

Forging Ahead
with a
friendly.

August, 2023

**favorable
future**

A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Johnson County,
Kite, and Wrightsville, Georgia



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A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Johnson County, the City of Kite, and the City of Wrightsville, Georgia in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with an effective date of October 1, 2018

Prepared By:

The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee
The Johnson County Local Governments
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

August, 2023

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Introduction & Executive Summary



Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future -- The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan is a comprehensive plan prepared in compliance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) with an effective date of October 8th, 2018. It is a joint plan for Johnson County and its municipalities – the City of Kite and the City of Wrightsville. The City of Adrian lies both in Johnson and Emanuel counties and formally plans (for DCA requirements) with Emanuel County.

Johnson County is a small, rural county in south central Georgia with a 2020 U.S. Census population report of 9,189. This is roughly a 7.9% population decrease from the 2010 U.S. Census population report of 9,980. The county's size of 303.01 square miles ranks 96th in

Georgia (out of 159 counties) giving it a population density of only 30.32 people per square mile, much less than the estimated 2020 Georgia total of 180.25 per square mile. The rural county is classified as part of the Dublin, Georgia Micropolitan Statistical Area (adjacent Laurens County) because roughly one-third of its labor force works in Laurens County. The unemployment rate in Johnson County has decreased to 2.50 percent as of 2022, compared to the 4.0 percent reported in 2018. The U.S. Census also reports a median household income of \$46,292 in 2022. Although these economic indicators have drastically improved since the 2008 economic recession, Johnson County is one of Georgia's counties described as having persistent poverty, currently measured around 26.7 percent of its population compared to 14 percent in Georgia overall. Such statistics have resulted in Georgia still ranking Johnson County as a 2022 Job Tax Tier 1 county. While this ranking is for Georgia's bottom 40 percent or so of counties needing an economic boost, it has the advantage of offering Georgia's largest tax breaks for job creation within Johnson County, and thus a substantial incentive for business job creator entities and further economic improvement. Johnson County's economic future does have many positive factors which hold much promise.



Pecan Farm, Johnson County

Johnson County considers itself as a warm, welcoming, and friendly community which looks after its neighbors, enjoys a low crime rate and warm climate, and is located in a pleasing, soothing rural landscape not far from, and with excellent access to, larger communities and additional economic opportunities. It enjoys an excellent atmosphere of rural, small town quality of life and prides itself as “The Friendliest Town in Georgia” as the City of Wrightsville’s slogan suggests. More than 92 percent of its land area remains agriculture land and forests. Abundant wildlife and recreational opportunities are afforded through slow-moving blackwater streams framed by crystal white sandbars along the Ohoopie, Little Ohoopie, and Oconee rivers and their tributaries. The community has many historic buildings and

residences related to a bustling heyday around the turn of the 20th century. An amazing heritage of entrepreneurship, education leadership, civic pride, and tourism stem from this period and heyday of growth. Transportation development, particularly the Wrightsville and Tennille and other railroads, and the county's yellow-pine forests were responsible for much of Johnson County's early growth and development. Transportation access, location, and fields, forests, and natural/historic resources remain keys to future growth and development.



Wrightsville Farmers Market

This 2023 update to the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan was developed with many opportunities for public input and was designed to accurately identify the needs and opportunities of the community. The planning process involved people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. The process gained widespread community interest, support, and buy-in, while exceeding state standards for public involvement. The plan titled “Friendly, Favorable Future” was created to capture two of the most important aspects of the community: a hospitable atmosphere to live, work, and play, and the improvements of the community sure to come with this community’s aspirations. This updated title lends a branding aspect to the plan and hopefully will develop into increased ownership and attention to the plan. The Johnson County community aims to protect its rural character, conserve its agricultural land and forests, improve its infrastructure, attract new residents and jobs, utilize its heritage, and grow tourism, among its guiding principles outlined herein.

Previous Plans. This comprehensive plan is the fifth within the County prepared under the auspices of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The first was adopted in 1994, while the second comprehensive plan was adopted in 2004. A partial update of the second plan was also adopted in 2009. These first two adopted plans were intensively data and state requirement driven, although local objectives can be discerned. The second plan contains much local information which may not easily be found elsewhere and may remain of use. In 2013, the third joint comprehensive plan, *From Wiggle and Twist to Hospitality and Opportunity*, was adopted in accordance with new state requirements and set in motion a locally driven planning process that produced a user friendly document. The fourth plan, *“Friendly Favorable Future”*, included additional sections such as a new Broadband Services element, and individual municipal visions. The fifth and most current plan, *“Friendly Favorable Future”* and each of the previous plans should remain available from the Johnson County local governments and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission. All plans are updated and posted to www.dca.ga.gov and (www.hogarc.org) websites.



Downtown Wrightsville

Data. The emergence of the world wide web with its vast data repositories accessible through free search engines allows anyone easy access to significant amounts and a wide variety of data, and profiles of any jurisdiction, including Johnson County and its municipalities. For this reason, this comprehensive plan includes only limited data to depict or illustrate points. DCA planning standards encourage such non-inclusion of data. Almost any data depicted at a moment in time quickly becomes dated, and maybe irrelevant. The world wide web offers the opportunity of more relevant and up-to-date data at the time of access.

There are a variety of reliable public and private sources of data. Of course, the traditional source of official community data is the U.S. Census Bureau. Data on Johnson County, its municipalities, or any other jurisdiction is quickly accessed at quickfacts.census.gov which will provide a summary community profile on many popular data items, and links to even more data. Another quality source of data is the website,

www.statsamerica.org, which provides a compilation of primarily government data on many items for any county in any state of the U.S. The site is maintained by Indiana University in partnership with the federal Economic Development Administration. The University of Georgia maintains a website, www.georgiadata.org, where county level data for nearly 1,300 variables related to a wide variety of subjects on population, labor, natural resources, government, health, education, and crime can be accessed. The data can be compared to other counties and the state as well as on a historical change basis, among various user options. The data is compiled from The Georgia County Guide and the Farmgate Value Report prepared by UGA's Extension Service. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has available data for cities and counties under "Community Planning Resources," and will also prepare community data reports when requested under "Other Resources." The State of Georgia has official labor and economic data in its Georgia Labor Market Explorer as organized by the Georgia Department of Labor at explorer.gdol.ga.gov. Additional state sponsored economic data is available at www.georgia.org.

Population Projections. As noted earlier, the 2020 U.S. Census population report of Johnson County was 9,189. This is roughly a 7.9 percent population decrease from the county's 2010 U.S. Census population report of 9,980. The State of Georgia had an increase of 9.5 percent compared to the national U.S. rate of 6.8 percent for the same time period. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the 2022 Johnson County population at 9,242, a decline of 738 persons from 2010. However, the 2020 population of 9189, suggests that there is a slight increase beginning to take place in the 2020's. The high mark of population in Johnson County was 1920's 13,546, and the low mark since then was 7,727 in 1980. The opening of Johnson State Prison in 1992, and bedroom community growth because of access to jobs in Laurens County, among other factors, have helped to stabilized population growth.

While past and present population levels are readily available on the world wide web, population projections are not so easily accessed. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) is responsible for generating official state population projections for Georgia counties. Current OPB projections for Johnson County from 2020 are 9789 persons in 2030, 9,693 persons in 2040, and 9,539 persons in 2050 showing a decrease over time. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) also prepares population projections which have proven to be relatively accurate in the past. HOGARC's population projections for Johnson Although both sources have proven to be quite accurate in the past, the ongoing expansion of large industry in Coastal Georgia will possibly make population predictions more challenging. The creation of new jobs such as the Hyundai Motors Plant in Bryan County, among many other employment opportunities in the coastal region, could have an impact on the county's population projections.

Population Projections, Johnson County

	2020	2030	2040	2050
OPB Long-Term Population Projections, 2021	9,667	9,789	9,693	9,539
HOGARC Regional Plan 2040	9,974	10,474	10,999	----
HOGARC Long-Term Population Projections, 2023	9,189	9,486	9,863	10,121

Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Budgeting, Series 2021 Long-Term Population Projections; Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, Regional Plan 2040, Population Projections; Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission 2023 Long-Term Population Projections

Coordination with Other Plans. Johnson County has an approved and adopted hazard mitigation plan prepared for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to remain eligible for federal disaster assistance. The latest hazard mitigation plan is the 2020 Johnson County Hazard Mitigation Plan. While both plans have been cross consulted and coordinated, it is clear that the two most prominent hazards facing Johnson County that can be influenced by the comprehensive plan are the hazard mitigation plan goals to reduce damage from flood hazards and wildfire, and thereby protect life and health. The comprehensive plan objectives to conserve the county's river and stream corridors, to maintain healthy working forests and fields (including employing proper management techniques), to improve fire/emergency management and other public safety services, and to enhance growth management/code enforcement regulation are clearly consistent, and offer implementation of, the hazard mitigation plan recommended actions.

The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan is also consistent with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy's goals and objectives to develop industrial parks; develop/improve local infrastructure; enhance telecommunications infrastructure; retain existing businesses/industry; attract new industry; and spur non-traditional economic development, like tourism and downtown development, are repeated as principal goals in the Johnson County Comprehensive Plan. The local plan is similarly supportive of espoused state economic goals.

Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria Consideration. Johnson County is part of the Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council. The adopted regional water plan, Altamaha Regional Water Plan (2011) and its 2023 update, were considered by the Johnson County Local Plan Coordination Committee and the local governments in preparation of this plan. This local comprehensive plan's objectives to maintain viable agriculture/forestry uses, protect/conservate natural resources, to enhance intergovernmental coordination and government/efficiencies, and upgrade local infrastructure all help implement, and maintain consistency with, the regional water plan.

Similarly, the Environmental Planning Criteria were also considered in the development of this comprehensive plan. The local governments of Johnson County, including Johnson County, the City of Kite, and the City of Wrightsville, have long been in compliance with the Environmental Planning Criteria, having adopted an implementing, consistent "Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit" Ordinance in October 2000.

Consistency with Quality Community Objectives. In 2011, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs changed its Quality Community Objectives to a more general listing and summary of the 10 objectives. These include: Economic Prosperity, Resource Management, Efficient Land Use, Local Preparedness, Sense of Place, Regional Cooperation, Housing Options, Transportation Options, Educational Opportunities, and Community Health.

The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan directly espouses (many of) these objectives and therefore, is very consistent with, and supportive of them. This comprehensive plan has goals to achieve a brighter future and better community for Johnson County, which is consistent with a quality community and the DCA Quality Community Objectives.

Community Involvement. As noted earlier, the Johnson County local governments clearly wanted to take advantage of the DCA planning standards to develop a broad-based community plan which would involve and excite all concerned, both public and private, with the future growth and development of Johnson County and its municipalities. To accomplish this, they created a steering committee, the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, of all local stakeholders who could be envisioned to help guide this plan's development, and make the community a better place to live, work, recreate, and learn. This committee did include elected and appointed members from the governing authorities, local economic development practitioners, and local government staff, as well as many others



L Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting **R** Public Hearing at Vintage Grace

concerned with community and economic development and other issues within the entire community. This Coordination Committee was actively involved in the development of all facets of this comprehensive plan, and had numerous opportunities to both help develop, review, and revise all components. The first orders of business at any Coordination Committee meeting were review of any revisions to previous elements based on committee input, and chances to return to and modify earlier elements, if desired. The initial meeting of the Local Plan Coordination Committee included a formal identification of strengths and weaknesses of the community, including opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). This identification was utilized in developing all plan elements. The general public was offered the chance to participate in the two required public hearings (and with the Coordination Committee, if desired, after the initial public hearing). These hearings were advertised through unique wording to specifically generate interest and participation. The initial public hearing was held near the beginning of the plan development process to explain the process, offer opportunity for further participation, and solicit input on an improved community vision and local issues/opportunities. The final public hearing was held after a plan draft was developed and reviewed by the Coordination Committee to allow citizen review, solicit any final input, and inform of pending submittal. Citizens were also provided the opportunity to give their opinions during a Final Public Hearing held at 5:00 p.m. in the Johnson County Commission Boardroom which was both publicly posted and announced in the local newspaper. A webpage specifically devoted to this plan was promoted throughout the community which allowed for administration of a Community Vision survey. A more detailed summary of community involvement is included in the appendix.

1. Interactive Website

In order to provide the community with a clear understanding of how the planning process would work and to keep residents updated throughout the process, an interactive website was developed. Through the website, citizens could access documents and notes from each stakeholder meeting and could submit responses to the survey questions at any time throughout the planning process. In addition, a planning timeline was made available on the website so that community members were always aware of when different meetings and planning sessions were occurring.



Local Business - Vintage Grace

2. SWOT Analysis

An initial steering committee meeting was held on January 23, 2023. During this meeting, members of the steering committee participated in a visioning exercise and began a SWOT analysis where they identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Johnson County. Figure 1 shows the results of the SWOT analysis. This identification was utilized in developing all plan elements. This activity provided a starting point in identifying the overall Needs and Opportunities of Johnson County, which are addressed in "Needs and Opportunities". The SWOT analysis showed that one of Johnson County's greatest strengths is its friendly, supportive community with a low crime rate and high community cooperation. Johnson County offers a central location for manufacturing/distribution and has industrial properties available. Close, cooperative relationships have been established among public schools and higher education institutions in the area. The area is among the locations for the newly established Hi-Lo trail. Wrightsville is undergoing improvements and renovations in pursuit of downtown revitalization. Opportunities include Johnson County's well-positioned location from Interstate 20 and Interstate 16, its location along Tradition's Highway, Wrightsville's recent Rural Zone designation, and active Industrial Development Authority, among others. Weaknesses exhibited in Johnson County include: a large number of residents that leave the county for work; spending dollars spent outside the county; limited housing options; aging infrastructure; and a lack of cultural programs

and youth leadership programs. Threats including an understaffed Johnson State Prison, an increasing homeless population, a lack of emergency transportation options, and increased gang affiliation among youth is noted. Consideration was made that increased regional development from the Georgia Ports and the potential for future development would require additional preparedness, housing, and infrastructure improvement within the County.

3. Community Survey

A community survey was developed with the help of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, Johnson County, and its municipalities, to distribute to community members. The survey consisted of 20 questions and the goal of the survey was to gain additional public input on the needs and opportunities of the community. The survey was distributed to community members through email, paper copies, and a link was made available on the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update webpage. The results of the survey were discussed at a later stakeholder meeting where the needs and opportunities of the community were addressed. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix.



L Mainstreet Murals Repainted, Wrightsville **R** Wrightsville Farmers Market

Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future is truly a locally developed guide to, and framework for, future growth and development of Johnson County designed to generate local pride and enthusiasm, to accentuate assets and improve weaknesses, and ultimately bring about a desired future which makes the Johnson County community an improved place to live and work with an outstanding and enhanced quality of life. It is realized that to overcome challenges and to make a difference will take time and much effort, but it is felt this plan is pragmatic and practical in outlining a course and roadmap for steps and actions which can be achieved, and which will continue to move the community forward. The plan continues with delineation of the Community Goals element and an outstanding Community Vision which essentially and succinctly summarizes the community's aspirations and plan's objectives.

S

STRENGTHS

1. Agriculture
2. Available industrial properties
3. Central location for manufacturing/distribution
4. Affordable housing
5. City and county work well together
6. Friendly supportive community
7. Great relationships with local higher education institutions
8. Parents involved with PTO.
9. Active Boys and Girls Club
10. Strong public school system
11. Southeastern Technical College's Adult Learning Center
12. Excellent setting to raise children
13. Low crime rate
14. Cities and counties have volunteer service for fire dept within 20 minutes.
15. College street Station – Huge Community involvement
16. Rotary Club
17. Community Gym
18. Code Red
19. Housing Authority – 75 units
20. Food Bank
21. "Camera Ready" designation
22. Hi-Lo Trail
23. Farmer's Market
24. Wrightsville Mainstreet Renovations
25. Johnson County Chamber of Commerce
26. Wrightsville getting wastewater treatment plant

W

WEAKNESSES

1. 85% of residents commute outside of the county for work
2. Most shopping dollars are spent outside of the county by residents
3. Limited housing options
4. Aging infrastructure
5. Lack of high-speed internet providers
6. Lack of timely medical services
7. No Historical Society/Arts Program/Local Museum
8. No venues/events for exercise
9. No youth leadership program

O

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Well-positioned with I-16 and I-20
2. Rural Zone Designation
3. Industrial Development Authority
4. Downtown Development Authority
5. Located on Traditions Highway, US 15
6. Lucrative opportunity for a grocery store development

T

THREATS

1. Johnson State Prison is understaffed.
2. Large and increasing homeless population.
3. Lack of Emergency Transportation
4. Increase in gang affiliation among youth

Community Goals



The Community Goals Element is described in the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive planning as the most important part of the comprehensive plan. It is a concise summary of future community desires and wishes. It provides a clearly referenced roadmap for community leaders and all concerned with growth and development of the community and its future. The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes three of the four possible components detailed in the Minimum Standards for the required element. These include: a general Community Vision, separate municipal descriptions/visions, listing of Community Goals, and a description of Long-Term Community Policies.

These components seek to paint a picture of the desired future community, and answer the planning question, ***“Where does the community wish to go?”*** To some degree, the Long-Term Community Policies also outline guidance strategy of, ***“How are we going to get where we desire to go, and also, what do we desire for other development parties to pursue?”***

Community Vision

We are a place of opportunity filled with spirit and pride for our heritage and excitement for our future. We aim to preserve our community traditions, resources, and small town feel while inviting new, innovative growth. We are committed to promoting our greatest assets, cultivating positive development, and improving areas of need. Our community will forge, maintain, and prioritize efforts in community outreach and intergovernmental relations. Achievements in continual community enhancement will be made through strategic actions taken in economic development, historic preservation, environmental protection, healthcare, education, community development, and public service. Johnson County and the Cities of Wrightsville and Kite will stay true to our values while providing economic opportunities and growth. We will promote our natural and cultural resources and create a welcoming, walkable, lively community to ensure a friendly, favorable future.

Johnson County views itself as a small rural county with abundant natural resources, an excellent quality of life, and much potential. While currently experiencing limited growth and an aging population, the community is an attractive place to live and work for those interested in a small town, rural America and slow-paced living amongst natural beauty. It truly is blessed with backroads charm and a caring, friendly community spirit. Johnson County is a bedroom community as recognized by its U.S. Census Bureau inclusion in the Dublin, Georgia Micropolitan Statistical Area. However, Johnson County wants to further develop the infrastructure and amenities to support and attract both resident population and local business growth. The community is especially proud of its strong and continuing commitment and cooperation in the realm of public safety which allows its citizens to enjoy a low crime rate and outstanding fire protection.

To fulfill our vision of the community we desire, we will consider the following goals when promoting our community:

- 1. Promote a healthy, transparent citizen-government relationship**
- 2. Create a common brand for Johnson County that can be used to market the County as a place to live, invest, play and educate**
- 3. Seek investment to capitalize on agriculture base**
- 4. Remain vigilant of tourism trends and seek ways to innovate promotion of the community**
- 5. Remove blight and improve cost-burdened housing**
- 6. Preserve, enhance, and promote the area's cultural and natural resources**
- 7. Maintain the sense of place and small-town character and feel of Johnson County while supporting modern technologies such as broadband connectivity**

Johnson County has an incredible history of civic pride, entrepreneurship, and educational and developmental leadership. The community was organized just prior to the Civil War by successful businessmen and agricultural interests. The devastation of war was quickly overcome by persistent civic minded businessmen and citizens who directed the early establishment of the Wrightsville and Tennille Railroad, and two other railroads. The community became a well-known center of civic improvement and agricultural commerce. Its leadership extended to establishment of the Nannie Lou Warthen Institute, a district Methodist High School, which was upgraded to Warthen College. Adult education was also deemed important with committed and noted participation in the national Chautauqua movement. The community also became the well-known and used center of extensive tourism and large local gatherings with the W&T Railroad development of the “Idylwild” recreation area along the Big Ohoopsee near the Oconee River.



Local Stores in Downtown Wrightsville

While the early 20th century was the pinnacle of previous development within the county, Johnson County has experienced slow, but steady growth since the 1970s, although much of this growth was stabilized by the establishment of Johnson State Prison in 1992. Johnson County wants to again capitalize on its historic charm, natural beauty, community connectivity, and small-town quality of life. It has many extant reminders of its past glory remaining, including the recently restored W&T Railroad Depot; the Grice Inn, a boarding house for the Warthen Institute; many beautiful historic homes; and the Johnson County Courthouse, among others. Its history of educational leadership has continued with construction of an adult literacy center in 2002, while its entrepreneurial spirit, taking advantage of its fields and forests, is evident by the continued growth of Flat Rock Nursery. Johnson County’s quality-of-life is at least partially responsible for the location of eight manufacturers within the county, including Electro-Mech Scoreboard Company, one of the top sports scoreboard manufacturers in the U.S. Some 227 businesses are located in Johnson County employing



nearly 3,250 people. Development of a local sawmill and additional businesses/industries, which utilize locally produced agricultural and natural resources, would further capitalize on these available assets.

Johnson County will employ an economic development strategy that upgrades infrastructure, improves educational and skill levels; revitalizes the commercial centers of its municipalities; attracts increased population, including young professionals, while retaining local graduates, and retirees; seeks tourism; and maintains, protects, and utilizes the county's agricultural and natural resources base. A vibrant local farmers market would help support local growers, increase availability of healthy food choices for residents, and attract tourists. The historic houses and commercial buildings of the county would be rehabilitated into continued, productive use. The community will maintain and enhance its "Camera ready" designation to attract movie production companies to utilize its unique historic/cultural and natural resources to local economic benefit. The environmental quality of the county would be maintained and enhanced through conservation of verdant fields and forest uses, and protection of air and water quality and other natural resources. A designated rails-to-trails multi-purpose trail would be developed to enhance recreation opportunities and attract visitors.

The community will capitalize on existing assets, including reuse of downtown buildings and greenspaces for multi-uses so that Main Street Wrightsville and Kite are robust activity centers during both the day and evening. Continuation/development of popular festivals and other venues which take advantage of the community's pride, character, and heritage will remain important. Possible examples could be expansion of the community's Fourth of July festival, regular downtown events such as movies on the lawn, and a UGA museum highlighting the outstanding contributions of native sons Herschel Walker and Loran Smith.

Land uses would continue in a similar manner as they exist now, and the rural character of the county would be maintained. The municipalities would further develop and expand existing infrastructure to attract and accommodate intense developments of all types and business and industrial growth. The community would jointly resolve current wastewater management issues limiting growth in Wrightsville, and continue to invest in public safety improvements. The community would not be the dumping ground for nuisance uses or other uses not compatible with its vision of protected natural and cultural resources, a quality rural character, and sound development. It would be a "recycling friendly" community with local collection centers available. Land use regulation of a specific nature would continue to be developed as needed to address particular development issues, with investigation of, and evolvement to, a more comprehensive approach as feasible.

While Johnson County has experienced much change throughout its history, the greatest asset remains its people and community spirit. It is the vision of our community to grow in all aspects of life and provide a stable place of opportunity all while being known as a friendly place to live and visit. Our goals are energetic, yet obtainable, and place our community on track for a friendly, favorable future.

City of Kite

Description

The City of Kite is located in eastern Johnson County along the Little Ohoopsee River. U.S. 221 (Montgomery Street) and GA Highway 57 (Kight Road) cross in the center of Kite, which is 12 miles west of the county seat, Wrightsville. It has a total area of 0.81 square miles and a population of 245 according to 2020 U.S. Census estimates.

The City of Kite began development as a railroad town in the early 1890s on land donated by Shaderick Kight when the county's second rail line, the Wadley and Mt. Vernon Railroad, was completed through several communities, including Kite and Adrian. Although named for its founder, the town name's spelling was simplified to "Kite" at his request to make for more efficient mail delivery and processing. The railroad through Kite was active until the late 1920s/1930s bringing with it much prosperity. The City of Kite was incorporated in 1891.

By 1900, Kite had numerous businesses and services available, including two blacksmith shops, a carpenter, a druggist, three general merchandise stores, a lawyer, a livery, two doctors, and even a hotel. According to the 1906 Cyclopedia of Georgia: Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns,....., Kite was described as having "a money order post office, from which several free delivery routes emanate, some good mercantile establishments and [that it] does considerable shipping." It had a population of 156 in 1900, which more than doubled to 344 by 1920. During its heyday in the 1930s, Kite had a bank, several dry goods stores, a turpentine still, at least four grocery stores, a furniture store, a millinery shop, and three cotton gins. The population reached its historic zenith of 472 by 1940.

Earnest Claxton built a popular attraction just outside Kite on the Ohoopsee River in the early 20th century known as Bee Line Springs Swimming Pool and Recreation Park. Three artesian wells provided icy cold water for the pool. Other facilities included dressing rooms adjacent to the pool, rental cabins, and a skating and dancing pavilion which also accommodated reunions and various other gatherings. Bands traveling between New York City and Miami in the late 1920s and 1930s, including several that were nationally known, stopped to perform for one night dances that attracted large crowds. Only remnants of the park remain today in the woods off GA Highway 57. Kite also had its own Masonic Lodge No. 321 by 1890. The historic two-story wooden lodge building remains and has been home to the Kite Homemaker's Club, a local women's service organization, since 1920. Today the building houses the Kite Museum. The renowned vascular surgeon, Dr. J. Harold Harrison (1926-2012) was a native of Kite. He was a pioneer in the field of cardiovascular surgery, developing the nation's first vascular training program at St. Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta in 1959 as well as procedures that helped shape the vascular surgery specialty during his medical career of more than 50 years.

Dr. Harrison never forgot that the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) “took a country boy and made a doctor out of him,” generously giving back time and money to his alma mater. Following his death, MCG received a transformative bequest of \$66 million from his estate, the largest ever to a public institution in Georgia, to fund student scholarships and endowed chairs for faculty.

Kite’s population began to decline steadily through the 1940s with the greatest loss occurring during the 1960s. By 1970, Kite was down to 335 people, a decline of nearly 21 percent over the previous decade. The city’s population continued to decline, dipping to 241 in 2000, the lowest it had been since the early 1900s, before stabilizing at about the same level of 245 persons in the 2020 Census. Kite is today a quiet community of approximately 245 residents. It retains a small collection of early 20th century commercial storefronts downtown, as well as some single-story frame late Victorian and Craftsman residences from the same time period.

Vision

The City of Kite desires to RETAIN ITS SMALL TOWN CHARM and friendly nature, while building on its existing assets for a MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE. The historic downtown commercial core would be revitalized with STREETScape/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS and REHABILITATED STRUCTURES housing businesses attractive to residents and visitors alike. The renovated Kite Museum would also be a “MUST SEE” DESTINATION for those interested in the community’s history. UPGRADED WATER AND DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE, BEAUTIFIED GATEWAYS, IMPROVED RECREATION FACILITIES, AND REHABILITATED HOUSING would all contribute to Kite’s vision for the future.

Issues:

U.S. 221/GA 171 and GA Highway 57 intersection, improvements to enhance safety, Firefighting equipment upgrades, Walking track upgrades, Community center upgrades for disaster relief, Satellite children’s library development, Determination of local police force feasibility, Gateway signage improvements, Determination of public housing feasibility, Substandard housing rehabilitation, Streetscape/pedestrian improvements, Kite Museum renovations

Opportunities:

Historic Buildings, Street resurfacing, Kite Museum/Kite Homemaker’s Club, Updated Manufactured Home Ordinances

City of Wrightsville

Description

Located west of the center of Johnson County at the intersection of U.S. 319, GA 15 and 57 in east Central Georgia, Wrightsville is a small historic city with a 2022 U.S. Census report of 3,309 persons. It has a total area of 3.74 square miles and is today considered a bedroom community for nearby larger cities, such as Dublin. Promoted as “the friendliest town in Georgia,” many people pass through Wrightsville en route to or from the University of Georgia in Athens year-round, but especially during football season.

The City of Wrightsville was laid out in 1859 in response to the need for a county seat for the newly created Johnson County (1858). William Hicks donated 78.4 acres of land, described as “a piney ridge and sage brush field where two wagon roads crossed,” for the town. Wrightsville was named for John B. Wright, a member of the town’s site selection committee, who was a large landowner. His farm was about eight miles outside of town where he raised thoroughbred horses. Wright later served two terms in the State Legislature. Wrightsville received its charter a few short years later on February 23, 1866 and began to grow by the late 1860s.

The City of Wrightsville grew by 76 percent during the 1880s, increasing from a Census population of 272 in 1880 to 479 by 1890. It experienced its most rapid growth in history, however, in the last decade of the 19th century when the population exploded to 1,127 for more than a 135 percent increase. Development of the railroad through Wrightsville was a major factor in the community’s growth. The Wrightsville and Tennille (W & T) Railroad, affectionately known as the “Wiggle and Twist” for its many twists and turns, was completed in Wrightsville in 1885. The next year, the W & T merged with the newly completed 19-mile Dublin and Wrightsville Railroad resulting in a 36-mile line connecting Tennille and Dublin through Wrightsville. In 1889, the W & T operated three locomotives, two passenger cars, and five freight and miscellaneous cars, all of which regularly passed through Wrightsville. The railroad developed Idylwild Pleasure Resort, a popular recreation area just south of Wrightsville on the Ochoopee River, where large events were sometimes held, such as a barbeque for the Georgia Weekly Press Association in 1918. The extant W & T Depot was built in 1900, and today the rehabilitated landmark is used for community activities. Naval stores and sawmill industries developed in Johnson County in the late 19th/early 20th centuries due to the availability of vast timber resources and railroad transportation. Wrightsville was also an important stopover on the “low road” from Augusta to Macon.

In 1888, the Nannie Lou Warthen Institute, a district high school of the South Georgia Conference of the Methodist Church, was established in Wrightsville due, in part, to its central location and convenient access by train. Named in memory of the principal benefactor Thomas Warthen’s daughter, the school became a college three years later. Its name was eventually changed and shortened to Warthen College in 1907. The 1906 Cyclopaedia of Georgia described the school

as being “somewhat noted as an educational institution.” The Wrightsville Board of Education took over local education responsibilities around 1917. Although none of Warthen College’s academic buildings survived, a boarding house for its students, known as the Grice Inn, has been preserved. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and serves as the headquarters of the Johnson County Historical Society.

Johnson County’s first courthouse is said to have been a wooden structure built about 1859 soon after the county’s creation, while some sources say that Cedar Creek Primitive Baptist Church served as the first courthouse before being replaced by a rectangular brick structure, perhaps the original Nannie Lou Warthen Institute. The current Johnson County Courthouse was built in 1895 at a cost of \$20,000. Architect James W. Golucke designed the original Romanesque Revival structure, the first of 25 courthouses he designed throughout Georgia. It was remodeled during the WPA era in 1938, including removal of the original central clock tower and replacing it with a shorter Colonial Revival tower reflective of the then popular architectural style. In the mid-1990s, the courthouse received much needed renovations for its centennial. The Johnson County Courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and continues to serve as the focal point of historic downtown Wrightsville. By 1900, businesses were booming in Wrightsville. There were several general merchandise stores, a dry goods store, three grocers, three drugstores, a furniture store, a wagon and buggy shop, three cotton gin companies, a jeweler, two lawyers, one insurance business, and three barbers. Two hotels, the Farmers and Planters Hotel and the Kennedy House, flourished, while there were also two newspapers, “The Headlight” and “The Record.” The Bank of Wrightsville had assets of nearly \$30,000. Just six years later, the Cyclopedia of Georgia described Wrightsville, in part, as having two banks, “some prosperous business houses, a good public school system and several churches.” It was further noted that about 5,000 bales of cotton were handled annually and that there was “a good trade in lumber and naval stores” with artesian wells providing “a fine quality of water” for the community. The city’s first water system was installed in 1912. According to the 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Wrightsville, the city’s sand and clay streets were in good condition.

Wrightsville’s population continued to increase, albeit at a much slower pace, through the first half of the 20th century. The greatest growth was between 1900 and 1910, when the population grew a robust 23.2 percent to 1,389. The next decade witnessed growth at a more modest, but still significant rate of 6.3 percent, bringing Wrightsville’s population to 1,476 in 1920. Once again, the city experienced a major population increase of 18 percent during the 1920s resulting in a total of 1,741 residents. Growth slowed the following decade to only 1.1 percent (1,760 persons) likely largely due to the effects of the Great Depression, while Wrightsville actually lost 0.6 percent of its population from 1940 to 1950, declining to 1,750 residents.

Since 1950, Wrightsville’s population increased for the next three decades. Double digit growth occurred in the 1950s (17.5 percent) and 1970s (19.9 percent) with a very modest increase of 2.4 percent in between during the 1960s. The 1980 U.S. Census population for Wrightsville was the highest ever in its history at 2,526. From 1980 through the end of the century and the 2010 Census, the City of Wrightsville lost population, ranging from a high of 7.7 percent in 1990 to a low of 1.3 percent by 2010. The official 2010 Census count for Wrightsville was 3,757. The 2020 Census reflects a decrease in population to 3,638 residents.

Vision

The local economy will be PROSPEROUS WITH HIGH QUALITY JOBS readily available for local graduates and others desiring employment. EXCELLENT INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING WATER, SEWER, BROAD-BAND INTERNET, AND TRANSIT SERVICE, will be provided throughout the community with excess capacity for commercial, industrial, and residential growth. In terms of education, the county school system will continue to provide OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND OPPORTUNITIES for its students, while the Adult Learning Center will offer a variety of classes through Georgia's technical college system which are responsive to local needs and demand. The City of Wrightsville will be a DESIRABLE address for all who seek an OUTSTANDING QUALITY OF LIFE in a HOSPITABLE small town setting where OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND.

Wrightsville will continue to be the primary location for economic, social, cultural, educational, and governmental activity in Johnson County Anchored by the fully restored, well-maintained historic Johnson County Courthouse, downtown Wrightsville will be a THRIVING MAIN STREET CITY with attractive rehabilitated historic structures housing retail businesses, restaurants, entertainment, professional offices, and services. In addition to the annual Fourth of July celebration, which was started in 1976, REGULAR SPECIAL EVENTS will be held downtown, such as movie night on the courthouse grounds, as part of ongoing efforts to promote and attract area residents and visitors to come to downtown Wrightsville. Downtown will also feature a Herschel Walker/University of Georgia museum to honor the Heisman Award winner and native son, as well as another legendary native associated with UGA, Loran Smith, a long-time sports journalist and sideline commentator. This attraction will help CAPTURE THE INTEREST OF UGA TRAVELERS and ENHANCE LOCAL TOURISM efforts. Development and marketing of the Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail through Wrightsville, a rails to trails multi-use trail linked with Dublin, and a local farmers' market will further contribute to local economic development/tourism As a bedroom community for Dublin, Wrightsville will continue to attract young professionals, families, and retirees seeking. for Dublin, Wrightsville will continue to attract young professionals, families, and retirees seeking SMALL TOWN CHARACTER and its associated QUALITY OF LIFE.

Issues:

Continuing downtown revitalization, Downtown Development Authority reactivation, Cedar Creek Industrial Park infrastructure, Wastewater system upgrades/expansion, Herschel Walker/UGA Museum development, Updated FEMA flood plain maps, Streetscape/transportation improvements, Firefighting equipment upgrades, Water system mapping, Fitness park development, City Hall renovations or new construction, Completion of TIA Band 3 projects, Farmers' Market, New City branding.

Opportunities:

National Register-listed Johnson County Courthouse, Historic Downtown Wrightsville, Historic Wrightsville Depot, Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration, Hometown of UGA legends, Herschel Walker and Loran Smith, Civil War Heritage Trail, Historic buildings, Walking Tour of Historic Wrightsville, "Friendliest Town in Georgia", Cedar Creek Industrial Park



Historic Residence, City of Wrightsville



Wrightsville Mural



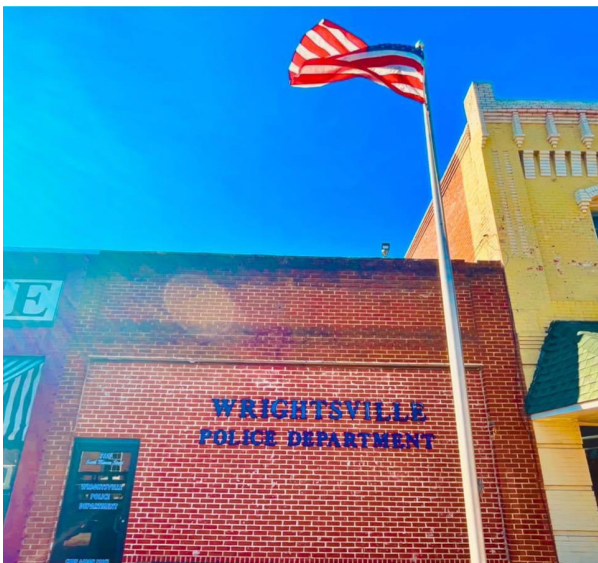
L Wrightsville Depot **R** Historic Residence, Wrightsville



L Downtown Wrightsville **R** Church, Wrightsville



L Historic Building, Kite **R** Residence, Kite



L Police Department, Wrightsville **R** Historic City Hall, Kite

Community Goals

Economic Development



1. Improve education levels
2. Address continuing education/job skills improvements
3. Nurture existing businesses/entrepreneurs
4. Support continued viability of Johnson State Prison
5. Address/improve infrastructure needs
6. Enhance broadband internet deployment/high speed
7. connectivity
8. Develop/improve local industrial/commercial sites/parks
9. Attract new businesses
10. Revitalize downtowns
11. Address growth management/community aesthetics
12. Develop/enhance tourism
13. Assure viability/support/enhance agricultural/forestry uses
14. Improve transportation access/quality
15. Promote quality of life/livability/location





U Park Scene
B Ocmulgee River



Natural & Cultural Resources

1. Address conservation/utilization of rivers
2. Protect significant natural resources of Johnson County
3. Maintain open spaces/agricultural/forestry uses
4. Seek compatible development/utilization
5. Utilize/preserve/adaptively use historic resources/heritage of Johnson County
6. Johnson County
7. Support Balls Ferry Historic State Park development/promotion





Housing



1. Remove blight/improve quality of existing housing stock
2. Address manufactured home quality/appearances
3. Guide/plan residential development
4. Improve subdivision/manufactured housing/land use regulation/code enforcement
5. Address growth management/community aesthetics
6. Market availability of housing to new residents

1. Address growth management/community aesthetics
2. Improve subdivision/manufactured housing/land use regulation/code enforcement
3. regulation/code enforcement
4. Guide/plan development
5. Maintain open spaces/agricultural/forestry uses
6. Protect significant natural resources of Johnson County
7. Encourage infill development
8. Develop/improve recreational/leisure facilities
9. Seek compatible development/utilization
10. Maintain sense of place/small town feel



Land Use



Community Facilities and Services



1. Address/improve infrastructure needs
2. Enhance broadband internet deployment/high speed connectivity
3. Improve transportation access/quality
4. Utilize infrastructure expansion/upgrades to guide growth
5. Maintain quality educational facilities/services
6. Maintain appropriate governmental facilities/services
7. Continue to upgrade public safety/fire service facilities/services
8. Continue to maintain/upgrade appropriate health care access/facilities/services within the community
9. Maintain appropriate solid waste management/recycling facilities/programs/initiatives, including beautification efforts
10. Develop/improve recreational/leisure facilities/programs
11. Encourage utilization/enhancement/promotion of cultural facilities/activities

Intergovernmental Coordination



1. Maintain/enhance local, regional, state cooperation
2. Seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in service delivery

Long Term Community Policies



Economic Development

1. The community will cooperate and coordinate with existing local, regional, and state agencies to improve all of Johnson County.
2. The community will work together to develop, support, and promote programs that will enhance opportunities for local graduates to both live and work in the community upon graduation.
3. The community will work together to improve education and skill levels to ensure a better-qualified workforce for existing and future employers.
4. The community will support increased local post-secondary education opportunities through nearby technical colleges, such as Oconee Fall Line in Dublin/Sandersville.
5. The community will collaboratively support the local school system and otherwise develop cooperative efforts to engage students to remain in school, thus continuing to reduce the local dropout rate and improving the literacy rate.
6. The community will support and promote programs for the retention of existing local industries and entrepreneurs in its support and quest of business/industry retention and additional job opportunities for local residents.
7. The community will continue to support the viability of Johnson State Prison and possible future expansions.
8. The community will actively recruit new industry and commercial/retail development compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing economy, and the natural environments of the community.
9. The community will seek to enhance its “camera ready” status to attract movie production companies to utilize local historic/cultural/natural resources for filming.
10. The community will work to develop the necessary infrastructure and industrial parks improvements to facilitate and accommodate desired commercial and industrial growth.
11. The community will continue to seek transportation improvements (highway, road/street, rail, transit, bicycle and pedestrian) to enhance and support economic development efforts.
12. The community will seek to enhance and grow tourism as an important component of the local economy through existing and new festivals, recreation and leisure facilities/activities, agri-tourism, nature-based tourism, museum development, and promotion of its Civil War and other historic/cultural sites for heritage tourism.
13. The community will work to enhance economic development marketing efforts, including development of a common brand for Johnson County and promotion of its proximity to retail markets, through an active Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, and other regional/state agencies.
14. The community will continue to seek retail trade/service sector and hospitality business development to further enhance the local economy and support increased tourism.

15. The community will cooperate to redevelop declining areas, upgrade commercial areas and substandard housing, and otherwise improve the appearance and aesthetics of the county and its municipalities.
16. The community will support and target downtown revitalization and investment efforts in Kite and Wrightsville to maintain them as important, functioning economic, social, and governmental centers, through an active Wrightsville Main Street Program, Downtown Development Authority, and other means as appropriate.
17. The community will preserve its unique landscapes and natural beauty and foster development compatible with its existing rural character and quality of life.
18. The community will maintain agriculture/forestry as viable economic uses through traditional and alternative enterprises, such as agri-tourism and nature-based tourism, including promotion and usage of the Johnson County Agri-Center and development of a local farmers' market.
19. The community will proactively manage and guide its future growth and development through community investment and appropriate regulation.
20. The community will work cooperatively to promote use of GA 15 and its four-laning.
21. The community will work to attract a diverse mix of jobs appropriate to the educational/skills levels of the local workforce.
22. The community will maintain adequate water/sewer service provision and pursue facility/service upgrades and expansion as needed.
23. The community will seek improvements to Internet access/service and facilities supportive of state-of-the-art communications, fiber-optics, and broadband technology.
24. The community will support development of a local leadership program to cultivate civic involvement and commitment.
25. The community will seek to attract new residents and retirees through promotion of its climate, quality of life, location, and other assets as a bedroom community to nearby larger growth areas.



Natural and Cultural Resources

1. The community will seek and promote development that is respectful of, compatible with, and maintains and supports the existing rural character, open spaces, and landscapes of Johnson County.
2. The community will seek to conserve and protect the Oconee, Ohoopie, and Little Ohoopie rivers, the county's significant groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, floodplains, other important natural resources, and the open spaces and landscapes of the county.
3. The community will continue to support and develop possible linkages with Balls Ferry Historic State Park in adjacent Wilkinson County.
4. The community will seek to conserve and protect the Oconee River Landing passive park and will work to develop and promote additional outdoor recreation or nature venues as needed.

5. The community will capitalize on its economic opportunities associated with its open spaces and natural and cultural resources, and will seek to promote, develop, and cultivate additional compatible uses of these resources.
6. The community will maintain, utilize, promote and preserve its heritage, and will seek to encourage public and private adaptive use/reuse of its historic buildings, historic districts, and landmark structures.
7. The community will continue to maintain the historic architectural integrity of the National Register-listed Johnson County Courthouse.
8. The community will seek to develop/enhance museums to capitalize on its heritage and attract tourism, such as a UGA Museum, a train exhibit/museum at the Wrightsville and Tennille Depot, and an improved Kite Museum.
9. The community will continue to utilize the Wrightsville and Tennille Depot for general community activities and as the center of train/railroad tourism/events.
10. The community will work to promote its Civil War and other historic/cultural/natural sites, including its presence on the Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail, through development of bike and driving tours with brochure/map and interpretive markers and other means.
11. The community will proactively manage and guide its growth and development and protect and conserve its important natural and cultural resources through community investment and appropriate regulation.
12. The community will work to improve its appearance and aesthetics through code enforcement and other means.
13. The community will seek development compatible with its existing rural/agricultural character and quality of life, including agri-businesses, agri-tourism, nature-based tourism, and other efforts supportive of agriculture/forestry.



Housing

1. The community will work toward both improving the quality of existing housing and promoting quality new development, including manufactured homes.
2. The community will work to market available existing and new housing throughout the region to attract new residents, including young professionals and retirees, seeking small town/rural character and quality of life.
3. The community will address substandard housing and concentrations of blight, including manufactured housing developments, and will cooperatively upgrade their quality and appearance through rehabilitation, removal, code enforcement and regulation.

4. The community will encourage the use of state and federal programs to improve availability of affordable/quality housing, and to encourage homeownership.
5. The community will provide guidance to, and for location of, compatible housing development through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation.
6. The community will upgrade its appearance and the quality of its housing developments through the adoption and use of updated coordinated land use/manufactured housing regulations, and code enforcement.
7. The community will cooperate to implement and enforce the need for updated, coordinated, and comprehensive land use planning, manufactured housing/land use regulations, and code enforcement county-wide.
8. The community will explore the feasibility of public housing development in Kite, possibly with Kite working in conjunction with the Wrightsville Housing Authority.
9. The community will support, through regulation and otherwise, development of upper story space in downtown Wrightsville for offices, loft apartments, or other uses, as appropriate.



Land Use

1. The community will plan, manage, and guide its future growth and development, and encourage growth compatible with its existing character.
2. The community will cooperate to implement and enforce the need for updated coordinated and comprehensive land use planning, manufactured housing/land use regulations, and code enforcement county-wide.
3. The community will encourage growth which preserves and protects its rural character and quality of life.
4. The community will encourage growth that preserves and maintains forestry and agriculture as viable, functioning land uses.
5. The community will enhance existing recreation facilities and develop new facilities/uses, which will complement/promote tourism and the community's character.
6. The community will work to encourage appropriate infill development through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation.
7. The community will seek to maintain and improve its appearance and aesthetics through landscaping/beautification efforts, code enforcement, and other means.
8. The community will seek and promote development that is compatible with existing infrastructure location to guide future growth.



Community Facilities and Services

1. The community will provide and maintain adequate government facilities/services and strive to promote healthy/transparent citizen/governmental relations.
2. The community will maintain, upgrade, and expand its existing infrastructure and services to enhance the quality of life, and to attract desired, compatible growth and development.
3. The community will guide growth and development to areas of existing infrastructure and will plan and develop expansions to help bring about desired patterns of growth.
4. The community will maintain adequate water/sewer service provision and pursue development of additional facilities and areas of service as needed.
5. The community will pursue, develop, and promote transportation improvements of all types (highway, roads/streets, rail, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) that are compatible with, and supportive of, the community's desired economic development, future growth, and quality of life.
6. The community will seek to continue to enhance educational and technological opportunities by continuing to maintain and upgrade its educational facilities and programs.
7. The community will maintain/enhance the county's solid waste/recycling facilities, programs, and initiatives, in conjunction with other efforts to improve community appearance.
8. The community will work together to maintain and upgrade its health care facilities and services conducive to economic development and a high quality of life.
9. The community will encourage and support the maintenance, enhancement, and promotion of existing cultural facilities and opportunities, and will further develop cultural facilities, museums, and assets to pursue and promote additional venues/activities.
10. The community will continue to improve public safety, fire, and emergency medical services and facilities to improve quality of service and better coordinate in times of emergency and disasters, including establishment of E-911 service.
11. The community will explore the feasibility of an EMS substation in Kite.
12. The community will enhance and promote existing parks and establish new parks/recreational facilities and activities to serve existing and future populations and to further cultivate/support tourism.
13. The community will seek and support improvements to Internet access/service and facilities supportive of state-of-the-art communications, fiber-optics, and broadband technology.



Intergovernmental Coordination

1. The community will continue to cooperate locally, regionally and on the state level to improve, develop, and plan for the desired future of Johnson County.
2. The community will continue to seek ways to cooperate and coordinate efforts in the delivery of services and will investigate the possibility of shared and consolidated where appropriate and feasible.
3. The community will cooperate in coordinated land use planning and regulation and code enforcement to manage and guide its future growth and development.

Needs & Opportunities



The Needs and Opportunities Element is required of all local governments by the Minimum Standards and Procedures. The community needs are those weaknesses or liabilities which have to be addressed, changed, or mitigated to help achieve the desired community future. The community opportunities are strengths and assets which can be utilized as starting points and foundations to easily accentuate or capitalize on to move the community forward on its desired future path.

The Needs and Opportunities Element generally answers the planning question, “**Where are we currently?**” The answers can provide the compass point guidance necessary to begin and advance along the improvement journey. The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan identifies each community goal as an issue for improvement, and further identifies local needs and opportunities, as appropriate.



Economic Development

Opportunities:

1. Increasing local high school graduation rate (ED, CFS)
2. Existing businesses/industries, such as Electro-Mech Scoreboard Company, SLT Services, McAfee Packing, and others (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
3. Local employment at Johnson State Prison (ED, CFS, IC)
4. Low unemployment/strong local workforce (ED, IC)
5. Influx of involved, civic-minded young professionals (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
6. Good electric and gas infrastructure in place for growth/development (ED, CFS, IC)
7. Active functioning Downtown Wrightsville with streetscape improvements and rehabilitation opportunities (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
8. Wrightsville's Rural Zone designation
9. Active Main Street Program in Wrightsville
10. Active Development Authority

Needs:

1. Retention of local graduates (ED, HO, CFS)
2. Continuing education/job skills improvements (ED, CFS, IC)
3. Continuing support for the local school system and increasing its high school graduation rate/improving literacy rate (ED, CFS, IC)
4. Existing business/industry/entrepreneur support (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
5. Support continuing operation of Johnson State Prison in Johnson County, including any future expansions (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
6. New business/industry/jobs attraction/creation (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
7. Diverse mix of jobs to fit local workforce (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
8. Enhancement of "Camera ready" designation to attract movie production companies (ED, NCR, CFS, LU, IC)
9. Maintenance/extension/development of infrastructure necessary for desired growth (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
10. Development/enhancement/maintenance of needed infrastructure upgrades and GRAD certification for Wrightsville-Johnson and Cedar Creek industrial parks (ED, CFS, IC)
11. Additional local retail trade/service sector/hospitality business options (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
12. Complete establishment of local Revolving Loan Fund (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
13. Development of new marketing materials and branding for Johnson County Economic Development (ED, CFS, IC)
14. Development of local farmers' market (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
15. Proactive growth management of future compatible development through community
16. Development of local farmers' market (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
17. Promotion/development of greater compatible economic use/tourism of parks, rivers, other natural/cultural resources (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
18. Book series about Johnson County nonfiction/fiction
19. Promotion of available land for economic development/residential attraction (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
20. Nearest Hospital Swainsboro & Sandersville EMS transports to Dublin
21. Warehousing facilities
22. Gateway signage improvements in Kite and Wrightsville
23. Marketing needed for bypass around Wrightsville



Natural & Cultural Resources

Opportunities:

1. Existing agricultural/forestry uses, such as Battleground Plantation and Flat Rock Nursery (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
2. Proximity to Savannah port and Atlanta airport (ED, CFS, IC)
3. Nature-based, Agri-tourism, recreation, heritage, and other tourism venues, including the Oconee, Ohoopsee, and Little Ohoopsee rivers; Battleground Plantation cane grinding; Civil War sites along GA 57, Idlywild Drive Recreation Area/Camp Reed area; and nearby Balls Ferry State Park in Wilkinson County (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
4. Local cultural/historic resources, such as Johnson County Courthouse, Kite Museum, Grice House, Wrightsville Depot, and historic residential and downtown commercial areas in Kite and Wrightsville, and opportunities for increased heritage tourism (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
5. Development of local UGA Museum honoring native sons, Herschel Walker and Loran Smith (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
6. Presence on Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trail (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
7. Wrightsville Historic House brochure (ED, NCR, CFS)
8. Community's rural character/small town quality of life (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
9. Significant natural resources, including Oconee, Ohoopsee, and Little Ohoopsee rivers and their corridors, and others (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
10. Recreation resources, such as Oconee River Landing passive park and nearby Balls Ferry State Park in Wilkinson County (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
11. Ample undeveloped land (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
12. Continued use of historic Johnson County

Courthouse (NCR, CFS)

13. Renovated Cook Building for Courthouse Annex (CFS, IC)
14. Existing cultural facilities/services (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
15. Johnson County Historical Society (NCR, IC)
16. Existing cultural facilities/services (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)

Needs:

17. Development of bike path along SR 57 linking Confederate historic sites and Balls Ferry State Park (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
18. Possible Rails to Trails multi-use trail linking Wrightsville with Dublin (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
19. Local/regional tourism enhancement/growth through events, such as Wrightsville's 4th of July celebration; recreation/leisure activities; museum development/enhancement; heritage tourism involving Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail, Civil War sites and others; Agri-tourism; nature based tourism; and other means (ED, NCR)
20. Community appearance improvements/redevelopment of declining areas/address dilapidated properties (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
21. Appearance/aesthetics improvements through landscaping, beautification efforts, codes enforcement, and other means (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
22. Downtown Kite - Active, well-funded Wrightsville Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
23. Compatible development supportive of community's unique landscapes; natural and cultural resources; open spaces; and rural character/quality of life (ED, NCR, LU, CFS)

(Neutral and Cultural Resources "Needs" Continued)

24. Agricultural/forestry land uses (traditional and alternative, such as agri- and nature-based tourism) economic viability support and increased marketing (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
25. Promotion/increased usage of Johnson County Agri-Center (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
26. Proactive growth management of future compatible development through community Continuing protection of Johnson County's significant natural and cultural resources (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
27. Continued conservation of Oconee River Landing passive park/development and promotion of additional outdoor recreation/nature venues (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
28. Oconee River Landing upgrades, including public access road improvements (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
29. Continued support/maintenance of Kite Museum (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
30. Development of UGA Museum honoring native sons, Herschel Walker and Loran Smith (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
31. Creation of train exhibit/museum at Wrightsville Depot (ED, NCR, IC)
32. Promotion of Civil War and other historic/cultural/natural sites with bike/driving tours, brochure/map, and interpretive markers, including recognition of Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail through Johnson County (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
33. Further development of Kite to maintain it as a vibrant/growing small town (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
34. Creation of train exhibit/museum at Wrightsville Depot (ED, NCR, IC)
35. Promotion of Civil War and other historic/cultural/natural sites with bike/driving tours, brochure/map, and interpretive markers, including recognition of Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail through Johnson County (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)



Housing

Opportunities:

1. Lower property values/lower property taxes (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
2. Lower cost of living and housing costs (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
3. Existing loft apartment in Wrightsville (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
4. Planned private 25 lot development to attract retirees (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
5. Availability of CDBG/other public/private programs to rehabilitate low- and moderate-income housing (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
7. Attraction of new residents/retirees through quality of life and bedroom community promotion (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
8. Existing and new housing quality/appearance improvements through rehabilitation, removal, code enforcement, and regulation (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
9. Marketing of available existing and new housing to attract new residents, such as returning natives and retirees (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
10. Substandard housing/concentrations of blight elimination, including rundown manufactured housing developments (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
11. State/federal housing programs utilization (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
12. More in city code enforcement

Needs:

6. Housing Authority to provide broadband for all residents.

(Housing "Needs" Continued)

13. Continued pursuit of CDBG/CHIP grants and others to rehabilitate substandard housing in Kite (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
14. Utilization of existing and new infrastructure location/planning/regulation to guide desired/compatible residential growth/development supportive of community's vision/rural character (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
15. Utilization of existing and new infrastructure location/planning/regulation to guide desired/compatible residential growth/development supportive of community's vision/rural character (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
16. Updated, coordinated countywide land use planning/subdivision/manufactured housing regulations/increased code enforcement/nuisance ordinances/growth management implementation and enforcement to improve appearance/quality of housing developments (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
17. Possible development of public housing in Kite in conjunction with Wrightsville Housing Authority (ED, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
18. Development of upper story space in downtown Wrightsville (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
19. Education of lower income residents to own/rent better quality housing (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
20. Revisions to County's manufactured home ordinance (HO, LU, CFS, IC)
21. Housing Authority, Pine Village, & Section 8 Housing.
22. Lack of ownership from community members
23. Improvement/ cleanup of blighted areas
24. Further development of Kite to maintain it as a vibrant/growing small town (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)



Land Use

Opportunities:

1. Wrightsville-Johnson and Cedar Creek industrial parks with available land/space (ED, CFS, IC)
2. Vacant spec building (ED, CFS, IC)
3. Existing zoning in Wrightsville (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
4. Land available for sale (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)

Needs:

5. Promotion of GA 15 usage and four-laning (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
6. Appearance/aesthetics improvements through landscaping, beautification efforts, codes enforcement, and other means (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
7. Cooperative implementation and enforcement of updated/coordinated/comprehensive land use planning, manufactured housing/land use regulations, and code enforcement county-wide (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
8. Encouragement of appropriate infill and intense development/land uses through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
9. Development compatible with existing infrastructure location to guide future growth (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
10. Redevelopment/enhancement of existing commercial areas and maintenance of Wrightsville as hub of economic/social/governmental activity in Johnson County (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)



Community Facilities and Services

Opportunities:

1. Excellent local schools, including facilities, technology, and dual enrollment opportunities (ED, CFS, IC)
2. Johnson County Agri-Center (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
3. Local medical facilities, including school-based health care clinic (ED, CFS, IC)
4. Johnson County Health Department (CFS, IC)
5. Local hospice (CFS, IC)
6. Johnson County Senior Center (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
7. Johnson County Recreation Park improvements (ED, CFS, IC)
8. Strong local public safety/enforcement and low crime rate (CFS, IC)
9. Johnson County Library (ED, CFS, IC)
10. Johnson County Historical Society (NCR, IC)
11. Existing cultural facilities/services (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
12. Housing Authority to add broadband for all residents
13. Community Food Distribution through Mount Olive Church and Golden Harvest

Needs:

14. Satisfy Wrightsville's EPD consent order concerning City's sewer system/wastewater treatment plant (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
15. Maintain/upgrade/expand water/sewer service provision as needed (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
16. Continued improvements/promotion of all kinds of transportation access/quality, including highway, rail, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal/Complete Streets (ED, CFS, IC)
17. Continuing street and road improvements, including paving and resurfacing projects utilizing TIA and other funding (ED, CFS, IC)
18. Completion of TIA Band 3 projects (ED, CFS, IC)

19. Local taxi/bus service or transit program (CFS, IC)
20. Increased development of local bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure Traffic safety signage, such as reminders to "slow down, kids playing" (CFS, IC)
21. Streetscape improvements/curb, gutter, and sidewalk expansion in Kite and Wrightsville (ED, CFS, IC)
22. e (ED, CFS, IC)
23. Gateway signage improvements at Kite city limits along SR 57 and 171 (U.S. 221) an in the City of Wrightsville (ED, CFS, IC)
24. Safety enhancements, such as rumble strips, at U.S. 221/GA 171 and GA Highway 57 intersection in Kite
25. Completion of drainage improvements in Kite in the Mixon, Church, Cemetery, Ohoopee, and Railroad streets and Claxton Boulevard areas (CFS, IC)
26. Completion of street sign replacements in Wrightsville (ED, CFS, IC)
27. Improvements to internet/broadband access/service/facilities supportive of state-of-the art technology (ED, CFS, IC)
28. Development of local leadership program (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
29. Historic resources preservation/reuse/promotion, such as former Masonic Lodge as Kite Museum, Wrightsville Depot for community events, and rehabilitation of downtown commercial structures (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
30. Continued utilization of Wrightsville Depot for community events/railroad tourism (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
31. Enhancement of existing recreation/leisure facilities and development of new facilities/programs as needed to complement community's character and promote tourism (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)

(Community Facilities and Services "Needs" Continued)

32. Completion of Johnson County Senior Center renovations (ED, CFS, IC)
33. Wrightsville City Hall renovations or new facility construction (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
34. Water system upgrades in Kite (CFS, IC)
35. Wrightsville water system mapping (CFS, IC)
36. Expansion of Wrightsville's wastewater treatment infrastructure, lift stations, and treatment capacity (ED, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
37. Resurfacing of Flanders, Lynn, Jan, Helen, and Lee streets and Lakeview Drive in Wrightsville (CFS, IC)
38. Animal control program (CFS, IC)
39. Acquisition of mosquito control chemical spraying truck to initiate service in Kite (CFS)
40. Continued maintenance/enhancement to retain excellent quality local educational facilities/services/technology (ED, CFS, IC)
41. Maintenance/upgrades to County's solid waste/recycling facilities and programs in conjunction with community appearance improvement efforts (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
42. Continued maintenance/upgrades, as needed of local healthcare facilities/services (ED, CFS, IC)
43. Continued support/promotion/maintenance/enhancement of existing cultural facilities/programs/events and development of additional ones (NCR, CFS, IC) Continued support for local Johnson County Public Library through facility, equipment, staffing, program, and other improvements/expansions, as needed (ED, CFS)
44. Development of satellite children's library in Kite (CFS, IC)
45. Establishment of E-911 service (CFS, IC)
46. Parks/recreation facilities/activities maintenance/improvements/promotion/new development (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
47. Walking track resurfacing at Johnson County Recreation Complex (CFS, IC)
48. Construction of one (1) T-ball field and development of multi-sport field (soccer and baseball) at County Recreation Complex (CFS, IC)
49. Upgrades to walking track in Kite (CFS, IC)
50. Development of a Herschel Walker Fitness Park (LU, CFS, IC)
51. Development of summer recreation opportunities, including youth league sports (CFS, IC)
52. Continued improvements to local public safety services, equipment, and facilities, as needed (CFS, IC)
53. Acquisition of equipment needed to use Kite Community Center as disaster relief shelter (CFS, IC)
54. Need for Senior Housing & Assisted Living for Aging Populations.
55. Transition to manned dumpsites
56. Replace culverts in county as needed
57. Increase of community events
58. Acquisition of mosquito control chemical spraying truck to initiate service in Kite (CFS)
59. Continued maintenance/enhancement to retain excellent quality local educational facilities/services/technology (ED, CFS, IC)
60. Maintenance/upgrades to County's solid waste/recycling facilities and programs in conjunction with community appearance improvement efforts (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
61. Continued maintenance/upgrades, as needed of local healthcare facilities/services (ED, CFS, IC)
62. Continued support/promotion/maintenance/enhancement of existing cultural facilities/programs/events and development of additional ones (NCR, CFS, IC)
63. Continued support for local Johnson County Public Library through facility, equipment, staffing, program, and other improvements/expansions, as needed (ED, CFS)

(Community Facilities and Services "Needs" Continued)

64. Development of satellite children's library in Kite (CFS, IC)
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72. Continued improvements to local public safety services, equipment, and facilities, as needed (CFS, IC)
73. Acquisition of equipment needed to use Kite Community Center as disaster relief shelter (CFS, IC)
74. Need for Senior Housing & Assisted Living for Aging Populations.
75. Transition to manned dumpsites
76. Increase of community events



Intergovernmental Coordination

Needs:

10. Continuing existing local, regional, and state agency cooperation/coordination (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
11. Wrightsville-Johnson and Cedar Creek industrial parks with available land/space (ED, CFS, IC)
12. Continued utilization/enhancement/support of active Wrightsville-Johnson County Chamber of Commerce, the Johnson County Development Authority, and others (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
13. Creation of blight tax in Wrightsville to encourage blight removal (ED, NCR, HO LU, CFS, IC)
14. Enforcement of model ordinance based on Georgia DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria for significant wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and protected river corridors (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
15. Updated FEMA floodplain maps for City of Wrightsville (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
16. Continued stewardship and local government use of National Register-listed historic Johnson County Courthouse, including exterior and roof rehabilitation (ED, NCR, CFS)
17. Continued maintenance and provision of adequate local governmental facilities/services, including healthy/transparent citizen/governmental relations and improved communication (ED, CFS, IC)
18. Johnson County Book of Ordinances update (CFS, IC)

(Intergovernmental Coordination "Needs" Continued)

19. Wrightsville City Hall renovations or new facility construction (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
20. Feasibility study of providing EMS substation in Kite (CFS, IC)
21. Purchase of trucks, suits, equipment, and other necessities for Johnson County and city fire departments (CFS, IC)
22. Purchase of two (2) pursuit vehicles/equipment for Johnson County Sheriff's Department (CFS, IC)
23. Feasibility study of establishing municipal police department in Kite (CFS, IC)
24. Obtain new pursuit vehicle and additional equipment for Wrightsville Police Department annually (CFS, IC)
25. Purchase of new computer software system for Wrightsville Police Department (CFS, IC)
26. Continued efforts to seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in delivery of services (ED, CFS, IC)
27. Continued efforts to seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in delivery of services (ED,WaCFS,IC)
28. Continued utilization/enhancement/support of active Wrightsville-Johnson County Chamber of Commerce, the Johnson County Development Authority, and others (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
29. Creation of blight tax in Wrightsville to encourage blight removal (ED, NCR, HO LU, CFS, IC)
30. Enforcement of model ordinance based on Georgia DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria for significant wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and protected river corridors (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
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34. Johnson County Book of Ordinances update (CFS, IC)
35. Wrightsville City Hall renovations or new facility construction (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
36. Feasibility study of providing EMS substation in Kite (CFS, IC)
37. Purchase of trucks, suits, equipment, and other necessities for Johnson County and city fire departments (CFS, IC)
38. Acquisition of two (2) pumper trucks for County fire department (CFS, IC)
39. Acquisition of two (2) ambulances/equipment for Johnson County EMS (CFS, IC)
40. Purchase of two (2) pursuit vehicles/equipment for Johnson County Sheriff's Department (CFS, IC)
41. Feasibility study of establishing municipal police department in Kite (CFS, IC)
42. Obtain new pursuit vehicle and additional equipment for Wrightsville Police Department annually (CFS, IC)
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Broadband Services



The Broadband Services Element is a descriptive snapshot of the areas of the community served by broadband technology. The deployment of broadband technologies has become a major selling point for those communities which offer high speed connectivity, and conversely, a detriment to economic development for those areas lacking the infrastructure. The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes this element to outline a strategy for attracting an increased level of broadband deployment by the private sector and to meet the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

Over the last couple of decades, the internet has evolved into an essential part of our everyday life. Research, social media, banking, business operations, communication, and many other enabling tasks supported by the internet, have elevated this resource into one of the most important infrastructures in the world today. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the need for faster and more reliable internet services became a critical asset to everyday life around

the world. The pandemic resulted in much of the population remaining at home and conducting business remotely. Schools, work, communications, religion services, and many others all relied heavily on the internet to function. As a result, the need for broadband services was recognized as a priority for the country. Johnson County recognizes the importance of broadband and will continue to seek ways to improve its current position. Johnson County has recently adopted an ordinance for a broadband ready community. This together with an updated comprehensive plan, containing the broadband element, will enable the County to apply for the Broadband Ready Status awarded by DCA.

Broadband is defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a minimum of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. It should be noted that the broadband definition has changed twice since its inception in 1996 due to technological advancements. Broadband delivery methods include, but are not limited to, digital subscriber lines, cable modems, fiber, wireless, broadband over power lines, and satellites. Nationally, 99.9 percent of the population have access to either fixed terrestrial service at 25 Mbps/3 Mbps or mobile LTE at 10 Mbps/3 Mbps. This percentage drops to 99.7% in rural areas. In the FCC's 2021 Broadband Deployment Report, it was estimated that 30.3 percent



Downtown Wrightsville



of the population in Johnson County have access to fixed broadband technology.

Fiber Optic service will soon be provided throughout Johnson County. Washington EMC (WEMC) will partner with Conexon Connect, the internet services provider (ISP) arm of full-service rural fiber-optic broadband provider. Their plan is to design and build a 3,000-mile fiber network in order to provide high-speed internet access to all 12,200 WEMC members within the next three years. Currently Pineland Telephone Cooperative offers fiber optic internet to the City of Kite.



Other avenues of internet service technologies available in the community are either satellite or wireless 4G LTE service. Satellite service speeds are generally slower download speeds compared to wired infrastructure and are prone to weather related outages. Wireless 4G LTE technology is widely available throughout the county and is used by smartphones and tablets to download content reliably, although speed is determined by proximity to a communications tower and the speed at which the tower is capable. Johnson County has a reported 4G LTE coverage area over the entire county. This avenue of service is generally sufficient for a homeowner or cell service subscriber; service reliability can be an issue with this technology which usually doesn't reach the threshold of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed as defined earlier as broadband service. 5G LTE is now available with most carriers and is expected to phase out 4G within the next ten years. The 5G LTE allows faster download and uploads for mobile users. The average speed is 300 Mbps.

Certainly, an industry desiring an improved communications network will seek a fixed connection service provider and will need at minimum 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds. According to data provided by the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and the FCC, the infrastructure for broadband services is in portions of Johnson County, but fixed broadband technology does not provide adequate speed to term service in the county "Broadband." Wireless 4G LTE in the county meets minimum speeds of wireless broadband; however, it is inadequate for industry seeking to locate in the county.

Some of the carriers that provide broadband services to Johnson County are Verizon 4G and 5G mobile which covers much of the county, while AT&T covers smaller portions. Pineland currently provides fiber optic to the City of Kite. As mentioned earlier Washington EMC will be providing fiber optic in the near future. Xfinity Cable service can provide up to 1200Mbps, while Hughes-Net and Viasat can reach the minimum 25 Mbps.

The need for broadband service in Johnson County is critical as it is determined to be moderately underserved by fixed broadband technology. To cover gaps in broadband access across the nation, including areas where there is no service or slow service, the federal government announced in 2023, it will distribute \$40 billion across the country. Georgia will be allocated \$1.3 billion of these funds to help rural areas like Johnson County get closer to their goal of becoming Broadband Ready. Johnson County, and the cities of Wrightsville and Kite desire to be fully served by broadband capability through broadband deployment with service areas reaching the minimum speeds to be considered "Broadband Service."

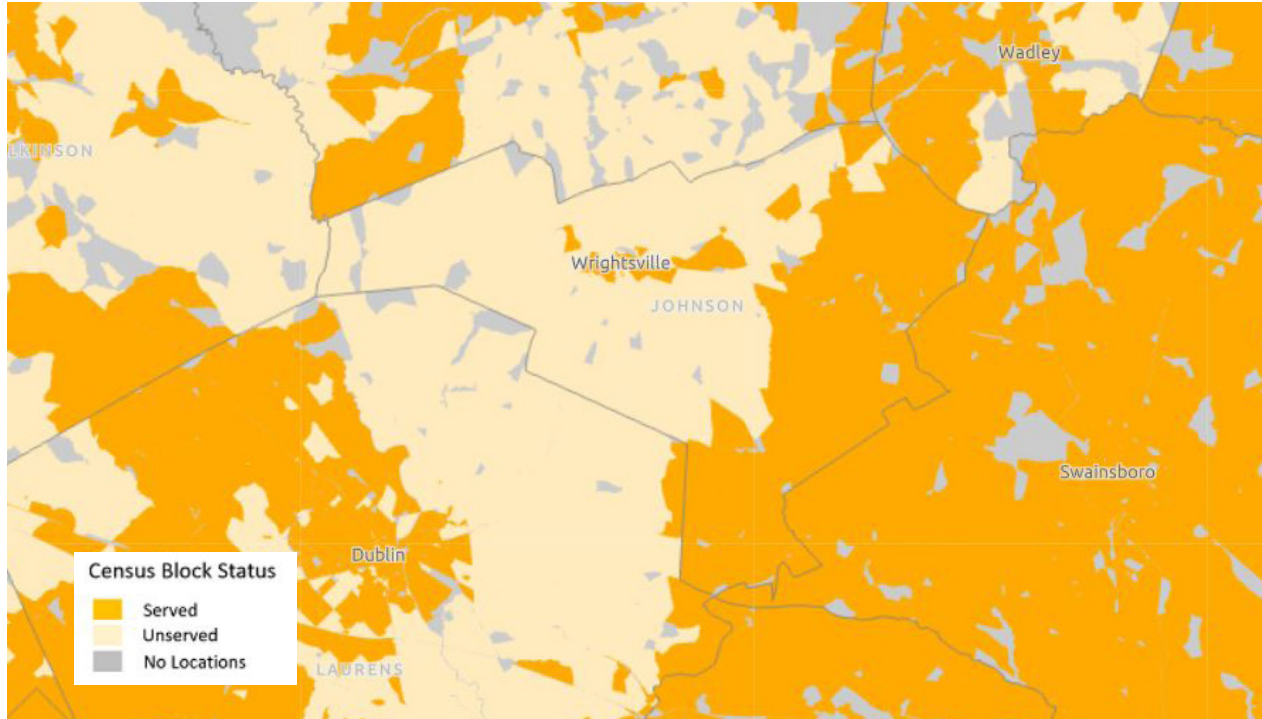


Figure: Broadband Availability within Johnson County

Source: Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative 2023; <https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps/gbdi-unserved-county>

The Johnson County community has chosen a multi-faceted approach and strategy to improve the availability of broadband and broadband deployment. The following items are actions steps the community will take to increase economic, educational, and social opportunities for citizens and businesses through the deployment of universal broadband and other communications technologies.

1. Develop and maintain an inventory of Community Anchor Institutions (schools, library, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, and higher education facilities) within the community to determine areas of greatest broadband need.
2. Develop or otherwise enact a model ordinance which determines a contact person for any broadband projects within the community, outlines a streamlined permit process for broadband projects, keeps broadband project permit fees reasonable, and ensures equal treatment for applicants applying for use of jurisdictional rights-of-way.
3. Apply to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for certification as a “Broadband Ready Community” or similar certification by the State of Georgia.
4. Partner with state agencies (Georgia Technology Authority, Department of Community Affairs, and Department of Economic Development) and area local governments to promote broadband deployment in the community, region, and state.
5. Identify broadband deployment projects eligible for OneGeorgia Authority funding and/or other state and federal grant or loan opportunities.

Economic Development



Economic prosperity is a key to community improvement. A community's comprehensive plan seeks at its core to make the community a better place to live, work, and recreate. To improve quality of life, there is a need for income and an increased tax base to help enhance the ability to afford needed and desired improvements, and afford better housing and a higher standard of living. Commerce and economic development have a major influence on overall population growth and development. The relationship is quite evident in Johnson County. Johnson County's heyday came from entrepreneurship and railroad establishment, resulting also in a population boom. The advent of the automobile, the accompanying decline of the railroads, the growth of larger retail markets, the Great Depression and mechanization of agriculture all took their toll on Johnson County and caused a long period of decline. Now Johnson County's location near larger communities with easy highway access, its calming and attractive landscape, open spaces, natural and historic resources, and warm, welcoming small-town charm attracts new residents. Jobs in the Johnson State Prison, local manufacturing, other businesses, and services have assisted in economic stabilization.

Age/Demographics.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Johnson County was 9,242 as of July 2022. For perspective, this makes Johnson 127th out of Georgia’s 159 counties. The most recent change available from the Census showed a 50 person increase over the July 2020 to 2022 period, which is a very small change, but appears very stable relatively when compared to neighboring counties. In fact, of its six neighboring counties, four of Johnson County’s neighbors saw decreases in their populations over the same period. Laurens County gained 79 people over the same two year period, while Emanuel County added 160 people from July 2020 to 2022. The median age for Johnson County in 2022 was 40.5 years old, compared to a national median age of 38.9, and a state median age of 37.2 years for Georgia. However, the population’s largest share, by age group, was the 25-34 age group, followed by the 35-44 year old age group. See figure 1. Instinctively, projections for 2027 from the third party firm Esri show the largest share of population by age will be the 35-44 year old age group, however, the older age groups in the county will be a larger portion of the population, with the 65-74 year old age group, 75-84 age group, and 85+ group all will increase in share of the population.

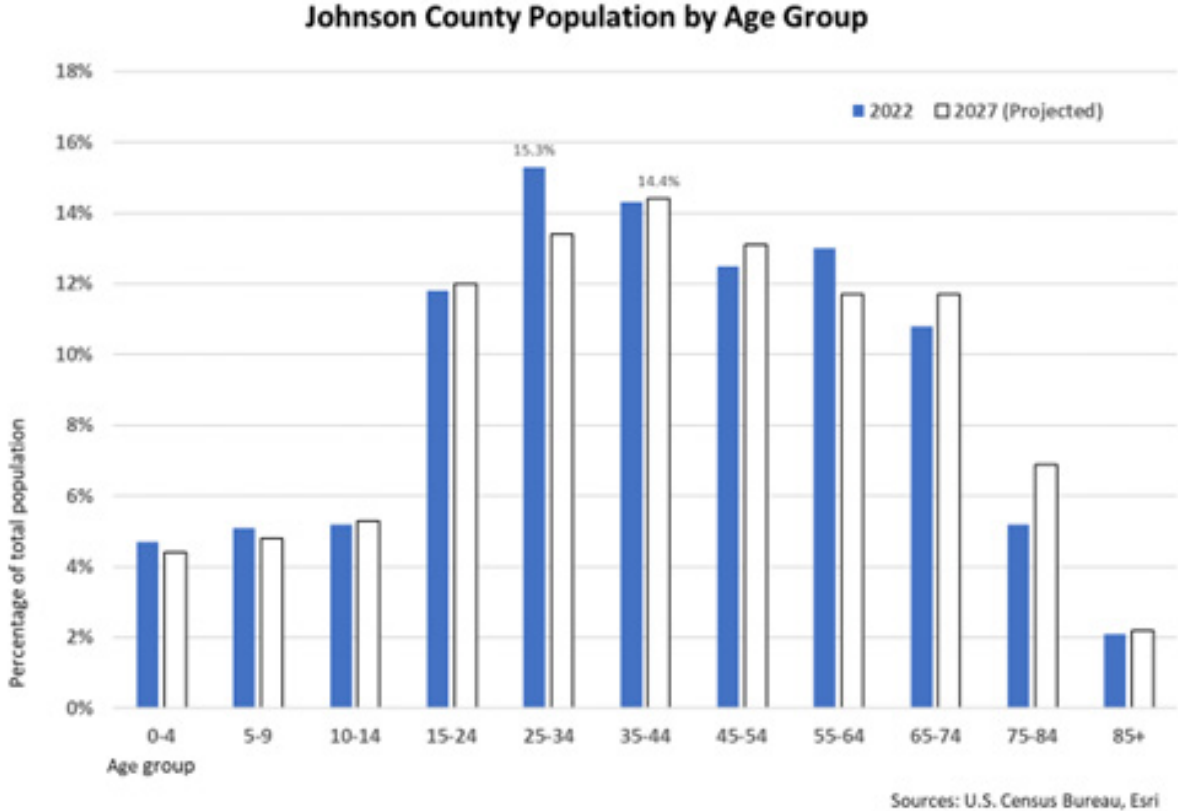


Figure 1. Johnson County Population by Age Group

Johnson County Labor Market According to the Georgia Department of Labor, major employers for Johnson County, excluding government, include the following, listed alphabetically:

1. Community Health Care Systems, Inc.
2. Electro-Mech Scoreboard Company
3. Scott Health and Rehabilitation
4. Southern Diversified Services, LLC
5. Wellpath, LLC,
6. Wrightsville Manor Health and Rehabilitation

Johnson County’s unemployment rate is the same as the State of Georgia’s at the time of this report (3.3%). This 3.3% figure for Johnson County comes from 3,838 persons being employed and 130 persons receiving unemployment benefits at the time of this report. Though this is one month’s data and therefore one bullet point on a graph, the unemployment rate for Johnson County has been fairly comparable with the overall State of Georgia’s since about 2020; both have been notably low.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, private sector firms made up about 64 percent of total employment in Johnson County compared to roughly 75 percent in the Johnson County Area. The increased concentration of government employment within Johnson County largely comes from its school system. Employment by industry for Johnson County shows a substantial portion of the labor force (about half) come from both services (32.8 percent) and retail trade (13.3). See Figure 2.

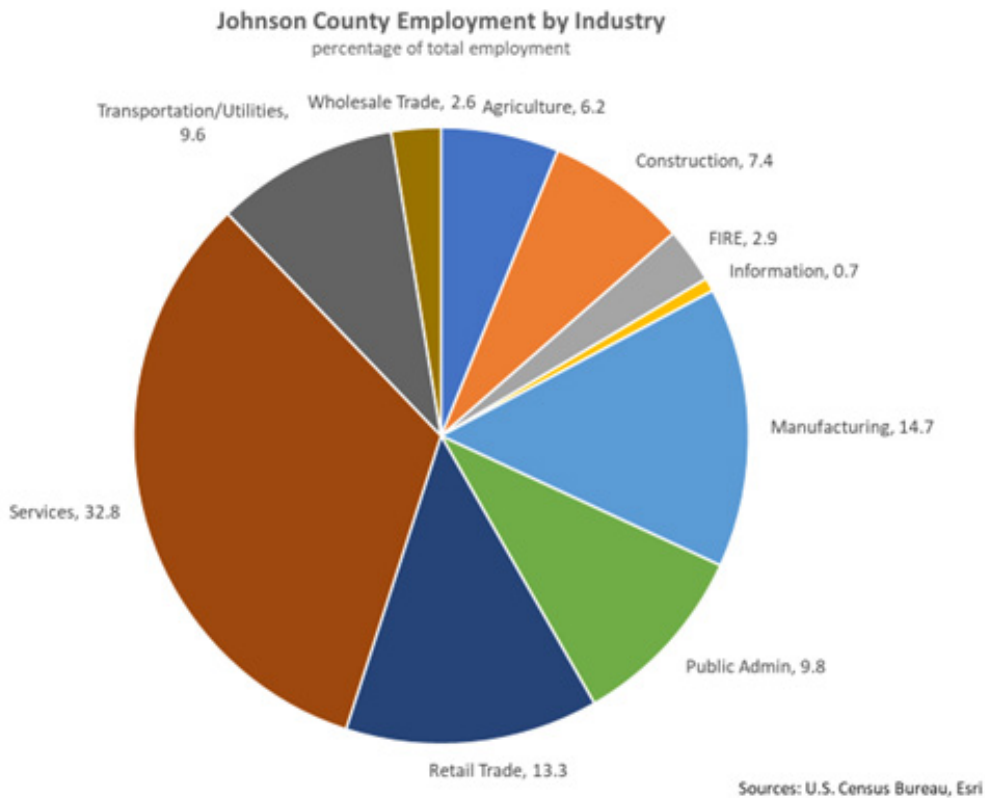
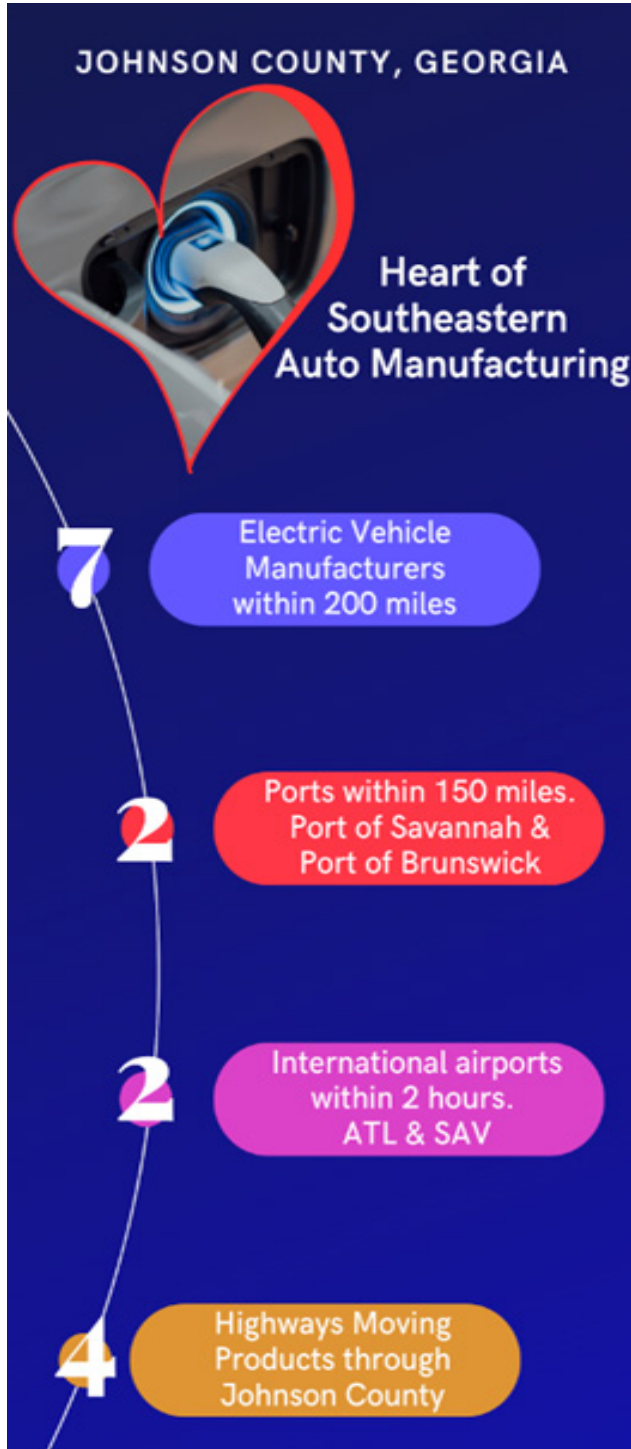


Figure 2: Johnson County Employment by Industry

Economic Development Priorities

The Johnson County community has chosen a multi-faceted approach and strategy to improve its economic status and further economic development in the county. The following goals and objectives were chosen to address identified economic development issues in Johnson County.



Source: Johnson County Development Authority, developjoco.com

Per the Develop JoCo Website, **the Community will seek to manipulate its location central to all four of Georgia's electric vehicle manufacturers** and maximize the effects of statewide agencies re-shifting priorities toward electronic vehicle production.

The Community will **market available tax incentives** to attract its target list of industries; these tax incentives include Rural Zone Tax Credits, Job Tax Credits, Quality Job Tax Credits, Exemptions for Manufacturers, and Exemptions for Distribution Centers. Aside from electric vehicle parts and supply logistics and manufacturing, these target industries for Johnson County include: transportation and logistics, food processing, manufacturing, and forestry.

The Community will align itself closely with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, **marketing its designations by Site Selection and Area Development Magazines** as the **#1 state in which to do business for 8 consecutive years by both publications.**

Median household income is \$48,174, about 77% that of Georgia (\$61,980). An improved poverty rate for Bleckley County citizens, (18%), was reported in 2019. This remains higher compared to 15.3% in Georgia as a whole. High poverty has persisted for a number of decades and a measurable improvement is much celebrated. There are needs for more jobs. Unemployment in the county at an annual average of 6.5% in 2020 is equal to that the state, but is higher than surrounding counties in the Bleckley Labor Market. Only about 42 percent of county workers do work inside Bleckley County, although another almost 16 percent work in Houston County (home of Robins Air Force Base) and nearly 9 percent in neighboring Dodge County. Job skills of local residents remain somewhat of a concern, although about 8.2% of local residents are without a high school diploma, much less than the state average of 15%. Transfer payments represent almost 30% of total personal income compared to about 17% statewide. On the positive side, there is more home ownership in the county (74.3%) than Georgia (63.3%), and housing costs are cheaper as well. The median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2015-2019, was \$102,300 in Bleckley County as compared to \$176,000 in Georgia, and median gross rents, 2015-2019, were \$620 in the County as compared to \$1,006 in Georgia. Compared to the rest of the country, Cochran-Bleckley County's cost of living is 18.2% lower than the U.S. average.

There are opportunities and optimism for future economic development in Bleckley County as well. Employment within the county does remain concentrated within the government and services sectors, and agriculture also provides relative stability as well. There remain many unrealized opportunities related to the abundant fields and forests, outstanding natural resources of the county, and the educational and cultural advantages afforded by Middle Georgia State University. The cost of living in Bleckley County is relatively very low, and the crime rate is low making it even more attractive as a place to live for families and new residents and retirees. Relatively stable population growth is anecdotal evidence that the overall outstanding quality of life, educational opportunities, local culture, outdoor fun, and community location are contributing to continuing success, and portend well for the future.

Address Low Educational Levels/Improve Jobs Skills

Johnson County will continue to support its school system, the local adult literacy center and other Southeastern Technical College programs, and regional Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act programs. The community also desires to develop a relationship with the nearby Oconee Fall Line Technical College Campuses in Dublin and Sandersville. It will develop public/private partnerships through its Chamber of Commerce and continuing intergovernmental cooperation.

Support/Enhance Agriculture/Forestry Uses

The community will support efforts to create additional markets, explore alternative crops, and seek value-added businesses which keep such uses viable and profitable. Industry recruitment efforts will focus on agriculture related businesses to capitalize on the local economic driver.

Address/Improve Infrastructure Needs

The lack of appropriate broadband telecommunications access will be addressed. Johnson County has participated in a regional access telecommunications feasibility study, and promoted expansion opportunity to multiple broadband providers.

Nurture Existing Businesses/Entrepreneurs

The Johnson County community will work through its Development Authority and in cooperation with Southeastern Technical College and state agencies to meet local needs and encourage expansions and new local business development.

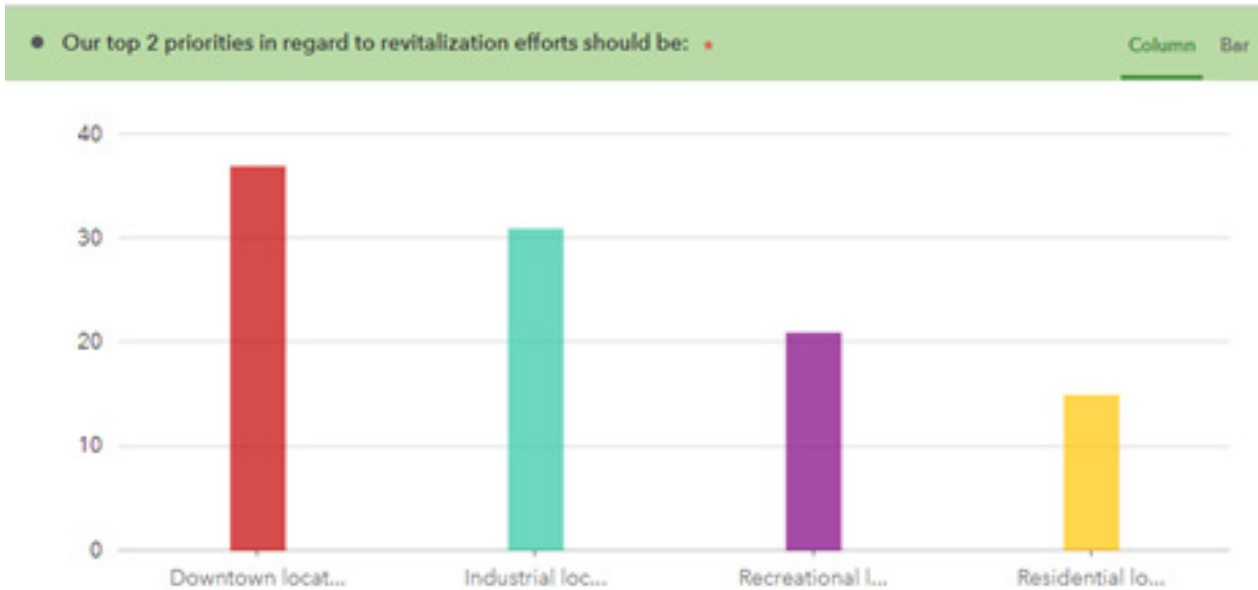


Figure 4: Survey Response from Johnson County Respondents on Revitalization Priorities

Grow Tourism

Johnson County was once a leader in Georgia tourism because of Idylwild, even hosting statewide conferences. Its outdoor amenities; many historic structures; existing and potential festivals; the W&T Railroad depot; its location along Georgia 15, a Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail; a UGA football route; and its UGA heritage through native sons, Herschel Walker and Loran Smith, offer much potential to increase visitors.

Improve Transportation Access/Quality

A relatively new bridge over the Oconee River to Laurens County, funded by T-SPLOST, has resulted in quicker travel and commutes to the nearby City of Dublin. Continued use and promotion of T-SPLOST will improve transportation in the County and perhaps improve business recruitment to the community. The completion of widening of Georgia 15 under Georgia's GRIP program would bring more usage and travelers to the county. These and other improvements could enhance local festival development, making Johnson County easier to access. It also makes business markets more accessible.

Revitalize Downtown

The historic fabric and available buildings in Wrightsville and Kite allow for much opportunity. This is

especially so given the local deficit in restaurant service and retail. The Johnson County Board of Commissioners has renovated an old furniture store as a county annex, prompting action and plans by other downtown building owners to consider renovations, including a dentist office adjacent to City Hall. Although the City of Wrightsville no longer directly participates in the former Better Hometown program, there is a driving tour of historic homes brochure, a volunteer program, and other similar building blocks which were established under the program. Additionally, 37 respondents from the HOGARC survey conducted in 2022 showed that the number one response for priorities in revitalization should be downtown areas. See Figure 4.

Develop/Improve Local Industrial Parks/Sites

The community has a number of available sites and buildings to market. The existing industrial park needs further improvement, and there is a need to further develop a new industrial park to facilitate and encourage efforts in industrial expansion and location. A portion of Bleckley County is within a Federal Opportunity Zone. This new tool should be marketed statewide to attract outside investment. The zone located within the county may be more advantageous for investors compared to other zones across the state.

Promote Quality of Life/Civic and Community Pride/Location

Bleckley County does possess extraordinary educational and cultural opportunities and many amenities and charm unique to a rural smalltown. There are many opportunities to promote its small town and rural character and quality of life through its Chamber and other means. The welcoming, family atmosphere; low crime rate; low cost of living; the outdoor adventure; the WMA and PFA; the local festivals; Middle Georgia State University; the award winning local schools; local museums, and other cultural outlets; the many, active civic clubs; and the landscape and outdoor amenities are all easy selling cards. The overall county location and easy access to larger urban areas further contribute and facilitate promotion of the county as an excellent place to live, visit, or do business.

Attract New Residents/Retirees

Johnson County has an opportunity to promote its small town and rural character and quality of life through its Chamber and other means. The welcoming, family atmosphere; low crime rate; low cost of living; and the landscape and amenities are all easy selling cards. The housing stock, although older homes, presents opportunities for purchase and availability at reasonable rates. The historic architecture is another drawing card.

Address Growth Management/Community Aesthetics

A well-planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. The community has developed individual land use regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but more general and coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location and civic organizations and programs to assist.

Land Use



The landscape and the way land is used is often visible and tangible evidence of planning or the lack thereof. It reveals the pattern of growth and development, and how we relate to the natural environment. It often defines what we view as the character of our community, and is a major component in our determination of quality of life. As science evolves, we realize with greater certainty that the way our land is used and managed has definite implications for air and water quality, and the diversity and health of our ecosystems.

The awareness of the impacts and consequences of the way land is used illustrate the need for wise use of our finite supply of land, and the necessity of sound decisions in its development or protection. The need for sustainable growth and development, which accommodates our development needs while maintaining balance and control, and limiting impacts on the natural and built environment, is recognized in the state quality community objectives.

Sound, quality growth and development results from effective and balanced land use planning that anticipates, prepares, and exercises control over development decisions. It guides and directs growth and development into a desirable and efficient pattern of land use to achieve compatibilities in use, proper return and effective use of public investments in infrastructure and services, and minimal impacts to environmentally or aesthetically important natural and cultural resources.

The lack of planning, on the other hand, can result in uncontrolled and unmanaged growth which can wreak havoc on community desires and plans, negatively impact property values, degrade the environment and landscape, and foster other detrimental effects or burdens in a short period of time. It can destroy important natural functions and treasured views or other parts of the landscape. It can cause new public tax or service burdens while lowering return or lessening use of public infrastructure already paid for or invested in. Public desires or future plans or options can be precluded or prevented by such uncontrolled growth, while other ill- advised consequences or burdens upon the general public can result.



L Residence **R** Farm

A community's land use planning efforts are an attempt to provide a policy guide and framework or blueprint for desired growth and development. Sound planning provides for managed growth and development, allowing for necessary land use and development, but guiding it in such a manner that balances and protects

resources, systems, and other aspects of the landscape important to the community. Such planning tries to lessen, mitigate, or avoid inconsistencies, inefficiencies, or conflicting land use efforts. Existing patterns and trends of land uses, community investment in and location of facilities and services, important natural and cultural constraints, and overriding community desires are considered and accommodated in developing and delineating the desired pattern of growth and development.

Johnson County and its municipalities are united in their vision and desires for growth. It is a small, rural county with abundant natural resources and great natural beauty. The County's vision for its growth and development is one that protects and utilizes its natural resources and landscape to continue growth and development conducive and compatible with such natural beauty. Land uses would continue to look similar to those existing, and the rural character would be maintained. Infrastructure and amenities would be expanded and developed to support and attract both population and business growth, primarily in or adjacent to the existing municipalities and developed areas. Agricultural and forestry uses would be kept viable and remain the principal land uses of the county. They would be an integral component of the economy of the county, and the preservation of rural character supportive of open space and natural resource protection.



L *Timber Land* **R** *Downtown Wrightsville*

While technically only Wrightsville is required, because of its zoning ordinance, to have a Land Use element in its comprehensive plan under the current DCA planning standards, all local governments in the county have chosen to participate and include the element in this joint comprehensive plan. Existing land use maps visually convey to all concerned the current landscape and correlation of extant development. Future land use maps illustrate to all concerned the community's vision and desires for additional growth and development. Such depictions also lend credence and supporting background information important to understanding and illustrating official local government policy in designating lands unsuitable for solid waste handling facilities in local solid waste management plans. Land use maps do provide official display of community desires and goals for compatible future growth and development.

The community's land use maps are, however, a general policy guide and framework, not necessarily a rigid or unchangeable picture of future growth and development. Not all growth or developments can be foreseen, and other events could necessitate a change in community vision or desires. The depicted pattern of desired future growth and development displayed on future land use maps is a current statement

and reflection of community expectations and desires. It provides a context, framework and background for the public and private sector to utilize to plan, evaluate, shape, guide, and evaluate proposed developments and other decisions affecting the use of the land and community growth and development. The plan provides a context for forethought, examination of impacts and consequences, and mitigation of land use decisions on the community's growth and development and desired future patterns and community vision.

Land Use Categories and Descriptions

Land use categories utilized in the development of this plan and in the land use maps are the standard categories established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and defined in the planning standards as below.

Residential. The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units.

Commercial. This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

Industrial. This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.

Public/Institutional. This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities. This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

Park/Recreation/Conservation. This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational and conservation uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, other wild lands, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.

Agriculture. This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or similar rural uses.

Forestry. This category is for land dedicated to commercial timber, pulpwood production, or other woodland use.

Existing Land Uses

Existing land use patterns for Johnson County and its municipalities are depicted on the following maps. A table depicting the existing distribution of land use acreages is shown below.

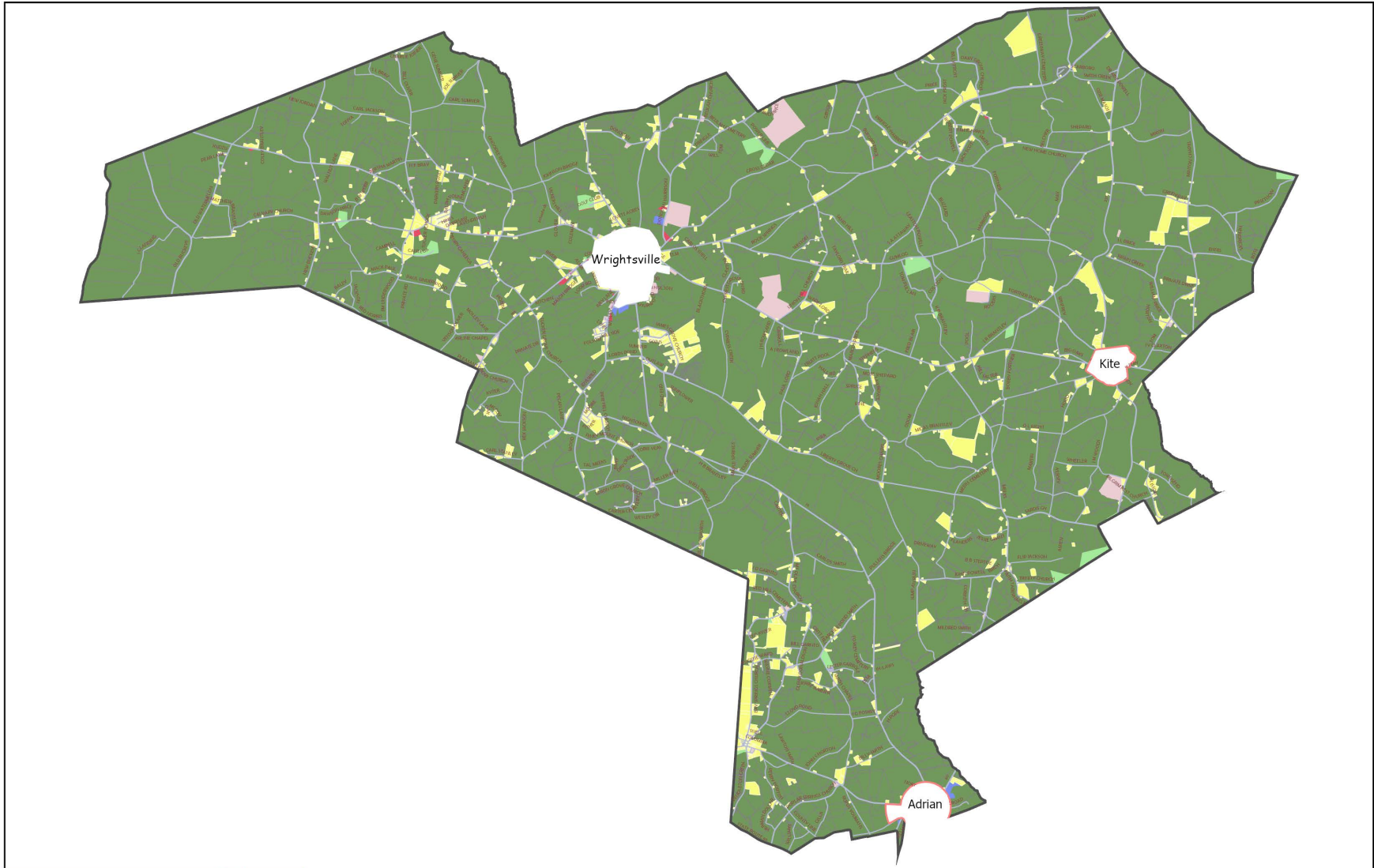
Existing Land Use Distribution, Johnson County, 2021(Acres)

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent of Total
Agriculture	122,312	62.25
Commercial	217	0.11
Forestry	58,144	29.59
Industrial	221	0.11
Park/Recreation/Conservation	968	0.79
Public/Institutional	1,107	0.52
Residential	9,202	4.68
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	4,415	2.24
Total	196,500	100

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Geographic Information System, 2023.



L *The Rural Scene, Johnson County* Photo Credit: Cal Avery, “The Barn Hunter”



Johnson County Land Use Map

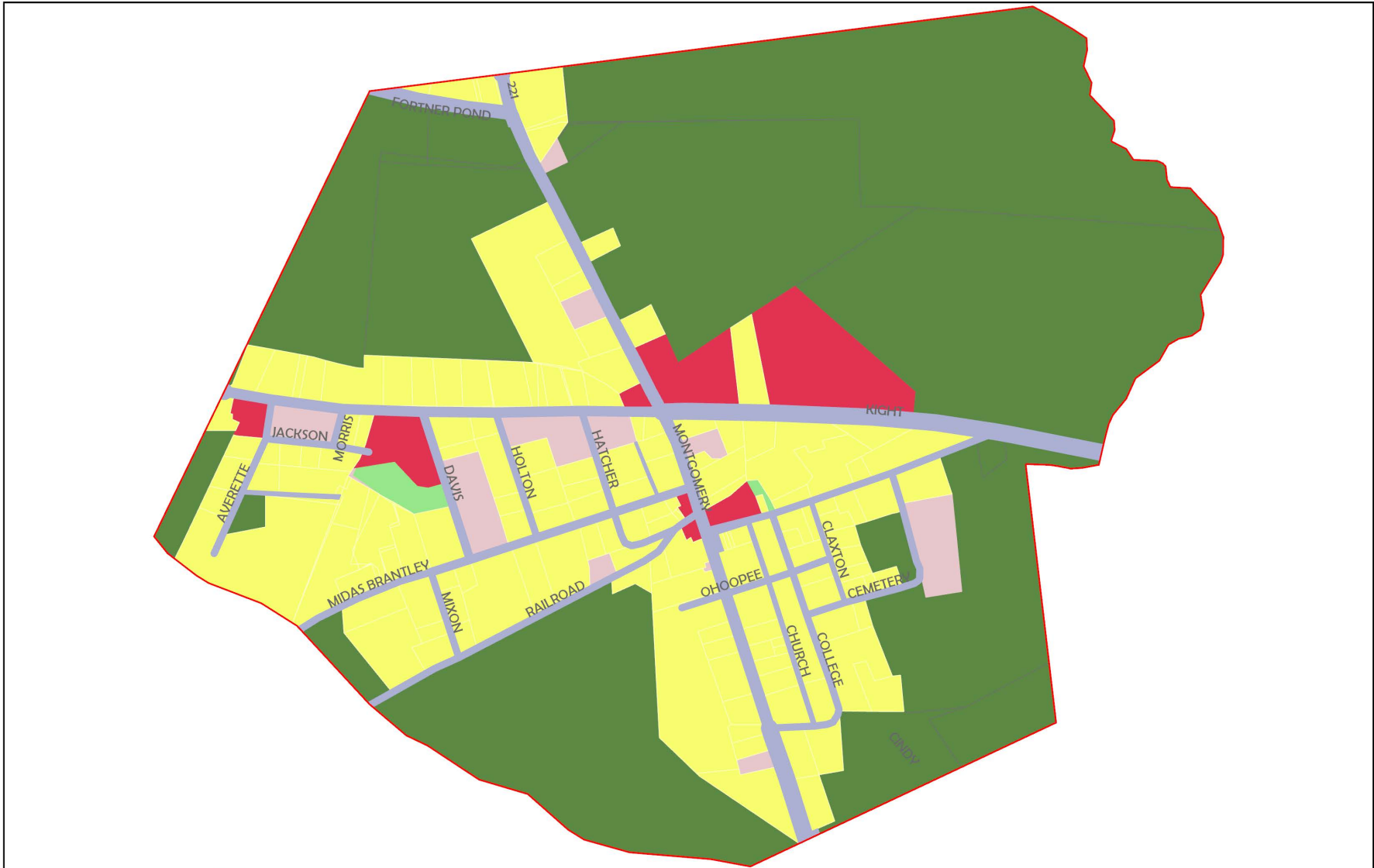
"The data sets represented here-in are presented to the user with the understanding that, because of the nature of some GIS datasets, there is no guarantee of completeness or accuracy. Conclusions drawn from, or actions taken on the basis of this data are the sole responsibility of the user."

2023



Existing

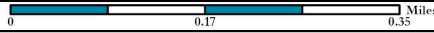
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities



Kite Land Use Map

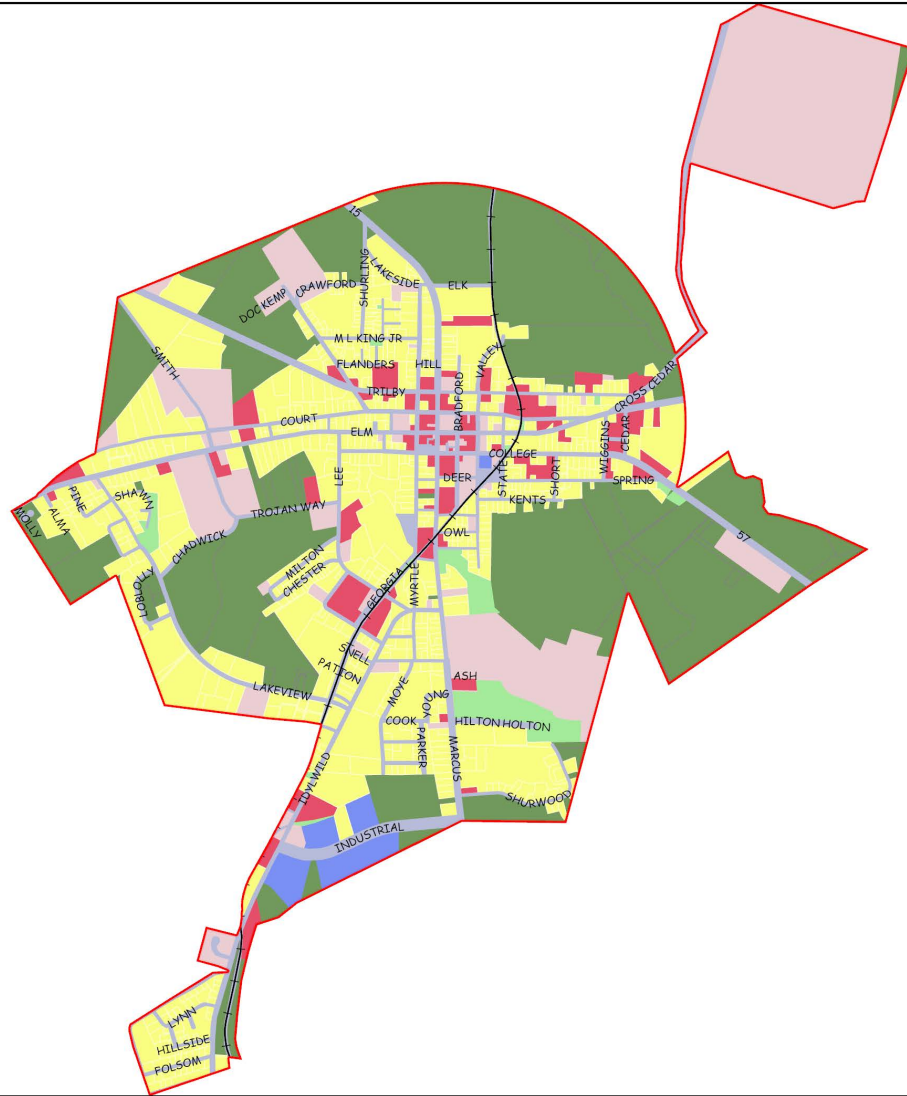
"The data sets represented here-in are presented to the user with the understanding that, because of the nature of some GIS datasets, there is no guarantee of completeness or accuracy. Conclusions drawn from, or actions taken on the basis of this data are the sole responsibility of the user."

2023



Existing

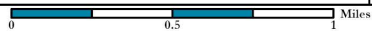
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities



Wrightsville Land Use Map

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2023



Existing

- Rail Roads
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities



Land Use Goals

Johnson County and its municipalities seek future growth and development respective of its rural character and small town quality of life. It desires growth patterns which maintain and keep viable existing agricultural and forestry uses, which sustain its heritage, abundant natural and cultural resources, and which is otherwise compatible and complementary of existing uses and scale of development. The community has chosen the following land use goals to help bring about its desired future and delineated community vision.

Address Growth Management/Community Aesthetics

A well-planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. The community has developed individual land use regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but more general and coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location and civic organizations and programs to assist.

Improve Subdivision/Manufactured Housing/Land Use Regulation/Code Enforcement

As noted above, Johnson County has rudimentary land use regulations, road acceptance/subdivision ordinances, a manufactured home ordinance, a medical waste ordinance and others to address specific issues or nuisances. Only Wrightsville has zoning and building code enforcement. Kite has recently updated their manufactured home ordinance. Code enforcement in the county is related to solid waste. These ordinances need updating, coordination, and joint collaboration/code enforcement to initiate a more comprehensive approach.

Guide/Plan Development

This management of growth and development can be accomplished through controlled, planned location of infrastructure and other public improvements; conserving natural/historic resources; maintaining viable agricultural/forestry uses, as well as through regulation enhancement.

Maintain Open Spaces/Agricultural/Forestry Uses

Development of new markets, supporting creation of alternative crops and uses, celebrating the heritage of these uses, providing professional support, and attracting compatible agribusiness or other industry all can help achieve this.

Protect Significant Natural Resources

The Ohoopsee, Little Ohoopsee, and Oconee Rivers have much history for recreation and tourism within the county. Increased recreational and outdoor usage through park development, promotion, and growth of tourism offer much unrealized potential to both economic utilization and conservation of Johnson County's significant natural and cultural resources. It can also attract more residents and build a larger audience of citizen support for protection and enhancement of these resources.



L Rural Scene **R** Downtown Wrightsville

Encourage Infill Development

It only makes sense to utilize lands and buildings where taxpayers and private interests have invested in providing costly infrastructure and construction in the past before extending additional infrastructure or incurring completely new construction costs. There are an abundance of available vacant commercial, industrial and residential structures within the community, as well as areas with readily available infrastructure.

Develop/Improve Recreational/Leisure Facilities

As noted above, appropriate development of facilities, parks, museums, festival sites, and other venues can benefit the community economically, support protection of natural and cultural resources, and attract new residents and visitors. The community's rivers, the historic railroad depot, existing and potential museums, and the recreation complex, among others, provide such opportunities.

Seek Compatible Development/Utilization

Growth supportive, not disruptive through use, scale, or intensity, of the community's existing rural character, small-town atmosphere, extant heritage, and current agricultural/forestry uses is desired. Available industrial space in Wrightsville is prime location for an agri-business to relocate or expand. Heritage/outdoor tourism development should be explored by local governments as well as private landowners seeking to create agri-tourism ventures.

Future Land Uses

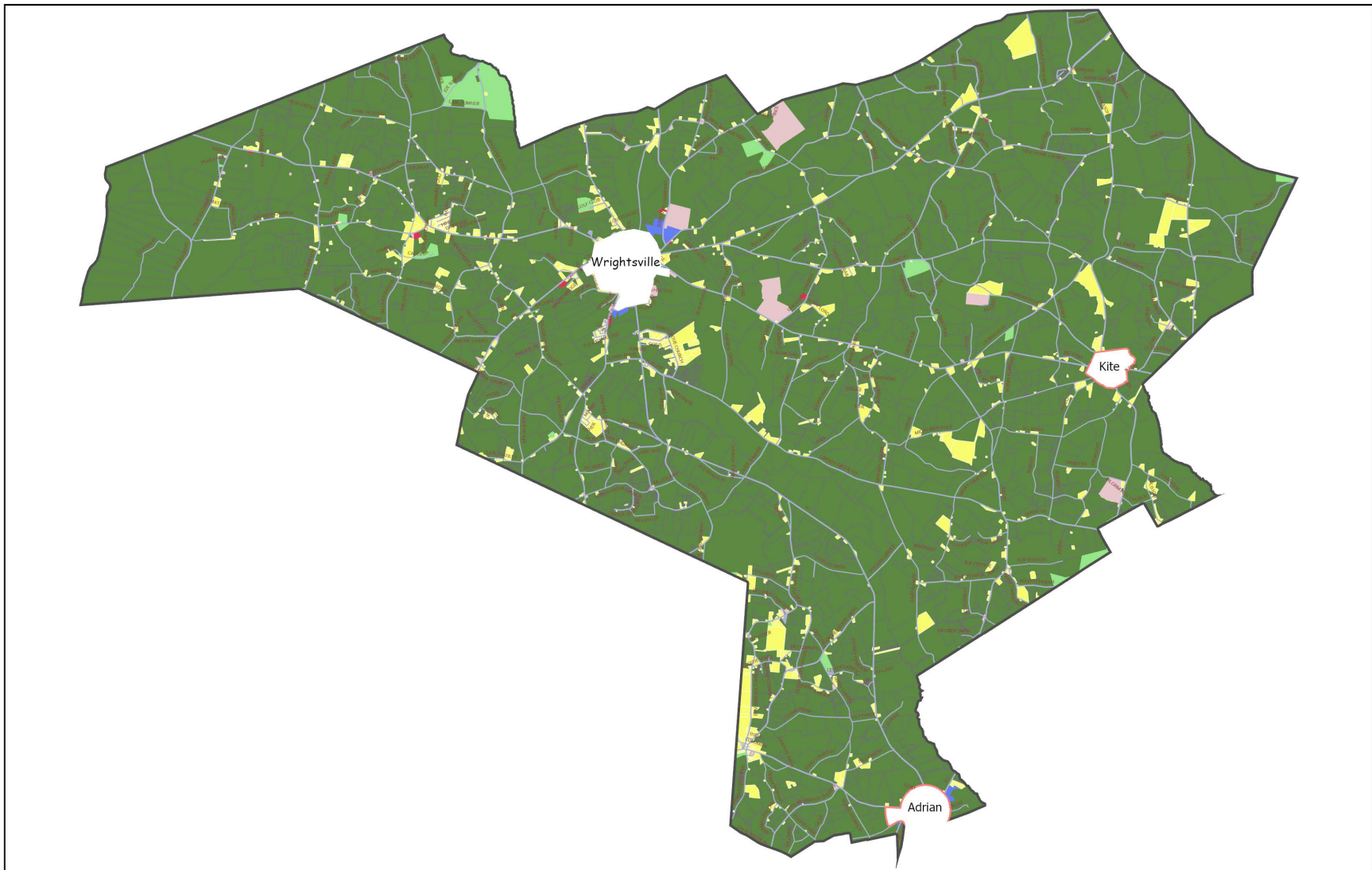
As noted elsewhere, Johnson County endured a long period of decline after the Great Depression and World War II until around 1970, and while growth has stabilized since then, it has been relatively stagnant outside of prison population growth at Johnson State Prison. However, the isolation and natural beauty of the county and its welcoming people, combined with easy commuting and transportation access to larger retail and service centers, is now attracting new residents and retirees. Many are able to move into existing vacant single-family housing.

While growth remains somewhat elusive and limited, the limited commercial and industrial sector growth within the county has concentrated almost completely in Wrightsville. The abundant supply of available vacant buildings in both of the county's municipal downtowns and the Cedar Creek Industrial Park with its available lands adjacent to Wrightsville on its west side foreshadows these trends to continue.

Residential growth within Johnson County remains primarily scattered individual single-family development with little pattern except for a tract of land which has been subdivided into 2 acre parcels along Kersey Road near Kite. The most likely places for additional residential growth are in the northwest quadrant of the county, northeast and southwest of Wrightsville along U.S. 319, and to a lesser extent around Adrian, and east and north of Kite between U.S. 221 and Georgia 57. There will likely be only limited growth, primarily single-family residential growth, in Kite. Future land use maps for Johnson County, Kite, and Wrightsville are included following this description.



Harlie Fulford Memorial Library, Wrightsville



Johnson County Land Use Map

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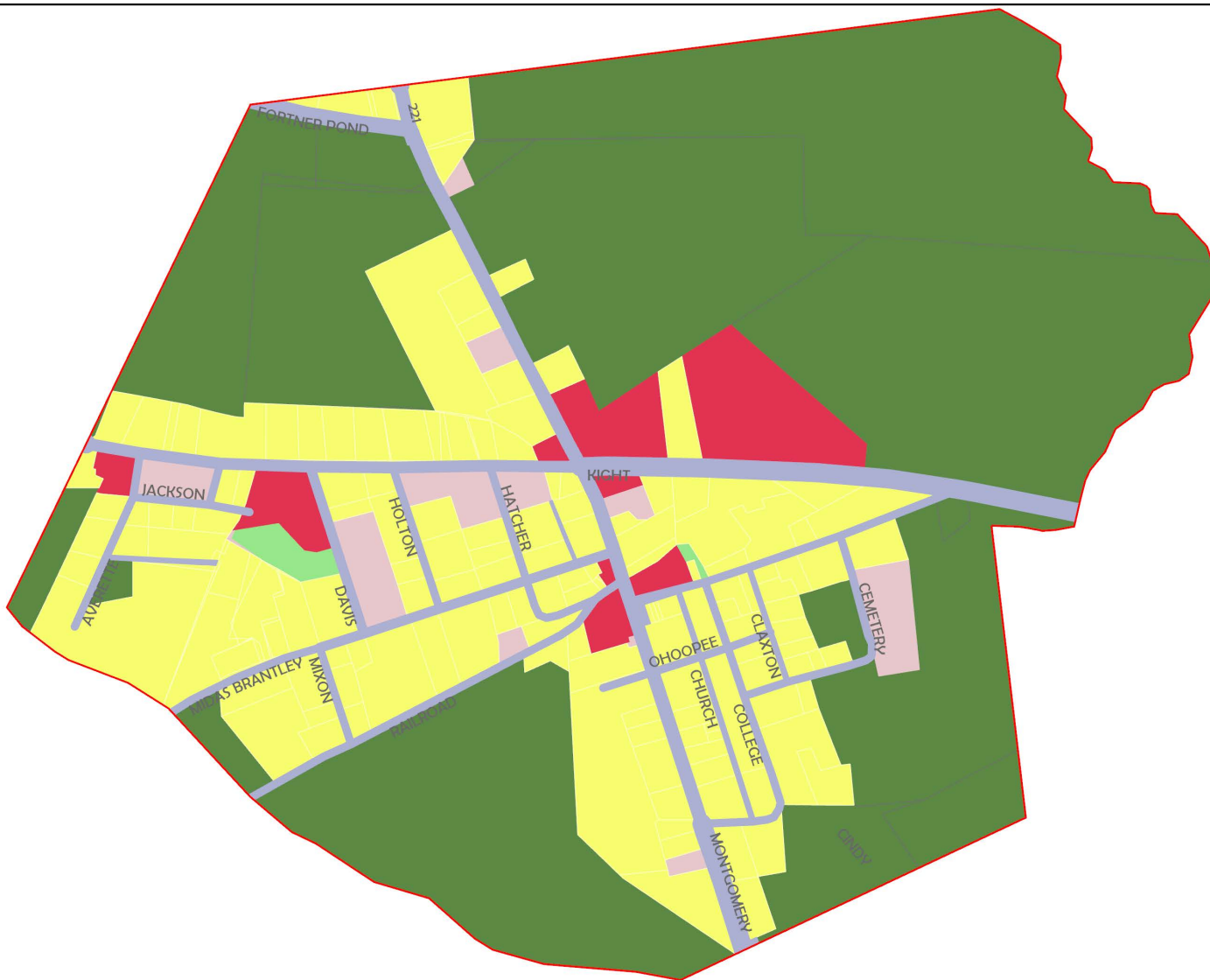
2023



Future

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities





Kite Land Use Map

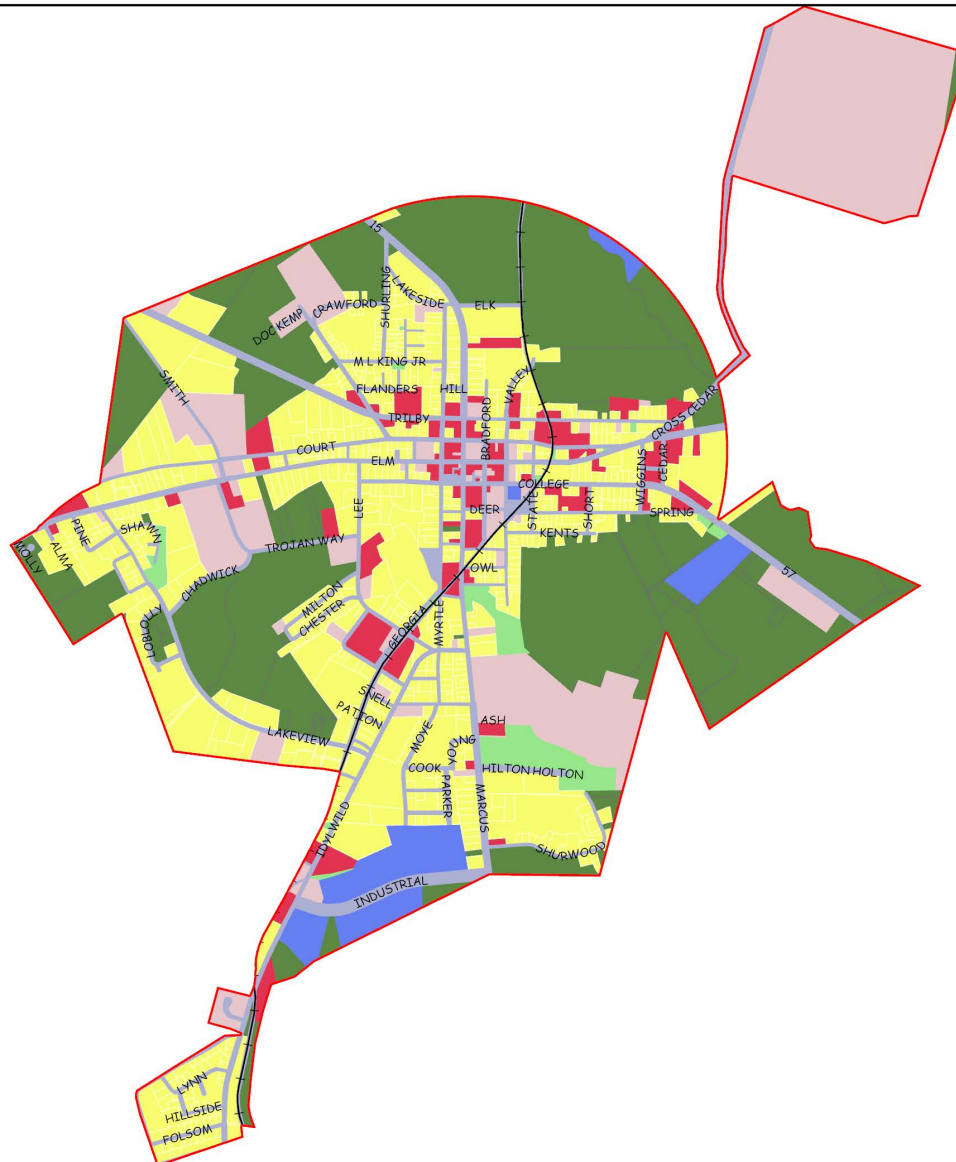
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2023



Future

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities



Wrightsville Land Use Map

"The data sets represented here-in are presented to the user with the understanding that, because of the nature of some GIS datasets, there is no guarantee of completeness or accuracy. Conclusions drawn from, or actions taken on the basis of this data are the sole responsibility of the user."

2023



Future

- Rail Roads
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

Community Work Programs



The Community Work Program Element is the chosen implementation strategy which the community has identified to begin its path toward improvement and its desired future growth and development. These are the immediate steps the community has chosen to address identified community issues, needs, and opportunities, and begin the journey to achieve the desired community vision.

This plan element answers the questions, **“How are we, as a community, going to get where we desire, given where we are?”** The Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes a separate community work program for each local government involved, as well as a report of accomplishments on their previous work program. The Long Term Policies identified under the Community Goals element identifies implementation activities and ideals which may take longer than five years, or because of circumstances involved, including finances, are not envisioned to begin in the near future.

JOHNSON COUNTY

Community Work Programs

Johnson County Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program

Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
2023	Seek the expansion of and fully develop infrastructure, including water and sewer extension to the Industrial Park			Y	2028				Action Item is underway. The Industrial Park has broadband as of 2021. Running water lines will be completed in 2023, and sewer in 2028.
2021	Establish a Revolving Loan Fund program							Y	Action item was dropped. The county decided it was no longer a priority.
2020	Seek to develop a Herschel Walker/UGA Museum to foster tourism attraction					Y	2024		Action item was postponed due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the 2020 U.S. Senate Campaign.
2023	Seek funding for the necessary firefighting equipment to maintain, and possibly lower ISO ratings in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas			Y	2028				Action item is underway. This is an ongoing effort that will continue each year until the goal is achieved.
2023	Seek funding to upgrade the public boat landing and public access road to improve the usage of the Oconee River					Y	2027		Action items has been postponed due to lack of funding. The County is currently reviewing all possible resources to fund this project.
2020	Seek funding as appropriate to establish a bike path along SR 57 between the Confederate historic site and Ball's Ferry State Park							Y	Action item was dropped. The county decided it was no longer a priority.
2019	Pursue funds and seek to establish E- 91 I service	Y							Action item was complete in 2023.
2021	Pursue the development of appropriate local broadband telecommunications service			Y	2023				Action Item is underway. Local EMC is establishing broadband services for the county in 2023.
2018	Purchase two (2) Pumper Trucks (Firetrucks)	Y	2023						Action Item was completed in 2023.
2018	Complete renovation of the Senior Center			Y	2025				Action item is underway. Renovations are expected to be complete in 2025.
2018	Construct one (1) T-Ball Field at the Johnson County Recreation Complex			Y	2024				Action item is underway and expected to be complete in 2024.
2018	Develop a multi-sport field (Soccer & Baseball) at the Johnson County Recreation Complex			Y	2026				Action item is underway and expected to be complete in 2026. Construction on the project will take place over the next 24 months.
2018	Update County Book of Ordinances	y	2023						Action item was complete in 2023.
2018	Complete TIA Band 3 Projects (Tuckers Grove Church Road Phase I, Pringle Road)	y	2023						Action item was complete in 2023.

Johnson County Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2024 - 2028

Activity	Years						Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source				
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Each Year	Beyond 2028	County	City		Other	Local	State	Federal	Private
Seek the expansion of and fully develop infrastructure, including water and sewer extension to the Industrial Park					X			X	X			X			
Seek to develop a Herschel Walker/UGA Museum to foster tourism attraction	X							X	X	Chamber, Dev. Auth., Private Donations	\$100.00	X			X
Seek funding to upgrade the public boat landing and public access road to improve the usage of the Oconee River				X				X		DNR (LWCF)	\$100,000	X	X	X	
Seek funding for the necessary fire-fighting equipment to maintain, and possibly lower ISO ratings in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas						X		X	X	FEMA, GEMA	\$300,000	X	X	X	
Pursue the development of appropriate local broadband telecommunications service				X				X		GTA, Private Companies	NA (no known estimate available)	X	X	X	X
Purchase two (2) Ambulance Vehicles, including equipment	X							X		SPLOST, USDA Grant/Loan	\$300,000	X		X	
Complete renovation of the Senior Center		X						X		GA DCA (CDBG)	\$750,000	X	X	X	
Resurface the walking track located in the Johnson County Recreation Complex		X						X		GA DCA (LWCF Grant)	\$100,000	X	X	X	
Construct one (1) T-Ball Field at the Johnson County Recreation Complex	X							X			\$125,000	X			
Develop a multi-sport field (Soccer & Baseball) at the Johnson County Recreation Complex			X					X			\$250,000	X			

Johnson County Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2024 - 2028

Activity	Years						Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source				
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Each Year	Beyond 2028	County	City		Other	Local	State	Federal	Private
Replace lighting and poles on field 1 and 2 (Recreation Department)	X	X	X					X		LWCF, SPLOST	\$400,000	X	X		
Develop a Master Plan for a Recreation Complex		X						X		SPLOST	\$30,000	X	X		
Road Department need new motor grader			X					X		SPLOST	\$400,000	X	X		
Purchase a generator for the Commission Office (Annex, EMS, LEC)		X						X		FEMA, GEMA	\$100,000	X	X	X	
Complete TIA2 Band 1, second and final phase of paving Tucker's Grove Church Rd., to Idylwild Rd.	X	X								GDOT, TIA	\$784,077		X	X	
Complete TIA2 Band 1, resurfacing of Donovan-Harrison Rd.	X	X								GDOT, TIA	\$202,957		X	X	
Seek funding to acquire construction of a new building for the Boys and Girls Club			X					X		Dev Auth, Boys & Girls Club	\$1 million	X	X	X	

The background of the page is a blurred photograph of tall, thin trees, likely pines or cypresses, with a light, hazy sky. The trees are out of focus, creating a soft, naturalistic backdrop.

CITY OF KITE

Community Work Programs

City of Kite Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
2021	Complete drainage improvements in the following areas: Mixon St, Church St., Cemetery St, Claxton Blvd., Ohoopee St., and Railroad St.	Y	2021						Action item was completed in 2021.
2021	Seek funding for the necessary firefighting equipment to maintain, and possibly lower ISO ratings in both the Incorporated and unincorporated rated areas	Y	2021						Action item was completed in 2021.
2021	Seek CDBG or other funding to upgrade the water systems as needed in Kite, to accommodate existing and future residents	Y	2021						Action item was completed in 2021.
2023	Investigate the possibility of establishing municipal police in the City of Kite			Y	2025				Action item is underway. The city is reviewing the feasibility of establishing a municipal police department. A decision is expected by 2025.
2020	Acquire equipment and establish the community center in Kite as a disaster relief shelter			Y	2024				Action item is underway. The center is expected to be ready in 2024. All equipment will be purchased within the next 12 months.
2020	Seek funding to improve and upgrade the walking track			Y	2024				Action item is underway. Construction on the walking track has been initiated, and expected to be complete by 2024.
2023	Seek to develop a satellite children's library in Kite	Y	2022						Action item was completed in 2022.
2020	Explore the feasibility of establishing public housing in Adrian and Kite, possibly in conjunction with the housing authorities in either Swainsboro or Wrightsville							Y	Action item was dropped. The city currently has developers interested in this project. This is no longer a priority for the city.
2020	Continue pursuit of public funds as needed, such as CDBG and CHIP grants, for rehabilitation of substandard housing			Y	2025				Action item is underway and estimated to be complete in 2025.
2018	Purchase one (1) mosquito sprayer truck to initiate service citywide			Y	2024				Action item is underway. The city is currently conducting price comparisons.
2018	Improve gateway signage at city limits located on State Routes 57 & 171 (US 221)	Y	2022						Action item was completed in 2022.
2018	Complete TIA Band 3 Projects (Hatcher Street)	Y	2022						Action item was completed in 2022.

City of Kite Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
2018	Seek funding for streetscape and other transportation improvements, including expand curbs, gutters, and sidewalks			Y	2024				Action item underway. The city is currently seeking funding for this project.
2018	Expand and/or reinvigorate the Kite Museum			Y	2024				Action item underway. The city is currently seeking private funding for this project.

City of Kite Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2024 - 2028

Activity	Years						Responsibility				Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Each Year	Beyond 2028	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Investigate the possibility of establishing municipal police in the City of Kite		X							X	Homeland Security DOJ	\$30,000	X	X	X	
Acquire equipment and establish the community center in Kite as a disaster relief shelter	X								X	FEMA, GEMA	\$5,000	X	X	X	
Seek funding to improve and upgrade the walking track	X								X		\$10,000	X			
Continue pursuit of public funds as needed, such as CDBG and CHIP grants, for rehabilitation of substandard housing		X							X	DCA (CDBG)	\$500,000	X	X	X	
Purchase one (1) mosquito sprayer truck to initiate service citywide	X								X	USDA, SPLOST	\$35,000	X		X	
Seek funding for streetscape and other transportation improvements, including expand curbs, gutters, and sidewalks	X								X	GDOT, LMIG, GDOT Multimodal Safety and Access Grant	\$100,000	X	X	X	
Expand and/or reinvigorate the Kite Museum	X								X	Private contributions	\$20,000	X			X
Complete TIA2 Band 1, Sidewalk construction project	X	X								GDOT TIA	\$35,000		X	X	

CITY OF WRIGHTSVILLE

Community Work Programs

City of Wrightsville Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Y/N	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date		
2023	Seek the expansion of and fully develop infrastructure, including water and sewer extension to the Industrial Park			Y	2028				Action Item is underway. The Industrial Park has broadband as of 2021. Running water lines will be completed in 2023, and sewer in 2028.
2023	Expand infrastructure and expand lift stations and treatment capacity to enable Wrightsville to serve new businesses/ industries			Y	2025				Action Item is underway. Wastewater treatment facility in process of expansion with an expected completion date of 2025.
2020	Seek to develop a Herschel Walker/UGA Museum to foster tourism attraction					Y	2024		Action item was postponed due to COVID-19 Pandemic and the 2020 U.S. Senate campaign.
2020	Seek to have FEMA prepare updated flood plain maps for the city			Y	2025				Action item is underway and estimated to be complete in 2025.
2023	Seek funding for streetscape and other transportation improvements, including expand curbs, gutters, and sidewalks			Y	2025				Action items is underway. The City of Kite is still in the process of seeking funding for this project.
2020	Develop detailed maps, utilizing GPS, of the water system and its components (valves, etc)			Y	2025				Action item is underway and estimated to be complete in 2025.
2022	Upgrade or replace the sewer and wastewater system treatment facility to provide for additional capacity for growth and extend services to all unserved residents			Y	2028				Action item is underway. Initiation of planning for upgrades has begun; the upgrades are expected to be complete in 2025.
2020	Seek funding for the necessary firefighting equipment (including a firefighting vehicle) to maintain, and possibly lower ISO ratings in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas			Y	2025				Action items is underway. The city is still in the process of seeking funding for this project. The purchases for this project are expected to begin in 2025.
2016	Resurface Flanders, Lynn, Jan, and Helen streets	Y	2021						Action item was completed in 2021.
2019	Resurface Lakeview Drive	Y	2021						Action item was completed in 2021.
2019	Resurface Lee Street	Y	2021						Action item was completed in 2021.

City of Wrightsville Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Y/N	Status/Comments
		Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date		
2018	Complete TIA1 Band 3 Projects (Myrtle Ave, Court Street, Georgia Ave.,Bradford Street)	Y	2022						TIA1 Band 3 Projects were completed in 2022.
2018	Complete street sign replacement initiative			Y	2024				Action item is underway. The estimated completion date is 2024.
2018	Purchase one (1) pickup truck for public works department	Y	2019						Action Item completed in 2019.
2018	Gather preliminary cost and feasibility of renovating city hall or constructing new building	Y	2023						Action Item completed in 2023.
2018	Purchase new software system for police department	Y	2019						Action Item completed in 2019.
2018	Purchase one (1) new police pursuit vehicle and equipment each year	Y	2020						Action Item completed in 2020.
2018	Purchase downtown street pole banners and seasonal signage			Y	2028				Action item is in progress. These items will continue to be replaced periodically.
2018	Initiate a blight tax to aid in blight removal							Y	Action item was dropped due to changes in priority.
2018	Support the development of a Herschel Walker Fitness Park							Y	Action item was dropped. Volunteers from the Wrightsville High School Class of 1980 complete this park in honor of their classmate Herschel Walker.

City of Wrightsville Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2024 - 2028

Activity	Years						Responsibility				Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Each Year	Beyond 2028	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Seek the expansion of and fully develop infrastructure, including water and sewer extension to the Industrial Park					X				X	Dev Auth., DCA (OneGeorgia), GEFA, USD Rural Dev't	\$250,000	X	X	X	
Expand infrastructure and expand lift stations and treatment capacity to enable Wrightsville to serve new businesses/industries		X							X	GEFA, DCA (CDBG)	\$16 Million	X	X	X	
Seek to develop a Herschel Walker/UGA Museum to foster tourism attraction	X								X	Chamber, Dev. Auth, Private Donations	\$100,000	X			
Seek to have FEMA prepare updated flood plain maps for the city		X							X	FEMA	\$5,000	X		X	
Seek funding for streetscape and other transportation improvements, including expand curbs, gutters, and sidewalks		X							X	GDOT LMIG, GDOT Multimodal Safety and Access Grant	\$500,000	X	X	X	
Develop detailed maps, utilizing GPS, of the water system and its components (valves, etc)		X							X	RC	\$2,500	X			

City of Wrightsville Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2024 - 2028

Activity	Years						Responsibility				Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Each Year	Beyond 2028	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Upgrade or replace the sewer and wastewater system treatment facility to provide for additional capacity for growth and extend services to all unserved residents					X				X	DCA, (CDBG) GEFA	\$2 Million	X	X	X	
Purchase one (1) new police pursuit vehicle and equipment each year	X		X		X				X	SPLOST, USDA	\$40,000	X		X	
Complete street sign replacement initiative	X								X	GDOT	\$100,000	X	X		
Purchase downtown street pole banners and seasonal signage						X			X	Chamber of Commerce	\$10,000	X			
Complete TIA2 Band 1, resurfacing of E Trilby Street	X	X								GDOT TIA	\$72,787		X	X	
Complete TIA2 Band 1, resurfacing Lakeside Drive	X	X								GDOT TIA	\$23,920		X	X	
Complete TIA2 Band 1, widening Chadwick Drive	X	X								GDOT TIA	\$147,049		X	X	
Complete TIA2 Band 1, resurfacing Donovan-Harrison Rd.	X	X								GDOT TIA	\$105,063		X	X	

City of Wrightsville Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Community Work Program 2024 - 2028

Activity	Years						Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source				
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Each Year	Beyond 2028	County	City		Other	Local	State	Federal	Private
Complete TIA2 Band 2, Resurface Crawford Rd.			X	X	X					GDOT TIA	\$68,000		X	X	
Complete TIA2 Band 2, Resurface Shurling Rd.			X	X	X					GDOT TIA	\$43,000		X	X	
Complete TIA2 Band 2, Resurface MLK Dr.			X	X	X					GDOT TIA	\$35,500		X	X	

Appendix

- **Public Hearing Notice 1**
- **News Release**
- **Comprehensive Plan Website**
- **Community Vision Survey**
- **Public Hearing Notice 2**
- **Meeting Agendas**
- **Stakeholders Invited to Participate**
- **Active Participants**

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan
“Friendly, Favorable Future”

What principles should guide future development in Johnson County and the municipalities within Johnson County? What can be done to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of all Johnson County?

The local governments of Johnson County and the Cities of Wrightsville and Kite are in the initial stages of a process to develop a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law.

The comprehensive plan outlines a community vision, identifies needs and opportunities, defines long term policies, and includes a community work program to provide a guide and blueprint for future growth and development within the community jurisdictions. It is desired that this plan not only meet state requirements, but also truly express the community’s wishes for future growth and development.

An initial public hearing is scheduled to provide an opportunity for citizens to express their thoughts regarding vision for the Community’s future, to receive input on the issues and opportunities facing the Community, and to identify solutions, strategies, and actionable efforts that could be employed to make Johnson County and the Cities of Wrightsville and Kite better places to live and work.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME:

Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING:

Johnson County High School Agricultural Center
251 Herschel Walker Drive
Wrightsville, Georgia

Please plan to attend, voice your opinions, and be involved. Help your community thrive, grow, and prepare a better future. If you would like more information, please contact Mandy Britt at the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 912-367-3648 or mbritt@hogarc.org. All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact the Johnson County Commissioner’s Office, 2484 W. Elm Street, Wrightsville, Georgia, or call 478-864-3388.

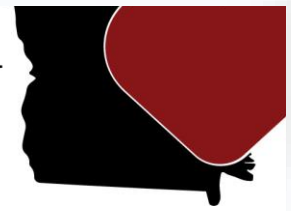
Join the Survey: <https://arcg.is/0bnarO0>



Regional Commission

331 West Parker Street
Baxley, GA 31513
Phone: 912-367-3648
Fax: 912-367-3640

5405 Oak Street
Eastman, GA 31023
Phone: 478-374-4771
Fax: 478-374-0703



NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN DROP-IN SESSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DATE: Tuesday, March 21, 2023
TIME: 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Vintage Grace
8651 South Marcus Street,
Wrightsville, GA

Are you concerned about the future of Johnson County, Wrightsville, and Kite? Do you have thoughtful ideas on what needs to be done to make the community a better place? What do you consider to be pressing needs and issues in the community?

The local governments of Johnson County, the Johnson County Board of Commissioners, and the municipalities of Wrightsville and Kite are in the process of updating their comprehensive plan required by state law. The current joint comprehensive plan dates from 2018 and is the principal guide to the long-term growth and development of Johnson County and its municipalities. The new update will focus on achieving a vision set by the community on what it wants to be and addressing identified needs and opportunities.

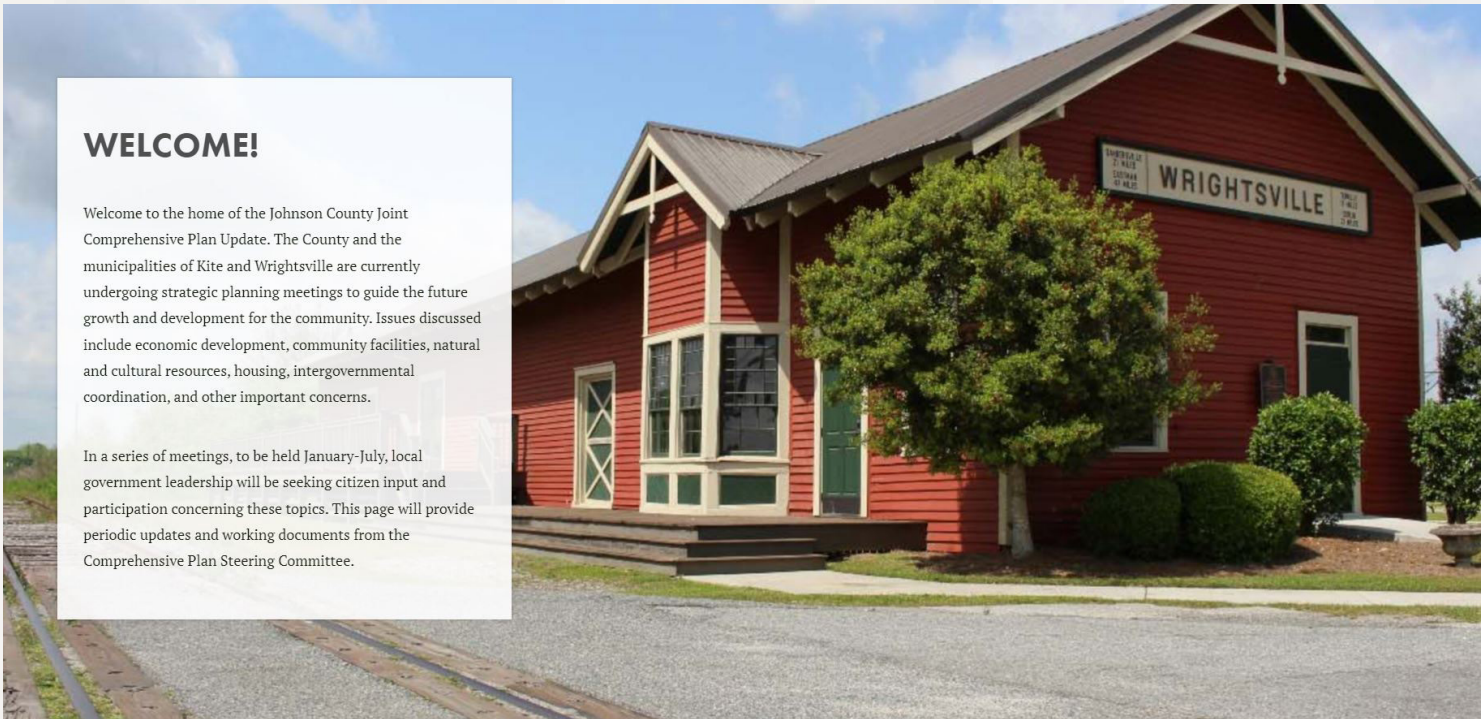
You are cordially invited to get involved and to participate in this plan update process. You may do so by attending a public drop-in session concerning the comprehensive plan update to be held at Vintage Grace Sweet Shop at 8651 South Marcus Street, Wrightsville, GA, at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 21, 2023. The session is designed to be informal, to answer any questions you may have, and to allow for one-on-one input at your convenience. Planning staff from the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission will be on hand to discuss the plan and its process, and to receive your input and ideas. There will be no formal presentation. The event is designed as a drop-in at whatever time is convenient for those wishing to participate or learn more.

Please attend and voice your ideas. We want to hear them. Let us know what you think. Do your part in making Johnson County an even better place to live, work, and play.



JOHNSON COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Johnson County, Kite, and Wrightsville



WELCOME!

Welcome to the home of the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Update. The County and the municipalities of Kite and Wrightsville are currently undergoing strategic planning meetings to guide the future growth and development for the community. Issues discussed include economic development, community facilities, natural and cultural resources, housing, intergovernmental coordination, and other important concerns.

In a series of meetings, to be held January-July, local government leadership will be seeking citizen input and participation concerning these topics. This page will provide periodic updates and working documents from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Friendly, Favorable Future



A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Johnson County, Kite,
and Wrightsville, Georgia

August 2018

[Download a Copy of the 2018 Plan Here!](#)



WHY IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPORTANT?

Effective planning ensures that future development will occur where, when, and how the community and local government wants. There are several important benefits to the entire community that result from the planning process:

- Quality of life is maintained and improved.
- There is a vision, clearly stated and shared by all, that describes the future of the community.
- Private property rights are protected.
- Economic development is encouraged and supported.
- There is more certainty about where development will occur, what it will be like, when it will happen, and how the costs of development will be met.

To encourage local governments' engagement in comprehensive planning, Georgia incentivizes it by allowing cities and counties with DCA-approved comprehensive plans access to a special package of financial resources to aid in implementing their plans. This includes Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), water and sewer loans from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA),



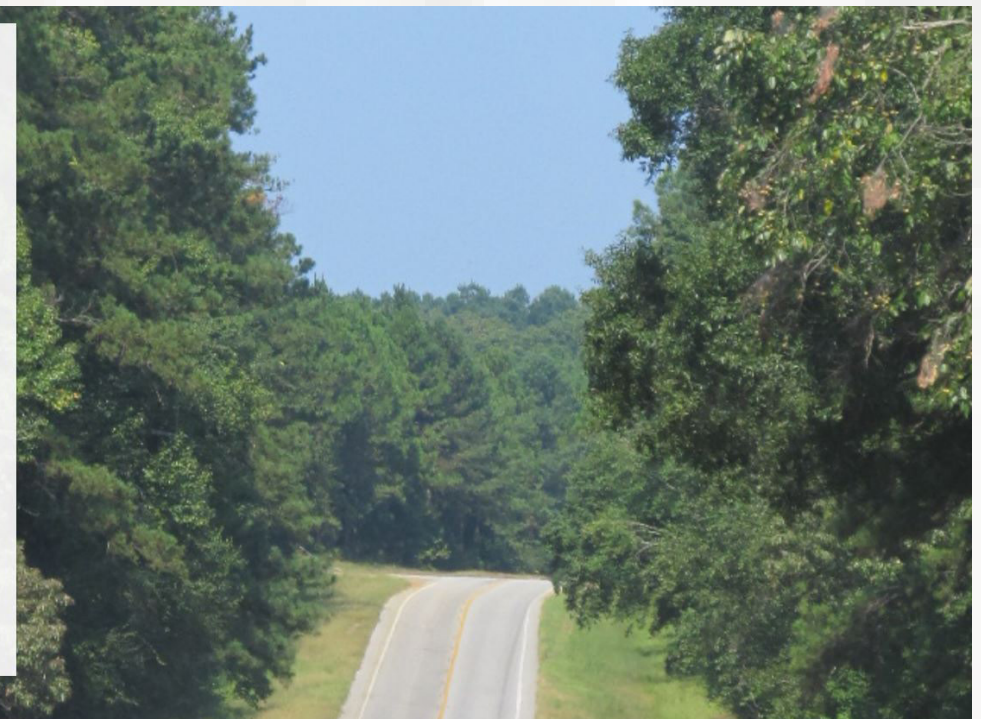
JOHNSON COUNTY 2023 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TIMETABLE

- **Monday, 1/23/2023, 2:00 PM:** *Kickoff Meeting, Introduction and Vision Making/SWOT*
- **Tuesday, 2/21/2023, 2:00 PM:** *Review Needs and Opportunities/Goals*
- **Tuesday, 3/7/2023, 5:00 PM:** *Initial Public Hearing*
- **Tuesday, 3/21/2023, 2:00 PM:** *Review Goals; Policies/Economic Development*
- **Tuesday, 3/21/2023, 5:00 PM:** *Community Drop-In Session*
- **Tuesday, 4/25/2023, 2:00 PM:** *Broadband & Land Use*
- **TBD:** *Community Work Program Updates with Individual Jurisdictions*
- **April-July:** *Draft Plan*
- **Final Committee Meeting:** *TBD*
- **Final Public Hearing:** *TBD*

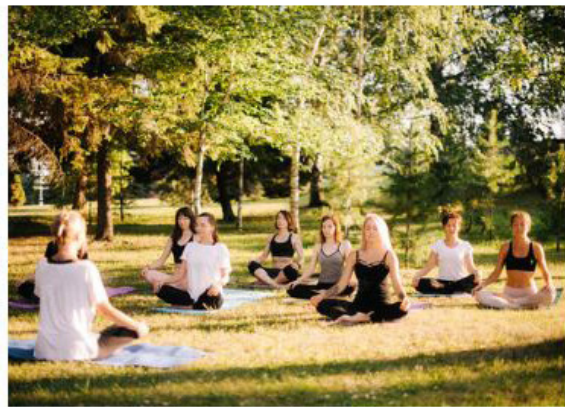


OUR VISION

We are a place of opportunity filled with spirit and pride for our heritage and excitement for our future. We aim to preserve our community traditions, resources, and small town feel while inviting new, innovative growth. We are committed to promoting our greatest assets, cultivating positive development, and improving areas of need. Our community will forge, maintain, and prioritize efforts in community outreach and intergovernmental relations. Achievements in continual community enhancement will be made through strategic actions taken in economic development, historic preservation, environmental protection, healthcare, education, community development, and public service. Johnson County and the Cities of Wrightsville and Kite will stay true to our values while providing economic opportunities and growth. We will promote our natural and cultural resources and create a welcoming, walkable, lively community to ensure a friendly, favorable future.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?



The Joint Johnson County Comprehensive Plan Survey

Please answer the following survey questions which will be used to help develop your community's updated comprehensive plan.

My association with Johnson County (Select all that Apply)*

- I grew up in and currently reside in Johnson County
- I moved my residence to Johnson County
- I work in Johnson County or my work involves working with/for organizations in Johnson County
- I own property in Johnson County
- Other

If you moved to Johnson County from somewhere else, please indicate which of the reasons explain your move:

(Select all that apply)

- Employment opportunity
- Family connections
- I grew up here
- Affordability
- Rural character
- Quality of local amenities
- To be closer to someplace else
- Quality of educational system
- Other

My age range: *

- 16-22
- 23-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-65
- 65+

Occupation Type/Status

Please choose or identify the most appropriate description of your occupational status or type from the following

- Financial Sector
- Agricultural Industry
- Public Services/Government
- Industrial/Manufacturing/Fabrication
- Healthcare
- Education
- Construction/Skilled Trades
- Commercial Sales/Retail/Customer Service
- Hospitality/Lodging
- Non-Profit/Faith-Based Sector
- Retired
- Disabled
- Homemaker
- Unemployed

How would you rate the overall quality of life in Johnson County? *

- Excellent
- Good
- No Opinion
- Fair
- Poor

What are the greatest strengths or assets of your community?

Our top 2 priorities in regard to revitalization efforts should be:*

- Downtown locations
- Industrial locations
- Recreational locations
- Residential locations

What are your community's greatest needs?

What type of businesses would you like to see more of in Johnson County? *

(Select all that apply)

- Retail stores
- Grocery stores
- Personal services (salon, barber shop, etc.)
- Restaurants
- Boutiques
- Bars and lounges
- Coffee shops
- Hotels
- Entertainment options
- Professional offices
- Medical facilities
- Industry (manufacturing/ warehouses)

How well do you rate your local government in regard to openness and communicating with the public?*

- Excellent (they are open to requests and responsive to needs)
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Poor (they do not interact well with the public and I feel they don't listen)

Please select your top 3 ways that you would prefer to receive information regarding community events, community meetings, or community issues. *

- Listen to an advertisement on the local radio station
- View a social media post (Facebook)
- Receive an email newsletter
- Read an article in the local newspaper
- Receive an insert in your utility bill
- View a post on the County/City website

There are opportunities for the public to engage in community decision making efforts:*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

What is the quality of your internet (broadband) service? *

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- No access/service

What outdoor recreational activities are important to you?*

- Biking
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Boating
- Hunting
- Kayaking
- Outdoor sports
- Running
- Other _____

Infrastructure Rating

Please rate the quality of infrastructure in Johnson County on a scale of one to five with 1 star being "Poor" and 5 stars being "Excellent"

Road Quality*

(Potholes, pavement issues, washes, etc.)

1-5 Rating: _____

Comments: _____

Road Drainage*

(Do you notice water drainage issues?)

1-5 Rating: _____

Comments: _____

Quality of Public Service Buildings*

(Courthouses, Senior Centers, Health Departments, etc.)

1-5 Rating: _____

Comments: _____

Quality of Water/Sewer Systems*

1-5 Rating: _____

Comments: _____

What type of housing would you like to see more of in the future?*

(Select all that apply)

- Single-family homes
- Apartments
- Townhomes
- Senior housing
- Affordable/ workforce housing
- Student housing
- Loft apartments
- None

Our top 3 priorities with regard to housing should be:

- Developing more high-end housing (>\$300,000)

- Working to address dilapidated/vacant properties
- Developing more single-family housing (<\$180,000)
- Developing more options for seniors
- Fostering more mixed use development
- Developing more rental options
- Developing more apartments

Our top 3 priorities with regard to cultural amenities should be:

- Need for new/improvement of parks and recreation areas
- Need for more/new entertainment options
- Preservation of historic sites and resources
- Need for more/new recreational trails
- Need for more/new social events in our community
- Need for new/improvement of athletic facilities
- Other _____

What are your 3 favorite things about Johnson County?

What are your 3 least favorite things about Johnson County?

Do you have any other comments that you would like to share about your community?

FINAL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan

The local governments of Johnson County including the Cities of Wrightsville and Kite are in the final stages of a process to develop a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law.

The comprehensive plan outlines a community vision, identifies needs and opportunities, and delineates long term policies and a community work program to provide a guide and blueprint for future growth and development within community jurisdictions. The plan is in draft finalization before submittal to the state for review.

The purpose of the hearing is to brief the community on the content and strategies outlined in the draft comprehensive plan; to address the issues and opportunities facing Johnson County and the Cities of Wrightsville and Kite; obtain any final citizen input; and notify the community of the pending submittal of the comprehensive plan for state and regional review.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME: **Thursday, August 31, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.**

LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING: **Johnson County Commission Boardroom,
2484 West Elm Street, Wrightsville, Georgia**

All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact Johnson County Commissioner's Office: 2484 West Elm Street, Wrightsville, Georgia or call 478-864-3388 ext. #4.

All persons are invited to attend the public hearing and voice your opinion to help your community achieve a better future. If you would like more information, please contact Mandy Britt at the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 912-292-4789 or mbritt@hogarc.org.

**JOHNSON COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING
COMMISSIONER'S BOARD ROOM
2484 WEST ELM STREET, WRIGHTSVILLE**

MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023, 2:00PM

AGENDA

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Agreements Needed**
- 3. Background/Committee's Purpose**
- 4. Proposed Timetable for Plan Development**
- 5. Community Vision Input**
- 6. SWOT analysis (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats)**

Adjourn

Next Meeting:

- Review draft of community vision/SWOT**
- Plan Title Discussion**
- Goals/Policies Discussion/Introduction**

**JOHNSON COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**COMMISSIONER’S BOARD ROOM
2484 WEST ELM STREET, WRIGHTSVILLE**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023, 2:00PM

AGENDA

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Regional Commission Service Agreement - *Wrightsville***
- 3. Brief Review of previous Meeting (01/23/23)**
- 4. Community Vision Outline Review**
- 5. Complete SWOT Analysis**
- 6. Needs and Opportunities**
- 7. Goals/Policies Discussion/Introduction**
- 8. Plan Title Discussion**

Adjourn

Upcoming Events:

Date/Time	Subject	Location
Tuesday, 03/07/23 , 5:00 PM	Initial Public Hearing	Johnson County Ag Center, 251 Hershel Walker Dr. Wrightsville, GA
Tuesday, 03/21/23 , 2:00 PM	Review Goals; Policies/ Economic Development	Commissioner's Board Room - 2484 West Elm Street Wrightsville, GA
Tuesday, 03/21/23 , 5:00 PM	Community Drop-In Session	Vintage Grace 8651 South Marcus Street, Wrightsville, GA

**JOHNSON COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING #3
 COMMISSIONER’S BOARD ROOM
 2484 WEST ELM STREET, WRIGHTSVILLE**

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023, 2:00PM

AGENDA

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Brief Review of previous Meeting/Community Drop-In/Survey**
- 3. Goals and Long Term Policies Review**
- 4. Economic Development Update & Discussion**
- 5. Plan Title Discussion**

Adjourn

Upcoming Events:

Date/Time	Subject	Location
Tuesday, 03/21/23, 5:00 PM	Community Drop-In Session	Vintage Grace 8651 South Marcus Street, Wrightsville, GA
Tuesday 04/25/23, 2:00 PM	Broadband & Land-use	Commissioner's Board Room - 2484 West Elm Street Wrightsville, GA
TBD	Community Work Program Updates with Individual Jurisdictions	
April-July	Draft Plan	
TBD	Final Committee Meeting	
TBD	Final Public Hearing	

**JOHNSON COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING #4
 COMMISSIONER’S BOARD ROOM
 2484 WEST ELM STREET, WRIGHTSVILLE**

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2023, 2:00PM

AGENDA

- 1. Introductions/Review**
- 2. Plan Title**
- 3. Survey Update**
- 4. Revised Draft Economic Development Element**
- 5. Environmental Planning Criteria/Altamaha Regional Water Plan**
- 6. Broadband Element**
- 7. Land Use Element**

Upcoming Events:

TBD	Community Work Program Updates with Individual Jurisdictions	(Local jurisdictions will be contacted for meetings)
April-July	Draft Plan	
TBD	Final Committee Meeting	
TBD	Final Public Hearing	

Adjourn

Stakeholders Invited to Participate in Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Preparation Process

Johnson County Board of Commissioners
City of Kite
City of Wrightsville
Johnson County Board of Education
Johnson County Development Authority/Wrightsville Mainstreet
Wrightsville-Johnson County Chamber of Commerce
Johnson County Farm Bureau
Johnson County Cooperative Extension
Johnson County Family Connection Collaborative
Johnson County Board of Elections
Johnson County Probate/Magistrate
Georgia Forestry Commission
Johnson County Fire/Emergency Management Agency
Associated Housing and Economic Development Corporation
Johnson County Sheriff's Department
Community Bank of Johnson County
Bank of Wrightsville
Johnson County Senior Center
Community Health Care Systems, Inc.
The Johnson Journal
Johnson County Board of Assessors
Johnson County DFACS
Electro-Mech Scoreboard, Inc.
Johnson State Prison
Sweat and Associates
State Farm Insurance
Wrightsville Family Dental

Active Participants in Johnson County Local Plan Coordination Committee Meetings and Plan Preparation

Johnson County Board of Commissioners

Bill Lindsey, County Manager

City of Wrightsville

Janibeth Outlaw, Mayor

Johnson County Development Authority

Hugh Darnley, Executive Director

Johnson County Tax Assessor's Office

Donna Young, Chief Appraiser

Johnson County Registrar's Office

Debbie Killingsworth, Chief Deputy Registrar

Johnson County EMA/Fire

Shawn Wombles, EMA Director

Johnson County Schools

Chris Watkins, Superintendent

Johnson County Health Department

Brandy Bass, RN

Johnson County Family Connection

Kristie Brantley, Executive Director

Johnson County UGA Cooperative Extension Office

Rocky Tanner, ANR Agent

The Factory/AHED

Mab Hightower

State Farm Insurance, Wrightsville

Marty Thompson

Bank of Wrightsville

Robert Harper, Vice President

Richy Everly, President, CEO

Johnson County 4-H

Ivey Glover, County Extension Agent, 4-H

Rotary Club

Bill Johnson

Local Citizens

Beth Hall

Celete Boone

Stella Boone

Connie Moen

Terry Richards

David Richards

Shannon Blizzard

Note: Both elected and appointed local government and local economic development officials participated.

Forging Ahead
with a
**friendly.
favorable
future**

JOHNSON COUNTY

Joint Comprehensive Plan

August, 2023

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires all local governments in Georgia to prepare a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective October 1, 2018, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

WHEREAS, Johnson County, Georgia has participated with the municipalities of Kite and Wrightsville in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning through the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

WHEREAS, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, for Johnson County and its municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the new joint comprehensive plan has been previously submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and

WHEREAS, the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, Johnson County is now desirous of adopting *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Johnson County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, as Johnson County's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Johnson County Board of Commissioners hereby instructs and directs that formal notification of said adoption be forwarded to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and to other agencies, as appropriate.

SO RESOLVED, this 9th day of October, 2023.

BY: 

ATTEST: 

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires all local governments in Georgia to prepare a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective October 1, 2018, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kite, Georgia has participated with Johnson County and the City of Wrightsville in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning through the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

WHEREAS, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, for Johnson County and its municipalities; including the City of Kite; and

WHEREAS, the new joint comprehensive plan has been previously submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and

WHEREAS, the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kite is now desirous of adopting *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Kite hereby approve and adopt the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, as the City of Kite's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Kite hereby instruct and direct that formal notification of said adoption be forwarded to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and to other agencies, as appropriate.

SO RESOLVED, this 23rd day of October, 2023.

BY: Jeremy Clayton
Pam Drees / City Clerk
P.D.

ATTEST: Pam Drees / City Clerk



RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires all local governments in Georgia to prepare a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective October 1, 2018, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wrightsville, Georgia has participated with Johnson County and the City of Kite in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning through the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

WHEREAS, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, for Johnson County and its municipalities; including the City of Wrightsville; and

WHEREAS, the new joint comprehensive plan has been previously submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and

WHEREAS, the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wrightsville is now desirous of adopting *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Wrightsville hereby approve and adopt the Johnson County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Forging Ahead with a Friendly, Favorable Future*, as the City of Wrightsville's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Wrightsville hereby instruct and direct that formal notification of said adoption be forwarded to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and to other agencies, as appropriate.

SO RESOLVED, this 16th day of October, 2023.

BY: Jane C. Outlaw

ATTEST: April Spang