activity may be completed for the period but retained as part of a longer-term, continuing effort

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Complete<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Underway, to be completed</b>	<b>Postponed until</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>
identify/acquire appropriate site and construct public safety building (police and fire)			2025 short LOST receipts reduced funding available for big ticket activities	
secure squad truck for fire department and replace one fire apparatus			2025 short LOST receipts reduced funding available for “big ticket” activities	
general fire department improvements; acquire/replace equipment, tools	X			
sidewalk construction			2023	
replace well on Industrial Drive			2023 short LOST receipts reduced funding available for “big ticket” activities	
water system improvement needs; well replacements, dead-end service lines, replacement of deteriorated and undersized lines			2021 - application to replace treatment plant unsuccessful	
wholesale upgrade to wastewater treatment plant			2022 – need financing	
renovate/upgrade lift stations/force mains (rescheduled as “replace six sewage pump stations)			2023 funding limitations	
identify better location options and pursue a larger senior citizens center			2025 Short LOST receipts reduced funding available for big ticket activities	

<sup>1</sup> Activity may be completed for the period but retained as part of a longer-term, continuing effort

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Complete<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Underway, to be completed</b>	<b>Postponed until</b>	<b>Not Accomplished</b>
incorporate pre-disaster mitigation functions in planning, permitting and capital budgeting			2021-2023 not high priority	
complete comprehensive review of zoning ordinance, update as needed		2021		
develop incentives for infill development		2021 ancillary to zoning ordinance update		
initiate periodic but regular meetings between local public boards, commissions and authorities			2021 not high priority	
prioritize improvements needed at Josh Gibson youth and family center, identify and pursue funding sources			≥2025 FY '18 CDBG application not successful	
<b>Economic Development</b>				
organize for economic development by creating and staffing the paid position of economic developer (C of C and DA)			2023-2024 no funding for economic developer position during period of depressed SPLOST receipts	
supplement the March, 2015, tourism resource recommendations with an inventory of human and natural resources, establish and prioritize goals, develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy likely to include a downtown revitalization plan with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of Downtown Development Authority</li> <li>• pursue Main Street-type designation</li> <li>• create local historic commercial district</li> <li>• National Register designation</li> <li>• develop design guidelines</li> <li>• develop façade program</li> </ul>			2021-2025  extended period of depressed LOST & SPLOST receipts prevented launch of new initiatives	

<sup>1</sup> Activity may be completed for the period but retained as part of a longer-term, continuing effort

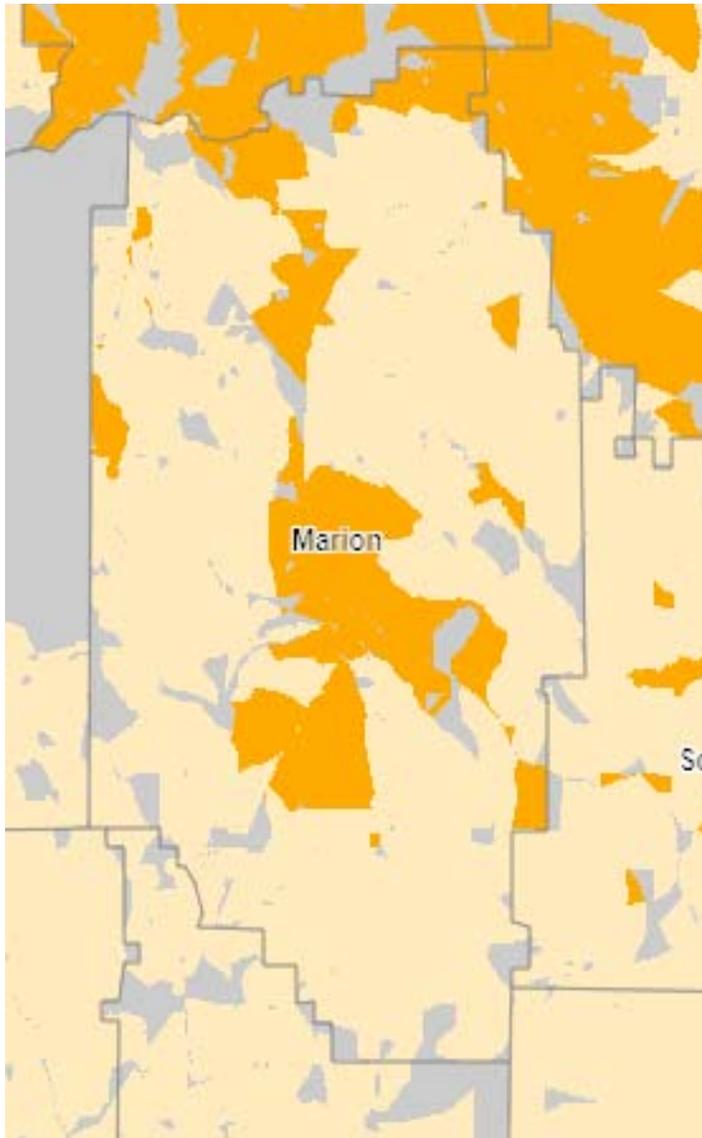
Project Activity	Complete <sup>1</sup>	Underway, to be completed	Postponed until	Not Accomplished
use municipal web page to support mentoring program			≥2021 creation of dynamic web site was delayed	
develop dynamic web site			2021 funding delayed	
create leadership development programs (adult and youth)			2023 lacking funding	
design and implement a job development initiative (revolving loan fund, entrepreneur development/ business incubator services/site, employer recruitment program, site, size, design and develop an industrial park, <u>airport enhancement</u> )	X		2023 extended period of depressed LOST & SPLOST receipts prevented launch of new initiatives	
develop economic incentive and promotional brochure			≥2023 no funding for economic developer position during extended period of depressed LOST & SPLOST receipts. Final product will be in digital format	

<sup>1</sup> Activity may be completed for the period but retained as part of a longer-term, continuing effort

## Broadband Internet Service Element

Broadband, or high-speed internet, has become essential to business, education, healthcare, agriculture, and overall quality of life for Georgians. Unfortunately, approximately 16% ( $\pm 1.6$  million), residing predominantly in rural communities, do not have access to broadband service.<sup>1</sup> In response, the General Assembly passed the Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act in 2018 to facilitate extension of broadband service to unserved/underserved areas to make it possible for residents to participate fully in today's society.

### Broadband Service Availability



Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

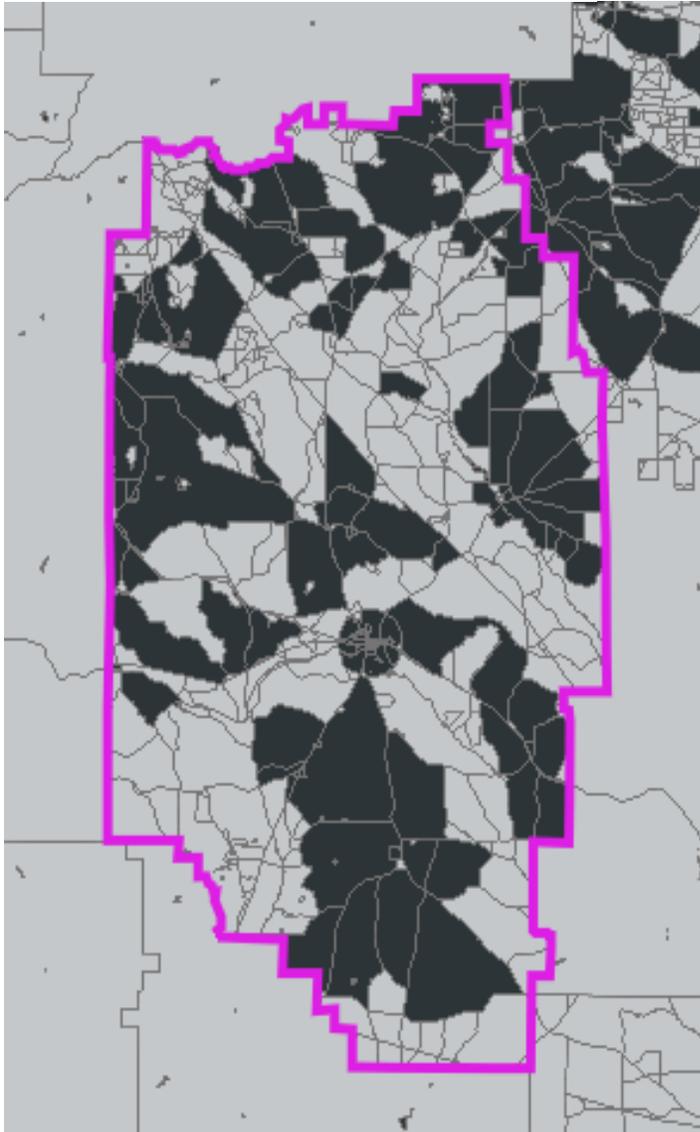
The Act gave rise to the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative, focused on partnerships and collaboration among government at all levels and the private sector to deploy fixed, terrestrial broadband services with minimum download speeds of 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps. The initiative will also help to better position communities for eligibility for anticipated federal funds in support of increased broadband deployment.

Accurate mapping of broadband availability is critical to identifying unserved locations and implementing the initiative. The accompanying graphic delineates local areas of broadband service availability at the Initiative's threshold speed. Populated census blocks that do not meet the threshold are shown as 'unserved'. Population and location data are from the 2010 Census and commercially available business listings (2014) with at least 3 employees and \$150,000 annual sales.

<sup>1</sup> 2014 data from the Georgia Broadband Initiative as cited in 2018 Annual State IT Report, Georgia Technology Authority. parenthesis added

Federal Communications Commission service data were used in the following graphic to depict where broadband service is available to at least one consumer, residential or business, by census block. The map presents every location in the census block as having service, even if there is only one internet customer in the census block. By this standard, the map may very well over-estimate broadband service availability, particularly in large census block areas. Nevertheless, these maps depict those areas of the county where fixed, terrestrial broadband services are available at the Initiative’s minimum threshold service level and where the minimum threshold service level will be targeted.

Broadband Service at 25Mbps/3Mbps  
by Census Block



ADSL 25Mbps/3Mbps Service Area in Black  
Source: Federal Communications Commission

#### Fixed Terrestrial Broadband

Based on the most current information available (June, 2019) from the Federal Communications Commission at this writing (November, 2020)<sup>2</sup>, there is a single provider of fixed, terrestrial broadband at 25Mbps/3Mbps service speed via Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Lines (ADSL). ADSL is the transmission of data over copper telephone lines. This service level is available to 64% of the population. The FCC reports slower ADSL service available to 97% of the population and the single provider is offering 100Mbps/10Mbps service to 30% of the population.

#### Fixed Wireless

The FCC reports fixed wireless internet service available in several small pockets across the county, overlapping areas of ADSL services. Fixed wireless is internet communication between two sites or buildings without satellite or telephone infrastructure, usually powered by electrical public utility mains. Local fixed wireless does not meet the Initiative’s speed threshold. A single provider is reported to offer 200K service to 13% of the population, but no faster rates are available.

#### Fiber-Optic

There are reportedly fiber-optic services available in the northeast corner of Marion County from a single provider at 25Mbps/3Mbps serving less than 2% of the population. The FCC reports slower 4/1 and 10/1 services are accessible to 9% of

the population. Fiber-optic internet is the transmission of voice and data via pulses of light through an optical fiber.

### Cable

Three providers offer cable internet service at the threshold level; two providing service north and south of the Buena Vista city limits to 2% of the population, while services of the third cover the city proper and pockets north and northwest of the city to 30% of the population. This service is provided over cable television infrastructure.

### Satellite

As stated earlier, graphics presented are representative of fixed, terrestrial broadband services, the focus of the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative. Two providers offer internet service countywide via satellite with 25/3 Mbps. The FCC reports there are three providers of internet via satellite at the 200K/200K service level, and two providers of 4/1 and 10/1 Mbps services.

With most residents not served by the Initiative's minimum threshold service level, the community needs to be positioned to facilitate, and to take advantage of any opportunity to facilitate, enhanced service delivery. Among first steps toward achieving that are adoption of a broadband ordinance, earning the Broadband Ready Community designation and otherwise being resourceful/innovative facilitating broadband service coverage.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/#/area-summary?version=jun2019&type=county&geoid=13197&tech=acfosw&speed=25\\_3&vlat=32.34832364633553&vlon=-84.52445499999999&vzoom=9.280139319847457](https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/#/area-summary?version=jun2019&type=county&geoid=13197&tech=acfosw&speed=25_3&vlat=32.34832364633553&vlon=-84.52445499999999&vzoom=9.280139319847457)

## Land Use Element

### Character Areas

Communities are made up of distinct areas, each with characteristics that make it unique from the rest of the community. Character areas are defined as specific geographic areas that:

- Have unique or special characteristics,
- May evolve into a unique area under specific and intentional guidance,
- Require special attention due to unique development issues.

The character of developed areas can be characterized by:

- Site and configuration of lots,
- Features such as landscaping, parking, driveways, accessory structures,
- Street design,
- Intensity of development,
- Building location, dimensions, and orientation,
- Types and quantities of natural features,
- Location, extent, and type of civic buildings and public spaces.

Many such characteristics exist regardless of the activity which occurs in the area. Thus, the characteristics are based on how buildings, lots, site features and streets are physically arranged, not individual use. Downtowns and historic districts are often identified because of their form, pattern, or character, rather than the array of individual land uses. These same ideas can be used to identify and express desirable development patterns as a vision for any area. The vision may identify the need to create a new character.

Environmental characteristics can also be used to identify an area's character. The character of environmental areas is based primarily on natural resources such as:

- Greenways or green corridors,
- Bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers and streams,
- Wetlands, floodplains and floodways,
- Habitats,
- Mountains or areas with steep slopes

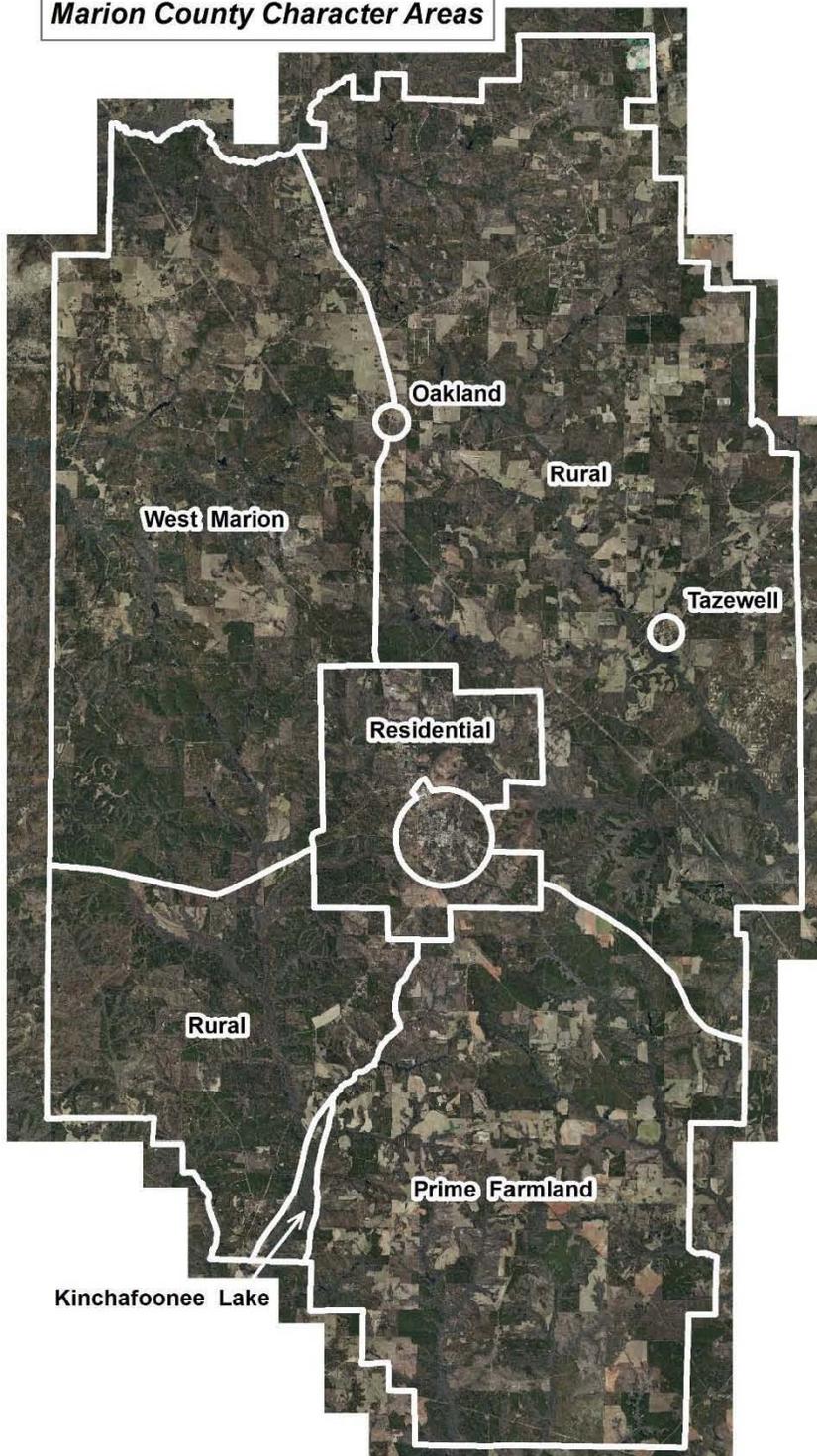
Open spaces are a third type of character area. These may be areas that are vacant or sparsely settled, neither environmental areas nor developed. Some vacant land will be needed to accommodate future growth. Open space areas will most likely fall into any of three categories:

- Agricultural production,
- Open space, and
- Future development areas.

Future development areas should be identified based on development potential, and future development characteristics should guide development decisions.

Each individual character area is most often identified by prevailing characteristics, not uniformity of form or pattern. The character areas identified on the following pages have varying degrees of internal homogeneity and diversity of form and pattern. Variations occur most noticeably near the outer limits of each area where they often begin transforming into prevailing characteristics of adjoining character areas. While proposed land uses are identified for each character area, they are intended to be the primary, not exclusive, uses.

**Marion County Character Areas**



## KINCHAFOONEE LAKE

### Description

This sliver in the southwest corner of the county consists of a heavily wooded buffer on both sides of portions of Lanahassee Creek and Kinchafoonee Creek. Because of the potential for flooding, development is nominal. The area consists of acreage depicted in a series of 1970s-era studies as backwater from Kinchafoonee Lake proposed for Webster County.

### Vision

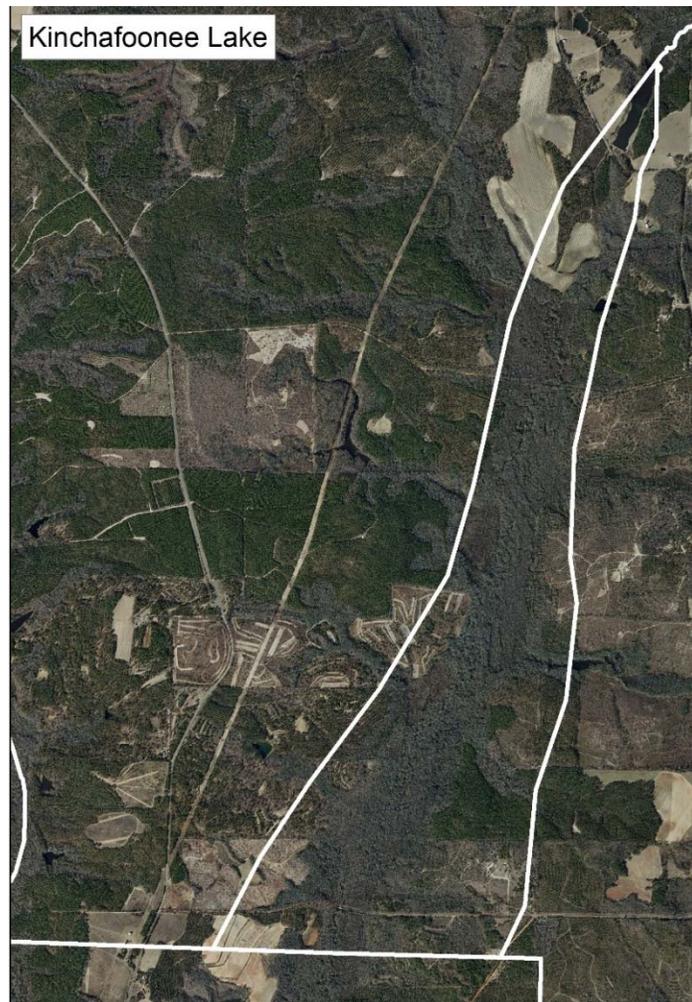
This area is envisioned as the northern-most reach of Kinchafoonee Lake at high pool enhancing recreational and housing opportunities, and generally stimulating economic activity in the community.

### Primary Land Uses

Residential development along the water's edge and in immediate vicinity  
Commercial catering to lake activity/development  
Recreation

### Development Strategy

Maintaining current land use(s) to minimize future lake development cost



## OAKLAND

### Description

Oakland is an established crossroads community located at the juncture of state routes 41 and 127 in north-central Marion County. Limited commercial services are available and a fire department is housed here. Otherwise, the area is a small residential community.

### Vision

The community envisions Oakland with a slightly expanded role as a crossroads community amid a large rural area. Limited, mixed commercial and public services are to be based here serving the more immediate needs of north Marion residents and highway traffic.

### Primary Land Uses

Residential  
Commercial  
Public



### Development Strategy

Landscaped entranceway signage identifying services  
Lighting at highway juncture  
Allow the minimum lot size permissible under Health Department regulations  
Target area for public roadway enhancements (additional road paving activity)  
Revise zoning ordinance as necessary



## PRIME FARMLAND

### Description

Soils in this area are generally well-suited to urban development, field crops, hay, pasture and woodland. The community's largest expanses and concentrations of "level" terrain and open, cultivated farmland are found in this area. Prime farmland is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as lands that produce the highest agricultural yields with minimal inputs of energy and money, and farming such lands results in the least damage to the environment. Although there is some acreage meeting this definition located along Ga. Highway 41 extending a few miles north of Buena Vista, the community's largest concentration of prime farmland is in the southeast quadrant of the county. Local interior roads have peak traffic counts of approximately 250 vehicles per day.

### Vision

The vision for the southeast quadrant is limited development and maintenance of the county's most intensive agricultural activity.

### Primary Land Uses

Agriculture  
Horticulture  
Forestry  
Wildlife management

### Development Strategy

Limit and manage new development  
Community's largest minimum lot size  
Encourage deep building setbacks  
Minimal local roadway enhancements (widening, paving)  
Revise zoning ordinance as necessary



## RESIDENTIAL

### Description

Soils surrounding Buena Vista are well-suited to urban development, field crops, hay, pasture and woodland. The gently rolling terrain is heavily wooded. There are small pockets of residential development widely distributed around the city's perimeter and just beyond. Traffic volume is locally significant because of proximity to the city and service by/access to state routes.

### Vision

The vision is for higher density residential development proximate to the City of Buena Vista to help sustain the economic core of the community, and to better manage costs associated with providing public services.

### Primary Land Uses

Residential  
Recreation

### Development Strategy

Minimum lot size allowed by health department, even smaller where sanitary sewer available.

Target area for local roadway enhancements (additional road paving activity).

Encourage sanitary sewer service extension into the current city perimeter  
Encourage subdivision development with conservation/cluster design

Revise zoning ordinance as necessary



## RURAL

### Description

The northeast sector has a combination of soils generally well-suited to urban development and moderately suited to hay, pasture and woodland. Development has been limited to single-family housing distributed almost exclusively along roadways. Residential density is approximately 1 residence per 90 acres. Development is heaviest in the northeast corner where the ratio is approximately 1:70. This portion of the character area attracted an influx of residents between 1990 and 2000 and as a result became among the county's two most developed unincorporated areas. Mobile homes/manufactured housing comprise much of the housing stock. This same portion of the area is home to a significant number of protected plant and animal species in Georgia, and an even larger number are of Special Concern. The gentle rolling terrain has numerous attractive vistas. Highest traffic volume is approximately 600 vehicles per day along the state routes in the interior, increasing to 1,250 on 41 N and 2,100 on 26 E.

The southwest corner of the county has soils well-suited for urban development and moderately- suited for hay and woodland. Except for an elementary school campus near the Buena Vista city limits, development has been limited to single-family housing. Residential density is even lower than in the northeast sector, and again generally dotting the roadside. The major interior roadway (Pineville Road) has a traffic count of approximately 550 vehicles per day. Larger daily traffic volumes are 2,800 on 26 W and 2,500 on 41S. The predominant land use/ground cover throughout the Rural character area is forest.

### Vision

The community envisions preserving this sparsely developed, heavily forested, rural character as an important quality-of-life resource.

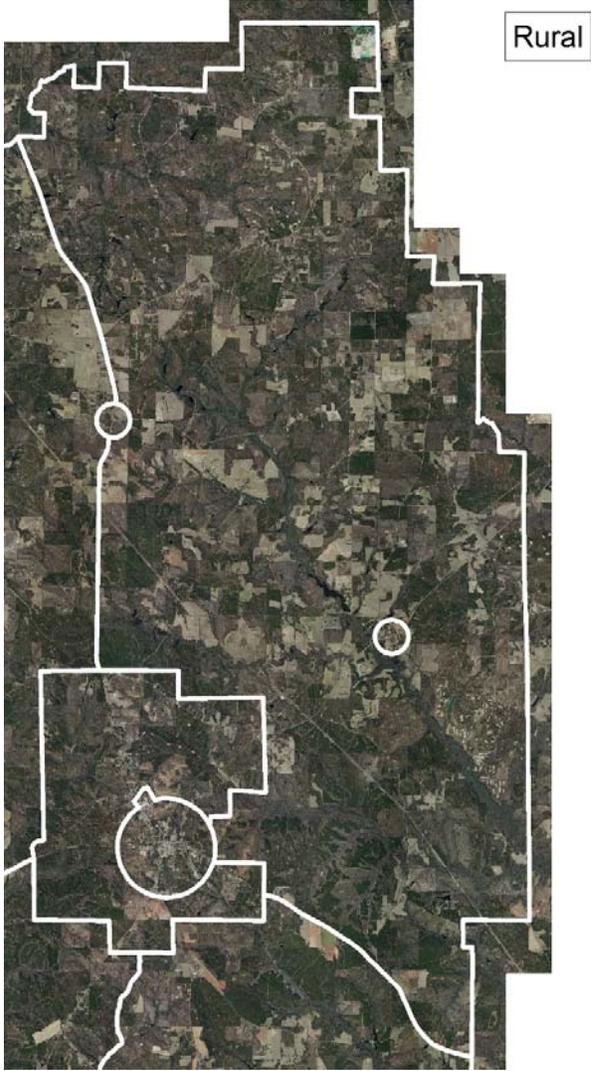
### Primary Land Uses

Agriculture, horticulture, forestry and accessory uses and buildings  
Single-family  
Seasonal produce stand selling locally grown products  
Wildlife management area

### Development Strategy-Implementation Measures

Limit and manage new development  
Minimal local roadway enhancements (widening, paving)  
Revise zoning ordinance as necessary  
Maintain "large" minimum lot sizes with "deep" front set-back requirements  
Subdivisions with conservation/cluster design visually buffered from roadway  
Revise zoning ordinance as necessary

Aerial images of this Area appear on the following page.



## TAZEWELL

### Description

Tazewell is an established (once incorporated) crossroads community located at the intersection of state routes 137 and 240. Very limited commercial services are available and a fire department is housed here. Otherwise, the area is a small residential concentration.

### Vision

The community envisions Tazewell with a slightly expanded role as a crossroads community amid a large rural area. Limited, mixed commercial and public services are to be based here serving the more immediate needs of east Marion residents and highway traffic.

### Primary Land Uses

Residential

Commercial

Public

### Development Strategy

Landscaped entranceway signage  
identifying services

Allow the minimum lot size permissible under Health Department regulations

Target area for public roadway enhancements (additional road paving activity)

Revise zoning ordinance as necessary



## WEST MARION

### Description

West Marion exhibits the greatest contrast among the community's unincorporated character areas. The northern third attracted a large percentage of the population surge of the 1990s, resulting in the highest density level in the county's unincorporated area; currently averaging approximately one residence/40 acres. This same portion of the area is home to a significant number of the state's protected plant and animal species, and an even larger number of species of Special Concern. The balance of the area (lower two-thirds) is the least developed in the county; currently averaging approximately one residence/180 acres. The gently rolling terrain is very heavily forested with several large acreage tracts. Available traffic count data ranges from 150 vehicles per day in the south to 2,000 vehicles per day at the north county line (state route 355). Daily traffic volume on 41 N is 1,250 and 2,800 on 26 W.

### Vision

The community envisions preserving the sparsely developed, heavily forested, rural character to protect sensitive habitat and limit diminution of quality of life because of proximity the increasing military activity on Fort Benning.

### Primary Land Uses

Agriculture, forestry and accessory uses and buildings  
Wildlife management area  
Outdoor recreation activities  
Single-family residential (limited)

### Development Strategy

Disclosure ordinance (real estate agents to inform prospective buyers of proximity to Fort Benning)  
Limited development  
Minimal local roadway enhancements (widening, paving)  
Maintain "large" minimum lot sizes with "deep" front set-back requirements  
Revise zoning ordinance as necessary





## BAKER STREET

### Description

Baker Street is a stable neighborhood characterized by well-maintained houses with shallow setbacks, ranging from late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century on small, tree-shaded lots. Streets are laid in a grid pattern complemented with sidewalk. The architectural character of the area is such that it is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register as a residential historic district.

### Vision

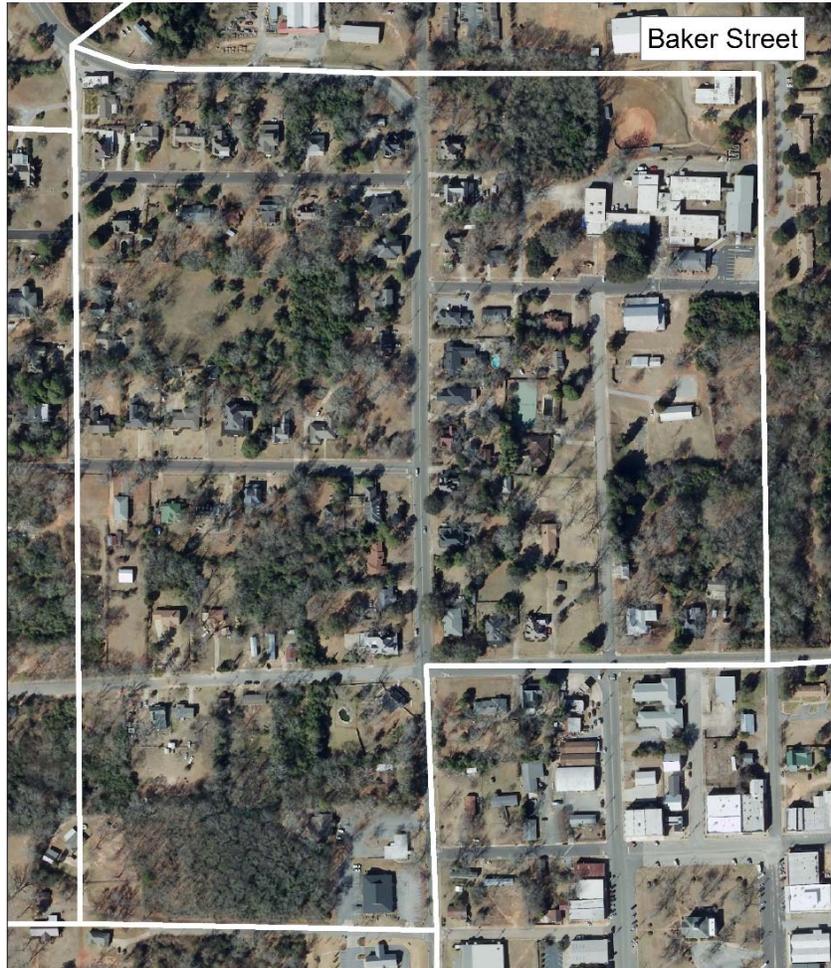
The vision is to preserve the well-maintained residential character of the neighborhood.

### Primary Land Use

Single family residential

### Development Strategy

Encourage architecturally compatible infill development  
Enforcement of an R-1 zoning district



## BURGIN NEIGHBORHOOD

### Description

Intended in the 1980s to serve as an industrial park, trees were removed and the area was developed with water, sanitary sewer and paved streets. The site was never attractive for such use, however, and sits vacant.

### Vision

The Burgin Neighborhood is envisioned as a new residential development with on-site/stick-built, owner-occupied housing (possible mixed-occupancy, multi-family).

### Primary Land Uses

Single (multi-) family residential  
Neighborhood park

### Development Strategy

Secure funding for housing construction  
Use this opportunity to develop a construction trades training program  
Provide homebuyer education program  
Secure down payment assistance  
Revise zoning ordinance as necessary



## COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

### Description

The commercial corridor is currently home to some commercial activity; dry goods, bank, home heating gas sales, but remains mostly undeveloped. Because of the topography site development requires significant fill and grade, but location on the major east-west thoroughfare and proximity to downtown makes it attractive for commercial development.



### Vision

The Commercial Corridor is intended to supplement economic activity of the adjoining Downtown character area by providing larger commercial acreage/parking needs not available on the courthouse square.

### Primary Land Use

Commercial

### Development Strategy

Develop design guidelines to limit view of parking lots  
Streetscape enhancements linking to downtown  
Development plan



## DOWNTOWN

### Description

The Downtown character area is one city block deep on all four sides of the courthouse square. The courthouse, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, sits in the middle of the square on the highest elevation in the city and serves not only as the focal point of the area but a community landmark. The square is graced with late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century storefronts. Many of these buildings have awnings, share party walls and are separated from the street edge by sidewalk. Although the downtown commercial core has been preserved, there are vacant storefronts around the courthouse square. The area is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a commercial district, or with the Baker Street character area as part of a larger mixed district. There are some vacant lots on the back sides of this district.



### Vision

The vision for this area is increased economic activity, preservation as the community's historic commercial core and preservation/maintenance of its historic commercial architecture.

### Primary Land Use

Commercial

### Development Strategy

Placement of historic or period street lighting and coordinated storefront awnings  
Promotion of tax credits for historic preservation Secure funding for facade grants  
Nominate as a commercial district to the National Register of Historic Places  
Develop innovative financial assistance program to attract new businesses to vacant store fronts  
Main Street-type program



## GENEVA ROAD

### Description

The area straddling state route 41 N. is a mixed-use neighborhood; residential, industrial, commercial (retail, service and office) medical, public works and the county jail. Some properties exhibit blight. Most housing is substandard; houses on Industrial Road have varying orientations to the street. Although this area is already mostly developed, its geographical size and topography make it the most attractive for development/redevelopment. This character area extends into the immediately surrounding unincorporated area.

### Vision

Mixed-use redevelopment is proposed for the city's northwest gateway.

### Primary Land Use

Mixed use

### Development Strategy

Master plan for redevelopment

Enhanced code enforcement (building, housing, environmental)

Promote infill development with conventional/site-built housing

Pursue housing assistance program(s)

Possible urban redevelopment plan

Update zoning ordinance



## GREENSPACE

### Description

The community is located along the southern boundary of the Fall Line, the transition between two distinct geologic areas, the rolling terrain of the Piedmont and flat terrain of the Coastal Plains. Development in the city has occurred along linear ridges where the limited flat/level acreage is concentrated. Areas between these ridges are generally not as conducive to development because significant variations in topography require higher site preparation costs. This topography impedes interconnectivity, contributing to dead-end residential streets. In absence of development these areas retain natural vegetative cover.

### Vision

Maintenance of the natural, undeveloped condition, with possible limited recreation development

### Primary Land Use

Natural state

Limited recreation

### Development Strategy

Preservation of natural state

This is a split character area distributed around the city along the outer limits of the corporate boundary. Refer to the city character area map.

## MILLER AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD

### Description

Neighborhood and housing conditions are generally in disrepair and declining in the west-central area of the city. The tree-shaded neighborhood has a moderate degree of building separation with variations in housing type and front yard setback.

### Vision

Redevelopment as an attractive low-moderate income residential neighborhood

### Primary Land Uses

Single-family residential

### Development Strategy

Enhanced code enforcement activity (building, housing, environmental)

Promote infill development with conventional/site-built housing Pursue housing assistance program

Provide homebuyer education program



## OLIVER STREET

### Description

Located along the northeast entrance, state route 137, this residential area consists of contemporary, mid--twentieth century housing with deep front yard setbacks and shaded lots.

### Vision

The vision for this area is preservation of the contemporary residential character

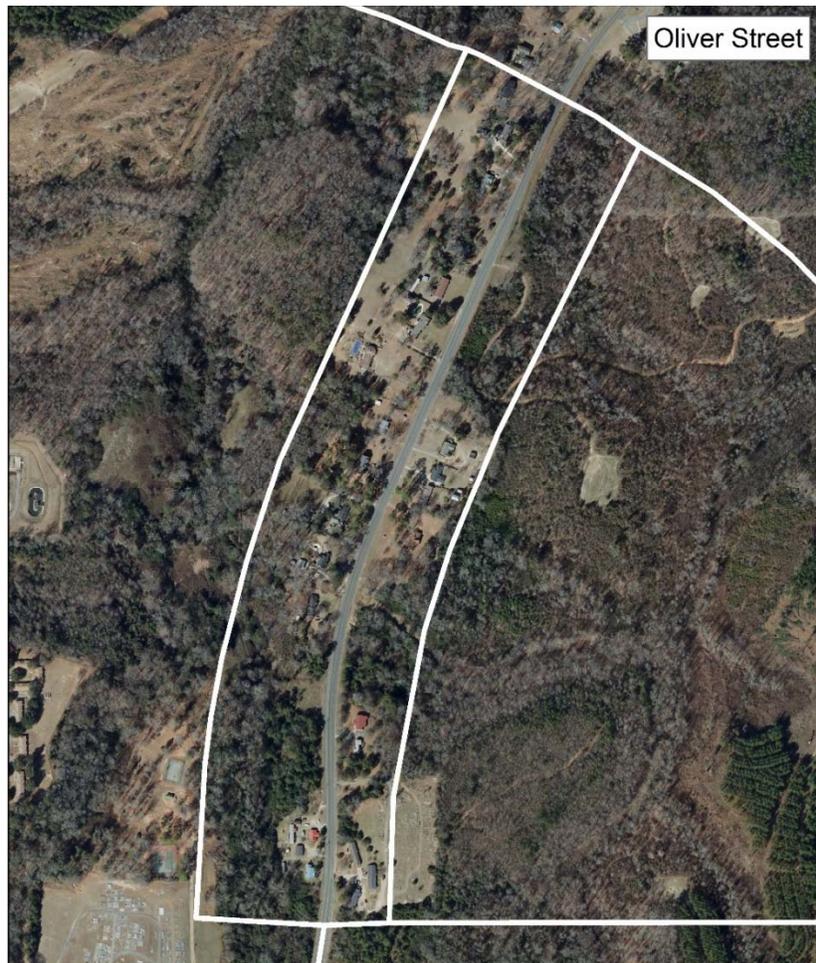
### Primary Land Uses

Single-family residential

### Development Strategy

Enhanced housing and environmental code enforcement

Update zoning ordinance as necessary



## SOUTH RESIDENTIAL

### Description

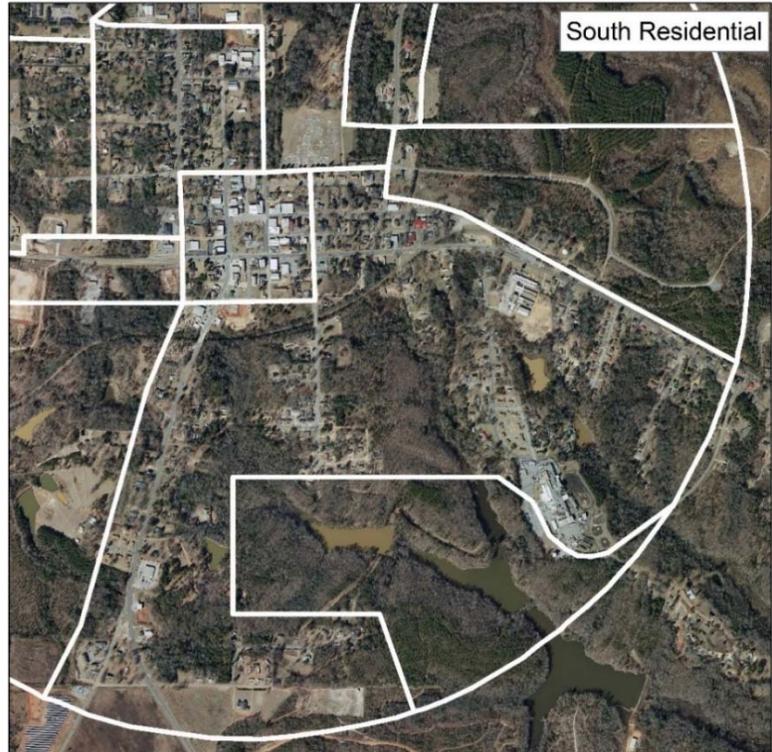
Housing in the southeast quadrant of Buena Vista is a mix of various conditions; new and old, conventional construction and mobile homes, various orientations, varying front yard setbacks, standard, substandard and dilapidated housing interspersed with other blighting influences. Because of terrain there is very little street interconnectivity; most streets are dead end. Much of the area is heavily shaded, sidewalk is limited mostly to the two state routes which essentially constitute the east and west boundaries of the area.

### Vision

Redevelopment is proposed for this large area.

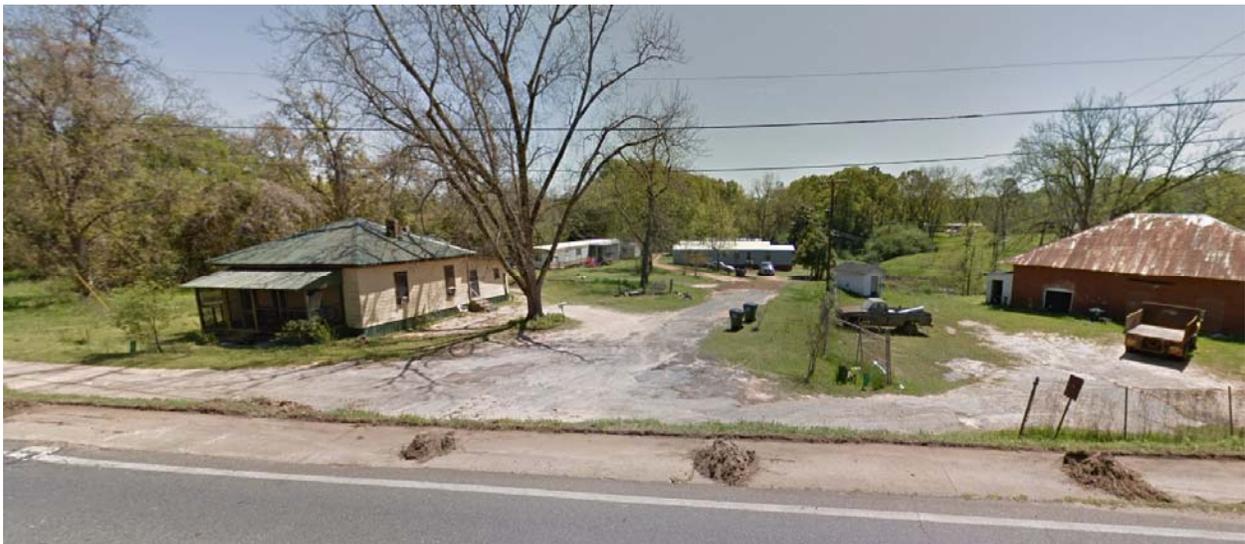
### Primary Land Uses

Residential



### Development Strategy

- Enhanced code enforcement (building, housing, environmental)
- Promote infill development with conventional/site-built housing
- Pursue housing assistance program
- Provide homebuyer education program
- Develop construction trades training program



## Data Tables



Graphic reproduced from Georgia Department of Labor website

Marion County lost population with each successive census 1900-1970, resulting in the cumulative decrease of half of the population. Primary causes of the decline were devastation wrought by the cotton boll weevil on the agriculture-based economy and the Great Depression, both events forcing residents to relocate in search of livelihoods. The 1970 Census documented the decennial low point for the century. Subsequent censuses documented similar increases averaging  $\pm 5\%$  during the seventies and eighties, and similar increases averaging  $\pm 25\%$  during the nineties extending into the new century. The 2010 Census recorded a population equal to 87% of the level recorded in 1900.<sup>2</sup> Reversal of the population trend was fueled primarily by acquisition of a local poultry producer by successive international companies and the several-fold increase in local employment. Growth was strong enough to increase the county's share of the area population from 6% in 1970 to 11% (rounded) in 2010 and 2019.

Buena Vista's population trend was comparatively favorable as it experienced consistent population growth 1930-1960. Its position as the only local municipality and the seat of county government served to buffer the city from the population loss experienced at the community level through mid-century. Small decreases in municipal population during the sixties and again during the eighties were followed by increases during the nineties and the first decade of the new century, the latter being the largest percentage and numeric increase recorded since 1930. Between 1930 and 2010 the municipal population increased 98%. Even so, as a share of the community total the city's population gradually decreased from 29% to 25% during the half-century period 1960-2010.

Population Marion, Buena Vista, Adjoining Counties 1960 - 2010, 2019 estimates							
Jurisdiction	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
Marion	5,477	5,099	5,297	5,590	7,144	8,742	8,432
Buena Vista	1,574	1,486	1,544	1,472	1,664	2,173	2,113
Chattahoochee	13,011	25,813	21,732	16,934	14,882	11,267	10,560
Schley	3,256	3,097	3,433	3,590	3,766	5,010	5,221
Stewart	7,371	6,511	5,896	5,654	5,252	6,058	6,293
Sumter	24,652	26,931	29,360	30,232	33,200	32,819	30,064
Talbot	7,127	6,625	6,536	6,524	6,498	6,865	6,321
Taylor	8,311	7,865	7,902	7,642	8,815	8,906	8,116
Webster	3,247	2,362	2,341	2,263	2,390	2,799	2,610
eight-county total	72,452	84,303	82,497	78,429	81,947	82,466	77,617
Marion's proportion	7.6%	6.0%	6.4%	7.1%	8.7%	10.6%	10.9%
Georgia	3.9M	4.6M	5.5M	6.5M	8.2M	9.7M	10.4M

Sources: 1960-2010 Decennial U. S. Censuses

2019 estimates are from U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates 2015-2019, Table B01003

Projections for the area population are presented in the following table<sup>3</sup>. They suggest predominantly negative trends among the eight area counties to 2040 and beyond. Six of the eight counties are projected to lose population with rates ranging from a low of -10% (Marion losing about 850 residents) to -23%. Among the two counties projected to "grow" the highest rate is +10% (Schley), equivalent to an additional 525 residents by 2040. The six negative county projections aggregated overwhelm the two low growth counties such that the area is projected to decrease by -10%, equating to over 8,100 residents.

<sup>2</sup> Boundary changes between 1900 and 1920 could have affected the county's population, but such changes, if any, were related to boundary shifts, nothing as drastic as the division/creation of new counties which did occur around the turn of the century.

<sup>3</sup> Projections prepared by the Georgia Office of Planning and Budget, supplier of official demographic and statistical data about the state

Official state population projections do not include small municipalities. For the present purpose, a proportion methodology is utilized to generate projections for Buena Vista. The city's most recent proportional shares of the total county population being 26%, 23% and 25%, a straight-line 25% share of the county projections is included in the following table for the City of Buena Vista.

Population Projections Marion, Buena Vista, Adjoining Counties 2020-2040							
Jurisdiction	2019 <sup>1</sup>	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	change '19 - '40
Marion	8,432	8,293	8,130	7,984	7,802	7,586	-10%
Buena Vista	2,113	2,073	2,032	1,996	1,950	1,896	-10.3%
Chattahoochee	10,560	10,749	10,899	10,890	10,883	10,966	+3.8%
Schley	5,221	5,275	5,354	5,494	5,612	5,744	+10%
Stewart	6,293	6,129	5,945	5,784	5,613	5,434	-13.6%
Sumter	30,064	29,399	28,619	27,810	26,776	25,619	-14.8%
Talbot	6,321	6,158	5,858	5,572	5,233	4,857	-23.2%
Taylor	8,116	7,958	7,773	7,620	7,447	7,249	-10.7%
Webster	2,610	2,550	2,384	2,276	2,148	2,030	-22.2%
eight-county total	77,617	76,511	74,962	73,430	71,514	69,485	-10.5%
Marion's proportion	10.9%	12.1%	12.1%	12.2%	12.2%	12.3%	+1.4
Georgia	10.4M	10.8M	11.6M	12.3M	12.8M	13.3M	+27.9%

<sup>1</sup> 2019 estimates are the U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates 2015-2019, Table B01003  
 Buena Vista 2020-2040 are straight 25% of the Marion County projections by River Valley Regional Commission  
 Sources: All county and Georgia projections are from the Georgia Office of Planning and Budget 2020-2040

These negative projections are certainly not unique to Marion or the immediately surrounding counties. Of the fifty counties comprising Georgia's southwest quadrant, the same state source projects thirty-five will experience population decrease to 2040, and beyond. Nearby metropolitan Columbus-Muscogee County, part of Marion's labor area, is projected to experience a 14% loss by 2040.

The 4,189 housing units credited to the community in 2018 is the continuation of uninterrupted decennial increases since at least 1960.<sup>4</sup> Even during the population loss of the 1960s total housing managed to maintain at least a low-level increase. Population surges of the 1990s and the first decade of the new century stimulated housing increases of one thousand units each decade. With these increases has come a significant shift in tenure. The 1960 Census credited the community with an owner-occupancy rate of 49%, with subsequent rates of 62%, 72%, and 79%/78% in 1990/2000. Despite the reported decrease to 74% in 2010 and 2018, the community's rate was still twelve points higher than the area rate. The area rate is influenced significantly by specific transient, renter, populations, a large military presence in Chattahoochee, and university enrollment and assisted living facilities among others in Sumter. Consequently, the area homeownership rate tracks more closely with the state than with Marion.

<sup>4</sup> albeit 2018 data is substituted for the 2020 Census which is being taken as this text is written

Housing - 2018							
Tenure and Age of Housing	Marion	Buena Vista	Area	Value	Marion	Buena Vista	Area
Total Housing Units	4,189	998	35,402	Owner-occupied			
Occupied	80%	74%	81%	<\$100K	52%	52%	58%
Owner	74%	40%	62%	\$100K-199,999	19%	21%	25%
Renter	26%	60%	38%	≥\$200,000	29%	27%	17%
No Vehicle	7%	22%	9%	Median	\$89,500	\$88,700	\$79,350 <sup>1</sup>
Vacant	20%	26%	19%	Gross Rent			
Year Structure Built				# paying rent	686	408	-
≥2000	21%	7%	14%	<\$500	45%	60%	25%
1980-1999	41%	40%	40%	\$500-\$999	53%	36%	54%
1960-1979	28%	32%	28%	≥\$1,000	2%	4%	21%
<1960	10%	21%	18%	Median	\$572	\$426	\$676 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> average of the eight area medians

Source: US Census, American Community Survey 5-Yr Average 2014-2018, Table DP04 conversions to percentages by River Valley Regional Commission

Multi-family, primarily rental, housing is most often concentrated in incorporated areas where public utilities and services are usually located, especially in rural communities. This has the effect of decreasing homeownership rates in cities. The Census records a very volatile homeownership rate in Buena Vista. Across the better than half-century referenced above homeownership in the city differed from countywide rates by +4 percentage points to -34 points. It is worth noting that much of this volatility is attributable to the statistical margin of error resulting from the method of data collection and the small size of the data field.

2018 Census estimates indicate there is not a vehicle available for the sole use of occupants at 7% of the community's housing units. Within Buena Vista this is reportedly the case at almost one-quarter of residences. This is an inconvenience for occasional medical visits, problematic for weekly grocery trips but rises to being a critical issue for chronic medical visits and daily trips to work.

Not shown in the table above, the community has experienced a drastic change in housing type over the preceding half century. The 1970 Census reported 7% of Marion's housing stock to be mobile homes, increasing to 38% in 2018. According to the census mobile homes reportedly account for 17% of the city's housing inventory (2018 Census estimates), and 44% of the housing inventory in the unincorporated area. This is significant, because under state law this type housing receives preferential local property tax treatment. Mobile homes are classified as personal property and valued on a depreciating schedule, thus contributing less to the tax digest and generating less in tax receipts annually. This decline is not readily obvious as new units are placed in the community concealing the depreciating value and declining tax receipts from existing residences. Further development of the economic base and local incomes could be a way to generate an increased preference for conventional home construction which could help preserve and even expand the tax base.<sup>5</sup>

The age of housing is very similar within the community and across the area during the combined decades of the 1960s/1970s and again during the 1980s/1990s. Locally, however, there is a significantly different age distribution between older and newer housing. The number of units in the city and the county

<sup>5</sup> There is a significant discrepancy in the number of mobile homes reported to be in the unincorporated area by the census and the number recorded in the county tax office. Some of this difference may be attributable to differences in definitions used by the Census Bureau and state tax law/regulations. While the numbers of units may differ thus altering the tax revenues received, the issue remains.

constructed prior to 1960 are virtually identical, 210/209, with the larger number accounting for 21% of housing in the city and the smaller for 7% of the county housing inventory.<sup>6</sup> The greater concentration of older housing within the confines of the city limits suggests the city has residential areas potentially eligible for designation to the State and/or Nation Registers of Historic Districts. Again, separating city statistics from the community total indicates one-quarter of housing in the unincorporated area is of much newer construction, having been constructed or placed in 2000 or later. More specifically, these 810 housing units in the rural area equated to 25% of total housing and 70 units in the city amounted to 7% of the city’s housing inventory.<sup>7</sup>

2018 Census estimates place the community and surrounding counties on opposite extremes of housing values. Two counties were credited with higher median values of owner-occupied housing, by less than \$1,000, and Marion’s median was \$10,000 above the area median. The medians for Buena Vista and Marion differed by less than \$1,000. Only two area counties were credited with median gross rents below Marion, and Marion was within \$100 of the lowest. Buena Vista’s median was \$50 below the lowest county.

With the recovery period from the Great Recession of 2008 extending deep into the current decade, one might question a strong increase in the community’s median household income 2010-2019. Review of data for the intervening years confirms annual increases as the upward trend was strong. The same held true for the area and state, but the local trend maintained a higher trajectory. Income growth was stronger in the unincorporated area as the city’s trendline did not keep pace with the larger community. For the decade to date, income for the city and larger community both outpaced the national income rate for the period.

Median Household Income					
Jurisdiction	2000 <sup>1</sup>	2010 <sup>2</sup>	2019 <sup>3</sup>	% Change 2010-2019	% Inflation 2010-2019 <sup>4</sup>
Marion	\$29,145	\$31,581	\$44,643	41%	20%
Buena Vista	\$17,672	\$18,795	\$24,333	29%	
Area	\$29,226	\$33,484	\$38,267	14%	

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Decennial Census

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2006-2010

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2015-2019, Table S2503. The reader should be aware the smaller the jurisdiction the larger the margin of error in these incomes. The margin of error for Buena Vista’s 2019 MHI is \$15,500; meaning, there is a 90% confidence level that the true MHI for Buena Vista at that time is within the range \$15,500 below \$24,333 and \$25,500 above \$24,333. The margin of error for larger Marion County is \$6,500.

<sup>4</sup> The Inflation Calculator <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/> using Consumer Price Index statistics published annually in the Statistical Abstract of the United States

<sup>6</sup> Note: Marion datum (10%) for housing built <1960 includes the city units.

<sup>7</sup> Note: Marion datum (21%) for housing built ≥2000 includes the city units.

Local poverty conditions have reportedly not improved over the past two decades. While the data do suggest improvement within the city (2018), the reader must consider the large margins of error that accompany surveys of such a small universe. This applies to the high rate reported for 2010 as well. Marion’s rate has closely paralleled that of the surrounding counties aggregated, faring most favorably in the recent data. Poverty rates among individuals across the state were reportedly 13%, 18%, 16%, respectively, showing a gradual closing between the county and state rates.

Persons in Poverty			
Jurisdiction	2000 <sup>1</sup>	2010 <sup>2</sup>	2018 <sup>3</sup>
Marion	22%	26%	21%
Buena Vista	35%	41%	22%
Surrounding Counties	21%	26%	25%

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Decennial Census

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year est. 2008-2012, Table S1701

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year est. 2014-2018, Table S1701

Over the course of the past decade Marion County recorded a significant improvement in higher educational attainment. At the time of the 2010 Census the highest attainment level among fully half of all residents 25+ years of age was high school graduation. Another 30% initiated post-secondary education with practically one-quarter (7% in the following table) having attained a four-year degree or higher. 2019 Census estimates indicate that among local high school graduates 42% initiated post-secondary studies with almost one-third (13% in the following table) having attained a four-year degree or higher. Yet, at the same time the proportion lacking a high school education reportedly increased two percentage points placing Marion four points higher than the area rate. The area improved in this attainment level six points. This area rate is heavily skewed by Sumter County. With almost 40% of the area population, Sumter is the home community of the area’s only hospital, university and college, entities which attract and employ large numbers of workers from higher attainment levels. While the area outperformed Marion at the lowest (22% v. 18%) and highest (13% v. 17%) attainment levels in 2019, Marion closed the highest attainment gap by half 2010-2019, from eight percentiles to four.

Highest Educational Attainment						
Highest Attainment	Marion		Buena Vista		Area	
	2010	2019	2010	2019	2010	2019
Less than HS diploma/equivalent	20%	22%	37%	36%	24%	18%
HS diploma/equivalent	51%	36%	35%	31%	36%	36%
Some college/Associate degree	23%	29%	20%	21%	25%	29%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	7%	13%	7%	12%	15%	17%

Resident population 25 years of age and older

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2006-2010

U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2015-2019

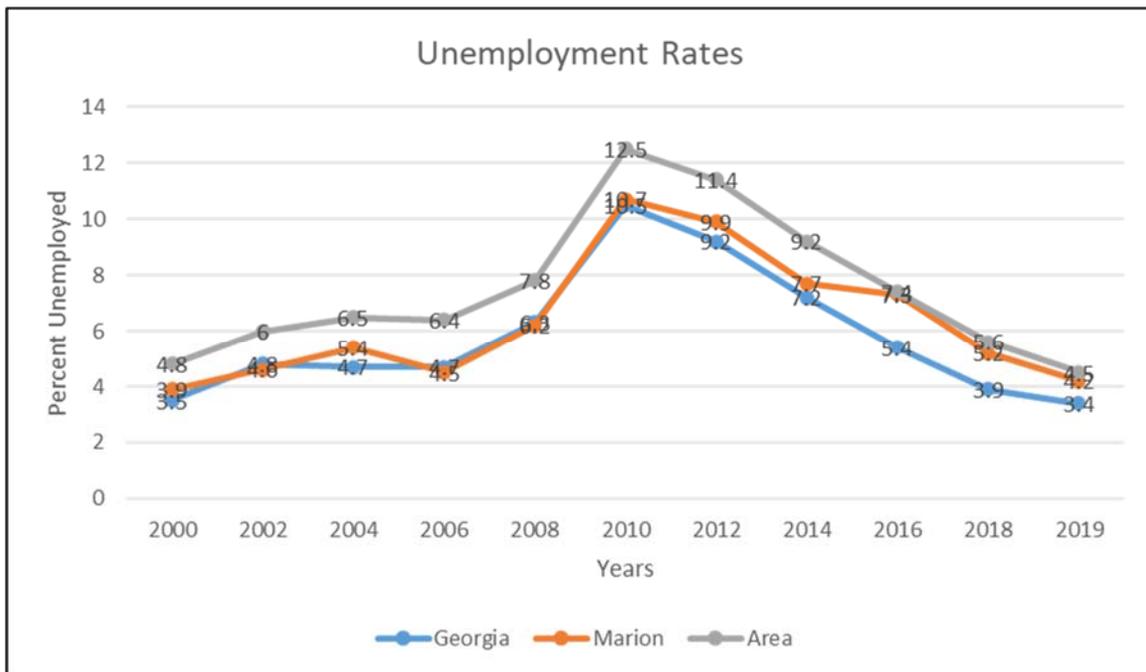
In 2019 more than one-third of the city’s 25+ age cohort lacked a high school diploma, relatively unchanged from 2010 and fourteen points higher than the county. Yet, the city and county rates at the highest attainment level differ by only a point. The relevant 2019 rates for the state from lowest to highest attainment are 13%, 28%, 28% and 31%; a much lower percentage than the community lacking a high school diploma and significantly larger percentage with at least a four-year college degree.

Area school systems have made great strides implementing a nationwide initiative to graduate high school students “on time”, i.e., within four years; grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Failure to graduate “with one’s class” has been shown to contribute to a loss of incentive/motivation, a higher probability of dropping out and poverty. The absence of a high school diploma limits job opportunities contributing to lower lifetime earnings. Marion County has maintained a position among the top half of area graduation rates, with rates ranging from three to thirteen points above the rate statewide.

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates Marion and Surrounding Counties					
Jurisdiction	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Marion	72.6 <sup>4th</sup>	80.2 <sup>3rd</sup>	92.6 <sup>1st</sup>	92.8 <sup>4th</sup>	91.5 <sup>4th</sup>
Chattahoochee	66.7	74.3	84.8	82.1	88.3
Schley	84.4	84.7	90.5	97.3	92.5
Stewart	89.7	70.4	75.7	96.2	92.6
Sumter	67.2	83.7	87.5	88.6	94.7
Talbot	45.5	46.2	54.7	95.0	80.0
Taylor	68.9	74.8	75.0	85.7	86.2
Webster	74.3	70	88.5	85.7	91.3
Georgia	69.7	72.6	79.4	81.6	83.8

Source: Georgia Department of Education

In 2000 the community was experiencing some of its lowest unemployment rates ever, and for the next fourteen years tracked state unemployment levels closely (data table on next page). But unemployment, local and state, began inching upward and with the onset of the Great Recession of 2008 the pace quickened, peaking in 2010. The local rate continued to track the state until 2015 at which time it diverted to a higher rate paralleling the area. After an unusually long national economic recovery period local unemployment was approaching the historic rates recorded two decades earlier.



Annual Unemployment Rates											
Jurisdiction	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2019
Marion	3.9%	4.6%	5.4%	4.5%	6.2%	10.7%	9.9%	7.7%	7.3%	5.2%	4.2%
Area <sup>1</sup>	4.8%	6.0%	6.5%	6.4%	7.8%	12.5%	11.4%	9.2%	7.4%	5.6%	4.5%
Georgia	3.5%	4.8%	4.7%	4.7%	6.3%	10.5%	9.2%	7.2%	5.4%	3.9%	3.4%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

<sup>1</sup> individual county unemployment was aggregated for conversion to area rates, computations by River Valley Regional Commission

According to the Georgia Department of Labor 2019 was the first year the local job base recorded an annual increase in employment (+32) since 2000. The 1,550 fewer workers for the period (2000-2018) amounted to a 59% reduction from the 2000 level and averaged 86 fewer each year. Employment through the first three quarters of 2020 suggests that by the end of the year there would be essentially no change from the 2019 employment level. Annual increases in average weekly wages were not sufficient to counter the negative effect of such a large-scale employment reduction. Aggregate wages paid decreased 28% 2000-2018, not adjusted for inflation. The loss of wages was not limited to Marion County, however. Although the jobs were local many of the workers commuted from out of county.

Jobs in Marion County		
Year	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
2000	2,613	\$348
2005	1,697	\$451
2010	1,491	\$503
2015	1247	\$577
2016	1121	\$586
2017	1090	\$606
2018	1063	\$620
2019	1095	\$621

Jobs covered by unemployment insurance laws, or approximately 96% of wage and salary civilian jobs.

source: Georgia Department of Labor, Employment and Wages

At both the beginning and end of the current decade the same two industrial sectors dominated local and area employment. Among Marion and the surrounding counties Educational Services.... was the **largest** sector, while Manufacturing accounted for the **largest** share in Buena Vista. Despite decreasing in the county by seven points 2010-2019, Manufacturing was still of sufficient size to be the **second largest** sector. Buena Vista recorded a similar loss, five points, yet Manufacturing remained the largest sector in the city. The loss in Manufacturing employment is a long-term trend. By the time of the 1970 Census Manufacturing had already replaced Agriculture as the dominant employment sector but has been losing share ever since, notwithstanding the area's recent two-point increase. With this gradual decrease the local economy has been following the state's evolution to a service-based economy. Hence, Manufacturing is now Georgia's fourth largest employment sector behind Educational Services..., Professional, Scientific.... and Retail Trade.

Employment by Industry						
Industrial Category	Marion		Buena Vista		Area	
	2010	2019	2010	2019	2010	2019
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	10%	5%	1%	2%	5%	5%
Construction	12%	12%	10%	8%	8%	7%
Manufacturing	21%	14%	34%	29%	13%	15%
Wholesale Trade	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	2%
Retail Trade	11%	9%	8%	7%	10%	10%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	3%	8%	0%	3%	5%	6%
Information	0%	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%
Finance and Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	3%	6%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Professional, Scientific, Management and Administrative, Waste Management Services	7%	10%	8%	6%	6%	7%
Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	21%	19%	22%	24%	24%	25%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	6%	5%	1%	9%	6%	6%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	1%	4%	6%	2%	6%	4%
Public Administration	3%	5%	5%	2%	9%	8%
Civilian Employment	3,357	3,218	608	680	26,124	27,740

source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2006-2010  
U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2015-2019, Table S2403

The 2010 Census reported Marion County workers were concentrated in the generally mid- to lower-paying occupational categories: Production, Transportation.... and Services. 2019 data revealed a significant local shift from 2010, most notably, (1) a six-point increase in Management...., making the generally highest-paying sector also the **largest** among working residents of the county, (2) a five-point reduction in one of the lower-paying sectors, Production, Transportation...., and (3) a three-point employment increase in Natural Resources, Construction...., the generally second highest-paying sector.

Employment by Occupation						
Occupational Category	Marion County		Buena Vista		Area	
	2010	2019	2010	2019	2010	2019
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	18%	24%	10%	21%	28%	29%
Service	22%	15%	26%	26%	18%	18%
Sales and Office	18%	21%	21%	15%	21%	20%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	15%	18%	13%	8%	12%	12%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	26%	21%	31%	30%	21%	21%
Civilian Employment	3,357	3,218	608	680	26,124	27,740

sources: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2006-2010  
U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2015-2019, Table S2401

The city is credited with doubled employment in the highest-paying sector, Management..., but nearly one-third continue to be employed in a lower-paying occupation, Production, Transportation.... The generally highest-paying sector is the largest employment sector in the surrounding area, and at significantly higher proportions than the community. Employment level changes at the state level during the period were much less dramatic, and over one-third of workers (38%) are employed at the highest paid sector.

For decades, the community has maintained a comparatively high rate of workers commuting to places of employment out of county. In 1980, when 42% of local resident workforce worked out of county the average among counties across the state was 27%. 2019 Census estimates reported the current rate to be 66%, 42% statewide. The greatest numbers of these commuters travel to metropolitan Columbus-Muscogee County (57% in 2019) and Sumter County. There are many reasons which contribute to worker commuting, perhaps the most common being higher income derived therefrom. The average weekly wage in Marion County 2015-2019 was \$602. As reported by the Georgia Department of Labor the average in Muscogee County during the same period was 40% higher (\$840); Sumter was 18% higher (\$709).

Worker Cross-county Commuting				
Commute	1990	2000	2010	2019
In-commuters	623	787	599	-
Out-commuters	973	1592	1801	2101
(share of commuters and non-commuting totaled)	(47%)	(54%)	(56%) (GA.- 41%)	(66%) (GA.- 42%)

Source: US Census 1990; 2000  
 US Census 2010 American Community Survey 5-year survey 2006-2010 Table B08007  
 US Census 2010 American Community Survey 5-year survey 2011-2015 Table B08007



## Appendix

### Community Involvement

<b>Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Debby Ford	Chamber of Commerce	Daniel Singleton	Phoebe – Doctor
Ron Hinze	Development Authority	Claudine Morgan	Buena Vista Insurance
Lloyd Hines	Hospital Authority	Matt Murdoch	Extension Office
Sheriff Derrell Neal	Sheriff	Randy Horton	Tax Assessor Board
Britt Moon	Swamp Fox Distilling	Jan Whitley	Recreation Board
Jeff Robinson	Robinson Paving	James Hagler	Health Board – Doctor
John Daniel	Planning Commission/ Realtor	Glenn Tidwell	Schools Superintendent
Sam Schiro	<a href="#">EMA Director</a>	Joyce Henson	DFCS Board
Richard Harris	The Journal	Jami Shivers	DFCS Board
Virginia Swint	Board of Education	Annie Sales	DFCS Board
Leon Williams	Board of Education	Annie Porter	DFCS Board
Ann Watson	Board of Education	Deanna Powell	DFCS Board
Debra Graham	Board of Education	Gloretta King	Election Board
Stanley Goodroe	Board of Education	Georgia Taylor	Election Board
George Neal	Board of Commissioners	Charlene Murray	Election Board
Norman Royal	Board of Commissioners	Jeremy Alexander	Pastor - Buena Vista Methodist
Steve Young	Board of Commissioners	Harold Grimsley	Pastor - First Baptist
Jody Grimsley	Board of Commissioners	Linda Wilson	Pastor - Tazewell Methodist
Matt Gunnels	Board of Commissioners	Jose Gutierrez	Business Owner - Goots
Tomika Sales	USDA	-	-



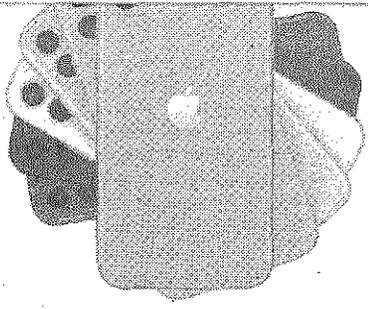
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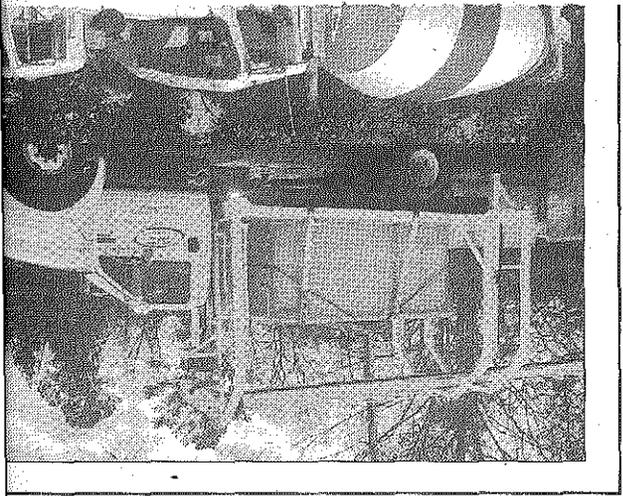
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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**Marion County and Buena Vista** are initiating an update to their **joint comprehensive plan**. This effort is an attempt to identify overall community and economic development needs and opportunities, establish community goals, identify preferred land uses and develop a five-year work program to address the issues. A **public hearing** has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m., **Thursday, February 13, 2020**, in the commissioners meeting room of the courthouse annex, 100 East Burkhalter Avenue, Buena Vista, to brief the public on the planning process, explain opportunities for public participation and solicit input on plan development. The public is encouraged to attend and participate



\* Oakland VFD - 2 personnel, 2 apparatus.  
 \* O'Neal VFD - 6 personnel, 3 vehicles.  
 \* Brown Springs VFD - 4 personnel, 1 apparatus.  
 \* Draneville VFD - 1 person- nel.  
 \* Doyle VFD - 1 personnel, 1 apparatus.  
 \* Vista 100 Fire Chief.  
 \* Hazewell 400 Fire  
 \* CPSTI 689064.  
 \* EMTF P007926.

Burial followed the officiating. Burial followed the service in Oglethorpe Cemetery. The family greeted friends at Way-Watson Funeral Home in Ellaville, GA on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, from 6-8 p.m. Serving as pallbearers were Johnathon Dowdey, Steven Dowdey, Chad Crook, Chris Aldridge, Dustin Shaw, Taylor Baker, and Kyle Watson.

Mrs. Phillips was born in Gainesville, FL, on December 28, 1940, to Allen Clifton and Mary Louise Lemmond Williams. She was Baptist by faith and a member of Shiloh Baptist Church. Mrs. Phillips had been employed as a secretary at Wilson Automotive and Sumter County School. She was a Pink Lady at Phoebe Sumter Medical Center. Mrs. Phillips was a loving wife to James H. Rocky Wade and a son Heath of Buena Vista, GA; a daughter, Flynn Wade and his wife Tammy of Cusseta, GA; a daughter, Janna Johnson Sieg of Canada; a brother, Carter Warren Swint of Buena Vista, GA; a sister-in-law, Virginia Hall "Ginger" Swint of Buena Vista, GA; two grandchildren, Tayte Harmon and Natalie Harmon; and several nieces, nephews, cousins and other family.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Buena Vista United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 449, Buena Vista, GA, 31803.

Please visit [www.waywatson.com](http://www.waywatson.com) to sign the online guest register for Mrs. Wade.

Way-Watson Funeral Home of Buena Vista, Georgia is in charge of arrangements.

### Aaron D. Wilson

Aaron D. Wilson, 84, of Box Springs, GA, passed away on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, at Magnolia Manor of Marion County.

A memorial graveside service was held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, February 2, 2020, at Cox Cemetery in Talbotton, GA.

Mr. Wilson was born on August 4, 1935, in Gainesville, GA, to Arhella and Ruth Carter-Wilson. He was Protestant by faith and was self-employed as

### Herschel Lee Spence

Mr. Herschel Lee Spence, 93, of Ellaville, GA, died January 28, 2020 at Perfect Care in Americus, GA. Funeral services were held on Friday, January 31, 2020 at 11 a.m. at Ellaville United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Buena Vista United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 449, Buena Vista, GA, 31803.

Please visit [www.waywatson.com](http://www.waywatson.com) to sign the online guest register for Mrs. Taylor.

Way-Watson Funeral Home of Buena Vista, Georgia is in charge of arrangements.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 🔔 PUBLIC NOTICES

- NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
Marion County and Buena Vista are initiating an update to their joint comprehensive plan. This effort is an attempt to identify overall community and economic development needs and opportunities, establish community goals, identify preferred land uses and develop a five-year work program to address the issues. A public hearing has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, February 13, 2020, in the commissioners meeting room of the courthouse annex, 100 East Burkhalter Avenue, Buena Vista, to brief the public on the planning process, explain opportunities for public participation and solicit input on plan development. The public is encouraged to attend and participate.
- FIVE YEAR HISTORY & DIGEST – 2019

### 📰 NEWS & EVENTS

- Census Day is April 1, 2020! Make sure you are counted!
  - The Census is a questionnaire that asks about the number of people living in the United States. Knowing the number of people in a city, county, or the whole state allows for the planning of day-to-day operations, the future, and even emergencies.
  - The personal information that you provide on the Census form is protected under Title 13 of the U.S. Code. It sets the fines and prison penalties (up to a fine of \$250,000 and 5 years in federal prison) for the illegal taking, sharing, or use of private information. In addition, "The 72-Year Rule" was set under Public Law 95-416. The rule states that after 72 years, the Census information can be released to the general public. Records from the 2020 Census will be released in the year 2092.
  - The questions on the 2020 Census will ask how many people live in the residence; if the home is rented, owned, or other; and a phone number to contact you only in the case of official Census Bureau business.
  - To view the sample 2020 Census questionnaire, click [HERE](#). To view the online 2020 Census questionnaire, watch the U.S. Census Bureau's video to the left.
  - For more information on the 2020 Census visit <https://census.georgia.gov/>
- For Local Area News: <http://www.tjournal.com/>

### 🚲 RECREATION

#### 2020 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Baseball Fields are open as of February 1, 2020.
- Spring 2020 Ball Season Registration end February 15, 2020.
- The Marion County Recreation Department will begin their Spring Baseball, Softball, & Tee-ball practices February 17, 2020.
- Opening Day will be on April 11, 2020 at 9:00 am.
- Sign-up forms are available in the Recreation Department office, Tax Commissioner office, Water Department office, and at Partners Propane.
  - There is a drop box on the Recreation Department office door for forms & payments. Address is 100 E Burkhalter Ave. Buena Vista, Ga.
- You can also register online for Baseball, Softball, & Tee-Ball at [www.marioncountyga.com/siplay.com](http://www.marioncountyga.com/siplay.com).
- If you are interested in Umpiring or Sponsoring please contact the phone number or email address below.
  - Contact (229)314-6255 or email [sallen@marioncountyga.org](mailto:sallen@marioncountyga.org)

Marion County/Buena Vista  
 Comprehensive Plan 2021-2025  
 Public Hearing – Courthouse Annex  
 February 13, 2020 – 6:30

name	representing	telephone	e-mail
John Daniel	Planning & Zoning + Broadmoor Realty	706-249-1155	reed@broadmoorrealty.biz
Mulkey M. Michael	Citizen	229-649-4314	mulkey.michael@yahoo.com
Jeremy Alexander	Citizen / Pastor Buena Vista UMC	863-513-7821	jeremy4christ@gmail.com
Justin Studdard	Marion County	706 436 4750	jstuddard@marioncountygga.org
Kevin Brown	City of BV	229 314 9399	mayorbrown@cityofbuenvista.org
MATT Murdoch	Marion County Extension <sup>USA</sup>	229-314-5459	mm23566@uga.edu
Sam Schiro	Phoenix Fitness	706 575 1308	sschiro@marioncountygga.org
Cassandra Porter	MCBOE	229-649-2234	porter.cassandra@marion.k12.ga.us
Wendell FAU112	Buena Vista PD	229 314-0884	buenvistagechief@police.ct@gmail.com
Dereck Neal	MARION county	229-649-3841	MARIONsheriff@windstream.net
Richard Morgan	morgan Farms	229-649-8330	rvm
Claudine Morgan	Buena Vista Realty Buena Vista Insurance	229-649-8118	buenvistarealty@windstream.net
BRIANT RODRIGUEZ	UPTOWN multimedia FACTORY	407-415-3017	BRODRIGUEZCONSULTANT@gmail.com
George Porter, Jr.	MCBOE	(229) 649-2234	Porter, George @ george.porter@marion.k12.ga.us

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PUBLIC NOTICES second meeting

- NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
**Marion County and Buena Vista are initiating an update to their joint comprehensive plan.** This effort is an attempt to identify overall community and economic development needs and opportunities, establish community goals, identify preferred land uses and develop a five-year work program to address the issues. A town hall meeting has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Monday, **March 9th, 2020**, in the commissioners meeting room of the courthouse annex, 100 East Burkhalter Avenue, Buena Vista, to begin the process of gathering public input for the updated plan.
- FIVE YEAR HISTORY & DIGEST - 2019

### NEWS & EVENTS

- Census Day is April 1, 2020! Make sure you are counted!
  - The Census is a questionnaire that asks about the number of people living in the United States. Knowing the number of people in a city, county, or the whole state allows for the planning of day-to-day operations, the future, and even emergencies.
  - The personal information that you provide on the Census form is protected under Title 13 of the U.S. Code. It sets the fines and prison penalties (up to a fine of \$250,000 and 5 years in federal prison) for the illegal taking, sharing, or use of private information. In addition, "The 72-Year Rule" was set under Public Law 95-416. The rule states that after 72 years, the Census information can be released to the general public. Records from the 2020 Census will be released in the year 2092.
  - The questions on the 2020 Census will ask how many people live in the residence; if the home is rented, owned, or other; and a phone number to contact you only in the case of official Census Bureau business.
  - To view the sample 2020 Census questionnaire, click [HERE](#). To view the online 2020 Census questionnaire, watch the U.S. Census Bureau's video to the left.
  - For more information on the 2020 Census visit <https://census.georgia.gov/>

- For Local Area News: <http://www.tjournal.com/>

### RECREATION

#### 2020 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Baseball Fields are open as of February 1, 2020.
- Spring 2020 Ball Season Registration end February 15, 2020.
- The Marion County Recreation Department will begin their Spring Baseball, Softball, & Tee-ball practices February 17, 2020.
- Opening Day will be on April 11, 2020 at 9:00 am.
- Sign-up forms are available in the Recreation Department office, Tax Commissioner office, Water Department office, and at Partners Propane.
  - There is a drop box on the Recreation Department office door for forms & payments. Address is 100 E Burkhalter Ave. Buena Vista, Ga.
- You can also register online for Baseball, Softball, & Tee-Ball at [www.marioncounty.website.siplay.com](http://www.marioncounty.website.siplay.com).
- If you are interested in Umpiring or Sponsoring please contact the phone number or email address below.
  - Contact (229)314-6255 or email [sallen@marioncountyga.org](mailto:sallen@marioncountyga.org)

Marion County/Buena Vista  
 Comprehensive Plan 2021-2025  
 second meeting      Public Hearing – Courthouse Annex  
 March 9, 2020 – 6:30

name	representing	telephone	e-mail
LANCE SCOTT	-	(706) 617-4423	lgs497@hotmail.com
Justin Strickland	Marion County	706-436-9750	jstrickland@marion-countyga.org
George Porter, Jr.	Marion County Schools	(229) 649-2234	porter.george@marion.k12ga.us
John Daniel	Planning & Zoning	706-249-1155	johndaniel@broadmoorrealty.biz
George Neal	County Commission	706-325-9474	gineal72@gmail.com
Sam Schiro	EMA	706 575 1308	sschiro@marioncountygga.org
Ron Hinze	Development Authority	(706) 621-2244	ronhinze@aol.com
Judith Smith	Ret. Tax Comm	229-649-4104	jrsmith46@windstream.net

Fill out your 2020 Census today.  
Respond online at [2020CENSUS.GOV](https://2020CENSUS.GOV)



Shape  
your future  
START HERE >

United States  
Census  
2020

third meeting

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### **“NOTICE OF VIDEO AND TELECONFERENCE DUE TO EMERGENCY”**

Due to COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions and concerns, the regular meeting of the Marion County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, at 5:00 P.M. will be conducted via Zoom video and teleconference on the following website (Video and Audio): <https://zoom.us/j/99968671891>. To call for audio only: +1 929 205 6099. The Meeting ID is 999 6867 1891.

---

### **“NOTICE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKSHOP MEETING”**

Marion County and the City of Buena Vista will be holding a planning meeting for updating the joint Comprehensive Plan as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. This meeting is for the community to provide feedback and thoughts on the direction of Marion County and the City of Buena Vista.

The meeting will be held via Zoom teleconference on **October 20, 2020** at 6:00 PM.

The website url for joining the meeting is:

<https://zoom.us/j/99159253864>

To join via telephone, call:

1-929-205-6099 and enter Meeting ID: 991 5925 3864

## Gerald Mixon

---

**From:** Justin Strickland <jstrickland@marioncountyga.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2020 7:58 PM  
**To:** Debby Ford; Ron Hinze; Lloyd Hines; Britt Moon; Jeff Robinson; John Daniel; Sam Schiro; Richard Harris; George Neal; Norman Royal; Steve Young; Jody Grimsley; Matt Gunnels; Tomika Sales; Matt Murdoch; Glenn Tidwell; bvmethodist@windstream.net; contact@firstbaptistchurchbv.com; carjoy@windstream.net; mulkey.mcmichael@yahoo.com; Matthew Murdoch; janthony31058@gmail.com; Bill Addison; porter.cassandra@marion.k12.ga.us; Wendell Faulk; George Porter; brodriguezconsultant@gmail.com; jeremy4christ@gmail.com; Jenefer Creamer; Marion County Elections & Registrations; Tax Commissioner; Heather Stuart; Smith, Joy; Stacey Ballard; Kimberley Scott; Nicole Aide; Shaun Raulston; renee barrett; Wayne Jernigan; Sam Way  
**Cc:** Gerald Mixon; Brown, Kevin  
**Subject:** Re: Restarting Marion/Buena Vista Comprehensive Planning  
**Attachments:** MARION-BUENA VISTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.docx

**[EXTERNAL] CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

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All,

This is just a reminder that this meeting is set for next Tuesday at 6:00pm via Zoom. Here is the link: <https://zoom.us/j/99159253864>. You can also call in dialing: 19292056099 and the Meeting ID: 991 5925 3864.

I hope most of you can make it! It is very valuable to get as much participation as possible while updating the plan. This plan guides the direction of both the county and city.

I am attaching the SWOT analysis that was developed during previous sessions before COVID so that those who have attended can have a "refresher" and those that haven't can have an "orientation".

On Thu, Oct 1, 2020 at 5:34 PM Justin Strickland <jstrickland@marioncountyga.org> wrote:

All,

You are receiving this email because you were either on the stakeholder list developed earlier this year or you attended one of the comprehensive planning meetings we held before the COVID-19 outbreak.

Our original due date for the update to our comprehensive plan was October 31, 2020 but we did receive an extension to February 28, 2021. This means we need to get the process back up and going. Mayor Brown, Gerald Mixon (RVRC), and myself are open to doing in-person meetings with social distancing restrictions or doing Zoom meetings. I would like to get an idea of what you all think before we make a decision.

Also, I am looking at October 20th as the first meeting to resume the process. I am also proposing a 6pm meeting time.

This accompanied the 10-16 reminder to stakeholders

MARION COUNTY – BUENA VISTA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2021 – 2026  
SWOT ANALYSIS

-STRENGTHS-

(preliminary notes of 3-9-20)

1. Quality school system
2. Pasaquan, an internationally recognized visionary art environment
3. Our historic courthouse is still functioning as a courthouse and anchoring our commercial core
4. The community maintains a vibrant downtown square
5. Locational advantages; this small, rural town is on the fringe of a metropolitan area in easy reach of mountain and beach getaways
6. The community has a good mix of family types; those with deep local roots and recent arrivals striving to develop roots
7. Mild climate
8. Regional partnerships have been forged in post-secondary education (local and commuter classes) and health care (local services are on a scale sufficient to be of benefit to nearby communities)
9. Medical capacity
10. The downtown square, the commercial and geographical heart of the community, is on the crossroads of the community's two most heavily traveled state highways
11. Proximity to Fort Benning
12. There is a high level of community involvement
13. Served by a good local/regional media outlet
14. Nationally recognized historic properties; eight currently listed on the national register of historic places
15. Growing and locally supported artistic and cultural community
16. Attractive venue for large and small game hunting
17. The community is graced with a wide variety of pleasing and "beautiful views" ranging from open farmland to pastoral scenes of flat and rolling pasture to gentle rolling hills, both meadows and woodlands.
18. Ease of access to post-secondary education institutions

-WEAKNESSES-

1. Continued poverty
2. Limited employment opportunities and choices
3. Lack of overnight accommodations for tourists, travelers; hotel/motel/B&B
4. The housing market (is perpetually not conducive to attracting prospective residents/families) or (is not responsive to the needs of prospective residents/families)
5. There is not a leadership development program to transition between generational stakeholders
6. The community is not capitalizing on the economic potential of agri-tourism
7. General lack of community awareness of local attractions, services, products, and opportunities
8. Lack of broadband service

-OPPORTUNITIES-

1. Creating incentives for filling empty downtown storefronts
2. Beautification of downtown / courthouse / sidewalks / buildings
3. Recruitment of young professionals to downtown community
4. Old Federal Road - Recently included on Georgia Trust's Places in Peril
5. Oral History Partnership with Columbus State University
6. Development of Trail System surrounding high school

-THREATS-

1. Demise of downtown Buena Vista - High rent and poor condition of buildings
2. Aging community - Young generations have left Marion County and leave no legacies in place to take over generational family businesses
3. Regional Economy - As the Columbus economy grows, it is eating away former economic impact in Marion County

## Gerald Mixon

---

**From:** Justin Strickland <jstrickland@marioncountyga.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020 9:14 AM  
**To:** Gerald Mixon  
**Subject:** Attendance  
**Attachments:** Comp Plan 10.20.20 - Attendance.jpg

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Gerald,

Here's a screenshot of all the attendees from last night's meeting.

--

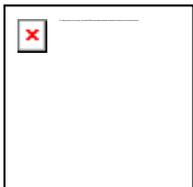
Thanks,

Justin Strickland

County Manager

Marion County Board of Commissioners

[jstrickland@marioncountyga.org](mailto:jstrickland@marioncountyga.org)



	Justin Strickland (Host, me)		
	gmixon		
	Larry Franklin		
	Marshall's iPhone		
	Ron Hinze		
	Jan Whitley		
	Lehanne		
	Mayor K. Brown		
	17065708251		
	Cal Myers		
	Camdyn Neal		
	Cassandra Porter		
	Daphnie Wright-Miller		
	Jasper Brown		
	jody		
	John		
	Porter.George		
	RCT6873W42BMF9A		
	Sarah Allen		
	Sylvia		
	Mulkey		

## Gerald Mixon

---

**From:** Justin Strickland <jstrickland@marioncountyga.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020 9:11 AM  
**To:** Gerald Mixon  
**Subject:** Re: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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I didn't take a screenshot last night and I can't access it now. I know the following were on (I only saw seven logged on):

- Gerald Mixon
- Justin Strickland
- Ron Hinze
- Jan Whitley
- Mulkey McMichael
- John Daniel
- George Porter

On Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 9:00 AM Gerald Mixon <[gmixon@rivervalleyrc.org](mailto:gmixon@rivervalleyrc.org)> wrote:

Justin,

Will you send me the attendance roster from last night, as you did last week?

I will be trying to contact you later this week about a timeline for the public “hearing” and to submit the draft for review.

Thanks

Gerald

Gerald Mixon

Planning Director - Americus Office

River Valley Regional Commission

228 West Lamar Street

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Marion County and Buena Vista have prepared a draft update to their joint comprehensive plan. Updates address strengths, weaknesses, threats, overall community and economic development needs and opportunities, preferred land uses and five-year work programs for each jurisdiction's use addressing the issues. A public hearing has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Monday, November 23, 2020, in the commissioners meeting room of the courthouse annex, 100 East Burkhalter Avenue, Buena Vista, where the plan will be presented for resident comment and input prior to December 9 submission for regional and state reviews. The draft, while still in development, will be posted on the county website by noon Monday the 16th with instructions for comment. The public is encouraged to attend and/or give input/comment.

Happy Thanksgiving from your Sumter EMC Board of Directors and employees.

The offices of Sumter EMC will be CLOSED Thursday, November 26, 2020 and Friday, November 27, 2020 for Thanksgiving.

For emergencies call: (229) 924-8041 or (800) 342-6978

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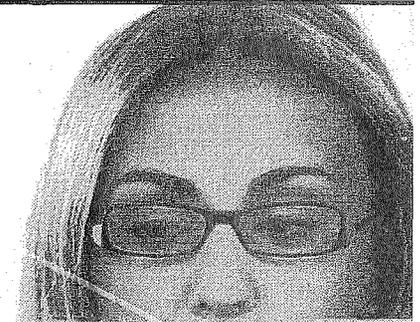
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229-649-6397



## Gerald Mixon

---

**From:** Justin Strickland <jstrickland@marioncountyga.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 11:40 AM  
**To:** Gerald Mixon  
**Subject:** Fwd: Restarting Marion/Buena Vista Comprehensive Planning

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----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Justin Strickland <jstrickland@marioncountyga.org>  
**Date:** Wed, Nov 18, 2020 at 5:34 PM  
**Subject:** Restarting Marion/Buena Vista Comprehensive Planning  
**To:** Debby Ford <ford.debby@windstream.net>, Ron Hinze <ron.hinze@gmail.com>, Lloyd Hines <lhines1948@yahoo.com>, Britt Moon <britt@swampfoxdistillingco.com>, Jeff Robinson <jrobinson@robinsonpavingco.com>, John Daniel <johndaniel@broadmoorrealty.biz>, Sam Schiro <sschiro@marioncountyga.org>, Richard Harris <tjournal@windstream.net>, George Neal <grneal72@gmail.com>, Norman Royal <normanroyal@hotmail.com>, Steve Young <steven.corbett.young@hotmail.com>, Jody Grimsley <jlgrimsley1@gmail.com>, Matt Gunnels <mgunnels@marioncountyga.org>, Tomika Sales <tomika.sales911@gmail.com>, Matt Murdoch <mm23566@uga.edu>, Glenn Tidwell <tidwell.glenn@marion.k12.ga.us>, <bvmethodist@windstream.net>, <contact@firstbaptistchurchbv.com>, <carjoy@windstream.net>, <mulkey.mcmichael@yahoo.com>, Matthew Murdoch <MATTHEW.MURDOCH@uga.edu>, <janthony31058@gmail.com>, Bill Addison <bill@southernlivingcustomhomes.com>, <porter.cassandra@marion.k12.ga.us>, Wendell Faulk <buenavistagachiefofpolice@gmail.com>, George Porter <porter.george@marion.k12.ga.us>, <brodriguezconsultant@gmail.com>, <jeremy4christ@gmail.com>, Jenefer Creamer <jenefercreammer@yahoo.com>, Marion County Elections & Registrations <marioncountyelect@gmail.com>, Tax Commissioner <taxcomm@marioncountyga.org>, Heather Stuart <heatherstuart@windstream.net>, Smith, Joy <joy.smith@gsccca.org>, Stacey Ballard <marioncochief@windstream.net>, Kimberley Scott <kscott@cvga.org>, Nicole Aide <buenavistacenter@mfcoa.org>, Shaun Raulston <Shaunraulston1@gmail.com>, renee barrett <renee.barrett@dph.ga.gov>, Wayne Jernigan <wjernigansr@gmail.com>, Sam Way <samwayfd@gmail.com>  
**Cc:** Gerald Mixon <gmixon@rivervalleyrc.org>, Brown, Kevin <kbrown.31803@gmail.com>

All,

Thank you for participating in the Comprehensive Plan Update process. There will be a public hearing to review the draft of the update on November 23rd at 6:30pm in the Commission Meeting room for any that want to attend.

--

Thanks,



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 🔔 PUBLIC NOTICES

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Click here for a copy of a draft of the 2020 update to the Marion County/Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan. Please see the below link for a chance to provide feedback and comment on the draft.

Click here for the link to provide feedback on the draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update.